

BRIEFING FOR PROFESSIONALS (August 2018)

At The Lighthouse we put the child at the centre, to make sure they have a safe place to recover at their own pace and rebuild their lives.

Medical, advocacy, social care, police, and therapeutic support will be delivered from one place, providing a coordinated approach to supporting children and young people. We want children, young people and their families to receive the justice, support and therapy they need in a timely manner meaning they can move forward towards recovering from the abuse.

Why do we need The Lighthouse?

Children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse often relive their experience after making their disclosure, and risk being re-traumatised. Often, agencies work in isolation, meaning children and their families can feel alone, left to navigate the health, police and courts system by themselves. Only one in four children and young people that report sexual abuse to the police in London receive emotional and health support (London Review of CSA pathway, 2015). At the moment, children who report sexual abuse may have to wait months for the important therapy and support they need. But, we know that up to 8 in 10 adolescents who experienced sexually abuse developed a mental illness within five months (Khadr et al, 2018).

What happens at The Lighthouse?

We want to make sure children overcome the trauma that sexual abuse can cause - not relive it. We focus on getting them the right help at the right time, by putting all the services needed to respond to sexual abuse under one roof.

The Lighthouse team will work together to support children, young people and their families through their journey. We have specially trained medical professionals, specialist therapists, advocates, police officers and social workers on hand to help with children's recoveries. And we make sure all the children we support receive all of this in one familiar and child-friendly place.

Advocacy

An advocate will guide the child or young person and their family through their journey of recovery, helping them access medical care, police and social worker assistance, and mental health support more easily and quickly. The advocate will also support children and young people through the court process.

The Lighthouse services are provided by:

Medical

A play specialist helps the child prepare for the medical assessments, offered by the paediatrician and supported by a paediatric sexual health nurse. The child or young person can be seen alone or with a parent or carer. The referring social worker is invited to attend and the advocate, sexual health nurse and therapist will be involved as needed.

Criminal Justice

Typically, the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview is conducted by a specially trained police officer. But, in The Lighthouse it can be conducted by a clinical psychologist, (supported by a police officer) helping to reduce re-traumatisation and to gather the best evidence, by putting the child or young person's emotional needs first.

Emotional support

Early and long-term support is offered through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioners plus the NSPCC's Letting the Future In and Protect and Respect therapeutic services. This additional emotional support helps them to feel safe and to help build resilience to recover from the abuse they have experienced.

Police and Social Care Liaison Officers

There are two Police Liaison Officers and two Social Care Liaison Officers, acting as vital links to offer advice and liaison to local police, children's social care services and MASH teams (multi-agency safeguarding hubs).

The Child House partnership

The Lighthouse is the UK's first Child House. In 2015 NHSE (London) commissioned the "[Review of the pathway following Children's Sexual Abuse in London](#)". The CSA Review recommended the development of improved forensic services for children and young people at The Havens (London's sexual assault referral centres), a pilot of the Child House model (international best practice) and, as a first step, the establishment of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) hubs in London.

The Child House model was further recommended in 2015 by the Children's Commissioner for England and is supported by the Home Secretary and Mayor of London. The Home Office has funded a national proof of concept of the Child House in London based on the international 'Barnahus' model.

The North Central London Child House has been funded by the Home Office, NHS England, MOPAC and the Department for Education. NHS England has commissioned the health and wellbeing services which will be provided by University College London Hospitals (UCLH), The Tavistock and Portman and NSPCC, supported by Morgan Stanley.

The Lighthouse services are provided by:

For more information

- Request a presentation from one of The Lighthouse team by emailing emmaharewood@nhs.net
- If you suspect child sexual abuse always speak with your local Children's Social Care or refer to the pan-London child safeguarding policy and procedures

The Lighthouse Open House

The team is hosting a week of open evenings, 4-6pm w/c 24th September 2018, at The Lighthouse in Camden.

These sessions will be an opportunity to hear more about The Lighthouse, understand more about the referral process, speak to The Lighthouse team and get a tour of the building.

Please contact Robyn.Cooke@nspcc.org.uk to book onto an Open House session.

The Lighthouse opening hours

Monday to Saturday: 10am to 8pm

Sunday: 10am to 1pm

All services are available by a booked appointment

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