

# We are Visible!

The Voice of adults who have experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse:  
The Voice of the Visible Reference Group

**Welcome to the 3rd issue of We are Visible** - This newsletter brings you information and news relating to the work of Visible. To contact the group please email [visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk](mailto:visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk)

## Visible – Who, What and Why?

### WHO

Key professionals from organisations in Leeds joining forces with those adults who have experienced child sexual abuse

### WHAT

A group that advocates best practice, successes, and learning. Through sharing the experiences of those who have experienced child sexual abuse

### WHY

Visible want to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of adults who have experienced child sexual abuse



## Spotlight on .....

**Why bother!!! Is there really a need for such a group in Leeds?**

**Yes because.....**

**50,000** LEEDS ADULTS  
are estimated to be living with the impact of  
**child sexual abuse**



Over **15,850**  
Children in LEEDS are predicted to experience  
**SEXUAL ABUSE** before their 16th birthday <sup>2</sup>



Source: Visible Website

## INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Truth Project is just one element of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, commissioned by the government. The final report has now been published. The Truth Project involved listening to those who have experienced child sexual abuse. Some of the 6,000 people that shared their personal experience are members of the Visible Reference Group. The Truth Project acknowledged that those who have experience child sexual abuse “could provide a uniquely informed contribution to understanding and learning from past mistakes and improving child protection in the future”.  
Click [here](#) to access the final report.

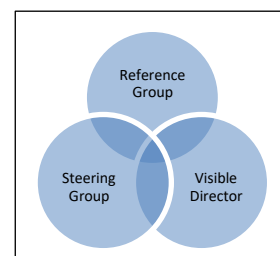
## Info About How Visible Is Made Up

### Visible Reference Group

The Visible Reference Group are a proactive group of adults that have experienced child sexual abuse. Members from the group attend every Steering Group Meeting to provide feedback and information to improve services for people that have experienced child sexual abuse. Currently we have seven active members and three silent members who are all dedicated to improve the outcomes of local child sexual abuse survivors living in Leeds. We are looking to expand this to twelve.

### Visible Steering Group

The Steering Group is made up of key people in the city from: Leeds City Council, Leeds York Partnership Foundation, Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, Police and Leeds Community Healthcare as well as BASIS, Women's Counselling and Therapy Service, Forward Leeds, and Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service.



The **Visible Director** links both groups and has.....

- Written the Leeds Trauma-Informed Charter, a foundation document for services and organizations to embed better practice for listening to and supporting survivors of traumatic events.
- Providing trauma-informed leadership within the Leeds Community Mental Health Transformation, aimed at making services much more accessible to people with lived experience of childhood sexual abuse.
- It is well known that many people who've experienced childhood sexual abuse will have 'co-morbidities' – physical health issues alongside their mental health issues. These can range from bladder and bowel health problems to auto-immune disorders and heart conditions. What makes this even worse is the fact that physical health examinations can often feel impossible, due to the triggering nature of e.g., touch from others. Visible is in partnership with the inspiring nurses at the Continence, Urology & Colorectal Clinic; and will be using their work as a template for other clinics to take up.
- Created a pathway into Community Dentistry for people with a background of child sexual abuse.
- Supporting those organisations that take up The Visible Policy Statement, a commitment to supporting employees and service-users who have a background of childhood sexual abuse.
- Sits on the Leeds Adult Trauma-Informed Steering Group, the Leeds Psychology Board; and the West Yorkshire Adversity, Trauma & Resilience Steering Group, working towards improving outcomes for survivors

To visit the Visible website, click [here](#)

# Survivor Stories- The Reference Group



The Reference Group have produced a series of podcasts. Each episode exploring a different topic relating to how the experience of child sexual abuse has impacted them as adults. Complete already are episodes on First Disclosures, co-Morbidities and How Survivors Present to Health Professionals.

The podcasts will be available in the new year. **Watch this Space!!!**

We have been instigating change to the child sexual abuse section of Mindwell

**NETWORKING** Making positive links with other voluntary sector organisations including: Mondays@Northpoint, St Giles Trust, The BASIS Project, 5-Ways Recovery Academy, Behind Closed Doors. Raising awareness of Visible at community groups such as The Vandam Group (Leeds Gujarati ladies group), and The Leeds DeaForum.

The Reference Group have developed a workshop "Exploring the Impact of Child Sexual Abuse in Adults". The belief of the group being that for outcomes to be improved, people must 1st understand the impact of the abuse and how it is affecting their daily lives and barriers they may face.

If you are interested in the Reference Group delivering the workshop in your workplace, please email for more info [visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk](mailto:visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk)

One of our members is doing a series of YouTube video's relating to how the experience of child sexual abuse has had on them. These are **No Frills** videos in that they are not scripted, not edited, and not airbrushed (a reflection of life). They are just frank conversations between a client and her therapist. Click [here](#) to go straight to the YouTube channel.

The Reference Group always welcome new members. Should you be interested in joining the group please email [visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk](mailto:visiblevoice@leedsinvolvement.org.uk) You can be involved as much or as little as you want. Hybrid meetings are monthly, or you can choose to be a silent member and contribute via email.



## Support for all survivors

[West Yorkshire Victim Support](#) is open weekdays (8am-8pm) if you need to talk to someone about any crime that you have experienced (including childhood abuse) – call 0300 303 1971. It doesn't matter whether you have reported the crime or how long ago it took place.

The [Victim Support National helpline](#) is open through the night (8pm-8am) and all weekend - call 0808 16 89 111 (freephone).

[Survivors West Yorkshire](#) provides support both to [men](#) and [women](#) in West Yorkshire who have been affected by sexual violence.

[Napac](#) is a national freephone support line for adults who have experienced any type of abuse in childhood. Call 0808 8010331, 10am-9pm Monday to Thursday and 10am-6pm on Fridays.

[Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre \(RASASC\)](#) is a national freephone helpline which supports any man or woman who has experienced rape or sexual abuse (or their supporters). 7.30pm – 9.30pm Monday -Thursday 01483 546400.

Please go to Mindwell's Website for additional local child sexual abuse support, impartial advice and online self-help programs. It has a fantastic sub-section that supports Child sexual abuse survivors. <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/services-directory/>