TOWARDS SAFER ORGANISATIONS II

Using the perspectives of convicted sex offenders to inform organisational safeguarding of children

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the men and women who volunteered to participate in this research, without whom this work would not have been possible and all the many Prison Service and Probation staff who facilitated their involvement.

We are particularly grateful to Mark Farmer and Gordon Low from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) who enabled our contact with the various Probation Areas; to Sherry Ashfield from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation for her advice about female offenders; and to peer reviewers Professor Helen Masson, Professor Malcolm Cowburn and Dr. David Briggs for their encouragement, invaluable advice and recommendations for improving the final product.

From NSPCC we would like to thank Claire Lilley for her contribution to policy issues and recommendations, the Child Protection Research Department for funding the research and to our managers who provided us with the time, resources and encouragement to carry out the fieldwork, analysis and writing of this report.

Marcus Erooga, Debbie Allnock & Paula Telford, February 2012
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This research presents the findings of research undertaken by an NSPCC Research Team from 2008–2010 with 27 adults convicted of sexual offences against children committed whilst in organisational positions of trust. Developed from an earlier review of the literature (Erooga, 2009) which identified the absence of the perspective of offenders themselves in how children could be better protected from such abuse it is a qualitative investigation of organisational processes, unique in its focus on using the offender's perspective.

RESEARCH AIMS

The primary aims of the research were to identify organisational risk factors and the way in which convicted sex offenders accessed organisations, in order to propose good practice in recruitment and within work settings with children and young people so that they can be better safeguarded against abuse and exploitation.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the study the relevant population was defined as any person working with a child who has been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or young person which was directly related to their paid work or volunteering activity. In this context working with children includes people working with children in health, social welfare, education, residential accommodation, leisure, sporting, religious activities and criminal justice systems and extends to the voluntary and private sectors (Beyer et al., 2005). The term is further extended to include managers.

METHODOLOGY

Research questions/aims

The primary aims of this study were to:

- identify organisational risk factors and the ways in which convicted sex offenders become part of organisations;
- propose good practice in recruitment and within work settings with children and young people in order to better safeguard children against abuse and exploitation.
Other related objectives included:

- To contribute to, and develop, existing knowledge by providing an in-depth, qualitative, contextualised understanding of those who sexually offend in organisational positions of trust;
- To inform and improve recruitment and screening tools within organisations which work with children and young people;
- To increase the use of situational prevention measures;
- To inform organisational responses to inappropriate behaviour and allegations of abuse;
- Ultimately, to contribute to the reduction of risk for children.

Key areas for exploration include the relationship between abuse in the context of organisational positions of trust and the setting in which the abuse is committed; the characteristics of an organisation which informed any choice participants made about gaining access to them; the characteristics of organisations, or measures taken by organisations, which would deter participants from choosing to access that organisation; how participants presented themselves to the organisation during recruitment processes; how they ‘groomed’ the organisation whilst an employee, particularly managers and colleagues; how they groomed their victims, and in particular whether there were context specific methods of securing compliance and ongoing non-disclosure of offending.

**Target sample**

There were two key eligibility criteria for participation in the study: that participants were convicted sex offenders who had offended within an organisational context and that there were no extant circumstances for the participant within their treatment or the criminal justice system with which the research would interfere or disrupt, for example, a risk assessment in progress or the offender being at a particular, sensitive, point in treatment. Access to participants was facilitated by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and individual prisons in England and Wales.

**Data collection**

A semi-structured interview approach was used to collect the data. These are interviews where a pre-planned topic guide and open ended questioning are used to focus the discussion on issues considered important to the research question(s) while facilitating the interviewee to expand on issues they felt were important to explain their perspectives.

Interviews lasted on average one and a half hours and took place on prison or probation premises. Two researchers undertook the majority of the interviews as a method of maximising the information collected.
SAMPLE SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Sample

There were 13 participants (12 male and one woman) from prisons and 14 (12 male and 2 women) from Probation.

The sample of 27 is divided into 2 categories: core and non-core participants. The core participants are those who met the criteria for eligibility to participate in the study and will be described in detail first. The non-core sample comprised participants who did not fully meet requirements of the core sample but whose experience was identified as having a potential contribution to learning for the study. All core participants were White British.

The settings in which core participants committed their offences is outlined in the table below.

### Core sample: organisational positions held at the time of offending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Care workers</th>
<th>Voluntary posts</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core sample n = 19</td>
<td>Residential social work manager = 1</td>
<td>Residential care worker = 1</td>
<td>Self-employed broadcast journalist and trainer = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding school = 2*</td>
<td>Residential care worker = 1</td>
<td>Volunteer in national tourist attraction = 1</td>
<td>Director of Naturist Club = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary = 1</td>
<td>LA Foster Carer = 1</td>
<td>National Choirs Director = 1</td>
<td>Stables Manager / Farrier = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sea cadet = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Army cadet = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support assistant in EBD school = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sports coach = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare Officer = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One of the teachers was also a priest

Two of the core sample had previous criminal convictions of any sort (sexual or non-sexual offending). One had a conviction for indecent exposure before the age of 16 some 30 years previously, and the other for separate offences of non-domestic burglary and assault. The most recent was over 20 years previously.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be noted that this is a qualitative study. The size of the sample and the fact that all are volunteers who self selected to participate mean that these findings should not be taken to be representative of the whole population of those who sexually offend in these settings nor to generalise characteristics of ‘professional offenders’. However, the consistency of some findings do seem to indicate that they warrant further consideration and may offer a basis for action.
Individual Facilitating Factors

In relation to individual processes including: how participants identified children to abuse; how they groomed them and the use of cognitive distortions that enabled them to overcome their own inhibitions to abuse children in their care, key findings include:

- It is difficult to disentangle motivations for participants in this sample to take jobs or volunteer in organisations in order to abuse children from legitimate motivations. However, the information provided in the interviews indicates that the picture is more complex than often believed in that far from all offenders actively seek opportunities to abuse.
- Personal stressors may have acted as catalysts for some to abuse opportunistically.
- Participants who abused children in their care or with whom they had professional contact used similar types of grooming approaches as offenders who abuse in other contexts.
- Identifying vulnerabilities in children appear particularly salient for the participants in this study. ‘Vulnerabilities’ were easy to perceive particularly when the participant had more than casual contact with children.
- There were indications of distorted cognitions in all participants’ accounts of how they overcame their inhibitions to abuse and were evident in some interviews where participants minimised their offences.
- Emotional and geographical isolation (as a characteristic of job or role) appeared to be a factor in some cases.
- Use of technology to groom and perpetrate abuse was used in a small number of cases in this study. In some historical cases the offences predated the availability of such technologies.
- Power disparities were a component of offender’s ability to maintain abuse over a period of time. The usual power imbalance between adults and children were compounded by children’s perception of an authority figure.

Organisational Facilitating Factors

Turning to organisational factors, the research identified a range that may have contributed to the development of an environment in which abuse could occur. There were clear themes around recruitment, organisational messages and organisational culture that emerged:

- Recruitment procedures, as described by participants, were often not rigorous.
- Selection processes such as interviews were not particularly challenging; participants who offended more recently described processes focussed primarily on technical knowledge rather than values related to working with children.
- There was evidence that some cases may have had insufficient screening of references; in particular, participants working as temporary staff reported that their employing agencies failed to adequately check historical references.
• All participants who could should have been CRB checked were; in only one case would a participant who abused children have possibly been screened out through this route.

• Participants described organisations which failed to provide clear indicators of organisational commitment to children’s welfare; at the beginning of jobs or volunteering most were no more than basic messages about child protection.

• It appeared that many organisations described by participants were not clear about the importance of rules and regulations; in particular, expectations about relationships between staff and children or young people were rarely spelled out and where they were, were rarely enforced.

• Some organisations were described as being more committed to managing children’s behaviour than in their overall welfare.

• Colleagues were described as either being unaware of the abuse participants were perpetrating or aware at some level but not acting on that knowledge. There were two examples where it seemed colleagues had some awareness, but showed more concern toward the perpetrator’s potential for ‘getting in trouble’ than for the welfare of the child.

• Location of abuse rarely played a part in facilitating abuse in this study; it appeared that abuse could happen almost anywhere, no matter how many others may have been around or had the potential for walking in on participants. In a few cases, it is possible that the geographical isolation of participants may have been a factor.

Situational Prevention

The substantive research report, and the literature review, discuss the applicability of situational prevention to the prevention of child abuse in organisational settings. Undoubtedly there are some individuals whose primary sexual interest is children and who will indeed lie and deceive in order to sexually abuse, but for a number of the participants in this sample the reality is more nuanced, and prevention may be an effective way of minimising risk.

Adapting Finkelhor’s (1984) original process model of sexual abuse alongside consideration of situational crime prevention theory may be a useful way to consider organisational measures, which might increase protection from an individual motivated to sexually abuse children. Beyer et al (2005) explain that situational crime prevention, in which organisational factors are used to reduce opportunities for abuse, can be grouped into several overall objectives known to have an influence on offending behaviour. These objectives align closely with Finkelhor’s four preconditions model. This would include rigorous vetting and screening, reducing permissibility of inappropriate behaviours and increasing risk, and perception of risk, of detection.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The single most important message from this research is that the common focus of deterring or preventing ‘paedophiles’ from joining organisations is not sufficient to appropriately safeguard children. As well as providing appropriate ‘barriers’ by way of selection and screening processes it is also necessary to
manage organisational processes so that the possibility of inappropriate or abusive behaviour developing or occurring is minimised. In that context there are a number of recommendations from the research:

**Practice recommendations for organisations**

All organisations, including those which are non-statutory or which do not have a specific remit for the welfare of children e.g. tourist attractions, should have a clear awareness of their Duty of Care towards children and engender the principle of safeguarding being ‘everyone’s responsibility’

It will be apparent that in circumstances of abuse by a professional the barriers to disclosure of children may be even greater than in some other circumstances. Our own findings suggest that organisational cultures can feel ‘closed’ and inaccessible to staff working in them and if this is the case, children will be affected by such cultures even more so. Services like ChildLine can meet that need to some extent but it is also important for organisations to develop confidential spaces for children and young people to be able to report abuse.

Equally the importance of ‘whistleblowing processes’ where staff that have concerns can report them should not be underestimated. The potential for these mechanisms to be used inappropriately or even maliciously is also a real one and it is important that any such scheme is designed and administered sensitively and with appropriate safeguards for all who may be involved in their use.

*Applications*: Reviewing information requested in applications so that there is a self declaration for criminal convictions and any charges for a criminal offence with outcome (possibly important information in the context of the high attrition rates for sexual abuse offences); any Finding of Fact in civil proceedings; history of performance or disciplinary issues; concerns relating to appropriate behaviour with service users, colleagues or in a non-work related context and any findings by relevant professional bodies.

*References*: If not already undertaken, consideration should be given to following the Warner recommendation that ‘any aspect of an employment history or reference causing concern should be checked, by telephone if easier, to obtain information’ (Warner, 1997, p. 15), with a written record made of the conversation and retained with other candidate information (Warner, 1992) in all appropriate cases.

*Induction*: Induction is an important element of the process of an individual joining an organisation. As well as an opportunity to introduce new joiners to the practicalities of their new role it is also an important opportunity to introduce them to the organisation’s vision, aspirations and expectations of all staff about working with children and what is considered acceptable and what is not (see for example DfES, 2009, for an example of accessible and clear guidance).

Employers should report any concerns they have about the behaviour of an individual to both the police and the DfES, and Government should take steps to encourage employers to do so.

The information employers obtain on CRB checks should be used not only to inform recruitment decisions, but should also be used to inform how they manage and supervise staff as effectively as possible.
Policy related recommendations

Protecting children is everyone’s responsibility and employers, parents and wider society need to be vigilant if they are to safeguard children. The NSPCC is clear that robust vetting and barring is a necessary, but not sufficient, element of safeguarding. A wide range of processes, practices, attitudes and understanding are all important. Vetting is a component of, not a substitute for, a range of child protection measures, which together constitute a robust system of child protection.

Government should produce clear guidance on vetting and barring and disclosure procedures for employers, in which they clearly set out the mechanics of the scheme. This should include information about: which employees and activities are included in the category of regulated activity; who should and should not be CRB checked; how often checks should be updated and whose responsibility this is; what to do with the information revealed in a check.

There is a potential role for kite-marking and accreditation schemes to complement regulation, particularly for the voluntary and community sectors. In the past the potential of Article 18 of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 in Northern Ireland legislation has been highlighted as a concept that could potentially assist, particularly in voluntary organisations, in making whole-system improvements and, as part of this, help to build capacity. The NSPCC recommends that the Government revisit this idea, as it has the potential for organisations to build capacity and good practice in relation to standards that go beyond vetting. Underpinning such a scheme there needs to be a clear set of good practice criterion against which employer accreditation would be judged. Government should produce or commission this set of criterion.

Policy recommendations regarding regulated activity

The Protection of Freedoms Bill restricts the definition of regulated activity relating to children. Regulated activity is being redefined to focus on those roles with close and regular unsupervised interaction with children, or roles in specified settings. Employers are able to request enhanced CRB checks for people working with children or vulnerable adults in non-regulated activity but are not required to do so. Employers should identify those permanent employees and volunteers who have frequent and regular access to children that may be unsupervised, even if this is not intensive and consider whether obtaining a CRB check for them would be advisable.

The exclusion of some supervised employees and volunteers from regulated activity is worrying because such people may still be able to develop the trust of children and have close contact with them, which may make it easier for children to be abused. It is important that accompanying guidance defines ‘supervision’ very tightly – this will help to ensure that employers are clear about the need to check people working without active supervision. Government guidance should set out clearly what levels of supervision are sufficient for a post to be considered outside regulated activity.
Policy recommendations regarding Barring

The Protection of Freedoms Bill proposes that barring will be restricted to people working in, or intending to work in, regulated activity. This means that a person might be barred from working in regulated activity, but then be able to move into non-regulated activity work with children without any obstacles. Employers will not be able to find out if individuals have been barred unless they work in regulated activity. The NSPCC believes that all enhanced CRB checks should show if an individual is barred, even if this barring does not prevent the individual working in the position for which they are being checked. They should also contain relevant non-conviction data.

Policy recommendations regarding portability and costs

Government should take steps to ensure that employers understand the limits of portability, and ensure that checks are clearly marked to indicate which positions and sectors they apply to.

Employers need to be encouraged to check regularly for updated information about people they employ. This means that, whilst employers may only check every three years, the subscription fee must be paid continuously, which may be expensive. Initial checks will be free for volunteers. Clarification is needed on whether the annual subscription fee will apply or be levied at a reduced rate for volunteers.

Policy recommendation regarding children under the age of 16

CRB checks should only be used for young people under the age of 16 where they are proportionate and necessary to ensure the protection of other children. The prime example of a necessary CRB check for children under 16 is when young people are part of a household that is applying to adopt or foster other children. In these cases, it is important that a fostering panel should be able to find out about the risk a young person may pose, and make decisions to manage this risk.

Young people under 16 should not be in positions where they have unsupervised contact with, or responsibility for, children or vulnerable adults through their paid work, voluntary work or work experience. Therefore criminal records checks for these positions are not justified. We recommend a communications and education campaign for employers and other organisations that might request checks, to ensure that they do not request unnecessary checks from young people.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND POLICY BACKGROUND

The sexual abuse of children is always a subject of acute concern and all the more so to parents and carers when it involves someone outside the family who has contact with their child as part of an organisation. During the preparation of this report there were two high profile cases involving the abuse of children by nursery workers, at the Little Ted’s Nursery (Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, 2010) and the Little Stars Nursery in Birmingham (The Guardian, 6/1/11), both of which attracted considerable media and public attention. This is in contrast to the overall relatively low level of attention usually paid to this issue, and the marked concern about false allegations by children against teachers (see for example Sikes and Piper, 2010).

The starting point for this study is that there is an imperative to maximise the effectiveness, commitment, skill and motivation of staff and volunteers selected to work in organisations concerned with the welfare of children. There is also a need to minimise the possibility that children are placed at risk by the adults recruited to work with or for them. Regrettably this goal has not always been achieved. The last sixty years have seen revelations of abuse and maltreatment perpetrated by those with a responsibility for the care and education of children in a range of settings, from foster care to residential schools, sports clubs and churches (Monkton, 1945; Gallagher, 2000; Brackenridge, 2001, 2002; Colton and Vanstone, 1996). Successive public inquiries, notably that by Sir Michael Bichard into the murders of two schoolgirls by the caretaker of a local community college in Soham (Bichard, 2004), have drawn attention to the repeated failures to systematically use vetting and screening approaches already available, and the need for new approaches to be developed, in order to minimise potential risk from employees and volunteers (Warner, 1992).

Prior to the current study about staff and volunteers in organisational positions of trust who may present a risk to children, one of the current research team was commissioned by the NSPCC to review the literature on people who are unsuitable to work with children (Erooga, 2009). This consolidated what is known from the literature about risk to children in organisational settings, including implications for recruitment and selection in organisations where children may be vulnerable. The findings of the review underscored the important influence of organisational culture and values on individual behaviour in the workplace, highlighting that in organisations where abuse has taken place there has frequently been a lack of appropriate infrastructure; absence of vigilance in both recruitment and on-going supervision; and a lack of culture and processes where whistle-blowing can take place.

The desire to develop these findings further led to the current study, a qualitative investigation of organisational processes, which is unique in its focus on using the offender’s perspective. The primary aims of this research were to identify organisational risk factors and the way in which convicted sex offenders accessed organisations, in order to propose good practice in recruitment and within work settings with children and young people so that they can be better safeguarded against abuse and exploitation. Other related aims included:

- To contribute and develop existing knowledge by providing an in-depth, qualitative, contextualised understanding of those who sexually offend in organisational positions of trust;
To inform recruitment screening tools within organisations which work with children and young people;

To increase knowledge about situational prevention;

To improve organisational responses to inappropriate behaviour and allegations of abuse;

Ultimately, to contribute to the reduction of risk for children.

The study was funded by the NSPCC with fieldwork conducted between November 2008 and June 2010.

**LAYOUT OF THE REPORT**

This report is structured to highlight themes concerning both individual offending patterns within organisations and organisational factors identified to be associated with increased risk to children. This introductory chapter introduces the research and provides the policy background to the study. Chapter Two provides a condensed version of the relevant literature reviewed in the previous NSPCC publication (Erooga, 2009) that formed the basis for this study. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used to carry out the study, with particular attention to the ethical issues involved. Chapter Four introduces in detail the characteristics of the participants in the study. Chapter Five presents the findings about individual participants and their offending patterns within organisations (e.g. grooming and selection of children). Chapter Six completes the findings with a focus on organisational factors identified by participants as contributing to an environment where abuse can be carried out. Chapter Seven presents an overview of the findings within contemporary knowledge of situational prevention and Chapter Eight concludes the study identifying specific policy and practice recommendations for government and organisations.

The fact of this research may be regarded by some as contentious; indeed the stories of men and women who abuse are infrequently used. Plummer (1995) has suggested that it is seen as ‘implausible that paedophiles have a story, and inconceivable that they should be allowed to speak it’ (p. 118). Sex offenders are labelled by much of society and the media as pariahs, monsters and as ‘evil’, thereby constructing them as ‘other’ than the rest of normal society. In this respect, they are not seen as having a legitimate story to tell. However, Waldram (2007) believes that everyone has a story and that these stories speak to our understanding of the human condition. In the interests of public safety, he argues, it is important to hear the voices of sex offenders. Skrapec (2001), a leading authority on psychopaths and serial murderers, says that ‘understanding a serial murderer can be achieved only by the extent to which we know his subjective experience of the world and not merely the objective realities of his life or the evaluations we make of those objective realities’ (p. 51). Similarly, it is important to understand the realities of sex offender’s experiences by going beyond the common use of psychometric measurement. It is this subjective understanding, particularly when combined with actuarial knowledge, that strengthens child protection.
BACKGROUND: POLICY, PRACTICE AND ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the broad legal responsibilities and policy related to organisations that work with children. Over the last 20 years government has shown growing commitment to keeping children safe by policy and legislative developments.

General organisational legal responsibilities

In addition to the specific mandatory checks and actions that will be outlined below, organisations have broader based legal responsibilities. The UK is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which provides some of the wider policy context and a framework for all signatories to develop policy in the best interests of the child. Article 19 of the UNCRC obliges states to protect children from all forms of maltreatment perpetrated by parents or others responsible for their care. The Convention is clear that every child has the right to be safe from harm and that organisations entrusted with the care of children, or that regularly come into contact with children, are required to create and provide safe environments for them. Ensuring that individuals who work with children are appropriate to do so is encompassed within this (Institute of Child Protection Studies, 2005). The Human Rights Act, 1998 also sets out principles regarding protection of individuals by state organisations or those working for such organisations. The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 gives employees a duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

In addition, employers have a 'Duty of Care' towards paid and unpaid employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974. This requires the provision of a safe working environment and guidance about safe working practices. Providing clear expectations and guidance about expected standards of behaviour and safe practice are therefore responsibilities for organisations. Consideration of individual implementation of the measures outlined below should therefore be seen in light of these broader responsibilities.

Policy and legislation responsibilities specific to child abuse and maltreatment

Policy and legislative concerns in this area can be divided into two broad categories: those with a focus on child care practice and those that attempt to control abusers.

Child Care Practice

Efforts to address institutional abuse started with the 1986 Home Office Circular (Home Office, 1986), which was subsequently revised in the 1993 Home Office Circular (Home Office 1993a) which produced guidelines covering local authority staff, teachers, social workers, childminders and foster parents. A Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) circular addressing National Health Service workers’ contact with children, followed two years later in 1988 (DHSS, 1988). The Children Act 1989 developed the first major legislative response to institutional abuse. It provided the impetus to regulate and standardise
practice within residential and Day Care facilities (Gallagher, 2000), including guidance for action if staff in a children's home suspected abuse by a colleague (Thomas, 2005). The Act, whose primary thrust was the concept of the State working in partnership with parents and carers, strengthened safeguards for children living away from home. Guidelines for workers in voluntary agencies, however, were not produced until the 1993 Home Office code of practice Safe from Harm (Home Office, 1993b). This made recommendations in respect of managing organisations in order to protect children, managing paid staff and volunteers in order to protect children, choosing the right paid staff and volunteers in order to protect children, dealing with abuse that has been disclosed or discovered, and training.

A report on safeguards for children living away from home, *People Like Us: Safeguards for Children Living Away from Home*, (Utting, 1997) was commissioned following a succession of abuse cases in children's homes in the mid 1990's. This led to the UK Government introducing *Quality Protects*, a major three-year programme designed to transform the management and delivery of social services for children in England (Department of Health, 1998a). In 2001 the General Social Care Council (GSCC) was established with a remit to set standards for social care and regulate the activity of all those using the title 'social worker'. During 2012 this body will be amalgamated with the Health Professions Council.

The Children Act 2004, through the Stay Safe outcome of the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme (HM Government, 2003), gave organisations and individuals a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children. Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2010) gave all agencies responsibilities for having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all new staff and volunteers to ensure they are safe to work with children and young people.

**Measures to control abusers**

Measures to control abusers comprise: (1) offences specifically created to further protect from abuse those children in especially vulnerable or dependent positions, such as the abuse of trust legislation; (2) mandatory measures for employers and specified individuals; and (3) discretionary measures for employers (Thomas, 2005). Mandatory measures are legal prohibitions on certain people working with children and both the individual and employer commit an offence if such employment takes place. Discretionary measures are those which potential employers may take to obtain relevant information when considering a potential member of staff or volunteer, and would include Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

**Abuse of trust legislation**

Under the abuse of trust legislation (Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000; Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008), it is an offence for anyone aged 18 or over, and in a 'position of trust' in relation to someone under that age, to have sexual intercourse or engage in other sexual activity with them. Abuse of trust legislation is intended to protect 16 and 17-year-olds in particular. Younger children are protected by the specific child sex offences (under the Sex Offences Act 2003 and Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008) applying to those aged under 13 and those aged under 16, which carry a higher maximum sentence (NSPCC, 2007).
Criminal records checks (England and Wales)

The Police Act 1997 allowed for the development of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in England, which came into being in 2001. The Criminal Records Bureau is an executive agency of the Home Office administered by a private company, thus relieving the police of the duty of conducting criminal record checks. It carries out relevant checks, now called 'disclosures', in England and Wales.

There is a range of information within this database that can be taken into account by those seeking a criminal background check when assessing a person's suitability for a regulated position. Legislative changes to the Police Act 1997 and the Protection of Children Act 1999 enabled inclusion of data from the Department for Children, Schools and Families data and the Department of Health Consultancy Service Index (Sullivan and Beech, 2002). Further recent amendments to part V of the Police Act 1997 allow an individual's barred status under The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (see below) to be disclosed on a disclosure certificate. Additionally, CRB staff liaise with local police to obtain 'other relevant information' and intelligence to be included in the central database (Thomas, 2001).

Beyer, Higgins and Bromfield, (2005) suggest that vetting processes cannot be considered as thorough without a database that enables a check of all relevant information. The intended value of the central Criminal Records Bureau is that it minimises overlaps, duplications and inconsistencies in the inherent 'snapshot' approach of previous screening searches, and relieves the police of the responsibility of deciding what information should be released (Bichard, 2004).

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 introduced a vetting and barring scheme designed to prevent those deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. The scheme was a consequence of the Bichard Enquiry following the murders of two schoolgirls by the caretaker of a local community college in Soham (Bichard, 2004) which recommended that all those who work with vulnerable groups should be registered. It was intended to consolidate and improve existing measures and guidance, replacing List 99; The Protection of Children Act (PoCA); The Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) and Disqualification Orders.

Employers, Children's Services and professional regulatory bodies would have a duty to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) any information about individuals who may pose a risk to children, so ensuring potential threats to vulnerable groups could be identified and dealt with (HM Government, 2010).

Much of the Act was implemented in October 2009 and the first registrations were due to be made on July 26, 2010 under the substantive Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS). However, the launch of the scheme was met with considerable public concern, some of which was based on misreporting and misunderstanding of its workings and scope. Under a new administration, the scheme was suspended and reviews of the Disclosure of Criminal Records system (and in Northern Ireland of the equivalent Criminal Records Regime) and of the Vetting and Barring Scheme were commissioned.
The Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme

Following pilots in four areas of England that began in 2008, this scheme was implemented in all 43 England and Wales police forces by April 2011. It enables the public to ask the police if someone in contact with a child has a record of child sexual offences. They can be a family member, friend, neighbour, employer or anyone who is worried about the child. If the check shows a record for child sexual offences, or other offences that might put the child at risk, the police will take appropriate action which may include sharing the information with the people best placed to protect the child, usually be the child's parent, carer or guardian. The information might not be shared with the person who made the enquiry.

In Scotland, the Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme operates in a very similar way. There is no equivalent scheme currently in operation in Northern Ireland.

The Protection of Freedoms Bill 2011

The Coalition Government's proposed changes to the Vetting and Barring Scheme and Criminal Records regime are contained in the Protection of Freedoms Bill, which at the time of publication is making its passage through Parliament. One aim of the Bill is to reform and simplify the existing system. The broad direction of the Bill and the proposals to maintain key protective provisions in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (and corresponding Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007), and the aim of simplifying the arrangements are positive. However details of the proposed arrangements are more concerning, for example the definition of 'regulated activity', the disclosure of barring information to employers about those who work with children and young people in non-regulated activity, CRB checking of children under the age of 16 and the practical issues that need to be ironed out in order to ensure that checks are portable.

The key elements of the proposed system are outlined below as they indicate the components of a co-ordinated approach to screening for a children's workforce. They fall in to two main types of change:

Simplification and streamlining of the system

- The functions of the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority will be performed by the newly created Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), a non-departmental public body created to provide a single barring and criminal records disclosure service.
- The CRB check will be held by the individual, but responsibility for checking it lies with the employer. The individual can challenge the information held on their CRB check before it goes to the prospective employer.
- Checks which are portable (transferable) between different jobs and activities will be introduced.
- The CRB check will be held by the individual, but responsibility for checking it will lie with the employer. The individual can challenge the information held on their CRB check before it goes to the prospective employer.
- There will be an online system to allow employers to check for updated information.
Reducing the number of people covered by the scheme

- The Bill revises the definition of regulated activity i.e. those positions covered by vetting and barring arrangements. Regulated activity is being redefined to focus on those roles with close and regular unsupervised interaction with children, or roles in specified settings. For example, the Bill exempts many positions from regulated activity simply by virtue of them being ‘supervised’, and excludes some groups of people who have frequent and close contact with children. Employers will not have to check these people and even if they do they will not be told if the individual is barred from regulated activity. The revised definition of regulated activity also distinguishes between paid and unpaid employees in some settings.

- Indications are that CRB checks for those working in non-regulated activity will not contain barring information. However, there will be measures to improve information transfer from the DBS to the police, and other measures in the Bill will support the police to make better judgements about what barring information is disclosed.

**CONCLUSION – THE ROLE OF SCREENING**

Whilst schemes such as the VBS show an increasing commitment to the protection of children from abuse, and are undoubtedly essential in preventing unsuitable people from gaining organisational positions of trust with vulnerable people, these measures can only be effective in barring those known to present a risk – those whose behaviour has been identified as a potential threat or who have actually been convicted of sex offences. As the Bichard Inquiry (2004) observed, however, many high-risk individuals do not have criminal convictions, while patterns of behaviour that might flag an individual as presenting such a potential risk are not necessarily detected by the police or children’s services. Nevertheless, employers may rely solely on these procedures, without considering the range of other screening methods necessary to safeguard children effectively. Checking for previous convictions is an important part of the recruitment process, but not sufficient in itself, as a significant proportion of maltreatment remains unreported and unrecorded (Gilbert et al., 2009).
CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE SCENE: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OFFENDERS IN POSITIONS OF TRUST, THEIR BEHAVIOURS AND ORGANISATIONAL SETTINGS WHERE ABUSE OCCURS

This chapter outlines key aspects from the literature regarding people who sexually abuse children whilst employed in organisational positions of trust. A fuller version of the information in this chapter can be found in Towards Safer Organisations: Adults who pose a risk to children in the workplace and implications for recruitment and selection (Erooga, 2009).

For the purposes of the study this population was defined as any person working with a child who has been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or young person which was directly related to their paid work or volunteering activity. In this context working with children includes people working with children in health, social welfare, education, residential accommodation, leisure, sporting, religious activities and criminal justice systems and extends to the voluntary and private sectors (Beyer et al., 2005). The term is further extended to include managers. Worker is used here as a generic term to describe anyone in this category.

Inevitably the literature regarding this population relates only to those whose offending has come to the attention of law enforcement agencies, those who have been convicted. The literature relating to those who have abused but not been convicted tends to focus, for obvious practical and ethical reasons, on a desire or willingness to abuse (Freel, 2003; Briere and Runtz, 1989) rather than on the modus operandi of unconvicted offenders. The findings from the literature must therefore be regarded with that potential limitation or bias.

THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL OFFENCES COMMITTED AGAINST CHILDREN IN PROFESSIONAL OR WORK PLACE SETTINGS

One of the striking features of an issue about which there has been so much publicity is that there are no definitive figures relating to incidence. What is known about the prevalence of organisational, or institutional, abuse comes from disparate sources as no national statistics figures are collated on the basis of the context of sexual abuse (Kendrick, 1997). Press coverage will inevitably distort public perception with the issue gaining awareness following the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by Ian Huntley in Soham in 2002 and more recently the sexual abuse of children in nursery by Vanessa George (Plymouth SCB, 2010). However, statistical information is far more difficult to obtain. One, albeit very partial, indicator of the increase in official interest in the issue is public inquiries, of which there were 20 between 1967 and 2000, with 14 of those during the 1990’s.
In the United States, a recognised expert in the field suggests that the most reliable estimate is that 9.6% of US school students experience some form of sexual abuse by an education professional (Shakeshaft, 2004). In the UK, the most recent information derived from retrospective studies with adults comes from the 2011 NSPCC study on the prevalence of maltreatment and victimisation of children which found only 0.7% reported sexual abuse by a professional (Radford et al., 2011). In one police force, investigation of institutional abuse in 1994–5 constituted 4% of all Child Protection investigations (Gallagher, 2000). From these figures, it is clear that the precise extent of the prevalence, or indeed incidence, of such abuse is largely unknown.

CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE WHO SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN IN ORGANISATIONAL POSITIONS OF TRUST

The literature in relation to organisations and the potential for abuse is sparse and has relatively little to offer in terms of the attributes of those who have sexually abused children specifically in professional settings. What literature there is provides a heterogeneous picture of offenders in organisations with some highly motivated individuals apparently targeting organisations with the intention of abusing (Sullivan and Beech, 2004), with others who apparently have no known sexual predisposition and whose propensity for abuse arises in the context of their work setting (Finkelhor, Williams and Burns, 1988). The current study found examples of both with a predominance of the latter. However, it should be noted that as the current sample volunteered to take part in the study, the group are unlikely to be representative of a wider population, whatever characteristics are displayed.

Whilst it is clear that children are vulnerable in professional relationships it is instructive to be reminded both of what offenders themselves have said about their offending patterns and what the literature highlights, particularly in order to review those issues most relevant to professional abuse facilitated by relationships in organisational settings. This section on offender characteristics concludes with a review of what is known about methods offenders use to abuse children, usually referred to as ‘grooming’. These strategies are specifically derived from studies of male offenders. Female grooming techniques are less well understood and may well be very different in nature to those utilised by male perpetrators.

Referring to abusers in organisations specifically, Abel et al. (1998) suggest that they gradually introduce physical and then sexual touching once a relationship with their victims is established. In Gallagher’s (2000) study 43% of cases involved first initiating (non-sexual) physical contact with the child. Colton and Vanstone’s (1996) study with 6 male organisational sexual offenders indicated that the offender was perceived as a peer, a father figure or a rescuer by his victim. By giving attention and gifts they managed to develop an emotional relationship into which sexual contact was gradually introduced.

Using a sample of 23 men who had at least one conviction for a sexual offence against a child with whom they were working professionally or as a volunteer, Leclerc, Proulx and McKibben (2005) found that modus operandi was related to the position of trust. Thus they were perceived as non-threatening to the child, could easily build a close relationship with a potential victim and used strategies such as giving attention to gain the child’s trust. The child could then be gradually desensitised and their compliance in sexual activity gained by way of non-sexual touching.
The authors suggest that due to their close relationship with the child, some offenders may believe that they do not need strategies to maintain victim silence. The methods used to gain victims’ cooperation is instructive in this context, indicating as it does how the particular circumstances of a professional relationship can be subverted. A number of the behaviours described here are echoed in the offence descriptions of the offenders in the current study.

Table 2.1: Strategies used by sex offenders to gain victims’ cooperation (Leclerc et al., 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving the child non-sexual attention</td>
<td>23 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching the child non-sexually</td>
<td>22 (95.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying nice things about them</td>
<td>19 (82.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching the child sexually more and more from one time to the next</td>
<td>19 (82.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying loving, caring things to the child</td>
<td>16 (69.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the victims sexually excited</td>
<td>15 (65.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking more and more about sex</td>
<td>14 (60.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting sexual contact as if it were no big deal</td>
<td>14 (60.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the victims very curious about sex</td>
<td>14 (60.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting sexual contact when victims were upset or needing attention</td>
<td>9 (39.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying how special they are to be doing this with you</td>
<td>4 (17.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying that you are going to teach them something</td>
<td>3 (13.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling that all their other friends have had sex by now</td>
<td>2 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing less clothing and telling the child to do the same</td>
<td>2 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying that you will love them more if they do this with you</td>
<td>2 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying that you will spend more time with them</td>
<td>2 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5 outlines the themes about ‘grooming’ that emerged in interviews in the current research.

Use of the Internet to access abuse images of children (child pornography) is still a relatively recent phenomenon and therefore remains an under-researched area. The extent of the problem is unknown, as is knowledge about the association between accessing images and likelihood of other forms of sexual offending. Organisations increasingly have to decide on the significance of inappropriate images viewed by current or potential staff or volunteers. They may also have to make decisions about those who have been accessing illegal abusive images but are not charged with a criminal offence. In 2002, Operation Ore in the UK resulted in a high number of offenders revealed in their investigation, and criminal justice agencies did not have the logistical capacity to prosecute them all (BBC, 2003).
The increased availability of the Internet has made possible relatively easy access to images which previously would have been available only to someone with a significant commitment to obtaining them by physical, rather than virtual electronic, methods. Middleton, Elliott, Mandeville-Norden and Beech (2006) observe that the internet combines 24 hour, 7 day a week access, affordability and anonymity with material of their choice available to knowledgeable users, thus ‘increasing the user’s sense of freedom, pace and … willingness to experiment’ (p. 589).

A study by Wolak, Finkelhor and Mitchell (2005) found that of 1,713 arrests for relevant offences in the USA, 91% used computers to access images at home, but 17% had also done so at work, reinforcing the importance of organisational monitoring for inappropriate use of computer equipment.

It is very difficult, therefore, to conclusively assess individual sexual interest in children or adolescents even when there has been use of the Internet to view indecent images of children. However, when considering the significance of such behaviours for employment it would seem that whatever the motivation, deliberately accessing such images is such a clear violation of accepted norms and expected standards that an individual doing so renders themself unsuitable to work with children. In addition, though there is no clear evidence of a causal link between viewing abusive images and child abuse it could also be argued that children have the right to be protected from those who might inappropriately regard them as sexual objects, as opposed to acknowledging their legitimate right to an age appropriate sexual identity, and that this in itself would make them unsuitable to be a worker in this context.

As well as a possible precursor to abuse, new technologies and indecent images also pose other risks to children in organisational settings. So, for example, a child's image might be captured for onward distribution or images might be used to coerce children into co-operating with abuse. The use of images hence serve the broader motivation of the emotional and psychological misuse of children. Readers interested in organisational Issues and new technologies in relation to potential risk to children are referred to Quayle, 2012.

SCREENING FOR A PRE-DISPOSITION TO ABUSE?

A long standing stereotype of sex offenders is that of ‘… a sophisticated and well organised, predatory individual’ (Jenkins, 1992) with its implications of intentionality in the process of finding settings where vulnerable children may be accessed. The concern that offenders will target occupations or activities that will provide access to children is an enduring one and therefore a focus of interest in this research. Whilst it may appear self evident, the issue of what it is that needs to be ‘selected out’ is not necessarily clear cut.

Child sexual offenders are widely agreed in the literature to be heterogeneous, that is there is considerable variation in the ways in which they select and groom children, in their sexual and other related behaviours and their means of avoiding detection (Boer et al., 1997). Characteristics of offenders are similarly varied in terms of age, ethnicity, offending background, level of sexual interest in children and relationship with their victims. (Smallbone and Wortley 2001). There is, therefore, no single test or screening process that can identify an individual with the propensity to sexually harm a child.
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN PREVENTING ABUSE

This review now turns from individual characteristics of offenders themselves towards issues related to the organisational environment itself in facilitating or preventing abuse.

An overview of the literature suggests that the organisational environment is a key element in the prevention of abuse. A satisfactory organisational culture has its basis in an organisational commitment to a clearly articulated set of values and desired organisational behaviours with children's welfare and wellbeing at their core. Alongside the values, organisations will have defined methods to put into practice and to monitor the effectiveness of these values and behaviours. (Erooga, 2009)

A number of organisational factors associated with heightened risk to children have been identified, including inadequate management systems oversight and an absence of an articulated child-centred culture. Consideration of those features which lead to high-risk environments is important to guide organisations toward measures which can be implemented to reduce potential risk. This section reviews characteristics of vulnerable organisations, what Hall (2000) refers to as an 'institutional syndrome', and the importance of the organisational environment in minimising potential risk to children.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONAL SETTINGS

Specific examples from the literature are presented here to illustrate the characteristics of vulnerable organisations as mentioned above. Education and nursery and Day Care settings have been included in order to provide learning about settings represented in the current study. Further discussion of these and other settings can be found in the literature review mentioned above (Erooga, 2009).

Education

In most societies school is considered a normal part of a child's development, consequently between the ages of five and sixteen children spend a significant proportion of their time at school. Being in the same institution with the same staff for a number of years creates the potential for on-going abuse. Additionally, the regard in which most educational institutions and those who work within them are held by wider society can be a risk factor (Wolfe et al., 2003).

Alleged Abusers in education settings

As with other abuse in organisational settings, there is no single feature that makes an individual an easily identifiable danger to children.

In terms of gender, a DCSF survey found 62% of allegations were made against men and 31% against women, with gender not recorded in 7% of allegations (Lawrie, 2006). Shakeshaft and Cohan (1995) found that in 96% of reported sexual abuse cases by teachers, the abuser was male and 76% of victims female. For female abusers, 86% of victims were female. However, a Harris poll for the American
Association of University Women (2001) found approximately 40% of female abusers and 40% of their victims to be male. Whilst, therefore, official figures reflect male abuse of females, confidential self-report is more likely to indicate higher proportions of female abusers and male victims.

The barriers to reporting related to gender are common across settings. For males abused by a woman the likely credibility of an allegation may be perceived as lower because of the broad societal perception that, for a male, any sexual contact with a female would be welcome. For males abused by a male, fear of a homophobic response may be a significant inhibitor to reporting.

The consensus from the research appears to indicate that those who sexually abuse students are often among the most competent and popular staff (Bithell, 1991). Indeed, a number of education workers known to have sexually abused children had been awarded prizes for outstanding teaching (Shakeshaft and Cohan, 1995). ‘The majority of educator exploiters are highly respected by their colleagues, supervisors and parents. Perhaps most important, they often are adored by their students. Educators, parents and students find it difficult to believe their favourite teacher could molest a youngster’ (Shoop, 2004, p. 19).

Shakeshaft (2003) suggests that this is more common amongst those who abuse young children and that the teaching relationship is both a key factor in enabling the abuse and serves to confound colleagues and officials leading to allegations being discounted, a feature of the Castle Hill School case described above.

In so far as these staff are more likely to be more experienced, analysis of the DCSF data is relevant, with staff with under two years or over 16 years’ service most likely to have allegations made against them (Lawrie, 2006). Clearly the latter group may be those referred to variously by Bithell, Shakeshaft and Cohen and Shoop above.

**Patterns of abuse**

*Sexual abusers use many strategies to entrap students. They lie to them, isolate them, make them feel complicit, and force them to have sexual contact. Often teachers target vulnerable or marginal students who feel especially gratified by attention and whom the teachers know will be disbelieved if they report abuse (Shakeshaft, 2003 p. 10).*

Although not every instance of educator sexual misconduct includes a ‘grooming’ phase, Robins (1998) describes a process very similar to that in other forms of sexual abuse, though one that exploits the particular features of an education setting. Here an abuser selects a student, gives them attention and rewards, provides support and understanding, whilst slowly increasing the amount of touch or other sexual behaviour. The purpose of this process is to test the extent of the child’s difficulty in disclosing, to desensitise them through progressive sexual behaviours, to provide non-sexual experiences they value and won’t want to lose, to learn information that will discredit the child, and to gain approval from parents. Robins suggests that more widespread understanding of grooming patterns would aid prevention and detection of such abuse.

The methods of maintaining secrecy and silence reported are again similar to that of sexual abuse in other settings but adapted to the particular features of an education setting. Shakeshaft (2004) suggests that almost always there is intimidation and threats of various sorts exploiting the power structure ‘if you
tell, I’ll fail you’; using relative credibility ‘if you tell, no one will believe you’, or manipulating the child’s affections ‘if you tell, I’ll get in trouble’.

Shakeshaft (2004) comments ‘Abuse is allowed to continue because even when children report abuse, they are not believed. Because of the power differential, the reputation difference between the educator and the child, or the mindset that children are untruthful, many reports by children are ignored or given minimal attention’ (p. 41), a description strikingly similar to that outlined in the Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome by Summit (1983) two decades earlier. It might be concluded that whilst the painful process of recognising that carers can sexually abuse has progressed such that there is more likelihood of disclosures being responded to, there is still a level of denial in relation to workers.

The power that the awareness of such a dynamic can have should not be underestimated. Shakeshaft and Cohan (1995) cite a case of a class where the teacher would call boys up to his desk at the front of the room and, one at a time, while discussing homework, would touch each boy’s penis. Whilst all the children knew what was happening and talked about it amongst themselves, the teacher repeated this behaviour for 15 years before one student finally reported it to an adult who would act on the information.

Nursery and Day Care

Whilst there were no participants in this research from these settings, the literature identifies some important issues of wider relevance.

The substantive information in the UK is from the Hunt Inquiry into the sexual abuse of children in nursery classes by 20 year old student on placement, Jason Dabbs. The potential for abuse in such a setting is possibly indicated by the report’s description of ‘… a history of abuse in which the sheer normality and vibrant, busy activity of the nursery classroom provided both the opportunity and means of concealment’ (Hunt, 1994, Para 2.6.27). The Inquiry concluded that nothing in Dabbs’ past life gave an indication of a propensity to abuse and he was regarded as a model student. Indeed, a particular strength was described as ‘an ability to relate … to individual children with sympathy and understanding’ (6.4.5).

The fact that a student could commit such offences raises the issue of student selection for courses that include contact with children, for example whilst on placement or teaching practice. The Hunt Inquiry was clear that ‘… the supervision of a student whilst on placement in a nursery class cannot of itself be regarded as an absolute safeguard against crimes of this type’ (4.3.7). Indeed, if such abuse can occur in a setting like a nursery, where contact with children is usually very public and visible, it would seem even more relevant to other settings, not least social care.

A more recent example is the sexual abuse of children in nursery (Plymouth SCB, 2010) where Vanessa George, a mother of two, was a nursery worker. She was jailed in December 2009 for an indeterminate period for sexually abusing children in her care and exchanging images that she took of the abuse with two other people, one of them another woman (Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, 2010). She used a mobile phone to take pictures of herself abusing children at Little Ted’s Nursery in Plymouth and exchanged more than 7,000 texts, photographs and calls with her two co-defendants over a six-month period (The Times, 2009). The initial contact with one of her co-defendants, Colin Blanchard, was made on a Facebook page called ‘Are You Interested?’ and was followed by a request for her to send pictures of
children with whom she worked. She responded initially by sending pictures of herself changing babies’ nappies, but these later included images of real, or simulated, penetration of children with objects.

The Serious Case Review convened following her conviction found no evidence of a sexual interest in children prior to the internet relationship with Colin Blanchard, ‘and it is therefore unlikely that a sexual interest in children would have been apparent prior to (VG) “meeting” him’. (Para 5.1., Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, 2010). She was, however, considered, an emotionally vulnerable woman who used the opportunity presented by her employment for her own ends.

Again the issue of the lack of privacy required for the offences to take place is instructive. Children’s nappies were changed in the toilet area that could be seen from the area of a main room in the nursery. The toilet door was reported to be usually propped open and there were four cubicles in a row, one with a full sized door, and three others with a half door. Most staff changed nappies on the main nappy changing area easily visible to other staff. Mrs George, however, started to use the cubicle with the full door, saying she could not bend down due to her (physical) size. Although the door was open her body blocked the line of vision from the nursery to the child. It was here that abusive acts occurred and the photographs were taken.

In the North American literature, Day Care settings have been a particular focus for some authors and one where female perpetrators of sexual abuse are more evident. One key study is that by Finkelhor, Williams and Burns (1988). This was a review of the incidence over a 3 year period of ‘substantiated’ sexual abuse in Day Care facilities, derived from official sources. Cases included were those that involved at least one child under age 6 years. Whilst the intention was to include all reported incidence across the USA, unsurprisingly given the scale of the enterprise, the sample was ultimately incomplete. The study identified 270 centres with 1,639 victims (484 male, 296 female and 859 not specified) and 382 perpetrators (222 male, 147 female and 13 not specified). It was estimated that 25% of allegations were substantiated and when the figures were extrapolated to make a national estimate, it suggested that in 500–550 centres some 2,500 children would have been sexually victimised over 3 years.

Twenty-five per cent of the abusers were owners/directors, of whom 50% acted alone. Relatively few appear to have established the institution in order to abuse. 30% of abusers were teachers/child care professionals, of whom 66% abused in conjunction with another and 15% were non-professional child care staff. Disproportionately represented were non-child care staff, who committed 20% of cases in centres where they were employed and who were often unscreened because of their role. Particular characteristics of these offenders were that they were typically male, acted alone, had not been screened and were quite possibly not employed by the Day Care facility but by another provider or agency.

Another noticeable phenomenon observed in the study was abuse of children by people not working in, or attached to, the Day Care centre, but by others whom staff allowed to have access to the children. Any process which focused on the staff member’s propensity for abuse would certainly not address such a possibility. This would suggest that an important area for selection for roles with responsibility for children’s safety is to ensure a sufficient focus on an individual’s commitment to protect children from others who might present a risk to them.

In terms of gender of abuser, 36% (96/270) of cases involved female perpetrators, with 147 female perpetrators out of a total 358. 90% were employees and unlikely to be detected by a criminal records check nor had any prior known deviant behaviour. A key difference also identified in more general literature on female offenders is that 73% acted with other abusers, whilst only 19% of the men did this.
There is frequently a minimisation of abuse by females in the media and it is instructive, therefore, to note that amongst the female abusers there was a higher frequency of more serious (invasive) abuse and use of threats as well as actual force.

These settings therefore seem to be characterised by high levels of unsupervised access to children and an assumption that staff will all have children’s welfare as their guiding principle and that they are therefore not capable of presenting a risk to them.

**Motivations to abuse**

In terms of motives, Finkelhor et al. (1988) suggest that much sexual abuse in these settings does not grow out of a specific conscious and pre-existing sexual preference for children of this age. Rather, they suggest much of the abuse is opportunistic, by which they mean that the abuse has a more general and diffuse motivation than specific sexual attraction and that the key factor was not the particular sexual attraction but rather the availability and vulnerability of the children. Thus, it is suggested, they probably would not have abused such young children, and possibly not abused at all, were they not in such close and constant interaction with young children. This is a provocative hypothesis but, given the credibility of the lead researcher in the field of sexual abuse, one which merits careful consideration. Indeed, the case in Plymouth may lend weight to this view. Certainly one implication is that screening for offences, or for sexual interest in children, is not likely to be effective for such potential abusers. If so, a selection process which reviews attitudes to children, individual motivation to work with them, or in their interests, and so partly focuses on potential inhibitors to acting on any emergent sexual interest in children, may be more indicative.

Certainly these authors conclude that ‘... most abusers cannot be identified on the basis of prior sex-abuse records, and even where there are records they are ambiguous in their meaning’ (i.e. relevance to risk to children) (Finkelhor et al., 1988, p. 65).

**DEVELOPING PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES – OFFENDER MOTIVATIONS AND SITUATIONAL PREVENTION**

*Although it is important that risk factors for children, adults and organisations are identified, it is equally important to draw on the knowledge about the features that make organisations safer for children. (Beyer et al., 2005, p. 106)*

Whilst the sample in the current study was not what could be considered representative of the population who have offended in this context, it is equally clear that there is no ‘typical’ profile of an offender in this context. Previous research that included psychological testing, as discussed above, has identified some common factors, though as noted, this tended to be with relatively skewed samples. Overall, whilst the stereotypes of professional offenders are helpful in that they guide attention towards areas of potential risk, caution should be exercised in the false security that is likely to be derived from thinking that there is a typical profile.
In contrast to the commonly held view in organisations that CRB and related organisational screening methods will adequately protect children, whilst they are clearly necessary it is apparent from the number of previously non-convicted offenders in this study, they are not sufficient. An approach which explores applicants’ values and underlying motivation more thoroughly, like Value Based Interviews (Cleary and Golokoz, 2008) has a contribution to make as there are no currently available screening measures which would both be acceptable for general use and sufficiently accurate to identify propensity for sexual abuse of children.

It seems clear therefore that the optimal combination of approaches which will maximise protection of children from harm by staff and volunteers is a thorough and consistently implemented recruitment and selection process and an organisation with clear values, explicit expected behaviours which consciously integrate a situational prevention approach into practice.

The popular understanding of what are now commonly referred to as ‘paedophiles’ is that they are a homogenous group, seeking out opportunities to sexually assault children and prepared to lie and deceive in order to do so (NSPCC, 2009). The literature and this research indicates that this is an over simplistic picture and that as with most human behaviour the reality is more nuanced.

It can be seen therefore that whilst interview and pre-employment screening may serve to highlight dispositional factors e.g. by previous convictions or markedly inappropriate attitudes to children, situational factors are potentially easier to control and manage and have the potential to impact positively on the likelihood of an offence occurring.

**Situational crime prevention: Typologies of offenders**

Drawing on the literature relating to general situational crime prevention, Beyer, et al. (2005) consider the importance of environment in reducing the potential of child maltreatment and in particular relate general offending typologies to those who may present a risk to children.

Situational offending describes the interaction of factors that result in decision-making about committing crime, including the environment or situation in which the offending is to take place. Cornish and Clarke (2003) propose three offender types based on the strength of the offender’s criminal disposition and the role situational factors play in their offending and Beyer et al. (2005) suggest that these classifications are useful for understanding a range of maltreatment types, including sexual abuse, which may not classically be considered in literature on crime prevention.

1. **Anti-social predators** refers to those who have ingrained criminal dispositions and make rational choices about the relative costs and benefits of criminal involvement in the context of particular situations. They may influence the environment to increase criminal opportunities. Beyer et al. (2005) suggest that the antisocial predator equates to the stereotypical fixated, predatory child abuser who are high-frequency chronic offenders. For predatory offenders, situational information informs their target selection and they expend considerable effort to achieve their goals (Conte et al., 1989; Elliott et al., 1995).
Obstacles to offending are seen as challenges to be overcome. Thus the stronger the individual's antisocial commitment, the more likely they will actively manipulate, rather than passively respond to, environments. Predatory offenders will be the most difficult to deter from offending but, it is suggested, their frequency of offending may be significantly reduced through situational prevention.

2. **Opportunistic offenders** are those who engage in occasional, low level criminality. They have a greater stake in conformity and are therefore subject to stronger personal and social constraints on their behaviour (what could be regarded as internal inhibitors in Finkelhor's four preconditions model (1984). These constraints however, weaken from time to time. To facilitate their engagement in morally proscribed behaviour, offenders may make excuses for their crimes (Sykes and Matza, 1957), especially where situational factors serve to obscure personal responsibility (Wortley, 2001). For this type of offender, organisational controls will be influential in preventing offending.

3. **Situational offenders** react to particular sets of environmental circumstances. Their crimes include crimes of violence in the heat of the moment, or impulsive ones committed when overcome by temptation, or a temporary failure of self control (Cornish and Clarke, 2003). The motivation for crime is supplied by the situation and the offence may represent an aberration in an otherwise law-abiding life. Situational offenders generally have no other criminal involvement and their offending will be a relatively isolated event, often committed as a reaction to cues.

In the context of a study of sexual abuse in Day Care settings (Finkelhor, et al., 1988) the authors state that it is their impression that ‘… much sexual abuse in Day Care does not grow out of a specific, conscious, and pre-existing sexual preference for day-care-age children.’ (p. 65). Rather they suggest opportunism may be a defining characteristic of the abuse – that is with motives more general and diffuse than specific sexual attraction and that the key factor was the availability and vulnerability of the children, rather than their sexual attractiveness to the abuser. Indeed they go so far as to suggest ‘… Opportunistic perpetrators probably … would not have abused at all if they had not found themselves in a setting where they were in close and constant interaction with children.’ (p. 66).

For both opportunistic and situational offenders in particular, the environment is critical to their decisions to offend or not. Reducing cues and opportunities for offending through manipulation of the organisational environment, Beyer at al (2005) suggest, can be very effective in preventing abuse with a minimal risk of displacement of the offending to other targets. Whilst predatory offenders are likely also to commit opportunistic and situational offences, i.e. whenever the opportunity is present, the reverse is generally not the case: opportunistic and situational offenders will not, as a rule, commit predatory crimes (Wortley and Smallbone, 2006).
CONCLUSIONS

Significant measures to prevent unsafe individuals from working with children have evolved over time and continue to be developed in light of experience. These measures are undoubtedly essential, both to deter inappropriate staff and volunteers from attempting to gain positions of trust with vulnerable people, and to prevent them from doing so.

However, it is self-evident that such measures can only be effective in barring those with known risk factors. The Bichard Inquiry (2004) concluded that many high-risk individuals do not have criminal convictions and, as police and social services treated episodes of offending in isolation, they failed to detect patterns of behaviour that might flag an individual as presenting a high risk. The system currently being administered by the ISA is a great improvement in this regard, but it is important for employers to be mindful that the majority of those who have abused children while in organisational positions of trust do not have a criminal record (Community Services Commission, 1996; Moriarty, 1990). There is a danger that employers may rely solely on the vetting and barring arrangements, and consider themselves to have fulfilled their safeguarding responsibilities by undertaking relevant checks, without considering the range of positive screening measures that are also necessary for actively safeguarding children on a daily basis.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research with those who have committed sexual offences in organisational positions of trust raises problematic issues that are common to other ‘sensitive topics’ (Lee and Renzetti, 1993) and also presents additional considerations. This chapter describes the methodology of the study, including the ethical issues that impacted on the study design, and then describes the sample.

As the literature review highlights, relatively few studies have sought the in-depth perspectives of sexual offenders against children and even fewer have focussed on those abusers in organisational positions of trust. This study aims to build on the small knowledge base that uses data directly from sex offenders themselves.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS/AIMS

The primary aims of this study were to:

- identify organisational risk factors and the ways in which convicted sex offenders become part of organisations;
- propose good practice in recruitment and within work settings with children and young people in order to better safeguard children against abuse and exploitation.

Other related objectives included:

- To contribute to, and develop, existing knowledge by providing an in-depth, qualitative, contextualised understanding of those who sexually offend in organisational positions of trust;
- To inform and improve recruitment and screening tools within organisations which work with children and young people;
- To increase the use of situational prevention measures;
- To inform organisational responses to inappropriate behaviour and allegations of abuse;
- Ultimately, to contribute to the reduction of risk for children.

Key areas for exploration include the relationship between abuse in the context of organisational positions of trust and the setting in which the abuse is committed; the characteristics of an organisation which informed any choice participants made about gaining access to them; the characteristics of organisations, or measures taken by organisations, which would deter participants from choosing to access that organisation; how participants presented themselves to the organisation during recruitment processes; how they ‘groomed’ the organisation whilst an employee, particularly managers and colleagues; how they groomed their victims, and in particular whether there were context specific methods of securing compliance and on-going non-disclosure of offending.
ETHICAL APPROVAL

The project proposal and supporting documents were submitted to the NSPCC Research Ethics Committee in January 2008. The application and documents were revised according to Ethics Committee recommendations and approval granted in March 2008. The following sections outline in detail the methodological approaches as they conform to ethical protocols for each step of the research process.

TARGET SAMPLE

There were two key eligibility criteria for participation in the study. The first was that participants were convicted sex offenders who had offended within an organisational context. As noted above the exact number of sex offenders in organisational positions of trust is not known and as there are no available statistics about sex offences by context it was not possible to know how representative the sample would be. The qualitative approach adopted for the study meant that a representative sample was not a goal. Rather, it was the identification of the processes and characteristics of offences within organisational settings that was the focus, and in particular, using the perceptions of offenders themselves. The results should, however, be interpreted with caution. First, it is a small sample although the small size is balanced by rich interview data to illuminate process and context. Second, the nature of the sample may present a bias. Waldram (2007) highlights the problems of recruiting those convicted of sex offences for research due to potential respondents’ concerns about their personal safety as well as a high likelihood of suspicion of authority. Those that chose to participate may therefore represent a particular group of offenders and findings related to their characteristics may not be more widely generalisable.

The second criteria was that there were no extant circumstances for the participant within their treatment or the criminal justice system with which the research would interfere or disrupt, for example, a risk assessment in progress or the offender being at a particular, sensitive, point in treatment. When seeking volunteers the researchers took the advice of Probation Offender Managers and Prison Treatment Managers who were in the best position to know the current circumstances of individual offenders. Three offenders who volunteered were considered ineligible for the study on this basis.

There were also two desirable features sought for the sample, although they were not always possible to achieve. These were to maximise inclusion of females in the sample, and for participants to be in, or have completed, sex offender treatment.

Sexual offending against children, particularly in the context of organisations, is widely assumed, wrongly, to be a ‘male problem’. For this reason it was seen as desirable, as far as possible, to include female as well as male participants.

Secondly it was regarded as desirable to include participants who had undertaken treatment, either through the prison-based Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) or one of the community-based Community Sex Offender Group Programmes (CSOGP). The SOTP is a framework for the integrated assessment and treatment of sex offenders in prison and the community. This is designed to challenge offending supportive belief systems, reduce risk and establish relapse prevention strategies (Mann and Thornton, 1998). The CSOGPs are group programmes for men ordered by the Courts to take part as a condition of their prison license or as part of a community sentence.
Targeting those who had been through treatment programmes was considered desirable as they would potentially have greater awareness of their own motivations and behaviours than non-treated offenders (Mann, 2004). Current thinking on effective treatment of those who commit sexual offences places an emphasis on attending to the narrative of the offender’s experience of their offending behaviour. This enables the worker to better understand the individual needs and motivations of the offender and to appropriately make these ‘accessible’ to the individual, who can then participate in the process of addressing non-abusive responses to the needs which the abusive behaviour has previously satisfied (Mann, 2004); in effect, to help offenders become more aware of their own behaviour and the needs and motivations which led to their offending so that they can develop more appropriate responses to those needs. The first stage in such a process is usually to support acknowledgment of the behaviour that enabled offending, which may have previously been regarded as a ‘seemingly irrelevant decision’ (Marlatt, 1985), e.g. choice of work setting. Seemingly irrelevant decisions are those which the offender sees at the time as justified and unrelated to any specific plan to offend but which contribute to their offence process. Many of the participants in this study acknowledged after reflection and/or treatment that such decisions had been relevant to their offence pathway.

The majority of treatment is undertaken in group settings, with a strong emphasis on using the group process to create an expectation of self-disclosure and self-reflection (Clark and Erooga, 1994). Most offenders who have successfully completed a treatment programme have partly done so by responding positively to these new ‘norms’. The indications from interviewing a small sample of offenders in the previous small scale study by two members of the current research team (Erooga, 2009) was that participants responded positively to the opportunity to demonstrate what they seemed to perceive as a newly discovered area of personal achievement in being able to actively reflect on their own behaviour and share that knowledge in a constructive way with others.

A key mediating factor in this process is undoubtedly the expressed attitudes of the interviewers. Research has indicated that an empathetic and personally warm approach is most likely to be effective in engendering positive change (Marshall et al., 2002; 2003). Although engendering positive change was not an aim of this research, it was hoped that this approach would encourage trust in the research team to share their stories. The theoretical basis for this approach was well understood by the researchers and the practitioner members of the research team had experience of working directly in this way. It was intended that the experience for those interviewees who gave informed consent would have minimal, if any, adverse impacts or negative effects.

There were two other considerations in respect of the sample to be noted here. One is that some offenders were identified as being peripheral to this study, in that their offence occurred within a professional position of trust but the offence settings were not organisationally derived. Some of these offenders were included where it was possible that their experience would have some relevance to the study aims. These offenders are clearly identified in the results that follow as being separate from the ‘core’ sample.

The second consideration related to the reality that some offenders continue to maintain their innocence after conviction. Because the focus of the research was not the offence itself but the context in which it took place, it was decided that these offenders could potentially be included, subject to advice from their Offender Manager or Treatment Manager. Only one participant in fact denied his offending, but as he was still able to articulate the relevant organisational aspects of his employment he was included in the analysis.
ACCESSING AND IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

Approval to carry out the study in Probation Areas was first obtained from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) by way of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Research Quality Assurance Group with approval granted in June 2008.

Similarly, permission to access prisons required an application to Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS), via the HM Prison Service Applied Psychology Group. The researchers submitted an application initially identifying two prisons, chosen for the concentration of sex offenders in their population, granted in August 2008. Approval to extend the study to all relevant prisons (i.e. those which provided the SOTP) in England and Wales was given in April 2009.

Once approval was granted, contacts within NOMS and HMPS were used to assist in identifying relevant people for the study.

The researchers initiated access to potential participants in the Probation Service via a meeting with senior staff from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). At this time it was agreed that:

1. NOMS staff would write to Chief Officers in selected Probation Areas to ask for their cooperation in identifying participants;
2. Once Chief Officers agreed to assist, the researchers would make direct contact with the identified/designed Assistant Chief Officer, Senior Probation Officer or Offender Manager to arrange contact with potential participants via invitation letters;
3. The researchers would negotiate interview times, venue and recordings with the local designated contacts.

In respect of the Prison Service, the researchers wrote to the Governor of each relevant prison requesting agreement to participate in the research. Where this was obtained the researchers liaised with identified contacts, usually the Head of Psychology, who helped to identify potential participants and facilitate the interview process.

Within both services potential participants were in the first instance approached by their Offender Manager (probation) or psychology staff (prisons). Identifying participants was relatively straightforward. Intermediaries were sent clear criteria for inclusion, which they used to identify potential participants from their caseloads or prison records. They then sent the researchers anonymised details of the offences and their circumstances. The researchers selected those participants whom they agreed fitted the criteria, at which point the intermediaries approached potential participants and provided them with a copy of the invitation letter and consent form (See Appendixes A and B).

Participants were also asked to consent to the researchers reviewing their case records prior to the interview. Once the offender had agreed in principle to participate the researchers were contacted and arrangements for the interview were made. The researchers undertook the final consent process in person. In both settings the intermediaries were therefore responsible for a) identifying participants;
b) approaching participants and inviting them to take part; c) gaining consent for researchers to access the case files and in principle to be interviewed; and d) arranging the location, time and date for the interview.

There was some difficulty in engaging potential participants in both organisations partly, no doubt, due to those issues of mistrust and safety identified by Waldram (2007). For example, some may have had a concern about contact with staff from the NSPCC as a well-known child protection agency.

Another potential barrier to participation was the role of the intermediary (Offender Managers and psychology staff). The tasks they undertook presented challenges to the researchers in successfully recruiting participants. The initial approach was a key juncture in the process of recruitment – in other circumstances researchers can directly appeal to potential candidates, ‘sell’ the study, confidently answer questions and provide details about the protection of identities and data. In this study being unable to do this may have impacted on the willingness of some offenders to take part. It was out of the research team’s control how the research was presented by the intermediary. There was therefore potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding, which, if unwittingly transmitted to potential candidates may have decreased the likelihood of participation.

The reliance on intermediaries such as these in the criminal justice system has potentially greater implications than communication difficulties. There are inevitably hierarchies and power dynamics within the probation and prison services between offenders and staff and also amongst offenders themselves. There was the risk that staff did not make clear enough the independence of the study from the criminal justice system, leading to a scenario where offenders may have felt threatened by the authority of the prison or probation staff and so felt coerced into participating. Conversely, they may have believed that if they took part they would be looked upon favourably by the system (Waldram, 2007; Hearn, Andersson & Cowburn, 2007). In this study it was regarded as important to emphasise researcher independence from the criminal justice system to participants and underscore the fact that their participation in the study would have no effect on their sentence or relationships with staff.

Because of the sensitivity of this issue being researched, and to avoid reputational risk to NSPCC as a child protection charity, in contrast to some other studies no monetary incentives, or indeed meeting of expenses like bus fare, were used to recruit participants. As far as possible the researchers tried to ensure that participants agreed to take part only on their own motivation to inform the research. Some reported that an element of this was, from their perspective, to make a form of reparation for their offending.

**DATA COLLECTION**

A semi-structured interview approach was used to collect the data. These are interviews where a pre-planned topic guide and open ended questioning are used to focus the discussion on issues considered important to the research question(s) while facilitating the interviewee to expand on issues they felt were important to explain their perspectives. Semi-structured interviews provide an appropriate level of privacy to explore and unpack the range of sensitive topics and perspectives from the diverse individuals who comprised this sample (Gibbs, 1997).

Semi-structured interviews also allow for the emergence of themes and ideas rather than relying solely on concepts and questions defined in advance of the interview. The topic guide was used to ensure
that areas for consideration were explored in a similar order but there was also scope for pursuing and probing for novel, relevant information through additional questions when new themes emerged (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). In order to facilitate subsequent thorough analysis with participant consent an audio recording was made (Willig, 2008).

Interviews lasted on average one and a half hours and took place on prison or probation premises. Two researchers undertook the majority of the interviews as a method of maximising the information collected. As with all research a key consideration in the organisation of the interviews was the safety of the participants and researchers. A contact from the relevant agency was available during and after the interview in case of difficulties or in the event that confidentiality procedures needed to be followed. There was a single case where the confidentiality procedure was followed, in relatively unusual circumstances some 12 months after the interview. This was because of the possibility of there being a previously unidentified risk that, in the event, proved not to be the case.

Participant distress during the interview was managed through the common procedure of offering breaks if needed, allowing ‘space’ for the participant to compose themselves and emphasising that the interview could be terminated at any time. At the close of the interview the researchers asked the participant to comment on the interview process, both to gain feedback about participant experience in order to improve the fieldwork and to give the opportunity to observe their mood and highlight any need for additional support if required at that point. This did not prove to be necessary, and participants indicated that, at worst, the interview was ‘better than expected’ and for some was a positive experience which enabled them to think about their offence from a different perspective.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues around consent and confidentiality were a crucial consideration with this particularly sensitive topic area. When undertaking research the primary reason for offering strict assurances of confidentiality is to enable the participant to feel comfortable in revealing information during the interview process. A full confidentiality protocol aids the researcher in encouraging the participant to share freely to maximise honest responses (Cowburn, 2005). However, when researching with sex offenders, considerations of child safety must take priority which does, unfortunately, reduce the likelihood of full and honest disclosure.

The researchers were ethically obliged to report any information disclosed by participants relating to crimes against children that were not previously known to the relevant agencies, or which indicated that a child might be at current risk of harm. Additionally, participant disclosure of any intention to harm children, be a risk to themselves or others or (where relevant) to breach prison security would require the researchers to report this information to the appropriate authorities. The researchers therefore developed protocols that would enable them to meet these requirements. Participants were asked for consent to researchers having sight of their case records prior to interview, which allowed the researchers to match knowledge of conviction history with the information participants shared. Clear information was provided to participants during the consent process about the limits of confidentiality, and a specific framework for reporting intended harm and security breaches was adopted. This included ensuring that participants were fully aware of this protocol before proceeding with any interview.
The first stage in the data collection process was to extract key information from participant case files. As discussed above the intermediary took permission for this from participants at an earlier stage. Demographic information such as age, ethnicity, marital status and employment history was collected. Additional relevant information such as CRB checks and information from employers was noted. It was at this point that offence history could be identified. In addition to current offence and sentence previous offences and their contexts were noted, providing the information necessary to inform the researchers during the interview process.

The interviews generally took place directly after the case file data collection. In seeking consent the researchers clearly explained the study to the participants and allowed time for questions and concerns to be raised. It was at this point that the confidentiality policy was also explained.

A framework developed by Cowburn (2005) was adapted to guide decision making about the need to breach confidentiality. Any of the following information disclosed by participants would be reported appropriately:

- Disclosure of unreported illegal sexual behaviours – research participants were informed of the limited nature of confidentiality at the outset. They were advised that disclosure of illegal behaviours that had not been reported to the police, where they identified specific victims (and offenders), would be passed to the police;
- Disclosure of intention to harm – Where a research participant expressed intentions to harm himself or herself or another specifically identified individual. Where a research participant expressed general intentions to harm someone, consideration would be given to the time-specificity (e.g. harming someone tonight or at some future date), which would inform a decision to break confidentiality in that specific case. In such circumstances guidance would also be sought from a senior operational manager within NSPCC;
- For those serving custodial sentences, any potential breach of prison security.

Participants were also advised that it was offences for which they had been convicted that were the focus of the interviews and which informed the boundaries of confidentiality in place. It was only after this discussion had taken place that participants were asked to sign the consent form.

A final ethical and methodological consideration was that of data security. A common requirement in any research is to ensure that all data collected is held securely. This is particularly important for participants convicted of sexual offences because of high levels of concern for personal safety that these participants might have (Hearn et al., 2007).

The procedure adopted for this study was to assign identification codes rather than names to all paperwork related to the participants. Similarly, transcript files were assigned identification codes. The data were held on the secure NSPCC server, in a file with additional password protection. All data will be destroyed at the end of the project life, once peer reviews and publication are complete.
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION

Data analysis involved the use of thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes from across all the interviews. NVivo 8, a qualitative software programme, was used to manage the interview and case file information and to work through the data thematically. For reliability, all three researchers independently coded the transcripts. This report has been written to reflect themes in the data, rather than in a case study style, in order to minimise the possibility of participant identification.

The report has been peer reviewed and, after publication, will be disseminated to appropriate agencies and professionals. The report will also be disseminated to the NOMS and HMPS contacts that assisted the study in order to share the report with participants. Participants were also told they could access the report on the NSPCC Inform website.

Details of responses from Prison and Probation Areas are in the following chapter on sample characteristics. This chapter has described in detail the methods of conducting this research and detailed the ethical protocols in place to both respectfully carry out the research with this specific population and to deal with the particular challenges involved in researching within the criminal justice system. The following chapter provides descriptive information about the sample itself.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS – SAMPLE SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter describes the study sample using data derived from participants’ case records. The first section describes the identification of the sample, as well as numbers and the organisational status of participants when they offended. The second section covers demographic characteristics of the sample, such as age; educational background, marital and parental status; whether they experienced abuse in their own childhood; sentence and conditions; the type of abuse committed; and some information about their victims. The third and final section is a discussion of the data in the context of other relevant research.

‘Offences’, as used in the subsequent text, refer to the sexual offences for which the participant was convicted and which formed the focus of the interview.

RESPONSES FROM PRISONS AND PROBATION AREAS

Difficulties inherent in identifying and engaging participants for this study have been addressed in Chapter 3. Table 4.1 shows the number of prisons and probation areas approached, and the number that were able to identify relevant participants for the study.

Table 4.1 Number of prison and probation areas that identified participants for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of agencies approached</th>
<th>Number of agencies which identified participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation areas</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three prisons and 1 Probation Area declined to facilitate the research request because they were already involved in other research and did not feel they could supply further resources. The request to undertake research in one prison was withdrawn because of the length of time the approval process was taking. The remainder of the non-contributing prisons and Probation Areas were unable to identify relevant participants.
SAMPLE

Table 4.2 shows the number of potential\(^2\) participants initially identified and the number those who took part in the study.

Thirty one potential participants were initially identified by HMPS. Four refused, and 13 took part. The remainder did not take part for a variety of reasons: several were released before they were approached whilst some others were identified as having on-going mental health issues and were therefore deemed unsuitable.

Probation Areas initially identified 41 potential participants. Twelve refused, and 14 took part. Of the remainder of those who were identified but did not take part, some had Orders, which ended before they could be interviewed; others were in the middle of assessment or treatment processes; and one could not be contacted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants identified</th>
<th>Number of actual participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation areas</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample of 27 is divided into 2 categories: core and non-core participants. The core participants are those who met the criteria for eligibility to participate in the study and will be described in detail first. The non-core sample comprised participants who did not fully meet requirements of the core sample but whose experience was identified as having a potential contribution to learning for the study. Characteristics of the non-core interviewees will be considered separately.

Core sample: Demographic information and abuse characteristics

The 19 participants in the core sample were comprised as in Table 4.3. below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample by subset and gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core sample</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are only 2 women in the core sample and all core participants were White British.

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\(^2\) ‘Potential’ participants refer to the number of participants identified as eligible for the study by contacts in NOMS and HMPS but whom had not yet been approached or invited to take part in the study.
Table 4.4 shows that organisational positions held by participants at the time of their offending were diverse, although nearly half were education staff.

**Table 4.4 Core sample: organisational positions held at the time of offending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core sample n = 19</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Care workers</th>
<th>Voluntary posts</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boarding school = 2*</td>
<td>Residential social work manager = 1</td>
<td>Cub scout leader = 1</td>
<td>Self-employed broadcast journalist and trainer = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary = 1</td>
<td>Residential care worker = 1</td>
<td>Volunteer in national tourist attraction = 1</td>
<td>Director of Naturist Club = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary = 1</td>
<td>LA Foster Carer = 1</td>
<td>National Choirs Director = 1</td>
<td>Stables Manager / Farrier = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sea cadet = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support assistant in EBD school = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Army cadet = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Welfare Officer = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sports coach = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One of the teachers was also a priest

Not all of the offences were recent. Nine core participants’ offences were ‘historical’, committed prior to current child protection and screening policies, including Criminal Records Bureau checks. Despite these offences taking place outside of the current child protection context (and therefore arguably not relevant to this study), there are organisational commonalities between the historical offences and those committed more recently.

The information on the core sample that follows was collected from participants’ prison or probation case files.

**Participants’ age at the time of offence/s**

The average age of the core sample at the time of their offence/s was 37 years, with the youngest offending at age 25 years and the oldest at age 60 years. Their mean ages at time of conviction was higher at 51.15 years, indicating that conviction often occurred some time after the offence. Convictions were on average 14.15 years after the offence. As will be seen later, delayed arrest and convictions were usually associated with disclosure by victims many years after the abuse occurred.

**Marital/relationship and parenting status**

Seven (37%) of the participants in the core sample were married at the time of offence. Four went on to divorce as a result of the offence. A further 6 (31%) of the core sample were single (both unmarried and without a partner) at the time of offence. Of these, 4 reported that they had never had sexual relationships with an adult, while 2 had been in previous relationships but were single at the time of offence. Five (26%) core participants reported they had been in a (unmarried) relationship at the time of the offence. One was divorced (and otherwise single) at the time of offence. Nine (47%) participants had biological children; one had step children.
Education

Of the 19 core participants, 15 (79%) finished secondary school; 6 of these also had a university degree; and 7 had teaching qualifications. Four core participants (21%) left school without any qualifications.

Own experience of abuse

Participants’ records were reviewed for experiences of abuse in their own childhood. These indicated that six (31%) of the core sample were victims of sexual abuse when they were children; four by people in organisational positions of trust including a scout leader, a headmaster, a music teacher and by teachers at a boarding school. Family members abused the other two. There were 2 participants’ whose records indicated they had experienced abuse in childhood but the nature and extent was unclear. Eleven participants’ case records indicated there was no known abuse in childhood.

Previous convictions for sexual offences

Two of the core sample had previous criminal convictions of any sort (sexual or non-sexual offending). One had a conviction for indecent exposure before the age of 16 some 30 years previously, and the other for separate offences of non-domestic burglary and assault. The most recent was over 20 years previously. Other than possibly in the last case, organisations that employed the offenders in this sample would, therefore, have screened them out on the basis of a criminal records check. It is not surprising that perpetrators with more recent offences did not have a history of conviction for sexual offences as recent policy and legislative changes have made it more difficult to obtain employment with a conviction for such offences (Gallagher 1999; Sullivan and Beech 2002).

All of those core participants who could have been subject to a CRB check had been checked: there were 9 who had appropriately been CRB checked in an organisation where it would be expected. Six participants offended in an organisation prior to the existence of CRB procedures; and 4 worked for organisations where a CRB check was not undertaken because they were not considered to have the necessary level of contact with children that would indicate a CRB check should be carried out.

Sentence and conditions

Sixteen (84%) of the core sample received custodial sentences, which ranged from 6 months to 19 years imprisonment, with an average custodial sentence of 6.6 years. The remaining 3 participants received Community Orders that were between 2 and 3 years. All participants were subject to Sex Offender Registration and most had specific orders and disqualifications as conditions of their sentence. The length of time participants were subject to Sex Offender Registration requirements ranged from a minimum of 5 years to life.

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3 The Sex Offender Register contains details of anyone convicted, cautioned or released from prison for a sexual offence against children or adults since September 1997, when the Register was established. Under the Sex Offenders Act 1997, as amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, all convicted sex offenders must register with the police within three days of conviction or release from prison. They are monitored by the police, who receive notification from the courts following conviction, and from both the prisons and probation service following an offender’s release into the community. Those given a jail sentence of more than 30 months for sexual offending are required to register indefinitely. Those imprisoned for between 6 and 30 months remain on the register for 10 years, or 5 years if they are under 18. Those sentenced for 6 months or less are placed on the register for 7 years, or 3.5 years if under 18. Those cautioned for a sexual offence are put on the register for 2 years, or 1 year if under 18.
Some participants were also subject to Sex Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) with varying conditions. SOPOs last a minimum of 5 years, but some participants in this study were subject to indefinite orders. The majority of the SOPOs in the sample specified that the participant should not work with or live with children and young people under the age of 18. One participant had a further condition that he was barred from using computers at home or as part of his work. Disqualification Orders were also a part of a majority of participants’ conditions.

Abuse type and number, gender and ages of victims

The type of abuse committed against children in the core sample varied, as shown in Table 4.5 below. For 6 (31%) of the participants this was contact sexual abuse with penetration; for a further 6 (31%) this was contact sexual abuse without penetration (e.g. masturbation); for 4 (21%) of the sample, this was a combination of contact abuse with and without penetration; 1 (5%) participant perpetrated contact and non-contact abuse using images; and 2 (10%) used recording equipment to video children who were unaware of this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Number of core participants perpetrating abuse type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact abuse with penetration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact abuse without penetration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact abuse with and without penetration</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact abuse with and without penetration and non-contact abuse (use of images)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contact abuse (recording images of children)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the current sample abused both boys and girls; all of the participants exclusively abused one gender, and the majority abused boys (74%). None of the offences involved multiple perpetrators. Twenty-three per cent abused pre-pubescent children (the youngest victim was 6) as described by the offender and cross-referenced with case records. Finally, in respect of the number of victims involved in the offences, the fewest number of victims abused as part of these offences was 1; the highest number was 13, with the average number of victims being 2.8. These figures exclude offences involving viewing images, as it is not known how many children’s images were viewed. However, the total number of victims is much higher than the general sample, as one conviction involved over 150 images of pre-pubescent girls.

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4. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 specifies the circumstances in which a SOPO, an order made under the civil law designed to protect the public from serious sexual harm, may be made against an offender.

5. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, 2000, as amended by the Criminal Justice Act, 2003, provides for disqualification from working with children. Disqualification Orders vary with sentence and age of the offender (whether adult or juvenile). The Orders are made when the offender has a qualifying sentence of 12 months or more and must be made unless the Court is satisfied that it is unlikely that the individual will commit further offences. Disqualification orders are of indefinite duration, and adult offenders can apply for a review after 10 years.
Non-core sample: Demographic information and abuse characteristics

There were 8 participants who had sexually offended interviewed as part of this research who did not meet the primary criteria for inclusion in this study (i.e. their sexual offending did not take place within an organisational context), but from whom it was felt there could be some relevant learning. For example, they included a secondary school teacher who had been convicted for possessing indecent images of children of the same age and gender as children he taught but where there was no indication of abusive behaviour to children at the school where he was employed. It was considered possible that interviewing this participant about the reasons why he did not offend at the school where he was employed might produce complementary learning about significant organisational characteristics that assist in the prevention of abuse.

As all that these ‘non-core’ interviewees had in common was a relevant offence and some characteristic of their offending which might yield relevant learning for organisations, these participants were not treated as a group and it was not intended to make comparisons between non-core and the core participants.

For the sake of transparency it is appropriate to include information about the characteristics of the non-core interviewees and as they do not form a group this would usually be presented individually. However, to do so potentially jeopardises their anonymity to some extent and the information is therefore presented here as an overview. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 describe the gender division of the non-core sample as well as the position they held at the time of their offences.

**Table 4.6 Non-core interviewees by subset and gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-core sample</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.7: Non-core sample: organisational positions held at the time of their offending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Care workers</th>
<th>Voluntary posts</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-core sample n = 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tutor = 1**</td>
<td>Care worker = 1</td>
<td>Private Nanny = 1</td>
<td>Restaurant owner = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports coach = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Milk deliveryman = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary teacher = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bus inspector = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The private tutor was not attached to any organisation**

One of the non-core sample was, when offending, and still is, married with children; another was married with children, but divorced after the offending; a third was and still is married with no children; two non-core (male) participants are in stable relationships with men; one non-core (male) participant has had numerous relationships with men; and one male and one female non-core participant had never held a stable relationship and had no children.
One of the non-core sample attended University; 2 finished secondary school; 2 left school at the age of 15; 2 had teaching qualifications; and it was unclear from the records what overall qualifications the final non-core participant possessed.

Two of the non-core participants experienced sexual abuse in their own childhood, one by multiple perpetrators both inside and outside of the family; five reported no experiences of abuse in childhood, although two non-core participants mentioned other childhood adversities.

Three of the non-core participants had previous convictions for sexual abuse or assault; four did not have any previous convictions of any kind; and one had a previous conviction for non-domestic burglary.

Their sexual offences were varied and most occurred outside of an organisational context. However, with the exception of one where the victim was a learning disabled young adult and one whose offences were non-contact, all these interviewees sexually assaulted children and young people between the ages of 8 and 17; with one non-core participant abusing more than 5 victims. All of the non-core participants abused one gender exclusively, with two of them abusing girls and the remainder having abused boys.

Sentences for their offences ranged from probation orders to imprisonment for between 4 years and life.

In the remainder of this report the core sample will be described and, where relevant, information relating to the non-core sample will be included and clearly identified as such.

**DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

A comparison of this study's core sample with other recent research on offenders in organisational positions of trust yielded some differences and similarities with regard to demographic characteristics.

For example, Sullivan and Beech (2004) reported that in their sample of professional perpetrators (excluding those who were required to remain celibate as faith community leaders) 50% were married at the time of their offence. Slightly fewer of this current sample (37%) were married at the time of offence. This study's sample (26%) is roughly equivalent to Sullivan and Beech's (2004) sample where 25% were in adult sexual relationships (unmarried) at the time of offence.

Previous research has found that a significant number of sex offenders report experiences of abuse in their own childhoods (Finkelhor, 1986). Sullivan and Beech (2004), for example, found that 50% of their professional perpetrator sample had been sexually abused as children, which is higher than this study's sample at 32%.

There is research that suggests that some categories of professional perpetrators are more likely to abuse boys exclusively (Haywood et al., 1996; Loftus and Camargo, 1993). In both of these studies it was samples of clerics that were found to be more likely to abuse boys than girls. Fifty per cent of non-cleric professional perpetrators in Haywood et al.'s (1996) study exclusively abused boys. Sullivan and Beech's (2004) research found that professional perpetrators were more likely to be interested in same sex children, although 17% of the professional perpetrators in their sample abused both boys and girls, indicating a more varied sexual interest than previously recognised. None of the current study's sample abused both genders; all of the participants abused one gender, and the majority abused boys (74%), providing some support for Sullivan & Beech's finding. However, as with Sullivan & Beech's study, this
sample is not generalisable, nor were this sample compared with non-professional perpetrators, thus this finding should be regarded with caution.

Finkelhor, Williams, and Burns (1988) reported that 17% of the sexual abuse cases in their study of Day Care (nursery) facilities had ‘multiple perpetrators’. Other research has suggested that professional perpetrators are more likely to abuse children in conjunction with other adults (Gallagher, 1999; White, 1995; Gallagher, Hughes, and Parker, 1996). Sullivan and Beech (2004) reported that 12.2% of their study group of professional perpetrators abused children in the company of other abusers. In this study, there were no offences involving multiple perpetrators.

Sullivan and Beech (2004) found that 71% of their professional perpetrator sample admitted to abusing children younger than 11. In the current study's core sample, the victims were both pre-pubescent and post-pubescent, with ages ranging from 6 to 17. One cause of the difference between Sullivan and Beech's and this sample may be due to the nature of the interview. Participants in this study were asked only about their index offences; for ethical reasons they were not asked about offences for which they had not been convicted. It is possible therefore that participants had abused other children but did not disclose the detail. This was known to be the case with at least one participant.

This chapter has highlighted the diversity of those who commit sexual offences in organisational positions of trust. It is clear from this sample that there is no single 'profile' of a professional perpetrator, with some characteristics comparable with other samples and some characteristics distinctly different. None of the characteristics described above can fully predict who will be most likely to abuse a child in a professional setting.

Furthermore, there were a range of organisational positions held by participants at the time of their offences. Some of these were in employment settings with formal obligations to follow child protection procedures while others were in settings not technically overseen by the child protection system. This highlights the need for any organisation involving contact with children, even if not a child welfare organisation (e.g. a national tourist attraction), to actively consider ways to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: FACILITATING FACTORS

Having control over the physical and emotional care of children creates a fertile environment for abuse to take place. If abusers have access to the intimate and personal details of children, this increases their power. (Bibby, 1996, p. 157)

This chapter considers themes which emerged about individual offending behaviours from interviews with participants. Themes include methods for identifying children to abuse, grooming techniques and how offenders maintained the abuse and how these, where relevant, were specific to issues of status or the environment of the organisation where they worked or volunteered. This is followed by a discussion of the cognitive distortions of participants, which are important in illuminating how offenders overcame both personal inhibitors and those in their environment. While a number of the study’s findings are also relevant to adults who abuse outside of organisational positions of trust there are also results that seem to be specific to this population.

Whilst the primary focus of this study is on those aspects of organisations that may help facilitate, or prevent, abuse of children it is also of interest to learn about the ways in which individual offenders operate within these contexts. This section focuses on participants’ descriptions of how they identified and groomed children, as well as how they maintained the abuse in an organisational context. The section concludes with findings related to the outcome of their convictions and how members of the community responded to their offending behaviours.

MOTIVATIONS TO OFFEND AND PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND THE TIME OF OFFENCE

Understanding offenders’ sexual interest in children is of significance because it may provide some indication of their motivations. However, inquiries following incidents of child abuse frequently report on the incredulity of colleagues and others when such abuse is finally made public (Erooga, 2009). This is possibly not surprisingly when, as is apparent from the Sullivan and Beech (2004) study, those who sexually abuse appear in most respects to be the same as any other worker. The implications for organisations are that if they rely too heavily on screening alone to exclude inappropriate individuals they are likely to inadvertently leave children at risk.

As part of the research, we were interested to know whether participants had a prior intention to abuse children through their employment – in other words whether they were specifically motivated to find a role where they would have access to children in order to abuse. We were aware that in some cases distorted cognitions might limit participants’ ability to fully understand their own motivations. Furthermore, without having the time in a brief interview to develop sufficient rapport with participants we were uncertain how forthcoming they would be about this question. Therefore, as Sullivan and Beech (2004) did in their research, participants were asked what their motivations were in taking the employment in which they abused as well as when they were first aware they held a sexual interest in children. In Table 5.1 below, it can be seen that ten core participants (52%) reported that they had no
awareness of a sexual interest in children prior to the offences. Two (10%) reported that they became aware of their interest in children in adulthood and 4 (21%) that they were under 11 years old when their awareness emerged. A further 4 (21%) reported that they were aware of a sexual interest in children, but it was unclear to them when this awareness developed.

All but one of the core participants said they had had no intention or motivation to abuse any children they had contact with in the organisation in which they worked or volunteered. One participant was unsure if this was the case. Instead, they described a range of other reasons for being in the job / organisation they were in when they offended. For example, some said they did not seek out the job but were invited to apply, while some employers transferred others into a new role that involved children.

Table 5.1 Awareness of sexual interest in children by when awareness developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness before taking job where offence took place</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No awareness reported</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness emerged in adulthood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness emerged in pre-pubescent stage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness reported but unclear when this developed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 shows that, regardless of what reported ‘intentions’ were by participants, all of those who described being aware of their sexual interest in children had known about this preference prior to taking employment in those organisations where their offences took place.

Being able to acknowledge a motivation to abuse, with intentionality bringing with it implications of culpability which go even further than the commission of the offences themselves may be more challenging for some offenders. It may be that to acknowledge such an intention would be to contradict their self-image of ‘someone who made a mistake’ or may arouse anxiety about a negative response from the researchers at interview. For these reasons there is no reliable indicator of what the actual situation might have been and responses as given below from participants should be viewed in that context.

One man who acknowledged he had abused children regularly in every setting he had worked in was nevertheless adamant that sexual attraction to children was not a factor in his motivation:

*But I mean, I can honestly say, I mean, you must understand when I say, that I actually destroyed myself thinking about what I’d done, not just to these boys, but to all those others who were involved in this betrayal of trust, but I can honestly say, I can, my conscience is quite clear that I did not go on the staff … to get the opportunity for molesting.*

It may be significant that this interviewee had not yet participated in a treatment programme.

One core participant recognised that there was a discrepancy between a predisposition to abuse and his choice of work setting being unrelated, acknowledging that this was a possible motivation.
Interviewer: Do you think that was in your consciousness when you applied for the job or do you think it was part of your motivation for applying for the job to get access to be able to abuse the boys or …

Participant: No I don’t think that was in my conscious thoughts, whether it was subconscious or not I just do not know.

Another was able to identify that his distorted thinking allowed him to convince himself that he was not going to abuse, despite this seeming not credible to an objective observer:

I did have a CD (cognitive distortion) … a massive CD, really effective CD, that I’m okay, you know … and I could be okay.

For a minority of participants, even after sentence and for one whilst serving a custodial sentence, there was still a tangible sense of shock that they could have behaved in this way:

Interviewer: Before it (the offence) happened, if somebody had said to you … could you imagine a situation where this might occur?

Participant: No (laughs) absolutely not, no way, I worked in a school for five years before that and it just doesn’t even enter my head, I don’t know it just … that’s why it’s taken me well, it took me over a year (in treatment) to … it took me that time to sort of get my own head round it … and if somebody had said to me you would do this in a couple of years’ time, I would have just laughed at them and said ‘Don’t be so stupid’. And now when I think about it, it makes me cringe and makes me feel sick and, but I’ve got to live with that.

Findings from this sample are in contrast to Sullivan and Beech’s (2004) study, where 15% of their professional perpetrator sample took the job solely in order to abuse children; 41.5% said they took the job partly to abuse children; 19.5% said they were unsure if abuse was a motivation; and 25% said they did not intend to abuse children.

Once again, therefore, contrary to widely held expectations, the research seems to support the notion that whilst some offenders undoubtedly target organisations with the intention of abusing, for others the motivation is less tangible and possibly situationally as well as personally derived, as hypothesised earlier by Finkelhor et al. (1988).

PARTICIPANTS’ PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Offender’s motivations are not homogenous and will vary greatly according to personal history and current circumstances. As part of this research the role of personal stressors or events in participants’ lives, which might have played a part in their motivation to offend, was explored by asking participants about events occurring in their lives at the time of their offending. Nearly all participants described experiencing some life change, stress or mental health problem. For some this occurred at the time of their offending whilst for others it was earlier. Reported life changes included shifts in sexual identity or sexual preferences; life stressors included personal problems associated with family or relationship breakdown, loss of a family member or overburdened working lives and mental health problems included.
depression and suicidal ideation. Some of these factors had been present throughout a significant part of the participant's life, for example depression. Others had been acute and temporary pressures present only at the time of their offending.

The most common life change for the participants around the time of their offence was changing sexual preference. This constituted a struggle for some participants, as this one described:

I went basically from being abused to thinking I was gay, to getting married because I was desperate to be normal … to having a child, to discovering that no, I was really confused about sexuality, to looking at pornographic materials online. I'm not being funny, but I looked at just about every type of image on my computer. I was like, trying to see what I liked. I was looking for what interested me …

For others, there was apparently less conflict with their shifting sexualities, as one participant described:

I was married for 30 odd years … then I began to have gay thoughts and especially about big penises.

Four participants were experiencing marital problems just prior to, and at the time of, their offences. Two participants were experiencing relationship problems with a partner. Four participants were experiencing multiple stresses and problems at the time of their offence, for example, one described extreme stress associated with long working hours that began to impact on his marriage.

Life changes, stress or mental health problems were not part of the experience of all participants however. Four participants described how, at the time of their offences, their lives were relatively stable and unproblematic, and emphasising that they had been happy with all aspects of their work and personal lives. Several of them were mystified by this, expressing an understanding of abuse as being prompted by stressful lives and as such, were seeking to understand what may have triggered their behaviour. One described it in this way:

You listen to other people (in prison) and oh you know it was 'I haven't got any money and my wife had left me, or I was on drugs', there's always an excuse there, you know life was bad when that happened sort of thing. And I can't say that. My life wasn't bad then. I think I was floating along and I think my tendency throughout childhood, teenage years, university, and even work is, yeah, I float through.

Examining personal circumstances does not yield a great deal of information about the role they played in this sample's offending. Although some difficulties were evident in the lives of participants at the time of their offending, only one felt strongly that this might have been a factor in their offending. Not all participants had personal difficulties at the time, which raises further questions about their individual motivations.

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND GROOMING BEHAVIOURS

Craven and colleagues define grooming as 'A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child's compliance and maintaining the child's secrecy to avoid disclosure. This process
serves to strengthen the offender’s abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions’ (Craven, Brown and Gilchrist, 2006, p. 297).

The definition therefore includes the selection as well as grooming on-going compliance. In the current study participants described not only grooming children, but also their families and provided indications of how they managed the impressions of the communities they lived and worked in. Some of the grooming patterns identified in this study were also identified by Leclerc et al (2005) in Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 and reflected how their organisational positions of trust facilitated the grooming process.

Identifying Vulnerability

In two studies in which treated sex offenders described their modus operandi (Conte et al., 1989, and Elliott et al., 1995), one of the themes emerging from both was offenders’ ability to identify vulnerability in their victims, whether that referred to status, home circumstances or age, or emotional or psychological state. For example in Elliott et al’s study, 49% of offenders reported choosing children to abuse who were lacking in confidence or had low self-esteem.

In this research 84% identified vulnerability in their victims and 79% manipulated children's vulnerability in order to abuse.

In one case a Sea Cadet Instructor was able to identify considerable vulnerability in a 14 year old female cadet whom he indecently assaulted:

> Yeah, right, that one, she … she started coming to cadets and then, she'd got a lot of problems at home which she started to tell us about … her mother was an alcoholic, her step father was quite a violent man from what she said … not to her, but to her mother … they weren't very supportive of her and it ended up, because me and my partner only lived just down the road, it ended up, most of the time, we would pick her up on the way to cadets … God knows how, but it even got to the point where she was asking us will you adopt us?

In this instance there were organisational rules about contact between instructors and cadets outside organised activity. However, concern about this girl’s situation caused the Commanding Officer to relax the rules about the sharing of personal telephone numbers and on one occasion even encouraged this instructor to let the girl stay with him and his partner.

In another example a non-core offender, who had his own business and recruited young men – some of whom who he went on to abuse – was particularly adept at identifying his victim’s vulnerability. He thought this was because it replicated his own experiences of having been sold for sex as a child by his mother. He was attracted to boys who were similarly emotionally vulnerable and used his ability to employ them, as well as his affluence, to make both the boy’s and the family’s life materially better:

> There had to be a sort of link between them and myself, and what happened to me, and say, sort of like parallel, it sounds sick now, doesn't it? You know, when you think about it, but it was there … If they'd said no, or anything, it wouldn't have made a bit of difference I would've still … felt that I, made a connection or, I, helped them if I could've done. I could see a lot in them that was in me … And it sounds sick, but I wanted them to have what I didn't have.
The complexity of grooming and selection is highlighted by further information this interviewee offered – that he allowed dozens of pupils from a nearby comprehensive school to spend time at his flat. Even though some of them had levels of vulnerability, in his view his choice not to abuse them was related to their not having had similar childhood experiences.

Having been clear about how he identified emotional vulnerability in the boys this interviewee said that his on-going grooming related both to the boys and their families. For one boy whose mother was home only one day a fortnight and who did not get on with his step father he was able to provide environmental, and a form of emotional, stability. His affluence meant that he could improve the boy’s life by employing him, buying him designer clothes and even buying him a motor scooter. For the rest of the family there were also material benefits including him financing a family holiday.

In a final example, the teacher who was also a priest identified variously the emotional isolation of boarders whose parents lived abroad and in one case a child’s bereavement as particular vulnerabilities:

… when they got fed up or depressed or down hearted they would come to me, to my room on the floor above … I might be thrown together with a boy or two boys one evening maybe … For example one boy lost his father, when, after term started and he was an only child and he would come down to my room, not to the priest he should have gone to, and he’d stand there crying, and I’d say, ‘come in’ and he’d stay there till about 2 o’clock in the morning just crying and talking about wanting to go home to look after his mum. Nothing at all happened, but it’s a situation where I’m trying to weigh up where you’re suddenly thrown into perhaps a one to one, usually one to one, where something could easily happen.

In all cases where children were targeted because of their vulnerability the offender’s role allowed them to develop close relationships that ultimately enabled abuse.

**Special Relationships**

In Elliot et al’s (1995) research with 91 offenders drawn from a range of community and custodial settings 48% said that a special relationship was vital to either wanting to, or managing to, abuse their victims. The current study found that in respect of 68% of core sample participants, relationships were either defined by the offender as special or in which they perceived the child as seeing them as special.

One teacher said:

Yes I did try to make them feel special to enhance their abilities, to make them feel they were very capable of performing well

In the case of a primary school sports teacher it was apparent that he presented as a charismatic leader and, in victim depositions, more than one boy described having a special relationship with him. It was interesting that when debriefing both interviewers identified having initially come away from this interview feeling unusually positive about the offender, a reflection of his social skills in presenting himself positively to others.
One man who offended against children he employed in his small business and then later in his position as an Education Welfare Officer was particularly sophisticated in the way he made young people feel special:

*I used to go camping quite a lot. 'Cos like I could take a group of boys camping, but there'd be one special boy in that group that would be my Number One … and everyone understood that he was my Number One … but probably didn't understand more than that.*

He went on to describe inner and outer 'circles' of boys, their position dependent on how susceptible they were to his incremental displays of affection.

In a final example of special relationships one offender highlighted how his victims gained added kudos in a hierarchical 'Looked After' situation. As a practitioner and a manager he had additional resources at his disposal that he used to groom children:

*Interviewer: Can you recall any instances of them describing your relationship to other boys?*

*Participant: I think the lad who went on holiday with me, he probably bragged about it when he was at school, yeah.*

*Interviewer: So he would use it as a one up with other kids?*

*Participant: Yes. Now that I think about it, he would probably have used that to his own advantage, yeah. And I think probably, not only with other children, but with staff as well.*

Elliott et al’s (1995) findings were in respect of a general population of sexual offenders against children whereas in this study it seems clear that participants’ roles with children made engaging and sustaining that special relationship easier.

**Incrementally introducing sexual content to victims**

It is known that a common method of grooming used by offenders is to talk to children about sex (Leclerc et al., 2005). Two core participants used sexual talk to groom the children they abused. One of the men in the non-core sample of the current study explained vividly how he would incrementally test out potential victims’ susceptibility by exposing them to increasingly explicit and more sexual talk:

*I manipulated the conversation, I'd draw the conversation and I don't remember much of the conversation because it went on for a couple of hours but I know I would have … I'd have been probing … by my questions I'd have been asking, like I may have asked about girlfriends, I may have asked about experiences, I may have made jokes about something … like maybe waking up in the morning with a hard on and needing a piss, or having a wank instead.*

It was of note that this offender had on this occasion taken time to groom this victim whereas on a separate occasion with another more vulnerable victim he went from meeting the boy to abusing him in the space of fifteen minutes. Two core participants used increasing sexual talk as a way of grooming their victims.
An interesting additional way this man gained and sustained compliance from victims was to wear a uniform that he believed gave him an otherwise lacking air of authority:

> I found it odd that he was very compliant because of … I went round there I was still in uniform at this stage so … it was the uniform that made him more relaxed around me and that’s when I committed my first offence.

A foster carer of long standing perceived his female foster child as needing medical attention on a number of occasions, using that context to abuse her. So, for instance after rubbing her stomach to ease a stomach ache he touched her breast and when she jumped down from a climbing frame and straddled his knee, he justified touching her vagina by saying he was checking for injury.

**Common Interests**

Seven of the core participants exploited common interests with children in order to abuse them. One volunteer at a national tourist attraction described it this way:

> ... He loved coming up with me and the railway. There were other times, especially in 2006, he’d done four days worth of school work experience and he’d done that with the trains … . He was looking towards perhaps joining the railways when he left school and at that time, he’d come up midweek.

A teacher in a boarding school used one young boy’s love of football to build a rapport with him on the way to abusing. Having been through a treatment programme he identified this as a ‘Seemingly Irrelevant Decision’ (Marlatt, 1985).

In Leclerc et al’s (2005) study participants described taking children away on trips in order to abuse them. Whereas this was not commonly the case for men in this study, a number of them used trips away to become closer to the child and then abuse them on return. This was true of the sea cadet leader who, on a trip overseas, described a situation that facilitated the development of a close friendship with one of his victims:

> I’d known her for some years I suppose … I suppose we became more friends rather than just instructor, cadet when we took them (away), ’cause we were together for a fortnight, she was one of the older ones and would rather sit and talk to us rather than talk to the younger kids that were there, you know, who were a bit babyish …

**Characteristics of the job**

There were a number of ways in which particular characteristics of offender’s jobs played a part in enabling the abuse.

Doran and Brannan (1996) suggest that there are two principal archetypes of institutional abusers. The first is the ‘charismatic, articulate, well networked “caring professional” who is usually a part of the leadership of the institution’ (p. 158). The second is an ‘… isolated but dutiful staff member who is
perhaps over helpful to colleagues and children, and frequently does things outside the normal duties’ (p. 158). While four individuals (all core) matching this second archetype did exist in this study this section also explores other circumstances in which isolation seems to have played a part in contributing to abusive behaviours and the ability to abuse. These included participants who were both emotionally and geographically isolated in their work settings.

Two female participants, both working in educational settings, cited both physical and/or emotional isolation as having contributed to their abusive behaviour.

The first, a special needs teacher, said:

> What I picked up on straight away was that the department I was going to work for seemed very fragmented … to me I think the main factor in my offending was the sense of isolation I had in that school. That would be … although it was a very big school with a huge number of students and staff, I did feel quite isolated I think. Partly because of how the department was and how people didn’t seem to interact … and also … physically it was sort of on the corner of the site … But any issues that arose … I didn’t know who to speak to about them, I didn’t feel I could talk to my Head of Department because he wasn’t effective in addressing anything.

This same participant said that she had confided in her female colleague that she was having sex with a male pupil (see section relating to colleagues below) and reported that her advice was not to disclose this as she would be unlikely to be believed.

The second of the women, a teaching support assistant also in a special needs setting whose offences against an adolescent boy were via text messaging, spoke about the cumulative effects of being personally stressed and working in a male environment in which seeking support was not encouraged:

> I think I was so, so low at the time and it was a bit of attention I think. And that’s how I got into that, I’d just had a cancer scare and I was … I didn’t communicate with my husband as I should have done but now we do communicate so much better.

She went on to say that the male dominated environment was not one in which she felt able to look for support and that, in her view, had she been able to, she might not have sought intimacy through the abusive behaviour. This participant spoke of a ‘macho’ environment in which extremes of physical force were used in the context of restraint as the norm and therefore not commented on, or open to being commented on. This illustrates a process which can develop in organisations where accepted practice has become inappropriate and develops into being part of the organisational culture.

Where participants had particular pastoral duties or responsibility for disruptive pupils this was sometimes seen as a pathway to abuse. The Education Welfare Officer described it in this way:

> He (a child victim) also had a temper, throw things about and that. So often instead of sending him to a teacher they would send him to me. I’m pretty sure that was how I first met him.

More than one offender was aware of how their standing in the community either enabled the abuse or impacted on whether disclosures would be taken seriously. One non-core participant described connections through his business with the Rotary Club, Ladies’ Circle and the Round Table which gave him a standing in the community which he thought would have discredited allegations.
Some offenders who experience emotional congruence with children will distance themselves from adults as in the case of one participant, who was working in a Children's Home:

Well, it's funny that it's come to mind now but I used to spend hours talking to these kids. One of the mistakes that I made, and it would never happen again, is that I kind of cut off adults and only moving among children and I've always said that was one of the, for me, was one of the big mistakes. I was, at 35 I was a very immature man moving in a very immature atmosphere with some really primitive, I can say that, very primitive stresses and well basically that was the underlying thing.

In summary, it was clear that isolation in their role, their standing or value in the organisation or the community and their responsibility for particularly vulnerable or challenging children were all factors that contributed to the likelihood that the abuse would happen and helped to sustain the abuse.

**Use of technology to groom**

Given the increasing integration of PC's, laptops, PDAs and ever more sophisticated mobile telephony into everyday life and the effect on professional / child relationships, the role of text messaging and indecent images was one of the themes for analysis in this study.

It has long been established that in grooming children for sexual contact, some offenders use pornography as a facilitator to legitimise the sexual acts and to gain compliance in sexual activity (Conte et al., 1989; Kaufman et al., 1998). This section therefore includes consideration of the use of internet and non-internet provided images as well as the use of text messages and internet based resources both to increase access and potential intimacy with victims.

It was initially intended that questions about use of texts, the internet and indecent images would routinely form part of the 'topic guide' used during the interviews. However, on reflection, it was apparent that to do so would potentially invite participants to disclose information about illegal activity not previously known to the relevant authorities. This possibility presented a range of ethical issues (see discussion in Chapter Three) and it was therefore decided not to proceed on that basis. However, where this information was contained in case records it was discussed with participants.

Some of the offences under consideration for this study pre-dated public use of the internet. Where participants reported use of indecent images that would now most likely be accessed on the internet, they are included in this section.

**Text Messaging**

Only 4 (21%) core participants reported, or had mention in the case files, of text messaging. In three cases this was either part of the process of grooming or of developing a more intimate relationship, in the context of breaching other boundaries of appropriate behaviour. In all cases this seemed to be part of a pattern of presenting themselves as quasi peers to their victim, with texts being the way in which most of the young person's peer group frequently communicated.
In the fourth case the texts were themselves the vehicle for the offences. Whilst in a teaching role the female participant initially exchanged a photograph of a family pet (at the young person’s request) but once this contact was established it subsequently led to an exchange of sexually explicit text messages with a 14 year old pupil.

**Use of Images**

Two participants reported using magazines of photographic indecent images of children in the period prior to the availability of the internet. One also reported using video games and video of sexually explicit activity with his victim immediately preceding the offences. Two others had accessed images but had not shared these with their victims, citing sexual inquisitiveness or confusion as their reason for doing so.

Both of these denied any sexual interest in children or an overtly sexual motivation to their offending. One other participant described viewing pornography as a result of sexual confusion:

> I was married for 30 odd years. I began to have gay thoughts and especially about big penises; I used to buy the Vulcan magazine (adult gay pornography) and sex went off with the wife. I read mags.

The victims of this participant were adolescents and his interest in adult pornography was part of his rationale that whilst he acknowledged the illegality of his offences, he was not sexually interested in children.

Two involved taking nude or sexually explicit photographs or videos of their child victims and for two (1 core and 1 non-core) possessing images were amongst the offences for which they were convicted. One had used a credit card to access images, which resulted in his apprehension whilst the other provided a very clear explanation of the process by which he had avoided doing this:

> Peer to peer is a side of the internet that isn’t based on the web. You have a piece of software which includes a search engine … and basically there are peer to peer servers, which merely serve as a connection point for anyone who’s using peer to peer … but, as far as tracing’s concerned it’s not … it’s extremely low risk.

In this context there was one example of use of technology as empowering for victims. One participant had been videotaping female pupils using a camera under their desks. When they observed this the girls concerned had used their mobile phones to record evidence of the offences before reporting it to school authorities.

Whilst this sample were primarily committing offences in the period before use of the internet for accessing indecent images of children was as widespread as it currently appears to be, for two offenders use of images (including pornographic videos) was clearly an integral part of their offending process.
Maintenance of abuse

Wolfe et al (2003) highlighted the issue of children's perceptions of the abuser's relative power over them as a significant reason why children might find it difficult if not impossible to prevent, stop or disclose the abuse. While that disparity of power between child and adult was invariably identified in this study as a reason for the child being unable to tell, there was a range of other factors that prevented disclosure. It should be noted however that this information comes from the offenders’ perceptions about the children's reluctance to disclose and not from researchers’ direct contact with the children.

Only one participant, who had abused a 14 year old girl at a time when she was emotionally vulnerable, directly asked her not to tell anyone and promised that he would not touch her again.

Another, a football coach, thought that at least one of his young male victims did not disclose in order to protect his mother from that knowledge. The offender went on to live with this woman as her partner.

Eight participants (42%) specifically related the child's inability or unwillingness to disclose to their perception of the abuser's status, as reflected in Leclerc et al.'s (2005) study or their relationship with them. For example:

... there would be no question of them telling on me ... they were in a position where they saw me as their friend, their best friend and it would have been unimaginable for them to complain and they never did.

Another, having said that he used no threats or bribes to secure secrecy, added that his victim knew how prominent he was in the community: foster carer, member of the church, providing 'casual' care for dozens of children and that disclosure would 'blow the family apart'. This latter point underscores the point identified by Erooga (2009), echoing Summitt (1983), that where offenders were seen as having high standing in the community it could be more difficult for the child to disclose or for the allegation to be taken seriously.

Four participants had involved themselves with the victim's family, which may well have inhibited children from feeling able to speak about their abuse. In one such case a sports teacher had become friendly with parents (interestingly his only source of friendship), drank with one of the victim's fathers and could see that this could well have inhibited the child from telling.

The final comments about inhibitors to disclosure relate to the participants' perception of how the victim saw the relationship, either in terms of reciprocity or the particular meaning of the abuse for the young person. The following two examples speak respectively to these points.

The first, a teacher providing private tuition to an adolescent boy from his school, reinforces the complexity of the judgements involved in that he clearly accepted responsibility as an adult while holding a view that it was also in some ways reciprocal.

No I didn't [think he might mention it to his girlfriend]. And we spoke, I mean we spoke about it, we spoke about what the consequences were for both of us if this was involved [people getting to know], and, you know in his words, well no one is gonna know.
In the second example, a (non-core) founder and Director of a residential naturist organisation saw the abuse as having served a developmental purpose for his oldest victim, one of two brothers. He believed that the boy who was entering puberty used the abuse as a means of satisfying his sexual curiosity. Framing it in this way allowed the offender to believe that:

_He developed without any attachment to what I was doing._

A number of findings in this study relate particularly to the offenders having been in organisational positions of trust. It would appear, however, that the ways in which abuse was maintained were similar to findings for a more general population of sexual offenders, for example making children feel special and developing common interests. What makes this sample different is that the imbalance of power between the adult and child was further exaggerated by the caring role and the children’s often traumatic or abusive histories.

**COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS**

This section explores how cognitive distortions functioned for participants to facilitate their abuse in organisational contexts. An additional reason for considering cognitive distortions is to account for bias within the stories being told by participants.

All the participants exhibited some degree of cognitive distortion about their offending. There were a few which identify the role that organisational factors played in the process of these distortions. Cognitive distortions can be seen as a process, and are, according to Thompson et al (1998) present in the stages prior to abuse as individuals attempt to overcome internal inhibitions; they are also present during the offences; and finally they exist after the offence, and serve to minimise (for the offender) the impact of the offence on its victims and reduce the offender’s guilt. Applying Lawson’s (2003) Cognitive Distortion Excuses Matrix to our offender population it is possible to identify the process by which participants overcame inhibitions for abusing within organisations.

For example, four participants directly shifted responsibility for the offence to the children they abused. Three inferred that the child had some responsibility, and using Lawson’s matrix, it is quite easy to see the distorted thinking utilised. One participant, for example, described how the victim ‘initiated’ sexual contact, while at the same time saying that he knew it was wrong:

_I still think of them as my friends, but what was done was done with my adult knowledge and full permission or whatever you want to call it, they are not to blame at all. Well, they're not to blame anyway because they're kids and I'm the adult and this is the thing I can't get past, if a little boy initiated some sexual action I should not have gone along with it, I should have stopped it dead._

The participant also explained his behaviour away by identifying extenuating psychological factors (Lawson, 2003). He used his role in the organisation as part of his rationalisation, suggesting he was providing intimacy and affection to a group of vulnerable and isolated children who were in his pastoral care, and this served as the ‘excuse’ for it being OK.

Another participant who worked at a national tourist attraction demonstrated a similar process when talking about how contact with the victim eventually came to an end. He acknowledged that he had
offended against the child, but still could not accept fully that he had done something wrong or that the victim was not reciprocating a ‘friendship’ that had been established during the course of their volunteer work together:

Certainly by 2005/6, if not earlier, he’d (the victim) made it clear to me that he didn’t want any further contact and I tried to hold myself back and not commit any offences against him. But he was still coming up all the time, he didn’t show to me that he got any problem in having the offences committed against him if you follow me. It wasn’t anything that put him off coming up and doing things with me. As I said he almost lived in my place more than he did at home.

This final example illustrates the cognitive distortions still present for one of the sample. The extract below does not refer to the victims he offended against, but provides an very good example of how his growing friendliness with the cadets he was responsible for began to blur boundaries, such that he was able to shift responsibility for inappropriate behaviours and comments onto the young people in his care:

Whether you think them inappropriate or not … sometimes you’d have the cadets, boys and girls staying overnight at the unit and obviously there would be, there wouldn’t just be me there, there’d be other staff as well … and what they consider an inappropriate comment was that sort of … say some of the girls’d come down wearing … come down the stairs wearing very little and I’d stand there perfectly still and look at the ceiling and say ‘get back upstairs and get something on … ’ you know, and they (the investigators) just, they did try to say that sort of thing was me saying inappropriate things.

There was evidence that at least some of the offenders were attempting to address their cognitive distortions, even if they had not fully done so at the time of the interview. One teacher said:

I am, however, extremely aware of the extent and implications of my actions, and the most obvious is the effect on my victims, as they evolved from childhood into adult life. My betrayal of the trust of the victims and the many other associated people is, I realise, nothing short of shameful. I am certainly conscious of the lives that have been affected so dramatically. I have myself analysed so many times about the reasons for the incidents that have taken place and am anxious to explore each and every possibility.

Did I offend either partially or fully for the reasons I believe? It is not easy to come to terms with the fact that from being in the position of highly respected member of the local community this has now changed into me being viewed as a social pariah. I accept that, regardless of any associated factors, this is a result of my own actions and connected concerns need to be fully addressed – and that was the first thing I wrote on my SOTP.

Another participant described his view of the treatment programme:

The problem is, from going on this victim empathy course (as part of the SOTP), you start to realise the far-reaching effects. The SOTP is very positive all the way through – you can’t change the past, but you can change the future – and the one thing that isn’t positive is the victim empathy bit. You always think worst case scenario – although, you would hope these people have moved on, you always assume they haven’t. That’s a good thing for your risk factors to think that. You don’t want to create any more victims. That’s one thing that did strike me. A lot of people don’t do very well on the victim empathy part but it was something that I really got to grips with – you feel very bad.
It is possible that such descriptions are a result of participants saying what is socially most acceptable, and indeed, may be a ‘script’ learned from the treatment programme as part of their treatment process (Clark & Erooga, 1994), part of which is to change old ways of thinking and begin to assess offending behaviour from a new perspective. It is not possible to identify from these interviews whether their cognitive distortions had changed or not. However, for at least some it did appear that their attempts to recognise the crimes they had committed were genuine.

HOW THE ABUSE STOPPED

This section considers how the abuse stopped and eventually came to light. Sexual abuse is largely a hidden crime and one in which, for it continue, most offenders have to actively try to conceal their offending. This makes the detection of sexual abuse very difficult. Reliance on the disclosure of abuse for incidence figures is not possible because a significant proportion of victims delay disclosure for a period of time and some never do so. Studies consistently show that between 46% and 69% of victims do not tell anyone about their abuse until they are adults (Allnock, 2010). The relationship between the child and abuser may be a predictor of whether or not abuse is disclosed: the closer the relationship, the less likely a child will disclose. In this study, although the offenders were not close family members, the relationship between the child and offender was one of unequal status and one in which the offender had significant authority and status.

As might be expected there was no set pattern for how the abuse stopped or came to light, largely varying according to individual circumstances. Overall there were four mechanisms by which the abuse stopped: child victims told; the child’s family found out; the victim grew out of the offender’s interest range or another circumstance intervened.

Reflecting the pattern of disclosure described above, few instances of abuse stopped because the child or young person told someone about what was happening. There were cases where disclosure did impact positively on the cessation of abuse.

With a participant whose offence was committed over a weekend the interviewer asked: And he went in on the Monday and … told someone? The participant responded: Must’ve done, yeah, a tutor of some sort.

In one case the adolescent victim did not disclose but made it clear that he was not willing to co-operate with the abuser:

Interviewer: So he actually had said ‘I don’t want this anymore’?

Participant: Yes, I was made to understand that he didn’t want anymore, but he stayed (in contact with the offender) … I had the habit of saying ‘Are you alright with this?’ or ‘Do you want me to carry on?’ or ‘Can I do this?’, and he began to say ‘No’. So I toned it down and thought I might try again next weekend or whatever, but then I got a ‘No’ again. And no means no, so I stopped.

In some cases this was age related, that is the victim either grew out of the age range in which the offender was sexually interested or because of developmental progression the circumstances of the offending became more difficult or unfeasible to maintain. Two examples illustrate this:
Participant: It went on and then, like the older one she got 15 and a half, nearly 16, she drifted … it stopped and she drifted away … and that was it …

Interviewer: So you say she drifted away and it stopped. Did it stop because she had other relationships?

Participant: Yeah with young lads … and I think in all, she were getting like 15 and half and I think you know, I didn’t want to be having you know, sexual intercourse with her and this sorta thing, but as she got older she came round less you see.

In the other case,

Interviewer: So was the age an issue because it meant the kids would no longer co-operate, or because that wasn’t the age group that you were interested in?

Participant: I guess my range of interests if I call it that … was probably teenagers from 13 to … yeah to 19 … but I think I was less interested as they got older.

For others their perception was that the abuse stopped of their own volition, with two ascribing this to their victim's response to them:

I decided to stop it … it was about nine months, the abuse took place over. And I had a look from one of the boys to me at breakfast one morning of absolute sheer disgust and I thought this is wrong, I must not do this and I must stop doing this and I must get out of boarding (school) teaching, and eventually I did.

For another participant, there was a change in his personal circumstances:

I think its back to meeting my present wife … I think because of the depth of the relationship and how meaningful it was. That’s why I said earlier if only I’d met her in 1976 (when the offending began), then maybe the offending wouldn’t have happened … but I can never know.

Overall the way in which the abuse came to light was varied and did not follow any set pattern. There was significantly delayed disclosure with 8 victims making disclosures as adults. This finding is consistent with what is known generally about patterns of disclosure, as described above.

In a number of cases it was due to immediate or rapid disclosure by the victim:

I’m guessing it was because of the offence he said to his parents what had happened and that’s how it came out. I think it was the same day he told his parents …

In two others it was due to intervention by family. In this non-core case by a private tutor:

I think from the child's point of view it must have been a hell, a sheer hell … I think (victim) must have felt, because I had so much trust in the family; for a start she would have thought, nobody's gonna believe me. Once Mum got the message (left on her computer), obviously she must have asked lots of questions and so on and the next thing I heard was the police.

and in another core case:
Interviewer: How were the (sexually explicit) texts discovered?

Participant: Umm, I think his family found them or seen them I think.

As adults we often have difficulty in understanding that when abuse has taken place in the context of a relationship, children may find it particularly hard to disclose. It is instructive therefore to be reminded of the similarities between difficulties for children disclosing abuse where it occurs in family situations and in this setting and that measures to enable concerns to be identified by children may need to take account of this.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter outlined individual processes including how participants identified children to abuse, how they groomed them and the use of cognitive distortions that enabled them to overcome their own inhibitions to abuse children in their care. Key findings include:

- It is difficult to disentangle motivations for participants in this sample to take jobs or volunteer in organisations in order to abuse children from legitimate motivations. However, the information provided in the interviews indicates that the picture is more complex than often believed in that far from all offenders actively seek opportunities to abuse.
- Personal stressors may have acted as catalysts for some to abuse opportunistically;
- Participants who abused children in their care or with whom they had professional contact used similar types of grooming approaches as offenders who abuse in other contexts;
- Identifying vulnerabilities in children appear particularly salient for the participants in this study. ‘Vulnerabilities’ were easy to perceive particularly when the participant had more than casual contact with children.
- There were indications of distorted cognitions in all participants accounts of how they overcame their inhibitions to abuse and were evident in some interviews where participants minimised their offences;
- Emotional and geographical isolation (as a characteristic of job or role) appeared to be a factor in some cases;
- Use of technology to groom and perpetrate abuse was used in a small number of cases in this study. In some historical cases the offences predated the availability of such technologies;
- Power disparities were a component of offender’s ability to maintain abuse over a period of time. The usual power imbalance between adults and children were compounded by children's perception of an authority figure.
CHAPTER 6: ORGANISATIONAL FACILITATING FACTORS

This chapter focuses on aspects of the organisation that may have contributed to an environment that facilitated, or failed to prevent, abuse. It covers practical issues related to recruitment and selection processes as well as the impressions given by the organisation to participants in respect of organisational attitudes to children and child protection. This issue is part of a larger characteristic of the organisation's culture, which will also be discussed here.

RECRUITMENT

The literature review outlined the importance of a thorough, procedure driven, recruitment practice with clear criteria and screening processes used consistently in order to select high quality candidates and minimise the likelihood of risk to children from employees. What follows here are participants’ descriptions of their recruitment experiences, including the application process, interviews, and screening procedures employed by the organisations in which they offended.

Application process

None of the interviewees reported applying for positions with the intention of gaining access to children in order to abuse. There were a mixture of routes by which interviewees came to be in the organisational positions of trust in which there offending took place. One participant was transferred by their employer to their new setting and therefore did not think they were being given an option about taking up the post. Another was working as a supply teacher and was subsequently offered a permanent position without a further process. In some informal settings (e.g. coaching in a local sports team) they described being ‘invited’:

I just took the lad there on Sunday, watching him, I just went to watch him play really … (and) just got roped in it ….

All core participants report that they had been interviewed although none described recalling the interview process as particularly challenging or robust. In only one case did an offender describe needing to be less than honest at interview:

I think there was a short interview with a male member of staff and it was talked about and I had very good and true answers, sort of, it was a case of I didn't have to lie, I just had to … be lenient with the truth I suppose … but there were plenty of correct and valid reasons why I wanted to do it.

There was an interesting contrast between descriptions of selection processes by those whose offences were ‘historical’, for whom selection had occurred some time in the past and those who had been selected more recently. In the case of historical offences, selection generally seemed to be informal and largely focused on basic competence and whether they would ‘fit in’. Later processes were more thorough in
some respects but were often focused on technical knowledge and ability to do the task rather than on aptitude and attitude to work with a vulnerable population. Whilst it would not be anticipated that this latter issue would be the predominant issue in selection, the overall impression was that there was an assumption that possible risk was not an issue that needed to be considered.

It appears therefore that there has been limited improvement in selection processes across the time scale represented by this sample.

**Screening**

Of the 19 core participants, 7 had previously been employed or volunteered in settings where they had had contact with children. In only one of these cases were concerns identified in a previous employment but not formally acted on (this was reported in the participant's case file).

Only one had a relevant previous conviction and all those who were employed in relevant settings during the period when CRB checks were required were appropriately checked. One reported that he had a CRB certificate from previous employment and that during his contact with the school where the offences occurred, as an external contractor working with children on a specific project, he had to draw his CRB check to the organisation's attention because he was not asked for it.

**References**

One of the issues of interest was whether offenders deliberately 'misdirected' employers to referees who were most likely to give an unduly positive impression. For all but one the choice of referees was uncontentious and straightforward, often because there were no significant issues to be avoided. In one case it was notable that two organisations had had significant concerns not reflected in references, thus, for example, one gave a reference but declined to comment on the individual's 'honesty and integrity'. He subsequently gained employment via an agency, which then gave a good reference based on performance. No further checks were made by the new employer.

This last case indicates the importance both of seeking information from a number of historical sources but also access to appropriate Human Resources advice to understand the significance of any information which is out of the ordinary – for example omissions in references or 'agreed references' both often indicators of unvoiced concerns.

**Criminal Records Bureau Checks**

As noted in the literature review, organisations have broad based legal responsibilities to employees and volunteers and to the children they work with. In this research most of these were followed, though not always as systematically as they are intended to be and one participant in particular had an interesting perspective on their effectiveness, as seen at the end of the next section.
Participants were asked if they had been appropriately screened by the CRB at the time of their employment. A CRB check requires the active participation of the subject by the completion of forms, so participants can reasonably be expected to have been aware of the process.

As stated above all of those participants who could have been subject to a CRB check were checked: there were 9 who had appropriately been CRB checked in an organisation where it would be expected.

*All my jobs yeah, oh yeah always been – I've hid nothing.*

In one instance a participant had been screened by the CRB on multiple occasions:

*Interviewer:* Do you know, at anytime were you CRB checked?

*Participant:* About 4 times … Scouts, teaching agency, teaching … and I think the fourth would have been for a summer job I did as a children’s courier of (holiday company).

Mindful of Warner’s (1992) finding that that 10% of Heads of Children’s Homes and 33% of care workers took up their posts before references were received, a delay in CRB was mentioned by two interviewees.

*Interviewer:* Do you remember if there was any way of checking whether you had previous convictions?

*Participant:* There was something you had to fill in to have a police check, but equally I wouldn't mind betting that we'd probably been in the job 6 months by the time it was done … I would guess yeah.

Where CRB screening did not happen there were a variety of reasons: that it was prior to the CRB process being available; that the offender was outside a regulated system, for example a private tutor; that they were simply not undertaken or in volunteer based organisations were regarded as too onerous: ‘No, no. Really, to go down the CRB check route, you would have to check every single member, and this would have created an awful problem for the (volunteer organisation).’

A further issue with CRB checks is cost, as one teacher who had a recent offence described. When asked if references had been checked by the employment agency and queried that school took him on anyway, even though the references hadn't come through, he responded:

*Costs, costs money doesn't it for the agency? Anyway, all of a sudden they knew me so well, cos I'd been there a week, and it was, I think in all fairness, I think it is, I think a lot of it is 'Oh, they seem a really good person'.*

Where screening processes were in place in at least one instance they were considered fallible:

*In them days, if you filled in your job application and you got to that question ‘Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?’ I always put ‘No’ because 5 out of 10 wouldn't check. Of the rest that did, 9 out of 10 of them other 5 would just sack you.*

Overall, therefore, this does seem to reinforce both the importance of a thorough selection and recruitment process but also the notion that whilst such processes are necessary they are not in themselves sufficient to effectively protect children in organisational settings.
Messages about the Organisation

One of the research questions related to the perception of the organisation gained by offenders during the recruitment or induction process, particularly messages about children and how they were regarded or expected to be treated by employees. Almost none recalled a specific mention of children in this way other than possibly being briefed about Child Protection procedures – how to respond if they suspected child abuse, largely from outside of the organisation. There was little variation in this aspect between those interviewed some years ago and those more recently.

**Interviewer:** Were there any descriptions about how the organisation cared for children? To say they were well safeguarded?

**Participant:** Not as such. Again, this was 20 some odd years ago, it was a job description. Yes they had fire and evacuation policies … training, all of that. But not child protection stuff. There wasn’t any specific, and yes, it was a job description and your role and how you could progress …

And a more recent example:

**Interviewer:** Did the Head Teacher give you any sort of messages or information about safeguarding or what they believed should happen for children? Anything at all?

**Participant:** I’m not sure, I can’t really remember, I’m sorry.

One offender who had been both a teacher and an active member of youth serving agencies had experienced organisations which placed a high emphasis on child welfare and child protection but commented that the effect of such wide ranging concern was potentially counter–productive:

**Participant:** Because the perception is, you can’t do anything, you can’t do anything, and you’re letting the kids down, because you know you can’t even give the kid that’s upset a hug. You can’t do this, and given that undertone, that actually leaves it quite easy. There’s all these messages about what you can and can’t do and so many of them seem to be overly, overbearing and self-destructive. I suppose it dilutes the core message of what’s really trying to be achieved to some extent …

**Interviewer:** Because you’re actually acting to do the right thing for the child?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah and then you’re actually getting very blurred lines rather than definite lines and where you’ve got blurred lines, you can do what you like can’t you pretty much. Not what you like, but it’s easy to get away with blurring lines …

This echoes a theme identified in interviews with managers who had experience of staffing issues in a range of settings undertaken as part of previous research (Erooga, 2009), that without the clarity of organisational aims and objectives, and the framework of good practice which they reinforce, ‘… too much depends on the attitudes and judgments of fallible individuals’ (Wardaugh and Wilding 1993, p. 18). Colton (2002) also suggests that without effective management and accountability structures, staff can become a law unto themselves and in this situation an individual organisational culture develops.
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Once an individual is in post, policies and procedures are intended to guide their conduct. There can be no single factor which will prevent the possibility of children being abused or maltreated by those working with them, but the recurrence of inquiries with similar themes suggests that the organisational context in which the work takes place is an important factor which mediates how likely or possible it is for any such recurrent patterns to occur (Goffman, 1961). As the Department of Health put it 'When a group of people work or live together, a culture evolves: it is something greater than the sum of the behaviour, attitudes and aspirations of the individuals.' (Department of Health, 1998b, p. 3)

The importance of this is that the organisational environment is a key element in the prevention of potential abuse. For an organisation to have a satisfactory child-centred culture with children's well-being and welfare at the core it must have clearly articulated set of values and desired organisational behaviours. It then needs defined methods to adhere to and monitor the effectiveness of those behaviours.

In six cases the transmitted message was that it was management of the young people that was the central priority:

Participant: Because the clients were difficult, they could be violent or aggressive, if you've got 8 or 10 of them, and there's only 2 of you ... one's dealing with one of the boys over there, and the other one's dealing with the other one there ... in another room ... it's impossible, you know ... there were times that happened, quite a lot.

Interviewer: Did you get a sense that there was a lot of concern about the welfare of the young people?

Participant: There was concern ... probably not enough though ... it was very blasé I think in a way.

A distinguishing feature of organisational abuse of power is that it involves more than a passive neglect of the principles of good practice but extends to an active betrayal of the basic values of the organisation. Rather like 'good practice' it is easy to assume that organisational values will be understood by those working within it, particularly when the organisation is one which has a public service or welfare remit. However, it seems more likely that if those values are not clearly articulated, communicated internally and demonstrated in the conduct of the organisation from senior management downward they are unlikely to be effective or credible, neither likely to be understood by workers or consistently demonstrated in organisational conduct.

In a number of the descriptions of their organisations by participants it seemed to be the case that such consistency or clarity was markedly lacking, unclear or non-existent.

Interviewer: Let me ask that a different way then. Were you told about things like, and I'm bearing in mind its 20 years ago, were you told about child protection policies?

Participant: No.
This was a similar issue in a more recent offence. When another participant was asked:

*Interviewer:* So did you have like an induction when you started at this school, where the offence took place? Any sort of induction training, you know a period where they told you about stuff?

*Participant:* No.

In others, in a finding reflected elsewhere in the literature (Erooga, 2009), expectations of staff behaviour were not made explicit:

*I think it was just understood that … it was expected that you knew.*

When there was intervention or attempts at good practice this seemed again to either not be clearly communicated or its purpose assumed to be understood. One participant described being given a doorstop to prop open their classroom door but no discussion about the rationale for this, which seemed to reflect more of a concern to protect the adult from allegations rather than to safeguard the children.

A basic expectation might be clarity of expectations about relationships or contact between staff and pupils. However, in 7 cases with both employees and volunteers this was apparently absent. Typical of a number of interviews was this response:

*Interviewer:* So there weren't specific rules about not being on your own with children (outside school) … ?

*Participant:* No.

In other cases overt expectations were simply not enforced. In one case private tuition (which was not supposed to happen) was an ‘open secret’ in the school but not acknowledged, as was, in another, the use of ‘Saturday boys’ on a milk delivery round.

By contrast where such issues were attended to the likelihood of abuse seems to have reduced. One participant abused a number of children prior to working in an Assessment Centre and did so again subsequently when working as an Education Social Worker but maintained that he had not abused when working in a residential children’s home (and had no allegations made against him of doing so). Having been through a treatment process during a lengthy custodial sentence he was able to reflect on his own behaviour and attributed the change to his pattern of offending in the home to a positive child-centred organisational culture and adherence to expectations of staff behaviour:

*I think they just had good staff and good rotas, there was always lots of people about … I just can't imagine looking back at it that you wouldn't ever have asked if you could (take kids out) – it wouldn't have been part of the norm … it just wasn't in that environment … that was a good environment in terms of … child protection, yeah absolutely … you know it's all the same things – there was boundaries, professionalism …*

Warduagh and Wilding (1993) suggested a process that can occur in organisations which makes them more vulnerable to the likelihood of abuse by staff. This is where service-users come to be seen as less than people with rights and needs, where they become problems to be resolved or regarded as measurable
'units' to be processed. This was a clear feature in five cases, where managing the children or client became seen as an overriding priority:

There were behaviour issues in the class. Now, whether or not that was down to me is slightly questionable 'cause someone else in the school told me 'we've been waiting to get rid of this class for 7 years' so ... (there was 13 final year 10 and 11 year olds) ... it very quickly became a bit of a dumping ground. That if children were seriously misbehaving or refusing to go to lessons, they would say 'Will you go to ... ' I think it was room 10 ... 'Go to room 10 and just sit quietly.'

Organisational priorities of managing children also impacted on staff and supervision and a focus on their functioning.

Interviewer: When you say you worked particularly with difficult clients, how did that impact on the supervision and how did it impact on the offending?

Participant: Because the clients were difficult, they could be violent or aggressive, if you've got 8 or 10 of them, and there's only 2 of you ... one's dealing with one of the boys over there, and the other one's dealing with the other one there ... in another room ... its impossible, you know ... there were times that happened, quite a lot. It's all about money, funding, you're only allowed to supply x amount of staff per hours, and x number of pounds on staff to cover those hours and despite the fact they are charities, they are also businesses, they want money.

One effect of such an environment is that it militated, albeit unintentionally, against children being able to express concerns or even to disclose abuse when it was occurring:

I think they (the children) could have talked to the matron, I suppose ... they could have talked to the Headmaster but that was all basically was above me really ... the Head was very much quite aloof and so was the matron really, and I think they were more afraid of her than anybody else.

This was undoubtedly unintentional in organisations, but if this quote is an adult's perception of the difficulties children would have faced in disclosure, it is likely to have been all the greater from a child's perspective. It was noticeable that in the case of both female participants they equally felt unable to speak about concerns they had about the events in their work setting.

Interviewer: Was there anyone you could talk to within the school about those sort of things?

Participant: No 'cos they all just seemed to think it was the norm (physical restraint of the children in a very male orientated environment), everybody seemed to think that, that was it, I think a lot of them had been there a long time and it was just their way of dealing with it.

Some organisations had well developed processes, with one participant describing very clear guidance about contact between adults and children which was adhered to, whilst another explained that on occasion it was difficult to follow through even if the ethos was understood:

Participant: One of the things that had been spoken about in this school, was if you reprimanded a child or were talking to a child, make sure there's a door open, and quite right and I think that's a good thing, it's good practical advice.
Interviewer: So were there rules in the school about teachers not being one on one with a child within … ?

Participant: No, no it was advice, because that situation was always gonna happen, how do you not do that? A kid comes to you and says, you know to a teacher, I’m trying to think if it happened to me, it did happen to me.

A kid came to me ‘Sir can I speak to you at the end please’, and you know ‘I want you to know I might get a bit teary from time to time, mum’s got cancer’. They don’t want to say that in front of loads of people there, you know it’s a brave thing for the kid to say or you know, whether it’s with the PE teacher, ‘I’m on my period, it’s the first time I’ve had my period’ or whatever. There is need for one on one.

In others they were considered too onerous to be followed. In this case of a voluntary organisation the offender was a member of the Board and it would seem to have been in his interest that this view was taken:

Interviewer: I’m quite interested in the organisational rules. Were there rules about child protection?

Participant: No

Interviewer: … had anyone, in the experience you had there, expressed any concerns about there being no rules or procedures or messages about children and children’s welfare?

Participant: Yes it had been mentioned at Society and Board level on a number of occasions. But it was decided that because it was so unclear and unwieldy and impossible to introduce, not to do anything.

Often overlooked as a significant factor, this would seem to suggest that as well as the contribution to risk of individual factors, the culture of the organisation also has a significant part to play in risk minimisation.

COLLEAGUES’ PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPANT’S OFFENDING

A final aspect of organisational culture to consider is how the culture manifested itself through colleagues. Participants were asked to comment on whether they thought their colleagues had concerns or suspicions about their behaviours.

Some of the issues identified included colleague perception of the offender at the time of the abuse, including their vulnerability as opposed to the child’s; colleague responses to requests for support at the time of the abuse and colleagues continuing to offer support post conviction. It should be noted that the research team did not interview offenders’ colleagues so this section is again only informed by offender perceptions.

There were at least 4 participants who fitted Doran and Brannon’s (1996) description of an ‘isolated, over committed and dutiful’ member of staff but it was clear in some cases that those qualities had more meaning in a context where other colleagues were willing to let children fend for themselves. One
offender, a priest and teacher described vividly such a situation in the boarding and day school where he taught:

Participant: This was the problem. If they'd shown more interest... They were all getting on with their own lives and were doing their own things, doing their, whatever work they do, marking or going out. It was to me the boarders came and I was doing a D. Phil course at the time, I was terribly stretched myself, but I would never turn them away and they used to say 'My, oh why don't you send them upstairs?' But if they came to me and I used to say to my colleagues, 'Well they must want something different, they must get fed up with where they are for a few minutes'. I would never, ever, turn them away, never.

Five participants, particularly in schools and children's homes, gave clear descriptions of colleagues' negative views of the children and young people. Wardaugh and Wilding (1993) describe certain populations, including children in social care as being held in less regard than others in society. Colton et al. (2002) similarly argue that 'looked after children are a population most likely to comprise a group widely stigmatised as the 'underclass' with an essential ambivalence in society between sympathy for the victims of child abuse generally and the threat to social order represented by 'troubled and troublesome youth' (p. 549).

A man who had been both a manager and a practitioner in a children's home described how it was easier for him and for colleagues to dismiss disclosures from the boys in their care because of the prevailing attitudes towards them. In the case of both women working in teaching settings their victims were generally viewed as disruptive and troublesome. In 6 cases it was notable that participants thought that despite being in organisations that had a duty of care toward children, colleagues expressed more concern about the professional's vulnerability than that of the children.

For example, a female colleague as putting himself at risk perceived this offender:

... and I always remember her saying to me, she says 'one of them girls has a crush on you and be careful' and she did. She used to follow me round you know and If I went in the changing rooms she'd come round you know ... and I made sure I never went anywhere without somebody else if she were about.

Similarly a stables manager for a Council was often on his own with vulnerable children attending extracurricular activities. His perception was that colleagues saw him as being vulnerable in that context:

Her house backed onto the stables – they were built into the primary school. They could have had people there. The caretaker said (to me) 'You're walking a very thin line – you're in a vulnerable position'.

This same man said that he had expressed worry about his isolation to a number of council officials to no avail until a fire at the stables resulted in there needing to be two staff on duty. This offender was able to see the distortion in this sort of view:

In this other situation where people did know ... my colleagues were just saying how stupid I was basically. Not in a way of ... not in the way you would hope ... that if something happened that shouldn't have happened – it wasn't that kind of reaction ... it was 'How stupid of you to get
involved with such a body, you know what he's like. So it was more a criticism of him. So that was quite powerful against him wasn't it really?

Some participants expressed incredulity that no one was concerned about their behaviour, or if they were, that they did not intervene. The first of these examples is a teacher/tutor in a private boarding school who was able to select the boys he wanted to abuse in his tutor group and who saw both those boys and boys who were to be punished in his private (school) accommodation.

Interviewer: Do you think any of your colleagues had any sort of inkling about what was happening at any point, was anyone suspicious?

Participant: I'm sure … no, nobody said anything. I think they did use the words X's favourites, umm, but I'm sure they were suspicious because they'd be silly if they weren't.

Interviewer: Just wondered why you would feel that they should have been suspicious? I mean you said that they would be silly to not have been suspicious.

Participant: Well I think if I put myself in that situation, you know I think I would have brought in all sorts of regulations that this type of thing shouldn't be able to happen. But my feeling is that the person who chose the people in the tutor groups should not actually have been a tutor themselves and then it could have been totally one step removed and I think I would have brought in you know to protect the children one thing that no children ever to go into staff accommodation.

A second offender, the Director of a national choir organisation who reported feeling extremely stressed at the time of his offence, described asking colleagues and parents why they had not confronted him about his general loss of control:

I have often thought why didn't the other people within the organisation and I asked them this, 'Why didn't you say anything to me about the control' and they said 'Well we have known you so long and respected you so much we didn't think, we thought you were just having a bad time because of what was going on with you wife and you know and your divorce and we were just trying to support you' and I was 'You should have just slapped me round the face'.

It would appear that in at least three instances colleagues had had concerns about participants' behaviour but this did not come to light until after the abuse was disclosed. In one example, worries about an army cadet leader being over familiar with female cadets had caused colleagues to question whether he should be allowed to accompany young people on a trip abroad. However, this did not result in action to prevent him from doing so.

In the case of a Sea Cadet leader the witness depositions indicated that following his arrest colleagues expressed concerns that he had made a number of sexually inappropriate comments about female cadets that could not be explained in the way the interviewee suggested:

I think that, to be honest I've always had a bit of a jokey, flirty nature ok, … sometimes you'd have the cadets, boys and girls staying overnight at the Unit and obviously … there wouldn't just be me there, there'd be other staff as well … and what they consider an inappropriate comment was … say some of the girls'd come down the stairs wearing very little and I'd stand there and look at the ceiling and say 'Get back upstairs and get something on so I can' … you know, and they just, they did try to say that sort of thing was me saying inappropriate things.
Finally, in the case of the Director of the Naturist Club who sexually abused two brothers, colleagues had noted that the offender was often seen to be ‘partying’ in other naturists’ tents. As in the case of the Choir Director above it might be reasonable to assume that his position and standing in the organisation (a founding member and Director) inhibited others from speaking out.

Whilst it cannot be concluded that had colleagues behaved differently children would definitely have been better protected we would suggest that there is considerable learning from these examples. It may be that information about the lack of a ‘typical profile’ for those who may behave inappropriately, in conjunction with clear and explicit guidance about discussing possible concerns about colleague behaviour, would go some way to addressing this. Further it would be interesting to explore whether the participants’ perception of colleagues’ concerns matched what those concerns actually were at the time, and whether expressing it as concern for the adult was more palatable than taking action over concern for the children.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT/BUILDINGS

A further organisational issue which was explored with participants was whether or not the physical layout of the setting in which the abuse took place contributed to or facilitated that abuse. In four this was apparently a significant feature and whilst it was not a cause of abuse it was possibly a facilitating factor. One residential teacher described the presence of the bed in his bed sitting room study as providing an opportunity to:

… wrestle or something like that fooling around, unfortunately it got a bit beyond that …

For the vast majority the physical layout did not consciously seem to have been a significant factor, with an acknowledgement that they

… could have been interrupted at any point I suppose …

In one striking case the physical layout seemed to reflect the isolation the interviewee felt in the organisation more generally:

Interviewer: Right, so was there a window in the door?
Participant: No.
Interviewer: So it was a closed room?
Participant: Yeah.
Interviewer: You, one of the kids, was there anything if you got into any difficulty?
Participant: No.
Interviewer: No Panic button?
Participant: No. I know, sometimes when I think about it now, I think what would have happened if I’d have got into a difficult situation as in that, but I suppose at the time I never thought about it. It was next door to another room and then on the other side of it there was just like a pool room.
**Interviewer:** So if you’d have been shouting?

**Participant:** There was an Art room that way, sometimes quite often they had music playing, quite loud so which means, I don’t know I think I’d have had to shout pretty loud to be heard.

**Interviewer:** Did people walk past the room?

**Participant:** Yeah, there could have been, but as I say …

**Interviewer:** Wouldn’t have made much difference … And you had the door closed?

**Participant:** Yeah.

In a further example arrangements seemed entirely sensible but inevitably did not prevent the offences taking place:

*Yeah, basically we’d been on an overnight camp at one of my local scout centres in March, so it was indoor camp … they had forty Cubs staying with us, there would have been five or six adults and I think there were four Scouts in the tents outside … basically we had two buildings, it’s got a small bunkhouse and it’s got a building for a main large home and kitchens and an entrance area. So, the adults were all sleeping in a bunkhouse, Scouts in the tents outside. And all the Cubs, boys and girls were together in the main, main hall area, sleeping in there.*

It would be simplistic to suggest that the simple modification of physical arrangements will protect children from abuse. However, it is a relevant factor to consider, both in terms of the practical benefits it may offer and the message about the organisations commitment to an open and protective culture that it may convey.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

This chapter has identified a range of organisational factors, which may have contributed to the development of an environment in which abuse could occur. There were some clear themes around recruitment, organisational messages and organisational culture that emerged:

- Recruitment procedures, as described by participants, were often not rigorous;
- Selection processes such as interviews were not particularly challenging; participants who offended more recently described processes focussed primarily on technical knowledge rather than values related to working with children;
- There was evidence that not all cases had sufficient screening of references; in particular, agencies providing temporary staff failed to adequately check historical references;
- All participants who could should have been CRB checked were; in no case would one of the participants who abused children been screened out through this route;
- Participants described organisations which failed to provide clear messages about organisational commitment to children's welfare; most messages at the beginning of jobs or volunteering were no more than basic messages about child protection
• It appeared that many organisations described by participants did not place an importance on clarity about rules and regulations; in particular, expectations about relationships between staff and children or young people were rarely spelled out and where they were, were rarely enforced;

• Some organisations were described as being more committed to managing children's behaviour than in their overall welfare;

• Colleagues were described as either being unaware of the abuse participants were perpetrating or aware at some level but not acting on that knowledge. There were two examples where it seemed colleagues had some awareness, but showed more concern toward the perpetrator's potential for 'getting in trouble' than for the welfare of the child;

• Location of abuse rarely played a part in facilitating abuse in this study; it appeared that abuse could happen almost anywhere, no matter how many others may have been around or had the potential for walking in on participants. In a few cases, it is possible that the geographical isolation of participants may have been a factor.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – A WAY FORWARD?

As indicated in the introduction, as a qualitative study with a non-representative sample it would be inappropriate to generalise the findings from these interviews to draw conclusions about the population of those who sexually abuse children in the context of their professional relationships. However, there are some clear themes which challenge the widely held view that those who perpetrate sexual offences against children are uniformly or even typically ‘paedophiles’ seeking out opportunities to sexually assault children and prepared to lie and deceive in order to do so (NSPCC, 2009). Undoubtedly there are some individuals whose primary sexual interest is children and who will indeed lie and deceive in order to sexually abuse, but for a number of the participants in this sample the reality is more nuanced.

Stark et al. (1997) suggest the best way to avoid harm to children is to avoid dangerous practice, rather than attempt to screen out allegedly dangerous people. The discussion in previous chapters has indicated the importance of clearly articulated values in organisations and the impact these can have on organisational culture and day to day practice. An integrated approach to value based recruitment and selection, management and practice, with a clear ethos of acting in the best interests of children would seem to offer the most effective way of responding to the challenge of ensuring that children receive the respectful and above all safe service that every organisation aspires to provide.

Adapting Finkelhor’s (1984) original process model of sexual abuse alongside consideration of situational crime prevention theory may be a useful way to consider organisational measures, which might increase protection from an individual motivated to sexually abuse children. Beyer et al (2005) explain that situational crime prevention, in which organisational factors are used to reduce opportunities for abuse, can be grouped into several overall objectives known to have an influence on offending behaviour. These objectives align closely with Finkelhor’s four preconditions model.

Figure 1: Safer Recruitment and Culture Model (Cleary, 2008)
As Figure 1 above illustrates, rigorous vetting and screening measures are an important step in the model and our research suggests that some organisations would benefit from a thorough approach to using such procedures.

A second step would be the stimulation of internal inhibitors within potential perpetrators. In situational crime prevention strategies, this corresponds to the notion of ‘reducing permissibility’ (Clarke, 1997) where offenders minimise the criminality of their behaviour by invoking excuses to free themselves of the inhibitory effects of self-blame. It is easy in a child focused organisation to assume that all staff know and understand the damage which abuse does to children. More open internal communication about this might help to both increase internal inhibition and maintain the necessary culture of awareness and vigilance. Failing to give clear messages about the priority of safeguarding and children’s right to be protected, particularly if combined with a perceived, or actual, failure to act in response to inappropriate behaviours, could allow a predisposed individual to follow a similar reasoning process. For example, findings in this study showed a focus in the recruitment period on ‘technical skills’ e.g. the ability to teach a subject or manage a classroom, but a marked absence of organisational clarity about expectations either of staff behaviour or the respect and care with which children should be treated. A value based organisational culture increases the efforts that an individual would have to make in order to achieve this level of distortion. As suggested above, abuse may be reduced by strategies that empower and humanise service users by appropriate rule setting and clarifying mutual responsibility, so curbing the sense that staff may act as they please. In the light of this it could be conjectured that there are implications for organisations, which do not

External inhibitors are also important sites of focus in Finkelhor’s model. All of the participants in this study held functionally distorted beliefs (cognitive distortions) which enabled them to overcome any internal inhibitors in order to offend which means that an important target would be external barriers to offending, which correspond naturally to situational prevention strategies focussed on ‘increasing the effort required to offend’. For organisational offending against children, this principally means both making it harder for potential offenders to obtain access to children to abuse and reducing opportunities for abuse when in a relationship with a child. Whilst the predatory offenders described by Wortley and Smallbone (2006) may, at best, be slowed down by this strategy, situational and opportunistic offenders may be fully deterred. A value based approach to recruitment may, in itself, act as a deterrent to attempting to gain such a position. Specific measures may restricting opportunities to have unsupervised contact outside of the work environment, controlling access to facilities, and in view of their finding about the proportion who had a reputation amongst the children for sexually inappropriate behaviour, teaching children to be assertive, know their rights and appropriate expectations of ‘caring’ adults and to know how to report any issues they are uncomfortable about, and use of controlling strategies such as staff oversight (Beyer et al., 2005).

A further situational prevention strategy focussed on the external is to ‘increase risk of detection’. This, it is suggested, is perhaps the most salient variable in the potential offender’s decision-making process (Cornish and Clarke, 2003). Indeed, in this research it was apparent that participants’ roles with children made it easier to engage them and to develop and sustain special relationships, which facilitated the abuse and potentially made it more difficult for the children to alert other adults who could have taken action to protect them.
In organisational settings, if those in authority take responsibility for monitoring, supervising and evaluating the behaviour of employees and volunteers this partly achieves and facilitates the identification and effective management of inappropriate behaviour by staff.

Appropriate protocols governing interaction with children can be introduced and the physical design of facilities modified to help increase natural surveillance (for example, interviewing rooms with glass panels in the doors) (Beyer et al. 2005). Improving knowledge and confidence of staff and children in reporting and discussing concerning behaviour also increases risk of detection of abusers (Wortley and Smallbone, 2006). Publicised organisational monitoring for inappropriate use of computer equipment may also be contributory element to prevention, especially if accompanied by procedures to respond to concerns, including notification of the police where appropriate.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is important that risk factors for children, adults and organisations are identified, it is equally important to draw on the knowledge about the features that make organisations safer for children. (Beyer et al., 2005, p. 106)

The single most important message from this research is that the common focus of deterring or preventing ‘paedophiles’ from joining organisations is not sufficient to appropriately safeguard children. This finding supports the NSPCC response to the recent proposed reforms to the Vetting and Barring Scheme and the Criminal Records Bureau by the Coalition Government announced in February 2011. As well as providing appropriate ‘barriers’ by way of selection and screening processes it is also necessary to manage organisational processes so that the possibility of inappropriate or abusive behaviour developing or occurring is minimised. In that context there are a number of recommendations from the research:

PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

All organisations, including those which are non-statutory or which do not have a specific remit for the welfare of children e.g. tourist attractions, should have a clear awareness of their Duty of Care towards children and engender the principle of safeguarding being ‘everyone’s responsibility’

Consideration of how situational prevention approaches outlined in Chapter Two can be used to maximise their contribution to creating safer environments for children in specific settings and interested readers are also referred to Erooga, 2009.

Consideration of an action plan based on the concept of an ‘organisational four factor preventive model’, as outlined in the discussion above.

It will be apparent that in circumstances of abuse by a professional the barriers to disclosure of children may be even greater than in some other circumstances. Our own findings suggest that organisational cultures can feel ‘closed’ and inaccessible to staff working in them and if this is the case, children will be affected by such cultures even more so. Services like ChildLine can meet that need to some extent but it is also important for organisations to develop confidential spaces for children and young people to be able to report abuse.

Equally the importance of ‘whistleblowing processes’ where staff that have concerns can report those should not be underestimated. The potential for these mechanisms to be used inappropriately or even maliciously is also a real one and it is important that any such scheme is designed and administered sensitively and with appropriate safeguards for all who may be involved in their use.

Under the proposed new system, some employers and volunteering organisations may be inconvenienced by the additional process required in having to obtain certificates from individuals rather than receiving them directly. However, this should not affect the effectiveness of the system in keeping children safe. Applicants for posts or jobs should not be able to take up their post without the relevant checks having
been completed, even if this is because they have requested a review of the non-conviction information supplied on their criminal record certificate.

Given that the Protection of Freedoms Bill creates a new penalty for those who knowingly request CRB checks for people who are not entitled to them (as currently defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) employers need to ensure that they are fully aware of the relevant regulations governing this.

Applications: Reviewing information requested in applications so that there is a self declaration for criminal convictions and any charges for a criminal offence with outcome (possibly important information in the context of the high attrition rates for sexual abuse offences); any Finding of Fact in civil proceedings; history of performance or disciplinary issues; concerns relating to appropriate behaviour with service users, colleagues or in a non work related context and any findings by relevant professional bodies.

References: If not already undertaken, consideration should be given to following the Warner recommendation that ‘any aspect of an employment history or reference causing concern should be checked, by telephone if easier, to obtain information’ (Warner, 1997, p. 15), with a written record made of the conversation and retained with other candidate information (Warner, 1992) in all appropriate cases.

Induction: Induction is an important element of the process of an individual joining an organisation. As well as an opportunity to introduce new joiners to the practicalities of their new role it is also an important opportunity to introduce them to the organisation’s vision and aspirations and expectations of all staff about working with children and what is considered acceptable and what is not (see for example DfES, 2009., for an example of an accessible and clear guidance).

Employers should report any concerns they have about the behaviour of an individual to both the police and the DBS, and Government should take steps to encourage employers to do so.

The information employers obtain on CRB checks should be used not only to inform recruitment decisions, but should also be used to inform how they manage and supervise staff as effectively as possible.

POLICY RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Protecting children is everyone’s responsibility and employers, parents and wider society need to be vigilant if they are to safeguard children. The NSPCC is clear that robust vetting and barring is a necessary, but not sufficient, element of safeguarding. A wide range of processes, practices, attitudes and understanding are all important. Vetting is a component of, not a substitute for, a range of child protection measures, which together constitute a robust system of child protection.

Government should produce clear guidance on vetting and barring and disclosure procedures for employers, in which they clearly set out the mechanics of the scheme. This should include information about: which employees and activities are included in the category of regulated activity; who should and should not be CRB checked; how often checks should be updated and whose responsibility this is; what to do with the information revealed in a check.
The NSPCC is cautiously optimistic about the national Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme and recommends that efforts be made to raise awareness of the scheme with employers and managers in companies where employees may have contact with children, no matter how infrequent or irregular. Ongoing, regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme is essential to ensure that it is being implemented consistently across all forces and is not having any adverse impact on offenders’ compliance with their registration requirements. Training for all police staff involved in the scheme and in making disclosures should be mandatory.

There is a potential role for kite-marking and accreditation schemes to complement regulation, particularly for the voluntary and community sectors. In the past the potential of Article 18 of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 in Northern Ireland legislation has been highlighted as a concept that could potentially assist, particularly in voluntary organisations, in making whole-system improvements and, as part of this, help to build capacity. The NSPCC recommends that the Government revisit this idea, as it has the potential for organisations to build capacity and good practice in relation to standards that go beyond vetting. Underpinning such a scheme their needs to be a clear set of good practice criterion against which employer accreditation would be judged. Government should produce or commission this set of criterion.

Policy recommendations regarding regulated activity

The Protection of Freedoms Bill restricts the definition of regulated activity relating to children. Regulated activity is being redefined to focus on those roles with close and regular unsupervised interaction with children, or roles in specified settings. Employers are able to request enhanced CRB checks for people working with children or vulnerable adults in non-regulated activity but are not required to do so. Employers should identify those permanent employees and volunteers who have frequent and regular access to children that may be unsupervised, even if this is not intensive and consider whether obtaining a CRB check for them would be advisable.

The exclusion of some supervised employees and volunteers from regulated activity is worrying because such people may still be able to develop close contact with them, which may make it easier for children to be abused. It is important that accompanying guidance defines ‘supervision’ very tightly – this will help to ensure that employers are clear about the need to check people working without active supervision. Government guidance should set out clearly what levels of supervision are sufficient for a post to be considered outside regulated activity. For example, a volunteer part-time teaching assistant in a classroom of 30 children, with only light-touch supervision by the classroom teacher, has plenty of opportunity to develop inappropriate relationships and groom children.

Policy recommendations regarding Barring

The Protection of Freedoms Bill proposes that barring will be restricted to people working in, or intending to work in, regulated activity. This means that a person might be barred from working in regulated activity, but then be able to move into non-regulated activity work with children without any obstacles. Employers will not be able to find out if individuals have been barred unless they work in regulated activity. The NSPCC believes that all enhanced CRB checks should show if an individual is
barred, even if this barring does not prevent the individual working in the position for which they are being checked. They should also contain relevant non-conviction data. We welcome moves to increase the transfer of information between the ISA and the police and we hope that this will help to ensure that CRB checks contain more comprehensive information. This could enable employers to make informed suitability decisions about people who wish to work with children.

Policy recommendations regarding portability and costs

Government should take steps to ensure that employers understand the limits of portability, and ensure that checks are clearly marked to indicate which positions and sectors they apply to.

Employers need to be encouraged to check regularly for updated information about people they employ. This means that, whilst employers may only check every three years, the subscription fee must be paid continuously, which may be expensive. Initial checks will be free for volunteers. Clarification is needed on whether the annual subscription fee will apply or be levied at a reduced rate for volunteers.

Policy recommendation regarding children under the age of 16

CRB checks should only be used for young people under the age of 16 where they are proportionate and necessary to ensure the protection of other children. The prime example of a necessary CRB check for children under 16 is when young people are part of a household that is applying to adopt or foster other children. In these cases, it is important that a fostering panel should be is able to find out about the risk a young person may pose, and make decisions to manage this risk.

Young people under 16 should not be in positions where they have unsupervised contact with, or responsibility for, children or vulnerable adults through their paid work, voluntary work or work experience. Therefore criminal records checks for these positions are not justified. We recommend a communications and education campaign for employers and other organisations that might request checks, to ensure that they do not request unnecessary checks from young people.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that there is widespread commitment to the appropriate and effective safeguarding of children in all settings, not solely those in organisations. Equally the furore that greeted the announcement of an extension to vetting and barring arrangements (BBC, 2009) indicate the need for a balance between child protection and perceived civil liberties. It is hoped that the findings from this research will further illuminate our understanding of the potential risks and constructive solutions so that more children can enjoy positive caring relationships with the adults who work with them.
APPENDIX 1

Dear X,

You are invited to volunteer to participate in a study by the NSPCC. There is relatively little information published about situations where adults working or volunteering in organisations have had sexual contact with children or young people. We have therefore designed a research project to understand this issue from the perspective of people who have been convicted of such offences, so that we can understand how such situations arise and what can be done to minimise the possibility of it happening in the future.

If you agree to be interviewed, you will talk to two of the three members of the research team, Marcus Erooga, Debbie Allnock & Paula Telford from NSPCC, whom have either previously worked in treatment settings with people who have been convicted of sexual offences with children or have experience of research with people who are in the criminal justice system.

The interview will take up to 90 minutes and be recorded to enable us to type up the interview afterwards. Any information from the interview will be used anonymously (no identifying names or other material) and when written up anything which might identify you specifically will be removed. The transcript of the interview will not be shared outside of the project which this work forms a part of and will be analysed as part of a larger set of interviews.

All the data from the interviews will be stored securely and destroyed once it has been analysed, not later than 12 months from the date of your interview. This is an entirely voluntary process and you would be free to withdraw from the interview or the process at any point, in which case any information you have provided will not be included in the study and be destroyed.

The focus of these interviews is as much about the circumstances surrounding your work or volunteering situation as the offences and we are not seeking any information about illegal acts which are not already known to the relevant authorities. However, you will appreciate that in the event that information is disclosed about a new offence, we have a responsibility to make this known to your Case Manager, the Police and Children’s Services if relevant.

Similarly, in the event that any new information is disclosed which suggests that you may present a risk to yourself or others, this will be made known to your Case Manager.

If you are interested in participating please advise the person who has given you this letter and they will contact us to make the necessary arrangements.

If you would like any further information similarly please advise the person who has given you this letter and they will contact us to obtain that for you.

We look forward to working with you

Marcus Erooga, Debbie Allnock & Paula Telford

NSPCC
APPENDIX 2
RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS
& CONSENT TO ACCESS FILES FORM

Title of Research: Study with offenders convicted of offences against children and young people in positions of trust

Researchers: Marcus Erooga, (Professional Advisor, NSPCC Fresh Start), Paula Telford (Children’s Services Manager, NSPCC) and Debra Allnock (Research Officer, NSPCC Child Protection Research Department).

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you understand the purpose of the study and what your participation involves. This statement describes the purpose, benefits and risks of the study, and includes a description of your role in it. It also explains your right to withdraw from the study at any time.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to increase understanding about sexual abuse of children in work related settings and to help to improve systems to keep children safe. We are interested in interviewing people who have been convicted of certain types of offences so that we can analyse patterns of behaviour and see how this can help improve preventive systems to be developed. Your contribution to this study will be invaluable to help improve safeguarding measures in organisations which work with children and young people.

EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES

We would like to undertake an in-depth interview with you for approximately 90 minutes, to explore a variety of themes as outlined above. We will be digitally recording the interviews for the purpose of later typing out the interview, which will make analysis easier. Prior to the interview we are asking your agreement to allow the researchers access to your case file (including psychology records), or information related to your current offence(s) from a professional. We will use this information only to provide further context for the interview. If, when we meet with you and explain the research and interview you decide not to proceed, then we will not retain or use any information from your case file/psychology file or use information from there.
CONFIDENTIALITY

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential, only available to the researcher team. The recordings we make will be stored securely and electronically on NSPCC premises and destroyed at the completion of the project. The typed transcripts of the interviews will be kept in secure files on NSPCC premises. There will not be any identifying information kept on the recordings, nor on the transcripts. The typed interviews will be analysed as part of a much larger set of interviews. The results of the research will be published in the form of NSPCC reports, and will appear in academic journals, and may be presented at professional conferences/meetings. You will not be identifiable in any of this public material.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

It is important for you to understand that your decision to participate or not will have no bearing on your sentence or any relationship you have with the agencies dealing with you. The NSPCC is completely independent from other organisations and your participation in this study is completely voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Each participant is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice.

If you have read, and understand fully, the purpose of the study and this request to access information from your file you are asked to sign and date the form below to confirm this.

If there is anything on this form that you do not fully understand and would like to discuss further, please let one of the researchers know. We are happy to clarify the study, or can provide you with an independent number for the NSPCC Research Department who can address your queries, and authenticate the study.

Signature_____________________________________________

Date________________________________________________

Appendix 2
REFERENCES


Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, 2010, Serious Case Review Overview Report Executive Summary in respect of Nursery Z.


