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Child sexual exploitation perpetrators research programme, report 4

Interventions for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation

A scoping study

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Acknowledgements

About Nacro

Nacro is a national social justice charity with more than 50 years' experience changing lives, strengthening communities and reducing crime. We house, we educate, we support, we advise and we speak out for and with disadvantaged young people and adults. We are passionate about what we do. We never give up. We use our extensive knowledge and experience to help the most vulnerable in the community to move on in their lives and to reach their full potential and aspirations. We do this by addressing social exclusion, inequality of opportunity and deprivation.

Our services include providing supported housing to vulnerable people, delivering education, training and apprenticeships to young people and adults up to 25, supporting people to access employment, promoting better health and services to offenders and their families inside and outside of prisons.

Nacro's Justice team works with young and adult offenders in prisons and in the community. We offer a wide range of services for different client groups; we support people to change their lives, and prevent and reduce crime and the risk of reoffending. In South Yorkshire and Essex we work in prisons and through the gate and into the community. We deliver interventions to help reduce reoffending and also work to find constructive and useful community projects for those subject to unpaid work as part of a community punishment. We deliver practical support, information, advice and guidance from first reception into prison, to release and the transition through the gate and into the community and are committed to helping individuals build positive futures.

About the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has been established to help bring about significant and system-wide change in how child sexual abuse is responded to locally and nationally.

We do this by identifying, generating and sharing high-quality evidence of what works to prevent and tackle child sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation), to inform both policy and practice.

The Centre is funded by the Home Office and led by Barnardo's, and works closely with key partners from academic institutions, local authorities, health, education, police and the voluntary sector.

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Summary

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has become an issue of growing concern over the last decade. Understanding and identification of how to work with victims has increased in this period, but little is currently known about those who perpetrate these offences. To prevent further cases of CSE, it is critical that more is known about the individuals involved and their journey through the criminal justice system. This information could help to influence the development of effective interventions for those individuals, and reduce their risk of reoffending.

This scoping study was part of a programme of research commissioned by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, concerning individuals who sexually exploit children. The study's purpose was to:

‣ ascertain whether any current interventions exist specifically for adult male perpetrators of CSE involving physical contact

‣ identify areas of promising practice and any evidence of their effectiveness

‣ gather expert views on what an appropriate approach to an effective intervention for this group would be.

The study was designed to review existing evidence and gather the views of experts. A literature review was carried out to identify existing interventions, areas of promising practice and recommendations as to how interventions could be further developed. Interviews were then undertaken with a range of experts, including practitioners and academics.

Key findings

‣ There is currently no specific intervention – in prison, probation or the community – for individuals convicted of a CSE-related offence involving physical contact. (This study did not investigate interventions for perpetrators of online CSE.)

‣ There was confusion amongst the experts we spoke to over the interpretation of the definition of CSE, and how appropriate this definition is in relation to interventions delivered in the criminal justice system. (A new Government definition of CSE had been introduced in England shortly before the bulk of this study took place.)

‣ There are significant gaps in knowledge about perpetrators. Filling these gaps may help when considering what a specific intervention would be appropriate, and if so what it could look like.

‣ Interventions in the community should be explored further, to supplement programmes provided by criminal justice agencies and enable more collaboration. Further resources would need to be made available to develop these effectively.

‣ It is unknown how the new prison programmes being rolled out by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will affect perpetrators of CSE.

What does the research show?

Current interventions

There are currently no specific interventions delivered in prison, probation or the community for perpetrators of contact CSE. Previously, depending on the offence that an individual was convicted of, they may have undertaken a sex offender treatment programme. New treatment programmes targeted at a wider cohort of male offenders (not just those convicted of sexual offences) are currently being rolled out by HMPPS, but little is currently known about how these will work with individuals convicted of a CSE-related offence.

Voluntary, community-based interventions, such as Circles of Support and Accountability, exist for individuals convicted of sexual offences, but are not specific to perpetrators of contact CSE. They are based on a voluntary participation model where the individual is supported to reintegrate into the community.

Specialist programmes and promising practice

There are currently no specialist programmes specifically for perpetrators of contact CSE in either a criminal justice or a community setting. Whilst there is a specific offence around exploitation contained in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, in reality perpetrators may be charged with a variety of offences, and CSE activity will not always be tracked through to the prison or probation setting. Identifying individuals as eligible for specialist programmes would therefore be challenging, unless tracking of CSE activity is more consistent.

Although no specific interventions in the criminal justice system for perpetrators of contact CSE have been identified, there are a number of areas of practice that could be developed, including the role of service users and disruption measures.

Evidence of effectiveness

Whilst reconviction rates of individuals committing sexual offences are low, to date it has been challenging to evidence the effectiveness of sex offender treatment programmes that perpetrators of contact CSE may undertake in prison and the community. We found no clear consensus around what is considered effective, owing to the complexities of measuring effectiveness (including the influence of variables such as housing or family, which may impact on reoffending). In addition, the evidence that exists does not allow us to disaggregate the data for perpetrators of CSE, making it particularly difficult to establish what works with this group.

Experts' views on the most appropriate approaches to interventions

Many of the experts we interviewed considered that, given the complexities around the different ways in which CSE is perpetrated, creating an intervention to address all models of CSE would be extremely challenging. We still know very little about the specific characteristics and motivations of perpetrators of CSE, and this is critical when considering what an effective intervention might look

> Identifying individuals as eligible for specialist programmes would be challenging, unless tracking of CSE activity is more consistent.

like. The need for an individualised approach towards interventions was highlighted, given the wide range of motivations and models of CSE that can occur.

Gaps in knowledge

There are still many gaps in knowledge about individuals convicted of CSE-related offences, in particular around their characteristics and their motivations for committing those offences. Knowing more about individuals who perpetrate CSE could help to inform a specialist intervention for this group.

Implications from the research

A number of themes emerged from the research that could be explored further: for example, the role that gender-based belief systems and attitudes play in relation to CSE activity.

Similarly, issues around gangs and groups (such as the utility of gang risk assessments rather than sexual offending risk assessments) were referenced as being important to consider in developing effective intervention measures.

Lack of interventions in custody or in the community for specific groups, particularly young men, is an area for potential exploration – as is the role that the community can play in providing interventions additional to those delivered in the criminal justice system. Given the current resource constraints of Government, supplementary interventions or services should be seriously considered.

1. Introduction

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has been an issue of increasing concern over the last decade, placing it firmly in the spotlight following a number of high-profile cases across the country. Evidence shows that CSE can occur in a number of situations, is not limited to specific geographical areas, and is not always easy to identify (Paskell, 2013). There are still significant gaps in knowledge about the full extent and breadth of CSE and all the ways it can be perpetrated. Section 3.1 sets out the recently revised Government definition of CSE for England, and its scope.

Embedding effective prevention and support mechanisms for victims has been a central focus for policy makers and the justice system over recent years. However, too little is known about the motivations, processes (the way CSE is perpetrated) or characteristics of the individuals perpetrating these offences to draw any conclusions about these on a national scale. There is an important knowledge gap around the perpetrators of CSE; from understanding what motivates individual perpetrators to offend, through to their journey through the criminal justice system and the interventions they receive within it. This gap needs to be addressed if we are to improve prevention of further cases and ensure effective interventions are provided to reduce perpetrators' risk of reoffending. This scoping study is intended to form part of the growing picture on perpetrators of CSE.

As part of a wider suite of research around CSE commissioned by the Centre for expertise on child sexual abuse, this project had as its purpose:

‣ ascertaining whether any current interventions exist specifically for perpetrators of CSE involving physical contact

‣ identifying whether any areas of promising practice have been identified and whether there is evidence of their effectiveness

‣ gathering expert views on what an appropriate approach to developing an effective intervention for this group would be.

This project did not investigate interventions for perpetrators of online CSE, as these were the subject of another study commissioned concurrently by the Centre of expertise. Its findings are reported in Perkins et al (2018).

As well as presenting our findings, we have produced recommendations from the findings which we hope will inform further areas of exploration in order to build the knowledge base in this area.

Following an outline of the study's methodology (Chapter 2) and an overview of the wider context of addressing and responding to CSE (Chapter 3), this report comprises a short literature review (Chapter 4) and a summary of expert interviewees' views aligned to the research questions (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 summarises the key points made and highlights the gaps where further exploration would be useful.

2. Methodology

2.1. Aims and scope

This project was designed as a scoping study based on a limited literature search, and conversations with experts and a small number of service users. Due to timescales, the quality of research evidence was not assessed. The study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What interventions are currently provided to adult men convicted of CSE-related offences in England and Wales?

2. Do any specialist interventions exist?

3. Have elements of promising practice been identified?

4. What evidence is there as to the effectiveness of any such interventions?

5. What are experts' views as to what might be the most appropriate approach to delivering interventions to those convicted of CSE-related offences?

This scoping study was carried out between January and April 2017. The final report was written at a time of a change in the approach to delivering accredited programmes to men convicted of sex offences in prison and probation, and a time of change in the criminal justice system – specifically the replacement of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), which was announced in February 2017 and came into effect in April. Whilst correct at the time of writing, the findings should be read within the context of this change and development.

We limited our scope to approaches taken in England and Wales, where prisons and probation are managed by the same agency. Given that there are considerably more men than women in the criminal justice system, and specifically amongst those convicted of child sex offences – and that the approaches taken to working with women and men in the criminal justice system are different – we focused on work with adult men only.

A different approach is taken with under-18s in the criminal justice system, and a decision was made to focus on interventions for adults only. Indeed, it has been suggested elsewhere that the approach taken with under-18s should be distinct (Berelowitz et al, 2013:88). We excluded from our scope preventative approaches taken before an offence has occurred, such as deterrence measures, education for behaviour change, generic community initiatives and work with family or community members.

2.2. Literature review

A review of the literature was first conducted to identify any current interventions for perpetrators of CSE, areas of promising practice, evidence of how these interventions may differ from interventions for the wider cohort of sex offenders, and recommendations as to how interventions could be further developed. Further information on the search strategy and inclusion criteria can be found in Appendix 2.

The literature review was conducted between 23rd January and 13th February 2017, with further literature reviewed between 6th and 27th March 2017.

> "
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> "

Definitions

When searching for literature we utilised the following definitions:

- Intervention – action or service designed to help an individual to stop (re)offending.
- Programme – accredited course undertaken by individuals serving a sentence, designed to prevent reoffending and developed to target the particular risks and needs for different types of offending behaviour.

At the outset we searched for evidence around the following styles of delivery and their effectiveness:

1. Programmes or interventions, delivered either one to one or in groups, in custody or the community, with convicted adult male perpetrators (aged 18 or over) of CSE-related offences involving physical contact (with a child of any age), where the intervention is specifically addressing that element of their offending.

2. Programmes or interventions, delivered either one to one or in groups, with adult men (aged 18 or over) subject to civil orders that have been applied to prevent or disrupt CSE perpetration involving physical contact.

It soon became apparent as we began our literature review that no specific interventions exist for perpetrators of CSE. In response, we expanded the first of these definitions as follows:

1. Programmes or interventions, delivered either one to one or in groups, in custody or the community, that a convicted adult male perpetrator (aged 18 or over) of a CSE-related offence involving physical contact (with a child of any age) would be likely to undertake within the criminal justice system.

We had originally included a third category: programmes or interventions not specifically aimed at CSE perpetrators, but where lessons could be learned or transferred to this field. Given the limited evidence base around characteristics, motivations and processes of those committing CSE-related offences, we decided early on that there was unlikely to be much value in pursuing this approach. Without

understanding how individuals convicted of CSE-related offenders compared to others in the criminal justice system, a scoping study of this scale could draw only limited conclusions as to whether lessons could be learned from other programmes.

Second stage

Following interviews with experts (see below), we referred to a limited amount of additional literature that the interviewees had signposted, or which helped provide further contextual information for this scoping study. A total of 20 additional papers were included at this point, providing evidence around:

- alternative models of sex offender treatment, including democratic therapeutic communities for individuals convicted of sexual offences (Shuker et al, 2010; Ackerman, 2010); the Wolvercote Clinic (Ford et al, 2004); the Good Lives Model (Willis et al, 2013; Ward, 2010); and the Dunkelfeld model in Germany
- the development of models and practice in sex offender treatment and delivery (Mann, 2004)
- arguments around the effectiveness of sex offender treatment programmes (Lösel and Schmucker, 2015)
- debates around the prevention of CSA (Smallbone et al, 2008).

Overall, 75 studies were included for review, including 32 documents that were reviewed as part of setting the policy context in Chapter 3.

2.3. Expert interviews

Following the first stage of the literature review, interviews with experts in the field were carried out. Potential participants were identified on the basis of their experience in one of the following areas:

- strategic responsibility for delivering interventions with those convicted of sex offences
- frontline delivery of interventions in custody or the community, including probation
- academic research interest in the field, such as expertise in sex offender treatment.

Table 1. Expert interviewees

Field	Sexual behaviour concerns	Number interviewed	Number of others approached
Prison	Therapists, custodial clinical services	2	2
	Current or former prison governors, experience of sex offender populations	1	1
Probation	Probation officers, expertise in delivering sex offender treatment programmes	3	0
Police	CSE police leads	1	1
Voluntary sector	Practitioners working with people convicted of sex offences in the community	1	1
Central strategic leads (including government departments)	Commissioning strategies, interventions or sex offender treatment programmes outcomes specialists	1	4
Academia	Those with a specialism in CSE	4	4

Potential interviewees were selected through a process of purposive and snowball sampling to gain an indicative snapshot of work being delivered with perpetrators of CSE. They were approached with details about the scoping study in the form of an information sheet asking for their participation (see Appendix 3).

Interviews were conducted with 13 experts, all based in England, between 10th February and 10th March 2017. A further 13 people were approached to participate but were either uncontactable or unavailable for a full interview in the time period allowed. Table 1 shows the areas of expertise and experience of all those approached.

An interview schedule was designed to explore the key research questions and further themes arising from the literature review. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out by either one or (in most cases) both of the researchers involved, at locations chosen by the participants, and took one to two hours on average.

All participants gave informed consent to being interviewed, having been told about the purpose of the interview and receiving an information sheet in advance, and having the opportunity to ask questions then and at the start of the interview. Participants all signed consent forms agreeing to their participation and had the choice to opt in to being referenced by their profession or have their identity kept anonymous.

Interviews were audio recorded with participants' consent. A summary of each interview was produced, comprising an outline of the key points raised and a verbatim transcription of key sections: these summaries were then coded and analysed to identify emerging themes, which have been used as the section headings in Chapter 5. The audio recordings were deleted, and all files containing personal details were kept password-protected.

2.4. Service user interviews

Although this was not part of the original design of this scoping study, we had the opportunity to interview three men in the community with experience of sex offender treatment programmes. These interviews were conducted alongside Dr Kate Walker from Coventry University, and were designed as part of research being carried out for the Centre of expertise to examine the characteristics of individuals who have sexually exploited children.

Ethical approval was obtained from Coventry University Research Ethics Committee and the National Research Committee of Her Majesty's

Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to undertake this part of the research. All interviews followed the same comprehensive interview schedule, which was reviewed by Centre of expertise staff and the two ethics committees.

The service user interview schedule was designed by the team at Coventry University, with supplementary questions added by Nacro. Questions for these interviews were primarily aimed at developing a life-story narrative, but also explored interviewees' experiences of any intervention or support they had received, and the extent to which they believed this had reduced their likelihood of reoffending.

These interviewees self-selected to participate, after being identified with assistance from a practitioner of the service they had engaged with. The degree to which their index offences could be described as CSE varied, reflecting the complexity of this issue.

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data were anonymised and identifying information removed. For more information about the interviews, see Walker et al (2018b).

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3. Policy and context

In order to ground the findings of this scoping study within the wider context and background of addressing and responding to CSE, this chapter provides a short overview of the key issues relating to the definition of CSE, attempts to estimate its prevalence and outlines the policy response to the challenge. It also contains an overview of the criminal offences related to CSE, to aid understanding of the relevant legislative context.

3.1. Defining child sexual exploitation

CSE has been identified as a national threat (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 2013), and defined as a subset of child sexual abuse (CSA) that must be tackled jointly by the police, local authorities and communities (HM Government, 2015). With this in mind, the Department for Education (DfE) released advice incorporating an updated version of the definition of CSE in February 2017. This states:

> 'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur also through the use of technology.'
> *(DfE, 2017a:5)*

This definition, which applies only to England,[1] was the result of a consultation process in 2016 (HM Government, 2017b); the intention was to ensure that all agencies are working towards a shared understanding that will inform more effective detection and prevention of CSE, as well as appropriate responses to both victims and perpetrators. Prior to this, various definitions of CSE had been in use, creating an inconsistent approach by agencies and voluntary organisations (HM Government, 2017b:3). Respondents to the Government consultation felt that the definition needed to clarify whether an 'exchange' had to take place in order to qualify as CSE (HM Government, 2017b:5), thereby distinguishing it from other forms of CSA, and make clear that CSE was characterised by an abuse of power (Association of Directors of Children's Services and Office for Public Management, 2015:67). As some young people in CSE cases may not feel they are being coerced into doing something they do not want to do (NSPCC, 2013), the consultation respondents also stressed the need to make clear that some activity may appear consensual. The majority of respondents to the consultation, from a range of professions such as education bodies and local authorities, were content with the revised definition of CSE (HM Government, 2017b:9).

There have been attempts to categorise CSE into types or models[2] in which it is known to be perpetrated: for example, through gang involvement and drug running, trafficking, and street or parlour based (Barnardo's, 2017).[3] Practitioners with expertise in this field stress that it is important to note the complexity and potential scope and breadth of CSE cases and offences (Paskell, 2013); for example, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation may be

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[1]The current working definition of CSE used in Wales is set out the All Wales Protocol: Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). In January 2017, the Welsh Government commissioned a review of this definition and its statutory guidance on CSE safeguarding; the review has recommended developing an updated definition (Hallett et al 2017).

[2]The term 'models' is used throughout this review to refer to the different ways in which CSE occurs. See Barnardo's (2017) for an extensive list, developed by practitioners to assist in identifying and supporting young people at risk of CSE.

[3]Other models include those involving online perpetration; however, the scope of this review has not covered individuals convicted of online CSE. Interventions for perpetrators of online CSE were the subject of research commissioned by the Centre of expertise and carried out concurrently with this study; see Perkins et al (2018).

operating within a gang where the perpetrator is also a victim. There is no single structure in the way children are exploited, and this must be acknowledged or we risk minimising or overlooking the existence of others (Barnardo's, 2017).

3.2. Estimating the prevalence of child sexual exploitation

The scale and volume of CSE is hard to estimate, owing to inconsistencies in how cases have been recorded, the challenges of identifying victimisation and perpetration in a number of complex situations, and low reporting rates. There are a range of data sources that can provide an estimate of the scale of CSA more widely, but limited sources around CSE specifically.

In a random sample of just over 35,000 women and men aged 16–59, 11% of women and 3% of men said they had experienced some kind of sexual assault in their childhood (Office for National Statistics, 2016). The largest study to date to determine the prevalence of CSE found that 2,409 children were victims of CSE in gangs or groups in a 14-month period, based on data collected through agencies and a direct call for evidence (Berelowitz et al, 2012:9).[4] In the year to March 2016, 55,507 child sexual offences were recorded by the police, a significant rise on the previous year (NSPCC, 2017); however, much abuse and exploitation of children still goes undetected, so the data are not necessarily indicative of the scale of the problem (HM Government, 2017a:8).

3.3. The policy response

A number of inquiries and reviews have highlighted CSE as a national threat, with acknowledgement of the need for more to be done following sustained large-scale incidents across the country that authorities failed to prevent or address (HM Government, 2015:1). The government published an overarching 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation' strategy to lead the national response to this challenge (HM Government, 2015:2), and a recent progress report of this work stated that the

Government had delivered around 90% of its commitments and 'achieved a step change in the response to child sexual exploitation' (HM Government, 2017a:3). Successes highlighted included an increased number of offenders brought to justice: of the 5,879 offenders convicted of CSA offences in 2014–15, 51% were sentenced to immediate custody (HM Government, 2017a:3).

Government strategy reflects a drive to create accountability and a culture shift in how CSE is responded to, both locally and nationally. The creation of the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, funded by the Home Office, represents a national response designed to translate policy into good practice; so does the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, a long-running inquiry appointed by the Home Secretary into institutional CSA and CSE across state and non-state institutions.[5]

Whilst planning a national response to CSE is crucial, CSE activity also needs to be mapped and responded to at a local level (Beckett et al, 2014:23), and police and crime plans highlight the need for collaborative working and multi-agency approaches (London Safeguarding Children Board, 2015:8). The police have attempted to strengthen leadership and effective systems to ensure a consistent approach across all investigations of CSE, including protocols around building profiles and sharing intelligence of perpetrators (College of Policing, 2012:4-5). The Government has identified 'tackling offenders' as a fundamental strand of their national strategy; this includes funding a network of regional coordinators and analysts in Regional Organised Crime Units to develop local intelligence around incidents of CSA, as well as funding additional Rape and Serious Sexual Offences prosecutors in the Crown Prosecution Service (HM Government, 2017a:12-15).

Local accountability measures include the duty for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to assess the effectiveness of agency responses to incidents of CSE (DfE, 2015:70). A number of regional initiatives have been adopted in locations where extensive cases have emerged, bringing agencies together and raising awareness of CSE to improve

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[4]The research by Berelowitz et al (2012) was limited to gangs- and groups-based CSE activity only, so may have missed a range of other instances in which CSE was recorded as having taken place. Furthermore, data were based on identification of CSE by practitioners, which can vary significantly; therefore caution is expressed over the accuracy of the data.

[5]The Inquiry's current investigation subject areas include CSE by organised networks; Cambridge House, Knowl View and Rochdale; Children in the care of Lambeth and Nottinghamshire Councils; and the internet.

prevention mechanisms (Local Government Association, 2014). A recent study of London boroughs, however, found that only one in four had developed a CSE problem profile in their area, although more were in the process of developing these (Beckett et al, 2014:19).

3.4. Child sexual exploitation related offences

There is no single specific offence that covers all incidents of CSE contained in legislation, but rather a range of offences that perpetrators may be convicted of. Most of which are set out in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA), including abuse of children through sexual exploitation, sexual grooming and the abuse of a position of trust, as well as other rape and sexual assault offences related to victims under the age of 18. The offences of sexual exploitation and grooming do not necessarily capture all incidents of CSE, as 'the exchange is limited to "financial advantage", whereas the policy definition includes a broader list of things the victim/offender could receive' (DfE, 2017b:14). It has been recognised that, because of the disparity between the legislative and policy definitions, police forces must flag all police-recorded offences that fall under the policy definition (Beckett et al, 2017). This indicates the overlap and complexity around legislative and policy definitions of CSE.

Over the 12 months to June 2016, sexual offences were amongst the few offences to see an increase in defendants being prosecuted, up by 10% (Ministry of Justice, 2016). More specifically, between 2014/15 and 2015/16 there was a 56% increase in recorded incidents of abuse of children through sexual exploitation (Office for National Statistics, 2017). Whilst these data provide some contextual information, it is hard to extrapolate an accurate picture of the extent of CSE cases brought to justice, as they can be interlinked with other offences: for example, if an individual involved in CSE activity is convicted of a drugs offence, the CSE activity may not be recorded by police. In the context of groups and gangs, information held by police on perpetrators usually relates to their gang involvement as opposed to their CSE activity (Berelowitz et al, 2012:98), supporting the notion that CSE can be hidden amongst other offences.

3.5. Child sexual exploitation as a public health issue

It has been suggested that sexual offending should be reframed in a public health context around education as well as outreach and support for potential perpetrators, supporting current interventions and treatment programmes (Kemshall and McCartan, 2014:214). There is widespread support for the use of a public health approach to address CSA in all its forms, which should entail a coordinated range of multi-faceted interventions, especially given the estimated costs of CSA (Brown et al, 2011). Three levels of a public health approach have been identified (Smallbone et al, 2008:133):

- ‣ primary prevention around education to recognise the signs of sexual abuse
- ‣ a secondary level around help and education for individuals who could (potentially) commit a sexual offence
- ‣ a tertiary level about the wider integration for offenders convicted of a sexual offence, which protects the public and reduces reoffending.

> There is no single specific offence that covers all incidents of CSE, but rather a range of offences that perpetrators may be convicted of.

4. Findings: literature review

This chapter summarises the range of literature we reviewed at the outset of this scoping exercise, supported by further research gathered at the midway point. Section headings reflect the key themes emerging through the review, including some of the contextual debates and research findings that relate to the approach taken to working with perpetrators of CSE. Owing to the limited literature specifically about CSE-related offences, much of this chapter refers to sex offender treatment more widely.

4.1. Perpetrators and the criminal justice system

Current academic literature and grey literature (e.g. work that is not published by commercial publishers, such as reports by charities) about CSE has tended to focus on prevention and support for victims (see, for example, Paskell, 2012:12). However, it became apparent through the literature review that comparatively little is known about the characteristics, motivations and processes of those committing CSE-related offences.[6] Much of what is known so far about CSE perpetrators has come from research centred on particular 'types' of CSE, particularly that perpetrated within gangs and groups (Berelowitz et al, 2013). Guidance states that most known perpetrators are male, come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and are not previously known to the authorities for sexual offending (Beckett et al, 2017).

The grey literature refers to the limited understanding of the drivers, motivations or models of perpetration, and a desire from police professionals for further research to support the identification and de-escalation of perpetration (Firmin, 2016:11). Theories around why individuals commit child sex offences have been explored over time and considered in the context of biological, developmental, ecosystemic and situational factors (Smallbone et al, 2008:23). This remains an evolving field, reflecting the complexity in identifying specific motivations.

Literature evaluating serious case reviews has uncovered themes around identifying perpetrators more effectively and at an earlier stage (NSPCC, 2013): for example, taking disclosures by young people seriously and identifying perpetrators swiftly in order to prevent them from continuing their abuse. It also unpacks some of the complexity around identifying exploitation, especially where the victim has loyalty to the perpetrator or appears to consent to sexual activity (NSPCC, 2013).

It is noted that the knowledge around the range of situations and models in which exploitation can occur is increasing (McAlinden, 2014:19). This makes understanding perpetrators of CSE challenging, however: motivations may vary or overlap for many perpetrators, and sexual exploitation can often be linked to other crimes (DfE, 2017b:9). Even within models of CSE activity – for example, groups or street gangs – identifiable characteristics and motivations of perpetrators can vary significantly (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 2013). Ofsted notes that CSE is not confined to particular ethnic groups (Ofsted, 2014), and racialised stereotypes about who perpetuates CSE are noted as being unhelpful (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2013:57).[7] It has been stated that carrying out profiling of individuals convicted of a CSE-related offence could reveal motivations and behaviours that may directly inform law enforcement strategies (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 2013), although it is unknown how much of this is being done within individual police forces.

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[6] Research on this subject, commissioned by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, was conducted concurrently with this study. See Walker et al (2018a, 2018b).

[7] Evidence presented to the Home Affairs committee, for example, suggested that the ethnicity of perpetrators was likely to reflect local demographics in areas where CSE was uncovered, and that statutory agencies might risk overlooking incidents of CSE if the aspect of race were further emphasised (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2013:55).

4.2. Current interventions

We found no evidence in the literature to suggest that there are currently any interventions designed specifically for adult male perpetrators of CSE in prison or the community in England and Wales. Below we set out the broader relevant interventions that perpetrators may receive.

Custody and community sex offender treatment programmes

Individuals convicted of a sexual offence and given a custodial sentence have, to date in the UK, been subject to a risk assessment process using the 'Risk Matrix 2000' tool to determine their eligibility for any prison programmes to be completed as part of their sentence (NOMS, 2015). This assessment has been based on the risk, need and responsivity approach (NOMS, 2010a), which focuses on the risk of that individual reoffending, their criminogenic needs related to offending, and the likelihood that they will respond to the programme. Until recently, a number of different sex offender treatment programmes (SOTPs) were available for individuals convicted of sexual offences, depending on the length of sentence and risk and needs assessment: these included the Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme (Core SOTP) and the Healthy Sex Programme. The Government provides basic information online about offender management programmes, including SOTPs (Ministry of Justice, 2017b).

The Core SOTP was targeted at men over the age of 18 convicted of a contact (or attempted contact) sexual offence and deemed to be at medium or high risk of reoffending. The Core SOTP and follow-on programmes were accredited cognitive behavioural interventions, usually undertaken in group sessions, which were broken down into 20 thematic blocks including teaching positive coping strategies, setting goals and identifying patterns in personality related to offending behaviour. The Core SOTP was designed to help the individual understand how and why they committed their offence(s) and develop new thinking and skills to help desistance from further offending (Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2013).[8]

Programmes known as Sex Offender Groupwork Programmes, based on similar themes, have been undertaken through probation; these may form part of a community sentence or a condition of a prison licence (NOMS, 2010b). They usually involve groups of eight to 10 adult men undertaking certain blocks around life skills and relapse prevention. The amount of treatment received by the individual is based on their assessed level of risk and is broadly cognitive behavioural, aimed at changing behaviours and attitudes that permit sexual offending. See Lucy Faithfull Foundation (2015) for a fuller description of an example SOTP delivered via NOMS.

There has been much debate around the role of trauma and past abuse experienced by individuals convicted of sexual offences; it has been argued that this should be considered as contributing to abusive behaviour, but that SOTPs have failed to acknowledge it (Nelson, 2016:358).

Individuals convicted of a sexual offence are required to register with the police and are subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), a mechanism for managing offenders in the community: their offence and sentence will determine the level of monitoring they will receive. Information including their address, employment and relationship details are stored on a central database, ViSOR, which enables information sharing between relevant agencies such as police and the National Probation Service (NOMS, 2012). Analysis of reoffending rates amongst individuals subject to MAPPA shows a general decline in their reoffending, suggesting that practices in this area are improving. However, caution should be exercised over how conclusive these data are, owing to limitations around methodology and analysis (Bryant et al, 2015).

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[8]The scope of this study did not include reviewing the content or effectiveness of thematic blocks of SOTPs in depth.

Specialist therapeutic programmes

Much of the literature we reviewed recommended that individuals convicted of CSE-related offences would benefit from alternative therapeutic approaches to current mainstream SOTP provision. Two of those highlighted were democratic therapeutic prison communities and the Wolvercote residential treatment clinic, now closed.

Democratic therapeutic approaches for individuals convicted of sexual offences, available in a limited number of prisons, offer a community approach focusing on personal development, self-knowledge and insight (Shuker et al, 2010). This approach is centred on creating an environment that enables people to learn from mistakes and recognise patterns of behaviour in order to develop appropriate pro-social attitudes and relationships. It has been noted that the effectiveness of such an approach hinges on a therapeutic alliance between the therapist and client, and requires a consistent and caring environment (Ackerman, 2010:74) alongside cohesive, well-organised group work (Mann, 2004:148).

A specific intervention mentioned in our expert interviews was the residential Wolvercote Clinic, which offered an intensive, unique model for sex offender treatment. Running from 1995 to 2002, it was a therapeutic clinic where men would stay for 12 months on average and complete a programme of group and individual treatment. A research study of 65 adult males who underwent at least six months of treatment at the Wolvercote Clinic showed that none was reconvicted for a sexual offence within a two-year time frame (Ford et al, 2004). It should, however, be noted that no comparison data were available so findings should be treated with caution (Ford and Beech, 2004).

Voluntary interventions

For convicted sex offenders leaving custody, a notable community support we found is Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). This is based on a voluntary participation model where the perpetrator, or 'core member', is at the centre of a group of community volunteers supporting them to reintegrate effectively into society, working in addition to criminal justice agencies which monitor them for public protection.

4.3. Effectiveness of interventions

Sex offender treatment programmes have undergone many developments since the 1970s in research and clinical thinking; it is still very much an evolving field. For example, some developments have occurred through consideration of other fields of psychology and by changing the way risk assessments are designed (Mann, 2004).

Studies have explored the effectiveness of sex offender programmes, with some evidence suggesting that individuals who received treatment[9] had lower reconviction rates compared to those who do not (Lösel and Schmucker, 2015; Farmer et al, 2015; Wilson et al, 2014). Research indicates that cognitive behavioural therapy is the most effective method of treatment compared to counselling or non-behavioural treatment

> "Despite extensive evaluation of sex offender treatment over decades, there is no unequivocal evidence to demonstrate effectiveness."

(Lösel and Schmucker, 2015; NOMS, 2010a). It has been suggested that treatment undertaken in a group can be beneficial for the individual in developing social skills and providing peer support, but that there are some circumstances – such as individuals suffering with borderline personality features, who can struggle in groups – in which one-to-one interventions need to take place alongside group work (Wilcox et al, 2015:4). It has also been suggested that the most effective results require a range of therapeutic and group process features (Smallbone et al, 2008:133).

Despite extensive evaluation of sex offender treatment over a number of decades, there is no explicit, unequivocal evidence to demonstrate effectiveness. However, the Ministry of Justice recently undertook an impact evaluation of the Core SOTP (Mews et al, 2017), matching individuals who had

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[9] Where the term 'treatment' is used this does not include medical, anti-libidinal or pharmacological treatment.

participated in the programme to individuals convicted of sexual offences who had not. The groups were compared on a range of proven reoffending outcomes, calculated over a period of eight years on average. Compared to the untreated group, the treated individuals were found to be more likely to commit at least one sexual reoffence during the follow-up period. The Core SOTP has now been discontinued and replaced by two programmes, Horizon and Kaizen, which are being rolled out at the time of writing. Individuals convicted of sexual offences will undertake Horizon or Kaizen, depending on a risk assessment.

The new Kaizen programme, aimed at high-risk individuals, moves away from offence responsibility and victim empathy and looks at risk in a different way, using a model of change that takes into account biological, psychological and social factors (Mann and Carter, 2012). Programmes based on this model instead celebrate an individual's strengths as well as offering room for personal growth to equip them with skills for change (Walton et al, 2017). Literature has explored the need for treatment of individuals convicted of sexual offences to be evidence-informed, and the importance of considering the context and wider environment in which programmes are delivered (Carter and Mann, 2016a).

Further, the Good Lives Model is an internationally developed rehabilitation theory, centred on a strengths-based approach to rehabilitation which addresses the needs of the perpetrator as well as those of the community (Willis et al, 2013). Research has explored how this model has been integrated into SOTPs internationally to enhance engagement, using the overarching principles to support existing programme content (Willis et al, 2013). It aims to 'build capabilities and strengths in individuals in order to reduce their risk of reoffending' (Laws and Ward, 2011), and represents a significant shift in approach to treatment through emphasis on the individuals' aspirations for a pro-social crime-free future and wellbeing (Ward, 2010). It has been argued that making treatment more positive and self-enhancing through the Good Lives Model is likely to increase responsivity to treatment (Marshall et al, 2005). Further, whilst literature on desistance from sexual crimes notes that there is little research on how and why people stop, there is a link between having positive plans for the future, a positive self-image

and desistance from committing further sexual crimes (Farmer et al, 2015). It has been suggested that the Good Lives Model should be seen as a complementary model of rehabilitation, should not completely replace previous approaches to treatment (Carter and Mann, 2016b), and lacks demonstrable superiority over previous approaches based on risk and need (Walton et al, 2017).

Recidivism rates for individuals convicted of sexual offences are low (NOMS, 2010a), but there are no data yet to suggest whether this is also the case amongst CSE perpetrators specifically, so establishing 'what works' with this group is particularly difficult. There is still considerable live debate as to the robustness of findings in this area, and there are still a range of methodological and ethical issues that affect evaluation studies: these include ethical challenges in withholding treatment from some groups of individuals to conduct randomised control trials, considered by some to be the 'gold standard' of evaluation research, as well as difficulties in gathering accurate and timely data on reoffending (Brown, 2010:88).

Some research suggests CoSA is effective, with evaluation of this intervention suggesting that achievements made by core members have included gaining confidence and a new perspective (Thomas et al, 2014); piloted studies have found that CoSA supported and complemented statutory supervision (McCartan et al, 2014:7). However, not enough robust evidence exists in England and Wales to support this, and it is noted that no large-scale study has been conducted into reconviction rates for CoSA members in the UK (Thomas et al, 2014:55) or any comparison groups.

It is important to note that the interventions and programmes referenced above, including SOTPs, are all designed for adult men convicted of a sexual offence and are not specific to CSE. The literature suggests that people who commit child sex offences have different criminogenic needs from those who commit sexual offences against adults – for example, they hold beliefs that endorse the sexual abuse of children and have heightened emotional affiliation with children – and therefore questions whether the same treatment is appropriate for these individuals (Walton and Chou, 2014:3). Specific research has been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of sex offender treatments for those convicted of child sexual offences

specifically; however, the findings were contradictory about whether treatment was in fact effective in reducing reoffending for this group (Walton and Chou, 2014:11). It remains to be seen whether the needs of individuals convicted of CSE-related offences are in fact distinct from those of the wider sex offender population. Government guidance notes that perpetrators of CSE are likely to have a range of motivations, and that treatment providers need to be aware of offence-related beliefs and/or gang involvement in order to determine the type of intervention employed with each individual (NOMS, 2016).

4.4. Limitations of current interventions and resources to deliver

Previously there were limitations in the use of interventions where perpetrators deny they have committed a sexual offence: NOMS did not accept offenders who categorically denied their offence on to prison and probation programmes. Denial can be present for a number of reasons, including threats to self-image or as a strategy in court to attempt to minimise sentencing (Hogue and Brand, 2013).

It has increasingly been recognised that individuals in denial of their offence need to be treated by a skilled responsive therapist in order to start the process of change (Blagden et al, 2011:582). Cultural influences may also mean that some offenders will not address their offence and therefore will not participate in any treatment programmes (Cowburn et al, 2015:9). There is, however, very little evidence to show the impact that denial has on an individual's likeliness to reoffend (Ware and Marshall, 2015:10). The new programmes introduced by HMPPS are accessible to men in denial, as the content focuses on equipping skills for change rather than exploring previous crime (Walton et al, 2017:29).

The literature notes that, given current financial limitations in the criminal justice system, interventions should be designed around approaches that have a sufficient evidence base linked to reducing reconviction, and directed to individuals who pose the most risk (Carter, 2014:124). Reductions in recidivism are achieved by 'providing the highest intensity treatment programmes to those offenders who present the highest risk of recidivism'

(Smallbone et al, 2008:132). Making sure that treatment reflects the evidence base can be challenging, particularly where resources are under pressure (Carter, 2014:124). However, it is argued that practitioners should be open to trialling new ideas which have been evidenced through scientific research, to ensure continual innovation in the field (Mann, 2004:149). It is recognised that there are always limitations of sex offender treatment, because individuals will respond differently to treatment; however, work is being done to reach a more evidence-informed position with regard to how effective treatment can be (Carter and Mann, 2016a:170).

> It remains to be seen whether the needs of individuals convicted of CSE-related offences are distinct from those of the wider sex offender population.

4.5. Prevention and disruption

Whilst the programmes referred to above are interventions for individuals convicted of sexual offences, a number of orders are available to prevent and disrupt CSE activities, including Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs), as well as closure notices for premises where CSE activity is suspected, and civil injunctions under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. These have been viewed as powerful tools to disrupt and prevent CSE activity and to build evidence for prosecutions (Casey, 2015:14). More than 9,000 SHPOs and SROs were taken out by police between March 2015 and October 2016 (HM Government, 2017a:14), but we could find no evidence in the literature that they were being used concurrently alongside any additional treatment or support to address an individual's risk of (re)offending.

5. Findings: participant interviews

This chapter summarises the key findings from expert interviews. Views are grouped under section headings reflecting the research questions, policy and context and key themes. For information about the interviewees, see Chapter 2.

5.1. Policy and context – defining CSE

Amongst the experts interviewed, there did not appear to be a shared understanding of the processes or cases that the term 'CSE' should be used to describe, despite the recently updated definition and guidance for England (see section 3.1).[10] This was significant in that the questions asked and the terminology used were debated and understood differently between participants.

There was clear disparity in opinion between whether CSE or CSA should be considered the umbrella term for the other to sit below, and there remained a degree of confusion over whether specific instances should be described as CSE or as CSA. Some suggested that 'exploitation' better described the process leading up to contact abuse, similar to grooming, rather than describing sexual abuse itself. There was general agreement, however, that exploitation was present in most contact abuse cases.

> "Pretty well anyone who has sexually abused a child will have manipulated and exploited that child in some way."
> *(Probation officer 1)*

Some participants suggested that the new definition did not give them any further clarification when compared to the previous one. Whilst the elements of power and exchange[11] were seen as important in cases of CSE, a number of participants suggested that these elements were also frequently present in CSA cases, and that the wording around financial exchange and increased status was too widely interpretable to be specific to CSE. A number of participants felt there were many cases that would still be difficult to categorise either way, and in this sense having a separate definition was not helpful. For some, it served as a distraction from the wider context of identifying and tackling CSA in all its forms.

> "I find it strange, because there's so much sexual abuse, whether it's of children or adults going on, why are we focusing on the sexual exploitation?"
> *(Anonymous)*

Despite the increasing awareness of the range of contexts in which CSE can take place, as cited in DfE guidance and grey literature, the most commonly referred-to examples of CSE were the high-profile cases involving gangs of predominantly Asian men that took place in areas such as Rochdale and Rotherham. The next most frequently cited examples were of young people's peer-on-peer abuse, which is outside the scope of this review, and situations involving 'older boyfriends' exploiting young victims.

For some participants, CSA was more clearly identifiable as involving young children being victimised primarily in or around the family home, and CSE was seen as a useful term to describe the abuse of adolescents or teenagers, often with their apparent consent, where there was a clear exchange of money or goods, primarily by people outside their family network and in places other than their home.

> "If you speak to most CSE victims, most of them will tell you they're not being exploited. So to them that definition doesn't meet what's happening to them."
> *(Police CSE lead)*

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[10]We discussed the new definition with all but one of the interviewees we spoke to, as that interview took place before the new definition was published on 17th February 2017.

[11]'Taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim wants or needs' (DfE, 2017:5).

In terms of developing effective interventions, some – particularly those involved in delivering interventions post conviction – felt the definition was irrelevant and did not add anything to their area of work. The risk of categorising situations too narrowly, or getting too caught up in language around the definition, was seen as having the potential to affect how cases were responded to, in that the specificity of a case or instances where multiple forms of exploitation take place at the same time might be ignored.

> "There used to be a big struggle for police around 'Is this CSE or not?' and swinging back from case to case." *(Anonymous)*

Others, however, felt that separating CSE from other forms of CSA was a useful distinction for developing effective responses to both victims and perpetrators. For them, further granularity in the understanding of all instances of CSA was useful and could help provide focus for future interventions through the identification of specific elements to those crimes: for example, the role of power and the element of exchange. It was overwhelmingly clear from all participants' feedback that every situation was likely to be different in some way, and that effective responses for both victims and perpetrators required an individualised response that took account of this.

Some participants referred to the complexities of attempting to group and treat individuals convicted of sexual offences. It was suggested that a number of groups had already been identified – for example, online, sexually preoccupied or intrafamilial sex offenders – and that adding further groups could create an unnecessary additional level of granularity that would not necessarily improve treatment responses.

5.2. Current interventions for individuals convicted of sexual offences

It was stated by participants that, at the time of interviewing, no specific interventions existed for CSE perpetrators. They said that group-work-based SOTPs in custody and the community would likely be undertaken where assessed to be appropriate. Note that this scoping review was undertaken at a time of

transition in accredited programmes being delivered in custody and through probation for individuals convicted of sexual offences (see section 4.3).

Limitations of current interventions

Current treatment programmes were said by many participants to have several gaps and limitations as to how much content could be explored in detail: some suggested that they struggled to provide an appropriately bespoke approach. Participant practitioners pointed out that, whilst group work can be effective for some, it does not always provide the right environment for every participant, nor can it meet individual need.

> "We can't just assume all sex offenders are the same, or can be treated in the same way." *(Anonymous)*

> **Disruption within groups or imbalanced dynamics was cited as a major factor that can affect engagement.**

Practitioners referred to the Core SOTP as not currently offering the space for the individual and practitioner to go deeper into their offence (for example, by addressing the fundamental motivations for committing the offence or having the room to explore how previous trauma may have had an impact on their behaviour).

> "That one [Core] SOTP course is trying to tailor its needs to everyone." *(Prison governor)*

Disruption within groups or imbalanced dynamics was cited as a major factor that can affect engagement. Some pointed to the fact that placing individuals convicted of different types of sexual offence in a group together, where they do not see themselves 'fitting' with the group, could risk interference with the programme. It was suggested that

group work was most effective where a set of core messages relevant to the whole group (such as themes around gender roles or anger issues) were identified and communicated. A few participants highlighted the value of perpetrators listening to others' offences in order to better understand their own offending.

The role that technology, the internet and digital connectivity play in daily life was said not to be explored fully within current SOTPs, although this was likely to play a critical and increasing role in men's lives and offending.[12] Some participants, for example, reflected on the role of mobile phones and social media in creating an accelerated intimacy and lowering inhibitions between victims and perpetrators, and speculated that this was not effectively addressed within current provision.

There are only a small number of dedicated prisons across England and Wales that deliver programmes or therapeutic support beyond the Core SOTP, so accessing this enhanced treatment can prove challenging. Examples were given of intensive therapeutic approaches, such as democratic therapeutic prison communities for violent and sexual offenders, but these were not widely available. They require a high threshold of individual insight and willingness to address past behaviours and traumas, which some participants noted would only be beneficial for those who take responsibility for their actions and want to explore and understand why they committed their offence(s).

Some participants explained that, whilst it was important not to provide an SOTP too early in a sentence (as the value and learning gained could diminish over time), this was leading to some prisoners spending long periods of their sentence without any kind of intervention or treatment. Finite resources and increasing numbers of people in custody convicted of sex offences (Ministry of Justice, 2015) were said to have resulted in many individuals, particularly those on long or indeterminate sentences, waiting considerable amounts of time before they began a programme.[13]

Individuals deemed to be 'low-risk' after assessment by a treatment manager in custody do not take part in any programmes. Participants agreed that placing low-risk individuals on programmes with those presenting a higher risk could be harmful, and alternative interventions could prove more appropriate for these men. Indeed, research shows that treating individuals considered to be low-risk has negligible benefits (NOMS, 2010a).

Evidence of programme effectiveness

Participants discussed a number of elements of existing treatments for those convicted of sexual offences that they considered to be effective: these included a personalised approach to treatment and the appropriate use of group work, where the right dynamic and group of individuals were involved. Developing a therapeutic and rehabilitative environment, in which the individual has support from a range of staff and other prisoners around them, and which addresses important resettlement factors such as employment and accommodation, was referred to as best practice by a number of participants.

Some participants felt that, for most men convicted of sex offences, a combination of different variables ultimately led to their desistance from offending, and that interventions should be delivered in the context of a wider rehabilitative approach that recognised this:

> "All of these smaller pieces fit together… Drawing together various elements of what you need to re-engage in society and doing all of them at the same time to get decent outcomes." *(Government intervention specialist)*

It was also stressed that, from what is known from wider literature, individuals convicted of sexual offences will desist in their own time, regardless of any interventions they may have experienced:

> "All the research in relation to desistance suggests that men will stop when they want to stop, irrespective of what we're doing." *(Probation officer 3)*

[12]There used to be a specific treatment programme specifically for men convicted of an internet sex offence (I-SOTP), but this has lost accreditation. For information about interventions for online perpetrators of online CSE, see Perkins et al (2018).

[13]One participant told us that, as an example of this, some prisoners were applying for a judicial review to challenge the length of time they had been waiting to receive treatment and progress their sentence plan.

Lived experiences of interventions

Although not originally included as part of our research, interviews were conducted with three individuals who had varied experience of sex offender treatment. Whilst these provided limited data, they do offer some useful insights into the experiences of those undertaking programmes. Further research in this area could benefit from service user engagement.

Service users we spoke to identified elements of SOTPs that they felt were either helpful or unconstructive. For example, one said that hearing about other people's offences in group work was detrimental to their own mental health:

> "I talked about what I did and then you have to [hear] about other [people's]… But other people's was worse… because I had the knowledge of knowing what I did was horrible, but listening to other people's... That just sticks with me all the time, stuff like that." *(SU2)*

For another, a one-to-one, psychotherapeutic approach would have been more effective than a group setting where there is less emphasis on the individual:

> "My personal view is that one-on-one psychotherapy is the route to go down with perhaps a limited degree of group work involved because… it's down to an individual to take responsibility for their actions and if you are in a group setting it's very easy not to take responsibility." *(SU1)*

The cognitive behavioural therapy element of the programme divided opinion, with one service user feeling it was invaluable and another saying it did nothing but exacerbate negative emotions without the additional support to work through them:

> "I have huge reservations about cognitive behavioural therapy… It dredged up the emotional hurt of the past and that wasn't dealt with… [Cognitive behavioural therapy] becomes an increasingly attractive option, because it's something you can buy off the peg, deliver in however many weeks or months and screw the individual who's maybe got deep rooted issues." *(SU1)*

With regards to the content of the SOTPs, one service user valued the victim awareness element, as well as a positive future approach. The most useful aspect of their SOTP was:

> "…looking at how I can improve myself in the future." *(SU3)*

When asked about accessing SOTPs and related programmes, service users voiced frustrations around lack of timely access, with one participant linking this to the impact it had on his reoffending:

> "I made several attempts to get on programmes… and there was just a resounding silence." *(SU1)*

> "I had to wait ages… [Starting the SOTP earlier] would have made a hell of a lot of difference." *(SU2)*

Asked what else made a difference towards a positive future, one service user said the church had been the most important element of his support on release.

> "The support I've had, not just from priests but from friends within the cathedral community that I've known… If I think I've got a problem about anything, I know I can pick up the phone and talk to them." *(SU1)*

5.3. Specific interventions for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation

As stated above, we found no specific interventions for perpetrators of CSE activity. This section reflects expert views on what we know about individuals perpetrating CSE, as well as views on appropriate interventions.

What is known about perpetrators of child sexual exploitation

There was agreement that little evidence exists about the characteristics or motivations of known perpetrators in CSE cases, but that addressing this knowledge gap could help to develop more appropriate treatment responses in this area. It was suggested that, from what is known so far, CSE perpetrators may have different motivations from individuals convicted of CSA and other sexual offences, and this may affect what kind of intervention they should receive.[14]

Some participants felt that researching the motivations of CSE perpetrators could help practitioners better understand the context and individual journeys within this kind of offending, helping to make treatment more effective. For others, individual motivations for committing sex offences varied so greatly that further research of this kind would be of only limited value in developing further interventions:

"[The] difficulty is that there are numerous types of offending, and motivations and characteristics differ among those patterns of offending, and that's what complicates the picture in terms of interventions." *(Academic 1)*

It was said, for example, that the motivations of a perpetrator of the 'older boyfriend' model of CSE might be primarily sexual. Perpetrators of gang-related CSE, however, might be motivated by financial gain or increased status amongst peers. Sexual exploitation in these cases could be a by-product of primary criminal activity, such as when sexual acts were used to pay off drug debts or as a weapon for revenge.

"If your primary motivation here is not your own sexual arousal, then it's a completely different set of treatment needs." *(Probation officer 2)*

Consideration was given to the "customers"[15] in CSE cases: those who do not directly organise exploitation but commit a sexual offence in the process of "responding to something offered to them" (Probation officer 3). It was suggested that motivations for these men are likely to differ from those of the individuals responsible for the grooming process – and that taking account of their sexual motivation, rather than financial or status gain, should be what drives their treatment (as is currently the case with the wider sex offender population).[16]

Some participants said that categorising the processes of CSE across the various ways in which exploitation can be perpetrated, rather than trying to identify specific characteristics of individuals, would help drive effective prevention and detection:

"It's about how they do it, rather than why they do it or who is doing it, that is the key." *(Government intervention specialist)*

There was also felt to be a risk that, if a 'typology' approach were pursued, the ways in which motivations or drivers may overlap would be ignored, or this might lead some forms of CSE to be viewed as more serious than others.

"To understand the problem we have to put it in different boxes, but then the boxes become beguiling because we assume there's a separation but there's not: people can shift between them or inhabit more than one at the same time." *(Anonymous)*

Knowledge of perpetrators is limited to the information available on those individuals who have already gone through the criminal justice system; some participants cautioned against the risk of placing too much focus on this one group and overlooking other potential perpetrators.

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[14]Referring to cases reported in the media, however, some participants expressed caution about what they viewed as (frequently racialised) stereotypes of what a CSE perpetrator 'looks like'; these create the risk of practitioners viewing CSE activity too narrowly, as taking place only within gangs or groups or within certain ethnic minority communities.

[15]The distinction and term 'customers' of CSE was used in a number of interviews.

[16]This is in line with the approach taken in some other countries: in the USA, one participant said, a distinction is made between 'customers' and 'traffickers' in the context of viewing CSE as commercial exploitation.

Views on appropriate interventions

It was felt by participants that developing a specific programme or intervention for perpetrators of CSE would likely be challenging, considering how little was known about the motivations of those committing CSE-related offences. For some, determining whether an offence can be described as CSE-related becomes less relevant where interventions are concerned, as the approach should focus on individual need and not attempt a "cookie cutter response" (Academic 2).

Most participants felt that elements of current programmes could be relevant or transferable if a bespoke intervention were to be designed for this group. Hostile attitudes to and entrenched beliefs about women were a commonly raised theme, for example, which participants believed should be integrated into any intervention for this group. Some participants considered that the issue should be addressed through preventative methods, via education, as well as being embedded in interventions for individuals convicted of CSE-related offences.

> "What are the attitudes that inform the behaviour which are abusive and hostile towards women and children?" *(Probation officer 3)*

Others suggested that an approach prioritising the impact of group or gang affiliation could be useful, where these relationships had played a significant role in an individual's offending. Some participants perceived individuals involved in gang activity as needing slightly different types of risk assessment and treatment. Many believed that gang affiliation and its overlap with CSE-related activity required further consideration, specifically in instances where the group affiliation or loyalty may be a primary driver for the offence:

> "[You] have to think about how it is similar to interventions for gang members because sometimes you're a CSE perpetrator because you happen to be part of a gang… Paedophile rehabilitation is not going to be as helpful to you or a good use of anyone's funding." *(Academic 2)*

Professional skills to deliver programmes

Most participants agreed that a number of professional skills were likely to be needed to work with men convicted of CSE-related offences, but that these were similar to those required by practitioners working with men convicted of sexual offences in general. They included therapeutic skills, empathy and an understanding of abuse and control.

Practitioners working on programmes emphasised that, whilst staff should be motivated to work with that group and have appropriate levels of resilience, there should also be robust support and supervision in place for them. Some participants identified social workers and mental health professionals as possessing the same skills required to deliver programmes of this kind.

> "Most participants felt that elements of current programmes could be relevant or transferable if a bespoke intervention were to be designed for perpetrators of CSE.

Current developments in sex offender treatment

At the time this research was carried out, two new evidence-based treatment programmes were being rolled out by HMPPS in prisons and probation: one suitable for moderate-risk and one for high-risk offenders (see section 4.3).

The programmes have adopted a desistence approach which presents a departure from previous offence-focused, risk-reduction work: a move that one practitioner described as a "cultural shift" (Probation officer 2). This new approach aims to help individuals take responsibility for their own futures, develop a pro-social identity, raise hope and build the intention to desist from crime:

"Instead of attempting to change people, we're trying to open people up to change." (*Government intervention specialist*)

A number of participants reflected on the growing evidence base around the Good Lives Model (see section 4.3), and reiterated that the new programmes are solely focused on the future and move away from individuals having to explore their offence:

"The sole aim used to be to get men to admit full responsibility for what they'd done and make them aware of the impact of this… We've moved a long way from that in the meantime." *(Probation officer 2)*

Given how early it was in the process of revising this approach, the participants were not clear how this shift would affect outcomes for individuals convicted of a CSE-related offence.

Denial

Even where an individual might want to change, it was suggested, the need to maintain innocence in order not to disappoint their family or community could take personal precedence over their desire to complete a programme. Denial of a sexual offence can be commonplace, particularly where individuals do not want to lose the support of their family or community throughout their sentence or on release. Indeed, research has shown that denial does not appear to have an impact on recidivism for individuals convicted of a sexual offence (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005), and some practitioners stressed that denial does not necessarily indicate a higher level of risk.

More specifically, participants stated that some individuals convicted of CSE-related offences would not necessarily see themselves as sex offenders. Their suitability for programmes related to sexual offences was therefore questionable, as engaging them would probably be challenging. Historically, an individual convicted of a sexual offence but in denial would not be accepted onto an SOTP in prison or the community. In recognition of the barrier that denial can create to treatment, however, we understand that the new HMPPS programmes are suitable for people who deny

responsibility for their offence; this is likely to make denial less relevant as an issue for treatment in future.

5.4. Current gaps in approaches to interventions

Identifying and tracking perpetrators through the criminal justice system

Participants said that little was known about the journey of perpetrators of CSE through the criminal justice system, and that trying to gather accurate information on this was likely to be extremely challenging and resource-intensive. They observed that there is currently no Home Office recording code that identifies incidents of CSE across all offences, nor a way of linking data held between the Ministry of Justice or the Home Office. Determining which interventions

> " Some practitioners stressed that denial does not necessarily indicate a higher level of risk. "

those convicted of CSE-related offences have so far received was said to require tracking named individuals from arrest, through the courts, then when under the supervision of HMPPS in custody and probation.

"[Whether or not the index offence is CSE-related] becomes clouded… because sometimes charges are dropped or moved around in order to get convictions, so you don't always get a clear picture of what the man has actually done from the description of the offence." *(Probation officer 3)*

Participants working across the criminal justice system identified a lack of effective monitoring and data-sharing across agencies working around CSE. It is clear that some areas of the country have developed effective multi-agency working arrangements between police, probation, social services, the third sector and other relevant agencies. However, there was no

consistent national approach, and participants expressed a clear desire for more effective partnership and engagement.

We heard of a number of projects at a local level to identify and prosecute cases of CSE swiftly. A number of participants said that local authorities and the police were moving towards a more proactive approach as part of a cultural shift towards identifying perpetrators. It was acknowledged, however, that some of this has been in response to local 'scandals' and was not, therefore, consistent across the country. It was clear that rapid information-sharing, and policing detection that does not always depend on the victim coming forward or disclosing abuse, were critical to success in these cases.

Young men

A particular gap in current programme provision, in prison and the community, was identified for young adult men convicted of sex offences. Practitioners suggested that current SOTPs had been designed with more mature men in mind and that exploring a different approach for young men might be more suitable. One suggested that the model of cognitive behavioural therapy embedded in sex-offender group work treatment would be less effective with young men who are still developing their own identities. Another participant told us that evidence around effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy for this group is not robust (Grimshaw, 2008).

Placing young men in programmes with older or prolific offenders was also thought to be potentially harmful, as this might damage their own progress. It was suggested that learning from work taking place with boys who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour at a young age could help to develop an approach appropriate to young adults.

The role of the community

Community tensions and anxieties around releasing individuals convicted of sexual offences back into the community were frequently identified as a challenge to effective rehabilitation, and it was suggested that the actual low risk level posed by people convicted of sex offences[17] was not well understood by or communicated to the public.

"A lot of [the barriers to effective support are] around the community's tensions, anxieties and worries about releasing sex offenders." *(Prison governor)*

The role of the community was also described as important in reducing recidivism, however, where a support network can be created around an individual so they can build a positive future on their release from custody.

The most commonly referenced mechanism was CoSA (see section 4.2), where a team of volunteers create a 'circle' around the individual to help them reintegrate back into the community. Whilst this was seen as supportive in many cases, and frequently oversubscribed as a service, it requires considerable motivation from the person at the centre of the circle to participate, and it is unknown whether this model would be suitable for CSE perpetrators specifically.

> A particular gap in provision, in prison and the community, was identified for young adult men convicted of sex offences.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation was frequently named as the most relevant organisation offering community interventions in this field. Having moved towards a preventative model of work, particularly with young people, the Foundation no longer provides direct services for adults. However, its 'Stop it Now!' helpline, a confidential service for individuals concerned about their thoughts and behaviour towards children, was identified as a resource that should be more available and widespread. The Dunkelfeld model in Germany, which offers free and confidential treatment for individuals seeking therapeutic help with their sexual preference for children, was also named as an example of how to work with those in the community who are concerned about their own behaviour or thoughts; it could also potentially provide valuable evidence about as-

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[17]Reoffending rates based on sexual offences are 13% for adults and 14% for juveniles (Ministry of Justice, 2017a).

yet undetected perpetrators, and participants advised that researchers in this country should remain attentive to this.

It was suggested that the third sector could play a more significant role in providing support to individuals convicted of sex offences on release into the community. Examples of where this was done well were provided: for example, voluntary organisations meeting individuals at the gate on release, as well as community and chaplaincy work. Community faith leaders were regularly identified as important figures to engage with in developing approaches to tackling CSE, and to embed within a network of support for individual perpetrators.

Getting individuals into education and employment, to reduce the role that economic need may have played in their past offending, was said by some to be as important as formal interventions. Challenges related to delivering this were recognised, particularly where having a sex offence presented a further barrier on top of having a criminal record, and employers were said to have a role to play in improving employment opportunities for this group.

The role of lived experience

Working with current and former service users to develop approaches to interventions was said to be a very powerful tool, and one that was under-utilised. An example was given of a service user forum, which had been found to be an effective mechanism for involving and engaging men convicted of sexual offences in developing interventions with (and support for) others. The potential for using people with personal experience as co-facilitators of group work, as seen more widely in the criminal justice system, was said to be underexplored:

> "All the literature and evidence shows this is a really powerful tool to use to help with treatment. The 'I've been there' approach." *(Anonymous)*

Civil orders

The use of non-criminal civil orders, including SROs, SHPOs and Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs), was raised as being an effective method of disrupting CSE and, in some cases, gathering evidence to prosecute a perpetrator.[18] These orders can be applied for by police, can contain prohibitive measures

(for example, preventing individuals from going to certain places or having contact with named people), and are monitored by police. Participants from the police told us that SROs are particularly useful as they can be granted on a victimless basis – for example, where a victim might think they are in a relationship with a perpetrator and would be unlikely to come forward to police or provide evidence towards a prosecution.

SROs, SHPOs and CAWNS are purely prohibitive, however, and no wider interventions (such as referral to a community programme) were said to be attached to them. Despite this, they were felt by one CSE police lead to be an effective prevention intervention. Data suggest that a minimal number of SROs have been breached, but they are still relatively new; research could be undertaken to explore how effective they are.

Prevention and early intervention

Although this was outside the scope of this research, participants in all fields said that investing in prevention was just as critical, if not more so, as developing interventions post conviction. Some felt that more could be done to invest time in identifying risky behaviours and delivering prevention work for individuals displaying these. Funding for specific projects set up to identify and prevent CSE varies from area to area, however, and sustainability of funding for prevention was a significant issue within a wider context of cuts across the board.

> " Getting individuals into education and employment was said by some to be as important as formal interventions. "

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[18] For more information about civil orders, see Annex B of Department for Education (2017b).

"There is a strong argument that all these resources in the criminal justice system should actually go into education much lower. We are where we are with [men who have already committed CSE offences], but if we were educating and equipping people at a young age not to get involved in the first place then that's a good use of resources." (Probation officer 2)

Participants felt that prevention work needed to take place with both victims and potential perpetrators. Views that can lead to the perpetration of gender-based violence, particularly against girls, are established early on for both perpetrators and victims; addressing these views at this stage was therefore seen as a better and less resource-intensive method of preventing abuse from taking place.

Whilst pockets of work were highlighted in certain areas, it was said that a more consistent approach should be adopted throughout educational institutions and the wider community, to tackle the conditions that enable and allow coercive, controlling or violent behaviour to take place. Examples given of appropriate prevention work included providing factual information (such as on the legal age of consent) and wider contextual education about healthy relationships, sexualisation, consent and gender-based violence. For some, mandating this in all schools was an obvious and effective prevention method.

Resource challenges

All participants stressed that a lack of resource was a key barrier to developing effective prevention and intervention work with perpetrators of CSE. Justifying spending on projects directed at perpetrators as opposed to victims, in a context of limited funding, was a further challenge:

"It's a real problem, the lack of treatment services available… which is partly why we want to set up a prevention service." (Anonymous)

Many participants said that the lack of prison staff was severely affecting the ability to deliver and maintain progress through interventions. This can cause delays to people progressing through their sentences, particularly those on indeterminate sentences where their release date will depend on satisfying the Parole Board that they have completed the necessary programmes. Frustration was expressed about the bureaucratic nature and slow pace of the prison system, exacerbated by the pressures of an increasing prison population. A disconnect between what takes place during a programme or treatment session and the prisoner's interaction with residential wing staff was also said to be detrimental to progress. Efforts to reduce siloed working, so that all prison staff were fully engaged and connected to the programmes taking place, were said to be pivotal in ensuring that programmes are as effective as they can be.

Similarly, participants working in the community noted the intensive resource needed to monitor effectively those individuals convicted of a sexual offence who are subject to MAPPA (see section 4.2) – particularly if increasing numbers of individuals are subject to these arrangements in future. Some suggested that it might be most appropriate to focus finite resource on, and develop bespoke interventions for, the highest-risk offenders.

Whilst most participants suggested that the most effective approach would be to develop a bespoke intervention which met a wider range of individual needs in the criminal justice system, to avoid placing individuals into categories or boxes, they also stated that this was unviable given the resource challenges in the system. For some, it was key to take a pragmatic approach as to how much is realistically achievable in delivering effective interventions within a context of constrained resource. This was an area of complexity for many participants, and reflects the systemic challenges of trying to deliver effective, individualised programmes with limited resources.

> Many participants said that the lack of prison staff was severely affecting the ability to deliver and maintain progress through interventions.

6. Discussion and conclusions

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Key findings

▸ There is currently no specific intervention – in prison, probation or the community – for individuals convicted of a CSE-related offence involving physical contact.

▸ There was confusion amongst the experts we spoke to over the interpretation of the definition of CSE, and how appropriate this definition is in relation to interventions delivered in the criminal justice system. (A new Government definition of CSE had been introduced in England shortly before the bulk of this study took place.)

▸ There are significant gaps in knowledge about perpetrators. Filling these gaps may help when considering whether a specific intervention would be appropriate, and if so what it could look like.

▸ Interventions in the community should be explored further to supplement programmes provided by criminal justice agencies and enable more collaboration. Further resources would need to be made available to develop these effectively.

▸ It is unknown how the new prison programmes being rolled out by HMPPS will affect perpetrators of CSE.

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6.1. Current interventions and effectiveness

It became apparent very early on in our scoping that no specific interventions exist for perpetrators of CSE. There is no one specific offence for CSE, but rather a range of offences that an individual could be convicted of,[19] which may or may not lead to an intervention in custody. Those who have been convicted of a sexual offence may, therefore, undertake a sex offender treatment programme in prison or in the community, as appropriate. In the community, voluntary support interventions may also be undertaken.

It should be noted that there was a general lack of agreement around the effectiveness of interventions with those convicted of sex offences, as there was no clear consensus in either the literature or from participant interviews around what is considered effective. The complexities of measuring effectiveness were highlighted: for example, the influence of other variables that may impact on reoffending such as housing or family. In addition, the evidence that exists on interventions does not allow us to disaggregate the data for perpetrators of CSE-related offences, so does

not provide us with any findings specific to this group. Importantly, owing to the range of offences and the lack of tracking through the criminal justice system of offenders who have been involved in CSE-related activity, it is not currently possible to map each individual's journey, the interventions they receive and consequently any effectiveness.

> "The evidence that exists on interventions does not allow us to disaggregate the data for perpetrators of CSE-related offences.

An important finding was the level of disagreement over the definition of CSE. Despite the creation of a very new, explicit description of CSE, distinct from CSA, we found significant confusion around this amongst the practitioners and academics we spoke to. Whilst the literature has identified a range of models of CSE, some practitioners

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[19]Department for Education (2017b), Annex B, provides more information about these offences.

referred solely to CSE in relation to gangs or groups. This suggests that other ways in which CSE can be perpetrated may be understood in different ways by different professional groups. Having a definition of CSE appeared to be more relevant to those working in identification and prevention than those involved in interventions in custody or the community.

Professional understanding of what instances could be described as CSE appeared to vary. Creating an intervention specifically for perpetrators of CSE would potentially be challenging given the complexity around the ways in which CSE is known to be perpetrated. A point that became extremely clear through our scoping was that creating a 'typology' around shared characteristics of this group is not currently possible, given the limited knowledge around who perpetrates CSE. The range of models, motivations and drivers of those perpetrating CSE-related offences would likely make this extremely complex. There is still very little known about specific characteristics and motivations of perpetrators across identified models of CSE, and more detailed understanding of this is critical when considering what an effective intervention might look like. This knowledge gap has a significant impact on how much can be asserted with confidence in this area.

Given that there are various models and situations in which CSE can occur, the information available on those individuals who have been convicted of CSE-related offences to date (including profiling information) should be used with caution when considering interventions, as this represents only the cohort of individuals perpetrating CSE who have been detected.

It was interesting to observe that there was not a strong appetite amongst interview participants for a new intervention in custody specifically for perpetrators of CSE, as an alternative to what is currently available in the criminal justice system – and that an individualised approach was highlighted as being needed. This reflected the wide range of motivations and models highlighted by participants.

At the time of writing, significant changes are taking place with regards to programmes delivered by HMPPS; these will inevitably have an impact on perpetrators of CSE who enter the criminal justice system in the future. The shift away from an offence focus towards an approach based on working towards offence-free, pro-social future identities in accredited programme delivery work presents a significant change in treatment programmes. The impact of this shift should be noted in relation to how it might affect perpetrators of CSE in the criminal justice system, and how any specific interventions would be developed.

> **Approaches taken around attitudes to women should be explored further in future research into interventions for CSE perpetrators.**

6.2. Appropriate approaches to interventions

Interesting questions are posed by the common themes that emerged in the study around the role of gender-based belief systems and attitudes in relation to CSE-related activity. Approaches taken around attitudes towards women, for example, should be explored further and considered in future research into interventions for perpetrators of CSE. Issues around gang or group dynamics were another strong theme, and other offending treatment programmes exploring these issues should be considered. Identity Matters, for example, was a programme piloted in two Young Offender Institutions around gang affiliation, which could be explored to develop an approach where this has featured in an individual's CSE-related offending.

Given the incoming changes to treatment programmes delivered in prisons and the community by HMPPS, it may be more appropriate to explore the content of these in more depth once they have been rolled out fully.

Notable gaps in intervention provision for certain groups of perpetrators of CSE (such as young adult men, who arguably require a distinct approach due to their cognitive development) were present in interviews and should be explored in more depth. Interventions using civil orders before an individual officially

enters the criminal justice system could be effective in preventing offending and should be considered in more depth.

With regard to disruption, an interesting finding was that understanding the processes of how cases of CSE are perpetrated may be more useful than understanding the range of an individual's motivations. This is an area worth further exploration.

Another area identified for further exploration is the role that the community can play in supplementing criminal justice interventions. For example, placing service users as peer supporters to play a significant role in community support was identified as being an effective mechanism that merits further consideration. Additional community interventions are particularly relevant in light of the resource constraints in the criminal justice system to provide support to individuals resettling in the community, given the potential longer-term savings that could be made through this approach. Increased use of the community and voluntary sector could be explored further to provide additional preventative and support functions. The lack of resource across both prison and probation was a strong theme throughout the review, and clearly creates a fundamental challenge which should not be overlooked when considering interventions for this group.

Our review was limited to interventions based in England and Wales. Whilst international scoping has as yet uncovered only limited findings in this area, approaches in Sweden and Victoria, Australia could be valuable to consider (Association of Directors of Children's Services and Office for Public Management, 2015),[20] as could the Dunkelfeld model in Germany (see section 5.4).

> "With regard to disruption, understanding how CSE cases are perpetrated may be more useful than understanding the range of an individual's motivations."

[20]Under one model in Sweden, individuals can proactively access web-based, telephone and one-to-one psychotherapeutic services if they are concerned about their sexual thoughts or behaviour. In Australia, a CSE prevention project has worked with Victoria Police to establish a more effective response to the sexual exploitation of young people, and has trained about 2,000 people in a year. It has brought police, child protection officers and residential care workers together through the training, encouraging them to work together and think about how they can respond in more effective ways through increased collaboration.

7. Recommendations

Below are recommendations to aid better understanding of potential interventions for perpetrators of CSE, identified through our findings as well as where we identified gaps:

‣ The rollout of the new HMPPS treatment programmes should be monitored in relation to perpetrators of CSE and their participation.

‣ Named individuals convicted of CSE-related offences should be tracked through the system, to determine what kinds of interventions are received and their outcomes.

‣ Preventative interventions for men at risk of committing a CSE-related offence, and in particular for those subject to prohibitive civil measures such as Sexual Risk Orders, should be explored before the individual enters the criminal justice system.

‣ Problematic gender-based belief systems should be addressed by, for example, developing interventions to address deeply held negative and problematic attitudes which perpetuate CSE in hotspot areas. The important role and involvement educators and the community could play in supporting and facilitating these should be examined.

‣ Community partnerships and collaboration should be explored when considering the development of better strategies for supporting or intervening with CSE perpetrators, including support on release from prison. Scoping could be done on scaling up current models or, where these may not exist, how they can be established.

The role of service users as potential facilitators and peer supporters, delivering additional support interventions and preventative work, should be considered.

‣ The role of service users as potential facilitators and peer supporters, delivering additional support interventions and preventative work, should be considered. Initial scoping research could be carried out to ascertain how lived experience could play a role in this area.

‣ The current journey through the criminal justice system of a young adult man convicted of a CSE-related offence should be explored, to identify what an effective intervention might look like and how the journey differs from that of an adult male convicted of a CSE-related offence.

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Appendix 1: Abbreviations and terminology

Abbreviations

CSA – child sexual abuse

CSE – child sexual exploitation

CSE cases – incidents where child sexual exploitation has occurred

NOMS – National Offender Management Service

HMPPS – Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

DfE – Department for Education

MAPPA – Multi agency public protection arrangements

SOTP – sex offender treatment programme

Terminology

Models – the different ways in which child sexual exploitation occurs.

Intervention – action or service designed to help an individual to stop (re)offending.

Programme – accredited courses undertaken by individuals serving a sentence, designed to prevent reoffending, and developed to target the particular risks and needs for different types of offending behaviour.

Treatment – non-medical or non-pharmacological services undertaken by an individual

Conviction – a formal declaration by the verdict of a jury or the decision of a judge in a court of law that someone is guilty of a criminal offence.

Reoffending/recidivism – the act of committing another offence. The underlying principle of measuring reoffending (or recidivism, which is the most commonly used term internationally) is that someone who has received some form of criminal justice sanction (such as a conviction or a caution) goes on to commit another offence within a set time period.

Sentence – the punishment a judge or magistrate decides should be given to someone who has been convicted of a crime; it comes at the end of a prosecution. A sentence aims to: punish the offender, reduce crime, reform and rehabilitate the offender, protect the public, and make the offender give something back.

Civil order – a mandate imposed on an individual, operating outside the criminal justice system and usually containing prohibitive measures such as not going to a certain place or contacting a certain person.

Custodial sentence – a sentence served in prison as opposed to in the community.

Therapeutic approach – a participative, group-based approach for offenders who have a range of complex offending behaviour risk areas including emotional and psychological needs.

Contact abuse – abuse where an abuser makes physical contact with a child.

Grooming – building an emotional connection with a child or young person to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Cognitive behavioural therapy – a type of 'talking treatment' which focuses on how thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect feelings and behaviour, and teaches coping skills for dealing with different problems.

Appendix 2: Supplementary information to the methodology

The literature review was conducted from January to March 2017, to review research studies published in the academic, government and independent sector since 2007.

Inclusion criteria

We included studies published within the last 10 years, relating to work being delivered in England and Wales, which were obtainable within the period of this scoping study. The 10-year limit was chosen for pragmatic reasons.

We included literature from:

‣ practice examples and guidance
‣ government reports and guidance
‣ voluntary sector reports and guidance
‣ academic reports
‣ parliamentary reports and legislation.

Exclusion criteria

As separate research (described in Perkins et al 2018) was taking place concurrent to this scoping study, we omitted literature specifically referencing perpetrators of online CSE.

Also excluded were:

‣ programmes and interventions delivered outside England and Wales, with girls or women, or with young people
‣ preventative approaches taken before an offence has occurred.

Where material was found

The databases searched were:

‣ Google Scholar
‣ ResearchGate
‣ DeepDyve
‣ Social Care Online
‣ British Library catalogue.

Thirty academic, charity and further organisation websites were searched:

‣ Action for Children (AfC)
‣ Barnardo's
‣ CSE and Policing Knowledge Hub
‣ Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
‣ The Children's Society

‣ College of Policing
‣ Department for Education
‣ Eradicating Child Sexual Abuse (ECSA) Project
‣ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee
‣ The Lucy Faithfull Foundation
‣ National Offender Management Service (now Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service)
‣ Home Office
‣ Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse
‣ Ministry of Justice
‣ National Crime Agency
‣ The International Centre, University of Bedfordshire
‣ Local Government Association
‣ National Children's Bureau (NCB)
‣ National Organisation for Treatment of Sexual Abusers (NOTA)
‣ Office of the Children's Commissioner
‣ NSPCC library catalogue
‣ NWG Network
‣ Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE)
‣ Parliament Select Committees, Parliament UK
‣ Public Health England
‣ Research in Practice
‣ Respect
‣ Safer Living Foundation
‣ UK Government
‣ Women and Child Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University.

Search terms used

‣ Perpetrat* AND child* AND sex* AND exploit* treatment
‣ Perpetrat* AND child* AND sex* AND exploit* programme
‣ Perpetrat* AND child* AND sex* AND exploit* intervention
‣ Child* AND sex* AND exploit* treatment
‣ Child* AND sex* AND exploit* programme
‣ Child* AND sex* AND exploit* intervention.

Overall, 75 studies were included for review, including 32 documents that were reviewed as part of setting the policy context in Chapter 3.

Appendix 3: Participant information sheet

Background

In the year June 2015 to June 2016 just over 42,000 child sexual abuse (CSA) offences were recorded in England and Wales, a rapid and significant increase on the previous year. We know that these offences cover a broad range of intra-familial, grooming and online activities in various group and individual models. Within those CSA offences, recorded instances of distinct child sexual exploitation (CSE) offences have also risen, however there is little known about the interventions that are provided for those individuals convicted of these offences both within prison and the community. Given the growing prevalence and rise in the reporting of CSE offences, more needs to be known about the nature and effectiveness of interventions for this group of perpetrators.

The research

Nacro has been commissioned by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse to conduct a scoping review into current interventions and programmes undertaken by those convicted of CSE-related offences. The Centre of expertise has been established to help bring about significant and system-wide change in how child sexual abuse is responded to locally and nationally, funded by the Home Office and led by Barnardo's. This includes identifying and sharing evidence of what works to prevent and tackle CSA and CSE, to inform both policy and practice.

Nacro's CSE scoping project aims to identify any existing evidence of promising practice, including the effectiveness of these interventions, and gain expert views as to what might be the most appropriate approach to interventions with those convicted of CSE-related offences.

We will produce a report with our findings along with a summary and presentation aimed at professional audiences. This report will feed into the Centre's knowledge hub and inform future work and recommendations for further research in this area.

Your involvement

To inform this work we are looking to speak to professionals working in the field of interventions for CSE perpetrators, both in the secure estate and the community, including practitioners, policy makers and academics in the field. We will also be speaking to service users in the community with CSE-related convictions who have received support or interventions to prevent further reoffending.

We are aiming to speak to experts throughout February in order to submit our report to the Centre of expertise by April, however, we aim to be as flexible as possible to ensure we receive important and relevant information to inform this scoping study.

Please contact Caroline Drummond or Jessica Southgate for more information.

Centre of expertise
on child
sexual abuse

Reports in the child sexual exploitation perpetrators research programme:

1. *Young people who engage in child sexual exploitation behaviours:*
   An exploratory study
   Simon Hackett, Durham University and Stephen Smith,
   Durham Constabulary

2. *Characteristics and motivations of perpetrators of child sexual*
   exploitation: A rapid evidence assessment of research
   Kate Walker, Claire Pillinger and Sarah Brown, Coventry University

3. *Characteristics and perspectives of adults who have sexually exploited*
   children: Scoping research
   Kate Walker, Claire Pillinger and Sarah Brown, Coventry University

4. *Interventions for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation: A scoping study*
   Caroline Drummond and Jessica Southgate, Nacro

5. *Interventions for perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation:*
   A scoping review and gap analysis
   Derek Perkins, Royal Holloway University of London; Hannah Merdian,
   University of Lincoln; Britta Schumacher, Maastricht University;
   Hannah Bradshaw, University of Lincoln; and Jelena Stevanovic,
   Maastricht University