

**Data and research to inform policy making
and strengthen children's protection from
violence**

**Violence against children via the
new technologies – risks & promises**

or

**SUPPOSITIONS, HOPES AND REALITIES –
lessons learned from working with children
abused online**

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20th June, 2012**

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“It’s not so much what was done to me but what it did to my head”

Survey of Barnardo's services November 2002/3

Just one click! Report published in 2004

- Children who view adult pornography - **5**
- Children abused through prostitution using the Internet and mobile phones to contact their abusers - **4**
- Adults or young people who engage in 'cyber sex' with children - **0**
- Children of adults who download or distribute sexually abusive images of children - **1**
- Children groomed online for sexual abuse offline - **15**
- Children sold online for sexual abuse offline - **7**
- Young people who place images of other young people online - **0**
- Children who download sexually abusive images of children - **22**
- Children sold online for live sexual abuse online - **1**
- Children made the subject of child abuse images - **28**

Children who view adult pornography - 5

- Availability, quantity and nature of the subject matter
- What might be the long term impact on their understanding of intimacy and sex in the context of personal relationships?
- Chose to search for adult pornography or encouraged to do so by another?

- Impacts on girls
- Age at which they start viewing/time spent
- Is this a growing problem? - Portman clinic – referrals for problematic internet usage – 0% 1997 to 26% in 2010 – adult pornography addiction being the major reason for referral
- Key issue is their current developmental stage and the impact such imagery has on the way they think, feel and behave
- Case study

Adults or young people who engage in cybersex with children - 0

- No cases referred under this category but during treatment programmes it became apparent that cybersex has occurred
- Predicted that young people would be most unlikely to report such abuse

- No case reported as the presenting problem
- Such behaviour on the part of the perpetrator tends to be part of the grooming repertoire
- No child has volunteered this information during treatment – counsellor is required to introduce this as a possibility

Children abused through prostitution using the internet and mobile phones to contact their abusers and children sold online for sexual abuse offline/online - 4 + 7 + 1 = 13

- New technology changed the manner in which contact is made – more hidden, less risks
- Young people “appear” to be pro-active in developing the relationship
- They do not (“can not”) perceive themselves as victims
- The perpetrator(s) ensures dependency through isolating, drugs, drink, cigarettes
- Interconnections – trafficking, ATP, CAI
- Large increase in online activity since mobile phones have had internet connectivity
- Generally perpetrators are working in groups – mobile technologies used for frequent and quick communication amongst perpetrators and between perpetrators and children
- What happens to the evidence?
- Case example

Children of adults who download or distribute abusive images of children - 1

- Operation Ore – a need to understand better the relationship between viewing and commissioning further sexual offences against children
- What risk does the adult pose to the children in the home?
- Impacts on family dynamics
- No research
- Practice guidance needed
- **Rise in prosecutions**
- Better recognition of the need to understand the relationship between viewing and doing is driven, not only by law enforcement but also by child protection agencies
- Still a paucity of research – but we have some useful advances – Michael Seto et al
- Little guidance on determining risk
- Decisions are disparate regarding outcomes

Children who download sexually abusive images of children - 22

- Number of children seen as a cause for concern
- Self initiated or introduced by another?
- Current practice does not give time for an accurate assessment and for decision making regarding disposal of the matter
- The research that we have to date reinforces the initial impression – namely that a significant number of young people are viewing abusive images of children – 30%+ -
- Recognition of the need for a timely dual assessment process
- Assessment and intervention models developed
- No universal application across the UK

Young people who place images of other young people online = 0

- Motivation – innocently sending an image to a friend,, intending to embarrass and humiliate someone, a bullying tool
- Little reported regarding this behaviour
- Sexting - the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones (mobile phones)
- 40% saw nothing wrong with a topless image and 15% saw nothing wrong with naked images - 27% of respondents said that sexting happens regularly or all of the time
- ACPO lead on Child Protection and Abuse Investigations – position statement

Children groomed online for sexual abuse offline/online - 15

- Grooming scenario - Find out as much as they can about their potential victim, establish the risk and likelihood of child telling find out about child's family and social network if "safe enough" will isolate their victim – may use flattery and promises or threats and blackmail – and get control
- Give false information, including false self images
- A muted understanding of the lack of inhibition
- Reframe the grooming scenario
- Victims are not going to report –of all the case I have worked with non self reported
- Minimal information given when interviewed by the police
- Formed online relationships 12/13 – age when abuse was discovered 14/15 – nb . Vulnerable groups/vulnerable stages in development
- Very few presented with a history of troubled backgrounds
- Recovery is a long haul!

What's different online?

Yas – aged 14

- “The internet is a weird version of the real world where you can do everything
- Groomers don't have to worry about seeming suspicious
- Children can act like adults
- I used people online to make me feel good
- Girls use groomers to make them feel mature – groomers use girls for sex – it's mutual using of one another
- Girls get involved with men because nothing much seems to be happening when you're 12-14 but you want to be older
- The most talkative (girls) online are the quietest offline
- The most normal (man) online is a real weirdo offline
- We rarely talk about our behaviour online – kind of embarrassing”

Quotes from children

- **“I would never have told anyone if the police hadn’t come knocking at our door. It turned out that they had arrested the bloke I was friends with online and had traced me through examining his computer. First off, I said they’d got the wrong person....I was terrified my mum and dad would know what I had been talking about....you don’t even talk to your friends about what you say online....somehow it seems a different world....one in which I can act like I’m 22 when I’m actually only 14”**

Children made the subjects of child abuse images - 27

- History – availability, old images, introduction of the digital camera
- COPINE – monitored the online behaviour of sexual abusers within newsgroups
- Numbers
- Perpetrators' strategies to silence children
- My hope – very young children, criminal justice system response
- **Silence/denial**
- **Investigative issues**
- **Recovery issues – impotence, shame, responsibility, non resolution of the abuse**
- **Still little evidence base research regarding victims**
- **Insufficient resources to open pandora's box**

continued

- Data from NCMEC
- Relationship of indentified victims to their abuser
- 1998-2010
- 3358 identified victims
- **66% known to the child**
- 14% coerced through online grooming
- 14% self produced
- 3% human trafficker
- 3% unknown to the child – un-established relationships
- The making of child abuse images is, in the main, an offline crime commtted by people known to the victims

- The UK Sentencing Commission – victim statements

Some thoughts

- Lack of critical understanding of the harms posed by the new technologies
- Lack of training, expertise and capacity to investigate such crimes against children, to protect them from harm and assist in their recovery.
- Need to connect knowledge of abusers with impacts on child victims
- Online and offline abuse of children are merged activities
- Intervention is a form of prevention (secondary and tertiary)
- Children are resilient – with the right help they can recover and lead safe lives
- We need to consider vulnerability within the context of child development
- We are not reaching the 11 to 14 year olds with the right messages
- The children's workforce – social workers, health, education, police – are not asking the pertinent questions – they need to because the children will not voluntarily tell

Barriers to effective listening and to asking the relevant questions

The Adult

Personal

Own pain, experiences, memories, sexuality.
View of child/alleged abuser .
Values, attitudes, beliefs

Feelings

Pity, Horror, Shame, Distress,
Embarrassment, Anger, Disgust,
Uncertainty

Doubts

Will I cope? Will I make it worse?
Is it true? What next?

Professional

Practicalities (time, other responsibilities etc.),
Knowledge, Skills, Confidence, Legislation, Language,
Support available, Possible repercussions.

Recommendations – 3rd World Congress 2008

- Conduct further educational campaigns and evaluate their impact on behaviour
- Prioritise victim identification and support
- Work with children and young people to determine factors that protect and promote resilience
- Amend existing legislation to clear definitions of all sexually abusive and exploitative behaviour and materials related to the new technologies.

Recommendations

- Encourage industry to be more pro-active regarding abusive content and make mandatory reporting to law enforcement of illegal content
- Support proactive involvement of the public
- Initiate a programme of research to examine:
 - Aspects of technology that facilitate abuse
 - Impact of technological expansion on abusive practices worldwide
 - The impact on the family and wider social networks of criminalisation of Internet related activity
 - The role of the IT sector in risk analysis of new products

UNICEF - Sexual abuse and exploitation in the converged online/offline environments: referral services and rehabilitation 2010/11 - recommendations

- All countries should be encouraged to carry out a State of the Nation Review of Internet Safety and Online Abuse of Children along the lines of the Bahrain Review but with a wider remit
- All countries should be encouraged to develop a policing and safeguarding hub that takes the lead for ensuring that national systems are in place to allow for effective investigation, assessment, intervention, support and follow up. Similarly the hub should act as the conduit for international referrals both to and from the country

Recommendations

- An international Forum for professionals working with victims of online abuse should be established to enable shared learning resulting in informed, evidence based practice
- Current ways of interviewing child victims of internet related crimes for evidential purposes need reviewing and good practice models developed
- Good practice models need to be developed for assessment and intervention programmes for children abused online

Recommendations

- Strategies, procedures and intervention models for young people with sexually problematic and harmful behaviours online need developing within a child development context and one that recognises the dual requirement to address both the protection needs and the criminal justice issues posed by the young person's behaviour
- The random survey carried out for the purposes of this paper, should be progressed and expanded to cover every country worldwide

Recommendations

- Training programmes regarding the impact of online abusive behaviours on children and their families ,and their recovery needs, should be developed for professionals working with traumatised children
- All governments should make funding available for the recovery of online victims of abuse and ensure that such monies are ring-fenced
- All governments should make the protection of children as equal a priority to the conviction of their abusers

Recommendations

- All countries should develop data bases to record relevant information regarding child victims of online abuse to assist in gaining an understanding of the incidents of this type of abuse and the demographic features of the children involved. There needs to be international agreement regarding what information needs to be recorded

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