

Guidelines for First Responders in Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Cases



News

Cornelia Riehle

On 18 November 2022, Europol published the public version of a new set of [Guidelines for First Responders in Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Cases](#). The guidelines are targeted at persons that, in their professional capacity, are among the first to be informed about a (potential) case of child sexual abuse and are required to (re)act in order to prevent further harm to the child. While such persons may include those working in education and medicine, the guidelines are especially targeted at persons working in law enforcement.

The guidelines start with an overview of the rights of victims, with a special focus on children being particularly vulnerable. They emphasize the need to not generalize a situation, to avoid any discrimination or possible devaluation of the victims' rights, and to have the best interest of the child as a guiding principle and primary concern throughout all activities carried out by the first responder. In a second step, the guidelines provide scenario examples aiming to help first responders understand how to support such victims and what they should keep in mind and pay attention to. Detailed information is given on the so-called "5Fs" in trauma, i.e. five different automatic and instinctive responses to fear and trauma that can be seen in the context of sexual assault: fight, flight, freeze, flop, and friend.

The [restricted version](#) of the guidelines has been embedded into the European Cybercrime Training and Education Group's (ECTEG) e-learning tool for first responders (eFIRST). For more information, interested members of law enforcement can reach out to Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3).

AUTHOR

Cornelia Riehle

Deputy Head of Section
Academy of European Law

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