



🎄 NWG Network Christmas Message 🎄

....Time for Change

As we come to the close of another year, we want to take a moment to reflect on what we've achieved together in 2025.

It has been a year of collaboration, growth and impact across the **NWG Network** and I am extremely proud of the work we have achieved.

Now it is time for a change and after 14 years as CEO of the NWG Network, I have decided to retire.



I started to look at the issues of child sexual exploitation back in 1998 - a time when we referred to children as prostitutes until the sexual offences legislation changed in 2002. We now recognise it for what it is and the huge impact it has on children and their families for a lifetime.

Since 2011 I have had the honour of leading the NWG Network working with so many great individuals and teams who are dedicated to making responses better for those identified as victims.



But in reality, neither I or my team could have had the same impact if I had not had the privilege of collaborating with so many people who have directly experienced abuse and how it affected and continues to affect them and their families.



You have all been so willing to help create an environment that makes it harder to abuse children through exploitation and easier to identify those who have become victim to it. For your engagement I am extremely grateful, thank you and I wish you all well.

Matt Thompson who has been my deputy will be taking over as CEO, and I am positive the organisation will be in good hands.

I have been given the great honour of being asked to be a Patron of the NWG Network, so I am sure that will enable me to still keep abreast of the great working being done by you all.

The Year in Review....

We have updated & launched our digital [Disruption Toolkit](#). The original toolkit produced in 2019 has now been converted into a digital format and allows all safeguarding partners to search for disruption methods/tactics more quickly. This has been an on-going project with an outside tech company and will continue to be developed from now on.

We have continued to attend the national transitional reference group meetings, NWG is the only 3rd sector organisation to be invited to this national meeting which allows us to support areas to develop and implement their transitional safeguarding responses across children and adult safeguarding partnerships.

Our most recent exploitation and transitional safeguarding forum was successful and had over 300 attendees booked to share and learn from practical and strategic examples of partnership and collaborative working.

We have facilitated meetings between safeguarding children's partnerships to look at how current practices can be enhanced. The current plan is to release a blog around further education and the importance of transitional safeguarding to the sector and a briefing on post 16 safeguarding.

We have attended several regional further education meetings and have also met with the national association of colleges who have been supportive of NWG's work in this area.

We ran our first networking forum for parent support. This was well attended and there was a clear appetite for it to continue bi-yearly. We have met with several FE colleges to look at the response to how they work with parents/carers and capture the learning outcomes.

[Missing People](#), have agreed to support a joint blog highlighting the key areas and learning. We were pleased to produce and distribute a quick access briefing paper for professionals to support them with their missing response to exploited children and young people.

We have established a regular EDI forum, where our network can focus on EDI issues in a safe place. This has supported members to raise and highlight the importance of EDI within their services and embed it in their practice.



A key highlight for the NWG is the huge success of our annual virtual conference,

Where is CSE in 2025?



With over 300 delegates booked to attend the Conference was well received with lots of positive comments about its focus on how the learning has already impacted on local responses to exploitation.

The conference focused on key themes including transitional safeguarding, the role of the education sector in tackling child exploitation, support required for families, parents, carers and wider communities and a focus on the importance of diversity through an intersectional lens. We were especially honoured by the attendance of Jess Phillips MP, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls.

Our **SCIMA** project continues its success, the number of members in clubs we certify has now passed 160,000.



Our map now displays over 2100 clubs for parents to choose from. With the support of the Active Partnerships Sport Welfare Officers network we have now achieved our target of successfully supporting over 140 clubs to complete our Quality Assurance process.

Home Office - Victim and Survivor Consultation Group

Delivery on the Home Office-convened victim and survivor consultation group has been substantial and high impact. The work successfully established a framework for engagement, ensuring that a number of victims' and survivors' voices meaningfully shaped the Home Office's work as it developed and progressed the National Inquiry.

The Scout Association - Safeguarding Reviews, Policy Reform, and Practice Improvements

Our support for The Scout Association has been extensive and high impact, resulting in tangible improvements across safeguarding policy, guidance, culture, and learning.

The review of the safeguarding policy and its associated procedures has strengthened clarity, consistency, and trauma-informed practice throughout the organisation. Work on the Duty of Candour, complaints handling, and organisational apologies has provided TSA with survivor-centred, ethically robust frameworks for responding to harm, including specific guidance for non-recent abuse.



Safeguarding in Sports

This year to date, NWG Network trained 518 people as Active Bystanders across grass roots sport.

New course formats have been added, including a 3-hour training session for apprentices in sport and leisure sectors.



Impact on knowledge, skills and understanding: Survey results showed improvements in the already strong results of participants' knowledge, ability, and application of skills in 2025 compared to 2024, a summary is listed below,

- Increased knowledge and understanding of CE in 2025 compared with 2024
- Increased ability to identify, disrupt and respond to CE scored higher in 2025 compared to in 2024.
- Increased ability to put knowledge and skills to tackle CE into practice scored higher in 2025 compared to in 2024.

Key Overarching Highlights from This Year:

Expanded Partnerships: We welcomed new members and strengthened relationships across sectors, ensuring a united approach to safeguarding.

Training & Awareness: Delivered thousands of training sessions and resources, equipping professionals with the tools to protect vulnerable individuals.

Policy Influence: Contributed to national discussions and shaped guidance that improves responses to exploitation.

Support Services: Continued to provide vital support to frontline practitioners and those affected, ensuring no one feels alone in this work.

Innovation: Launched new digital tools and resources to make information more accessible and actionable.

None of this would have been possible without your dedication and commitment. Together, we've made a real difference—and that's something to celebrate. As we look ahead to 2026, let's carry forward this momentum and continue working towards a safer future for all.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year from everyone at NWG Network