“Regulating risk? Techniques and technologies used to prevent child sexual exploitation”

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PLEASE NOTE: This working paper is a live document intended to inform and stimulate discussion and debate within the partner organisations involved in this specific research project, but also to contribute to a wider conversation involving academic and police related colleagues. PLEASE DO contact us if you have any comments or questions or would like to discuss the ideas in this document further: Please contact the lead author Dr Samantha Weston. - s.k.weston@keele.ac.uk
Between November 2015 and March 2017 a joint academic research team from Keele and Staffordshire Universities conducted police/academic collaborative research as part of a broader research project - *Developing an Action/Work-based learning system for improved knowledge exchange, development and implementations through partnership working* (Project code J11). This research was made possible thanks to financial support from the Police Knowledge Fund, provided by The Home Office, The College of Policing and the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE).

As part of the legacy and wider impact of this research the team committed to carrying out related research in parallel and after the funded research topics, utilising methods and collaborative networks facilitated by the funded research. This discussion document relates to one of these parallel streams that developed out of our project.

This series of discussion and policy documents and presentation slides is intended to inform and stimulate discussion and debate within the partner organisations involved in our research project, but also to contribute to a wider conversation involving academic and police related colleagues. The views expressed in these documents are those of the individual authors and should not be regarded as representative of the views or official policies of any of the Police or related agencies that have collaborated in our research.

These documents regularly draw on research and evaluation of procedures and practices in a range of Police Forces, Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners and related partner agencies. While the project that has stimulated these documents was initially formulated in partnership with particular Police and related agencies and organisations, it should not be assumed or inferred that the discussion contained in these documents specifically relates to these partners, their policies or practices.

These documents are intended to be accessible to non-academic readers, and to provide an overview of a range of ideas, concepts and outputs from our research. We want these documents to stimulate debate and develop further knowledge exchange and production with a wider range of potential partners. If you have any comments or questions or would like to discuss the ideas in this document further, please feel free to contact the project lead cited on the title page.
Regulating risk?
Techniques and technologies used to prevent child sexual exploitation

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Context of Research

- Emerged in parallel with project looking at Policing, vulnerability and mental health.
- Research project that includes observation of and in-depth interviews with members of a multi-agency team set up to prevent CSE.
- Knowledge Exchange Groups with young people in receipt of CSE education awareness sessions.
- Working with Police led multi-agency CSE team based in Police Force HQ.
Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation (PCSE) Team

- Multi-agency team – importantly located at police headquarters – ‘owned’ by the police
- 1 x Preventing CSE Project Lead
- 1 x Sergeant
- 3 x Police Officers
- 5 x Multi Agency Posts: Teaching, Family Support, Education Welfare, Teenage Pregnancy, Boys at Risk of CSE
- 1 x Analyst
- 1 x Researcher
Aims of the team:

- To identify children and young people who are at risk of potential sexual exploitation
- To engage with potential and actual victims
- To identify those at risk of offending
- To work with other agencies to share information to help safeguard children and young people
- To raise awareness for Police, Professionals, Parents, Children and Young People:
Approaches used by the team

Intelligence

Identification

Education/brief intervention
Through the acquisition of intelligence the team identifies hotspots where CSE activity might be taking place.

The team then goes out within those areas and, through the use of education strategies delivers presentations in schools (to raise awareness among children), businesses and community groups (to raise awareness among parents).

In addition they do, what can only be described as brief intervention work (small groups of children and parents) where a particular issue relating to CSE has been identified. This leads to further disclosures closing the loop (back to intelligence).

One might suggest, therefore, that this represents a positive step towards a welfare–based response...

However, what I’d like to suggest is that such examples of ‘progressive governance’, while appearing to devolve power to local partnerships and multi–agency teams, upon closer examination reveal more expansive forms of control via techniques of risk management and responsibilisation.

Drawing on Beck’s concept of ‘organised irresponsibility’ I also want to consider, and I need to develop this a little more, is the extent to which policy, institutional structures particularly the legislation around consent to sexual intercourse and the sharing of indecent images of children, impact on the way in which these types of interventions are delivered and, therefore, the messages communicated.
Pope Resign! Pope protected paedophile priests.
Notes for previous image

Context:

In more recent times there has been growing concern about child sexual exploitation (CSE), both internationally and in the UK. Fuelled by several high profile cases in the media (e.g. Jimmy Saville, Rolf Harris, Rotherham, the Roman Catholic Church) there has been a proliferation of official enquiries, inspections and case reviews, all of which call for proactive pre-emptive action to address CSE. The UK Government's CSE Action Plan (Department for Education, 2011) dictates that CSE awareness should be raised among young people, parents, carers and potential perpetrators leading to the implementation of criminal justice led initiatives aimed to specifically prevent CSE.

Rotherham (1997–2013): In just over a third of cases, children affected by sexual exploitation were previously known to services because of child protection and neglect. Over the first twelve years covered by this Inquiry, the collective failures of political and officer leadership were blatant. From the beginning, there was growing evidence that child sexual exploitation was a serious problem in Rotherham. This came from those working in residential care and from youth workers who knew the young people well. But within social care, the scale and seriousness of the problem was underplayed by senior managers. At an operational level, the Police gave no priority to CSE, regarding many child victims with contempt and failing to act on their abuse as a crime.

Institutions exposed to unrelenting pressure to be seen to be doing something!

Alongside this backdrop has been the rapid expansion and adoption of online digital technologies which has had a profound effect on the way young people conduct their social relationships.
Culture of fear

“The internet and digital technologies have transformed how we learn, communicate and socialise, particularly for young people. The benefits of the internet are immense and children become familiar with its use from a very early age, logging online in a number of settings for a variety of reasons. 99% of eight to seventeen year olds living in the UK have access to the internet through computers, tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices. This has opened up the opportunity for them to freely interact, unsupervised, with strangers and to be exposed to the dangers lurking within the virtual world. They risk becoming victims of grooming, sexual abuse and exploitative situations by predators. In the UK the number of child abuse investigations has increased by 88% since 2012 and information from 20 police services shows that there have been 363 reported cases of online grooming since 2013. This is widely accepted to be just the tip of the iceberg as it is estimated many children, who have encountered harmful or inappropriate content, do not report it.”

(Quote from plenary speaker at event at Centre for Child Protection, University of Kent).
National guidance (HM Government, 2016)

- An effective response:
  - Educate all children and young people about the nature and risks of child sexual exploitation and other forms of related harm (both online and offline) and how to access support
  - Promote the resilience of children and young people and their families and strengthen the protective factors around them
  - Provide complementary messages to parents and carers about risks to their children (online and offline) and how to access support if they have concerns
Specifically...

- Challenge myths and misconceptions about who is perpetrating and experiencing this form of abuse;

- Challenge any victim-blaming and promote the rights of all victims to protection and support

  (This, however, has to be done within a particular legislative framework...)
Legislative framework

- **Sexual Offences Act 2003, S9–13**
  - The age of consent to any form of sexual activity is **16** for both men and women (Sections 9–13, Sex Offences Act 2003)

- **Protection of Children Act 1978, S1**
  - The prohibited conduct is:
    - To permit to be taken or make an indecent image of a child
    - To distribute or show any such photograph
    - To have in his possession any such photograph (CJA, 1988)
    - A child is a person **<18** years of age
(Information and advice for 8–10 year olds)

HELLO

If you’re between 8 and 10, you probably know a lot about using the internet.

We've created this area for you to show you what we think is good, look at what's not and show you ways you can get yourself out of bad situations.

If you know something we don't, or you want to get involved in helping to make our website better take a minute to fill in one of our polls.

We have a cool cyber cafe for you to visit where you can help Jason, Sunil, Ali and others to stay safe using new technology.

PLAY GAMES

GIVE US A HAND!

Fill in our survey...

THINKUKNOW HOME PAGE

Play STAR RIDERS
You. Your friends. The Internet.

Keeping yourselves safe, keeping the internet fun.
Sex.
Relationships.
The Internet.

Three things that get a little bit complicated.
Gemma: “I don't think... I think at this age, I think we shouldn't focus on strangers as such, I think it's more like at this age, like people going out, and like up clubs and stuff...”

Lexi: “Not just that, even when you were younger, and you were going to like your friend's house, like you've gone round your friend's house for a house party. How many different, like, guys try get you drunk, or you've got drunk, and then they tried it on with you, and think that it's okay”.
Responsibilising children: SMART

- **SAFE:** Staying safe involves being careful and not giving out personal information: name, address, mobile phone no., school name or password to people online.

- **MEETING:** Meeting someone that you have only been in contact with online can be dangerous. This should only be done with a parent's/carer's permission, and only when they can be present.

- **ACCEPTING:** Accepting e-mails or opening files from people who are not really known or trusted can lead to trouble – they may contain viruses or nasty messages or illegal images.

- **RELIABLE:** Someone online maybe lying about who or what they are, and information found on the Internet may not be reliable.

- **TELL:** Tell your parent or carer if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.
A victim-centered discourse

Holly: “It's so wrong that like we're being taught like... Because the thing we're being taught to not put ourselves in situations, or speak to people that rape, well they just shouldn't rape”.

Hannah: “It annoys me more than anything because you want to be able to do what you want on social media. It’s your social media.”
Sophie: “There’s loads of pictures on Instagram and Facebook of these relationships, and they all look really perfect but relationships aren’t perfect, you have arguments”.

James: “Because you’re seeing all of these pictures of the perfect relationship you envy that relationship, it makes you think that your relationship should be like that, and you start doubting it”.

Sophie: “I think that children should be taught from a young age about respect, respecting themselves and respecting others. It’s like my little brother, he’s in year 6 at primary school, I think from that age he should be taught how to treat people with respect because there’s so many people who grow up thinking that they can touch people inappropriately”.
If a image is sent it could be shared with a number of other people or put onto the internet

Once an image is on the internet it is very difficult to remove

Once an image is sent the person receiving it COULD BLACKMAIL you into sending more images

It is also a criminal offence to be in possession of an indecent (naked/part naked) image or to distribute it (send it on) to someone else.
‘we know that you all share images of yourselves but you shouldn’t because it’s against the law and you are committing a crime and if you do share an image you are exposing yourself to risk and vulnerability!’ (PCSE worker; presentation)

“It seems to be the norm to send a topless picture or bottomless picture and sending pictures of their bits. But it’s not until you sort of tell them that they’re committing offences, they’re committing criminal offences. They’re in possession an indecent image of a child. Even if it’s of themselves and they understand that so it’s getting that message across it’s an offence...You know, and you could be caught”. (PCSE worker)
Tammie: “I don’t know how to explain it. What about the in-between. It’s not made that clear which is right and which is wrong, if you get me. What... The middle bit, what is right? And then, what is wrong?”

Rose: “I understand why you shouldn’t, and why it’s classed as an indecent image, because even if you send it to your boyfriend you don’t know what he could do with it, he could show his friends, share it around, you don’t know. But it is part of our relationships now.”

Jessica: “I don’t get it. Why is it 18 to share an image of yourself but 16 to have sex. So you get to see someone strip down naked at 16 but you can’t have a picture of them until you’re 18? So what if you’re having sex and you take a photo? You’d have to be 18? I don’t get it?”
Organised irresponsibility

“Criteria of action stem from institutions belonging to a different world”
(Beck, 1999:28)
Yet another risk–based intervention that produces clear iatrogenic effects:

- Strategies and techniques used promotes a form of governance that individualises problems and detracts from a government failure to tackle underlying conditions

- Sustains binaries between good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate sexual conduct, silencing capacity for agency and alternative experiences