



children's charities' coalition on internet safety

Professor Eileen Munro
Munro Review
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

29th July, 2010

Dear Eileen,

This letter expands on the comments made in the template provided by the Department.

We very much welcome your review and the emphasis the Government is placing on identifying what helps or hinders effective child protection work. We would like to raise an issue that we are increasingly concerned about.

There is a growing but still limited body of evidence which suggests that children who have been sexually abused to produce child abuse images will have particular and potentially quite long term needs in relation to therapeutic and other forms of support.

In addition to the traumatic effects of the abuse itself, for the foreseeable future the child has to come to terms with the fact that, until technology yields a solution¹, a seemingly permanent record of their abuse has been made, published and perhaps very widely distributed. For the time being, and possibly forever, the child will have no control over how many times the abusive image is downloaded or shared. They have no idea who has already seen it or who might be about to see an image of their humiliation.

We need further research to develop our understanding of the impact this type of experience has on the child and how it impacts on their path to recovery or shapes the therapeutic support or help that is needed by the child.

I attach a briefing note we wrote on this issue for another purpose. I hope you find it useful. There are several references in it to practitioners' views. You probably know the individuals concerned, but if not I am glad to have been of service.

Our feeling is that the partnership approach is likely to be critical to ensuring that the needs of this group of children are met. We need to ensure that we have a workforce that understands the new environments which the internet has created and therefore knows how to

¹ which it may never do

respond effectively to children whose abuse has been circulated on the internet or who may currently be experiencing other forms of internet related abuse.

In particular the law enforcement response needs to be fully engaged with the partnership idea. Law enforcement systems need to value the role and importance of child protection.

Finally, we would like to see a much higher rate of success in terms of victim identification from images seized by the police and a consistent approach to the response given once a child has been identified. The best interests of the child must be the key determinant of any and all courses of action.

I appreciate that these are early days in the work you are undertaking but if you can think of any way in which I or CHIS members can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Carr', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

John Carr
Secretary

www.chis.org.uk