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Building a Brighter Future
for Injured People

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By email only: CSA.NationalStrategy2025-2035Consultation@gov.wales

Dear Sir/Madam

National strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse

APIL is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on the draft national strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.

We support the aims and outcomes of the national strategy overall. We have provided comments on Section 3 of the draft strategy on the objectives concerning support for children and families affected by child sexual abuse.

Supporting children and families affected by child sexual abuse

Section 3.3 of the draft strategy outlines the actions aimed at supporting children and families affected by child sexual abuse. One of the actions proposed is the development of guidance to enable families and carers to access legal support and advice to enable them to navigate the family and criminal court systems following child sexual abuse.

We strongly recommend that the guidance produced includes information and signposting for families on how to access support through the civil justice system. The civil courts are the means through which survivors and families can claim compensation to enable them to access support and rehabilitation, where appropriate. Bringing a civil claim can be empowering and an effective means of providing an opportunity for a survivor and/ or their family to have their case heard. It also provides recognition of the harm that they have suffered. The civil justice process is as much about obtaining justice as it is compensation for the harm suffered.

The guidance produced as part of the strategy should also include information regarding the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme, as well as signposting to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority's step-by-step guide to the process. The CICS is another option for redress and recognition of the abuse that has been suffered.

It is also essential that the support services envisaged in the strategy possess the relevant knowledge and ability to signpost to the civil justice system, in order to ensure that families are fully informed of their rights.

The guidance developed for families should inform them that legal aid may be available in some circumstances. We believe that the importance of early legal advice should be highlighted, as well as the need to select a specialist solicitor. Specialists have thorough

knowledge of the law and procedure applicable in civil abuse claims and are better equipped to accurately value the claim, considering the full impact of the harm, to ensure that survivors receive full and fair compensation.

We suggest that the guidance signposts families to APIL and the Wales Law Society, as both organisations can provide support in finding a solicitor. APIL's website has a list of specialist criminal injury lawyers who are professionally accredited and have satisfied comprehensive criteria regarding experience and expertise, who can support families or survivors in seeking compensation.

We hope our comments prove useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ana Ramos". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name "Ana" and last name "Ramos" clearly distinguishable.

Ana Ramos

Legal Policy Officer