



**Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding**

Pre-Trial Therapy for Child Witnesses / Victims and Suspects

Foreword to Fundamental Principles and CPS Guidance



Foreword

In line with the principles of Achieving Best Evidence, the link below sets out fundamental principles and guidance which has been published by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) regarding pre-trial therapy for child witnesses / victims. These same principles also apply for child suspects and where pre-trial therapy is required, the health and well-being of the child will be a priority.

It is not a decision for criminal justice practitioners and there is no requirement to delay access to such therapy as a result of any on-going police investigation or prosecution.

The court should, of course, be made aware that pre-trial therapy is taking place with a child witness / victim or suspect but practitioners must understand and comply with all relevant legal requirements as regards data protection / disclosure of the content of that therapy. Such requests must be compliant with legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and be considered a reasonable line of enquiry in the circumstance or so directed by the court, with a clear purpose and scope referenced. It cannot be an unfocused request simply to browse files for possible relevance.

*In the case of child suspects, it is likely that such therapy and safeguarding discussions will also require dialogue with the child's Defence Team, but **it is not** a Police or CPS decision – albeit they should be informed that a child is receiving such therapy.*

[Pre-Trial Therapy - Fundamental Principles | The Crown Prosecution Service \(cps.gov.uk\)](https://www.cps.gov.uk/pre-trial-therapy-fundamental-principles)

If you are a practitioner working with a child witness, victim, or suspect, helpful resources regarding pre-trial therapy are available through the Bluestar Project website at <https://www.bluestarproject.co.uk/>. The Bluestar Project was an exploratory research study which was funded by the Home Office Childhood Sexual Abuse Support Services Transformation Fund. The project was sponsored by the Green House, a specialist children's sexual violence therapy and support service.

The Bluestar Project has worked closely with the CPS, Police, and multi-agency services to develop a collection of free, evidence based resources that can support practitioners when working with child witnesses, victims and suspects. Specific guides are available as detailed below:

- [Service Level Protocol/Policy](#) for you to use locally
- Easy read guides for [Therapists](#) and [ISVAs](#)
- A guide-to-[note-taking pre-trial](#)
- Pre-Trial [Leaflet for Adult Clients](#)
- A guide to [Running Groups Pre-Trial](#)
- A guide to [Responding to Notes Requests](#) from the Police