

Annex 1

National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group

8th October 10:30-13:00

Agenda

- Welcome, introductions, and apologies
 - Minutes of last meeting and actions arising
 - CSAE Data Roundtable update
 - Workforce 'deep dive' discussion
 - Mandatory Reporting discussion
 - AOB
 - Next Steps and Close
-

National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group – Chair’s Brief

Date: Wednesday, 8 October 2025 **Time:** 10:30-13:00 (pre-meet from 10:00) **Venue:** via Teams

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
10:00	Pre-brief		N/A
10:30	Welcome, intros & apologies	<p><u>Transcription of the meeting</u> Chair to advise that we will be using Teams' transcription function today to capture a note of the meeting for the minute. Once the minute has been created, the transcript will be deleted. Note: We will also include text in the chat as well, especially for those joining us later.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new member: Jackie Irvine, CEO, Care Inspectorate – note not attending today. • Highlight recent engagement with Ministers on the work of the group and wider child protection activity and note the pace that Ministers expect to see. <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doug Marshall, Childlight • Lydia Davenport, Childlight <p>To note: James Stevenson representing Childlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynda Fenton, Public Health Scotland • Lucy Coleman, National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse (NOTA) • Kirsty-Louise McNally, Barnardo’s • Kathryn Lindsay, SOLACE • Jackie Irvine, Care Inspectorate • Sharon MacIver, Action for Children • Yvonne Friel, Public Health Scotland <p>CONT. ON NEXT PAGE</p>	Co-Chairs 10 mins

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
		<p><u>Clarification of Alexis Jay’s position on further inquiries</u> <u>Suggested lines:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the debate on the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill in Parliament on 16 September, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice quoted the views of Alexis Jay on calls for further inquiries into child sexual abuse. • I wish to clarify that Professor Jay shared these views in the context of her work on the Independent Inquiry in England and Wales. These were not related in any way to the debate on the Victims Bill or the position in Scotland, but she does believe the Scottish Government should take steps as a matter of urgency to establish reliable data about the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation by organised networks. 	
10:40	Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising	<p>The group held its last regular meeting on 10 June, with an additional extraordinary meeting on 14 July. Minutes of both meetings have been agreed by the group and published on SG website.</p> <p><u>Actions</u> Cross Party Survivor Group – will be discussed as part of MR discussion.</p> <p>Workforce Deep Dive Group actions - will be discussed in today’s meeting.</p> <p>Co-chairs to meet with Serious Organised Crime Taskforce (SOCT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SOCT is next meeting in November, and it has been agreed there will be an update on the work of the CSAE Group with future attendance of co-chairs. • Members will note the publication of SG’s refreshed Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy in July which directly highlights CCE and its links to other forms of harm. • [Redacted - section 29(1)(a)] <p>ICSA Benchmarking paper. Paper circulated to group for their consideration.</p>	Co-Chairs 20 mins

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This highlights the priorities this Group has agreed via its Outcome Framework map well onto key recommendations and actions arising from IICSA and other inquiries, including Casey Audit and Welsh Government’s strategy (currently out for consultation). • However, we would welcome the Group’s reflections on opportunities for the Framework to go further so our approach in Scotland keeps pace with improvements elsewhere in the UK. • Welcome any initial feedback, and members can also feedback in slower time via email to co-chairs and secretariat. <p>Outcomes Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been updated following the last meeting to reflect the Group’s feedback. • We have also considered the cross-cutting importance of data and information sharing to the Group’s work which has also been reflected in the update and discussed today. <p>Police Scotland update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Redacted – Section 38(1)(b)] to provide update on the group-based CSAE case review work. <p>Actions arising from July extraordinary meeting on Casey Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be aware of continued calls for SG to undertake a formal Inquiry as per UKG. Scottish Ministers remain of the view that there is not yet sufficient evidence of the need for such an Inquiry in Scotland, which also reflects the views expressed by this Group in July. • Whilst this group continues to heavily influence these decisions in the advice we offer, we must also ensure we are not complacent in our responses and accept there may be a need to scrutinise local response to CSAE beyond the work underway by Police Scotland. • Members can be reassured that officials are engaged in discussions, with Professor Jay’s support and advice, on what options might be available to us and will engage with group members and local leaders in time for our next meeting. • We propose that there is an further extraordinary meeting of the Group in November to discuss a proposal for this work in order to get members’ views. 	

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
11:00	CSAE Data Roundtable	<p><u>Chair to hand over to</u> [Redacted – Section 38(1)(b)]</p> <p><u>Suggested speaking note for</u> [Redacted – Section 38(1)(b)]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 16 September, I chaired a roundtable discussion with policy leads and analysts from across SG to discuss the challenges of getting a clear picture of CSAE in Scotland. • In that meeting we discussed a range of existing data sources and the challenges of getting a national picture. I highlighted the need to define what we need to do and scoping that out would be a good next step as set out in the paper shared for today’s meeting. • The purpose of the roundtable was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discuss the range of data sources that we do have access to ○ scope out opportunities for collaboration ○ and to come up with creative solutions to addressing gaps in CSAE data. • The discussion highlighted the need to define the key principles of this work. • For example, are there any additional data sets that can help us understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who is experiencing/at risk of CSAE in Scotland? ○ Who is perpetrating CSAE in Scotland? ○ How effective is Scotland's response? ○ And, what additional data do we need to help answer these questions? • We would welcome views from the group on these principles and, particularly, which stakeholders it would be helpful for SG to engage with on these issues? <p>Chair to reflect on challenges, on Minister’s views and ensure there is clear agreement from the Group that data is a priority for the group.</p>	[Redacted – Section 38(1)(b)] 10 mins
11:10	Workforce discussion	<p><u>Suggested remarks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the Group’s agreement that workforce issues were a key priority for action, and this has been taken forward over the summer by a ‘deep-dive’ sub-group. 	[Redacted – 38(1)(b)] and [Redacted – 38(1)(b)]

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the group, [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] and , [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] as co-chairs, and , [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] and , [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] from CELCIS for their time and commitment over the summer. <p>CONT. ON NEXT PAGE</p> <p><u>Chair to pass over to [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] and [Redacted – 38(1)(b)]</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been asked to deliver 5-10 minute presentation and 10-15 minute discussion. <p>Chair to ensure there is clear decision from the Group on whether it is content with the recommendation to proceed with proposed next steps.</p>	20 mins
11:30	Comfort break		10 mins
11:40	Mandatory Reporting discussion	<p><u>Chair to pass over to [Redacted – 38(1)(b)]</u> [Redacted – Section 30(b)(i)]</p> <p><u>CELCIS Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Redacted – 38(1)(b)] to provide short overview of key findings from CELCIS paper. <p><u>Alexis input</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected to share views on UKG approach and key issues of focus for today’s discussion. <p><u>Discussion - Chairs to lead</u> [Redacted – Section 30(b)(i)]</p> <p>CONT. ON NEXT PAGE</p> <p><u>Discussion questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the issue that we are trying to address? 2) Do we think practitioners aren’t reporting/responding to CSAE now? If so, why not? 3) Would mandatory reporting complement our response to CSAE in Scotland? 4) Should duty extend to other forms of physical and/or emotional abuse? What about neglect? 	<p>80 mins (total)</p> <p>[Redacted– 38(1)(b)] 10 mins</p> <p>[Redacted– 38(1)(b)] 5-10 mins</p> <p>Chair 50 mins</p>

Time	Item	For Chair	Lead
		[Redacted – Section 30(b)(i)]	
12:50	AOB	<p>NPPLG hosted Learning Event - Child Exploitation: Learning from the Experiences of Greater Manchester Wednesday 12th November, 2:00 – 4:00 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members already had invitation via email 	5 mins
12:55	Next Steps and Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs to sum up and agree next steps. The next meeting is planned for 14 January however given the continued profile and pace of our collective efforts on CSAE, propose meeting at end of November to ensure further discussion and consideration of work underway. We thank members in advance for their continued flexibility and support for our shared efforts. 	Co-Chairs 5 mins
13:00	Post-brief		

CSAE Framework

	• Education as prevention	• Workforce education and training	• Recovery and survivor support and services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary prevention • <i>Prevent CSAE before it occurs across the whole population (reduce risk)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are consistent audience/ setting appropriate info on CSAE and its impact (Key messages are developed for all age ranges, carers/families and bystanders) • The public are knowledgeable about where /how to raise CSAE concerns • The current review of RSHP in education considers the equity and quality of delivery in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our broader public service workforce have a shared understanding to recognise CSAE • The workforce know how to report and escalate CSAE concerns to protect CYP • The workforce have knowledge of prevention and early intervention approaches and services including focused approaches for those who cause harm • Some of the workforce have an enhanced role and specialist knowledge to prevent and detect CSAE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing evidence and listen to those impacted by CSAE including young people to learn about prevention of CSAE.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary prevention • <i>Identify and address those at risk of CSAE or further harm (response)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced awareness of the public in relation to specific risk factors in CSAE, for example disability, childhood adversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist training to provide timely intervention/ response to CSAE available • Specialist training for some in the workforce on potential focused approaches for those who cause harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is consistent and timely access to appropriate services for CSAE victims offering range of approaches/ interventions • CYP impacted by CSAE or HSB (and carers/families) know how to access support

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are consistent and trauma-informed processes across specialist workforces • The workforce are aware of place-based prevention approaches and community settings in which CSAE may occur (sport, faith organisations, schools, residential settings) and take action to prevent this • Services recognise and address needs of at-risk groups and multiple risk factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP and carers/families understand their rights and entitlements as victims of CSAE
<p>Tertiary prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide support and prevent further CSAE harm (recover, protect, disrupt, deter)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP and carers/families are supported to understand what ongoing support options are available in their local area • targeted education interventions are available to reduce risk of harm caused by adults and CYP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is understanding of the impact of CSAE and ongoing support needs of those impacted by CSAE • Specialist training on evidence-based care support and interventions is available • Specialist training and targeted interventions including focused interventions to manage those causing harm and prevent future harm are available for adult and young people (under 18) and children whose behaviour may be causing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP and carers/families impacted by CSAE are helped to recover, have better outcomes and risk of further harm is reduced • The role of specialist mental health services i.e. CAMHS in abuse recovery is clear • There is consistent and available provision of local survivor support services for CYP and carers/families impacted by CSAE • Local services monitor the recovery and risk of CYP and carers/families impacted by

		harm to others including sibling sexual abuse	CSAE via local Girfec/child's planning processes
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[Redacted – Section 29(1)(a)]

CSAE – UK Government Recommendations Benchmarking Paper

INTRODUCTION

The National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Strategic Group has been established to increase cross-sectoral coordination and capability to address the risks and harms of CSAE in Scotland by scrutinising existing and emerging evidence and practice to inform, prioritise and agree actions. The group has identified priorities and is developing a workplan, with initial work looking at improvements to workforce education and training and multiagency data collections.

In 2022 the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in England and Wales published its final report following seven years of investigation, setting out 20 recommendations for central government, with all but one accepted by the then UK Government. The [National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#), led by Baroness Louise Casey, was a much shorter exercise taking place across a number of months and was published on 16 June 2025 with the current UK Government (UKG) accepting all 12 recommendations. Work is now underway across the UK Government, led predominantly by the Home Office and the Department of Education to implement the recommendations of both reports.

This paper has been developed for the National CSAE group to assess the UKG recommendations within a Scottish context in recognition that while the specific context and nature of offending frequently differ, the challenges and opportunities set out in those reports could help to inform our approach in Scotland.

It should also be noted that a number of other relevant reports including the UKG's April 2025 [Tackling child sexual abuse: progress update](#), [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel \(CSPRP\)](#) (published in November 2024), [Joint Inspections For Children And Young People At Risk Of Harm, 2021 – 2025](#), the [Welsh Government draft strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse](#) and the experience of The Greater Manchester Combined Authority have also been considered within this paper.

Annexes

Annex 1: Summary table of recommendations, UKG and SG actions from each key report. This is themed under the Outcomes Framework agreed by the National CSAE Group, with an additional table setting out wider recommendations.

Annex 2: Full list of IICSA, Casey Audit and CSPRP Report Recommendations

Annex 3: Welsh Government (WG) Draft Strategy Outcomes grouped against the National CSAE Group's agreed Outcomes Framework.

ANALYSIS

Context

This report has been structured around the three priorities agreed by the National CSAE Strategic Group which form the priority outcomes for the CSAE prevention framework. These are: education as prevention, workforce training and education and access to recovery services, with a section also included for data as one of the enablers of the framework and recognised by the group as a key priority area to address.

OUTCOME 1: EDUCATION AS PREVENTION

Relevant Recommendations

IICSA acknowledged the hidden nature of abuse and public attitudes about CSAE, recommending a programme of public awareness raising to encourage a national conversation about the scale, nature and responses to child sexual abuse.

UKG Position

The UKG set out activities relevant to this recommendation in April 2025, which includes plans to step up national communications activity to raise awareness of child sexual abuse as well as existing funded and supported activity, including the Fearless Programme and support for the Lucy Faithful Foundation's Stop It Now! Online Deterrence campaign.

SG Position

SG ran a successful national public awareness campaign in February and March 2022, and again in February 2023, to support parents and carers to help keep their children safer online. This linked to SG's Parent Club website and the [Online Safety Hub](#) and [Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Hub](#). The campaign advert appeared 5.4 million times on social media resulting in 1 million completed views of the campaign film.

SG supports a range of activity to increase national understanding of CSAE, this includes support for the Crimestoppers/Fearless Sextortion campaign and the funding in 2024 for Child Protection Committees (CPCs) child sexual abuse campaign. In April 2025, SG published Parent Club resources on criminal exploitation to raise awareness of this issue, and connect them to support. The resource highlights online safety and reinforces the key messages about the risks to children and how to get help.

Key considerations

[Redacted – Section 29(1)(a)]

OUTCOME 2: WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Relevant Recommendations

IICSA made several recommendations to improve the focus on and consistency of child protection approaches across national government and relevant agencies. This

included the establishment of a Child Protection Authority (CPA) to provide stronger national oversight of child protection and more robust inspection arrangements.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel sets out a number of recommendations relevant to this outcome for England and Wales, which includes developing a strategic plan to improve practice, ensuring practitioners have the necessary skills, capabilities and guidance, improving quality of joint enquiries, practitioners understanding they can talk directly to children and their families, asking NHS England to audit local commissioning arrangements to ensure pathways and services are in place to respond to health needs of sexually abused children and relevant inspectorates being invited to consider the findings of the review.

UKG Position

UKG have announced activity they will be taking forward across a number of areas to improve practice and take forward the recommendations, this includes strengthening statutory child safeguarding guidance, national roll-out of a new social work induction programme and new standards for advanced child protection social work and continued funding to the Child Sexual Abuse Centre. UKG are also supporting the Child Safeguarding Panel to develop into the CPA and will be consulting on its roadmap this year. One aspect of the IICSA recommendation was for the CPA to take on an inspectorate role – UKG have rejected this, stating that they wish to ensure independence between the CPA and inspectorates and to focus the work of the CPA on advising on practice improvement. The delivery status of this work is to be confirmed by UKG as they progress their plans.

SG Position

The CSAE group established a workforce deep dive group in Summer 2025 in recognition that workforce capability is the highest priority of the three outcomes. This group has carried out research into existing practices, challenges and good practice from across Scotland and the UK. This includes considering all relevant recommendations from IICSA, Casey Audit and the CSPRP as it develops its initial recommendations.

The inspection process led by the Care Inspectorate is the Scottish Government's assurance of the quality of provision of services to protect children nationally. The Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate has joined the National CSAE group and is also a member of the National Public Protection Leadership Group (NPPLG) which is considering the future approach to scrutiny of public protection. We will work with them to consider UKG recommendations for Scotland and options to provide further detail and assessment of local responses to CSAE (See also Wider Strategic and Policy Developments)

Key considerations

The deep dive group will be setting out recommendations to the CSAE group for their consideration at the 8th October meeting.

OUTCOME 3: ACCESS TO RECOVERY SERVICES

Relevant Recommendations

IICSA made recommendations to improve support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. It drew out concerns regarding the availability and suitability of the current therapeutic support landscape across England and Wales and called for a national guarantee that child victims and survivors of sexual abuse will be offered specialist therapeutic support.

UKG Position

The UKG is funding the CSA centre in 25/26 to deliver training and resources for those working with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, expansion of mental health support teams and working with the CSA centre to develop a framework for a joined up provision for adult survivors. UKG will develop proposals for improving therapeutic support that will be announced following the spending review.

Scottish Government Position

SG has invested £20 million during the Bairns' Hoose pathfinder phase, with ten partnerships established across Scotland to test the Bairns' Hoose model in different local contexts ahead of national and incremental roll-out during 2027. Bairn's Hoose is providing safe, trauma-informed environments where child victims and witnesses can access multi-agency support and recovery services whilst participating in the child protection, justice, and health processes. Across Pathfinder sites, health professionals are fully embedded in multi-agency teams and are leading innovative approaches to child-centred support. This includes the coordination and provision of holistic and wellbeing health needs assessments between acute, specialist and universal services that a child or family may require. In 2025-26, SG have supported this with over £1.6 million investment towards health-related activity, including staffing and therapeutic support.

There is also continued support for the implementation and national rollout of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII), as part of the Pathfinder Phase and cornerstone of the Bairns' Hoose model. SG funding for the National JII Team has been confirmed until March 2026.

Key considerations

We will consider how to engage with the Bairns' Hoose policy team as the group develop a workplan on this outcome.

ENABLER: DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING

Relevant Recommendations

IICSA highlighted the limitations of current methods of data collection and inconsistencies in approaches across key organisations impeding the ability to properly understand the true scale and nature of child sexual abuse. It called for agencies to produce consistent and compatible data about child sexual abuse.

The Casey Audit also made a number of recommendations to better understand the prevalence of group-based sexual abuse and improve information sharing across organisations to improve the multi-agency approach. This includes the mandatory collection of ethnicity and nationality data of child sexual abuse suspects, Department for Education (DfE) introducing a unique reference number for children, the upgrading of police information systems, DfE carrying out an interrogation of

child protection data, UKG commissioning research into drivers of group-based child sexual exploitation and a code of practice on access to records about child sexual abuse.

UKG Position

UKG are taking forward a number of different activities in response to the IICSA recommendation to develop a single set of core data, this includes the ONS Safety During Childhood survey pilot in Autumn 2025/26, measures in Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to introduce provision for a single child identifier, improved police performance framework and working with stakeholders across the Criminal Justice System to agree clear targets on child sexual abuse to drive up charges and prosecutions.

In response to the Casey Audit, the UKG have written to English and Welsh chief constables about improving ethnicity and nationality data, unique reference numbers will be delivered through Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and they have announced they will publish analysis by the end of 2025 regarding the decline in child protection data on child sexual abuse and exploitation and will be commissioning new research into the drivers of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation

Scottish Government Position

There is ongoing work within the child protection unit to explore options to improve child protection data collection and information sharing. The National Child Data Protection group met in July with a meeting focused on CSAE, and a CSAE data roundtable was held in September, led by SG's Chief Statistician, it included analytical colleagues, policy leads and relevant police leads. This meeting was focused on scrutinising existing sexual abuse and exploitation data collections and practice across organisations in Scotland with a view to identifying improvement opportunities.

Key Considerations

An update from the data roundtable will be provided at the 8 October CSAE group meeting. SG's CSAE policy leads will continue to engage with the National Data group and attendees of the roundtable to develop recommendations for the National CSAE group's consideration.

WIDER STRATEGIC AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Joint Inspections For Children And Young People At Risk Of Harm, 2021 – 2025

The Care Inspectorate carried out a review of the findings of joint inspections of services to children and young people at risk of harm between 2021 -2025. These were carried out in community planning partnerships in 15 local authority areas across Scotland: Dundee, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Highland, Aberdeenshire, East Dunbartonshire, Scottish Borders, North Lanarkshire, Moray, East Lothian, Renfrewshire, Angus, East Ayrshire and Glasgow.

The review highlighted a number of areas of strength, including Inter-Agency Referrals (IRDs) discussions as an effective way to bring together staff to make clear and timely decisions, timely multiagency approach to concerns about unborn or very

young children, that 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) had made a positive difference to children's lives, that staff surveyed felt they had knowledge, skills and confidence to report concerns, and that Bairns' Hoose and SCIM were strongly felt by staff to improve practice in relation to the involvement and participation of children and young people.

There were a number of common themes identified across inspections for improvement, these include IRDs not always being held where concerns arose from an accumulation of incidents of risk or potential risk, under half of chronologies were evaluated as 'Good' or 'Very Good', the identification and response to concerns in the community or concerns of older young people was not as robust as that for concerns about younger children, responses were less effective where the child or young person was at risk of harming themselves or others, or at risk in the community, children, young people and families found frequent changes in staffing a barrier to relationship building or enabling improvements in their lives.

Welsh Government Draft Strategy

On 16 July the Welsh Government (WG) launched a consultation on its new 10 year strategy to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. WG have developed a set of outcomes and actions that respond to recommendations of IICSA and the Casey Audit, looking to increase awareness and understanding of CSAE to create a culture of openness to discuss, recognise and report CSAE, improve recovery service provision and support for adult victim survivors and ensure the workforce is sufficiently trained. Their outcomes broadly align with the CSAE Group's framework outcomes, demonstrating commonality of approach across both devolved governments. There are existing examples of good practice in Wales that could be considered for Scotland, for example the Regional Safeguarding Boards deliver the majority of their training and through this they have developed a standardised approach. SG will be regularly engaging with Welsh counterparts as they develop their strategy to hear progress and share good practice.

Greater Manchester Child Exploitation response

Greater Manchester underwent a significant change in their approach to CSAE as a consequent of political and media pressure following the conviction of the Rochdale child sexual abuse ring. The Mayor and a Chief Constable committed to making changes and worked with local politicians and senior leaders to make improvements – recognising the challenges of Rochdale and knowing that was not the only case to uncover. Challenges included some opposition to further investigation, but the political and senior leadership support led to a change in approach. Due to the political drive they now have 86 detectives reviewing historical sexual abuse cases and children's social services training in place to address a gap in workplace capability. The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit Director will be delivering a session on his experience in partnership with the National Public Protection Leadership Group to members of Scotland's Chief officer Groups and is open to continuing to work with the National CSAE Group to share learnings.

[Redacted – Section 29(1)(a)]

Summary

The Framework and identified priorities of the CSAE group broadly align with many of the recommendations and planned activity by UK and Welsh Governments. Areas not in alignment include mandatory reporting, or where we have a different process or system in Scotland. Whilst Scotland has different legislative, child protection and education systems – there are common challenges facing all governments and work is already underway or planned in Scotland that aligns with recommendations set out by UKG and WG. Whilst not all recommendations will be applicable to Scotland, it will be helpful to continually review the recommendations for Scotland to ensure we align, collaborate and learn as we work with partners to address CSAE in Scotland.

Next steps

Members are invited to give feedback on this analysis, particularly on any gaps in this work, any further actions to consider and any implications for the Group's Outcome Framework and workplan.

Annex 1

Summary table of recommendations, UKG and SG actions from each key report (themed under the 3 CSAE Group Outcomes + Data, with additional table for wider recommendations)

Outcome 1: Education as prevention

Relevant Recommendations	UK Actions	SG Actions
IICSA Rec 4: A public awareness campaign	<p>In April 2025 UKG announced they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up national communications activity to raise awareness of child sexual abuse throughout the next year and beyond • Continue funding The Children’s Society to deliver its Prevention Programme, including the “Look Closer” campaign • Support Crimestoppers Fearless Programme in schools • implementation programme of the new mandatory reporting duty raising awareness • support the LFF Stop It Now! Online Deterrence campaign, services to prevent offending and continue investing in LFF’s Shore resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Safer Internet Day 2025 in February, which was accompanied by an update to online safety resources on Parent Club and a dedicated email campaign to parents which reached around 40,000 parents and carers. • Working with Police Scotland and other partners to launch the second phase of the Crimestoppers/Fearless Sextortion Campaign in February • Funding in 2024 to Child Protection Committees Scotland for a campaign focusing on effects of child sexual abuse. The campaign was developed in partnership with Barnardo’s Scotland and co-produced with the support of adult survivors and had a reported reach of over 1.8 million adults in Scotland.

Outcome 2: Workforce education and training

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
<p>IICSA Rec 2: Child Protection Authorities for England and Wales Child Safeguarding Review Panel Report (November 2024) Recommendation 1: National strategic plan Government should develop and publish a strategic plan to secure the necessary practice improvements identified in this report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources for Child Safeguarding Review Panel to enable it to develop into the CPA. • Consult in 2025 on a roadmap to a CPA • Develop programme and timetable to create CPA. • Deliver improvements through working with existing inspection bodies –UKG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSAE group set up of a workforce deep dive group to develop recommendations to improve the workforce capability. • The deep dive group will be sharing recommendations with the CSAE group at the October meeting with a workplan to developed following this • The Care Inspectorate are now members of the CSAE group. We will

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
<p>CSPR Recommendation 2: Professional knowledge, skills and confidence Government should take the necessary steps, working with professional bodies, to ensure that practitioners and managers have the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities, including access to relevant guidance.</p> <p>CSPR Recommendation 3: Enquiries and investigations Government should take necessary steps to improve the quality of joint enquiries so that decisions are more consistently in children’s interests.</p> <p>CSPR Recommendation 5: Talking to children Government should ensure that practitioners understand that they can and should talk directly to children, and families, about concerns of sexual abuse.</p> <p>CSPR Recommendation 6: Health Government should ask NHS England and public health commissioners to audit local commissioning arrangements to ensure that pathways and services are in place to identify and respond to the health needs of sexually abused children (recent and non-recent).</p> <p>CSPR Recommendation 10: Inspectorates The Panel invites the relevant inspectorates (Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and HMI Probation) to consider the findings of this review</p>	<p>have advised that CPA will not have inspection powers to enable CPA to provide advice to improve and change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a cross-government working group focused on strengthening single and joint inspection • Ask the relevant inspectorates (Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP) to carry out the next thematic Joint Targeted Area Inspection on child sexual abuse in the family environment in Autumn 2025 • Strengthen the existing statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ on local and national accountability for Safeguarding Partners at its next update • Launch a Call for Evidence on safeguarding in out of school settings in 2025 • Work with Ofsted to strengthen its powers over unregistered settings in which looked after children are placed and enable Ofsted to issue improvement notices to providers where requirements are not being met in two or more children’s homes (or other settings) owned by the same provider group. • national roll out of a new social work induction programme for all those entering the profession. • new standards and training for advanced child protection social work • Commission two Practice Guides for leaders and practitioners on how to 	<p>work with Care Inspectorate to consider UKG recommendations for Scotland.</p>

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation and how to support victims	
IICSA Rec 13: Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in certain circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Policing Bill will introduce a new mandatory reporting duty for individuals undertaking key roles with responsibility for children in England to report sexual abuse and create a new criminal offence of obstructing an individual from making a report under the duty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently considering the case for a statutory mandatory reporting duty in the Scottish context. • We are engaging with stakeholders to explore the benefits and challenges of doing so, including with the Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse, as well as with Social Work Scotland, Police Scotland, Child Protection Committees Scotland and others.

Outcome 3: Recovery and survivor support and services

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
Rec 16: A national guarantee of specialist therapeutic support for victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding to the CSA Centre in 2025/26 to develop and deliver evidence-based training and resources for those working with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse • Provided funding, via the Families First for Children pathfinder programme to enable CSA Centre to work with Warwickshire Council, to embed resources and training across social care, police and health partners, and use learning to support wider roll out (subject to funding) • NHS planning guidance for 2025/26 also sets out sets out expansions to mental health support teams consistent with the aim of reaching 100% coverage by 2029/30 • Government will work on ambitious proposals for improving the therapeutic support offer, with further 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With ten partnerships established across Scotland, we are in a Pathfinder phase of testing the Bairns' Hoose model in different local contexts ahead of incremental national roll-out from 2027. • Backed by over £20 million investment to date, SG remains committed to testing our approach to Bairns' Hoose, providing safe, trauma-informed environments where child victims and witnesses can access multi-agency support and recovery services whilst participating in the child protection, justice, and health processes. • The provision of effective therapeutic services and wider support for victims is essential to Bairns' Hoose. In 2025-26, we have supported this with over £1.6 million investment towards health-related activity, including staffing and therapeutic support.

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	<p>details to be set out following the upcoming Spending Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide additional support to the CSA Centre to work with service providers and victims and survivors to develop a framework to support local leaders and commissioners to develop more holistic and joined-up provision for adult survivors across England and Wales. Home Office will double the funding it provides for national services supporting adult survivors of child sexual abuse in 2025/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across Pathfinder sites, health professionals are fully embedded in multi-agency teams and are leading innovative approaches to child-centred support. This includes the coordination and provision of holistic and wellbeing health needs assessments between acute, specialist and universal services that a child or family may require. We continue to support the implementation and national rollout of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII), as part of the Pathfinder Phase and cornerstone of the Bairns' Hoose model. SG funding for the National JII Team has been confirmed until March 2026. This is one of the 3 priority outcomes for the CSAE group, with the group to consider as part of its workplan.
IICSA Rec 14: Compliance with the victim's code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government asked the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates (CJJI) to include an inspection on the experiences of victims of child sexual abuse in the criminal justice system, including compliance with the Victims' Code, in their 2025-27 Business Plan as a priority 	
IICSA Rec 15: The removal of the three-year limitation period for personal injury claims brought by victims of child sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government has committed to remove the three-year time limit for victims to bring civil child sexual abuse claims with the burden of proof falling on defendants (rather than victims, as at present) to show that a fair trial is not possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Act 2017 removed the 3-year limitation period for civil claims of personal injury resulting from childhood abuse in Scotland. This means that survivors of childhood abuse can pursue legal action regardless of how long ago the

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to amend the Law of Apologies through changes to the Compensation Act 2006 to encourage employers to apologise to people wronged by their employees 	<p>abuse occurred, provided it happened after September 26, 1964. Survivors who previously had claims rejected due to the time bar can now pursue a civil claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apologies (Scotland) Act 2016 gives legal protection to an apology, in certain circumstances. An apology is not admissible as evidence of anything relevant to the determination of liability and cannot be used in any other way to the prejudice of the person by or on behalf of whom the apology was made.
<p>IICSA Rec 18: Further changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The compensation scheme is based on the injuries sustained rather than according to the nature of the crime committed against them making it difficult to amend the scheme along the lines of the IICSA recommendation. • CICA provides its staff with specific training on the impact of psychological and emotional trauma in sexual abuse cases, and guidance on applying the exceptional circumstances discretion to extend time limits to sexual abuse cases – particularly child sexual abuse. • Will consider suggestions on how to further publicise and improve awareness of the Scheme 	
<p>IICSA Rec 19: A tiered redress scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is not currently taking forward any further steps on the IICSA proposal for a separate, national financial redress scheme for all victims and survivors of child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government set up a redress scheme in December 2021 for survivors of historic abuse in care. This covers various types of abuse (emotional, verbal, sexual and neglect) within relevant care settings.

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	<p>sexual abuse with a connection to state or non state institutions</p>	<p>Survivors can apply for a payment of between £10,000 and £100,000 and an apology can be facilitated where possible. As of 31 August 2025, nearly 6,500 applications have been received and nearly 3,000 applicants have accepted a payment offer. Redress payments of more than £155M have been made.</p>
<p>Casey Rec 3: Review the criminal convictions of victims of child sexual exploitation. Disregard any convictions where the government finds victims were criminalised instead of protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKG will disregard convictions of children who were criminalised as prostitutes when they should have been protected. [UKG] will legislate immediately in the Crime and Policing Bill to introduce a disregard scheme for the convictions of individuals who were found guilty of prostitution offences as children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Redacted – Section 30(b)(i)] • In January 2024, the Lord Advocate updated the instructions for non-prosecution of victims of human trafficking and exploitation to underline the non-punishment principle, that prosecutors must consider whether a child is the victim of exploitation, including: ‘exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation’. • Ash Regan MSP has introduced a members Bill in the Scottish Parliament - Prostitution (Offences and Support) (Scotland) Bill - which includes provisions to quash any conviction for an offence under Section 46 of The Civic Government (Scotland) Act (soliciting and importuning by prostitutes) that preceded the Bill coming into force. It also looks to repeal Section 46. • Officials are in discussion with the Home Office to better understand how UKG intends to progress this recommendation. We are also interested in understanding the approach being taken in circumstances where grooming, exploitation, and the impact of not being protected remained

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
		when the child became an adult and any subsequent relevant convictions, and how that affects or not the application of the proposal to disregard convictions.

Enabler: Data

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
IICSA Rec 1: A single set of core data to be collated relating to child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation	<p>April update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS Crime Survey for England and Wales module on adults' experience of sexual abuse published by ONS in December • Pilot of the ONS Safety During Childhood Survey – Autumn 2025/26, Estimate of abuse experienced by late 2026, prevalence estimates of child abuse by mid/late 2027 • Fund CSA which produces the Trends in Official Data Report and updates to the Data Insights Hub • Measures in Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to introduce provision for a single child identifier and ensure the legal framework leaves no doubt on agencies' ability to share information to safeguard children • improved police performance framework - by May 2025 • Timetable will be set out to act on Casey Audit improvements on collection and quality of data • The Government will work with stakeholders across the Criminal 	This will be considered as part of the wider data work.

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	Justice System to agree clear targets on child sexual abuse to drive up charges and prosecutions.	
Casey Rec 4: The government should make mandatory the collection of ethnicity and nationality data for all suspects in child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation cases and work with the police to improve the collection of ethnicity data for victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Home Secretary has written to chief constables to signal that the current data collection across ethnicity and nationality is unacceptable, and that this data must be improved as a matter of urgency. Work is now under way looking to amend the annual data requirements to support this process, and we are looking at legislative options to drive forward these improvements. 	This will be considered as part of the wider data work.
Casey Rec 6 The Department for Education should move swiftly to introduce unique reference numbers for children to improve opportunities for agencies to better share their information about children at risk of child sexual abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government is delivering this through the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although there are currently no plans to develop a Single Unique Identifier like the proposal currently being tested by the UK Department for Education, work is underway by SG officials to improve existing data linkage processes across children’s services data collections, by removing the reliance on the Scottish Candidate Number to link children’s data to the population spine.
Casey Rec 7 Police information systems should be upgraded. These systems should also provide for the use of the unique reference numbers for children which are being introduced by the Department for Education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to act at pace to upgrade police information systems to better enable the tracking of intelligence links across forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no plans at this stage to upgrade Police Information systems as Police Scotland utilises one vulnerability database feeding local and national child protection procedures, and a National Intelligence database which addresses some of the data challenges identified by the Audit.
Rec 9 The Department of Education should urgently interrogate child protection data to identify the causes of the decline in child sexual abuse and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative data is current being interrogated by DfE analysts, with a commission planned work to collect qualitative data through interviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A CSAE data roundtable was held in September led by SG’s Chief Statistician, analytical colleagues, the police professional adviser and policy

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
<p>representation in child in need assessment data; examine the reasons for variations across local authorities; and review the effectiveness of Serious Incident Notifications in relation to child sexual abuse and exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE are engaging Ministers to agree a publication approach 	<p>leads to scrutinise existing sexual abuse and exploitation data collections and practice across organisations in Scotland with a view to identifying improvement opportunities. This will be discussed at the CSAE group meeting on 8th October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ongoing work within the child protection unit to explore options for better information sharing in relation to child protection data. This includes looking at local processes and variation in what and how data is captured. This involves a bi-monthly meeting with relevant internal and external stakeholders including analysts, social work and third sector.
<p>Casey Rec 10 The government should commission research into the drivers for group-based child sexual exploitation, including online offending, cultural factors and the role of the group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Office is commissioning new research into the drivers of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation. • Advice has gone to ministers and will make announcement in due course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials have engaged Home Office counterparts on the UKG commitment to commission new research and are seeking to understand if any work could also encompass Scottish interests.
<p>IICSA Rec 17: A code of practice on access to records about child sexual abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government completed a study exploring the feasibility of opening up datasets for the training and testing of age assurance tools to improve their ability to determine the age of children at younger ages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no plans to take forward work in this area at this time, but will be considered as part of the wider CSAE data work.

Other Recommendations

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
<p>IICSA Rec 12: Pre-screening for illegal images of children by internet providers to prevent child abuse images from being uploaded to platforms and social media profiles. This prevents the images from being viewed or shared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Online Safety Act gives Ofcom the power to require the use of accredited technologies or best endeavours to deal with child sexual abuse content in private channels where necessary and proportionate. • Ofcom’s illegal harms codes of practice that tackle child sexual abuse and grooming more widely. • Will monitor the implementation of the existing powers and remain alert to whether further measures are necessary for protecting children’s safety. • 17 March 2025, in-scope user-to-user and search services will need to comply with the illegal content safety duty in the Online Safety Act 2023. Services must protect UK-based users from illegal content and activity that is facilitated or encountered via their services 	<p>SG are supportive of the measures set out in the Online Safety Act and working engaging with Ofcom has further measures are introduced.</p>
<p>IICSA rec 20: Age verification in relation to online services and social media platforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has completed a study exploring the feasibility of opening up datasets for the training and testing of age assurance tools to improve their ability to determine the age of children at younger ages. • Will continue to monitor whether the Online Safety Act is appropriately tackling the issue of children accessing social media below the minimum ages set in firms’ terms of service 	<p>SG are supportive of the measures set out in the Online Safety Act and working engaging with Ofcom has further measures are introduced.</p>

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
N/A	<p>Measures within the Crime and Policing Bill to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a new offence that criminalises AI models that have been optimised to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). • Updating the existing law criminalising 'paedophile manuals' to cover Artificially Generated (AI) CSAM • Criminalising those who provide, maintain or moderate online services which are being used to share child sexual abuse imagery or commit other child sexual abuse offences. 	<p>SG are working with UKG to extend these provisions to Scotland.</p>
IICSA Rec 3: A Cabinet level Minister for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretary of State for Education is the Cabinet minister for children. • Creation of a Keeping Children Safe ministerial board to track implementation of CSRP reviews, progress of the CPA and take advice from the CPA • Children and Young People's Advisory Board made up of 11–25-year-olds has been set up 	<p>The Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise reports to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills who has overall responsibility for the portfolio and is a member of the cabinet. There are no plans to</p>
IICSA Rec 11: Extending the disclosure regime to those working with children overseas	<p>By 2026, working with ACRO Criminal Record Office and DBS, we will enable those making decisions overseas to have access to DBS barred list data</p>	N/A
Casey Rec 1: The law in England and Wales should be changed so adults who intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of a child under 16 receive mandatory charges of rape.	<p>The government will change the law to ensure that adult abusers who intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of an under 16 are charged with rape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is always criminal for an adult to engage in sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 (subject to the defence of 'reasonable mistaken belief as to age' where a child is 13-15). • However, the law operates in different ways depending on the age of the child and the specific circumstances.

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a child is 13 or older, Scottish law currently distinguishes between offence of rape (where no consent) for which the maximum penalty is life imprisonment, and 'sexual intercourse with an older child', for which the maximum penalty is 10 years' imprisonment. • Where a child is under 13, sexual intercourse is always classed as rape as children under 13 are deemed to have no capacity to consent to sexual activity. <p>Broadly, current Scottish law is similar to the English and Welsh law that the UK Government are intending to change.</p>
<p>Casey Rec 2: A national police operation and national inquiry, co-ordinating a series of targeted investigations should be launched into child sexual exploitation in England and Wales.</p>	<p><u>National operation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Beaconport has been established (announced 3/9/25), overseen by the National Crime Agency and with 216 highest priority cases—those that involve an allegation of rape being accelerated as a matter of urgency. • From July 2024 to July 2025, CSE taskforce Government contributed to 827 arrests nationwide, an 11% increase on the previous year. • £426,000 additional funding to the tackling organised exploitation (TOEX) programme, to existing £8.8 million, extending access to its suite of cutting-edge investigative apps and digital tools. 15 police forces currently utilising TOEX tools, a further 10 forces currently onboarding. <p><u>National inquiry:</u></p>	<p><u>National operation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Scotland operates nationally through the National Child Abuse Investigation Unit (NCAIU) which provides a dedicated, specialist investigative resource directly to divisions to support complex and high level cases of child abuse, child death and child sexual exploitation (CSE) across Scotland • The Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE) Unit of NCAIU was formed as part of Police Scotland's response to the investigative challenges of online child sexual abuse and forms part of a proactive response to this significant issue mainly through enforcement of National Online Child Abuse Prevention (NOCAP) packages. <p><u>National inquiry:</u></p>

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment process was carried out over the summer for the Chair and is now in the final stages of the appointment process. • A dedicated panel of victims and survivors has been established to contribute to the chair selection process • The appointed chair will play a central role in shaping the commission's terms of reference. These will be published and subject to consultation with stakeholders, including victims and survivors. • The inquiry is expected to run for two to three years and will begin by identifying priority areas for review, conducting targeted local investigations and reporting findings at both local and national levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial view from Police Scotland is that there are no current investigations in Scotland involving offences against children and young people which would mirror the investigations described in Casey's Audit as being perpetrated by "grooming gangs". • The First Minister has publicly noted that the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is ongoing and that he would give "every consideration" to the issue of a grooming gang inquiry in Scotland "if [he] felt it was necessary". • The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) is undertaking an extensive review of child protection policy and practice in Scotland and will report recommendations for further development in due course. • The Inquiry is established under the Inquiries Act 2005 and may compel witnesses to provide evidence. [Redacted Section 28 (1)]
<p>Casey Rec 3: Review the criminal convictions of victims of child sexual exploitation. Disregard any convictions where the government finds victims were criminalised instead of protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Crime and Policing Bill, currently going through Parliament, is going to disregard any child prostitution convictions. • UKG are working with the Ministry of Justice to find the wider cohort of victims, and with bodies in the criminal justice system to identify and review cases and to support victims. It will not always have been prostitution charges; victims who have been criminalised for a variety of things that they probably should not have been. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash Regan MSP has introduced a members Bill in the Scottish Parliament - Prostitution (Offences and Support) (Scotland) Bill - which includes provisions to quash any conviction for an offence under Section 46 of The Civic Government (Scotland) Act (soliciting and importuning by prostitutes) that preceded the Bill coming into force. It also looks to repeal Section 46. • Officials are in discussion with the Home Office to better understand how UKG intends to progress this

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
		<p>recommendation. We are also interested in understanding the approach being taken in circumstances where grooming, exploitation, and the impact of not being protected remained when the child became an adult and any subsequent relevant convictions, and how that affects or not the application of the proposal to disregard convictions.</p>
<p>Rec 8 Child Sexual Exploitation investigations should be approached like Serious and Organised Crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the national criminal operation and with the leadership of the NCA and NPCC, we will work with police forces to drive consistency and rigour into CSE investigations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National CSAE Strategic Group has discussed the intersection of sexual exploitation with other forms of abuse and where effective prevention or victim support requires a consistent and coordinated response. • This includes harms associated with organised crime such as criminal exploitation of children and the co-chairs of the Group have agreed to engage with the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce (SOCT) to consider how links can be strengthened between the Groups and to consider shared opportunities.
<p>Rec 11 The Department for Transport should take immediate action to put a stop to ‘out of area taxis’ and bring in more rigorous statutory standards for local authority licensing and regulation of taxi drivers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department for Transport will legislate to address the important issues raised in the report, tackling the inconsistent standards of taxi and private hire vehicle driver licensing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials regularly engage with the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR) to consider and review any policy issues relating to taxi licensing and other powers available to disrupt child criminal exploitation activity. • The last meeting of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce also heard an update from the SoLACE representative on the partnership work between Edinburgh City Council and counterparts in Manchester on the legislation and programmes available in Manchester to disrupt CCE and support victims.

Relevant Recommendations	UK actions	SG actions
<p>Rec 12 The government should commit to fully resourcing the implementation of these recommendations over multiple years and to tracking their implementation across Departments and other organisations, with regular reports to Parliament</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government accepts this recommendation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scottish Government continues its funding commitments across various policy areas, to support action to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation. This includes increased police funding for 2025-26 to £1.64 billion, an increase of £90 million on 2024-25, £3.345m budget for the Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund and £5.65m per year for the Future Pathways Fund to enable survivors to access health and wellbeing services.

Annex 2

Full list of IICSA, Casey Audit and CSPRP Report Recommendations

IICSA	Casey Audit	CSPRP (national level)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A single set of core data relating to child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. 2. Child Protection Authorities for England and for Wales. 3. A cabinet-level Minister for Children. 4. A public awareness campaign. 5. Prohibiting the use of pain compliance techniques. 6. The amendment of the Children Act 1989. 7. Registration of care staff in children's homes. 8. Registration of staff in care roles in young offender institutions and secure training centres. 9. Greater use of the Disclosure and Barring Service barred list. 10. Improvements to compliance with statutory duties to refer concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service. 11. Extending the disclosure regime to those working with children overseas. 12. Pre-screening for illegal images of children. 13. Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in certain circumstances. 14. Compliance with the Victims' Code. 15. The removal of the three-year limitation period for personal injury claims brought by victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. 16. A national guarantee of specialist therapeutic support for child victims. 17. A code of practice on access to records about child sexual abuse. 18. Further changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. 19. A tiered redress scheme. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The law in England and Wales should be changed so adults who intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of a child under 16 receive mandatory charges of rape. 2. A national police operation and national inquiry, co-ordinating a series of targeted investigations should be launched into child sexual exploitation in England and Wales. 3. Review the criminal convictions of victims of child sexual exploitation. Quash any convictions where the government finds victims were criminalised instead of protected 4. The government should make mandatory the collection of ethnicity and nationality data for all suspects in child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation cases and work with the police to improve the collection of ethnicity data for victims. 5. Mandatory sharing of information should be enforced between all statutory safeguarding partners in cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Compliance should be monitored by the inspectorates and overseen by the proposed Child Protection Authority. 6. The Department for Education should move swiftly to introduce unique reference numbers for children to improve opportunities for agencies to better share their information about children at risk of child sexual abuse 7. Police information systems should be upgraded. These systems should also provide for the use of the unique 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government should develop and publish a strategic plan to secure the necessary practice improvements identified in this report. 2. Government should take the necessary steps, working with professional bodies, to ensure that practitioners and managers have the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities, including access to relevant guidance. Recommendation 3. Government should take necessary steps to improve the quality of joint enquiries so that decisions are more consistently in children's interests. 4. Government should ensure that there is robust assessment and management of people who present a risk of sexual harm and who have contact with children. 5. Government should ensure that practitioners understand that they can and should talk directly to children, and families, about concerns of sexual abuse. 6. Government should ask NHS England and public health commissioners to audit local commissioning arrangements to ensure that pathways and services are in place to identify and respond to the health needs of sexually abused children (recent and non-recent). 7. Government should take action so that there is a clear and agreed process for ensuring that where cases cannot be considered against the threshold test, early charging advice is sought in

<p>20. Age verification in relation to online services and social media platforms.</p>	<p>reference numbers for children which are being introduced by the Department for Education.</p> <p>8. Child Sexual Exploitation investigations should be approached like Serious and Organised Crime.</p> <p>9. The Department for Education should urgently interrogate child protection data to identify the causes of the decline in child sexual abuse and exploitation representation in child in need assessment data; examine the reasons for variations across local authorities; and review the effectiveness of Serious Incident Notifications in relation to child sexual abuse and exploitation.</p> <p>10. The government should commission research into the drivers for group-based child sexual exploitation, including online offending, cultural factors and the role of the group.</p> <p>11. The Department for Transport should take immediate action to put a stop to 'out of area taxis' and more rigorous statutory standards for local authority licensing and regulation of taxi drivers.</p> <p>12. The government should commit to fully resourcing the implementation of these recommendations over multiple years and to tracking their implementation across departments and other organisations, with regular reports to Parliament.</p>	<p>cases of intrafamilial child sexual abuse.</p> <p>8. The Panel invites the President of the Family Division to consider the findings of this review and determine what actions are needed to support judicial decision making when children may have been sexually abused.</p> <p>9. The Panel invites Cafcass to consider the findings of this review to determine what actions it needs to take.</p> <p>10. The Panel invites the relevant inspectorates (Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and HMI Probation) to consider the findings of this review.</p>
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Annex 3
Welsh Government (WG) Draft Strategy Outcomes grouped to SG outcomes

SG Outcome	Relevant Long term Outcomes	Relevant Actions
<p>SG: Education as prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain a culture of openness and understanding where everyone feels safe and confident to talk about all forms of child sexual abuse. • Children and young people and adults around them are empowered to keep children safe from sexual abuse and know how to report concerns. • Communities recognise, respond and report concerns of child sexual abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adults in Wales with accurate information on child sexual abuse, healthy relationships, and sex education. • Empower communities to discuss, identify, and report child sexual abuse confidently. • Increase awareness of children's vulnerabilities to sexual abuse due to unresolved trauma and adversity. • Host community events on preventing child sexual abuse and keeping children safe. • Promote appropriate language use around child sexual abuse, avoiding victim-blaming. • Ensure parents and carers can identify all forms of child sexual abuse, including intrafamilial, sibling, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation, and online abuse. • Raise awareness and build a trauma-informed culture within Welsh communities. • Inform parents and carers about support resources for children who have experienced or are at risk of sexual abuse. • Educate all children in Wales about healthy relationships, safety, and reporting concerns. • Support individuals who have thoughts of sexually abusing children to prevent harm occurring. Support individuals who have been convicted of causing sexual harm to children to prevent harm recurring. • Offer services and information to deter young people from causing sexual harm to others.
<p>Recovery and survivor support and services</p>	<p>Recovery Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children and young people who have been affected by child sexual abuse will have access to appropriate and timely support that meets their needs. • All services and practitioners can provide the right support at the right time to children, young people and those around them who have been affected by child sexual abuse. • Families and those around children and young people who have been affected 	<p>Recovery Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure there is a clear and detailed understanding of service provision for children and young people affected by all types of child sexual abuse across Wales. • Ensure access to specialist counselling and support services for children and young people affected by child sexual abuse including harmful sexual behaviour, facilitating their healing and recovery when necessary. • Raise awareness of support services and promote the importance of the voluntary sector in providing recovery, counselling, and support to children and young people affected by child sexual abuse. • Incorporate families and caregivers affected by child sexual abuse into the support planning process.

	<p>by child sexual abuse have access to support that meets their needs.</p> <p>Supporting adult victim-survivors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and maintaining a culture of openness and understanding, and an environment where adults feel safe and confident to talk about sexual abuse that happened to them when they were children. • All young people and their families affected by sexual abuse are given access to support across their transition into adulthood and beyond. • All services and practitioners provide the right support at the right time to adults who have been affected by sexual abuse as children or young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support families and carers in identifying and managing the effects of child sexual abuse with a trauma-informed approach and develop their understanding of their children’s and their own trauma needs. • Support families and carers to manage the effects of sibling sexual abuse with a trauma-informed approach. • Ensure children and families can access specialist support when a family member is arrested for child sexual abuse, including online offences • Develop guidance to enable families and carers to access legal support and advice to enable them to navigate the family and criminal court systems following child sexual abuse. <p>Supporting adult victim-survivors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage adults who experienced sexual abuse to share their stories. • Ensure professionals working with children, families, and adults in Wales understand the long-term impact of child sexual abuse. • Recognise adolescent development needs and risks related to sexual abuse in policies and practices. • Provide a consistent response to sexually abused adolescents across Wales for support and safeguarding. • Ensure young people aged 18-25 affected by child sexual abuse can access appropriate care through homelessness, substance misuse, criminal justice, and mental health services. • Ensure adult survivors of child sexual abuse in Wales can access counselling and related support services that will help with healing and recovery when needed • Increase visibility and recognition of support services for adult survivors of child sexual abuse, emphasising the role of the voluntary sector in recovery and counselling. • Clarify the responsibilities of adult social care under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 regarding adult survivors of child sexual abuse. • Ensure access to support services for individuals who displayed harmful sexual behaviour as children, focusing on building protective factors during their transition to adulthood and beyond. • Set up a Routine Enquiry project group to develop and roll out training to help all practitioners to routinely ask about child sexual abuse with adults. • Development of guidance for Local Authorities about eligibility criteria, care and support for adult survivors of child sexual abuse, including situational capacity.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the response for young people and their families affected by all forms of sexual abuse and better
<p>SG: Workforce Priorities</p> <p>Relevant WG Strategic Objective:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All professionals have child sexual abuse training at a level appropriate to their roles and can identify and respond to sexual abuse, can support children and their families and assess and manage risks associated with sexual abuse. • Parents and carers receive timely support if their child is at risk of child sexual abuse, is or has been sexually abused or is engaging in harmful sexual behaviour. • There is a consistent multi-agency response to concerns of child sexual abuse across Wales. • Professionals can access specialist advice to support their work with children, families and adult victims-survivors. • Children and young people know they will be seen, heard and understood if they are being sexually abused or feel at risk of child sexual abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the review being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current effectiveness of the mandatory organisational duty to report and the consideration of mandating duties to report on individuals. • Strengthen existing guidance for practitioners about all types of child sexual abuse and the risk indicators associated with people who are at risk of sexually abusing children. • Work with Regional Safeguarding Boards to embed a child sexual abuse multi-agency response pathway across Wales. • Map existing resources for professionals, centralise access to these and identify and address gaps. • Explore the potential for establishing expert practitioners (virtual hubs) across Wales and what funding would be required to establish. • Scope the added value of NSPCC snap shots to assist this and what funding would be required. • Encourage children and young people in Wales to confidently report any risk or experience of sexual abuse to a trusted person by providing clear information about what steps will be taken if they disclose to a trusted adult via awareness raising, education, informative, accessible materials. • Revise and re-launch the statutory Welsh Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 7 – Safeguarding Children from Child Sexual Exploitation.

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Data – Opportunities for Improvement

8 October 2025

Prepared by: Scottish Government Child Protection Unit and CELCIS

Introduction

1. Child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) are often hidden and under-reported forms of abuse. However, developing an effective response which prioritises prevention requires a robust understanding of scale and nature. There is currently no comprehensive national data on the prevalence of child abuse in Scotland. Addressing this issue is a particular challenge in relation to CSAE in ensuring data is collected in a trauma-informed manner which supports and protects child victims.
2. There are a very limited number of published sources of CSAE data in Scotland. Notwithstanding this, the two main published sources point towards different profiles:
 - The Child Protection Registration data finds that 162 children were registered with sexual abuse recorded as a concern, and 30 children were registered with child sexual exploitation recorded as a concern in 2023/24.
 - Recorded crime data from Police Scotland finds that there were a minimum number of 5,087 sexual crimes with victims aged under 18 in 2024/25.
3. To better understand these differing numbers, it is important to review CSAE data captured within other parts of the child protection process, particularly at Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs, the beginning of the child protection process), Joint Investigative Interviews (the best practice model for interviewing children and young people in Scotland), medical examination and other protective processes.
4. Through these different sources, partners can gain a fuller understanding of the number of children at risk of or experiencing CSAE, and how these children are responded to and supported. Indeed, the initial mapping of sources contained in this paper finds that there is CSAE-relevant data collected across Scotland's child protection processes, but it is currently unclear whether and how this data can be collated, analysed and shared at a national level.

Policy Context

5. In 2024 the Scottish Government established the National CSAE Strategic Group to increase cross-sectoral coordination and capability to address the risks and harms of CSAE in Scotland by scrutinising existing and emerging evidence and practice to inform, prioritise and agree actions. A key focus of the Group's efforts to date has focused on the challenges and opportunities related to data collection, analysis and use.

6. Following widespread media coverage and political interest, Baroness Louise Casey was commissioned by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary in February 2025 to evaluate the scale, nature and drivers of group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) at a national and local level in England and Wales. The National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was published on 16 June 2025, with the UK Government (UKG) accepting all 12 recommendations.
7. A key focus of the Casey Audit was the lack of comprehensive child protection and other data available on CSAE, from victim information to perpetrator characteristics.
8. **Recommendation 9** of the Casey Audit stated:
The Department for Education (DfE) should urgently interrogate child protection data to identify the causes of the decline in child sexual abuse and exploitation representation in child in need assessment data; examine the reasons for variations across local authorities; and review the effectiveness of Serious Incident Notifications in relation to child sexual abuse and exploitation.
9. In its response, the UKG made the following commitment:
The [UK] government will urgently review child protection data. We must better understand the decline in child sexual abuse and exploitation representation in child in need assessment data and the reasons for variations across local authorities. We will therefore publish analysis by the end of 2025 that aims to better understand what has happened regarding the decline in child protection data on child sexual abuse and exploitation.

This will include analysis of child abuse victims' demographics, outcomes, trends and local area variation over time. We will also work with the CSA centre to understand the specific issues outlined in this recommendation and will publish any related research once concluded.

We will also look at the overall fall in serious incident notifications and exploring whether there is underreporting and if there is, what the reasons for this might be.

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

Internal Roundtable Discussion

10. On 16 September 2025, colleagues from the child protection unit (CPU) held a roundtable discussion with analysts from across SG, chaired by Chief Statistician Alastair McAlpine, to discuss the issues set out in this paper and begin scoping out what work can be taken forward.

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

Contents

1. Suspected prevalence of CSAE in Scotland	42
2. Overview of child protection data available on CSAE in Scotland	42
2.1 Children’s Social Work Statistics: Child Protection	42
2.2 Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees	43
2.3 Police Scotland IRD Spreadsheet	44
2.4 Joint Investigative Interview / Scottish Child Interview Model	46
2.5 Health data	47
2.6 Education Data	47
2.7 Third-Sector and Partner Helpline Data	47
3. Summary of Justice data on CSAE in Scotland	47
3.1 Recorded crime in Scotland publication	47
3.2 Police Scotland UNIFI database	48
3.3 National Referral Mechanism	48
4. Analysis of published child protection CSAE data in Scotland	49
5. Key Questions for Consideration	50

1. Suspected prevalence of CSAE in Scotland

11. Whilst Scotland has no specific national prevalence study of its own of in-person or online enabled CSAE, Childlight has applied meta-analysis of global data set out in its ['Into the Light' report](#) published in December 2024 to Scotland. While this does not utilise Scotland-specific data, it provides an indication of what we might expect the prevalence of online-enabled CSEA (a subset of all CSAE) to be. Childlight estimate that of Scotland's 760,000 children aged 5-17:
- 90,000 children; or 12% of children have experienced online solicitation in the past year.
 - Just over 150,000 children (20%) have been victims of non-consensual taking, sharing or exposure to sexual images and videos in the past year.
 - One in twenty children have experienced sexual exploitation in the past year; and over one in 10 (11%) have experienced this at some point during their childhood.
12. Based on global reports from organisations that track and report child sexual abuse material (CSAM) it is estimated that in Scotland in 2022 over 265,000 CSAM reports/notices of CSAM were made - more than one report every two minutes.

2. Overview of child protection data available on CSAE in Scotland

2.1 Children's Social Work Statistics: Child Protection

13. Annual returns have been made by local authorities to the Scottish Government for this publication since 2011-12. Child-level data is provided on children subject to child protection processes in Scotland and by local authority areas, with this data than aggregated within the annual publication.
14. Data collected includes children subject to Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD); children subject to Child Protection Planning Meetings, Child Protection Registrations numbers and concerns recorded when registered. It should be noted that data on IRD was collected for the first time in the last collection that was published and there is a significant time lag (~9 months) between data collection and publication, meaning this collection is generally more useful for tracking longer term trends and research purposes
15. Child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation are both included as concern categories, however this is only recorded for registrations currently.
16. **Child's Demographics** - Data collected on the child's demographic characteristics are:
- Age of child.
 - Sex of child.
 - Ethnicity of child (White; Mixed or multiple ethnic group; Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British; African, Caribbean or Black; Other ethnic group; not known).

- Religion of child (None; Church of Scotland; Roman Catholic; Other Christian; Muslim; Buddhist; Sikh; Jewish; Hindu; Pagan; Other Religion; Not Known).
- Disability of child (Yes; No; Not yet assessed; Not known).
- Local authority where child lives.
- Home postcode where child lives (used to link to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).

17. **Abuser's relationship** - There is also data collected on the primary known/ suspected abuser in terms of their relationship with the child. However, it is not known whether the perpetrator/ abuser information can be analysed for CSA and CSE victims only.

- Natural mother; Natural father; Natural parents,
- Step mother; Step father; Natural parent and their partner or step parent.
- Parent's cohabitee.
- Sibling.
- Other relative (excluding sibling).
- Foster carer/ professional carer.
- Other person known to child/ family.
- Residential care staff.
- Persons unknown to child/ family.
- Child themselves.
- Not known.

2.2 Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees

18. The Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees responds to an action within Scottish Government's 2016 Child Protection Improvement Programme to:

- Deliver robust datasets to support child protection improvement.
- Develop a national resource for advice on using child protection data for local planning and service development.
- Expand analytical capacity.

19. Importantly, the action reflected an appetite for data improvement among Scotland's Child Protection Committees (CPCs), which play a pivotal role in the continuous improvement of the protection of children and young people. This responsibility involves generating, collating and analysing a range of data and evidence to inform improvement planning. The Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees sits within this context.

20. The quarterly data collected as part of the Minimum Dataset includes children subject to Interagency Referral Discussions; children subject to Child Protection Planning Meetings, Child Protection Registrations numbers and concerns recorded when registered, number of referrals to the Reporter and number of Child Protection Orders granted and timescales of key child protection processes.

21. Child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation are both included as concern categories however this is only recorded for registrations currently, as is the case for data on age of the child. It is important to note that this is a minimum dataset however, and whilst this is not consistent across all CPCs, it is understood that CPCs do collect additional data relating to both earlier stages of the process and concern categories (including CSAE).
22. The Minimum Dataset is collected by CPCs and is primarily for their local, multi-agency use. The quarterly data is not readily available to Scottish Government and is not currently aggregated at a national level.

2.3 Police Scotland IRD Spreadsheet

23. Police Scotland began development of an IRD Spreadsheet in September 2023 to provide a better way to capture all data in relation to IRD's conducted within each division. It will ensure that all children discussed in an IRD will be documented on the spreadsheet and figures in relation to each division will be accurate.
24. Police Scotland have staggered the roll out of the IRD Spreadsheet across divisions and it is now live across the country. The Spreadsheet has not been active in all divisions for a full year yet however so comparable data across all areas is not available yet but is expected to be by the end of 2025. There will also be a rollout of a Power BI system that will enable different cuts of the data to be generated, however some technical issues need to be worked through first.
25. **Child sexual abuse concerns** - Child sexual abuse is captured in the spreadsheet with 12 different concern categories that can be recorded under this category. Where child sexual abuse is suspected, only one of these concerns can be recorded for each child:
- ACRA Significant/Serious Harm
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Child Trafficking (Sexual)
 - Rape
 - Domestic Rape
 - Sexual Assault
 - Grooming
 - Online – NOCAP
 - Online
 - Indecent Communication
 - Voyeurism
 - Other Sexual Abuse
26. **Child exploitation concerns** - A separate field/column in the spreadsheet is to record where child exploitation is a factor in the IRD. Where it is, officers have three options:
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- CSE and CCE

27. Demographic information - recorded in the IRD Spreadsheet, specifically:

- Age of child
- Gender of child (Female, Male, Transgender Female, Transgender Male, Non Binary)
- Ethnicity of child (African, Any Mixed Ethnic Group, Arab, Bangladeshi, Black Scottish or other Black, Caribbean, Chinese, Indian, Other African, Caribbean or Black, Other Asian, Other Ethnic Group, Other White, Pakistani, Unknown, White British, White Gypsy/Traveller, White Irish, White Northern Irish, White Polish, White Scottish, White Welsh).
- Language spoken (approximately 200 languages listed)
- Known disability (Yes, No, Unknown)
- Vulnerabilities (Communication needs, Disabilities, Mental Health Problems, Problematic Alcohol/Drug Use, Domestic Abuse, Non-Engaging, None)
- Subject to statutory supervision (Yes, No, Unknown)
- On Child Protection Register (Yes, No, Unknown)
- Local authority area

28. Setting and suspected perpetrator information - recorded for each IRD:

- Extra-Familial Harm (Yes, No)
- Suspects Relationship to Victim:
 - Father/Mother (including adoptive and step-parents)
 - Mother's/Father's partner
 - Foster carer or guardian
 - Brother/Sister (including foster, step and half-siblings)
 - Another relative
 - Friend of the family
 - Neighbour
 - Current/previous boyfriend/girlfriend
 - Victim's friend/acquaintance for more than 24 hours
 - Stranger/acquaintance known for less than 24 hours
 - Someone in a position of trust or authority
 - Someone met online
 - Someone else
 - Not known

29. IRD outcome - Data is also captured on the outcomes of an IRD (e.g. if a Child Protection Planning Meeting was initiated, led to Care and Risk Management processes, or statutory measures were applied for).

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

2.4 Joint Investigative Interview / Scottish Child Interview Model

30. As part of the development and implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model, the National Joint Investigative Interview (JII) Team has developed and shared a Data Capture Form for local JII partnerships to guide and support the data collected for each SCIM JII held. The Data Capture Form was recently updated for 2025-26 and its use by all JII partnerships across Scotland is encouraged. However, there may be some variation in what data is captured across different local authorities.
31. Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation - are both concerns options for recording, while information is also recorded on whether the JII is as/about:
- Victim/Witness/Familial/Non-Familial
 - Peer-to-Peer Incident (Yes, No)
32. **Demographics** - for each child interviewed, the following information is to be recorded:
- Age of child
 - Gender of child (Female, Male, Transgender, Non-Binary, Other, Unknown)
 - Ethnicity (White, Mixed, Asian, African, Caribbean/Black, Other, Choose Not To Disclose)
 - Disability (Vision, Hearing, Mobility, Dexterity, Learning disability, Learning difficulty, Social interaction and communication, Mental Health, Speech and Language, Long-term illness or health condition)
 - First language (open text)
 - Other languages (open text)
 - Local authority
33. **Other information** - recorded about the child are:
- Looked after status (Not looked after, Looked after at home, Kinship, Foster Care, Residential)
 - Is a multi-agency (GIRFEC) child's plan with lead professional in place at time of notification of concern? (Yes, No)
 - Currently on child protection register? (Yes, No)
 - Known to SCRA? (Yes - open referral/ongoing investigation; Yes - previously known; Yes - subject to CSO/Interim CSO; No - not previously known)
34. **Process and outcome information** relating to the JII is also captured:
- Route into JII (Urgent JII prior to IRD, IRD Decision, PF Request No IRD, PF Request IRD, Witness Interview No IRD, Witness Interview IRD)
 - Type of Medical (Specialist Child Protection Paediatric Single Doctor, Joint Paediatric Forensic Medical, Comprehensive Medical Examination/Assessment)
 - Was a disclosure made during interview? (Yes, No)
 - Has a crime report been raised? (Yes, No)
 - Did the interview result in charges being preferred? (Yes, No)

2.5 Health data

Pockets of data relating to CSAE are also understood to be held by health boards.

35. NHS Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service (SARCS)

- Public Health Scotland publish annual data - Analytics and Intelligence for people who access an NHS Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service (SARCS) following a recent rape, sexual assault or child sexual abuse: Third report on the operation of the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021 – with monitoring data for children and young people indicating that during 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 there were around 140 acute (that is, within seven days or less following the incident) examinations for children under 16, with around 56 non-acute examinations.
- The West of Scotland SARCS recently undertook a study to report on the characteristics of the complainers and suspects, and to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and experiences of the adolescents attending their service. The 2025 (unpublished) report considered 285 children attending the service over a 5-year period. 94% of children were female and 89% white British/Irish. The study revealed a number of trends of relevance to CSAE, such as the identification of Child Sexual Exploitation indicators in 38.6% of cases reviewed, with multiple indicators present in 52.7% of these cases, highlighting the complex vulnerability profile of many adolescents being supported by the service.

36. Other potential sources are:

- National Sexual Health System.
- Child Protection Medical Examinations data overseen by the Managed Clinical Network for Child Protection.

2.6 Education Data

37. While likely held in children's individual pastoral notes and therefore unable to be extracted on a quantitative basis, software developments may mean it is now possible to extract some data from SEEMIS around CSAE risks and concerns.

2.7 Third-Sector and Partner Helpline Data

38. Another potential source of data to explore is the risks and concerns shared by children and parents who are calling or contacting helplines (e.g. Childline and Parentline) for support and advice.

3. Summary of Justice data on CSAE in Scotland

3.1 Recorded crime in Scotland publication

39. These publications provide information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland for the year ending March and include detailed commentary on the recording of crimes and offences. There are a number of data indicators in this collection of relevance to CSAE, including:

- Sexual assault against a child: 1,524 recorded in 2024/25.
- Causing a child to be present / looking at sexual activity: 539 recorded in 2024/25.
- Sexual exposure of a child: 72 recorded in 2024/25.
- Communicate indecently with a child: 572 recorded in 2024/25.
- Voyeurism involving a child: 97 recorded in 2024/25.
- Grooming of children for purposes of sexual offences: 50 recorded in 2024/25.
- Rape and attempted rape of a child under 16: 452 recorded in 2024/25.
- Minimum number of sexual crimes with victim aged under 18: 5,087 recorded in 2024/25.

40. A limitation of this dataset is that it generally only captures data on children under the age of 16, and therefore misses out on a significant cohort of children that may be victims of CSAE. The data does also not allow for determination of the specific age or ethnicity of the victim.

41. These statistics generally show a higher prevalence of crime recorded related to CSAE than the prevalence of CSAE within child protection datasets. For reference, the table below shows the number of sexual assault crimes recorded by the police for female and males under 16 over the last five years.

Sexual crime	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Sexual assault of female under 16	1,082	1,509	1,336	1,301	1,232
Sexual assault of male under 16	178	267	306	300	328

3.2 Police Scotland UNIFI database

42. Police Scotland have recently implemented a new centralised database (called UNIFI) to hold information on recorded crime, including victim and suspect details which replaces multiple separate systems inherited from the pre-2013/14 legacy forces. There is the desire to use UNIFI to expand Scottish Government Official Statistics into at least age, gender and ethnicity. Whilst that project does not have a specific focus on sexual crime, the outcome would in theory include an ethnicity breakdown for sexual crime suspects where the victim is a child.

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

3.3 National Referral Mechanism

43. In the UK, the primary source of data on victims of trafficking is the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), with statistics published by the Home Office on both a quarterly and annual basis. These reports provide insights into the types of exploitation reported, who has made the referral, and the outcomes of referrals. In Scotland, referrals to the NRM for children are made by designated First Responders, which include Police Scotland, local authorities, the Home Office, and selected non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
44. However, due to the hidden and often underreported nature of exploitation—particularly sexual exploitation—NRM statistics are widely considered to underestimate the true scale of trafficking and exploitation.
45. Between 2020 and 2024, referrals to the NRM for child sexual exploitation have increased, rising from 16 cases in 2020 to 49 in 2024. Despite this notable growth, the number of referrals for child sexual exploitation remains relatively low compared to other forms of exploitation.

Year/Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Sexual	16	24	29	56	49	174
Labour	49	59	91	138	178	515
Criminal	56	32	73	103	135	399
Domestic	11	16	14	30	42	113

Table: Breakdown of child NRM referrals at age at exploitation and exploitation type in Scotland (2020-2024)

4. Analysis of published child protection CSAE data in Scotland

46. Currently the only national child protection data that is publicly available is from the Scottish Government’s annual Children’s Social Work Statistics: Child Protection.
47. The latest collection of this data covering the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 found that registrations with child sexual exploitation recorded as a concern during the year was low at 30, making up only 1% of registrations, whereas registrations with sexual abuse was 162, making up 5% of registrations.
48. Registrations with child sexual abuse and/or child sexual exploitation recorded as a concern have generally been low as part of this collection, however appear to be on a further downward trend since 2021. The last five years of data is captured in the table below for reference. As multiple concern categories can be recorded for one case a combined total of child sexual exploitation plus child sexual abuse has not been included.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024

Child sexual exploitation	65	139	84	41	30
Child sexual abuse	260	250	170	190	162

Table: Number of child sexual exploitation concerns identified at Planning Meetings of Children registered during the year

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

5. Key Questions for Consideration

Prevalence

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

Data Sets

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]

National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Workforce Learning and Development Subgroup - initial report

September 2025

[Redacted Section 29(1)(a)]