Centre of
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Coventry
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Child sexual exploitation perpetrators
research programme, report 2

Characteristics and motivations of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation

A rapid evidence assessment of research

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About the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has been established to help bring about significant and system-wide change in how child sexual abuse is responded to locally and nationally.

We do this by identifying, generating and sharing high-quality evidence of what works to prevent and tackle child sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation), to inform both policy and practice.

The Centre is funded by the Home Office and led by Barnardo's, and works closely with key partners from academic institutions, local authorities, health, education, police and the voluntary sector.

Contents

Summary

There is a lack of information about individuals who perpetrate child sexual exploitation (CSE) offences. This report describes one of three research projects to build an evidence base about this population.

The project's aims were to:

‣ investigate the characteristics of those who commit CSE

‣ identify the nature and dynamics of their behaviours, their motivations and the way they target and exploit their victims.

The report will be of interest to frontline practitioners, service providers, commissioners of services, policy makers, researchers and academics.

Method

A rapid review was conducted, finding 50 studies/reports where the offences met the definition of CSE and information could be extracted about perpetrators' characteristics, behaviours, motivations and methods of targeting/exploiting their victims.

Key findings and gaps in research knowledge

‣ The majority of studies were conducted in the UK (19) and USA (18), with four conducted in Canada, three in New Zealand, two in France and one in each of Australia, Mexico, Germany and Sweden. It is important to note that some of these studies reviewed and/or combined the findings from a number of published studies, so each study's findings were not necessarily specific to its country of origin.

‣ The majority (37) of studies were of offenders who have committed exclusively online CSE offences, with only 10 examining non-online CSE offences and three covering both online and 'offline' offences; very limited knowledge was obtained regarding other types of CSE, such as CSE perpetrated within groups and gangs; offences such as human trafficking

> **The majority of studies were of offenders who have committed online CSE offences exclusively.**

for, or resulting in, sexual exploitation; and the purchasing of sexual contact. This limits the extent to which the review's findings and observations can be generalised.

‣ Across the studies there were many methodological limitations such as inconsistencies in the definition of CSE, comparisons between groups of sexual offenders only (with a lack of other offender or non-offender control groups), lack of typical or normative data comparisons, and reliance on correlational data. These limit the potential to draw conclusions about causal influences.

‣ Perpetrators were generally identified as male, white and aged between 18 and 85 years (with the average age in individual studies ranging from 30 to 46 years); a high proportion were employed, with a large number of these in professional jobs.

‣ Mental health characteristics and psychological characteristics (personality traits) were examined only in relation to online CSE offences, and no research examined them in relation to other forms of CSE, e.g. CSE perpetrated in gangs or groups.

‣ In relation to online CSE, owing to methodological challenges and insufficient research it is impossible to isolate specific mental health or psychological characteristics that have a causal relationship with this type of offence. However, factors such as depression, anxiety, stress and suicidal ideation are most likely to be relevant.

‣ The evidence is weaker for psychological characteristics being associated with

CSE; however, some attachment styles (e.g. not securely attached, fearful attachment) were associated with this group, and the formation of relationships appeared to be problematic.

‣ There was limited research that identified the motivations of CSE perpetrators; the studies that did so were generally those looking to develop typologies and categories of online offenders. The two key motivations found were sexual and financial.

‣ There was no research that specifically identified the way that perpetrators targeted/exploited their victims, beyond explaining the context within which the exploitation occurred (i.e. online exploitation, gangs or trafficking/commercial dealings). It may be that such information could be located within the literature on victim-survivors, but including and analysing research on victim-survivors was beyond the scope of the current review.

Implications and recommendations

There is very little reliable information about the characteristics of individuals who perpetrate CSE offences, particularly those who do not commit offences in or using online environments. This significantly limits our ability to identify potential offenders and situations to target and design prevention strategies.

More research is required to fully understand the characteristics and motivations of CSE perpetrators. That research will need to:

‣ have consistency and clarity regarding the definition of this type of offending and the different contexts within which it occurs

‣ use methodological research designs that allow differences and causal pathways to be reliably identified – for example, including appropriate non-offender control groups, longitudinal methods and large sample sizes (although this may be unrealistic, as studies are generally based on small, convicted samples by necessity).

> " Across the studies there were many methodological limitations such as inconsistencies in the definition of CSE and a lack of control groups. "

1. Introduction

Research into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the UK has been difficult to establish owing to the hidden nature of the abuse (Barnardo's, 2011).

CSE affects children and young people of all backgrounds, and its prevention requires understanding of the nature of the problem and those involved. An important element of this is understanding the characteristics, behaviour and motivations of individuals who perpetrate this type of child abuse.

In early 2017, the centre of expertise on child sexual abuse commissioned three research projects to build an evidence base about this population, through a rapid evidence assessment, exploratory empirical research with adult perpetrators of CSE, and a case study analysis of juveniles who have committed CSE offences.

This report presents the findings of the rapid evidence assessment, and should be read in conjunction with the reports on the other two research strands. These studies will be of interest to frontline practitioners, service providers, commissioners of services, policymakers, researchers and academics.

1.1. Defining CSE

In England and Wales, CSE is regarded as a form of child sexual abuse (CSA), although policy and practice frameworks differ and indeed definitions have changed over time, with implications for practice. England and Wales operate with slightly different definitions, although they do share some commonalities.

In early 2017, a review of the Wales CSE guidance protocol and embedded definition was commissioned by the Welsh Government. In England, Government guidance regarding the definition of CSE states:

> 'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology.'
> *(Department for Education, 2017:6)*

1.2. Aims

The rapid evidence assessment reviewed published empirical research, with the aim of informing future research and practice by:

▸ investigating the characteristics of those who commit CSE

▸ identifying the nature and dynamics of their behaviours, their motivations and the way they target and exploit their victims.

2. Method

The rapid review was conducted from January to March 2017, to review research studies published in the academic and government/charity and third sector domains since 2000. It was based on rapid evidence assessment (REA) methods, and the REA guidance produced by the EPPI-Centre for Civil Service on Rapid Evidence Assessment (Civil Service, 2014) was used as a framework for the review.

2.1. Inclusion criteria for review

The following inclusion criteria were used:

- Original empirical studies that included:
  - individuals identified as CSE perpetrators
  - offences, or offenders who had perpetrated offences, that contained:
    - a commercial element
    - trafficking
    - gang involvement
    - any form of technology-facilitated abuse, i.e. online sexual offences
  - studies published in English since 1 January 2000 that were obtainable within two weeks of being identified as suitable for the review
  - studies published in academic journals, on the websites of relevant charities and other organisations, and on research sharing sites such as ResearchGate and Google Scholar
  - studies from any country.
- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

The following exclusion criteria were applied:

- Studies in which the following offences were examined:
  - intrafamilial CSA (where the abuse was not deemed to be CSE, based on the above inclusion criteria)
  - CSA in organisations including schools, churches and religious sectors, and sporting organisations.

- Studies that focused only on victim characteristics and circumstances.
- Narrative reviews.

It is important to note that the majority of the studies/reports reviewed either did not include clear definitions of CSE or did not offer a definition at all. This is a generic problem when examining CSE, and is particularly an issue given that CSE has only recently been defined and redefined in the UK. The screening of studies for relevance was based on an examination of the descriptions of the participants (i.e. as online offenders, traffickers, familial child abusers) and the offending behaviours (i.e. what charged for, self-reported current offending and/or offending histories, types of offences reported, typologies of offenders) that were included in each study's information about its participants.

2.2. Search strategy, screening and data extraction

Relevant publications were sourced by searching:

- electronic bibliographic databases (Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, Medline, PsycArticles, and PsycInfo)
- reference lists of included studies, which were searched and considered in line with the inclusion/exclusion criteria above
- grey literature (web pages of charities and organisations – see Appendix 1).

Details of the steps taken for searching (strategy and search terms), screening (inclusion and exclusion criteria), and sifting papers (numbers of papers initially identified then rejected or retained) can be found in Appendix 1.

3. Findings

Fifty papers/reports were found in which it was deemed that CSE was evident and some information could be extracted about perpetrators' characteristics.

When researchers have examined the characteristics and contexts of CSE, the focus has almost exclusively been on victim characteristics, the impact of CSE, policy to protect victims, and/or the healthcare, societal and legal response to victims; these topics are not included in this review. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the studies that met the inclusion criteria for this rapid evidence assessment; it describes the aims of each study, the samples and/or data examined, the methodology employed, and key findings in respect of perpetrators' demographic information.

Across the studies there is a lack of consistency and consensus in how CSE is defined. It is often defined in general terms to encapsulate a range of different types of sexual abuse against those under 18 years old. Where CSE is defined more specifically, a common theme (consistent with the new Government definition in England, given in section 1.1) is the notion of an 'exchange' of something to either the victim (e.g. money, alcohol, promise of a relationship) or to a third party. However, many other elements of the various definitions used in the literature diverge from the Government definition: for example, CSE has been defined to include molestation, rape, technology-facilitated crimes, and/or any abuse of a position of vulnerability. It is therefore difficult to differentiate between CSE and CSA, compare findings across studies and establish how distinct the characteristics of CSE cases and perpetrators are from those of other types of sexual abuse.

A range of different types of CSE is represented in the studies, including gangs/group offending, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), internet-facilitated CSEC, use of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) online, and sex trafficking. The majority (37) of the studies investigated online CSE exclusively, with 10 examining CSE in other contexts and three covering both online and 'offline' offences. This means that we know very little about CSE perpetrated outside online environments.

Studies originated mainly in the UK (19) and USA (18), with four conducted in Canada, three in New Zealand, two in France and one in each of Australia, Mexico, Germany and Sweden. It is important to note that some of these studies reviewed and/or combined the findings from a number of published studies, so the findings are not necessarily specific to the country of origin.

Most studies examined a single group of offenders – with a wide range in sample sizes, some of which were very small (n = 3) – or compared groups of people who had committed different types of sexual offences.

> **Most studies examined a single group of offenders or compared groups of people who had committed different types of sexual offences.**

There is also a reliance on clinical or convicted populations. Hence, the literature is limited by a lack of non-sex-offender and non-offender control groups, a lack of typical or normative data comparisons, a dependence on clinical and convicted samples which might not be representative, and a reliance on correlational data which limits abilities to draw conclusions about causal influences.

In order to address the aims of this study, the findings have been grouped into two sections, covering perpetrator characteristics and perpetrator motivations. Throughout the literature, there were differences in the types of CSE studied and the ways that perpetrators and their behaviours were labelled and defined

(e.g. 'users of internet child pornography', 'child pornography offenders', 'perpetrators of commercial sexual exploitation of children', 'chat room sex offenders'). When discussing each piece of research in this report, we use the labels and terminologies that the authors used; these are not necessarily our preferred terminologies, and indeed some of those used (e.g., 'child pornography') are generally not deemed acceptable.

3.1. Perpetrator characteristics

Across the 50 studies included in the review, the characteristics identified could be grouped into four key areas: demographic characteristics; mental health characteristics; psychological characteristics; and implicit theories.

It is important to note that the demographic data come from all the studies in the review, which examine different samples (e.g. online, trafficking, gang CSE). Studies with findings relevant to the other three areas (mental health characteristics, psychological characteristics, implicit theories) examined only online CSE offences; hence the findings in those areas are restricted to this group of CSE offences.

3.1.1 Demographic characteristics

Appendix 2 provides the details of the demographic data for each study. There is a noticeable lack of data across the range of demographic characteristics. The only consistent finding is that the majority of perpetrators are male; this aligns with previous prevalence and agency data, where males are disproportionately found to be perpetrators of sexual abuse (e.g. Vandiver and Walker, 2002).

The findings regarding demographic data, although broad and inconclusive, seem to be replicated across different groups of CSE perpetrators. These findings are typified by Alexy et al (2005), who examined the characteristics of 225 perpetrators of computer-facilitated sexual exploitation of children. They found that:

‣ 95.1% were men

‣ their ages ranged from 15 to 66 years (mean 37.2 years, standard deviation 10.7 years)

‣ almost two-thirds (64%) were employed as professionals, with 11% labourers, 6% in

> ## The only consistent finding is that the majority of perpetrators are male.

the military and 3% in the clergy; 9% were unemployed and 7% were students.

Mitchell et al (2011) in the USA examined the characteristics of perpetrators of CSEC (which they defined as producing, purchasing and/or selling child pornography), and found that the majority were male, white and in full-time employment.

Five reports provide insight into the characteristics of those who exploit children in gangs and groups (Berelowitz, 2012; Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 2011; Cockbain et al, 2014; Gohir, 2013; Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012). Two of these studies (Berelowitz, 2012; OCC, 2012) defined their participants as gang members, whereas the other three studies (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 2011; Cockbain et al, 2014; Gohir, 2013), referred to the participants as part of groups/network of offenders. Owing to the small number of these studies, many of which have methodological limitations (e.g. significant gaps and inconsistencies in the recording of perpetrator characteristics, small sample sizes [n = 3; case studies research, Cockbain et al, 2014]), caution is required when interpreting their findings. Across the studies it was found that:

‣ it was not possible to fully establish estimates of the amount of CSE occurring in groups, as only one study – which was based on case studies and did not report its methodology – reported this (86%; Gohir, 2013)

‣ the majority of perpetrators were male, with 0.01% to 10% of perpetrators identified as female (Berelowitz, 2012)

‣ where reported, the age range of perpetrators was 12–85 years; this range was fairly consistent within each study where reported (see Appendix 2), although the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2011) reported in its research that perpetrator age was disproportionately skewed towards young adults within the 18–24 age range, with almost half of the offenders being under 25 where their age was known

▸ perpetrators included those with little education, well-educated professionals, and respected members of the community (e.g. law enforcement, teachers, medical, military, clergy).

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2011) undertook a thematic assessment to ascertain the scale and nature of localised, often group-based grooming of young people under 18; the aim was to establish whether there are any common patterns of offender behaviour. Using rapid assessment methodology including literature review, assessment of intelligence held on relevant agencies' systems, and consultation with CSE victims and frontline practitioners, it identified 2,379 individuals as possible localised grooming offenders. Although the quality of the demographic data was variable, the offender group was predominantly male (n = 2,118) and aged 18–24 (n = 500). The relatively young age of this population is notable as it differs from the profile of the more common older male abuser. Unusually, there was a high representation of 90 females in the sample, who were predominantly involved in the facilitation of CSE.

In summary, the demographic characteristics identified are very broad, highlighting the range of offenders who sexually exploit children. At best, this rapid evidence assessment identified that perpetrators are generally male, white and aged 18–85 years; a high percentage work in professional jobs, many of which include a position of authority.

These findings may not be truly representative. For example, it has been argued that female perpetration is widely underdetected and underreported, and that the quality and accuracy of official records is questionable (Bourke et al, 2014). However, given the relatively small number of studies that have examined this, and the fact that a large proportion of CSE goes unreported, it is not possible at present to quantify the extent of female-perpetrated CSE.

The limitations of the studies identified in this rapid evidence assessment make it difficult to identify specific demographic characteristics associated with perpetrators of CSE. These limitations include:

▸ correlational analyses which prevent the identification of causal pathways/details

▸ predominantly online CSE samples/data, limiting knowledge in respect of the wider range of CSE offences

▸ lack of appropriate control groups

▸ comparisons made between different types of sex offenders where the boundaries between CSE and CSA may become blurred.

In addition, the majority of the findings are descriptive (e.g. summary percentages or frequencies within the specific sample recruited), where is it not possible to identify how these characteristics differ from the general non-CSE-offending population. This means that it is difficult to draw meaningful, generalisable conclusions which would enable the development of targeted prevention strategies.

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"

3.1.2 Mental health characteristics

Some researchers have examined the relevance of mental health characteristics in relation to CSE perpetrators, and the evidence is in the main inconclusive. One reason for this is that mental health characteristics have generally been compared between types of sexual offenders – e.g. those described as 'child pornography' offenders, non-contact sex offenders and contact sex offenders (Jung et al, 2013; Webb et al, 2007) – or only within the CSE offender sample, with no control or normative data for comparison (Wolak et al, 2011). The absence of a control or normative data makes it difficult to assess the extent to which these characteristics are associated specifically with perpetrators of CSE.

Among studies that have compared characteristics across different types of sexual offender, two have revealed that different groups of sex offenders are indistinguishable based on their mental health characteristics. In one, Jung et al (2013) compared child pornography offenders, non-contact offenders (exhibitionism or voyeurism) and contact

child molesters on their psychiatric history, personality characteristics and mental health variables. All three groups were unremarkable and indistinguishable. Approximately one-third of each group had accessed mental health services, and the three groups did not differ on 12 of the 14 scales of the Personality Assessment Inventory (Morey, 1991), which includes measures such as antisocial features and suicidal ideation: average group scores across all 14 scales were within the range that would be expected of the typical population.

Similarly, Webb et al (2007) examined risk and clinical personality traits among 90 internet offenders and 120 child molesters. They found more similarities than differences between the two groups when examining the risk of sexual recidivism, psychopathy, clinical personality traits (i.e. mental health disorders) and change in the risk over time. Across the internet offenders and child molesters combined, however, there were high levels (40% of sample) of personality disorders: individuals presented specifically with schizoid (distant, detached, and indifferent to social relationships), avoidant (extreme social inhibition, inadequacy, and sensitivity to negative criticism and rejection) and dependent (inability to be alone, anxious) profiles.

A small amount of research has identified potential mental health issues for online offenders. Examining a relatively small sample (n = 51) of chat room offenders, Briggs et al (2011) found that approximately 75% presented with at least one mental health diagnosis, and 25% with comorbid or co-occurring conditions. The most common of the diagnoses were depression, adjustment disorders (stress, feeling sad or hopeless) and substance use disorders. Approximately 50% were assessed as having a personality disorder. The most frequent diagnoses were avoidant (extreme social inhibition, inadequacy, and sensitivity to negative criticism and rejection) and narcissistic personality disorder (grandiosity, a lack of empathy for other people, and a need for admiration); antisocial personality disorder was uncommon. Although this research suggests that mental health issues may be associated with perpetrators of CSE, it should be noted that the mental health diagnoses described perpetrators' *present* functioning and not necessarily their pre-offence functioning; it is possible that their mental health issues arose as a result of their arrest, incarceration, marital issues, job losses and involvement

in the criminal justice system following their offending. In addition, it is difficult to generalise the findings, given that the research used a relatively small sample.

Research can be deemed more robust and informative when mental health characteristics in CSE perpetrators are compared to non-offender or normative data (Bates and Metcalf, 2007; Gillespie et al, 2018; Laulik et al, 2007), although this still cannot take account of the temporal ordering of events (i.e. whether the mental health issues were a pre-offending status, or arose as a result of offending individuals' involvement with the criminal justice system). When such research has been carried out, the researchers have suggested a link between CSE perpetration and factors such as depression, anxiety and stress, and CSE perpetration. For example:

- Gillespie et al (2018) found that, amongst 92 adult male users of CSEM, a large proportion were classified as severe or extremely severe relative to the general population on depression, anxiety and stress; thus suggesting that these offenders may have affective and interpersonal difficulties and that there is a link between depression, anxiety and stress. This finding may not be limited to the group of offenders, however, as it has also been found amongst, for example, perpetrators of intimate partner violence (e.g. Shorey et al, 2012).

- Laulik et al (2007) found that, compared to normative data, internet offenders scored significantly higher on depression, schizophrenia, borderline personality features, antisocial features, suicidal ideation and stress. Many were classified within the clinically significant range for depression (30%), schizophrenia (13%), borderline features (instability in moods, behaviour, self-image, and functioning) (17%); suicidal ideation (23%); and stress (16%). It is important to consider that this study was based on a relatively small, self-selected sample (n = 30) at various stages of intervention completion; as such, the offenders' psychological functioning would have altered from the time of their arrest/use of the internet for CSE. Despite this, the findings can be interpreted as indicating several underlying vulnerabilities and mental health issues which contribute to the generation and maintenance of CSE-related internet offending.

In summary, there is some evidence that mental health issues might be associated with the perpetration of CSE (specifically online-facilitated CSE), although the evidence is mixed and its validity is questionable. There is an absence of studies that use non-offending control groups or that assess mental functioning pre-offence, so it is difficult to identify true causal relationships or make meaningful conclusions. At best, the strongest evidence would suggest that mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress and suicidal ideation *may* be of relevance, and that these mental health issues certainly warrant further research.

3.1.3 Psychological characteristics

Psychological characteristics such as personality traits or characteristics have also been examined by a few researchers. Again, it is very difficult to draw meaningful conclusions as the evidence is sparse, findings are equivocal and research is generally limited by methodological weaknesses. The majority of studies lacked a control group or normative data, and/or compared only different groups of sexual offenders. The studies revealed that psychological characteristics do not consistently differentiate the sexual offender groups examined.

Neutze et al (2012) classified their 155 participants by self-reported prior lifetime offences (child pornography, contact sexual abuse, and mixed offenders) and on activity in the previous six months (inactive, child pornography, and contact sexual abuse). The offences were not all *convicted* offences, as three quarters of the child-pornography-only offenders reported being officially undetected and 51% of the recent child contact sexual abuse offenders had no criminal record. On a range of variables (emotional deficits, offence-supportive cognitions, sexual self-regulation problems and non-conformity), there were no significant differences between the three prior-lifetime-offences groups and the three recent-activity groups, with the overall findings characterised by similarities rather than differences.

Seto et al (2012) also compared three groups of offenders: contact offenders, child pornography offenders, and solicitation offenders (i.e. those who use online technologies to communicate

with minors for sexual purposes and to arrange real-life meetings). They found very few differences between the groups on psychological variables (e.g. emotional identification with children), nor on employment problems, cooperation with supervision, drug problems or alcohol problems.

Using cluster analysis, Henry et al (2010) examined whether internet-based sexual offenders (n = 422) fell into clear groups, based on a standard pre-intervention battery of psychometric tests which form part of the Sex Offender Treatment and Evaluation Project (STEP) test battery (Beech et al, 1999); these tests assess pro-offending attitudes (three measures) and socio-affective functioning (five measures). Three types of offender were identified:

> "
> The majority of studies lacked a control group or normative data, and/or compared only different groups of sexual offenders.
> "

- **The ostensibly normal** (more emotionally stable and less pro-offending in attitude than the other two types)
- **The emotionally inadequate** (characterised by socio-affective deficits, e.g. self-esteem and emotional loneliness)
- **The sexually deviant** (mixed deficits across socio-affective and pro-offending, but specifically pro-offending measures all higher than the other two types).

This typology indicates that factors such as low self-esteem, emotional loneliness and personal distress were considered to be characteristics of online CSE perpetrators. Psychometric data were not compared to control groups or norm data, however, meaning that it is difficult to know how much these factors differentiate this group from non-perpetrators or general CSA populations.

Gillespie et al (2018) included comparison data (e.g. from college students, hospital workers and prison officers) and found that adult male users of CSEM scored higher on social anxiety, emotional reappraisal and suppression, locus of control, levels of loneliness and self-efficacy, and lower on self-esteem. However, no statistical testing was done to enable a causal effect or a significant group difference to be determined, so at best the finding might suggest that these are topics warranting further empirical investigation.

Similarly, Bates and Metcalf (2007) analysed psychometric test data from 39 internet offenders and 39 contact offenders to see whether they scored above or below the normal range (based on data from 'typical' individuals) for different characteristics. They found that high proportions of internet offenders had scores above or below the norm range for impression management, emotional loneliness and self-esteem. However, even higher percentages of contact offenders scored outside the average range for measures of self-esteem and, particularly, of locus of control. This would suggest a need for more research where statistical testing involving control-group comparisons is required, or longitudinal data that captures the temporal ordering of events; however, such research designs are exceptionally difficult to execute and do not come without inherent methodological challenges.

Armstrong and Mellor (2016) compared the psychological characteristics of attachment styles and intimacy deficits amongst 32 internet child pornography offenders, with 32 matched contact offenders, 31 matched adult sex offenders, 20 offenders convicted of an internet child pornography and offline sexual offence, and 47 non-offending controls (a community group, selected from the state electoral roll). A strength of this study is that this is one of very few studies that included control-group comparisons; however, the offenders were classified based on their convictions, and therefore undetected offending was not captured. (For example, contact offenders may have used the internet as part of their offending, but this could feasibly have remained undetected.) The study found that internet child pornography offenders were the most likely to report a fearful attachment style, but were not significantly more likely to do so that any of the

> Between contact offenders, child pornography offenders and solicitation offenders, few differences were found in psychological variables or problems with employment, drugs or alcohol.

other offending groups; they were therefore no more likely to avoid close relationships than those groups. Compared to the other offending groups, internet child pornography offenders did report a more negative view of themselves and saw themselves as less worthy of love, but did not report a more negative view of others. Similarly, internet child pornography offenders did not differ from the other offending groups with regard to fear of intimacy, fear of negative evaluation, and social avoidance and distress – but compared with non-offenders, they were less securely attached and reported a more fearful attachment style, a negative view of the self, and social avoidance and distress. This finding was based on a small sample and self-report of offending type/non-offending. However, with the inclusion of a control group, the findings are more meaningful regarding possible relevant psychological characteristics of CSE perpetrators.

Utilising the same data set for two different papers, Seigfried and colleagues also employed control groups (participants voluntarily recruited via the internet by publishing or advertising the survey on various online resources) when comparing the psychological characteristics of internet child pornography users with those of non-users, in a mixed male and female sample and a female-only sample. They used an online survey comprising several questionnaires, previously used or adapted from studies in the area of deviant computer behaviour. To measure psychological characteristics, the questionnaires included the modified Goldberg (1992) Big-5 questionnaire to measure the 'Big Five' personality traits (extraversion,

neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness); the Moral Decision-Making Scale (MDKS) (Rogers et al, 2006) to measure the respondents' moral choice and decision-making tendencies; and the Exploitive-Manipulative Amoral Dishonesty Scale (EMAD) (Altemeyer, 1998) to measure level of social dominance in the areas of exploitation, manipulation, and dishonest behaviour. In the two studies:

‣ Seigfried et al (2008) compared the psychological characteristics of 30 internet child pornography users (20 males and 10 females) with 277 non-users. Using the above questionnaires, they reported acceptable levels of reliability (from α = 0.72 to α = 0.86). Exploitative-manipulative personality trait and lower internal individual moral values were found to be related to the consumption of internet child pornography. Moral choice hedonistic values, moral choice social values and the Big Five personality traits, however, were not different between internet child pornography users and non-users.

‣ Seigfried-Spellar and Rogers (2010) focused on female consumers of internet child pornography, comparing 10 consumers (who self-reported that they intentionally viewed, accessed, downloaded and/or exchanged internet child pornography) with 152 non-consumers. Using the same questionnaires detailed above, acceptable levels of reliability were found for the Big-5 questionnaire (from α = 0.77 to α = 0.82), and for the EMAD (α = 0.82), but not for MDKS subscales which yielded less than satisfactory alpha levels of hedonistic values (α = 0.60), social values (α = 0.59), and internal values (α = 0.52). However, they found a relationship between female internet child pornography consumption and (i) lower scores on neuroticism, and (ii) higher scores on hedonistic moral choice. Female consumers were more likely to report a non-white racial identity. No differences were found between the two groups in relation to internal moral values, social moral values, extraversion, agreeableness, exploitive–manipulative amoral dishonesty, dependableness/conscientiousness, and openness to experience/intellect. These results should be seen as exploratory, given the very small sample size of consumers (n

= 10) in comparison with non-consumers (n = 152), and the reliability reported for some of the subscales used. At best the results indicate that a further examination of the relevance of low neuroticism and hedonistic moral choice in female samples is required before any meaningful conclusions can be drawn.

Elliott et al (2013) identified problematic psychological characteristics of contact offenders that distinguished them from online CSE perpetrators, but this was in the absence of control or norm data. Using a sample of 143 mixed offenders, 526 contact offenders and 459 internet offenders, they found that contact offenders had a greater frequency of victim empathy distortions and cognitive distortions, lower fantasy scores, a more external locus of control, greater over-assertiveness, and higher levels of cognitive impulsivity than the other offender groups. Mixed offenders were more similar to internet offenders than to contact offenders. Although this research offers an insight into the characteristics of different

> **Cognitive distortions (or permission-giving statements) might be a notable psychological characteristic associated with online CSE perpetrators.**

types of sexual offenders, all the differences were small. In addition, it would have been useful to compare these characteristics with non-sexual-offending populations. The findings are more likely to identify characteristics associated with contact offenders than those associated with online CSE perpetrators (i.e. internet offenders).

Merdian and colleagues (Kettleborough and Merdian, 2017; Merdian et al, 2014; Merdian et al, 2016) and Howitt and Sheldon, 2007 have identified that cognitive distortions (or permission-giving statements) might be a notable psychological characteristic associated with online CSE perpetrators.

For example:

- Merdian et al (2014) found that mixed offenders (online and contact) showed the highest affirmation of cognitive distortions, followed by contact offenders; child pornography offenders were the least likely to affirm cognitive distortions. Specifically, they were less likely to endorse *Justification*, *Children as Sexual Agents* and *Power and Entitlement* than contact offenders. Overall, endorsement of the cognitive distortion items was generally higher for the mixed offenders, and child pornography offenders had low endorsement of cognitive distortions in general. However, the research used an existing scale for measuring cognitive distortion in contact offenders; it may be the case that child pornography offenders' cognitions are offence-specific and thus not picked up by existing scales.

- Analysing responses by professionals to a survey that aimed to explore the thinking patterns of child pornography offenders, Kettleborough and Merdian (2017) identified four themes that captured the permission-giving thoughts of CSEM offenders: *Perceived nature of children, Non-sexual engagement with child sexual exploitation material, Denial of harm* and *Expression of a general sexual preferenc*e. Based on these themes (and associated sub-themes), the authors suggested that CSEM offenders could be a distinct group of sexual offenders in relation to their cognitions and thinking patterns, and that they hold a range of permission-giving thoughts which might be cognitively different to those held by contact offenders.

- Howitt and Sheldon (2007) compared internet offenders with contact offenders and mixed offenders using relatively small samples (16 internet offenders, 25 contact offenders and 10 mixed offenders). They developed a questionnaire specifically for online offenders, based on an existing questionnaire for examining cognitive distortions for contact offenders. They concluded that, across all three offending groups, substantial numbers of cognitive distortions are accepted by a majority or substantial minority of offenders. The cognitive distortions that were more characteristic of the internet offenders were 'Having sexual thoughts and fantasies about

a child isn't all that bad because at least it is not really hurting the child' and 'Just looking at a naked child is not as bad as touching and will not affect the child as much', potentially providing internet offenders with justification for their offending.

It should be noted that the studies of Merdian and colleagues did not record the number of participants who were pre-treatment, post treatment or no treatment, meaning that the potential influence of intervention cannot be accounted for.

In summary, as when examining mental health characteristics, the findings are inconclusive. Much of the research has compared different types of sexual offender, where findings have suggested there are more similarities than differences between groups on the psychological characteristics examined (e.g. emotional deficits, offence-supportive cognitions, sexual self-regulation problems,

> **Low self-esteem has been identified as a potential characteristic of CSE perpetrators in particular across a few studies**

and non-conformity). Low self-esteem has been identified as a potential characteristic of CSE perpetrators in particular across a few studies, although this is based on studies that are not necessarily methodologically robust.

We perhaps get more of an insight where studies have employed norm data or a control group (although the validity of such studies is still questionable); here the most convincing evidence suggests that characteristics might include loneliness and problematic attachment styles, and the difficulties with the formation of relationships. For example, Armstrong and Mellor (2016) have suggested that CSE perpetrators are less securely attached (i.e. potentially less satisfied in their relationship) and report a more fearful attachment style (e.g. feeling uncomfortable getting close to others, perpetually worried that they will get hurt if they allow someone in, and with an overall negative view of the self). This needs to be

examined more closely, perhaps looking to understand underlying characteristics that may be associated with these styles (e.g. low self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control).

3.1.4 Implicit theories

Bartels and Merdian (2016) presented an initial conceptualisation of implicit theories held by CSEM users, which gives an insight in to some potentially relevant characteristics of this group of perpetrators. Using a Grounded Theory approach, they reviewed and systematically analysed the relevant CSEM literature (17 papers in total), and proposed five core implicit theories specifically for users of CSEM:

- *Unhappy World*.
- *Self as Uncontrollable*.
- *Children as Sex Objects*.
- *Nature of Harm (CSEM variant)*.
- *Self as Collector*.

These are contextualised by the individual's underlying assumption that the Internet is accessible, anonymous and an available means for CSEM use. Through the core implicit theories, the authors offer an insight into some potential characteristics of those who may hold them (based on the literature to date): for example, the characteristics associated with *Unhappy World* included incapability of forming close and meaningful relationships with others (which could relate to the attachment issues identified above) and emotional problems (potentially depression, anxiety, stress discussed in mental health problems); whereas compulsivity, addiction to CSEM and internally driven offending were the characteristics associated with those who held the *Self as Uncontrollable* implicit theory.

However, the proposed implicit theories represent an initial conceptualisation – and as they were not directly empirically assessed, future empirical research and further critique are required to validate, explore and further develop them. We currently have only exploratory and initial insight in to potential characteristics of CSEM perpetrators, so our understanding of whether such characteristics are specific to this type of sexual offender – compared to other types of sexual offenders (e.g. familial CSA) and non-offending populations – remains weak.

3.2. Perpetrator motivations

Information regarding motivations is sparse in the empirical literature. Generally, the findings are from research that has developed typologies or categories of offenders based on their motivations and the context of their offending. The majority of these were in relation to online CSE, although a couple of studies examined CSE in different populations (trafficking, and commercial exploitation of children). It is important to note that the online environment is rapidly changing, so the findings of these studies can quickly become dated.

3.2.1 Typologies and categories

Coding qualitative and quantitative data from the National Juvenile Online Victimization (N-JOV) Study, Mitchell et al (2011) examined a sample of perpetrators who had engaged in internet-facilitated CSEC. They identified two categories of perpetrator, linked to the motivations behind their offending: *profiteers* (making a profit) and *purchasers* (paying for material). As the names suggest, the motivations were to gain or try to gain financially by selling child pornography images (profiteers), or to pay for or try to pay for child pornography images or sex with a minor (purchasers). This would suggest that the motivations were, respectively, financially and sexually driven.

Three studies (Burgess and Hartman, 2005; Elliott and Beech, 2009; Krone, 2004) identified in a review by Prat and Jonas (2013), and a further study by DeHart et al (2017), developed types of online CSE perpetrator based mainly on their motivations. The identified types were very similar to those of Mitchell et al (2011), with motivations being linked to how and why individuals accessed, distributed or used child sexual exploitation material. Burgess and Hartman (2005) identified three types based on motivations: *Traders* (people who send and collect child pornography on the internet); *Travellers* (people who try to make contact with children using coercion or manipulation); and *Traffickers* (people who are actively involved in child trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation). Likewise, Elliott and Beech (2009) identified four types of online offenders: *Periodically prurient* (those who access images out of curiosity, who can have addictive

behaviours, but who have no particular sexual interest in children); *Fantasy only* (people who have sexual fantasies about children, who fuel this interest by sharing images); *Direct victimization* (people with a particular interest in contact with children, either real or virtual); and *Commercial exploitation* (criminally minded people who trade images for money).

However, Krone (2004) developed the most comprehensive, exhaustive and detailed typology. Her categories were derived from motivations, level of involvement in paedophilia and the level of risk, e.g. between secure and non-secure collectors. The types identified were:

‣ *Browsers:* access images unintentionally and decide to keep them.

‣ *Private fantasy:* access images for personal reasons with no intention of sharing.

‣ *Trawlers:*
 • *Sexually omnivorous* – use sexual material of any kind, including child pornography.
 • *Sexually curious* – experience this type of material but do not pursue it.
 • *Libertarian* – assert they are free to access whatever material they wish.

‣ *Non-secure collectors:* download and share images from openly available sources.

‣ *Secure collectors:* download and exchange material, but use security barriers.

‣ *Online groomers:* make contact with minors and use pornography to lower their inhibitions.

‣ *Physical abusers:* are actively involved in the abuse of minors and use images to reduce the inhibitions of their victims, and to supplement their craving.

‣ *Producers:* are actively involved in physical abuse and produce images of that abuse for other pornography users.

‣ *Distributors:* are not necessarily directly involved in abuse, but distribute images.

These types are representative of the small amount of research to date that has examined typologies of online CSE perpetrators, and give an insight into potential motivations behind this type of offending.

Beyond this research, we identified two studies that examined trafficking as a form of CSE, and some of the motivations of the perpetrators. It appears that the key motivation is to control (and maintain control of) children, recruit children, and make financial gain from them:

‣ Hargreaves-Cormany et al (2016) undertook exploratory research examining the criminal histories, offending behaviours and behavioural characteristics of 117 offenders involved in the sex trafficking of juveniles. Violent criminal histories were common in this group and many engaged in violent acts against the trafficked victims. Violence was specifically used to control juvenile victims, but in addition the offenders often used charismatic/manipulative tactics that victims perceived as being caring/ loving. Indeed, at least 86% of the sample employed one charismatic/manipulative tactic to recruit and/or maintain control of their victims.

‣ Smith et al (2009) analysed 297 interviews with groups of professionals identified as likely to come into contact with victims of trafficking, which revealed that perpetrators' potential motivations were to keep the victim under control; make money; and lower the child's credibility in the eyes of law enforcement and the community so they would not be believed when disclosing information about the exploitation. It was also found that traffickers identify the physical and/or psychological needs of the victim and fulfil them, to create dependency between the victim and themselves; by offering a false sense of security, respect and love, the motivation is to establish a trauma bond which will keep the victim vulnerable.

In summary, research attempting to develop typologies or categories of offenders can establish an insight into potential motivations of perpetrators of CSE. The two key motivations identified for online offenders are a sexual interest in children and/or a financial motivation; however, a motivation to control others was found for those involved in trafficking children. Perpetrators, however, are likely to have several motivations behind their offending; this needs to be explored more fully if we are to get a complete picture of those who perpetrate CSE.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the research to date on the characteristics and motivations of CSE perpetrators is sparse. Evidence is particularly difficult to find and collate (especially in a rapid review rather than a comprehensive, exhaustive review of the literature) because of the lack of a clear definition of CSE, inconsistency in definitions used across the world, and the lack (in some reports) of detailed descriptions of the samples employed. It is therefore difficult to categorise an offence as CSE, and the boundaries between what comprises CSE and what comprises CSA are blurred.

When researching this population, researchers should include in the report/ article, as a minimum:

- a clear definition of CSE and the boundaries that this includes

- a description of any comparison groups, clear definitions of each group and the boundaries this includes

- the measures and approaches used to categorise individuals (e.g. self-report, official data)

- how the samples were recruited

- robust methodological designs that enable differences between groups or causal pathways to be identified

- an assessment of the reliability of measures used, and their suitability for use within the populations under observation.

Most research into the characteristics of CSE perpetrators has focused on online/ internet offenders. However, this research risks becoming quickly dated, given the continual advances in technology and the speed at which they occur. In addition, there is little empirical research into the sexual exploitation of children within the context of gangs – only two studies explicitly referred to gangs, with three examining groups/networks of offenders – or into commercial child exploitation/trafficking or contact offences involving a clear exchange of goods. This is certainly an area where more research is required.

Owing to the methodological limitations of the studies and the small numbers of studies that have explored some characteristics, it has been difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions. For example, across the studies there is a lack of control groups and norm data: comparisons are made only between types of sexual offenders (who are not always clearly defined), and many studies are based on correlational data, making it difficult to isolate characteristics specific to CSE perpetrators.

Characteristics explored in many instances were mainly demographic; these tended to be very broad in their range across studies, so it is difficult to isolate specific relevant characteristics. At best we can summarise the data by stating that the majority of the samples were male (although this could be as a result of recruitment and sampling) and classified themselves as white (ranging from 33% to 92% across the various studies), with an age range of 18–85 (with the mean age ranging from 30 to 46 years); a high proportion were employed (between 69% and 98%), with a substantial number (between 35% and 41%) classified as 'professional', and across the studies 14.3%–49% reported that they were married and 28%–69% reported being single.

Some information was identified about potential mental health characteristics, psychological (personality) characteristics and implicit theories held by online CSE perpetrators. As with the demographic information, much of this research compared groups of sexual offenders in the absence of a control group or normative data, and was reliant on cross-sectional correlational data. As a result, it was difficult to draw conclusions beyond the relative comparison of different groups of offenders. It was not possible to identify causal relationships, and at times it was not possible to identify the temporal ordering of events, specifically when examining mental health (i.e. whether mental health issues preceded or followed an individual's offending behaviour).

In the absence of clear definitions of CSE, it was difficult to establish whether any of these samples overlapped in their offending behaviours. However, for mental health issues, the evidence was most compelling with regard

to the potential relevance of issues such as depression, anxiety, stress and suicidal ideation. It is recommended that these issues are examined more closely, with a view to establishing whether they are prevalent in this group of offenders (and, if they are, when they arise). In relation to psychological characteristics, there is no evidence at all of causal relationships; only one study employed a control group, and offered some evidence that attachment styles and relationship formation may be of relevance in this population. Interestingly, where implicit theories have been applied to online CSE perpetrators, similar characteristics have been implied for this group: some of the characteristics associated with the proposed implicit theories include incapability of forming close and meaningful relationships with others (which could relate to the attachment issues identified above) and emotional problems (potentially depression, anxiety and stress).

Evidence regarding CSE perpetrators' motivation came largely from studies that looked to develop categories and typologies of offenders; these were mainly situated within the community of online offenders. The motivations identified were generally financial or centred on a sexual interest in children; these motivations may coincide, but there will be individuals whose motivation is purely commercial or purely sexual. Much more research is required to understand the different motivations for CSE and how these differ in different contexts.

4.1. Implications

More research is required if we are to understand the unique characteristics of perpetrators of CSE. In particular, the following recommendations for future research going forward are suggested:

‣ Of utmost importance is addressing issues around the definition of CSE and assessing whether there are distinct groups of individuals who commit different types of CSE offences. It is potentially more useful to look at the *context* of the offending, e.g. groups and gangs, online CSE, sex trafficking, and purchasing sexual contact with children.

‣ There needs to be more research generally on CSE perpetrators, especially in other contexts to online offending (e.g. to include gangs and trafficking).

‣ At the very least, clear descriptions of the samples and their offences need to be provided in future research. It is currently unclear whether we are examining discrete groups, or whether there is a blurring of boundaries across different types of behaviours. If samples and their offending are clearly described, we can obtain a clearer picture of the different groups we are aiming to understand, and where there may be some overlap between each group.

‣ More methodologically robust designs need to be employed – for example, by using control group and norm data comparisons, and using longitudinal data and other designs which can identify potential causal relationships. While this is no easy task and research is constantly hampered by limited opportunities to access participants and to find and accurately identify control groups, only this type of research will isolate casual risk factors and markers which we can then be confident need to be targeted at treatment.

‣ As we know little about the characteristics and motivations, qualitative research is also required to identify these; it needs to include questioning about the context of offending and about specific internal and external factors that are likely to be associated with offending behaviours. Such studies will need to be followed up by empirical testing and validation of the variables identified in larger samples.

‣ Research also needs to establish the protective factors that prevent CSE perpetration. To date this has not been examined, so our knowledge is currently lacking. If both risk and protective factors associated with perpetrators of CSE can be specifically identified, this knowledge can be used to develop evidence-based interventions which will enable the more effective treatment of different groups of CSE perpetrators.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Rapid evidence assessment search strategy

Databases searched for empirical papers

- ‣ Academic Search Complete
- ‣ CINAHL
- ‣ Medline
- ‣ PsycArticles
- ‣ PsycInfo

Search terms for empirical papers

The following terms were used and the following numbers of articles were identified.

Search term	Articles found	Duplicates
Child* AND Sex* AND Exploit*		
Academic Search Complete	641	19
CINAHL	555	193
Medline	11	11
PsycArticles	268	146
PsycInfo	128	100
Child* AND Sex* AND Exploit* AND Perp*		
Academic Search Complete	10	9
CINAHL	10	10
Medline	1	1
PsycArticles	10	10
PsycInfo	10	10
Trafficking AND Sex* AND Exploit		
Academic Search Complete	193	187
CINAHL	98	95
Medline	3	3
PsycArticles	75	69
PsycInfo	36	25
Trafficking AND Perp* AND Sex*		
Academic Search Complete	71	14
CINAHL	22	14
Medline	0	0
PsycArticles	16	5
PsycInfo	3	2
TOTAL	2161	914

Sifting process for empirical papers

The following process was followed to sift the academic literature.

Retained	1,274		151		Total: 42

Removed
1,123 following title/abstract sift
122 following full read

Added
13 following hand searches
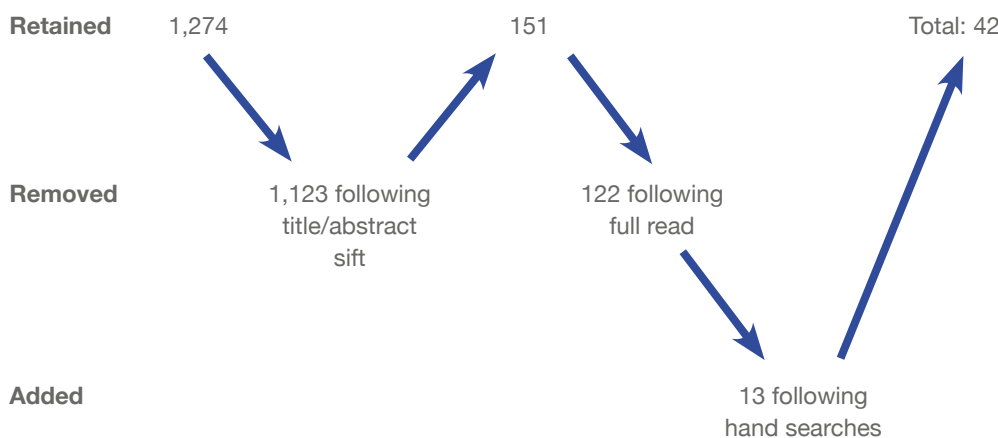
Charities/organisations whose web pages were searched for grey literature

- Safe and Sound Group
- Thomas Coram Research Centre
- NSPCC
- Barnardo's
- Council of Europe
- University of Buckinghamshire Research Centre
- PACE – Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation
- The Children's Society
- Open Grey
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre
- National Crime Agency

- NWG Network
- Public Health England
- ADCS Leading Children's Services
- CATCH 22
- HM Inspectorate of Probation
- National Children's Bureau (NCB)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner
- BASPCAN
- CAFCASS
- Children's Services Network
- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- Department for Education

Sifting process for grey literature

The following process was followed to sift the grey literature.

Retained	641		58		Total: 8

Removed
583 following title/overview sift
74 following full read

Added
24 following hand searches
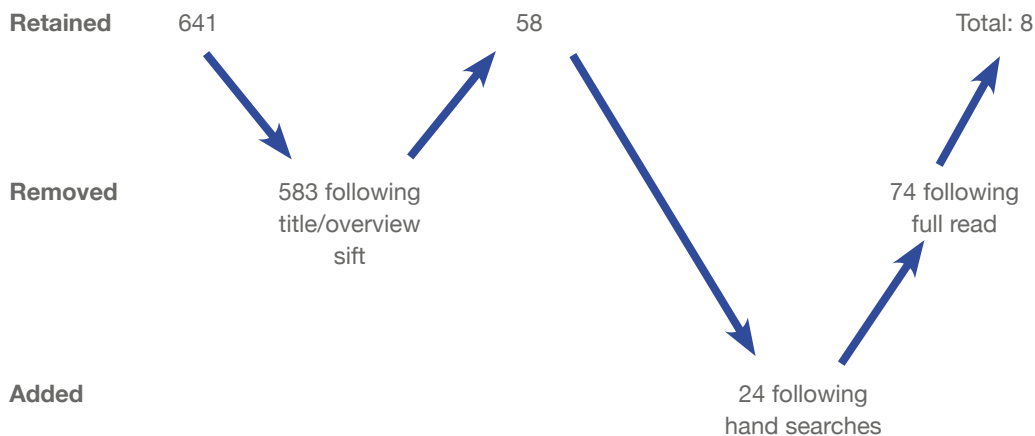
Appendix 2: Summary of studies, including aims, samples, methodologies and findings of demographic characteristics

Authors/country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Alexy et al (2005)/ USA	Analyse the media portrayal of internet offenders	225 cases published in media. Cases were internet crimes against children (ICAC)	Descriptive analysis (frequencies)	**Gender:** Male 95.1% **Age:** 15–66 years (M_{age} = 37.16 years, SD = 10.73) **Employment:** professional 64.0%; labourer 11.2%; unemployed 8.8%; military 5.6%; student 7.2%; and clergy 3.2%
Armstrong and Mellor (2016)/ Australia	Investigate attachment intimacy and anxiety in child pornography[1] offenders (CPOs), other sexual offenders and non-offenders	162 participants divided across 5 groups: (i) 32 CPOs; (ii) 32 contact sexual offenders (CSOs); (iii) 31 offenders convicted of sexual offence perpetrated against person over 16; (iv) 20 mixed offenders (MOs) and (v) 47 non-offending controls	Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (MANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders and control group on range of variables	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 18–24 years 9.4%; 25–35 years 25%; 35–45 years 21.9%; 45–55 years 25%; 55–65 years 12.5%; 65+ years 6.3% **Ethnicity:** Anglo-Australian 91.7% **Education:** Completed high school 21.4% **Employment:** Employed 66.7% **Relationship status:** Single 66.7%; De facto relationship 3.3%; Divorced 10%; Married 20%; Widowed 0%; Separated 0%; Steady partner 0%
Azaola (2006)/ Mexico	Describe the research conducted into CSEC in Mexico	Original data from primary sources obtained in seven towns of the Mexican Republic and secondary sources for the rest of the country	No statistics, descriptive accounts about characteristics	**Gender:** Specifics not given; only reported as most males, some are women[2]

[1] As noted in Chapter 3 of the report, the terminology used in this Appendix to describe/define perpetrators reflects that used by the authors of each article/report; it is not necessarily our preferred terminology, and may not currently be deemed acceptable in the UK.

[2] This article was based on primary data, but was largely a description of context and characteristics; no specific characteristics were reported.

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Babchishin et al (2011)/ Canada	Conduct meta-analysis to examine the extent to which online and offline offenders differ on demographic and psychological variables through meta analysis	27 distinct samples of online offenders; Sample size ranged from 26-870 (*Median* = 100; *N* = 4844)	Meta-analysis	**Gender:** No specific data reported; identified that five of the 27 studies included females, but female participants made up less than 3% of these samples **Age:** M_{age} = 38.6 years (*n* = 1,845) **Ethnicity:** Racial minority 8.2% (*n* = 2,014) **Education:** Incomplete high school degree 10.6% (*n* = 1,630) **Employment:** Unemployed 14.7% (*n* = 1,630) **Relationship status:** Never married 50.4% (*n* = 2,164) **Previous convictions:** One prior non-sexual offence 11.8% (*n* = 1,150) Note: n denotes total sample size from which the means or percentages were calculated
Babchishin et al (2015)/ Canada	Conduct meta-analysis to compare the characteristics of online child pornography-only offenders, typical (offline) sex offenders against children, and mixed offenders (child pornography and contact sex offences against children	29 distinct samples of online offenders; Sample size ranged from 10-459 (*Median* = 38; *N* = 2,284)	Meta-analysis	**Gender:** Male 100% No other percentages/mean scores presented; analysis was based on comparisons between groups and so based on effect size (Cohen's d) comparisons
Bartels and Merdian (2016)/ UK	Develop CSEM-specific implicit theories based on analytic review of existing research body	Grounded Theory coding relevant literature (described as data)	Grounded theory approach to reviewing and systematically analysing/ coding relevant CSEM literature	No specifics given[3]
Bates and Metcalf (2007)/ UK	Compare psychometric test assessments of internet sex offenders with contact offenders	39 internet offenders (IO; 37 of who never been convicted of other sexual offence) 39 contact offenders (CO)	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100%

[3]This article analyses existing literature that its authors classify as 'data'. It identifies implicit theories and associated characteristics.

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
[4]Beckett (2011)/ UK	Explore scale and nature of CSE in NI	1102 risk assessments (NB other data was collected only on victimisation not perpetration)	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test)	**Gender:** Male 94.7%
Berelowitz (2012)/ UK	Examine the nature and extent of CSE in gangs and groups in England	115 submissions from relevant agencies who work with CSE in gangs. 14 site visits speaking to professionals and young children (n unreported). Interviews with 23 young people (20 CSE victims, 7 gang members).	Analysis of frequencies in 115 submissions and content analysis of emerging themes. Area maps of sites recording model of CSE identified. Interviews manually analysed to identify trends	**Gender:**: Male 72%; Female 10%; Unknown 18% **Age:** 12–19 years 29%; 20–29 years 22% **Ethnicity:** White 36.0%; Asian 27.1%; Black 16.1%; Mixed 3.2%; undisclosed 16.4%
Bissias et al (2016)/ USA	Detailed measurement of illegal trade in child exploitation material (CEM) on five P2P file sharing networks	Analysis of three years of logs of activities on peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing networks	Frequency data (no inferential statistics)	No basic demographics **Previous convictions:** 9.5% of persons arrested for CEM had committed a past or present contact sex crime against a child
Briggs et al (2011)/ USA	Examine characteristics of chatroom sex offenders	51 convicted chatroom sex offenders (categorised as contact driven [$n = 30$] and fantasy driven [$n = 21$])	Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (chi-squared test) between categories derived	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 19–54 years (M_{age} = 31.45 years, SD = 8.72) **Ethnicity:** White 78.4%; Latino 15.7 %; African Americano 1% **Education:** Not high school graduate 7.8%, high school graduate 31.4%, some college education 37.3%, associate degree 9.8%, bachelor degree 7.8%, graduate degree 5.9% **Employment:** 88.3% employed **Relationship status:** Single, never married 52.9%, married 25.5%, separated/divorced 21.6% **Family:** Have children 35.3% **Previous convictions:** Felony 9.9%, previous sex offences 3.9%

[4]Those studies highlighted in grey, refer to the studies found in the grey literature search, all others were identified in the academic literature search

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Burgess et al (2008)/ USA	Analyse the portrayal of internet offenders from cybercrime cases in the newspaper	285 cases from nine different news sources	Descriptives, frequencies and percentage distributions	**Gender:** Male 94.8%; Female 5.2% **Age:** 18–72 years (M_{age} not reported); younger than 20 years 2.0%; older than 60 years 8.2%; 30–49 years 53.4% **Employment:** Professional 41%; labourer 24%; teacher 22%; clergy 7%; military 3%; student 3%
Carr (2004)/ New Zealand	Develop a tool for the collection of information about Censorship Compliance Unit (CCU) offenders	109 cases investigated by the CCU between 1996 and 2001. Of the 106 offenders sampled, 100 had been involved in internet-related offences and six in relation to objectionable material (video-recording)		**Gender:** Male 99% **Age:** 14–67 years, M_{age} = 30 years **Ethnicity:** New Zealand European 85.8%, European born overseas 7.5%, Asian 5.6%, Maori 0.9%, Other 7.5% **Employment:** Student 31.1%, Employed 71.6% (including IT professionals 17.9%), Unemployed 6.6%, Sickness beneficiary 5.6% **Family:** Living with parent 32.1%, Living with partner 25.4%, Living alone 18.8%, Living with other (non-family) 18.8%, Living with own children 18.8%, Living with other (non-family) children 2.8%, Living with stepchildren 0.9% **Previous criminal convictions:** Previous sexual offences 13.2% (with further 4.7% under investigation, 1.8% given warning), non-violent offence 1.8%, drug offence 1.8%
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2011)/ UK	Analyse nature and extent of localised grooming, patterns of offending profile and/or victim experience	1217 offenders, reported to CEOP for street grooming and child sexual exploitation	Thematic Assessment	**Gender:** Males 87%; Females 4%; Unknown 9% **Age:** 50% of the offenders were under 25 (where age known).

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Clevenger et al (2016)/ USA	Examine the demographic and background characteristic differences between those arrested for child pornography (CP) possession (only) or CP production/distribution or attempted or completed sexual exploitation of a minor (SEM)	Arrest record data from second wave National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (N-JOV2), n = 755	Descriptives, frequencies and group differences (bivariate analyses) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 99% **SEM**[5] [5]**Age:** Less than 30 years 49%; 30–39 years 26%; 40–49 years 20%; 50 years or above 5% **Ethnicity:** Caucasian 89%; Minority 11% **Employment:** Full-time employed 76% **Family:** Lived with minor 17% **Previous convictions:** Previous arrest for sexual offences 5%; Previous use of violence 4% ***CP possessors***[5] **Age:** Less than 30 years 35%; 30–39 years 20%; 40–49 years 21%; 50 years or above 25% **Ethnicity:** Caucasian 96%; Minority 4% **Employment:** Full-time employed 65% **Previous convictions:** Previous arrest for sexual offences 10%; Previous use of violence 12% ***CP production/distribution***[5] **Age:** Less than 30 years 31%; 30–39 years 33%; 40–49 years 20%; 50 years or above 16% **Ethnicity:** Caucasian 87%; Minority 13% **Employment:** Full-time employed 67% **Family:** Lived with minor 29% **Previous convictions:** Previous arrest for sexual offences 13%; Previous use of violence 24%
Cockbain et al (2014)/ UK	Identify factors and processes underpinning CSA groups' activities and associations	3 CSA offenders involved in sex-offending groups	Thematic analysis	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 3 participants aged 35 years, 78 years and 85 years

[5]Percentages for each group are not stated explicitly in the article, but are calculated from the information presented in the article.

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Crookes et al (2017)/ UK	Identify the extent and severity of online Narrative CSEM	11 participants with experience of working with CSEM users 11 User Participants (UP)	Thematic analysis	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 28–66 years (M_{age} = 46 years, SD = 14.88) **Relationship status:** Single 54.5%, married 18.1%, engaged 18.1%, divorces 18.1%, widowed 18.1% **Family:** Have children 54.5%
DeHart et al (2017)/ USA	Identify key elements about victim-offender chats (Internet crimes against children: ICAC) and develop a typology	200 offenders' cases filed in 7 states with offenders residing in 14 states	Typology development (cluster analysis)	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 18–74 years, (M_{age} = 34.75 years) **Ethnicity:** White 84%; African-American 6%; Hispanic 6%; Asian 2%; Other 3%
Elliott et al (2013)/ UK	Examine the extent to which mixed offenders, (MO) share characteristics with contact offenders, (CO) or internet offenders, (IO) (or have a combination of both)	526 CO, 459 IO, and 143 MO (both CO and IO)	Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (MANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 34.75 years **Relationship status:** Single 58.1%; married cohabiting 24%; separated/divorced/ widowed 17.9%; parent 40.9% **Family:** Parent 40.9%
Elliott et al (2009)/ UK	Compare internet offenders (IO) and contact offenders (CO) on psychological measures assessing offence-supportive beliefs, socioaffective functioning, emotional management, and socially desirability	505 adult male IO and 526 adult male COs	Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (multivariate logistic regression) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 40.1 years (SD = 11.2) **Relationship status:** In a relationship 23.4% **Previous convictions:** One or more known previous convictions 10.9%

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Gillespie et al (2018)/ UK	Evaluate a psycho-educational programme for community users of CSEM	92 male adult users of CSEM	Descriptives, frequencies, and change over time (MANOVAs)	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 46.5, SD 11.5 years **Relationship status (time of offending):** Single 28.3%, Married 52.2%, Cohabiting 15.2%, Divorced 3.3%, Separated 1.1% **Previous convictions:** One previous 6.6%, two previous 3.3%
Gohir (2013)/ UK	Understand sexual exploitation of Asian girls and young women	35 case studies constructed after talking to key informants with knowledge of victims' experiences and 73 interviews with professionals	Methodological approach not reported	**Gender:** Male 100% **Ethnicity:** Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Afghani and White (no figures given; note that this research was undertaken specifically in Asian/Muslim communities)
Hargreaves-Cormany et al (2016)/ USA	Examine criminal histories, offending behaviours and characteristics of sex trafficking of juveniles (STJ) offenders	117 offenders and 179 victims in cases involving sex trafficking of juveniles	Typology development (latent class analysis)	**Gender:** Male 95.7%; Female 4.3% **Age:** 18–48 years (M_{age} = 30 years) **Ethnicity:** African-American 91.5%; Hispanic 4.3%; Caucasian 1.7%; Asian 0.9%
Henry et al (2010)/ UK	Examine whether internet sex offenders fall into clear groups based on standard psychometric screening battery	633 male offenders convicted of internet sexual offences	Typology development (cluster analysis)	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 17–70 years, (M_{age} = 39.3 years, SD = 12.1) **Relationship status:** Single 61.9%; divorced/separated 19.19%; married 17.3%; widowed 1%
Houston (2015)/ USA	Analyse activists' discursive framing of juveniles involved in prostitution and their buyers	Field observations in non-profit anti-CSEC organisations. In-depth interviews with 48 participants who worked for non-profit organisations, or were involved in task force on CSEC	Grounded theory	No specific demographic data; qualitative interviews describing perpetrators

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Howitt and Sheldon (2007)/ UK	Compare the cognitive distortions of Internet offenders (IOs) with contact offenders (COs) and mixed offenders (MOs)	Probation and prison sample: 25 COs; 16 IOs; 10 MOs	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (ANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} between 46 and 47 (SD = 11.2) Education: M = 13.8 years of education (SD = 2.9) **Previous convictions:** Average number 1.0 (SD = 1.4)
Jung et al (2013)/ Canada	Compare child pornography offenders (CPOs) with both child molesters (CMs) and non-contact sexual offenders (NCOs)	196 sexual offenders, 50 CPOs (accessing and/or distributing), 45 NCOs (exhibitionism or voyeurism) 101 CMs	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (ANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 36.7 years (SD = 12.03) **Education:** M = 12.8 years of education (SD = 2.44) **Relationship status:** M = 1.1 marriages (SD = 1.06); M = 18.5 partners (SD = 27.96) **Family:** M = 0.6 children (SD 0.93) **Previous convictions:** M =1.5 previous convictions (SD = 4.44); one previous sex charge 12%; two or more previous sex charges 7%
Kettleborough and Merdian (2017)/ UK	Explore the thinking patterns of offenders who have used/ downloaded CSEM	16 professionals who work with CSEM offenders	Thematic analysis	No specific demographic data, as thematic analysis to examine implicit theories
Laulik et al (2007)/ UK	Examine whether psychopathology and maladaptive personality functioning were associated with individuals who commit sexual offences against children via the Internet	30 convicted internet offenders, attending a three-year, community-based, sex-offender group work programme	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (t tests) between internet offenders and norm data	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 24–62 years (M_{age} = 40.7, SD = 10.17) **Ethnicity:** White European 100% **Employment:** Employed 73.3% (36.7% in professional occupations) **Relationship status:** No permanent sexual partner 50%, Married 30%, Never had sexual relationship with adult 16.7% **Previous convictions:** Contact offences 6.7%; previous internet offences 6.7%; previous violent 3%; at least one non-sexual non-violent offence 9.9%

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Merdian et al (2014)/ New Zealand	Examine endorsement of cognitive distortions in child pornography offenders (CPOs)	22 CPOs, 29 contact sexual offenders (CSOs) and 17 mixed offenders (MOs)	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (Kruskal-Wallis tests) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 41.82 (SD = 14.5) **Ethnicity:** NZ Europe 77.27%; Maori 4.55%; Pacific Island 4.55%; other 9.09% **Education:** M = 11.62 years of education (SD = 5.18) **Employment:** Unemployed 9.09% **Relationship status:** number of stable partners – none 36.36%; one 18.18%; two 18.18%; three plus 27.27% **Family:** Own children 40.91%
Merdian et al (2016)/ New Zealand	Examine the potential different CSEM pathways	CSEMOs (n = 22), CSOs (n = 29), Mixed offenders (with both offence types) n = 17	Sub-group of CSEMOs development (cluster analysis and principle components analysis), predication of reoffending (multinomial regression) by sub-group type	As above: same sample used
Middleton et al (2006)/ UK	Examine the applicability of the Ward and Siegert Pathways Model of Sexual Offending to a sample of Internet offenders	72 cases drawn from a community sample in England and Wales	Descriptives, frequencies, manual analysis of psychometric data to assign individual to one of five pathways	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 43.17 (SD = 12.3) **Relationship status:** Married 48%, single or divorced 48%, widowed 4%

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Mitchell et al (2011)/ USA	Examine prevalence rates for internet-facilitated CSEC	Mail surveys sent to national sample of 2,598 state, county and local law enforcement agencies, with 87% (n = 2,028) response rate	Descriptives and frequencies	**Gender:** Male 99% **Age:** 25 years or younger 17%; 26–39 years 41%; 40 years or older 47% **Ethnicity:** Non-Hispanic White 84%; Hispanic White 7%; Non-Hispanic Black 15% **Education (highest level):** Did not finish school 9%; some college 15%; college graduate 10%; postgraduate degree 4%; unsure 21% **Employment:** Full-time 69% **Relationship status:** Single/never married 55%; married 27%; living with partner 8%; separated/divorced/widowed 16% **Previous convictions:** Previous arrest for sexual offence 14%; previous arrest for sexual offence against a minor 27%; previous arrest for non-sexual offence 27%
Neutze et al (2011)/ Germany	Identify dynamic factors that distinguish those who act upon their sexual urges by using child pornography (CP) from those who use both CP and contact CSA	155 participants classified where data available on previous lifetime offences, 42 CP, 45 CSA, and 50 mixed offences	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (MANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 39.29 (SD = 13.32) **Education:** More than 10 years of education 43.8% **Employment:** Employed 79.7% **Relationship status:** Single 68.8% **Family:** Has children 28.1% **Previous convictions:** Child pornography offences 10.9%; CSA offences 14.1%
Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012)/ UK	Examine CSE in gangs and groups, with a special focus on children in care	115 submissions from relevant agencies informing about CSE in gangs (NB Other data collected covered only victimisation, not perpetration)	Descriptives and frequencies and content analysis of emerging themes	**Gender:** Male and female, predominantly male (% not given) **Age:** 12–65 **Ethnicity:** Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, White (% not given)

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Owens et al (2016)/ USA	Extend knowledge about crossover offending (those who possess pornography cross over to other types of offending) and compare child pornography offenders with contact offenders	251 resolved FBI online CSE investigations	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 18–77 years (M_{age} = 39.0 years, SD = 11.94) **Ethnicity:** Caucasian 97% **Employment:** Employed 98%; employed holding position of trust 21% (law enforcement, teacher/coach, medical, clergy) **Relationship status:** Married 49%; living alone 39%
Prat and Jonas (2012)/ France	Identify the characteristics of people who are drawn to child pornography	Sample of 69 who were charged with possession, distribution and/or production of pornographic images of minors	Descriptives and frequencies	**Gender:** Male 97.1%; Female 2.9% **Age:** 15–66 years (M_{age} = 40.0 years) **Education:** No vocational training 10.5%; vocational training 31.3%; university education 58.2% **Relationship status:** Living with a partner 49.3%; single 50.7%
Prat and Jonas (2013)/ France	Review psychopathological characteristics of child pornographers and their victims	36 articles	Systematic review	(Summary only given in review) **Age: 25–50 years** (younger than offline offenders) **Education:** Generally well-educated **Employment:** Generally have a job
Reid (2016)/ USA	Advance understanding of the tactics employed by sex traffickers to recruit minors and facilitate prolonged or repeat exploitation	Case files of 79 female youths who were minors at time of initial exploitation	Template analysis (thematic analysis)	**Gender:** Male 67%; Female 33.3% **Age:** 15–45 years (M_{age} = 25.13 years, SD = 8.46)
Roe-Sepowitz et al (2015)/ USA	Develop a typology for female sex traffickers	49 female pimp cases	Qualitative case study analysis approach	**Gender:** Female 100% **Age:** 18–55 years

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Seigfried et al (2008)/ USA	Examine whether demographic, personality and behavioural factors can discriminate between users and non-users of internet child pornography (CP)	307 participants; 277 (90.2%) classified as non-users of CP; 30 (9.8%) classified as users of CP	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (t tests) between CP users and non-CP users (control group)	**Gender:** Male 66.6%; Female 33.3% **Age:** 18–25 years 40.0%; 26–35 years 40.0%; 36–45 years 10%; 46–55 years 6.7%; 56+ years 3.3% **Ethnicity:** White 57.1%, Other 42.9% **Education:** < HS diploma 3.6%; GED or HS Diploma 14.3%; Associates or Bachelors 60.7%; Masters or PhD 21.4% **Relationship status:** Single, never married 63.3%; married or common law 14.3%; separated/divorced/widowed 6.7%
Seigfried-Spellar and Rogers (2010)/ USA	Examine whether there are any personality or psychological differences between female consumers and female non-consumers of internet child pornography (ICP)	162 females; 10 classified as self-reported ICP users, 152 classified as non-consumers	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (ANOVAs) between CP users and non-CP users (control group)	**Gender:** Female 100% **Age:** 18–25 years 40%; 26–35 years 40%; 36–45 years 20% **Ethnicity:** White 33.3%; Asian 55.6%; Hispanic 11.1% **Education:** GED or HS Diploma 22.2%; Associates or Bachelors 55.5%; Masters or PhD 22.2% **Relationship status:** Single 70%; married 30%
Seto et al (2012)/ USA	Compare contact sexual offenders (CSOs), child pornography offenders (CPOs) and solicitation offenders (SOs)	146 male participants: 38 CSOs, 38 CPOs, 70 SOs	Descriptives, frequencies, and comparisons (ANOVAs) between types of sex offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **CPOs** **Age at conviction:** M_{age} = 38.7 years, SD = 11.96 **Ethnicity:** White (100%) **Family:** Lives with child 47.4% **Previous convictions:** M = 1.00 non-sexual arrests (SD = 1.43) **SOs** **Age at conviction:** M_{age} = 35.1 years, SD = 9.98 **Ethnicity:** White (94.2%) **Family:** Lives with child 64.3% **Previous convictions:** M = 1.12 non-sexual arrests (SD = 2.35)

Authors/country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Seto and Eke (2015)/ Canada	Develop a structured risk checklist to predict recidivism among adults charged with child pornography offences	266 case files from adult male child pornography offenders	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age at first conviction:** M_{age} = 38.0 years, SD = 12.5 **Employment:** Not working 10%; student 12%; unskilled/semi-skilled 22%; skilled 20%; professional 35% **Relationship status:** Single 56%; married/ common law 36%; separated/divorced/ widowed 7%
Shannon (2008)/ Sweden	Describe the range of types of online sexual encounters between children and adults coming to the attention of the Swedish justice system	315 police offence reports	Description of case studies	***Online only*** **Gender:** Male 96%; Female 4% **Age:** Under 18 years 21%; 18–24 years 34%; 25–34 years 15%; 35–44 years 21%; 45 years and over 8% ***Contact, both online and offline*** **Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** Under 18 years 4%; 8–24 years 19%; 25–34 years 58%; 35–44 years 12%; 45 years and over 8% ***Victim contacted online by adult prior arrangement*** **Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** Under 18 years 0%; 18–24 years 32%; 25–34 years 27%; 35–44 years 27%; 45 years and over 14% ***Online contact resulting in offline contact sex offence*** **Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** Under 18 years 10%; 18–24 years 29%; 25–34 years 37%; 35–44 years 19%; 45 years and over 5%

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Shelton et al (2016)/ USA	Investigate offender characteristics and offending behaviour of those who engaged in online CSE	251 resolved FBI online CSE investigations	Descriptives and frequencies	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** 18–77 years (M_{age} = 38.0 years, SD = 11.28) **Ethnicity:** Caucasian 97% **Education:** Less than high school 7%; graduated high school or equivalent 22%; attended college 37%; college degree 22%; obtained graduate degree 11% **Relationship status:** Never married 43%; living alone 28% **Family:** Biological children 27% **Previous convictions:** Criminal arrest history 28%
Smeaton (2013)/ UK	Determine the relationship between running away and CSE	41 people under 16 who have experienced running away and CSE	Grounded theory approach	No specific demographic data as qualitative interviews describing context
Smith et al (2009)/ USA	Examine prevention, prosecution, and protection in relation to domestic minor sex trafficking	297 interviews with groups of professionals identified as likely to come into contact with victims	Methodological approach not reported	No specific demographic data as qualitative interviews describing context
Webb et al (2007)/ UK	Compare internet sex offenders with a matched group of child molesters to examine risk and clinical traits	67 Internet offenders (IOs) and 106 child molesters (CMs)	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test and t tests) between types of sexual offenders	**Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** M_{age} = 38.0 years (SD = 10) **Ethnicity:** White 91%; Black 1%; Asian 8% **Relationship status:** Single 56%; divorced/ separated 6%; married/cohabiting 38% **Previous convictions:** None 92%; child victim 4%; Adult victim 1%; non-contact only 2%; unconvicted allegations (sexual) 9%

Authors/ country	Aim of paper	Sample	Methodology	Demographic characteristics
Wolak et al (2011)/ USA	Understand scope and nature of child pornography (CP) possession, including characteristics of offenders	Subsample of 1,034 cases (wave 1, *n* = 429; wave 2, *n* = 605). Note: These were different cases, not the same cases examined at two time points	Descriptives, frequencies and group comparisons (chi-squared test) between two sets of CP offenders	***Wave 1 offenders*** **Gender:** Male 100% **Age:** Under 18 years 3%; 18–25 years 11%; 26–39 years 41%; 40+ years 45% **Ethnicity:** White non-Hispanic 91%, Other 9% **Education:** High school or less 43%; some college education or technical training 40%; college graduate or more 20% **Employment:** Full time 73% **Relationship status:** Single (never married, divorced, separated, widowed) 62%; married or living with partner 38% **Family:** Lives with children 31% ***Wave 2 offenders*** **Gender:** Male 99% **Age:** Under 18 years 5%; 18–25 years 18%; 26–39 years 28%; 40+ years 49% **Ethnicity:** White non-Hispanic 89%; other 11% **Education:** High school or less 43%; some college education or technical training 35%; college graduate or more 16% **Employment:** Full time 61% **Relationship status:** Single (never married, divorced, separated, widowed) 69%; married or living with partner 31% **Family:** Lives with children 22%

Centre of expertise
on child
sexual abuse

Reports in the child sexual exploitation perpetrators research programme:

1. *Young people who engage in child sexual exploitation behaviours:
   An exploratory study*
   Simon Hackett, Durham University and Stephen Smith,
   Durham Constabulary

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