



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION & INFORMATION SHEET

Research into the health and wellbeing of frontline responders to child sexual exploitation and abuse online

About the research

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the toll that cumulative exposure to trauma can take on individuals working in professions that respond to child sexual abuse and exploitation online. The nature of this work can include content moderation on online platforms, analysing content for hotlines, providing psychosocial support to victim-survivors and investigating suspected cases of online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

While technology such as AI, chatbots and other tools can aid in certain aspects of the response, humans will continue to play a pivotal role because of the nuanced understanding required of culture and contexts for certain decisions, emotional intelligence, and the ability to provide empathetic support tailored to the unique needs of each individual. This critical work depends on their continued efforts in supportive environments.

WeProtect Global Alliance are partnering with the [Virtual Global Taskforce](#) (VGT) to begin a new research study on the health and wellbeing of frontline responders. The VGT, with [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) (RCMP) as the lead organisation, are conducting research with law enforcement participants. WeProtect Global Alliance are conducting research with the same aims and seeking other frontline responders as participants. The objectives of this research are to:

- understand the health, well-being, and work impacts of responding to online child sexual exploitation and abuse in a professional capacity,
- assess work-related risk and protective factors, including the current state of support systems available for digital first responders,
- provide tailored recommendations aimed at enhancing work practices for a more robust response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, ensuring its sustainability, fostering response resilience, and improving staff retention.

If you work in or with a child rights organisation responsible for detecting, flagging, removing, and investigating online child sexual abuse and exploitation, or if you provide support to victim-survivors of such abuse, we would like to invite you to confidentially share your experiences with our team of trauma-informed researchers. The types of roles

we would like to talk to include content moderators, hotline analysts, and safeguarding leads. This is not a prescriptive list, so if you consider yourself a frontline responder in some other way, please do consider talking with us! Frontline responders are essential to combating child sexual abuse, and the sustainability of this critical work depends on their continued efforts in supportive environments.

Who can participate in this research?

We define frontline responders as the professional individuals who are first alerted to potential online child sexual abuse and exploitation cases and who are tasked with starting to address the situation.

We are looking for participants including:

- Digital investigators with responsibility for investigating child sexual abuse and exploitation online
- Content moderators with social media platforms with responsibility for detecting, flagging and removing child sexual abuse and exploitation material
- Hotline and helpline analysts with responsibility for responding to reports of child sexual abuse and exploitation material online
- Safeguarding leads from organisations that work in the field of responding to online sexual abuse

You should have at least two years of work experience responding to child sexual abuse and exploitation online.

You must have access to counselling services or referrals to relevant support organisations through your current work.

What does taking part in the research involve?

You will first need to complete a screening form to determine whether you fit the study criteria. If you are then selected to take part, we will explain the research project to you and ask you to complete a consent form,

We will then arrange a Microsoft Teams interview lasting approximately 60 minutes where we will ask you a series of questions to understand your work and experiences which impact on your wellbeing.

This interview will be organised at a mutually convenient time and date in August/September. You can choose whether to have their camera on or off during the interview.

Researchers will take notes during the interview and the interviews will also be audio-recorded on Teams.

You will be assigned a pseudonym (either a different name or a number) to ensure anonymity. All personal information will be strictly confidential, and no identifying details will be disclosed in the final publication. This protects the privacy of everyone being interviewed so they can share their insights freely and honestly.

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you can withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If you withdraw, we will dispose of any information we have gathered from you during the study within seven days. During the interview, you can also decline to answer any question or request that we stop/pause the audio recording for any reason.

What happens to my information?

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants will be safeguarded throughout the research process. Personal details will only be accessible to the research team and will not be retained or stored. All data collected will be securely managed on password protected drives, adhering to stringent data protection protocols and in compliance with UK GDPR regulations. After we have transcribed the audio recording, we will permanently delete them from our records.

The information you provide will be anonymised and then analysed to explore recurring patterns, themes and narratives across all the interviews we conduct.

A report will be created to present these findings and to make recommendations to improve the health and well-being of frontline responders.

Would you like to take part?

If you feel you fit the research criteria and would like to be part of this important study to improve the health and wellbeing of frontline responders, please register your interest through this online [form](#) by 17.00 BST on **Friday 23 August 2024**. We will see if you meet the criteria and, if appropriate, contact you to arrange a time for the interview.

If you have any questions about the research, send an email to researchconsultant@weprotectga.org, and our research team will contact you.

About WeProtect Global Alliance

WeProtect Global Alliance is a global movement bringing together more than 300 organisations from across governments, the private sector and civil society working together to transform the global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online. The Alliance is the largest and most diverse global movement dedicated to ending child sexual exploitation and abuse online. It supports and generates political commitment and practical approaches to make the digital world safe and positive for children, preventing sexual abuse and long-term harm.

Should you wish to find out more about WeProtect Global Alliance and our work, please visit www.weprotect.org. You can also stay up to date with our latest news by [subscribing to our monthly newsletter](#), or following us on social media.