



POLICE
SCOTLAND

POILEAS ALBA

Policing Online Child Sexual Abuse in Scotland

A/DSU Carron McKellar, National Child Protection Lead

June 2024

The Headlines

- 1.3% - 1.6% of adults in the UK estimated to pose varying degrees of sexual risk to children
- Increased accessibility to Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) vs. increase in severity of images
- Decrease in age of children with unsupervised access to internet
- Exacerbated by the Pandemic and End to End Encryption
- Lines blurred between 'contact', 'non-contact' & AI
- 61% increase in 'Sextortion' reports 2022 - 2023



Global research

- Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) can be located on the open web through commonly used search engines... within 3 clicks.
- It takes 19 seconds for a child to be exposed to grooming during gaming and, on average, 45 minutes to be groomed.



Scottish Context

- 2022/23
 - Sexual cyber-crime in Scotland is increasing (*Communicating indecently, Causing to view sexual activity/images, Indecent photos of children, Disclosing or threatening to disclose an intimate image*)
 - Of the estimated 3,380 sexual cyber-crimes recorded, an estimated 2060 had a victim under the age of 18.
 - Almost 2/3 sexual cyber-crimes had a perpetrator located within Scotland



What do we know

- Victim/Complainer
 - Those aged 12-15 account for approximately 2/3
 - The majority are female
- Perpetrator
 - Over 90% of those identified are male
 - More than ¼ are aged 17 and under
- Peer to Peer
 - A considerable portion of offences committed against children were committed by children aged 17 and younger
 - The highest number of offenders in disclosure of an intimate image/revenge porn by a considerable margin were aged 13-15



Investigation

- Specialist investigation teams within the National Child Abuse Investigation Unit, located across Scotland to support Local Policing
- Working with the National Crime Agency, UK & International Law Enforcement Agencies
- Victim Identification Team – reviewing images to identify the children in the pictures
- NOCAP – National Online Child Abuse Package
- Work in partnership with Lucy Faithfull Foundation in relation to prevention



Cyber Harm Prevention Team

- Cyber prevention advice & guidance to officers, work in partnership with statutory, private and 3rd sector organisations, including SWS, Education Scotland, NHS, SCRA, Youth Workers and Housing Officers.
 - Assisting in the development of an interactive resource by I AM ME Scotland for use in schools by Police & practitioners.
 - Sextortion - social media campaign & resources for raising awareness to practitioners & school liaison officers.
 - Intimate Image Sharing - resources created for young people & parents, highlighting measures to take to keep children safe online.
 - Creation of the Online Safety Guide for Parents and Carers
 - Review geographical trends & working with academia
 - CPD sessions for officers on the delivery of Police resources
 - Resources available to officers through the police section of GLOW (the Education Scotland platform for storing and presenting of lesson plans and resources).



Final Points

- Children have the right to be safe online & to thrive in a digital environment
- Lives lived online
- Generational gaps in knowledge
- Importance of listening and supporting
- Victim blaming & victim blaming language
- Longer term impacts
- Partner Intelligence Portal (PIP)
- Prevention advice/guidance - PPCWCyberHarmPrevention@scotland.police.uk

