

# INFORMATION FOR REFERRERS

Guidance for those referring children under 14, and young people under 18 for free sexual abuse counselling at The Green House.



*Free sexual abuse counselling*



## *Our care is excellent.*

The Green House has provided a safe, non-judgemental space for us to explore the difficulties we've been experiencing in our lives.

I have the tools I need to make a practical difference to my life.

It has been brilliant. A real life changer for me.

### **What does The Green House do?**

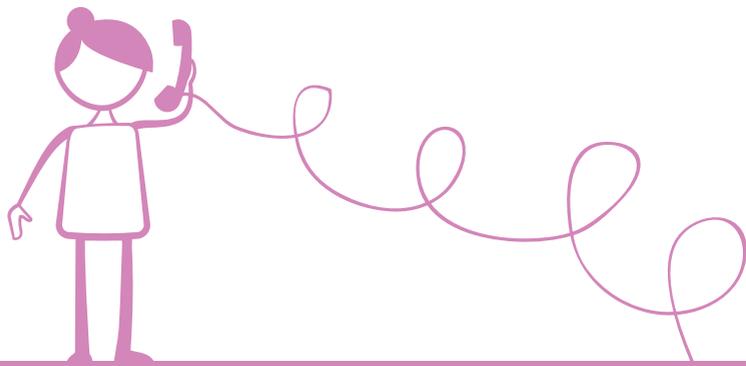
The Green House is a registered charity formerly known as Avon Sexual Abuse Centre (ASAC). We provide free, confidential, specialist counselling/therapy and support for men, women, young people (14+) and children who have experienced or been affected by sexual trauma at any point in their lives.

### **What about children & young people?**

Working as part of our Children & Young People's Service is a small team of counsellors/therapists who have extensive experience working therapeutically with children and young people who have experienced trauma. Our therapists use a combination of verbal and non-verbal techniques including art therapy and drama therapy to provide a variety of opportunities to explore and express experiences in a way which feels right.

All our staff undergo a criminal and enhanced disclosure records check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

It is our aim to improve resilience, emotional wellbeing and prevent further abuse from taking place.



## What is the referral criteria?

We are a post-disclosure service. We only work with children and young people whose sexual abuse has been reported to statutory services. Both professional and self-referrals are encouraged, in accordance with these criteria.

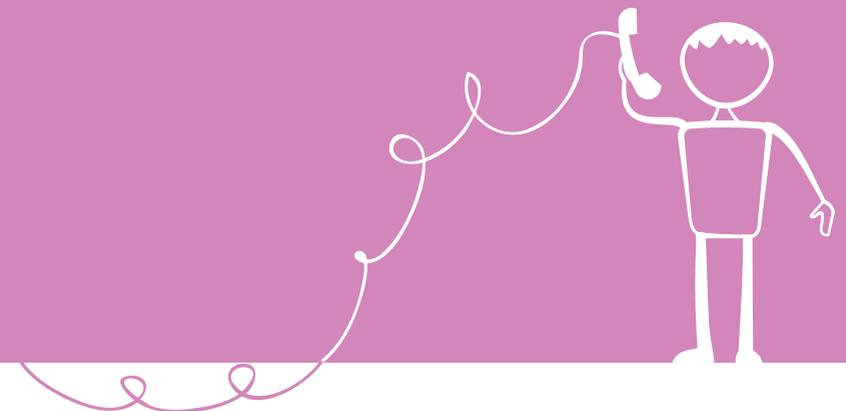
Children and young people must be:

- under 18 years of age,
- have experienced or been affected by sexual trauma,
- which has been disclosed and reported to statutory services,
- the child/young person is in a safe and stable environment,
- and, the child/young person is aware and consents to this referral is being made.

Where a Child Protection investigation or court proceedings are anticipated or underway, we will assess whether a therapeutic intervention is appropriate for the child or young person at that time.

## What should those referred expect?

- An initial assessment session to determine the benefits of counselling/therapy for the child or young person referred to us.
- Family Support Work sessions for parents/carers/families, to support them in supporting their child or young person who has been referred to us.
- Between 12 and 24 sessions of individual counselling/therapy, taking place at the same time and same location each week with one of our Counsellors/therapists.
- Regular reviews to consider to process and direction of the work.





## *We're here to support you.*

### What happens when we receive your referral?

- The Family Support Practitioner will acknowledge receipt of your referral, inform you of its eligibility and the current waiting time for a service. If the referral does not meet our criteria we will signpost you to more appropriate service/s wherever possible.
- In many cases, where children (under 14) have been referred, their parent/s or carer/s will be invited to The Green House to attend an assessment appointment with one of our counsellors/therapists. Parental consent for counselling/therapy will be obtained at this stage. When young people (14+) are referred, their case is considered on a more individual basis.
- Although we prefer to work with young people where parental consent is obtained, we recognise that this is not possible in every case and sometimes it is appropriate to invite young people along to an assessment appointment independent of their parent/s or carer/s. The young person's competence to consent to their own counselling/therapy will be assessed at this stage.
- If it is felt that the child or young person could benefit from accessing counselling/therapy with our service, they will be sent a letter inviting them to their first counselling/therapy session.

### Who are the professionals at The Green House?

- Children's counsellors / therapists - qualified and registered practitioners with significant experience working with children and young people who have experienced trauma, who use the arts, play and talking therapies in counselling/therapy sessions, to help children and young people express themselves more fully.
- A Family Support Practitioner – who manages the referral process and liaises with external professionals such as Social Services, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service where required, who also provides Family Support Work sessions for parents, carers and families.
- A Clinical Lead – who manages the clinical practice of children and young people's therapeutic services, and who is responsible for the development and quality of services provided for children and young people.



## *Trust and confidentiality are very important to us.*

### **Professional Standards**

The Green House is an organisational member of The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and adheres to its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. The Green House has clear policies and procedures regarding Confidentiality, Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults and Complaints.

A safe non judgemental space

The counsellor's skill and patience have helped me make progress.

### **Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Child Protection**

We have clear policies to protect the confidentiality of all children/young people and families referred to our service, while balancing this with the need to ensure that children/young people are protected from harm. This means that, in line with Child Protection legislation, there are limits to the level of confidentiality we can offer. If a child/young person is deemed at risk of harm, we have a duty of care to share information with relevant agencies. There may be other occasions where it is beneficial to the child/young person for mutual information sharing to take place between The Green House, referrers and other agencies. If this is the case, we will ensure that the consent of the child/young person and family is sought beforehand.

### **Inclusion and Participation**

The Green House is committed to offering inclusive, culturally sensitive and accessible services. We recognise that involving children and parents/ carers in the development and evaluation of the service is vital to effective service delivery.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To offer the highest quality services, we continually monitor and evaluate all our interventions through questionnaires, case studies, regular reviews and service-user feedback.



# *Creative Arts Therapies*

## **Why we use Creative Arts Therapies with Children & Young People Affected by Sexual Abuse**

Children & young people who have experienced trauma often feel powerless, overwhelmed by emotion, confused, ashamed and are afraid to trust others or their environment.

Trauma is an autonomic, physiological and neurological response to overwhelming events or experiences, in other words when we experience trauma an involuntarily or unconscious response is activated within the body. For this reason people who have experienced trauma often have difficulty expressing these events or experiences using words alone.

In order to reach these children effectively we use developmentally appropriate methods and creative approaches, such as art therapy or drama therapy.

Creative arts therapies and non-verbal approaches play a valuable and unique role in the treatment of children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Our aim over the course of therapy is for children and young people to better understand the way they are feeling and in turn for trauma to be processed safely, at a pace which feels right for them.

The creative expression of trauma offers opportunities for:

- Traumatic material to be contained within an object, an image, a story or a character.
- Traumatic material to be worked with metaphorically in a less threatening form.
- Gaining a sense of control over frightening memories and flashbacks
- Active and physical participation in the therapy through sensory play and art making.
- A reduction in emotional numbness through coming into contact with their experiences safely.
- A reduction in hyperarousal responses often experienced by children and young people who have experienced trauma through the use of non-directive approaches.
- A re-enactment of feelings and sensations associated with the trauma within a safe and containing environment, in order that these feelings and sensations can be understood and processed.

Our aim through therapy is to facilitate emotional reparation, relief and recovery from all children and young people we work with who have been affected by sexual abuse. The most effective way we feel we can do this is through offering a range of creative modalities which children can use in the way which will be beneficial to them.

**Please help us by donating at:**

**[www.the-green-house.org.uk/donate](http://www.the-green-house.org.uk/donate)**

**The Green House**

**44 Mina Road, St Werburghs, BS2 9XH.**

**Tel: 0117 935 1707**

**Email: [info@the-green-house.org.uk](mailto:info@the-green-house.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.the-green-house.org.uk](http://www.the-green-house.org.uk)**

The Green House is a registered charity. Registered Charity Number 800806.

The Green House is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England 2414332

The Green House adheres to the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy BACP Organisational member (No. 735998)

The Green House adheres to The Survivors Trust National Standards

