A CELCIS Emerging Insights Series Webinar:

Protecting children and the risk of online sexual abuse: what do we need to know?

Video transcript

Speakers:

Claire Burns, Director, CELCIS

Carron McKellar, A/Detective Superintendent, Police Scotland

Chris Hughes, Hotline Director, The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

Stuart Allardyce, Director, the Lucy Faithful Foundation

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Claire Burns 0:09

Hello, everybody, and welcome to the latest in the series of CELCIS emerging insights seminars. I'm Claire Burns, I'm the Director of CELCIS, and really grateful to everybody who's taking the time out, I know what's really busy schedules, to be with us this morning. But I think it's also just a real reflection on people's desire and passion around the subject area to get as much information as we can. We've had a huge response to the seminar. And again, I think that very much reflects the way this cuts across, I'm just thinking this is a subject matter that really cuts across both personal and professional interests, and concerns for many of us. Today's seminar is entitled protecting children and the risk of online sexual abuse, what do we need to know. And I'll introduce our three speakers in a moment, but just a short bit before we start about the series of seminars. They were launched in 2023, to kick off a new short series of webinars for practitioners or anyone with responsibility or interest in child protection in Scotland, and in particular, they're designed to give people a bit of space and a bit of reflective time to get information and insights, particularly into new developments and risks. And this is no less true of the topic today. And I know that lots of people have been in touch with us through CPC and through our networks to see this as something that we're really concerned about, and

how can we find out more about it. So just give us a bit of space to think about, give access to new thinking, research insights and perspectives, and a space for all of those who have got responsibility for child protection to learn and engage as a community and ask questions. So just some housekeeping again, before we start, we've got a large number of attendees for the webinar. And as we've done before, attendees, cameras and microphones will be automatically turned off, as will the chat function and we'll manage all that. We'll be using the Q&A function to collect questions and comments for after we've had the presentations, and I'll be getting those fed through to me, and I'll kind of summarise them and then pass them on to our speakers. We would ask that no people or organisations are referenced specifically within questions and comments and for attendees to refrain from taking any photographs or screenshots of the webinar during the live session. This is to provide anonymity for our attendees and their organisations as well as to protect the content of the webinar, which will contain references. So, there's a particular reason for that to do and it contains references to a social media deterrence campaign developed by police, Scotland, and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, which has not been launched at the moment but launched at the beginning of July. So that's why we've been particularly careful around the confidentiality and anonymity this morning. In most of the seminars, we have been emphasising the wellbeing element, and again, even more significant for the topic today. So given the series of this and particular subject matter of this one, what is shared and discussed, maybe upsetting, and this can affect all of us, and it may even take us quite unexpectedly. So please take time out of the seminar if you need to, during the webinar or afterwards, there have been well-being messages that have been sent in advance, they will also be in the chat function, if you need to speak to someone about how you're feeling and connect with someone you feel comfortable talking to. And we've also provided information for people to talk in confidence to the Samaritans or Breathing Space. In particular, if you're a survivor of abuse or worried that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, there are steps you can take to share this information. And again, we're sharing that and the chat function. And I will reiterate some of those messages at the end again as well for people so. And again, that you can be in touch with us at any point as well if need be. So, and now to our speakers and a huge welcome to them. And thanks in advance for I know the preparation that they've put into today and for really sharing the expertise with us today and agreeing to come along. I cannot do justice to the CV so I'm going to just see a small part of what the what they've done. So, Carron McKellar, Carron will be our first speaker today Carron is Detective Superintendent with Police Scotland. Over the last year Carron has led Police Scotland's national child protection portfolio, as well as being responsible for the four C's Child Protection Policy work, she heads up the National Child Abuse

Investigation Unit and the online child sexual abuse and exploitation teams. The specialist team responsible for investigating online child abuse. Carron chairs Police Scotland's multi agency prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation group and along with her team is involved in working with partners in the EU and UK, on a project which aims to deliver action to reduce the number of abused children and protect those at risk of exploitation. Carron also sits on several UK groups focusing on law enforcement as well, in relation to the subject matter. So again, can see Carron is bringing a huge amount the expertise with us today and I think Carron, that might be just one small aspect of your CV but, but bits that are very important. We've also got Chris Hughes with us today, welcome Chris. Chris is the Hotline Director from the Internet Watch Foundation. Chris joined that in February 2012. He is responsible for the running of the hotline which receives inbound reports from all over the world, and proactively searches for child sexual abuse material. Chris is the IWS key contact with law enforcement bodies in the UK and around the world, including Interpol. He leads on the IWS victim identification referrals to law enforcement ensuring that incidents are escalated to the National Crime Agency appropriately. Chris also sits on several advisory groups which include multi agency preventing online sexual abuse and exploitation group with Police Scotland, the National Crime Agency, CSA prevent group and in hope working groups. So again, as you can see, we're really bringing people with direct experience here as well. And last but not least, we'll hear from Stuart Allardyce and is Director of the Lucy Faithful Foundation Scotland, and as director he has responsibilities for Stop It Now services in Scotland, as well as research across the whole organisation. He is currently chair of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse in the UK and Ireland and was formally changed, NOTA as that's called at Scotland. He is a visiting researcher here at the University of Strathclyde and an associate at CYCJ and a trustee at White Ribbon Scotland. He's a member of the Scottish Government's expert working group on preventing sexual offending amongst children and young people. So welcome to the three of you. And again, huge thanks in advance. So, with no further ado, Carron, I'm going to pass over to you to share your presentation with us. Thank you.

Carron McKellar 6:55

Policing Online Child Sexual Abuse in Scotland

A/DSU Carron McKellar, National Child Protection Lead   June 2024

Thanks, Claire. Morning, everyone. Thanks for the opportunity to kind of share their insights and information or a little bit of information regarding online child sexual abuse. As Claire said, I'm the Child Protection lead for Police Scotland, I also have responsibility for the teams involved in investigating online child sexual abuse. So, my aim today is to provide a bit of context, some insights from a Scottish perspective, and also highlight some of the work that my own organisation Police Scotland does in general in this area. And I'll end my presentation with some points and thoughts. I'd like you to take away and consider in the context of your own workplace and practice. And in addition to that, as Claire highlighted Police Scotland have been working with Lucy Faithful Foundation, and the Stop It Now no service. And we have a new 'Get Help or Get Caught' campaign that will be launched on the first of July. And we'd like to let you see that after Stuart's presentation at the end. So, if you can move on to the next slide, please, Michelle.

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

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So, it's important to have better context, as I said, around online child sexual offending and set the scene to an extent. The threat in relation to online child sexual abuse is increasing. It's a global issue. It doesn't recognise borders, and it doesn't recognise area boundaries. Countries across the world are grappling with the increase of online offending. Although difficult to accurately state figures, more and more research and statistics are produced each year giving us an indication of the scale and prevalence of this type of offending nowadays. And the simple fact is that we all live our lives online, children and young people more so. So how many of you are sitting there just now with your phones nearby notifications coming through from any social media apps you use? How many of you truly understand how the algorithms work? Or are your privacy settings current? And are they in place? I'm no expert. But I'm aware that algorithms are designed to push content and keep you engaged. So, what does that mean for young people exploring online or using apps to communicate with their hundreds of friends? It's clear to us nowadays that the world of online child sexual abuse is no longer contained on the dark web. It's on the open web and accessibility as a result to child sexual abuse material has increased. Across the UK, we are seeing an increase in the severity of images and at the same time a decrease in the age of children depicted in those images. And by that, I mean children under 10. As we've all experienced the pandemic has pushed us further and further into living our lives online, which brought many opportunities many, many positive opportunities but it's also seen an increase in the risks associated with this. You'll have heard of end-to-end encryption by social media platforms, and this will see increased dangers for children on any of the associated well-known apps, as it becomes more difficult to detect child sexual abuse material.

Research is showing us that online pornography has exacerbated things. It can have links with online offending against children. Violence and pornography can often go hand in hand and bear in mind how algorithms work, constantly pushing content and gradually more severe content. How does this play out for a teenage boy, for example, accessing porn sites and exploiting his sexuality, or an adult. When we think about the potential of desensitisation or normalisation of behaviour, as I've heard it being called, are the justifications that we sometimes hear around what is online isn't actually seen as real. What is the longer-term impact from this? The accessibility of pornography is not just restricted to porn sites. It may be a surprise to you, but recently, it was reported that X or Twitter is the most common place to see porn, something that we're seeing currently in our own investigations. With the recent enactment of the Online Safety Act, we've yet to see the full impact of legislation which provides increased responsibility on platforms under tech giants to improve age verification measures, for example. And I would recommend accessing Ofcom's site to see the work that they're doing in this area, they've got a number of consultations ongoing, but in effect, they have to police the tech giants. So, we've previously referred to contact and non-contact offending, extended reality, and AI. The latter is almost perceived as a lesser crime, not my thoughts, I hasten to add. But the reality is that nowadays, the lines between all of these are blurred, I recently heard in person and online offending being described as two sides of the same coin. And I would absolutely agree, one enables the other. And what we see is that just because perpetrators involved in one are involved in one, it doesn't mean that they're not involved in the other. So, with AI images are becoming so realistic, that is getting increasingly difficult to tell the difference. But it's really important to know that they are treated in the same way as other images. No matter which type of image offence. There is always a victim, a child, or a young person somewhere in the chain of events leading to the image posted online. Whether it's pseudo or AI generated. An indecent image of a child is illegal, whether deemed to be real or not. And we collectively need to be clear about that. Then there's the online blackmail or sextortion, slightly different because it's financially motivated as opposed to sexually motivated. But I'm sure you'll agree the links with this area are absolutely clear. This represented about 12% of all cyber-crime reported in Police Scotland in 2023, illustrating the sheer prevalence of this crime, the figures are likely to be much higher, when taken into consideration the sextortion attempts that go unreported. The impact of victims of sextortion can vary there's much more than just the financial loss at stake. It affects adults, it affects children alike. But as far as children are concerned, teenage males in particular are vulnerable to sextortion. And I'm sure you'll be aware of the recent publicity and focus on this following the tragic

suicide of 16-year-old Murray Dowey at the end of last year that's been highly publicised. Can we move on to the next slide, please?

So, a very short slide. I'm hoping quite an impactful one. It was taken from the Global Threat Assessment and 2023 by the We Protect Global Alliance and I think it highlights exactly what we're dealing with when it comes to online child sexual abuse. Well, known social media platforms, encrypted messaging apps, and online gaming are all used to make contact with children. TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, all well known, all well used by the general population. And in Scotland from our fingers over the last year, Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp have been the most common platforms used that I'm seeing in our investigations. So, three clicks to find child sexual abuse material, and 19 seconds to start a grooming process. So, let's move on to the Scottish context.

What does this all mean for Scotland? There are so many sets of statistics out there, as I've said, and the reports highlighted as pre reads go into some of these so I'm not going to regurgitate them. But the stats here are the ones that I've highlighted relate to official recorded crime in Scotland. And I'm under no illusion that this shows the full extent of the issue. But the stats show us it's on the increase, as we know, and it has been over the last five years or so, we currently estimate about 20% increase in the last year in online child sexual cyber-crimes committed against children. Most sexual cybercrimes involve a child victim, excuse me, and for crimes reported in Scotland, most perpetrators are from Scotland. Now, given the audience given those of you that are beaming into this, just now, I think it's really important to note how difficult it can be for victims to disclose offences in this area. And having worked in public protection for most of my career, I recognise the different reasons for this. But when it comes to online offending, it's particularly difficult. And this is due to the feelings of guilt and shame on behalf or on the part of the victim. Feelings like why didn't I just turn off the phone? It's my fault. Very, very common. It's important, we are extremely mindful of this when we're dealing with anyone who discloses online abuse. And the other aspect of this is that some don't even recognise that they've been groomed or abused online. It was just part of a game. And for some, they believe that they are the ones that are in control. They're the ones that are getting paid, after all, whether that's money, gifts, gaming vouchers, whatever. So, in addition to the sort of information that we receive in Police Scotland from partners, a lot of what we deal with, comes from referrals through the industry themselves, where Child Sexual Abuse material or conversations about it have been detected. And ultimately, this comes to us through the

National Crime Agency. This will ultimately be impacted by end-to-end encryption, as I mentioned earlier, so it's important that we look beyond the investigation of crimes to the importance of education, and awareness raising, and prevention.

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

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The information highlighted here is from a review of a number of different databases and Police Scotland. It's not what I would refer to as official recorded crime statistics, but it's a snapshot if you like. So, apologies if you feel that I'm being a bit vague. But I wanted to have a look at offending in more detail. And what our work so far has shown us is absolutely mirrors what's going on elsewhere in the UK, and indeed elsewhere in the world. So, the majority of victims are aged 12 to 15 and female. It's important to know, however, that boys are less likely to disclose due to the stigma that's associated with this, and we shouldn't forget them. Over 90% of perpetrators are male with around a quarter of them 17 and under. And that leads us on to peer-to-peer offending. Often the disclosure of intimate images by peers. And I'm sure we're all aware of children sharing images with each other before they know it out of control, and feature and further distribution to classmates. Again, the impact of this can be devastating on the victims and those who those who feature in the images. Unlike other parts of the UK, in Scotland, the sharing of an image of a child of themselves tends to be dealt with under Child Protection processes or an agreed single agency support whether that's through education or other relevant partner. To prevent in effect victims being charged, but also to ensure that children are supported in what can be an extremely distressing situation for them. So how did police investigate online child sexual abuse? Well, as I've said

I lead the National Child abuse investigation unit and I've got specialist teams within that unit located across the country.

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

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They support local policing teams but also work internationally given some perpetrators or victims of Scottish perpetrators can be located elsewhere in the world. And we're currently running, for example, a number of inquiries in tandem with the FBI. So, we also have victim identification team. Their role is reviewing images that we recover, to identify children so that we can ensure safeguarding measures are implemented and actions taken. And for me, they're very much the unsung heroes given the volume and the content that they have to view on a daily basis. And as you might imagine, we have to be really mindful of their welfare. But they have an incredibly difficult task, which they're all totally committed to. And in some devices, we recover, we can recover up to an if not more than hundreds of 1000s of images. So, the investigation teams deal with what we call no caps, and there are national online child abuse packages which some of you may have heard of before. These NOCAPs are developed through the police to the stage where action can be taken and teams will go and progress warrants, will arrange IRD through local policing teams and they'll take action against perpetrators. Working in partnership with Stuart's organisation to encourage any perpetrators to make contact with and seek support from them as we seek to prevent further offending and therefore, further victims. Now I have a quick case study which I wanted to highlight in order to show how the police deal with information in relation to child sexual abuse material. As Claire said, the topic is quite emotive. So I'll just kind of highlight that as a bit of a health warning for people I'm not going to go into the graphic details of anything

is quite general, but also what I wanted to use us to dispel any myths or stereotypes or in the type of inquiries that we deal with daily and also highlight the devastating impact they can have on the other victims of online child sexual abuse and exploitation, and that's the families of the perpetrator. So, information was received by police that an individual was engaged with someone via Twitter using it, sorry, discussing Child Sexual Abuse material. Images were of a schoolgirl, they've been shared, showing her undressing and focusing on her groin area. The discussion was highly sexualized. It was inferred that the child was a daughter of the individual concerned. And incidentally, he also shared an image of himself. This information was passed via a no cap to our investigation teams. The child wasn't identified at this point, and there were difficulties identifying the perpetrator. But the school uniform ultimately led to inquiries at the school and the family concerned being identified. Checks were carried out with partners and revealed that the family were unknown to police or them, the perpetrator was married and employed. Given concerns regarding the girl safety, action had to be taken swiftly and the perpetrator was traced at home. And unfortunately, he was there with his children and his wife at the time. His devices were examined at the house and revealed indecent communications as well as indecent images. He was arrested and removed from the house and officers remained with his wife and children who were extremely distressed and shocked, as you might imagine. His wife was signposted to support and was also advised that we would have to instigate Child Protection processes and multi-agency discussion would be taking place. An IRD took place in respect of the children, as it was important obviously to establish whether there was any further offending had taken place against them. Social work colleagues proceeded to provide the family with support and the perpetrator's wife in particular. The family had never experienced any social work input previously, the perpetrator did not speak during interview but was charged with sexual offences and telecommunications offences relating to what had been uncovered on his devices at his home address. He was released on bail to another address and conditions put in place prohibiting him contact with his wife and children while investigations were progressed. A full examination of the devices taken from the perpetrator were undertaken with a large volume of other images and other offences identified, including communication with individuals over social media from elsewhere in the world. Relevant information was then passed to law enforcement agencies in relevant countries for consideration and action as appropriate. And due to comments from his daughter, she had to undergo an interview although she did not disclose or make any disclosures. Given the nature of the images and the content, the perpetrators wife unfortunately had to be shown some. This had to be managed extremely carefully, and was still very, very distressing for her. So, I'm not going to go into the specifics of the case any

further, but I think you'll agree the impact of this action is clear. The perpetrator has lost his family, and essentially his life as he knew it. His family are devastated, shocked, upset and horrified by what's taking place. And after being married to him for a long time, his wife had absolutely no inclination of her husband's behaviour, the result of his actions, being that she has taken on the mortgage and supports the children both emotionally and financially, and he no longer has access to them. The role of the police and investigation of online child sexual abuse is clear. But the impact of the action we have to take can be utterly devastating for families. I would like to see this scenario is unusual, but it isn't. And we're currently supporting work to look at how we how families can be better supported through us and with our partners. But the other reason I wanted to highlight this is because the perpetrator had a well-paid job, was in a stable relationship with children, was well known in his local community, and was unknown to either the police or other partners. And we see this more and more. And the themes touched on here are what we've targeted in our latest campaign, through the help from Stuart and Lucy Faithful Foundation, which is as I said, it's going to be launched next month and we'll give you a sneak peek.

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).

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It's not just about the investigation of crime for police, Police Scotland also has a cyber harm Prevention Team, which supports officers and works with partners focusing on raising awareness in schools, with parents, carers and practitioners, and it has a number of resources available on glow for those officers that are involved in working in an education setting. Cyber Harm Prevention Team also have a keen focus on the peer-to-peer aspect of online sexual abuse and the sharing of images and supporting education and young people sorry, and

supporting the education of children and young people, but the consequences of pressing that share button. And finally, if we can move on to the last one.

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

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So, here's some points I referenced earlier, which I just wanted to highlight to encourage you to have a think about whether as a practitioner, a manager, or even as a parent, or a carer, we all have a right to be safe online, especially children. Living our lives online means the removal of access to it could have an extremely detrimental impact on a child or young person. It contains their life, their connections, it's all on their phone. But equally, the continual use of it can have the same effect. So, it's a kind of catch 22 situation. I don't know about you, but I have difficulty keeping up with technology and I guess it's my age. But the fact is, there's a generational gap and that's increasing so we collectively need to be supporting parents, carers and practitioners. So, what are you doing in within your organisation? Or what are you aware of that's happening locally around us? We need to be mindful about how we react to sharing of images amongst children. I know I'm preaching to the converted regarding listening and being supportive and being trauma informed. But the language we use needs to be carefully thought about given the shame and guilt and guilt that victims describe feeling. We have to be careful not to be using victim blaming or judgmental language. Self-harm, suicide, suicide attempts, social challenges, PTSD, lifestyle instability, anxiety, and depression are known to be some of the long-lasting symptoms and impacts from being a victim of sexual abuse. And finally, I wanted to highlight that Police Scotland has a partner and intelligence portal, which can be used by other organisations to share intelligence with the police. I should stress it shouldn't be used instead of the Child Protection

procedures. But it can be particularly useful if you have a bit of information, you feel the police should know. It can be that final piece in a jigsaw, particularly when looking at this type of offending. And I can, or we can arrange training with partners if required. And I'm happy to be contacted through CELCIS by any of the organisations, any organisation, that's felt will benefit from this and hasn't already taken part in the training. And below at the bottom of that slide is the contact details for our Cyber Harm Prevention Team. So, this is just a short overview. And I hope I've managed to give you some further insight to online offending and how we deal with it and what we need to be thinking about going forward. Thank you.

Claire Burns 28:18

Thanks so much, Carron, and I think you know, I was about to say, those are so sobering. But I think sobering just doesn't, you know, it's to minimise that they're absolutely shocking statistics, even when you work in this field. And I think what you've done a great job of is just reminding us of the scale. But I think particularly, really challenging us to think about some of the stereotypes that might exist about who these perpetrators are. So, I think that's certainly a couple of things have really impacted on me this morning. So, thank you. I'm going to pass them on to Chris. Chris, if you want to get to your presentation. Thank you.

Chris Hughes 28:53

Okay, so thank you to Claire. And additionally following on from Carron, who has highlighted some of the areas that I will actually be touching on within my presentation. So, as I already kind of identified, my name is Chris Hughes. I'm the Hotline Director at the Internet Watch Foundation. And I have the everyday responsibility for managing the hotline team here based in Cambridge.

So firstly, just for those of you that aren't familiar with the IWF, I'll just give you like a brief background. So, we were established 28 years ago, we are the only

UK hotline. We're a not for profit, and our primary focus, certainly in terms of the hotline and the team of analysts that I manage, is that we up we are tasked to find, assess and remove images of child sexual abuse from the internet. Carron mentioned briefly that there is a bit of a misnomer that the vast majority of content is on the dark web, but all of the statistics I'm going to show, or 99% from the clear web. So, I just want to kind of make that make that clear that this is where we are focusing our time and our energy. So, in terms of the Internet Watch foundation, this is clearly a global problem. And some of the stakeholders that you can see on the slide there on the left-hand side are just a small number of the partners that we have to cooperate and coordinate with in terms of being able to have a sustainable effort in this particular fight against child sexual abuse material. And it's often said that it takes a network to defeat a network. And I think that's particularly true in the case of online Child Sexual Abuse material. So, you can see that we have connections to GCHQ, the NCA, obviously Police Scotland, as well as other NGOs, including the NSPCC and Lucy faithful. We also operate in addition to the IWF website, we also operate 54 other international reporting portals, which allows nationals of other countries to be able to report suspected child sexual abuse material to us online. We're also engaged with internet industry; they need to be part of the solution. So, we also provide data and services to the internet industry to help them mitigate, find and remove content from their platforms.

IWF
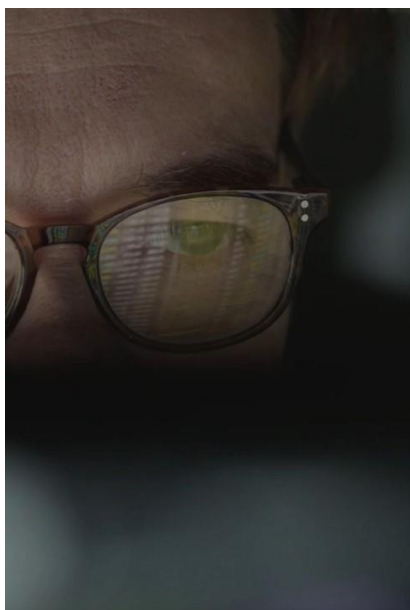
Finding content

- **Public reports**
  We take public reports in the UK and from our 54 international portals.

- **Police and Industry**
  We take reports from police as well as reports from the internet industry.

- **Proactive**
  Our analysts proactively search all public areas of the internet.

- **Reports from child victims**
  Children can report to us in the UK via Report Remove and in India through the Meri Trust Line.

- **Crawling**
  We use technology to automatically crawl from site to site looking for known content.

So, in terms of how do we find content, how do we encounter content. So, like I said, we were set up originally to be a body for members of the public to find and have a safe place in order to report suspected child sexual abuse material

that they may stumble on online. So last year, to put that into context, I think we took approximately 133,000 reports of suspected child sexual abuse, and I say suspected at this stage. And I'll clarify that in a moment. We also take reports directly from police and also the internet industry. But by far, the largest proportion of our work is in 2014, we were given the ability to proactively search for content. Some of you will remember the summit that was held by David Cameron in Downing Street. And this was directly off the back of the horrendous murders of Tia Sharp and April Jones, when internet industry was called into number 10 to have a summit to see what more could be done, both of those offenders had confessed to viewing images of child sexual abuse online before going on to commit those offences. So, one of the recommendations that was put forward and that the IWF put forward was to allow us to proactively search and go out there and find content, rather than simply being responsive to content that was being reported online. So that makes up about 98% of all criminal content we find is via proactive searching, so it's a significant part of our work. We also have and operate to child specific victim reporting services and I'll come on to mention those in more detail in just a bit. And obviously, we're in a technological age, we also use technology, such as crawlers to be able to go out and search the internet for these types of criminal images.

That's just a small section of the ways in which we go about identifying and finding child sexual abuse on online. The statistic that you can see on screen at the moment is taken from last year's annual report. The numbers kind of speak for themselves. But for those of you that perhaps, like me, your mental arithmetic is not that great.

Scale of the problem in 2023

392,665
Reports assessed

275,652
Reports were confirmed to contain images or videos of children suffering sexual abuse

IWF

1,000,000+
As each report contains at least one, and sometimes thousands of images, **this equates to millions of criminal images** removed from the internet.
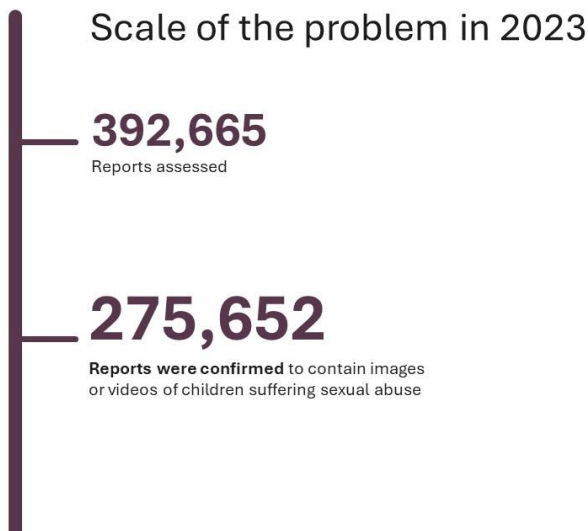
These are the numbers that are perhaps a little bit easier to kind of digest in terms of getting a sense of the scale of the problem. And bear in mind, these are only the numbers from the IWF. There are some 54 other hotlines globally, and they will have their own numbers. And that's in addition to reports that will be made directly by industry to law enforcement. So last year, we assessed again, it was a, if I can use the term a record year, we assessed just shy of 400,000 reports. And of all of those reports assessed 275,000 of those were confirmed instances of child sexual abuse. And again, in this instance, I'm talking about reports, but we have to bear in mind that behind each of those reports, we are talking about a victim of child sexual abuse. And each report may have led us to 1000s or hundreds of images contained within each report. So, the scale is increasing, and it's quite shocking. What I want to do now is just to show you a brief video, a campaign video that the Internet Watch Foundation released, and this video was made because it reflects what we are seeing every day in the videos and the content that we see online. Obviously, this is content safe, but I just want to play the video and then I'll explain a little bit more about it. But this could be any house in any street in any part of the country.

Video - Mum 35:05

Dinner in five minutes Evie.

Man 35:43

Don't be shy. It looks so pretty in your picture Evie. Just want to see what you've got under there, just for me.
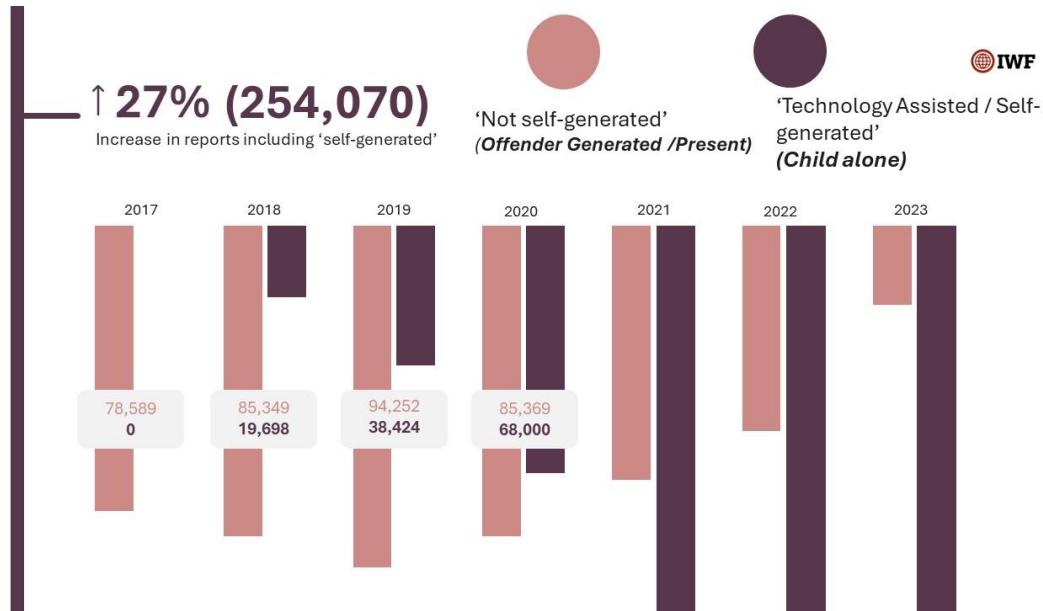
Mum

Dinner is ready.

Evie

Okay mum.

Narrator 36:00

Girls are increasingly being groomed by adults to create sexually explicit images and videos. Make sure your home doesn't have an open door to child sexual abusers. Talk to your child, agree boundaries and set Device Controls together. Visit talk.iwf.org.uk for guidance.

Chris Hughes 36:29

↑ **27% (254,070)**
Increase in reports including 'self-generated'

'Not self-generated'
(Offender Generated /Present)

'Technology Assisted / Self-generated'
(Child alone)

🌐 **IWF**

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
78,589	85,349	94,252	85,369			
0	19,698	38,424	68,000			

So that was a short campaign video, I'm hoping the audio came through okay for everybody on that particular video.

Claire Burns 36:38

So, I didn't hear the audio, Chris. I don't know if anyone else did. I'd have to say it was just as, I found it incredibly powerful even without the audio. So, if we can get that we'll maybe do it at the end, so we'll try and sort that out. Okay.
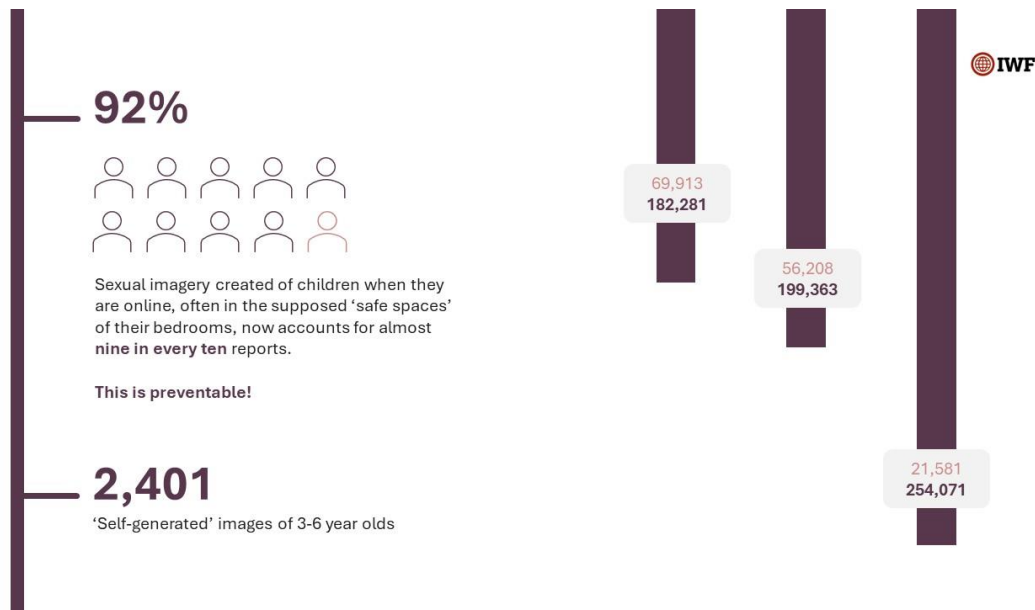
Chris Hughes 36:52

Okay, that's fantastic. So, in the clip, the mother is heard calling up to the daughter in her bedroom to say that dinner's ready. And this reflects a video that I've seen myself and again, these instances that we've seen many, many times where children in the supposed safety of their own homes, where we expect our children to be safe, are being approached, they're being groomed by offenders online. And the chart that I'm showing at the moment really shows how this particular online offence has grown over time. So, the light-coloured bars show the instances or the reports that we process where the offender is present is physically in the presence of the child when the images are being taken. So, you can see in 2017, that's pretty much all of the reports that we're processing. And then as the years progress, we see this situation where whether we call it technology assisted or self-generated content, these are images were on analysis by our analysts, we can see that the image has been taken remotely,
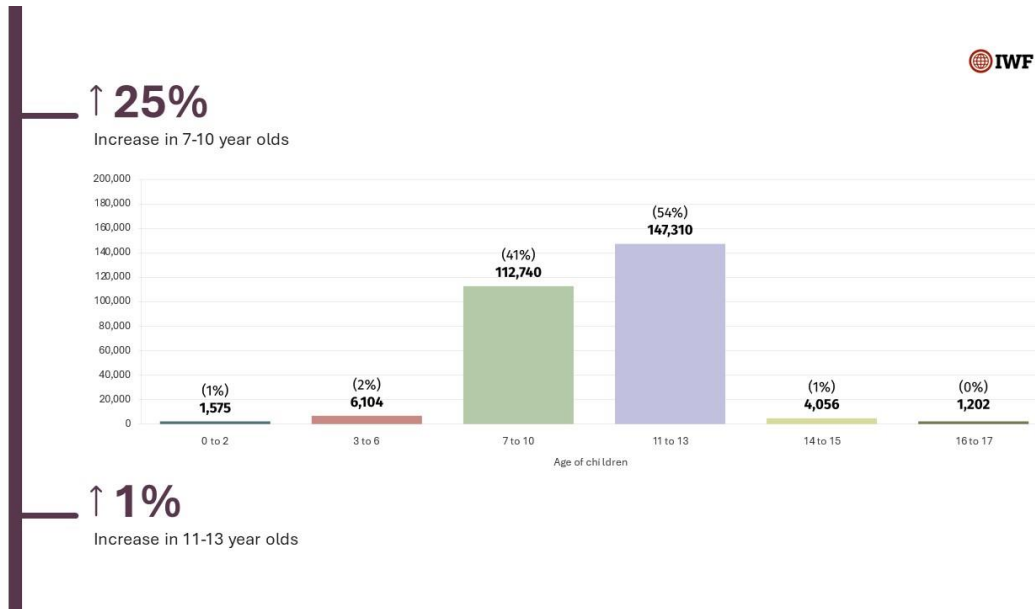
typically by an offender on their webcam. And in some instances where the child has shared the image perhaps directly by taking a video or an image on their mobile phone.

92%

Sexual imagery created of children when they are online, often in the supposed 'safe spaces' of their bedrooms, now accounts for almost **nine in every ten** reports.

This is preventable!

2,401
'Self-generated' images of 3-6 year olds

69,913
182,281

56,208
199,363

21,581
254,071

IWF

And if we look at the statistics at the end of last year, 92% of all of the imagery of all of the reports that we processed contains at least one instance of this technology assisted content. And rather worryingly, when we look at the estimated ages of the victims that we see in those images, over nearly two and a half thousand of those images contained children estimated to be in the age of three to six years of age, which is quite a staggering statistic.

IWF

↑ **25%**

Increase in 7-10 year olds

Age of children	Value
0 to 2	(1%) 1,575
3 to 6	(2%) 6,104
7 to 10	(41%) 112,740
11 to 13	(54%) 147,310
14 to 15	(1%) 4,056
16 to 17	(0%) 1,202

↑ **1%**

Increase in 11-13 year olds

So, looking at the broadest statistics for the content that we see online, you can see from this particular graph, that typically the cohort that we see that is most affected, are those in the 11 to 13 age group. And they are predominantly females, they are girls. But worryingly last year, the fastest growing age demographic was those in the seven- to 10-year-old age category. And you can see that increase was up by 25% in last year's data, and this is a growing trend.

IWF

Analysis of 3–6-year-olds in 'self-generated' imagery.

Analysis based on individual image hashes from 2023

LOCATION:

Nearly half were recorded in a bedroom **(47%)**.

SEX:

♀ **91%** were girls.

PROXIMITY TO OTHERS:

Most were pictured seemingly alone: A quarter involved at least one other child **(28%)**.

ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY:

3/5
showed "sexual posing with nudity"

16%
showed rubbing of genitals

15%
showed penetration – children penetrating themselves, or another child

So just to kind of drill down a little bit further into the content that we see with reference to three- to six-year-old children. You can see the statistics on the on
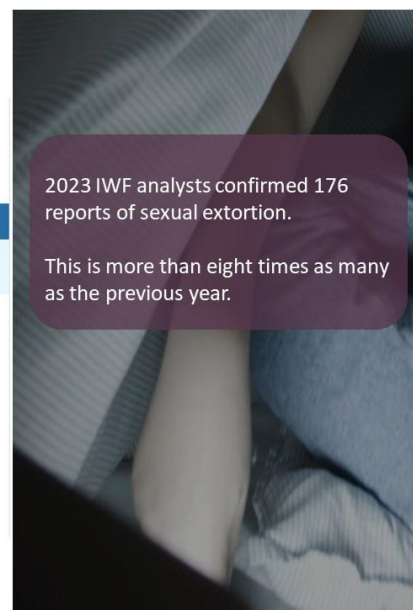
the screen there. I think the last statistic on the bottom right-hand side of the screen 15% of the imagery and videos that we saw showed some level of penetration either with the child penetrating themselves or being shown penetrated by another child. So again, in terms of thinking about the messaging and at what point we need to be able to protect our children. We need to be thinking about those younger age groups that are clearly vulnerable to this type of online enticement and grooming.

So much so, and again, many of you in your professional capacity will be aware of the alerts that the National Crime Agency put out earlier in April, specifically about sextortion. And the rise in this as a particular trend or a particular threat, not only to adults, but specifically for children. And this is something that we are also seeing within our hotline at the Internet Watch Foundation, I would say that what we are seeing, given we know the levels of underreporting and the challenges that a child has, or the fears that children have in terms of reporting, we know that this is the tip of the iceberg. And we can compare this to numbers that we see from the National Centre in America as an example, where this is, this is a growing, growing reality.

Sexual Extortion - 'Sextortion' of children

- **Sexually motivated:** Offenders coerce victims into producing intimate and sexually explicit photos or videos.
- Sexual gratification – The production of more often increasingly extreme imagery.
- Images and coercion may be used facilitate contact abuse.
- Victim contact details may be 'traded' with other offenders and used in swaps as a form of human currency.

- **Financially motivated:** sexually coerced extortion or 'sextortion' is a type of blackmail where offenders use intimate photos or videos of their victims to extort money from them.
- Financial Reward – Offenders target young people and adults alike.
- When shared online, the publication of the images signals the end stage of the extortion process.

So historically, when we talked about sextortion, certainly in our world, we were really looking at offenders that would contact children and their motivation would be sexual, they might start off at a fairly low level, but they would then coerce and groom that child into producing evermore explicit content. We've seen examples of where children have then been threatened to bring in either their siblings or school friends in order for that threat to be carried on and to give offenders more access to more children. So, it's a it's a totally brutal regime. Again, typically, the vast majority of the victims that we see in that threat area are girls. Moving on to the financially motivated sextortion. This is a this is a crime. This is a obviously a financially motivated crime, where generally speaking, and I am generalising here, the motivation is really for financial gain, the content is really just a by-product, if I can put it in that in those terms, in order for the offender to be able to access and extort money from, from children. And this is where we see, typically, teenage boys, young boys being the focus of those particular online gangs, which typically operate out of places like the Ivory Coast, the Philippines, etc.
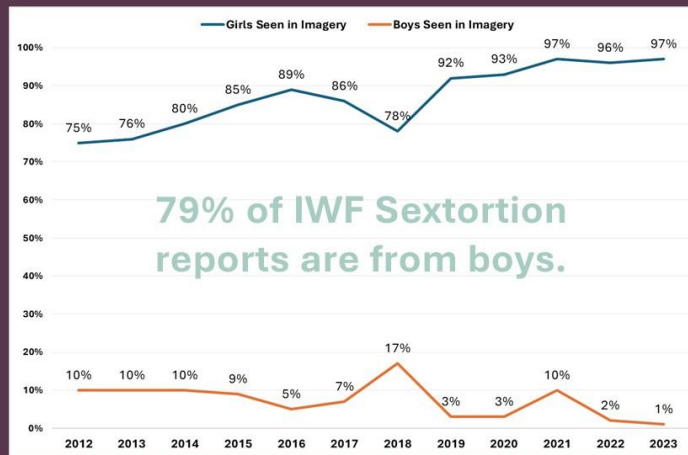
So, the chart that I'm showing you here, shows, we categorise, and tag all of the imagery, and we record all of the imagery that we see, along with our reports. So, you can see that our general work 97% of the content that we see is typically of girls and boys appear relatively, well surprisingly low level in terms of online imagery. However, when we look at the victim demographic for online sextortion, particularly financially motivated, sextortion I'm talking about here, we see that those numbers are reversed and 79% of all of the reports that we receive are from boys, they are from boys.

So, again, a particularly troubling area in terms of making sure that we update the way in which we think we used to think predominantly that girls were the demographic that were that were at risk online, and we need to change our thinking to reflect this particular heinous crime. So, in addition to the indignity of those images being shared, clearly, children and young people are being faced with that added level of threat and blackmail. And as Carron has already pointed out, sadly, we are aware on an increasing level of the number of young people that are taking their own lives that are committing suicide. And the timescales in which this is happening is quite frightening. And as you can see from that, just one particular slide, it can be a matter of hours from a child being reasonably safe online, making an incorrect decision and then finding themselves at the mercy of these blackmailers. So, it's an area that we are seeing, sadly, increase on a on a on a daily basis.

Sextortion: The Dangers of AI

You can't attend a webinar or turn on the television these days without hearing about AI. And Carron did already mentioned AI. I just wanted to kind of try and kill two birds with one stone in terms of talking about AI but also child sexual abuse and the threats that we're seeing not only now but what's potentially coming down the line. So obviously, all of the images in that that grid of six images on the right-hand side are AI images, almost impossible to tell from a real image. I'm showing you examples of safe images. However, we are seeing content reported to us content that we're finding proactively, where AI images of child sexual abuse are being generated. And we have to bear in mind that what can happen in an AI world unfortunately has no limits. There are physical limitations to the type of abuse that you could physically carry out to a child.

Those boundaries and those restrictions don't, don't exist in the AI world. So, we are seeing horrendous sadomasochistic type content, including bestiality and the like, where these images are being generated. So, again, I concur with Carron that these, this is not a victimless crime. What I wanted to show you, focusing on the images on the left-hand side, you'll see that there's a man, there's a gentleman wearing a wig. And the image that is mimicking his actions is an AI projection, which can be done in real time. And the reason that I wanted to highlight this is children are already being duped by fake profiles online. And what we need to be cognizant of coming down the line is the fact that offenders could be using this technology to pose to be a young girl, a young boy and to trick individuals online to feel that they are communicating with someone other than who they really are. And again, once the child is then entered into sharing those images, there is then an opportunity, obviously, for the offenders to either continue with the offending or extort money, if that's their particular motivation. So, AI is real is with us now, this isn't a future problem. And it's something that we should all be attuned to. Now, so far offenders are to a degree having their own way. So, what are we doing at the Internet Watch foundation to be able to, to mitigate this particular problem. So, I just wanted to show you another short video. And I'm not sure if you're going to get the audio on this. So, bear with me. But this is a campaign video that we released, which went out to parents, carers to young people themselves, to give them some sense of being able to get control. And I'll talk a bit more about the video once it's finished.

Video - Girl 47:11

So, it happened. No shame, no blame, but that pic you sent, you know, the one, it's out, maybe they said you had to do. Maybe at the time, it seemed like a good idea. Maybe you're in love, whatever you, you did not say that could share it around. And now you don't know who's seen it. You might feel scared, alone. Like you want to disappear. But we're not leaving it like that. It's your body, you should be in control of who sees it. So, if you want it taken down, take it down. You can. Go to the Childline website, verify your age, ask them to get rid. Report, remove. Because no one has the right to share a nude of you.

Chris Hughes 48:09

Report Remove – Support for victims

IWF & NSPCC developed Report Remove to support a young person in reporting their own sexual images or videos for removal from the internet.

- Childline supports and safeguards the child;
- The child reports their image/video to IWF through a dedicated portal, verifying their age with Yoti.
- IWF analysts assess the imagery against UK law. A criminal image will be removed from internet and hashed.
- Childline contacts the child to provide updates on their report.

The process is child-centered; does not identify them and ensures the child will not inadvertently be criminalised.
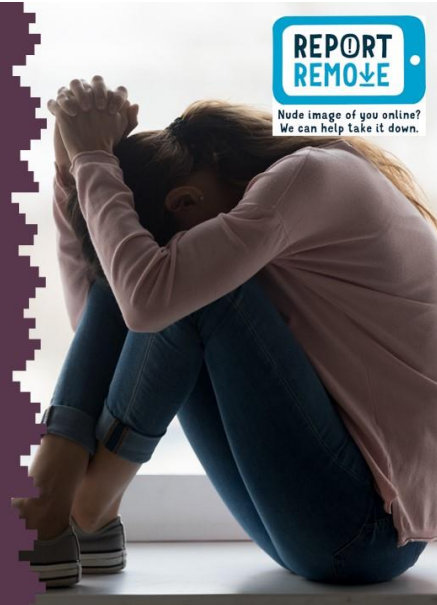
So that's finished now. So basically, it's a young, obviously a young girl on a bus. And she's talking about the fact that an image has been shared. And that is, as you can see from the actors in the clip, her friends at school, her peers are having access to that image. And it really speaks to the child having the ability to be able to not settle with the status quo to be able to actually report those images to the Internet Watch Foundation via Childline, via the NSPCC to have that particular, those particular images and that content removed. In terms of the service itself, this is part this is a partnership that we entered into with Childline in the NSPCC a couple of years ago. And it was in response to the fact that children are sharing their images. They're either sharing them and that those images are being distributed online or they're being shared from mobile phones to mobile phone. So, we developed a system, understanding that Childline are the experts in terms of safeguarding and looking after children and being able to provide appropriate advice and guidance. And the Internet Watch Foundation are the experts in making an assessment of content and getting that content taken down. And the hashes are the digital fingerprints of those images being shared with industry, so the industry can either prevent the upload of that content or scan their networks or services to detect that content and have it removed. So, this is a very child centric approach. And it's the first, the first of its kind. We're fortunate in the UK that having been able to speak to the CPS, the home office, and various others and the National Police Chief's Council, that we were able to produce a service that enabled children to actually send us images that they would have that they've taken themselves on their mobile phones, and that they've shared with another person. They may not know whether their images are online. But if they are still in possession of those

images, those images can be uploaded to the IWF via a separate Portal link. And then those images can be assessed. And like I said, we can then start to take action to have the content removed.

So, it's a vital service. And it's a service that is growing in demand in terms of the number of victims that are reporting through the IWF service. And then, really, I guess, just on the last slide, in addition to the work that the hotline does, we have a comms or a campaign team that have produced a number of different resources, both for parents, children, practitioners, teachers, and the like. And I've provided some links there on the screen for people to be able to access those. And I know, obviously, there'll be shared afterwards. And we've just launched a new campaign this week, which is called Think Before You Share. And again, we've set up a separate website there, which has a number of campaign videos that specifically targets or is focused on young children. But there are also resources there, like I said, for educators, for parents and children, just to kind of make people aware of the consequences of sharing content online. But additionally, what resources there are out there to help mitigate some of the damages in terms of that content being shared. There are further that there's a separate website, very last link at the bottom there, which contains all of the statistics from the IWF annual report from last year, that has quite an in depth look across all of the different studies, including where the content is hosted, the demographic of the victims and so on and so forth.

But that kind of brings me to the end of that presentation.

Claire Burns 52:09

As I said, I was absolutely struck by how powerful that first video was without the audio about thinking about that child in the bedroom with all of these other people being in and it just made me think in terms of this audience. You know, we're thinking about parents and carers, but we're thinking about residential workers, foster carers, you know, kinship carers, so we're thinking about what are the implications of that for them, and we can maybe come back to how they're well, how they're well supported. And again, just that piece, I think, so powerful around the increase in seven- to 10-year-olds, and the particular issues, you know, the gender issues that we need to think about in terms of disclosures as well. So maybe there's things that we can come back to, but again, those are just the things that really struck me. So, thanks again. And we'll hear from you in the question-and-answer session. Can I know come to Stuart. Stuart, if you're ready, we'll just give you a couple of minutes to get set up.

Stuart Allardyce 53:03

A CELCIS EMERGING INSIGHT SERIES

LUCY FAITHFULL FOUNDATION
Scotland | Alba

Tackling online harm

Stuart Allardyce
21.06.2024

Great. Thanks, Claire. My name is Stuart Allardyce. I'm the director of Lucy Faithful Foundation in Scotland. Absolutely delighted to be with you today talking about I think what is, you know, a difficult and challenging topic, let's be absolutely frank about that. Claire's given you my biography. But I'm a social worker by trade. I've worked in the child sexual abuse field, in Scotland, really, for the last kind of 25 years or so there's a few things that I want to kind of talk about today.

Today's content

- What do we do at Lucy Faithfull Foundation Scotland?
- Who commits online sexual offences?
- Why do people offend - pathways into online abuse / motivations
- How can we better manages cases involving online harm in the child protection system?
- How can online harm be prevented in the first place?
- What resources can you use in your role to tackle online harm?
- To premier a deterrence video developed by Police Scotland and Lucy Faithfull Foundation to be launched 1st July)

So, this is gonna be a bit of a whistlestop tour, but I want to talk a little bit about what we do at the Lucy Faithful Foundation, and then building on previous two speakers. You know, we've heard a lot about what harm looks like online, we've learned a lot about the kind of statistics and prevalence, but who are these people who commit these particular offences and why do they offend and what are the pathways into offending behaviour. I also want to recognise that particularly, you know, situations where people have been arrested for online offences where they may have dependent children themselves, there will often be child protection involvement. So, I want to talk a little bit about management of cases and decision making in that space, particularly that space before people are convicted. I want to talk a little bit about prevention. There are some resources I'm going to share with you that hopefully you can use in your own role. They will be hyperlinked into the presentation itself but also, they will be emailed out separately to you as well. And then we'll finish off with the premiere of a little deterrence video that we've been working with Police Scotland on.

LFF Scotland

- Confidential help and advice available to all concerned about child sex abuse.

- 1-1 intervention support and group work for individuals who cannot access statutory services

  - adults who are at risk of sexual offending or who have offended
  - families and friends of people who are at risk of sexual offending or have been arrested for online offences,
  - children and young people (under the age of 18) who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour or have been arrested for online sexual offences

- Advice, training, guidance and resources for parents and carers, communities and professionals in children's services and criminal justice settings about all aspects of CSA prevention (not just online harm).
- Last year we worked with 150 adult males worried about their sexual thoughts, feelings or behaviours towards children, 100 partners or family members and 15 under 18s who had displayed online harmful sexual behaviour.

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In terms of the Lucy Faithful Foundation, Scotland, we are a charity based in Edinburgh covering the whole of Scotland. And our focus is on the prevention of child sexual abuse. That's what all of our work is about. We have about 10 staff who work from here, half of our colleagues are law enforcement colleagues or former law enforcement colleagues, some are social workers like myself, we have a full-time forensic psychologist here as well. We provide direct support to those individuals who've worked for whatever reason cannot access statutory services. So, people who may not have offended yet, but who are worried about thoughts, feelings that they have towards children, individuals who have

offended but haven't been convicted yet, particularly online offenders. And we also work with kind of families and partners and friends who aren't those individuals, we do a little bit of work with adolescents who are involved with, particularly online harmful sexual behaviour. And then this is key I think we take all the learning from this work, and we turn it into resources, advice, training, for professionals, but also for parents and the general public as well. So, we all have a better idea of everything that we can do to stop child sexual abuse in the first place. And last year, we worked with about 150 guys, and about 100 family members, and our team also worked with around 15 under-18-year-olds.

LFF Scotland Referral Routes - Getting Arrested in Scotland
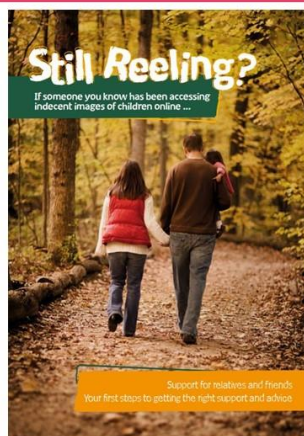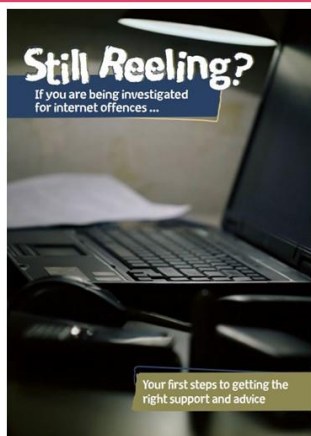
Creating a world free from child sexual abuse | LFF

So, to give you a kind of sense of the kind of scale and kind of throughput here, there's a number of different referral kind of pathways into our services. One of those pathways is if you're arrested for an online offence in Scotland, or under investigation, When the police arrive with a search warrant, they will give you one of these leaflets as part of their processes. Now, these are leaflets that then tell you about the services that we provide and Lucy Faithful Foundation Scotland, we also you can see on there on the right we have a leaflet that specifically for parents or sorry partners and family members as well. So that's one referral route in which is usually self-referral from individuals who are under investigation for online offences.

Referral Routes: the Stop It Now helpline for UK and Ireland

Helpline Target group: people with concerns about child sexual abuse, including

- **People concerned about their own thoughts and behaviours towards children (online and offline)**
- **People concerned about the behaviour of another adult**
- **Adults concerned about a child who may have been abused**
- **Professionals calling for case advice**
- **Survivors of child sexual abuse**

Stop it now

Edinburgh

Bromsgrove
Cardiff
Epsom

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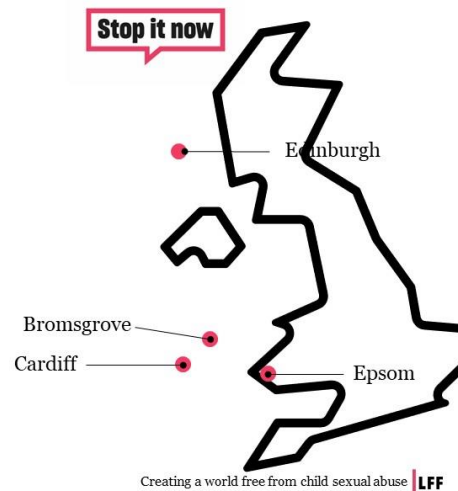
The other kind of main referral route into ourselves comes from our UK helpline, the UK helpline is funded by the home office and Ministry of Justice. The it's been running now for 25 years. And the helpline is there for anyone with any concerns around child sexual abuse, completely anonymous and confidential space for anyone who's concerned about their own thoughts, feelings or behaviours. But also, if you're concerned about another adult, if you're concerned about a child, including your own child, we also have kind of professionals who phone us and also survivors of child sexual abuse as well.

Stop it Now helpline stats 2023/2024

Stop it now

14,564 calls
5,555 callers

2,829 emails
2,346 emailers

1,956 chats
1,039 chatters

Total overall:

19,328 Calls, chats and emails

8,753 Callers, chatters and emailers

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We're the biggest child sexual abuse prevention helpline in the world now. So, figures have been creeping up for quite some time. And indeed, if you pull together phone calls to the helpline, emails that we have that come in, we have a anonymizer email system and also live chat as well. We had 19,000 contacts last year from just over 8000 individuals, quite a few of those individuals who contact us, contact us on the back off police driven deterrence campaign work that we do targeting those who are either involved with online offending, or those who are on a trajectory towards online offending. So, I'll say more about that, in a minute.

Stop It Now UK helpline – 0800 1000 900

2%
Young person
(U18)

2%
Adults concerned
about a child or
young person who
is at risk/ is showing
signs of being
sexually abused
or being groomed
online

4%
Parents and carers
concerned about
a child or young
person with
worrying sexual
behaviour

26%
Adults concerned
about another
adult's behaviour

47%
Adults concerned
about their own
behaviour

8%
Professionals

9%
Other*

2%
Adult survivors

*callers outside target groups include those with general internet concerns, requests for general information and inappropriate callers

Creating a world free from child sexual abuse **LFF**

If you break down the people who call the UK based helpline, about half of the calls come in from individuals worried about their own sexual thoughts, feelings or behaviours. Many of them have already been arrested for an offence, including an online offence, but probably about 20% are individuals who are unarrested. And when you phone the helpline, you're told that if you give us any identifying details about who you are, and tell us that you're a risk to yourself or other people, or indeed that you've been involved with any criminality, we may have to pass that information on. However, you can choose whatever identity to use in this call, and we have no way of tracing it back to you. So, people do use that anonymity within the call itself. And then about a third of the calls are people who are worried about somebody else, you know, might be a partner worried about the husband's online behaviour. It might be a mum, who's phoning up who's worried about the way her uncle is playing with her three-year-old daughter. No abuse has happened yet, but there's something that's making her feel really uncomfortable and she's looking for advice and support in some way. So general kind of practical advice and support around child sex

abuse prevention from our helpline, we don't use volunteers all of our helpline, colleagues are staff. And indeed, a number of, the majority of the calls the we received from people who are worried about their own sexual thoughts, feelings or behaviours towards children are involved with online behaviours in some way.

RMA Literature Review on online offending – 2018

Literature review
A review of the risk posed by internet offenders

RMA
Risk Management Authority

- Overwhelmingly caucasian males.
- Can be any age but most studies show mean age of mid 30s (but also spike between 14 and 21)
- Typically well-educated, in some form of employment and with no history of inviolvement in the criminal justice system.
- Less stable intimate relationships than general population.
- Several studies reported that internet offenders experience problems with intimacy, emotional loneliness, low self-esteem and social skills.
- Autism overrepresented (research equivocal on this)
- Online offenders when compared to contact offenders are more likely to have sexual feelings towards children but less likely to have cognitive distortions about sexual agency of children. Online offenders less likely to have a criminal history.
- Review suggests groomers are an insufficiently studied group (are them ore like CSAM viewers or contact offenders?)
- Subgroups - offenders are a heterogeneous group ranging from diagnosable paedophiles to those who begin offending without a self-reported sexual interest in children

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So, let's move on to what we know about online offending. This particular publication is worth knowing about it's a little bit out of date now, but it is written for a Scottish audience, a literature review prepared by the risk management authority in Scotland, a review of risk posed by Internet offenders. So this was a very extensive literature review that was done by the RMA, it told us a number of other things with that the majority of those involved with this kind of offending behaviour, both looking at Child Sexual Abuse material, and having sexualized conversations with children online, tend to be Caucasian males mean age of mid 30s, through to connect early 40s for in most studies, but interesting that there is also a spike between ages 14 and 21. For people involved with the these kinds of behaviours as well. Typically, we're talking about individuals who are better educated and more likely to be in employment and have no history of involvement in the criminal justice system, particularly in comparison to those that were involved with contact sexual offending, less stable, intimate relationships than the general population. Some studies suggesting problems around intimacy, emotional loneliness, low self-esteem and social skills with some of those individuals. Some evidence that autism is overrepresented amongst this population, but equivocal evidence partly because when individuals are under investigation or indeed arrested, if they are on the autistic spectrum, then often they are not diagnosed at that point. When

compared to contact sexual offenders, individuals involved with online offending are more likely to have sexual feelings towards children but less likely to have cognitive distortions about sexual agency of children. And also, less likely to have a criminal history. Not a lot of evidence really about those involved with online solicitation and grooming, not enough to really confidently tell us whether they look more like CSAM viewers or more like contact offenders. I'll come back to that in a minute. And certainly, suggestions that there are kind of subgroups within these populations as well.

Presence of mental health disorders (%) in LFF Scotland referrals 2011 -21 (n=800)

- Twice as many with disorders as not
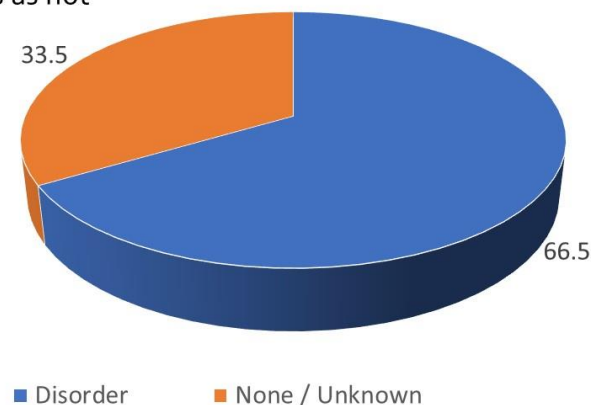
What the study didn't bring out, and partly because this question hasn't really asked, really been asked in many studies so far. But whether there are issues around mental health and emotional health and wellbeing issues for those that were involved with online offending. We did some work recently looking at 800 individuals that we'd worked with over a 10-year period, at Lucy Faithful Foundation Scotland what used to be called Stop It Now Scotland until we rebranded last year. And actually what we found was that almost two thirds of the individuals that we worked with, almost all of whom were individuals who've been arrested by the police for online sexual offences had gone to a GP at some point, or mental health professionals in relation to anxiety, depression or other kinds of mental health presentations. So, I think there's something to recognise here, that there is a that are kind of factors around kind of mental health issues for many of the individuals that either may predate their offending or making may be comorbid with the offending itself.

Jack

- Aged 64 and arrested for large collection of CSEM, some of it accessed via dark net.
- Describes himself as 'a lifelong paedophile' when he meets our staff
- Divorced, saying his wife 'didn't like the way he looked at children'
- Retired, but has spent much of his professional life working with children

And hopefully, this is brought out by here are some case studies now all of these individuals are real individuals that I've met and worked with, obviously have changed their names, and these are not the real photographs. But Jack is 64 arrested for having a large collection of child sexual abuse material, some of it which he did access from, from the Darknet interestingly, when I met with him, within a minute, he had said to me, one of the things you need to know about me is that I'm a lifelong paedophile. So, it's interesting because we don't often hear people saying that he described having sexual thoughts and feelings towards young children from early adolescence, he said that he'd had few relationships with adults in his life. He'd been married to a woman for a couple of years. But the relationship didn't work out, he said, partly because in his words, the way he looked at children when they were out, and she kind of realised that what was going on in terms of my fantasies, he was retired but and this was a real kind of red flag for us. He'd spent a good deal of his life working with children. And indeed, one of the things that followed on from us meeting with him is triggering, is triggering a historical investigation into whether the were issues that had come up in his is professional career as well.

Dave

- Male 50, works as a Health & Safety Office
- Clinical Depression for about 3 years coinciding with onset of offending. Socially isolated, working away from home Married, currently separated, no children
- Compulsive Collector –a large amount of legal pornography and CSEM. 13 hard drives taken by police.
- Stated that he was not interested in children sexually but found that his huge collection of pornography led to boundaries being blurred and viewing CSEM' made him feel like an outlaw'

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So really, you know, quite a concerning individual at a number of different levels and compare him to Dave, Dave is 50 Health and Safety Officer, clinical depression for the last three years off work for a good bit of time. That depression definitely coincided with the onset of his offending behaviour quite socially isolated. He was working away from home, as well. For a good bit of time, married currently separated no children, he described himself as a compulsive collector, he had an enormous amount of legal pornography that he had kept, but also Child Sexual Abuse material, 13 Hard drives were taken away by the police for, for assessment. Interestingly, he said that he had been looking at more and more extreme material over a period of time. And he'd never really given any thoughts sexually to children, until he had found some videos of 13- and 14-year-old girls. And what he said to me was, look, I did what I always do when I look at images online. And I didn't think the images of children were any different to anything else I was looking at. But when I closed my laptop, he said, my heart pounded faster than it ever had done before. Because I realised that what I was doing for the first time was breaking the law. And when I opened up the laptop, the following day, those were precisely the kind of images that I wanted to look at, again. Which is interesting. Because this is not somebody who's going online with very clear paedophilic sexual interest, but somebody more that has a capacity to be sexually interested in children in certain contexts.

Alex

- 17 year old male with autistic spectrum disorder
- Bullied at high school, confused about sexual and gender identity
- Shared sexual images of himself on messaging apps
- Sent CSAM by adult offenders and started trading CSAM
- Said that 'he felt he had found a community online where he had power

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And then there are other drivers in all of this as well and then compare him to Alex, Alex is 17 years old. On the autistic spectrum, bullied at high school, very confused about sexual and gender identity. He actually was exploited, groomed himself online, shared sexual images of himself really kind of exploited to kind of share those images of himself. But he said, Actually, then these adults sent me images of other teenagers and younger children. And I was quite turned on by those images. And then he found himself within some kind of online communities, particularly on particular kind of messaging apps, which says something that Carron was talking about earlier on. And he said that actually, I found I had quite a lot of kind of power within that community because I could then find other images for individuals that people were looking for. So not only was he an individual who was viewing these kinds of images, but he was actively involved with the procurement and, and trading of those images at age 17. He also said to me, I knew this was wrong, but I didn't know how wrong it was because when I went on to these groups, so I found hundreds of people there. And I thought if it was so wrong, how could there be so many people looking at this kind of stuff? And was it almost like a technical illegality, like speeding. Which is a good way of people kind of, a good example of people justifying things to themselves, but also, I do think there's something there about a kind of artistic kind of frame of reference, which is which was quite interesting.

Mark

- 33 year old police officer arrested for owning CSAM
- Married with 2 year old daughter
- Images were of boys aged 8 -12
- He noted in interview that he had been abused by his uncle between these ages. He knew he had an erection when he was abused and he wondered whether there was something that was never quite processed for him.

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And then finally, Mark, when I met with Mark 33-year-old police officer, been arrested for viewing images, married with a two-year-old daughter images were of eight to 12 year old boys. And one of the things he said in us meeting with him, he said, Look, you know, I'm not saying that this has any mitigation or excuse, but he said I was sexually abused by my own uncle between the ages of eight and 12. And he said, Look, I, I have often wondered whether there was something that was never quite kind of processed or resolved for me in all of this insofar as I had an erection when I was abused. And I wonder whether you know that you said, I have to be absolutely clear, I was looking at these images as an adult and I was masturbating to them. But I wonder whether there's some kind of unresolved connection with what had happened to me in some way. So, the important thing to bring out here is that we have four different individuals with very different trajectories and pathways. And two, it's the behaviour and very different needs I would say as well.

Why do people offend online?

What's porn got to do with it?
The link between viewing adult
pornography and online sexual
offending against children

By Alexandra Bailey and Fiona Moran
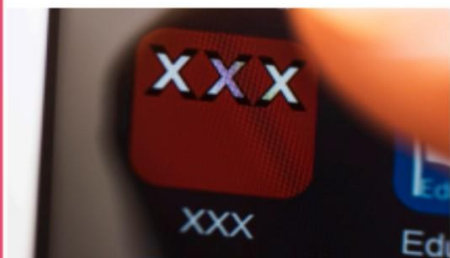
- Multiple pathways and entry points into online offending and areas where CSAM accessed (encrypted messaging apps, newsgroups, surface web forums, dark web CSAM forums).
- Triple A engine (accessibility, anonymity, availability)
- Compulsivity online (particularly to pornography and sexual behavior generally)
- Sex as a coping mechanism
- Affordances of the internet (e.g. algorithms promote increasingly extreme sexual material)
- Desensitisation to legal pornography over time
- Capacity to be sexually interested in children
- Exceptionalism ('I'm not like paedos on TV')

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So, it's difficult to say anything, generalising about kind of kind of pathways into this behaviour, because there are multiple pathways and different kinds of entry points. But some of the things that simply contribute to the enormous figures that Carron was talking about, in terms of numbers of images and numbers of individuals looking for this kind of material is that accessibility anonymity and availability of this kind of material is really, you know, some of the drivers and all of this. I think, online compulsivity, particularly around pornography, and indeed, sexual behaviour general generally is a factor, I tend to try and avoid the language of porn addiction, I don't think it's very helpful for many of the individuals that we work with, but many of them have almost like a compulsive use of sex as a coping mechanism online, there were affordances provided by the Internet, insofar as algorithms, particularly on mainstream pornography, websites will try and pull people into looking into more extreme material over time people describe then desensitisation to that material, and then often could describe a capacity to be sexually interested with, with images that they see. But they will often say Yeah, but you know, I was doing this. But I'm not like the kind of people I see on TV who are being arrested. I'm my own person in all this. So sometimes that othering that we have about the kind of individuals that are involved with this kind of offending behaviour makes it easier for people to reconcile to themselves, but at least I'm not that kind of person. On the left hand of the screen, you can see a paper that we published a couple of weeks ago, sorry, a couple of months ago, actually co authored by the forensic psychologist in my team looking at some of the pathways into this behaviour.

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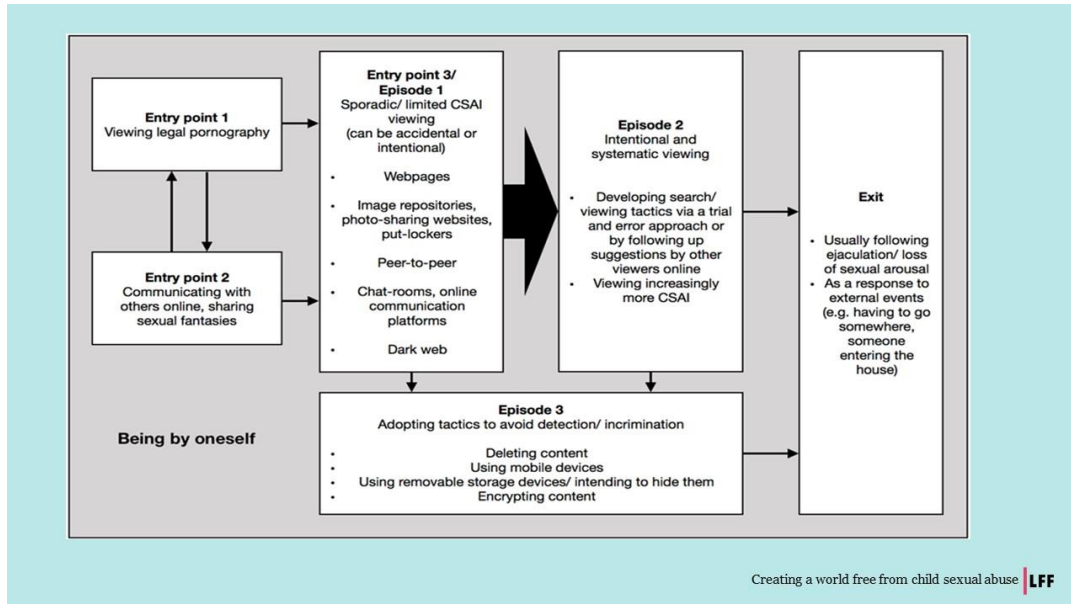
This slide sorry, there's a lot on there. I'll just quickly talk you through this. But this was a study that was done by Ethel Quayle, and a PhD student that she had working with her interviewing 50 guys that we had worked with at Lucy Faithful Foundation who had been involved with online offending. And almost all of them described that their kind of entry point was kind of viewing legal pornography. Although for some people, it was about being involved with a wider range of kind of cybersex behaviours, including viewing legal pornography. And then they talked about kind of shifting into accessing illegal images. And then over time, moving to more intentional and systematic viewing, developing particular kind of search and viewing tactics, and then you can see episode three kind of adopting tactics to avoid detection and incrimination, and all of that. So, it's a deleting content using mobile devices. And then you can see the kind of connection from, from these kinds of behaviours as well. What's important here is if you begin to think about these behaviours as a as a process, rather than an event, we think about them as an event because usually, the important thing we're responding to in our services is after somebody's been arrested, but if we think about it as a process, where people are incrementally moving towards and through offending behaviour, then there are lots of opportunities for prevention in all of this.

Risk profiles

- '*Internet offenders reoffend at a lower rate than contact and dual offenders. Internet offenders who do reoffend tend to do so with further IIOC offences. The research found that only a very low number recidivated with a contact offence*' RMA Lit Review 2018
- Factors associated offline offending include antisociality and having a criminal history. There is also some speculation about more extreme IIOC of children aged five years and under, predisposition and fewer pro-social factors facilitating the transition to contact offending.
- Some recent evidence to suggest that those involved with dark net offending more likely to be more at risk of contact offending
- Those involved with online offending up to 100 more likely to commit suicide than
- Risk factors for suicide including being married, having children and social economic status

Let me say a few things about risk profiles. So, I'm moving through some stuff quite quickly here, but I'm kind of aware that time is of the essence. The risk management literature review that I mentioned early on pointed out that almost all studies that have looked at reoffending rates of those that are involved with online offending suggested that there are very low reoffending rates and the vast majority of individuals who do reoffend are involved with further online offending rather than contact offending. So, this idea that all online offenders go on to become contact offenders, there's little evidence to substantiate that. But of course, a minority do those individuals who are kind of higher risk of those individuals who are at higher risk of moving through to contact offending issues around anti sociality have been picked out as a particular risk factor, along with some studies suggesting that more extreme kind of material and perhaps a predisposition to a sexual interest in children. And lower kind of pro social factors may be may be factors in all of this. CPORT, which is the mean assessment tool around assessment of online offenders. I think the only kind of assessment tool that we currently have in that particular space, does look at those two different axes, kind of anti-sociality, and, and sexual interest in children as the kind of connect key factors and kind of risk prediction. Interestingly, there's some recent evidence, particularly from colleagues in Finland, and the link is in this particular slide to, to the research, those that were involved with the redirect project and Finland who have been looking at offending in the dark net, who would suggest that actually, those involved with dark net offending seem to be a bit more criminogenically orientated, which is worth paying attention to early days, in our understanding about all of this. And then when we're talking about risk, just to point out that we need to clearly

think about risk that individuals present to other the other to children and of course to reoffending generally. But actually, those who are involved with online offending particularly at the point of arrest, are at elevated risk of suicide. And indeed, a study by Chad Steele, who used to work at FBI is now an academic, reviewing the literature on this concluded that individuals and for with online offending up to 100 times more likely to commit suicide than those in the general population. And actually, the risk factors around suicide, particularly for those who have been arrested, or individuals who are married have children are more socially anchored and have higher socio-economic status. Basically, the more you have to lose, the higher the risk around suicide.

Conceptualising the issue – what do we mean by online child sexual abuse and exploitation?

Online grooming

Contact child abuse

IIOC / CSAM
downloading

Just to say that those that are therefore involved with viewing sexual images online, there was an overlap of course, with contact child abuse for some individuals, I'll say more about that a second. But also, we know that there's an overlap with those that were involved with online solicitation and online grooming. And indeed, some people are involved with solicitation of children not to abuse them offline, but to actually abuse them online to exploit them online and get more images. So, we see this kind of complex kind of Venn diagram kind of situation.

Complexities of offending trajectories
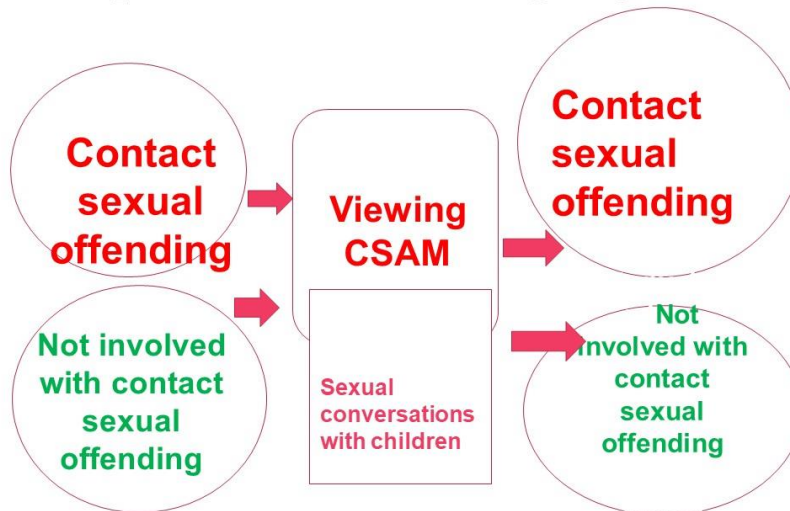
The relationship between kind of viewing child sex material and contact sexual offending is really quite complex, partly because although we know only a minority go on to be involved with contact sexual offending, as has been pointed out, by Chris, the majority of images actually are produced in domestic settings. So of course, some individuals were involved with the creation of these first-generation images. And also separate from that we know that there was a cohort of individuals who have been involved with contact sex, sexual offending in the past, sometimes undetected, sometimes detected, sometimes recently, sometimes quite a bit in the past, particularly around adolescence, and then the move towards viewing CSAM and you could actually consider what they're doing as being a way of trying to kind of cope or handle their own kind of sexual or manage their own sexual thoughts and feelings towards children in some way. So, we see this kind of complex relationship because actually, we do know that there are quite a few that are involved with viewing these kinds of images may have been involved with contact offending in the past. And then there's the where it kind of overlaps, we're having sexual conversations and children with children, which is probably a more kind of controversial and kind of difficult area. A few things before.

Risk assessment in a child protection context

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 — Part 4: Specific support needs and concerns — 172

Indecent images and internet-enabled sexual offending by adults

4.207 Internet-enabled sexual offending includes possession, exchange and distribution of indecent images of and/or with children (IIOC); production of IIOC; sexual solicitation (online interaction with minors for sexual purposes); non-consensual sharing of sexual images; and conspiracy crimes such as working with others to distribute IIOC or to solicit children. All such behaviour causes significant harm to children. Investigation by Police Scotland will be necessary. An inter-agency referral discussion (IRD) will be necessary in relation to identified children who may be at risk of significant harm. Relevant legislation is signposted above in the section on child sexual abuse.

4.208 Most people who offend are male. Many are in relationships and have children. Motivations vary: some have a long-standing sexual interest in children, while some behaviours are exploratory or relate to the seeking out of extreme sexual material.

4.209 Beyond the direct and indirect abuse of children caused by the behaviour listed above, practitioners concerned with child protection will be concerned to know:
- is this person likely to commit a contact sexual offence with a child?
- has the person already committed contact sexual offences with a child?

4.210 The Risk Management Authority in Scotland's recent review of current evidence suggests that those convicted for viewing IIOC only are in general less likely to commit further sexual offences than other types of sexual offenders. When they do re-offend, it tends to be repeat

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Claire Burns 1:20:11

Stuart, if I could just come in sorry to interrupt, just to see we probably got about another five minutes before we really need to move to questions. So just to give you a chance to think about what content you want to share, but we will send it all out, okay. Thank you and apologies, thank you.

Stuart Allardyce 1:20:23

That's fine, that's great, I do have a timer running. So right. Yeah, thanks for that Claire.

Claire Burns 1:20:27

Thank you.

Stuart Allardyce 1:20:28

Risk assessment in a child protection context, if you're involved with these kinds of cases, particularly in a child protection role, because it can often take up to two years for between kind of arrest and conviction of an individual. Just to note that there's a section in the Child Protection guidance, which you can see on the right side of the screen that's specifically on that, and this publication on the left

came from the Centre for Expertise and Child Sexual Abuse, which is for social workers making decisions in this area, that particular publication, makes a kind of a number of arguments.

Key messages for supporting families affected by online harm

- Discovering that a partner, who may be the parent of their child(ren), has accessed child sexual abuse material is likely to be one of the most traumatic experiences any parent will go through. A trauma informed perspective is essential

- It can take up to 2 years for conviction to take place (and also a portion of investigations do not lead to arrest or conviction. Whenever you are working with a family where a parent or carer has accessed child sexual abuse material, you will need to make an assessment in relation to:

  1. the potential risks that the offending parent poses to child(ren) in the family home
  2. the non-offending parent's capacity to protect their child(ren)
  3. the overall safety and wellbeing of the child(ren) in the home

- When a parent or carer is under police investigation for accessing child sexual abuse material, the early responses that their family receive are extremely powerful. Positive, informed and non-judgemental responses are typically felt to be supportive, while ill-informed, critical and subjective responses can lead to or exacerbate significant trauma across the whole family

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But the main point here is discovering that your partner has been involved with these kinds of behaviours, including accessing these kinds of kind of materials can be incredibly traumatic for parents, it can take a long time for conviction to take place. So, this particular publication, then can help you in that pre conviction space begin to think about what risk means in this kind of situation. And how do we begin to kind of promote overall safety and wellbeing for children in the family home.

What prevents online sexual offending

	Universal prevention	Risky situations	After offending
Children	Online safety education (RSHP)	Targeted support and resilience building for particular children	Ameliorating harm and preventing revictimsation
Parents	Digital resilience – age appropriate conversations about online behaviour and safety	Reducing risks, building protective factors, promoting safety	Emotional and practical support for parent
People who offend (or are at risk of doing so)	Developmental prevention/ deterrence	Disruption and early help	Policing, prosecution, criminal justice interventions

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So, I would certainly kind of recommend that in terms of kind of prevention. Just to kind of point out that if we if we're thinking about kind of prevention of online child sexual abuse, what we do to make sure that actually this stuff doesn't happen in the first place. Then the stuff we won't get to universal prevention, the stuff that we need to get to everyone which is kind of online safety education in schools for all children, we need to make sure that all parents are equipped to have conversations with their children about digital resilience and online safety. And we need the proper kind of kind of deterrence messaging for everyone. But also, there are kind of risky situations, there are children who are kind of a higher risk, you need more kind of targeted support. And indeed, parents where there were issues around kind of near misses around exploitation and harm in the family environment needs specific supports. Those who are starting to get a move towards online offending behaviour, we need to get the get the right kind of kind of kind of disruption and, and messaging and then we can think about what needs to be there in terms of support after offending has taken place. But the problem I think, is that we often in our services, just really think about what's there for everyone after harm has been identified, and we need to get better at trying to ensure that we do everything we can to prevent abuse happening in the first place.

Resources for Parents

Cyber resilience and internet safety

A Guide for parents and carers

- Signposts parents to resources about apps, how to set up parental controls on devices etc.
- Promotes online safety within a wider context of digital resilience
- Discusses online behavior in context of adolescence and neurodevelopment
- Underlines importance of key messaging to children, ensuring they have different options if they are worried about their safety or behavior online and open conversations about what we do online.
- Conversation starters and ideas to move away from conversations about online safety feeling like 'surveillance' of young people
- Information on signs and indicators of risk and what preventative actions you can take as a parent

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So just some quick resources before we finish this particular resource here, you can find this on our website, but you'll get it sent out to you. It's a resource for parents that we developed with parents themselves. Really helping parents know that where they can find information about, you know, what apps children are using now, how to set up parental controls and devices, but actually, most importantly, it's about the relationship with your child and how you have conversations with them about their online lives, and how we thread stuff around online safety into that. So, it doesn't just feel like a one-off conversation or surveillance of what a child does online. So have a have a look at that if you if you work with parents.

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EMERGING INSIGHT SERIES

Self help resources — Get Help

Concerned about your own thoughts or behaviour?

Ways to look after your wellbeing & self care

Self-help, information and support to help you look after yourself, motivate and manage change as well as help you have a better understanding of you feelings and emotions and how to deal with them.

Learn More

Are you worried about inappropriate thoughts or behaviour?

Self-help, information and support for people troubled by their sexual thoughts about children and young people. Help to cope with unwanted feelings and manage problematic behaviour.

Get Support

Are you worried about your online behaviour?

Self-help, information and support to stop viewing sexual images of children or having sexual conversations with children.

Get Help

Information and support to encourage you to move forward positively

Self-help, information and support on how to continue moving forward, disclose your offending and build a fulfilling life.

Learn More

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We have an online resource called Get Help, which is on the Stop It Now website which is for adults who are worried about their online sexual behaviour. This particular resource is a manualized treatment programme that people can use themselves completely anonymous. It was used last year by 10,000 individuals in Scotland, and a lot of those individuals accessed it by being signposted to it by police deterrence campaigns, which is what we're going to finish with.

Self Help resources - SHORE

shore

Help and advice ∨ About Have your say

⚠ I need help now   Start typing to search   Go

Welcome to shore

A safe space for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour

How can we help?

Close site ◈

EN ∧

Get help

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We also now have a similar online resource for young people who are worried about their own sexual behaviour, including online behavioural, called Shore, which I would absolutely recommend to you.

Call to Action

- Pass on information about the Stop It Now! Helpline to whoever might need it
- Explore some of the resources such as Shore and Get Help. Use them as sources of ideas for your work.
- Consider how you sign post service users to resources that promote prevention or early self help
- Contribute to the social media promotion of our deterrence campaign work if you can (partners pack will be made available to those at this webinar)

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And then just to finish off, a kind of call to action really with just a few things to think about. You've heard what our helpline can provide. Stop it now helpline, please do everything you can to make sure that information about it is being passed to professionals and service users who might be able to use it in some way, have a look at the some of the resources that I've highlighted in this presentation and use them as kind of sources of ideas within your own work. Consider how you signpost service users to resources around prevention, you know, if you're working with families working with individuals where there are lots of risk factors, but and low protective factors, but there isn't any evidence of abuse or exploitation taking place. But you're worried about that, then there are resources and an organization's we can we can signpost people to. And finally, we've talked about our deterrence campaign work, there will be a social media kind of pack to help any of you kind of promote some of the campaign work that we're going to do, which is a video which we're about to see, which will be launched officially on the first of July.

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www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
sallardyce@lucyfaithfull.org.uk
Scotland office: 0131 556 3535

Anonymous and confidential support
to stop child sexual abuse
0808 1000 900

Stop it now

Creating a world free from child sexual abuse

So that's a week on Monday. My contact details are here, if there's anything you want to kind of reach out to me for, but also happy to kind of take any questions, and I'm going to pass, stop sharing, and hopefully we'll get a chance to kind of share the video in question.

Video - Woman

All right, see you later.

Narrator 1:26:36

You might just be having a peek. A little look. A wee glance. But that's how it starts. Viewing sexual images of children under 18 is illegal. Just like sexual conversations with children are illegal. You can't hide, you will get caught. And everyone will find out, stop it now and get help before more lives are ruined.

Claire Burns 1:27:16

So again, thanks so much. And we're just going to move just so folks that are aware. I'm going to move now to the questions and some of the themes that have come through. And Stuart, I just wanted to reflect and think, again, so helpful for our community who are on this morning, who are concerned about child protection, that if we're gonna have a holistic view around this and be

preventative, then we need to think what do we know about victims, what do we know about perpetrators as well, and having that really holistic view across all of that as required. And I thought you did that you did that really well for us. So, thank you. Maybe just going back to Chris and then I think Carron for a moment, I think one of the things that's come through is that issue around the link between young men particularly and their vulnerability, and disclosure, and I suppose I just wanted you to maybe speak just a bit more of that. And one of the things, I suppose it raised for me that I think others are thinking about as well is, is the relationship between the stigma that is involved, particularly for young men and the way in which they are then more vulnerable to the exploitation. So, Chris, I wonder if you and then Carron can maybe talk to that and then Stuart if you wanted to come in?

Chris Hughes 1:28:29

Yes, thank you, Claire. I think from the IWF's perspective, that information really comes to us second hand. Where we have victims report into us, we actually don't have direct contact with the victims, we're only able to establish that they are being extorted, particularly in the financial realms, because the way in which offenders typically operate is that they will screen capture multiple images of the victim and then overlay the imagery with the threat. And it's only in us identifying those images that we can see that the child is being extorted. We're not in dialogue with them. Like I said, the relationship between us and Childline on the reporting side means that Childline are having those potential conversations with the victims. We are really just responding to the imagery. But you know speaking to our to our peers and other organisations, there is an additional vulnerability in terms of boys generally being more gregarious and more susceptible to an approach from a seemingly attractive young female to risk take, and I even attended one webinar where the speaker was talking about going back literally into our DNA of young men needing to sort of like I'm talking about like hunter gatherer type, you know, that far back in history, where the reward the dopamine hit, to be able to go out there do things and take risks is kind of inherent and sort of, like built into built into some degree into boys. But I think there's vulnerability that boys absolutely tend to be more gregarious and more willing to take that risk, literally with a with a stranger, whereas most young girls or lots of young girls, if they were approached online by someone that suggesting within a matter of moments that they share news, and not likely to go down that down that particular path. And I think that's why we're seeing the discrepancy. But we're not having direct contact with those children. So, it's difficult to me to kind of give sort of like first-hand anecdotal information.

Claire Burns 1:30:52

Yeah, and I appreciate Chris this is also nuanced as well, because you're talking about the increased risk of young, particularly young women. So, I appreciate this as all there are no hard and fast rules here. It's all very nuanced, Carron was there anything that you wanted to say there?

Carron McKellar 1:31:09

I mean, I would just probably reiterate what Chris has said around about risk taking behaviours at a particular age, and particularly teenage males, development. And yeah, I'm not going to wholehearted expert, the likes of Stuart would be able to see more roundabout that but it's what we see. And the stigma is massive, at that age, disclosing what has happened. But yeah, just reiterate what Chris has said. Sorry.

Claire Burns 1:31:30

Thanks, Carron, Stuart do you want to come in?

Stuart Allardyce 1:31:40

I would just add that there was some data that came through from Thorn about a year and a half ago, which looked at a cohort of individuals who had been sexually exploited online. And, of course, as you would expect, girls were much more likely to be sexually exploited than boys in all of that. But if you if you cut up the data in a different way, and looked at sexuality, actually, children who were LGBTQ plus were as likely to be exploited as girls within that study. And I don't think it would be untoward to say that probably includes gay and bisexual young men within all of that particularly, so I think there were particular risk factors there in terms of how young men are perhaps exploring their sexuality. And let's be very clear not to be victim blaming and all of this, but often some quite risky areas. If you're 15 years old, and you're on Grindr, then actually, that's quite a dangerous place to be. And that's one of the stories that we hear from young people, young men who have heard of being involved in stuff on sexploitation.

Claire Burns 1:32:45

Thanks very much. We've had a couple of questions on, there's a couple of questions around some of the safeguards that are in legislation and Ofcom. And so, the new online safety legislation, the new draft, draft codes for Ofcom, which don't say age limits, so again, people are just getting a sense of how helpful do you think our current kind of legislative framework and codes of practice are? And where do they need to be? Where do they need to be strengthened? So, Carron, that's the big question, but I'm gonna come you.

Carron McKellar 1:33:16

Thanks for giving me the easy question Claire.

Claire Burns 1:33:18

I Know sorry about that.

Carron McKellar 1:33:20

I think I think we're the one at the beginning of this journey, in relation to this. And I think the Online Safety Act is a step but, I think we would all agree there's a lot further to go on the journey. And I know in Scotland, you know, we're nationally looking at a strategic group now to look at what needs to get done in this country, which will be reflected in some way, I guess, potentially roundabout legislation as well. But you know, I don't think any of us actually believe that it's going to stop anything. It's part of a journey towards trying to make the world a better, a better place online for children.

Claire Burns 1:33:58

Thanks. Chris, or Stuart want to come in here? Chris, do you want to come in?

Chris Hughes 1:34:02

Yeah, I was just really going to say what Karen said. I mean, we are as the Internet Watch Foundation, and have been engaged with Ofcom really since you know, since the bill, the bill has now changed, changed into an act. So, we are

still in that consultation phase. We are still putting recommendations forwards where we see gaps particularly from our side from the online side. And Ofcom is still building its team. Like I said, we are kind of focusing on trying to have our ducks in a row by the end of the year in terms of moving things forward. But but it's very much going to be an iterative processes as Carron's already kind of sort of like spelt out. But it's not yet perfect. But I think we shouldn't underestimate the fact that finally, because we've been talking about regulation for years, it's quite clear that industry regulating itself is a failed experiment. So just we just need to build on that, but need to appreciate perhaps that this is not going to happen overnight.

Claire Burns 1:35:07

Thanks Chris. Stuart, anything else from you?

Stuart Allardyce 1:35:11

Well, if there are colleagues from Ofcom on the call, I think they should be answering the question rather than us. But I also, yeah, I mean, the only safety act as a game changer. But I think that the danger is that we then just think it's the responsibility of big tech to sort out this problem. And, you know, as I was kind of saying in my presentation, we're kind of showing that kind of grid, looking at different prevention targets. Actually, big tech has a role in all of this, but so do parents, so do teachers. So do professionals, we all need to play a part and know what our role is in terms of prevention. So, I think that there's a danger that we can step back to the only safety acting kind of think, somebody else is sorting that out, rather than actually thinking about the necessity of having ongoing conversations with children and in our lives about online safety.

Claire Burns 1:36:05

Thanks Stuart. I think that's so helpful. And it links to one of the other things that's coming through because, you can imagine that for the audience here. It's about saying, what can we do individually and collectively? So, I think, just maybe in two parts, people are asking about what resources, you've taken us through some really helpful resources. But what else is that out there to support parents and carers of very young children, perhaps again, you know, for this audience, kinship carers or foster carers who may be older, as well, and not as tech savvy, as, as we're saying, although I know those two things don't

necessarily go together. And also, I'm taking these things as threes is there a way of also showing that impact of AI that you showed, so those three kinds of elements key elements that are but how do we support? How do we support parents and carers of very young children? How do we think about, you know, the whole care community that we're not just talking about parents and carers, but other people and other settings like residential? And that piece of AI? So, I don't know, Carron I'll come to you first, then Chris, then Stuart.

Carron McKellar 1:37:10

I think there's a lot of resources out there, I think, just know, what we need to do kind of nationally is start to pull things together to help areas have a look at what good practice is happening across the country, and I know discussions with CPC, Scotland earlier this week. That was that was what was coming out through that meeting as well. And but I think that's a kind of starting point because it is good work happening in some areas, toolkits, training of practitioners, inputs with parents at schools, etc. And I know police are involved in some of them, but not all of them. So, I do think there's a bit of work for us nationally to do to just bring all that together so that there is somewhere for people to go to, to see what they can dip into and take what they what they need out of it.

Claire Burns 1:37:49

Thanks that's really helpful. And I know that Tam Baillie, who's the Chair of CPC is on the call today, is on the webinars. So, you know, that's something that again, we can be we can be working with them on. Chris anything else from you?

Chris Hughes 1:38:03

Yeah, I mean, I can either do it now, or obviously share with you after the event Claire. But the Internet Watch foundation is one third of the UK Safer Internet Centre. So certainly, happy to kind of provide links to the Safer Internet Centre, excuse me, which specifically asks, I could see in the chat, someone asked about content, specifically for the younger age spectrum. And their resources cover content for four- to 11-year-olds, again, safe, safer, saferinternet.org.uk. Again, they've also got resources as well as all of the resources that I showed earlier for the IWF. So, I think there actually is a multitude of resources out there. But just coming to the AI thing. We are already engaged. And we've been running in AI

roundtable event, which includes the CPS, the home office, various other stakeholders. Because when we first saw AI content being distributed, it came as a bit of a bombshell. So, we wanted to get ahead of the curve. So, there is a huge amount of work being done in that space, not least engaging with the internet industry, and flagging up the risks and the dangers and looking at the controls and things that can be put in place there. But also, and this kind of flows into policing as well is getting that public messaging out there to, to make sure that the wider public and indeed offenders, perpetrators understand that AI is not a victimless crime, whether or not you're talking about the images that were scraped in their billions off the internet with nobody's permission of children, to the fact that if you're if you're proficient in AI now, and we see chats from offenders every day, if you're proficient in AI, there are offenders taking commissions, from individuals. So basically, they will say, you know, for $50, send me a picture of a child that you want to see an abuse image of tell us the scenario in which she wants to see that child abused, and they will then generate the AI for it. So having that consistent message pushed back that generative AI when it comes to child sexual abuse material is not an alternative avenue to minimise the effect, there are still children involved, albeit at a step removed.

Claire Burns 1:40:40

Thanks, thanks for that Chris. So important to hear that. Thanks, Stuart, anything else from you on that.

Stuart Allardyce 1:40:46

And the next phase, which we haven't really seen yet, I don't think is the use of AI in relation to almost solicitation and grooming which I think it's probably inevitable. So we're all in a kind of learning curve in all of this, but going back to your original point, so for very young children, you know, at high levels of use of parental controls, supervision and monitoring, and also making sure that your child knows that they can go and speak to an adult about anything that worries them. I know that my nine year old daughter, sorry, my daughter when she was 10 years old, she's not nine anymore, but I remember coming to be quite upset because she had been on the laptop with parental controls on there, looking at pictures from Nintendo, because she wanted to draw some pictures of Pokémon characters. But of course, in going onto images, you then have some people involved with cosplay. And some of the images of people doing cosplay went pornographic, but it was slightly sexualized in various ways. And she was really

quite overwhelmed by that but fortunately knew that she could go and speak to someone about it. So, you know, making sure that actually that that your child can come and speak to you about both things is essential. Safer Internet Centres, as Chris has said is a great source of stuff as the parent's club in Scotland loads of videos and loads loads of resources that that Police Scotland have been involved with developing along with ourselves there. And also, NSPCC, I think have absolutely fantastic resources online that and that would be my, my kind of go to place for online safety for parents.

Claire Burns 1:42:45

Thanks very much Stuart. And we can get, we can get some of that information out to people as well, if that's helpful. So just to see it's ten to twelve, we've got another couple of questions that will be kind of 12 o'clock before we finish. So just another couple and Carron, I'm going to come to you first on this because this is quite an important, but a technical question, but somebody's asked around in terms of report and remove, do the images have to be shared online or is there still a capacity for young people or others to report where they've got a fear that something's happening? So, where they think or anticipate that that might happen? And where can they go with that? You know?

Carron McKellar 4 1:43:13

I'm probably going to defer to Chris, because he's in charge of all that so.

Chris Hughes 1:43:18

Yeah. So, when, when report remove was initially set up. The service allowed victims to report the URLs, the web address, where they knew that the content was online, that's still in effect, so if they know that the content has been distributed, and it's on a public publicly accessible place, you know, if it's on Twitter, should it should I call it X, or it's on Instagram, or wherever it is, if it's publicly accessible, then they could report the URL. So that's a retrospective action. In 2021, we enhanced report remove to give it a proactive edge. And that's where imagine if you're a young person, you've created or for want of a better term, a selfie, and you've sent an image to someone and you then have you then reflect and think, Well, this might end up online even though I perhaps said to the person don't share it. If they are still in possession of that image. They can physically send the image to us, which we will then assess and create a

digital fingerprint for assuming it meets the threshold to be considered criminal. And then that digital fingerprint that hash is then daily sent out to the internet industry. So, it will go to Meta it will go to Google They download our hash list on a daily basis. And the idea is that they can then detect either potentially on upload at the point of upload or detect retrospectively by scanning their service for any time that image may appear. So, the URLs is kind of like after the horses bolted. Whereas the ability to send the image is speculative. And it's the child taking a proactive step to say, well, I don't know that it's online, or I don't know that it's actually been distributed. But here is an option I can take forward to reduce or mitigate the potential for that happening in the future.

Claire Burns 1:45:16

So helpful, Chris, and so clear as well, thanks so much for that. So, this is the kind of last question for the three it's a kind of sweeping question. I appreciate to kind of end on but I think the I think the reason that so many people have turned up today, and, you know, continue to be interested is because the passion for child protection. But also, I think they're concerned that things are changing so quickly, in this context, that how do we how do we keep up with that? So I suppose just a question around anything else that you would advise us as a child protection community and as a community concerned with children needing care and protection about, how do we build how do we think about how we continue to build the confidence and capacity of, of both workers and carers to manage this increasingly complex context that we're working in. So, I know a big sweep and but just anything else that you feel you've not had a chance to say, or things that you would advise us as the Centre for Excellence, or CPC to say this is what you should be providing for staff? So, Stuart, do you want to kick off and we'll give, go to Chris and Carron? Sorry Chris.

Claire Burns 1:46:24

Carron, I know did you said that you often feel overwhelmed by can technology nowadays? And I'm sure most of us on the call, would we feel the same? And I quite often hear from parents and carers saying, well, you know, my kids know much more about all this stuff than I do. And that, unfortunately, will always be the case that our younger generations will know more about these things than we do. But actually, as a professional working in this area, I don't think we need to worry too much about that insofar as, as long as we know the places we can get reliable information when we need it. So, you didn't need to know what all the new apps are. But you do need to know that there's an NSPCC website that

you can go and look at, which will tell you every app that's out there at the moment and will know whether there are any issues around risk safety and security in relation to those apps. So that you can always go somewhere to get the information, if you know where you can get good information, then actually what it is about what we need to do in terms of kind of promoting safety in all aspects of our life with children is it's about conversations, it's about relationship. And that's the stuff as childcare professionals, we do really well. So, you know, I think as long as you know where you can, you can you can get information, don't feel overwhelmed by the what sometimes feels like an apocalyptic kind of future about kind of online harm. All the evidence, which suggests as increased, offending takes place online, we're also seeing increasing detection of harm. And we're also seeing increasing numbers of individuals who are worried about their own behaviours, seeking out self-help. So, there are things being done and we can signpost, people to the right kinds of resources if we know about them.

Claire Burns 1:48:32

That's so helpful Stuart thanks so much, Carron.

Carron McKellar 1:48:38

Yeah, the resources, there is there's an absolute host of resources out there through, particularly through Chris's organisation as well, the UK Safer Internet centre, NSPCC as a Stuart's mentioned, CEOP safety centre, the list goes on. There's so much out there. But I think it's important to include children and young people in those conversations about how we take that education forward as well, because I think they're the ones that could probably steer us in being there, you know, given the generational gap, but you might my hope is that the kind of new strategic group and the work that will be going on in this area will focus on that kind of practitioner awareness, parent and carer awareness and just try and help that education aspect and prevention.

Claire Burns 1:49:24

Thanks, Carron. And just before we get the final word from Chris, I think you've hit on something really important there as well about how do we get information to people but how do we talk to children and young people with you know, that's developmentally appropriate and to their needs? I think there's something else

in there that maybe we may need to think about. So, thanks for that Chris final words from yourself.

Chris Hughes 1:49:44

Yes, I mean, I'll just reiterate what Stuart and Carron said, I mean, the latest campaign that the IWF launched this this week, actually, which is, you know, about young people sharing their nudes. Again, it's about making sure from a from a child perspective, that we're using language that resonates with them that they understand. It's about, you know, professionals being live to what the risks are being aware of the risks. And as Stuart said, knowing, you know, knowing where to go to get resource advice, and guidance, and just, you know, be curious, the chart that I showed that, and the reality of that, that I see and that my team see on a daily basis, where we have, you know, children estimated to be a three to six, seemingly alone in a house with an internet enabled device. Most of a lot of what we see is preventable, it's clearly a different conversation and a different risk, you know, that three- to six-year-old children should not be alone with an internet enabled device. And when it's happening, it's either because the parents don't know the risk, but it's wholly preventable. When we're dealing with late age teens, that's a very different risk, they are making more of an informed choice about the risks that they're taking. So you can't, you can advise, and you can give information, you give resources, but at least 50% of the problem from my perspective, shouldn't be happening, because children having access to those devices, unsupervised, is something that we as the adults in that in that space, you know, need to be doing more to make sure that our children aren't being compromised in that way.

Claire Burns 1:51:32

Thanks so much, Chris. So, with an eye to time, I'm just going to do some final comments and thanks. So, first thanks, of course, goes to Chris and Carron and Stuart, for coming today and sharing your expertise with us. And we all know you're busy, but also the work that goes into putting these presentations together. And I am absolutely confident about how impactful that has been and informative have been for people. So, thank you so much. And I hope that this is you know, we keep this connection going with CELCIS and with this, the child protection community in Scotland. Thanks to everybody who's turned up today on a Friday morning in huge numbers says such a lot about your interest and passion for the area. And I hope that's been impactful. Let us know about anything else you'd like us to follow up on either information or other things you

think that CELCIS and I'm sure Tam would be okay with me saying or anything else that you feel that CPC should be doing as well. Thanks to the CELCIS team, it's never, you know, these things look like they all flow together. But there's a lot of work that goes that goes into it. So, thanks to them. My final comment is just to reiterate some of the well-being messages as well been a lot of really challenging content this morning. So, we'll just say to people, go back to our messages that we've given you around if you need to talk to somebody or if you'd like to follow up with us. So please look after yourself. And on that note, just to say thanks very much again to everybody and I hope you all have a lovely weekend. Thank you.