

## Expert testimony to inform NICE guideline development

| Section A: Developer to complete                    |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name:</b>  | Simon Hackett   |
| <b>Role:</b>  | Principal/ Professor of Applied Social Sciences (academic)  |
| <b>Institution/Organisation (where applicable):</b> | Durham University, St Mary's College  |
| <b>Contact information:</b>                         |   |
| <b>Guideline title:</b>                             | Harmful Sexual Behaviour  |
| <b>Guideline Committee:</b>                         | Public Health Advisory Committee F  |
| <b>Subject of expert testimony:</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of policies and procedures across the devolved administrations including the role of primary prevention.</li> <li>• What are the elements of a good service response to the issue of harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people</li> </ul> |
| <b>Evidence gaps or uncertainties:</b>              | [Research questions or evidence uncertainties that the testimony should address are summarised below]   |
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## Section B: Expert to complete

**Summary testimony:** [Please use the space below to summarise your testimony in 250–1000 words. Continue over page if necessary ]

This expert testimony reviewed and analysed the state of the policy and practice response across the UK in response to children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours. It acknowledged the development of a more sophisticated approach to this area of work in evidence over the last decade and an increase in services, especially assessment services for young people. However, there remains considerable concern about the variable nature of national and local guidance on this issue and the patchiness of service provision nationally. It is also notable that there is a deficit in appropriate provision for young people with learning disabilities who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviours, as well as for younger children under the age of 10. Specifically, policy developments are almost entirely focused on adolescents with harmful sexual behaviours, with the different profiles and needs of younger children with problematic sexual behaviours absent from professional debates. The testimony wanted that it is not possible to assume that models of assessment and inter-agency management of adolescents are appropriate for younger children. The absence of the issue of young people who sexually abuse from the Working Together guidance in 2013 is problematic and there remains a need for a national strategy guided by the evidence. The testimony concluded with a review of elements of good service delivery responses, including the importance of seeing children and young people's harmful sexual behaviours in a continuum or concerns, risks and needs. Appropriate service responses are delivered as far as possible, it was emphasised, in a community context so that service delivery takes place in the least restrictive setting that manages risk, while enhancing the developmental needs of the young person. It is also important to maintain a family focus and to provide placement stability, as interventions are more likely to be successful when underpinned by a stable living placement. Good practice responses do not merely focus on the harmful sexual behaviours but also pay attention to non-sexual offending problems and offer support for comorbid mental health problems.

**References to other work or publications to support your testimony' (if applicable):**

Smith, Allardyce, Hackett, Bradbury Jones, Lazenbatt (2014) Practice and policy in the UK with children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours: an analysis and critical review. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*

Hackett (2014) Children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours. A Research Review. Dartington, Research in Practice

Expert testimony papers are posted on the NICE website with other sources of evidence when the draft guideline is published. Any content that is academic in confidence should be highlighted and will be removed before publication if the status remains at this point in time.