

Measuring the scale and changing nature of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation

Scoping report

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Introduction

A key aim of the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse is to increase understanding and awareness of the scale and nature of child sexual abuse (CSA). This paper forms the background to reaching current best estimates for both CSA and child sexual exploitation (CSE), as part of a strand of work which seeks to improve measurement and identify gaps in knowledge.

The aims for this piece of work were to:

- Establish a best estimate of the scale of CSA/E, drawing on the current evidence base and informed by expert input on the quality, reliability and extrapolation potential of this data. As far as possible, estimates should be provided at national and local level in England and Wales.
- Keep abreast of future changes in data collection, providing informed comment as needed on the interpretation of new data.
- Make proposals for a feasible new methodological framework to assess the scale of CSA/E and its various forms, building on current promising approaches and adding innovative methods.
- Review promising practice in recording. Where reporting is high, what are the reporting and recording procedures followed? Possible case matching of areas with similar demographics but different practices and reported levels of CSA/E.

At the heart of being able to distinguish between CSA and CSE is the issue of definitions, so we begin there. This is followed by a section on prevalence data and then exploration of official data sources.

One observation from our review is that there is a tendency to rely on recently published material, which hides earlier prevalence studies (see Baker and Duncan, 1985; Kelly et al. 1991 for the UK) and the lessons learnt, alongside previous explorations of the overlaps and distinctions between sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse (Kelly et al. 2000; Itzin, 2001).

Working methods

This has been primarily desk based research, undertaking reviews of existing prevalence estimates of CSA, research on the scale of CSE and the official data on recorded cases – in particular cases that enter the criminal justice and child protection systems.

We have undertaken our own analyses on publicly available datasets to explore changes over time and regional variations: the Children in Need census published by the Department for Education (DfE) in England and the Welsh Government in Wales, police recorded crime and outcome data tables released by the Home Office (HO), and Criminal Justice System Statistics published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) – the latter two both cover England and Wales. Regional variations can now be analysed in all main datasets.

Two workshops brought together academics and data holders (see Appendix 2 for a list) to explore a range of issues: definitions, prevalence studies, the strengths and weaknesses of official datasets and a possible minimum core data template.

Defining CSA and CSE

The last four decades have been witness to a changing landscape of language and framings for CSA – from incest in the 1970s, through a number of other terms, to the current distinction of CSE being a category within CSA. Each shift has meant that different forms and/or contexts of abuse have been recognised and attended to: which also opens up space for survivors to speak and for agencies to listen and hear. This is less a pendulum effect, more a clock face on which parts are highlighted and others in shadow: holding all forms of and contexts for CSA in view at the same time has been elusive for research, policy and practice.

Sexual exploitation of children is not a ‘new’ issue – sexual abuse rings were studied from the late 1970s (Burgess and Clark, 1984), followed by a focus on networks, organised abuse and abuse in institutions in the 1980s and 1990s (Gallagher, 1998; Nelson, 2016). Research also focused on girls involved in ‘prostitution’ and what were then termed ‘rent boys’. That family members may be involved in sexual exploitation (specifically the production of child abuse images, selling children for sex and wider abuse networks) has long been recognised, as has a prior history of family based child sexual abuse in the lives of those who are sexually exploited subsequently. These overlaps make creating definitional distinctions problematic, and were part of the reason for including the word ‘commercial’ in the early definitions of sexual exploitation in the 1990s (Alexander et al. 2000). There is currently no globally recognised definition of CSE, and many definitions still retain the commercial focus (Hallett, 2017). This has been dropped in recent iterations in England, although payment features in the Welsh Government definition which was formulated in 2008 (see below). Margaret Melrose (2012) notes that the progressively expansive definitions of CSE have resulted in a loss of connections to the sex industry and the creation of a fuzzy and elastic concept which, she argues, is difficult to apply consistently in practice.

Current definitions and framings

There is no agreed UK definition of CSE and, to date, CSE related policy and practice frameworks in England and Wales operate with different definitions¹. There are however some commonalities between them. The most recent guidance for England from the Department for Education (2017) argues that CSE should not be separated from other forms of CSA, nor from trafficking (see also Brayley and Cockbain, 2014), gendered violence or going missing. Current guidance for Wales similarly positions CSE as a form of CSA; however, trafficking, ‘missing’ and gendered violence, whilst flagged as connected concerns, are dealt with under separate protocols and guidance².

Nesting CSE within CSA is appropriate but delineating the boundaries is critical for measurement.

¹ A review of the Wales CSE guidance, protocol and embedded definition was commissioned by the Welsh Government in early 2017.

² As these protocols and guidance are being updated in line with the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there is indication that this will remain the case.

The most recent version of *Working Together* (Department for Education, 2015: 93) defines sexual abuse as:

... forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some forms of CSE are explicitly noted within this overarching definition. The most recent definition of CSE in England comes in guidance from the DfE (2017: 5).

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 needs or 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 also occur through the use of technology.

A subsequent paragraph points to the importance of combining professional curiosity with indicators, and the issue of consent (DfE, 2017: 6):

Child sexual exploitation is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess. The indicators for child sexual exploitation can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given. Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

Further clarifications are offered regarding the concept of ‘exchange’ with perpetrators within CSE (DfE, 2017: 6):

Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). It is critical to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Whilst there can be gifts or treats involved in other forms of sexual abuse (e.g. a father who sexually abuses but also buys the child toys) it is most likely referred to as child sexual exploitation if the ‘exchange’, as the core dynamic at play, results in financial gain for or enhanced status of, the perpetrator. Where the gain is only for the perpetrator/facilitator, there is most likely a financial gain (money, discharge of a debt or free/discounted goods or services) or increased status as a result of the abuse.

If sexual gratification, or exercise of power and control, is the only gain for the perpetrator (and there is no gain for the child/young person) this would not normally constitute child sexual exploitation, but should be responded to as a different form of child sexual abuse.

However, the boundaries between what children and young people receive which distinguish CSE from CSA remain unclear: the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) study (McGee et al. 2002) reports that offers of sweets, cigarettes, alcohol and other material objects was the most common tactic used by perpetrators in all child sexual abuse, and these could be interpreted as forms of exchange. Where the gain for young people is limited to affection or some kind of status, does this mean that sexually abusive peer relationships should all be designated CSE? This is not a rhetorical question, as it has implications for not only how cases are recorded but also how they are responded to: would CSE or domestic abuse services be more relevant? Further clarification of ‘gain’ in relation to children and young people is needed if there is to be consistency across datasets.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has noted in relation to this report that inconsistency in reviewing and flagging CSE and CSA are, in part, explained by crossovers within definitions, which result in multiple interpretations. Both contain elements of non-physical action – be it enticement in the definition of CSA or manipulation in CSE. In recognition of the difficulty in making clear and consistent differentiation, in 2017 the NCA referred to CSE&A in its strategic reporting.

Too often forms of abuse and the contexts in which they take place are conflated: separating them conceptually raises further questions. For example, locating all sexual abuse in families as CSA precludes sexual exploitation by family members. But even here there are a series of complexities: would the production of child abuse images within familial abuse mean that this form should be defined as CSE, whilst the contact sexual abuse is designated CSA? Similar complications emerge with respect to online: it is both an emerging context that enables

existing forms of abuse and a location in which new forms of abuse develop. The concept of 'grooming' is neither a form nor a context, but rather an umbrella term which refers to the strategies used by perpetrators to identify, target and implicate children and young people.

There are also elements of CSA reflected in the Wales definition of CSE, particularly in the opening lines, as set out in the All Wales Protocol (AWCPPRG, 2013:3):

Child sexual exploitation is the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, 'protection' or affection. The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent.

This definition requires some form of exchange for sexual exploitation, retaining links to previous models through its reference to 'payment' (as noted above). The guidance is also explicit in its reference to grooming as a process through which sexual exploitation occurs.

Whilst some boundary issues are inevitable between categories, there are currently so many overlapping elements between CSA and CSE that allocations are likely to be inconsistent between individuals and agencies. Some of the expert workshop participants were concerned that the Rotherham case and what was termed 'the grooming and pimping' model has come to define CSE, and is implicit in the indicators used by many agencies in their practice to identify those at risk, who are implicitly also understood as female. As a consequence, the trafficking of young people for sexual exploitation is sometimes considered to be separate from CSE, as is the selling of sex by young people outside this model. There remains a need to map the range of forms and contexts for CSA and CSE in order that parts of the clock face are not in shadow.

Issues and challenges for measurement

The many overlaps between definitions of CSA and CSE create a set of challenges in how CSE can be differentiated in both prevalence studies and agency data, in relation to both forms of and contexts for abuse. That the boundaries have shifted, with CSE becoming a more extensive concept (Melrose, 2012), makes tracking changes over time an inherently challenging task.

Prevalence research

Prevalence research is focused on CSA: its origins are a ground-breaking study by David Finkelhor (1979), with research in many countries following in the 1980s–1990s. Whilst there was a subsequent decline, innovations in methods continued, exemplified by the Irish SAVI study (McGee et al. 2002) which explored sexual violence in both childhood and adulthood and a recent increase in studies with young people themselves (see, for example, Finkelhor et al. 2014; Radford et al. 2011). To date, most studies focus on assessing the scale of victimisation from retrospective reports by adults, with limited efforts to measure actual or potential perpetration (see later section). Headline findings parallel those for domestic violence, with single incidents combined with ongoing patterns of abuse.

Several meta-analyses have been undertaken, and the best estimates they reach are noted below.

Two focus on US studies only:

Bolen and Scannapieco (1999)	20% girls	7% boys
Gorey and Leslie (1997)	12–17% girls	5–8% boys

A further two others included international studies:

Stoltenborgh et al. (2011)	18% girls	7.6% boys
Pereda et al. (2009)	19% girls	7.9% boys

One meta-analysis draws only on recent research with young people:

Barth et al. (2013)	15% girls	8% boys
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Whilst all are in a similar range, there are not inconsiderable differences across the estimates, with figures for girls ranging 12–20% and for boys 5–8%.

Finkelhor et al. (2014), working with data from three US studies conducted by his team involving young people aged 15–18, argue that the most complete estimates came from samples of 17–18 year olds, both because of the frequency of abuse by peers and that some family abuse continues in ages 16–17. Their three studies combined produced a higher lifetime prevalence of 26.6% for girls and a lower 5.1% for boys.

Whilst there is lack of consistency in definitions and methods which makes comparisons across time and countries complex, the conclusions in meta-analyses suggest that minimum estimates of CSA are 15–20% for girls and 7–8% for boys.

Methodological lessons

Key methodological insights have been garnered over the four decades of prevalence research, which account for some of the variations in overall findings.

- How the survey is framed: crime framings generate lower prevalence rates than those framed in terms of health, well-being or sexual experience.
- Specialised CSA and sexual violence surveys produce higher estimates than modules nested in wider surveys.
- The age cut off for childhood – 15, 16 or 17 – decreases or increases prevalence measures.
- The most effective questions are behaviourally specific lists (see next section and Appendix 1) which avoid terms such as ‘rape’, ‘assault’, ‘violence’ or ‘force’.
- Including non-contact abuse (and more recently online) and abuse by peers increases prevalence rates.
- The context in which surveys are completed (home, school, college) affects disclosure rates, especially for young people.
- Offering more than one opportunity to reveal, including questions about escapes or attempts, increases prevalence rates.
- Inclusion criteria for sampling, especially those requiring being a householder or having a telephone landline, exclude populations which may have higher rates of abuse, such as those in institutions or the homeless.

There is limited consensus on how to measure frequency/chronicity, since this covers both duration of abuse and the number of incidents – for long duration it is only possible to estimate the number of incidents. Similarly, data which would differentiate single from multiple perpetrators, both with respect to particular experiences and in terms of re-victimisation by different perpetrators, is a complex undertaking within the confines of survey methodology. Few studies to date (for an exception, see Kelly et al. 1991) have included questions which might facilitate identifying some forms of CSE.

Selected studies

In this section, the most recent British prevalence data – from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (ONS, 2016a) and the NSPCC child maltreatment study (Radford et al. 2011) – are explored. In addition, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency violence against women survey (2014) and the SAVI study (McGee et al. 2002) are discussed. All focus on CSA with limited attention to CSE, primarily because the data collected do not allow for differentiation. Appendix 1 summarises key methodological information including the actual questions used.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

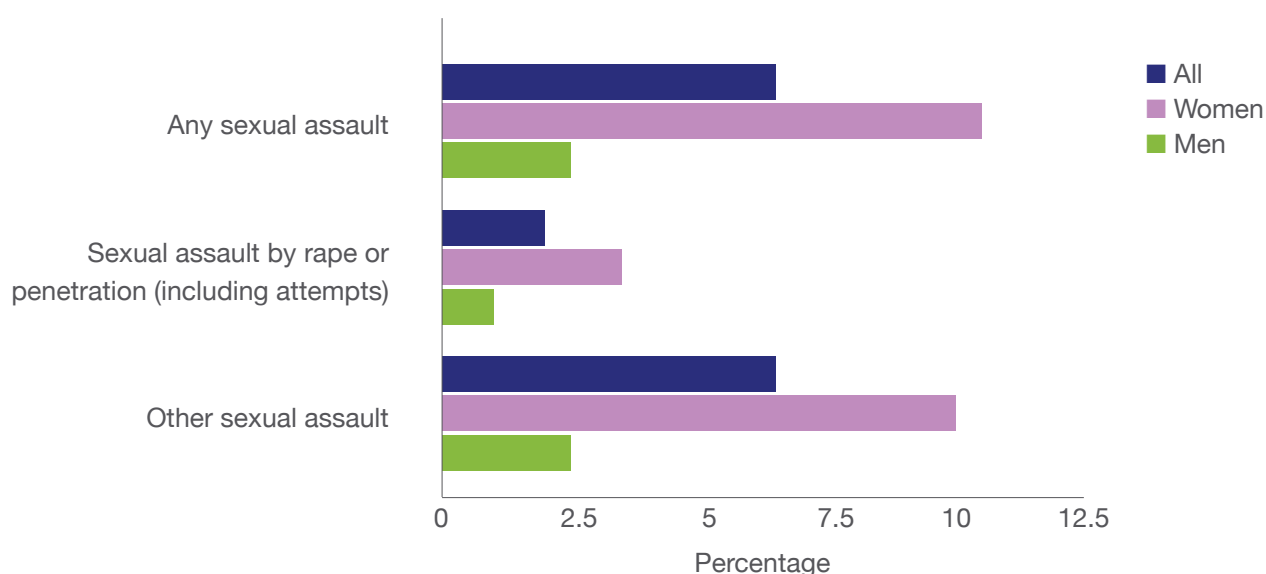
In the 2015/16 wave of data collection for the CSEW, a module on child abuse was included for the first time (ONS, 2016a). This was administered using computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI), where a laptop is turned round to the participant and they enter their responses anonymously – a practice which has been used in the intimate violence module for more than a decade.

The CSEW has a large random sample of 35,324 adult women and men living in households: the sample for the intimate violence module is 20,582 adults aged 16–59. Three specific questions were included to estimate the prevalence of sexual abuse – one covering

penetrative offences, a second ‘other sexual assaults’ (specifically flashing and sexual touching) and a question on attempted penetration (see Appendix 1). Perpetrators are specified as adults, thus excluding abuse by peers.

The overall prevalence findings were that 7% of adults aged 16–59 has experienced some form of CSA (see Figure 1), with non-penetrative sexual assaults more prevalent (10% of women and 3% of men): for penetrative offences the headline finding was 3% of women (estimated at 567,000 in the 16–59 population) and 1% of men (estimated at 102,000 in the 16–59 population). A series of additional questions about where the assault took place, age at which it started and stopped, whether anyone was told and the outcome of police involvement (if any) were limited to penetrative offences, although the relationship to perpetrators was explored for both categories.

Figure 1. Prevalence of sexual assault during childhood among adults 15–59, by sex and abuse type, year ending March 2016



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

‘Any sexual assault’ includes sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) and other sexual assault, including indecent exposure or unwanted touching. These two subcategories do not sum to ‘any sexual assault’, as respondent could be a survivor of either or both subcategories.

Interestingly reporting was highest in the older age groups (45-59). ONS (2016a) noted that this could indicate a decline in prevalence, but it could equally be linked to a greater willingness or readiness to both define and report sexual abuse amongst the older cohorts. More women than men reported both sexual abuse as a child and sexual violence as an adult (26.7% compared to 3.8%), suggesting that re-victimisation is gendered.

Table 1 records the relationship to the perpetrator and shows both gender differences and varying patterns across the different forms of CSA. Family members feature more strongly in relation to penetrative offences (42% for women, 38% for men) with unknown adults low for the most serious offences. This is reversed for ‘other sexual assault’ with high proportions of unknown perpetrators (43% women, 41% men) and lower proportions of family members. Whilst there are a small number of mothers as perpetrators, there are no stepmothers in either category, compared to 8% stepfathers for penetrative offences and 5% for other sexual

assaults. This may reflect a pattern noted in the 1980s of sexually abusive men seeking out partnerships with single parents in order to have access to their children. Friends and acquaintances make up between a quarter and a third across the two forms of CSA. Boys were more likely to be abused by someone in a position of authority, and girls by family members. Overall known persons predominate as perpetrators, especially with respect to penetrative offences.

Table 1. Survivor-perpetrator relationship for sexual abuse before the age of 16, by sex and type of sexual assault, England and Wales, year ending March 2016

	Sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts)			Other sexual assault		
	Percentage ¹			Percentage ¹		
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All
Mother	2	1	1	4	1	1
Father	5	7	7	2	5	4
Step-father	8	8	8	3	6	5
Step-mother	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other family member	23	27	26	10	17	16
Partner or previous partner ²	1	10	8	5	4	5
Friend or acquaintance ³	27	30	30	21	23	23
Person in position of trust or authority e.g. teacher, doctor, carer, youth worker	15	4	6	13	5	6
Stranger	16	13	14	41	43	42
Someone else	11	7	7	8	7	7
Don't know/can't remember	1	0	0	0	0	0
Don't wish to answer	4	3	4	3	2	2
Unweighted base – number of adults	68	444	512	266	1,190	1,456

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics. Adults aged 16-59

Notes:

1. Percentages sum to more than 100 as respondents could choose more than one answer for this question.
2. Partner or previous partner refers to the survivor's partner or previous partner. As questions were asked in relation to adult perpetrators it is assumed that the partner or previous partner was aged over 16 at the time of the assault whilst the survivor was aged under 16.
3. Friend or acquaintance includes friend or acquaintance, friend or acquaintance of a member of your family, or neighbour.

More adults with long-term illnesses or disabilities reported abuse. More women and men from the LGBT communities reported abuse, but findings were not statistically significant, possibly due to small sample sizes. Both issues deserve more attention in research.

For penetrative abuse, 5% reported that abuse began by the time they were four, for 73% onset was before they were 13, and for 21% it continued after age 16. In terms of when abuse begins, the numbers of men fall after age 11, whereas for women the proportions are relatively constant through to 15.

The measurement of duration is limited to a calculation based on the time abuse began and ended: less than a year (38% women, 31% men); one to three years (34% men, 28% women); three to five years (20% men, 14% women); five to 10 years (15% women, 11% men); 10–14 years (5% women and men). These data show that two thirds of the CSA reported was an ongoing pattern.

With respect to penetrative offences, almost three quarters did not tell anyone at the time (28% women and 17% men did) and those under 45 were more likely to tell. The most likely person to be told was someone in their immediate network; only 10% told a professional, and 7% the police, with young men more likely to tell a teacher. This contrasted with sexual violence in adulthood where 28% told a professional and 17% the police. These data confirm that there are particular barriers for children to tell others about sexual abuse – and that, whilst young women are more likely to tell, the gender difference is not as significant as many believe.

The ONS intends to include questions on CSA every three years, creating an opportunity to refine the methodology. It is also seeking to use a new address register which will make inclusion of different forms of accommodation possible.

NSPCC child maltreatment study

The NSPCC child maltreatment survey (Radford et al. 2011) followed up a previous study in 2002, albeit with an adapted methodology making direct comparisons difficult for some measures. In developing the questionnaire in 2002, questions on payment for sex were included to address CSE, but they did not generate much data. The questions were dropped from the 2011 study.

The study had three sub-samples: 2,160 parents of under 11s; 2,275 11–17 year olds with some additional input from parents; and 1,761 18–24 year olds. Questions about sexual abuse were included within an eight-question module which additionally asked older cohorts about sexual experiences more generally. Four of the questions covered what could be designated CSA, with one question conflating touching and ‘forced sex’; attempts and flashing are also included.

Whilst including non-contact, much of the analysis focused on contact abuse. Close to two-thirds of what was reported was perpetrated by peers, making the profile of identified abuse substantially different to that in CSEW, where all perpetrators were adults.

The figures for contact CSA from the three samples are:

Under 11s	0.8% girls	0.2% boys	0.5% all
11–17	7% girls	2.6% boys	4.8% all
18–24	17.8% girls	5.1% boys	11.3% all

Including non-contact offences, 1.2% of under 11s, 16.5% of 11–17 year olds and 24.1% of 18–24 year olds had experienced sexual abuse at some point during their childhood. The study’s estimate of the prevalence of CSA is much higher than the ONS’s; based on ONS population estimates in mid-2009, the year of the study’s data collection, an estimated 785,000 11–17 year-olds had experienced any form of CSA and 228,000 had experienced contact CSA.³ The highest rates were for 15–17-year-old girls, undoubtedly linked to the extent of abuse by peers. Most perpetrators were male and known in some way.

³ Figures were calculated using reported rates from the survey and extrapolated to mid-2009 ONS population estimates for England and Wales. This was a UK-wide survey; it is not known if the results from England and Wales differed from the overall findings.

Measures for within the last 12 months were calculated for the two samples who were still children at the time of the interview: 0.6% of under 11s and 9.4% of 11–17- year olds.

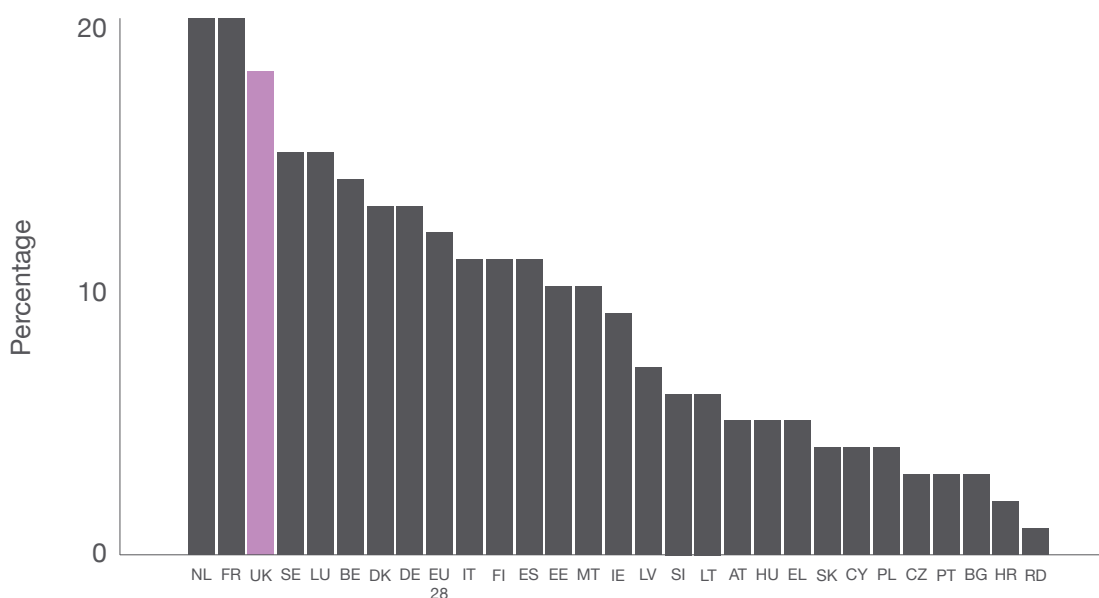
EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey

Another recent but rarely referred to source is the EU Fundamental Rights Agency violence against women survey (FRA, 2014). Whilst the sample comprised only women, the total of 42,002 was a large one, including around 1,500 from the UK. It had a narrower (than both CSEW and NSPCC) age based definition of CSA – happening before age 15 and perpetrated by an adult (someone over 18): peer abuse was thus excluded. There were five behaviourally specific questions, which were more clearly differentiated than the questions in either of the previous two studies (see Appendix 1).

For the EU as a whole the average prevalence rate was 12% (see Figure 2). The highest rates of 20% were in France and the Netherlands, with the UK following at 18%. One explanation offered for the variable rates between member states is that in some the issue remains taboo, whilst in others (including the UK) at the time of survey high profile cases were the topic of widespread media coverage.

Overall the vast majority of perpetrators were male (97%), half were strangers, 8% fathers/stepfathers and a further 17% other male relatives, with persons in positions of trust at 3%. The data for the UK were similar, with a slightly lower percentage of relatives (7% fathers/father figures, 12% other male relatives) and higher for unknown men (60%). Reflecting a finding from the CSEW, the highest reporting was in an older age cohort: in this case, those aged 30–40.

Figure 2. Childhood experience of any sexual violence before the age of 15 by %, EU, 2014



Source FRA, 2014, p127

Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) study

This study is included because it is one of very few specialist sexual violence surveys to be undertaken in Europe: it was conducted in Ireland under the auspices of the Royal College of Surgeons (McGee et al. 2002).

The survey was administered to a random sample of 18–90 year olds (n=3,118, comprising 1,584 women and 1,534 men) living in private residences with a landline telephone. The sample was built through random digit dialling with quotas to ensure it was as representative as possible, especially with respect to sex and age. Unlike the other three surveys, the interviews were conducted over the telephone. This study had the largest number of behaviourally specific questions (12) and an additional set to address sexual violence in adulthood (see Appendix 1). It was also, as a specialist survey, able to ask more detailed questions on frequency and duration.

Three measures of prevalence were presented:

- Childhood – sexual abuse which happened when under 17.
- Adulthood – sexual violence which happened when 17 and over.
- Lifetime – the most serious incident from childhood or adulthood, individuals are not double counted.

For females in childhood

- 20.4% contact abuse + 10% non-contact = 30.4% overall; 5.6% involved penetration.

For males in childhood

- 16.2% contact + 7.4% non-contact = 23.6% overall; 2.7% involved penetration.

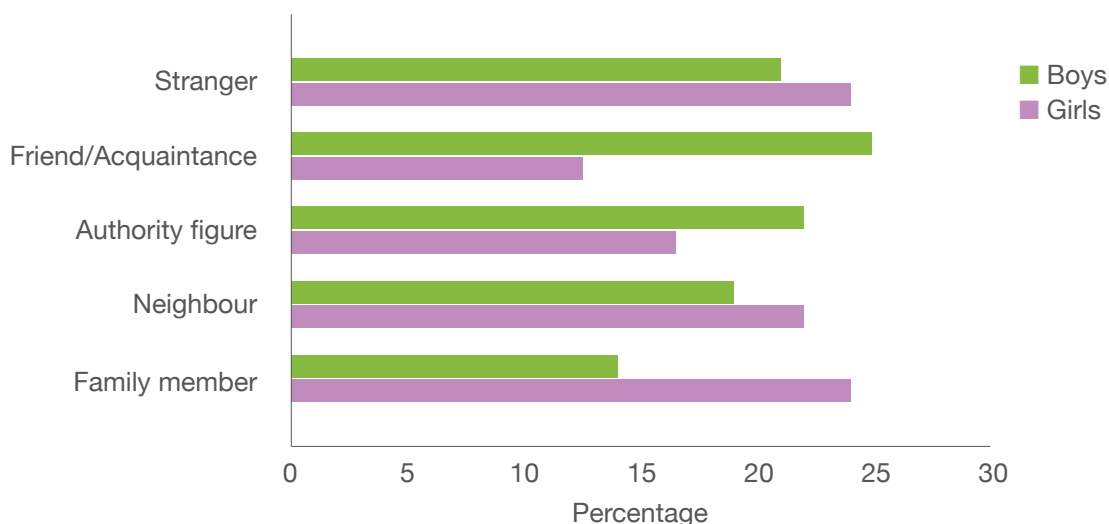
Lifetime estimates combining childhood and adulthood

- Women 42%, men 28%.

Over half of all reports for men and women were single events, with 20% of women and 12% of men reporting that there were ‘too many incidents to count’.

The relationships to perpetrators are presented in Figure 3 below. Whilst the findings were similar to those of other studies in the proportions of known perpetrators, there were some interesting differences: higher proportions of authority figures for men and women (possibly linked to the publicity preceding the survey on abuse by Catholic priests and nuns), and the usual larger proportion of family members for women. The data on contexts did not enable differentiation of CSE cases.

Figure 3. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse by gender of person reporting abuse, Ireland, 2002



Source SAVI (2002) p5

Measuring potential perpetration

Methodology exploring the potential for perpetration is much less developed, and it is interesting to reflect on why this might be the case. That said, there are a number of US studies and a recent German publication with a large sample.

The approach can be traced back to an exploratory study which sought to explore clinical constructions of sex offenders through research with 'normal' men (Briere and Runtz, 1989). A survey was administered to 193 male university students, of whom a fifth (21%) said they had some sexual attraction to children, 9% acknowledged having sexual fantasies involving children and 7% agreed with the statement that there was a likelihood that they would have sex with a child if they could avoid detection and prosecution. Correlations were found with early negative sexual experiences, having masturbated to pornography, having frequent sexual partners and beliefs that supported male dominance. An adaptation of the methodological approach included women (n=180) and men (n=99) and found a significant gender difference in reported sexual attraction to children (Smiljanich and Briere, 1996): 22% of men reported such attraction compared to 3% of women.

The most recent research (Dombert et al. 2016) was a large online survey with 8,718 German men which included questions on paying for sex and 'prostitution tourism'. Here the findings on sexual fantasies were more specified: 4.1% reported having them about pre-pubescent children and 0.1% were identified by the researchers as having what they defined as a 'pedophilic sexual preference' (p215). Correlations with practices in relation to pornography were more complex than those reported in previous studies.

What we currently do and do not know

The following findings are drawn from the current evidence base:

- Taking into account the variations in prevalence studies for England and Wales⁴, the data suggest that some 15% of girls/young women and 5% of boys/young men experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16, including abuse by adults and peers. The methods used and number of questions asked affect estimates; at the higher end, international estimates reach 30% for girls and 23% for boys.
- The rates are significantly lower, although less easily calculated, for repeated penetrative abuse. This is more common in the lives of girls and young women.
- The most serious and repeated offences are more likely to be committed by known persons, with family members more common for girls and young women and authority figures more common for boys and young men.
- Males are the vast majority of perpetrators.
- Most children and young people do not tell anyone at the time abuse is taking place, and many wait until they are adults.
- The higher overall prevalence findings in the SAVI and FRA surveys, compared to CSEW and NSPCC, suggest that having more than three questions, which are behaviourally specific and differentiated increases prevalence estimates.
- Including abuse by peers taps into an additional layer of sexually abusive experiences, including those in early intimate relationships.

⁴ Includes ONS (2016b), Radford et al. (2011) and Fundamental Rights Agency (2014).

There remain significant gaps in the evidence base:

- No general population prevalence studies have been undertaken on CSE as such; current survey questions do not permit such differentiation.
- We do not know why older age groups are more likely to report having had an experience of CSA.
- The patterns of abuse over time – duration and frequency – and where it takes place are less well established.
- Neither multiple perpetrators nor abuse by subsequent perpetrators are well documented.
- It is not yet possible to map online forms onto what we know about CSA to explore how far this is a context for abuse and how far there are specific online forms of abuse.
- The lack of time series data and variations in methodological approaches make exploration of a ‘changing nature’ of CSA complex: many studies are one off, so trends over time cannot be discerned; different methodologies and definitions make comparisons across studies problematic; and there is often too little differentiation of both the forms (the sexually abusive acts) and the contexts (not just the relationship to the perpetrator, but also the process of entrapment/point of first contact).

Future challenges

This overview raises a series of questions about current best estimates and how measurement might be improved, specifically in terms of England and Wales.

There are two obvious issues for CSEW. Firstly, could the number of questions be increased in order to further differentiate forms of CSA and within this identify CSE? There are financial implications for each additional question, and a methodological challenge in finding a format within a survey to create even a single question which would distinguish CSA from CSE. The second issue involves an additional layer of questions which would create better measurements of duration, frequency, locations of abuse and the tactics used by perpetrators to ensnare and silence children and young people.

It is an open question as to whether there is scope within general population studies to explore possible or actual perpetration.

The scale in official/agency data

Known cases of CSA are recorded in the child protection system and within police recorded crime statistics. Specialist support services also collate data on the survivors they support. Such records help to estimate the current level of known cases and identify trends, although the latter is more difficult to assess with confidence, since changing policy priorities and recording practices, and/or the increase or decrease in resources, can change the profile of detected cases.

It is generally recognised that administrative data underestimates the scale of CSA and CSE because:

- Most CSA remains hidden and is never reported to, or uncovered by, an official agency.
- There is a time lag between experiencing CSA and reporting it, with many cases only reported in adulthood (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2015), and we do not have a reliable measurement of how the rate of disclosure has changed over time.
- Recording cases as CSE is relatively recent, with some agencies yet to do it at all, alongside inconsistencies in allocating the categories.
- Not all reports are recorded – an issue in both police recorded crime and child protection data.
- Recording practices vary across agencies, administrative areas and over time; not all referred or reported cases are recorded in child protection data.

The most comprehensive effort to collate data across agencies was undertaken by the Children's Commissioner for England⁵ (2015): this report estimated that only 1 in 8 victims of CSA come to the attention of the authorities. ONS (2016a) found that 74% of adults reporting penetrative offences in childhood did not tell anyone about this at the time, and in only 7% of cases were the police told. The most common reason for not telling anyone was embarrassment or humiliation (48%) followed by fearing they would not be believed (38%).

This situation has been made more complex within police data by the dramatic increases in non-recent cases⁶ being reported; around a fifth of reports of sexual offences in 2015/6 (ONS, 2017).

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency recently noted the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse for child refugees. Evidence of both appear in the agency's monthly reports, but this is yet to be monitored systematically.

It remains the case, therefore, that the majority of CSA/E is neither reported nor identified during childhood and thus will not appear in official agency data.

Local authority children's services

Data from the child protection system shows the reasons why children are considered at risk and, more recently, made subject to a child protection plan by LA children's services. There are four categories of abuse – emotional, physical, sexual, and neglect – with a fifth multiple

⁵ No similar study has been done for Wales.

⁶ Non-recent cases are defined as those which take place 12 months before they are recorded by the police.

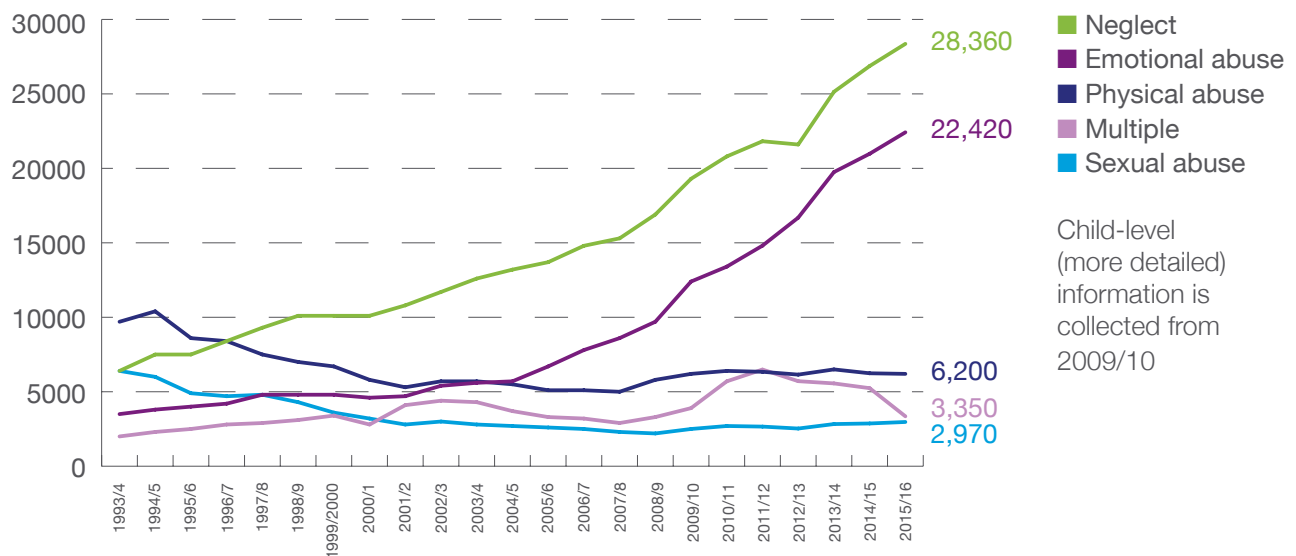
category⁷. Since 2014/15, children's services in England publish information on risk factors identified at the initial and most recent needs assessment – this data includes both sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as categories of need. Such information is not published for Wales⁸.

Trends over time

Figure 4 shows a dramatic decrease in the number of registrations for sexual abuse in England since 1994: the numbers fell by two thirds, from 6,400 in 1993/94 to 2,200 in 2008/9, rising to 2,910 children in 2015/16. It is now the lowest category, far below registrations for neglect and emotional abuse. The rise in the latter is, at least in part, linked to the recognition of children living with domestic violence as a form of abuse. This trend in CSA registrations has received limited attention in research or policy.

Whilst any trend figures over a long period of time need to be interpreted with caution, the Children in Need data collection framework has remained relatively stable over this period. The format of collection has changed twice: in 2000/1 when the 'multiple' category was introduced and most recently in 2008/9 when the DfE replaced aggregate LA-level collections with child-level data and introduced a second data capture point. It noted an increase in the numbers with child level data returns in 2009/10 which can be seen in Figure 4 (albeit not in the figures for sexual abuse).

Figure 4. Number of children on child protection plans by category of abuse, 1993/4–2015/16, England



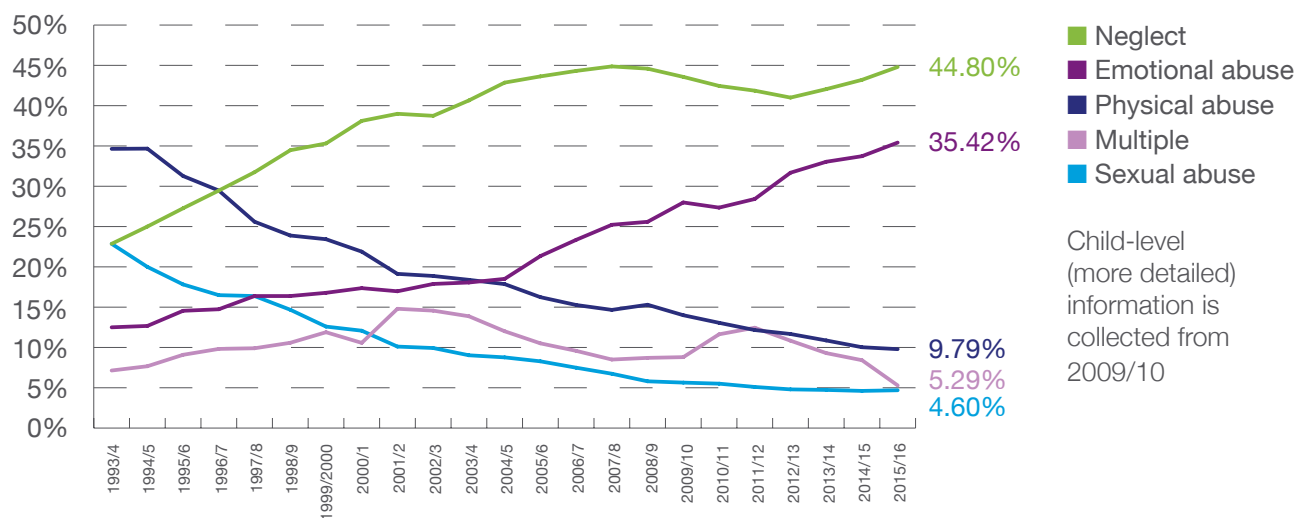
Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England: Registrations to child protection registers during the years ending 31 March by category of need, 1994–2004; Children who became the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) by category of abuse, 2005–2009; Number of children who became the subject of a CPP during the year ending 31 March by the initial category of abuse, 2010–2016. If a child was in the child protection system more than once during the year, each incidence is recorded. Child-level (more detailed) information is collected from 2009/10. Data confidence indicator was used for years 2008/9–2014/5, very few LAs were considered to provide low quality data. Missing data was noted for years 2009/10–2012/13 – by 14 LAs in 2009/10, 8 LAs in 2010/11, 2 LAs in 2011/12 and 1 LA in 2012/13.

7 In addition to abuse children can be in need for the following reasons: child's disability or illness; parent's disability or illness; family in acute stress; family dysfunction; socially unacceptable behaviour; low income; and absent parenting. When a child is in need for a combination of reasons, only one (the highest ordered in the list above starting with abuse) is recorded. Around half of all children in need are recorded under the abuse categories in both England and Wales.

8 Social services are a devolved responsibility, whereas policing and criminal justice systems are not, meaning that social services data gathering and reporting is different in Wales and England.

Figure 5 shows a parallel decline in the share of children who were subject to a child protection plan in England since 1993/4: in that year 23% had sexual abuse as their primary category of need, the same proportion as neglect, but by 2015/6 this had fallen to 5% whilst the neglect and emotional abuse categories had increased significantly (to 45% and 36% respectively), as had the number of children subject to a protection plan – from 28,000 in 1993/4 to 63,000 in 2015/16.

Figure 5. Percentage of children on child protection plans by category of abuse, 1993/4–2015/16, England



Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England: Registrations to child protection registers during the years ending 31 March by category of need, 1994-2004; Children who became the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) by category of abuse, 2005-2009; Number of children who became the subject of a CPP during the year ending 31 March by the initial category of abuse, 2010-2016. If a child was in child protection system more than once during the year, each incidence is recorded. Child-level (more detailed) information is collected from 2009/10. Data confidence indicator was used for years 2008/9-2014/15, very few LAs were considered to provide low quality data. Missing data was noted for years 2009/10-2012/13 – by 14 LAs in 2009/10, 8 LAs in 2010/11, 2 LAs in 2011/12 and 1 LA in 2012/13.

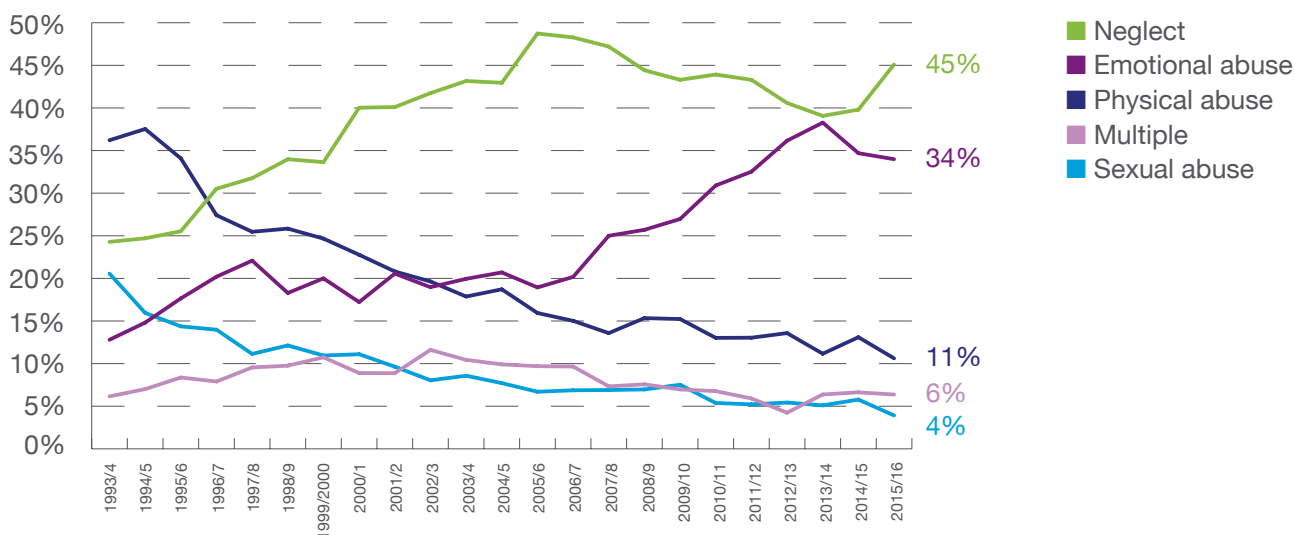
Data from Wales is only available for children who were on a child protection register at 31 March each year, giving a snapshot rather than the full number of children about whom there were child protection concerns in a given year. This data is therefore not directly comparable to that for England⁹. Nevertheless, it shows a similar decline – the share of children deemed in need of protection from sexual abuse decreased from 10% in 2001/2 to 4% in 2015/16 (see Figure 6). The drop is modest in absolute terms – from 190 to 120 children – but it took place against a background of a significant increase in the number of children in need, from 1,970 in 2001/2 to 3,060 in 2015/16. Unlike for England, data for Wales breaks down the multiple category, revealing that sexual abuse accounted for between 24% and 48% of multiple reasons for registration over the time series. The most frequently recorded combination with sexual abuse was neglect.

Several recent reports, summarised in Flood and Holmes (2016), have explored links between neglect and CSA/E. Early neglect was found to be associated with later CSE, through increased likelihood of behaviours such as running away from home or misusing drugs

⁹ Snapshot data as at 31 March is also reported in England, however the full year's figures were used to give a more accurate scale of children on protection plans.

during adolescence, which in turn are considered to increase the risk of CSE. Childhood neglect is also considered a factor in creating vulnerability to gang involvement or association and through this increased risk of exposure to CSE, especially for young women. Another possible pathway is harmful impacts of early neglect on cognitive and language functioning and psychological difficulties (such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem), making young people more vulnerable to perpetrators' grooming and entrapment strategies.

Figure 6. Children on a child protection plan by category of abuse at 31 March, 2001/2–2015/16, Wales



Source: Children in Need census, Welsh Government. All figures are as at 31 March.

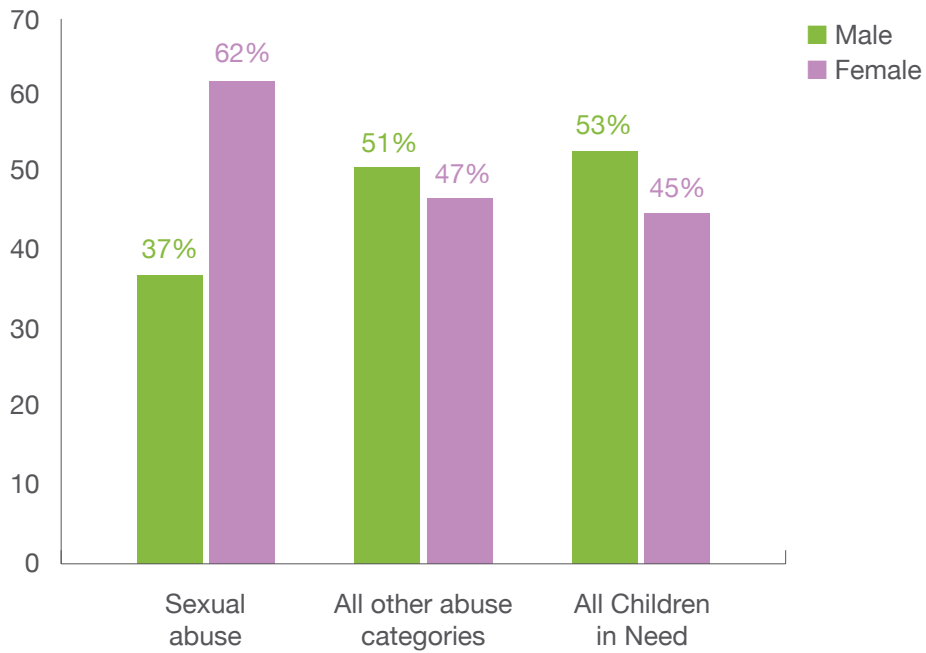
Jud et al. (2016) found sexual abuse to be generally the smallest recorded form of child maltreatment in international administrative data, with rates ranging between 3–9% of cases. They noted a significant drop in US since the 1990s, a pattern also found in New Zealand.

Characteristics of children registered under sexual abuse

The profile of children registered under sexual abuse in England and Wales¹⁰ shows that they are more likely to be female than children registered under other categories of abuse (see Figures 7 and 8). In terms of age, in England 50% were aged 10+ compared to 30% for other abuse categories (see Figure 9), similar to Wales (see Figure 10). The ethnic profile of children was not significantly different from those in other abuse categories: 81% were of White ethnic background, compared to 78% for other abuse categories. A further 7% were of mixed, 5% of Asian, 3% of Black and 2% of other ethnic backgrounds; ethnicity was not recorded for 2% of the children on protection plans for sexual abuse. This information is not available for Wales.

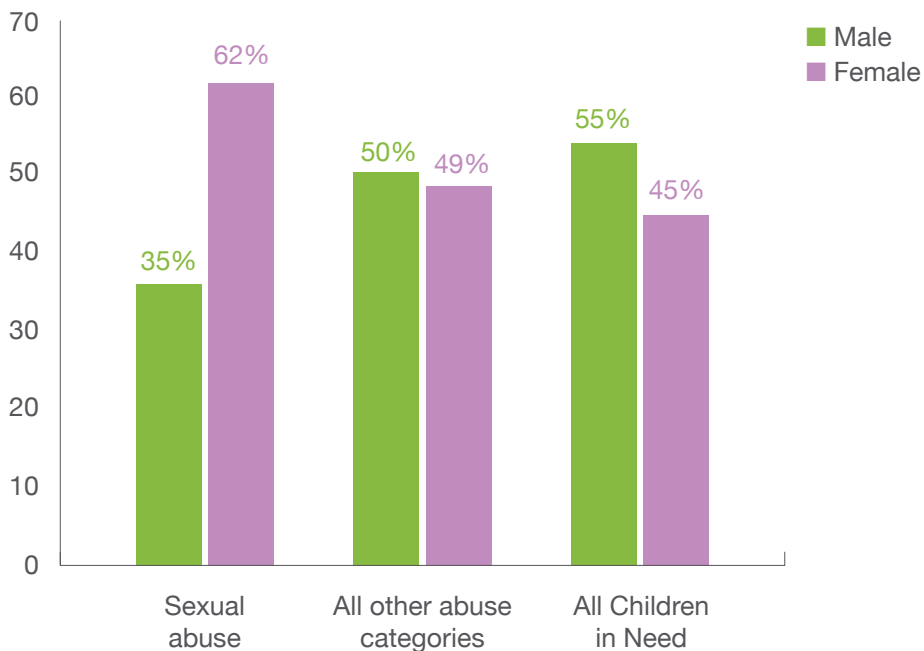
¹⁰Figures from Wales presented as at 31 March 2015; later figures not published.

Figure 7. Children who were subject of a protection plan for sexual abuse, for all other abuse categories and total Children in Need on 31 March 2016 by gender, England



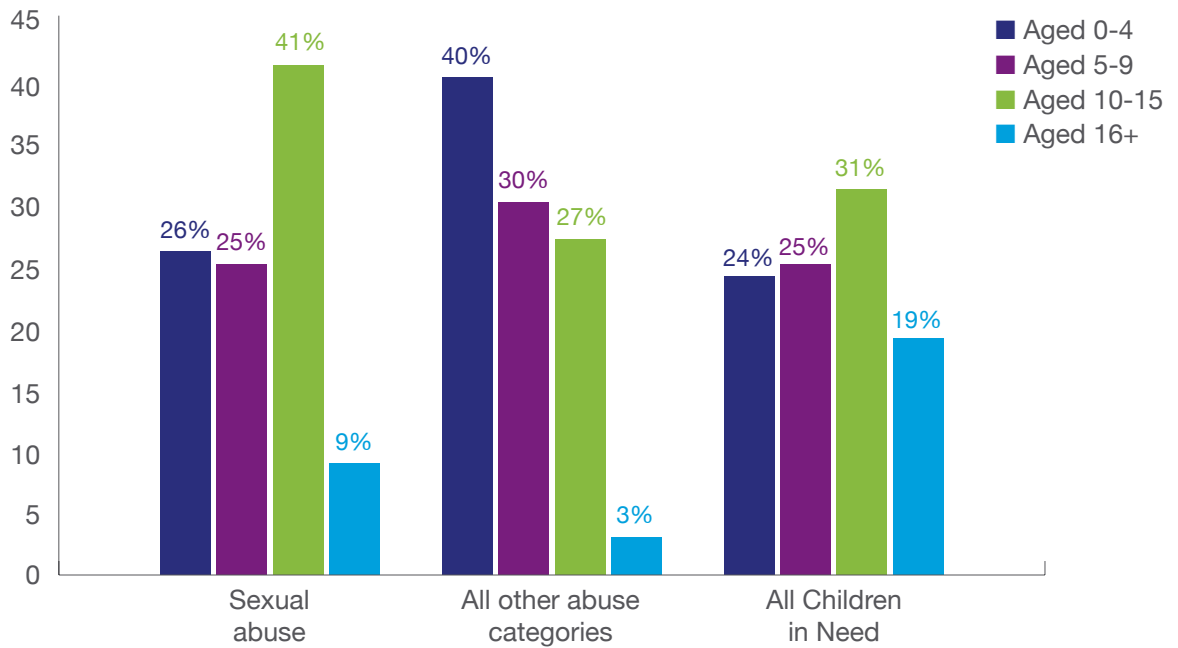
Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England, 2015/16. All figures as at 31 March 2016. Figures do not sum to 100% because the chart excludes a small number of children of unknown gender, and unborn children.

Figure 8. Children who were subject of a protection plan for sexual abuse, for all other abuse categories and total Children in Need on 31 March 2015 by gender, Wales



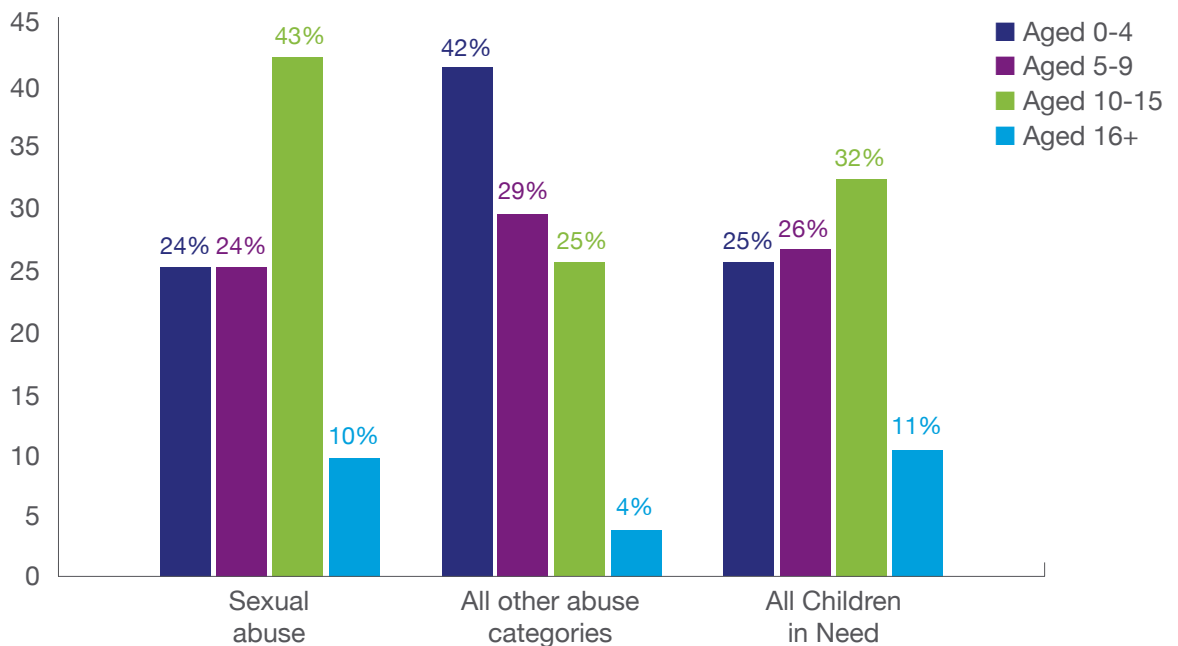
Source: Children in Need census, Welsh Government 2014/15. Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Figure 9. Children who were subject of a protection plan for sexual abuse, for all other abuse categories and total Children in Need on 31 March 2016 by age, England



Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England, 2015/16. All figures as at 31 March 2016. Numbers may not sum due to rounding. A significant share of 16+ children are in need on grounds of 'absent parenting', which includes unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Figure 10. Children who were subject of a protection plan for sexual abuse, all other abuse categories and all Children in Need on 31 March 2015 by age, Wales



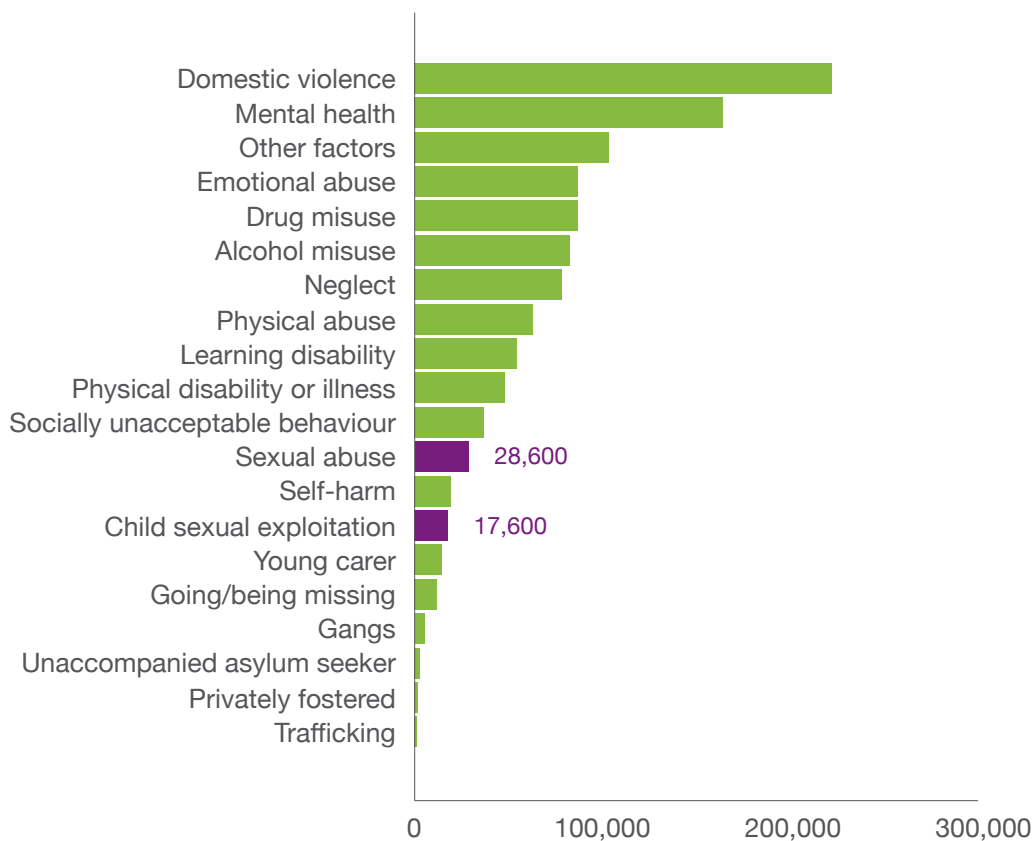
Source: Children in Need Census, Welsh Government 2014/15. Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Children at risk of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in England

From 2014/15, local authorities in England publish a list of risk factors identified for children who are referred to Children's Services and whose needs are assessed. Where multiple risks are identified, all factors are recorded. Figure 11 shows that, out of 448,200 assessments undertaken in 2015/6 in England, 28,600 children were identified at risk of sexual abuse and 17,600 at risk of sexual exploitation¹¹. The figure for sexual exploitation is close to the 16,500 estimate by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (Office of the Children's Commissioner and Berelowitz, 2012). Collecting data from 100 LAs (66%), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS, 2016:65) identified 13,466 children at risk of CSE. This report highlighted a 'wide range of counting and recording methodologies' used by LAs. Trafficking was recorded separately and accounted for a further 1,300 children. Children living with domestic violence were by far the largest category.

These data show the scale of children at risk of CSA and CSE identified within child protection processes.

Figure 11. Children assessed by children's services in England by identified needs, 2015/16



Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England, 2015/16. Number of episodes with assessment factor information, in the year ending 31 March 2016 factors identified at the end of assessment. Excludes assessments where no risks were identified.

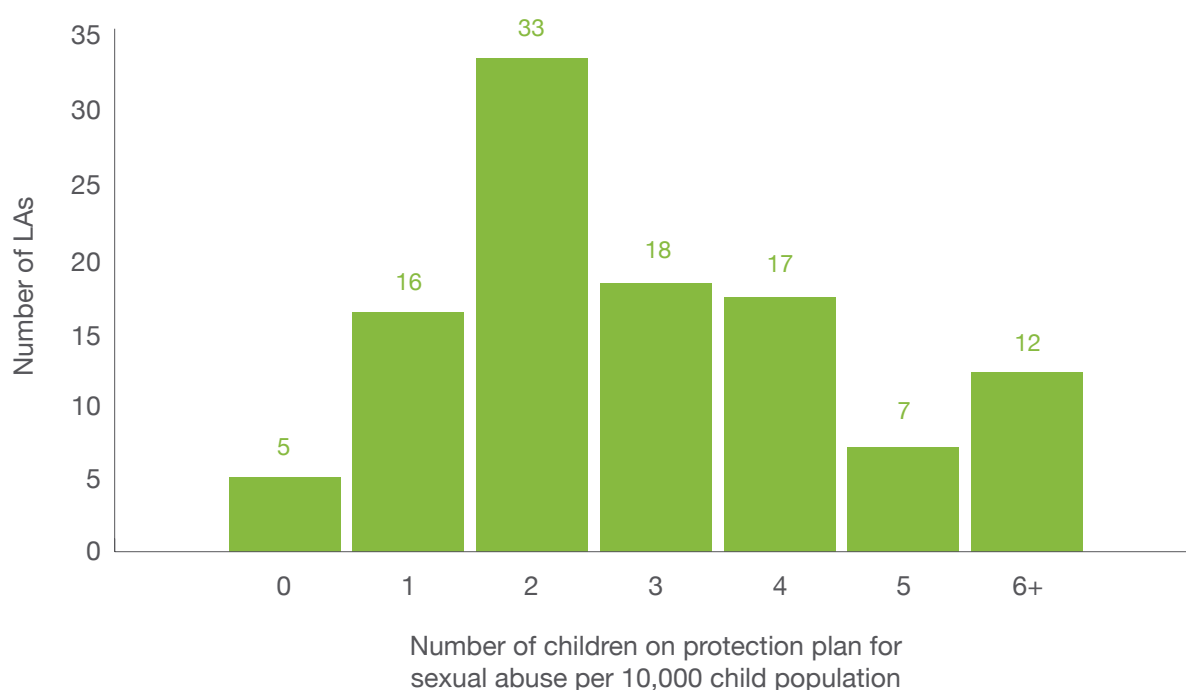
¹¹ Since children can be assessed more than once during the year, this may include double counting. Both CSA and CSE increased in 2015/6: CSA risk was recorded in 5.8% of all assessments in 2014/5 and in 6.4% in 2015/6; CSE was noted in 3.0% of assessments in 2014/5 and in 3.9% in 2015/6. In both categories this represented an increase of around 5,000 extra children at risk.

Regional patterns

Regional data is available in England and Wales with respect to children registered in need under the category of sexual abuse. The actual numbers are important in terms of resource allocation, but to explore patterns these numbers need to be calculated as a proportion of the local child population.

Figures 12 and 13 show variations between LAs in registration rates per 10,000 of the child population (0–17); data from around a third of LAs (44 in England and eight in Wales) was excluded as the numbers were under five, which are suppressed in publicly available data. Twelve English LAs had made at least 6 sexual abuse registrations per 10,000 child population, whilst 5 LAs recorded no sexual abuse cases at all in 2015/16. Similar variations were found in Wales (see Figure 13)¹². These patterns merit further research, including into whether resource allocation and availability of specialist teams affect identification and designation.

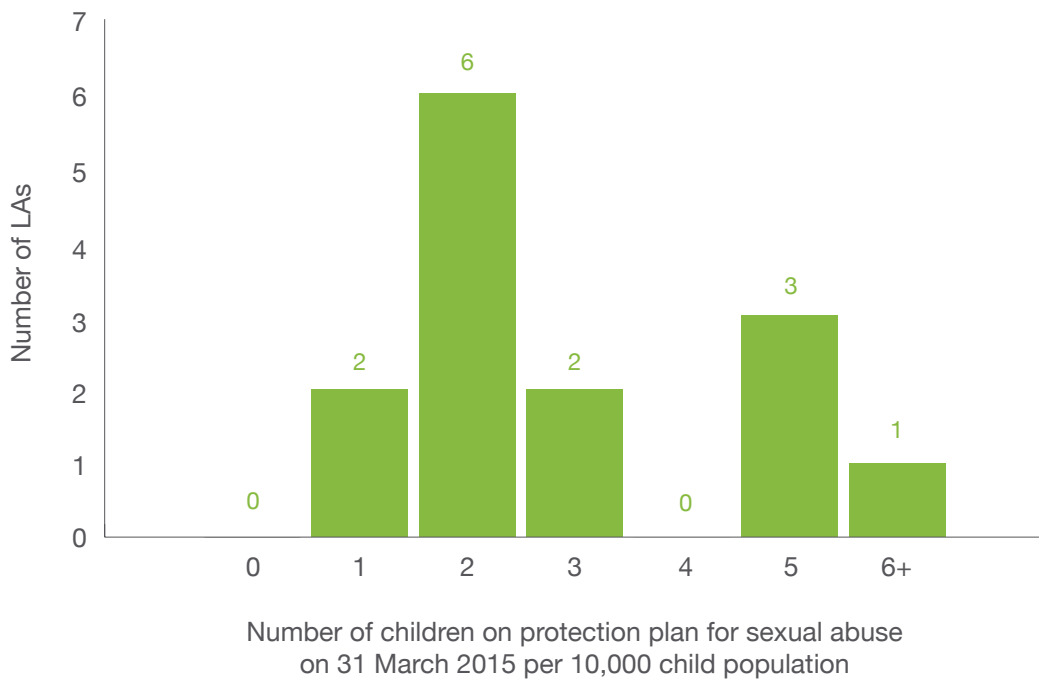
Figure 12. Distribution of local authorities according to the number of children recorded in category 'sexual abuse' per 10,000 child population in England, 2015/16



Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England, 2015/16. Number of children who became the subject of a child protection plan, in the year ending 31 March 2016, by local authority and initial category of abuse. Excludes figures from 44 LAs which were suppressed. Where a child is the subject of more than one child protection plan in a year, both are counted. Population figures (aged 0–17) estimated at mid-2015 (30 June).

¹²Data in Wales presented as a snapshot at 31 March, 2015 rather than all children registered under sexual abuse during the year as in England.

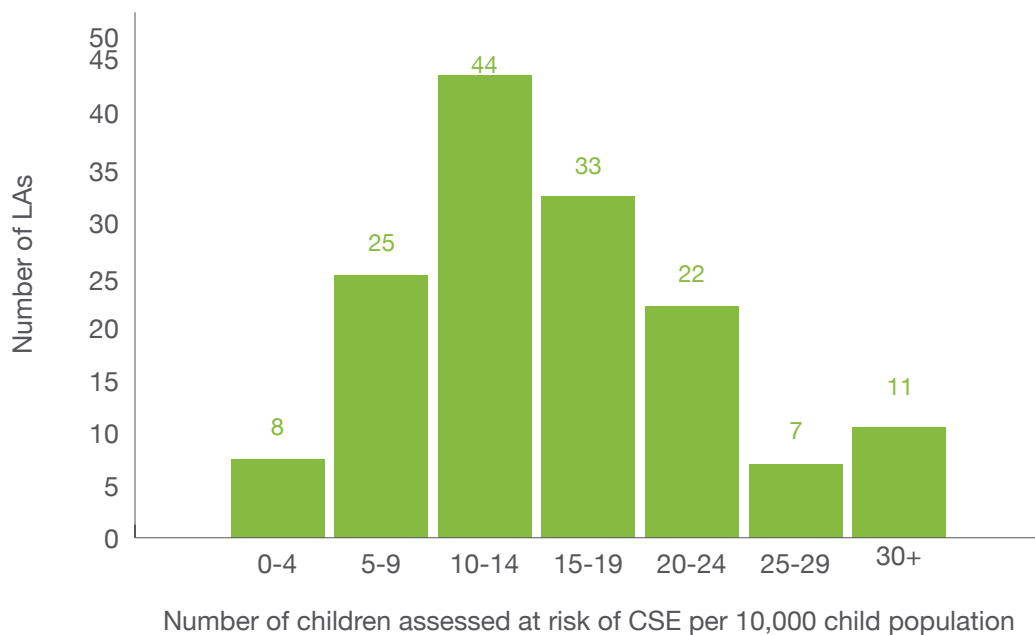
Figure 13. Distribution of local authorities according to the number of children recorded in category 'sexual abuse' per 10,000 child population in Wales, at 31 March 2015



Data source: Performance Management of Children's Social Services data collection, Welsh Government. Figures at 31 March 2015. Excludes data from 8 LAs which were suppressed. Population figures (0–17) estimated at mid-2014.

Wide variations are also visible in LA-level assessment of CSE risk, ranging from over 36 children at risk per 10,000 to no children at risk in 2015/6 (see Figure 14). This data is not available for Wales. ADCS (2016) collected data on CSE risk, finding an even greater variation ranging from 1.1 to 137.5 children at risk per 10,000. The highest rates were reported in areas where there had been recent high profile cases and in coastal towns. Whilst the majority of LAs attributed higher levels of referrals for CSE due to heightened awareness among professionals and the wider public, this is unlikely to account for variations where there are few, if any, cases identified.

Figure 14. Distribution of local authorities according to the number of children assessed at risk of CSE per 10,000 child population in England, year ending March 2016



Source: DfE Children in Need Census in England, 2015/16. Number of episodes with assessment factor information, in the year ending 31 March 2016 by local authority and sexual exploitation identified as risk. Excludes figures from 2 LAs which were suppressed or not provided. One LA did not provide data for the last two weeks of the year. Population figures (aged 0–17) estimated at mid-2015 (30 June).

Gaps and challenges

Child protection data shows that only a small proportion of children experiencing CSA are recorded under this category in children's services data, although a much wider cohort of children is identified as being at risk of CSA/E. The number of actual victims therefore remains difficult to judge from children's services data. Analysis also suggests that there has been a change in the way CSA is either identified or recorded over the past two decades, as the decline in the number of identified victims is not borne out by other measurements of scale of CSA in England and Wales. Possible explanations here point to difficulties in using children's services data to estimate the number of victims of CSA identified.

- Children do not generally fall into a single category of need, but current systems require selecting a single category. This means that children where CSA is suspected may be recorded under other categories. The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2015) found that in the majority of CSA cases reported to the police where children were also the subject of a child protection plan, they were not registered on grounds of sexual abuse: comparing across police and children's services records (2012–2014), just 20% of CSA victims known to the police had been registered on grounds of sexual abuse, 32% were registered under neglect, 29% for emotional abuse, 5% for physical abuse and 14% under multiple. The nearly ten-fold difference between children at risk of sexual abuse (28,600) and those registered under the sexual abuse category on a child protection plan (2,970) also points to undercounting.
- The Office of the Children's Commissioner's report (2015) also suggests that neglect is considered a 'more straightforward' designation, since the designation of sexual abuse requires more comprehensive assessment and relationship building by social workers.

- Police referrals to children's services are treated as contacts, with data not collected by the DfE – this only becomes a referral after an assessment has taken place.
- Alternatively, sexual abuse may come to light during work with a family on the initial category of need, but the original designation remains the formal record.
- There appear to be different thresholds for CSA and CSE, with CSE entering earlier under the 'at risk' designation.
- Some commentators (see, for example, Nelson, 2016) argue that the crises on sexual abuse in the late 1980s and 1990s¹³ had a 'chilling effect', making child protection agencies anxious about recording cases as CSA unless there was clear evidence of sexual assault.
- In its review of the most recent child protection inspections of police forces, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015) found that police referrals to children's social care were not always investigated. It concluded that "there is likely to be under-recording of abuse and neglect within the child protection system. We are not satisfied that the details of children who come to the attention of child protection agencies are being properly recorded" (p11). HMIC found that police referrals did not always result in a child protection conference or an interagency discussion, indeed what did happen in cases failing to reach local risk thresholds was unclear. Two recent studies relying on large-scale data collection from statutory agencies (Berelowitz, 2012, Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2015) confirm that more data on victims for CSA and CSE is held by police.
- A child only becomes the subject of a protection plan if there are ongoing concerns (as in guidance from the Department for Education, 2015: 36). If a perpetrator of sexual abuse is removed from the household, for example, the child may be deemed as not requiring intervention.

All of these factors mean that children's services data tell us less about the scale of CSA in child protection systems and more about recording practices over time.

Data from criminal justice agencies

In this section we draw on publicly available data from police recorded crime, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ). In response to recent concerns about CSA and CSE, the Home Office now requires that police report on this through use of a flag (a way of marking electronically that this case fits one of the two categories); both data returns also have to indicate if there is an online element. A report assessing compliance will be published later in 2017. The Home Office has also invested in a network of regional analysts in police force areas who are responsible for producing problem profiles and improving our understanding of the nature of the threat from CSE. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has endeavoured to create some common terms of reference and a data collection plan for the latest profile – some figures are reported below in the 'improving CSE data' section. Some Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have been inputting data on CSA and CSE into Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, but we currently do not know how universal this is, nor the extent to which young people are involved in these processes. There is an obligation in Wales for Safeguarding boards to report CSE data on risk assessments

¹³ This included the Cleveland crisis where paediatricians and social workers diagnosed a large number of young children as having been abused and the police withdrew cooperation from joint investigations. There is a belief that the inquiry found that the children had not been abused; this is not the case. Other high profile cases where there was public debate and disquiet took place in Rochdale, Nottingham and Orkney. Again, there is a taken for granted belief that all of these cases involved accusations that were not proven: in several, adults were convicted of sexual abuse and received long prison sentences. For a summary of these and other high profile cases see Nelson (2016).

using the sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF), which is currently under review. The Welsh Government is currently seeking that data specify how many cases are confirmed as being CSE. These steps in improving data on the scale of CSA and CSE are welcome, but are not currently available for analysis.

Police recorded crime statistics

Police data is recorded by offence (rather than by victim or perpetrator) as defined in legislation. This makes it difficult to establish the precise number of victims or perpetrators. In nationally published crime data, offences are recorded in the year in which they are reported to the police, rather than the year the offence was committed (dates of offences are available at local level). In the year ending March 2016, non-recent cases accounted for 20% of all sexual offences (adult and child). Increases were found in both current (up 22%) and non-recent sexual offences (up 15%) compared to the previous year. The number of offences that took place over 20 years earlier was 8% higher in 2015/6 than the year before (ONS 2017). Police recorded crime data does not currently meet the standard of designation as National Statistics, although it is believed that the compliance with the recording standard has improved in recent years (ONS 2017).

The breakdown of identifiable CSA offences¹⁴ in England and Wales for 2015/16 (April to March) is presented in Table 2. This does not include all CSA, as it may be folded into other offence categories (e.g. trafficking, abduction, exposure and voyeurism) for which the precise proportion of offences committed against children cannot yet be obtained. The two offences most clearly associated with CSE – abuse of children through sexual exploitation and sexual grooming – make up 3.0% of police recorded CSA cases in England and 2.0% of cases in Wales¹⁵. Whilst some child abuse images cases involve CSE, many are possession cases – that is, accessing and storing images created and possibly sold by others.

53,811 CSA offences in England and Wales were recorded by the police in 2015/16. This figure includes a large number of crimes related to the publication/possession of obscene or protected sexual materials (12,875 offences), which include crimes against adults as well as children. A second category – abusing position of trust – can also include offences against adults. It is not currently possible to differentiate between child- and adult-related offences in these two categories. It will be more possible to disaggregate by age through the Home Office Datahub when data returns are more complete.

¹⁴ Throughout this report the criminal justice data excludes sexual offences committed against 16–17 year olds. This is one of the reasons for the introduction of the CSA 'flag' by the Home Office. A freedom of information request by the NSPCC to police forces in England suggests that an additional 9,267 CSA offences (excluding obscene imagery) were committed against 16–17 year olds in England in 2015/16 (Bentley et al. 2017).

¹⁵ Many offences which are a result of CSE would be recorded under other CSA categories (rape, sexual assault etc.) as police forces and CPS will pursue the most serious charges the evidence supports.

Table 2. CSA and CSE offences in England and Wales, year ending March 2016

Offence category	Number in England	Number in Wales	Total number Eng and Wales*	% of CSA offences in England and Wales
Rape of a female child under 13	3,961	224	4,185	7.8%
Rape of a male child under 13	1,648	143	1,791	3.3%
Rape of a female child under 16	4,988	258	5,248	9.7%
Rape of a male child under 16	631	38	669	1.2%
Sexual assault of a female child under 13	6,911	460	7,384	13.7%
Sexual assault of a male child under 13	2,451	163	2,617	4.9%
Sexual activity involving a child under 13	5,554	327	5,882	10.9%
Sexual activity involving a child under 16	10,662	671	11,338	21.1%
Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature (incl. under 16s)	226	12	239	0.4%
Abuse of children through sexual exploitation	541	22	563	1.0%
Sexual grooming	970	44	1,020	1.9%
Obscene publications and protected sexual materials (incl. over 16s)	11,986	879	12,875	23.9%
Total	50,529	3,241	53,811	100.0%

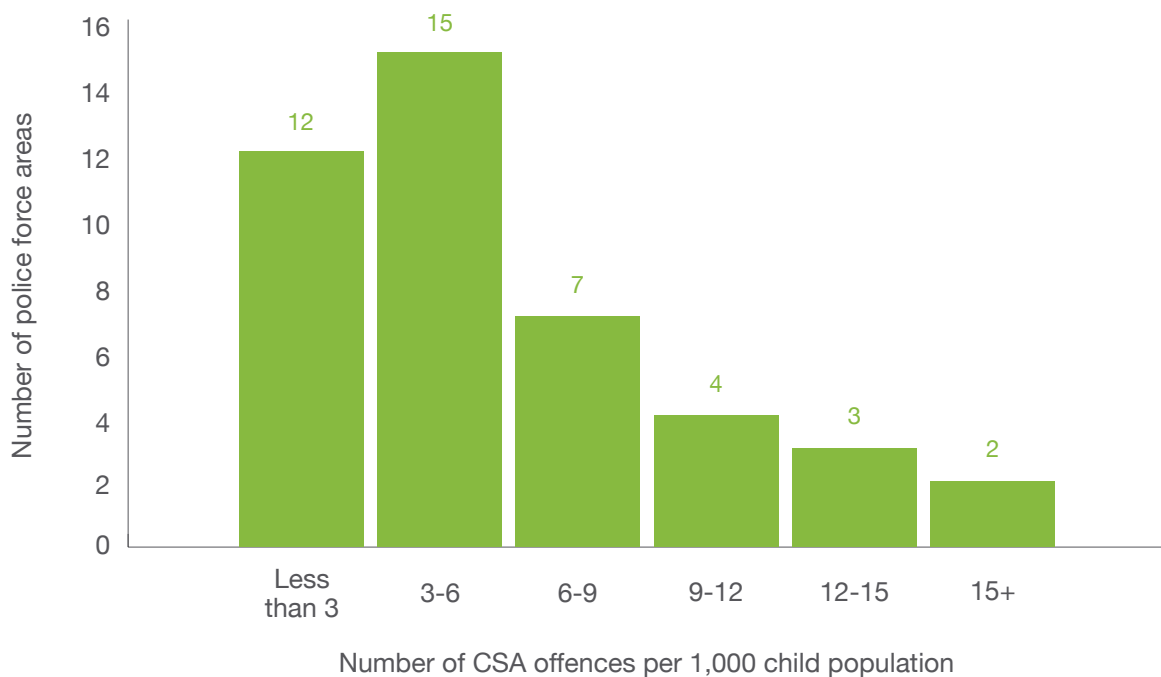
* Total for England and Wales includes offences recorded by the British Transport Police, which are not included in England and Wales figures as BTP operates across geographical boundaries.

Source: Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables, updated 27 April 2017

Regional patterns

Figure 15 presents the number of CSA offences per 1,000 child population (under 16) in police force areas. Large regional variations are evident: five areas have a rate of 12 or more CSA crimes per 1,000 child population, and 12 areas have a rate below 3. Regional differences in rates of recorded CSA have been highlighted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012, 2015) which argued that success in identification rather than actual crime rates was as the main source of geographical difference. Here the resources available and local policing priorities may account for some of the differences, particularly in relation to image offences. Regional variations merit further in depth research.

Figure 15. Distribution of police force areas according to the number of CSA offences (incl. publication of obscene imagery) per 1,000 child population in England and Wales, 2015/16



Data source: Home Office Police recorded crime open data tables, updated April 27 2017. Police recorded crime includes non-recent offences. British Transport Police data excluded. Population estimates per Police Force Area are not published by ONS. These were derived by matching mid-2015 population estimates (as at 30 June) by Local Authority District areas with PFAs.

Trends over time

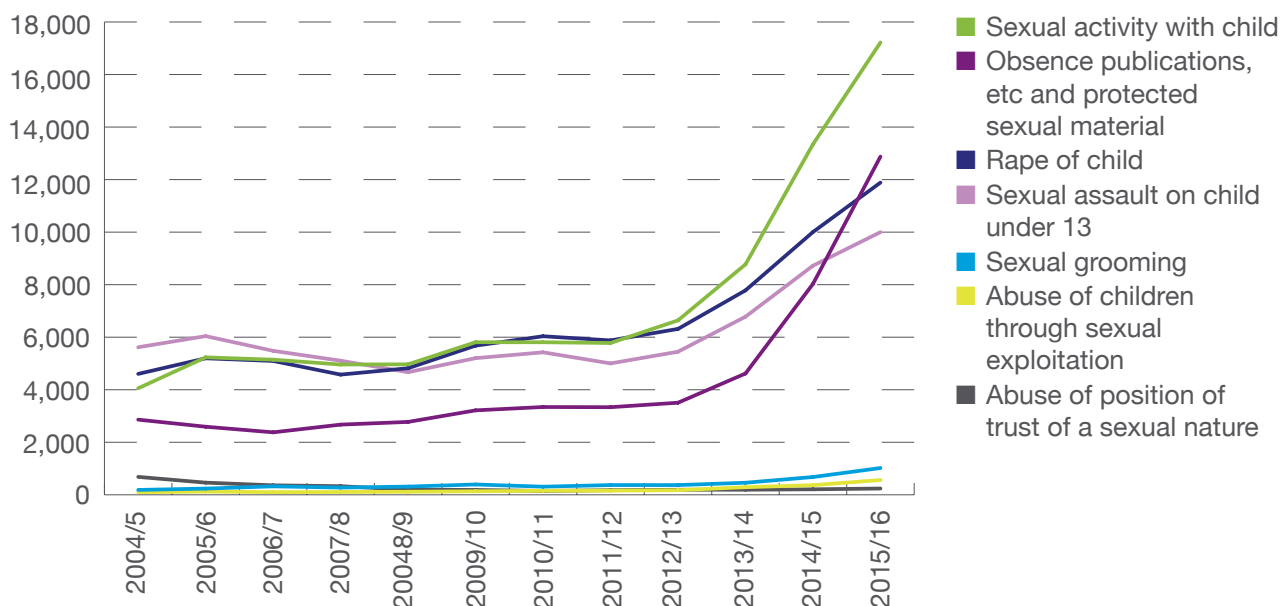
The Office of National Statistics (ONS, 2017: 5) cautions against interpreting the rise in recorded sexual crime data as an increase in rate of offending:

... the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police is thought to have led to improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standards, leading to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police. This means caution should be taken when interpreting police recorded crime trends.

Figure 16 shows that a relatively large increase in recorded CSA offences for most crime categories took place in 2013/14 (overall by 28%) and a higher rise in the following year (overall by 43%), particularly in offences of rape and sexual assault, grooming and sexual exploitation. The increase has slowed slightly in the most recent year (increase by 30% in 2015/16) but sexual grooming and sexual exploitation increased by more than 50% between 2014/15 and 2015/16. Furthermore, indecent imagery offences nearly quadrupled between 2012/13 and 2015/16, from 3,506 to 12,875 in England and Wales. The latest data suggests that the increase has continued to slow in 2016/17 when a 19% increase in CSA crimes was recorded during the first three quarters compared with the previous year. The overall number

of CSA offences in the first three quarters of 2016/17 (April to December) was 45,822¹⁶ compared with 38,546 at the same period in 2015/16 (Police recorded crime open data tables, updated 27 April 2017).

Figure 16. Number and type of CSA offences per year in England and Wales, 2004/5–2015/16

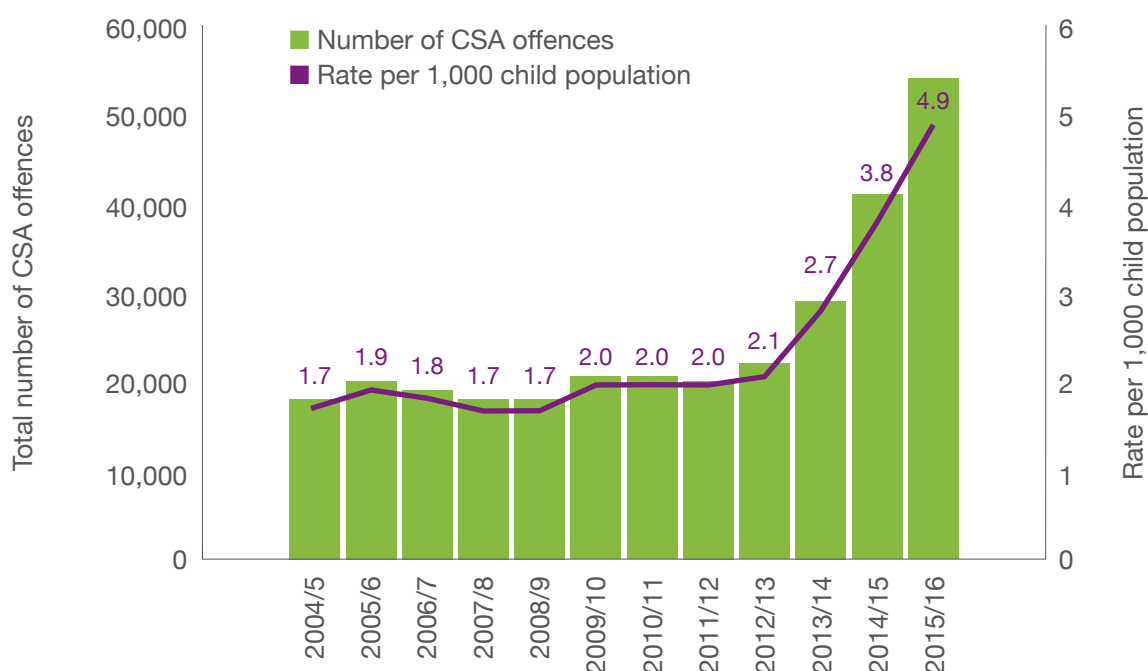


Source: ONS, Crime in England and Wales, year ending December 2016. All figures are presented from April to March. Police recorded crime includes non-recent offences. ONS note to accompany figures: "The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences. Prior to year ending March 2010, a small number of offences continued to be recorded relating to offences repealed by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. While these may have been legitimately recorded for offences committed prior to May 2004 it is also possible that some may have been recorded in these old categories in error, so any changes based on small numbers should be interpreted with caution." Figures from 2005–2010 in the graph thus under-represent CSA offences.

The increase in overall recorded crime is reflected also in the CSA crime rate per 1,000 child population (under 16) (see Figure 17). In 2004/5 the police recorded 1.7 CSA offences per 1,000 children aged under 16; by 2015/6 the rate had increased to 4.9 CSA offences recorded per 1,000 children. The rate of CSA offences per 1,000 children has more than doubled in the past four years.

¹⁶ Including offences related to the publication of obscene and protected sexual materials. 2016/17 figures are likely to be revised in future crime data releases.

Figure 17. CSA offences (incl. indecent imagery) by year (left hand axis) and by rate per 1,000 child population (right hand axis) in England and Wales, 2004/5–2015/16



Source: ONS, Crime in England and Wales, year ending December 2016. All figures are presented from April to March. Police recorded crime includes non-recent offences. Mid-year population estimates ONS, as at 30 June each year.

These data show that the scale of CSA and CSE recorded by the police has increased significantly since 2012/3.

Case attrition

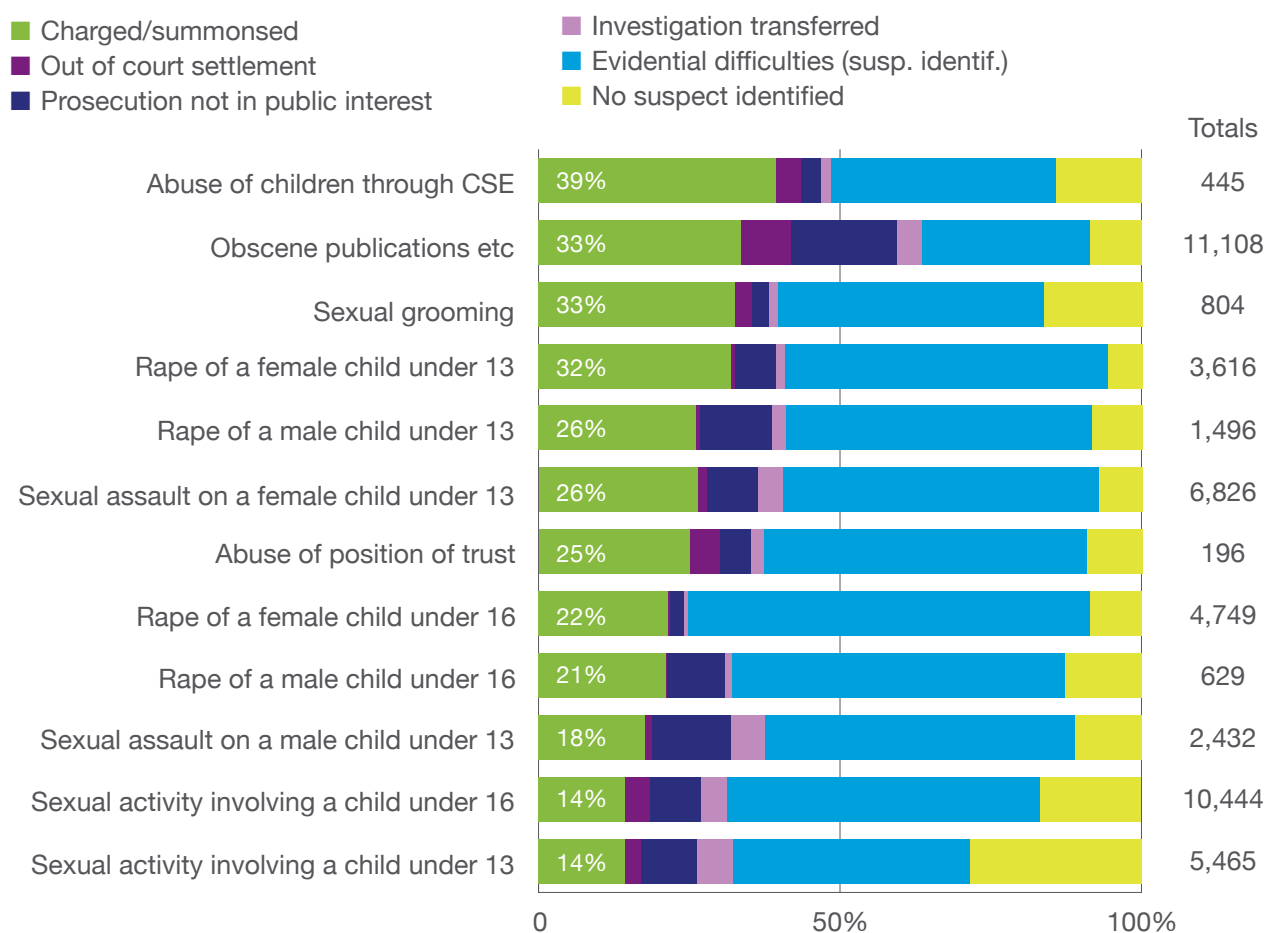
There is considerable attrition as child sex offences proceed from the initial report to charge. Police published outcome data (for both contact and indecent imagery related offences) for the year ending March 2016 is presented in Table 3. This indicates that around a quarter (24%) of recorded CSA offences resulted in a charge or summons; an offender was cautioned or a community resolution was reached in a further 3% of cases. Evidential difficulties were the main barrier to a successful outcome: 60% of cases were discontinued, even where a suspect was identified (26%), in a further 21% the victim (and presumably in some cases their parents) did not support a prosecution, and in 13% the suspect was not identified.

Table 3. CSA offences by crime outcome in England and Wales, year ending March 2016

Outcome category	Number	% of total
Charged/summonsed	11,409	24%
Insufficient evidence (suspect identified, victim supports action)	12,349	26%
Insufficient evidence (victim does not support action)	9,948	21%
Investigation complete – no suspect identified	6,078	13%
Out-of-court (formal) – cautioned	1,054	2%
Out-of-court (informal) – community resolution	664	1%
Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	4,688	10%
Further investigation not in the public interest – police decision	172	0%
Responsibility for further investigation transferred to another body	1,820	4%
Taken into consideration	28	0%
Total	48,210	100%

Source: Home Office Crime Outcomes open data year ending March 2016, updated 27 April 2017. Police recorded crime includes non-recent cases.

Figure 18. Crime outcomes by CSA offence in England and Wales, year ending March 2016



Source: Home Office Crime Outcomes open data year ending March 2016, updated 27 April 2017. Police recorded crime includes non-recent cases. Category 'abuse of children through CSE' includes outcomes recorded under categories 'abuse of children through CSE' and 'abuse of children through prostitution and pornography'.

Figure 18 shows that the 'abuse of children through CSE' crime category has the highest charge rate – 39%. Image-related (obscene publications etc) and sexual grooming crimes have also a relatively high charge rate – a third (33%) end in a charge or summons. This is undoubtedly linked to the availability of material evidence on electronic devices, meaning that prosecution does not depend on a victim's account. Indecent imagery offences also have the highest out-of-court settlement rate (8%). Sexual activity offences have the lowest successful outcome rates – just a sixth of recorded crimes ended in a charge/summons in 2015/16.

Data gathered by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2015) analysed police data by victim rather than offences. Between April 2012 and March 2014 this study identified 37,844 victims of CSA (excluding image related offences): 9,921 (26%) saw their case detected (a perpetrator was cautioned, charged or summonsed to appear in court). When the crime is not detected, either the accused has not been identified or there has been insufficient evidence to issue a charge/caution. Close to half of the cases (45%) were reported within the forensic window of 7 days after the assault. Analysis also revealed that 5,492 CSA-related reports were recorded as Crime Related Incidents or subsequently 'no-crimed' – 14.5% of all cases.

Data on victims and perpetrators

Data published by the police do not provide information on victims and perpetrators. The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2015) gathered information from the police on perpetrators, identifying 34,241 CSA offenders over a two-year period (April 2012–March 2014); a third were under 18. No data was published on either the ethnicity or the gender of perpetrators. The same report also highlighted gaps in victim data and did not specifically publish data on victims identified from the police information. Nevertheless, the overall victim profile gathered from police, local authorities and the voluntary sector showed that, of the 49,673 identified victims, 73% were female and 27% male. The age profile differed by gender: the majority of girls were aged 13+ (15% were aged 0-7, 23% aged 8-12 and 62% over 12) whilst most boys were under 13 (32% were aged 0-7, 37% aged 8-12 and 33% over 12). Ethnicity data was missing in almost a third of cases (30%), with 59% identified as White, 4% as Asian, 4% as Black and 3% of mixed ethnic backgrounds.¹⁷

Crown Prosecution Service data

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) monitors CSA prosecutions and convictions in England and Wales. CPS data is collected for the effective management of its prosecution functions and does not constitute official statistics as defined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007¹⁸. The CPS has three administrative data systems: based on the defendant, the witness, or the offences. Child abuse data is available in all three systems but data on CSA is only available by defendant and not by victim, and it is not possible to distinguish between current and non-recent cases.

¹⁷ Rates of ethnicity in the original report excluded 'missing' from the breakdown. We have recalculated the proportions of victims from different ethnic backgrounds to account for the missing data.

¹⁸ The official statistics relating to crime and policing are maintained by the Home Office and the official statistics relating to sentencing, criminal court proceedings, offenders brought to justice, the courts and the judiciary are maintained by the Ministry of Justice.

Data¹⁹ since 2008 (see Figure 19) shows that there has been a substantial increase in completed prosecutions of CSA cases, from 3,941 in 2007/8²⁰ to 6,217 in 2015/6, a 58% rise. This data includes prosecutions of non-recent CSA cases, which are considered to be a significant contributor to the increase, and on defendants prosecuted for offences relating to indecent imagery of children from 1 April 2013. Convictions have also risen in volume (the latest figure being 4,643), with the conviction rate stable at around three quarters of prosecutions, ranging between 72% and 76% annually.

Information on defendants indicates that in virtually all cases the perpetrator was male – 98.3% in 2015/16 (CPS 2016). Details are also provided on the number of offences relating to the possession, making and distribution of indecent photographs of children: there is a significant volume, of 22,545 offences in 2015/16 (CPS 2016, Table 4), with production the majority of prosecuted offences (15,000 in the previous year). The increase in the overall number of child abuse image offences in the years 2009/10 to 2015/16 has been 20%; but this has not been linear (see Table 4).

Figure 19. Defendants prosecuted for CSA offences and convictions per year, 2007/8–2015/16



Data source: CPS Violence Against Women and Girls annual reports, 2008/9–2015/16, all figures presented April to March. Data includes non-recent CSA cases; the inclusion of child abuse image offences was partial prior to 2012/13 and is fully included from 2013/14 onwards.

¹⁹Data have been drawn from CPS Case Management System and Management Information System, which, as with any large-scale recording system, is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the CPS.

²⁰All data presented April to March.

Table 4. Child abuse image offences starting prosecution, 2009/10-2015/6

Offence category	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Possession of an indecent photograph of a child	4,117	4,543	3,885	3,849	4,265	4,820	5,248
Possession of a prohibited image of a child	0	21	179	394	534	631	625
Making an indecent photograph of a child	13,652	15,768	14,570	13,596	14,443	14,518	14,930
Distributing an indecent photograph of a child	804	670	695	803	907	1,318	1,422
Showing indecent photographs of children	137	410	333	294	224	292	319
Publishing an advert likely to suggest advertiser distributes or shows indecent photos of children	2	3	1	1	0	1	1
Total	18,712	21,415	19,663	18,937	20,373	21,580	22,545

Source: Violence against Women and Girls crime report 2015–16. Crown Prosecution Service. All figures are presented April to March.

Data from the Ministry of Justice

The Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December bulletins published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) present information on defendants prosecuted, convicted and sentenced, by type of offence: this data is designated as National Statistics²¹. Data is recorded by defendant²² and includes demographic information on gender and age. It is possible to use this data to estimate the volume and outcomes of CSA offenders dealt with in court²³. Both current and non-recent offences are included, although the figures below exclude those historic offences which are recorded in offence categories no longer applicable under current law (e.g. gross indecency, indecent assault etc.). CSA recorded under other current crime categories (e.g. trafficking, abduction) is also excluded. Table 5 shows that 9,270 defendants were proceeded against for CSA offences in 2016 (calendar year), of which 6,687 (72%) were convicted.

There are substantially higher rates of rape and sexual assault against girls: 1,402 defendants were prosecuted for rape of a girl and 217 for rape of a boy in 2016; and 1,427 defendants faced prosecution for sexual assault against a girl and 123 against a boy, a pattern also found in the police data.

²¹ Statistics are derived from the LIBRA or the Crown Court's CREST system and include offences where there was no police involvement, such as prosecutions instigated by government departments, private organisations and individuals.

²² The volume figures relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant was found guilty of two or more offences, it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed that is recorded.

²³ The publicly available offence groupings do not identify separately the full set of offences considered to represent CSA, and some CSA will be dealt with through offences that are not intrinsically CSA.

Table 5. Defendants prosecuted and convicted by CSA offence category, England and Wales, year ending December 2016

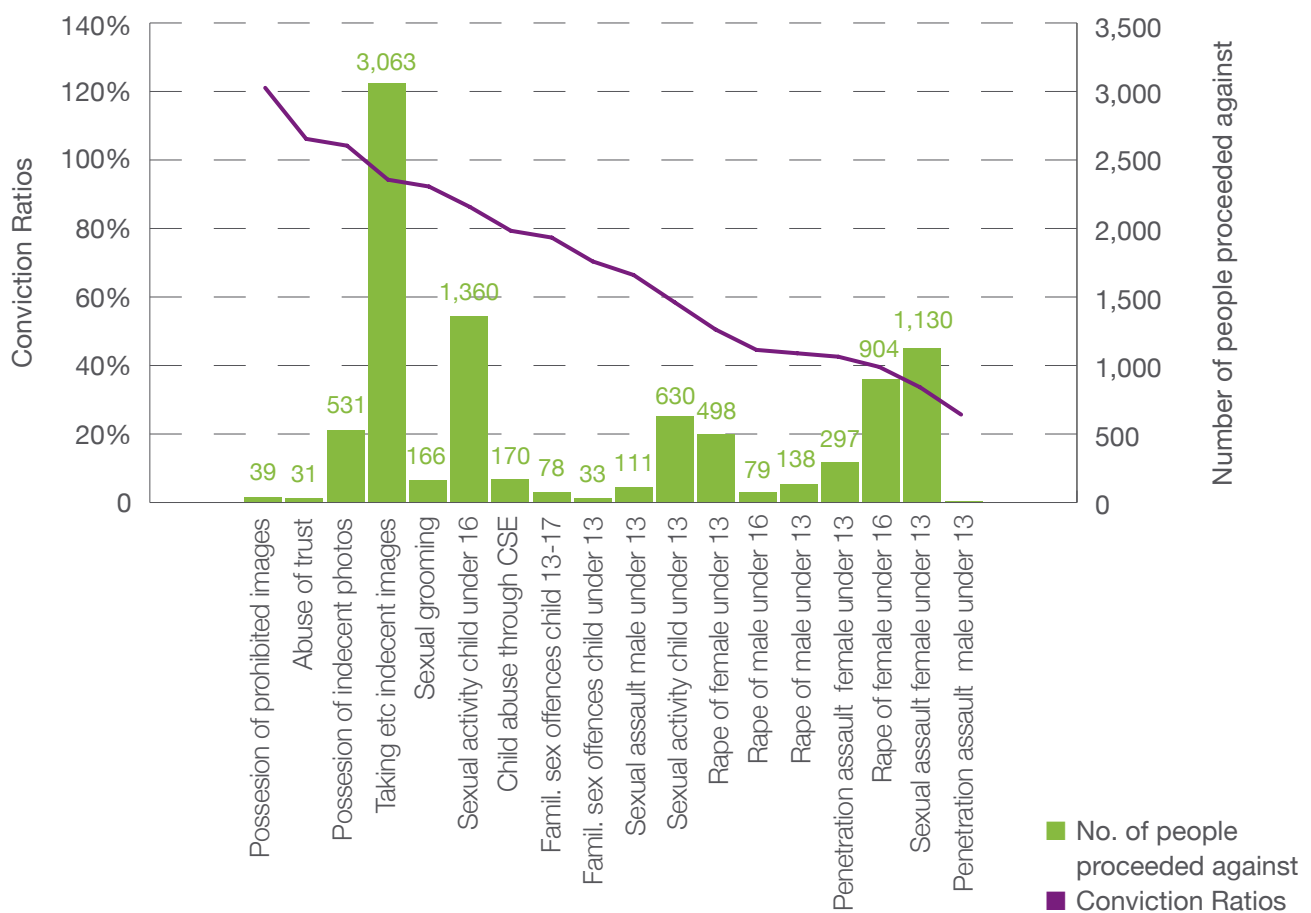
Offence category	Cautions issued*	Proceeded against	Convicted
Rape of a female child under 13	6	498	247
Rape of a male child under 13	4	138	59
Rape of a female child under 16	0	904	349
Rape of a male child under 16	0	79	35
Penetrative sexual assault on a female child under 13	3	297	125
Sexual assault of a female child under 13	33	1,130	371
Penetrative sexual assault on a male child under 13	1	12	3
Sexual assault of a male child under 13	7	111	73
Sexual activity involving a child under 13	68	630	364
Sexual activity involving a child under 16	220	1,360	1,168
Familial sexual offences with a child family member aged under 13	15	33	23
Familial sexual offences with a child family member aged 13–17	4	78	60
Child abuse through prostitution and pornography	5	170	134
Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature (incl. under 16s)	10	31	33
Taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children	221	3,063	2,890
Possession of indecent photograph of a child	222	531	554
Possession of prohibited images of children	15	39	47
Sexual grooming	4	166	152
Total	838	9,270	6,687

*The number of cautions given for rape offences has been falling over time. Between 2005 and 2010, there was an average of 29 cautions given each year compared to 19 cautions a year between 2011 and 2015. By contrast, the number of prosecutions for rape has been increasing. Most cautions were administered to juvenile offenders, with the oldest offender being cautioned aged 21 years (MoJ 2016)

Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: CJS Outcomes by Offence 2006 to 2016: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales, Ministry of Justice, published May 2017. Numbers relate to defendants proceeded against per principal offence. Includes defendants proceeded against for historical abuse.

The conviction ratios were calculated by dividing the number of convictions by the number of prosecutions in a given year. This data is indicative as cases are not actually tracked through to outcome²⁴. Nevertheless, they show a large variation in the average 72% conviction rate. In particular, the sexual assault and rape offences, which have relatively low summons/charge rates in the police system, continue with low conviction ratios in court – in 2016 all categories of rape had a conviction rate below 50% and sexual assault conviction rates ranged from 66% to 25% depending on category (see Figure 20). Image offences, which have one of the highest summons/charge rates in the police system, also have high conviction ratios at court. However, sexual activity offences had the lowest charge or summons rates in the police system but relatively high conviction rates at court, probably connected to the thresholds required to authorise prosecutions.

Figure 20. Number of prosecutions (right-hand axis) and conviction ratio (left-hand axis) by offence category in year ending December 2016, England and Wales



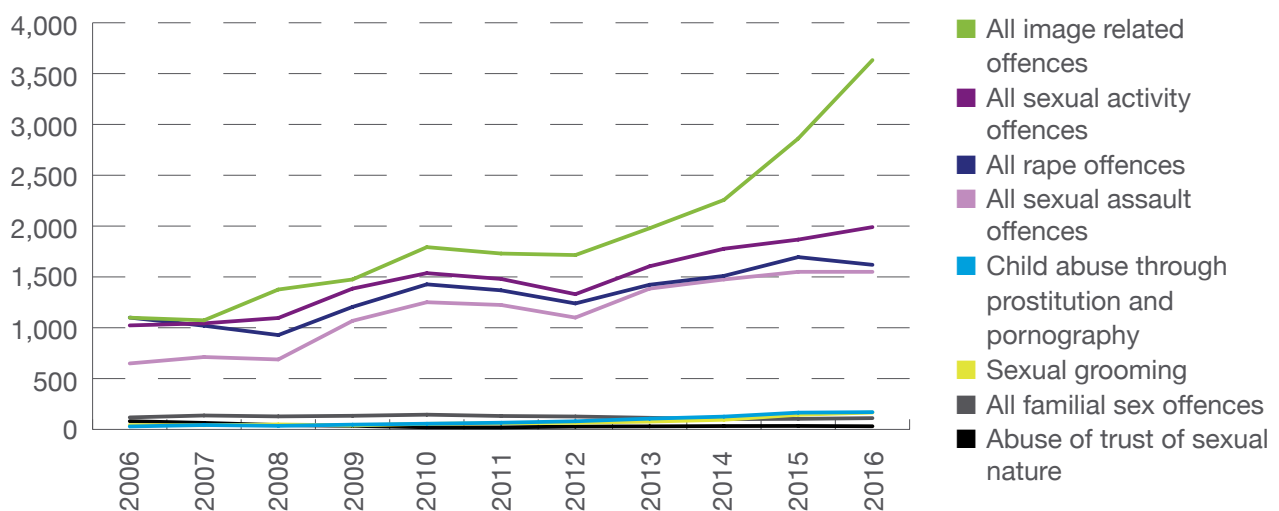
Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: CJS Outcomes by Offence 2006 to 2016: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales. Ministry of Justice, published May 2017. Includes historic CSA offences. Ratio calculated by dividing the number of defendants convicted by the number proceeded against. Where the conviction ratio exceeds 100% there were more convictions than prosecutions that completed in 2016.

²⁴ Prosecutions and convictions are each reported in the year the case completes at that court, which may not be the same if defendants are committed to the Crown Court for trial (all prosecutions are counted at magistrates' courts). This method can suppress conviction ratios for offence categories which are increasing in volume and where convictions often come long after prosecutions – sexual assault, rape, sexual activity offences particularly. They may also be suppressed by any 'downgrading' during the trial of the offence being considered by the court, because the prosecution will still be counted as relating to the original offence.

Trends over time

Figure 21 presents the number of defendants proceeded against under each CSA offence category between 2006 and 2016, indicating a sharp rise in prosecutions of indecent imagery, sexual activity, rape and sexual assault offences against children from 2012 onwards. Prosecutions of child abuse through prostitution and pornography and of sexual grooming have also risen, but the volumes are relatively low (170 and 166 defendants respectively were prosecuted in 2016).

Figure 21. Number of defendants proceeded against for child sexual offences by offence group, 2006-2016, England and Wales

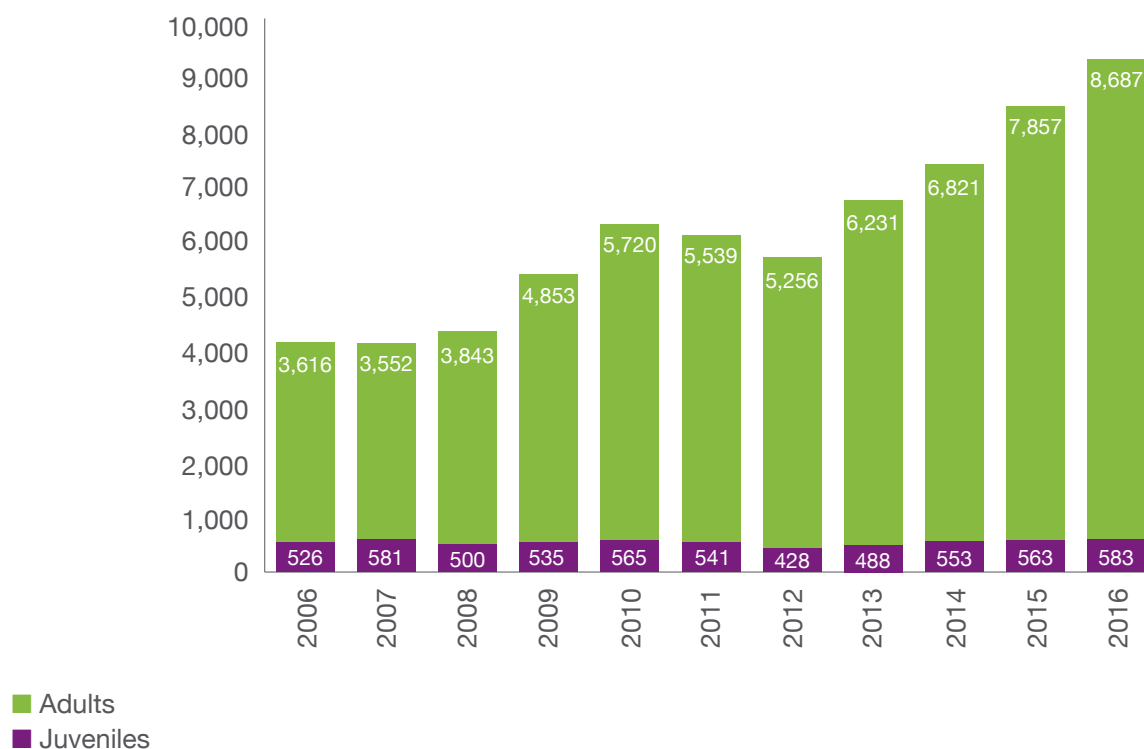


Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: CJS Outcomes by Offence 2006 to 2016: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales, MoJ, published May 2017. Figures presented per calendar year to December. Numbers relate to defendants proceeded against per principal offence. Includes defendants proceeded against for non-recent abuse. Image related offences include: taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children, possession of indecent photograph of a child and possessing prohibited images of children (introduced as offence in April 2010). Sexual activity offences include all offences related to sexual activity with a child under 13 and involving a child under 16. Rape offences include rape of a female or male child under 13, and under 16. Sexual assault offences include assaults on a male or female child under 13, penetrative or not. Familial sexual offences include sexual offences with a child family member aged under 13 and aged 13–17.

The court system is currently the only public data source to separate adult and peer perpetrated CSA offences. This data shows the number of peer (juvenile) defendants stable against a substantial rise in proceedings against adults (see Figure 22) – the share of juvenile defendants decreased from 13% in 2006 to 6% in 2016. In 2016 abuse by peers was highest in rape (15%), sexual activity (8%) and sexual assault (7%) proceedings, and made up only a small proportion under image related offences (2%). The majority of juvenile defendants were aged 15–17 (79%); the remaining 21% were aged 12–14.

Females accounted for less than 1% of all defendants proceeded against in the years 2006 to 2014, and 2% in 2015 and 2016, confirming findings elsewhere that the majority of CSA offences are committed by males. In 2016, female prosecution rates were highest for child abuse through prostitution or pornography (8% were females), abuse of trust of sexual nature (6% females) and familial sexual offences (5% females).

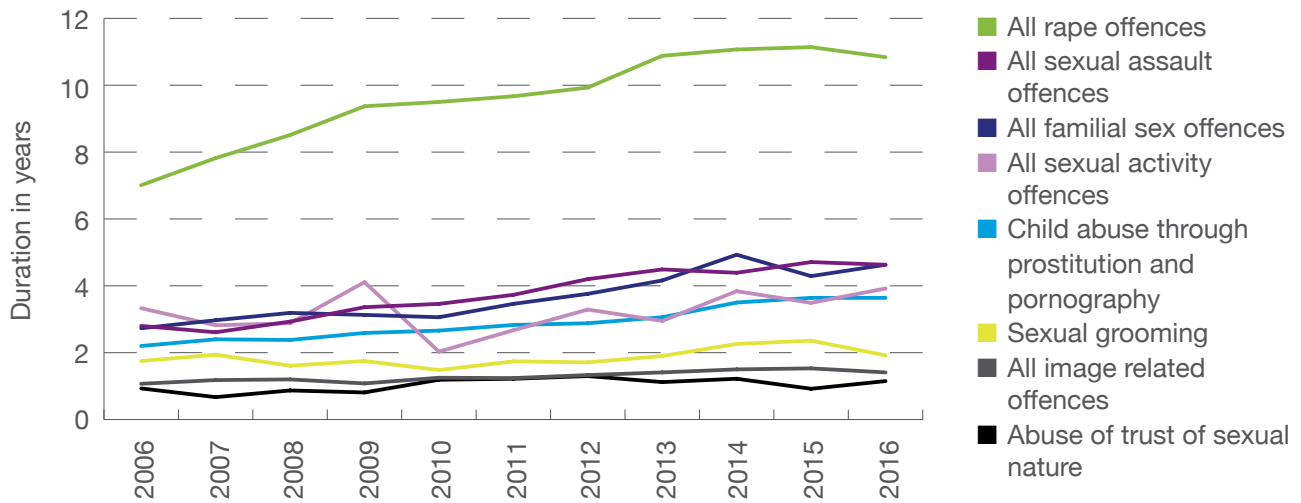
Figure 22. Number of adult and juvenile defendants proceeded against for CSA offences, 2006–2016, England and Wales, years ending December



Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: CJS Outcomes by Offence 2006 to 2016: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales. Ministry of Justice, published May 2017. All figures presented per calendar year to December. Numbers relate to defendants proceeded against per principal offence. Only current legislative CSA offences are included.

Average custodial sentences have increased substantially for defendants convicted of sexual assault, rape, familial sexual abuse and sexual activity offences. The average custodial sentence for rape offences increased from 7.0 to 10.8 years between 2006 and 2016, and the average for sexual assault increased from 2.8 to 4.6 (see Figure 23).

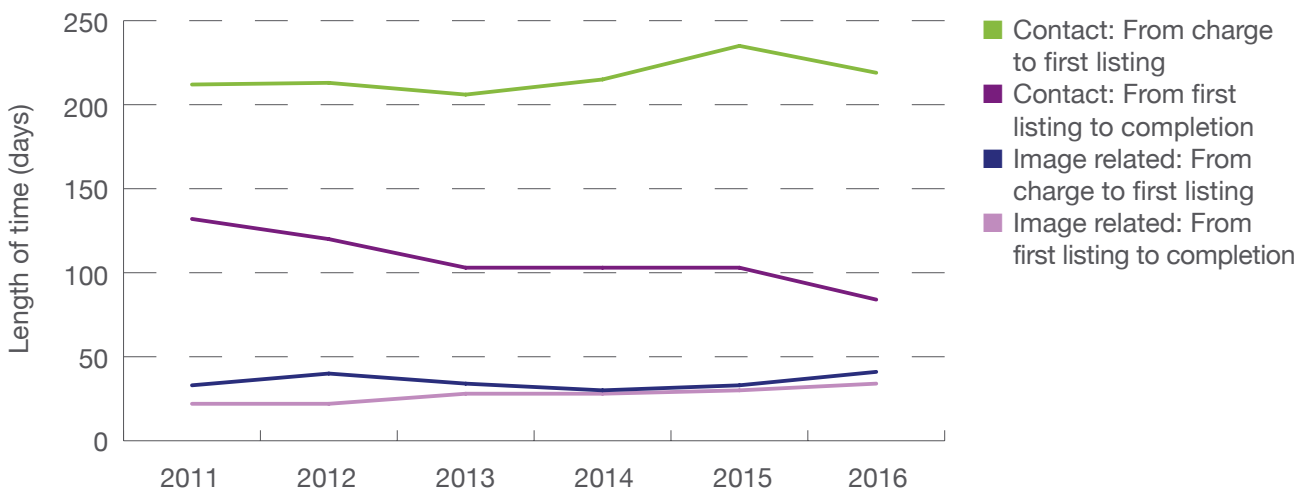
Figure 23. Average custodial sentence length (in years) for defendants convicted of child sexual offences by offence category, England and Wales, years ending December



Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: CJS Outcomes by Offence 2006 to 2016: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales. MoJ, published May 2017. Includes historic CSA offences. Data presented in calendar years (ending December). Immediate custody only. Excludes indeterminate sentences such as life sentences.

Figure 24 looks at court proceedings timescales for image-related and 'contact' CSA (this includes all CSA with the exception of image-related offences). This shows a decrease in duration for image-related offences between 2011 and 2016 but not for contact offences. Court proceedings complete at a faster rate for image-related offences (84 days in 2016²⁵) than 'contact' CSA (219 days).

Figure 24. Average number of days from charge to completion by CSA offence type, years to December



Source: MoJ Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly, England and Wales, October to December 2016. All figures at calendar years to December. Includes non-recent CSA. Only the most serious offence is counted per defendant. 'Contact' offence includes all CSA that is not image-related, including rape, sexual assault, sexual activity, familial sex offences, etc., whether or not it involves actual contact.

²⁵ All figures calendar year to December.

Gaps and challenges

All criminal justice data systems analysed for this report have recorded increasing levels of CSA and CSE offences. Recently published datasets by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice give detailed information on the specifics of CSA crimes and outcomes; however, important detail is lacking on the demographic profile of perpetrators and victims and on important contextual information (such as the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, crimes committed by multiple perpetrators or against multiple victims, and the online element in any contact crimes). Crucially the impact of non-recent sexual offences on the overall rise remains unaccounted for in some datasets. At some point the number of non-recent reports may decline and care needs to be taken in order that this is not interpreted as a fall in current CSA.

Currently in the nationally available data, CSE can only be seen under two very restricted offence categories – abuse through exploitation and sexual grooming – across all criminal justice systems, and image offences involving a CSE element (making, distributing or publishing) are separated in CPS and MoJ data. As such, only a fraction of CSE is currently visible in justice system data, although it is hoped that this will change when the use of CSE flags is fully implemented.

Tracking cases and attrition from the first report to police through to conviction is hampered by differences in counting rules – the police record offences, the CPS and MoJ defendants – and different data capture points (calendar or financial year). Currently criminal justice agencies' IT systems lack universal unique reference numbers which would enable case progress to be tracked. That said, there are significant levels of attrition for CSA offences recorded in crime and criminal justice statistics.

Data from the MoJ is the only source to separate peer and adult-committed crime, and shows that a small and decreasing proportion of defendants are peers (6%), but it is not known whether this reflects CSA crime data generally or that only a small proportion are charged.

Furthermore, important data on reports which do not proceed to 'outcomes' (previously, detections) are not routinely recorded. There have been recommendations (Bunting, 2014) to improve the data on these cases to increase understanding of why crimes do not achieve an outcome, understand attrition and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, a review of police crime reporting found that 26% of sexual offences reported to the police that should have been recorded as crimes were not so recorded (HMIC, 2014). In response to this under-recording, in April 2016 HMIC started a new programme of inspections to audit the recording accuracy in all police forces; particular focus was given to sexual and violent crimes, which had the poorest recording accuracy in the original HMIC investigation. After seven inspections, HMIC reported the combined recording accuracy for sexual offences as 91.5% (+/-1%) (HMIC, 2017). It is not possible to judge whether this figure is representative of recording accuracy of CSA, or across all police force areas. Further, HMIC note that "not all forces accurately record all reported allegations of rape, and in some cases there is no investigation into the reports" (p68).

Health and education

The Department of Health has not mandated collection of data on CSA or CSE, and limited attention has been paid to them by Health and Well Being Boards, but there are several processes underway which may change this. There is a current pilot of routine enquiry of adverse childhood experiences within adult mental health and CAMHS for over 14s covering CSA and CSE. Public Health England has commissioned a report, as has NHS England. The Royal College of Paediatricians is developing a common dataset on child abuse and neglect. Alcohol and drugs services are asking under 18s about CSA/E in first assessments, and data will be available through the national drugs treatment dataset. The reluctance to ask amongst some staff is considered to arise from a concern about it interfering with the relationship with a patient.

Whilst the Department for Education is responsible for children's services data dealt with earlier, there is no data collected within education services on CSA/E. The only relevant dataset is that on persistent absence.

What we currently do and do not know about CSA through administrative data

What we know

- There are changing patterns of identification and reporting, with CSA becoming a much lower proportion in child protection data but a much higher number of recorded crimes by the police.
- There are considerable regional variations across all administrative data.
- CSE is increasingly being identified by police and children's services.
- The vast majority of identified perpetrators of CSA and CSE are male.
- Girls and young women are much higher proportion of identified victims of CSA and CSE.
- Child abuse images are being identified in increasing numbers, and there is increase in successful prosecutions.
- Rates of attrition through the criminal justice system vary by offence.
- Online is a new context for CSA and CSE, and is generating new forms of abuse which are difficult to track accurately.

What we do not know

- We do not know if there is more or less CSA/E.
- Current data does not differentiate between abuse that is reported by victims or their supporters from cases that are identified by professionals/agencies.
- There is no accurate measure of how many victims are being identified within criminal justice data.
- The profiles of victims and perpetrators, apart from sex, are not consistently recorded.
- Data on the contexts for abuse – the relationships of perpetrators with victims and the duration of abuse – are weak.
- Data on perpetrators do not identify if they were single or multiple or serial offenders.

Using administrative data to estimate prevalence

One of the key challenges is that data are not collected on the same basis across agencies: the police collect on offences, the CPS and MoJ on defendants and children's services on children. The number of actual victims, therefore, remains opaque. Data held by police and children's services have been used to estimate the number of CSA victims in England. In 2015, data were collected from police, children's services and charitable organisations as a foundation for estimating the number of victims of CSA in the family environment known to services (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2015). The report identified around 50,000 current CSA victims during April 2012 to March 2014. Complete data were only available on approximately two thirds of children. Analysis found 36,617 CSA victims in police records, 13,956 in children's services data and 437 in voluntary sector material; after removing duplicates, a figure of 49,673 victims in total was obtained. Helpline data could not be included, since identifying duplicates was not possible.

The researchers applied a statistical modelling technique, Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE), to this dataset to estimate the 'hidden figure' of those not in contact with services. The size of the unidentified population was estimated from the extent of overlap between the datasets held by police and children's services – the smaller the proportion of children recorded in both datasets, the larger the number of unidentified cases. Using this technique, an estimate of an additional 350,000–400,000²⁶ CSA victims not known to services in the two-year period was reached. The findings were considered indicative since the data on which the model is based were incomplete.

Another method to combine administrative data collection and prevalence estimates has been used in the Netherlands, first in 2005 and repeated in 2010 (Euser et al. 2010). This study replicated the design of the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) in the US, now on its 4th cycle since 1979. Trained childcare professionals (sentinels) were recruited across the Netherlands to report on child abuse through a uniform registration system over a three-month period, and their reports were extrapolated to a 1-year period to estimate scale in that year. The reports were divided into a 'harm' standard where abuse was confirmed and an 'endangerment' standard for at risk cases. The study focused primarily on abuse perpetrated by parental figures. Self-report forms were also used for young people aged 12 to 17 through schools. The prevalence for sexual abuse in 2010 was estimated at 0.8 victims per 1,000 children (based on sentinel reports) and 58 per 1,000 children (based on self-report). Interestingly the 2010 study found a large increase in child abuse recorded in the child protection system but no change in sentinel and self-report; the authors attributed the change to an increased awareness among professionals rather than an increase in the actual number of maltreated children. The authors regard the use of sentinels as enabling clearer definition of abuse than self-reporting whilst covering a more comprehensive cohort of children than administrative data sources.

Euser et al. (2013) used the same method to estimate levels of sexual abuse in out-of-home care, finding a much higher 3.5 children per 1,000 as victims of sexual abuse through sentinels, and 248 adolescents per 1,000 in self-report, with the highest levels reported in residential care. Jud (2016) notes that cyclical professional surveys on child maltreatment are conducted in three countries: the US, the Netherlands and Canada. All rely on the above methodology.

²⁶This includes both contact and non-contact CSA cases but not indecent imagery offences.

Improving data on CSE

Much of the initial work on CSE was undertaken by Barnardo's, with Harper and Scott (2005) identifying 507 suspected or known cases in London: that the figures for individual boroughs ranged from 1 to 53 cases suggested that there was under-identification in some areas. This led to the use of risk indicators which revised the estimate upwards to 1,002. The most recent data from Barnardo's (2017) shows that in 2016 over 5,000 young people were worked with: 40 CSE services supported 2,466 young people, 10% of whom were male and 18% from BME communities.

The National Working Group (2010) surveyed 53 specialist CSE services in the UK: they reported 4,206 referrals in the previous 12 months, of which 11% were boys. The following year, Barnardo's (2011) audited numbers across 22 specialist services – in 2009/10 they were working with 1,098 children. Also noted were increases in internal trafficking and more evidence of the internet being used to contact children.

One of the most cited, but also contested, estimates comes from the interim report of the two-year Inquiry by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (Berelowitz, 2012). Data is, however, limited to children exploited in the context of gangs and groups. Double counting of individual cases was addressed by asking for each child's initials and birth dates. The report concluded that 2,409 children and young people in England were identified as sexually exploited in gangs or groups between August 2010 to October 2011, with a further 16,500 children designated high risk.

The variation in the number of CSE victims identified varied considerably by police force area – 19 areas provided no data, 10 reported fewer than 15 victims in a 14-month period whilst 4 police force areas were responsible for over half of the total. The majority of victims (72%) were girls, with just over a quarter (28%) BME backgrounds. The routes to identification were different between white and BME victims: police identified most of the white victims; and BME, faith and youth justice agencies most of BME victims. Children recorded as White British and Asian were more likely to be linked to a group, and those recorded as Black and Mixed Heritage linked to a gang, although this may tell us more about agency reach than the actual pattern of victimisation. Those deemed 'at risk' were identified using a set of 11 indicators (see Appendix 1), including persistent absence from school, self-harm, and being a child in need or in care. This approach was developed in recognition of the under-identification of CSE. If three indicators were recorded for a child aged over 10, they were designated at high risk of being sexually exploited. Returns on risk indicators were received from 100% of police forces, 88% of local authority Children's Services and 66% of primary care trusts.

Data on perpetrators was very limited: just 3% of calls for evidence submitted full data, and two thirds provided none. 1,514 perpetrators were identified, the vast majority of whom were male ranging in age from 12 to 75, with over 50% aged between 12 and 29. Ethnicity data was not provided for a fifth of perpetrators; of the remainder, 545 were 'White', 415 'Asian', and 244 'Black'.

There have been methodological critiques, with the statistics deemed confused (Cockbain, 2013) and many of the indicators not specific to CSE, as recently acknowledged by the DfE in its new CSE guidance (2017). In addition, indicators are not consistent between England and Wales.

Historically there has been little or no consistent data collected or held on CSE across Wales. In response to discussions at the Wales CSE Roundtable, chaired by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, a task and finish group has been set up to agree a minimum dataset in relation to CSE alongside developing a guidance document and toolkit to support accurate and consistent reporting of CSE across Wales. The dataset covers all CSE strategy meetings held and all cases that are assessed as significant or moderate risk. Data will be collected from local authorities as they will have a record of all CSE risk assessments, avoiding duplication of recording.

The other widely cited statistic comes from Alexis Jay's (2014) Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham. Whilst an appendix lists a large amount of documentation which was consulted, quite how the estimate of 1,400 girls over a 16-year period was reached is not transparent.

The widely accepted limitations in data have led to a number of changes, especially creating administrative data categories for CSE. A CSE flag became a formal requirement in police recorded crime data in April 2016, and an initial report is expected from the Home Office later in 2017. Data on children assessed at risk in relation to CSE has been recorded within child protection system from 2014/15 (see above).

In response to the emerging evidence base regarding the scale and nature of CSE, there has been an investment from the Home Office via the Police Transformation Fund in recruiting a network of analysts, located in regional police crime units which cover all police force areas in England and Wales. They were tasked with creating regional problem profiles which bring together police data and intelligence and input from local partners; the profiles were produced in 2015 and an overview of the top line figures has been published by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC, 2016). This collated data showed that there were 8,995 victims and those at risk of CSE identified by the police in 2014/5 (from November to October); 7,373 CSE crimes were identified, committed by 6,107 offenders²⁷. The average age of victim was found to be 14 and that of suspects 26.5 years: 88% of victims in this cohort were female and 94% of offenders male. The majority of both offenders and victims were of white ethnic origin: 70% of victims were white, 5% Black, and 2% Asian; 59% of offenders were white, 12% Asian, 8% Black. For around a fifth of both victims and offenders, no data on ethnicity was recorded. The figures include non-recent offences identified during the period and online CSE offences.

The National Referral Mechanism received 362 referrals of trafficking where CSE was suspected in 2016 (calendar year); 208 of potential victims were children from the UK. There was a considerable increase in referrals on grounds of CSE: +124% for UK nationals and +40% for non-UK nationals from the previous year, with Albania and Vietnam being the most frequently recorded countries of origin for the latter (National Crime Agency, 2017).

An analysis of police crime and intelligence data in Bristol (Skidmore et al. 2016) focused on CSE by groups with links to organised crime. Despite using data held by the police, this research found that only 6 of the 43 identified groups were entered by the local police force into the organised crime mapping system (which enables specialist expertise to be allocated). It highlighted confusion among practitioners about what constitutes organised CSE, with data being scattered and unstructured, resulting in a lack of consistency in recording. The study identified 371 CSE perpetrators over a two-year period (2013–2014). Around half (192)

²⁷ Whilst there is no published source to reference what is designated CSE, it is likely to vary across police forces.

operated in groups, characteristically loose networks of associates often of similar ethnic backgrounds. The majority of perpetrators were found to be living in the same community as their victims, with each group linked to an average of 5 known victims although variation here was considerable (e.g. one was linked to 54 victims). Two-thirds of the 179 known or suspected victims had not disclosed victimisation.

Improving data on online sexual abuse

Increasingly data on CSA and CSE perpetrator behaviour highlights the use of IT technology in identifying and targeting potential victims (see, for example, Berelowitz, 2012), and in the circulation of child abuse images. In addition, peer-to-peer sexual abuse is frequently linked to the use of messaging applications and social media. The critical question here is whether technology increases the scale and/or reach of CSA/E. The professional consensus is that the scale and reach of certain types of CSA have increased as a result of technological change. It is likely that more individuals with a sexual interest in children commit at minimum image based offences, due to low perceived risk. Individual offenders may also be able to offend more prolifically by using instant communication and guidance from other offenders met online. It is widely acknowledged that, with more children owning phones and tablets, perpetrators' access to potential victims has become easier.

A useful distinction here is between cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crime:²⁸ the CPS lists CSA offences under cyber-enabled offences (CPS, 2017). There is no doubt that technology enables the creation and sharing of child abuse images, but this form of abuse has a long history. Newer forms of abuse such as live streaming are cyber-dependent crimes, only possible because of the technology.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2013) undertook an analysis of 118 indecent images which pictured 146 victims; the vast majority (120) were female, with 96% white, 4% Asian. Three quarters of images were Level 1 on the Sentencing Council Scale²⁹, the least harmful category; a fifth depicted sexual contact between an adult and a child. A further time trend analysis between 2010 and 2013 uncovered an increase in the proportion of female victims aged under 10 and a considerable increase in Level 4 images, although Level 1 remained most prevalent.

Unlike in offline contexts where offenders typically invest time in building relationships with specific targeted children, increasingly online the pattern is to attempt to make initial contact with large numbers of children at the same time, followed by a rapid escalation for those who respond into intimidation, threats and coercion. The scale here is illustrated by referrals the National Crime Agency is receiving from industry (internet service providers), from around 400 per month in 2010 to 4,075 in 2016; in addition, 500–750 reports per month are received from the public (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2017)³⁰.

28 The National Cyber Security Strategy defines cyber-dependent crimes as "crimes that can be committed only through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) devices, where the devices are both the tool for committing the crime, and the target of the crime." Cyber-enabled crimes are defined as "traditional crimes which can be increased in scale or reach by the use of computers, computer networks or other forms of ICT" (National Cyber Security Centre 2016: 17).

29 Five levels are described by the Sentencing Council: Level 1 contain nudity with no sexual activity; Level 2 sexual activity between children or masturbation by child; Level 3 non-penetrative sexual activity; Level 4 penetrative sexual activity and Level 5 sadism or bestiality. More recently these have been replaced with Categories A-C with A being the severest.

30 These do not equate to individual offenders.

The NCA's latest assessment (NCA, 2016) cites cloud storage hosted outside UK jurisdiction and live streaming as ongoing challenges. It places CSE/A in priority Band 1, with a particular focus on the proliferation of child abuse images (understood as records of abuse: the Child Sexual Exploitation Referral Bureau received 1,800 referrals a month in 2016 compared to 400 in 2010). Self-generated indecent imagery by children and young people is noted to be contributing to the proliferation. A fifth of reports to CEOP in 2012 concerned sharing of a self-generated image, 16,200 images in total. The emergence of younger, more technologically astute offenders, who are better able to hide their activity through a range of anonymisation methods including use of the 'dark web', is also noted. The NCA report suggests that, although the number of CSA-related hidden service sites in the dark web is currently low, the traffic to those sites is high. NCA reported that UK enforcement agencies identified 450 victims from abuse images in 2015/6 (Home Office, 2017).

The EU Online Safety project (Davidson et al. 2016) brought together information on victims and perpetrators of online grooming and possession, collection and distribution of child abuse images. The project involved the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Ireland, and concluded that the UK had the highest number of identified online child abuse cases. Half of surveyed young people in the UK had been solicited online, mostly by peers: less than half had sought support compared to over three quarters in Italy. Young people's online behaviours were profiled into four distinct groups: 'adapted adolescent'; 'risk-taking aggressive adolescent'; 'inquisitive non-sexual'; and 'inquisitive sexual'. The last of these was most closely associated with online risky sexual behaviour.

An ongoing debate here is whether sexting should, in all circumstances, be considered a criminal offence when it involves under 18s, or whether it is a cyber-enabled sexual practice. Police sexting advice (College of Policing, 2016) and the related advice for schools through the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (2016) sought to deal with this issue: "Offences involving self-generated images or images obtained with consent by other children may be dealt with differently... thereby avoiding stigmatising children or causing them unnecessary fears and concerns" (College of Policing, 2016: 2) Martellozzo et al. (2016) found that, whilst around 8% of young people had shared a naked or semi-naked image of themselves with someone else, a smaller 2.5% had sent one to someone they did not know and 1.5% reporting being coerced to create such an image.

An NSPCC report (Jutte 2016) focused specifically on trying to capture activity relating to the production, sharing and viewing of online child sexual abuse images. In the absence of population-level research into the number of potential users of such material, the project applied figures from a German survey of self-reported male sexual interest in children (Dombert et al. 2016) to estimate that 450,000–590,000 males aged 18–89 in the UK may have viewed or used child sexual abuse imagery. There are acknowledged limitations to this estimate, including the limited knowledge base and the basing of estimates on the assumption that all of those with sexual interest in children and access to the internet would view images. A separate study (Giles and Alison, 2016) using similar methodology, sought to differentiate between online only offenders and those who commit contact offences: they estimated that there are between 5,042 and 25,210 individuals in the UK who access images online but also pose a risk of contact offending.

Reflections

Whilst prevalence studies are undertaken with random samples of the wider population, data from agencies has a different purpose: it is case management information at local and national levels. As such, what is and is not recorded reflects the needs, understanding and priorities of agencies, which vary. What cases come to the attention of agencies is affected by wider social awareness and by policy priorities, meaning that it can be skewed in certain directions at specific points in time. If agency data is to become a better data resource, agreement is needed on what key pieces of information matter and why, which would in turn enable a common basic data template to be drawn up which agencies attempt to meet. The expert workshops for this project agreed that such a template should cover: victims; perpetrators; forms and contexts of abuse; online elements; and agency processes, actions and outcomes. A draft template has been developed as part of this strand of work, which will be further refined through piloting in the next year.

Significant data gaps have been identified: age, ethnicity, disability in relation to children were noted by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015) as not consistently reported in police data. Limited information about perpetrators, especially multiple perpetrators, and their relationship to the child was noted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (Berelowitz, 2013), and has been evident in this review. The forms and contexts of abuse are not always recorded systematically, making tracing patterns over time problematic.

Whilst there remains uncertainty as to whether CSA/E are changing in nature, there has been an increase in reporting of sexual abuse to the police, possibly linked to high profile cases and repeated positive messaging. There is also evidence of under-recording in child protection data. The introduction of the CSE flag in police data means that this data is coming on stream, albeit currently combining actual cases and those at risk. The next challenge here is to create agreed protocols across agencies for separating the two, whilst enabling updating when an 'at risk' case becomes a confirmed one.

There is an ongoing discussion in both England and Wales about the extent to which the current CSE indicators discriminate neither between CSE and CSA nor between pre-abuse vulnerabilities and post-abuse consequences (Beckett, 2011; Jago et al. 2011). Klatt et al. (2014) argue that there is a need to develop more specificity about which vulnerabilities are specifically and consistently associated with sexual exploitation. The Centre of expertise has a strand of work which is exploring these issues.

Experts at the two project workshops noted that the grooming model has predominated in the development of approaches to CSE, including in the indicators, and that this has meant that some forms – such as young people selling sex outside the involvement of organised exploiters – have been neglected or even excluded. With the increase in agency data on CSE, it should now be possible to map the forms and contexts of CSE they are currently encountering, explore regional variations, and move towards a more accurate framing.

Conclusions

Here we present a summary of the key evidence compiled for this review.

- Prevalence studies reach somewhat different estimates on the scale of CSA, in large part due to different definitions and methodological approaches. This is the case for the two most recent covering England and Wales: ONS (2016a) limited perpetration to adults, whereas Radford et al. (2011) included a substantial proportion of abuse by peers. This suggests that variations in methods and questions have tapped different experiences, all of which should come within CSA. Thus, each represents an underestimate of the actual scale.
- Taking into account the variations in the prevalence studies for England and Wales³¹, the data suggest that some 15% of girls/young women and 5% of boys/young men experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16, including abuse by adults and peers. The methods used and number of questions asked affect estimates; at the higher end, international estimates reach 30% for girls and 23% for boys.
- Ongoing abuse that includes some form of penetration is a far lower figure.
- The vast majority of perpetrators are male (always over 90% in prevalence studies) and most are known to the child and young person in some way.
- CSE has yet to be effectively included in prevalence studies.
- Measurement of duration and frequency could be improved.
- Data on online is largely missing in prevalence studies, and future studies need to address this.
- Whilst we have stronger headline data from both prevalence and agency data, there is not enough depth to map across key themes, especially the contexts and locations of abuse and data on perpetrators.
- Whilst CSE is located within CSA, the boundaries between the two have shifted over time, with CSE becoming a more expanded concept. This makes tracing change over time difficult.
- It is important to separate conceptually forms of and contexts for abuse, to avoid making unwarranted assumptions. For example, seeing sexual abuse in families as separate from CSE means that cases where family members are involved in CSE are lost from view. Online is both a new context and generating new forms of abuse.
- Administrative data tells us how many cases are being reported or identified and recorded, but it remains the case that much CSA/E remains hidden.
- In children's social care data since 1994/5, a declining number of children are on child protection plans for sexual abuse in England and Wales, although numbers increased slightly in 2015/6 and since 2014/5 CSE risk is recorded at a far higher level – 17,600 in 2015/6.

³¹ Includes ONS (2016b), Radford et al. (2011) and Fundamental Rights Agency (2014)..

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- Children on child protection plans under CSA are more likely to be female and older than children recorded under other categories of abuse.
 - There are strong regional variations in the proportions of the child population registered as in need or at risk in relation to CSA and CSE – an issue that deserves more detailed attention.
 - In contrast, police recorded crime, prosecution and court data shows a strong and continued upwards trend of CSA offences, prosecutions and convictions.
 - Again, regional variations are marked, but not easily mapped onto those from local authorities.
 - There is considerable attrition of cases through charge, prosecution and conviction, but the patterns are different across offences. Sexually abusive image offences are the most likely to be proceeded with and to result in a conviction, linked to the availability of material evidence.
 - CPS and MoJ data show that 98% of defendants were male, and peers are a small and falling proportion of those prosecuted.
 - Data profiling victims and perpetrators and the contexts of abuse could be improved.
 - There is limited data collected by health services currently, although there are some pilots and research projects in train.

We return to the aims of this study and the extent to which these have been met over the five months of the study.

- *Establish a best estimate of the scale of CSA/E, drawing on the current evidence base and informed by expert input on the quality, reliability and extrapolation potential of this data. As far as possible, estimates should be provided at national and local level in England and Wales.*

This paper sets out the quality, reliability and extrapolation potential of the current evidence base, and highlights a series of gaps and challenges to be addressed in the future. Our two best prevalence measures have tapped different forms and contexts of CSA; a best estimate would combine the two, although that is not possible in terms of the actual data.

Agency data does now allow for regional analysis, and reveals wide variations which are not currently well understood. There are also serious gaps which make the actual number of current victims of both CSA and CSE difficult to estimate and fail to record important data on perpetrators, the duration of abuse and other contextual information.

- *Keep abreast of future changes in data collection, providing informed comment as needed on the interpretation of new data.*

The expert working group provided access to future plans for improving data and when new data streams will be accessible at government department level.

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- *Make proposals for a feasible new methodological framework to assess the scale of CSA/E and its various forms, building on current promising approaches and adding innovative methods.*

A data template has been devised, to be piloted in the next year, which would address some of the gaps and challenges already noted above. We do not, however, underestimate the implications of multiple agencies adjusting their IT systems. The challenge in both prevalence research and administrative data of consistently distinguishing between CSA and CSE also remains.

- *Review promising practice in recording. Where reporting is high, what are the reporting and recording procedures followed? Possible case matching of areas with similar demographics but different practices and reported levels of CSA/E.*

It has not been possible in the timescale to drill down to this level, but the groundwork of analysing data regionally to identify potential case study areas has been completed.

Future work

The Centre of expertise will continue to focus on improving the understanding and quality of data on CSA and CSE. This project has identified a series of future steps which will contribute to this.

- To advocate for the UK Government to commit to commissioning a regular CSA prevalence study, under the auspices of the Office for National Statistics (see briefing).
- To advocate for organisations carrying out similar surveys and longitudinal cohort studies on linked issues to consider including a module on CSA (see briefing).
- To create a series of nested data visualisations which present the best estimates of what we know from prevalence and agency data. These will be updated each year by the Centre for expertise as new data comes online.
- To maintain the conversation and exchange between academics and data holders which this project has enabled, through biannual meetings in which improvements in the evidence base will be explored.
- To bring together a smaller group of methodologists who will explore potential improvements in survey questions which might enable differentiation between CSA and CSE, and to consult with young people on these.
- To develop a best practice prevalence module on CSA/E which could be used in existing surveys, and to explore whether there are appropriate longitudinal cohort studies in which it might be nested.
- To pilot the data template over the next year in order to ensure that the fields and categories are the right ones, and to test how onerous or useful it might be for agencies.
- To explore in more depth the regional variations in identification rates.

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Appendix 1

Here key aspects of method, and especially the questions asked, are recorded for each of the studies addressed in the prevalence section.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

Framing

Crime victimisation survey

Definition

Sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts): sexual assault by penetration of a [mouth, vagina or anus; or mouth or anus] with a penis, or penetrated their [vagina or anus; or anus] with an object (including fingers).

Other sexual assaults including indecent exposure or unwanted touching: the category includes indecent exposure (as in, flashing), or being touched sexually whether it was agreed to or not (for example, groping, touching of breasts or bottom, kissing).

Sample

The survey had a nationally representative sample of 35,324 adults with a response rate of 72%. The self-completion module on abuse during childhood had a sample of 20,582 adults aged 16-59.

Method

Interview at respondent's home address, with CSA questions given to the respondent to self-complete (computer-assisted self-interviewing)

Questions

1. Thinking about any time before you were 16 years old, did any ADULT ever do any of the following things to you?
 - Indecently exposed themselves to you (i.e. flashing)
 - Touched you sexually whether you agreed to it or not (e.g. groping, touching of breasts or bottom, kissing)
2. Thinking about any time before you were 16 years old, did any ADULT ever do any of the following things to you?
 - Penetrated your [mouth, vagina or anus/mouth or anus] with their penis
 - Penetrated your [vagina or anus/mouth or anus] with an object (including fingers)
3. Thinking about any time before you were 16 years old, did any ADULT ever do any of the following things to you?
 - ATTEMPTED to penetrate your [mouth, vagina or anus/mouth or anus] with their penis
 - ATTEMPTED to penetrate your [mouth, vagina or anus/mouth or anus] with an object (including fingers)

NSPCC study

Framing

Child maltreatment survey

Definition

Uses both that in Working Together and the criminal law, not research definition

Sample

2160 parents of under 11s

2275 11-17s with input from parents

1761 18-24 year olds

Method

Computer-assisted self-interviewing, listening on headphones and entering responses

Questions

This is the whole module. Those questions marked * are CSA; the others might be but not enough data to make a decision

- *1. At any time in ([CHILD]'s/your) life/Before you were 18, did a grown-up touch ([CHILD]'s/your) private parts when they SHOULDN'T have, or MAKE ([CHILD]/you) touch their private parts or did a grown-up FORCE ([CHILD]/you) to have sex?
- *2. Now think about other young people, like from school, a friend, (IF YOUTH/RETRO SURVEY: a boyfriend or girlfriend,) or even a brother or sister.
At any time in ([CHILD]'s/your) life/Before you were 18, did another child or teenager MAKE ([CHILD]/you) do sexual things?
- *3. At any time in ([CHILD]'s/your) life/Before you were 18, did anyone TRY to force ([CHILD]/you) to have sex, that is sexual intercourse of any kind, even if it didn't happen?
- *4. At any time in ([CHILD]'s/your) life/Before you were 18, did anyone make ([CHILD]/you) look at their private parts by using force or surprise, or by "flashing"
5. At any time in ([CHILD]'s/your) life/Before you were 18, did anyone hurt ([CHILD]'s/your) feelings by saying or writing something sexual about ([CHILD]/you) or ([CHILD]'s/your) body?
6. (only for 12+) At any time in your life/Before you were 18, did you do sexual things with anyone 18 or older, even things you wanted?
7. (only for 16-24) Since you were 16, have you done/And thinking back to when you were 16 or 17, did you do) sexual things with anyone who was in a position of trust, such as a teacher or personal adviser, even things you both wanted?

-
8. (only for 18-24) Now thinking about things that might have happened before you were 16.
- Before you were 16, were you hugged or kissed in a sexual way, whether you agreed to it or not?
 - Before you were 16, did you have full sexual intercourse?
 - Before you were 16, did you have anal intercourse?
 - Before you were 16, did you have oral sex?
 - Before you were 16, did someone put their finger, tongue or an object into your (IF FEMALE: “vagina or”) anus?

EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey

Framing

Violence against women survey

Definition (via methodology)

Under the age of 15, by an adult 18 or over, contact and non-contact

Sample

Minimum 1,500 in each member state aged 18-74

N=42,002

Multistage random probability sampling

Method

Paper and pencil interview and computer-assisted self-interviewing, with CSA questions given to the respondent to self-complete.

Questions

Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years or over do the following to you, when you did not want them to?

- Expose their genitals to you.
- Make you pose naked in front of any person or in photographs, video or an internet webcam.
- Touch your genitals or breasts against your will.
- Make you touch their private parts – genitals or breasts.

Force you to have sexual intercourse.

Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland study

Framing

Specialist sexual violence (child and adulthood) survey

Definition

Not found in any explicit way

Sample

3118 (1,584 women and 1,534 men) 18-90 year olds living in private residences with a landline telephone.

Method

Telephone survey

Questions

1. During your childhood or adolescence did anyone ever show you or persuade you to look at pornographic material (for example, magazines, videos, internet etc.) in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?
2. Did anyone ever make you or persuade you to take off your clothes, or have you pose alone or with others in a sexually suggestive way or in ways that made you feel confused or uncomfortable in order to photograph or video you?
3. As a child or adolescent, did anyone expose their sexual organs to you?
4. During this time did anyone masturbate in front of you?
5. Did anyone touch your body, including your breasts or genitals in a sexual way?
6. During your childhood or adolescence, did anyone try to have you arouse them, or touch their body in a sexual way?
7. Did anyone rub their genitals against your body in a sexual way?
8. Did anyone attempt to have sexual intercourse with you?
9. Did anyone succeed in having sexual intercourse with you?
10. Did anyone, male or female, make you or persuade you to have oral sex?
11. Did a man make you or persuade you to have anal sex?
12. Did anyone put their fingers or objects in your vagina or anus (back passage)?

Office of the Children’s Commissioner indicators for the scale of CSE

	Indicator	Dataset	Source
1	Missing from home or care	Children reported missing Or Children reported to be 'absconding' or 'breaching'.	Police YOT data via ASSET
2	Victim of a sexual offence	Children reported as victims of rape	Police
3	Engagement in offending	Young people known to youth offending services	YOT data via ASSET
4	Lacking friends from the same age group	Children lacking age appropriate friends	YOT data via ASSET
5	Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations or Poor mental health	Children putting their health at risk	YOT data via ASSET
6	Recruiting others into exploitative situations	Children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour	YOT data via ASSET
7	Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality) Or History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect Or Children in care	Children referred to as 'children in need' Or Children 'looked after' under both S31 and S20 orders	Local authority Local authority
8	Absent from school	Children persistently absent from school	Local authority
9	Excluded from school	Children permanently excluded from school	Local authority
10	Self-harm Or Thoughts of or attempts at suicide	Children who are self-harming or showing suicidal intent.	PCT/Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
11	Drug or alcohol misuse	Children misusing drugs and/or alcohol	PCT/Drug and Alcohol Team

Appendix 2: Membership of the expert group

Debra Allnock	Senior Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire
Chris Attwood	Research Programme Director, Crime and Policing Analysis Unit, Home Office
Helen Beckett	Reader in Child Protection and Children's Rights, University of Bedfordshire
Rebecca Channing	Safeguarding and tackling violence, Crime and Policing Analysis Unit, Home Office
Michelle Clift Matthews	Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
Rachel Conner	Science, Research and Evidence Directorate, Department of Health
Catherine Davies	Team Leader – Tackling CSA, Department of Health
Eustace DeSousa	National Lead – Children, Young People and Families, Public Health England
Gareth Edwards	Policy advisor to CC Simon Bailey – National policing lead for Child Protection, National Police Chiefs' Council
Sophie Hallett	Lecturer, CASCADE, Cardiff University
Laura Koehli	Programme Support Officer, Public Health England
Deborah Lader	Safeguarding and tackling violence analytical lead, Crime and Policing Analysis Unit, Home Office
Miguel Marques	Lead Analyst on CSE, Children Services Analysis and Research Division, Department for Education
Andy Myhill	Researcher, College of Policing
Jack O'Sullivan	Victims and Witnesses Social Researcher, Ministry of Justice
Lorraine Radford	Professor of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Central Lancashire
Angie Scholes	Cyber crime research, Office of Security and Counterterrorism Research and Analysis, Home Office
Joe Traynor	Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
Louise Wallace	Adviser to the National Institute for Health Research, Health Services and Delivery Research Programme
Jude Watson	Violence against Women Strategy advisor, Crown Prosecution Service

The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the Government.

**Centre of expertise on
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