

# Standing together against sexual violence

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UNITED  
FOR BOYS



**Family**  
for every child

# STRONGER TOGETHER

**We're calling out for brave organisations who are willing to stand up to sexual violence affecting boys.**

With sexual violence affecting an estimated 1 in 6 boys worldwide, it's high time we break the silence and face this taboo head on.

It's a tough subject to talk about, and even tougher to change. In fact, it requires change to happen across the whole system of organisations that work with children – from sexual abuse support services, to educators, law-makers, the media, and more. That's why we're asking you to join us in being United For Boys.

## WHY BOYS?

All around the world, millions of children – girls and boys alike – are affected by sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful behaviours.

All children deserve a childhood free of these threats. And because boys and girls have different experiences and needs when it comes to sexual violence, we need to ensure that we are working to support them both. Thankfully, a range of initiatives already exist to help girls, and whilst more work still needs to be done, many parts of the world have no services available for boys at all. United For Boys is an effort to start changing this situation so we can work towards having services that can support all children, regardless of gender, whilst understanding and celebrating their differences.

Research about sexual violence affecting boys is lacking, so we have been focusing on this over the last year. Here are some of the key things we've learnt:

- Sexual violence affects all children, but differences exist in how each gender experiences, discloses and recovers from it. We need to recognise and build on these differences to create ways to effectively improve the situation for everyone.
- Boys are highly unlikely to disclose experiences of sexual abuse. The reasons for this include the stigma of being a victim, the fear of being labelled as gay if the perpetrator is male, and the lack of recognition that they have been abused due to lack of awareness of the issue.
- Sexual violence affecting boys is a taboo in many countries around the world. This often leads to us being silent on the issue, which means we're not tackling it; and this puts boys at a higher risk. To change the situation, we need to change the conversation first.
- Worldwide ideas of masculinity can have a serious effect on boys' willingness to disclose sexual violence and to seek help. Notions of what it means to be strong and brave can mean that it is less likely that they will ever talk about their experiences, leading to further long-term damage to their wellbeing. It's crucial that we learn to tackle damaging ideas of what it means 'to be a man' in order to create a brighter future.
- Long-term effects of sexual violence can include a higher instance of mental health problems that can lead to self-harm, depression, anxiety, hostility, and suicide.
- On a global scale, the services available to boys affected by sexual violence are severely lacking. In some countries no such services exist altogether, and in others services are focused primarily on girls. Because of this, boys often have nowhere to turn.

**We believe that the best way to achieve change is by engaging professionals who can make changes to the system a reality for children worldwide. That's why we've created the United For Boys Charter.**



## Our Charter

As a signatory of this Charter, we commit to being united for boys in the face of sexual violence. Through these six key principles we will fly the flag for change, creating a brighter future for all of society. These are:



Raising awareness of sexual violence affecting boys amongst professionals who work with children, and committing to develop an organisational strategy for proactively building staff's knowledge and skills so they feel informed and equipped to best support them.



Ensuring that all our services that can support boys are designed and managed in ways that make them feel included, accepted and welcome; by taking the time to actively understand and take into account their needs and wishes



Providing easily accessible, appropriate and high quality information to help educate children and families on sex, sexual health, sexuality and internet safety; and ensuring that this includes information relating to sexual violence affecting boys



Advocating for changes in the law that could ensure that boys affected by sexual violence are better protected and supported, and that victims are not criminalised



Changing the conversation around our culturally-embedded harmful social norms around gender



Challenging damaging narratives around sexual violence affecting boys, including in the media; and offering support on how to better frame the issue

**Support on implementing this Charter is available from Family for Every Child, an alliance of local children's organisations working around the world. This is just one of the ways we are building a better future for children and families through innovating, inspiring, and taking direct action.**

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

### How we'll support you

If you join us as a signatory organisation, you'll be able to access tailored support and guidance from Family for Every Child; as well as being able to publicly display your commitment to tackling sexual violence affecting boys by using our campaign materials and badge.

Our support includes:

- Support from the RISE Learning Network, which promotes and facilitates learning on recovery and (re)-integration for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation
- Opportunities to share your knowledge and experience through the RISE Learning Network and Family for Every Child's communication networks
- Training opportunities
- Webinars
- Downloadable guidance and resources
- In-person conferences
- An opportunity to connect with the team at Family for Every Child with questions on best practice

### Showing your commitment

If you join us, we'll proudly share the news on our website and social media.

We'll also provide you with a signatory's pack, including digital files containing our logo that you can use on your website or in printed media; as well as a printable version of our Charter that you can display where you work.

## JOIN US!

If you represent or work for an organisation interested in signing up for the Charter, please contact us for further information on how to sign up – and the support you could receive to implement the Charter.

### There are three steps to signing up:

- 1 Complete the contact form at [www.familyforeverychild.org/unitedforboys](http://www.familyforeverychild.org/unitedforboys).
- 2 We will get in touch for any further information we need to add you to our list of signatories.
- 3 We'll send you a signatory pack including guidance on how to implement the commitments, and a range of tools and resources you can use to promote your commitment online and in print.

# Family for Every Child

## Ideas. Inspiration. Action.

Family for Every Child is a network of local children's organisations from around the world. By coming together as one, we ensure that locally-grown ideas get the global attention they deserve; and that individually all our member organisations have new opportunities to flourish and grow.

We're led by our members, whose in-depth understanding of their context enables them to develop tried-and-tested models that lead to change for the families and communities with which they work. They all have years of experience in addressing the drivers leading to children being separated from their families and examples of how families can be strengthened; and can demonstrate what the situation is for alternative care in their countries and inform what changes need to happen. Through collaboration, cooperation and coordination we adapt their innovations and learnings to new contexts around the world.

By coming together as a global alliance, we have a stronger voice than our members would individually. This gives our members a greater opportunity to influence governments and policy-makers around the world, turning their locally-grown ideas into world-changing action.

To learn more about becoming a member of Family for Every Child, contact a member of our Scoping Team, Gemma and Nicole, who can be reached at the following email addresses:

[gemma.gilham@familyforeverychild.org](mailto:gemma.gilham@familyforeverychild.org)  
[nicole.ristic@familyforeverychild.org](mailto:nicole.ristic@familyforeverychild.org)



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