



11 Systemic Issues arising in Case Study 40 - The response of the Australian Defence Force to allegations of child sexual abuse

The systemic issues arising in Case Study 40 are:

- organisational understanding of the scope and impact of child sexual abuse
- the importance of providing children with trusted adults to whom they can disclose sexual abuse
- the importance of educating and reassuring children that it is safe to report child sexual abuse and that they will receive support and assistance where they do so
- the culture of secrecy and barriers to disclosure in a hierarchical organisational structure in which alleged abusers remain as superiors
- the increased risk of child sexual abuse occurring where cadets and staff do not receive appropriate and correct information, training and supervision
- internal responses by institutions to allegations, and risk management, of child sexual abuse, including complaint handling and risk management
- an institution's disciplinary process for dealing with alleged perpetrators, especially where they have voluntarily resigned from the institution
- the impact of internal investigative mechanisms on criminal investigations
- developing an organisational culture that recognises and embraces the principle of acting in the best interest of children within its responsibility, especially where children represent only a small portion of the organisation's personnel.

