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The
Marie Collins
Foundation

*Meeting the needs of
children abused online*

Hello from the team at MCF!

Welcome to this first newsletter of 2021.

Although none of us knows what the new year will bring, we have begun with hope and optimism; we are encouraged by all the work going on to continue the fight against online child sexual abuse and exploitation and are determined to build upon the contribution we are able to make to this global challenge.

Events Updates

Already this year our Director of Operations Vicki Green has joined [Sacpa](#) (Safeguarding & Child Protection Association) as a guest speaker at the 'Abuse Online: Managing and Preventing Incidents' virtual conference.

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Internet Safety (ISG), evidence group on the group's second webinar, this time focusing on online child sexual abuse and bringing together high-level experts from research, policy and practice. It's still possible to join via:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-2-online-child-sexual-abuse-research-policy-and-practice-tickets-136606093503>

In a new and developing partnership with Harrow Safeguarding Alliance, Vicki and our subject matter expert Rhiannon are speaking at the **Harrow Safeguarding Children Board** conference at the end of February, while Rhiannon is also speaking at the **Essex Local Safeguarding Board** conference.



Tink was involved in a small round table chaired by **Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Safeguarding) Victoria Atkins** with colleagues from the Home Office and other charities in relation to the Online Harms White Paper which is due to become law in the near future.

At the request of the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OCSE)**, Tink joined forces with our friend and colleague **Dr Sharon Cooper** to run a four-hour interactive workshop for adult

New Starters



We are pleased to welcome four new colleagues who have joined the MCF team as Associate Trainers.

They are Sally O'Donnell, Christie Knowles (pictured), Sarah Wood, and Penny Tyndale-Hardy who is starting in March.

Together with Sam Tarling, they take our team of trainers to five.

EDUCATION

We have launched a series of training courses in Wales within our THINK, ACT and MANAGE programmes in partnership with South Wales Police. These training programmes, developed by MCF, with support from BT, aim to assist professionals working with child victims of online abuse understand their role and those of colleagues in other organisations.

We have a similar programme running through to this spring in Scotland, this time coordinated by our colleague Catriona Scobbie, who is Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer at Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services.

Thanks to colleagues at Central Bedfordshire Council, who have supported us by piloting our e-learning

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recover. Virtual College, which develops digital learning solutions, has enhanced the THINK module of our CLICK: Path to Protection training with films and interactive features to create the online package, making it accessible to colleagues, many of whom are now working from home. On completion of the two-hour training session, trainees are given access to more resources and further training. More news to follow on the GPN launch below.

In April and May we will be hosting free, open access sessions to our THINK: Path to Protection training for professionals, and, in June, to our THINK and ACT modules, via the MCF website. The pilot sessions will be evaluated with the results used to inform future open training. The sessions will run from 9.30am-1pm, dates TBC.

Working with colleagues in Kirklees, we are aiming to pilot similar, shorter sessions in the future aimed at parents to give them the tools to understand online harm better and the ways they can support their children before offering this as an open session for parents via our website from June 2021.

INNOVATION

INTERNATIONAL WORK

We are delighted to be partnering with ChildFund Vietnam, ChildFund Australia's representative office in Vietnam, in an agreement which will see our organisations working together in response to child sexual abuse and exploitation in Vietnam.

The MCF and ChildFund Australia are both beneficiaries of the Global Fund to End Violence Against Children (EVAC) and have each separately received funding to support different elements of the multi-sectoral response to child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) in Vietnam and will now work formally in partnership until at least April 2022.



The collaboration will see the organisations work together to implement the second phase of ChildFund's SwipeSafe project to develop the knowledge and understanding of CSAE for police and child protection workers, and develop CSAE education and awareness-raising products for children.

The agreement will include developing an in-depth understanding of the current experiences of victims in the criminal justice system in Vietnam and identify opportunities to work directly with professionals and develop capacity and capability leading to improved outcomes for children.

Bao Le Ngoc, Child Rights and Child Protection Team Leader, CFVN, says: "ChildFund Vietnam welcomes this collaboration with MCF. We understand that working with other child focused organisations with complementary expertise increases the quality of our work, ultimately bringing greater benefits to children and their families. We are stronger together."

Our [GPN platform](#) is now up and running and attracting subscribers from around the world as well as academics keen to share their latest research. We have reached out to over 70 organisations for consent to share their work and resources and are regularly updating our research library, which already holds over 200 different studies and reports.

An international version of MCF's trainer-led virtual CLICK: Path to Protection programme will take place on the platform on March 2, giving colleagues across the globe who are members of GPN free access to this world class training.

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The GPN platform is a global online community of child protection practitioners, policy makers and academics eager to share the very latest research.

Become a member

To access contemporary academic literature discussing the global challenges as well as providing a range of training opportunities by subject matter experts.

[Register Now](#)
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

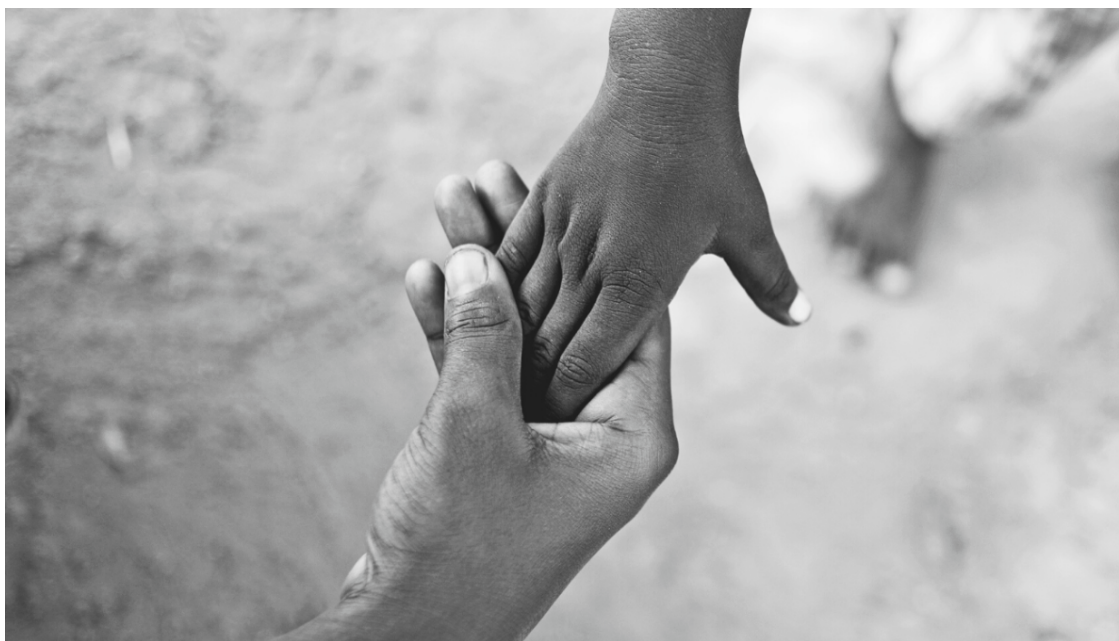
We are grateful to everyone who offered their feedback following our first virtual international conference in October/November. We are already incorporating this feedback as we develop plans for 2021. Our hope is to be able to host an in-person international conference. However, due to the success of this first virtual conference, we are also planning for a second online event, in addition to, or instead of, an in-person conference in accordance with coronavirus guidelines later in the year.

Forty people responded to our post-conference survey and nearly everyone (90%) agreed that the sessions they attended met their expectations in terms of content and themes discussed. Here are some of your comments:

- “All of the conference sessions I attended were extremely informative. Those sessions that had the personal experiences of presenters were truly inspiring.”
- “The speakers were incredibly knowledgeable and passionate about what they do. All sessions were thought-provoking.”
- “Overall, I think the conference was well organised and delivered against all of my expectations. The content was varied and interesting. It was great that there were two sessions a day to take

knowledgeable speakers and participants from across the globe.”

More than 88% of respondents said they learned something from the conference sessions and most (96.88%) strongly agreed or agreed that they would attend another MCF virtual conference. We are grateful that 94.88% also strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend an MCF virtual conference to their colleagues or peers.



NEW SEN RESOURCE

We were successful in a bid for financial support from Help for Children (HFC) to partner with Ann Craft Trust to develop a new resource for parents of children with special educational needs. As well as being accessible to all families there will be links to resources provided by other organisations. This project will be completed by the end of June.

RESOURCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We are working with Huddersfield University media students on a project providing undergraduates with a real-life brief to develop a new resource for young people. The aim is for them to design a resource that will take our messages about risk and recovery to this audience in an age-appropriate and engaging way.

The MCF has continued to support children, their parents and professionals. This has been through direct work, consultation and training.

REFERRALS

In the last quarter we have received a greater proportion of requests compared to the previous quarters for assistance from parents/carers and professionals to help children in their recovery from online sexual abuse and exploitation.

NEW TRAUMA RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

We are in negotiation with Perth and Kinross regarding the development of a specific resource for schools around trauma and how teachers might reduce the impact for the victim/learner and thus help them on their road to recovery.

LAUNCH OF THE UK GOVERNMENT'S TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE STRATEGY

We have been an active member of the Home Office Voluntary Sector Advisory Group for the implementation of a strategy regarding the sexual abuse of children. The strategy entitled Tackling Child Sexual Abuse, which was launched in January 2021, has three key objectives:

1. Tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice
2. Preventing offending and reoffending
3. Protecting and safeguarding children and young people and supporting all victims and survivors.

Objective 3 outlines nine outcomes that the government aims to achieve in order to make children and young people safer in both the offline and online communities. Whilst this new strategy is welcomed by the MCF we are mindful of the fact that the economic impact of Covid-19 will restrict the funding available to meet the objectives of the strategy.

ADVOCACY

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Our subject matter expert Rhiannon is working with Thorn, which is conducting a survey about how young people communicate within online relationships. The results of this survey will be valuable to all of us who need to keep up to date with the very latest trends and movement in communications.

Google continue to be in consultation with Tink regarding two possible pieces of research that they are interested in carrying out in relation to survivors of abusive imagery and the removal of their images and those relating to the offending images being removed from the internet.

Tink has contributed to a book edited by Dr Michelle O'Reilly and colleagues at Leicester University entitled "Tacking Online Abuse and Grooming of Children" which will be published later in the year.

MEDIA

Rhiannon was filmed by SBS Dateline, an award-winning Australian public affairs television programme for a documentary examining the issue of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. The programme is due to be broadcast early this year.

The MCF is also in the early stages of working with two production teams who are aiming to create innovative documentaries tackling this subject. We will provide more information on these projects as they develop.

Tink has responded to a number of enquiries from journalists requesting information on the impact on victims of online child sexual abuse.



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Unit 5a
Well Hall Farm
Well
Bedale
North Yorkshire
DL8 2PX

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