

# Over the Internet, Under the Radar: Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation – a brief literature review

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## 1. Summary

In early 2016, the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ) at the University of Strathclyde facilitated two 'invite only' seminars for professionals from a wide range of backgrounds who encounter issues around adolescent 'risk-taking behaviour online' and 'e-safety'. A separate paper published by CYCJ describes the content of these events and outlines the recommendations that emerged from these seminars in relation to improving outcomes for Scotland's children with regards to digital safety.

Further to these seminars, CYCJ commissioned the following brief literature review in relation to online harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children and adolescents. This review was written to contextualise some of the debates that took place at the seminars with what we know from current research evidence. It was also written to help ground some of the recommendations from the seminars with findings from the relevant international literature. The review highlights some emerging findings relating to adolescent harmful sexual behaviour online, notes some of the conceptual issues raised by young people being active producers of online explicit content and discusses an emerging digital landscape where many of the traditional certainties we have in working with young people who sexually abuse are subverted, creating new challenges for agencies and practitioners.

## 2. Introduction

In September 2016, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published guidelines on harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people (NICE, 2016). The recommendations from this report address harmful online behaviour. They suggest that signs of problems include sexualised behaviour such as sexting or sharing and sending sexual images using mobile or online technology and viewing pornography that is inappropriate for age and developmental status. The NICE report differentiates between sexually abusive behaviour and behaviours that are detrimental to the child or young person's development. Sexually abusive behaviours are coercive and involve forcing others to comply with an action. This can include oral, anal and vaginal penetration. Whereas behaviours that affect individual development could include, for example, compulsive masturbation or addiction to online pornography. The latter is not defined either in terms of what it means to be addicted or the nature of the material. The authors also note that the link

between pornography and sexual violence is unclear. The report considers the role of electronic media in sexually harmful behaviour although it acknowledges that reasons behind the growth in online grooming, the viewing of online pornography, and the making and distributing of sexual images is poorly understood. Again, it is unclear in these guidelines what these assumptions (at least in relation to young people) are based on. As will be seen, while there has been a substantial growth in the literature on harmful online sexual behaviour by adults, there have been much fewer studies concerning children (aged under 18 years). Even literature that refers to youth often relates to older teenagers (over 18 years and young adults).

### 3. Sexually abusive behaviour

#### Prevalence

There is a lack of studies looking specifically at the prevalence of online harmful sexual behaviours in children. However, population studies were some of the earliest to indicate concerns about the involvement of children (for example, Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell & Ybarra, 2008). This review of the research suggests that there has been a reliance on surveys as the primary method of data collection into the prevalence of online abuse and exploitation and some of this data has relevance for this report. Representative surveys do give indications about the scale of certain 'problematic' experiences, but they may be limited by the kinds of questions that can be asked in a survey and the willingness of victims to disclose (see Livingstone & Smith, 2014). There are also limitations in the use of surveys in terms of their capacity to reveal the relationship between these experiences and harm, as opposed to feelings of distress.

Mitchell et al., (2014) reported on US trends in unwanted online experiences and sexting as evidenced by the Youth Internet Safety Survey (YISS) at three time points (2000, 2005, 2010). The YISSs were conducted via telephone surveys with separate national samples of 1,500 internet users aged 10-17 and their parents. YISS-3, which took place in 2010, included questions which assessed children creating and distributing explicit images of themselves and/or peers. Along with changes in the patterns of internet use by children, these surveys indicated a decline of 53% in unwanted sexual solicitations, but the proportion of solicitations that were aggressive in nature (involving offline contact by the perpetrator

through surface mail, telephone or in person, or attempts or requests for offline contact) was 15% in 2000, 31% in 2005, and 34% in 2010. The declines in sexual solicitations were highest among children aged 10-12, and the main source of these solicitations were from adolescents and young adults under the age of 25. There was also an increase in solicitations coming from people known offline, as opposed to strangers, and these solicitations were largely taking place through social networking sites as opposed to chat rooms. These trends were argued to provide evidence that protective adaptations to the online environment have been successful (Jones, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2011). Mohler-Kuo et al.'s (2014) epidemiological survey was conducted on a nationally representative sample of 6,787 Swiss students with an average age of 15.5 years. Overall, 40.2% of girls and 17.2% of boys reported having experienced at least one type of child sexual abuse (CSA) event. The most frequently experienced event was sexual harassment via the internet (no further definition was given of this). More than half of female victims and more than 70% of male victims reported having been abused by juvenile perpetrators.

A large offender data set comes from the US longitudinal National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (NJOV) (Walsh et al., 2012). This arrest study collected data at three time points (2000, 2006, 2009) over two phases comprising different methods: a postal survey of law enforcement agencies of arrests made for technology-facilitated sexual crimes against children over a specified period of time, and 1,299 telephone interviews concerning cases identified in the survey. Between 2000 and 2006, there was a substantial increase in the number of arrests (2,577 to 7,010, with arrests in 2009 at 8,144, although this may not indicate an actual increase as there was an overlap in the estimated ranges at the 95% confidence interval). Approximately half of the arrests were for possession of child pornography only (the term used in these reports). Arrests for crimes where the victim was known to the police (through the production of images of sexual abuse and exploitation, which was named in the report as child pornography) increased by approximately 30% between 2000 to 2006 and doubled 2006 to 2009. This also reflected a large increase in offenders who were known to their victims (described as family and acquaintance offenders).

Arrests through proactive policing (police posing as children online) declined in 2009, although arrests for proactive investigation of 'child pornography' offences increased in 2009 (2,353 compared to 880 in 2006) (Wolak et al., 2012).

The increase evidenced in these studies for the arrests for the production of child sexual abuse materials is important for this report. This rise was largely driven by 'youth-produced sexual images' which were taken by children 17 years or under and which met the legal definitions in the US for child pornography. In most of these cases the person arrested was an adult who had solicited images from a minor. This was also reflected in the fact that there were more adolescent victims who were face-to-face acquaintances with the person arrested. The 2009 data demonstrated that 37% of the arrests were of adults who had taken images of minors and 39% where minors had been enticed to produce images.

Approximately 25% of incidents only involved adolescents, although the report noted that most of these (16%) involved serious criminal activity by 'juvenile offenders' (children involved in harmful sexual behaviour) that included sexual abuse, blackmail or other 'aggravated incidents', with the remaining 7% involving 'sexting' (produced as part of a romantic peer-relationship or by attention-seeking adolescents) (Wolak et al., 2012). These adult-produced images were more likely, than those produced by adolescents, to be taken by a family member (51% as opposed to 6%), who was 26 years or older, have victims who were younger than 12 years old, possessed additional child pornography downloaded from the internet, and be discovered through law-enforcement activity. One quarter of the adults producing images distributed these on the internet. Where adolescents had produced the images, 83% were distributed, mainly by adolescents who had taken pictures of themselves and sent them to others. Fifty-six percent of this distribution was through mobile phones. In 2009, the majority of the victims of child pornography production were aged 13-17, and overall more than half of the producers arrested had committed a contact sexual-offence, documented in the images taken. Wolak et al. (2012) described most of these offences as 'non-violent', in that children were persuaded or pressured into the activity, rather than forced, although in 2009, 45% of cases involved penetrative sex.

## Online grooming

Ashurst & McAlinden (2015) claim that there is ample evidence that young people are using social media in grooming and bullying to abuse and exploit others sexually with enough frequency to make those behaviours important concerns for both society and care providers. This article provides a critical overview of the conceptual and theoretical foundations for 'grooming' among peers and use of social media within harmful sexual behaviour. Grooming has been defined by Craven et al., (2006) as a process by which a person prepares a child,

significant adults and the environment for the abuse of the child. Whittle et al., (2013) suggest that this definition may apply to a real world setting, or that which occurs online. In many commentaries, and some research literature, the terms 'sexual solicitation' and 'grooming' are used synonymously, although in fact there are marked differences between the two. Sexual solicitation refers to requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or to give personal/sexual information that was unwanted or made by an individual  $\geq 5$  years older, whether wanted or not (Jones et al., 2012). 'Aggressive sexual solicitations' are where solicitors attempted or made offline contact with youth through regular mail, by telephone, or in person. Evidence of growing concerns about online harmful sexual behaviour in the UK comes from McAlinden (2013), who found, from over 50 interviews with criminal justice personnel within the UK, including police officers, that peer-to-peer grooming involving sexting and cyber bullying among the 13 to 17 year old age group accounts for an increasing number of cases involving indecent images of children. Evidence for these claims are provided by reports suggesting increases in the number of cases of internet sexual offending brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies (CEOP, 2013) and increases in referrals for treatment with HSB services of children displaying harmful sexual behaviour through social media (Hackett, 2014).

Mitchell et al. (2014b) analysed trends in unwanted sexual solicitations and indicated that in 2010 approximately 1 in 11 children who used the internet (9%) received an unwanted sexual solicitation in the preceding year, which was a decline from 19% in 2000 to 13% in 2005 (a decline of 53% over the decade). Seventy-two percent of those making the solicitations were largely male and the same was the case in 79% of aggressive episodes. Nearly half of the solicitations were committed by other children (42%) as was also evidenced in 59% of aggressive solicitations. Sixty-five percent of aggressive solicitations included a request for sexual pictures of the child being solicited.

### Image-related offences

A recurrent challenge for legislative systems is the 'problem' of child offending. Leukfeldt et al. (2014) examine this in relation to juvenile suspects of 'child pornography' crimes. They analysed 159 Dutch police files related to images of abuse and exploitation child pornography and found that almost a quarter of the suspects were under 24 years of age. Of that group, 35% were younger than 18 years. Their analysis indicated that these are children

who take sexualised pictures and/or make videos of themselves and/or each other which, if the material is distributed via the internet, becomes a matter for law enforcement agencies.

The report evidences the tensions as to how these scenarios should be managed and whether these activities should result in prosecutions. For example, Gillespie (2013) has argued that these self-produced images when taken consensually are an expression of the adolescent's sexual identity and thus protected by Articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

A further Swiss study by Aebi et al. (2014) analysed a consecutive sample of 54 male children aged 10-18 years convicted of the possession of 'child pornography'. Demographic characteristics, criminal history, and subsequent offending were analysed from criminal files and official reports. Comparisons were made between these children who possessed 'child pornography' with three different groups of children: possessors of other illegal pornography (n = 42); those who committed a sexual contact offence against a child (n = 64); and those who committed a sexual contact offence against a peer or adult (n = 104). Children who possessed 'child pornography' were found to have downloaded illegal material more frequently and over a longer time period than children who possessed 'other' illegal pornography. Furthermore, possessors of 'child pornography' differed from those who had committed a contact offence and showed fewer previous and subsequent offending than children who sexually offended against a peer or adult. The study concluded that children who were found to possess 'child pornography' would benefit from targeted interventions which focus on dysfunctional internet use and sexually deviant arousal.

A small-scale UK study of seven male children referred to Barnardo's Taith Service for downloading images of sexual abuse and exploitation over a three year period (Moultrie, 2006) indicated that there was little evidence of abuse or trauma in their backgrounds and that they presented very differently to young people who might traditionally be assessed as high risk of offending. However, two of the young people were known to have committed previous sexual offences and others were engaged in what were described as risky behaviours, such as following or filming children in the community. Five of the seven children discussed sexual arousal, both to images viewed as well as towards younger children in the community. Two had high levels of 'cognitive distortions' concerning children and sex, and



others displayed attitudes indicating little understanding of victim issues. Moultrie felt that these factors, when coupled with exposure to pro-offending attitudes, may increase concerns about the risk that these children pose. The study points to downloading images being associated with emotional isolation from others which seemed at odds with their relative economic and domestic stability and interpersonal skills. The author felt that it was not possible to conclude if any other difficulties preceded involvement with images of abuse and exploitation, and engagement with others on line, or whether contact with others preceded the difficulties.

More recently, Stevens et al. (2013) compared offence-related and developmental characteristics in subgroups of a sample (n=184) of 'male sex offenders' aged between 10-21 years referred to a specialist UK community facility. The sample was made up of every individual referred to a UK National Health Service community-based assessment and treatment facility for adolescent sexual offenders. Developmental and offence-related characteristics associated empirically with sexual offending among adult and adolescent samples as well as any characteristics considered to be associated with these populations based on the authors' clinical experience were collated on a proforma checklist. Of this sample, six children had engaged in online harmful sexual behaviours. All those who used internet 'child pornography' were living with family at the time they offended and none had experienced state care or experienced, or witnessed, neglect or abuse and none had psychiatric or criminal histories or a disrupted education. None of the six children who used internet 'child pornography' re-offended, sexually or otherwise.

### Voluntary sexual exposure online

A series of studies from Sweden have described the phenomenon of voluntary sexual exposure among youth online. Jonsson et al. (2014) investigated Swedish youth with regard to internet behaviour, social background and psychosocial health including parent-child relationships. A representative sample of 3,503 Swedish children aged 16-22 years completed a survey about internet behaviour, internet-related sexual harassment, sexuality, health, and sexual abuse. Out of those taking part in the survey, 20.9% (19.2% boys and 22.3% girls) reported experiences of voluntary sexual exposure online. This was assessed by answering 'yes' to one or more of the following index questions: (1) "Have you posted pictures/films of yourself online where you were partially undressed?" (2) "Have you ever

exposed yourself sexually (flashed) via a webcam or mobile phone?” (3) “Have you ever masturbated and shown it via webcam or on a mobile phone?” (4) “Have you ever had sex with someone and shown it via webcam or on a mobile phone?”. Multivariate analysis showed a significant association between voluntary sexual exposure online and a number of different forms of online harassment. However, poorer psychosocial health and problematic relationships with parents were not significant in the final model. The authors concluded that voluntary sexual exposure online is associated with vulnerability on the internet among both boys and girls and that there is a need for parents and professionals to better understand what young people do on the internet and the risks they may incur.

A second study by Jonsson et al. (2015) examined the association between online sexual behaviours among Swedish youth and background factors as well as aspects of well-being. The behaviours investigated were: having sex online with a contact met online; having sex with an online contact offline; posting sexual pictures online; and selling sex online. A representative sample of 3,432 Swedish youth were asked about their lifetime experiences as well as their experiences within the previous year. The authors hypothesised that online sexual behaviours were associated with more problematic background factors, worse psychosocial well-being and riskier behaviours in general. The results suggested that these online sexual behaviours were not evidenced by the majority of children but that those who reported online sexual behaviour indeed showed a more problematic background, rated their health as poorer, had a more sexualised life and had experienced more sexual or physical abuse. Youths who sold sex online were seen to be especially at risk.

## Sexting

The importance of self-produced sexual images (often called sexting) is a contested area. Angelides (2013) has argued that there is a ‘sexting panic’ and that ‘the emotional, or, affective tropes of fear and shame have been mobilized in the service of these performative strategies’. There are a variety of definitions used in relation to sexting (which also overlaps with ‘sextortion’ and ‘revenge porn’ (see Definitions), which makes it difficult to understand its scale, or how much harm may be associated with it. Livingstone & Görzig (2014) examined harm in relation to receiving sexual messages (talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex) on the internet. Their 2010 ‘EU Kids Online’ survey included questions about sexual messages for 11-16 year olds (n= 18,709). Harm was estimated by

asking those who had received sexual messages online whether they had been bothered in any way (i.e. they felt uncomfortable, upset, or felt that they shouldn't have seen it). Twenty-four percent indicated that they had felt bothered or upset. The results indicated that the risk of receiving sexual messages increased with age, was greater in those higher in sensation-seeking and who experienced psychological difficulties, and who engaged in more online and offline risk-taking. The consequences of these self-produced sexual images for adolescents have largely been seen as negative (Houck et al., 2014; Lunceford, 2011). Lee and Crofts (2015) have argued that assumptions about coercion and harm do not reflect the experiences of the majority of girls who engage in sexting and who are motivated by pleasure and desire. Powell and Henry (2014) suggested a need for more 'nuanced understandings of sexting' to distinguish between the 'consensual and non-consensual creation and distribution of sexual images' and to more usefully inform policy making and educational resources.

'Sextortion' is a relatively new term, largely used by US law enforcement, which is used to refer to the coercive use by adults and adolescents of sexual images produced by children. Where sexting relates to the creation and sharing of sexual images, specific attention has been paid to the risks that young people (particularly adolescent girls) may expose themselves to (e.g. Lunceford, 2011). These include sexual harassment, online grooming, sexual pressures and "objectification via the creation, exchange, collection, ranking and display of images" (Ringrose et al., 2012: p8). In their typology of sexting based on US case-law, Wolak and Finkelhor (2011) highlighted a range of 'aggravated' sexting incidents carried out by adults and youths, with individuals intending to harm, harass or embarrass others through behaviours that include deception, exploitation and abuse. These findings were based on a review of over 550 cases obtained from a US national survey of law enforcement agencies. The cases all involved "youth-produced sexual images," defined as images of minors created by minors that could qualify as child pornography under applicable criminal statutes. The aggravated incidents involved criminal or abusive elements which included adult involvement; criminal or abusive behaviour by other minors such as harmful sexual behaviour, extortion, or threats; malicious conduct that arose from interpersonal conflict; or the creation, sending or showing of images without the knowledge, or against the will of a minor who was pictured. These authors described two subgroups of these cases that only involved children under the age of 18 years. The first were classified as "Intent to Harm" and

involved criminal, malicious or other abusive behaviour beyond the creation, sending or possession of youth-produced sexual images. In the second group, someone who was pictured in an image did not willingly or knowingly participate in the taking or sending of the picture. These were classified as “Reckless Misuse.” The groups were distinguished by the intent of at least one of the participants. If a child took or used images intending to harm, harass, or embarrass someone, then the incident was classified as ‘Intent to Harm’ (for example, in retaliation for a relationship breaking up). In the ‘Reckless Misuse’ group pictures were taken or sent without the knowing or willing participation of the child in the image, but there was no apparent specific intent to harm (showing or sending on a picture without permission by the person in the image to do so).

Sexting, especially consensual sexting, has been seen by many as problematic and wasteful of police time. The ubiquitous use of mobile technology and applications such as Snapchat, Frankly, Wickr, Blink and Glimpse have been argued by Charteris et al. (2016: p2) to “provide a social landscape through which teens surveil themselves and others”. These applications where images are automatically deleted shortly after being received allow for ‘ephemeral messaging’ which enables the user to capture images that are designed to be shared only temporarily. Receiving an image only for a short time before it is automatically deleted may create a heightened focus on the image and can enable users to evade detection (Charteris et al. 2014) and lead to cyberbullying and cyber-harassment. Cyber-harassment can be defined as threatening or harassing email messages, instant messages, blog entries or websites dedicated solely to tormenting an individual (Cox, 2014). Social media use has been linked to harassment, bullying and even violence (Lippman & Campbell 2014) where ephemeral media may play a role and make it more difficult for outsiders to recognise and detect.

#### **4. Use of sexually explicit material**

Although there is a growing literature examining the effects of young people’s use of sexually explicit internet material, research on the compulsive use of this type of online content among adolescents and its associated factors is still in its infancy. Doornwaard et al., (2016) investigated whether psychological well-being, sexual interests/behaviours, and impulsive-psychopathic personality predicted symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit internet

material among adolescent boys across two time points. Data were collected from a survey of 331 Dutch boys aged 11-17 years who indicated that they used sexually explicit internet material. The results indicated that lower levels of global self-esteem and higher levels of excessive sexual interest concurrently predicted boys' symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit internet material. Longitudinally, higher levels of depressive feelings and excessive sexual interest predicted relative increases in compulsive use symptoms six months later. The authors felt that these findings tentatively suggested that both psychological well-being and sexual interests/behaviours are involved in the development of compulsive use of sexually explicit internet material among adolescent boys.

However, the relationship between consumption of online sexually explicit material and aggressive sexual behaviour in children remains poorly understood. Pratt & Fernandes, (2015) ask the question as to why most young people are 'able to view pornography without sexually abusing others, while for others pornography seems to provide high levels of sexual stimulation and represents a manual on "how to do sex", as well as lowering inhibitions to engage in sexually abusive behaviour'. Skau and Barbour's (2011) survey of 470 Canadian adolescents (average age 19 years, 49% male) reported that 98% of the sample had been exposed to pornography, with average age of first exposure being 12.2 years. Nearly one-third had seen pornography by the age of 10, and pornography exposure tended to occur prior to sexual activity. Viewing pornography at an early age (nine or younger) was associated with having engaged in more 'sexually questionable acts', a desire for more varied sex, more sexual arousal to violence, higher consumption of pornography later in life, and spending more time each week looking at pornography (Skau, 2007). Horvath et al. (2013) suggested that access and exposure to pornography may contribute to engagement in risky sexual behaviour, but this was contrary to the findings of Burton et al. (2010), although in this survey, adolescents who engaged in harmful sexual behaviour reported more exposure to pornography than those who engaged in non-sexual crimes.

Alexy et al.'s (2009) study of 'sexually reactive children and adolescents (SRCAs)', hypothesizes that they may be more vulnerable and likely to experience damaging effects from pornography use because they are a high-risk group for a variety of aggressive behaviours. This was a secondary analysis of data from the US study, 'Risk Management of

Sexually-Reactive Children and Adolescents' on 160 SRCAs. SRCAs who used pornography were more likely to display aggressive behaviours than their non-using cohort. This included a pattern of lying, theft/stealing, truanting, manipulating others, engaging in arson/firesetting behaviours, engaging in coerced vaginal penetration and forced sexual acts such as oral or digital penetration, expressing sexually aggressive remarks and engaging in sex with animals. However, this study did not specifically relate to online sexually violent media. Stanley et al., (2016) reported findings from a large school survey of 4,564 young people aged 14-17 in five European countries. They identified a relationship between regular viewing of online pornography, sexual coercion and abuse and the sending and receiving of sexual images and messages (sexting). In addition, 91 interviews were undertaken with young people who had direct experience of interpersonal violence and abuse in their own relationships. Boys' perpetration of sexual coercion and abuse was significantly associated with regular viewing of online pornography. Viewing online pornography was also associated with a significantly increased probability of having sent sexual images/messages for boys in nearly all countries. In addition, boys who regularly watched online pornography were significantly more likely to hold negative gender attitudes. Research from the US (Ybarra et al., 2011) of longitudinal linkages between intentional exposure to x-rated material and sexually aggressive behaviour surveyed 51,588 10–15 year olds across three time points over a 36-month time frame. An average of 5% of those surveyed reported perpetrating sexually aggressive behaviour and 23% reported intentional exposure to x-rated material. The authors found that intentional exposure to violent x-rated material over time predicted an almost six-fold increase in the odds of self-reported sexually aggressive behaviour, whereas exposure to nonviolent x-rated material was not statistically significantly related.

## 5. Conclusion

There are very few studies that have explicitly examined harmful online sexual behaviour amongst children where abusive behaviours are evidenced. However, US and European epidemiological studies of stratified samples within the general population would indicate that a high proportion of online abuse and exploitation crimes do involve children and that the capacity to create sexual media has meant that young people are also creating online content, some of which would meet the criteria for illegality. Self-production of sexual images (sexting) clearly poses a dilemma about children's rights to express themselves sexually and

anxieties as to how these images are used once they have been shared. There is also an emerging literature on exposure to sexual media and its potential impact on attitudes and behaviour, including sexually harmful behaviour. The context for these crimes is the pervasive use of the internet, increasingly through handheld devices. Whether this has been associated with an increase in sexually harmful behaviour is unclear, but what is evident are the opportunities afforded by technology to engage in behaviour that may be harmful.

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## 7. Definitions

The following definitions are informed by the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, January 28, 2016:

([www.unicef.org/protection/files/Terminology\\_guidelines\\_396922-E.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Terminology_guidelines_396922-E.pdf)).

**Child:** Throughout this report 'child' will be used to refer to people under the age of 18 years, although reference will be made to adolescents where differences in the age of the child are an important consideration in the research findings. This definition is consistent with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which defines the age of a child as 18 years 'unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. This is with reference to the fact that countries may define the age of majority for some purposes to be less than 18. This is replicated by the [EU] Council Framework Decision (Article 12.1) (Gillespie, 2010). In relation to the abuse and exploitation of children through technology there are tensions around this definition as in many countries the age of consent to sexual activity ranges between 12-21 years. In some jurisdictions the age of consent differs for anal or homosexual acts, and consideration is also given to the relative ages of the people involved or the context in which the acts take place (Clough, 2012).

**Forms of sexual conduct requiring protection:** The Convention differentiates certain forms of sexual conduct from which children must be protected (Gillespie, 2010). This includes inducing or coercing a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices, or the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials. However, with self-taken sexual content by young people, consensual sexual activity with a young person may be lawful, but recording of that activity may constitute a serious criminal offence.

**Child sexual abuse materials:** Also called Child pornography in many jurisdictions (e.g. the US). The Optional Protocol to the UNCRC is: ". . . any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes" [Article 2(c)]. This clearly includes

written and audio materials and does not distinguish between fictitious and non-fictitious materials. The Lanzarote Convention definition is, “any material that visually depicts a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child’s sexual organs for primarily sexual purposes”. Child sexual abuse materials are largely produced through photographing the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and have been facilitated by the capacity to create and distribute digital media. Crimes related to these materials include the production of media, dissemination and possession. Simple possession is not illegal across all countries (ICMEC, 2016). Of the 196 countries reviewed by the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2016, only 82 countries were seen to have legislation deemed sufficient to combat child pornography offenses.

**Commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC):** The International Labor Organization definition is: “... the exploitation by an adult with respect to a child or an adolescent – female or male – under 18 years old; accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the child or adolescent (male or female) or to one or more third parties”. We include in this children abused through prostitution. There is lack of clarity and agreement about the term when there are financial or economic benefits arising from, for example, the production and sale of child abuse images, abuse through prostitution or the trafficking of children for sexual purposes (Mitchell et al., 2011). Financial benefits are sometimes expanded to include food, shelter or drugs, although it is unclear whether these benefits follow from the sexual engagement with the child or are part of a bribe or a bid to silence a child (Edinburgh, Pape-Blabolil, Harpin & Saewyc, 2015).

**Grooming or solicitation of children for sexual purposes:** The terms sexual exploitation, grooming and online solicitation are often used interchangeably. Article 23 of the Lanzarote Convention requires Parties to criminalise the intentional proposal of an adult to meet a child for the purpose of committing unlawful sexual activities against him or her. This intention is organised and expressed through the means of information and communication technologies and has to be followed by material acts leading to such a meeting. However, while online grooming may lead to an adult proposing to meet a child in person with the intent of committing a sexual offence, it is also possible for sexual offences to be committed exclusively online, nonetheless causing harm to the child.

**Live streaming of child sexual abuse:** EUROPOL defines the live streaming of abuse for payment as Live Distant-Child Abuse (LDCA) which can be a part of a sexual extortion process, but often is carefully arranged and involving money transfers in most of the cases. “This criminal activity is based on members of networks who control access to the children. These persons offer homeless children or children from their own family for sexual abuse by individuals live in front of a camera in the EU, or other developed countries, for financial gain.”

**Revenge pornography:** This refers to the publication of explicit sexual material portraying someone who has not consented for the image or video to be shared. The law in many jurisdictions now makes it illegal to disclose a "private sexual photograph or film" without the consent of the person depicted in the content, and with the intent to cause them distress.

**Sexting:** Sexting is often defined as the sending of digital text messages containing suggestive, provocative, or explicit sexual photographs, although it was defined by the Lanzarote Convention as children exchanging/circulating sexual images of themselves via social media. In many jurisdictions these acts are criminalised under child pornography law, contrary to the Lanzarote Convention. Sexting comes with a confusing array of definitions (Klettke, Halford & Mellor, 2014; Drouin, Vogel, Surbey & Stills, 2013) and there are inconsistencies in the way this research has defined the content of messages, (e.g. texts and/or images); the medium used to send them; and the relationship context within which the messages have been sent. Many definitions of sexting are dependent on subjective evaluations, for example ‘nearly nude’, which again makes comparison difficult. For these reasons, prevalence estimates of sexting vary (Cooper, Quayle, Jonsson & Svedin, 2016).

**Sexual extortion of children (also known as sextortion):** The International Association of Women Judges defined ‘sextortion’ as ‘a form of corruption in which sex, rather than money, is the currency of the bribe’. Interpol has used the term to refer to ‘sexual blackmail in which sexual information or images are used to extort sexual favours and/or money from the victim’. In their Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment, EUROPOL describe sextortion as ‘coercion to extort sexual favours or images from a victim, usually by threatening to disseminate existing images of the victim if demands are not met’. The Terminology Guidelines describe sexual extortion as, “the blackmailing of a person with the help of self-

generated images of that person in order to extort sexual favours, money, or other benefits from her/him under the threat of sharing the material beyond the consent of the depicted person (e.g. posting images on social media). Often, the influence and manipulation typical of groomers over longer periods of time (sometimes several months) turns into a rapid escalation of threats, intimidation, and coercion once the person has been persuaded to send the first sexual images of her/himself. Sexual extortion is considered a feature of online solicitation of both children and adults, and there appears to be an increase of the use of this type of blackmailing, including more extreme, violent, sadistic, and degrading demands by offenders. When carried out against children, sexual extortion involves a process whereby children or young people are coerced into continuing to produce sexual material and/or told to perform distressing acts under threat of exposure to others of the material that depicts them.” (p52).