

Freedom of Information Act 2000 disclosure log entry

Reference

FOI 22-23012

Date sent

12/05/22

Subject

Sexual abuse policies, assessment, support and training

Details of enquiry

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

1. When sexual abuse is disclosed (at any point in assessment/treatment) is there a local policy or a standard way in which this should be recorded (e.g., description within case notes)?
 - i. Do these policies refer to sexual abuse that occurs online (e.g., social media, internet contact made, sharing images)?
2. List all assessment tools that make references to a patient's online life (i.e., assessment mentioning young people engaging with social media, frequency of use of the internet)
3. What support and interventions do you offer to a service user who has experienced technology-assisted sexual abuse?
4. Is training provided to staff on online harms and the impact of technology-assisted sexual abuse young people?

SARC

1. Are there policies or a standard way to record technology-assisted sexual abuse when it is disclosed (at any point in assessment/treatment)?
2. Are there assessment methods that are used to assess for technology-assisted sexual abuse?
3. What support and interventions do you offer to a service user who has experienced technology-assisted sexual abuse?
Is training provided to staff on online harms and the impact of technology-assisted sexual abuse young people?

Response sent

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

1. When sexual abuse is disclosed (at any point in assessment/treatment) is there a local policy or a standard way in which this should be recorded (e.g., description within case notes)?
We require full and contemporaneous clinical notes to be made at all patient sessions in line with our Health Records Procedure.

Safeguarding and Risk assessments are also required and ask specifically about risk of sexual abuse.

There is no specific additional approach specifically for sexual abuse disclosure. This would involve probing where possible on origin of abuse, frequency, when it happened and whether it is still happening. Please also bear in mind that some disclosures come via a third party (teacher, friend, relative, parent).

Explicit disclosures are quite rare and disclosures often are made and then retracted or minimized. All staff document what is disclosed and work on the premise that if immediate risk to the child or others is imminent, escalation will occur (police/social care). Otherwise a sensitive approach is required dependent on the case, the capacity of the child and the known history.

- i. Do these policies refer to sexual abuse that occurs online (e.g., social media, internet contact made, sharing images)?
 The Trust treats any disclosures of online sexual abuse with the same degree of scrutiny as any other disclosure.
2. List all assessment tools that make references to a patient's online life (i.e., assessment mentioning young people engaging with social media, frequency of use of the internet)

Our Under 18 Assessment Form asks the following questions.

Digital Life
Suggested prompt questions for clinicians to ask young person:
Have you been upset by anything you've seen?
If relevant ask the young person specifically about use of self harm and pro ana sites. Does the young person have contact with other young people through these sites?
Have you been worried about something you have read about someone else?
Have you seen things online that you think might have been too old for you to look at?
Clinicians should include information on how much time does the young person spend online, what sites they look at and to what extent it is interfering with ordinary life/school/personal relationships/sleep.

Any disclosure of sexual abuse is very sensitive and personal, so we cannot supply you with a standardised risk assessment. Our treatments are case specific and use standardized risk assessment tools but nothing specific to online sexual abuse.

3. What support and interventions do you offer to a service user who has experienced technology-assisted sexual abuse?
 Please see response to Q2 above.
4. Is training provided to staff on online harms and the impact of technology-assisted sexual abuse young people?

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust is not a SARC, it is a specialist mental health Trust which provides mainly outpatient psychological services. The Trust treats patients suffering from sexual abuse on an individual basis. Our psychology clinicians offer talking therapies for a wide range of presenting conditions, including sexual abuse, and training for dealing with this is covered under their safeguarding training.

SARC

4. Are there policies or a standard way to record technology-assisted sexual abuse when it is disclosed (at any point in assessment/treatment)?
 Not applicable. The Trust does not have a dedicated SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)
5. Are there assessment methods that are used to assess for technology-assisted sexual abuse?

Not applicable. The Trust does not have a dedicated SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

6. What support and interventions do you offer to a service user who has experienced technology-assisted sexual abuse?

7. Not applicable. The Trust does not have a dedicated SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

Is training provided to staff on online harms and the impact of technology-assisted sexual abuse young people?

Not applicable. The Trust does not have a dedicated SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)