

# “I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world”

---

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry  
into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups

## INTERIM REPORT

November 2012



**Authors:**

Sue Berelowitz  
Carlene Firmin, MBE  
Gareth Edwards  
Dr Sandra Gulyurtlu

# CONTENTS

---

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER</b> | 4  |
| <b>FOREWORD</b>  | 5  |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>                                | 7  |
| <b>INQUIRY PANEL AND TEAM</b>                          | 8  |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>                               | 9  |
| <b>INTERIM REPORT</b>                                  | 19 |
| <b>BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY</b>                       | 19 |
| • Definition of child sexual exploitation              | 19 |
| • Definition of 'gangs' and 'groups'                   | 19 |
| • Definition of 'consent' to sexual activity           | 19 |
| • 'Tamzin's' story                                     | 20 |
| • What prompted the OCC Inquiry                        | 22 |
| • Growing concern about child sexual exploitation      | 22 |
| • Recent studies                                       | 23 |
| • Recent policy changes                                | 23 |
| • The fractured response                               | 24 |
| • The structure and aims of the Inquiry                | 25 |
| • Legislation enabling the Inquiry                     | 27 |
| <b>EVIDENCE-GATHERING AND ANALYSIS</b>                 | 28 |
| • Methods of gathering evidence                        | 28 |
| • Commissioned research                                | 28 |
| • Methods of analysing evidence                        | 29 |
| • Reliability and validity of the data submitted       | 30 |
| <b>THE NATURE OF THE ABUSE</b>                         | 34 |
| • Differences between gang and group-associated CSE    | 34 |
| • Similarities in gang and group-associated CSE        | 37 |
| • Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse                | 38 |
| • Location of abuse                                    | 41 |
| • Use of technology                                    | 43 |
| • Use of pornography                                   | 44 |
| • Commercial abuse                                     | 45 |
| • Links to family abuse                                | 45 |
| • Consent and coercion                                 | 47 |
| • Impact of the abuse                                  | 49 |
| • Signs of risk and vulnerability                      | 51 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>THE SCALE OF THE ABUSE</b>   | 53  |
| • The number of children being sexually exploited   | 53  |
| • Cases reported to the CSEGG Inquiry   | 55  |
| • Numbers of children at risk   | 58  |
| • Reported versus potential scale   | 60  |
| • Patterns within and between risk indicators (warning signs)   | 62  |
| • Trends across age, gender and ethnicity   | 63  |
| • Patterns between individual indicators  | 69  |
| • Gaps in the figures   | 80  |
| <b>WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?</b>   | 82  |
| • Children at risk  | 82  |
| • Victims' histories  | 82  |
| • Children in care  | 84  |
| • Victim/offender overlap   | 85  |
| • Age   | 85  |
| • Gender  | 87  |
| • Ethnicity   | 91  |
| • Disability  | 96  |
| <b>WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?</b>  | 98  |
| • The information gap   | 98  |
| • Identification  | 100 |
| • Age   | 102 |
| • Gender  | 103 |
| • Ethnicity   | 104 |
| • Disability  | 109 |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  | 110 |
| • Urgent action required  | 110 |
| • Identifying victims   | 110 |
| <b>PHASE 2</b>  | 113 |
| APPENDIX A – WARNING SIGNS AND VULNERABILITIES CHECKLIST  | 114 |
| APPENDIX B – METHODOLOGY  | 117 |
| APPENDIX C – FULL SITE VISIT TABLE  | 125 |
| APPENDIX D – LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT  | 130 |
| APPENDIX E – EVIDENCE-GATHERING PREPARATION PROCESS   | 132 |
| APPENDIX F – LIST OF DOCUMENTS CURRENTLY REFERENCING 'PROSTITUTION' IN<br>RELATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE | 134 |
| APPENDIX G – HELP AND SUPPORT   | 136 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY  | 137 |

## **ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER**

---

The Office of the Children's Commissioner is a national organisation led by the Children's Commissioner for England, Dr Maggie Atkinson. The post of Children's Commissioner for England was established by the Children Act 2004. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpins and frames all of our work.

The Children's Commissioner has a duty to promote the views and interests of all children in England, in particular those whose voices are least likely to be heard, to the people who make decisions about their lives. She also has a duty to speak on behalf of all children in the UK on non-devolved issues which include immigration, for the whole of the UK, and youth justice, for England and Wales. One of the Children's Commissioner's key functions is encouraging organisations that provide services for children always to operate from the child's perspective.

Under the Children Act 2004 the Children's Commissioner is required both to publish what she finds from talking and listening to children and young people, and to draw national policymakers' and agencies' attention to the particular circumstances of a child or small group of children which should inform both policy and practice.

As the Office of the Children's Commissioner, it is our statutory duty to highlight where we believe vulnerable children are not being treated appropriately and in line with duties established under international and domestic legislation.

## FOREWORD

---

Sexual exploitation is a curious term, for it runs the risk of glossing over the reality of what is done to children.

The reality is that each year thousands of children in England are raped and abused from as young as 11 years by people seeking to humiliate, violate and control them and the impact on their lives is often devastating.

This report, coming at the end of the first year of this Inquiry into the sexual exploitation of children in gangs and groups, has uncovered for the first time the extent to which children in England are being sexually exploited. We publish the number of known victims over a set period of time but can say with certainty that our figures are an undercounting of the true scale of this form of abuse. We know that because, although many agencies and organisations responded to our request for information and data, there were some notable gaps, with a few local authorities failing to do so. Furthermore, we know that children are sexually exploited in contexts other than in gangs and groups, including by lone perpetrators. Evidence about those children is not included in this report.

During the course of this Inquiry we have heard from young people who have been raped in the most unbearable ways. These have included children who have been abducted, trafficked, beaten and threatened after being drawn into a web of sexual violence by promises of love and others who have suffered in silence for years as they are casually and routinely raped by the boys in their neighbourhoods – as they come out of school, as they walk to the shops, as they play in their local park.

The vast majority of the perpetrators of this terrible crime are male. They range in age from as young as fourteen to old men. They come from all ethnic groups and so do their victims – contrary to what some may wish to believe. The failure of agencies to recognise this means that too many child victims are not getting the protection and support they so desperately need.

If the recent allegations against Jimmy Savile are true, a conspiracy of silence allowed him and those who acted with him to continue to rape children with impunity for decades. It is too easy to simply blame the BBC as if what happened was entirely due to a failure in one organisation.

The truth is much more difficult and challenging. We need to ask why so many males, both young and old, think it is acceptable to treat both girls and boys as objects to be used and abused. We need to know why so many adults in positions of responsibility persist in not believing these children when they try and tell someone what they have endured.

This report is a wake-up call. As one young woman said after telling us her story: *"I can let go now because you are dealing with this."* Each and every one of us owes it to her and all other victims to listen, to believe and to act to stop this terrible abuse. Using the warning signs lists, produced in this report, is the first step to identifying and protecting children.

Year two of the Inquiry will focus on how to tackle the sexual exploitation of children and we will be investigating examples of good practice so that these lessons can be shared nationally. We will complete the work being undertaken by the University of Bedfordshire into young people's experiences of living in gang-involved neighbourhoods. The interim report on that research is published along with this report. We have also commissioned London Metropolitan University to examine children and young people's understanding of consent because so many appear not to appreciate that forced sex, including oral sex, is rape.

This report is dedicated to the thousands of children and young people who are victims of sexual violence in the form of sexual exploitation. I am particularly indebted to those who shared their stories with us and am humbled by their grace and courage in the face of their on-going distress and trauma as a result of their shocking experiences. Tragically, many disclosed that in their early childhoods they were also sexually abused by family members and friends. Too often this was not identified and no action was taken to protect them. Without exception, all chose to share their accounts because they want to stop other children suffering as they did.

I am profoundly grateful to the panel members and secretariat for their commitment to this Inquiry. Their determination to uncover the truth has been unstinting even when listening to the most harrowing accounts. My special thanks go to Carlene Firmin, Gareth Edwards and Sandra Gulyurtlu without whom this report would not have been possible.

This report is not a comfortable read and the content may be distressing to some readers. We owe it to the victims to face up to the realities of sexual exploitation.



**Sue Berelowitz**

Deputy Children's Commissioner/ Chief Executive

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This report has been made possible because of the dedication and commitment of a great many people all of whom care deeply about the children and young people whose lives are so cruelly affected by sexual exploitation. Each is driven by a determination to expose the truth so that children can be given the protection and support that they deserve. I am particularly indebted to the following without whom this report could not have been produced:

Carlene Firmin, Dr Sandra Gulyurtlu, Gareth Edwards, Lisa Prendergast, Denise Malcolm, Jenny Clifton, Shaila Sheikh, our wonderful panel members whose names are listed in full on page 8, Stanley Ruszynski, the 115 agencies who submitted evidence, the police constabularies, local authorities, and primary care trusts who submitted data, the 68 professionals who gave oral evidence and the 167 professionals who met with us on our 14 site visits. Above all, profound thanks are due to the young people who spoke so openly to us of their appalling experiences. Their courage and fortitude in the face of what they have endured remains humbling. It is for them that we do this work.

I extend special thanks to Dr Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner, for her unfailing support and encouragement throughout this Inquiry.

## HELP AND SUPPORT

The NSPCC is assisting the Office of the Children's Commissioner providing immediate assistance to anyone affected by sexual abuse or exploitation.

If you are a child or young person affected by abuse or exploitation you can call Childline for advice and support 24 hours a day on Tel: 0800 1111.

If you are an adult who needs support or information, or are concerned about a child or young person, call the NSPCC helpline on Tel: 0808 800 5000. See Appendix G for further contacts.

## INQUIRY TEAM AND PANEL

---

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Inquiry Chair</b>   | Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner for England  |
| <b>Inquiry Panel</b>   |   |
| <b>Martin Houghton-Brown</b>   | Chief Executive of Missing People   |
| <b>Whitney Iles</b>  | Director of NoSexWithOutLove  |
| <b>Marai Larasi MBE</b>  | Executive Director of Imkaan  |
| <b>Professor Jenny Pearce</b>  | Director of the Institute of Applied Social Research,<br>University of Bedfordshire   |
| <b>Professor John Pitts</b>  | Vauxhall Professor of Socio-Legal Studies,<br>University of Bedfordshire  |
| <b>Dr Mike Shaw</b>  | Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at the<br>Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust  |
| <b>Sheila Taylor MBE</b>   | Director of National Working Group for Sexually-Exploited<br>Children and Young People  |
| <b>Kate Wallace</b>  | UK Programme Director, Barnardo's   |
| <b>Deborah Hodes</b>   | Consultant Community Paediatrician, University College<br>Hospital London and Named Doctor for Child Protection,<br>Camden, London; representing the Royal College of<br>Paediatrics and Child Health |
| <b>Commander Christine Jones</b>   | Association of Chief Police Officers  |
| <b>Principal Policy Advisor and<br/>Head of the Secretariat for the<br/>CSEGG Inquiry:</b> | Carlene Firmin MBE  |
| <b>Researcher:</b>   | Dr Sandra S Cabrita Gulyurtlu   |
| <b>Data Analyst:</b>   | Gareth Edwards  |
| <b>Senior Communications Officer:</b>  | Denise Malcolm  |
| <b>Principal Participation Advisor:</b>  | Shaila Sheikh   |
| <b>Administrative Support:</b>   | Lisa Prendergast  |
| <b>Clinical Consultant:</b>  | Stanley Ruszczyński, Director, The Portman Clinic   |

In addition to the panel, the Deputy Children's Commissioner has established an advisory group, government officials' group and a number of specialist advisory groups to confer with the wide range of people and organisations who have shown interest in the CSEGG Inquiry.

The participation of children is intrinsic to the CSEGG Inquiry. It has been our priority throughout this Inquiry to ensure that children and young people can participate safely and securely, and in a way that promotes their healing and best interests. We have taken steps to ensure that throughout the Inquiry, the voices of children are heard in a safe and secure way.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

### THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ABUSED OR AT RISK OF ABUSE

Imagine that within three medium sized secondary schools every pupil was being subjected to sexual violence on a routine basis over months, and sometimes years, by multiple perpetrators; or that within 20 medium sized secondary schools every child was displaying behaviours which indicated they were at significant risk of being sexually exploited, and only a small number of staff acted on these warning signs.

The equivalent of this is true.

Based on evidence submitted to the CSEGG Inquiry, at least 16,500 children were identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation during one year and 2,409 children were confirmed as victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups during the 14-month period from August 2010 to October 2011.

Evidence to the Inquiry indicates that in any given year the actual number of children being abused is far greater than the 2,409 that have been confirmed. Interviews with children and young people, evidence collected during site visits and gathered at hearing sessions all indicated that many children who were sexually exploited either remained unseen by professionals or, even when known, were not recorded in the call for evidence submissions received by the OCC.

16,500 children from across England were identified as being at high risk of child sexual exploitation during the period April 2010-March 2011. This figure is based on children who displayed three or more signs of behaviour indicating they were at risk of child sexual exploitation.

These are the main findings of the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (CSEGG) by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC).

### THE INQUIRY

This report is the most in-depth investigation to date of child sexual exploitation (CSE) by gangs and groups in England.

Over the past 20 years evidence has shown that large numbers of children are being sexually exploited in the UK. The convictions of a group of men, who sexually exploited children in and around Derby, and research into the impact of gang-associated sexual violence on women and girls, have raised awareness of the problem in gangs and groups. Several studies and policy changes have been undertaken to tackle the problem. While awareness of CSE has increased substantially, and there has been considerable progress in agency coordination, much still needs to be done to prevent exploitation and protect and rescue child victims.

It was against this background that the OCC embarked on its Inquiry. It was divided into two consecutive phases.

**Phase 1** was launched in October 2011 and ran to September 2012. This gathered evidence on the

nature and scale of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups across England.

The Inquiry marks the first occasion on which data have been pulled together from the police, local authorities, central government and primary care trusts on children displaying the warning signs associated with this form of abuse. This has been compared with details of confirmed victims to produce a body of evidence that demonstrates the deeply troubling extent and nature of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.

This Interim Report comprises the findings. It also pinpoints concerns about the ability of professionals to identify CSE and to support victims. The report makes recommendations on how to improve the identification of CSE in gangs and groups, along with victims and perpetrators, and also the gathering of data and evidence.

**Phase 2**, which will run from 2012-13, will identify measures required to prevent child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups and will recommend how to put these measures into force.

## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN GANGS AND GROUPS

The broad definition of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups is this:

- 1) **gang** – mainly comprising men and boys aged 13 – 25 years old, who take part in many forms of criminal activity, such as knife crime or robbery, who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers such as territory, a name, sometimes clothing etc. While children can be sexually exploited by a gang, this is not the reason why a gang is formed.
- 2) By contrast, child sexual exploitation by a **group** involves people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, co-ordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way.

For the full definitions please see the main report.

## RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE DATA SUBMITTED

The evidence and data collected to inform the findings of this report is the most thorough and comprehensive collection of information on child sexual exploitation collected to date in England. The evidence on known victimisation is based on 115 submissions to the call for evidence request, 14 site visits, oral evidence from 68 professionals and interviews with 20 sexually exploited children across the country. Data enabling the identification of children at high risk of being sexually exploited was received from 100% of police constabularies, 88% of local authority children's services and services operating in 66% of Primary Care Trusts.

At the same time CSE goes largely undetected. There are some inconsistencies in relation to detention and data capture at the local level.

These include: gaps in data on victims and perpetrators; biased data, given that some agencies go looking for CSE and others do not; varying definitions of CSE in groups and gangs; data gaps on specific warning signs of CSE; datasets held by a number of departments and agencies that are not

joined-up; health statistics on abortions and sexually-transmitted diseases not made available to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry also encountered inconsistent recording and collection of data by external agencies. Sometimes information on CSE is buried in records on offending (in relation to gang association) or broader categories of child sexual abuse.

Warning signs linked to CSE, such as a child going missing, are not recorded consistently. Local authorities do not have a common definition to determine what data to record on children missing from care, with some local authorities logging details only of children missing for a period of 24 hours or longer. Police forces have different ways of recording instances where children repeatedly go missing.

There is no standardised process for recording sexual offences by multiple (more than one) perpetrators. Each police force has its own way of coding sexual offences against children, many of which cannot distinguish where groups of individuals are reported to have carried out the offence or directly set it up.

At local level this means that both data-sharing and the flagging-up of possible CSE cases are disjointed. At a national level this inconsistency forestalls the collation of accurate numbers of reported cases, the number of children affected, and their profile.

This lack of and inconsistencies in data-recording locally mean the number of children identified in this report as being at risk of child sexual exploitation will be lower than the actual number.

## THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The Inquiry heard evidence of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse of children.

**Sexual abuse** involved vaginal, anal and oral penetration and was reported in both gang and group CSE. These cases involved different forms of sexual touching, including penile penetration and penetration with objects.

Oral sex was used particularly when several perpetrators were involved. Men and boys may stand in line (a 'line-up') or enter a room one at a time without a break. Professionals reported oral rape more than any other form of sexual assault during the evidence hearings.

In some instances girls were made to witness sexual abuse of others and then forced to participate.

The panel was concerned about the reported levels of anal rape of both boys and girls in both groups and gangs. There were numerous accounts of children being anally raped by several perpetrators.

In the call for evidence submissions, oral rape was reported most frequently, followed by anal rape. Vaginal rape was the least frequently referenced form of abuse. There was a consensus amongst experts that anal and oral rape could be viewed as more humiliating and controlling than vaginal rape and, as such, may be favoured by those who are sexually exploiting children.

**Physical abuse**, inflicted by the use of violence, has been found in both groups and gangs, most commonly: punching; hitting or 'beating up' the victim; use of physical force to restrain a victim; grabbing the victim; attempted strangulation; kicking all over the body and burning, particularly with cigarettes.

Use of weapons was mainly identified where a gang is involved. Examples included using firearms, knives, bottles, bricks or bats to intimidate and/or coerce the victim into sexual activity.

**Emotional abuse** was identified in various forms throughout the cases presented to the Inquiry.

The most prominent form involved victims living in a state of anxiety and acute fear of their abusers. Threats were used to ensure compliance, including filming sexual abuse and threatening to post images of victims online. Children reported feeling they had lost all control over their lives.

Some children reported that the grooming process lasted a long time – months or even two years in one case. This led them to believe they were in a loving relationship – but with those who then went on to abuse them. The perpetrators would use this emotional attachment to manipulate and exploit the child.

The **use of mobile phones, social networking sites and other forms of technology** are highlighted in the report as channels through which perpetrators groom, bully and pursue victims as part of CSE.

The impact of **pornography**, particularly extreme and violent types, was a concern reported by professionals from many agencies, in particular its impact on both children's and young adults' understanding of what is acceptable, required or expected during sexual contact.

Some children's experiences of **familial child sexual abuse**, neglect or physical abuse increased their vulnerability to future exploitation.

The panel was presented with confused and inconsistent understanding on the part of both professionals and young people of the concept of **consent to sexual activity**.

Children and young people who were being sexually exploited were frequently described by professionals in many localities as being "promiscuous", "liking the glamour", engaging in "risky behaviour" and being generally badly behaved. Some of the most common phrases used to describe the young person's behaviour were: "prostituting herself", "sexually available" and "asking for it".

The Inquiry panel believes this labelling reflects a worrying perspective held by some professionals, namely that children are complicit in, and responsible for, their own abuse.

Given the violent and traumatic nature of CSE in gangs and groups it is not surprising that the Inquiry was provided with substantial evidence of its **devastating impact**.

Areas of particular concern included: children **going missing** as a result of sexual exploitation; the **health of victims** (particularly drug and alcohol problems, self-harming and mental health

problems); **children and young people offending** either as part of the process of being exploited or as a consequence of it.

From evidence collected on site visits, it is clear that **agencies** are all too frequently not sharing sufficient information or not co-operating enough in tackling child sexual exploitation. Agencies often do not agree over whether a particular CSE incident should be categorised as a child protection or youth crime case, or both.

All agencies, police units and other organisations need to do much more to work in partnership with each other and to share information, to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

## THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

The number of confirmed cases of children being sexually exploited by gangs and groups in the period covered by the Inquiry is given at the start of this Executive Summary. There is also a figure for the number of children who were at risk of child sexual exploitation during one year.

It is not possible to state definitively how many children are victims of CSE in any given period because there is no recognised category of abuse for sexual exploitation as part of standard child protection procedures. Furthermore, whilst perpetrators have been convicted for their involvement in the sexual exploitation of children, using offences such as 'grooming' or 'sexual activity with a child', there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation and therefore it is not possible to obtain figures through a trawl of police crime data on sexual offences.

With regard to victims, agencies in 19 out of 39 police constabulary areas did not submit any information on cases of child sexual exploitation in either gangs or groups in their responses to the call for evidence.

Compared to the 115 submissions received on victims, only 30 agencies submitted data on **perpetrators**. Data on perpetrators were provided in full in only 3% of call for evidence submissions, with no perpetrator data provided in 68% of submissions.

It is clear that **sexually-exploited children are not always identified** even when they show signs of being victims.

Those children and young people interviewed for the Inquiry (including young adults for whom the abuse was in the past) were clear that their experiences were extremely traumatic and violent. Child sexual exploitation has had an enduring impact on their lives.

The evidence points to several factors that **can increase a child's vulnerability to being sexually exploited**. These include: living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household; history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect); attending school with young people who are sexually exploited; experiencing a recent bereavement or loss; and in cases of CSE in a street gang, children who were gang-associated either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships, or living in a gang neighbourhood, were also vulnerable.

**Signs that a child has already been abused** include: missing from home or care; suffering physical injuries; engaging in offending; drug or alcohol misuse; receipt of gifts from unknown sources; thoughts of suicide.

(Please see Appendix A for the full indicator checklist).

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately seek to determine the risk, while taking preventative and protective action as required.

## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Children and young people of a range of ages, both male and female, of a range of ethnicities, who identify as heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual, and some of whom are disabled, have been sexually exploited in either gangs or groups.

Furthermore, children from loving and secure homes can be abused in gangs and groups, as well as children with pre-existing vulnerabilities. Those for whom there are no protective measures in place are at greatest risk.

The characteristics common to all victims are not their age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation, rather their powerlessness and vulnerability.

The majority of sexually-exploited children are **living at home** when their abuse begins. However, a disproportionate number are **living in residential care** compared to the total number of children in care.

A child faces the risk of sexual exploitation at the hands of a gang or a group in their **neighbourhood, home, and school, among peer groups or at places such as parks, shopping centres, parties, bus and train stations, and in hotels and guesthouses.**

Of the 2409 **victims** reported in the call for evidence process, 155 were identified as **also being perpetrators** of child sexual exploitation. This overlap is deeply troubling.

Respondents to the call for evidence identified sexually-exploited children and young people ranging in age from **4 to 19 with a peak age of 15**. Victims involved with a gang tended to be younger than those involved with a group.

The vast majority of victims identified were girls. There is no doubt that girls and young women are at much greater risk than boys and young men and are targeted due to the way some men and boys perceive women and girls. Serious questions must be asked about prevailing attitudes towards women and girls in some parts of society.

Victims of child sexual exploitation were identified as coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. There was a higher rate of victimisation amongst black and minority ethnic (BME) children and young people than has been previously identified. The figures showed that 28% of victims reported to the Inquiry were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. This information is significant, given that

the general perception appears to be that sexual exploitation by groups, in particular, is primarily a crime against white children.

## WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

Far less is known about the individual characteristics of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation than is known about their victims. Agencies rarely record data on those who perpetrate CSE and what they do record is often incomplete or inconsistent.

In addition, victims are frequently able to provide only aliases, nicknames or physical descriptions of perpetrators.

Recent public and media attention on the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation has focused on high-profile court cases. These have mainly involved adult males of British Pakistani origin and White British female victims. Given the publicity surrounding these cases it is clear that the police, children's social care services and other agencies have been effective in readily identifying perpetrators and victims with similar individual characteristics to those involved in such cases. However, what the evidence in this report has shown is that this issue is widespread and there is more than one type of perpetrator, model and approach to child sexual exploitation by gangs and groups.

The Inquiry received information via the call for evidence on 1514 individuals who were known to be sexually exploiting children between August 2010 and October 2011. The Inquiry was also informed about 1,094 known perpetrators during the site visit.

The substantial majority of perpetrators identified by the Inquiry were men and boys. Of the total number of perpetrators identified in the call for evidence, 72% were male, 10% were female and in 18% of cases the gender was undisclosed. Only 0.01% of the perpetrators disclosed in the site visits were female and the rest were male. Gender is the single most significant identifying feature of perpetrators. The vast majority of groups and gangs involved male-only perpetrators and, where women or girls are involved, they are a small minority. In only one case was a female-only group of perpetrators reported to us, this involved girls under the age of 18. The evidence submitted identified perpetrators who ranged in age from 12 to 75. Children and young people who were interviewed identified perpetrators aged between 15 and over 70.

As with the victim data, individuals classified as 'White' form the largest group of perpetrators in both gangs and groups. BME individuals, particularly those loosely recorded or reported as 'Asian', are the second largest category of perpetrators reported via the call for evidence. However, White British males were the only perpetrators identified in all site visits, and perpetrators from various ethnic groups in addition to White British and Asian were found in both the site visits and call for evidence. Evidence gathered from victims also covered a much broader range of perpetrators of CSE in both gangs and groups, although in many cases far less reliable data could be produced on individual perpetrators.

The circumstances in which children are abused can be deeply confusing with the result that the victims often simply do not know the identities or numbers of people involved. Children have described 'parties' involving several men who raped and sexually assaulted them, incidents where

they were intoxicated or drugged so they did not know what was happening to them, and being taken to many different locations where they were assaulted. As a result, it is not possible to say or even estimate accurately how many people in England are sexually exploiting children in gangs and groups.

The fact that the majority of perpetrators in the cases reported to the Inquiry remain unidentified is of concern. The Inquiry has concluded that the actual number of perpetrators is likely to be substantially greater than that reported.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence gathered during Phase 1 of the Inquiry shows clearly that **urgent action** is required so that professionals and practitioners **recognise the many warning signs** that children display when being subjected to sexual exploitation at the hands of gangs and groups. **The OCC will contact local areas at the close of the Inquiry to assess progress made on the recommendations below in advance of the final report.**

Children need to be protected against such abuse.

During Phase 2 we will consider in detail what action is required to prevent and tackle this abuse. In the interim, it is possible to make initial recommendations in relation to the recognition of CSE, the identification of victims and perpetrators and the process of recording and sharing data.

### For Immediate action

- 1. All directors of children's services, the chief medical officer, directors of public health and chief constables, the Royal Colleges, Police and Crime Commissioners, and the Department for Education, the Crown Prosecution Service and Chief Crown Prosecutors, should circulate the warning signs of child sexual exploitation to all professionals who come into contact with children and young people (Appendix A), and ensure they understand and act on them.**

In addition, **urgent implementation** of the recommendations below will significantly improve the protection of children subject to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation.

### Identification of Victims

2. Coordinated by the local safeguarding children board, and using the self-assessment tool produced by the University of Bedfordshire, all local areas should conduct their own audit of CSE based on the list of warning signs and vulnerabilities produced in this report<sup>1</sup>.
3. All police forces should work with partner agencies, including third sector specialist organisations, to log information on the girls and young women linked to gang members, and then risk-assess these young people for sexual exploitation.

---

<sup>1</sup>Evidence shows that any child presenting with combined vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk for sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately commence an investigation to ascertain risk and initiate preventative and protective action as required. However, it is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited, and therefore any child presenting with the risk indicators in the second list but none of the vulnerabilities in the first, should also be considered as potential victims and appropriate assessment and action initiated as required.

4. All those identifying victims of child sexual exploitation should review their processes to ensure that intelligence or individual indicators used to proactively find victims children are not leading to biased identification. They should also liaise with agencies, including specialist third sector organisations, that are working with under-represented children and young people to ensure their identification of all those who are vulnerable or at-risk.

## Identifying Perpetrators

5. Police forces should review their local multi-agency intelligence collection processes and existing information to proactively identify perpetrators of CSE.
6. Police forces should use multi-agency intelligence to proactively profile local risk, as well as to direct enforcement and disruption activity.
7. LSCBs should agree policies and procedures for ensuring partner agencies including children's social care services, YOTs and police work cooperatively to identify and deal with children and young people who are both victims and perpetrators of CSE. These procedures should be incorporated into each LSCB's CSE strategy and monitored for effective practice.

Further detailed recommendations on improving the identification of victims and perpetrators will be made in Phase 2.

## Data gathering and information sharing

8. The Department of Health should issue guidance to all health agencies to ensure effective information-sharing so that victims of child sexual exploitation, and children at risk of CSE, are identified.
9. All agencies should adopt an agreed method for recording the ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability of victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.
10. Youth offending services should share information on either or both victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation with other agencies, given the intelligence held on their assessment tools.
11. Police forces should improve their recording of sexual offences to enable the recording of multiple perpetrators and allow for a CSE flag.

Further detailed recommendations on improving the data-collection process will be made in Phase 2.

**As soon as possible** the following recommendations should be delivered to contribute to a shift in professionals' awareness and understanding of child sexual exploitation.

## Recognition and awareness-raising

12. Every LSCB should ensure that the core training delivered to all professionals who come into contact with children and young people should include information on warning signs, and impact, of child sexual exploitation, to ensure victim identification, and should outline an implementation plan for training as part of their 2013/14 business plan.

13. A review of all legislation and guidance which makes reference to children as 'prostitutes' or involved in prostitution (Appendix F) should be initiated by the Government with the view to amending the wording to acknowledge children as sexually exploited, and where appropriate victimised through commercial sexual exploitation.

At this stage we are unable to recommend any particular training programme. During Phase 2 we will explore what is currently offered to professionals and make recommendations if appropriate.

When the final CSEGG Inquiry report is published in 2013, these recommendations will be reviewed, revised where necessary and augmented which will challenge and should enabled the system to provide a holistic response to the needs of sexually-exploited children and young people.

## INTERIM REPORT

---

### BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY

In October 2011 the Office of the Children's Commissioner launched an Inquiry into the sexual exploitation of children in gangs and groups.

The Inquiry is operating under the following definitions:

#### Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

The sexual exploitation of children and young people (CSE) under-18 is defined as that which:

*'involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability'* (Department for Education 2012)

#### Definition of 'gangs' and 'groups'

This Inquiry is not intended to cover all models of child sexual exploitation. It focuses specifically on child sexual exploitation linked to gangs and groups (CSEGG). The full definitions for gangs and groups that have been used in the Inquiry are as follows:

- 1) **Gang:** A relatively durable, predominantly street-based, social group of children, young people and, not infrequently, young adults who see themselves, and are seen by others, as affiliates of a discrete, named group who (1) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence, (2) identify or lay claim to territory, (3) have some form of identifying structural feature, and (4) are in conflict with similar groups.
- 2) **Group:** Two or more people of any age, connected through formal or informal associations or networks, including, but not exclusive to, friendship groups.

#### Definition of 'consent' to sexual activity

The law not only sets down 16 as the age of consent, it also applies to whether a person has given their consent to sexual activity, or was able to give their consent, or whether sexual violence and rape in particular took place.

In the context of child sexual exploitation, the term 'consent' refers to whether or not a child

understands how one gives consent, withdraws consent and what situations (such as intoxication, duress, violence) can compromise the child or young person's ability to consent freely to sexual activity.

There are several occasions in this report when children and/or professionals are said to be “confused” about the meaning of consent. This refers to young people, and professionals, failing to identify the circumstances under which a child (anyone under 18) was unable to consent freely to sexual activity, for example drunkenness, influence of drugs, threats of violence towards the young person or their family, grooming, a power imbalance between victim and perpetrators. This is why a 16- or 17-year-old can be sexually exploited even though they are old enough to consent to sexual activity.

### Tamzin's story

The voice of children and young people is central to all the work the OCC undertakes. In investigating child sexual exploitation we must never forget that at the heart of this issue is an individual child who has been subjected to unimaginable abuse and whose life has been scarred, often for life.

As part of the background to this Inquiry, we include the story of one such victim – and there are hundreds like her. This is 'Tamzin's' story in her own words, written for the Inquiry.

*Dear Devil,*

*Insecurity was the problem...*

*Girl open your eyes overlook his handsome features all the money he makes overlook the streets, the drugs, the scandalous lifestyle.*

*Overcome the charming behaviour, the soft lips, the sweet scent lingering on his neck, overlook the baggy jeans, the fresh trainers overcome the swag...*

*In the beginning I loved the life I led I wish I overlooked all the superficial things I by passed his huge arms da way he looked at me...*

*T why didnt you listen to your head?*

*And not your heart why didnt you be smart?*

*You ignored all the warnings...*

*I fort I loved him I just wasnt ready...*

*Yes you was my everything I dedicated my all to you, at the beginning you were my morning noon and night.*

*Why did you change?*

*Why did you become obsessive?*

*Why did you hurt me and treat me like a trophy something that belonged to you “your property” was i your girl or your belonging an item to misuse and mistreat.*

*I was a good girl I would hold drugs I did the dirt I was well respected hood royalty always kept fresh never embarased you, kept my hair neat spoke when spoken to some would say I was perfect "wifey material" obviously not enough.*

*I rided for you then you turt crazy started moving crazy insecure, demading so angry...*

*Tryna controle my whole life how I dressed spoke walked.*

*The first two years was amazing we had so many good times the person controlling my mind wasnt you it wasnt my baby that was the devil.*

*The devil never took no 4 an answer.*

*He controlled my mind got so deep I was blind to the abuse.*

*I was a strong girl you made me weak broke me down took away my innocene the first time you took me thats when I was lost forever I scrub my skin till it bleed yet I still felt so dirty.*

*What you did made me sick my dream life became a nightmare in a matter of months my heaven became hell.*

*My glorious days were stolen I was falsed to indulge in things not evan 50 year olds could cope with.*

*I tried to stay strong but I was so damn weak the boiling showers didnt help the pain is still there, it always will.*

*You made me feel worthless ugly like damaged goods i was strong on the outside and oh so very weak on the inside...*

*What dont kill you only makes you stronger you may have taken somethink I can never get back but I can honestly say Im so strong today not you or anyone else will ever get into my mind again, my wounds will never fully heal but Im stronger than ever I can talk about my experiences with my head held high because I am far from damaged good I am a fighter a young girl with experience and a wonderfull life ahead of me you will never ruin another life again.*

*Life is beautiful xxx.*

## What prompted the OCC Inquiry

Amid mounting concern about child sexual exploitation, and the inadequate responses to it described below, the Office of the Children's Commissioner took the decision to get to the root of the problem, draw information together from disparate agencies, and to find ways of tackling it.

The OCC also became increasingly concerned about emerging information that children are being sexually exploited in both groups and gangs.

There were two important developments in both areas:

- Group-associated: The convictions of a group of men who sexually exploited children in and around Derby, together with the work of *Safe and Sound Derby* in bringing this case to national attention.
- Gang-associated: Two *Female Voice in Violence* reports published by *Race on the Agenda* (Firmin 2011; 2010) into the impact of gang and serious youth violence on women and girls, and the OCC's position on the London Serious Youth Violence Board<sup>2</sup> in taking forward some of the report's findings.

## Growing concern about child sexual exploitation

Over the past 20 years evidence has shown that large numbers of children<sup>3</sup> are being sexually exploited in the UK (Chase and Statham 2005).

Research has: illustrated the impact on child victims (Coy 2009); sought to evaluate the protection offered to sexually-exploited children (Scot and Skidmore 2006); produced qualitative evidence about children's experiences and the work of professionals seeking to support them (Pearce 2009).

In recent years, anecdotal and qualitative information has indicated potential shifts in the nature of child sexual exploitation, the scale at which it is happening, its extent across the country and the responses in place to address it.

Questions have been raised about: the potential impact of young people's access to pornography, particularly extreme and violent pornography (Perry 2012); the prevalence of sexual bullying in schools (EVAW 2010); and the use of social networking sites, mobile phones etc. to make contact with a young person who might then become the victim of abuse.

During the same period, concern about particular kinds of child sexual exploitation has intensified.

---

<sup>2</sup> This multi-agency Board operated from 2009 – 2011 to examine and promote effective intervention in relation to gun and knife crime in London.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this report the words 'children' and 'young people' refer individuals aged under-18. This report also has regard for young adults up to the age of 21, if they have been in care or have a disability.

## Recent studies

The **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** (CEOP) published a 'Thematic Assessment of on-street grooming' in 2011.

This followed a number of high-profile convictions for group-associated child sexual exploitation. There was also increased media attention on the issue.

This study collected data from 46 police forces, 22 children's services or Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and 12 specialist CSE service-providers. Information on all cases dating over a seven-year period was requested. This was subsequently revised to cover a three-year period.

This important attempt to assess the extent of CSE had limited results as the terms of reference were restricted by: excluding specific forms of abuse such as gang-associated or peer-on-peer abuse; the limited statutory powers held by CEOP to request information; the methodology; the period over which the research took place.

However, the data produced evidence of 1,875 cases covering a number of years. The data came with caveats regarding the scale of CSE, given the limitations outlined above. Nevertheless, the assessment was a significant step forward in highlighting current shortcomings in data collection.

Peter Davies, Chief Executive of CEOP, said he was "passing the baton" to the OCC when the assessment closed and the OCC's CSEGG Inquiry opened.

At the same time, the **University of Bedfordshire** published a national review of LSCBs' responses to CSE. This reported that 27% of known CSE cases were perpetrated by young people. This raised questions as to how well-equipped were services to respond to young people who were both victims and perpetrators of exploitation (Jago et al 2011).

Since the launch of the Inquiry, there have been a number of convictions for group-associated child sexual exploitation. In July 2012 the OCC published an [accelerated report](#) that focused on the sexual exploitation of children in residential care. This was at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP, following the conviction of nine men in Rochdale for the group-associated sexual exploitation of five girls.

## Recent policy changes

Over the past 18 months there have been significant policy changes with regard to child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.

Following the publication of the Barnardo's report *Puppet on a String* in January 2011, the Government assigned responsibility for child sexual exploitation to a minister<sup>4</sup>.

In November 2011 the Government published the *National Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan* (Department for Education 2011).

---

<sup>4</sup>Initially this minister was Tim Loughton MP, Minister for Children, at the Department for Education (DfE), and following a reshuffle in September 2012 it is now Edward Timpson MP

In October 2011 the Government published its *Strategy to End Gang and Youth Violence* (HM Government 2011). The document clearly identified the issue of sexual violence and exploitation within street gangs. As a result, a working-group was established on women, girls and gangs. Additional funding was granted to improve services in this area.

In March 2012 the Government updated its action plan to end violence against women and girls. This made specific commitments to tackle 'teen abuse' and to review the definition of domestic violence to include younger victims. It also looked at the role that sex and relationships education might play in helping children to understand what is meant by consenting to sex.

## The fractured response

Against the background of the recent research and policy changes outlined above, and the growing number of victims like 'Tamzin', what has been the role of the relevant bodies responsible for combating child sexual exploitation?

In **statutory agencies**, responsibility for action on child sexual exploitation lies with local authorities and the police.

Strategic responsibility lies with Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs).

In 2009 national guidance was published to safeguard children from CSE. However, research in 2011 revealed that two-thirds of safeguarding boards were not fulfilling their duty to put in place multi-agency plans to safeguard children from this abuse (Jago et al 2011).

A multitude of **services** are in contact with children who are, or have been, at risk of being sexually exploited. These include:

- Specialist child sexual exploitation services in both the voluntary and statutory sectors.
- Health services – sexual, mental, medical (hospitals, including accident and emergency, community health care, primary care, school health), drug and alcohol misuse.
- Housing – homelessness services, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, hostels, foyers (accommodation centres for 16-25 year-olds that also provide learning, support and training), mother-and-baby units.
- Children's services – either provided or commissioned by local authorities, children in need<sup>5</sup>, child protection, residential care, fostering, family support and youth services.
- Violence against women and girls services – refuge provision, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), rape crisis centres.

---

<sup>5</sup> Under Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989, a child is a Child in Need if:

- He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority;
- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or
- He/she is a Disabled Child.

- The youth justice system – the secure estate (youth offending institutions, secure training centres, secure children's homes), youth offending teams, youth crime reduction projects.
- Police services – sexual violence, child protection, gangs (including where guns and knives are used), child sexual exploitation, missing people, drug-related crime, in addition to street based teams.
- Gangs and serious youth violence voluntary sector – including agencies working with young offenders both in the community and in custody.
- Education commissioners and providers – schools, pupil referral units, colleges, alternative education providers, those providing school nursing services where young people seek advice.
- Black and minority ethnic groups (BME) specialist services.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organisations, especially those working with children and young people.
- Organisations working with disabled children and young people.

In the **voluntary sector**, specialist CSE services have been strengthened over the past 20 years by organisations such as *Barnardo's*, *The Children's Society* and the *NSPCC*, as well as by smaller services such as *Safe and Sound in Derby* and *Taking Stock* in Sheffield.

Large numbers of locally-based violence against women and girls organisations – from rape crisis to specialist BME services – have also broadened their expertise in working with sexually-exploited children.

Gang and youth crime services have been identifying young people linked to gangs – both sexually-exploited child victims and young perpetrators.

Despite the multitude of organisations involved, however, the broad picture that confronted the OCC as it embarked upon its Inquiry was this:

- little co-ordination between those involved in tackling child sexual exploitation.
- no consistent method for identifying and assessing children and young people who are being abused.

## The structure and aims of the Inquiry

The OCC's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups was divided in two consecutive phases.

**Phase 1** was launched in October 2011 and ran to September 2012. This set out to assess child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups across England by gathering evidence on:

- the nature of the abuse taking place – trends and differences within and between gang and group-associated CSE.

- the reported prevalence – who is doing what, to whom, where and in what circumstances.
- the potential numbers of children at risk of CSE.
- the difference between the known and potential number of victims of CSE.

This Interim Report has been produced following completion of Phase 1. It identifies:

- The current policy and practice in handling the problem.
- The nature of the abuse – trends and differences within and between gang and group-associated CSE.
- Prevalence: cases occurring over a 14-month period reported to the Inquiry.
- The potential numbers of children at risk of CSE compared to the recorded figures.
- Major concerns and findings about the ability of professionals to recognise and describe child sexual exploitation, identify victims and perpetrators, collect data on the issue, and provide support.
- Recommendations to improve: the recognition of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups; the identification of victims and perpetrators; the collection of data and evidence.

**Phase 2** will run from 2012-13. It will identify measures required to prevent and address child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups and will recommend how to put these measures into force.

In addition, the CSEGG Inquiry aims to:

- Promote children's right to protection from sexual exploitation, in accordance with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This states that every child shall be protected from all forms exploitation, victimisation and abuse, and receive help accordingly, specifically with regard to:
  - Article 19: Protection from all forms of violence.
  - Article 34: Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation.
  - Article 35: Protection from abduction.
  - Article 37: Protection from torture.
  - Article 39: Right to rehabilitation from abuse, exploitation and torture.
- Conduct the CSEGG Inquiry in the spirit of, and in compliance with, the following UNCRC articles:
  - Article 3: The best interest of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.
  - Article 12: Every child has the right to have their views heard in all decisions affecting them, and to have those views taken seriously.

- Ensure that the Government and statutory agencies, including local authorities and the police, are fully informed about the nature and extent of gang and group-associated child sexual exploitation, victimisation and abuse – in support of the National Action Plan for preventing and combating the sexual exploitation of children.

Terms of Reference for the CSEGG Inquiry were developed in consultation with a stakeholder group and are available on the [OCC website](#).

## Legislation enabling the Inquiry

In establishing its Inquiry, the OCC invoked powers under the Children Act 2004 (Part 1, s3) and the Local Government Act 1972 (s250, 1-6). The Inquiry operates in accordance with the general functions outlined in the 2004 Children Act Part 1, s(2). For details of the full legislative context of the CSEGG Inquiry please see Appendix D.

## EVIDENCE-GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

---

1) To gather evidence on the **known** nature and scale of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, the Inquiry took the following steps:

- Issued a **call for evidence**.

Published in October 2011, this document provided agencies with the opportunity to inform the Inquiry of all known cases of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups that occurred during the 14-month period from August 2010–October 2011.

- Carried out **site visits**.

From November 2011 to February 2012 the Inquiry Chair and panel members visited 14 urban and metropolitan areas in England, speaking to local authorities, police, professionals, children and young people.

- Conducted **interviews with children and young people**.

2) To gather evidence on the **potential** numbers of children at risk of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, the Inquiry:

- Issued **data requests**.

From February 2012, these were sent to localities throughout England, aiming to collect information on the numbers of children who in April 2010–March 2011 displayed warning signs of child sexual exploitation.

Following the above evidence-gathering on both the known and potential scale of child sexual exploitation, four **evidence hearings** were held in March 2012.

These enabled panel members to raise queries following the field visits, to gain a fuller understanding of gaps and nuances in the evidence and to put the relevant data into context.

All forms of evidence-gathering outlined above were fully compliant with the most rigorous methodological standards and procedures (see Appendix E for full details). They encompassed:

- Ethical framework.
- Risk assessment.
- Privacy impact assessment.
- Participation strategy.

### Commissioned Research

During Phase 1, it became evident that there are particular aspects of child sexual exploitation that warranted in-depth academic investigation, the results of which could contribute to the Inquiry's findings.

Professionals are less likely to identify child sexual exploitation in street gangs than that which takes place in groups, for reasons which are outlined later in this report.

The OCC therefore commissioned the University of Bedfordshire to undertake a two-year research project into sexual violence in gang-affected neighbourhoods. This is a qualitative study focusing on six localities in different parts of England. It involves interviews with young people and is yielding invaluable and troubling evidence of the impact of living in gang-affected neighbourhoods. A brief synopsis of Year 1 findings, together with the research methodology, can be found on the OCC website.

At the same time, the panel became increasingly concerned about children and young people's, and professionals', understanding of consent to sexual activity. This influences how child sexual exploitation is viewed, how it takes place and how it is identified.

As a result, the OCC commissioned the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU) at London Metropolitan University to undertake a study into how young people understand consent to sexual activity, what influences this understanding, and what impact this understanding has on their behaviour and choices.

Both of these research reports will be published together with the final CSEGG report in autumn 2013.

## Methods of analysing evidence

Both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected. Details of each data source and methods of analysis are outlined below:

*Table 1: Phase one evidence gathering process*

| <b>Inquiry Objectives</b>       | <b>Method for Data Collection</b>                                   | <b>Data Source</b>   | <b>Method for Analysis</b>  | <b>Information Produced</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Scale, Scope, Nature and Extent | 1. Call for evidence  | 115 Individuals and Public, Private and Voluntary Organisations. | Analyse the frequencies of and relationship between the different indicators. Content analysis of emerging themes. Analyse the frequency in which different issues/themes emerge. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and characteristics of known victims</li> <li>• Number and characteristics of known perpetrators</li> <li>• List of vulnerabilities</li> <li>• List of warning signs</li> <li>• Nature of the abuse</li> </ul> |
| Scale, Scope, Nature and Extent | 2. Site Visits – using pro forma questionnaires and written records | 167 Specialists from Public, Private and Voluntary Organisations | Area maps produced from each site visit recording each model of CSE identified during the visit period.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visit tables and maps documenting local information on cases over a five year period</li> <li>• Contributed to understanding the nature of the abuse</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Inquiry Objectives</b>                            | <b>Method for Data Collection</b>  | <b>Data Source</b>   | <b>Method for Analysis</b>  | <b>Information Produced</b>   |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Scale, Scope, Nature and Extent                      | 3. Evidence Hearing  | 68 Specialists from Public, Private and Voluntary Organisation   | Content analysis of emerging themes. Analyse the frequency in which different issues/themes emerge.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed to understanding the nature of the abuse</li> </ul>  |
| Scale, Scope, Nature and Extent                      | 4. Datasets  | 52 Specific datasets which feature as indicators of CSE. Requests vary from individual and amalgamated/ thematic data provided by local and national agencies. | Data cleansing. Cross tabulation of data to identify matching individual records which feature across multiple CSE indicators. Analyse the frequencies of and relationship between the different indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of children at risk of CSE</li> <li>Patterns between and within individual vulnerabilities and warning signs</li> </ul>           |
| Scale, Scope, Nature and Extent                      | 5. Interviews with children and young people   | 23 Children and young people (20 who were sexually exploited and seven of whom were gang associated).  | Transcribed and manually analysed to identify trends that correlate with the rest of the evidence base.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed to understanding the nature of the abuse</li> <li>Contributed to understanding of hidden victims and perpetrators</li> </ul> |
| Sexual Violence in Gang-Affected neighbourhoods      | 1. Commissioned research: University of Bedfordshire Research                                | Interim Report submitted to Inquiry (with methodology included)  | Meetings between OCC and University of Bedfordshire to consider how to integrate research findings into the CSEGG Inquiry Interim report.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided an interim report about the nature and extent of sexual violence in gang-affected neighbourhoods</li> </ul>                     |
| Children and young people's understanding of consent | 1. Commissioned research: Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University | Not included in the interim report   | N/A   | N/A   |

A detailed breakdown on the methodology employed for each aspect of the evidence-gathering process, outlined in Table 1, can be found in Appendix B.

## Reliability and Validity of the Data

The evidence and data collected to inform the findings of this report is the most thorough and comprehensive collection of information on child sexual exploitation collected to date in England. The evidence on known victimisation is based on 115 submissions to the call for evidence request, 14 site visits, oral evidence from 68 professionals and interviews with 23 sexually exploited children across the country. Data enabling the identification of children at high risk of being sexually exploited was received from 100% of police constabularies, 88% of local authority children's services and services operating in 66% of Primary Care Trusts.

At the same time, there are some omissions in the information gathered which is compounded by the inconsistencies in data collection across agencies.

Gaps in evidence/data submitted to the Inquiry include:

- Individual Characteristics: Not all submissions received via the call for evidence provided data on the characteristics of victims and perpetrators. There are inconsistencies and gaps in the recording of ethnicity, nationality, disability and faith.
- The call for evidence did not specifically inquire about all aspects of victims, such as whether children were in care or had a history of abuse. Therefore, the evidence received on some specific aspects varied across submissions.
- Area bias: Where local agencies are actively looking for, and recording, incidents of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, they were able to provide information on more children than agencies who are not. This means that the emerging national picture is inevitably skewed and there are gaps where areas are not looking for victims. The Inquiry assessed the data accordingly.
- Despite specific definitions being provided, the submissions revealed inconsistency in applying the definitions of child sexual exploitation in groups and gangs. This led to variations in the data.
- Some submissions omitted large chunks of data on specific warning signs, which could influence aggregated results.
- Most call for evidence submissions included both aggregate and individual level data, but in different ways. Individual data would allow us to explore in more detail the relationship between the different indicators, but as a number of submissions provided aggregated data, we have had to analyse this separately.
- The Inquiry gathered data on a number of indicators of CSE. Datasets are held by a number of departments and agencies. They are of true value only when joined up. Based on the responses, it is clear that there are data gaps in both the range of indicators and the quality of data recorded within them. This restricts meaningful analysis at both a local and national level.
- Health providers, including primary care trusts, can be crucial in spotting the warning signs in children at risk of sexual exploitation, as recognised in UK published research.

Under the powers conferred under section 2(9) of the Children Act (2004) the Inquiry tried to obtain individual level data (personal details) on children who have had more than one abortion and those who are repeatedly attending sexual health and family planning clinics with sexually-transmitted infections (STIs). The intention was to compare these data with other known CSE indicators.

Legal counsel advised the Inquiry that the Abortion Act 1967 and Abortion Regulations 1991 prohibited agencies from sharing data on terminations. As a result a request for data on terminations was removed from the CSEGG dataset.

However, guidance about sharing sexual health data was less consistent, with differing legal opinions offered by the Department for Health, legal counsel on behalf of the OCC, and individual primary care trusts. As a result, the request for data on sexually-transmitted infections was removed from the CSEGG dataset, and each local PCT sought legal advice about whether or not they could submit data to the Inquiry.

This has prevented these key CSE indicators from featuring in requests for data. Health data passed to the Inquiry are therefore patchy, despite detailed discussion with local and national stakeholders on how sharing the data could be made possible.

While the child's right to confidentiality must be observed, these data could provide a valuable insight into CSE and aid the protection of children. Consideration should be given as to how, legally, these data could be shared with the Inquiry, to broaden its understanding of CSE, and also with LSCBs to help them improve services aimed at protecting vulnerable children.

Inconsistent data recording/collection by external agencies:

- Data collected as part of the dataset process will also vary, based on how local areas record data. It's often difficult, therefore, to compare indicators across aggregated (national trends) data.
- Information on CSE and gang association is not always recorded in datasets in a way that makes it easy to extract or identify vital information. Sometimes it is buried in records on offending (in relation to gang association) or broader categories of child sexual abuse, or labelled as 'missing' cases of CSE where children have run away from home or care.
- Recording of missing incidents is inconsistent. The details of children missing from care are held by both the police and local authorities. Data-collection methods vary.
- Local authorities do not have a common definition to determine what data are recorded, with some local authorities logging details only of children missing from care for a period of 24 hours or longer.
- With regard to the police, the level of detail captured and the IT systems used vary between constabularies. At local level this means that both data-sharing and the flagging-up of possible CSE cases are disjointed. At national level this inconsistency forestalls the collation of accurate numbers of reported cases, the number of children affected, and their profile. This is of greatest concern when trying to identify those children repeatedly going missing and who are potentially at greatest risk. When this information was requested by the Inquiry, 36% of police forces were unable to provide these data. Furthermore, missing-from-home data are reliant upon parents reporting children as missing.
- Where children have been thrown out of home, are at risk of forced marriage or abuse in the home, or are in families who avoid contact with police and social services, such children may not be reported missing by their families.

- There is no standardised process for recording multiple sexual offences by multiple (more than one) perpetrators. Each police force has its own way of coding sexual offences against children where groups of individuals are reported to have carried out the offence or directly set it up. Some records do not distinguish between multiple and single perpetrator offences. This undermines the accuracy of data on CSE as well as attempts to arrive at a national figure for the number of reported cases of actual abuse.
- The dataset does not record the age of a child when they came to the attention of the relevant service. In these cases guidance was provided that where possible the age should be calculated as per 31st March 2011. This may result in the details of some children being wrongfully inputted or excluded from the analysis.

This lack of and inconsistencies in data-recording mean the number of children identified in this report as being at risk of child sexual exploitation will be lower than the actual number. Due to the complexity of and significant variations in data quality, the Inquiry did not attempt to estimate the difference.

## THE NATURE OF THE ABUSE

### Differences between gang and group-associated CSE

Child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups is complex. Phase 1 of the Inquiry has identified several manifestations of it. This section of the report combines the evidence collected during site visits, submitted via the call for evidence and presented at evidence hearings.

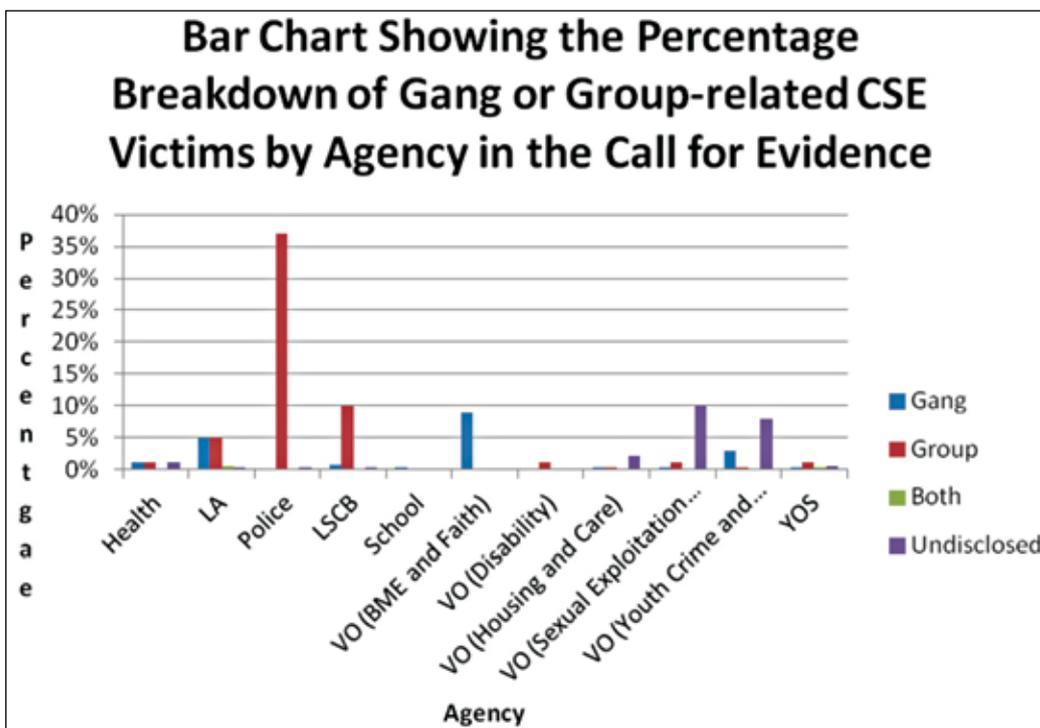
While child sexual exploitation in both gangs and groups share many characteristics, we found some key differences between these two forms of abuse:

#### Victims and perpetrators:

The profiles and identities of victims and perpetrators involved in gang and group-associated CSE are different. Only 1% of cases submitted through the call for evidence process identified victims who were both group and gang-associated. Therefore, if professionals are looking separately for group-associated or gang-associated CSE, and are not considering the potential for the other to be occurring, they are likely to miss a significant number of victims and/or perpetrators in the other category.

#### Agencies:

Both the call for evidence and site visits demonstrated that different agencies identify gang and group CSE:



The police and children's and young people's services rarely identify gang-associated CSE.

Community safety teams, BME and youth crime voluntary organisations and youth offending services usually identified child sexual exploitation committed by, within or between street gangs.

Child sexual exploitation by or within groups was identified by professionals from partner agencies in LSCBs, police forces and a range of children's services.

Such different patterns of identification are a concern, in the context of evidence of limited information sharing and cooperation in tackling child sexual exploitation.

From evidence collected on site visits, it is clear that agencies are all too frequently not sharing sufficient information or not co-operating enough in tackling child sexual exploitation.

This means there are inconsistencies in registering the prevalence of abuse in a given area. Agencies often do not agree over whether a particular CSE incident should be categorised as a child protection or youth crime case, or both. This split in who identifies which category of CSE reinforces the importance of involving agencies beyond the police and children's social care services in identifying victims.

All agencies, police units and other organisations need to do much more to work in partnership with each other and to share information, to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

### **Motive:**

In cases of group-associated CSE, perpetrators came together in order to sexually exploit children. This was the case both for organised groups, where children were being sexually exploited for commercial profit, and more loosely-organised peer groups or networks where financial gain was minimal or non-existent.

Beyond commercial profit, professionals suggested motives for sexual exploitation that included the exertion of power and control, a desire to humiliate, sexual gratification and a belief in entitlement to sex.

While street gangs are a type of 'group' the Inquiry distinguishes them from other groups as street gangs are formed independently of child sexual exploitation. The violence and hyper-masculinity of street gangs brings with it the sexual exploitation of girls and young women, and on occasion boys and young men, who are gang-associated. In cases of gang-associated CSE two broad motives were present. One was similar to cases of group-associated CSE where girls and young women would be passed around by young men in a casual manner, and used as their sexual property, motivated by a sense of entitlement. In other cases sexual violence was used to threaten, punish or control young women, and on occasion young men, who were either associated with rival gangs, or who were perceived to have 'disrespected' or upset members of the gang with which they were associated. Examples were found of girls and young women being bartered as part of an exchange or in exchange for a boy or young man avoiding punishment for example to settle drug debts. This motive was unique to gangs and applied to a range of girls and young women including sisters, girlfriends, friends, cousins and daughters of gang members.

As part of its research, the University of Bedfordshire is identifying emerging evidence of sexual exploitation and violence being used against boys and young men who are gang members. Evidence of this form of abuse was submitted to the Inquiry during two site visits. However, it is rarely identified and further work is required to understand its prevalence.

### **Associations:**

In cases of group CSE, victims were linked to perpetrators as a result of the sexual exploitation. While there were occasions where victims were also connected through broader friendship groups, or extended family members, in the majority of cases the association between victim and perpetrator was predicated on abuse. This is different from gang victims, who may be linked to a street gang for a multitude of reasons independent of sexual exploitation, as explained above.

The gang association of the victim is critically important in identifying and preventing risk. The association can act as a risk indicator of, or as a motive for, CSE and is unique to the gang context. In addition, victims are not always initially linked to their perpetrators. While some victims are abused by the gang to whom they were originally connected, others are associated to a specific gang via an intimate or relative, and then abused by a rival gang as a threat or punishment.

In some of the most high-risk cases, young women are intimately linked to several gangs. In many cases, if the gang association is removed, so too is the risk of sexual exploitation. Boys and young men who are gang members may also be abused, although, as has already been highlighted, evidence of this was less forthcoming.

### **Criminal Context:**

In both gangs and groups, victims of child sexual exploitation may become involved in offending behaviour, either alongside their abusers or as a consequence of their abuse.

When children offend in street gangs, their offences are specific to street gang behaviour and will often involve weapon and drugs possession, for example. Having been involved in, or coerced into, this type of offending, they may think that if they report their exploitation to the police, they will also get into trouble for offences they have committed.

Young women or young men may not want to disclose abuse for fear of placing family members in trouble with the police (for example, if a sibling is involved with a gang), or because they themselves have been involved in gang offences. In these circumstances, sexual violence forms part of the context of gang-association, in the same way as knife or gun crime, and is therefore managed within that context.

In groups other forms of criminality were sometimes identified, such as links to adult prostitution and fraud. However, this was identified on a case-by-case basis and was inconsistent across groups. Victims of groups were often coerced into offences such as shoplifting, which would then be used against them by perpetrators as a means of controlling them.

## Age of perpetrators:

Evidence obtained during the Inquiry demonstrates that most perpetrators identified in gangs and groups are aged under-29, with 29% aged 12-19 and 22% aged 20-29. However, in gangs, perpetrators were likely to be younger. In call for evidence submissions 5% of perpetrators aged 19 or under operated in a group, compared to 11% who operated in a gang. A further 16% of perpetrators were 19 or under but the submission did not specify whether they were in groups or gangs.

Older perpetrators tended to be in groups only. This has been particularly evident in recent high-profile convictions for group CSE, which involved groups of perpetrators significantly older than their victims, and where lack of consent, based on age, was easier to demonstrate.

Historically, child sexual exploitation has been seen as involving an older boyfriend, acting alone, who enters into an exploitative relationship with a child whom the boyfriend can control and exploit. Such perpetrators choose a child as they are easier to control and can be more vulnerable than adults. This has meant that services have been particularly worried about children who are in relationships with older boyfriends, rather than about children who may be at risk from their peers.

In street gangs, and to a lesser extent in groups, children are of a similar age to one another, but their gang association means they are at risk of CSE. There does not need to be a large age gap between victims and perpetrators in some cases of CSE, and in a gang-associated context there rarely is one. This is different from cases of child sexual exploitation, where the exploitative relationship and the power imbalance, in particular, are based on a large age gap between victims and perpetrators. If professionals are looking only for children with much older boyfriends, they will miss victims who are being exploited within street gangs and peer groups.

These differences demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups. All professionals working with children should be mindful that both exist. At present, the Inquiry's evidence suggests that agencies are focusing on one or the other. Wider public attention is focused only on one model of group abuse, involving older perpetrators, resulting in the inconsistent identification of victims and perpetrators.

Having outlined the differences between gang and group CSE, the remainder of this section will illustrate aspects of the abuse that are identified in both.

## Similarities in gang and group-associated abuse

Regardless of the unique nature of each individual case in the evidence submitted to us, the following characteristics were similar in both group and gang child sexual exploitation:

- Sexual violence.
- Perpetrators using their power to exploit and control victims.
- The use of technology to initiate, arrange or continue the exploitation.
- Multiple perpetrators involved in different ways: some arranging and facilitating, some as active abusers, some taking the lead and others following.

- Actual or threatened extreme physical violence.
- Repeat victimisation of children and young people either by the same or different perpetrators.
- Most perpetrators are in groups or gangs are men and boys. In a small minority of cases these groups include women and girls.

These similarities can be identified across a spectrum of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, which can differ on grounds of organisation:

Disorganised and opportunistic ————— Organised



And may, or may not, generate financial profit:

No financial gain ————— Financially profitable



Characteristics that differed across the cases in the evidence were:

- Profile of perpetrators.
- Profile of victims.
- The location of the abuse.
- The context within which the abuse took place.

## Sexual, Physical, and Emotional Abuse

The sexual exploitation of children is a deeply damaging, frequently sadistic, form of child abuse. Children are used as sexual commodities and subjected to physical, sexual and emotional violence including rape.

Neglect is also present, particularly in children who are abducted for periods of time and kept with limited access to food, water and washing facilities. The following types of abuse have been reported:

| Type of Abuse | Call for evidence Submissions | Site Visits (% out of 14 visits) | Oral Evidence Sessions |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sexual        | 94%                           | 100%                             | 100%                   |
| Physical      | 57%                           | 100%                             | 95%                    |
| Emotional     | 46%                           | 100%                             | 95%                    |

*Table 2: Type of abuse recorded in evidence submissions, site visits and oral evidence sessions*

### Sexual abuse:

Vaginal, anal and oral penetration was reported in both gang and group CSE. These cases involved different forms of sexual touching, including penile penetration and penetration with objects. In some instances girls were made to witness sexual abuse and then forced to participate, or made to perform sex acts on each other.

**Oral sex** was used particularly when several perpetrators were involved. Men and/or boys may stand in line (a 'line-up') or enter a room one at a time without a break.

The call for evidence also highlighted cases where these acts were being recorded, and the images shared, through the use of digital/social media and mobile phones etc.

During the evidence hearings, professionals reported oral rape more than any other form of sexual assault.

The panel was concerned about the reported levels of **anal rape** of both boys and girls in both groups and gangs. There were numerous accounts of children being anally raped by several perpetrators.

In the call for evidence submissions, oral rape was reported most frequently, followed by anal rape. **Vaginal rape** was the least frequently reported form of abuse.

During site visits and evidence hearings, professionals agreed on why oral and anal rape seemed more prevalent than vaginal rape. The two most common reasons cited were: the influence of some forms of media, particularly pornography and some music from a range of genres, and the avoidance of pregnancy. In relation to anal rape a desire for 'tightness' was cited as a motivating factor. With regard to oral rape, professionals said it was not perceived by either victims or perpetrators as being as serious as other forms of sexual violence. Forced oral sex was not always understood as rape. Among young people, in particular, it was viewed casually, in contrast to anal and vaginal penetration. There was a consensus amongst experts at the evidence hearings that anal and oral rape could be viewed as more humiliating and controlling than vaginal rape and, as such, may be favoured by those who are sexually exploiting children. All these perceptions were cited to the panel by professionals, and require further exploration, through research, in order to be fully understood.

### **Physical abuse:**

The use of violence has been found in both groups and gangs. The most common forms of physical abuse to be identified were: punching; hitting or 'beating up' the victim; use of physical force to restrain a victim; grabbing the victim; attempted strangulation; kicking all over the body and burning, particularly with cigarettes.

Use of weapons was mainly identified where a gang was involved. Examples included using firearms, knives, bottles, bricks or bats to intimidate and/or coerce the victim into sexual activity.

Injuries resulting from physical abuse were similar in both gang and group CSE. These include bites, burns (particularly cigarette burns), abrasions and broken bones. During one site visit there was a report of internal injuries to a child. Ten submissions detailed cases where death threats were made to victims and their families for the purposes of intimidation and control.

## Emotional abuse:

Various forms of emotional abuse were identified throughout the cases presented to the Inquiry.

The most prominent of these involved victims living in a state of anxiety and acute fear of their abusers. Children reported feeling they had lost all control over their lives.

Some children said that the grooming process lasted a long time – months or even two years in one case. This led them to believe they were in a loving relationship – but with those who then went on to abuse them. The perpetrators would use this emotional attachment to manipulate and exploit the child. This was sometimes done through establishing and then exploiting feelings of guilt and obligation to the perpetrator. In some cases, once the child was dependent on their affection, the perpetrator would also manipulate the child through intimidation and aggression.

In other cases, however, the grooming process seemed to be absent. Instead, the threat of extreme violence towards a child or her/his family, or of an initial rape, was used to force the victim to comply. In gangs, fear was instilled in the victim merely by the reputation of the street gang as well as their use of violence throughout their neighbourhood.

Isolation from friends and family and a growing dependence on abusers also characterised many of the cases that we encountered. The extent to which grooming was used often depended upon the levels of violence threatened and exerted, and/or the pre-existing vulnerability of a child. For example, in cases where children had a history of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, the process of grooming was not required to the same extent.

In addition, there were specific characteristics of emotional abuse that applied in some cases. This was manifest in children who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, or who were unsure about their sexuality or gender identity, and whose vulnerability in this regard was exploited by perpetrators:

### Shane's story

Shane is a 13 year-old White British male, and has told a small number of his peers that he thinks he might be gay. Shane is unsure about how to explore this possibility, and doesn't know of any safe ways in which he can meet other gay young people. As a result Shane starts hanging around outside clubs that are known to be frequented by gay men. Professionals are becoming increasingly concerned that a group of men have become aware of Shane and are exploiting his vulnerability to engage in sexual activity with him. Shane reports that he has had sex with multiple male partners whom he has met near the local clubs, and who are significantly older than him. He is confused about whether this was consensual or not, and yet he does not feel as if he has alternative options for experimenting with gay relationships.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds, in particular, were sometimes controlled by the fear of bringing shame on their families. Evidence was received of both boys and girls being threatened with forced marriage if they were to disclose the abuse. This ensured their compliance. Risk of forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence was reported in one call for evidence submission, on four site visits, in six evidence hearings and in three interviews with young people.

Physical, emotional and sexual abuse was also made possible by perpetrators using bribes and gifts.

In 58 written submissions and on all site visits, material inducements to victims were identified. These included money, drugs, alcohol, food, accommodation, phones or phone top-up credits, gifts, debts and links to adults involved prostitution.

Such financial coercion was particularly apparent in cases where children were homeless and on the streets, had run away or were drug/alcohol dependent. In these cases children were described as being coerced by people and/or by circumstances to exchange sexual acts for accommodation, alcohol and drugs. It was this vulnerability that was exploited by those looking to abuse them. Occasionally, a child ended up homeless or misusing alcohol or drugs, as a result of being subjected to CSE. However, when a child is vulnerable in this way before any exploitation takes place, it makes it all the easier for a perpetrator to manipulate the child into being abused.

## Location of Abuse

The range of places where abuse takes place demonstrates how they are generally determined by the 'relationship' between victims and perpetrators and the context within which the abuse takes place.

Many examples were reported including:

- When children are being sold to a range of people they do not know, the abuse may take place at organised parties in warehouses or private houses.
- When they are exploited by their peers, the abuse is more likely to take place in schools or in public places in the neighbourhood such as parks and stairwells.
- Children may be abused en-route to parties while in vehicles. The offer of transport may be the exchange via which the abuse takes place – for example, bus or taxi drivers who will exchange a lift home for sex.
- Children might be taken to hotels, bed-and-breakfasts or hostels, to be abused by several men, where the premises may be used solely for the purpose of abuse.
- They may be abused within the hostel in which they have been placed.
- If children have on-going contact with one group or gang member, they may also go to their private homes where the abuse takes place.

During Phase 1 of the Inquiry the following locations were reported:

*Table 3: Frequency of references to different locations of abuse, as reported to the CSEGG Inquiry*

| <b>Location</b>         | <b>Percentage of Call for Evidence Submissions</b> | <b>Percentage of Site Visits (% out of 14 visits)</b> | <b>Percentage of Oral Evidence Sessions</b> |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Abandoned buildings     | 3%   | 36%   | 5%  |
| At home                 | 10%  | 14%   | 33%   |
| Bus/Train/Tube stations | 10%  | 36%   | 14%   |
| Car/Lorry parks         | 1%   | 7%  | 14%   |

| <b>Location</b>                    | <b>Percentage of Call for Evidence Submissions</b> | <b>Percentage of Site Visits (% out of 14 visits)</b> | <b>Percentage of Oral Evidence Sessions</b> |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Cemeteries                         | 2%   | 7%  | 0   |
| Children's homes                   | 3%   | 29%   | 14%   |
| Cinema                             | 3%   | 0   | 0   |
| Food outlet                        | 7%   | 29%   | 10%   |
| Funfair                            | 0  | 7%  | 0   |
| Hostels                            | 9%   | 36%   | 14%   |
| Hotels and Bed and Breakfast       | 13%  | 29%   | 14%   |
| Nightclubs                         | 2%   | 14%   | 10%   |
| Parks                              | 19%  | 36%   | 14%   |
| Party                              | 23%  | 50%   | 62%   |
| Petrol Stations                    | 1%   | 0   | 0   |
| Private Houses                     | 32%  | 14%   | 38%   |
| Red light areas and brothels       | 9%   | 14%   | 5%  |
| Roof tops                          | 1%   | 0   | 0   |
| Schools                            | 10%  | 64%   | 29%   |
| Shopping centres / markets / Shops | 6%   | 29%   | 29%   |
| Stairwells                         | 3%   | 36%   | 10%   |
| Streets/Alleys                     | 26%  | 43%   | 38%   |
| Taxi rank                          | 1%   | 29%   | 5%  |
| Public/Venue Toilet                | 5%   | 7%  | 19%   |
| Transportation Vehicles            | 46%  | 36%   | 57%   |
| Warehouses                         | 2%   | 14%   | 0   |

With each victim, abuse can take place in several places and this can change over time:

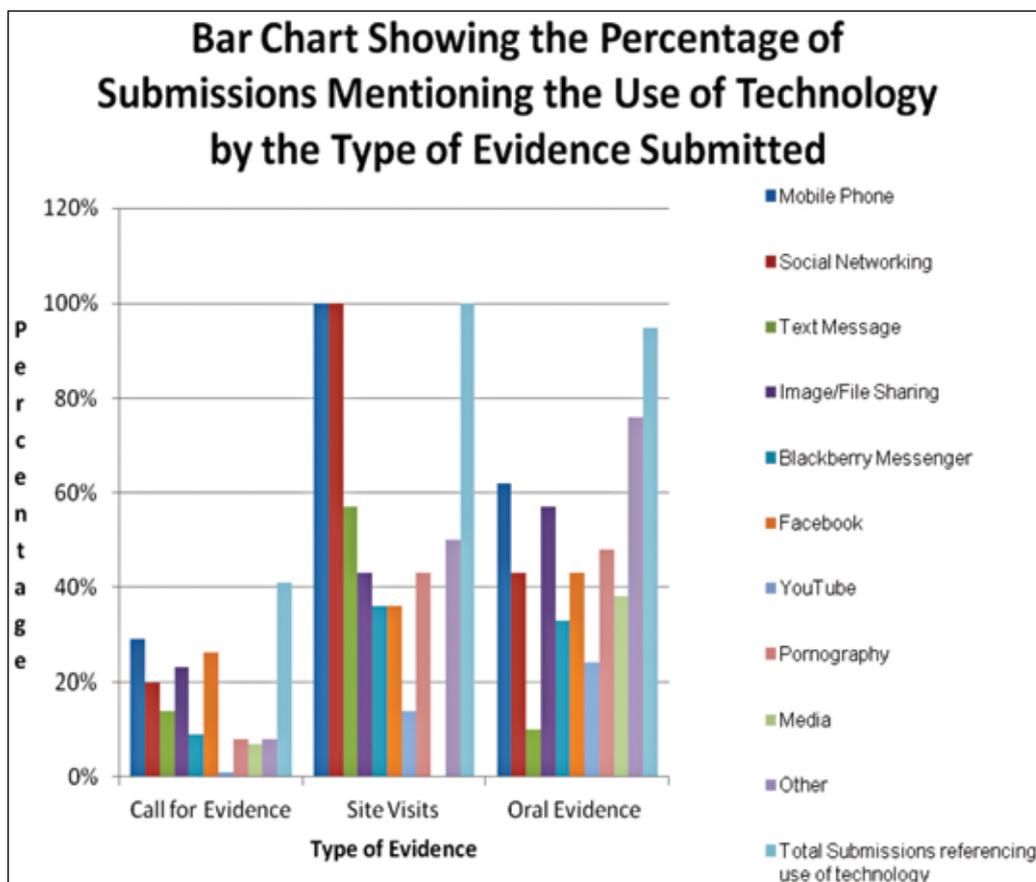
### **Marina's story**

'Marina', a 16-year-old White British young woman, was sexually exploited along with her 14-year-old sister, in public and in private homes and buildings. Professionals reported that local White British shop owners would sexually exploit Marina in exchange for alcohol and cigarettes. Both would also be 'picked up' by men on the streets and sexually assaulted in local alleyways. Marina had been met by a range of men and driven to parties in other local areas where she would be raped by multiple 'party-goers' before being dropped off at home. Marina also reported going to parties at her 'boyfriend's' house and being passed around his other friends. Her boyfriend, of North African origin, was in his late thirties.

*Site visit 3 evidence*

## Use of Technology

Technology was consistently reported throughout evidence submissions as a means of initiating, organising and maintaining CSE:



Technology forms part of most people's lives, especially those of young people. As a result it has been rare to identify cases of child sexual exploitation where the use of technology has not been a factor. This fact is significant, as information technology is having a direct impact in a multitude of ways on the means by which people are able to sexually exploit children:

- Threatening that they will share images of them online, and using these threats to coerce the victim into on-going sexual abuse.
- Harassment and bullying through text messaging.
- Purchasing mobile phones for victims and then sharing their numbers among group or gang members.
- Random contact with children via social networking sites.
- Using 'friends' lists' on networking sites of known victims to target new children.
- Viewing of extreme or violent pornography and discussing it during sexual assaults.
- Posting images of girls (or boys) with rival gang members to invite a sexual assault as punishment.
- Filming and distributing incidents of rape.
- Distributing Blackberry pin numbers for lists of girls labelled as 'easy'.

In many cases, several forms of technology were used throughout the abuse.

### Rochelle's story

Over the two years that 'Rochelle' was sexually exploited by a street gang, several forms of technology were used to abuse and control her. Members of the street gang would routinely steal her phone and then tell her that if she wanted it back she would have to come and meet them. When Rochelle went to locations to collect her phone she would be told that she must perform oral sex on one or multiple members of the gang or they would anally rape her, in order to get her phone back. Members of the gang, and their sisters, would send Rochelle abusive and threatening text messages throughout the abusive process. These on-going threats scared Rochelle, meaning she was always afraid of what might happen to her. Instances of abuse were filmed by members of the gang, and Rochelle would be told that if she did not comply with the demands of gang members, footage would be circulated around her school. When Rochelle disclosed the abuse she was threatened over Facebook. The young men who were abusing Rochelle would communicate frequently using an instant messaging service, and individual members of the street gang would also use it when they were with her to invite others to meet up and take part in the abuse.

*Case file evidence*

### Use of pornography

In addition to the use of technology, the use and impact of pornography was raised during 43% of the site visits and 48% of the evidence hearings.

The impact of pornography, particularly the extreme and violent type, was a concern reported by professionals from many agencies, in particular its impact on children's (and young adults') understanding of what is acceptable, required or expected during sexual contact. An abused child might be left assuming that pain and violence, inflicted by several people at once, is the norm in sexual activity.

Police case files analysed by this Inquiry cited instances of boys and young men referring to pornography during sexual assaults. Pornography was reported as being used in only eight of the cases submitted through the call for evidence process. However, those interviewed regarded the use of pornography – and people's attitude towards it – as an issue that society needs to address.

Research has concluded that a causal link cannot be established between viewing child abuse images online and being directly involved in the physical/sexual abuse of children. However, the Inquiry is concerned about whether exposure to violent and extreme pornography has an impact on children and young people's, as well as young adults', expectations when it comes to sexual relationships. The Inquiry also had concerns over whether pornography contributes to ideas about: entitlement; the sexual objectification of women and children; humiliating and violent sexual acts that may underpin child sexual exploitation. There appears to be little research on this issue and it is an area that needs further investigation.

## Commercial Abuse

Commercial sexual exploitation involves the exchange of a child (for sexual purposes) for the financial gain of the perpetrator.

The Inquiry has been informed of many instances where some kind of financial profit results from the sexual exploitation of children. Commercial child sexual exploitation was more frequently identified in groups, with a number of models presented to us. Some of these were organised and complex:

### Teegan's story

'Teegan', a White British young woman, was sexually exploited from the age of 12 years old. From the age of 13 Teegan was taken by a Turkish man to a variety of 'parties' across England that she reports were in nice houses and in some cases described as 'mansions'. In these houses Teegan would be raped by several men, from a range of ethnicities, who were paying to use her. Teegan described a book being available with photographs and ages of all of the girls being sexually exploited by this particular group. Men could choose which girls they wanted. Teegan reported men paying those who were exploiting her up to £500 for an hour with her. Groups of men could also request one girl to share between them over a night, where the rape of the girl would be filmed. The operation involved men working the streets to pick up vulnerable girls, forming 'relationships' with them by grooming them and then passing them on to the men who controlled the business. If Teegan ever refused to comply, she would be beaten and her family threatened. Following the abuse, Teegan took several overdoses, was placed in secure accommodation, and self-harmed by cutting and ligaturing sometimes on a daily basis. Teegan described the abuse that she experienced as serious and organised, and is unwilling to make a formal complaint for fear of repercussions from those involved in the operation.

*CSEGG interview with a young person*

Other instances were less organised. It was clear that, while there were commercial transactions, profit was not substantial and was not the primary motivation for the abuse.

On a number of site visits, the panel was alerted to links between the sexual exploitation of children and brothels or street prostitution in the local area.

During one evidence hearing we were informed of commercial child sexual exploitation in a street gang.

## Links to family abuse

Some children's experiences of familial child sexual abuse, neglect or physical abuse were directly linked to their later experiences of sexual exploitation. Past abuse inflicted upon them by their own family increased their vulnerability to future exploitation.

During site visits and in evidence hearings, the Inquiry learned of cases where family members, particularly in households where domestic abuse or child sexual abuse were present, were directly involved in the sexual exploitation of children:

### Sophie's story

'Sophie's' mum, Linda, has been known to a local violence against women service for a number of years because of the violence she has experienced from multiple partners. Sophie is a White British young woman and she was 13 years old when Linda met Ray. Ray, who was also White British, moved in with Linda and was violent towards both her and her children. Ray began to invite his friends around to the house. They, in turn, were abusive to Linda and her children. Following this, Ray offered Sophie as a sexual commodity to his friends on a regular basis, and threatened Linda and Sophie with violence if Sophie did not comply

*Site visit 4 evidence*

In another instance, members of an extended family were involved in sexual exploitation, particularly commercial sexual exploitation.

Children, whose mothers were involved in prostitution or had histories of sexual exploitation, were sometimes drawn into child sexual exploitation via their mother or the people who were arranging or profiting from the prostitution which involved their mother:

### Rosa's story

According to 'Rosa', a Mixed heritage young woman, when she was growing up she had been sexually abused by her mother's partners, particularly while her mother was involved in prostitution. By the time Rosa was taken into care she describes that she: had already come to expect violence and abuse from older males; believed that she was a 'slag'; and thought that sexual activity was all that was ever expected or required of her.

*Interview with a young person*

25% of evidence submissions included reports on past or continuing abuse within the family, including sexual and physical abuse, risk of forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence and neglect as a result of child sexual exploitation:

### Sahida's story

'Sahida', a 17-year-old British Pakistani young woman, made an allegation of sexual abuse against a family member. As a result she was threatened with a forced marriage. Sahida's family claim they want to remove her from the country to curb her 'wild behaviour'. Following these threats Sahida began spending time with older males, described by professionals as 'Asian', and was moved to multiple locations by them. Sahida is now pregnant as a result of the sexual exploitation she has experienced. Family members have physically assaulted Sahida as a punishment for the pregnancy.

*Call for evidence submission*

## Consent and Coercion

Throughout Phase 1 of the Inquiry, the panel was presented with confused and inconsistent understanding on the part of both professionals and young people of the concept of consent to sexual activity:

*Table 4: Frequency of references to consent, as reported to the CSEGG Inquiry*

|                                 | <b>% of call for evidence Submissions</b> | <b>% of Site visits</b> | <b>% of Oral evidence sessions</b> |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Confusion amongst young people  | 17%                                       | 71%                     | 52%                                |
| Confusion amongst professionals | 20%                                       | 64%                     | 76%                                |

Children and young people who were being sexually exploited were frequently described by professionals in many localities as being “promiscuous”, “liking the glamour”, engaging in “risky behaviour” and being generally badly behaved. Some of the most common phrases used in the call for evidence submissions to describe the young person's behaviour were:

- The young person is “prostituting herself”.
- She/he “places her/himself in vulnerable situations”.
- She/he is “drawn to it”.
- She/he is “risk-fuelled”.
- They are a “danger to themselves”.
- She/he “refuses to acknowledge risks”.
- She/he is “sexually available”.
- She/he is “asking for it”.

The Inquiry panel believes this labelling reflects a worrying perspective held by a number of professionals, namely that children are complicit in, and hence responsible for, their own abuse.

Professionals often demonstrated a lack of awareness of the impact on children of living in dangerous environments and of the consequences for the child or young person of saying “no”.

Numerous testimonies from young people provided clear evidence that failure to comply with demands for sex, no matter what the circumstances, were likely to result in serious harm to them and/or to their family. It was clear that, even when young people were saying that they were agreeing to sex, this was happening under manipulative and coercive circumstances.

However, coercion was not always identified, or even considered, by professionals. This was true for both gangs and groups.

Yet, when directly questioned during site visits and hearings, professionals stated that the violence within street gangs would compromise a young person's ability to freely consent to sexual activity.

The labelling and conflicting opinions described above should be a wake-up call to professionals – that sexually-exploited children are children first and foremost, and that their experience in these circumstances is not consensual, but abusive.

There was great confusion among young people about the meaning of consent. Analysis of case files provided illustrations of children struggling to communicate or comprehend whether they were consenting to the activity in which they had been involved:

### Mia's story

'Mia', a young woman of 'Mixed' ethnic heritage, disclosed to professionals that she had been sexually exploited for two years by a local street gang, from the age of 11 to 13. When Mia made her disclosure she named a number of other girls from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds, who were either present at instances of abuse or who were also abused by members of the gang. Some of the girls named were interviewed by the police. The girls, who had witnessed the abuse, or previously been friends with Mia, stated that Mia had consented on all occasions that they had witnessed. They stated she was a 'slag'. One of the other girls, who had also been abused by the street gang, was shown phone footage of her assault. She informed the police that she did not want it to happen, but that she had consented and therefore did not want to proceed with a complaint.

*Case file evidence*

Children were confused for many reasons. For example, the panel received written and verbal evidence from children who struggled to understand consent, given their previous experiences of child sexual abuse.

Others' understanding of consent seemed to be influenced by where they lived and with whom they mixed.

For some children, how they understood consent was influenced by the fact that they had previously committed offences. They assumed they had to comply with the abuse or else their abuser might turn them in to the police.

Others seemed to have had their understanding of consent informed by wider social messages, stereotypes and structures. The grooming process actively distorted some children's understanding of consent, and was used for that purpose.

Feelings of powerlessness and fatalism were common among the children and young people who were interviewed for the Inquiry.

For all of these reasons, some children simply did not feel that there was a choice to be made or that there was any way in which they could seek support.

Given the complex nature of this issue, the OCC has commissioned The Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU) at London Metropolitan University to conduct a study into young people's understanding of consent to sexual activity and how this shapes their expectations, choices and experiences. Following this study the Inquiry's final report will present full findings and recommendations on the issue of consent.

## Impact of the Abuse

Given the violent and traumatic nature of CSE in gangs and groups, it is not surprising that the Inquiry was provided with substantial evidence of its devastating impact.

Areas of particular concern were:

### 1) Missing children

58% of call for evidence submissions stated that children had gone missing from home or from care as a result of child sexual exploitation. During all 14 site visits children who were being sexually exploited were also repeatedly going missing, in some cases three or more times within a two-week period.

Professionals interviewed during site visits and evidence hearings repeatedly raised concerns about children who were not being reported missing from home. They cited children who were absent from school as another 'at-risk' group. 27 % of call for evidence submissions identified sexually-exploited children who had stopped attending school either permanently or intermittently. 12% of submissions identified children who had been excluded from school as a consequence of CSE. Of the sexually-exploited children who were interviewed, 70% had gone missing from home and 65% were not attending school.

### 2) Health of CSE victims

- 41% of call for evidence submissions identified children having **drug and alcohol problems** as a result of CSE.
- 32% of submissions identified children **self-harming** as a result of CSE.
- 27% of submissions raised broader concerns about victims' **mental health** following exploitation.

During site visits, evidence hearings and interviews with children and young people, the following issues were identified:

- Emerging personality disorder.
- Borderline personality disorder .
- Emerging psychosis.
- Depression.
- Self-harming.
- Thoughts of suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Severe low self-esteem.
- Self-neglect.

85% of the sexually-exploited young people who were interviewed had either **self-harmed** or **attempted suicide** as a result of CSE.

39% of call for evidence submissions identified a negative impact on young people's **sexual health**.

Professionals reinforced this concern during site visits and evidence hearings, reporting pregnancy, miscarriages, terminations, sexually-transmitted infections including Chlamydia, herpes and gonorrhoea, and other consequences. One verbal report was made of a young person contracting HIV/Aids.

Children who were interviewed discussed their experiences of sexual health services. The 75% who had contracted a sexually-transmitted infection had visited a sexual health service. However, in all cases children told us that professionals did not seek to identify whether they were being sexually exploited.

All the children interviewed reported experiences of physical violence. For 48% of them, their injuries had required them to visit an accident and emergency department.

### **3) Offending**

37% of call for evidence submissions reported children and young people offending in a variety of ways, either as part of the process of being exploited or as a consequence of it.

Many young people who had been sexually exploited were known to youth offending services for criminal activities, ranging from shoplifting to criminal damage. Sometimes the people who were exploiting them told their victims to offend (for example to steal alcohol), and on other occasions they would offend as a result of their abuse (for example self-medicating with drugs, or damaging property in anger).

Offending among the children affected is prevalent in both groups and gangs. However, offending involving firearms or drugs, in addition to 'joint enterprise' offences, is more common in cases of young people being sexually exploited by a gang.

During site visits, youth offending teams often passed on valuable information on CSE in both gangs and groups. Frequently, they were the only agency trying to help sexually-exploited young people who had also become involved in offending. Of both the sexually-exploited and gang-associated young people interviewed, 65% had become involved in offending and four of the young women had served custodial sentences.

Many offences were interpreted by professionals as a sign of a young person's 'risky behaviour', rather than being the symptoms or consequences of sexual exploitation. Consequently, agencies addressed the risky behaviour only. Typically, in response to drug or alcohol misuse, he or she was put onto a drug treatment programme, or subjected to curfews as a result of running away, rather than attempts being made to identify and address the cause of their distress and anger. Numerous young people told us they felt that professionals punished them for the abuse they suffered. Professionals set out to control them, instead of trying to apprehend the abusers and thereby stop the abuse.

While it is vital that young people are supported as they face up to the impact that child sexual exploitation has had on their lives, it is even more important that the sexual exploitation is itself tackled. If services focus solely on the consequences rather than the causes of child sexual

exploitation, young people will continue to feel responsible for the abuse they have suffered. The result will be that other young people will be at risk from perpetrators who have not been apprehended or whose abuse has not been halted.

## Signs of risk and vulnerability

Given the evidence on the impact of CSE, the researcher on the OCC Inquiry team conducted analysis of the evidence gathered on known cases of CSE in gangs and groups (call for evidence, site visits, evidence hearings, interviews with children and young people) and identified the following typical **vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse**:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality).
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only).
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Learning disabilities.
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families.
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Homelessness.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carers.

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited.

- Missing from home or care.
- Physical injuries.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absence from school.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites.
- Estranged from their family.
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.

- Recruiting others into exploitative situations.
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm.
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately start an investigation to determine the risk, while taking preventative and protective action as required.

However, it is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited. Therefore, any child showing risk indicators in the second list, but none of the vulnerabilities in the first, should also be considered as a potential victim, with appropriate assessment and action put in place as required.

## THE SCALE OF THE ABUSE

---

### The number of children being sexually exploited

The 2011 CEOP assessment published evidence on 1,875 cases of 'localised grooming' that took place over a period of up to seven years.

Evidence to the OCC Inquiry has resulted in a substantially larger number of cases coming to light – and over a shorter timeframe.

The Inquiry can report that there were **2,409 confirmed victims** of CSE in either gangs or groups during the 14-month period from August 2010 to October 2011.

Furthermore, this figure is based solely on submissions to the Inquiry's call for evidence. Analysis of the entire body of evidence obtained by the Inquiry leaves us in no doubt that the actual number of victims is far higher.

Interviews with children and young people, evidence collected during site visits and gathered at hearing sessions all indicated that many children who were sexually exploited either remained unseen by professionals, or even when known, were not recorded in the call for evidence submissions received by the Inquiry.

Evidence on known cases of CSE has been used to generate both a list of factors which increase a child's vulnerability to sexual exploitation, and a list of warning signs indicating that a child is at high risk of being sexually exploited.

Where available, data were collected on children who displayed these warning signs. This process has produced the 'CSEGG dataset'.

The information within the CSEGG dataset indicates that from April 2010 to March 2011 at least **16,500 children displayed three or more signs or behaviour indicating they were at risk of child sexual exploitation.**

When we compare the CSEGG dataset with the evidence collected on known cases of CSE, it is reasonable to assume that the numbers of children being abused far exceeds 2,409.

To determine the scale of the problem, a number of evidence-gathering processes were employed (as outlined in the methodology section in this report, pages 117-124). Each process collected different types of data. Taken together, these have enabled the Inquiry to build up comprehensive evidence on identified cases of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, and on children who are at risk of exploitation but remain unrecognised. Evidence was gathered in five ways:

- 1) The call for evidence process was loosely structured to allow respondents to submit general information as well as specific data on victims and perpetrators whom they had identified within a 14-month period. Submissions were diverse and included detailed accounts from families of victims as well as hard data from a range of agencies on confirmed numbers of victims and perpetrators.

- 2) In the 14 site visits, in-depth conversations were held with a wide range of professionals, enabling them to share information about cases of CSE that they had identified over a five-year period.
- 3) During the four days of evidence hearings, the panel questioned witnesses on a range of key areas. This enabled them to clarify specific information received in the call for evidence submissions and in field visits.
- 4) The 23 interviews with children and young people brought home to the panel the real-life experience of victims.
- 5) The CSEGG dataset – developed to examine the potential scale of the problem – is based on data submitted on children who showed signs of risk or vulnerability associated with CSE over a one-year period from April 2010 to March 2011<sup>6</sup>. Analysis of these data have enabled us to quantify the number of children who display three or more signs of risk associated with CSE and to assess the difference between the numbers of identified victims reported to the Inquiry and the numbers of potential victims.

Taken together, this information has enabled the Inquiry to build an invaluable evidence base on the identified scale and nature of CSE in gangs and groups. All types of evidence are utilised in this report. It must be noted that the different types of evidence have not been combined because the four methodologies, while complementary, are not fully reconcilable. (Please see the full explanation of the methodology in Appendix B.)

While the evidence has enabled us to form the most comprehensive picture to date of the nature and scale of child sexual exploitation in England, it is still not possible to state definitively how many children are victims of CSE in any given period. The reasons for this are complex and include the following:

- There is no recognised abuse category for sexual exploitation as part of standard social care practice. Children who are sexually exploited may never be put on a child protection plan where child sexual abuse is the grounds for doing so. Therefore, by requesting information on the number of children on child protection plans for child sexual abuse, it is not possible to find out how many children have been abused in gangs and groups. This information will include children who have not been sexually exploited, and will not include many children who have been sexually exploited.
- While perpetrators have been convicted for their involvement in the sexual exploitation of children, using offences such as 'grooming' or 'sexual activity with a child' (the same as those used for other sexual offences), there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation. Therefore, it is not possible to obtain figures through a trawl of police crime data on sexual offences. Furthermore, given that the majority of offences do not result in a conviction, reliance on crime statistics alone will not provide a full picture of this form of abuse.

---

<sup>6</sup> For those data sources which required a manual trawl to abstract the relevant records, guidance was provided to reduce the time frame of the data collection to four months (April, July, October and January) to reduce the administrative burden. In practice, this was most prevalent in the data provided by YOT teams. Nationally 12 YOTs submitted 4 months' worth of data and one just a month's data.

## Cases reported to the CSEGG Inquiry

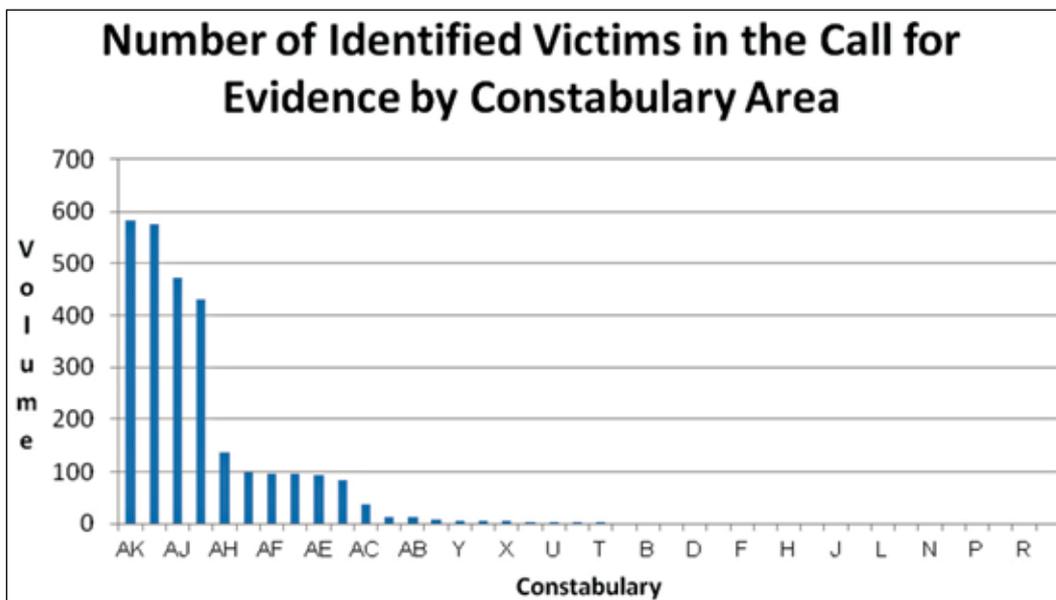
### 1) Victims

The data in this report outline the numbers of victims reported to the CSEGG Inquiry via the call for evidence, interviews, evidence hearings and site visits – alongside the numbers of children identified through the dataset who displayed multiple signs of risk related to CSE.

Agencies in 19 out of 39 police constabulary areas did not submit any information on cases of child sexual exploitation in either gangs or groups in their responses to the call for evidence. This was despite the fact that of these 19 areas, seven were identified as ‘Ending Gang Violence’<sup>7</sup> (EGV) areas and all had children identified as vulnerable within the CSEGG dataset. One large rural county informed the Inquiry during a site visit of 130 victims in a single case, but did not submit data via the call for evidence process. These victims are therefore not counted in the call for evidence information recorded in this report.

Having studied the data from areas that did respond to the call for evidence, the Inquiry has no reason to believe that these areas are significantly different from those that did supply evidence. The only clear difference between the areas that did identify victims and those that did not is that the former contained agencies that were determinedly looking for victims.

**Of those agencies that did submit cases to the call for evidence, 41 agencies within four police force areas identified over half of the 2,409 recorded victims, with one area identifying 582 and another identifying 575:**



A further seven constabulary areas identified no more than nine children in total who had been sexually exploited. Given what the Inquiry has uncovered about the nature of CSE in gangs and groups, we must conclude that it is highly unlikely that any one child would be a single victim. It is

<sup>7</sup>Ending Gang Violence areas were identified as part of the Government’s plan to end gang and youth violence. These areas have been awarded funding to develop and deliver responses to tackle gang and youth violence issues that they have identified locally

far more likely that they are the only victim to have been identified. Therefore, in the seven areas that identified small numbers of victims, we would assume that other victims remain unidentified.

## 2) Perpetrators

Compared to the 115 submissions received on victims, only 30 agencies submitted evidence on perpetrators. Data on perpetrators were provided in full in only 3% of call for evidence submissions, with no perpetrator data provided in 68% of submissions. In the majority of cases, group-associated perpetrators were unidentified by professionals during site visits. Of the 1,094 perpetrators discussed during site visits, only 328 were known to operate in a group, compared to 1,538 group victims who were identified.

It is clear that more effort needs to be put into the identification of perpetrators.

The process by which professionals record information on perpetrators is inconsistent and insufficient, with little detail being captured.

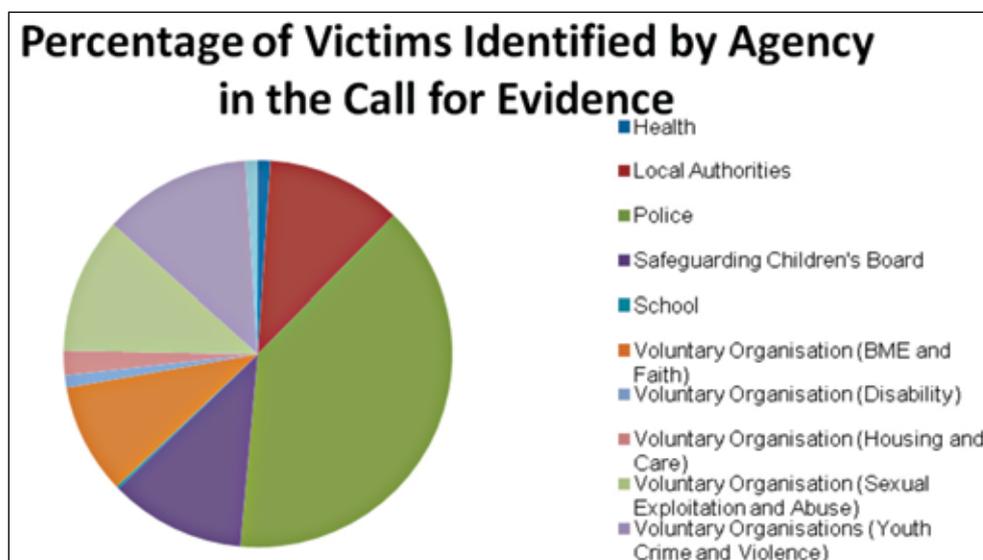
Furthermore, victims are frequently able to provide only aliases, nicknames or physical descriptions of perpetrators. A child might be too distressed or confused after being abused to be able to give much information.

Children interviewed for the Inquiry described being taken to 'parties', where they were raped and sexually assaulted by several men, and occasions when they were intoxicated or drugged so that they did not know what was happening to them. This made it impossible for them to identify the perpetrators.

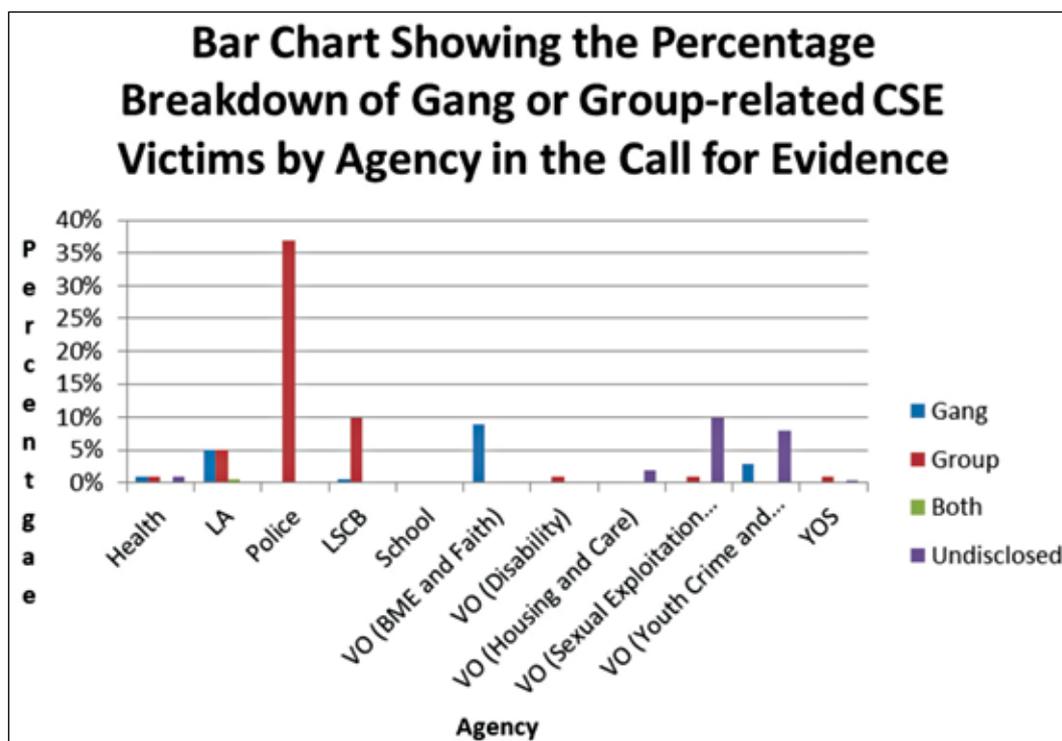
The Inquiry must conclude, therefore, that in both gangs and groups the number of known perpetrators is a significant undercounting of the true figure.

## 3) Overall Figures

A range of agencies made 115 submissions to the call for evidence request, with the largest number of victims being identified by police forces:



The types of abuse identified varied according to the type of agency responding, with the police identifying more victims of group-associated CSE than any other agency, but not identifying any cases of gang-associated CSE. Evidence of the police identifying gang-associated CSE victims, however, was obtained through information presented to the Inquiry panel on site visits. This could reflect the different assumed responsibilities, whereby police and law enforcement agencies take responsibility for gun and knife crime (community safety) while child protection agencies are responsible when it comes to child sexual exploitation:



The **site visits** mirrored the ways in which agencies had identified victims in their submissions to the call for evidence process. During the visits, the Inquiry was told of approximately **1,746 children** who had been sexually exploited across the 14 visited localities. While the information provided extended beyond the 14-month period that was in place for the call for evidence, each site visit demonstrated the complex nature of child sexual exploitation. Analysis of the information gathered during the site visits on a locality-by-locality basis demonstrates differences in how the problem is being recognised and how agencies within the same area and between areas are identifying victims:

Table 5: Size of the problem as identified during site visits

| Site | Area                                     | Victims Identified | Evidence of Gang and/or Group-Related CSE                         |
|------|--|--------------------|---|
| 1    | Urban Local Authority                    | 56                 | Mainly gang-related CSE   |
| 2    | Large City                               | 480                | Both gang and group-related CSE                                   |
| 3    | Urban Local Authority                    | 30                 | Mainly group-related CSE  |
| 4    | Large rural county and police force area | 439                | Only group-related CSE  |
| 5    | Urban Local Authority                    | 67                 | Mainly group-related CSE although there were concerns about gangs |

| Site | Area   | Victims Identified | Evidence of Gang and/or Group-Related CSE                         |
|------|--|--------------------|---|
| 6    | Large Rural County with a City                               | 22                 | Both gang and group-related CSE                                   |
| 7    | Urban Local Authority  | 40                 | Mainly gang-related CSE   |
| 8    | Metropolitan and rural local authority and police force area | 164                | Only group-related CSE  |
| 9    | Urban Local Authority  | 80                 | Mainly gang-related CSE   |
| 10   | Metropolitan Local Authority                                 | 81                 | Mainly group-related CSE although there were concerns about gangs |
| 11   | Metropolitan Borough   | 164                | Mainly group-related CSE although there were concerns about gangs |
| 12   | Metropolitan Borough   | 12                 | Mainly group-related CSE although there were concerns about gangs |
| 13   | Large City   | 99                 | Mainly group-related CSE  |
| 14   | Metropolitan Police Force                                    | 12                 | Both gang and group-related CSE                                   |

## Numbers of children at risk

In an attempt to quantify the number of children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, irrespective of whether or not this risk has been identified by professionals, the Inquiry collected data on the key risk indicators associated with CSE. Information was collected which would:

- Identify the number of children nationally who showed signs of CSE in a one-year period.
- Identify potential distortions or under-recording in the reporting of children with certain characteristics, such as by gender or ethnicity, to understand more clearly which children may be missed.
- Develop models of risk, based on patterns of warning signs of abuse, to help professionals and parents/carers seeking to identify children and young people at risk of CSE.

The detailed methodology used in the Inquiry's dataset development can be found in Appendix B.

Given the variation across the sites visited, and the gaps in the call for evidence submissions, it is important to consider the numbers of children who have shown signs that they may be at risk of CSE.

From the information gathered during the site visits and the evidence hearings, it is clear that sexually-exploited children are not always identified even when they show signs of being victims.

Those children and young people interviewed for the Inquiry, including young adults for whom the abuse was in the past, were clear that their experiences were extremely traumatic and violent. It has had an enduring impact on their lives.

All the evidence gathered during Phase 1, particularly the lists of vulnerabilities and warning signs associated with CSE, demonstrates that there are:

- consistent themes in the histories of children who have been sexually exploited.
- consistent themes in the signs that children are being sexually exploited.
- some victims less easily identifiable, given that they don't display the same signs as most sexually-exploited children.

The Inquiry data analyst considered the presentation of these signs of exploitation against the quality of the data submitted. Data could not be captured at an individual level for all vulnerabilities and warning signs identified earlier in this report; where possible, individual or aggregate data on trends were collected. When the dataset was analysed, the children who showed only one or two of the above indicators were discounted. This is because the dataset is seeking to identify only those children and young people who are at high risk, rather than assuming that if a child has a small number of these indicators or signs he or she is automatically likely to be a victim of CSE. The dataset was further refined, based on combined evidence on known cases, to prioritise those that were most prevalent.

The dataset was compiled on individual children aged 10 upwards where the Inquiry held data on the following 11 indicators:

*Table 6: CSEGG dataset indicators, data source and geographical coverage*

|     | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Source</b>  | <b>Geographical Coverage<sup>8</sup></b> |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 1.  | Children reported missing<br>Or<br>Children reported to be 'absconding' or 'breaching'.                   | Police<br>YOT data via ASSET                         | 90%<br>66%                               |
| 2.  | Children reported as victims of rape  | Police   | 95%                                      |
| 3.  | Children involved in offending  | YOT data via ASSET                                   | 77%                                      |
| 4.  | Children lacking friends of similar age   | YOT data via ASSET                                   | 73%                                      |
| 5.  | Children putting their health at risk   | YOT data via ASSET                                   | 72%                                      |
| 6.  | Children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour  | YOT data via ASSET                                   | 73%                                      |
| 7.  | Children referred to as 'children in need'<br>Or<br>Children 'looked after' under both S31 and S20 orders | Department for Education<br>Department for Education | 98%<br>100%                              |
| 8.  | Children persistently absent from school  | Department for Education                             | 100%                                     |
| 9.  | Children permanently excluded from school   | Department for Education                             | 100%                                     |
| 10. | Children who are self-harming or showing suicidal intent.   | PCT/CAMHS  | 41%                                      |
| 11. | Children misusing drugs and/or alcohol  | PCT/DAT  | 37%                                      |

<sup>8</sup> Geographic coverage describes the percentage of areas covered by the national data request. For example 77% geographic coverage for individual YOTs engaged in offending data means that data covering 77% of the 152 local authorities within England has been obtained. Please note that this is not a measure of the completeness of data nor is it a measure of the number of individual responses received as some agencies provided data for multiple police force, local authority or primary care trust geographical areas.

These indicators were identified because of their relation to the vulnerabilities and risks consistently present in known cases of child sexual exploitation. Indicators 1 and 7 comprise two data sources merged into one because, while they are collected separately, they are intrinsically linked to each other. Counting them separately would in effect create a false increase in the numbers of children highlighted as being at risk within this report.

Data were received that geographically cover 100% of police constabularies, 88% of local authorities, 66% of primary care trusts and every region<sup>9</sup> in England. The information was analysed in conjunction with the individual level data provided by Department for Education and which, in the majority of cases, covers the whole of England<sup>10</sup>. These data form the basis for the analysis in this section. They are complemented by aggregate data held by other central government departments where available.

As illustrated earlier, it is important to note that not every data submission was complete in providing all the data requested against the listed specific indicators of CSE. For example, four police forces were unable to provide any individual level data to the Inquiry concerning missing children within their area. The quality of data also varied significantly from agency to agency. There are a number of limitations or caveats associated with these data that need to be considered when interpreting the information. These are specifically set out in the methodology section (see Appendix B).

It was after analysing data submitted on the 11 indicators requested that the Inquiry reached its conclusion that at least 16,500 children displayed three or more warning signs associated with CSE within a one-year period across all regions in England.

## Reported versus potential scale

The 16,500 children at risk were identified across the country. Over a thousand children displayed three or more warning signs in eight out of England's nine regions and in one region over 950 children were at risk.

When this information is examined at local level and compared with the data that were received on identified victims<sup>11</sup>, some concerning patterns emerge in relation to victims of CSE who may remain unidentified:

---

<sup>9</sup> By region we are referring to the nine former government office regions

<sup>10</sup> For children in need data 8 Local authorities did not provide robust enough data to DFE to be supplied direct to the Inquiry. For these areas direct approaches were made to obtain data from source (where available). Also as part of the cleansing and data matching process employed by DFE it is thought that around 10% of records submitted were not of sufficient quality to be kept in the dataset for children aged 10-17 and are therefore missing from the analysis and lead to undercounting.

<sup>11</sup> A cross section of constabulary areas/ local authorities covering North and South of England were selected (three constabulary areas which provided evidence on group associated CSE and one Ending Gang Violence local authority area which provided data and same number of areas which did not provide call for evidence data or limited numbers). In addition, the areas that did not provide data are selected as they sit within the 'Most Similar Force' cohort for each area which did provide data and are therefore comparable.

Table 7: Victims identified via the call for evidence and children at risk of CSE in the CSEGG dataset in proactive areas

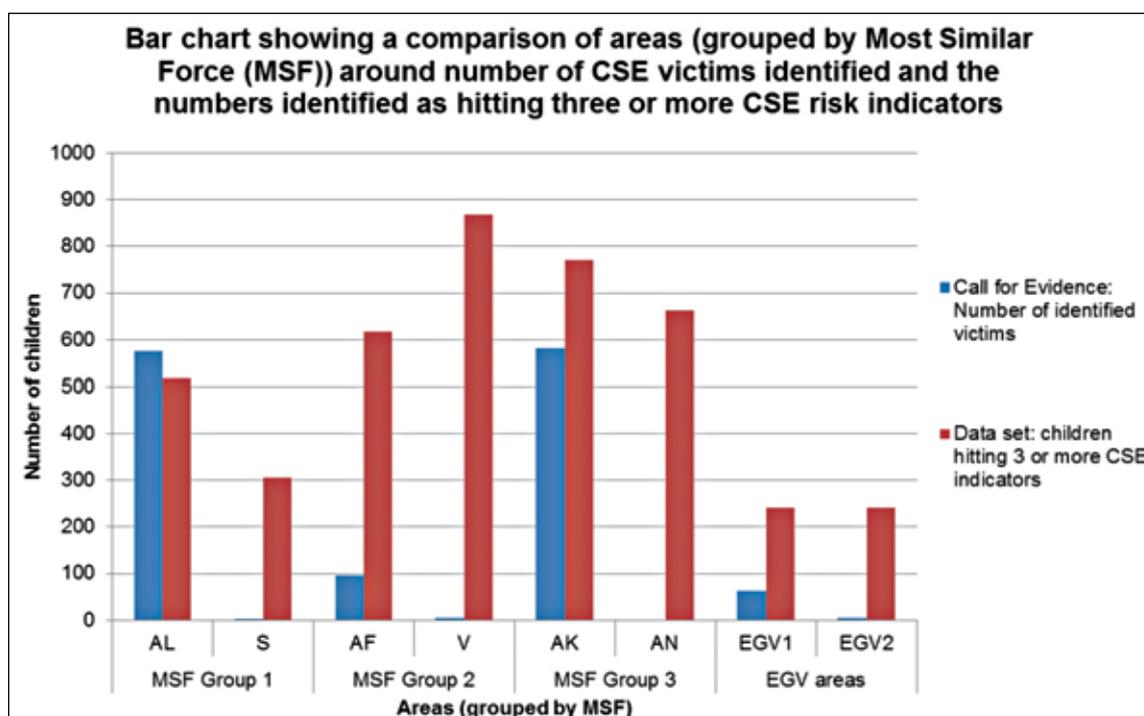
|  | Call for Evidence Submission – victims identified | CSEGG Dataset – Children at Risk |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 1 (AL)</b> | 575   | 518                              |
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 2 (AF)</b> | 95  | 618                              |
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 3 (AK)</b> | 582   | 771                              |
| <b>EGV local authority area 1</b>      | 63  | 241                              |

This becomes even more concerning when we consider submissions that identified fewer than five victims within their local area:

Table 8: Victims identified via the call for evidence and children at risk of CSE in the CSEGG dataset in areas which lack a proactive response to CSE

|  | Call for Evidence Submission – victims identified | CSEGG Dataset – Children at Risk |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 5 (S)</b>  | 1   | 305                              |
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 6 (V)</b>  | 4   | 869                              |
| <b>Police Constabulary Area 7 (AN)</b> | 0   | 662                              |
| <b>EGV local authority area 2</b>      | 4   | 242                              |

When we combine these two tables into a single graph we can see the significant disparity between the numbers of victims reported to the Inquiry and the number of children reported to have displayed three or more behavioural signs that placed them at risk of CSE:



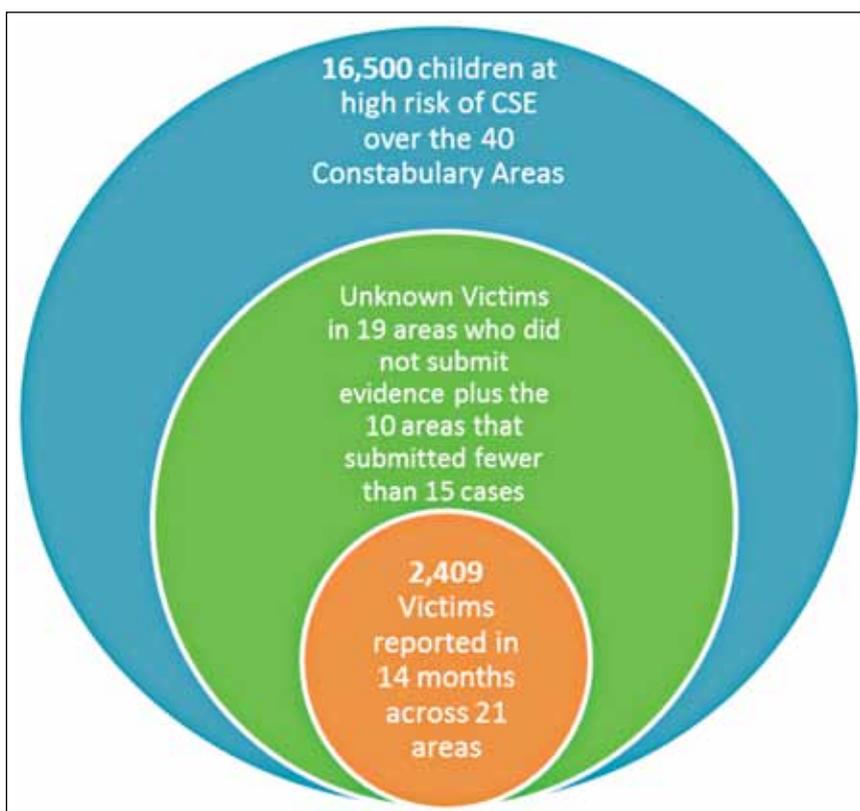
The data provided by area 'AL', which was a detailed multi-agency submission on sexual exploitation from a police force and local authority that are uniquely proactive in the identification of both victims

and perpetrators, indicate a slightly higher figure for the numbers of victims identified than the numbers of children showing three or more signs associated with CSE. This could potentially be explained by the gaps in the CSEGG dataset or the fact that not all children being sexually exploited display multiple CSE risk indicators as highlighted earlier.

Whatever the reason, the consistency between the number of victims identified and the number of children at risk in area 'AL' is promising.

In all other cases, the stark difference between identified victims and children showing signs in both gang and non-gang areas is extremely worrying. This is particularly so, given that there is no significantly differentiating factor between area 'AL' and the others, apart from the fact that CSE is proactively identified and policed in that area.

The dataset indicates that there are only small variations in numbers of children at risk between the 21 areas that identified and provided details of CSE victims and the 19 that did not. It was based on this evidence that the Inquiry concluded that the 2,409 reported victims are likely to be a substantial undercounting, as is set out below:



### Patterns within and between risk indicators

In order to understand what the figure of 16,500 represents, and to improve the practice of identifying vulnerable children, it is useful to consider trends within and between the different signs of risk. Additionally, trends within aggregate data in relation to gender, ethnicity and age, for example, assist in the identification of any potential biases within the dataset.

## Trends across age, gender and ethnicity

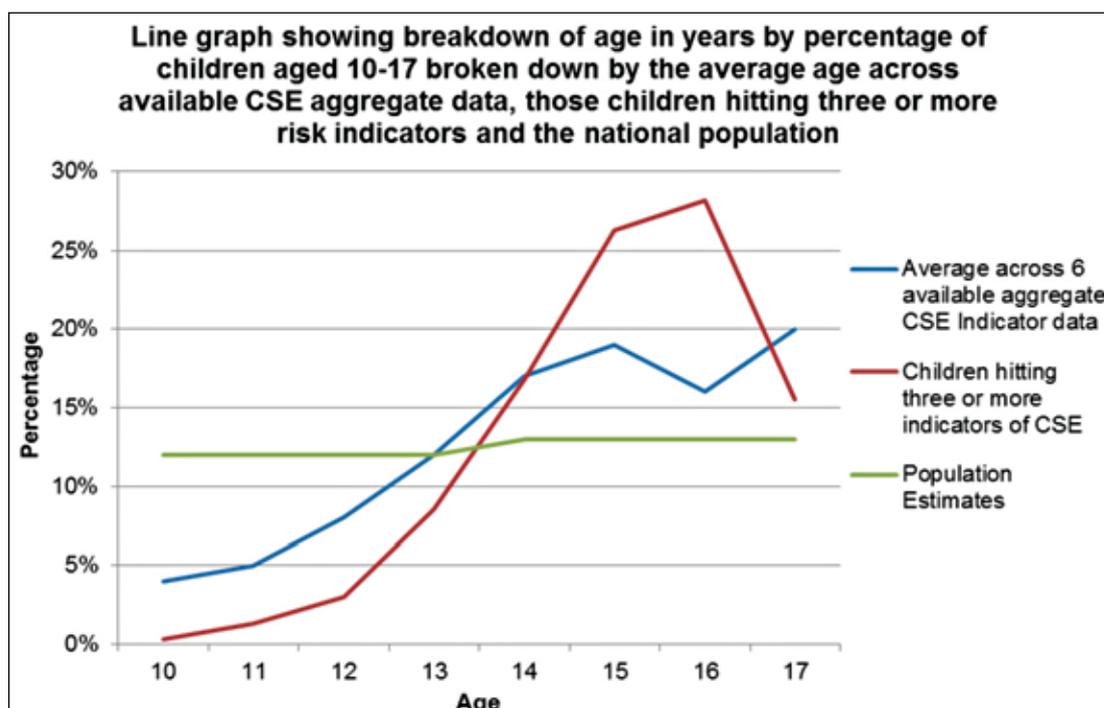
The Inquiry was able to access data on the characteristics of age, gender and ethnicity in relation to some of the indicators within the CSEGG dataset.

In relation to age, aggregate data are available for six<sup>12</sup> of the 11 indicators within the dataset. When we compare the average age cited in these data with the national population estimates for England and the ages of children who hit three or more indicators (within the individual level dataset) the following patterns emerge:

| Age   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Average across 6 available aggregate CSE Indicator data | 4%  | 5%  | 8%  | 12% | 17% | 19% | 16% | 20% |
| Children hitting three or more indicators of CSE        | 0%  | 1%  | 3%  | 9%  | 17% | 26% | 28% | 16% |
| Population Estimates                                    | 12% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 13% |

Table 9: Age of children in population, hitting three or more indicators and hitting any of the indicators on average

Firstly, the table demonstrates that children hit three or more indicators across all ages (children aged 10 accounted for 0.3% of the dataset). More importantly, however, there is an evident cluster of vulnerable children aged 14-16 who hit three or more indicators, compared to population size. Even more concerning is the jump in the percentage of children showing multiple signs of risk from age 13 to 14; this jump is highlighted in the chart below:

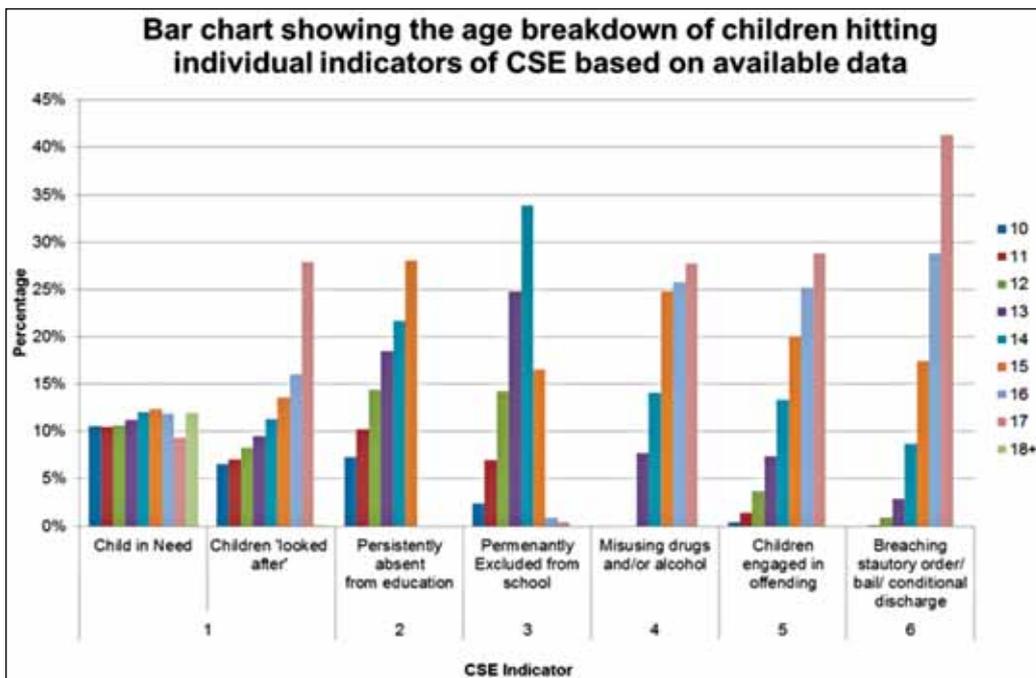


<sup>12</sup> There may also be some bias in the data with data on persistent absence only being collected on children up to the compulsory school age. Nationally this is collected and aggregated by the DFE for children between the ages of 5 and 15.

Children across the age range feature in both the individual aggregate data and in the data for children hitting multiple indicators of CSE.

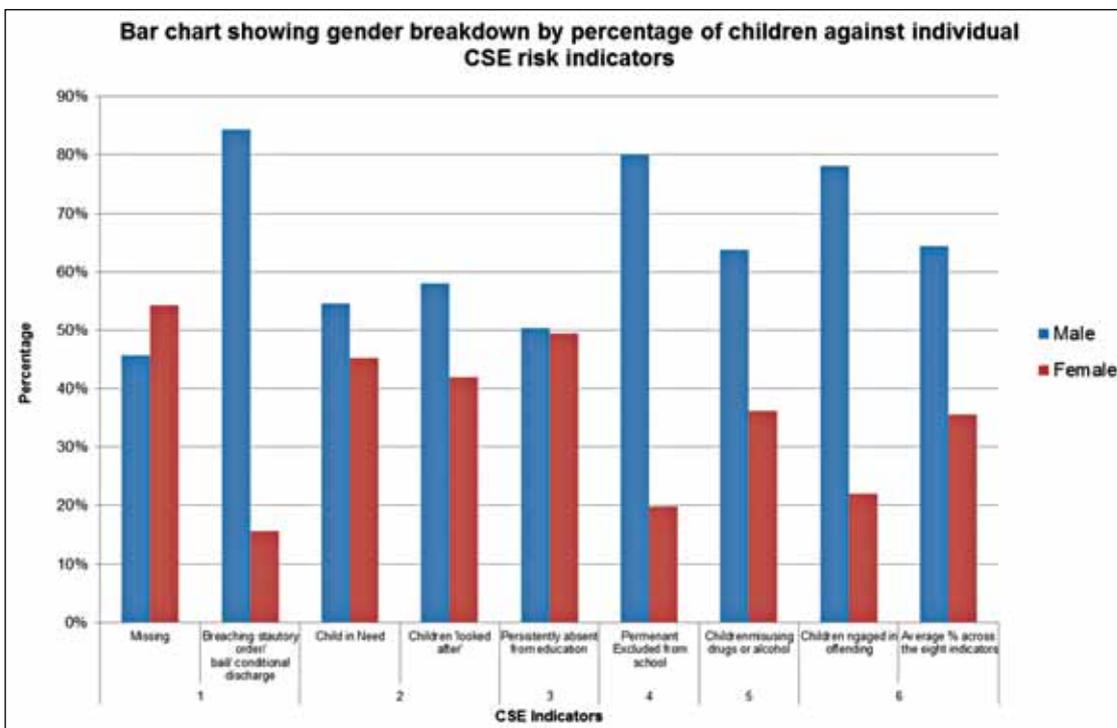
However, this does not match population size. It is important to note that this jump may represent the age at which children are identified, and not necessarily the age at which the harm/risk begins. However, it does demonstrate that the CSEGG dataset, and the indicators used to identify sexually-exploited children, are more likely to identify those aged 13 and above.

When we look at individual indicators, there are some differences in the age profile of children. This is mostly apparent in children identified as being in need – which appears to be reasonably equally spread across all ages:



It is clear from the above graph that the individual indicators are generally more likely to identify children aged 14 and 15. Older children are less likely to be identified through not attending school once they reach 16, and are more likely to be identified in relation to offending and care status. As such, within the indicator list, particular combinations of indicators may be more likely to identify children of a certain age.

In relation to gender, the national population of 10-17 year-olds is split 51% male and 49% female. For the six indicators where there are aggregate data, children display relevant behaviour as follows<sup>13</sup>:



As was anticipated before site visits, girls are more likely to be reported missing from home than boys. Given that going missing is the most commonly-used indicator to identify children at risk of sexual exploitation, use of that indicator alone will result in bias towards the identification of young women.

For many of the other indicators within the dataset, particularly children who are under the supervision of youth offending teams, who have been excluded from school or who are accessing substance misuse services, boys are more likely to show up.

Interestingly, figures on children who are persistently absent from school show very little difference between boys and girls.

It is important to note that victims of rape and sexual offences are not included in the above table. The Inquiry is confident that the bias within that indicator would be towards girls and young women, given that they are far more likely than men and boys to report a sexual offence. In addition to missing, and sexual offences, children attending sexual health clinics are also disproportionately girls and young women:

Table 10: Percentage of children who are female making repeat presentations to GUM clinics

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Proportion of children who are female and presenting at a GUM clinic on more than one occasion within a year:                           | 85% |
| Proportion of children who are female and presenting at a GUM clinic with more than one acute case of a sexually-transmitted infection: | 80% |

<sup>13</sup> Aggregate missing children data was provided by the UK Missing Persons bureau and is based on data supplied by 28 Police forces and provides a count of incidents not individuals

Although these data were not included within the CSEGG dataset (due to the low number of submissions made to the Inquiry and problems in obtaining health data), evidence from the known cases submitted to the Inquiry demonstrated the importance of sexual health as an indicator of risk. The fact that 85% of those children who visited a GUM clinic on more than one occasion were girls implies that should this be included within the dataset. It may increase the number of girls and young women identified, but not necessarily the number of boys.

Although 20% of those children who had more than one acute case of a sexually-transmitted infection were boys, and this being a higher percentage of victims generally identified as being at risk of CSE, this indicator could assist in the identification of some of the most vulnerable boys and young men within the dataset.

In relation to ethnicity<sup>14</sup>, aggregate data are available on six of the key risk indicators within the dataset. Across an average of these six indicators, 80% of the children affected are recorded as 'White':

*Table 11: Ethnicity of children presenting with indicators on the CSEGG dataset*

|                                      | <b>Asian or Asian British<sup>15</sup></b> | <b>Black or Black British<sup>16</sup></b> | <b>Mixed<sup>17</sup></b> | <b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group<sup>18</sup></b> | <b>White<sup>19</sup></b> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Average Across CSE Indicators</b> | 5%   | 7%   | 6%                        | 1%  | 81%                       |

<sup>14</sup> There are some notable limitations with collecting accurate aggregate data on ethnicity on the indicators of CSE and indeed at a national level. In relation to the individual indicators there are differences between the ways in which organisations collect ethnicity data, with police predominantly collecting data on ethnic appearance which is not directly comparable with that provided by other organisations

<sup>15</sup> Asian or Asian British comprises of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Any other Asian background.

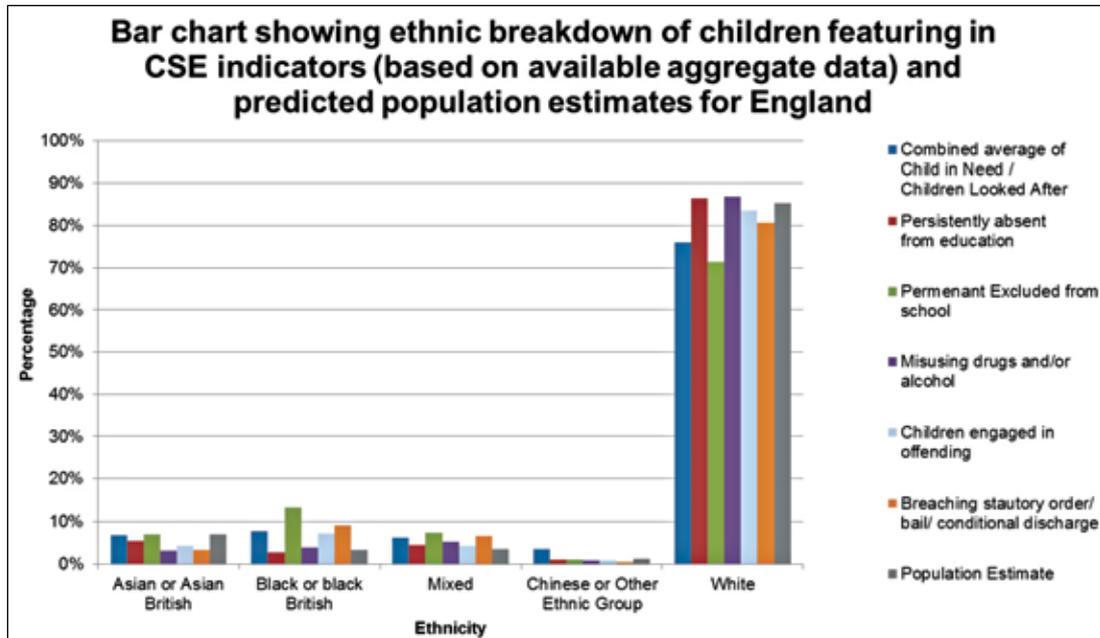
<sup>16</sup> Black or Black British comprises of Caribbean, African or Any other Black background.

<sup>17</sup> Mixed comprises of White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other Mixed background.

<sup>18</sup> Chinese or Other Ethnic Groups comprises of Chinese and Any other ethnic group.

<sup>19</sup> White comprises of White British, White Irish, Traveller of Irish Heritage, Any Other White background and Gypsy/Roma.

However, for individual indicators, as with gender, there are variations:

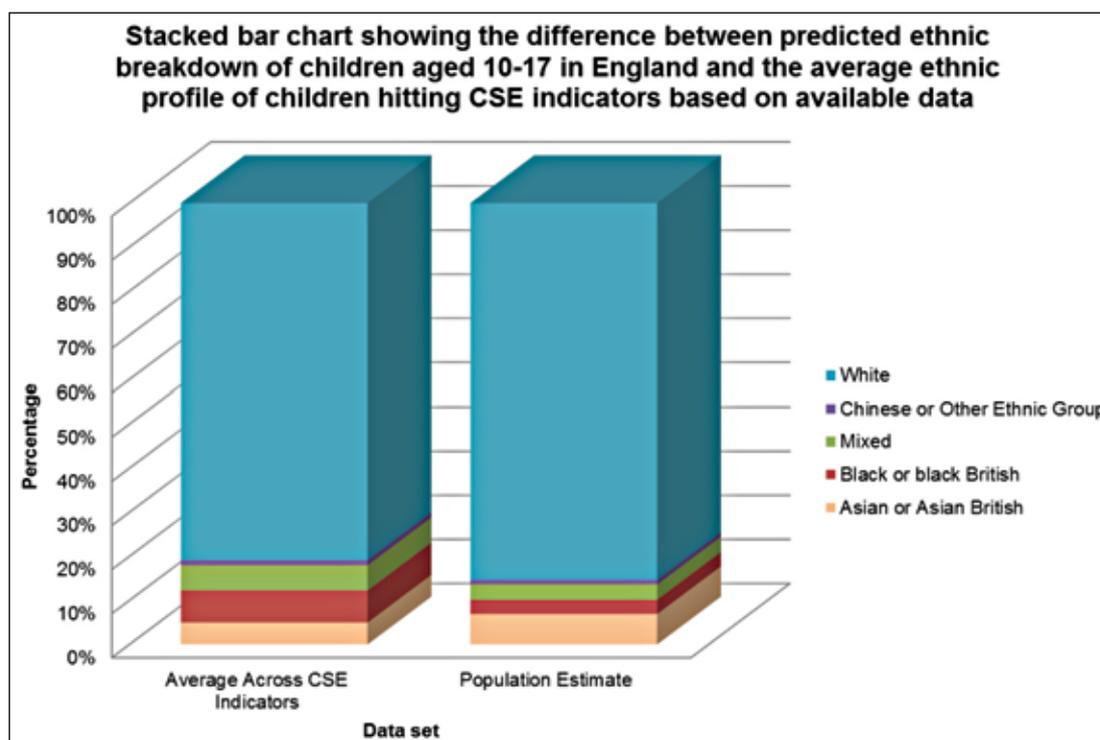


Most notably, a greater proportion of White children access drug and alcohol misuse services and are persistently absent from school, while a larger proportion of BME children are permanently excluded from school.

Ethnicity data from the latest census are not yet available. 'Experimental'<sup>20</sup> data obtained from 2009 population estimates have been obtained to provide an indication of whether there is any ethnic weighting across the CSE indicators. As the chart below indicates, where data are available, they are more likely to identify those recorded as 'Black' or 'Mixed'. It is important to note that data on children reported as 'missing' are not available in relation to ethnicity. Given the importance placed on this indicator when identifying sexually-exploited children, this is a gap that needs to be filled.

<sup>20</sup> Population estimates based on national office of statistics 'experimental data' mid 2009 data. These are not shown to meet the standards of national office of statistics so should be treated with caution and only be used as a guide: (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/publication-scheme/published-ad-hoc-data/population/june-2012/unrounded-mid-2009-population-estimates-by-ethnic-group-for-all-local-authorities-by-single-year-of-age.zip>)

The graph, however, indicates that children recorded as 'Asian' or 'Asian British' are less likely to be identified using the indicators associated with child sexual exploitation. As the evidence base has identified (in the chapter on victims), children from some ethnic minority groups may be less likely to be identified by statutory services, as they often have different 'help-seeking' behaviour, and their risks are less well known to professionals:



These trends are also consistent when looking at aggregate data on repeat STI attendance at GUM sexual health clinics, and on abortions.

Using aggregate data, we can identify whether any individual indicators are more likely to identify girls than boys, particular ethnic groups, or children of particular ages. Aggregate data were not available for all indicators, but the data that were provided imply that some indicators are more likely to identify girls, and others are more likely to identify boys; for example, girls are more likely to be reported missing than are boys, but boys are more likely to be involved with a youth offending service than are girls.

Some are more likely to identify White British children and others are more likely to identify BME children; for example, White British children are more likely to be using drug and alcohol services, whereas BME children are more likely to be excluded from school.

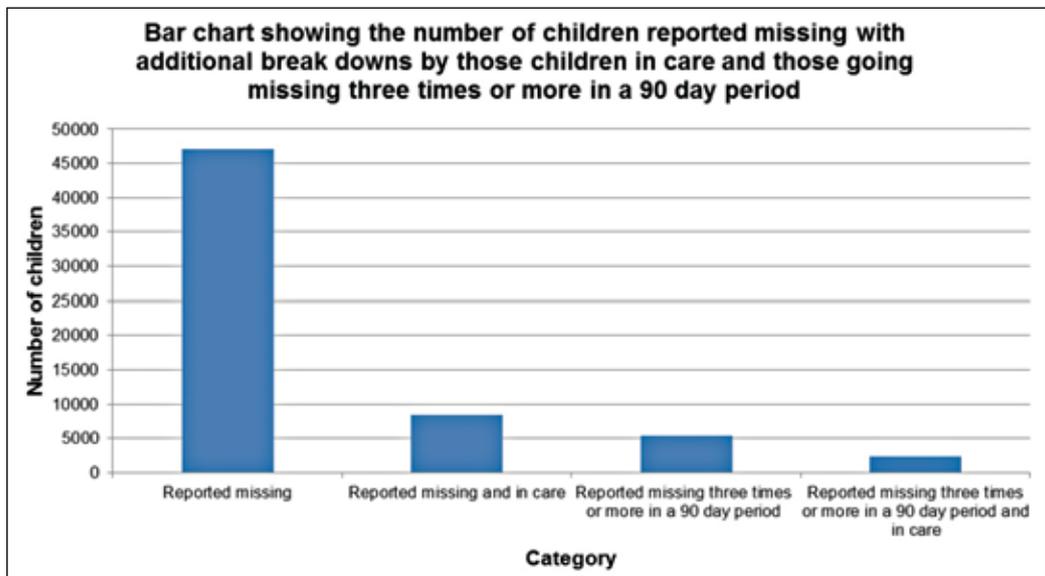
Most of the indicators are more likely to identify children aged 14-16. Therefore, if professionals used only the warning sign of 'being reported missing to the police' to identify potential victims, they would be more likely to identify girls and young women and miss boys and young men. If they looked only for children with an identified drug and alcohol problem, they would be more likely to find White British victims and miss BME victims. Professionals must use the warning signs linked to CSE bearing these trends in mind. We would advise professionals to assess risk using multiple indicators, rather than prioritising just one, such as 'missing', to ensure that children are not overlooked.

## Patterns between individual indicators

In order to understand the prevalence of individual signs of risk among the 16,500 children identified by the Inquiry, the Inquiry has analysed patterns between the individual 11 indicators. Analysis of these patterns assists in our understanding of potentially harmful/risky combinations of indicators, and reaffirms the importance of assessing risk across a number of agencies, including police, health, children's service, youth offending, and education.

### 1) Missing

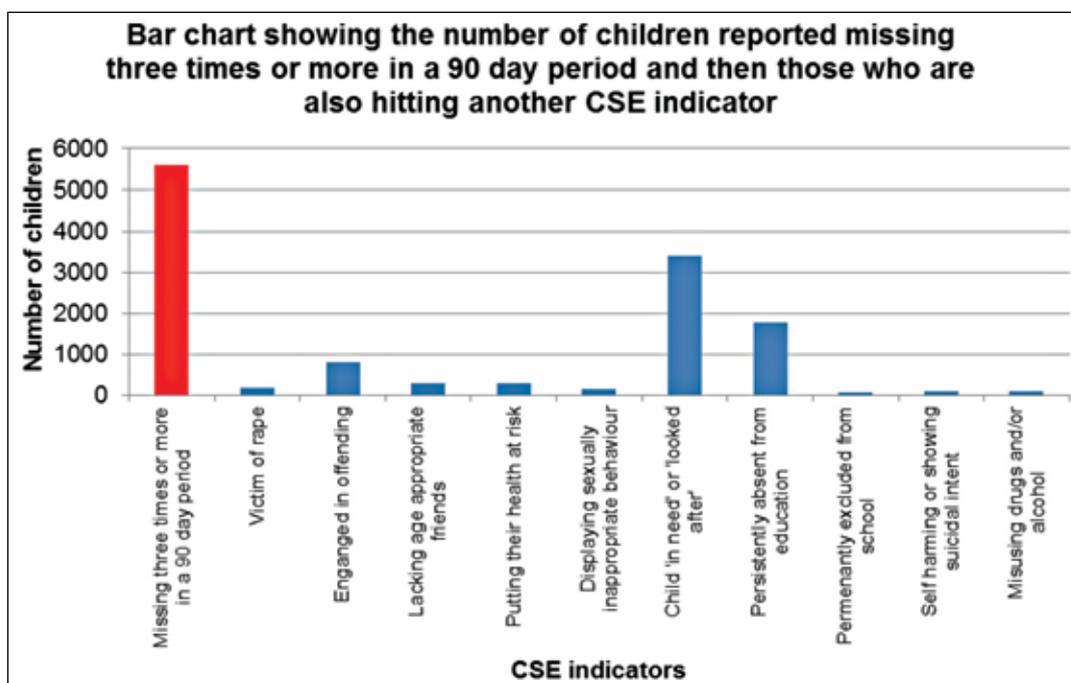
From the evidence base it is clear that many children who are sexually exploited repeatedly go missing as a result. Evidence submitted to the Inquiry's dataset<sup>21</sup> indicates that between April 2010 and March 2011, over 47,000<sup>22</sup> children aged between 10 and 17 were reported to police forces across England as missing, of whom at least 5,400 were reported missing three or more times in 90 days:



<sup>21</sup> Given that four police forces were unable to provide individual level data around missing persons, and 12 police forces were unable to provide data on children missing three times or more in either 90 days or 14 days, the actual number of children going missing and particularly those at greater frequency, is likely to be higher than the figures within the Inquiry dataset.

<sup>22</sup> Data provided to the national missing persons bureau by 28 Police forces identified that over 96,000 reports of children (aged 9 to 17) going missing were made to Police forces operating in England. This figure is based on incidents and will contain multiple reports for the same individual children. It is also an undercounting due to the absence of data from 11 Police Forces.

When we consider the other risks linked to these children, the CSEGG dataset indicates 61% of those children reported missing three times or more in 90 days were identified as being 'in need' or 'looked after' and 32% were identified as being persistently absent either from school or a pupil referral unit (PRU). These patterns are seen in the graph below:



The CSEGG Inquiry Accelerated Report (OCC 2012), which focused in particular on the sexual exploitation of children in residential care, highlighted inconsistent recording of children who go missing from care.

The dataset confirms these concerns. According to figures obtained through the dataset process, 8,375 children were reported as missing from care in 2010/11. These figures were arrived at by:

- Matching police<sup>23</sup> records of children reported missing to the police to data on children in care that were provided by DFE/ local authorities. Some police services do not currently capture if a child is, or is not, in care when a missing incident is reported. These data cannot be obtained without this comparison being made.

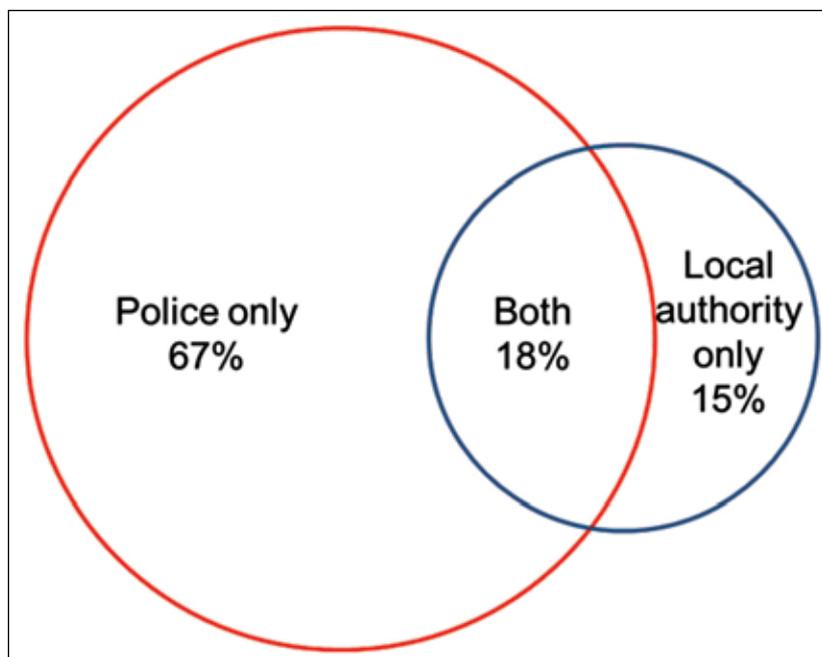
These data were in turn compared, matched and added to:

- Missing from care data held by DFE and collected via SSSA03 annual return. This currently only requests data for children who are missing from care for 24 hours or longer.
- Missing from care data held by local authorities on children missing for less than 24 hours. 32% of the local authorities who responded to the data request could provide this data.

<sup>23</sup> No time restriction was placed on how long the child was required to be missing for when collecting the Police data.

Based on this analysis, it became clear that data collation in this area is currently fragmented, with records being held across several organisations as illustrated in the Venn diagram:

*Venn Diagram 1: Agencies that hold data on children reported as missing from care*



Based on the available data and the definition currently used within the SSDA903 return, the DFE currently record the details of 11% of the children reported missing from care.

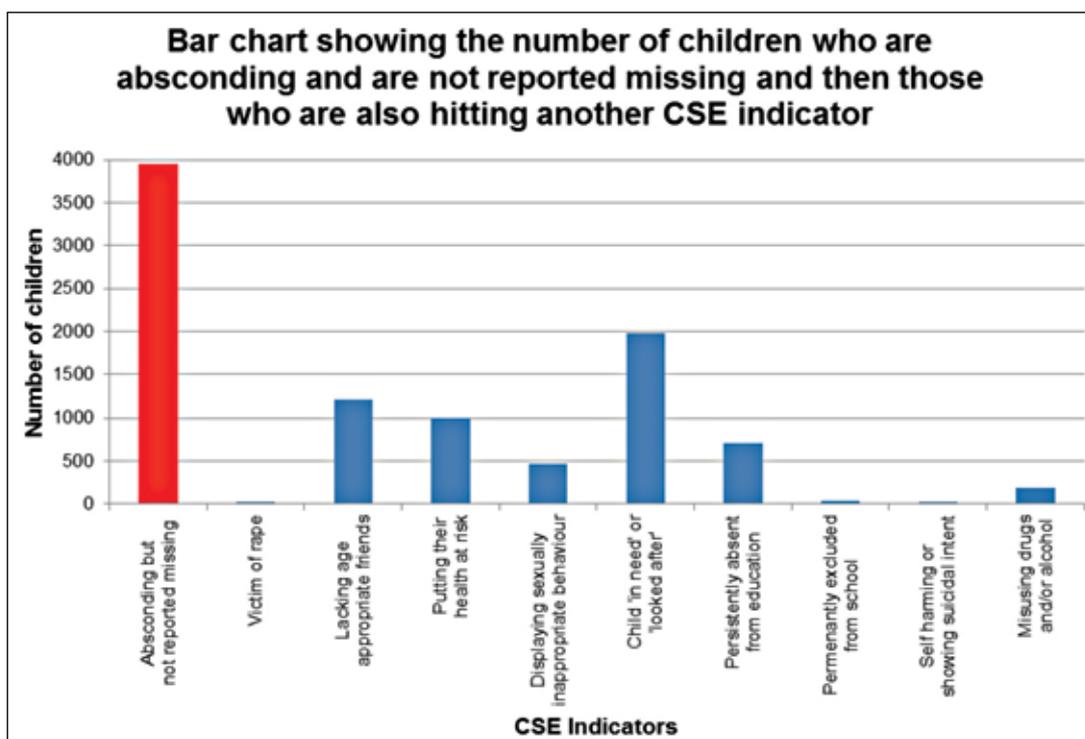
The figure of 8,375 begins to highlight the true scale of the numbers of children going missing from care. While it is not possible to distinguish within the police figures whether some of these reports concern children who were absent (i.e. late home, rather than missing), this is still likely to include some undercounting<sup>24</sup>. This is because four police forces were unable to provide any missing children data and 19 local authorities did not submit information to any part of the data request.

Consequently concerns exist over how effectively this area of risk is being monitored at a national level and in some local areas to ensure that action is taken to safeguard vulnerable children within this group. The Department for Education is seeking to address this issue through a dedicated task and finish group. This group was established following the publication of the Inquiry's accelerated report on group and gang-associated sexual exploitation of children living in residential care homes, published in July 2012.

Evidence to the Inquiry indicated children who are being sexually exploited regularly go missing as a consequence; however, children who are missing as a result of CSE are not always reported to the police.

<sup>24</sup>The APPG reports on missing persons and children in care published in June 2012 quoted a figure that 10,000 children were reported missing from care based on an estimate provided by the UK Missing Persons Bureau.

To discover whether the indicator of missing potentially left out children hitting other multiple signs of risk associated with CSE, analysis was conducted on children who were recorded by a youth offending service as 'absconding'<sup>25</sup>. The graph below shows that 3,950 children were recorded as absconding by a youth offending service but had not been reported or recorded as missing by the police. 43% of those children who absconded and who were not reported missing, displayed three or more signs of risk associated with CSE:



This demonstrates the importance of seeking out multiple sources of information in order to identify the vulnerability of sexually-exploited children. While these children had not been reported missing, there were periods when they were disappearing and not being accounted for. This behaviour is equally important to identify.

## 2) Non-attendance or exclusion from school

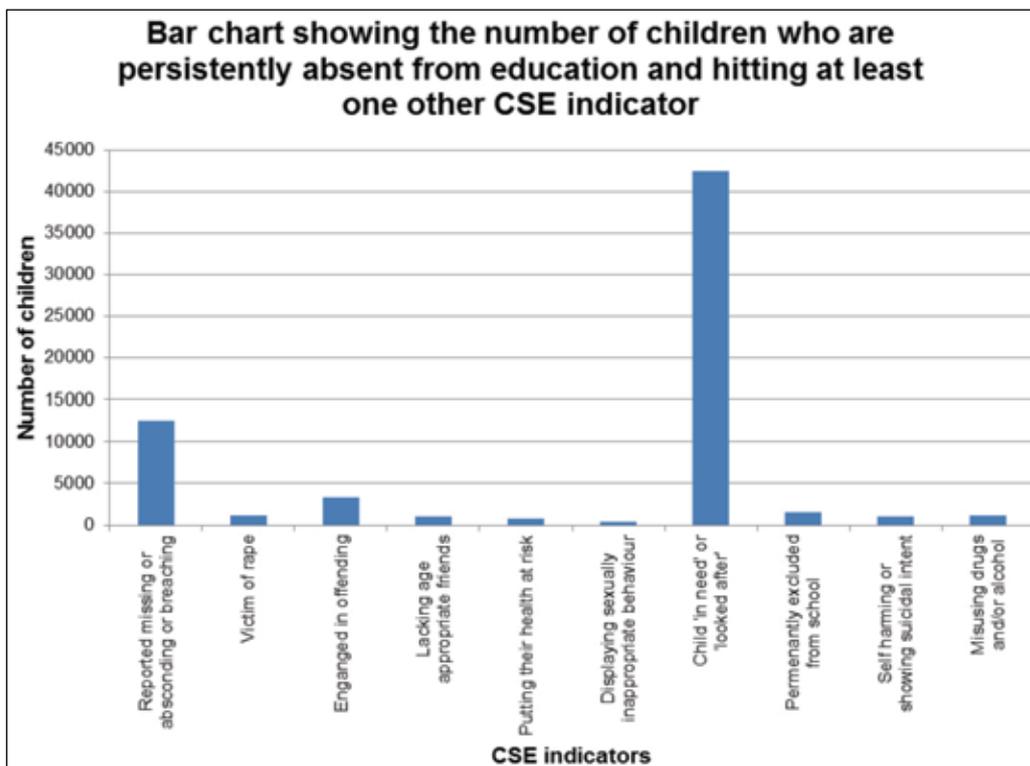
While it is appropriate to prioritise missing reports from home and care in relation to CSE, evidence collected on site visits and during evidence hearings indicated that not all children who were missing would be reported as such. Furthermore, some children were being sexually exploited at school or during the school day, resulting in their missing school rather than going missing from home. The Inquiry dataset indicates over 273,000 children<sup>26</sup> were reported as being persistently absent from state-funded mainstream and special schools between April 2010 and March 2011. Around a further 18,500 children were not held on any school register during this same period<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> To abscond is defined as 'to go away suddenly and secretly in order to escape from somewhere'. In the context of ASSET data this could be where a child is failing to appear at scheduled appointments with their YOT supervisor.

<sup>26</sup> DFE – School census data based on children aged 10 to 17 as at 31st August 2011. Persistent Absentees are defined as having an overall absence rate of around 15 per cent or more. This equates to 46 or more sessions of absence (authorised and unauthorised) during the year.

<sup>27</sup> There were significant variations in recording practices between local authorities in relation to children missing from education creating data quality issues & preventing meaningful inferences to be made from this particular dataset.

While this individual indicator potentially introduces a large number of children to the dataset, when it is considered against other indicators the total number of children significantly reduces. Of those children who were absent from school, 11,400 were also reported as missing to the police and 2,200 were missing from care. Assessing this indicator against other signs of risk, rather than considering it in isolation, helps to identify the most vulnerable children – as the graph below illustrates:



While the number of those hitting multiple indicators, and who are also absent from school, is small compared with the total number of children (273,000), non-attendance at school helps to make sense of other indicators. For example, 28% of children who accessed a drug and alcohol service, and 24% of children who had been a victim of rape, were persistently absent from education. This strengthens our understanding of the children who are vulnerable within other datasets but who are not being reported missing from home.

In addition, evidence indicated that some children, who had been sexually exploited, were ultimately excluded from school. Exclusion was for several reasons, including the traumatic nature of the abuse resulting in chaotic or disruptive behaviour. In addition, in a small number of cases, children were excluded for sexual misconduct:

## Annika's story

'Annika', 14 year old young woman, told professionals that she had been raped by a group of three males, although she was unable or unwilling to provide any further information about the perpetrators. Following this incident Annika was found in her school toilets giving oral sex to three boys who were in her year group. According to the agency submitting evidence, 'the boys denied their involvement' in the incident, but Annika admitted that she had been engaged in a sexual act. Annika was excluded from school for a fixed term. Following this incident Annika is now out of education and hoping to be moved into a different school. She is currently being supported by a specialist sexual exploitation service.

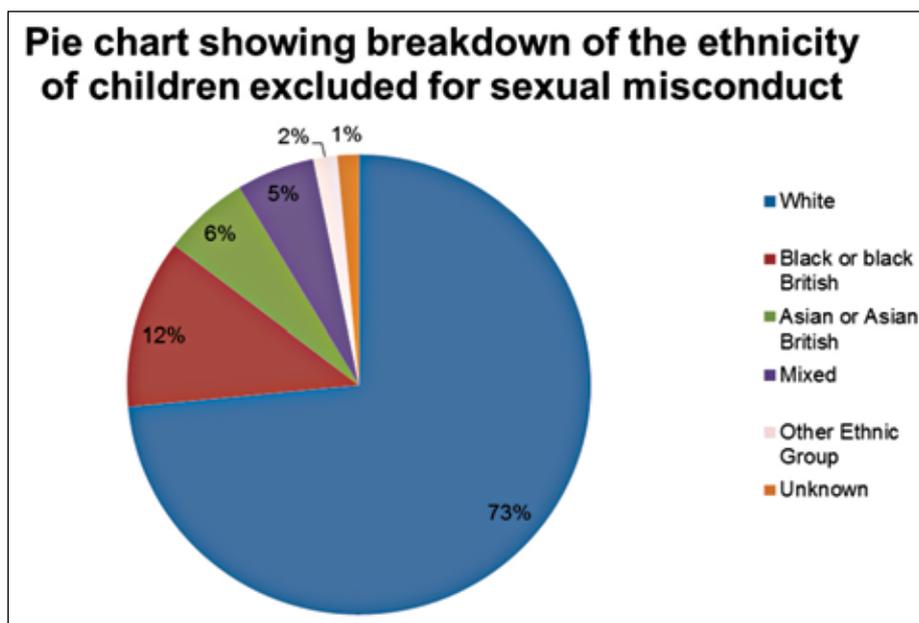
*Call for evidence submission*

School exclusions data for children aged 10 to 17 showed there were 3,041<sup>28</sup> fixed term period exclusions and 78 permanent exclusions for sexual misconduct. This represents approximately 1% of all fixed term exclusions 2% of all permanent exclusions:

*Table 12: Number of children excluded from state funded schools and pupil referral units in general, and for sexual misconduct specifically*

|                             | Fixed Period Exclusion |         | Permanent Exclusion |       |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------|---------------------|-------|
|                             | Sexual Misconduct      | All     | Sexual Misconduct   | All   |
| <b>State Funded Schools</b> | 2961                   | 294,776 | 78                  | 4,601 |
| <b>Pupil Referral Unit</b>  | 81                     | 11663   | 0                   | 1     |

Around 93% of children excluded for sexual misconduct were boys and young men and 70% were aged between 12 and 14. The following pie chart shows the recorded ethnicity breakdown for those excluded for sexual misconduct:

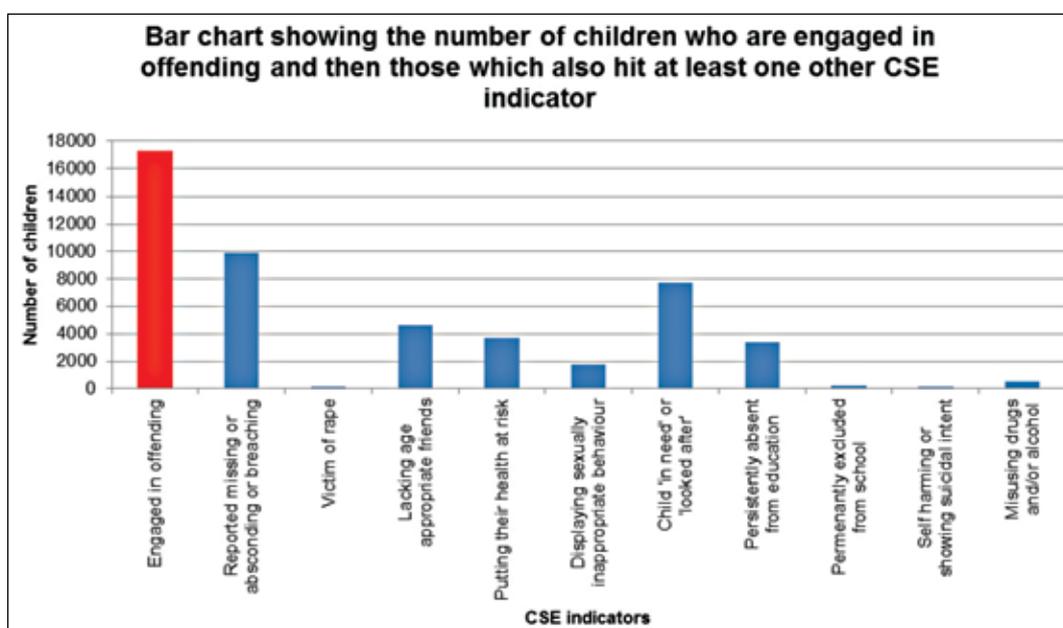


<sup>28</sup> DFE – School & Pupil Referral Unit Census: Data based on age at 31st August 2010 and includes summer term 2010, autumn term 2010 and spring term 2011; excludes general hospital schools.

In relation to school exclusion more generally, 43% of children who were excluded for a fixed period, and 79% of children who were permanently excluded from school (for sexual misconduct, physical assault against a pupil or for drug and alcohol related misconduct<sup>29</sup>), displayed other warning signs associated with CSE.

### 3) Offending

Evidence submitted to the Inquiry established that some children in both gangs and groups offended as a consequence of being sexually exploited. Based on published statistics on children in the youth justice system, 85,300 young people were under the supervision of youth-offending teams (YOTs) across England and Wales in 2010/11. A limited dataset of the above is held by the Inquiry relating to 17,300 children who were involved in or were at risk of offending<sup>30</sup>. Of those children, 15,125 displayed the following additional signs of risk and vulnerability:



Data collected by youth offending teams were particularly important for identifying children displaying behaviour rarely recorded elsewhere, such as children who lack friends of similar age or who display sexually-inappropriate behaviour. Inclusion of the ASSET data within the CSEGG dataset was therefore an invaluable resource for identifying vulnerable children. This was the case even though it clearly identified only children (it is a youth offending assessment) who are offending as well as displaying the behaviour in question.

### 4) Health Data

The list of warning signs that a child may be experiencing sexual exploitation, as discussed, came about as a consequence of CSE in the cases submitted to the Inquiry.

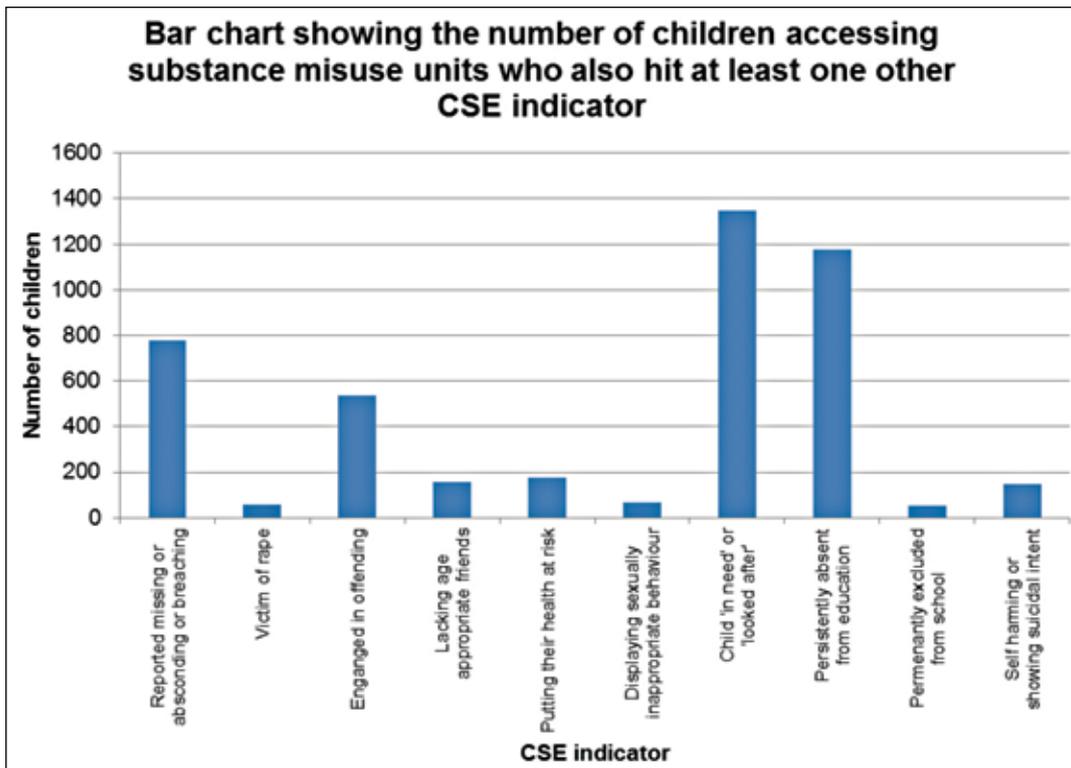
It is therefore crucial that relevant health information is included in any local risk assessment of CSE. All such data are held by numerous health agencies and proved the most difficult for the Inquiry to

<sup>29</sup> Figure is based on children expelled from state and special schools only.

<sup>30</sup> Supplied by 77% of local YOTs in England using the ASSET assessment data.

access. Unfortunately, this resulted in significant gaps in the dataset when it comes to identifying these signs of risk.

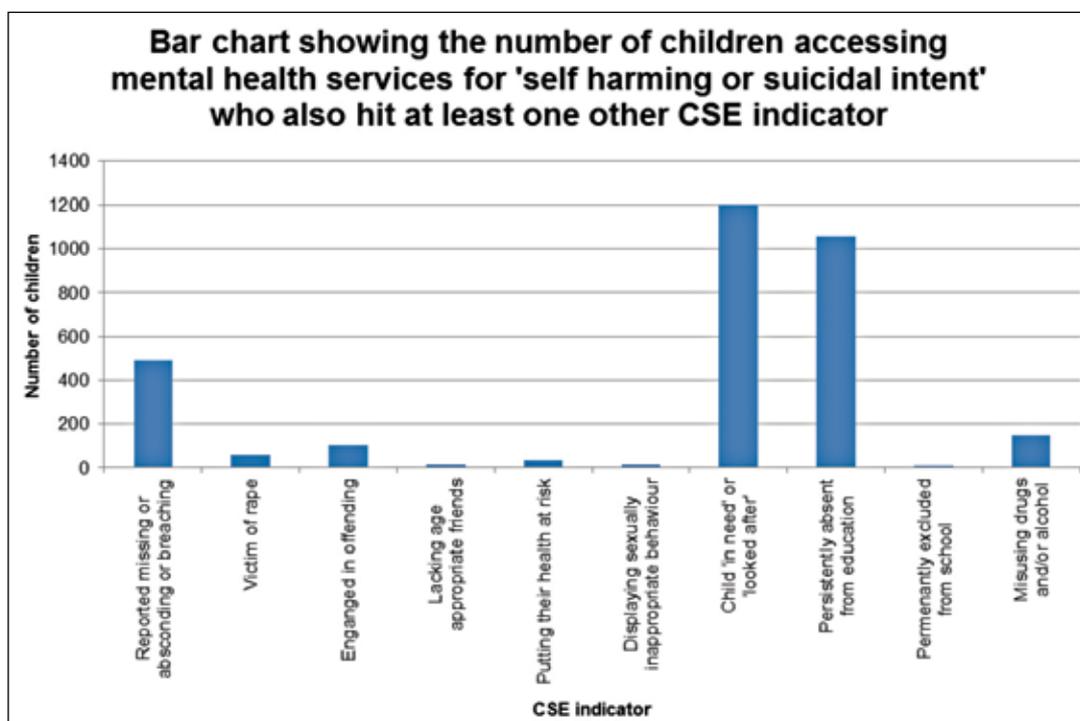
Individual health level data were provided only by drug and alcohol teams (DATs), which provide services in 37% of PCTs<sup>31</sup>. Within those areas, 55% of the children (around 2,325) showed more than one other CSE indicator:



Data provided by the national treatment agency show that 21,955 children aged 17 and under were recorded as receiving specialist substance misuse interventions between April 2010 and March 2011. We would suggest that many more children within the 63% of PCTs which did not provide these data are potentially missing from the dataset and feature across multiple risk indicators of CSE.

<sup>31</sup> 22% being complete and covering an entire year.

Given the impact of CSE on children's mental health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) data are particularly important for the dataset and services that operate in 41% of PCTs providing these data. As a result, around 2,025 children who were accessing CAMHS services for 'self-harming or having suicidal intent' were also recorded as showing the following vulnerabilities:



The graph above illustrates the benefits of complimenting health data with information held by local authorities and the police. In order to generate a full picture of the potential risks faced by the children accessing CAMHS, and to identify their additional risks, multiple datasets needed to be drawn together. Knowing that a child was self-harming does not in itself fully identify their potential risk in relation to child sexual exploitation.

In relation to sexual health, only a very small number of PCTs provided data to the Inquiry, as outlined in the methodology section of this report. Such was the size of the data, it was not methodologically viable to include this information within the CSEGG dataset analysis. However, given the significant presence of poor sexual health in the cases submitted to the CSEGG Inquiry, separate analysis was conducted on the sexual health data provided. The Inquiry requested data on:

1. Children aged 10-13 with an STI.
2. Children aged 10-17 with more than one STI in a year.
3. Children visiting a GUM or family planning clinic on more than one occasion a year for non-routine appointments.

11% of the children who showed any of the above indicators shared features with the children counted within the CSEGG dataset. 3% displayed three or more signs of risk associated with child sexual exploitation. Caution should be taken with this figure as the number cannot be considered to be representative due to the existing data gaps. However, it does help to demonstrate the potential value of these data as an indicator of CSE.

Data from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) indicate that approximately 11,800 children attended a genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic on more than one occasion between April 2010 and March 2011. Approximately 900 children presented on more than one occasion with an acute sexually-transmitted disease<sup>32</sup>.

Further data provided by the Department of Health showed that 1,193 terminations of pregnancy between April 2010 and March 2011 involved a child who was under 16 and who had already had at least one previous termination<sup>33</sup>.

Given these numbers, it is crucial that local areas are able to include sexual health data when conducting risk assessments on children. These indicators could provide a crucial piece of information required to understand a young person's vulnerability, when set against other warning signs associated with CSE. It is clearly important to explore how barriers that impede data-sharing can be broken down in order to ensure children at risk of CSE are identified and protected.

## 5) Child Protection Plans

As itemised above, living in a chaotic or dysfunctional home, or having previous experience of abuse within the family, makes children more vulnerable to CSE.

25% of call for evidence submissions recorded some form of previous abuse within the home.

Information published by the Department for Education shows that 12,930 children aged 10 and over were subject to a child protection plan during the one-year period included in the CSEGG dataset. During the same period, 30% of those children showed the CSE risk indicators (excluding those who identified as being a 'child in need' or looked after'), in particular:

- 3,150 identified as being persistently absent from education.
- 1,025 reported as missing to the police.

In addition, it is worth noting that of the 12,930 children on child protection plans, only 1,060 were on a plan for sexual abuse<sup>34</sup>. Evidence to the Inquiry, particularly interviews with children and young people, suggests that childhood experiences of sexual abuse that went undetected increased a child's vulnerability to CSE.

The Inquiry is concerned that child sexual abuse is not being identified and recorded in a way that enables professionals to address this vulnerability and protect children from exploitation in the future.

Information submitted also indicated that child protection plans are rarely used for children at risk of child sexual exploitation or gang association. Only 9% and 1% of local authorities were able to

<sup>32</sup> A child is only counted as presenting on more than one occasion if there is over six weeks between their first and last appointment. Acute STIs include diagnoses of Chancroid, LGV, Donovanosis, Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, genital herpes (first episode), Molluscum contagiosum, Non-specific genital infection, Scabies, Pediculosis pubis, Syphilis (primary, secondary, and early latent). As these data only includes GUM clinics and no other sexual health services these figures can only serve as an indicator of the number of children undertaking STI checks and being diagnosed with an infection

<sup>33</sup> As individual level data for each of these indicators is not obtainable we are unable to ascertain whether there is any double counting between each dataset in terms of children who feature in both of these cohorts.

<sup>34</sup> Where the latest category recorded was child sexual abuse

provide data on each. Where data were provided, only 106 children were on plans for child sexual exploitation and 29 for gang-related violence or gang association.

## 6) Living in gang neighbourhoods

It was unusual for evidence to be submitted on children who had been sexually exploited by a gang but who did not live in a gang neighbourhood or were not in a relationship with a gang member (either as an intimate partner or family member).

Locating gang-associated women and girls is underway by the *Home Office*, *Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)* and *Greater Manchester Police*. This information was not available in time for the first round of data requests.

However, using as a measure both the Ending Gang Violence (EGV) areas identified by the Government and the most recent census, it is evident that 1,123,000 children and young people aged 10-19 live in local authority areas that include gang neighbourhoods. This represents around 17% of all young people in England in this age group.

In relation to individual level data on this issue, 26 of the 29 EGV authorities responded to the dataset request. Of the children who were showing three or more signs of risk in relation to CSE, 4,375 were living in a gang-affected area.

## 7) Housing and homelessness

Worrying evidence emerged about children, and young people aged 16-17, who were housed in hostels, bed-and-breakfast and foyer<sup>35</sup> accommodation and who were subject to sexual exploitation. The abuse was sometimes not recognised or, if it was, not consistently assessed, leaving the child or young person in question without protection.

During a conversation with youth workers and outreach staff on a site visit, the panel was informed that young women aged 16 and 17 were being placed in a local women's hostel. Professionals voiced concerns that some adult women in the hostel were involved in street-based prostitution, and were being threatened and coerced to introduce 16 and 17 year olds from the hostel to the pimps on the streets. On some occasions pimps would park near the hostel and wait for the older women to bring the younger women outside. Professionals reported that this process had led vulnerable young women into commercial sexual exploitation and drug and alcohol misuse. No child protection investigation or action had been taken.

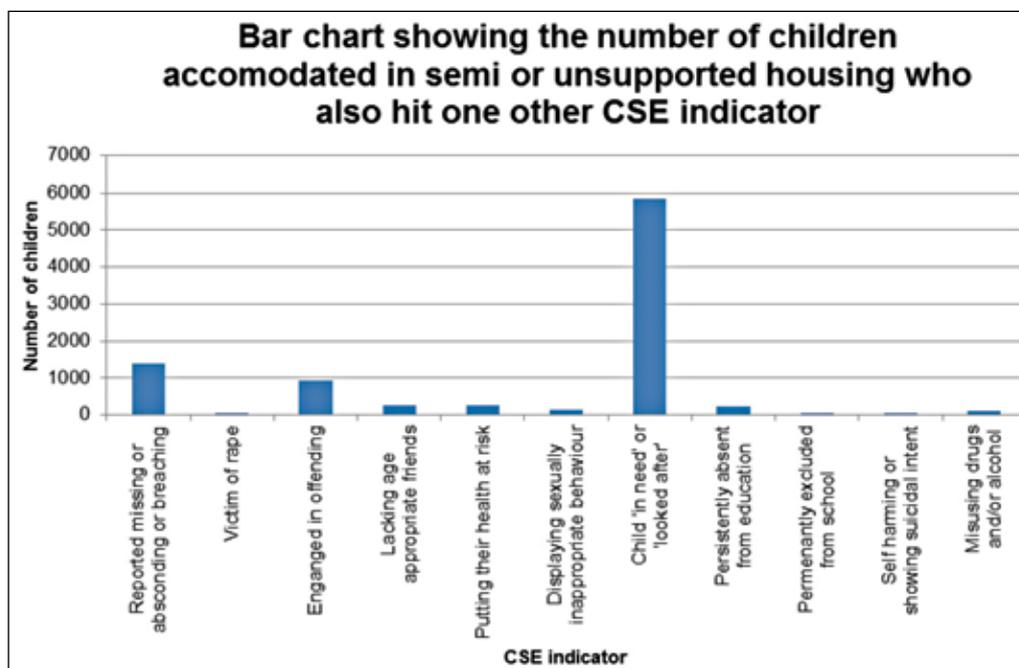
*Site visit 9 evidence*

As with children who have stopped attending school, but not been reported missing, children living in hostels and foyers may be missing from traditional counts of vulnerable children.

Data on these children were requested, and the Inquiry dataset records that at least 11,200 children and young people, up to the age of 21, were housed in hostels, bed-and-breakfasts and foyer

<sup>35</sup> Foyers are integrated learning and accommodation centres which provide housing, support and training for young people aged 16-25

accommodation across England from April 2010-March 2011. During the same period, at least 14% of those children and young people displayed additional signs of risk, not including children identified as 'being in need' or 'looked after'.



## Gaps in the figures

The CSEGG dataset represents a first attempt at compiling data from children's services, health, education, youth offending, the police and other agencies to identify children at risk of child sexual exploitation.

This exercise reinforces the point made under "Limitations of the data" that the signs of risk are such that not all are consistently recorded, if at all.

The Inquiry makes no apology for repeating its concern that:

**Where data are available, they are held across multiple agencies that share limited amounts of information and have different record-keeping and computer systems, thereby making it very difficult to identify and protect victims.**

During Phase 2 the Inquiry will address some of these areas through:

1. The dissemination of a second national data request<sup>36</sup>. This will focus more on understanding practice in relation to CSE and will seek to collect data on:
  - the extent of: data capture; multi-agency data-sharing; resulting action at local level to identify and address CSE involving gangs and groups.
  - the number of localities that have undertaken strategic planning and put services and/ or plans in place to review and address CSE involving gangs and groups.

<sup>36</sup> Planned to be launched early December 2012.

- action being taken by the Police to combat CSE involving groups and gangs and the intelligence that is being accrued.
  - all local profiles produced either by the LSCB or Police to augment the current picture currently held by the Inquiry. The Inquiry will also conduct visits where suitable.
2. Seeking to complete the existing dataset through the direct targeting of localities that did not respond to the initial phase one dataset request. This to obtain a fuller picture of the number of children at risk of CSE.
  3. Reviewing opportunities to increase understanding of the profile of children at risk of CSE, and in particular identify any cross-over with known victimisation and other 'at risk' groups, where appropriate and ethically approved.
  4. Establish whether there is a geographic profile in relation to CSE involving groups and gangs, including an assessment of trends or vulnerabilities that could lead to areas featuring with higher numbers of children at risk.

In the interim, the Inquiry calls upon local areas to share information across agencies in order to conduct a reliable and realistic assessment of local risk. The Phase 2 call for evidence closes on the 30th November and can be downloaded from the OCC website.

It is imperative that those children showing multiple warning signs of something being seriously wrong are identified.

Any such assessment should heed the advice within this report about potential age, gender and ethnicity distortions within the indicator set, and question the results of the assessment to ensure that they have identified vulnerable children who may be more unseen than others.

## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

---

### Children at risk

No child should be considered immune to child sexual exploitation.

However, as we have shown earlier in this report, it is possible to conclude that children who have pre-existing vulnerabilities are more likely to be sexually exploited than those who do not.

This section of the report outlines the evidence gathered on the individual characteristics of children reported to the Inquiry.

Overall, what this section demonstrates is that children and young people from a range of ages, both girls and young women and boys and young men, of a range of ethnicities, who identify as heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual, and some who are disabled, have been sexually exploited in either gangs or groups.

Furthermore, children from loving and secure homes can be abused in gangs and groups, as well as children with pre-existing vulnerabilities. Those for whom there are no protective measures in place are at greatest risk.

What is common to all victims is not their age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. It is their powerlessness and vulnerability, which shows itself through the kind of behaviour already outlined in this report. The only potential exception to this is the gender of victims, who are predominantly girls and young women. That said, when services went looking for boys and young men who are victims, they found them. Even so, girls and young women made up the majority of identified victims.

In fact, the evidence reveals that the individual characteristics of victims – gender, age, ethnicity etc., and how professionals respond to them – will determine the extent to which a young person is identified, and who identifies them. It may also determine the way in which they are sexually exploited, or the particular vulnerabilities that their abusers choose to exploit. Individual characteristics cannot be used, however, to target and identify victims. Rather the collective behaviour and vulnerabilities of victims, as outlined previously in this report, assist in the identification and rescue of children.

This section outlines the way in which individual characteristics of victims are identified and responded to by professionals, and abused by perpetrators, and what the consequences of these are for sexually-exploited children.

### Victims' histories

The majority of sexually-exploited children are living at home when their abuse begins. Some of those reported to the Inquiry come from loving and secure families, while others have been living in difficult circumstances, or have been in care or homeless, prior to being abused. 25% of call for evidence submissions, site visits and interviews with individual children and young people indicate that those who are raised in homes where there is domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse by parents or carers, or child abuse (physical, sexual or emotional) are more vulnerable to being sexually exploited.

23 young people<sup>37</sup> were interviewed for the Inquiry. The following information on their histories prior to being sexually exploited was provided:

- 12 young women said they were living in households where there had been domestic violence.
- four had histories of familial child sexual abuse.
- three had been young carers.
- 15 were bereaved of either a parent or a friend. Six of the children's parents had either committed suicide or died as a result of drug or alcohol use. Six had lost a friend as a result of gang-related violence.

A child can face the risk of sexual exploitation at the hands of a gang or a group in their neighbourhood, home, and school, among peer groups or at places such as parks or shopping centres.

All the gang-associated young people interviewed for the Inquiry were connected to street gangs via their neighbourhoods, schools, families and intimate relationships. This was echoed in the cases submitted via the call for evidence process and assessed on site visits.

Children who grow up in loving and secure homes may also be vulnerable to child sexual exploitation if they live in a gang-affected neighbourhood, have a friend who is being sexually exploited, or go to a school where other children have been sexually exploited. However, children who have pre-existing vulnerabilities and little protection around them will be at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

From the evidence submitted we have identified the circumstances under which children have an increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation. Those shown in **bold** are those that appeared most consistently across the evidence base:

- **Those children living in households described by professionals as 'chaotic' or 'dysfunctional'** were considered vulnerable for several reasons, including a need for love and security, and a lack of parental supervision or monitoring to enable early recognition of or active protection from abuse.
- **Children with a history of abuse** – including familial child sexual abuse, and children at risk of forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence.
- **Loss through bereavement** or family breakdown, including being taken into care.
- **Children living in gang-affected neighbourhoods.**
- Children witnessing domestic violence.
- Children with low self-confidence or low self-esteem had an increased vulnerability to grooming, and to the need to be part of a group/gang or to be 'loved' by other people.
- Children with a low socio-economic status had an increased vulnerability to grooming in return for gifts such as jewellery, clothing and mobile phones.
- Children in care.

---

<sup>37</sup> Of the 23, 19 were young women (all of whom had been sexually exploited), one young man had been sexually exploited, and three young men were gang-associated but did not disclose sexual exploitation. The full breakdown of the young people by gender, age and their association to groups or gangs is available in Appendix B

- Children and young people trafficked into the country and who were exploited sexually or otherwise once in England, were vulnerable to abuse due to isolation, dependence on the traffickers, threats of and actual violence, and/or threats to their family in their country of origin.
- Children at risk of forced marriage or 'honour'-based violence, resulting in the child running away from home, becoming homeless or being less likely to disclose exploitation should it take place.
- Children experiencing homelessness prior to abuse, including those occasions when a young person disclosed they were lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Children from black and minority ethnic communities perceived as 'westernised' and consequently abused by people within their family or extended family.

## Children in care

The Inquiry's accelerated report on children in residential care in July 2012 (mentioned above) showed that while the majority of children who are sexually exploited are living at home, a disproportionate number are living in residential care. Some children may be placed in care as a result of sexual exploitation. Others may be in care prior to being sexually exploited.

Particular risks to children in care were raised in 42.6% of evidence submissions. Call for evidence responses were received on the care status of 732 victims. Of those cases, 15% of the children reported had experienced abuse while in care. Of the young people interviewed as part of the Inquiry, 12 had been in care at some point before the age of 18. Six of the young people had been in care before being sexually exploited, while the other six were in care as a result of their exploitation.

According to the Inquiry's dataset, of the 16,500 children who showed three or more signs of risk linked to CSE in one year, 5,775 (around 35%) were children in care. All of the data gathered for the Inquiry indicate that the majority of sexually-exploited children are not living in care. However, a significant number are.

The Inquiry was informed about some residential children's homes that were being repeatedly targeted by perpetrators of CSE. In these instances, placing a child in those particular homes increased the risk of their being sexually exploited.

A specialist sexual exploitation service reports working with a particular residential children's home for a number of years. This particular home, and the children living in it, is repeatedly targeted by a group of men seeking to sexually exploit girls and young women. Several victims have been identified as living in the home. When girls are moved on and new ones arrive, the new girls go on to be sexually exploited. The home is perceived as an easy target by perpetrators, who assume that the children living in it are seeking love and security, and use this vulnerability to groom and abuse them.

*Site visit 5 evidence*

The accelerated report also found that children in care may be additionally vulnerable to child sexual exploitation due to the location of a residential children's home or by being placed with other children who are already being sexually exploited.

In addition, given their often traumatic backgrounds, children in care may have pre-existing vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation as listed earlier in this report.

The accelerated report made nine recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Secretary of State. Work on implementing the recommendations is being led by a senior official within the Department for Education. Three multi-agency task and finish groups have been established, with tight timescales for producing an action plan to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation that faces children in care. This is a very encouraging outcome.

## Victim/offender overlap

Of the 2409 victims reported in the call for evidence process, 155 were identified as also being perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. There were six adult perpetrators who were also identified as previous victims of CSE.

This overlap was identified during seven site visits. The children in question were either older young people and/or young men.

Some agencies used age as the benchmark for judging whether someone was treated as a victim or perpetrator. As the child got older, the less often they were recognised as a victim. Other agencies used the extent to which the child's victimisation was corroborated to decide whether to treat them as a victim or perpetrator. Gender sometimes influenced the decisions of professionals, with boys more likely to be perceived as perpetrators only, without due consideration being given to the extent to which they were consenting to participate in the abuse.

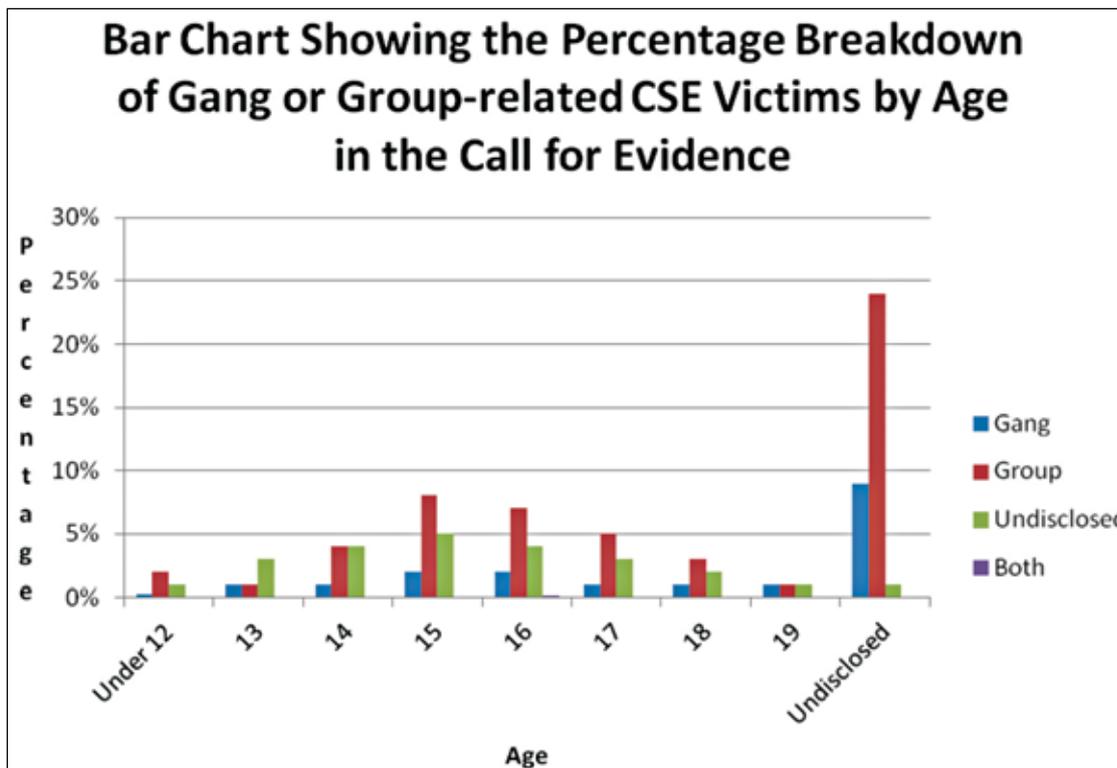
This overlap is deeply troubling, as it implies that the victimisation of some children is being left unidentified, or if seen not tackled. Further information about these concerns is outlined in the sections below on age and gender.

## Age

Respondents to the call for evidence identified sexually-exploited children and young people as ranging in age from 4 to 19 with a peak age of 15<sup>38</sup>.

---

<sup>38</sup> The OCC had requested information on children aged 10 upwards, given the existing evidence base on the ages of children who were being sexually exploited. However, the written call for evidence submissions informed us of 18 victims of CSE who were aged under 10, with the youngest being four. We removed submissions about children who were victims of other forms of child sexual abuse. The information provided to us about the context of these cases satisfied us that they should be classified as child sexual exploitation, as opposed to other forms of child sexual abuse.



As this graph illustrates, victims who were involved with a gang tended to be younger than those with a group. This finding was corroborated during site visits, evidence hearings and in interviews with children and young people, although these methods commonly identified the peak age for victimisation to be between 13 and 14.

Nonetheless, the call for evidence submissions alone contained information on over 200 victims who were aged 13 and under. This was a deeply troubling and unexpected finding. From the body of evidence obtained, in both gangs and groups the victimisation of younger children also tended to involve young perpetrators:

### Becky’s story

A sexual exploitation service has been notified of a 13-year-old White British girl, 'Becky'. She is being sexually exploited by a group of boys who attend her school. According to her school, when her parents were not at home a group of boys were invited round to take part in 'group sex' with Becky. This was referred to as a 'sex party' by the young people in her school, and information about it was posted on Facebook. Following the incident Becky was coerced into throwing further 'sex parties' whenever her house was empty. The sexual exploitation service is now working with Becky but no further details about the group of boys is available.

*Site visit 3 evidence*

When professionals were providing evidence on both young perpetrators and young victims, there was sometimes an overlap between responses relating to 'bullying' and those to 'sexual exploitation'.

Bullying was reported on 15 occasions in the call for evidence submissions, with children being bullied for their sexualised behaviour, learning difficulties or for reasons arising from their living in poverty. However, there were also cases where victims of CSE were involved in bullying others.

One of the most common forms of bullying happened through the use of technology such as social networking sites. When children are sexually exploited by their peers in school, some professionals describe this as 'sexual bullying' rather than as exploitation. This is sometimes perceived as a child being bullied as a result of being promiscuous, and therefore the victim is blamed for their own exploitation. This context is significant given that the way in which CSE is described, recognised and understood by young people and adults has a direct impact on the way in which it is tackled.

Although a large number of young perpetrators were identified in relation to younger children, older perpetrators were also exploiting younger children.

This is not to say that older young people were not themselves also being sexually exploited. However, as the age gap between victims and perpetrators narrowed, site visits exposed unwillingness by professionals to view cases as exploitative.

The Inquiry was repeatedly informed of young people who had been exploited over a number of years and who, as they got older, were being groomed to draw in other young people. These two factors could result in the under-identification of older young people as victims of child sexual exploitation, either because they were considered to be in consensual relationships or because they were identified as perpetrators rather than as victims too:

### Chanice's story

Professionals believed that 'Chanice', a White British young woman, had been sexually exploited for up to seven years. She had been in care for most of this time and had been moved across several local authorities. Chanice was linked by police intelligence to four groups of perpetrators. She was often viewed by professionals working in the locality as pivotal in setting up the child sexual exploitation of other children. It was clear that Chanice had drug and alcohol problems, and that extricating her from a wide network of exploiters was unlikely. Chanice depended on her exploiters for drugs and alcohol, was clearly afraid of some of them and was refusing to co-operate with the police. They were the only agency involved in her case. Given that she was 20 years of age when we conducted our site visit, Chanice was described to the panel as simply a 'perpetrator'.

*Site visit 2 evidence*

## Gender

Across the Inquiry's evidence base, the vast majority of identified victims were girls. There is no doubt that girls and young women are at much greater risk than boys and young men and are targeted due to the way men and boys who perpetrate CSE perceive women and girls.

Serious questions must be asked about prevailing attitudes towards women and girls in our society.

Of the 2,409 children identified via the call for evidence, 72% were girls and 9% boys. The gender of the victim was not specified in 466 cases. It is likely that of these 466, any boys would have been recorded as their cases are exceptional, given that the overwhelming majority of victims are girls and young women. It can therefore be assumed that a sizeable proportion of the unspecified 466 were girls and young women. This marked gender split was replicated in site visits discussions with professionals. Four out of the 14 sites failed to identify any boys and young men as victims, while girls and young women who were victims were identified at every site. Only one of the 23 young people interviewed by the Inquiry was a male victim.<sup>39</sup>

However, where agencies were looking out for boys and young men who were victims, the gender split, while still present, was less pronounced.

The evidence-gathering process identified several concerns in relation to the sexual exploitation of boys and young men.

Firstly, boys and young men who were either unsure about their sexuality or were gay or bisexual, and who had consequently left home or their local area, were considered at higher risk than their peers. A number of localities reported such young men exchanging sex for accommodation and food in a group-associated context.

### Randall's story

'Randall' is a 15 year old boy, of mixed ethnic heritage, and described by professionals as 'exploring his sexuality'. He is said to be unaware of safe routes to meeting other gay young people. Professionals report Randall has been seen hanging around at bus stops. He has disclosed to professionals that he has been targeted by groups of men who are grooming him to exchange sex for alcohol, cigarettes and acceptance. Professionals are working with Randall to try to keep him away from areas of risk, but they are aware he continues to go missing and are unable to account for his whereabouts on all occasions.

*Site visit 8 evidence*

Secondly, in both groups and gangs the Inquiry identified the use of young adolescent boys to groom and sexually exploit girls and young women, before passing them on to older men. This was identified during seven site visits in a gang-associated context and in four site visits in a group context. These younger boys would be groomed in order to exploit the girls in several ways. Some would be given gifts or attention, or made to commit crimes with older men. Some would be coerced into having sex with girls or with each other. In one instance there was evidence that this was filmed and the footage used for the purposes of control. Others would be threatened with violence, have violence inflicted upon them or be sexually assaulted by older men.

The panel was concerned that these boys and young men were identified as perpetrators of abuse, with their own exploitation not being given due consideration or, too often, not even identified.

---

<sup>39</sup> The other males interviewed disclosed being gang associated but not being sexually exploited

## Mitchell's story

'Mitchell' is a White British 17 year old boy, and has been known to the youth offending service for several years. From the age of 12 Mitchell was seen spending time with White British men, some of whom were believed to be sexually exploiting young women in the local area. Some of these older males bought Mitchell trainers, taught him how to comb his hair in particular ways and how to speak to girls. The older men also introduced Mitchell to some of the girls that they were sexually exploiting. At one point, he was found locked in a garage where one of the older males had brought young female victims of abuse. Mitchell gradually became involved in the sexual exploitation of young women in the local area, and would pass them onto his older peers.

*Site visit 2 evidence*

Evidence hearings identified specific risks to transgender young people. The panel met staff from a new project that was working with 'trans' young people.

One site visit uncovered evidence of sexual exploitation of boys and young men in gangs where the purpose of the exploitation was considered to be humiliation and control.

Limited evidence was submitted of the exploitation of boys and young men by women. Where such evidence existed, the panel was concerned that some professionals did not view these relationships as exploitative. Boys were considered 'lucky' to be having sex with an older woman. This perception held, even when older men were implicated in setting up the exploitation.

As stated earlier, the substantial majority of identified victims were girls and young women. The evidence gathered during site visits and evidence hearings suggests a reduced awareness and potential under-reporting of the victimisation of boys and young men by some professionals. However, from all the evidence gathered, it is possible to state confidently that the vast majority of victims of child sexual exploitation are girls and young women, although the gender split amongst victims is less pronounced in areas where agencies seek out boys and young men.

Gender is a significant factor in relation to the vulnerability of girls and young women to sexual exploitation, and has an impact on their identification. Having read transcripts from many police investigations, and spoken directly to children and young people, panel members concluded that the attitude of some men and boys towards women and girls is one of entitlement, ownership, power and control. The Inquiry is concerned about an apparently endemic belief among some groups of boys and men that they have an absolute entitlement to have sex with girls and young women and are justified in abusing them.

While boys and young men might not be identified as victims, for reasons outlined earlier, girls and young women who were victims were often described by professionals in ways that were gender-stereotyped, such as being 'promiscuous', and were in effect being seen as the agents of their own abuse. Numerous professionals and young people both subscribed to gender stereotypes about girls and young women.

Young women were reported as being perceived as sexually available to boys and young men. Men and boys who were sexually exploiting girls and young women believed that they were entitled to do so.

### Lacey's story

'Lacey', whose ethnicity is not disclosed, was out with friends when she came across three boys including Marcus, a Black African boy, with whom she had previously had consensual sex. He asked what she was going to give him as it was his birthday, and indicated that he wanted oral sex. Despite Lacey resisting his demands, Marcus pulled her by the side of her jumper causing her to fall to her knees. He orally raped her and his friends then did the same. Marcus blamed Lacey for her 'promiscuous behaviour'. Marcus already had a previous reprimand over sexual activity without consent.

*Call for evidence submission*

Girls associated with gangs were seen to occupy specific sexual roles. Their exploitation occurred as part of hyper-masculinity among gang members.

The Inquiry was told, on both site visits and in interviews with victims that girls were being made to have sex with one another, either in front of groups of men and boys or while being filmed, with the footage subsequently shared. This form of abuse was identified in both gangs and groups.

Links to domestic or intimate-partner violence cannot be ignored in the context of child sexual exploitation.

34% of call for evidence submissions highlighted victims of CSE by gangs and groups who were also victims of or witnesses to domestic violence. 12% of submissions mentioned that victims of CSE were also in violent relationships and that the acceptance of sexual violence had become commonplace.

During site visits, professionals discussed young women who were in violent or abusive relationships with men and boys in both groups and street gangs, but did not necessarily identify those young women as being at risk of sexual exploitation. When these cases were probed by the panel, it was clear that these young women were not able to consent freely to the sexual activity in which they were involved, and that the relationships should therefore have been considered to be exploitative.

Representatives from agencies dealing with violence against women and girls gave evidence at the hearings to support their contention that young women's experiences of sexual exploitation were linked to their broader experiences of violent and abusive relationships. Given that low self-esteem was identified as a risk indicator for some sexually-exploited children, it is unsurprising that such vulnerability underpinned young women's experiences of abuse. This was highlighted by one submission quoting a young woman who had said 'a kiss with a fist is better than none.'

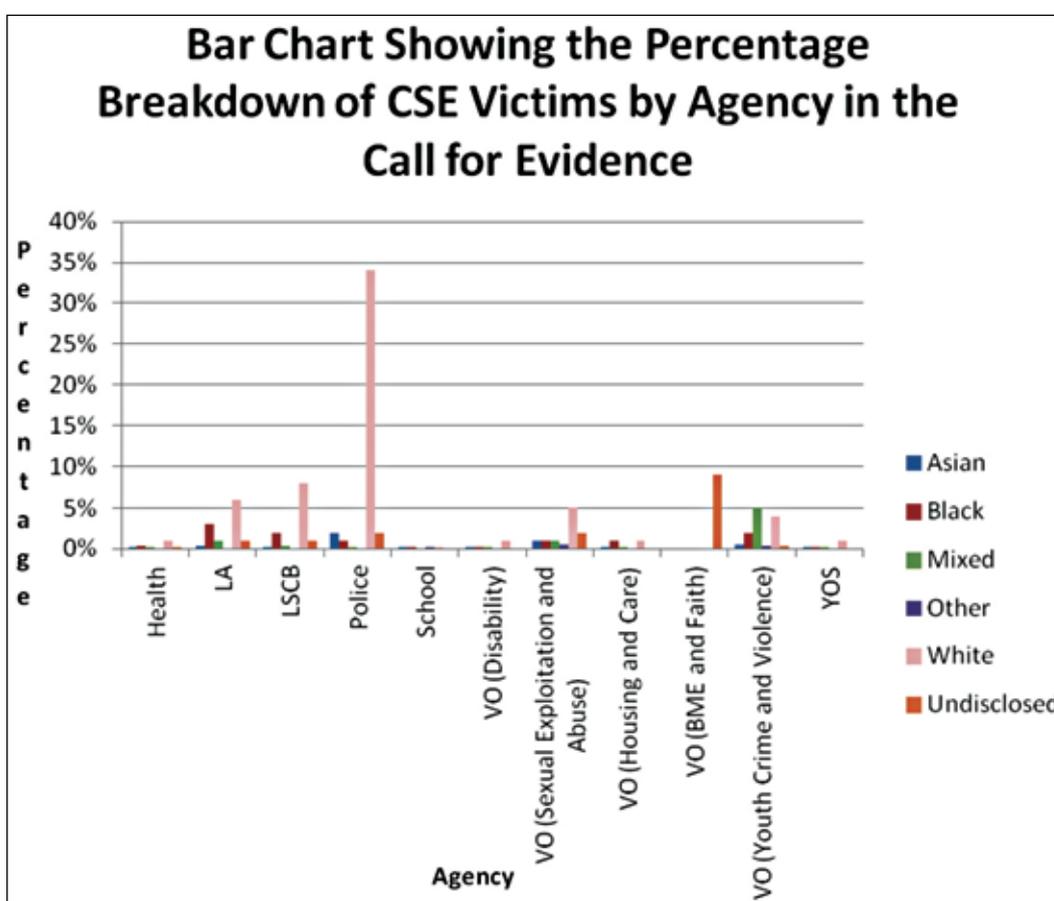
For young women who are victimised, sexual exploitation in gangs and groups is just part of wider violence, coercion and abuse that's inflicted upon them within their intimate relationships and peer

groups, and should be considered within that context. The same mistaken beliefs of entitlement, availability and judgement about young women's 'sexual promiscuity' too often prevent professionals and young people themselves from identifying or responding to what are clearly abusive situations.

## Ethnicity

Victims of child sexual exploitation were identified as coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. In site visits, call for evidence submissions and evidence hearings, professionals who identified BME victims were not those who identified White British victims.

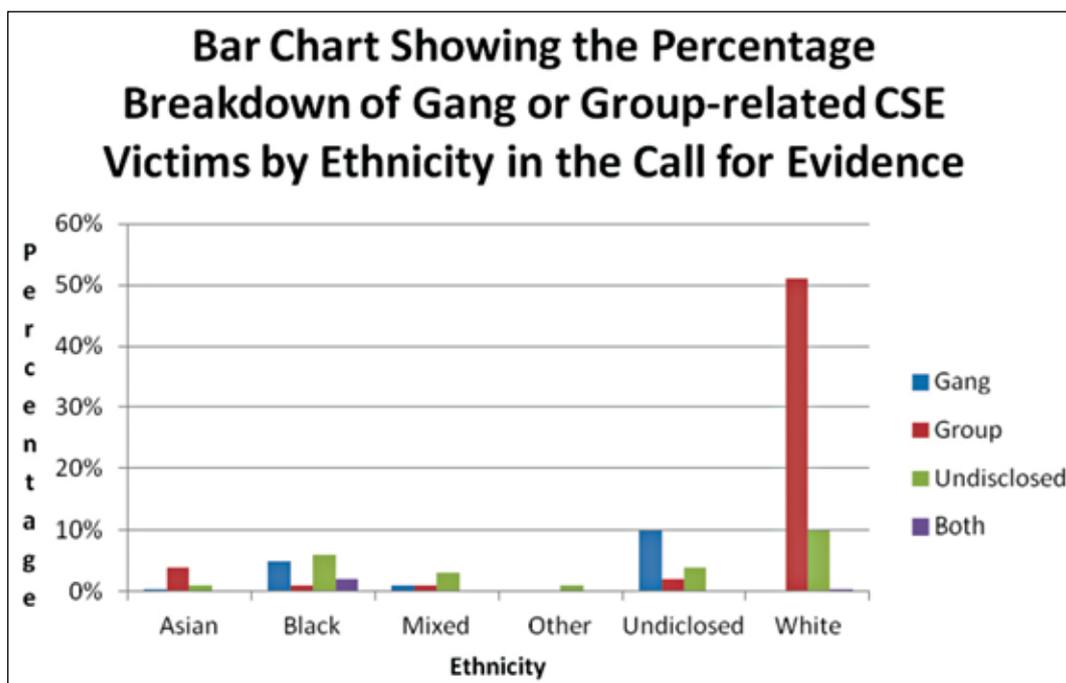
Children from ethnic minority backgrounds tended to be identified by BME, faith and statutory and voluntary sector youth justice agencies. They were rarely identified by professionals from police forces or local authority children's services who were more likely to identify children who were White British:



Children recorded as 'White British' and 'Asian' were more likely to be identified in a group, while those recorded as 'Black' and 'Mixed Heritage' were more likely to be identified in a gang. However, this was very often dependent on which agency was involved in the case. By contrast, site visit evidence uncovered child victims from a range of ethnic backgrounds in both gangs and groups. For example, during one site visit, all the gang-associated victims were White British girls and young women as the gang-affected neighbourhoods were inhabited by White British families. During another site visit, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean young women were the

majority of victims being supported by the sexual exploitation service, which in turn was primarily working with group-associated young people.

The ethnicity<sup>40</sup> of victims reported via the call for evidence responses is shown in the following bar chart:



The Inquiry recognises that these broad headings are unsatisfactory as they fail to discriminate between the ethnic identities of victims. The data are faithfully recorded as submitted. Therefore, when a submission states generically 'Asian' or 'White', it is often recorded without greater specificity.

It is essential that agencies agree on a more detailed and sophisticated system for recording victim and perpetrator profiles. This will ensure more effective intelligence-gathering to support prevention and intervention. As a minimum, data on ethnicity, faith and nationality should be recorded for all victims and perpetrators.

<sup>40</sup> Responses to the call for evidence classified victims into the ethnicities identified below. These are not ONS categories, and are a direct reflection of all the ethnicities attributed to victims by respondents. There were large inconsistencies in the recording and reporting of ethnicity across services, and even greater inconsistency in relation to nationality. The table below is therefore not indicative of the nationalities of any of the victims, as we were unable to ascertain nationality from the responses we received. For example a victim may have been of Bangladeshi origin but of British or Bangladeshi nationality, or have been of Polish origin and of either Polish or British nationality. Thus we are unable, at this stage, to ascertain which of the categories below were of British nationality.

However, within the generic headline categories, sub-categories were identified in some submissions. The table below records the information provided to the Inquiry on the ethnicity of victims. Ethnicity was not recorded in every submission:

*Table 13: Victim breakdown by ethnicity as reported through the call for evidence*

| <b>Ethnicity</b>                  |                                  | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Asian                             | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>116</b>   |
|                                   | Bangladeshi                      | 4            |
|                                   | Bengali                          | 1            |
|                                   | Chinese/Japanese/South East Asia | 3            |
|                                   | Indian                           | 7            |
|                                   | Pakistani                        | 17           |
|                                   | Sri Lankan                       | 2            |
|                                   | Undisclosed                      | 80           |
|                                   | Vietnamese                       | 2            |
| Black                             | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>312</b>   |
|                                   | African                          | 66           |
|                                   | Caribbean                        | 72           |
|                                   | Nigerian                         | 1            |
|                                   | Somali                           | 5            |
|                                   | Ugandan                          | 1            |
|                                   | Undisclosed                      | 167          |
|                                   | Mixed                            | <b>Total</b> |
| Mixed – Asian/African – Mauritian |                                  | 1            |
| Mixed – British/Mediterranean     |                                  | 1            |
| Mixed – Caribbean/British         |                                  | 47           |
| Mixed – White/African – Unknown   |                                  | 10           |
| Mixed – White/Arabic              |                                  | 1            |
| Mixed – White/Asian               |                                  | 5            |
| Mixed – White/Black               |                                  | 4            |
| Mixed – White/Latin American      |                                  | 1            |
| Undisclosed                       |                                  | 79           |
| Other                             | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>38</b>    |
|                                   | Azerbaijani                      | 1            |
|                                   | Iranian                          | 1            |
|                                   | Iraqi                            | 1            |
|                                   | Kurdish                          | 6            |
|                                   | Libyan                           | 1            |
|                                   | Mauritian                        | 2            |
|                                   | Undisclosed                      | 26           |

| <b>Ethnicity</b> |                        | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Undisclosed      | <b>Total</b>           | <b>337</b>   |
| White            | <b>Total</b>           | <b>1457</b>  |
|                  | British                | 1001         |
|                  | Eastern European       | 3            |
|                  | Gypsy/Traveller        | 5            |
|                  | Hungarian              | 1            |
|                  | Irish                  | 8            |
|                  | Mediterranean/Hispanic | 9            |
|                  | Other                  | 2            |
|                  | Other European         | 31           |
|                  | Polish                 | 1            |
|                  | Turkish                | 12           |
|                  | Undisclosed            | 384          |
| <b>Total</b>     |                        | <b>2,409</b> |

As this table demonstrates, information submitted via the call for evidence process demonstrates a higher rate of victimisation amongst BME children and young people than has been previously identified. For 14% of victims, ethnicity was undisclosed. 60% of victims were described as 'White' (42% 'White British'), 5% of victims were recorded as 'Asian', 6% as of 'Mixed' ethnicity, 13 % as 'Black', 1% as 'White Other' (including 'Other European'), and 2% as 'Other'.

This means that 28% of victims reported to the Inquiry were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds<sup>41</sup>. This information is significant, given that the general perception appears to be that sexual exploitation by gangs and groups is primarily a crime against White children. It is critical to note that all children are potentially at risk.

During a two day city visit the Inquiry panel met a multi-agency team, who identify and support victims of child sexual exploitation, and members of the police force, who identify victims and disrupt perpetrators. Over the first day and a half, in four meetings with separate agencies, valuable information on victims and perpetrators is presented to the panel including detailed spider-grams showing the patterns of sexual exploitation within the city. Evidence includes names and ethnicities of both victims and perpetrators. All of the victims are the same White British females while the perpetrators are White, Kurdish, Turkish, Afghan and Pakistani. On the second day, and only at the fifth meeting, the panel meet staff from the youth-offending service. A new list of children being exploited in both groups and gangs is presented. All of the victims are black and minority ethnic girls. The perpetrators are boys and young men who are both white and BME. It is clear that there are information-sharing problems across agencies in this city, and that victim and perpetrator identification is worryingly inconsistent as a result.

*Site visit 2 evidence*

<sup>41</sup> including victims from non-British White backgrounds

Some sites visited by the panel focused on cases where BME victims were identified but professionals mistakenly told the panel that known cases involved only White girls as victims:

Meeting a police team investigating child sexual exploitation the panel is told of a group of mainly British Pakistani males, with a number of Afghan males, who are sexually exploiting a group of young women. The police inform the panel that the young women are mainly White British, but that at least two of the victims are of mixed Pakistani/White British heritage and one is Black African. When the panel discusses the same case with the safeguarding team later that day, it hears that the group of victims are exclusively White British young women. It is only when the panel questions the lists of names presented that professionals correct their statement and acknowledge the ethnic minority victims on the list.

*Site visit 6 evidence*

Evidence gathered during evidence sessions also raised concerns that BME children may:

- display different help-seeking behaviour.
- be more likely to have their abuse concealed by family or extended family.
- have parents who feel less confident in either the police or children's services to report their children missing from home.

Despite the biased weighting described above, site visits and interviews with children and young people identified both BME and White victims being abused by perpetrators from their own and other ethnicities. In several cases the Inquiry has identified mixed ethnicity groups of victims for example:

- Site Visit 1  
Perpetrators: Somali, African Caribbean, White British.  
Victims: Black British, Mixed White/Black Caribbean, White British.
- Site Visit 5  
Perpetrators: White British.  
Victims: White British, Romany.
- Site Visit 11  
Perpetrators: Kurdish, African Caribbean, White British.  
Victims: White British, White/Black Caribbean, Polish Romany.
- Interview with young person  
Perpetrators: White British (main perpetrator) and wider group of men from other ethnic groups.  
Victim: young woman of mixed Bangladeshi/Indian/White, British heritage.
- Interview with young person  
Perpetrator: Turkish (main perpetrator) and wider group of men who were White British, Chinese, and Black African.  
Victim: young man British Pakistani heritage.

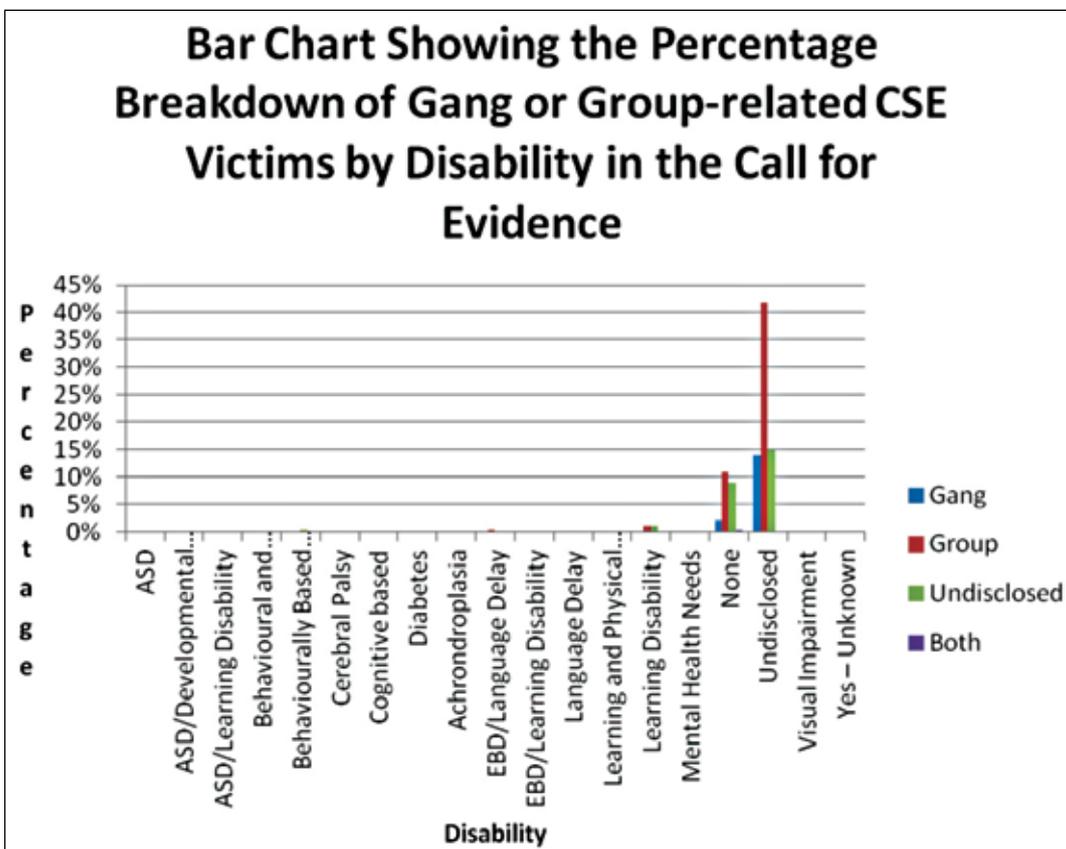
- Interview with young person  
 Perpetrator: group of Chinese males, and second group of Algerian males.  
 Victim: young woman White Mixed British/Estonian.

From the outset of the evidence-gathering process the Inquiry sought to collect evidence from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies, in addition to specialist child sexual exploitation and children’s social care services. As evidence was collected from youth offending services, the broader violence against women sector, specialist BME services, the secure estate, education and housing providers, the potential to identify BME victims increased. In addition, as the Inquiry was concerned with a range of group as well as gang-linked abuse, the evidence submitted was broader than the type of sexual exploitation identified in the high-profile investigations such as those in Derby and Rochdale. This ensured a more comprehensive picture was obtained than had previously been recognised.

It is not possible to determine from these data that BME children are disproportionately sexually exploited across England. However, they are significantly represented in the pool of children and young people reported to the CSEGG Inquiry.

### Disability

Most of the submissions to the call for evidence did not identify whether or not child victims were disabled. Where this was recorded, there were significant inconsistencies in the recording of information. The following bar chart outlines the data that were submitted:



During site visits and evidence hearings, the panel was informed of many cases where a child's disability either increased their vulnerability to abuse or hindered relevant professionals in supporting or identifying them.

### Lily's story

Lily was a 20-year-old young woman with learning difficulties. She made a number of concerning comments to professionals about her desire for a boyfriend and what she would be willing to do to secure a relationship. Lily appeared to believe that if a boy said he loved her and asked for sex she had a duty to go along with it, regardless of how she felt about him. Lily later disclosed that she had been physically assaulted by her boyfriend's friend when she resisted his approaches for sexual activity. When she told her boyfriend what had happened he laughed.

*Call for evidence submission*

Services that specialise in working with disabled children and young people were more likely to inform the Inquiry about disabled child victims. One service provided both verbal and written evidence on 33 children.

The Inquiry concludes it is likely that there were a number of disabled children and young people who were being sexually exploited during the relevant time period, but who had not been identified.

## WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

### The information gap

Far less is known about the individual characteristics of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation than is known about their victims. Public and media attention on the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation has been largely focused on high-profile court cases. These have mainly involved adult males of British Pakistani origin and White British female victims. Given the publicity surrounding these cases, it is clear that the police, children's social care services and other agencies have been effective in readily identifying perpetrators and victims with similar individual characteristics to those involved in such cases. Examples of this featured prominently in evidence provided on site visits and in call for evidence submissions.

Identification remains of significant concern, because, as mentioned earlier, we cannot accurately identify how many perpetrators there are across the country. During site visits and evidence hearings, there was no doubt that data is gathered more assiduously on perpetrators identified by professionals as 'Asian', 'Pakistani' or 'Kurdish'. However, White British males were the only perpetrators identified in all site visits, and perpetrators from various ethnic groups in addition to White British and Asian were found in both the site visits and call for evidence, as well as from interviews with victims. What the evidence in this report illustrates is, is that this issue is widespread and there is more than one type of perpetrator, model and approach to child sexual exploitation by gangs and groups.

As the table below demonstrates, in over 90% of submissions all, or at least some, of the perpetrators were unknown. Only 3% of submissions provided complete data on all perpetrators.

*Table 14: Percentage of call for evidence submissions that provided data on perpetrators*

| <b>Call for Evidence Perpetrator Data</b>  | <b>Percentage of Submissions</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Complete perpetrator data  | 3%                               |
| Incomplete perpetrator data  | 23%                              |
| Perpetrators identified by professionals but victims would not disclose or have retracted their complaints | 26%                              |
| Perpetrators not identified  | 68%                              |
| No Recorded CSE  | 6%                               |

The comparative lack of data on perpetrators was also seen during discussions with professionals on the Inquiry's 14 site visits. In total, 1,094 perpetrators were discussed during site visits. The majority of these discussions were based on 766 identified gang members, with only 328 group perpetrators being named. Far more information is held about gang members, probably because they are known by professionals for reasons other than child sexual exploitation. Where individuals are known only because of their involvement in sexual exploitation, information is limited to those areas where services are actively policing child sexual exploitation.

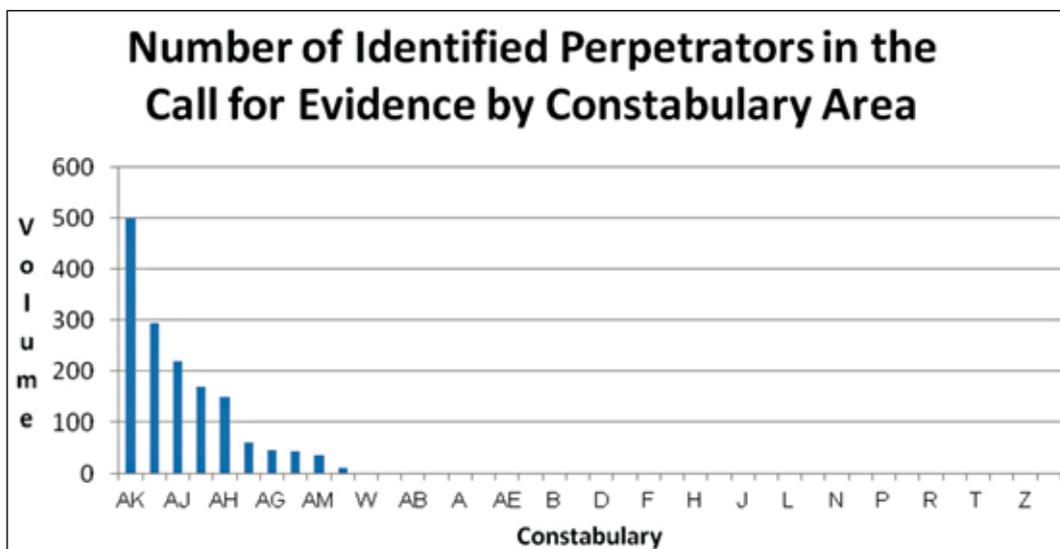
Evidence gathered from victims covered a much broader range of perpetrators of CSE in both gangs and groups, although in many cases far less reliable data could be produced on individual perpetrators.

The fact that the majority of perpetrators in the cases reported to the Inquiry remain unidentified is of concern.

Of the data that are available, it is hard to draw many generalised conclusions about the individual characteristics of perpetrators. What all perpetrators have in common, – regardless of the differences in age, ethnicity, or social background (information on disability or sexual orientation was rarely available) – was their abuse of power in relation to their victims, and that the vast majority of them were male.

Gaps in the information provided in both the call for evidence submissions and site visits, combined with the testimonies from children and young people, shows that a lot of work needs to be done on identifying perpetrators. Victims are frequently able to provide only aliases, nicknames or physical descriptions of perpetrators. The circumstances in which children are abused can be deeply confusing, with the result that the victims often simply do not know the identities or numbers of people involved. Children have described 'parties' involving several men who raped and sexually assaulted them, incidents where they were intoxicated or drugged so they didn't know what was happening to them, and being taken to many different locations where they were assaulted. As a result, in both gang and group contexts, it is not possible to say or even estimate accurately how many people in England are sexually exploiting children.

Call for evidence submissions identified 1514 individuals who were known to be sexually exploiting children between August 2010 and October 2011. These data were submitted by 30 agencies covering 13 police constabulary areas:



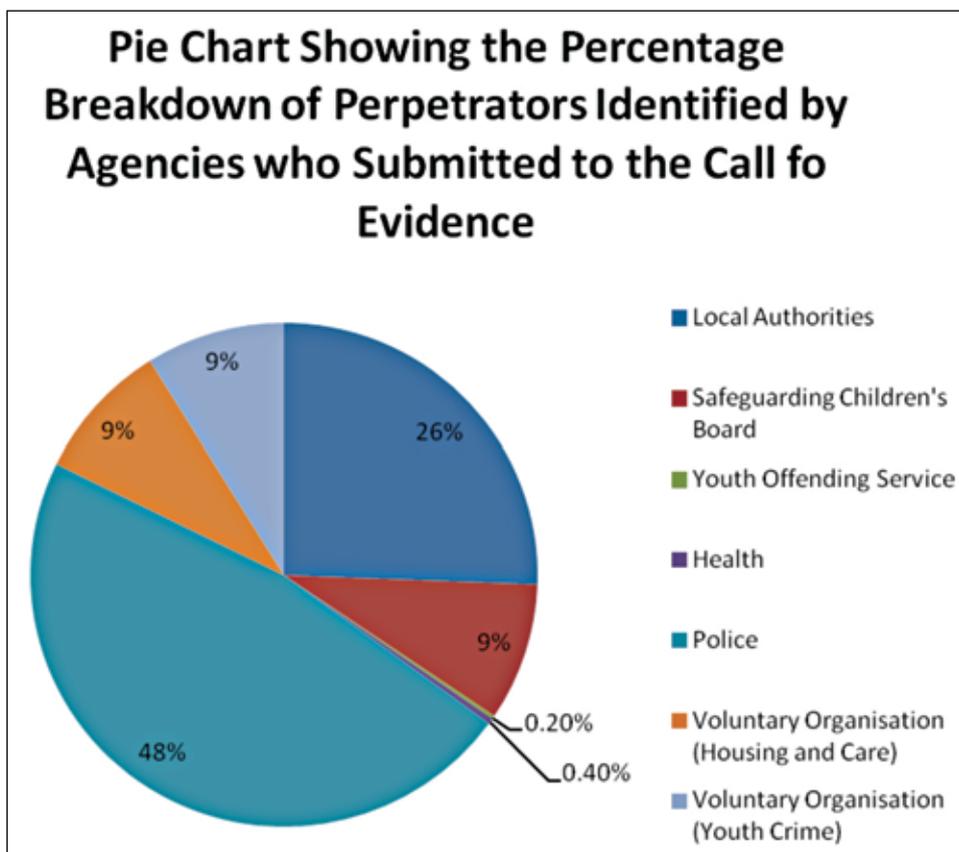
These figures contrast with the 115 call for evidence submissions received on victims from 21 police constabulary areas.

Given the large number of unknown perpetrators, it is impossible to confirm whether available figures on the ethnicity, age, faith, nationality and disability of identified perpetrators are representative of all perpetrators.

## Identification

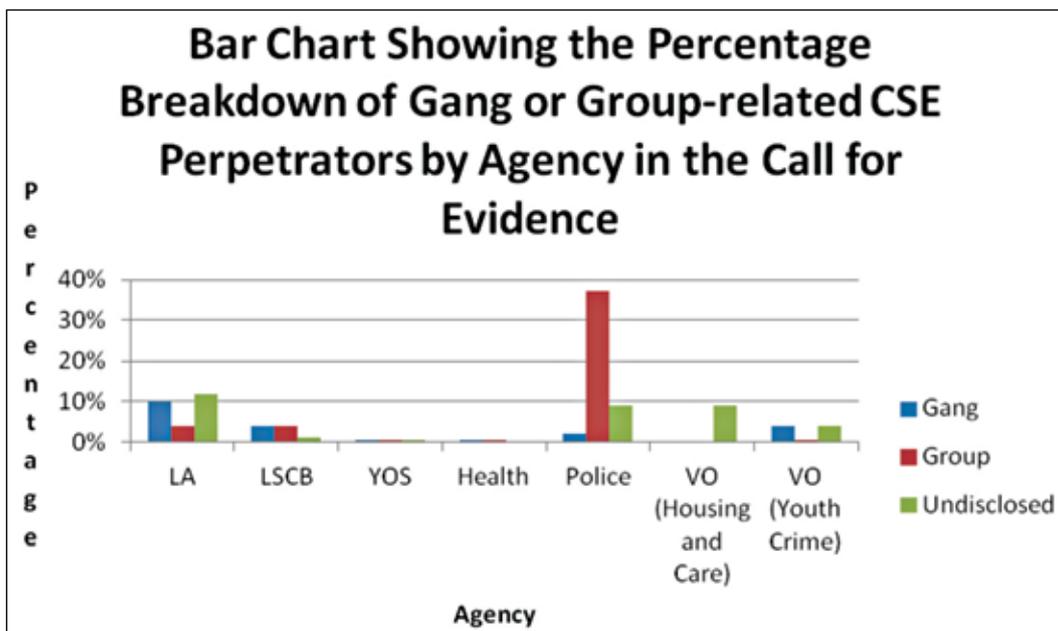
Of the 30 agencies that provided data on 1,514 perpetrators to the call for evidence, just under 50% of the information was provided by the police. During site visits, the majority of information on perpetrators was also provided by the police or by multi-agency teams that included the police. Organisations working with victims held limited information on perpetrators. When victims of CSE were interviewed, they were rarely able to provide full and accurate details of all the perpetrators who abused them. Most of their information focused on one or two central individuals.

Information on the 1,514 perpetrators was submitted via the call for evidence by a range of agencies as follows:



Given that the majority of perpetrator data collected during the call for evidence and site visits were presented by the police, it is possible that the data held by the Inquiry may be biased in favour of groups or individuals who are the most visible to the police.

Accounts from children and young people interviewed for the Inquiry mentioned perpetrators who had never been charged or even arrested. While the police and other agencies hold intelligence on, and are able to identify, gang members, individuals who are involved in perpetrating gang-associated exploitation are even less likely to be reported than those who are perpetrating abuse within a group. It is notable that in the call for evidence submissions 46% of identified perpetrators were involved in group sexual exploitation, whereas during site visits 70% of the perpetrators who could be named by professionals were in gangs.

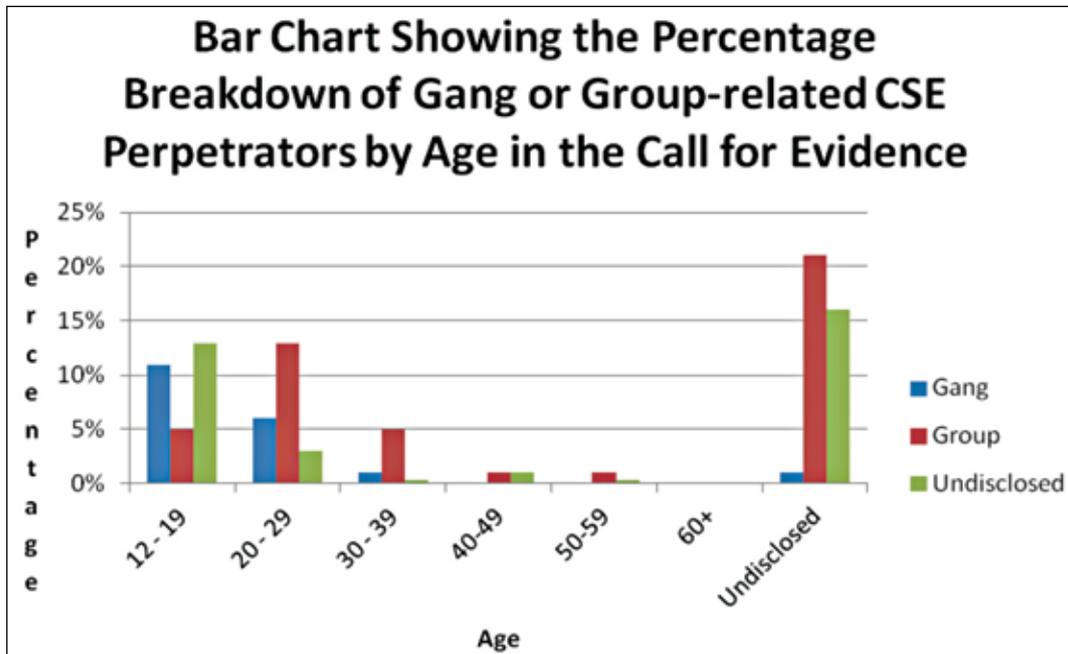


Accounts of victims' experiences from children and young people, along with evidence collected during site visits and through the call for evidence, include reports of repeat victimisation over many years (seven years in one case). The victims were raped relentlessly by multiple and single perpetrators whether in a group or a gang. Some children told the Inquiry that they simply could not recall the numbers involved because there were so many. They tended to know the identities of the particular men who groomed them and orchestrated the abuse, some of whom portrayed themselves as boyfriends, but rarely knew details of the majority of the men and/or boys who actually abused and assaulted them.

The Inquiry has concluded, therefore, that the actual number of perpetrators is likely to be substantially higher than that reported. There were significant gaps in localities' and agencies' ability to provide data to the Inquiry on perpetrators' age, ethnicity, faith, nationality and disability. However, the information that could be gathered is outlined below.

## Age

Call for evidence submissions identified perpetrators ranging in age from 12 to 75.



This age range was confirmed from information provided during the site visits and evidence hearings.

During site visits the youngest perpetrator was 12 and the oldest 69. Children and young people who were interviewed identified perpetrators aged between 15 and over 70.

While the range of ages is consistent across all the evidence-gathering methods, the peak age of offending differed between submissions to the call for evidence, site visits and interviews with children and young people. Over 50% of perpetrators identified via the call for evidence were aged between 12 and 29.

As has been highlighted elsewhere in this report, seven site visits identified cases where older men controlled boys through the use of violence, forced sex and videoing of the latter, particularly where this was between boys. The threat of exposing the video material was used to obtain the boys' compliance. The boys were then required to find and groom girls for the purpose of exploitation by the older men.

It appears that it was often easier for agencies to target younger perpetrators who were more visible, than to identify and pursue the older perpetrators. This factor also emerged during interviews with children and young people. While four of the young women who were abused by a street gang reported perpetrators who were the same age as them, four other young women were groomed by younger men before being passed onto older perpetrators. The remaining 11 young people interviewed were sexually exploited by much older men, who then passed them onto other older men.

Questions about the age of perpetrators are difficult to answer. It is possible some agencies identify younger perpetrators because the comparative youth of those involved is a characteristic of that form of abuse. Younger perpetrators in both gangs and groups may also be more visible to agencies, whereas older perpetrators may be hidden.

When we consider CSE cases that have been successfully prosecuted and are therefore in the public consciousness, older perpetrators tend to be involved. It is possible that enforcement agencies consider that consent is less likely to have been given when the age gap between victim and perpetrators is substantial. When there are smaller age gaps between victim and perpetrator, either because everyone involved was under the age of 18, or because the victim was 16 to 17 and the perpetrators were in their early 20s, it could be more difficult for agencies to prove a lack of consent by the victim.

## Gender

The substantial majority of perpetrators identified by the Inquiry were men and/or boys. Of the total number of perpetrators identified in the call for evidence, 72% were male, 10% were female and in 18% of cases the gender was undisclosed. During site visits only 19 of the 1,094 known perpetrators were female (0.01%). In interviews with children and young people all of the perpetrators identified were male.

Gender is the single most significant identifying feature of perpetrators. The vast majority of perpetrator groups and gangs involved only men and, where women are involved, they are a small minority. In only one case was a female-only group of perpetrators reported to us; this involved girls under the age of 18.

Where women or girls were identified as perpetrators, their role was primarily, though not exclusively, to procure victims. Women and girls who were perpetrating were identified during site visits tended to be young, had histories of being sexually exploited themselves and of abusing others in tandem with the group or gang that had previously sexually exploited them.

Women and girls directly involved in sexually exploiting children were either in relationships with men who were perpetrators or related to, or friends with, men and boys who were abusers.

### Rebecca's story

Rebecca is a 15-year-old Black British girl, and has reported she was forced by a group of girls to have sex with a boy in the girls' toilets at their school; otherwise they would beat her up. The group of perpetrators were made up of three 14-year-old girls and one 14-year-old boy, all of whom were Black British. One of the girls is described as the 'instigator' of the assault. Another girl filmed the assault on her mobile phone. The assault took place as part of a pattern of on-going bullying of Rebecca. She was anally raped by the 14-year-old boy. She had never had sex before this assault.

*Police Case File Submission*

In both groups and gangs young women and girls were identified as sexually exploiting their peers, both girls and boys.

These various types of exploitation by women and girls result in their being identified as perpetrators. This should not detract from the fact that the majority of identified perpetrators were men and boys.

Men and boys were involved in procuring victims, profiting from abuse and sexually assaulting children, in addition to paying for sex in cases of commercial sexual exploitation.

By contrast, no evidence was submitted to the Inquiry of women and girls paying for sex as a form of commercial sexual exploitation.

Some men and boys would threaten their victims through the use of technology and attempt to humiliate their victims:

Evidence on gender provided to the panel consistently identified:

- some men and boys believing they are entitled to have sex and that women and girls must simply be compliant; there was no concept or understanding of consent.
- the central role of power and control in child sexual exploitation, broader forms of sexual violence and domestic abuse.
- the use of sex and sexual exploitation by some men to control and humiliate women, girls and younger boys.
- the range of masculine identities adopted by men, some of which endorsed the right of men to sexually exploit others.
- the gendered hierarchies that exist in society (the power imbalance between masculinity and femininity that creates 'tough men', 'weak men', and 'women as property', for example, and results in gender inequality) and the way in which these manifest themselves in sexually-exploitative behaviour including in groups and gangs.

The Inquiry concludes that there are serious issues to be tackled regarding the attitudes of some men and boys towards women and girls.

It is troubling that there are groups within society who see women and girls as objects who are not worthy of respect and who can be used at will. Worryingly, many of the girls who were victimised seem to have subscribed to this view, apparently having little notion of the concept of consent. That said the levels of violence and threat to which they are subjected if they fail to comply, make consent a spurious notion. As mentioned earlier, the Inquiry has commissioned research into young people's understanding of consent and will report on these findings at the end of Phase 2.

## Ethnicity

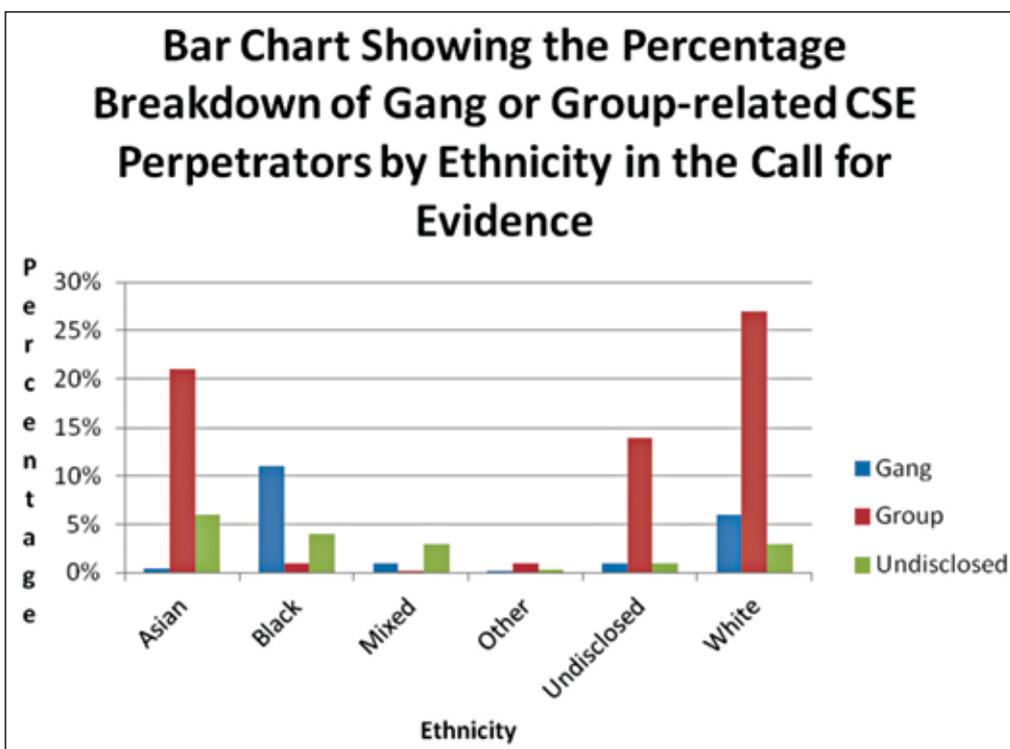
Data on the ethnicity of perpetrators are considerably less reliable than that supplied on age or gender.

During site visits and in interviews with children and young people there were occasions when references to the ethnicity of perpetrators changed during the course of the discussion. Ethnicity and

nationality were sometimes confused. Unless a perpetrator had actually been arrested, it was difficult to be sure whether or not their ethnicity had been correctly identified.

In addition, professionals adopted a range of methods for capturing data on ethnicity, and often used broad headings such as 'Asian' or 'White' to capture individuals.

As stated earlier, children were not always able to provide accurate accounts of the ethnicity of all of their abusers. Given that only 3% of call for evidence submissions could provide full perpetrator data, and that 68% of submissions did not provide any perpetrator data, the chart below must be viewed with caution as the picture is incomplete. Based on the call for evidence submissions, the ethnicity of identified perpetrators was reported as follows<sup>42</sup>:



26% of submissions provided information on a total of 1514 perpetrators, although for 21% of these cases the ethnicity of the perpetrator was not provided. Where the ethnicity of perpetrators was provided, 545 were recorded as 'White', 415 were recorded as 'Asian', and 244 were recorded as 'Black'. Based on the terms used in the call for evidence submission, the following sub-categories can be produced:

<sup>42</sup> As was the case with victim data, responses to the call for evidence classified perpetrators into the ethnicities recorded below. These are not ONS categories, and are a direct reflection of all the ethnicities attributed to perpetrators by respondents. There were large inconsistencies in the recording and reporting of ethnicity across services (see victim data). Given the limited intelligence on perpetrators, and the fact that ethnicity is often attributed to them by the victim/s or by professionals, rather than self-identified, we cannot be confident of the level of accuracy in these data.

Table 15: Ethnicity breakdown of perpetrators as submitted via the call for evidence

| Ethnicity   |                                     | Total Perpetrators |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Asian       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>415</b>         |
|             | Bangladeshi                         | 5                  |
|             | Chinese/Japanese/South East Asia    | 1                  |
|             | Indian                              | 6                  |
|             | Pakistani                           | 35                 |
|             | Sri Lankan                          | 1                  |
|             | Undisclosed                         | 366                |
|             | Vietnamese                          | 1                  |
| Black       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>244</b>         |
|             | African                             | 44                 |
|             | Caribbean                           | 30                 |
|             | Somali                              | 4                  |
|             | Undisclosed                         | 166                |
| Mixed       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>49</b>          |
|             | Caribbean/African                   | 8                  |
|             | Mixed – British/Somali              | 1                  |
|             | Mixed – Caribbean/British           | 18                 |
|             | Mixed – White Mediterranean/Kurdish | 1                  |
|             | Mixed – White/African               | 5                  |
|             | Mixed – White/Black                 | 1                  |
|             | Undisclosed                         | 15                 |
| Other       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>13</b>          |
|             | Afghan                              | 1                  |
|             | Arabic                              | 2                  |
|             | Iranian                             | 1                  |
|             | Iraqi                               | 1                  |
|             | Kurdish                             | 2                  |
|             | Libyan                              | 1                  |
|             | Middle Eastern                      | 1                  |
|             | Undisclosed                         | 4                  |
| Undisclosed | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>248</b>         |
| White       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>545</b>         |
|             | British                             | 166                |
|             | Eastern European                    | 2                  |
|             | Gypsy/Traveller                     | 5                  |
|             | Irish                               | 4                  |
|             | Mediterranean/Hispanic              | 21                 |
|             | Other European                      | 3                  |
|             | Polish                              | 1                  |
|             | Turkish                             | 2                  |
|             | Undisclosed                         | 341                |
|             | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>Total</b>       |

As with the victim data, it is not possible to extrapolate from this information a definitive statement about the ethnic origin of perpetrators. This is because their backgrounds were not reported as part of call for evidence submissions or in other forms of evidence. In addition, as is the case with victim data, the ethnicities provided are weighted in favour of those areas and agencies that were able to identify perpetrators and those perpetrators who were most visible. Compared with the data on victims, considerably less is known about perpetrators and the available data are limited.

As with the victim data, while White individuals form the largest group of perpetrators in both gangs and groups, BME individuals, particularly those loosely classified as 'Asian', are the second largest category of perpetrators reported via the call for evidence. Within the wider evidence base, it is evident that data are more proactively gathered on men and boys of Pakistani and Kurdish origin.

As was the case with victims' data, during site visits it was apparent that agencies frequently focused on the model of sexual exploitation identified in high profile cases such as those in Derby and Rochdale. Perpetrators, like victims, had similar individual characteristics to those featured in those cases. As a result this was the specific pattern of abuse professionals looked out for. They often told the panel that the perpetrator groups were 'Asian' without a more detailed analysis, including whether this label referred to nationality or ethnicity. The Inquiry was informed in several site visits of groups of perpetrators who were described generically as 'Asian' but who, upon further investigation, turned out to include Afghan, Kurdish and White British perpetrators.

*Table 16: Ethnicity of perpetrators identified during site visits*

| <b>Site Visit</b> | <b>Ethnicity of identified perpetrators</b>  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1                 | African British; Caribbean British; Mixed Caribbean/White British; Turkish; White British  |
| 2                 | Afghan; Caribbean British; Pakistani British; White British  |
| 3                 | African; White British   |
| 4                 | Irish Traveller; Vietnamese; White British   |
| 5                 | African British; Caribbean British; Kurdish Mixed African/White British; Turkish; White British  |
| 6                 | Afghan; Caribbean British; Pakistani British; White British  |
| 7                 | African British; African Caribbean; Caribbean British; Mixed African/White British; Mixed Caribbean/White British; Mixed other; Turkish; White British       |
| 8                 | Afghan; Chinese; Kurdish; Pakistani British; Sri-Lankan; Turkish; White British  |
| 9                 | African British; Bangladeshi British; Caribbean British; Mixed African/White British; Mixed Caribbean/White British; Mixed other; White British; White Other |
| 10                | Irish Traveller; Kurdish; Polish Romany; White British; White Other  |
| 11                | Bangladeshi British; Pakistani British; White British; White Other   |
| 12                | Caribbean British; Pakistani British; White British  |
| 13                | African British; Caribbean British; Mixed Caribbean/White British; White British   |
| 14                | African; African British; Caribbean British Mixed Caribbean/White British; Other; White British  |

While the pattern of exploitation identified in Derby, Rochdale and some other areas is one form of child sexual exploitation, other patterns and models of exploitation have emerged in the course of this Inquiry. The children and young people interviewed for the Inquiry identified the ethnicity of their exploiters as follows:

Table 17: Ethnicity of perpetrators as reported by children and young people interviewed for the CSEGG Inquiry

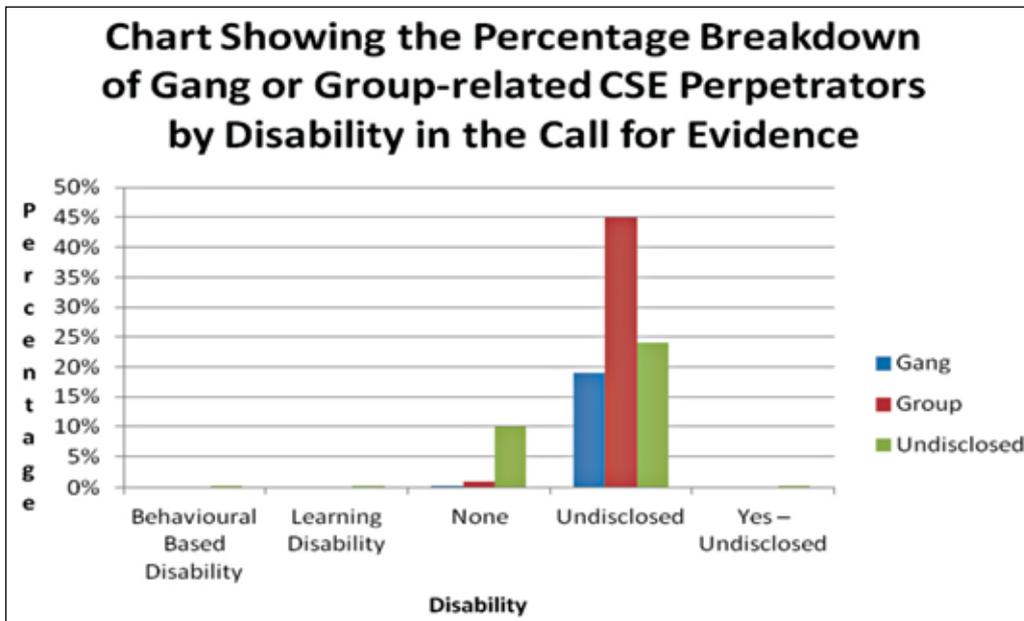
| <b>Young Person</b> | <b>Primary Perpetrators (first point of contact/partner/person that groomed them)</b> | <b>Secondary Perpetrators (those who were within the wider group/gang exploiting/sexually assaulting them)</b> |
|---------------------|---|--|
| A                   | Black Caribbean   | Black Caribbean and White British  |
| B                   | Mixed White British/Black Caribbean   | White British, Black British, Unknown  |
| C                   | Gypsy Roma  | Unknown  |
| D                   | White British   | Unknown  |
| E                   | Pakistani British   | Pakistani British, Unknown   |
| F                   | Kurdish   | Turkish, White British   |
| G                   | Afghan  | Pakistani British  |
| H                   | Turkish   | White British, Chinese, Black African, Black Caribbean, Unknown  |
| I                   | White British   | White British, Chinese, Black Caribbean, Unknown   |
| J                   | Turkish   | Kurdish, White British, Turkish  |
| K                   | Mixed White British /Black Caribbean  | Unknown  |
| H                   | Sri Lankan  | Kurdish, White British, Unknown  |
| I                   | Pakistani British   | Unknown  |
| J                   | White British   | Unknown  |
| K                   | Unknown   | Unknown  |
| L                   | Pakistani British   | Unknown  |
| M                   | White British   | White British  |
| O                   | Chinese (Group 1)<br>Arabic (Group 2)   | Chinese (Group 1)<br>Arabic, White British (Group 2)   |
| P                   | Pakistani British   | Pakistani British, White British   |
| Q                   | Unknown   | Unknown  |

In only three cases were the perpetrators discussed by these children and young people either charged or convicted. In the majority of cases the perpetrators were never arrested. It is highly likely, therefore, that information on these perpetrators was not submitted to the Inquiry via the call for evidence. Their details are not reflected in any of the perpetrator data analysed for this report. Interviews with young people demonstrated the significant gap that exists between recorded data on perpetrators and the experiences of the children and young people who are sexually exploited.

The evidence gathered for Phase 1 of this Inquiry demonstrates the complex and multi-faceted nature of child sexual exploitation across England. It is clear that more work is required in order to gather accurate profiles of those who are sexually exploiting children in both gangs and groups.

## Disability

Information on whether or not perpetrators were disabled was very limited. Evidence submitted in response to the call for evidence is shown in the following table:



Whether or not an abuser had a disability was not recorded, or not known, in 88% of the submissions that included perpetrator data. The fact that this information is not being collated was echoed during site visits. Interviews with children and young people indicated that relying on a victim to know whether an abuser was disabled or not would not yield good-quality information. The nature of the abuse means that unless a physical disability is involved, victims were unlikely to know whether or not the perpetrator was disabled.

The lack of information on this issue gives cause for concern, given that evidence taken during the evidence hearings indicated that disabled young people were vulnerable to perpetrating sexual exploitation as well as to being victimised.

While evidence hearings were able to shed some light on young disabled people who had been identified as perpetrators, this information did not extend to adult perpetrators. This significant gap in knowledge is symptomatic of how a great many perpetrators are never arrested or formally recorded by statutory agencies. It is therefore not surprising that characteristics not easily identifiable remain unidentified.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The evidence gathered during Phase 1 of the Inquiry shows clearly that **urgent action** is required so that professionals and practitioners **recognise the many warning signs** that children display when being subjected to sexual exploitation at the hands of gangs and groups. **The OCC will contact local areas at the close of the Inquiry to assess progress made on the recommendations below in advance of the final report.**

Children need to be protected against such abuse.

During Phase 2 we will consider in detail what action is required to prevent and tackle this abuse. In the interim, it is possible to make initial recommendations in relation to the recognition of CSE, the identification of victims and perpetrators and the process of recording and sharing data.

### For Immediate action

- 1. All directors of children's services, the chief medical officer, directors of public health and chief constables, the Royal Colleges, Police and Crime Commissioners, and the Department for Education, the Crown Prosecution Service and Chief Crown Prosecutors, should circulate the warning signs of child sexual exploitation to all professionals who come into contact with children and young people (Appendix A), and ensure they understand and act on them.**

In addition, **urgent implementation** of the recommendations below will significantly improve the protection of children subject to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation.

### Identification of Victims

2. Coordinated by the local safeguarding children board, and using the self-assessment tool produced by the University of Bedfordshire, all local areas should conduct their own audit of CSE based on the list of warning signs and vulnerabilities produced in this report<sup>43</sup>.
3. All police forces should work with partner agencies, including third sector specialist organisations, to log information on the girls and young women linked to gang members, and then risk-assess these young people for sexual exploitation.
4. All those identifying victims of child sexual exploitation should review their processes to ensure that intelligence or individual indicators used to proactively find victims children are not leading to biased identification. They should also liaise with agencies, including specialist third sector organisations, that are working with under-represented children and young people to ensure their identification of all those who are vulnerable or at-risk.

---

<sup>43</sup> Evidence shows that any child presenting with combined vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk for sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately commence an investigation to ascertain risk and initiate preventative and protective action as required. However, it is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited, and therefore any child presenting with the risk indicators in the second list but none of the vulnerabilities in the first, should also be considered as potential victims and appropriate assessment and action initiated as required.

## Identifying Perpetrators

5. Police forces should review their local multi-agency intelligence collection processes and existing information to proactively identify perpetrators of CSE.
6. Police forces should use multi-agency intelligence to proactively profile local risk, as well as to direct enforcement and disruption activity.
7. LSCBs should agree policies and procedures for ensuring partner agencies including children's social care services, YOTs and police work cooperatively to identify and deal with children and young people who are both victims and perpetrators of CSE. These procedures should be incorporated into each LSCB's CSE strategy and monitored for effective practice.

Further detailed recommendations on improving the identification of victims and perpetrators will be made in Phase 2.

## Data gathering and information sharing

8. The Department of Health should issue guidance to all health agencies to ensure effective information-sharing so that victims of child sexual exploitation, and children at risk of CSE, are identified.
9. All agencies should adopt an agreed method for recording the ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability of victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.
10. Youth offending services should share information on either or both victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation with other agencies, given the intelligence held on their assessment tools.
11. Police forces should improve their recording of sexual offences to enable the recording of multiple perpetrators and allow for a CSE flag.

Further detailed recommendations on improving the data-collection process will be made in Phase 2.

**As soon as possible** the following recommendations should be delivered to contribute to a shift in professionals' awareness and understanding of child sexual exploitation.

## Recognition and awareness-raising

12. Every LSCB should ensure that the core training delivered to all professionals who come into contact with children and young people should include information on warning signs, and impact, of child sexual exploitation, to ensure victim identification, and should outline an implementation plan for training as part of their 2013/14 business plan.
13. A review of all legislation and guidance which makes reference to children as 'prostitutes' or involved in prostitution (Appendix F) should be initiated by the Government with the view to amending the wording to acknowledge children as sexually exploited, and where appropriate victimised through commercial sexual exploitation.

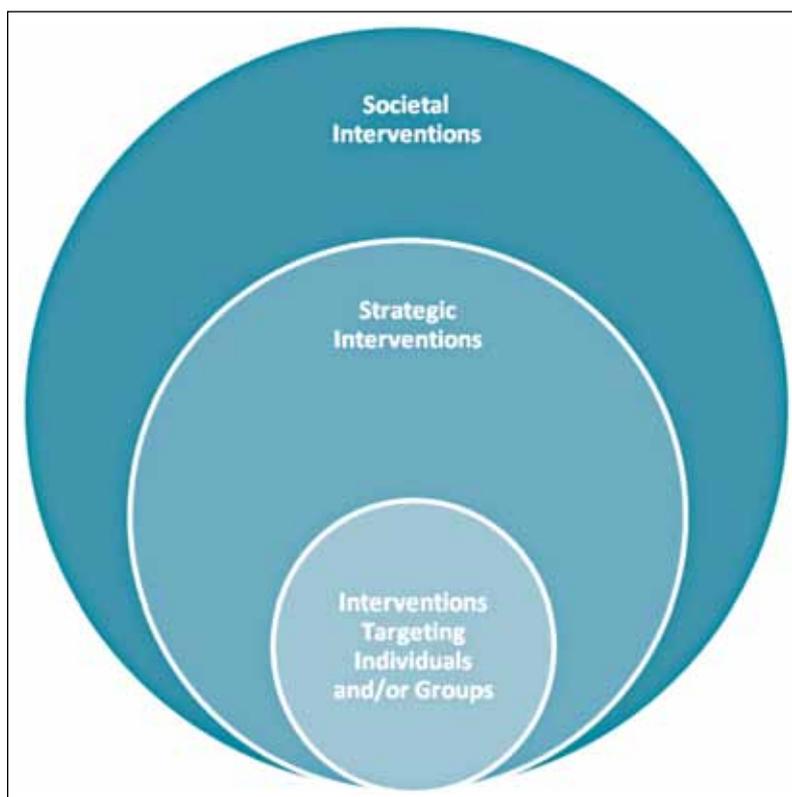
At this stage we are unable to recommend any particular training programme. During Phase 2 we will explore what is currently offered to professionals and make recommendations if appropriate.

When the final CSEGG Inquiry report is published in 2013, these recommendations will be reviewed, revised where necessary and augmented which will challenge and should enabled the system to provide a holistic response to the needs of sexually-exploited children and young people.

## PHASE TWO

---

Phase 2 of the CSEGG Inquiry was launched in September 2012 and will identify the action required to tackle the sexual exploitation of children in gangs and groups. The Inquiry wants to find out what is being done, and should be done, to: address individual cases; strategically approach the issue locally and nationally; address societal problems that underpin child sexual exploitation:



A call for evidence has been published and is available on the OCC website. During Phase 2 further evidence will be gathered through a review of central government policy, site visits, workshops, evidence hearings, commissioned research, interviews with children and young people and data requests to statutory agencies.

The final CSEGG Inquiry report will be published in autumn 2013 with recommendations to improve the protection of children from this pernicious and traumatic form of abuse.

## **APPENDIX A: WARNING SIGNS AND VULNERABILITIES CHECKLIST**

---

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality).
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only).
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Learning disabilities.
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families.
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Homeless.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carer.

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited.

- Missing from home or care.
- Physical injuries.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Involvement in offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absent from school.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites.
- Estranged from their family.
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations.
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm.
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately start an investigation to determine the risk, along with preventative and protective action as required.

However, it is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited. Therefore, any child showing risk indicators in the second list, but none of the vulnerabilities in the first, should also be considered as a potential victim, with appropriate assessment and action put in place as required.

The following organisations and agencies need to take account of the above list and work together to identify children showing the warning signs of, or who are vulnerable to, child sexual exploitation, and act accordingly:

- Accident and Emergency.
- CAMHS services.
- Children's Social Care (including family support/early intervention teams, child protection/duty and assessment teams, looked-after children teams, leaving care teams).
- Drop-in clinics and community based health services.
- Drugs and alcohol misuse services.
- Educational institutions (including schools, pupil referral units, academies, private schools, special schools, and extra-curricular provision).
- Fire service.
- Gangs and serious youth violence projects.
- GP surgeries.
- GUM and family planning clinics.
- Housing (including foyers, hostels, refuges, bed and breakfast, and housing associations)
- Midwifery and health visitors.
- Police (including neighbourhood policing, missing, safer schools officers, gangs and youth violence, organised crime, trafficking, child abuse investigation teams, sexual offences teams)
- Residential children's homes.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centres.
- Violence against women agencies (including rape crisis and refuge provision).
- Youth Justice agencies (including youth offending services, secure training centres and youth offending institutions).
- Youth service and specialist agencies working with children and young people (including mentoring services, those working with disabled children, LGBT children, BME children)

In order to identify children who show the above risk indicators, professionals could begin by bringing together data that is already collected, adopting a similar approach to that which has been used by the Inquiry to produce the CSEGG dataset. Data is not routinely collected on all of the risk indicators identified, but to assist with the risk assessment process we are publishing the list of indicators that the Inquiry used for the CSEGG dataset, and the data sources from which they were accessed.

Table 18: CSEGG indicators, dataset and source

|     | <b>Indicator</b>  | <b>Dataset</b>  | <b>Source</b>                                  |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 1.  | Missing from home or care   | Children reported missing<br>Or<br>Children reported to be 'absconding' or 'breaching'.                   | Police<br><br>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<br>Or<br>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)<br>Or<br>History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)<br>Or<br>Children in care | Children referred to as 'children in need'<br>Or<br>Children 'looked after' under both S31 and S20 orders | Local authority<br><br>Local authority         |
| 8.  | Absent from school  | Children persistently absent from school  | Local authority                                |
| 9.  | Excluded from education   | Children permanently excluded from school   | Local authority                                |
| 10. | Self-harm<br>Or<br>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 B: METHODOLOGY

---

### CALL FOR EVIDENCE

#### Development of the call for evidence and dissemination

The purpose of the call for evidence was to capture data on the prevalence and nature of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups over a 14-month period. The information requested was as follows: numbers of victims and perpetrators in gang and group-associated contexts, the characteristics of victims and perpetrators, and any specific details about the nature of the abuse that was taking place. Definitions of children, child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and group were provided, and a time period specified.

The Inquiry was aware that not all agencies captured the specifics that were being asked for, but the aspects that were requested, such as gang or group, were necessary for the purposes of the CSEGG Inquiry. Any aspects that were not required for the core purpose of the CSEGG Inquiry, such as the care status of the child, were not requested at this stage. The call for evidence was kept open-ended in order to allow as many agencies as possible to contribute to the evidence-gathering process. The Inquiry was conscious that the more specific the request, the more restrictive that would be for agencies who were seeking to take part in the process. There were pros and cons to this approach. Allowing submissions without a template meant there would be a lack of uniformity in responses, but it also enabled smaller organisations to submit evidence, and for agencies to respond in the way in which they were recording data without having to go through time-consuming reformatting processes.

An extensive range of responses was sought from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies including: children's social care, local safeguarding children's boards, violence against women and girls, child and family support, specialist child sexual exploitation, youth offending teams, schools, police forces, health, housing, the secure estate, missing people, BME and LGBT services. Parliamentarians and other stakeholders were also notified and asked to disseminate the call for evidence onto their networks.

Respondents were given just over three months to make submissions.

#### Logging, coding and analysis

Call for evidence data were divided into folders based on the area/agency making the submission. The data provided were recorded in a table which detailed the locality, agency and type of data submitted. Data submitted to the call for evidence process were:

- Quantitative data detailing age, ethnicity and disability of the victim and/or perpetrator of CSE and whether it is group or gang associated.
- Individual level data.
- Aggregated data.
- Qualitative data on the nature, scale, scope and impact of group or gang-related CSE.

Individual level was separated in terms of victim data and perpetrator data and entered into SPSS in two separate files (PASW Statistics 17.0.2). Cases where the individual was both a perpetrator and a victim were entered into both files. The data on perpetrators was coded slightly differently to reflect the different evidence submitted.

Any data with two or fewer variables were entered in the aggregate data. Once duplicates were removed, the non-identifiable variables were then aggregated and analysed.

Some submissions did not break the data down to individual level and chose to provide an aggregate figure on each of the categories we asked for in the call for evidence. In order to avoid double-counting, submissions with aggregate figures were counted only if they were not from a locality where there was a submission with individual level data. In addition, if there were two submissions with aggregate data from one locality, then the submission with more data was used. Again, victim data and perpetrator data were entered into different spreadsheets and, in cases where there were both, they were included in both these spreadsheets.

Qualitative data were coded in three stages:

- Stage 1: Data from 30 of the 82 localities were analysed in detail for emerging themes and key terms that are used by agencies and professionals.
- Stage 2: Data were then entered into NVivo 8 (QSR, 2008) and coded in terms of the key areas identified in the previous stage, most common terms used and other themes that emerged whilst coding the data.
- Stage 3: There will be a final read of remaining documents to check if any issues have been missed.

The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately and then compared and contrasted.

## Quantitative data

Data were analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. Frequency counts and cross tabulations were used to measure the prevalence of CSE by gangs and groups.

## Qualitative data

These were analysed in two ways:

- A content analysis was used to analyse and gain understanding of the emerging themes nature, scale, scope and impact of CSE by gangs and groups.
- The prevalence of these themes was recorded in order to document how many submissions mentioned those issues.

## SITE VISITS

### Development of site visits

The site visit schedule for Phase 1 covered urban, rural and metropolitan areas, and a mixture

of gang-affected and non-gang-affected neighbourhoods. Contact was made with a mixture of specialist CSE services, violence against women and girls agencies, local safeguarding children's boards, police forces (missing, CSE, sexual violence, gangs), schools, sexual health services, drug and alcohol teams, housing and homelessness services, youth offending services, community safety teams, BME services, LGBT services and gang and serious youth violence projects across the 14 sites.

## Process and recording of site visits

The OCC liaised with sites ahead of the visit, providing agencies with the CSEGG Inquiry terms of reference and the call for evidence. The PPA answered queries from site contacts during Phase 1.

A pro-forma of questions for each site visit meeting was produced. However, questions were not asked in the same format on each visit. Instead, the pro-forma served as a guide to enable panel members to conduct semi-structured interviews, while recording consistent areas of information. Each panel member made notes, using a template to record answers, and these notes were handed to the PPA at the end of each meeting. During all site visit meetings, with one exception, the individual names of victims and perpetrators were recorded in order to avoid double-counting. This also helped, when evidence from the call for evidence and site visits were drawn together, to ascertain whether any information was gathered during site visits hadn't been submitted through the call for evidence process.

A separate pro-forma was produced for speaking to children and young people on site visits.

Site visits in London and the surrounding areas took place over one day, while site visits outside London took place over two days. Three meetings were held on each day, each lasting between one and two hours.

Following site visits, letters of thanks were sent to the professionals and any participating young people, and any specific ethical concerns or safeguarding issues were followed up.

## Analysis and Mapping

The CSEGG Inquiry PPA conducted a manual analysis of the notes taken at each meeting, on each site visit. Following analysis, a map was produced for each site visited that outlined the evidence that had been provided to the CSEGG Panel according to:

- total number of identified victims in a gang and group-associated context.
- total number of identified perpetrators in a gang and group-associated context.
- age, gender, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, disability of victims and perpetrators.
- different groups or gangs in operation and their links to different victims.
- identified movement across different local authorities.
- details about the nature and location of the abuse.

The mapping process enabled us to identify and communicate the multi-faceted nature of gang and group-associated child sexual exploitation across the sites visited.

## EVIDENCE HEARINGS

### Development of evidence hearings

Evidence hearings were designed to enable the CSEGG Chair and Panel to follow up lines of enquiry that had developed during the evidence-gathering process. The content of the hearings was discussed at a panel meeting, where agreement was reached on the themes of the days. Panel members wanted to call: agencies that had identified large numbers of victims, to examine their submissions; agencies that had identified small numbers or limited models of exploitation, to study their submissions; agencies that may have information on victims that is buried in data on other services such as housing, health and youth justice; agencies whose work spans several areas of equality including disability, LGBT, ethnicity and gender; agencies involved in information-sharing and data-capturing.

Following this discussion the PPA drafted a schedule and a list of proposed agencies to invite. This was circulated to the CSEGG Panel and CSEGG Chair. Following feedback, the schedule was finalised and agencies/individuals were invited by letter to give evidence at a specific date and time. The PPA liaised with professionals to confirm their attendance and to answer any queries in advance of the sessions.

### Delivery and recording of evidence hearings

The PPA designed a schedule for each evidence hearing, and the CSEGG Panel met before each session to agree areas of questioning.

A stenographer was booked to transcribe all evidence hearing sessions. Transcriptions were sent to all participants by the CSEGG Researcher to enable them to check for accuracy.

### Logging and coding

Once feedback on all 21 transcripts was returned, all changes were noted and they were entered into NVIVO 8 (QSR, 2008) for coding and analysis.

Similar to the qualitative data from the call for evidence, the data from the evidence hearings were coded in three stages:

- Stage 1: Data from 5 of the 21 transcripts were purposely selected and analysed in detail for emerging themes and key terms used.
- Stage 2: Data were then entered into NVivo 8 (QSR, 2008) and the key terms from the previous stage, along with the terms from the call for evidence, were used to identify key areas. These were coded accordingly, along with any other emerging themes.
- Stage 3: A final reading of remaining documents was conducted to check for any issues that may have been missed.

## Analysis

The evidence hearings data were analysed in two ways:

- A content analysis was used to gain understanding of the emerging themes nature, scale, scope and impact of CSE by gangs and groups.
- The prevalence of these themes was recorded in order to document how many submissions mentioned those issues.

## DATASET

### Development of the dataset

In order to identify the numbers of children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, the CSEGG team, Chair and Panel agreed that data should be collected on children meeting the risk indicators for child sexual exploitation as identified in the Department for Education Safeguarding Guidance for CSE (2009) and used in the CEOP Thematic Assessment of CSE (2011).

From the outset it was evident that data on some of the softer indicators, such as children acquiring gifts and mobile phones, would not be available. The list of indicators was used as a guide and a full dataset of risk indicators was drafted. Once the list was drafted it was shared with the CSEGG Panel, CSEGG officials' group and central government statisticians. The content was also discussed with professionals during the site visits. The Inquiry sought to collect as much data centrally as possible, and then aimed to write to local authorities, primary care trusts, police forces and the secure estate to collect the remaining evidence.

Data were requested at an aggregate level and at the individual child level. Child level data (initials and dates of birth) were used to count the numbers of children hitting multiple indicators of risk across a police force area. Aggregate level data were to be used to consider whether there were any patterns in the characteristics of any individual indicator such as age, ethnicity, gender etc.

The initial data request began to be circulated on 24th February 2012 with a deadline of 30th March 2012 to provide the data. This was disseminated to senior officials across relevant central government departments and at a local level to Directors of Children's Services, Chief Constables and Directors of Public Health.

### Issuing and Re-issuing of the dataset (including FAQ)

The data request was issued in February specifically to avoid the busy period faced by local authorities when completing their annual data returns. However, preceding its release, a range of queries arose, predominantly focussed on:

- The legal authority of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's power to obtain the data (as enshrined in the Children's Act 2004) and whether statutory agencies would be breaching the Data Protection Act 1998 or Human Rights Act 1998 by responding to the request.
- Duplication in requesting from a local authority individual data already held by a central government departments and which could therefore be provided from one source.

Consequently a holding-letter was issued on 26th March 2012 directing all organisations to delay submitting data until further clarity was provided. The OCC drew up a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to clarify the position (above) and to clarify what data are being requested and how they will be used. The OCC liaised with senior officials from central departments to obtain the additional data they held. The officials explained that the OCC needed to take additional steps prior to any additional data-sharing taking place. These included obtaining Risk Management Accreditation (RMAD) and undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA). Once completed, a revised scaled-down data request/ FAQ document was issued to Chief Constables and Directors of Children's Services on 17th May with a deadline of 13th June 2012. Prior to further consultations with DH and the National Treatment Agency, a separate FAQ was disseminated to Directors of Primary Care Trusts on 6th June 2012 with a deadline of 29th June.

The Inquiry would like to thank all police forces, local authorities and health providers that responded to the data request, particularly as unforeseen delays meant the timing of the data request ended up coinciding with the period when annual returns were being produced.

## Logging, Coding and Anonymisation Process

The data request focussed on collecting individual and aggregated data on the known indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation at an individual level. Each indicator was allocated an individual unique code that was kept in a separate password-protected document. Each geographical area was also issued a unique individual code to anonymise it accordingly.

All data were disseminated to a secure mailbox to which only OCC employees working on the CSEGG Inquiry had access. Upon receipt, a log was updated to reflect which areas had responded to the data request. Upon detailed review of the data itself, the log was updated to reflect both the indicators, against which each area was able to provide data, as well as the completeness of the data. Any queries around the data were directed to the originator and recorded in a notes section.

A template was formulated in Microsoft excel where all of the individual level data were brought together in a consistent format. This displayed the initials and dates of birth of each child and the unique individual codes for each indicator against which each child record was recorded.

## Analysis

Once all the data had been logged, coded and anonymised, they were separated into 39<sup>44</sup> spreadsheets, each one reflecting the geographical area of an individual police force. Police force geographical boundaries were chosen as they corresponded to those of local authorities. The boundaries of geographic coverage provided by primary care trusts also approximate closely to police force areas. Where a PCT's geographical area does not overlap with that of a police force, the individual level data were duplicated across each police force area that their services cover. This, in conjunction with the lower volume of returns from primary care trusts nationally, means that we will

---

<sup>44</sup> For the purposes of the analysis the Metropolitan Police was split into two areas (North and South) due to its composite size / resident population. City of London Police was incorporated into the Northern aspect of this. British Transport Police was not included despite sexual offence crime data being provided/ collected due to the national geographic coverage this service provides.

not be commenting on totals of individual child records provided around health data. We will instead rely on the aggregate totals provided through the more complete datasets held by DH, the national treatment agency and national substance misuse unit.

To avoid double-counting and to enable us to identify the number of children who were recorded against multiple indicators of CSE, a unique code was assigned to each child record. This was done by merging the child's initials and date of birth. This code then formed the core basis of a pivot table that identified duplicates and counted the number of times each code appeared for each indicator. The totals from the pivot table were counted, to provide a total for each indicator. Where a child was identified as hitting more than one indicator, their data were added to a separate spreadsheet containing all the police force areas combined. It was from this that the more detailed analysis was undertaken of how many children were crossing over multiple indicators and their correlation to each other.

It should be noted that all figures that result from the individual record level analysis should be used only as a guide and will be referred to as 'at least' this volume of children. This is because the data cannot be considered to be complete as areas provided differing levels of data against the various indicators. Throughout the report the completeness at a national level of each indicator will be outlined as a caveat. Within the time frames, broader estimates are not possible of what the actual national totals are likely to be, due to the lack of consistency of data quality of each indicator across all geographic areas.

Within the dataset the potential exists for child records to be provided whereby different children have the same initials and dates of birth. Consequently, based on the methodologies employed to identify crossovers, should these children appear under different and not matching indicators, they would be counted as one child and result in the inflation of figures within this report. However, the opposite is also possible, whereby several children have the same initials and DOB and are hitting multiple indicators of CSE, but are grouped as one person.

To reduce the risk of this influencing the accuracy of the figures, the Inquiry undertook the cross-over analysis at police constabulary boundary geographical level. This will reduce the likelihood of multiple children having the same initials and DOBs and ultimately being recorded as hitting a CSE indicator. This does create potential additional duplication whereby a child is, for example, relocated (if in care) or moves to a different police constabulary area within the time period and their behaviour continues. This potential double-counting can and will be taken into account when providing figures on children at risk and caveated accordingly within the report.

## INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

During Phase 1 of the CSEGG Inquiry, 23 children and young people were interviewed by the Deputy Children's Commissioner, with the assistance of either a member of staff from OCC or a CSEGG Panel member; 20 of these young people had been sexually exploited and seven were gang-associated. The young people who were interviewed were being supported by specialist CSE services, the police, children's services, the secure estate and specialist gangs and youth violence services. Their interviews provided detailed accounts of their experiences of child sexual exploitation

or gang association, and offered insights into the actions that would have, or did, make a difference in keeping them safe from harm.

Details of the children and young people who were interviewed were as follows:

*Table 19: Children and young people interviewed for the CSEGG Inquiry*

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b>                      | <b>Disability</b> | <b>Sexual Orientation</b> | <b>CSE</b> | <b>Gang Association</b> |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Female        | 17         | Black Caribbean                       | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | Y                       |
| Female        | 16         | Mixed Caribbean/White British         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | Y                       |
| Female        | 17         | Gypsy Roma                            | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        |            | White British                         |                   |                           | Y          | N                       |
| Female        |            | White British                         |                   |                           | Y          | N                       |
| Female        |            | White British                         |                   |                           | Y          | N                       |
| Female        |            | White British                         |                   |                           | Y          | N                       |
| Male          |            | Black Caribbean                       | None              | Heterosexual              | N          | Y                       |
| Male          |            | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | N          | Y                       |
| Male          |            | Mixed Black Caribbean/White British   | None              | Heterosexual              | N          | Y                       |
| Female        | 21         | Mixed Bangladeshi/White British       |                   | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 18         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 17         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 18         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 16         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | Y                       |
| Female        | 21         | Mixed Pakistani/Black Caribbean       | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 16         | Mixed White British / Irish Traveller | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 25         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Male          | 18         | Pakistani British                     | None              | Gay                       | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 16         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 17         | Mixed White British / Estonian        | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 23         | White British                         | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | N                       |
| Female        | 17         | Mixed Black Caribbean/White British   | None              | Heterosexual              | Y          | Y                       |

While each of the young people who were interviewed had experiences that were unique to them, the stories they told were similar to those of other victims – stories that help our understanding of child sexual exploitation. Case studies and quotations from the young people interviewed are distributed through this interim report.

## APPENDIX C – FULL SITE VISIT TABLE

Table 20: Detailed findings from all site visits conducted during phase one of the CSEGG Inquiry

| Site 1  | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
|---|--------------------|--|
| (2 days)<br>Urban Local Authority   | 56                 | Professionals from safeguarding, youth offending, leaving-care, violence against women voluntary sector organisation.  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Less information was held on this form of exploitation than that which took place within street gangs. A local violence against women and girls organisation was working with five sexually-exploited young women through their rape crisis provision at the point of interview, two of whom had experienced 31 separate sexual and physical assaults. The local authority had also identified one sexually-exploited young man.  |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| 2009/10. 10 young women identified. Targeted work led to 40 young women being identified in 2010/11; this figure was considered by professionals to be conservative. 170 gang-associated men and boys had been identified in the local area, and the women and girls associated to these gang members had yet to be identified. According to the youth offending service at least 90% of young people on statutory orders to them are gang – associated.  |                    |  |
| Site 2  | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
| (2 days)<br>Large City  | 480                | Multi-agency team, specialist CSE service, police, youth offending service, children's services, BME violence against women service, and the drug and alcohol service. |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| CSE service works on approximately 60 caseloads a year although 460 cases had been identified over a 5-year period. All victims that the CSE service had worked with were young women; the vast majority of whom were identified as 'white females'. The police informed the Inquiry about 59 named perpetrators, across five groups, of whom 57 were men and boys and two were women and girls, although a number of the boys were also suspected to be victims of CSE.  |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Limited specific data presented, with the bulk of the intelligence held by the youth offending service. Four 'postcode-based' gangs were identified by professionals, who offered four detailed cases of gang-associated sexual assaults. A further 20 names of female victims were raised by the youth offending service, none of whom had been mentioned by the specialist sexual exploitation service or local police force; this raised concerns about a lack of information-sharing between agencies outside formal multi-agency structures.   |                    |  |
| Site 3  | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
| (2 days)<br>Urban Local Authority Area  | 30                 | Safeguarding, violence against women agency, a specialist CSE service and, subsequently, the genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic.                                      |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| The chair of the local safeguarding children board had not been aware of the 2009 safeguarding guidance on CSE or the CSE requirements outlined in the 2006 Working Together Guidance, until they had been notified of the CSEGG Inquiry visit. The head of safeguarding was unable to tell the panel the total number of children who were on child protection plans or how many were on plans under the category of Child Support Agency (CSA). When asked specifically about CSE, statutory professionals informed the panel about only 2 young women, whom they described as 'prostituting themselves'.<br>When voluntary sector agencies were interviewed, a different picture of group-associated CSE emerged. The local CSE service has recorded 26 cases in the last 18 months, of which 24 were girls and two were boys; the youngest victim was 13. The violence against women and girls service discussed a further four cases, and identified specific areas where children who were living in households where there was domestic violence and were vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Homelessness was considered by voluntary sector agencies to be a key risk factor in this particular local area. At the time of the visit 200 young people were known to be homeless in the local authority. |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| This form of sexual exploitation was rarely discussed by services. Gang-associated CSE was reported only when discussing local drugs markets and their links to neighbouring localities. On one occasion the Inquiry was given information on 'drugs barons' and 'middle-market organised groups' who were involved in drug-related offending and also had connections to commercial sexual exploitation.   |                    |  |

| Site 4  | Victims Identified | Interviewees  |
|---|--------------------|---|
| (2 days)<br>Large rural county and police force area  | 439                | Safeguarding, police force, education and internet safety services and specialist CSE and 'missing' service.  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| <p>Over 130 girl victims and three men who were perpetrating were identified in a single case. Concerns were raised by the CSE service about a further four boys who were victims in the same case. Police officers indicated that there were likely to be further perpetrators, related to both the victims and the perpetrators, who had not been arrested or charged. A separate case involving six boy victims and 15 'Asian' girl victims, had been linked to two other perpetrators. A further case involving a group of four victims had been identified but all of the perpetrators were unknown. Repeat cases of children going missing had been used to identify victims. Police reported eight current investigations, each involving approximately 35 victims. One case, involving the use of social networking sites, had identified 2,900 vulnerable children who were connected to the main perpetrator. Education services reported that a survey of school boys aged 13-14 had identified that over 95% of them had accessed online pornography. Police stated that limits had been imposed on the extent to which they could investigate further due to cost pressures. It was the view of the officers interviewed that if the word 'child' had been replaced with 'drugs' then the necessary resources would have been available.</p> |                    |   |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| No street gangs or gang-associated CSE had been identified.   |                    |   |
| Site 5  | Victims Identified | Interviewees  |
| (2 days)<br>Urban Local Authority   | 67                 | Specialist CSE service, children's services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the police and specialist gangs and serious youth violence service. |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| <p>The specialist CSE service was working with 67 young people at the time of the visit. The majority of cases involved perpetrators who were under the age of 18, although professionals identified men abusing boys, and a case of family members exploiting one young woman. Of the 67 cases, 64 victims were female and 3 were boys. Professionals working at the CSE service described their caseload as the 'tip of the iceberg', and believed that the number of victims was closer to 300 (given the number of children that their service-users talked about but who weren't accessing a specialist service).</p>  |                    |   |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| <p>Professionals from the gangs and youth-violence service considered all the boys and men that they are working with to be at risk of engaging in sexually-exploitative or violent behaviour towards partners. According to statutory agencies up to 40 boys/young men (up to 25 years of age) would be on their list of known gang members at any one time. Girls and young women in the area were also associated to street gangs from up to four other neighbouring areas.</p>  |                    |   |
| Site 6  | Victims Identified | Interviewees  |
| (2 days)<br>Large Rural County with a City  | 22                 | Professionals from the police, specialist CSE service, GUM clinic, children's services and safeguarding.  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| <p>Police investigation had identified six girls who were being sexually exploited by one group in the local area, and had concerns about a further 15 victims who had been abused in the past. All victims had been identified as a result of repeatedly going missing. Victims in this case were aged 12 and upwards and had been moved around the country within an organised network of adult men for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. A further group of perpetrators had been identified, with links to adult brothels and prostitution markets, although the number of victims was undisclosed. At the time of the visit the total number of perpetrators was unknown, with girls reporting being exploited at 'parties' by several men who were paying for sex. Younger boys were also reported as being involved in the exploitation and there were concerns that they were being groomed and exploited by the older men.</p>   |                    |   |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |   |
| <p>One identified gang in the local area with up to 20 central members. Activity to identify women and girls associated with the gang was underway but, at the point of the visit, professionals were unable to inform the Inquiry about the number of girls and young women affected. One young woman had reported a gang-associated rape involving her ex-boyfriend and three young men who were all members of the same gang. The youth offending service also reported a number of pregnancies as a result of gang-associated sexual exploitation.</p>  |                    |   |

| <b>Site 7</b>   | <b>Victims Identified</b> | <b>Interviewees</b>  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| (1 day)<br>Urban Local Authority Area   | 40                        | Professionals from the multi-agency gangs unit, youth offending service, safeguarding, children in care service, housing and education.                            |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| Professionals did not formally record the issue of group-associated CSE although, through discussions with the panel, approximately 25 victims were named. All victims identified were thought to be girls and young women, apart from one boy. Children were being moved across neighbouring areas and were being taken to 'parties'. A number of victims were reported to have gone missing, particularly by the youth-offending service. On one occasion a young women was missing for three weeks and another for five months. No intelligence could be provided on perpetrators.   |                           |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| According to the multi-agency gang's team, 15 street gangs were in operation in the local area. At the time of the visit, 34 young people (three of whom had been accused of three separate rapes) had been identified as gang members of greatest concern. In total, statutory agencies were aware of 120 young people who had been identified as gang members through a risk matrix, while police intelligence had identified up to 500 men and boys suspected as gang members. Only seven referrals for gang-associated young women had been made to a specialist service at the point of the visit and agencies were yet to identify any young women against their list of known gang members. A further two gang-associated young women were named during the site visit, and 6 unknown victims of gang-associated rape were also reported by professionals. Professionals were aware that a number of girls in the local area were daughters or sisters of known gang members. Oral rape, rape of partners, pregnancy as a result of rape, and firearms possession had all been identified by professionals in the local authority, although no charges had been brought in relation to gang-associated sexual exploitation |                           |  |
| <b>Site 8</b>   | <b>Victims Identified</b> | <b>Interviewees</b>  |
| (2 days)<br>Metropolitan and rural local authority and police force area  | 164                       | Professionals from a specialist CSE service, the police, community safety team, safeguarding, sexual assault referral centre and a violence against women service. |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| According to professionals 430 young people had been reported missing in the last year, a reduction from over 700 in the previous year. The specialist sexual exploitation service was seeing 24 young people a week at the time of the visit and estimated that the current number of victims was three times that who were accessing the CSE service. The majority of those identified were girls and young women, although a small number of boys were also accessing the service. There were an additional 60 young adult women who were involved in prostitution and who had disclosed being sexually exploited as children. Professionals informed the Inquiry of a further 80 victims in a neighbouring area. Children were being moved across four of the neighbouring areas. Five distinct groups of perpetrators had been identified, although most of their individual identities remained unknown.  |                           |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| No street gangs or gang-associated CSE were identified in the local area, although professionals in the CSE service were concerned that it was an issue that had not been considered and was therefore going undetected.  |                           |  |
| <b>Site 9</b>   | <b>Victims Identified</b> | <b>Interviewees</b>  |
| (2 days)<br>Urban Local Authority   | 80                        | Professionals from a specialist BME violence against women service, the youth offending service, three schools, leaving care team and the police.                  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| Relatively little information available on group-associated CSE in the local area. Some victims identified through schools, either by teachers, or by specialist agencies working in the school premises. The majority of group-associated cases identified were in a peer-on-peer context. In some cases victims were identified who had run to the local area as they were at risk of forced marriage. A specialist BME agency had worked with up to 500 young people who were at risk of CSE. Local schools reported approximately 50 young women about whom they were concerned in a group-associated context, and identified two young women whom they were particularly concerned about. Perpetrators in a group-associated context were rarely identified.   |                           |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                           |  |
| The majority of victims identified by professionals were being sexually exploited in a street gang context. Professionals were aware of approximately 300 members of street gangs in the local area, who were themselves linked to older men involved in organised crime. Gang membership was predominantly men and boys. In this context, one group of six victims, all girls and young women, were reported during the site visit. A further 22 victims were identified through schools, health agencies and specialist CSE services. Victims ranged in age from 11 upwards.  |                           |  |

| Site 10   | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
|---|--------------------|--|
| (2 days)<br>Metropolitan Local Authority  | 81                 | Specialist CSE service for boys and young men, safeguarding, the police, a second specialist CSE service and a service working with gangs and serious youth violence.          |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| The local safeguarding children board, in partnership with the local police and specialist services, had identified 74 victims of group-associated CSE, of whom 71 were girls and young women and three were boys and young men. A specialist project working with boys and young men identified a further four boys and young men who were victims. 11 groups of perpetrators had been identified by the police, linked to the 74 identified victims. The groups had different models of operating, some were linked to local businesses and others were peer groups or were linked to local schools.  |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Professionals lacked information on gang-associated CSE in the local area, even though four local street gangs had been identified. A specialist project working with street gangs and serious youth violence was working with a group of 5 young women and a 13-year-old girl who were linked to street gangs and local groups who were sexually exploiting children. The project was also aware of a boy who was gang-associated and had been sexually assaulted as a form of gang retaliation.   |                    |  |
| Site 11   | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
| (1 day)<br>Metropolitan Borough   | 164                | Specialist CSE service, police, safeguarding and the youth offending service.  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| The specialist CSE service was working with 80 open cases at the time of the site visit, and had a further 40 referrals that were awaiting an initial assessment. There were a number of 'victim' groups identified who were predominantly young women and girls. A further 42 victims were identified through the youth-offending service within a one-year period, 33 of whom were girls and 9 boys. Professionals struggled to distinguish between victims of group-associated CSE and those that were linked to street gangs. 154 perpetrators had been identified in a group-associated context.   |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Professionals struggle to say whether victims were gang-associated. However, street gangs were identified, two involving older men who were linked to organised crime groups and one involving younger males. Up to 40 gang-associated men and boys were discussed in relation to street gangs and CSE. The youth-offending service identified a further two, but specific identification of victims was lacking.   |                    |  |
| Site 12   | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
| (1 day)<br>Metropolitan Borough   | 12                 | Multiple housing providers, a school and a local college.  |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Little formal recording of child sexual exploitation by professionals, and significant lack of awareness among professionals within housing services about the risks within hostel accommodation. However, extensive anecdotal information held by education providers. There was concern amongst professionals about peer-on-peer exploitation and the expectations among some boys and young men that they are entitled to have sex with girls. In total, the cases of three young women were discussed during the site visit.  |                    |  |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| Nine individual cases raised by professionals, although anecdotal information presented on other young people. Professionals discussed the negative impact of gang-association on the ability of young people to attend school, and a number of children have gone missing from the system or cut themselves adrift as a result.  |                    |  |
| Site 13   | Victims Identified | Interviewees   |
| (2 days)<br>Large City  | 99                 | Professionals from a specialist CSE unit (police and children's services, multi-agency gangs unit, gang and serious youth violence service, a school and an LGBT organisation. |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>   |                    |  |
| The specialist CSE unit had identified 55 victims during a 14 month period who comprised 17 victim groups. All of the identified victims were girls and young women and were aged 11 –18. 47 were known to the local authority, either as children in need, 'looked after' or known to children's services. One had been placed in secure accommodation. During the same period 72 perpetrators were identified, of whom 53 were aged over 18, 67 were men and five were women. Further meetings during the site visit resulted in the identification of over 20 other victims, including some boys, and many more 'unknown' perpetrators who were not officially reported by the unit. |                    |  |

| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>  |                           |   |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| <p>One victim was identified via CSE unit, and 23 victims were identified by gangs' projects, housing and gangs units and the youth-offending service. 22 victims were girls and young women and two were boys and young men. The majority of victims were not known to children's services and were living in gang-affected neighbourhoods; some were connected to street gangs through families and others through their schools. Three main street gangs were described by professionals: one with approximately 30 members, one with approximately 17 members and one with approximately 12 members. Men and boys who were gang members were aged between 12 and 24 and had connections to older men involved in serious organised crime groups.</p>                           |                           |   |
| <b>Site 14</b>   | <b>Victims Identified</b> | <b>Interviewees</b>   |
| (2 days)<br>Metropolitan Police<br>Force   | 12                        | Six selected case files examined, three each for gang and group-associated sexual exploitation. |
| <b>Group-Associated CSE</b>  |                           |   |
| <p>Three cases examined. Each involved one victim. In total, there were 16 perpetrators linked to the three victims (one case involved three perpetrators, one involved two and one involved 10). In two cases, all the perpetrators were aged between 13 and 15 (14 perpetrators in total). In one case the perpetrators were thought to be in their late twenties/early thirties (two perpetrators in total). All victims were girls and young women. In two cases all of the perpetrators were men and boys, and in one case two perpetrators were young women and one was a young man.</p>   |                           |   |
| <b>Gang- Associated CSE</b>  |                           |   |
| <p>Three cases examined. One case involved two central victims and four others, all of whom were girls and young women. Another case involved two victims who were young women. The third case involved one victim who was a young woman. All cases involved gang-associated victims who were linked to perpetrators through intimate relationships or friendships; all victims lived in gang-affected neighbourhoods. Four street gangs were involved in total (one case involved two street gangs and the other two cases involved one gang each). In total 13 street gang members were named as being directly involved in sexual assaults, with concerns raised in case files of up to 80 other members in total who were linked to either the victim or the perpetrators.</p> |                           |   |

## **APPENDIX D: LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

---

Specifically, for the purposes of the CSEGG Inquiry:

The Children's Commissioner or a person authorised by him/her may for the purposes of his/her function under this section at any reasonable time:

Enter any premises, other than a private dwelling, for the purposes of interviewing any child accommodated or cared for there; and

If the child consents, interview the child in private (2004 Children Act – Part 1, s2 (8)).

The Children's Commissioner may only conduct an inquiry under this section if he/she is satisfied that the inquiry would not duplicate work that is the function of another person (2004 Children Act – Part 1, s3 (2)).

Where the Children's Commissioner has published a report under this section containing recommendations in respect to any person exercising functions under any enactment, he/she may require to person state in writing, within such period as the Children's Commissioner may reasonably require, what action the person has taken or proposes to take in response to the recommendations (2004 Children Act – Part 1, s3 (7)).

The Children's Commissioner may summons require any person to attend, at a time and place stated in the summons, to give evidence or to produce any documents in his/her custody or under his/her control which relate to any matter in question at the inquiry, and may take evidence under oath, and for that purpose administer oath. (Local Government Act 1972, s250 (2)).

Provided that –

no person shall be required, in obedience to such summons, to attend to give evidence or to produce any such documents, unless the necessary expenses of his attendance are paid or tendered to him/her; and

nothing in this section shall empower the person holding the inquiry to require the production of the title, or any instrument relating to the title, of any land not being the property of a Local Authority.

Every person who refuses or deliberately fails to attend in obedience to a summons issued under this section, or to give evidence, or who deliberately alters, suppresses, conceals, destroys, or refuses to produce any book or other document which he is required to produce for the purpose of this section, shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level three on the standard scale, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both (Local Government Act 1972, s250 (3))

## Subject Context

This formal Inquiry, led by the Deputy Children's Commissioner, focuses specifically on gang and group-associated sexual exploitation, victimisation and abuse of children (CSEGG), and is not intended to cover all models of child sexual exploitation. The Inquiry will not duplicate the work of other organisations in the field of child sexual exploitation.

The purpose of the CSEGG Inquiry will not be to identify and rescue children. However, if any information emerges that indicates risk to individual children then the appropriate safeguarding response will be initiated, and appropriate referrals made.

## Purpose

1. To promote children's rights to protection from sexual exploitation in accordance with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that every child shall be protected from all forms exploitation, victimisation and abuse and receive help. Specifically:
  - Article 19: Protection from all forms of violence.
  - Article 34: Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation.
  - Article 35: Protection from abduction.
  - Article 37: Protection from torture.
  - Article 39: Right to rehabilitation from abuse, exploitation and torture.
2. To conduct the CSEGG Inquiry in the spirit of, and compliant with, the UNCRC Articles:
  - Article 3: The best interest of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.
  - Article 12: Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
3. To ensure that the Coalition Government is fully informed about the nature and extent of gang and group-associated child sexual exploitation, victimisation and abuse, in support of its plans for preventing and combating this abuse of children.

## APPENDIX E – EVIDENCE-GATHERING PREPARATION PROCESS

---

### Ethical Framework

Prior to commencing with the Phase 1 evidence-gathering process, the OCC established an ethical framework under which the CSEGG Inquiry would operate. In order to produce the strategy the OCC completed the Barnardo's ethics documents, which were then scrutinised by the University of Bedfordshire. It was agreed with the University of Bedfordshire and Barnardo's that, as this was a national Inquiry and not a research project, it would not be appropriate to take the CSEGG Inquiry through an approval process that is in place for academic research. Given the sensitivities of the CSEGG Inquiry it was deemed appropriate to follow the ethical process but not subject the Inquiry to ethical research approval. The completed Barnardo's documentation was supplemented with an overarching ethical strategic framework for the CSEGG Inquiry, and both documents are available upon request. Key aspects of the ethical framework to be noted in this interim report are as follows:

- All localities and services that have taken part in the CSEGG Inquiry will remain anonymous throughout the process. We were advised that the publication of any locality, service or individual in any CSEGG Inquiry materials could increase the risk to children, by potentially flagging up to exploiters the fact that certain areas in England have a large number of vulnerable children.
- The only exception to the above rule will be during Phase 2 of the CSEGG Inquiry in which services demonstrating best practice may be asked whether or not they wish to be named in the final report. If a service does not want to be named it will still be possible to describe the practice while keeping the service anonymous.
- Under no circumstances will any individual who has taken part in the CSEGG Inquiry be named. All individuals will remain anonymous throughout the CSEGG Inquiry process.
- A child would be interviewed only if the OCC was satisfied it was safe and appropriate to do so and that the child had a support network around them, in line with the CSEGG Inquiry participation strategy and the OCC safeguarding policy.

### Risk Assessment

In order to ensure that the information being collected would be requested, received, processed and published safely, a CESG Listed Advisor Scheme (CLAS) consultant was commissioned to complete a Risk Management Accreditation Document Set (RMADS). The RMADS attributed a risk or level to the evidence being requested through the dataset, call for evidence and locality visits, by assessing the threat level of the data being requested set against the measures in place to mitigate risk. Once the RMADS was completed a Department for Education independent accreditor assessed the document set and accredited the OCC CSEGG Inquiry Process. Full accreditation was achieved.

## Privacy Impact Assessment

In addition to the production of the RMADS, legal counsel was sought to produce a full privacy impact assessment for the CSEGG Inquiry evidence-gathering process. Counsel advised the OCC that the data being requested, and the proposed process for data management, were lawful and constituted no breach of the Data Protection Act or any equalities legislation. Counsel advised that the Abortion Act 1967 prevented the sharing of individual level data with the Inquiry and this request was removed from the dataset.

The full opinion is available and the full privacy impact assessments are available on request.

## Participation Strategy

A CSEGG Participation Strategy was produced covering all aspects of participation including the safety and well-being of young people who contributed to the CSEGG Inquiry. The welfare of children and young people is at the heart of the CSEGG Inquiry. All aspects of the work, from design through to publication of the findings, were considered from a safeguarding perspective.

The full participation strategy is available upon request.

## APPENDIX F: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REFERENCING 'PROSTITUTION' IN RELATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The table below lists the legislation which contains specific reference to child prostitution within the body of the text<sup>1</sup>. This list is not exhaustive and is provided as a guide.

| Legislation   | Section                |
|---|------------------------|
| The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Amendment of Schedules 3 and 5) Order 2007 (no. 296)              | Article 2              |
| Sexual Offences Act 2003  | Part 1                 |
|   | SCHEDULE 3             |
|   | SCHEDULE 6             |
| The Courts-Martial (Review of Sentencing) (Categories of Offences) Order 2007                   | SCHEDULE               |
| The Armed Forces (Review of Court Martial Sentence) Order 2009                                  | SCHEDULE               |
| The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order 2006                                | SCHEDULE 1             |
| Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Prospective)                        | SCHEDULE 18            |
| Criminal Justice Act 2003   | SCHEDULE 15            |
|   | SCHEDULE 17            |
|   | SCHEDULE 1             |
| Serious Crime Act 2007  | SCHEDULE 1             |
| The Criminal Defence Service (Funding) Order 2007   | SCHEDULE 1             |
| The Day Care and Child Minding (Disqualification) (England) Regulations 2005                    | SCHEDULE 2             |
| The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009   | SCHEDULE 2             |
| The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2007   | SCHEDULE 2             |
| The Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 | CH 10 (FOR SCHEDULE 2) |
| The Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 | Regulation 4           |
| Policing and Crime Act 2009   | SCHEDULE 2             |
| Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000  | SCHEDULE 4             |

<sup>1</sup> Source: www.legislation.gov website based on key word searches on "child prostitute" or "child prostitution". It did not involve any broader key word searches or manual trawls of sexual offence/ prostitution related legislation.

The below table contains a list of the key national guidance documents<sup>2</sup> containing references to child prostitution:

| <b>Guidance</b>   | <b>Section</b>  |
|---|---|
| DCSF (2009) Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation                           | 1.2 1.6<br>2.9<br>4.49<br>7.10  |
| DH (2000) Safeguarding Children in Prostitution   | Mentioned throughout  |
| DCSF (2010) Working Together to Safeguard Children  | 6.63<br>12.10   |
| Home Office and DH (2001) National plan for safeguarding children from commercial sexual exploitation | 1.5<br>2.1 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.12<br>3.25<br>4.20<br>5.3 5.4 5.6 5.7<br>7.2 7.3 |

<sup>2</sup> Table is based on online searches of the main government department websites (DFE, MOJ, HO and DH). This does not include searches on localised policy and practice documents.

## **APPENDIX G: HELP AND SUPPORT**

---

Should you and a child you are in contact with require support or information following this call for evidence please use the following contacts:

The NSPCC is assisting the Office of the Children's Commissioner providing immediate assistance to anyone affected by sexual abuse or exploitation:

- If you are a child or young person affected by abuse or exploitation you can call Childline for advice and support 24 hours a day on Tel: 0800 1111.
- If you are an adult who needs support or information, or are concerned about a child or young person, call the NSPCC helpline on Tel: 0808 800 5000.
- To locate your nearest child sexual exploitation service:  
<http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org/services>
- For advice and support for parents of sexual exploited children:  
<http://www.cropuk.org.uk>
- For support following sexual violence or assault:  
<http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/> 0808 802 9999 (12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm)
- For 24/7 contact line call Missing People: 0800 700 740

In an emergency please dial 999

## **Bibliography**

---

E. Chase and J. Statham (2005) Commercial and sexual exploitation of children and young people in the UK—a review, *Child abuse review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 4–25.

Coy, M (2009) 'Moved around like bags of rubbish nobody wants: how multiple placement moves can make young women vulnerable to sexual exploitation', *Child Abuse Review*, 18, 254 – 266.

Department for Children Schools and Family (2009) *Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation, Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children*, DCSF, London.

Department for Education (2011) *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: National Action Plan*, Department for Education, London.

Department for Education (2012) *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: National Action Plan Progress Report*, Department for Education, London.

EVAW (2010) Almost a third of girls experience unwanted sexual touching in UK schools – new YouGov poll [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)

Firmin, C (2010) *Female Voice in Violence: A study into the impact of serious youth violence on women and girls*, Race on the Agenda, London.

Firmin, C (2011) *This is it, This is my Life: Female Voice in Violence Final Report*, Race on the Agenda, London.

Flood, M (2009) The Harms of Pornography Exposure Among Children and Young People *Child Abuse Review* 18 (2) 384-400.

HM Government (2011) *Ending Gang and Youth Violence: A Cross-Government Report including further evidence and good practice case studies*, The Stationary Office, London.

Jago, S et al (2011) *What's Going On to Safeguard Sexually Exploited Young People*, University of Bedfordshire.

Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012) *Accelerated report on the emerging findings of the OCC's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, with a special focus on children in care*, OCC.

Pearce, JJ (2009) *Young people and sexual exploitation: It isn't hidden, you just aren't looking*, London: Routledge Falmer.

Pearce, JJ and Pitts, J 2011 *Youth Gangs, Sexual Violence and Sexual Exploitation*.

*A Scoping Exercise for The Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, OCC and University of Bedfordshire*.

Perry C, (2012) *Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection*.

Scott, S and Skidmore, P (2006) *Reducing the Risk – Barnardo's support for sexually exploited young people: a 2 year evaluation*, Barnardo's.



Championing Children and Young People in England

**The Office of the Children's Commissioner**

33 Greycoat Street

London

SW1P 2QF

**Tel:** 020 7783 8330

**Email:** [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)