

Newsletter

Edition July 2022

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

free for SURVIVORs
who are Members
of CIS'ters

Charity registration:
1184857
(previously 1123125)



www.cisters.org.uk

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

2022 = Resilience/Recovery

Bumps in the road

.....
Email: helpme@cisters.org.uk

Phone: 023 80 338080 (answer phone)
.....

We had planned to have this newsletter cascaded in June, but encountered more bumps in the road. A smaller (still) team than normal meant that any unplanned or unexpected event, requires priority tasking and something has to give. But hopefully now back on target for 'July'.

PSS Calls

We introduced 'peer support calls' for members in 2021 and increasing numbers of Members are accessing these. We do our best to 'match' the reason a member is seeking a call, with someone from our lived-experience-peer-support small team who can listen and perhaps contribute to a topic/issue that the member is currently struggling with:

“This is the first time I have accessed one of the new PSS calls (though have previously at times attended various support meetings (in years gone by)). Some weeks ago I was feeling incredibly anxious about submitting a claim for PIP (Personal Independence Payment). Gillian had suggested that it might be helpful to talk through how I was feeling during a PSS call with one of CIS'ters small team. It was very helpful to talk to a female with a similar life experience (physical mobility issues as well as CSA). The person I spoke with was happy to go at my pace and I felt validated and heard. I felt less alone. Thank-you for such ongoing support, care and lack of judgement. Dawn, (member since 1997)”

“Talking to another 'person with lived-experience' is such a rare experience. When you spend such a large part of your life pretending, for whatever personal reasons, just to have someone who 'knows' and understands is PRICELESS. For once, we, are the 'US' and not the 'them'. Marie (member since 2021)”

What it is (quote from Ed James (author of crime books series set in Scotland))

Sexual abuse is a crime of infinitesimally small increments.....

Physical Meeting – finally !

Trustees gave us permission to go ahead with the 2022 (residential) weekend workshop which was held on 21st and 22nd of May. Extra care was taken to ensure that we lowered risk of Covid-19 transmission and this also included reduced number of delegates attending.

The prior weekend workshop event had been some two years before. For 2022 we took a cautious approach and preparations were under constant review, including the number of times the 2022 team would meet (physically) as part of planning process and team development. Unlike the majority of other organisations, our unique approach is that our front facing lived-experience-peer-support-workers are ALL volunteers (each with busy lives of their own and many (in common with the nation) are impacted by Covid-19 either directly or indirectly).

The team were busy from the outset, undertaking lateral flow tests when delegates arrived (all had proved their vaccination status as part of the application process) and then we were ready to 'start'. After a period of no physical meetings (since March 2020) and now encountering a room full of delegates and our wonderful team of volunteers, it felt daunting. The inherent sense of 'responsibility' felt much higher than is usual, and our aim of trying to ensure that everyone had a positive experience (gosh how that word 'positive' now has such negative connotations, whereas negative meant something else before !).

We had some blips, which we expected – but everyone met obstacles with good humour and above all we had a sense of real sisterhood which was underpinned by the feedback forms. We laughed, we cried, we sat and talked, we said how we felt (joyous and sad) and above all – we cared about each other.

Trustees have approved an event for 2023, and Members will find a flyer with their newsletter.



Below (and overleaf) -

Collective Output From CIS'ters (Residential) Workshop which took place 21/22 May 2022

Delegates who attended the event came from a wide geographical area.

During the event individuals could choose to write personal meaningful statements which were then hung on a small tree in the shared lounge.

The weekend workshop included optional sessions and during one of these on the final day, the delegates who chose to attend used the written labels to create the 'collective' message below. Four of the delegates then presented it at the.....

Closing Ceremony for the Weekend Workshop.

Part 1 – Acceptance of Self

- *Speaking out is OK*
- *Opting out is OK*
- *Dissociating is OK*
- *Imperfect is OK*
- *Being angry is OK*

Part 2 – Today, I Feel

- *I am proud, I feel able to be here*
- *Proud to be with/part of such lovely brave women*
 - *I have a voice*
 - *I am no longer alone*

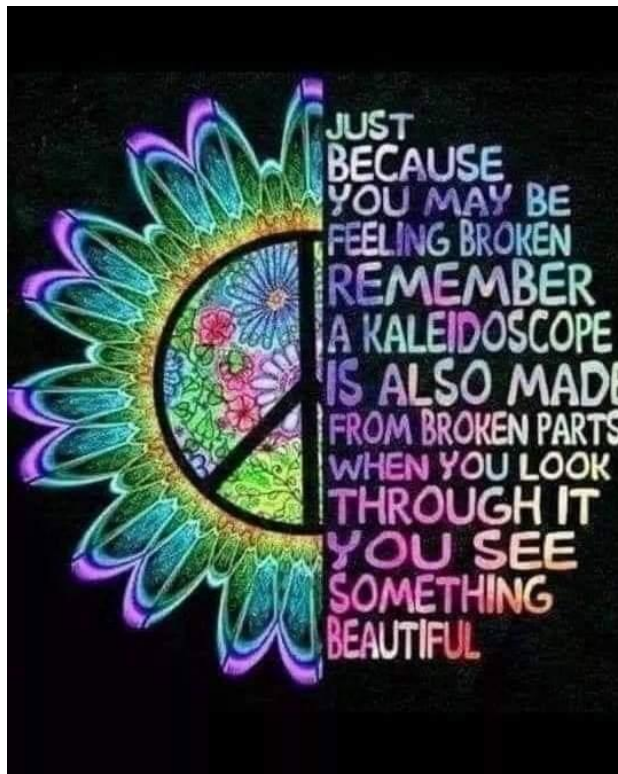
Part 3 – This Weekend

- *I feel so much support, thank you*
- *Finally allowing myself to allow the emotion to flow out, felt thawed and flowing*
- *If I had never been abused I would never have met so many amazing women... That doesn't mean the abuse is ok..... But it makes **me** ok.*
 - *I am thankful and grateful for CIS'ters*

Part 4 – Kaleidoscope *

- *I cannot change anyone but me*
 - *(I need to) Take care of Me*
- *Allow yourself to heal, I'm on a new journey to self*
- *A sense of rebirth and blossoming like Sakuras***
 - *An emerging Butterfly*

* A **group of butterflies** is officially **called** a kaleidoscope. If you describe something as kaleidoscopic, you mean that **it consists of a lot of very different parts, such as different colours, patterns, or shapes**. ... a kaleidoscopic study of the shifting ideas and symbols of nationhood.



Continued overleaf >

- ** Sakuras - The national flower of Japan, the **cherry blossom** – or Sakura, represents a time of renewal and optimism. The pops of pink mark the ending of winter and signify the beginning of spring.



Part 5 – Villages (added after the Closing Event)

During the event, one of our team introduced the concept of ‘a village’ and this thought process quickly became popular across the team, and delegates. In essence, an individual creates their own village of emotional well-being

Description of:

‘My Village’

- It’s good to be surrounded by helpful and positive people who help us on our journey through life
- My village of people are kept available to me in my head
- They are real, inspiring, knowledgeable, and practical people
- I can call on people in my village in my head when I need them
- I can ask people to leave my village if I want to.....
- And when I want to.....
- I can have a large or small village.....It’s MY village
- I’m in control

Part 6 – Larger than a Village (added after the Closing Event)

For the 2022 Queens Jubilee, 8 new cities were designated. These are: Bangor (Northern Island), Colchester (England), Doncaster (England), Douglas (Isle of Man), Dunfermline (Scotland), Milton Keynes (England), Stanley (Falkland Islands) and Wrexham (England)

The final label on our ‘tree’ at the weekend said:

“Feel proud and amazed to meet the residents of the 9th new city = CIS’ters. “

*So, perhaps, that makes **CIS’ters** a UNIVERSAL city ?*

FLOOD in June 2022



Never rains, it pours – as the saying goes, but this time it was indoors and thankfully **clean** water, not dirty. There was a pipe burst in another office space, and the first we knew of it was arriving the next day to find that water had crept along the corridor and then under our door – and left soggy carpets in both parts of our office. The resulting mess is still being resolved.



It has taken time to sort out insurance, and assess damage to equipment (display boards were key area); and we are still trying to get rid of the musty smell in the office.

There is never the right time, nor the wrong time, there is 'just'. I couldn't believe my eyes when I arrived that morning. Water running down the external corridor and under our door. Wet carpets, and stacks of stuff to move off the floor to reduce damage potential. I made some calls and four fab volunteers turned up (including Kate who had been at the hairdressers in preparation for her holiday). Thank you to all who came to the rescue on the day, and since. Gillian x (Member since 1995)

MAP England and Wales

You will find a map with this newsletter. We recently submitted a funding application to the Home Office where we had to provide indications of where we had 'service users' (i.e. who we call Members). As you can see, on 1st July 2022 we had members everywhere other than Leicestershire or Herefordshire on that specific date. The map constantly changes as new members join, and others leave. Whilst a number of delegates at our Residential Weekend lived in Hampshire, others had travelled from much further away. Creating opportunities for themselves, to connect with other survivors and build their 'personal network'.

Rest in Peace – Isobel (member since 1997)

It with great sadness that we let you know that Isobel, following an accident, died on 22nd April 2022. She had been one of our earliest (and still current) members and much loved by all who knew her. Her partner, Dawn, knows that we all care, and Gillian represented us at the funeral on 1st June 2022.

brave movement | End Childhood Sexual Violence <https://www.bravemovement.org/about-us>

If you are an activist, or a someone who likes to know what work is being undertaken to challenge the existence and prevalence of CSA; and give voice to what is needed, then you might be interested in the 'Brave Movement'. It is a GLOBAL movement, as can be seen from their website.

"We are survivors with different backgrounds and our experiences with sexual violence are varied. But we share a common knowledge of what it's like to feel alone, to be hidden, to live scared, and to hold onto misplaced blame. We know what it's like to carry shame.

This is a burden we refuse to carry any longer. We are transforming our shame into our call for bold and transformative action through the Brave Movement." Their core aims are:

For survivors everywhere to find healing, agency, and their power to heal;

For perpetration to be prevented and perpetrators held to account and brought to justice; and

To enable adults, leaders, and institutions that perpetuate the silence to transform into allies.

More information can be found on their website, plus latest news articles:

<https://www.bravemovement.org/news>

A MESSAGE FROM Sally (a member since 1998)

Hiya Gillian, Sorry to read that you are struggling with anxiety. These past two years have been insane! Covid-19, a bloody hurricane, the rise in the cost of living and now this sodding war. That's without the daily challenges we all face. **Following is my offering for the 'Picture Project'**



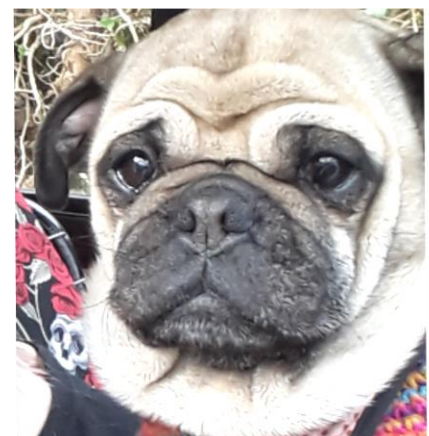
LEFT: Someone showing caring- During the first lockdown, my dad and I stripped and restored my classic car (a Black 2cv). It's given me back my freedom and independence.

BELOW: After years of poor choices of partners/ "distractions", I have been on my own for over a year- just me and my dog (Mavis). I aim to continue focusing on my relationship with myself and maintaining my sobriety- 4 years now.



LEFT:

I love to photograph nature. Nature keeps me grounded, it is food for my soul. (Butterfly and yellow flower)



Improving Victims Voices – The Parole Boards

Increasingly, issues have been raised nationally about the effectiveness of the way in which offenders are considered for release. The current Victim Contact Scheme relates to offenders who have been sentenced to 12 months or more – and the victim is entitled to receive information via the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS).

As a victim, joining the scheme means you will be allocated a Victim Liaison Officer who will:

- Explain how sentencing works
- Keep you updated on the offender's prison sentence and release
- Tell you if the offender is eligible for a Parole Board hearing
- Tell you how to make a statement to be submitted to Parole Board hearings
- Help you request 'licence conditions', such as stopping the offender from contacting you or coming near your home
- Help you request a [summary of the parole decision](#)
- Help you [challenge a parole decision](#) if the Parole Board decides the offender is safe to release

You choose whether or not to join the scheme, and you can change your mind about joining at any point during an offender's sentence.

You will need to tell your Victim Liaison Officer whenever you change your contact details, so they can stay in contact with you.

If you are interested in joining the VCS please email: vcenquiries@justice.gov.uk

More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-parole-boards-commitment-to-victims-of-crime>

In addition: Baroness Newlove, a former Victims' Commissioner, has produced a short 4 minute video setting out some facts about Victim Personal Statements and how to make one for the Parole Board. <https://youtu.be/GE05jgM6hww>



Plans to put victims back at the centre of justice system

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-put-victims-back-at-the-centre-of-justice-system-published>

Support for victims of crime are in the process of being reviewed, though the outcome of these are now being delayed due to the current process to replace the Prime Minister.

Draft legislation published on 25th May 2022 by Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab will pave the way for the first ever Victims' Law – putting their needs and voices firmly at the heart of the justice system.

It will see victims' views sought at regular points during their case, with greater accountability placed on agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police for the service they provide to them. Victims will also be given clearer routes of redress if they do not receive the support they are entitled to.

For the first time, a duty will be placed on prosecutors to meet victims in certain cases before trial in order to hear their views. Victims will also be given the right to attend Parole Board hearings in full and to submit questions during the process – such as querying an offender's suitability for release. The Parole Board will be required to consider victims' views and concerns before making a decision in a case.

Criminals will also be forced to pay more towards crucial victim services such as rape support centres which that will raise an extra £20 million by 2025. This penalty fee is imposed on offenders when they are sentenced for crimes, to ensure they take responsibility for their actions and pay back to society by contributing to services which support victims.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Dominic Raab said:

No victim should feel lost in a faceless system. We're amplifying victims' voices, boosting their rights at every stage and making criminals pay more to help victims recover.

We're doing this because it is morally the right thing to do to strengthen the care for victims, but also because it is operationally critical to drive up convictions – and keep our streets safe.

The reforms come as the government continues to drive improvements for victims, in particular those of rape and sexual offences, for which convictions rose 27 percent last year compared to before the pandemic.

There are now 26 courts where rape victims can, **following a successful application to the court**, pre-record their cross examination which will spare them the stress of giving evidence under the full glare of a courtroom. We understand that the national rollout is due to be complete by Sept 2022.

The draft Bill will outline how the Victims' Code will be set out in law and introduce additional scrutiny on the support victims receive from the police, Crown Prosecution Service, prisons and the Probation Service. Ministers will be able to order the criminal justice inspectorates to undertake regular joint inspections on victims' issues and produce action plans to drive improvements.

Diana Fawcett, Chief Executive of the independent charity Victim Support said:

It is vital that victims have stronger rights, better support and real influence in the justice system.

The Victims' Bill announced today presents a true opportunity to improve victims' experiences and we look forward to continuing our work with the government to ensure that the final bill leads to meaningful change for victims.

It will also introduce a new duty on Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities and health organisations to work together when commissioning services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other serious violence so that services are more effective.

Continued overleaf >

Victims will also find it easier to make complaints about the service they have received, by removing the requirement for them to go through their local MP before speaking to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

The legislation will also establish a statutory definition for Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) to ensure that these vital roles are more consistent. This will ensure victims know that they will receive a high standard of support from them.

In March 2022 the government announced that victim support services would receive £440 million in grant funding over the next 3 years, helping to fund more than 1,000 Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors and a 24/7 rape crisis helpline (*note from CIS'ters: this 24/7 helpline will also be adult survivors of CSA*).

- The [Draft Victims Bill](#) will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by the Commons Justice Select Committee, with the Committee's feedback being considered before the Bill's formal introduction
- A new cross-government Victims Funding Strategy which will tackle barriers to sustainable funding and drive consistent commissioning, so that victims get the right support at the right time.

A MESSAGE FROM Julie (a member since 2020)

I feel a lot stronger after the (residential) Weekend Workshop in May 2022. It was emotional for me and that was a breakthrough and really liberating. The penny has finally dropped that there was nothing I could have done after your presentation on the topic of 'Why Me' and Finkelhor, so thank you Gillian. Feel so privileged to have spent time with such strong and brave women.



Survivors of childhood trauma reveal the support needed from workplaces

People who have experienced trauma in childhood have spoken up about the space, dignity, and flexibility they need from their employers to help them manage their trauma and meet their work objectives. Childhood trauma affects one in five adults, with around 8.5 million people aged 18 to 74 years having experienced at least one form of child abuse before the age of 16 in the UK. The response to this trauma is often ongoing and impacts interpersonal relationships, which can negatively affect health and wellbeing throughout life.

Through a research project led by **Nottingham Business School** (NBS) and funded by The British Academy, a group of 20 survivors took part in interviews to share their personal experiences of dealing with work and organisational realities.

They revealed a lack of awareness and trust among managers and colleagues within their workplaces, which often led to feelings of anxiety and apprehension, and in many cases the sense of insecurity, vulnerability and of not belonging.

The survivors feared talking openly about the trauma in case it led to stigmatisation and bias. They were also concerned about being perceived as the ‘troublemakers’ and creating the perception that their trauma prevents them from doing their work.

Highlighting the support needed, the survivors did not want their organisation to try to address the causes of trauma, but instead wanted them to empathise, talk confidently, actively listen to survivors and create the space to receive appropriate support based on individual needs.

[Dr Stefanos Nachmias](#), research lead and principal lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management at NBS, also spoke to policymakers and employers as part of the study. He said: “Talking about trauma is difficult as it’s a very sensitive topic for many of us. It’s even harder for people who have experienced trauma to talk openly, and most importantly to ask for support from their own organisations.

“Survivors shared with me that past experiences and a lack of trust in the organisational approach to dealing with disclosures meant that they would rather leave an organisation than disclose their trauma, for fear of what the consequences might be.

“Workplaces need to be a psychologically safe space for survivors, but I found that there’s confusion as to who is responsible for providing support. The organisation itself, health professionals or the survivors themselves? However, the answer is straightforward. It is a collective effort to develop an approach that offers survivors an appropriate level of support.”

Stephanie Hunter, a social worker, author, trainer and therapist, took part in the research, having experienced trauma due to the deaths of her father and young brother. She said: “Trauma and adverse childhood experiences are in fact not uncommon. I know this from research and the national and international training I deliver and how many delegates seek me out in person and by email to share experiences. What is not available is a consistency in terms of responses which are trauma informed and would lead to improvements in productivity and less time in workplace absence, but it is the human cost which pains me. More organisations absolutely need to be trauma informed.

“This research is a positive step forward. In terms of my experience contributing and, for the first time, acknowledging experiences in a professional arena, whilst those involved were warmth and empathic it was not without its sadness. I think we should all work towards enabling authenticity, safely at work and reduced shame cultures to strength based and relational practice models, enabling more recognition of courage and strength.”

Continued overleaf >

The study recommends that supporting trauma requires several organisational, operational and management actions to address individual needs. This support covers a number of complex areas including policy development, staff development, workload, disclosure, communication, performance, and other wider employment practices.

A guide for workplaces has been produced following the study and outlines several practices that organisations should consider at different levels. These include:

- Place trauma into welfare and wellbeing agenda as a strategic dimension and not a single approach to manage welfare.
- Recognise the importance of supporting trauma survivors in the workplace and create the infrastructure for an integrated, individualised and targeted approach to support.
- Replace high reliance on HR policy and wellbeing strategy with a more personalised approach based on the individual needs.
- Address high level of anxiety to talk about the trauma and whether their organisation offer a balanced support mechanism.
- Improve confidence to offer direct support to individuals who disclose trauma by effectively managing line management processes.
- Consider legal requirements, however, this should be followed by extensive training and development on how to support survivors at different stages. This is because legal requirements only apply for those with a diagnosis. Many survivors do not have a diagnosis, but trauma manifests at work. The process should avoid re-traumatisation.
- Seek external support when knowledge in the area is poor and identify best practices.
- Remove activities and avoid making decisions based on personal experience. Any decision to support trauma at work should be only delivered via professional knowledge emerged from specific training and development activities.



GP Access Survey: Healthwatch Hampshire report published

This project came about as Hampshire Healthwatch were receiving a high level of feedback from the public in relation to access to GP led services.

They worked collaboratively with other local Healthwatch, Care Quality Commission, NHS colleagues and Practice staff to further understand the experiences of the public and practice staff themselves. A PDF of the report can be viewed and downloaded on our website [here](#). If you need the report in another format or would like to discuss anything, please email enquiries@healthwatchhampshire.co.uk or call 01962 440262.

A MESSAGE FROM Elaine *(a member since 2020)*

I'm feeling pretty good since the Residential Weekend Workshop. I have committed to writing a short reminder in a journal each morning that starts me on a positive note. This morning it was this:

'I steer my own ship, when the storm gets too much I can lower my sails & just drift until it passes'

I'm determined to develop better habits to give myself what I need, I gained so much strength from the other ladies at the weekend, it was such a special & valuable time.

Established some years ago, the overall aim and purpose of this Inquiry is to raise public awareness of the abuse of children in care, particularly during the period covered by the Inquiry. It will provide an opportunity for public acknowledgement of the suffering of those children and a forum for validation of their experience and testimony. A number of reports have been produced (more to come).

INFORMATION ADVISORY GROUPS – to the Police

Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) are voluntary groups made up of members of the public that are independent from the police. They meet between four and six times a year, at various locations, to review and challenge policing practices in a constructive way. This helps us improve our service to the public.

Groups will often review how we handle major investigations, as well as incidents and issues that impact local communities. As an IAG member, you will represent yourself and your own views or that of your community. The police can't always act on everything their local IAG groups tells them, but should value the input.

If you would like to know more, contact your local Police Force (dial 101 as this is not an emergency), and ask to know more about the IAG, and see who is 'representing' the issues you personally feel passionately about. If there isn't anyone you feel is able to do that, then consider putting yourself forward.

A MESSAGE FROM Rachel (a member since 2019)

Following is my offering for the 'Picture Project'

- A** - something I avoid is friendship. I don't open up, I don't tell anyone my business, I feel that I am too complicated and don't want people knowing me or how I live now or what I come from.
- B** - Where I am in myself. I am struggling with physical and mental health and just want my bed whenever I can get to it.
- C** - My aim for the future is to be happy and healthy.

FRIENDSHIP



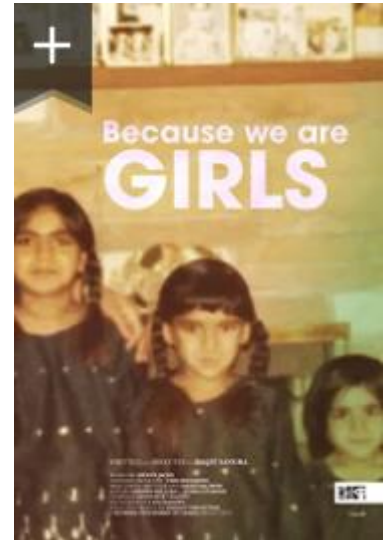
Three Punjabi-Canadian sisters overcame cultural norms to report their sexual abuser.

Then they made a documentary about it

Vancouver-based filmmaker Baljit Sangra and the three Pooni sisters hope their film, 'Because We Are Girls,' will encourage others to confront familial sexual abuse

This film is available via **Amazon Prime** (if you have access) – and possibly from other sources as well.

Very impactful.



A MESSAGE FROM Debs (a member since 2008)

After keeping the lid tightly on everything for 40 years it came flying off & I had a breakdown. I told no-one & wouldn't go to my doctor for help in case he had me locked up for being mad (I still believed all those threats made to me in childhood to stop me telling.)

I started therapy privately (so no-one would know) with a fantastic counsellor & found out about **CIS'ters**. From my first core group meeting a weight lifted from my shoulders. I was believed. I was accepted. I was supported. I was normal. I could see myself in other members & they weren't mad so maybe I wasn't either! The group felt like my family should have - safe & supportive.

When I heard others speak so many things chimed with my own feelings & this helped me to have faith that no, I really wasn't making it up - whatever my family said. In **CIS'ters** we give each other what we should have had as children - the safety to talk. We put the responsibility where it should be - on the abusers not the children.

Counselling with the right therapist is fantastic but it cannot do what **CIS'ters** does. The support, belief & understanding of other survivors is such powerful thing & was a big part of my healing.

I hope it helps other Members to read this too. Thank you **CIS'ters** !

HEALTH AND CARE ACT

The new Health and Care Act will come into force in July 2022. The emphasis is on integration within the NHS and between the NHS and other partners. The intention is that this will result in:

Health and care systems place greater investment in early engagement and to promote ongoing dialogue and with people and communities • Take a 'community-centred' approach: work together with local communities, who are often better placed to create solutions to the health challenges we face as society and individuals • Plans and strategies are fully informed by engagement with the public and patients and there is feedback on the impact of engagement • Focus on building relationships, partnership, transparency and trust • Encourage collaboration across systems in engaging with local populations

In recent months there has been huge activity as Integrated Care Boards (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/integrated-care-boards-in-england/>) have been created, to replace the Clinical Commissioning Groups (purchasers of healthcare i.e. award contracts to health trusts etc.). There is a good (short) video available which explains what is going to happen: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/how-does-nhs-in-england-work> or if you are interested and don't have access to the internet – you can ring your local Healthwatch organisation and ask them to send you a written update.

Independent Inquiry into TELFORD Child Sexual Exploitation

A copy of their report can be downloaded via this link: <https://www.iitcse.com/documents/chairs-final-report> - the reason for CIS' interest is that some children who have been sexually exploited outside of the home have previously experienced trauma, including familial CSA in their home.

Statement from West Mercia Police: The Inquiry, which was commissioned by Telford and Wrekin Council in April 2018, found that there were significant failings by public services, including West Mercia Police, in the handling of child sexual exploitation in the borough dating back to the mid-90s. "We are making an unequivocal apology to victims and survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation in Telford for past failings by the force."

PRE TRIAL THERAPY GUIDELINES – from CPS

The new pre-trial therapy guidelines were finally issued in May 2022. If you are a Victim/Survivor, a counsellor, or support worker, and would like to know more please use links below.

This new guidance, which has been produced by the Crown Prosecution Service with the assistance of experts and voluntary sector providers, replaces earlier guidance jointly published with the Home Office and the Department for Health in 2002 following the 'Speaking up for Justice' report. That report concluded that intimidated witnesses should not be denied the emotional support and counselling they need before trial.

The hesitancy in offering pre-trial therapy was usually due to challenges from defence solicitors that the victim had been coached in some way and their account of abuse was 'false memories'. The new guidelines are very clear on this specific topic in that it states:

There is no substantive evidence that therapy will generate false memories. It is well recognised, conversely, that victims of trauma avoid engaging in trauma-focused therapies where they are required specifically to focus on the memories due to the associated distress. Further, some victims do in fact remember details of the abuse many years later; these are not false memories but rather real memories that had until that point been repressed.

Concerns, including within the criminal justice system, have been raised that certain kinds of therapy may have the potential to produce false memories. It has been argued (without specific evidence being provided) that a number of therapeutic techniques are associated with an increased risk of false memories, including guided imagery, dream interpretation, free association and hypnotic age regression. Whilst these techniques have a recognised place in therapy, victims should be informed of how these techniques can be viewed given the (undetermined) risk of incurring false memories.

However, 'Recovered memory therapy', which involves victims identifying memories of childhood abuse that they had no prior recollection of, is not a recognised form of therapy or taught or approved by any professional body. Similarly, neither is the idea that experiences such as child sexual abuse can be 'diagnosed' on the basis of the client's presenting symptoms, even if they have no memory of them.

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/pre-trial-therapy>

BIZPEDIA – Corporate Sponsor – AMAZING EXPERIENCE – 6th JULY 2022

There are no words to really explain what this incredible funding event was like. Let's go back to the beginning. In 2019, BIZPEDIA (a management network for small/medium/large companies) voted to adopt us as their named charity for 2020. The rest is history as we know. But in early 2022 we were approached again and the promise to raise some funds was *honoured*. That in itself meant so much.

On 6th July 2022, five teams of gathered (representing: Basingstoke, Bournemouth, Poole, Portsmouth and Southampton) with the aim of raising as much money as they could for us. They started at 10.30am and finished at 3.30pm. Prior to the day we had wondered what kind of sum they might raise. We had no idea. Kate (our Senior Admin Officer) and I attended the fund-raising-event. There was a real buzz in the air. We watched in disbelief as the total kept getting higher and higher as each team fought to raise the most. Reaching £34,000. Kate was an emotional wreck by the end of the day, whilst I managed to hold it together whilst there but sobbed my heart out when I got home (snots and all).

It wasn't just about the money BIZPEDIA raised (though believe me that was so amazing and means we can (at least) begin to replace the funds we had to draw down from our reserves as 2021/2022 had been a poor year for raising income). What made it extra special was that there were so many people we didn't know that were there on the day, each working their way through their personal phone lists and ringing up as many people (colleagues and friends/family) as they could – asking for money, for **CIS'ters**.

Over the day, individuals came and chatted to Kate and/or I and it was clear that they were emotionally affected by the work we do. The volume of calls made on the day helped raise awareness of a difficult subject and, if viewed in isolation, is worth even more than the final financial amount raised by BIZPEDIA that day.

In October 2022 year, after our next Trust Board meeting, we will be updating BIZPEDIA on how we utilised their funds. The key decision 'what' rests on the outcome of current grants we have applied for elsewhere. To be in this position of not needing to lose (much needed beauty) sleep over how we will pay the rent (for example) over the next 12 months, is such an unusual situation to be in.



Picture: BIZPEDIA Evening Celebration on 7th July 2022. Gillian (far right) with representatives from the five competing teams plus Josh (3rd from left) the event Organiser.

I am still on an emotional high following such an outpouring of help and support for **CIS'ters** on that day. And the relief that came after as I realised that I needn't worry too much about the money side of running our charity, for this year at least. Especially the phone bill and so much more.

BUT – at the same time, I also knew that this was a one-off gift (from the generous heart of BIZPEDIA and their friends and colleagues) that has provided a short and welcome break from 'worry', we still have to focus on raising funds for 2023/24 and thereafter. It is going to get harder and harder. We can't lose sight of fund raising as an essential task, if **CIS'ters** is to survive be here to aid the 1000s of survivors who have yet to reach out for help and support. Thank You, BIZPEDIA. A day to remember, love as always from Gillian (Founder of **CIS'ters**, and full-time-Volunteer)



VICTIMS SURVEY 2022 - closes on 26th August 2022

Have you been a victim of, or reported a crime, in the past three years ?

Take part in the Victims Survey being undertaken by the Victims Commissioner for England (Dame Vera Baird QC)

<https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/victims-survey-2022/>

if you don't have access to internet and want to participate – please contact **CIS'ters** ASAP

A welcome to Mandy (*member since 2017*)

We are slowly rebuilding our volunteer team, and recently welcomed Mandy who has taken on the onerous role of bidding for grants (a horrible and time consuming task). We recently submitted an application to the Home Office and will hopefully know the outcome in a few months (though the election of a new Prime Minister might make that longer ?). There will be massive competition for a small amount of available funds, so although we are hopeful – we will just have to see what happens !

We have been successful in securing a grant from Joseph Rank Trust – which we are very appreciative of. Plus, we are in final stages of agreeing outcome measurements for a grant from NHS England (to cover cost of producing more podcasts etc.).

Are you able to Help CIS'ters – to fundraise for 2023 ?

Most people don't appreciate that it requires a substantial amount of money to keep **CIS'ters** going.

Although we are lucky to have such amazing volunteers, and our paid workforce are kept to a minimum, we have expenditure on areas such as office rent, phones, and so many others (including heavily subsidising the Residential Weekend Workshop).

If you are already helping – then a massive thank you. If you are struggling financially, then we understand. But, if you are in a position to help us – then probably the easiest way is via our **Give As You Live Donate Page**:

[click > Donate to CIS'ters - Surviving Rape And Sexual Abuse | Give as you Live Donate](https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/donate?cid=169541) or <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/donate?cid=169541>

Plus: You can make a donation from your bank directly into our account, which is: HSBC Sort Code 40-20-10 Account Number: 41304771 and Account Name: CISTERS

You can send a donation using a cheque made payable to CISTERS – and post to: CIS'ters, PO Box 119, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9ZF

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.

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