

## Charity echoes Ofsted concerns on safeguarding disabled children

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A report that warns that disabled children in England need better protection against neglect or abuse has been welcomed by a national charity.

The [Ann Craft Trust \(ACT\)](#) says the report by Ofsted, which says that disabled children are more likely to be victims of abuse but are less likely to have a child-protection plan to safeguard them, has highlighted major gaps in provision and that more need to be done by local authorities to tackle these worrying issues.

The charity, which is based at The University of Nottingham, works tirelessly to safeguard disabled children from abuse and has repeatedly expressed its frustration at what it describes as a 'dogged determination' by the [public sector](#) and politicians to ignore the specific needs of the disabled child.

Chief Executive of the Ann Craft Trust Deborah Kitson said:

"Safeguarding children has been a high priority for government and the public sector for many years but the needs of the disabled child have always been an 'add on' to policies and consultations despite research that has clearly evidenced the specific vulnerabilities and increased risk for disabled children.

## **Same issues**

"ACT completed research in 2000 looking at the [sexual abuse](#) of disabled children and the findings reflect those found today, including indicators being ignored, health appointments being missed and a lack of understanding about how to communicate with the disabled child. Many professionals working in safeguarding have not received specific training about disability and so may only become aware of the abuse of a disabled child when they have concerns about their [siblings](#). Twelve years on, despite this work and the recommendations that came from it, the same issues are being raised.

"Disabled children are more likely to suffer abuse than their non-disabled peers and yet at present they do not have the same protection. Agencies need to review their practice including ensuring that their policies, procedures and training encompass the needs of the disabled child and to equip those with the responsibility to safeguard children to have the confidence and the expertise to also safeguard their disabled peers."

## **Journey through the system**

Ofsted's [Protecting Disabled Children: Thematic Inspection Report](#) examined the effectiveness of child protection work for disabled children in 12 [local authorities](#), covering 173 cases and tracing the child's

journey through the system to understand how well disabled children are protected from harm.

The Ann Craft Trust works with staff in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors to protect people with learning disabilities who may be at risk from abuse. It also provides training on all issues regarding safeguarding of [disabled children](#).

Provided by University of Nottingham

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