



2024-2029

# Strategy

**END THE SILENCE:**

Creating a New Narrative for  
Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Our vision is to end the **social silence, stigma,** and **shame** of child sexual abuse so that children, young people, and families can build **thriving relationships** and **communities.**

# Our Values

## We have hope

We believe it's possible to grow beyond traumatic experiences. Our hope for change recognises the strengths and agency of the children, young people, and families we support.

## We foster connection

Our commitment lies in nurturing safe and trusting relationships that form the core of healing for both individuals and communities.

## We embrace creativity

We have faith in the ability of creativity to facilitate healing and change the way our society supports children and families affected by sexual abuse.

## We are genuine

We believe in meeting people where they are, and we strive to be honest, committed, and authentic in all our actions.

## We take action

We stand with children, young people, and families to create the change they want to see.

# The Challenge

As long as child sexual abuse is hidden, silenced, and stigmatised, most people who have experienced this trauma will never access support. This can often mean lifelong impacts, including mental and physical health needs alongside social isolation. Those who do find support, face significant challenges in getting justice or accessing a service that feels right for them. In addition, the system of agencies designed to support them needs to be more cohesive and manageable, not fragmented and overwhelmed.

Children and young people who have endured child sexual abuse are often traumatised by their experiences. The impact of the trauma increases when they aren't then believed, protected, and supported. Evidence shows the quicker a child gets support, the lower the risk of long-term harm. Research also tells us that the outcomes for children are better when families and communities are supported to navigate the way ahead for children who have experienced abuse.

There are an estimated 11 million adult survivors of sexual abuse in the UK. Every year 500,000 more children and young people will experience sexual abuse in England and Wales. Only a small fraction - around 80,000 per year will report to the police. And, an even smaller number, around 30,000 are visible to support services. There are thousands more living in unbearable silence.

The impacts of child sexual abuse are different for each child, young person, and their family. Research tells us that the choice of when to access support and the ability to shape the service received is critical to healing.

Yet, our society's existing response to child sexual abuse offers little choice or flexibility - it focuses almost exclusively on a criminal justice response or a short-term 1:1 therapy offer. Children, young people, and families are telling us they need and want something different. They want a response that helps them to rebuild their lives and create change for others who have shared this experience.

**This means we must end the social silence, stigma, and shame of child sexual abuse so that children, young people, and families can build thriving relationships and communities.**



# Creating a new narrative

At the Green House, we believe every child and young person has the right to choose and shape their healing journey. Their voices and experiences guide everything we do. **Together, we are writing a new narrative - one of kindness, strength, and solidarity that will reshape understanding of child sexual abuse for a more compassionate world.**

We are confident in the direction and ambition of this strategy because children, young people, and families have been involved in its creation. We wanted to be collaborative and open in our approach, involving all stakeholders. Bringing the voices of young survivors and their families into key strategic decision-making - on our vision, mission, priorities, and how we work. Deepening our commitment to work in a way that values these voices and works with them to achieve our mission, and takes us closer to our vision.



“ The Green House’s new strategy embraces hope and healing at an individual and societal level for children, young people, and families. The emphasis on expertise by experience ensures that they will write a new narrative, one that can both prevent child sexual abuse and support those who have experienced it. The commitment to evaluation, developing evidence and systems is very welcome. It’s exactly what our sector needs. ”

*Funder*

# About The Green House

The Green House is a sexual abuse charity providing evidence-based, trauma-informed support services for children, young people, and families in Bristol and environs. This includes arts and nature-based therapies, group activities, activism, and peer support. We dedicate ourselves to providing children and young people with a safe and creative space to connect, grow, and thrive. Research guides everything we do, we are dedicated to improving the evidence base around what effective support looks like after experiences of sexual abuse.


**Our mission is to offer hope and healing through creativity, connection, and activism for children, young people, and families who have experienced sexual abuse.**

For over 50 years, we have worked alongside people who have experienced sexual abuse, extending our service to include children and young people in 2015. 2018-2022 saw an overwhelming increase in referrals to our children's service. In January 2022 we responded by focusing exclusively on supporting the whole family so that children could have access to timely, specialist support services that were right for them.

*"I would describe it as a place where you can talk about anything and not be judged and feel like what you have to say is important"* *Young Person*

The Green House has gone through enormous change: we've tested innovations, reshaped services based on the latest research evidence, and made progress on fostering key partnerships and influencing system change. We also know from partners and families who use our services, that we are trusted, and seen as a leading child sexual abuse support charity in Bristol and beyond. Our evolution is set to continue.

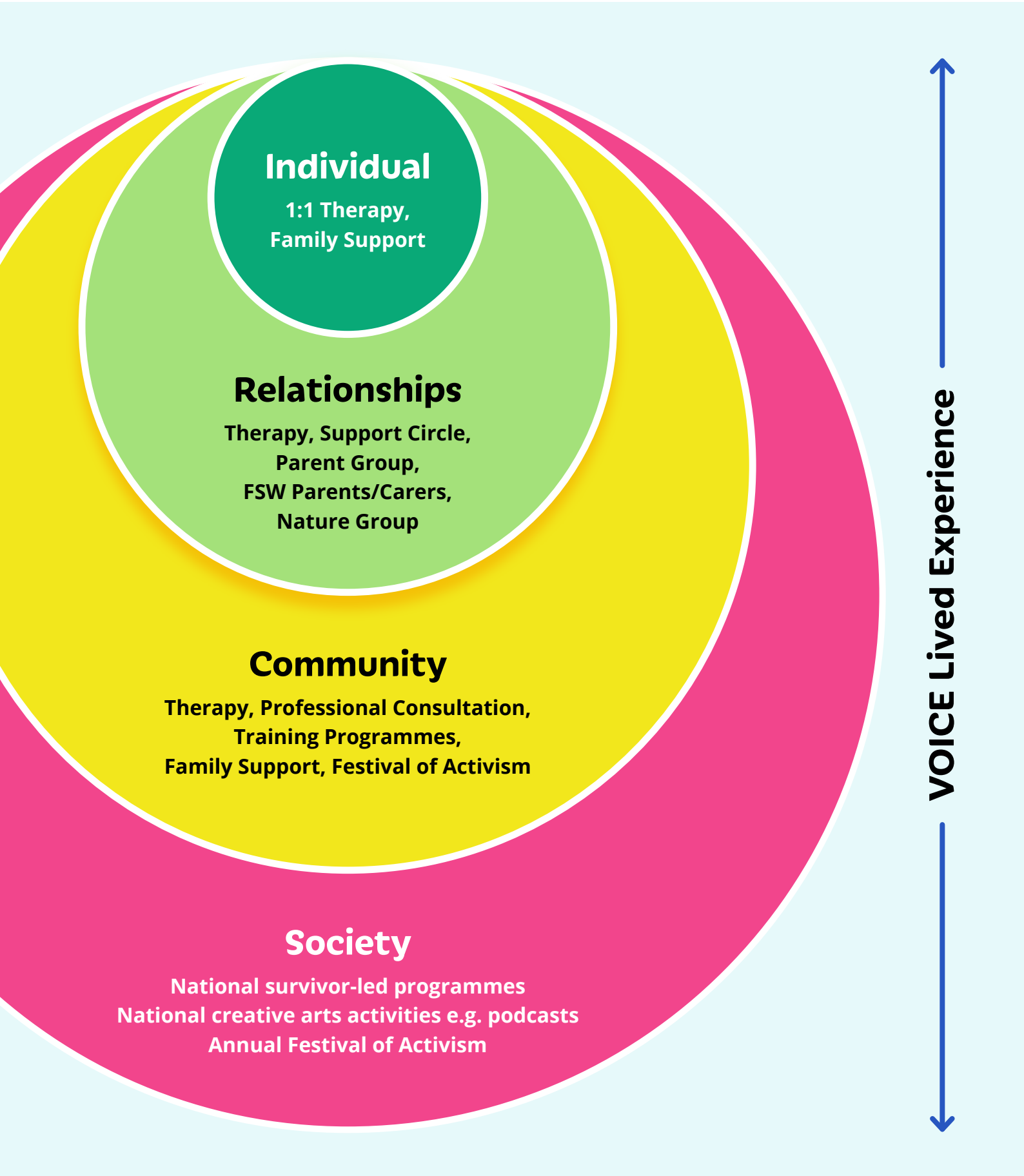
**We recognise that healing reaches beyond individuals to encompass families and communities.** Our strategy is based on an ecological model shaping our commitment to bringing young survivors, their families, and wider networks together to create a collective healing journey.



“ The service has been a lifeline for my child and for us as a family - we have been able to deal with this because of The Green House. I don't know what we would have done otherwise! We are not sure our journey is over but we are in a better place knowing we have The Green House's support. ”

*Parent / Carer*

# Our Ecological Model





## Using an ecological model to explain how we support children, young people, and families has several advantages:

**1** It ensures a holistic perspective by giving a comprehensive view of the various factors affecting the families we support. It considers individual, relational, community, and societal levels, ensuring that the support addresses not just the immediate effects of abuse, but also the broader context in which families live.

**2** By examining different levels (individual, relational, community, and societal), we can identify multiple points for intervention and support. This enables us to develop more effective strategies for both **prevention and support**.

**3** The model helps to recognise the complexity of sexual abuse and its effects. It highlights how factors at different levels interact with each other, such as the interplay between personal trauma, social stigma, and legal frameworks.

**4** This holistic view supports the development of tailored strategies that are responsive to the specific needs of children, young people, and families at different stages of their healing process.

**5** The ecological model emphasises the equal importance of individual healing, relationships with family and communities, and the systems level and societal change required to address the root causes of sexual abuse.

**6** By providing a structured framework, the ecological model can guide our research, advocacy, and policy-influencing activity. Helping The Green House to identify gaps in existing support systems and advocating for policies that address these gaps at local and national levels.

**7** The model also recognises that different groups may have unique experiences and needs. This awareness helps us to develop more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to supporting survivors from diverse backgrounds.

The ecological model offers a multidimensional and interconnected approach to understanding and supporting children, young people, and families who have experienced sexual abuse, and as such provides the best framework for setting our Strategic Priorities and Objectives.

There's a lot to do, not least as we recover from the pandemic. However, The Green House is in a strong position to play its part. We are committed to breaking the social silence that surrounds child sexual abuse and to end the stigma, shame, and loneliness that families often feel.

We believe that this new five-year strategy firmly positions us on the right path. Through support, research, training, and partnerships, we work to reshape societal perceptions and create a more compassionate and understanding world.

**A world where the social silence, stigma, and shame of child sexual abuse no longer exist. A world where children, young people, and families build thriving relationships and communities.**





# Our Strategic Priorities & associated objectives

# 1 To offer safety, hope, and healing

This strategic priority aims to provide a comprehensive approach to increasing access to support for children, young people, and families. Objectives under this priority are designed to address the multiple barriers families face in accessing support and ensure that we continue to develop our local services based on what families tell us. Evaluating our services at a detailed level is an important part of figuring out how well they work. This learning will feed into national projects and communities within other priorities.

## How we will do this:

### **1a** Increase access to child and young-person-centred therapeutic support for sexual abuse.

- 1** Continue to develop therapy and support programmes that respond to the needs of children and young people.
- 2** Establish satellite centres in underserved areas to improve access to support.
- 3** Develop specialised support services for children and young people who face additional challenges finding support (eg young people from global majority communities, boys, LGBTQIA+).

### **1b** Reduce isolation by increasing understanding and support for families and communities affected by sexual abuse.

- 1** Continue to develop Family Support Work programmes in response to the needs of parents and carers.
- 2** Create provision for parents and carers in need of therapeutic support because of the impact of sexual abuse or their own lived experience.
- 3** Provide regular support group meetings and peer-led discussions to encourage parents, carers, and wider network connections.

*"I felt like I was talking to a really good friend, one that I could trust." Young Person*

“ I found everything helpful. Knowledge and giving me the understanding to support my daughter better. Confidence to advocate for my child. I feel stronger. ”

*Parent*



**1c** Embed continuous quality improvement through monitoring, research, and evaluation.

“The lovely staff always made me feel so welcome. It felt like we were family members to them. It’s a lovely place and a calm environment to relax and wait in, too.” *Parent*

**Potential activities**

- 1** Regularly assess programme outcomes and impact through data collection and analysis.
- 2** Conduct an annual whole-service evaluation to inform sector-wide learning.
- 3** Collaborate with research institutions to build the evidence base around support efficacy for whole families affected by child sexual abuse.
- 4** Implement opportunities for young people and families to participate in service development through research and evaluation opportunities.

## 2 To create supportive connected systems

This strategic priority aims to influence a system-level change. The objectives focus on raising the visibility of child sexual abuse and upskilling practitioners to work with confidence when a disclosure is made. The only way we can deliver this work is to build trusted local and national partnerships that can facilitate an exchange of specialist knowledge within the wider system.

### How we will do this:

**2a** Raise awareness of child sexual abuse within governmental and systems agencies (e.g education, health, and social care).

- 1** Do a study to discover the things that make it difficult or easy to care for child sexual abuse, all across the system.
- 2** Build a community of practice at a local and national level focussed on sharing expertise across multi-disciplinary teams.

**2b** Develop a confident, responsive, and supportive system of agencies working with children, young people, and families.

- 1** Continue to develop a trauma-informed Consultation offer for systems partners to build confidence in responding to children, young people, and families at disclosure and beyond.
- 2** Conduct workshops and seminars for community leaders and professionals to address misconceptions and promote understanding.
- 3** Develop evidence-based training programmes for non-specialist partners e.g., CAMHS, Social Care, Dept of Justice, etc.



“ This is such a helpful space and has helped me formulate my thoughts around this complex case. I have felt really isolated in my work with this child and this space has really helped with that. ”

*Professional after consultation*



## **2c** Cultivate and nurture strategic partnerships to deliver systems change.

- 1** Increase the number of strategic partnerships at a local and national level to address systems issues affecting access to support, e.g., CAMHS, Social Care, etc.
- 2** Develop integrated services with partner agencies to improve pathways to support.
- 3** Reach out to key communities, e.g., schools, and community centres to build partnerships that enable children, young people, and families who face additional challenges to access support.

# 3

## To write a new narrative

This strategic priority aims to bring about positive changes in society and make it a more compassionate place for children, young people, and families who have experienced sexual abuse. The objectives in this priority include increasing awareness about child sexual abuse through research, activism, and creating programmes led by survivors.

### How we will do this:

#### **3a Break the social silence and stigma of child sexual abuse through increasing awareness**

- 1** Support services to develop robust data that could contribute to a national dataset of child sexual abuse services
- 2** Deliver the annual Festival of Activism and survivor-led podcast to bring together key change-makers
- 3** Engage policymakers to promote legislative changes that protect children, young people, and families rights and ensure equity of access
- 4** Participate in awareness-raising events, conferences, and national forums to amplify the collective voice against child sexual abuse
- 5** Collaborate on joint campaigns, events, and initiatives to increase exposure and reach new audiences.

#### **3b Stand with young survivors of child sexual abuse and their families by supporting them to speak out and share their experiences to drive the change they want to see.**

- 1** Support young survivors and their families with advocacy and leadership opportunities
- 2** Facilitate young survivors and their families to develop, deliver, and lead their own peer-support spaces
- 3** Establish strategic partnerships with other organisations delivering programmes that amplify the voices of those with lived experience
- 4** Develop opportunities at a local and national level for young survivors and their families to speak out, share their experiences, and create change
- 5** Create a plan for survivors to move from receiving support to having influential roles within the organisation.



“ The festival talks were so engaging and hearing from young survivors was really impactful. I feel what I learnt on the day will stay with me for a long time and has inspired me to be a better advocate for child sexual abuse in my work and personal life. ”

*Festival Participant, 2024*

“ I used to be shy to speak up, but the group has given me confidence. I feel charged up by using our experiences to help change it for the better for others. ”

*Parent, VOICE Group member*



# 4

## To look after our house

This strategic priority aims to ensure that the Green House continues to be available locally and nationally for children, families, and communities in the long term. Objectives under this priority focus on financial sustainability; optimising operations; team safety and growth; and a diverse and inclusive culture.

### How we will do this:

#### **4a Secure the organisation's future by achieving financial stability, enabling us to invest in expanding our activities to end the silence of child sexual abuse.**

- 1** Increase The Green House's public presence and attract diverse funding sources by establishing a clear brand voice and messaging, securing media coverage, and expanding our audience through social media and broader communication efforts
- 2** Maintain and expand our government funding while broadening our support base by fostering strong relationships with commissioners and diversifying our sources of statutory support
- 3** Improve our early trust programme by providing better stewardship to nurture long-term relationships with current donors and identifying a robust pipeline to secure new trust income
- 4** Boost commercial revenue from training courses and professional consultation

- 5** Lay the groundwork for future individual and corporate giving programmes by responding to ad hoc inquiries, improving our data collection, and establishing a firm foundation for donor stewardship.

#### **4b Optimise operational processes to measure our effectiveness - quality, governance, and impact.**

- 1** Develop an operational plan for regular review and monitoring of progress against key outcomes
- 2** Continue to review internal processes to identify cost savings and areas for streamlining
- 3** Improve operational efficiency by implementing technology solutions such as fundraising software
- 4** Develop a comprehensive financial policy framework to guide decision-making, risk management, and accountability
- 5** Ensure Board policies and procedures are up-to-date and in line with Charity Commission guidelines.

#### **4c Foster psychological safety and personal growth for our people.**

- 1** Design and implement a comprehensive trauma-informed training program for all staff and volunteers
- 2** Offer ongoing training and development opportunities, including specialised trauma training, to enhance staff expertise
- 3** Regularly review and adjust compensation, benefits, and recognition programs to ensure they are competitive and equitable
- 4** Regularly talk to our staff, the people we help, and those who have an interest in our organisation to collect their thoughts and feedback on what we do and how we do it
- 5** Establish open communication channels and regular feedback mechanisms to encourage employees to share ideas and concerns without fear
- 6** Organise regular spaces that focus on self-care and reflection for staff.

#### **4d Strengthen Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to create a diverse and inclusive culture.**

- 1** Continue to develop, implement, and monitor our comprehensive EDI policy and action plan that outlines the charity's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 2** Enhance our recruitment process by making our job ads and outreach efforts more specific to bring in a more diverse group of well-qualified candidates. We will actively search for and welcome people who aren't usually represented.
- 3** Develop a comprehensive programme for supporting staff with their own lived experience in the workplace.
- 4** Conduct EDI training and awareness campaigns to promote understanding and cultural sensitivity among staff
- 5** Develop a volunteering strategy to provide opportunities for people to support The Green House by offering their time, skills, and expertise.



# Additional considerations

## Engagement & Feedback Mechanisms

We will incorporate mechanisms for gathering feedback and input from the community, beneficiaries, and stakeholders to ensure the strategy remains responsive to evolving needs and challenges.

## Monitoring and Evaluation:

The strategy mentions the importance of research, monitoring, and evaluation. We are currently looking at how data will be collected and analysed to make the strategy more robust.

## Our guiding principles

These principles guide us in creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse to foster healing, hope, and connection.

- We are child-centered and family-focussed, recognising and respecting their individual needs, preferences, and rights and prioritising the best interests of the child or young person in all decisions and actions
- We ensure the physical and emotional safety of the child or young person through robust safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent further harm
- We recognise and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. We aim to tailor support services to be culturally sensitive and inclusive
- We acknowledge and understand the impact of trauma on children, young people, and their families. We adopt trauma-informed practices that prioritise safety, trust, and collaboration
- We support children and young people in regaining a sense of control and autonomy over their lives and involve them in decision-making processes to the extent appropriate for their age and capacity
- We respect and maintain the confidentiality of information shared by the child or young person, while also balancing the need to safeguard them from further harm
- We work collaboratively with other agencies, professionals, and stakeholders involved in the child or young person's life. We promote a coordinated approach to service delivery for comprehensive support
- We believe in offering a range of holistic support services, including therapy, arts, and nature-based support, group and peer programmes, family support, and educational resources, to address the diverse needs of survivors.

## Challenges and Critical Success Factors

- **Limited Resources:** Insufficient funding, staff, and other resources may hinder the execution of the strategy. Overcoming financial constraints and securing necessary support through diversifying income streams.
- **Complex Issue:** Child sexual abuse is a deeply complex and sensitive issue. Addressing it requires expertise and resources, and navigating this complexity will require robust data and partnership working.
- **Stigma and Resistance:** There may be resistance from individuals or communities who are unwilling to engage with or support activities aimed at addressing child sexual abuse due to the stigma and discomfort associated with the topic. Focus on awareness-raising campaigns and collaborations that bring childhood sexual abuse and its impact out of the dark by extending advocacy and activism programmes.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging young survivors and their families to work alongside us can be difficult because of fear, stigma, and trauma symptomology. Building trust and facilitating open dialogue will be an ongoing challenge.
- **Partnership Building:** Building and maintaining partnerships with governmental and institutional agencies and other organisations may prove challenging because of differences in objectives, priorities, or approaches. We will start by consolidating and extending relationships with existing partners.
- **Data Privacy:** Given the sensitive nature of the issue, handling and protecting data, particularly of children, young people, and their families, will require rigorous measures and compliance with data protection regulations; effective data policies and expert compliance skills.

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below...

→ **Measuring Impact:** Accurately measuring the impact of the strategy and ensuring that it aligns with our objectives can be challenging. Develop meaningful KPIs and evaluation mechanisms.

→ **Economic and Political Uncertainty:** Assess and analyse various potential scenarios that may impact the charity's work, considering both political and economic factors to create contingency plans for different outcomes.

→ **Diversity and Inclusion:** Achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion within the organisation and in the delivery of services may require overcoming biases and barriers within society and the organisation itself.

→ **Changing Social Dynamics:** The strategy aims to change societal attitudes and narratives about child sexual abuse, which can be resistant to change, requiring persistent advocacy and public engagement.

We understand that addressing these barriers will require a multi-dimensional and adaptive approach that involves collaboration, community engagement, resource mobilisation, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Our strategy must remain flexible and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities while staying true to the Green House's vision, mission, and values.





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REGULATOR**

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Have you experienced childhood sexual abuse? Would you like someone to talk to?  
The Southwest Survivor Pathway can help you find support. Go to [survivorpathway.org.uk](https://www.survivorpathway.org.uk)