

# Newsletter

## Edition **January 2023**

£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 CSA victim/survivors, but this is not all that we are, or can be”

# 2023: Where We Are 'at'

## Bumper Edition

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**Email:** [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) **Phone:** 023 80 338080 (answer phone)  
.....

### Peer Support Group Sessions

We have reintroduced Peer Support Group Sessions. These are Member only meetings and places for each session will be limited. To book a place email [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) or leave a (clear) message on 023 80 338080

### Peer Support Phone Calls

These are still available and again for Members only. To book a call email [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) or leave a (clear) message on 023 80 338080

### Member Only Weekend Workshop 2023

Flyers went out for this Member Only event last year. It is scheduled for 20-21 May 2023. Unlike our other services, there is a fee to access this event, which has been heavily subsidised. Further reductions might be available for those travelling long distances or financial hardship. Please note that this event is residential for one night, bedrooms are single and also ensuite. For further information email [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) or leave a (clear) message on 023 80 338080

### Tolly's Self Help Toolkit 2023

We are in the final stages of developing a self-help toolkit, which we have titled “Tolly’s Toolkit”. Not many of you will know that we have a mascot – which was given the name of Étoile by a panel of Members. In French étoile means Star and is a lovely name and also it describes our journeys, as survivors:

*Some people think it is ‘easy’ to move on or ‘easy’ to let go – but we know that it takes effort and is a daily toil on our physical and emotional reserves.*

Etoile = (Not) easy + (it’s a TOIL) + (Not) easy (to let go)

Eventually, and can’t remember why – the name étoile became shortened to Tolly – and that name is equally loved and gives us a focus.

So.....we have begun to pilot “Tolly’s Toolkit”, which is initially only for Members.

For further information email [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) or leave a (clear) message on 023 80 338080

## Setting up a forum 2023

In recognition that nearly 50% of our Members do NOT live in Hampshire, we are in the process of setting up a forum, with initially ten members, who will meet quarterly **on-line**. This forum will be tasked with providing trustees with insights/updates and reports on the kind of issues and challenges that Members are encountering in their wider worlds. This can also inform and expand the awareness work that is undertaken by **CIS'ters**.

When applying to join this forum it will be important for individuals to appreciate that this is not a therapy group. It will have a formal role to discuss and debate key issues that have either been requested by the Trust Board, via the Manager, or issues that the forum itself considers important at that time.

The forum will be Chaired by a Member designated by the Trust Board. Terms of Reference will be established for the forum, and there will be a recruitment process. We will also be seeking a balance of not less than six members (out of the ten) who live outside of Hampshire. For further information email [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) or leave a (clear) message on 023 80 338080

## A BIG change scheduled for 2023

Gillian set up **CIS'ters** in September 1995 and the name stands for: Childhood Incest Survivors; plus the 'ters' in our title name reflects the many sibling sisters who are often abused by the same abuser/s.

Since 1995 Gillian has been a trustee and, with others, and has given her passion, commitment and time over the years. In 2012, following retirement from paid employment elsewhere, she stepped in and became our Manager, as a volunteer.

We are hugely appreciative of all that she has done, and continues to do for **CIS'ters**, including in her role as a trustee. However, she has decided to step down (in September 2023) from the Manager role. This is not unexpected, not least because she will be 72 in March 2023 and wants a future that includes more time for home and holidays.

She will continue as a trustee, for the foreseeable future, which will help with the transition to a new manager and we have now embarked on a project to recruit a paid manager on a 21-hour week contract.

We know that some of you have already indicated your anxiety about what this new person will be like and if they will be able to represent our Members in a way that is needed, following on from the pathways established by Gillian (nationally, regionally and locally) as someone with lived-experience.

Our registered constitution states that **CIS'ters** core service is aimed at providing emotional support for females age 18+ who were born female and sexually abused as female children.

The Manager is a key role and is the outward facing face/voice of **CIS'ters**, representing our Members and that we continue to be a peer-led Charity. With that in mind, our trustees will be seeking to recruit someone who can openly role model our service (in line with our constitution) as a female adult survivor, who was born female, sexually abused as a child within a family environment. Our uniqueness is the 'I Am' approach.

Currently trustees are preparing the Manager job specification in readiness for the recruitment phase.

*Gosh what a nice photo of me, I look and feel so much older these days !  
Really sad to step down from the Manager role, but know that the time has come, especially whilst I am physically well enough to be able to pass on the baton and as the wide knowledge I have gained during the past 30 years. Gillian x "*



For better to come, good must stand aside." — Carl Jung

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

Our income is always somewhat of a roller coaster. Good years, not so good years and very poor years. Financial year 2021/22 was a horrendous year; but balanced out by 2022/23 which has been a good year. Fundraising takes up a huge amount of effort, and with such a small team it can drain much needed time.

We are lucky to have such amazing volunteers, and our very small paid workforce are kept to a minimum, but we have ongoing expenditure for office rent, phones, and so much more.

All small amounts become a larger amount – so it isn't about being able to raise tons of money as an individual – but about helping to raise some. 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** > <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/donate?cid=169541>

**OR:** 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

## New Government Funded 24/7 Support Line for Victims of Rape and Sexual Abuse

For more information, look at their website > <https://247sexualabusesupport.org.uk/> which also includes an online chat facility

Or phone 0808 500 2222

As this is a relatively new support line, provided via Rape Crisis England and Wales (national umbrella organisation); **can you give us some feedback if you do use it please.**

## A MESSAGE from Julie (who became a Member in 2020)

Hi Gillian, I am going to apologise in advance 😊 for the long email but after reading the March 2022 Newsletter I suddenly felt this outpouring and wanted to share it with you and I thought it might be good to give some feedback too that you may want to share with members:

"To Hold on or not" That is the question...

The eldest of four sisters we were all abused by our "father". My sisters chose to deal with it in a very different way i.e. denial and to bury it as deep as possible. I was always the one shouting from the rafters refusing to be silenced 😊 but this was often met with anger and emotional bullying from them. I understood their reaction, the shame and the trauma was too much for them to deal with.

For years I did everything I could to meet their needs, to be quiet, to protect them and help create what I realise now was their image of a fun family. It's only been the last year that I began to ask myself what do I need? The realisation was that the relationship was not equal and the emotional *continued overleaf*

*(Continued from prior page)*

price of keeping "the secret" for over 40 years was too high. I was really unhappy and so I finally found the courage to tell them how I felt and this was met with rejection. It was sad and hurtful to realise that they weren't able to give me the support and care that I needed, so I have stepped away and we are not in contact. I don't regret the confrontation I needed to be myself and I am proud of who I am.

I have edited this quote that inspired me from the author Nikki Banas *"The only one who gets to decide your worth is you. It doesn't come from what someone else says you are worth. It's called self-worth for a reason - it comes from you. It comes from being yourself and being proud of who you are. It comes from being someone that you can count on and someone you love. (I am working on the love bit 😊). The numbers will change with time, but what won't change is who you are deep inside - beautiful, limitless, wonderful, creative, strong, capable- and that is where your worth comes from."*

I also just wanted to thank you for including (in an earlier newsletter) the piece on RJ -Restorative Justice - which I asked you about on my feedback form.

I remember watching a documentary some time ago whereby a survivor confronted her abuser (family member) and it was very powerful which impacted on me and I wanted to find out more about it. It was really encouraging to read in the newsletter how RJ helped a survivor of childhood abuse but I quite understand that it is a route that many survivors don't wish to pursue. When I confronted my father years ago I was ill equipped to deal with his response: denial, playing it down, the excuses, he tried to wriggle out of any responsibility. I was left feeling re-traumatised and I retreated into myself for many years (if only I had read The Courage to Heal Workbook 😊 at the time). I like to think I would have handled it very differently and realise I wasn't ready to disclose and confront at that time, I was still consumed with self-loathing and shame. I am happy to say after what has been years of therapy and lots of reading I am getting stronger and more equipped to deal with confrontation. Three years ago with my therapist's encouragement I did report what happened to the police. My father couldn't face the consequences of what he had done and attempted suicide, was hospitalised, and he was deemed unfit for questioning due to his psychosis and as a result the police closed the case. Maybe I would have considered going down the RJ route as an alternative. I thought I just wanted justice but it was more than that, I really wanted him to admit what he had done. I realise now I don't need to hear him say the words to move forward.....I know the truth and my words are enough. I came across this quote on the RJ website and I agree with it.

"Justice is not some abstract thing. It's a force that sits at the very centre of who [we] are ... do we have the capacity to shatter denial ... and allow suffering to speak ... allow every voice to be lifted?  
Cornel West (2015) NACRJ Conference, USA"

I gained so much from the weekend residential workshop in May 2022 thank you. One of the members recommended Reiki and I tried it and like the weekend workshop it was transformational. The emotional release was like nothing I had ever experienced. And I have now found a therapist who specialises in CSA and works using the Internal Family Systems model and it is really helping me to heal the parts that have had to separate to survive.

My father (abuser) died recently and I am not celebrating as I thought I would be but I do feel a sense of relief that he is no longer in this world. It's brought up a lot of things and I am talking this through with my therapist.

For me justice can also be about finding your voice and speaking your truth, even if we don't get the result we rightly deserve, a healing process not a destination. Thank you for everything you and the team (paid and unpaid) do at **CIS'ters** to support us.

from **Julie** *(who became a member in 2020)*





## Working definition of trauma-informed practice

Trauma-informed approaches have become increasingly cited in policy and adopted in practice as a means for reducing the negative impact of trauma experiences and supporting mental and physical health outcomes. They build on evidence developed over several decades. However, there has been a lack of consensus within the health and social care sector on how trauma-informed practice is defined, what its key principles are and how it can be built into services and systems.

The following website provides a working definition that can be more easily applied.

Published 2 November 2022 by the Office for Health Improvements & Disparities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice>



**Benches and plaques across England and Wales will soon bear messages of hope for children as part of a landmark Legacy Project by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.**

Benches and plaques are set to be placed at up to 200 locations around both countries, inscribed with uplifting messages gathered directly from victims and survivors who have taken part in the Inquiry's Truth Project. Each message has been chosen for reflection or to spark conversation, assuring victims and survivors they have been, and will continue to be, heard.

Through the 15 investigations, research programme and Truth Project, thousands of victims and survivors have made a vital contribution to the Inquiry's work, helping to pave the way for change to protect future generations of children.

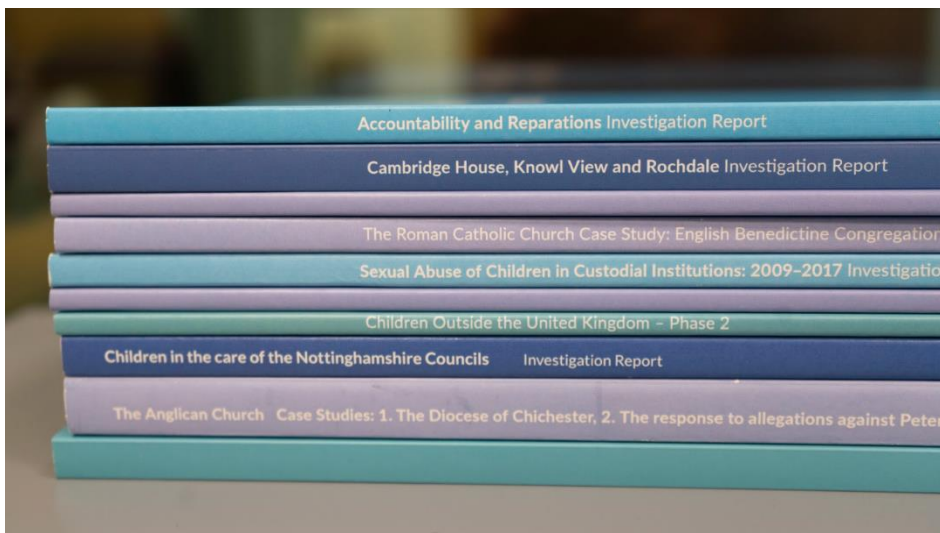
Across England and Wales, benches and plaques will form part of a long-standing, easily accessible legacy located in gardens, parks, towns and other public spaces. While every bench or plaque stands alone, the Inquiry's Legacy Project creates a communal space for reflection on shared experiences, helping victims and survivors, however far apart, to never feel alone.

Uniting this community space online, the Inquiry has also launched a new legacy Instagram page and website space, enabling users to follow the development of the project, share their own photos, and provide a digital place of connection for anyone who wishes to be involved in the project.

Benches will also feature a QR code linking to a new section of the Inquiry's website, dedicated to the Legacy Project. This will include clear signposting for help and support services, background information and further resources for those who wish to show their support. It will also feature a digital interactive map, enabling viewers to easily find the closest bench to them.

Since the Inquiry began, we have seen an increased understanding of the devastating extent and impacts of child sexual abuse, but there is still a long way to go. IICSA hopes that through the Legacy Project, they will continue to shine a light on the experiences of all victims and survivors by encouraging a more public conversation around child sexual abuse, to support real cultural change.

*more overleaf*



## IICSA Legacy

IICSA final report comprises two parts. The first, *Victims and Survivors' Voices*, reflects the accounts of over 7,000 victims and survivors who participated in the Inquiry's work. The second part is *The Inquiry's Conclusions and Recommendations for Change*. The report makes 20 powerful recommendations to government and other institutions - two of these form the centrepiece to the Inquiry's work:

- A new law of mandatory reporting making it a legal requirement for those who work in regulated activity or work in a position of trust to report child sexual abuse;
- The creation of a Child Protection Authority (CPA) in England and in Wales to secure a much stronger focus on the complex work of child protection in the relevant institutions and statutory agencies

You can download a copy of the final report > <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/inquiry/final-report>

**MORE NEWS ON FUND RAISING:** As a nation of prolific online shoppers, we were sad to see that Amazon has closed down 'AmazonSmile', which was their online *donate as you shop platform*. It didn't offer much, a fraction of the actual cost of an item, but it all added up.

However, you can still choose to donate to CIS'ters whilst shopping, through other providers such as the following:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/cisters1/> - which lists over 7000 brands

or

<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/> - which lists over 6000 stores, catering for small or large purchases

## MESSAGES FROM MEMBERS

*I find the Newsletter useful. Informative – highlights current relevant issues. Helpful as full of empathy and understanding. It is good to know there are others out here who have been through, sometimes, very similar traumatic experiences – you do not feel alone. **Cathy, who became a Member in 2007***

*I enjoy articles written by members and the poetry etc. I appreciate the help I received from you especially when I lived in the South. I wish you well for the future and hope you are able to continue with everything you do to prevent abuse as well as supporting survivors. **Carolyn, who became a Member in 2008***

**CIS'ters** helps me realise I wasn't alone and I enjoyed reading the newsletters. **Abi, who became a Member in 2017**

Whenever I hear from you it reminds me I'm not alone dealing with the after effects of this kind of abuse. **Caroline, who became a Member in 2005**

"Thank you, it means so much to be part of a supportive group. It's amazing what a feeling of community has done to my mood so far. Thank you. **Lucy, who became a Member in 2022**

### **FEEDBACK ON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OFFERED BY CIS'ters**

My therapist was very keen on the work of **CIS'ters**. She is brilliant and helped me a lot. It is good to know you are helping to train therapists like mine. Before her, I had a long line of more or less incompetent therapists ! **Jan, who became a member in 2006**

### **WHAT DOES THE POLYVAGAL PERSPECTIVE MEAN**

Trauma and the Nervous System: A polyvagal perspective. This nine-minute video was developed to give a basic introduction and overview of how trauma and chronic stress affects our nervous system and how those effects impact our health and well-being. Much of the content is based on the ground-breaking work of Stephen Porges and his Polyvagal Theory and inspired and informed by the work of thought leaders Deb Dana, Vincent Felitti, Robert Anda, Gabor Mate, Dan Siegel and Peter Levine. We encourage you to watch the video <https://youtu.be/ZdlQRxwT1l0>

### **PETITION TO SIGN – a request from a non-member survivor**

*As a survivor of sexual violence, I have found myself being blindsided by sexual violence and rape in books, where no warning is previously given or indicated at the outset or in the plot description.*

*This has caused discomfort and ultimately triggered me. Having spoken to others in the same situation, it became clear this is not something specific to me.*

*I have therefore started a petition to require publishers to include such trigger warnings on contents pages of books (so that people who are interested can search for such warnings but those who aren't minded to look aren't forced to). This is not designed to censor stories but give fair warning, as we receive on tv shows and films.*

*I was hoping that perhaps your team would support this and even consider posting it on your fb page and other social media sites.*

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/617045>

*I appreciate any support your members can provide. Nikki (not a member)*

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL STATISTICS – British Crime Survey – Focus Group

Late last year we were asked if it was possible for some of our members could take part in a focus group (1:2:1 interviews) being undertaken by ONS as they were compiling a more detailed questionnaire to be part of future BCS. We asked five of our more robust Members if they would be willing to take part (alerting them that it could be emotionally difficult), and all said yes. Below is the feedback from **Sally, who became a Member in 1998**

*The main thing that I took from the experience was how important it was for the researchers to speak to survivors, before compiling the questionnaire. There were a lot of things that they didn't seem aware of, i.e. when you are in a domestic abusive situation you are a hostage, there is no escape. And the need for a trigger warning in the introduction so that someone can either choose not to complete it or prepare themselves. Especially as this questionnaire will be sent out to random addresses- I was shocked to learn this is how they collect their information, on such an emotive subject.*

*However, I was impressed that they wanted to know how the questions affected me, so I was encouraged to think out loud.*

*Surprisingly I did find the process triggering, staring at the black and white hard facts of my childhood was difficult. But I was fully armed with my healthy coping tool box, so I recovered quickly.*

*I voiced my concern about someone receiving this questionnaire when they are coping with their life, a few years back that could have knocked me off my feet. So I suggested sending it via survivor groups or counsellors. But I understand that they are seeking a broader group of individuals to gain the bigger picture of the true extent of childhood abuse in this country. And they will include helplines with the questionnaire.*

*On the whole, the questionnaire was well written, with multiple choice answers so I didn't have to dig too deep.*

*Previously I didn't appreciate how much work goes into these surveys or how important they are. I was glad I took part in it.*

### Reflections from Gillian:

I share Sally's concerns that the form is being sent to individuals/homes without prior warning, though there will be (we understand) care taken on how each page is presented (so individuals can opt out). This was a similar approach (random calling) to a major research project in Ireland undertaken some 20 years ago – which was focused on determining the level of Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI). The methodology and outcome is still considered today, some two decades later, as being ground breaking at that time.

The Irish research was undertaken in the early 2000s and included a fast track system so that any individual who was triggered or unable to manage their emotional overload (having responded to the SAVI questionnaire (which was a phone call)) was offered immediate access to specialist counselling and support.

The statistical data that came out of the Irish research blew away any denial that abuse occurred, and a follow up undertaken 10 years later highlighted that those that did take part, were pleased that they had.

If you want to learn more about the SAVI research you can download a copy of the report, which was published in 2002 > <https://www.womensaid.ie/about/policy/natintresearch/the-savi-report/>



I'M GONNA SMILE LIKE NOTHING'S  
WRONG, PRETEND LIKE  
EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT, ACT  
LIKE IT'S ALL PERFECT, EVEN  
THOUGH INSIDE IT REALLY HURTS.

**FROM – Janie (400), who became a Member in 2001**

Hi Gillian

I wonder if any other members have had major problems accessing their GP since COVID reared its ugly head? Our GP practise went straight to using an online triage system, and *if you were lucky* you would get a telephone consultation. Which is a bit awkward when you're hard-of-hearing, but hey ho.

Now for the very distressing event I experienced. I had asked for a medication review with my preferred GP, Dr F, who is, of course, female. I said that if she wasn't available, I'd be happy to talk to Dr B, also female.

I got a text saying Dr F would be calling me. At this point, I should mention we use my husband's phone number with the GP, and my husband is authorised to speak for me - something he has to remind them of every time they call us.

Anyway, the call duly came, my husband handed me the phone, and - HORROR!! It was a *male* GP. All coherent thought left my head; I couldn't even think what I'd wanted the call for, and in the end, it achieved precisely nothing, just left the male GP thinking I was some sort of crazy woman, and me in tears.

The next time the surgery rang - some administrative thing, I think - I heard my husband say the usual "if you check her notes, you'll see I'm authorised to speak for her" then a few minutes later he told me they insisted on speaking to me. I shook my head and retreated to the kitchen. My husband, foolishly, with hindsight, followed me. At that point I had a *full on panic attack* – and my husband tells me I was shaking violently from head to foot, and hyperventilating. He says it scared him to death!

I have been trying for *many years* to get my GP surgery to understand that *I cannot deal with male GPs or nurses*. I am terrified of men other than my husband, and I am terrified of medical personnel - put the two in one package and I simply cannot cope.

I recently had to do blood pressure tests for a week at home, and I put a covering letter in with the chart I produced with the results, and in that letter I said that I wanted it prominently on my notes that due to PTSD *I cannot cope with men*, and that any and all communication with me needs to be with a woman. I'm not holding out any hope that they'll take any notice, though.

Have any other members received what I consider to be horrible treatment like that? It would be interesting to know how prevalent such a cavalier attitude is.

Ah, well; all part of life's rich tapestry - the bit where the cotton got tangled, maybe!

## FROM – Marie, who became a member in 2021

“I sometimes find myself waking and thinking I want to message/speak to Gillian. Is that OK??  
(*response sent at the time from CIS'ters: yes, it is always ok to send emails to the office and we will respond as quick as we can*).

Following on from the weekend workshop in May 2022, just wanted to say that “My village” is still very tiny and I am really struggling to imagine I can let anyone else in (for now at least). My husband is great, but I know he doesn't, and will never, “get it”. He will read articles I give him, pat me on the back, hold me etc. and then in the next breath ask me “what's the matter”. Poor bugger doesn't know what to do with me. (*CIS'ters response: yes, that is a fairly common response. Some partners want to know nothing and shut the victim/survivor down; others want to know too much (bordering on very intrusive and voyeuristic) and the rest are like your husband (and mine)*).

The new family dynamic playing on my mind is that my brother (perpetrator) no longer contributes to the family WhatsApp (this is since I ignored his last message to me at the end of August where he referred to my “silly behaviour”). He is however still reading the family chat. It feels so pathetic, so why is it irritating me? It feels like a control thing? Also, and maybe this is my real issue, no one else has commented or mentioned it. They 100% will have noticed and I suspect are communicating directly with him (as some of them do with me too).

Maybe I need to just withdraw myself, but that then feels like a victory for him. Why should I have to be the one to isolate myself because of what he did to me. Honestly, I know I sound insane but how can he still be controlling me.

I know I need to be stronger and not allow this, but I do also wish it would all just go away and go back to my old ways of just blocking it all (though obviously I know I will never put that lid back on).

*Further reflections from Gillian:*

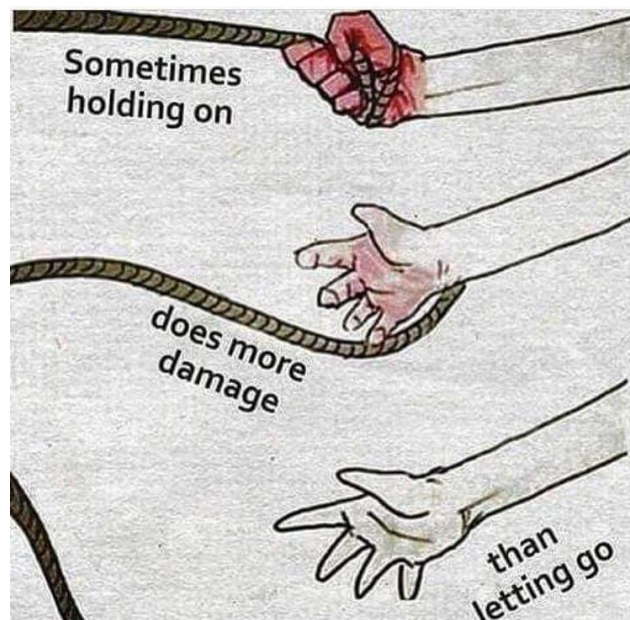
*Yes, the denial and behaviours from ‘other’ family members are as complex as the abuse itself, and adds to the emotional trauma or abuse impact.*

*Some victim/survivors are able to weave a way around different situations and find a ‘way’ of maintaining contact with those family members who they do want to stay in contact with; whilst others find it so toxic that they effectively walk away and divorce their family of origin. The decision from non-abusing family members can be as hurtful and painful – and they have really no idea of why we want them to behave differently i.e. stand up for us.*

*I guess it will always come down to the reality that their perception of the abuser, and ours, are fundamentally different – and that might be because they are swayed by financial or emotional reliance on the abuser or the wider family that has chosen sides.*

*A way forward might be to make a list of all of the adults in the family and then write down the positives and negatives of each being part of your life. Then stand back and see how much you want the individuals in your life – and what is the emotional cost to you, and that might make it clearer in terms of ‘is the price worth remaining in connection’ and if not, what other steps might you need to take i.e. for them to demonstrate their support to you (what does that look and feel like etc.).*

*One way is to have a family WhatsApp within a family WhatsApp, where you only include those that you want, but then that does not stop some individuals from forwarding different messages etc.*



## A Film Called 'Flow' – thank you to Julie, who became a member in 2006

Julie asked if we could share this film with you (called 'Flow') for which she provided some lived-experience perspective towards. It does NOT have any abuse scenes, but does highlight the emotional conflict within families. [www.https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/events/flow](http://www.https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/events/flow)

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## MALE SURVIVORS – important that we not forget them !

Although we are a support service for female survivors (age 18+) who were born females, and sexually abused as female children – it is important that we do not ignore the reality that many male children, some of them who are/were relatives of ours, were also victims of sexual abuse.

Within **CIS**ters we continue to have a passion to protect children, many of us are mothers and grandmothers, so the plight of male children ought not to be something we ignore. The following information is an insight into the impact on male children of sexual abuse, within the world of football.

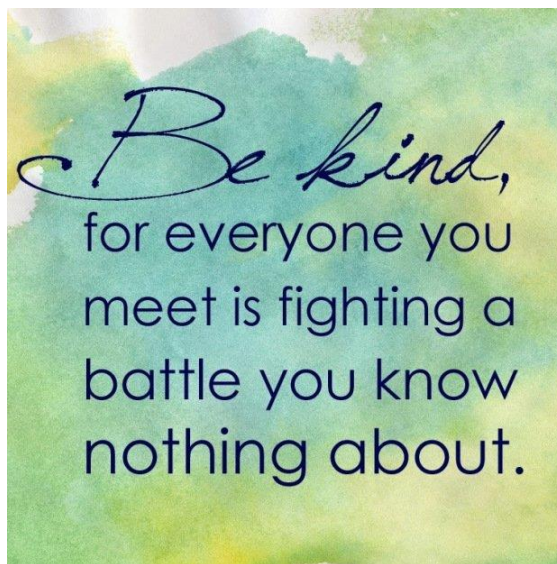
New films have been released by an organisation called 1in6.uk featuring Ian Ackley, Head of the Survivor Support Advocate Service at the Professional Footballers' Association.

Ian chats to 1in6uk's marketing manager and activist, Gary Pleece, in the first film: 'Ian Ackley, The Way Through' as he tells the story of his abuse as a young boy by football coach, Barry Bennell. Ian went from being a promising young footballer who played for both the Manchester clubs, City and United, to not being able to even face kicking a ball again.

In the second film: 'Suicidal Thoughts as a Result of Trauma' He also talks about having dark, suicidal thoughts and how he often felt that he just "didn't want to be here anymore." It was only the support of his partner and the birth of his child that actually stopped him from committing suicide. What he says in this film is both affecting and insightful and could help others who are feeling similar emotions to the ones Ian describes.

Lastly, and in his role as the *Head of The Survivor Support Advocate (SSA) service at the Professional Footballer's Association*, Ian talks about Safeguarding in Football; how important it is for all organisations not just football, how far it's come since his abuse in the game, and how we all have a role to play in protecting young people.

<https://www.1in6.uk/new-films-released-by-1in6uk-featuring-ian-ackley-head-of-the-ssa-pfa/>



### MESSAGE FROM Carrie-Ann, who became a Member in 2002

Hi Gillian,

Do you remember that research into pregnancy and childbirth that **CIS'ters** took part in ? I think another research project needs to be conducted like that previous research.

Or, the prior research needs to be sent to all departments in hospital so that they can be aware of the impacts on survivors when they attend appointments and procedures.

For example, in January 2023 I had Lipotripsy (shock wave therapy to break up kidney stones) at the urology department in my local hospital.

I had to enter a room with about 4 women working on computers on one side of the room. The bed was in the middle. There was a screen between the bed and door to corridor.

I had to remove all clothing and wear a gown and disposable pants. Whilst I was on the bed, only in gown and net pants, the door kept being opened, at one point I could clearly hear a male in the doorway.

It was very disturbing. Even the nurse that was helping the student to do the Lipotripsy was not happy and commented on this. I did ask if anyone else was coming in. She tried to reassure me but it was difficult as the door continued to be opened, people in and out.

I cannot take painkillers so was completely conscious and aware during this procedure which heightened my fear.

Could the information from the previous pregnancy and childbirth research be put into a format that could inform all departments and increase the awareness of survivors?

It was another needless traumatic experience that could have been avoided. Before the procedure whilst in the urology waiting room, every old man reminded me of my dad as many were his age now. So I was already triggered before I went into the room with the forever opening door.

Can't we use our previous hard work to improve future hospital visits?

I was overwhelmingly relieved after I had the hysterectomy because it meant I didn't have to have strangers touching me in private areas of my body. Now that's over but I am having to be manhandled again so I'm not happy. Sometimes I think my body sabotages my mind and puts me in danger.

I'm not looking forward to getting old and having to depend on strangers who are ignorant and unaware that they can easily hurt me. Can anything be done?

Hope you're all well, **Carrie-Ann**



*I completely get what Carrie-Ann is saying. As someone who is increasingly having bits of my body beginning to fail I need to access health services more often. I do, in advance, explain to the booking team/clinical staff, that I am a trauma victim and ask that the hospital staff all be women. In the main that is what happens, but on the occasion I have an experience like Carrie-Ann did and it is upsetting and ought to have been avoided. The research that she mentions about Pregnancy and Birthing was undertaken by Elsa Montgomery and can be found at > <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/pbpaftercsa>*

*We and others continue to raise the issue for research into the impact of sexual abuse into adulthood, and focusing on physical ailments which might or might not be attributed to the initial abuse, but also the lack of trauma understanding when accessing health care settings.*

*The 'voice of survivors' who give us feedback, as Carrie-Ann has done in this instance, help us to provide the lived experience perspective and evidence of the need for improved care.*

*So, please let us know if you have had similar difficulties and challenges when accessing health care.*

## WHAT MASK SHALL I WEAR TODAY ?

At times I am still wearing a mask, for different reasons- not just COVID!

Masking pain for health reasons! Masking because you're dealing with someone you don't have time for or not particularly fond of! It's still wearing a mask!

I am lucky to have a good family, children and siblings, friends, colleagues & work colleagues.

But, despite all that, I still need to wear a mask! Some days, I'm transported back to that young girl, frightened to tell what has happened to me! I look to my music for bringing me back to the cheeky, vibrant, strong woman, I've become!

Below are some of my favourite songs, that help uplift my mood:

Elton John's – 'I'm still standing'  
Labi Siffre's – 'Something inside so strong'  
Gloria Gaynor's 'I will Survive!' & I have survived!

Remember: try and give yourself treats, be kind to yourself and focus on ways to improve life.

**Best wishes to all from Cathie, who became a Member in 1997**

## Podcast: edition 11 "The Power of Music"

If you have not yet accessed our podcast channel 'Hidden Harm' you might want to know that we have included an edition that discusses how music and words can help lift us when times feel too tough. <https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/21517157>

## A Massive Thank You to Dr Elsa Montgomery – for her work as one of our trustees

There really are insufficient words to describe Elsa. Tall, Graceful, Calm, Welcoming, and so much more. She has been part of **CIS'ters** for in excess of 10 years, and agreed to become a trustee in 2013 (at that time our registration with charities commission was number 1123125). In 2020 we upgraded our registration to something called a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is why we have the new charities registration number of 1184857.

Due to huge pressures of work in her professional role as a midwifery lecturer, she has had to step back from being one of our trustees. We are soon to see her to show our appreciation (with a small gift) and to wish her well. Within her work she continues to raise awareness of the sensitivity that needs to be taken with patients and colleagues who may well have been victims of sexual abuse or sexual violence.

## WHAT ABOUT COOKIES

Not the following kind of cookies! - You can have a cuppa and one of them (or maybe two) after you've read this!



Instead, let's explore those annoying/sometimes scary message that pop up every time you go onto a website (even ours).

Cookies, the computer kind, are there to collect information that is useful to the site that owns the website. It provides 'traffic' or 'footfall' data. In other words, how often is the site visited and so forth.

It is normal nowadays to have a cookie notice on websites, for visitors to accept or decide whether they want to include, or not, the additional cookies that a website owner might wish to collect data for.

We have a secure website (you can tell this by the closed padlock if you look where the website address is).

Once we had introduced the cookie, in early 2022, we noticed that the numbers visiting our website had dropped and it was clear this was most likely in response to the presence of the cookie. It is scary being a victim of sexual abuse and searching out help, and even more so when you encounter a cookie on the way into a website like ours i.e. subject matter sexual abuse, which is slightly different than, say, shopping at Tesco or Asda.

So Jo, a lovely lady who manages our website, created the short article below to explain a bit more about what cookies are, and what they do.

The information below has been copied from a very helpful website and you can learn more if you click on the link > <https://www.aboutcookies.org/>

In terms of the **CIS'ters** website – we would be really grateful if when you access our website that you permit 'Strictly Necessary Cookies' and 'Performance Cookies' as these will allow us:

- To count visits to our website.
- They also help us to know which pages are the most and least popular and see how visitors move around the site.

All information these cookies collect is aggregated and therefore anonymous. If you do not allow these cookies we will not know when our site has been visited and will not be able to monitor its performance. We need to be able to demonstrate to potential funders that our website is very useful to those accessing it, but can't do that if you have turned off cookies. So we do need your help.

### What Is a Cookie?

A cookie can be thought of as an internet user's identification card, which tells a website when the user has returned. The information the cookie contains is set by the server and it can be used whenever the user visits a specific website. A web-page-server is basically the system that operates the website.

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## Can Cookies Threaten a Website Users' Privacy?

Cookies are NOT stored on a computer's hard drive. They are UNABLE to access the hard drive on your computer/tablet/phone. A cookie is unable to access any other information saved on your device or get a user's e-mail address etc. They only contain and transfer to the web-page-server as much information as the user has, themselves, disclosed to a specific website.

Companies that sell internet advertising can often embed a cookie on the user device (but we don't sell anything, so that will not happen with any of our cookies). Where cookies have been downloaded, these are companies that sell internet advertising on behalf of other websites. We have all, as computer users, visited sites that ask about marketing and in those cases, like shopping channels, it may be possible that user's information, such as surfing habits, is passed to third party websites without the users' knowledge or consent. This is the most common reason for people rejecting or fearing cookies.

## Are Cookies Dangerous?

No. Cookies are small pieces of text. They are NOT computer programs, and they can't be executed as code or used to spread computer viruses. Modern versions of some search engines (such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox and Netscape browsers) allow users to opt to set their own limitations to the number of cookies saved on their hard drives.

## Be Proactive In Managing and Deleting Cookies

Web browsers/search engines give users control over what cookies are stored, but each works slightly differently. This link > <https://www.aboutcookies.org/how-to-manage-and-delete-cookies> , explains the different ways you can manage cookies (on your computer/tablet/phone) depending upon which browser/search engine you use.

**Cookie Law** *(the legal bit, for our protection, and why we now have to contend with the cookie pop ups)*

PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) means that a website operator must not store information or gain access to information stored in the computer or other web-enabled device of a user unless the user "**is provided with clear and comprehensive information about the purposes of the storage of, or access to, that information**" and "**has given his or her consent**". The consent requirement in the UK Regulations replaces the previous position which provided that visitors should be given the option to refuse cookies.

You can read more about the Cookie Law here <https://www.aboutcookies.org/eu-cookie-law> . If you have any further question/concerns about cookies please get in touch with us via [helpme@cisters.org.uk](mailto:helpme@cisters.org.uk) We have created our website so that you can access help and information about Child Sexual Abuse and we would hate to think that the cookie policy is stopping you from doing so.

## FAKE EMAILS ON THE INCREASE

We know ourselves, and others have reported similar, that fake emails are on the increase. Just want to remind everyone to be alert.

On receipt they look more often look ok, as if from a legitimate sender but further checking can reveal that they are not from the 'named' sender. If something looks suspicious, please take care.

If you receive something that you can identify as a scam or potential to exploit money – forward the email to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)



**DOING YOUR BEST  
MIGHT LOOK DIFFERENT  
EACH DAY  
AND THAT IS OK**

Today is proving to be an ok kind of day  
Yesterday was an awful day  
Tomorrow, I will just have to wait and see  
But I will do my best to remember that

I do have amazing days, good days and they are what keeps me going when the not so good days turn up.

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**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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