

# Newsletter

## Edition January 2020

£12 p.a. subscription for non-members  
or organisations

free for **SURVIVORS**  
who are **Members**  
of **CIS'ters**



www.cisters.org.uk

**CIS'ters IS NOT a therapy group:** it is an organisation run by survivors, for survivors:  
“we might be victim/survivors, but this is not all that we are, or can be”

# Year 2020 is CIS'ters 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

*We wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone (members and non-members) for all of their help and support since we were set up in September 1995.*

*The past twelve months has seen individual/organisational highs and lows across our sector and beyond. During 2020 within CIS'ters we will be considering what the future might bring plus taking the opportunity to consolidate our existing services. All of our members will be part of that process as we will be seeking your involvement as part of a consultative task during the next six months.*

## **Rights of Women's new Sexual Harassment at Work legal advice line for women**

According to the TUC, as many as 1 in 2 of women have experienced sexual harassment at work.

Rights of Women has the only **specialist free legal advice line for women in England and Wales experiencing sexual harassment at work.** <https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/sexual-harassment-at-work-law/>

The legal advice will be provided by Rights of Women legal staff and volunteer women employment lawyers through a dedicated telephone line **020 7490 0152**. Women calling will be able to get specialist legal advice on what behaviour constitutes sexual harassment, how to bring a grievance against their employer, how to make a claim in the Employment Tribunal, settlement agreements and non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and other related legal problems faced by women experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The advice line is funded by the TIME'S UP UK Justice and Equality Fund, managed by Rosa, the UK Fund for Women and Girls, kickstarted by donations from British actor and activist Emma Watson and others. The money for this fund was donated by the public after the scale of the problem of sexual harassment was revealed by the #MeToo movement, which saw millions of women across the globe share their stories of sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

## **CIS'ters CONTACT DETAILS:**

**HELPLINE** 023 80 338080 (which is an answerphone). Please leave clear contact details. Messages are monitored regularly during normal office hours and we will seek to call back as quickly as we can, and will take care when returning calls. Please note that our number is shown as 'withheld' when we are returning calls. Alternatively you might prefer to **Email:** [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk)

[www.cisters.org.uk](http://www.cisters.org.uk) Registered Charity: 1123125 Twitter: CIS'ters\_Standup

**They:** by an anon member of **CIS'ters** ([www.cisters.org.uk](http://www.cisters.org.uk))

They are the golden ones

Who can do no wrong

The ones who you smile upon

The ones you speak of admiringly

The ones you are proud of

They are 'the sibling'

*I am the black sheep*

*The one with the problems*

*The one with the eating disorder*

*The one with the mental health issues*

*The one with the alcohol and drugs misuse*

**They are the ones you love**

**I am the unlovable one**

**Have you ever wondered why**

**I turned from that loveable child**

**Into this person I am today**

**Have you ever wondered what happened**

**When you left me in the care of my elder sibling**

**When you went out socializing to the pub or club**

**Did you ever wonder what experiments they did**

**Using my body as a practice map for all their**

**Deviant behaviour**

**Knowing that I could/would not tell**

Because they have always been the blue eyed

Child you are proud of

That you mention often in my presence

That you hold up as an example of what a child of yours

Should be like

*Whilst I.*

*I am nothing.*

*Forever silenced*



*Official Friends of CIS'ters (20 years plus) Massive thanks to following two local companies that provide us with help and support throughout the year. It is heart warming that there are so many that do believe in what we do and provide the assistance we need.*

*Abbey Office Solutions Ltd [www.abbeyoffice.com](http://www.abbeyoffice.com) and also IP Technology [www.ip-technology.com](http://www.ip-technology.com)*

## HELP RACHAL and her team on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 - LONDON



Not satisfied with running the London Marathon in April 2019 and raising in excess of £3,000 for **CIS'ters** – this year Rachal (centre of picture above) has set her sights on taking a TEAM to the Vitality Big Half Marathon, which is being held in central London on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The six person team are all part of Southampton based St. James' Runners which was originally created from a group of like-minded people who had progressed from doing a 'couch to 5k' course run by Parklives but then wanted to continue on to create a real community running group which fully supports and encourages all. SJR moto is "Run for Cake".

**SO – the date for the event is 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020.** The team, led by Rachal, are all raising funds for **CIS'ters**. She, and we, would really appreciate it if you could help her, and them, to help us: Use the following link to donate. <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/StJamesRunners>

### MEASURING THE SCALE

The National CSA Centre Report: 'Measuring the scale and changing nature of child sexual abuse: Analysis of 2017/18 official and agency data'. Download the report by using the following link <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/scale-and-nature-update-2019/>

It remains the case that the majority of child sexual abuse is neither reported nor identified during childhood and will therefore not appear in official agency data. However, the extent to which agencies recognise and respond to concerns of child sexual abuse is important, and this report pulls together available public data relating to child sexual abuse in one place. The Centre hope it enables those in the field to better understand the bigger picture and changing context of the issue.

They highlight gaps and weaknesses in fundamental data: duration and frequency of abuse; contexts and locations in which it takes place; and basic profile information about victims and perpetrators. Because of these limitations making decisions is difficult in that some aspects become clearer at different times, but it is still not possible to see the whole picture. Below are some of the key messages:

- There is substantial variation in local and regional reporting of child sexual abuse:
  - Six police force areas recorded fewer than five child sexual abuse offences per 1,000 of the child population in 2017/18, while seven recorded 10 or more;
  - Nine local authorities placed one or fewer children per 10,000 of the child population on child protection plans on grounds of sexual abuse in 2017/18, while nine local authorities placed five or more children per 10,000.
- There have been consistent increases in police recording of child sexual abuse offences, with recent jumps in specific offences related to child sexual exploitation and grooming;
- Fewer (14%) child sexual abuse offences proceeded from initial report through to charge (down from 18% the previous year);
- The current statutory data provides very little information about the victims, perpetrators and contexts of child sexual abuse.

# Can you ?

One of our members has recently been through a turbulent time and this has included losing some of her possessions which helped her feel safe and a reminder of better times. We are trying to help her rebuild her collection of CDs.

If you have any of the following and no longer need them – please consider donating them to her. **PLEASE CONTACT US FIRST** (email: [admin@cisters.org.uk](mailto:admin@cisters.org.uk) or phone 02380 338080) as we don't want you to send anything in without checking because someone might already have sent in a copy. She is looking for anything by:

Queen  
West Life  
Cliff Richard

Take That  
Hear Say  
Plus DVD Mary Poppins

## SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE USED >



Many survivors of sexual abuse use or have used strategies such as self harm or self injure to manage their emotional distress. [www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk](http://www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk) (a well respected charity based in Bristol) has helped 1000s of women over the years.

They have excellent articles on their website and we do encourage CSA survivors to access the site if they are struggling with self harm or self injury.

In common with the majority of charities they are currently facing major financial difficulties and it would be a tremendous loss to us all if they were to close. If you can help – then please make a donation to them via <https://www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk/appeal/save-our-services-without-your-support-they-will-close-in-2020>

**SOMETIMES WE NEED SOME REMINDERS** – within this newsletter we have provided a copy of an **action calendar** for January 2020. Always helpful to be reminded on a daily basis of things that we can do to lift our mood. You can access these and more from the following website – and encourage others to do the same: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars> - plus lots of other useful info on site.

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2020** - we have several individuals taking part in the Southampton 10K race. More info in the NEXT newsletter; or contact us earlier if you would like to know more.

# A SESSION FROM OUR WEEKEND WORKSHOP OCTOBER 2019



Delegates were asked if they would write down something positive about the weekend and then use a label to tie it to a small tree we had taken with us. The messages were then used within one of the optional sessions on the Sunday and the following was collectively created, and presented (by those members named) during the closing ceremony.

Louise (1497)	<b>C</b> : as in	compassion, comfort, comical, connectedness, creative, chocolate, crying, contribution
Mary Anne (1465)	<b>I</b> : as in	(less) isolated, inspired, included, individual, (loved for who) I (am)
Astra (1389)	<b>S</b> : as in	supported/supportive, safe, solidarity, (understood without) speaking
Anne (454)	<b>T</b> : as in	(aroma)therapy, togetherness, team, totally letting go, true freedom, team (are kind, supportive and loving), truth, trust, taking (off the mask), tears, tissues and toast (burnt*)
Joan (1498)	<b>E</b> : as in	Energy, empowered, empathic, enlightened, educated, easy, eating
Wendy (1406)	<b>R</b> : as in	Respected, resilient, relationships, rested, refreshed, reassured, reliable, relaxed
Gillian (00)	<b>S</b> : as in	Secure, strong, serious, singing, social, standing together, speaking (or not)

Followed by the named members then saying, together:

“Above all, CIS'ters, collectively stands for acceptance, belonging, unconditional love, non-judgemental and being valued”.

The additional comments below were left on the tree after the session (so were not included within the above, although others might have previously left something similar): *singing our hearts out with amazing CIS'ters, having a group that understands, being accepted, feeling safe, amazing friends, a new family, amazing love and friendship, a safe place, not so isolated, meeting inspiring women, not having a secret, big thank you, cis'terhood inspiration, I like getting post from CIS'ters and being part of this community, helping me to heal.*

- Burnt Toast: this was a mention of the slice or two of toast which got burnt on the Sunday morning at breakfast.

## Songs – to lift the heart ?

At the weekend workshop we listen to songs that help raise our energy and give us strength to move forward with our lives. We call these ‘warrior songs’ in that they motivate us to climb the mountain ahead of us, or go around it, or smash through it. Songs like ‘Something Inside So Strong’ by Labi Siffri. Can you think of any others – we are compiling a list of songs, that speak to and lift the heart. The words are as important as the music. Email us with a link [admin@cisters.org.uk](mailto:admin@cisters.org.uk) ps thanks to Faith (1368) for being the first to email through a suggestion - a Shania Twain song called Juanita

# When you do your best, but feel no-one understands and are also unhelpful



After years of receiving cervical smear test letters telling me that I need to have another one done, and after building up the courage to go, I walk in to see the nurse. She asks me what method of contraception I'm using? I tell her that I've had a hysterectomy, almost two years ago now. But the bloody useless system doesn't tell her this. No. That would make sense. My NHS number, which is unique to me (or so we are told) does not communicate with 'different systems' within the NHS, she tells me.

"Have you had a full or partial hysterectomy" she asks? Partial I say, they left my ovaries as a leaving present, (plus all the packing which gave sepsis and nearly killed me... but that's another story) but took the womb. "So have you got your cervix?" She asks? Well I thought that I had, I say. She looks at her screen, searching for clues. "If you've had a full hysterectomy, then they will have taken your cervix" she says, and that's what it is telling me." I ask her why doesn't she check my records before I arrived? or even before the letters come... every bloody six months! "Oh they are separate records" she says.

So after a difficult conversation trying to work out if I have my cervix or not, (surely her notes would tell her, surely I should know?), she makes me feel stupid for assuming that my records would all be joined up. Oh that would be bloody ridiculous wouldn't it!! That would of course make total sense, which is why the NHS don't bloody do it.

I say to her, "do you know what it takes for women like me to finally get through this door? To have ignored these letters and made excuses to keep missing or ignoring these letters and appointments? Who feel guilty and reckless for not attending these sooner". I tell her that women like me who have been sexually abused over long periods of time, who've been violated, the consequences of which affects their very soul and their core every bloody day for the rest of their lives... to be met with this total lack of information is an abomination!!!"

So – I am sat here in my car (emailing Gillian) and still not sure if I have a cervix or not? Almost in panic attack, fight or flight or freeze. Well she wasn't certain either, and she's a nurse! I felt humiliated when she replied "bless" to my reply to her question of whether I still had a cervix.

I feel angry that I needn't have entered the cycle of dodging tests then feeling guilty. Repeat - I feel STUPID! I also feel explosive that I've had to justify my reaction once again with the "I have been abused line... and so this is why I'm so bloody angry". Love to all from Nix (414)



The email from Nix (414) is not unusual in that the majority of our members have found, or still find, going for a smear an incredibly difficult task. Add to that whether or not following an operation you know if you still have, or not, a cervix and the trauma continues. However, we do know of this wonderful charity called [www.jostrust.org.uk/](https://www.jostrust.org.uk/) and we have offered to help them develop an information sheet for CSA survivors, which can be used by both professionals and patients to ease the process of attending for smear tests. Have a look at their website and let us know if there are any other comments you would like us to make. SO – what would YOU like to see included? Please email us [admin@cisters.org.uk](mailto:admin@cisters.org.uk) or write to us through our PO Box.

## Thank you for your letters: (here are some examples (printed with permission))

### Hi CIS'ters.

This will be the second letter I have written now. First one didn't get sent. When I read over the first letter written, not one bit made any sense. My head was somewhere, I know not.

Have been writing my own thoughts for a lot of years now, it really does help to get out all the ramblings running around my head daily. When I was younger I didn't have time to keep a diary or journal. Now I have lots of books, paper, writing all my thoughts down as no one likes to hear what I think about my past.

I would like to thank you for the newsletters. The last one included some recommended books. I have previously read both and found them useful. Still have the one written by Laura Davis. Less crying has been done this year, which I am grateful for. Have to accept more changes to my daily struggles. Accepting that all things cannot be fixed is this year's challenge. Have not given up on working towards making the Drop In session. Getting stronger once again. All the best to you all, Muriel (1230)

### Dear Gillian and CIS'ters.

Hope you are well. Just wanted to say that I feel that finding CIS'ters for me was like a breath of fresh air. My saviour, an understanding, warmth and love from people who understand me.  
From Lisa (1114)

### The Real Me by Rosemary (1484)

When I was abused I felt like a piece of meat,  
Dirty from my head to my feet  
I have blamed myself for the abuse for many many years  
Sitting down on my own many times it's brought me to tears  
For the last 12 years with my husband there's abuse no more  
With my husband there's never been abuse and now I am no-ones fool  
I am growing like a flower every day  
Being myself my way  
I am no longer that scared little girl  
I have a completely new world  
No matter what ever happens to you  
You need to be yourself this is true  
Don't let what happen destroy your life  
Years later I am now a happy wife  
Don't let the abuse win  
Because it wasn't you who did the sin  
Your childhood got taken away  
But hold on to your future I will say

Dear Helen (221),

First of all I would just like to say a big thank you for everything. The newsletter reminds me that I am not alone. I now feel like a real nice loving caring person and not a robot or a piece of meat. I don't want pity or tears, I am just saying it as it is. The poems I write are a part of myself if that makes sense. For the first time I am finding out who I am and not be someone I think that person wants me to be like. I haven't ended up in hospital for 5 years now for trying to end it all. If my poems just help one person then it's worth it. If I can help people then I couldn't wish for anything more in life. Thank you CIS'ters I'm slowly becoming the real me. Your kindness I will always carry when times are tough, so thank you again.

From Rosemary (1484)

Hi Everyone. I decided after seeing advertisements on Social Media and TV for the Truth Project (part of IICSA National Inquiry) that I would like to take part and talk about my experience of CSA and institutional failings.

I phoned 0800 917 1000 and had a chat and gave my details. It was explained that I would be called back to make arrangements as I had already decided that I would travel to London to have my history of sexual abuse recorded (i.e. give my testimonial), and I also waved my rights to anonymity. After a few weeks I received the awaited call and on the 13th March 2019 I travelled up to London with a friend. We were running late and so I phoned and explained and they had a support worker waiting outside for me.

I was shown into a nice room and met with three people, After introductions I sat down and told them what had happened to me. I had already sent the week before some supporting evidence such as the letter from the CPS and letters and emails between myself and siblings. For some reason the information I had sent had been passed on to the wrong department but the team on the day assured me that they would get to read it all and it would be returned to me.

It felt good to tell someone what had happened to me and at my own pace. After I had finished I was then asked for recommendations to help professionals do things better from learning from survivors.

My recommendations have come from my own experience and how I felt in areas I was let down in. I feel more training for teachers is required and I don't feel the current DBS is enough as more checks other than a DBS should be done as abusers are hiding behind it, the proof of this is just last week in my local paper a games teacher at a local School has been convicted of child abuse. The most common plea of help from a child is a silent plea and that was mine, I didn't comb my hair, bathe, and was so unkempt and withdrawn. None of this was picked up and I know if I had been approached I would have spoken out. Teachers need to be trained more.

I also feel that an independent trained person should go into schools, etc. and to talk to the children away from teachers, and be encouraged to talk about life skills and to help build confidence and that it's ok and good to talk, to learn about healthy relationships and asked about what is actually happening to them. This way an abused child can confidently (without feeling guilty) tell that trusted person. I wish I could have had something like that when I was at school.

My other recommendation is more training for workers in adult services. I explained to the Truth Project that when my father was dying (i.e. a vulnerable adult) I phoned Adult services and told them who I was. They were shocked as they had no idea I existed and said to me "You are not on the list to know anything." I replied it's ok! I don't wish to know anything..... my call is to tell you what you need to know. I asked for a meeting which took place a week later.

I met with two workers from the safeguarding team and told them what he had done, how my sister has never had help so she has severe PTSD and why I had been disowned. I never had anything to do with my father for years.

In cases of sexual abuse during childhood, those caring for the elderly need to understand the issues. Social workers are not always aware of past events (within families) and cuts to adult services means that some social workers do an assessment over the phone rather than visiting. There needs to be more training in non-recent child sexual abuse (i.e. historical) for social workers, I found the social workers attitude lacking any real understanding to what I had told them.

I was thanked for my input to the Truth Project and they agreed with what I had said though explained it was all down to funding. The support from everyone I spoke to on the day or on the phone from the Truth Project was second to none, they are brilliant and I was also able to tell them about how CIS'ters had helped me on my journey.

I encourage people to take part either on phone or email or in person. I did it to help others and I hope telling you this has helped someone reading this, as it's important to keep talking and never stop.

Best wishes Jan (550)



## Volunteers recognised at Awards Ceremony in Winchester



On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at an Awards Ceremony held in Winchester at the Guildhall, the contribution made to CIS'ters by Louise (615) and Shelley (300) was personally recognised by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

A message from us all:

*Without volunteers **CIS'ters** would be unable to function – so, a massive thank you to **ALL of our amazing volunteers**. Each and every one of you.*

### Part of saying goodbye at the end of the weekend workshop.....

An important aspect of the weekend workshop every year is that delegates are given a 'token' to take away. A reminder of the event. This year this included a small felt flower that had been created by some of our volunteers. Each delegate was given a small voile bag, inside was a flower, plus a stone with the date on it. Both small enough to keep in a pocket, in a purse or somewhere else as a reminder of 'being part' of a special event.



*On the outside I am an adult; but often on the inside there is a small girl who at times responds emotionally from a hurt place - so help me if you can*

### You Can Help CIS'ters When Shopping Online!

Do you shop online with Amazon.co.uk ?

If so, perhaps **you** might consider registering with [Smile.Amazon.co.uk](https://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) ?

**CIS'ters** is one of the charities listed on [Smile.Amazon.co.uk](https://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)

If you make purchases via [Smile.Amazon.co.uk](https://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) and have selected CIS'ters as a beneficiary, we will receive a small donation from them based on the cost of the item you have just purchased.

## Diary for 2020 for CIS'ers members (survivors)

Enclosed is information on forthcoming workshops, the Monthly Drop In plus a flyer for our 2020 annual (residential) weekend workshop **24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> October 2020**.

# #ITSNOTOK

## SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK

### 3<sup>RD</sup> – 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

Listen to that internal voice. If it feels important to take part, then do so. BUT if the 2020 Awareness Week doesn't feel the right time (perhaps too dangerous (personally / emotionally)) then give it a miss this year. Instead focus on something else.

If you are interested – then we suggest you keep a weekly watch on the organiser's site to find out if anything is happening close to where you live

<http://sexualabuseandsexualviolenceawarenessweek.org/>

Events will start to get added soon and updated regularly.

We fully understand that not everyone will feel strong enough to attend an event or to highlight the awareness week on social media. Remember, do what you can and want to do – but the priority has to be that it feels the right thing for you to do personally.

Remember, **you don't have to be visible to be part of a visible national campaign. Of equal and substantial importance is the foundation, supportive wall, upon which others stand or rest against.**



**Is it time ?** (anonymous Member, CIS'ers)

My psychologist told me that I need to move on  
My ex-partner told me that I was stupid  
My children tell me to stop drinking, doing drugs  
My head knows I need to let go but  
FIRST I need to stand up  
And let others know of the harm done to me

**Just Because** (anonymous Member, CIS'ers)

Just because I don't shout and scream and stand beside you doesn't mean that I don't care about what happened to you, to me, to us.

It might mean that today it isn't the most important thing I do or it might not be the right time. It might mean that I am currently too scared to stand beside or near you. It doesn't mean I don't care.

My absence might mean that other life traumas are over taking me, such as death, disease, or needing to work to keep a roof over my family. I might be battling addictions, such as alcohol, drugs, gambling.

Perhaps I feel weary after the numerous campaigns I have already undertaken/been part of - so that you, today, have a door that is slightly open if not fully

Today, and because I do care, I choose to be part of the wall that you can sit on, to rest against, to draw strength from.





## REPORT FRAUD AND ATTEMPTED FRAUD

**ActionFraud**  
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre  
0300 123 2040

If you have a computer or smart phone then increasingly you are receiving emails that look as if they are legitimate, from banks and other institutions – but are attempts at fraud. So be alert. You can report fraud or cybercrime to Action Fraud any time of the day or night using their online reporting system. The tool will guide you through simple questions to identify what has happened and their advisors are available twenty four hours to give you help and advice if you need it.

When reporting online you will be given the option to register, login to an existing account or continue as a guest.

### **By registering you will be able to:**

- Save and resume a partially completed report
- Track progress of your report
- Add information to your report
- Call us to discuss your report
- Receive an update by email

If you continue as a guest you will only be able to receive updates by email or post.

You can also report to the Action Fraud Centre by calling **0300 123 2040** Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm. If you are calling from abroad please call +44 300 123 2040.

### **Reporting fraud to other organisations**

If your report relates to any of the below, please look <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime> so you can follow the correct links, for:

- Counterfeit currency
- Theft of a vehicle
- Suspicious online behaviour with or towards a child
- Online hate or bullying crime, material or messages
- Counterfeit medicine or medical devices available to purchase online
- Business or personal tax fraud or related HMRC matters
- Benefit fraud
- Immigration fraud

**If you have not been defrauded** but there was an attempt to defraud you, through an email, then please use the following link which explains how you can report the attempt:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing>

## Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-given-power-to-question-lenient-prison-sentences>

published on 29th October 2019

The scheme gives victims or members of the public the power to ask the Attorney General to consider whether a sentence could be reconsidered by the Court of Appeal, where it could then be increased.

Crimes such as murder, robbery, and a range of terror offences are already covered, and now the government is introducing legislation to extend the scheme further to protect the public and make sure victims see justice done. The extension follows wider action to restore faith in the criminal justice system – with the recruitment of 20,000 police officers, investing £2.75 billion in prisons, £85 million for the Crown Prosecution Service and reviewing sentencing to ensure violent and sexual offenders spend longer behind bars.

Secretary of State for Justice, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said: *“We know that victims and the public sometimes feel sentences don’t match the crime and we are determined to give them a greater voice in the system. Sentencing will always be decided by our independent judiciary, but by extending the scheme we are sending a clear signal that this Government will do everything in its power to build faith in the justice system and protect the public.”*

The Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said: *“This government is taking greater steps to tackle violent crime in our communities. The latest extension to the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme means that perpetrators of the most heinous crimes such as sex offences against children and vulnerable adults and controlling and coercive behaviour could have their sentences increased, bringing some comfort to victims and their families. As a result of the extension becoming law, the Attorney General and I can look at even more sentences than before and we will do everything we can to challenge those that we regard to be clearly wrong.”*

A statutory instrument laid in Parliament comes into force 21 days subsequently. Sentences imposed for these additional offences from then on will be in scope of the scheme, meaning anyone will be able to query sentences (if considered too lenient) with the Attorney General. The move will bring offences including controlling and coercive behaviour within scope as well as further child sexual abuse offences, such as those involving the taking, distributing and publishing of indecent images of children and abusing a position of trust with a child.

↪ ↪ *Prior to these changes sexual crimes such as creating indecent images of children or of sexual activity with a child by a person in a position of trust were NOT in the scheme and short sentences could therefore not be challenged. The new changes mean that LENIENT SENTENCE CAN NOW BE CHALLENGED. If you have an interest in how many challenges are made and whether successful or not – then the data for 2019 (prior to the changes above) can be accessed via the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/outcome-of-unduly-lenient-sentence-referrals> which also provides information on how to refer to case if you feel the sentence awarded is too short.*

**Editorial Statement:** We welcome letters from Survivors and from those who support them such as friends/allies/counsellors/social workers etc. While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary, and will note it as ‘edited’. Decisions about the inclusion & amendment of contributions are the responsibility of the Editorial Team, and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views & opinions of CIS’ters, members of the Trust Board, or the Editorial Team. Inclusion of any reference to an individual, book list, or organisation resource is not a recommendation.

The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only.

This newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision.

CIS’ters, PO Box 119, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 9ZF Tel: 023 80 338080 [www.cisters.org.uk](http://www.cisters.org.uk)

CIS’ters: an experience in learning, sharing, growing – individually and together

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