

**Voice of the Child Workshop:
Private Family Law Proceedings Involving Sexual Abuse**

25 March 2021

13.00 – 16.30

Venue: By zoom and invitation only (held under Chatham House Rule for participant confidentiality)

This workshop will explore the treatment of sexual abuse allegations in the family court in England and Wales, with a particular focus on amplifying the voice of the child who has made allegations of sexual abuse against a parent. Assessments of harm to children in private law cases has recently been the focus of an expert review commissioned by the [Ministry of Justice](#). The review identified the treatment of sexual abuse allegations as an under-researched but major threat to the safety of children. The aim of the workshop is to respond to the need identified by the review to build an evidence base with key stakeholders, including people with lived experience of the family courts.

Outline Programme:

13.00 – 13.10	Introductions
13.10 – 14.00	Panel 1 – Amplifying the voice of the child
14.00 – 14.50	Panel 2 – Support for children during private family law proceedings
14.50 – 15.00	Break
15.00 – 16.00	Panel 3 – The role of the family court in responding to allegations of sexual abuse: challenges and possibilities
16.00 – 16.30	Discussion of issues and next steps

Points for discussion will include:

1. The role and importance of support for children to help amplify their voices;
2. The lived experience of people who have experienced the treatment of sexual abuse allegations in the family courts;
3. The role of ‘parental alienation’ and its impact on how sexual abuse allegations are treated;
4. How the family court responds currently and the challenges for the law where allegations of sexual abuse against children are raised;
5. How to further support the family courts to deal with this area moving forward.

Joining details will be shared with those who register an interest. For further information or if you would like to register to attend, please contact Jo Harwood (jh18437@essex.ac.uk) with your name, affiliation and contact details.