

Learning Together: Involving children and youth in research about sexual abuse

Survey Information Sheet

What is the 'Learning Together' project?

The Learning Together project seeks to support the safe and ethical engagement of children and young people in research addressing the issue of sexual abuse.

We use the term research broadly, to include qualitative and quantitative research, evaluations and other similar learning initiatives

We use the term researcher to describe anyone undertaking these activities (not just those whose job titles are researcher)

We use the term sexual abuse in relation to children; including any form of sexual harm affecting those aged under 18

Whilst there is a growing recognition of the importance of involving children and young people in research in this field – and ethical guidelines and toolkits that can helpfully support thinking about it – there is a need for further learning around the real life challenges of translating these commitments into practice.

Learning Together seeks to support this learning through sharing real-life research scenarios and resources, creating opportunities for peer learning and a youth-led project about what safe and ethical research means to them.

The project is being run by the [Safer Young Lives Research Centre](#) (SYLRC) at the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom. It will run until autumn 2023.

Learning Together Survey

The first part of the project uses surveys to understand the key challenges people face when involving (or seeking to involve) children in research on sexual abuse. **It is specifically focussed on involving children as research participants.**

This includes research:

- Specifically focused on sexual abuse AND wider research that includes sexual abuse within its remit
- Involving children with known experiences of sexual abuse AND that involving wider cohorts of children, whose experiences of sexual abuse are unknown
- Addressing any aspect of sexual abuse, including prevention, awareness, experiences, responses and recovery.

We have chosen to focus this stage of the project on children (under 18) given the more limited evidence base around this. Considerations for involving young people, aged 18 and over, will be addressed in later stages of the project.

Who can take part?

We want to hear from those who have already involved children in research around sexual abuse (as defined earlier) AND those who have not yet done this, but would like to do so.

We have created **two versions of the survey**, reflecting these different experiences. The links are at the end of this document - please select the one that best fits your experience.

Both versions of the survey are open to anyone studying at doctoral level or working in a relevant field, whether employed or self-employed.

The surveys are only available in English, so require an ability to complete them in that language.

About the surveys

Both versions of the survey capture some non-identifying descriptive information about you and your research experience. They then explore the practical realities of conducting safe and ethical research with children in the field of sexual abuse, asking you to share your views and/or experiences of this.

The surveys contain a mix of open and closed questions. Please provide as much or as little detail as you feel comfortable with. You can also pass on any questions you don't wish to answer.

Depending on your pathway through the surveys, completion will take between 10 and 20 minutes.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The surveys are anonymous, so you do not need to provide your name or any other identifying details.

As the surveys are anonymous, we will not be able to directly respond to any concerns raised in the survey, but have included some sources of support at the end of this information sheet.

If you wish to be kept updated about the project, we will register your contact information on a separate form, so your personal information is not linked to your survey responses. You will be directed to this at the end of the survey, or if you will not be completing the survey, you can register your interest in being kept informed about the project, by clicking on [this link](#) and subscribing to our mailing list.

Withdrawal from the survey

You can withdraw from the surveys at any point by closing the browser. Your answers will not be included in the analysis unless you receive a message confirming your answers have been recorded.

You can also withdraw your contribution any time before Monday 31st October 2022. As the surveys are anonymous, you will be asked to provide a unique word that you will remember at the start of the survey, and keep a record of the date on which you completed it, so we can identify your contribution should you wish to withdraw it. To withdraw your contribution, just email these details, and which survey you completed, to claire.soares@beds.ac.uk

What we will do with the survey responses

Once the surveys have closed, we will analyse the data to identify key emerging themes and issues. We will write a short report highlighting these, and also use the learning to inform the focus of subsequent phases of the Learning Together project. Survey findings will also be used in academic articles and other project outputs.

In submitting your survey response, you are agreeing for your responses to be used in this way, unless you withdraw your contribution as outlined above.

Sharing the surveys with your colleagues and networks

You are very welcome to tell your colleagues and networks about the surveys if they have relevant experience and you think they might like to take part – and we would be very grateful for any onward sharing.

Please share this information sheet, rather than just the link to the surveys, so they can make an informed decision about taking part.

Questions, support and complaints

If you have any questions about taking part in the survey, or any other aspects of the project, please don't hesitate to contact Claire or Helen from the research team at claire.soares@beds.ac.uk or helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk

If you wish to make a complaint about your experience of taking part in the survey, or the wider project, please contact Professor Emily Munro at the University of Bedfordshire. Emily is the Director of the Institute within which the Centre conducting the research falls, and is independent of this project. You can contact Emily at Emily.munro@beds.ac.uk

If completing the survey raises any questions or difficulties for you, we would encourage you to seek support from the relevant person(s) in your organisations or local area, or visit the following websites for information about ethics, or information about support organisations that cover your region:

Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) website: <https://childethics.com/>

Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) <https://www.svri.org/>

Rape Crisis Network Europe: <https://www.rcne.com/>

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence: <https://www.api-gbv.org/>

Next steps

Have a think about whether you would like to take part in the survey. If you would like to, follow the link to the survey that best fits your experience:

If you have already involved children in research about sexual abuse, [click here](#)

If you have not yet involved children in research about sexual abuse, but want to do so, [click here](#)

The surveys will close at midnight (UK time) on **Monday 24th October 2022**

You will be asked at the beginning of the survey to confirm you have read and understood this information sheet and to record your consent to take part before moving through to the main survey questions.

If you would like to speak to someone before making a decision, you can contact Claire or Helen at claire.soares@beds.ac.uk or helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk

If you do not wish to take part, there is nothing further you need to do. If, however, you wish to be kept informed about subsequent stages of the Learning Together project and any associated outputs you can subscribe to our mailing list [here](#)

Many thanks,

The Learning Together project team