**Non offending carer assessment guidance**The assessment will address the following areas:

* Family social history.
* Level of knowledge and acceptance of the reported sexual abuse.
* General understanding of sexual abuse.
* History of abuse in the family.
* Capacity to parent the abused child (and siblings).
* Knowledge of children’s sexual behaviour and development.
* Other concerning behaviours or difficulties.
* The daily life of the family.
* Protection of children.
* Family discipline and control.
* Household circumstances.
* Sexually explicit information.
* Assessment summaries and family support and protection plan.

**1. Family social history**

* Exploration of family relationships, identifying key attachments and any history of loss or bereavement.
* Details of the relationship between the alleged abuser and children in the family.
* Details of parenting relationships; sibling relationships and family dynamics.
* Identification of any key extended family relationships or key extra-familial friendships.
* Known details of the children’s peer relationships.
* The children’s education history and current school progress.
* Brief history of the children’s general health and development.

**2. Level of knowledge and acceptance of the reported sexual abuse**

* The extent of the non-offending carer’s understanding and knowledge of the reported sexual abuse, how they found out and who else knows and how.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer has discussed the reported sexual abuse with the alleged perpetrator. Also whether or not the abuse was reported or discussed with anyone else.
* The extent to which it is accepted and believed that the sexual abuse has happened, and who the non-offending carer feels is responsible – the extent to which it is believed that what was reported amounts to sexual abuse.
* The non-offending carer’s attitude and beliefs about the reported sexual abuse – any evidence of minimising, re-framing or disbelieving the reported sexual abuse.
* The extent to which non-offending carer have discussed the reported sexual abuse with their children, and with any other family members.

**3. General understanding of sexual abuse**

* Exploration of what the non-offending carer understands about what sexual abuse is, and his or her ability to distinguish between appropriate, and inappropriate or harmful, sexual behaviour.
* Non-offending carer’s understanding of the widespread nature of sexual abuse – how and why sexual abuse takes place – including an understanding of the “thinking errors” and the planning, targeting and grooming process that abusers use to gain access to children.
* Exploration of the extent to which the non-offending carer understands the impact of child sexual abuse and why children and young people often find it difficult to tell.

**4. History of abuse in the family**

* Known details of physical or sexual abuse experienced by any members of the family, whether or not it was reported, and what the consequences were.
* How the parents or carers perceive the impact of any abuse their children have experienced.
* Other significant life experiences the children or family have experienced, and whether or not there is any perceived connection with the current reported sexual abuse.
* Non-offending carer’s knowledge and understanding of the sexual behaviours of the (alleged) perpetrator of the reported sexual abuse.
* Non-offending carer’s experience of physical or sexual abuse, or aggressive sexual behaviour committed by the (alleged) perpetrator.

**5. Capacity to parent the abused child (and siblings)**

* Ability of the non-offending carer to adapt to and manage the additional needs of a child who has been sexually abused, applying knowledge (new or old) about how to respond to trauma-related behaviours, including flashbacks, intrusive abuse memories, mood swings, anxiety attacks, self-doubt and so on.
* Understanding the importance of continually and consistently reassuring the child that they were not to blame for the abuse and are not responsible for the immediate and wider consequences of reporting the abuse. Being very clear about supporting the child’s decision to report the abuse. Assessing the extent to which the non-offending carer has the sensitivity to carry this out.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer can be available to support, listen and talk to the child about the abuse and related matters.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer is prepared or able to recognise the possible need for their child to receive additional support in coping with the impact of the sexual abuse.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer is prepared or able to recognise the need for additional support.

**6. Knowledge of children’s sexual behaviour and development**

* Non-offending carer’s knowledge of the level of their children’s sexual development, activities and understanding.
* Non-offending carer’s understanding of the extent of sex education their children have received, and where from.
* Non-offending carer’s knowledge of any other sexual behaviour their children may have been involved with, and whether they are considered appropriate or inappropriate.
* Non-offending carer’s general ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour.
* Details of sexual behaviours considered acceptable for children or young people to engage in, and whether this is allowed to vary according to age or development and gender.
* Attitudes and beliefs about gay and lesbian sexuality, again in relation to age and development.
* Family attitudes towards nudity and privacy.

**7. Other concerning behaviours or difficulties**

* Any other difficulties or problems the children have experienced – health, mental health; social skills; peer group or friendship problems; problems with intimate or sexual relationships; education; experiences of oppression such as racism or name-calling.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer perceives the child or young person’s difficulties as being related to the reported sexual abuse.

**8. The daily life of the family**

* Non-offending carer’s knowledge of their children’s friendships and social networks.
* Whether or not the non-offending carer considers these friendships to be age appropriate.
* How and where their children’s time is spent with friends, and how much time is spent alone.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer is aware generally of their children’s whereabouts.

**9. Protection of children**

* Details of action taken by the non-offending carer to protect their own and other children from the person reported to have committed sexual abuse – both inside and outside the home.
* The extent to which the non-offending carer feels that this protection is necessary.

**10. Family discipline and control**

* Details of house rules, privacy and family discipline, punishments, sanctions and rewards – does the family use physical punishment.
* How problems are approached and dealt with, and how conflict is resolved.
* Details of who now exercises the most authority in the family and how it is articulated.
* Details of family relationships, whether or not there are any significant divisions or alliances.
* The extent to which difficulty is experienced in exercising discipline and control, boundary setting and so on.

**11. Household circumstances**

* Details of the physical layout of the house.
* Where parents or carers and children spend their time, who sleeps in which bedroom, and where the bedrooms are located in the house.
* The use of locks and bolts, bathroom rules – whether bathroom and bedroom doors are knocked before rooms are entered.

**12. Sexually explicit information**

* Details of any use of sexually explicit materials at home, books, pornographic pictures, videos and internet etc.
* The extent to which adult sexual intimacy, behaviour or conversation takes place in the presence or within earshot or sight of children or young people.
* The extent to which children or young people are allowed access to sexually-explicit information, including unsupervised use of the internet.

**13. Assessment summaries and family support and protection plan**

* Summary of key issues identified by the various sections of the assessment.
* Statement of any risks or concerns identified by the assessment.
* Statement of the family’s needs in terms of reducing any risk or concerns which may contribute to circumstances where sexual abuse may occur.
* Statement of the family’s needs in terms of support and counselling related to managing the impact of sexual abuse.
* Summary of the extent to which the family is willing and able to accept and engage in the support and protection plan.
* Detailed plan of how the family are going to be supported in addressing the gaps or difficulties identified by the family assessment, and in managing the protection plan.