



Home Office



HM Government

Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021

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March 2021*

1. Introduction

On 22 January 2021, the UK Home Office published the [*Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*](#), setting out our Government's long-term vision to combat all forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA).

The UK welcomes the opportunity to share with the Lanzarote Committee about the Strategy:

This presentation will cover the following aspects of the Strategy:

1. Introduction
 2. Background
 3. Development & Delivery
 4. Aims & Content
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1. Q&A



The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

2. Introduction

The [*Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*](#) reflects our Government's unwavering commitment to tackle all forms of CSEA, whether it is committed in person or online, in families, institutions or communities, here in this country or overseas.

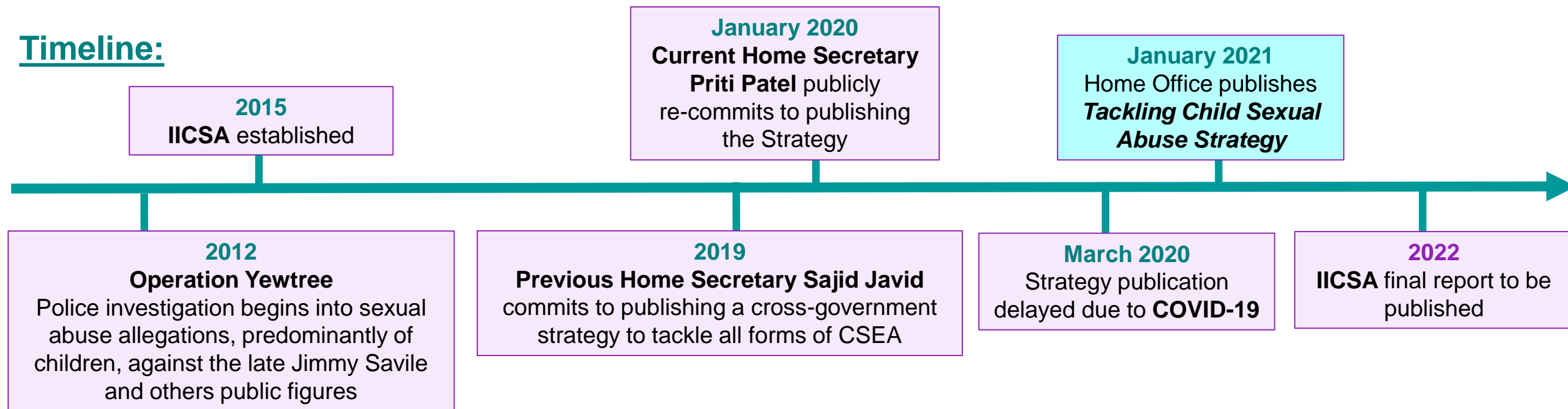
- **CSEA takes place on a shocking scale and inflicts profound and lasting harm on victims and survivors.** 7.5% of adults in England & Wales are estimated to have experienced sexual abuse before they were 16. This is equivalent to 3.1 million people – 700,000 men and 2.4 million women (Office for National Statistics).
- **Despite huge increases in reporting in recent years, abuse remains hidden.** Over 83,000 CSEA offences were recorded by police in the year ending March 2020, an increase of approximately 267% since 2013.
- **The imperative to act is not just a moral one, but also economic.** The Home Office has recently completed work that estimates the financial and non-financial (monetised) cost relating to all victims who continued to experience contact sexual abuse, or who began to experience contact sexual abuse, in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2019. This is estimated to be at least £10 billion and includes the costs of this cohort being victimised in previous and future years, in addition to lifetime consequences as a result of experiencing child sexual abuse.
- **There is evidence the situation has been made more acute by COVID-19.** During 1-month of lockdown at least 8.8m attempts to access child sexual abuse material (CSAM) were identified in the UK by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). IWF processed 16% more CSAM reports in 2020 compared to 2019, equivalent to millions of images and videos.

The Strategy provides the blueprint for driving action across Government, agencies, sectors and society as a whole to protect children and stop offenders.

3. Background to Strategy

- Tackling CSEA is a priority for our Home Secretary.
- Over the past decade there have been a number high profile cases, including:
 - Sexual abuse of at least 1,400 children in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.
 - Sexual abuse carried out by public figures such as the TV entertainer Jimmy Savile.
- In March 2015, the Government set up the statutory [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(IICSA\)](#) to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The Government has cooperated fully with the Inquiry and carefully considers its recommendations. The Inquiry's findings and recommendations have informed the *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*.

Timeline:



4. Development and Delivery of the Strategy

- **The Strategy builds on previous work by Government**, including: *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Report (2015)*, *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Progress Report (2017)*, *Government's paper on group-based child sexual exploitation (2020)* – **recognising the scale of the problem warrants a new, comprehensive approach..**
- **Achieving this ambition meant developing a strategy that would speak to the different organisations and sectors involved in an effective CSEA response** - from local agencies to industry, charities to law enforcement, the public to international partners.
- Whilst led by the Home Office, **the Strategy is cross-government and draws on the expertise and insights of delivery partners and external experts**. This process helped keep a focus on prevention/ early intervention and avoided any form of victim blaming.
- **The Strategy complements broader Government initiatives**, for example our *Victims Strategy (2018)* and forthcoming strategy on tackling violence against women and girls.
- **Publication was delayed due to COVID-19**, allowing the Strategy to account for the profound impacts of the pandemic.
- Despite the challenging fiscal environment created by Covid-19, **the Government has continued a £30 million uplift in funding for our CSEA response for 2020/21**, helping us achieve the Strategy's ambitious agenda. The Strategy will also inform future government spending reviews.
- **To deliver the Strategy effectively**, robust governance arrangements have been established to monitor progress and hold the system to account.

5. Aims and Content of the Strategy

- The Strategy is structured around **3 core objectives** and sets out the **concrete steps** we are taking, and will take, to step-up our response to CSEA.

Objective 1:

Tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice

Objective 2:

Preventing offending and re-offending

Objective 3:

Protecting and safeguarding children and young people, and supporting all victims and survivors

- It is underpinned by **4 key principles**:

Principle 1:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone has a role in preventing child sexual abuse

Principle 2:

We need to work across agencies and systems to uncover and respond to child sexual abuse

Principle 3:

We need a collaborative response which empowers local partners to respond to local issues

Principle 4:

Tackling child sexual abuse is a global issue

6. Aims and Content of the Strategy

Objective 1. Tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice

- Equipping law enforcement and intelligence services with world-leading technology to catch more offenders faster, such as the **UK's Child Abuse Image Database**
- Enhancing **data collection and analysis** on group-based CSEA
- **Strengthening the local level response**, including by improving the police's understanding of and response to vulnerability and an enhanced Child Exploitation disruption toolkit
- Improving the criminal justice response through **training and guidance for prosecutors** who handle CSEA cases

Objective 2. Preventing offending and reoffending

- Developing our **understanding of pathways and motivations for offenders**
- Funding evidence based programmes providing advice and information to **deter potential offenders**, including Lucy Faithful Foundation's [*Stop It Now!*](#) campaign
- Protecting victims and the wider public through **stronger sentencing** that is commensurate with offenders' crimes
- **Improving management of registered sex offenders** (RSOs) through extensive probation reforms, reviewing how police manage RSOs in the community, piloting technology to identify reoffending and strengthening civil orders

7. Aims and Content of the Strategy

Objective 3. Protecting and safeguarding children and young people and supporting all victims and survivors

- **Raising awareness** through cross-government communications and improving resources for parents, carers and the public
- **Educating children and young people** through compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education in schools and a forthcoming Media Literacy Strategy
- Introducing a ground-breaking **Online Safety Bill** requiring companies to do more to protect their users, especially children, from harms and take stringent action
- **Upskilling frontline professionals** to identify and intervene early in abuse
- **Targeted support** for children particularly at risk, including through the £13.2m Trusted Relationships Fund giving young people the opportunity to develop positive relationships with a trusted adult
- Strengthening new **multi-agency safeguarding arrangements** to drive better collaboration and information sharing between health, police and local areas
- Promoting **common global standards** such as the Lanzarote Convention, strengthening protection for children overseas, including through the End Violence Against Children Partnership, and stepping up **action against transnational child sex offenders**
- Boosting investment in **victims' support services** and embedding best practice, including through the Child Sexual Abuse Services Transformation Fund and Child House pilot

Are there any questions?

We would welcome further engagement with you to share learning about our respective approaches to tackling CSEA.

Thank you all for listening.

Annex: Strategy Overview

Safeguarding children and young people		Tackling offending and managing offenders	
Safeguarding partnerships drive better multi-agency working, with practitioners able to identify and intervene effectively in child sexual abuse cases		Intelligence is enhanced, ensuring resources are prioritised most effectively	Sex offender management in prison and the community is strengthened
Institutions that work with children prevent offenders from accessing children, and identify and support those at-risk	Law enforcement have an understanding of safeguarding and vulnerability in order to support victims and survivors appropriately	Law enforcement and intelligence services have the capability to disrupt offending at scale, leaving no safe spaces for offenders	
Supporting victims and survivors		Bringing offenders to justice	
Child and adult victims and survivors have access to the support services they need	Child and adult victims and survivors are better supported throughout the criminal justice system	The criminal justice system responds more effectively and efficiently to all forms of sexual offending	
All agencies share information effectively to safeguard children and tackle offending			
Targeted support for those at-risk		Deterring offending	
National and local actors are able to identify and effectively support children, young people and families who are at-risk, including those facing greater risk due to COVID-19	Our evidence base for preventative measures, including for harmful sexual behaviour and peer-on-peer abuse, is more robust	Our understanding of offender pathways and motivations is developed and drives interventions to deter offending in the first place	
Giving children the best start in life, raising awareness amongst parents, carers and families, and protecting children and young people in their communities			
Offenders are less able to take advantage of children and young people through raising awareness amongst parents, carers and families, and giving children and young people access to safe spaces and trusted adults		Children are given the best start in life, including access to information and education around healthy and abusive behaviours	
Working with industry to build resilience to abuse online			
Online services are safe by design and all users know where to report concerns		Online platforms prevent, uncover and stop grooming, livestreaming and sharing of child sexual abuse material	
Working internationally to raise global awareness and standards			
The global profile of child sexual abuse is raised, helping to prevent abuse in key at-risk countries and international sectors, and disrupt cross-border offending both on and off line			