



Current Practice and Research into Internet Sex Offending

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January 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Author would like to thank those who have contributed to this research for their generosity in sharing their work (on occasion unpublished), valuable perceptions, experiences and contacts. Particular thanks are extended to: Professor Ethel Quayle (COPINE Project); Dr Ewan Lundie (Head Of Psychology, Scottish Prison Service); David Middleton (National Probation Directorate, Home Office, London) Professor Michael Seto; Professor Anthony Beech; Professor Tony Ward; Professor Reinhard Pfaefflin; Professor Marc Graf; Professor Ronald Langevin; Professor Donald Grubin; John Carr (Internet Watch Foundation and NCH the Children's Charity); Ruth Mann (UK Prison Service); Cedric Fulwood, UK National Probation Service; Superintendent James Cameron (Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland); The Police National High Technology Crime Unit Scotland; the Scottish Executive Effective Practice Unit; Family Protection Scotland; the London Metropolitan Police High Technology Crime Unit, Paedophile Unit, Clubs and Vice Unit; The Norwegian Police Child Sexual Exploitation Unit; Robert Shilling (Chair, Interpol Sex Offenders Management Sub Group and Seattle Police); the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, London; Cheshire Probation Service, England; Alexis McDade (The Clyde Quay Project, Scotland).

The Author also wishes to thank Professor Roisin Hall and Dr Anastasia Koulouri of the Risk Management Authority in Scotland for their endless support and encouragement during the conduct of the work.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ACPOS	Association of Chief Police Offices in Scotland
BSC	British Society of Criminology
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
CJSW	Criminal Justice Social Work Scotland
COPA	Child Online Protection Act 2000 (United States)
COPINE	Combating Paedophile Information Networks In Europe - Project at University College Cork
Grooming	Grooming involves a process of socialisation during which an offender seeks to interact with a child (a young person under 18 in Scotland, England and Wales), possibly sharing their hobbies and interests in an attempt to gain trust in order to prepare them for sexual abuse.
HCR-20	Historical, Clinical Risk-20 Scale
HMPS	Her Majesty's Prison Service England & Wales
HTCU	Police High Technology Crime Unit
IPES	International Police Executive Symposium
IATSO	International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders
IBAQ	Internet Behaviour and Attitudes Questionnaire
i-SOTP	Internet Sex Offender Treatment Programme
IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NHTCU	Police National High Technology Crime Unit
NOTA	National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers
NPS	National Probation Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OLR	Order of Lifelong Restriction (Scotland)

PSR	Pre Sentence Report (National Probation Service, England and Wales) - a report prepared by a probation officer to inform sentencing decisions
RATED	Risk Assessment Tools Evaluation Directory (RMA Scotland)
RMA	Risk Management Authority
RM2000	Risk Matrix 2000 scale
RSVP	Risk for Sexual Violence Protocol
SAP	Sentencing Advisory Panel (England & Wales)
SER	Social Enquiry Report (Criminal Justice Social Work Scotland) - a report prepared by a criminal justice social worker to inform sentencing decisions
SORAG	Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide
SPO	Senior Probation Officer
SOPO	Sex Offender Prevention Order (England & Wales)
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
VGTT	Virtual Global Taskforce
ViSOR	Violent and Sexual Offender Register
VRAG	Violence Risk Appraisal Guide

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This report seeks to explore the current and recent practice of Scottish, English, Welsh and international governments, organisations and agencies in assessing risk and managing and treating internet sex offenders.

The research aims were addressed via a literature review, documentary analysis of key legislation, policy and practice documents and semi-structured interviews with a small number of key respondents with expertise in the area and representatives from criminal justice agencies ($N=15$).

2. Summary of Research Findings

1. Key steps have been taken by some governments in attempting to legislate against the online sexual abuse of children. Significant efforts to protect children from internet sexual abuse have been made by organisations such as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) and Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) who also work with the IT industry. The work of national and local Police High Technology Units in Scotland, England and Wales, in attempting to identify and convict online abusers and to identify the victims portrayed in indecent images, should also be acknowledged.
2. A growth in the number of indecent images, many of which are of a more violent nature depicting the abuse of young children, has led Carr (NCH, the children's charity, 2006) to claim that despite these positive moves the problem continues to escalate and the online protection of children is not afforded a high enough political priority in governments' agendas.
3. Information was found regarding developmental, innovative research and work in risk assessment, management and treatment of internet sex offenders in the UK, Canada, Amsterdam ¹ and Switzerland. ²

¹ Although no detailed information has been forwarded regarding practice at the Amsterdam Clinic.

² There are doubtless other countries working on this issue where information was not found in the literature review or provided by respondents.

4. In Scotland, England and Wales, internet sex offenders are currently risk assessed using instruments designed for sex offender assessment, including Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) and Risk for Sexual Violence Protocol (RSVP). Internationally no risk assessment tools appear to have been developed specifically for this group.
5. Little work has been undertaken in attempting to address risk assessment with those who target and groom children online - such offending is potentially more dangerous. Some police respondents expressed concern that offenders convicted for indecent image related offences who may be assessed as 'low risk' may actually constitute a higher risk in terms of their propensity for contact abuse. The point was made repeatedly that not enough is known about the boundary between the use of indecent internet child images and the potential for contact abuse.
6. Respondents raised many important points regarding effective risk assessment and management of internet sex offenders. Both the offender's situational (access to children, lifestyle, home environment etc) and individual risk factors (the nature of any collection of indecent images and collecting behaviour for example) should be taken into account both at the Social Enquiry Report/Pre Sentence Report stage and into the sentence.
7. Respondents suggested that criminal justice social workers and probation officers should be using screening questions regarding computer/internet use when compiling social enquiry reports and pre-sentence reports (SERs/PSRs) for sentencers, on all sex offenders.
8. Effective collaborative working between criminal justice social workers, probation officers and specialist police units working with sex offenders was identified as key in risk assessment and management.
9. A typology for categorising internet sex offenders using indecent images of children has been developed by Quayle and Taylor (2003) (COPINE-Combating Paedophile Information Networks in Europe project at University College, Cork). This formed the basis of the risk categorisation advice issued by the Sentencing Advisory Panel in England and Wales. The typology is widely used both in the UK and internationally but excludes online groomers. A typology for categorising indecent image internet offenders and online "groomers" has been developed by Krone (2004), and

adapted for use by Wortley and Smallbone (2006), which informs the work of the police in the United States.

10. Some respondents suggested that internet sex offenders could be effectively monitored under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (to be introduced in Scotland in April 2007) via the regular inspection of home computers. It is possible that software in use in the United States will be introduced in the UK to regularly monitor the computer use of those on the Sex Offenders Register.
11. The treatment of internet sex offenders is largely based upon the cognitive behavioural model which underpins criminal justice sex offender treatment in Scotland, England and Wales. Some innovative approaches based upon this model are under development.

3. Key Recommendations

1. Further Research

Further research is needed to explore the behaviour of online groomers who target children; the link/boundary between non-contact online sexual abuse of children; and internet offender's propensity for contact abuse. Research is also needed to investigate the behaviour and motivations of those using 'extreme sexual pornographic images' depicting adults.

2. Inter-Agency Collaboration

Criminal justice social workers in Scotland and Probation Officers in England and Wales should work directly with specialist police units, such as local HTCUs, and MAPPA officers in assessing risk by internet sex offenders at the SER/PSR stage and possibly throughout the sentence period.

3. Managing Internet Sex Offenders

Some respondents suggested that the effective management of internet sex offenders in the community should include the screening of all registered sex offenders for computer/internet use and the regular monitoring of computer use.

4. The Risk Assessment of Internet Sex Offenders

A number of key factors should be taken into account by practitioners in assessing risk with internet sex offenders. These could inform the production of screening questions and risk assessment tools in future. Factors include the nature of any collection of indecent child images and the nature of the collecting behaviour (following Quayle and Taylor's (2003) typology); offender's internet access; computer use; degree of IT knowledge; previous history of allegations; contact sexual abuse and access to children.

5. International Research and Collaboration: Sharing Knowledge and Experience

Criminal justice agencies should share practice and research information for the benefit of the wider international community. Such a research/information repository might be facilitated at a national level by an organisation such as the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) and at international level by the International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders (IATSO).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report seeks to explore the current and recent practice in Scotland, England, Wales and internationally in assessing risk and managing and treating internet sex offenders.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The research aimed to:

1. Explore how sex offenders use the internet in perpetrating sexual offences, including the targeting and grooming of children; the possession, production and distribution of indecent images; and the possession of 'extreme' sexual images depicting adults (proposed legislation in Scotland, England and Wales).
2. Explore the legislative and policy context of internet sex offending in Scotland, England, Wales and internationally and ask how current legislation seeks to regulate such offending.
3. Identify the key issues arising from the research literature regarding the risk assessment and management of sex offenders using the internet in the commission of sexual offending.
4. Establish what projects and practical initiatives, including risk assessment and offender management tools and approaches that are currently used in Scotland, England, Wales and internationally, in work with sex offenders convicted for internet related sexual offences and explore the outcomes of any evaluations of such practice.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Methodological Techniques

The research questions were addressed via a literature review, documentary analysis of key legislation, policy and practice documents and semi-structured interviews with a small number of key respondents with expertise in the area and representatives from key agencies ($N=15$).

Contact was established initially via email and telephone with 48 academics, key agency representatives and practitioners with expertise in the sexual offending area, spanning many UK and international criminal justice, academic and health organisations. Contact has also been made with senior police practitioners working with internet sex offenders including:

- The National High Technology Crime Unit, (Scotland) (NHTCU(S)) – now part of Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency e-crime (SCDEA e-crime)

- The London Metropolitan Police High Technology Crime Unit, Paedophile Unit and Vice Unit – now part of Serious Organised Crime Unit (SOCU)

- The National Police (Sex Offender Working Group), Scotland

- The Italian Police Criminal Profiling Unit

- The United States Police, Ohio and Seattle

- Interpol Sex Offender Management Sub-Group

- The Norwegian Police Child Sexual Exploitation Unit

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

Also:

- Family Protection and Criminal Justice Social Services, Scotland

- The National Probation Service, England and Wales

- Sex Offender Programme, University Hospital Basel, Switzerland

35 responses have been received of a total of 48 requests for information (see Appendix A for list of respondents, responding organisations and interviewees).

Literature Review and Documentary Analysis

The literature review and documentary analysis of key policy and legislation sought to address research aims 1-3 exploring:

- sex offenders use of the internet and the legislative context;
- current moves to protect children; and
- approaches to risk assessment and management with internet sex offenders and the implications of this for policy and practice.

Interviews with Academics, Key Agency Representatives and Practitioners

15 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key agencies/academics and practitioners: 5 with senior police practitioners; 5 with Criminal Justice Social Workers (Scotland) and Probation Officers (England and Wales) and a Clinical Psychologist (Scottish Prison Service); 5 with key academic experts.

The interviews aimed to:

- Explore projects and practical initiatives concerned with assessing and managing internet sex offenders;
- Gather and assess UK and international information and data regarding the way in which relevant agencies approach the assessment and management of internet sex offenders; and
- Seek expert view regarding the assessment and management of risk with internet sex offenders.

Interview schedules contained broadly similar questions with each schedule adapted to suit the role, responsibility and experience of the respondent. Interviews were face to face or conducted via telephone lasting between 1 and 2 hours, with two interviewees responding via email. Interviewees responded freely (the usual assurances regarding anonymity and confidentiality were made, where permission to cite was given, respondent names are included in the text). Interviews were not recorded as some were conducted by telephone and some respondents did not wish their views to be recorded, comprehensive notes were taken. Several of the police practitioners asked that descriptions of operational techniques with internet sex offenders should not be made

public. The research findings may be limited, in terms of representativeness, by the small number of respondents.

Ethics

The research methodology is predominantly based upon secondary sources and there are few ethical considerations. Following the British Society of Criminology Ethical Code of Conduct (BSC, 2006), standard assurances regarding anonymity and confidentiality were afforded to interviewees and respondents' informed consent was gained. The research did not require ethical approval from the University of Westminster Ethics Committee but a copy of the approved proposal was forwarded to the Committee for information and to be held on file.

Respondents representing organisations were afforded anonymity and where permission was granted, respondents are cited in the text along with extracts from interviews.

Respondents were asked to confirm the accuracy of verbatim quotes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Work with internet sex offenders falls into three broad areas and includes different categories of offender: first, those who use the internet to target and 'groom' children for the purposes of sexual abuse; second, those who produce and/or download indecent illegal images of children from the internet (Quayle & Taylor, 2003; Davidson & Martellozzo, 2005); third, those who produce, distribute and possess 'extreme' pornographic material depicting the violent, sexual abuse of adults³. Little work has been done by agencies in addressing the issue of possession of extreme pornography depicting adults, as moves to legislate in this area are very recent. All of the developmental risk assessment and offender management work with internet sex offenders has been conducted in the child sexual abuse arena given that the legislative framework to address such offending behaviour is already in place and that an increasing amount is known about this group of offenders.

4.2 Sex Offenders' Use of the Internet and the Legislative Context

Sex Offenders' Use of the Internet

It is clear that sex offenders use the internet to access indecent images of children, to select victims for abuse and to communicate with other sex offenders. Gilan (2003) has suggested that the demand for indecent images through for example, the use of file-sharing technology, has expanded so much that law enforcement agencies are encountering increasing difficulties in tracking down the child victims and the perpetrators involved (this was confirmed during interviews with police practitioners).

Internet sex offender behaviour can include: the construction of sites to be used for the exchange of information; experiences and indecent images of children; the organisation of criminal activities that seek to use children for prostitution purposes; the production of indecent images of children at a professional level; and the organisation of criminal

³ There is some debate regarding the extent to which this group may or may not be categorised as 'sex offenders' where there is no evidence of contact abuse (Interview 3, Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit).

activities that promote sexual tourism. Indecent images of children are frequently shared by sex offenders using the internet and the industry in such images is becoming increasingly large and lucrative (Wyre, 2003). Taylor, Holland and Quayle (2001) suggest that some online sex offenders are 'collectors' of indecent images of children who routinely swap images with other collectors. It is also suggested that some of these images are photographs taken by people known to the children such as members of their family (Interview, Metropolitan Police HTCUC: Interview Quayle, 2006) although at present there is little empirical evidence to support this claim and more research is needed.

Quayle and Taylor (2003) also comment on the possible motivations of online child sex abusers. It is suggested that sex offenders perceive the internet as a means of generating an immediate solution to their fantasies. Factors including presumed anonymity, disinhibition and ready accessibility undoubtedly encourage offenders to go online. Quayle and Taylor (2003) also acknowledge, however, that the unique structure of the internet may play a major role in facilitating online child abuse. One practitioner respondent working with internet sex offenders has suggested that offenders' internet use is not limited to abuse and that the internet often plays a significant role in other areas of their lives (Interview. Probation Officer/Facilitator 2, National Probation Service).

The Legislative Context of Online Child Sexual Abuse

The concept of 'grooming' is now recognized in Scottish legislation. The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 includes '*meeting a child following certain preliminary contact*' (s1). Where a person arranges to meet a child who is under 16, or under 18 in some circumstances⁴, having communicated with them on at least one previous

1. The Acts create four offences which extend the age of consent to under 18, building upon the abuse of trust offence introduced in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 (England & Wales, these offences may apply to the grooming process: s.16 Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child; s.17 Abuse of position of trust: causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity; s.18 Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity in the presence of a child; s.19 Abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act

⁴ Six cases of 'grooming' have been brought under the new legislation in England and Wales since 2004 (Metropolitan Police, 2006. Interview 3).

⁴ The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) is currently under review in Northern Ireland. Some concerns have been raised regarding a lack of clarity around the age of consent and informed consent. Currently the age of consent is 17 in Northern Ireland (it was raised from 16 to 17 under the Children and Young Persons Act 1950). NI Office, July 2006.

occasion (in person, via the Internet or via other technologies), with the intention of performing sexual activity on the child⁵.

This new offence category was also included in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in England and Wales (this section of the Act also applies to Northern Ireland⁶): section 15 makes '*meeting a child following sexual grooming*' an offence, this applies to the Internet, other technologies such as mobile phones and to the 'real world'. '*Grooming*' involves a process of socialisation during which an offender seeks to interact with a child (a young person under 16, or under 18 in some circumstances (see footnote 1), in Scotland, England and Wales), possibly sharing their hobbies and interests in an attempt to gain trust in order to prepare them for sexual abuse. The process may also involve an attempt to normalize sexual relations between adults and children.

Several countries are beginning to follow the Scottish and English lead in legislating against 'grooming' behaviour. Sexual grooming has also recently been added to the Crimes Amendment Act 2005 in New Zealand. In the United States it is an offence to electronically transmit information about a child aged 16 or under for the purpose of committing a sexual offence (US Code Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 117, AS 2425). The Australian Criminal Code (s218A) makes similar restrictions as does the Canadian Criminal Code (s172.1). The legislation in Scotland, England and Wales differs in that the sexual grooming offence applies both to the internet and to the '*real world*'; legislation in other countries addresses only electronic grooming via the internet and mobile phones. In reality it would be extremely difficult to police and evidence grooming behaviour in the '*real world*' so it is therefore unsurprising that few cases have been brought to court on this basis under the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales).

The concept of sexual grooming has in reality been drawn from the sex offender literature, where it is well documented (Finkelhor, 1984), in legislation and is now filtering

⁵ Six cases of 'grooming' have been brought under the new legislation in England and Wales since 2004 (Metropolitan Police, 2006. Interview 3).

⁶ The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) is currently under review in Northern Ireland. Some concerns have been raised regarding a lack of clarity around the age of consent and informed consent. Currently the age of consent is 17 in Northern Ireland (it was raised from 16 to 17 under the Children and Young Persons Act 1950). NI Office, July 2006.

into policy, crime detection and prevention initiatives. Note for example the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), a recently launched (April 2006) UK Government and communications industry funded organisation which includes representatives from the police and other criminal justice agencies. CEOP draws upon expertise from internet service providers (such as AOL and Microsoft) and children's charities such as the NSPCC; in an attempt to confront online abuse (<http://www.ceop.gov.uk>). This new centre aims to raise awareness amongst children and parents about the potential dangers of the internet and to create a database of known offenders. Police officers visit chat rooms posing as children in order to detect any grooming behaviour with false websites being set up to attract sex offenders seeking to groom children. These policing tactics are not new: the National High technology Crime Unit Scotland and the Metropolitan Police High Technology Crime Unit for example, have placed undercover officers in teen and other chat rooms likely to attract children since the introduction of the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as have other HTCU's). These officers have learnt to interact as children do online through the use of text language in order to prompt and encourage conversation with child abusers seeking to groom a child with several recent convictions secured on this basis and an increasing number of online groomers arrested (Interview, Metropolitan Police, HTCU):

“Grooming online was infrequent but there is now a rich seam of perpetrators online every day, officers act covertly as children on a regular basis and we are catching offenders every week.”
(Interview. Metropolitan Police HTCU)

The police employ similar tactics in other countries, such as Italy (Vulpiani, 2001; Strano, 2004), where legislation allows.

The International Trade in Indecent Images of Children

The legislation in Scotland (the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005, s.16), England and Wales (the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales), s.45-46)⁷ attempts to curb the production, distribution and possession of indecent images of children on the internet. The age of the child is raised

⁷ The Sexual Offences Act 2003 does not create any new offences in this category but raises the age from 16 to under 18 by making amendments to the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and the Protection of Children Act 1978.

from 16 to under 18 in both acts with certain provisions.⁸ The purpose of the legislation is to protect children from abuse in the creation of such images in order to curb the circulation.

In the United States the law is similar (Child Online Protection Act 2000 (COPA)), although indecent images of children do not have to be overtly sexual, the possession of suggestive images of children may be prosecuted under the legislation. It is also an offence to simply access images without saving them on a computer. There has been considerable debate in the United States regarding the introduction of COPA; the Act has been returned to the Supreme Court several times on the basis of representations made by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) regarding its restrictiveness. The ACLU have argued consistently and fairly effectively that the Act infringes upon civil liberties and that it is possible to accidentally encounter such images online. They also object to the inclusion of the possession of suggestive images, although presumably offence circumstances would be taken into account here. The ACLU has undoubtedly formed a powerful lobby in the United States. No such objections have been voiced in the UK in such an organised manner, although it could be argued that groups such as the IWF and key individuals such as John Carr have campaigned more successfully in the UK for the rights of child victims of internet abuse. In the United States under COPA the making available of material that is harmful to children for commercial purposes on the Web is also illegal; unless child access has been restricted. It was argued by the ACLU that more effective, less restrictive mechanisms exist to protect children and that educating children and their parents about internet awareness would be a more effective approach (Supreme Court Transcripts, *Ashcroft v ACLU* 2/3/04).

The scale of the problem is considerable. The Internet Watch Foundation have reported a rise in the number of websites containing indecent images of children from 3,438 in 2004 to 6,000 in 2006. The websites are hosted outside of the UK, and are therefore extremely difficult to police and control (Internet Watch Foundation, 2006). Many of these child victims are amongst the most vulnerable, from poor countries and are repeat victims. The police and Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) are attempting to identify victims from the images produced on the internet but the process is

⁸ The provisions allow a defence to the charge if : the picture is of a 16 or 17 year old; the 16/17 year old 'consents'; the picture/s of 16/17 year olds are not distributed; the perpetrator and the 16/17 year old are in long term relationship/married/co-habiting. S. 8H 2005

slow and time consuming and yields little identification (Interview. Metropolitan Police HTCUC).

There is no doubt that such abuse has a damaging and negative impact upon child victims. It has been claimed that in many instances where children are abused, the abuse is recorded by members of their own family or people known to them (Klaine, Davis and Hicks 2001). Many indecent images depict the sexual abuse of children who are victimised both in the creation of the image and in the distribution of the image. It could be argued that a child is re-victimised each time their image is accessed, and images on the internet can form a permanent record of abuse.

4.3 Online Sexual Abuse: Moves to Protect Children

A considerable amount of work has been done internationally to protect children online. The G8 countries have agreed a strategy to protect children from sexual abuse on the internet. Key aims include the development of an international database of offenders and victims to aid victim identification and offender monitoring and the targeting of those profiting from the sale of indecent images of children. Work has also been done with internet service providers and organisations such the Association For Payment Clearing Services in the UK, and other credit card companies in different countries, in attempting to trace individuals using credit cards to access illegal sites containing indecent images of children. An attempt to put mechanisms into place to prevent online payment for illegal sites hosted outside the UK has also been made.

Organisations like the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) are making some headway in attempting to protect children online. VGT is an organisation that comprises several international law enforcement agencies from Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Interpol. Through the provision of advice and support to children, VGT aims to protect children online and has recently set up a bogus website to attract online groomers. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is one of the main government watchdogs in this area. Although based in the UK, the IWF is a part of the EU's *Safer Internet Plus Programme*. This programme has four main aims: to fight illegal internet content; to tackle harmful internet content; to promote a safer internet environment; and to raise awareness about internet

dangers (Robbins and Darlington, 2003). The IWF seeks to raise awareness about internet dangers and provides a confidential reporting facility. The IWF also provides an international information service to law enforcement agencies and government bodies. Importantly the IWF also works with the internet industry to educate organisations about the trade in indecent images of children and online grooming. The IWF has been operational for 10 years.

It would appear, however, that there is much work to be done in educating internet service providers. Recent research (2005) undertaken by the IWF suggests that 72% (of a sample of 1000 IT senior professionals) were unaware of the implications of amendments to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 upon their industry and only 56% had heard of the IWF. Internet service providers have, however, taken some action to address child safety online, for example British Telecom's Operation CleanSweep resulted in the closure of all of its chat rooms following concerns over sex offender's use of the service to target children. Other providers such as MSN and Yahoo⁹ have taken some action to protect children in chat rooms. A Scottish company (Net ID) has just launched the world's first virtual ID card which aims to protect children and young people online. The card aims to remove the anonymity of the internet thus preventing paedophiles posing as children in chat rooms to gain their trust (Lunchtime Scotland Today, 2/8/06).

Many police forces both in the EU and the United States are working to trace internet sex offenders and their victims. In the UK, national and local High Technology Crime Units currently investigate the grooming of children on the internet and indecent online images of children. Successful prosecutions have been brought under the Acts in Scotland, England and Wales, both for 'grooming' online and for the possession of indecent images on the internet following Operation Ore. This operation was launched following information provided to the UK police by the FBI in the United States regarding peer-to-peer technology in sharing indecent images of children. The National Crime Squad (which targets serious and violent crime) has made 1,200 convictions since 2002 under Operation Ore.

⁹ Yahoo were forced into action in 2005 by a New York State Attorney General's Office investigation which found that users were creating chat rooms explicitly for the purpose of grooming children for abuse. Yahoo then agreed to put into place procedures to ensure that the creation of such chat rooms would not continue.

Measures to protect children also include school based programmes aiming to educate about the dangers posed by sex offenders in cyberspace. Such programmes are now routinely delivered to secondary school children and their parents in the UK and other countries such as New Zealand and Canada (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2004).

Despite moves on the part of law enforcement agencies, governments, the IT industry and organizations such as VGT and IWF to control online abuse, John Carr of the NCH in the UK suggests in a recent report (2006) that such efforts are largely failing as the number of indecent images of children on the internet continues to increase and the images become ever more disturbing, involving a greater degree of violence and increasingly younger children. It is suggested that governments are failing to make the growing trade in indecent images of children a high enough political priority and that, as the title of the report '*Out of Sight, Out of Mind*' (2006) suggests 'the hidden nature of the offending and lack of public awareness makes this possible. Indeed, other recent research conducted in the UK suggests that child victimisation and protection issues are not a high priority for the criminal justice agencies involved in the investigative process (Davidson, Bifulco, Thomas & Ramsay 2006 in print). Carr advocates a global initiative, and key areas are identified where action should be taken. Carr is correct in suggesting that the key issue is one of effective leadership, and that a '*global leadership mechanism*' (p1) should be developed. This mechanism, it is suggested, should take the form of a new NGO or a network that draws upon existing NGOs. This central body would act to scrutinise and advise governments, law enforcement agencies and the industry. It would also provide a hitherto absent degree of IT industry public accountability. This is undeniably an essential move as at present attempts to protect children online are ad-hoc and some international police forces have only just begun to recognise the scale of the problem. The difficulty will be in setting up a central mechanism that is really able to scrutinise international approaches to the problem and that will have the power to intervene effectively where there is inaction or indifference.

4.4 The Possession of Extreme Pornographic Material Depicting Adults

Proposed legislation in Scotland, England and Wales will make the production and possession of extreme pornographic material depicting adults illegal. Four categories of offending are included: bestiality; necrophilia; serious violence in a sexual context; and serious sexual violence (Goggins, 2005. National Offender Management and the Scottish Executive Consultation Paper,2005). A possession offence is proposed in an

attempt to disrupt demand and supply. Whilst it is illegal to sell, import or publish such material both in Scotland (Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982) and England and Wales (Obscene Publications Act, 1959; 1964) possession¹⁰ is not currently an offence.

The proposed offence categories (Scotland, England & Wales) are:

1. intercourse or oral sex with an animal
2. sexual interference with a human corpse
3. serious violence in a sexual context
4. serious sexual violence

(National Offender Management and the Scottish Executive Consultation Paper, 2005 p2).

The consultation paper (NOMs & Scottish Executive, 2005) does however make the point that no research exists to suggest that there is a correlation between the viewing of such extreme pornographic material and the commission of violent sexual offences, and little is known about those who use such images. Some anecdotal information has been gained as a consequence of cases involving the abuse and murder of victims by offenders using extreme internet pornography. One such case was that of Jane Longhurst in 2003. The impetus to introduce such legislation in Scotland, England and Wales follows increased pressure on the government on the part of the Longhurst family, to act following the sexual abuse and murder of their daughter Jane by a man addicted to such extreme internet sites. Graham Coutts murdered Jane Longhurst acting upon violent sexual images depicting the rape and torture of women, viewed on the internet (Lords Hansard Debate, 2004).

Although the proposed legislation constitutes an attempt to place some control on the possession of such material, enforcing the legislation could prove problematic. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) claim that sites containing extreme pornography are rarely hosted in the UK but are hosted in other countries, where to do so may not be an offence. The Metropolitan Police (Interview. Metropolitan Police Clubs & Vice Unit) suggest that much of the material is produced in the United States where possession is not illegal. The IWF and specialist police units such as the National High Technology Crime Unit do pass information about such sites to law enforcement agencies in other countries and collaborative investigative work is undertaken, facilitated by G8 and

¹⁰ Sale, distribution and publication of such material is however illegal under the legislation.

Interpol. The latest statistics produced by the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation, 2006) suggest that 615 reports of internet abuse were received during their first year of operation (1996), compared to 27,750 reports in 2006 (85% of which related to suspected child abuse web sites). During the 10 year period, 31,000 web sites have been found to contain potentially illegal child abuse images. It is claimed that the number of reported websites containing illegal child abuse images has fallen in the UK from 18% in 1996 to 0.2% in 2006. A breakdown of countries where websites containing child abuse images appear to have been hosted during the period 1996-2006 is provided by the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation, 2006):

- United States 51%
- Russia 20%
- Japan 5%
- Spain 7%
- United Kingdom 1.6%

Source: Internet Watch Foundation Press Release and Conference 'Remove Online Images Of Childabuse', Tuesday 24th October 2006.

Controlling Possession of Extreme Pornography: Respondents' Views

Respondents expressed concern regarding the proposed legislation, in particular, issues around the difficulty of enforcing the legislation given a lack of clarity in defining what constitutes 'extreme pornography' were raised:

*"We are concerned about the proposed legislation in its current form – the wording is problematic and open to misinterpretation. The difficulty is with the term 'extreme' if it is left to the police to determine what's extreme and what isn't. It's unclear how far for example simulated scenes involving rape or other forms of sexual violence will be included – perhaps where there is implied sexual violence but this is not fully displayed for example, in theory this could apply to TV programmes and DVDs/films as well. The police will need much clearer guidance here."
(Interview, Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit)*

One respondent also suggested that it was not entirely clear how this group of offenders would be classified; if they would be classified as sex offenders and subject to MAPPA arrangements or if they should be criminalised at all:

“This is a very difficult area at several levels. Extreme porn is very profitable, there’s a big market and it is produced outside of the UK. The proposed legislation makes assumptions about the way in which we equate viewing and offending behaviour. People may be using (and may have been for some time) but have no intention of offending – should they really be criminalised? Although some of the material is offensive it’s not really about possession but about trying to curb supply.”
(Interview. Quayle, 2006)

Other respondents did believe that this group of offenders would be classified as sex offenders pointing to motivations in using such material and the fact that many adults, often women, are victimised and abused in the creation of the images. There is, however, understandably no clarity at all at present regarding the way in which this group would be risk assessed and managed by criminal justice agencies:

“This probably will become legislation but it is unclear how this group will be treated. They probably will be viewed as sex offenders, subject to MAPPA arrangements and placed on the sex offenders’ register. There are questions about what motivates people to use this kind of extreme pornography, and issues (like children) about those adults victimised in the process of producing it. There will probably be more emphasis upon monitoring this group rather than SOTP, perhaps behavioural modification techniques will be employed.”
(Interview; Middleton, 2006)

“This group will be categorised as sex offenders and will be subject to the same requirements. A new risk assessment tool will be needed for this group in future.”
(Interview; Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland)

Although such policy is unusual, moves to curb the possession of extreme pornography are not limited to Scotland, England and Wales. In Switzerland prosecutions for possession of such images are increasingly common with offenders categorised as sex offenders and subject to treatment programmes:

“Increasingly we are treating offenders for the possession of ‘illegal’ pornography since 2004. This includes sexual violence against adults and bestiality. Federal court practice has changed this year (2006) in that no distinction is made between ‘production’ and ‘possession’. A downloaded picture file is now viewed as ‘production.’”
(Interview; Graf, 2006)

In Switzerland, Articles 135 and 197 of the Penal Code (The Production and Distribution of Illegal Pornography (extreme & child)) imply that if the indecent material is only to be

used for personal viewing, possession is not punishable. But it would appear that some federal courts are arguing that downloading such material from the internet constitutes storage, and therefore contravenes the articles.

Variance in sentencing practice and particularly the way in which courts view the possession of indecent images of children was an issue also raised by the police in Scotland. It is suggested that sentencers have different views regarding the seriousness of possession, on the basis that no *direct* victimisation occurs. The same would presumably be true if legislation regarding the possession of 'extreme pornography' depicting adults is introduced. Given that children are abused in the production of abusive images, it would appear that there is a need for clear information and some awareness raising work for sentencers regarding the possession of indecent images of children, and indeed possession of extreme pornography, when the legislation is introduced:

“Another problem that we have in Scotland is variance in the judicial view regarding the possession of indecent images of children, it’s a question of educating and raising awareness as some judges take a serious view of this form of offending and some don’t as they believe that there is no real victim.”

(Interview; Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland)

This view was supported by the experience of sentencing offenders for possession of extreme pornography depicting adults in Switzerland:

“The problem is that federal areas treat the offence differently in that some will remand these offenders into treatment and some will not. Some view this as an offence and some do not. There is no equity and sentencing varies by federal area.”

(Interview; .Graf, 2006)

The possession of extreme pornography will shortly become illegal in Scotland, England and Wales. This group of offenders will probably be categorised as sex offenders: subject to low level MAPPA arrangements in Scotland, England and Wales, and will be placed upon the sex offenders' register (Author's view based on research findings). However given that there is no international consensus about the legality of possession, this has implications for the manner in which offenders convicted under the new legislation will be assessed in terms of risk and managed throughout their sentence and beyond.

In reality it would seem that criminal justice agencies (both in the UK and internationally) have only recently begun to consider how they might address risk in managing internet sex offenders who target children. The legislation has been in place for a considerable time and any attempt to address risk with those possessing extreme pornographic images of adults will be a difficult and lengthy process, particularly as some respondents have claimed that proposed legal definitions regarding what constitutes 'extreme pornography' are vague and open to misinterpretation.

4.5 Recent Developments in the Risk Assessment, Management and Treatment of Internet Sex Offenders

4.5.1 Categorising Internet Sex Offenders and Assessing Risk

Current Risk Assessment Approaches with Sex Offenders

There are a number of validated risk assessment tools in use by practitioners in England and Wales. These include screening tools such as offender Assessment System (OASys) and Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) (Thornton et al 2003) and a number of structured professional tools such as the Risk of Sexual Violence Protocol (RSVP) (Hart et al, 2003). The RMA has compiled a comprehensive directory of risk assessment tools (RATED, 2006) to inform practice in Scotland.

OASys measures dynamic risk factors and can measure the impact of changes in life circumstances and focuses upon risk of harm and risk of reconviction. Harm is categorised at three levels (low, medium and high) and this informs allocation to the level of seriousness under the MAPPA arrangements.

Seto comments that in Canada and the United States:

“Adult sex offenders are typically assessed using actuarial risk scales such as the Static99 or the Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (SORAG).----- and the MnSOST-R, is used in a number of American States.”
(Interview. Seto, 2006)

RM2000 is a risk measurement tool and was designed specifically to assess risk in sex offenders¹¹. It is an evidence based actuarial risk assessment instrument that has not been designed for use with internet sex offenders, although the tool is presently being evaluated and an attempt made to adapt it for use with internet sex offenders possessing indecent images of children (Interview. Middleton, 2006. National Probation Service). This work is being undertaken by Professor Beech from Birmingham University, but is still at a developmental stage (Interview. Beech, 2006).

There has been some criticism of the ability of RM2000 to accurately predict sexual re-offending at an individual level. It has been suggested that the addition of other factors associated with re-offending, such as a history of employment problems, substance abuse and relationship problems, greatly enhances the ability of the scale to accurately predict risk (Craig, Browne & Beech, 2004). How far this may be applied to internet sex offenders remains to be seen and clearly more research is needed to explore this issue. Whilst most actuarial tools are competent in terms of predicting risk of re-offending but may not be adept at predicting risk of harm, it is important to take other situational factors into account in making an informed assessment of risk. However as Seto comments:

“It is increasingly accepted that the most accurate risk assessments are obtained when one uses actuarial risk scales. This is still debated in some circles but less so as the research findings accumulate. The current debate is about how much, if at all, to adjust those risk estimates using other factors, or how to combine information about risk with treatment and management decisions.”
(Interview; Seto, 2006)

There is a need for tools that seek specifically to assess risk with different categories of internet sex offender and that allow for the possibility that categories are not mutually exclusive; ‘collectors’ of indecent images may also be online groomers for example.

Categorising Internet Sex Offenders: the Basis of Risk Assessment

There is a scarcity of any good empirical research in this area both internationally and in the UK. As discussed, risk assessment techniques employed by the police and other

¹¹ RM 2000 comprises three scales (RM2000/s, RM2000v and RM2000c) which seek to predict sexual offending, violent non-sexual behaviour and sexual or other violence. Static risk factors are assessed to obtain one of four classifications: Low Risk; Medium Risk; High Risk and Very High Risk (Thornton, 2003).

agencies in Scotland, England and Wales presently focus upon the use of RM2000 and in England and Wales the advice of the Sentencing Advisory Panel (2000) on classifying categories of internet offender convicted for possession of indecent images of children. The Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP) system does not however extend to offenders grooming children and those using extreme pornography depicting the abuse of adults. The system has been criticised by police practitioners for being too limited and not accurately assessing risk with internet sex offenders (Interviews; Metropolitan Police HTCUC and PU).

“We don’t think that RM 2000 is appropriate for this offender group and we need a more appropriate risk assessment tool. The police view in Scotland is that we really doubt the relevance of RM2000 for internet sex offenders, work needs to be done on this quickly. So at the moment it’s difficult to classify people according to risk.”
(Interview, Chair; National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland)

One respondent described a recent case where a sex offender was assessed as low risk using RM2000 when his offences involved the filming of abuse he had perpetrated, the indecent images were subsequently posted on the internet. Clearly there is much work to be done in adapting RM2000, but it is also clear that practitioners are simply using the scale as a baseline indicator (Interview. Probation Officer/Facilitator 1, NPS).

The SAP advice is based upon a system developed by Taylor, Holland and Quayle (2001) on behalf of the COPINE. The typology developed by Taylor et al (2001) lists 10 categories of offence that increase in seriousness from level 1-9. Level 1 offences include images often freely available on the internet depicting children in their underwear or swimsuits, whilst levels 9 and 10 include grossly obscene and sadistic images of children. It is recognised that offenders may possess images that cross several categories, but that ‘*overt sexual intent and content*’ (2001, p6) are key issues which the police and practitioners working with internet offenders presumably should address in assessing risk. Other factors which may impact upon risk assessment are identified as:

Table 1: Sentencing Advisory Panel Risk Levels- Indecent Child Images

- Level 1 – Images depicting erotic posing with no sexual activity;
- Level 2 – non-penetrative sexual activity between children or solo masturbation by a child;
- Level 3 – non-penetrative sexual activity between adults and children;
- Level 4 – penetrative sexual activity involving a child or children, or both children and adults;
- Level 5 – sadism or penetration of or by an animal

(Sentencing Advisory Panel, 2004, p40)

1. The size of a collection of images and the manner in which it is organised. This is taken to be indicative of the extent to which an offender is using such material offline.
2. New and private material is taken to be indicative of access to sex offender communities and possibly producers.
3. The child's age. It is argued that the younger the child the greater the imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim.

In terms of judging seriousness and risk when sentencing, the Court of Appeal accepted the advice of the Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP, 2002) in sentencing internet sex offenders using indecent images of children, following *R v Oliver, Hartrey and Baldwin*¹².

The possession of indecent images of children can be tried under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in England and Wales and carries a maximum penalty of 5 years custody for possession and up to 10 years custody for production and distribution. Aggravating circumstances include: distribution; evidence of a systematic collection; use of drugs or alcohol; collection stored so that others may view it accidentally; intimidation or coercion; financial gain. Mitigating factors include: a small number of images held for personal use and images viewed but not stored¹³.

¹² R V. Oliver, Hartrey and Baldwin (2003) 2 Cr App R28: (2003) Crim LR 127. Here the two determining factors of seriousness were taken to be the nature of the material and the degree of the offender's engagement with the material. In considering the custody threshold the fact that the material upon which the convictions were based constituted a small part of the collection and that the potential for others to access and view the collection was great. The defendants all received a custodial sentence.

¹³ The sentencing guidelines may be viewed at <http://www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk/docs/advice-sexual-offences.pdf> (SAP, 2004, p99).

As discussed the Sentence Advisory Panel (SAP) levels of seriousness are based loosely on Taylor et als (2001) typology. Although this provides a valuable structure in which to locate different categories of internet sex offenders' use of indecent child images, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that the most serious level 4 and 5 internet offenders constitute the greatest risk to children in terms of contact offending. Indeed, police practitioners have suggested that the system does not fully address the risk issue. An offender may for example possess images at level 1 but have regular access to children within his family circle, whilst an offender may possess images at level 3 but have no such contact and restrict his behaviour to the internet (Interview. Metropolitan Police HTCUC, 2006).

Indeed police practitioners participating in this research, who are working with internet sex offenders on a daily basis, have identified very different types of behaviour amongst this group. It is apparent that some such offenders are not simply 'collectors' of images :

"I suspect that many internet sex offenders are really just sex offenders who now have access to the internet, with the advantages it affords in terms of access and anonymity and are not just 'collectors' at all. I recall a recent case for example involving an offender who claims the internet led him to offend. He had a senior job in the IT industry (very wealthy), he used the internet to target and groom a family with children. He started by using indecent images of young children but then arranged to meet the family and over a considerable period of time helped with babysitting etc and became trusted (typical grooming behaviour) he eventually raped their young child."

(Interview; Metropolitan Police PU)

Whilst there is some research evidence to suggest that offenders collecting indecent images of children limit their offending behaviour to non-contact abuse (Quayle and Taylor 2003) a number of recent convictions under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) suggest otherwise. Respondents in this research have expressed concern about the danger of making assumptions regarding the offending behaviour of such offenders on the basis of little empirical evidence. It is clear from some recently prosecuted cases that sex offenders are using the internet to contact other sex offenders; groom children for abuse; and are collecting indecent internet images of children (Davidson and Martellozzo, 2006; Interview; Metropolitan Police, HTCUC and Paedophile Unit; Interview; Chair National Police Sex Offenders Working Group, 2006).

Internet offenders grooming children constitute a higher risk than those whose offending is limited to possessing indecent images of children. Practitioners must effectively

explore the real possibility that 'level 1' internet offenders are engaged in contact abuse. Although such offenders may be the exception to the rule (and this has not really been empirically established), any attempt to neatly categorise and risk assess internet sex offenders must take into account the diversity of this offending group and the potential for contact abuse.

Research into this issue has been conducted by Seto and Eke (2005a, 2005b) in Canada whereby the criminal records of 204 male offenders using indecent images of children¹⁴ were analysed. The researchers suggest that offenders using indecent images of children who had committed a previous or concurrent contact sexual offence were the most likely to re-offend over a 2.5 year period (2005a). This has implications for risk assessment practice with this group. Seto and Eke (2005b), on the basis of their follow-up study with 198 of the original sample of 204 male offenders, claim that criminal history is an important indicator of risk of re-offending in offenders using indecent images of children but that age at first charge or conviction did not seem to be a good predictive indicator of further offending. It is also suggested that risk of contact offending posed by this offender group is lower than that posed by other sex offenders. This finding should, however, be treated with caution. The authors acknowledge the limitations of the study in terms of sample size, given that there may be differences between internet offenders using indecent images and offenders accessing such images via a different media.

Other unpublished research by Seto, Cantor and Blanchard (2005c, permission to cite provided) with a large sample ($N=685$, 100 of whom were convicted for use of indecent child images) of sex offenders who had offended against children aged under 15, does however suggest that the use of indecent images of children is a strong indicator of paedophilia. One explanation offered for this is that:

'People are likely to choose the kind of pornography that corresponds to their sexual interests, so relatively few non-paedophilic men would choose illegal child pornography given the abundance of legal pornography that depicts adults' (2005c, p11).

The work of Seto et al is important in that it sheds light upon the nature of such offending behaviour. Further large scale research on internet sexual abuse is ongoing which will play an important role in informing risk assessment approaches. Adding to the risk debate, Seto (Interview; 2006 and 2006 unpublished) suggests that:

¹⁴ Not all of whom were internet offenders

- a. Greater paedophilic sexual arousal appears to be equated with greater risk of committing a contact offence; and
- b. Low nonsexual criminal history lowers the risk of contact abuse in indecent image users.

“The only two factors that stand out right now are greater paedophilic sexual arousal, from the “in press” article, and lower nonsexual criminal history than contact sex offenders. So there does seem to be a difference between internet sex offenders and other sex offenders. How this plays out in terms of risk, treatment, and management remains to be examined.”

(Interview. Seto, 2006)

Little work has been undertaken in attempting to address risk with those who target and groom children online, other than that undertaken by Strano (2004) in Rome; ongoing doctoral research with the Metropolitan Police in London (Martellozzo, 2006. Unpublished); and O’Connell (2003), who spent some time in children’s chat rooms posing as a child in order to engage would-be online groomers. O’Connell identifies several different stages in the online grooming process during which an offender will seek to identify and target a potential victim: develop an online relationship with them; explore vulnerability and availability; and ultimately arrange to meet. The process described by O’Connell is very similar to the grooming process in the ‘real world’. Respondents from the police in this research have suggested that online grooming behaviour rarely follows this pattern and that offenders are making direct and swift approaches to children and young people regarding the possibility of sex (Interviews; Metropolitan Police HTCUC and PU). Quayle (Interview,2006) has identified a number of possible types of internet groomer:

“It’s much more difficult to categorise offenders in terms of risk here as little is known about this group and few cases have been brought under the new legislation. They probably fall into several categories:

- *Those who enjoy talking online and interacting with children but don’t meet with them;*
- *Those interested in child cybersex but who don’t meet; and*
- *Those targeting and grooming children to meet for sex.”*

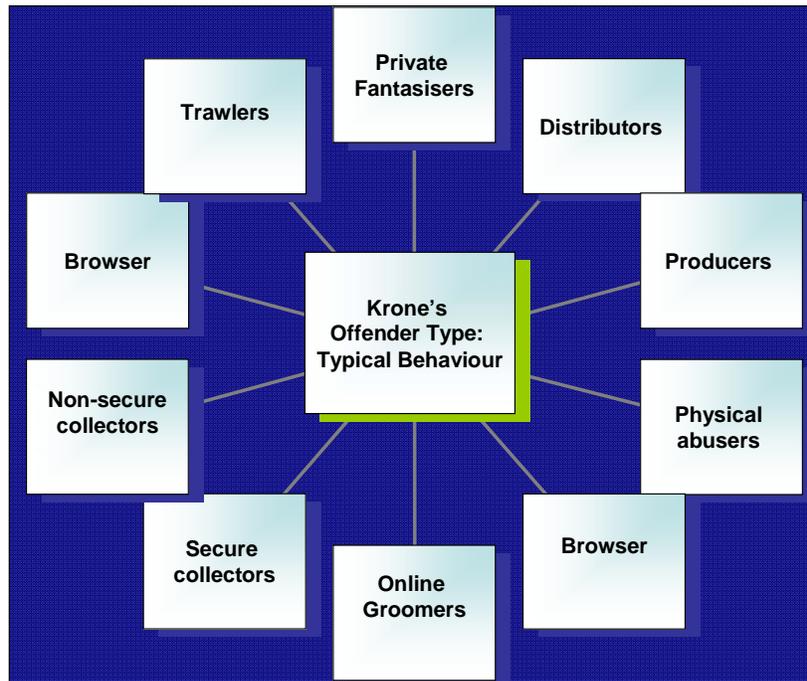
Probation practitioner respondents have described their work with offenders who have spent a considerable amount of time preparing children for abuse before arranging to meet with them:

“I’ve worked with men who’ve spent months preparing a child for abuse online before meeting up with them. The lengths they will go to are extraordinary. I knew one man who spent a long time online learning children’s computing language so that he could communicate more effectively and present himself as a child. He would spend time in chat rooms learning how children talk to each other and then go online to see if he was convincing. After a lot of test runs eventually he was convincing.” (Interview; Probation Officer/Facilitator 1, National Probation Service).

Exploration of online grooming behaviour should be a research priority as police are encountering an increasing number of such offenders in peer-to-peer networks and chat rooms (Interview. Metropolitan Police HTCUC) and relatively little is known about how these offenders might be effectively risk managed.

A typology of internet child sex offenders has been developed by Krone (2004) and has been adapted for use by Wortley and Smallbone (2006) to guide the work of police officers in the United States. Whilst some of the categories are questionable, the typology does include those offenders targeting and grooming children online, a group largely excluded from other typologies. Nine categories of offender are identified: ‘*Browsers*’ (Wortley and Smallbone, p15) are offenders who accidentally come across indecent images and save them, in reality such images are either purchased via credit card or are swapped by collectors. The second category are ‘*Private Fantasiers*’ (p15) who create digital images for their own private use; third, ‘*Trawlers*’ (p15) who search for indecent images through open browsers and may engage in some networking; fourth, ‘*Non-Secure Collectors*’ (p15) who look for indecent images in open areas of the internet such as chat rooms will probably be networking ; fifth, ‘*Secure Collectors*’ (p16): offenders who belong to an online hidden, paedophile network. These offenders are highly organised, likely to be collectors and employ sophisticated security to conceal their offending; sixth, ‘*Groomers*’ (p16): offenders targeting and grooming children via peer-to-peer technology, interactive internet games and chat rooms. These offenders may send indecent images to children as a part of the grooming process; seventh, ‘*physical abusers*’ (p16) contact abusers who have an interest in indecent images as a part of their fantasy cycle. These offenders may photograph their abusive behaviour for their own use; eighth, ‘*Producers*’ (p17) offenders who record the sexual abuse of children for the purposes of distribution to networks and to satisfy their own fantasy. The final category includes ‘*Distributors*’ (p17), offenders distributing indecent images either for financial gain or as part of their collecting behaviour.

Figure One: Krone's (2004) Typology of Internet Sex Offenders (*adapted by Wortley and Smallbone, 2006*)



These categories should not be seen as mutually exclusive and further research is needed to explore the nature of internet offending, but this typology is useful in isolating different types of internet offending behaviour including online grooming. It would be possible to begin to identify the risk associated with different types of behaviour on the basis of some of these categories, both in terms of type of internet abuse and the boundary with contact abuse.

The Assessment of Risk in Work with Internet Sex Offenders

Risk assessment and management of sex offenders occurs at several levels. There is clearly a need for criminal justice organisations to attempt to control and manage this group of offenders via MAPPA arrangements, but police, social work and probation practitioners have the difficult task of attempting to make assessment at an individual and treatment group level. Whilst organisations such as the National Probation Service

provide general guidance on risk management¹⁵, no formal specific advice or techniques appear to have been developed regarding internet sex offenders:¹⁶

“It is my impression from talking to practitioners that they are working with minimal forensic input in their work with internet sex offenders and understandably practitioners feel burdened with the responsibility of supervising such a potentially dangerous group of people. They aren’t trained in this area of work and don’t know who to ask for advice.”
(Interview; Quayle, 2006).

Criminal justice social workers and police have some training in risk assessment with sex offenders in Scotland has begun, and probation officers in England and Wales are currently undergoing training in the delivery of a new cognitive behavioural treatment programme.

Research conducted by Quayle and Taylor (2002) with social workers and probation officers suggested that practitioners did not understand ‘*the function of the internet for adults with a sexual interest in children*’ (2002, p32) and did not routinely screen sex offenders for internet use, an issue that is of concern and that was also raised by a representative from the High Technology Crime Unit of the Metropolitan Police¹⁷. Quayle and Taylor (2002) comment in this work that there are currently no specific assessment tools to aid practitioners in managing internet sex offenders (this has been confirmed by representatives from the Family Protection, Scotland and the National Probation Service in England and Wales, 2006). Practitioners in Quayle and Taylor’s study were relying upon the standard assessment interview to make judgments about risk. Quayle and Taylor go on to suggest a series of useful questions that practitioners might employ during the assessment interview but these don’t appear to have been taken up in practice (Interview; Quayle 2006).

Such an approach may be useful in raising awareness amongst practitioners about key areas upon which to focus during supervision sessions with internet sex offenders. However if practitioners have no confidence in assessment tools that are imposed upon

¹⁵ The Home Office ‘Risk Management Framework’ identifies 4 rather obvious steps for practitioners: 1. identify risks; 2. Assess risks; 3. Address risk responses; 4. Risk review and report. (Home Office, 2004, p10).

¹⁶ Although it is clear that key developments are taking place in this area in Scotland, England and Wales and that further guidance and training will be offered to practitioners.

¹⁷ This unit is responsible for policing online child sexual abuse, including the possession, production and distribution of indecent images of children and online grooming.

them, they will probably not be used accurately or effectively in managing and assessing risk. Research undertaken with practitioners by the Scottish Executive in 2002 into the use of risk assessment tools in Scotland suggested that some found standard risk assessment tools such as Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2000) to be complex and too academic. If such tools are to be effectively integrated into practice and perceived as useful by practitioners, their views based upon professional and clinical judgment and experience with different groups of offenders should be actively sought during the developmental phase of any risk assessment work.¹⁸

The National Probation Service Sex Offender Strategy (2004) makes reference to provision in England and Wales of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 regarding internet offending. It is clear from the document that risk assessment is considered key at various stages of the criminal justice process. Risk assessment tools for use with internet sex offenders, however, are currently still under development and advice offered to probation practitioners acknowledges the difficulty of applying RM2000 to work with this group of offenders. Practitioners have been advised to omit the aggravating factor of 'non-contact' offence and to continue to apply dynamic risk factors to assess risk on an individual basis (Probation Circular, 85/2005). One senior probation practitioner with responsibility for work with sex offenders reported that this advice is being followed in the absence of any specific risk assessment tool (Interview; Senior Probation Officer, NPS):

"Staff are currently using RM2000 to allocate internet sex offenders to appropriate training streams and using the harm categories to manage these offenders throughout supervision. The potential difficulty in designing a risk assessment tool is its ability to predict the risk of contact abuse where internet sex offenders are categorised as low risk on the basis of current offending."

(Interview; Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service)

This Senior Probation Officer also recognises the difficulty of accurately predicting risk of contact abuse in work with internet sex offenders categorised as 'low risk', a point which has been alluded to by police officers and discussed in this report. Practitioners are also instructed to use the Sex Offender Psychometric Scoring System (SOPSSys) to assess the treatment needs of all sex offenders (Probation Circular 92/2005).

¹⁸ The work of the RMA in inviting practitioner comment and input into the development of risk assessment techniques is an example of good practice in this area.

Practitioner risk assessment of internet sex offenders is of paramount importance at social enquiry/pre-sentence report stage in informing sentencing decisions and suitability for treatment; it is equally important during sentence (in informing release decisions for custodial sentences, and risk issues in the community) and post release. Police practitioners have commented upon the lack of inter-agency knowledge sharing and collaboration at the pre-sentence report stage and beyond. It has been suggested that much greater collaboration is needed between MAPPA officers and social workers/probation officers in continually assessing risk with all categories of internet sex offender (Interview; Metropolitan Police HTCUC, Interview; Metropolitan Police PU: Interview, Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland, Interviews; Probation Officers/Facilitators, NPS).

Middleton, NPS (Interview, 2006) identified some key risk assessment issues in working with internet sex offenders: At the pre -sentence report stage (social enquiry report stage in Scotland), as practitioners should be using RM2000 with the suggested changes at present, but also talking to the police about the exact nature of the offence and the evidence. This was a point also made by Graf (Interview, 2006) and police respondents (Interviews. Metropolitan Police HTCUC and PU: Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland), as the evidence gained from the case can be usefully employed to confront denial. It was suggested that practitioners do not need to know a great deal about the technical aspects of internet use, but should be asking the right screening questions regarding offenders' computer use (nature and frequency of use for example) and do need some basic IT knowledge in order to do this effectively. The Probation Officers/Facilitators participating in this research suggested that the inclusion of screening questions regarding computer/internet use should be incorporated in practice in work with all sex offenders at PSR stage:

"I think we should be screening all sex offenders and asking the right questions about internet use. I'm sure we'd find a lot more using the internet."

(Interview; Probation Officer/Facilitator 1.National Probation Service).

It was also recognised that risk is a dynamic concept and that practitioners should be checking this throughout supervision:

'They (practitioners) should be using RM 2000 but there are elements of this which we think are inappropriate for internet sex offenders. We've been talking to David Thornton about reworking it and Tony Beech &

Dawn Fisher are doing some work on this. We want to adapt it for use with internet sex offenders'.
(Interview; Middleton, NPS 2006)

Risk assessment should be an ongoing process that is built into practice and that is carefully informed by existing research and best practice with this particular offender group. The consequence of not addressing risk appropriately and effectively with this group of offenders could be high and any mistakes potentially damaging to the reputation of the agencies concerned.

The Practice of Risk Assessment with Internet Sex Offenders: Respondents' Views

Respondents were asked to comment upon the factors that should be taken into account by practitioners in assessing risk and managing internet sex offenders.

Many very important issues were raised by respondents which are divided into two general risk areas. The first area includes situational risk, the risk of contact abuse and the way in which agencies collaborate in risk assessment. The second includes questions to pose in risk assessing offenders using indecent images of children.

Respondents raised many important points regarding effective risk assessment and management of internet sex offenders. Both situational and individual risk factors should be taken into account both at the SER/PSR stage and into the sentence and that effective assessment can only occur in the context of inter-agency collaboration. A summary of key findings follows (Tables 2-4).

Table 2: Assessing Risk at Social Enquiry Report/ Pre-Sentence Report Stage

1. Practitioners should be seeking to establish if sex offenders are using the internet, how often they access the internet and for what purpose. A number of screening questions should be asked routinely.

*'It's important for practitioners to explore the nature of internet behaviour at the outset of supervision/treatment and I don't think that practitioners do this on a regular basis at present. It is also really essential to explore the boundary between online and offline abuse i.e. Is there one? Or is the person collecting as part of a fantasy cycle and then putting fantasy into action? That's the danger that practitioners should be aware of and looking for'.
(Interview; Quayle, 2006)*

2. Practitioners compiling SERs/PSRs need some specialist IT knowledge if they are to effectively challenge and explore offender's claims.
3. Evidence from the offender's case should be used to assess risk, help determine treatment and confront denial.
4. A greater degree of collaboration between Criminal Justice Social Work Services (Scotland)/ the National Probation Service (England and Wales) and the police in assessing and managing the risk posed by internet sex offenders, throughout the sentencing process and beyond, is essential as is some specialist IT knowledge.

*"If I were a probation officer charged with producing a pre-sentence report assessing dangerousness, I'd be routinely checking the details of the police case to determine the exact nature of the offending, before forming any opinion concerning risk."
(Interview. Metropolitan Police HTC)*

Table 3: Situational Risk Factors

1. Offender's access to the internet and level of technical IT knowledge – has the offender gained any IT qualifications for example?

“Did they try to conceal their offending and what lengths did they go to? Some go to extraordinary lengths in getting IT education to enable them to hide their offending more effectively.”

(Interview. Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland)

2. Is the offender operating as part of an internet network?
3. Explore any history of previous allegations (not just convictions) but also importantly the nature of the allegations.
4. Explore any history of contact sexual offending.
5. Did the offender attempt to conceal their offending and what lengths did they go to in order to achieve this?
6. The extent of denial: Graf (2006) suggests that internet offenders demonstrating extreme denial should be categorised as high risk.
7. Does the offender have immediate or other access to children?
8. What does the offender do in his free time? Are there any unaccounted for frequent gaps in time?

“How do they spend their days? Are there any unaccounted for frequent gaps? It's a question of digging here. And this is what MAPPA Officers and probation officers should be doing. Dropping in on offenders on the register without appointment- looking at their living environments, asking questions about what they have been doing. Viewing their computing equipment. I regularly visit the offenders I'm in touch with unannounced, I visited one man on the register and saw lots of pairs of children's underpants around his house - he has been reconvicted – unannounced visits are important.”

(Interview. Metropolitan Police PU)

Table 4 : Questions to Ask in Assessing Risk: Indecent Images of Children

1. Explore the way in which images are sourced - is the offender a serious collector or an amateur? Where do the images come from? Are they home produced or professionally produced?
2. Is the offender involved in the production and distribution of images too?
3. Is there a great deal of swapping of images?
4. What is the nature of the collection in terms of its seriousness and the degree of violence involved?
5. Is the collection highly organised?
6. Is the collection highly focused on a type of victim?
7. Does the nature of the collection suggest a pre-occupation – is it highly organised and has it taken a long time to amass? Does the offender use it on a regular basis? How often is it used?

“Really looking here for obsessive behaviour, how much of their time is focused on the obsession and the nature of the obsession. As a screening question I would be asking about computer use and about how they spend a typical day. I really want to know initially how much time they are spending on their computer and if they have a computer at home (although could be using an internet café- I know of one such case – but the more obsessive would be working at home/somewhere quiet).”

(Interview. Quayle, 2006)

8. Do the images form a part of the offender’s fantasy abuse cycle? This may be indicative of obsessive behaviour.

Based on interview data, Quayle (2006).

4.5.2 Working with Internet Sex Offenders: Approaches to Management and Treatment

Managing Internet Sex Offenders: Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

In Scotland, England and Wales, internet sex offenders will be subject to the restrictions placed upon other sex offenders in terms of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)¹⁹. Arrangements require criminal justice, housing, health, local authority, social work and probation services to put into place arrangements for establishing and monitoring risk with sex offenders and other violent offenders.

In Scotland MAPPA arrangements are to be introduced in April 2007 and legislation which amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 has recently come into force (the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006)²⁰. The arrangements will address several areas of good practice: ongoing risk assessment; the development of risk management plans that focus upon public protection; and performance evaluation. There are four core functions: identifying MAPPA offenders; sharing relevant information across agencies involved in the assessment of risk; assessing and managing risk of serious harm²¹. A responsibility is placed upon the Scottish Prison Service, the police and local authorities to jointly establish arrangements for the risk assessment and management of sex offenders subject to the notification requirements of part two of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

In Scotland, England and Wales violent and sex offenders are divided into three distinct categories under MAPPA arrangements: *Category One* includes all registered sex offenders; *Category Two* includes violent offenders and *Category Three* includes offenders with previous convictions whose behaviour suggests that they pose a continuing risk. As in England and Wales, under MAPPA arrangements in Scotland, level 1 offenders will be overseen by one agency, usually the police or criminal justice social

¹⁹ Established by the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 in Scotland and by the Criminal Justice & Court Services Act 2000 and re-enacted and strengthened by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 in England & Wales.

²⁰ Section 80 of the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 by inserting s96A. Police can apply to a sheriff to obtain a warrant to enter and search a known (registered) sex offenders home address for risk assessment purposes or following failure to gain entry on more than one occasion.

²¹ S10 and 11 of the Management of Offenders Act (Scotland) 2005 introduce a statutory function for the police, local authorities and the SPS which includes the establishment of joint working arrangements to assess and manage risk with sexual and violent offenders. ACPOS, ADSW and the SPS will work with the Justice Department.

work/National Probation Service, whilst level 2 offenders will be subject to multi-agency oversight and level 3 offenders (known as the critical few) may be subject to intensive measures, such as monitoring on a daily basis.

In Scotland the risk assessment and management of serious violent and sexual offenders is a key issue on which a central body (the Risk Management Authority) advises. The approach is becoming an integral element of practice. This is an unusual approach and other countries may follow the Scottish lead. The routine checking of sex offenders' home addresses for the purpose of risk assessment is encouraged under MAPPA arrangements and new legislation allows the police to apply to a sheriff to obtain a warrant to enter and search a sex offender's home where necessary (Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act, s96A, 2006), a move welcomed by the police in Scotland (Interview; Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group):

“The key is really to have unlimited access to (sex) offenders’ computers through MAPPA arrangements in future, we will target offenders appropriately.-----The police will have the power to check the computers of all registered sex offenders (we will target resources). This will greatly extend our powers and it’s a measure that’s needed.”
(Interview, Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland).

Indeed this issue was raised by a respondent from the Metropolitan Police HTCUC. Although it is possible for the police to apply for access to sex offender's computers via an extended licensing order, no such moves are proposed in England and Wales at present but the legislation may follow shortly:

“The computers of all child sexual abusers (and possibly adults when the legislation is passed) on the register should be analysed by the police when performing post registration visits. This has huge resource implications but is absolutely necessary. I’m saying that we’re probably looking at the tip of the iceberg and that many sex offenders are using the internet routinely contrary to their SOPO and other prevention orders. This is very difficult to police but should be performed initially by Public Protection Command Officers whose role it is to monitor sex offenders and their activity on the internet. This could be achieved by allowing application for an extended licensing order and beefing up the existing SOPO (Sexual Offences Prevention Order).”
(Interview; Metropolitan Police HTCUC)

A statutory obligation is now placed upon criminal justice agencies working with serious violent and sexual offenders in Scotland who are subject to an Order of Lifelong

Restriction (OLR)²² to prepare and act upon a risk management plan. The plan should include an assessment of risk and describe how the perceived risk will be monitored and how the offender will be managed by all relevant agencies. The OLR is a sentence which was introduced following the recommendations by the MacLean Committee on serious violent and sexual offenders (2000), and has been made available to the High Court since June 2006 for offenders appearing on indictment for an offence without a mandatory life sentence of imprisonment. The statutory provisions for the OLR are set out in section 210F of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (as inserted by Section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003). The MacLean Committee also recommended establishing an independent body to ensure that statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies worked together systematically to address the risk posed by serious offenders. The proposal led to the establishment of the Risk Management Authority (RMA). It is the role of the RMA to approve and monitor the risk management plans prepared by agencies for those offenders serving an OLR. The Authority's remit also includes: setting standards and accrediting risk assessors and the methods to be used in the assessment of those offenders for whom the court is considering an OLR; the development of policy and conduct of research in the fields of risk assessment and management and the provision of guidance and training for criminal justice agencies and practitioners. RMA publications include: the 'RMA Standards and Guidelines for Risk Assessment' (2006) and RATED, a directory of risk assessment tools (RMA 2006).

Effective Management of Internet Sex Offenders: Respondents' Views

Respondents were asked to reflect upon how internet sex offenders might be effectively managed and controlled as a group and how far planned (Scotland) and current MAPPA arrangements (England and Wales) might address this. International respondents commented generally upon the positive aspects of the MAPPA system, which it would seem is fairly unique, particularly in Europe where communication between agencies is more informal:

"I think MAPPA is a really good idea. There are no similar arrangements in place in Switzerland or the rest of the EU, as far as I'm aware. But, in Switzerland agencies do work informally together effectively, we are always in touch with social workers, probation and the police in assessing risk – we share information well."
(Interview; Graf, 2006)

²² It is the responsibility of the 'lead' agency to prepare the plan.

All respondents supported the principle of multi-agency working and MAPPA arrangements but some questioned the adequacy of the system in assessing and managing risk with sex offenders (including those convicted of internet related offences):

“MAPPA was introduced in 1998 (England and Wales). It’s good for re-housing sex offenders but fairly ineffective truthfully in managing and monitoring this group. When you think about the scale of the problem, 4000 new sex offenders are registered every year, how can you realistically monitor that number of people? It’s a resource issue and there is no real mechanism for knowing if someone is high risk and following up on that information, it may be a better idea to monitor most serious more closely but as I said the ‘high risk category’ internet ones are not necessarily the most dangerous in terms of contact abuse.”
(Interview. Metropolitan Police HTCUC)

One police respondent questioned how far agencies are currently committed to enforcing MAPPA arrangements:

“It’s (MAPPA) certainly a step in the right direction, but is this really a priority for the agencies involved? It’s not really and resourcing is an issue.”
(Interview; Metropolitan Police PU)

Respondents identified some useful steps that might be taken in ensuring more effective management of internet sex offenders:

Table 5: The Effective Management of Internet Sex Offenders	
1.	Unlimited access to registered sex offender’s home computers (aided in Scotland by the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, 2006.
2.	MAPPA officers should be regularly making unannounced visits to sex offenders in order to view home environments and computers.
3.	Regular and effective collaboration between police officers from specialist sex offender units and social workers/probation officers regarding risk assessment and management at social enquiry/pre-sentence report stage and throughout the sentence.

“MAPPA Officers should be regularly ‘dip-sampling’ from the register to check all sex offenders (not just internet sex offenders) and should be checking out their lifestyles regularly. They should be checking internet sex offender’s computers on a regular basis- in fact they should be checking all sex offenders’ computers. I would be suspicious of an offender using an evidence eliminator. Consideration should be given to obtaining a condition placed on the offender’s licence, to gain regular access to their computer. Resourcing is however a big issue here.”
(Interview. Metropolitan Police PU)

These proposals carry a considerable resource implication. It may, however, soon be possible to monitor sex offender computer use electronically and remotely. This may initially prove costly but such a move may provide a more cost effective alternative in the long term. The Home Office are currently exploring the possibility of introducing software in England and Wales that has been developed in the United States:

“We want to introduce software (in use in the States) to allow us to monitor what convicted offenders are using their computers for. We certainly could use this with internet sex offenders and possibly others on the register who have a computer. We couldn’t do this covertly but it could form a part of an offending order or a condition of licence. There may be difficulty in resourcing and monitoring but it’s being considered. We could then produce a weekly printout about computer use.”
(Interview; Middleton, NPS, 2006)

It is clear that MAPPA arrangements provide a useful framework for the management of internet sex offenders in Scotland, England and Wales. Respondents have, however, suggested that a more proactive approach should be taken by agencies in monitoring internet sex offenders, particularly via regular access to home computers in order to assess risk, and that a greater degree of collaboration between agencies would aid this process.

Internet Sex Offender Behaviour: the Theoretical Context of Treatment

Quayle et al (2004) have developed a cognitive behavioural treatment (CBT) module for internet sex offenders along with the NSPCC and Greater Manchester Probation Service. The module sought to build upon the accredited probation sex offender treatment programme (SOTP) in guiding practitioners’ work with internet sex offenders. Elements of the module will be used in the new accredited Home Office probation programme for internet sex offenders, which has been developed by Middleton (2006). There appear to be few treatment programmes dedicated to internet sex offenders, other

than small scale, ad-hoc projects largely developed by practitioners. In Switzerland, for example, 40 internet sex offenders have undergone a tailored CBT programme (Interview; Graf, 2006) and some work is underway in the Netherlands at the Amsterdam Clinic.

“The CBT model we use is based upon Marshall & Law’s/ Mann’s (SOTP) but we have adapted for this for internet sex offenders using child pornography. As there are large numbers coming through using ‘illegal pornography’ (adults) we will have to adapt the model for use with this group.”

(Interview. Graf, 2006)

There is work in the UK to address risk assessment and treatment for internet sex offenders who possess, produce and distribute indecent images of children²³, most notably that undertaken by O’Brien and Webster (2005, unpublished) on behalf of the UK Prison Service Offending Behaviour Programmes Unit, and developmental work conducted by Middleton et al (2005, in press) on behalf of the National Probation Service. These developments are discussed below.

Middleton et al (2005) conducted research exploring the applicability of the Ward and Siegert (2002) Pathways Model of Sexual Offending to a sample of 72 internet sex offenders who had been convicted for possession and distribution of indecent images of children (no internet ‘groomers’ were included in the sample). The sample was drawn from the 15 Probation Service Regions in England and Wales. 67% ($n= 49$) of the sample had been risk assessed using RM2000 and 17% had been categorised as high risk. Drawing on existing theoretical explanation for sexual offending, the Pathways Model identifies four key areas to be addressed in treatment programmes for internet sex offenders: intimacy and social skills deficit; distorted sexual scripts; anti-social cognitions and emotional dysregulation (Ward and Siegert, 2002).

The aim of Middleton et al’s research was to explore implications for assessment and treatment. The internet offenders tended to fall within the ‘intimacy deficits’ and ‘emotional dysregulation’ pathways. The ‘intimacy deficits’ pathway contains offenders who offend at irregular intervals particularly when isolated or lonely; these offenders usually have normal sexual scripts. The ‘emotional dysregulation’ group contains

²³ None of this research has focused upon those who groom children online, possibly as there are currently few such offenders in the system and cases are difficult and time consuming to evidence

offenders who have difficulty in regulating their emotions but have normal sexual scripts. Middleton et al did not find high levels of cognitive distortions amongst their sample, but this finding has been contradicted by the work of O'Brien and Webster (2005) and Quayle and Taylor (2003, 2002), who identified four characteristics of cognitive distortions in internet sex offenders: justification of possession of indecent images as 'only' images and non contact abuse²⁴; 'normalization' as many others are engaged in this behaviour; 'objectification' through the collection of images, which is possible as there is no direct contact with the victim; and 'justification' through participation and collusion via an online network of abusers.

Middleton et al conclude that internet sex offenders are a diverse group and this is confirmed by O'Brien's and Webster's (2005) work, some of whom have similar psychological problems to other sex offenders. The implications for assessment and treatment are that risk assessment tools and treatment should take account of these differences, and the CBT approach adopted by both the probation and prison service with sex offenders in the UK at present may not be entirely relevant. This contention is, however, contradicted by the work of O'Brien and Webster (2005), whose research was conducted with internet sex offenders. O'Brien and Webster sought to design and validate a risk assessment measure to guide the work of practitioners. The '*Internet Behaviour and Attitudes Questionnaire*' (IBAQ, see Appendix B) draws upon Quayle and Taylor's (2003, 2002) interview guidelines for practitioners in work with internet sex offenders. Other items on the scale were developed following a literature review and interviews with the Metropolitan Police. The IBAQ contains a series of 42 behaviour items that require a 'yes'/ 'no' response and 34 attitude items. The questions explore the nature of the offender's internet behaviour in relation to indecent child images and general attitudes towards internet abuse. Many of these statements seek to explore denial and minimization regarding the seriousness and extent of the behaviour. These concepts are well established in treatment work with sex offenders and evidenced in the general sex offender literature (Finkelhor, 1984; Gudjonsson, 1991; Davidson, 2006).

O'Brien and Webster's research was divided into 2 phases: 40 sexual offenders with a history of using indecent images participated in phase one (pilot) and 123 sexual offenders convicted of internet child pornography participated in the second phase. All

²⁴ A similar concept to that of 'denial' in sex offender populations (Davidson, 2006) and one worth exploring with those using the internet.

respondents were serving custodial or probation sentences. The internal consistency of the measure used with phase two respondents increased following changes made as a consequence of data produced at phase one. The IBAQ may shortly be used in the new CBT development by Middleton (2006). The authors caution that the scale does not yet have the capability to accurately measure risk. It is, however, suggested on a more optimistic note, that elements of the CBT treatment model currently in use for sex offenders may have some relevance for internet sex offenders, but in the absence of any conclusive empirical evidence this conclusion must be tentative.

A number of key areas to be addressed in treatment programmes designed for internet sex offenders using indecent child images are suggested by the literature:

Table 6: Key Treatment Areas Guiding Work with Internet Sex Offenders Using Indecent Child Images

- Intimacy and social skills deficit
- Distorted sexual scripts
- Anti-social cognitions
- Emotional dysregulation
- Cognitive distortions:
 1. Justification of possession (only an image)
 2. Normalisation (many others do this)
 3. Objectification of victim/victims
 4. Collusion (with wider network)

Ward & Siegert, 2002; Quayle & Taylor, 2003; O'Brien & Webster, 2005; Middleton, 2006.

Treatment Approaches in Work with Internet Sex Offenders

Treatment approaches with sex offenders whose offending is internet related tend to be based on the cognitive behavioural treatment (CBT) model. However the structure and delivery of such programmes differs. In England and Wales there has been a recent attempt to centrally develop and organise a CBT programme for internet sex offenders that is now in use by the National Probation Service (July 2006) and will possibly be introduced to prisons. The internet Sex Offender Treatment Programme (i-SOTP) runs alongside the existing sex offender treatment programme.

Some uncertainty was expressed by respondents in Scotland about the benefits of developing a tailored programme given the developmental state of knowledge and research on internet sexual abuse:

“I’m not sure we have enough knowledge yet to devise a specific programme for internet sex offenders. Do we know enough about what is different about sex offenders who use the internet in the commission of their offending? It seems quite possible that they are more similar than different from the population of contact offenders we already work with?”
(Interview; Lundie, 2006, Scottish Prison Service)

This concern was shared to a certain extent by a Probation Officer delivering the new i-SOTP programme who commented that although the ‘internet offenders’ attending the programme had been convicted for indecent child image related offences, some had previous convictions for contact sexual abuse plus many were using the internet in other areas of their lives, to build other adult relationships for example and to approach children in chat rooms.

In Scotland internet sex offenders receiving custodial sentences are currently treated under SOTP. In the community most are treated through C-SOGP or other locally developed initiatives. One example is the Individualised Treatment for Sex Offending (ITSO) programme developed by Dr Ewan Lundie (Interview 15, 2006. SPS) that draws heavily on SOTP but has novel aspects (including a non-offending foundation phase and a recurrent emphasis on formulation) that allows treatment to be tailored to individual sex offender need. The ITSO programme runs across 2 criminal justice social services areas in Scotland and a significant proportion of participants are convicted internet sex offenders. The programme combines some structure with a more organic, flexible approach. Practitioners trained in programme delivery are encouraged to work with the offender and to listen to their needs in undertaking the work. The treatment, risk assessment and management plans are assisted by frequent application of the Structured Assessment of Risk and Needs (SARN; HMPS, 2005) framework. Following the initial mandatory phases of the programme, practitioners are able to choose modules from a menu that best suit the offender’s treatment needs. This assessment would be based upon practitioner and client collaboration, established during the formulation and reformulation phases of treatment. The programme is at a developmental stage and has not yet been evaluated. Lundie suggests that ideally further modules might be developed

and incorporated to this treatment approach that address internet sex offending in all its forms, when more empirical data regarding the behaviour of such offenders is available.

“There’s no certainty that sex offenders using the internet are really that different as a group to those who don’t. If they are using indecent internet images are they any different to those who’ve used such images as part of their fantasy cycle in the past but from different media? Sex offenders are an extremely heterogeneous group but our research knowledge is really very limited here. And we should be really careful about how we risk assess and treat these offenders. For example, the current treatment approaches provide enough scope to address the heterogeneity between men who sexually abuse adults and/or children, we don’t yet know enough about internet offenders to justify applying discreet approaches to them.”

(Interview; Lundie, 2006)

Another CBT treatment programme is currently operational at a local level at the Forensic Department, University Hospital, Basel, Switzerland. This inpatient and outpatient clinic for sex offenders includes those remanded in custody; on probation; post release from prison; and some self referring (approximately 15-20% of all internet offenders are self referring). 40 men have attended the programme so far, therapy lasts for 1 year (weekly sessions of 1.5 hours) and is based upon relapse prevention models adapted for use with internet sex offenders. The majority of offenders have been charged with possession of child internet pornography. The programme has been running for 4 years and the CBT model used is based upon the work of Marshall, Laws and Barbaree (1990), which has been adapted for use with sex offenders using indecent internet images of children. Graf (Interview, 2006), who runs the programme, made some interesting observations about the internet offenders he has worked with:

“We are finding that internet sex offenders are a very different group to other sex offenders, they are often highly educated, professionals – some working in the IT industry, they tend to be much more competent and therapy is easier, they seem to respond and understand the work well.”

(Interview; Graf 2006)

Indeed these comments were endorsed by other practitioner respondents:

“They seem to be a different group to other sex offenders I’ve worked with. They are intelligent, often professional men who are well motivated to work on their problem.”

(Interview. Probation Officer/Facilitator 1, National Probation Service)

A different approach to risk assessment is employed by Graf, and actuarial assessment tools are not favoured:

“We are using a risk assessment pack which is evidence based and was developed by Professor Ditmann, it’s a catalogue of techniques for use with internet sex offenders. We don’t use Matrix 2000 type approaches as we prefer to assess risk on a tailored, individual basis; using evidence from the offender’s case to confront their denials. For example, we think it’s really important to confront these people with the pictures they’ve collected, in both assessing their acceptance of responsibility and motivation to change. We also use the Quayle & Taylor approach in assessing risk.”
(Interview; Graff 2006)

The remainder of this section describes the internet sex offender treatment approach in England and Wales and draws upon information provided during interview with David Middleton (Sex Offender Strategy and Programmes Public Protection and Courts Unit, National Probation Service), a Senior Probation Officer from the National Probation Service (Interview. SPO) with responsibility for the management and treatment of sex offenders in one area in the North West Region, and 2 Probation Officers/Programme Facilitators (Interviews F1 and F2) trained in the delivery of the new CBT programme. The section also draws upon relevant probation circulars.

The National Probation Service in England and Wales has launched a cognitive behavioural treatment programme (the internet Sex Offender Treatment Programme, i-SOTP) designed specifically for those men convicted of internet related sexual abuse crimes against children (although it is possible that adults convicted for the possession of extreme pornography under the proposed legislation may at some point join the programme). The Scottish Executive is aware of developments regarding this programme and will monitor its progress before deciding upon implementation in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2006). There is no similar programme in Scotland; internet sex offenders currently attend the existing programmes for sex offenders (Interview respondent, 2006, The Clyde Quay Project).

The National Probation Service programme began to roll out on a regional basis from July 2006. Probation practitioners were concerned that there would be an insufficient number of internet sex offenders to run rolling programmes, but an increasing number of offenders are under probation supervision. The programme has been developed

alongside the standard programme (SOTP) and is specifically designed for internet sex offenders accessing indecent images of children:

“We noticed as a consequence of Operation Ore²⁵ that the Probation Service was getting internet sex offenders on the standard CBT which isn’t really appropriate in many ways, it’s (the programme) the next generation of SOTP.”
(Interview; Middleton 2006)

Table 7: I-SOTP Key Features

- 6 modules and 35 sessions.
- Internet sex offender behaviour characterised by: *‘lack of victim awareness (more so than empathy), compulsivity, collecting behaviour, emotional avoidance and investment in online pseudo relationships’* (Probation Circular 92/2005, p2).
- Areas covered in the programme include:
 1. Motivations & values
 2. Skills development in relationships and emotions
 3. Relapse prevention

Middleton (2006)

The difficulty is that given the lack of research in this relatively new area and the small, non-random samples of such offenders (drawn from the convicted sex offender population) who have participated in recent work, the assumptions regarding internet sex offender behaviour upon which the programme is based must be tentative. This is a concern endorsed by other respondents with considerable experience in work with sex offenders:

“There’s no certainty that sex offenders using the internet are really that different as a group to those who don’t. If they are using indecent internet images are they any different to those who’ve used such images as part of their fantasy cycle in the past but from different media? I’m not suggesting that sex offenders are a heterogeneous group but our research knowledge is really very limited here. And we should be really careful about how we risk assess and treat these offender.”
(Interview; Lundie 2006)

²⁵ **Operation Ore** was a large-scale international police operation that commenced in 1999 intending to indict thousands of users of websites featuring child pornography. In the United Kingdom it led to 7,250 suspects identified, 4,283 homes searched, 3,744 arrests, 1,848 charged, 1,451 convictions, 493 cautioned, 879 investigations underway, 109 children removed from suspected dangerous situations and at least 35 suicides. *Sunday Times*, 3 July 2005.

The i-SOTP programme was accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel in December 2005 and 90 probation staff (intervention staff/facilitators) have been trained in its use. Intervention staff run the accredited offender management programmes and often have specialist experience/knowledge in the sex offender area. There are plans to begin training the trainers in October 2006 and to roll the programme out further; the training is intensive and takes 3 days. Trainers are assessed in their proficiency at the end of the course. There are also plans to develop a post qualifying qualification with an HE institution (Interview; Middleton 2006).

The theoretical basis of the programme draws upon a number of sources including Quayle's original internet CBT module (Interview; Quayle 2006); the spiral of abuse model and Finkelhor's 'multi-factoral' approach (1984), upon which the original SOTP was based. The CBT programme is restricted to offenders categorised as 'low deviance' in terms of RM2000 (MAPPA level 1), and runs in 2 formats: group work (with continued one to one supervision with an offender manager) and one to one work:

"It (the CBT programme) was designed to provide a more holistic approach to allow the programme to be tailored to individual need. In the long term we will have to look at the diversity of internet sex offenders coming into the system and learn more about them to develop the programme further. Our approach to working with internet sex offenders is much more holistic than it has been in work with other sex offenders in the past and this programme will be designed to deal with different types of offender."

(Interview; Middleton 2006)

The implication is that although the programme has been designed for those convicted of indecent image related offending, the content and structure of the programme should allow for the allocation of different types of internet sex offender to different and appropriate treatment streams. For example, the effective management of online groomers may require more one-to-one supervision, along with elements of the original SOTP and i-SOTP. However, information produced for practitioners by the National Probation Directorate (Probation Circular 92/2005) indicates that the programme has been designed exclusively for '*offenders who have been convicted of offences which involved the viewing, making, possession, distribution of indecent images of children through the medium of electronic communication*' (2005, p2). Online grooming is not referred to. Facilitators were asked for their views about the flexibility of the programme

in enabling the risk assessment and management of different types of internet sex offender and although the programme has only been running for 1 week, facilitators felt that the structure and design would allow for a flexible approach in working with different types of internet sex offender, including those grooming online:

‘There aren’t any groomers on the programme at present but there’s no reason why they couldn’t do the programme. It’s designed to be flexible and we’ve been asked to feedback on progress at a later stage.’

(Interview Probation Officer/Facilitator 1, National Probation Service)

Practitioners thought that the design and structure of the programme were appropriate for the offending group and they commented favourably upon the exercises and the use of the ‘spiral of abuse’ theory:

“It’s difficult to judge at this stage, but I think the programme will work well, we’ve run one session so far with the men and they seemed to respond well. The exercises look useful.”

(Interview; Probation Officer/Facilitator 1, National Probation Service)

“I think it will work well. This group of offenders seem very comfortable with disclosure and almost full disclosure at week 2. We are very pleased.”

(Interview; Probation Officer/Facilitator 2, National Probation Service)

“Early feedback from trained staff (facilitators) is that the training manual looks positive but will wait to see how it works in practice. The CBT programme draws upon the best elements of other CBT models so it should work.”

(Interview; Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service)

Risk assessment and management should be an integral element of the new CBT programme and probation offender managers and facilitators must currently produce approved risk plans. Standard training materials for trainers are currently under development, as is a standardised internet sex offender test battery which will be used by the Prison Service and the National Probation Service (across all 42 probation areas). These will be developed by early 2007 along with a new standardised test battery for internet sex offenders using indecent images of children, and will also be used to aid risk assessment. Middleton (2006) suggested that the IBAQ will be useful in screening sex offenders for deviant internet use in future and sorting them into offence seriousness categories for research. Evaluative research will be conducted to assess these developments and to explore how offenders might be assigned to different pathways (following Ward & Siegert, 2004).

Much treatment practice with internet sex offenders is new and innovative and the effectiveness of different approaches will not be apparent until the work has progressed sufficiently to allow for the collection of data and evaluation.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This report sought to explore current practice with offenders convicted for indecent images of children-related internet offences and offenders convicted for grooming children online. It also looked at proposed work with those possessing extreme pornography depicting adults.

Whilst only a small number of respondents participated in interviews, many practitioners from different backgrounds have expertise in the area of sexual abuse and have contributed to this work in some way. Practice in the risk assessment, management and treatment of internet sex offenders is relatively new, developmental and experimental. There has been considerable focus upon those offenders convicted for the possession and distribution of indecent child images but little focus upon those grooming children in chat rooms and increasingly on peer-to-peer networks. Agencies in the UK have not yet begun to consider how they might risk assess and manage a potentially new category of sex offender if the legislation addressing the possession of extreme pornography depicting adults comes into force in Scotland, England and Wales.

The key findings arising from this research may be summarised as follows:

- 5.1 Key steps have been taken by some governments in attempting to legislate against the online sexual abuse of children through grooming behaviour and the production, distribution and possession of indecent images.
- 5.2 Significant efforts to protect children from internet sexual abuse and to raise awareness about the problem have been made in Scotland, England and Wales and internationally by organisations such as the IWF, the VGT and CEOP, who also work with the IT industry.
- 5.3 In Scotland, England and Wales national and local Police High Technology Units are employed in an attempt to trace online abusers and identify the victims portrayed in indecent images. They are aided in this work by CEOP and the VGT.

- 5.4 Despite these positive moves there has been a growth in the number of indecent images, many of which are of an increasingly violent nature depicting the abuse of young children. Carr (NCH, 2006) has claimed that the online protection of children is not afforded a high enough political priority on governments' agendas.
- 5.5 Information was found regarding planned, developmental and innovative work in risk assessment, management and treatment of internet sex offenders in the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Amsterdam²⁶ and Switzerland.²⁷
- 5.6 In Scotland, England and Wales internet sex offenders are currently risk assessed with a range of tools designed for the assessment of sex offenders, including RM2000. None of these instruments were designed for use with internet sex offenders; RM2000 is currently being adapted for this purpose. Internationally no risk assessment tools appear to have been developed specifically for this group.
- 5.7 Little work has been undertaken in attempting to address risk assessment with those who target and groom children online. Such offending is in a sense potentially more dangerous given the offenders desire to seek out a child victim for the purpose of sexual abuse.
- 5.8 Some police respondents expressed concern that offenders convicted for indecent image related offences who may be assessed as 'low risk' may actually constitute a higher risk in terms of their propensity for contact abuse. The point was made repeatedly that not enough is known about the boundary between the use of indecent internet child images and the potential for contact abuse. Some respondents suggested that internet sex offenders may not be a distinctive group and categorising, risk assessing and treating them as such may be misguided. There is clearly a need for more research here.
- 5.9 Respondents raised many important points regarding effective risk assessment and management of internet sex offenders. It is clear that both the offender's

²⁶ Although no information has been forwarded regarding practice at the Amsterdam Clinic.

²⁷ There are doubtless other countries working on this issue where information was not found in the literature review or provided by respondents.

situational (access to children, lifestyle, home environment etc) and individual risk factors (the nature of any collection of indecent images and collecting behaviour for example) should be taken into account both at the SER/PSR stage and into the sentence and that effective assessment can only occur in the context of inter-agency collaboration.

- 5.10 Respondents suggested that criminal justice social workers and probation officers should be using screening questions regarding computer/internet use when compiling SERs/PSRs on all sex offenders. It was also suggested that practitioners need some basic IT knowledge in order to effectively conduct screening.
- 5.11 A typology for categorising internet sex offenders using indecent images of children has been developed by Quayle and Taylor (2003). This formed the basis of the risk categorisation advice issued by the Sentencing Advisory Panel in England and Wales. The typology is widely used both in the UK and internationally but excludes online groomers. A typology has also been developed by Krone (2004) and this guides the work of police officers in the United States.
- 5.12 Effective collaborative working between criminal justice social workers, probation officers and specialist police units working with sex offenders was identified as key in risk assessment and management.
- 5.13 Respondents commented that the management of sex offenders via MAPPA arrangements was welcomed as a positive move, but some were critical of the way in which the arrangements have operated in practice in England and Wales and made several suggestions regarding the effective management of internet sex offenders in the community. These include the regular inspection of home computers to view offender's home environments. It is possible that software in use in the United States will be introduced in the UK to monitor the computer use of those on the Sex Offenders Register. It was also suggested that the enforcement of MAPPA arrangements was not necessarily a high priority for some agencies in England and Wales.

5.14 The treatment of internet sex offenders is largely based upon the cognitive behavioural model which underpins the Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) in Scotland, England and Wales. Some innovative approaches based upon this model are under development, most notably the developmental work of Graf in Switzerland. In England and Wales the internet Sex Offenders Treatment Programme (i-SOTP) developed by David Middleton, has just been introduced by the National Probation Service. These initiatives are recently introduced and there is currently no information regarding their effectiveness.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research forms an important first step in attempting to describe recent and planned practice in risk assessment and management work with internet sex offenders. Many criminal justice and social work agencies are attempting to build upon existing good practice in terms of assessment and treatment for sex offenders and to adapt this practice for use with sex offenders whose offences are internet related. Although practitioners are dedicated and much of the work is innovative, it is essential that good quality research underpin practice. There is a scarcity of such research regarding the behaviour of different types of internet sex offender (Quayle and Taylor's (2003) and Krone's (2004) work is the exception. Research has focused upon those who produce and collect indecent images of children, whilst very little is known about those who groom children online and the boundary between online abuse and contact abuse. The police have suggested that a greater number of such cases are now being prosecuted under the legislation in Scotland, England and Wales. It is therefore of concern that so little is known about this potentially high risk group. Even less is known about those who use 'extreme pornographic sexual images' depicting adults, and agencies have not yet considered how this type of offender may be categorised and assessed when the legislation is passed in Scotland, England and Wales.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Future Research

There is an urgent need for research to explore the behaviour of online groomers who target children and the link/boundary between non-contact online sexual abuse of children and internet offender's propensity for contact abuse. Any attempt to further develop risk assessment tools such as RM2000 should be undertaken with reference to such work as should further developments in treatment practice.

Research is also needed to investigate the behaviour and motivations of those using 'extreme pornographic sexual images' depicting adults. Although this is a difficult area to research and the legislation is not yet in place in Scotland, England and Wales, nothing is known about this group and agencies have not yet begun to consider how such offenders might be risk assessed and managed within the criminal justice system. This is an important and urgent step as the legislation is likely to come into force shortly.

2. Inter-Agency Collaboration

Whilst criminal justice and social work agencies in Scotland, England and Wales are making good progress in developing treatment practice with internet sex offenders (as are other countries), there is a need for more effective inter-agency communication and collaboration in approaching risk assessment and management with this group. Specifically, criminal justice social workers in Scotland and probation officers in England and Wales should work more directly with specialist police units such as local HTCUs and MAPPA officers in assessing risk with internet sex offenders at SER/PSR stage and throughout sentence.

3. The Risk Assessment of Internet Sex Offenders

Respondents suggested that a number of factors should be taken into account by practitioners in assessing risk with internet sex offenders producing and/or possessing

indecent child images²⁸, some of which draw upon the advice of the SAP and Quayle and Taylor (2003)'s typology:

1. The way in which images are sourced
2. Offender involvement in the production and distribution of images
3. The nature of the collection in terms of its seriousness and the degree of violence involved
4. The degree of collection organisation
5. The extent to which the collection suggests a pre-occupation and the frequency of offender use
6. The extent to which the images form a part of the offender's fantasy abuse cycle

Seto (2006) has suggested that:

- a) Greater paedophilic sexual arousal appears to be equated with greater risk
- b) Low nonsexual criminal history lowers the risk of contact abuse in indecent image users

Respondents identified some key issues to guide the work of practitioners in assessing risk. It is recommended that these factors be built into a schedule of screening questions for use by practitioners at SER/PSR stage and built into risk assessment approaches in future. The IBAQ questionnaire (Appendix B) may also form a useful screening and evaluative tool to guide the work of practitioners, further use and evaluation of the tool are however necessary to establish this.

4. Managing Internet Sex Offenders

Respondents made very specific recommendations regarding the management of internet sex offenders in the community:

1. Agencies should give high priority to the monitoring of internet sex offenders in the community under MAPPA arrangements.
2. The screening of all registered sex offenders regarding possible internet use (Basic IT training may be necessary for some practitioners)
3. The regular monitoring of all registered sex offenders' home computers. Failing this, the targeted monitoring of high risk internet sex offenders' home computers.

²⁸ These categories may be applicable to risk assessment of offenders possessing 'extreme pornography' depicting the abuse of adults, but research is yet to be conducted in this area.

4. MAPPA officers should make regular, unscheduled visits to internet sex offenders to check their living environments for evidence of offending.
5. Ongoing offender questioning regarding the nature of computer use is important in seeking to establish how offenders spend their time.

5. International Research and Collaboration: Sharing Knowledge and Experience

There are many examples of international innovative assessment and treatment practice with internet sex offenders. Much of this work is ad-hoc and information is not readily available. Good research should form the basis of risk assessment, offender management and treatment practice with internet sex offenders. There is an urgent need for agencies to share practice and research information regarding research and practice in work with internet sex offenders. Such a research/information repository should be facilitated by an organisation such as the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers at national level and the International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders at international level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Contacts and Interviewees

*** Includes interviewees, agencies and those responding to requests for information**

The National High Technology Crime Unit Scotland

The London Metropolitan Police High Technology Crime Unit, Paedophile Unit and Vice Unit

The National Police (Sex Offender Working Group), Scotland

The National High Technology Crime Unit, Scotland

The Italian Police Criminal Profiling Unit

The United States Police, Ohio and Seattle

Interpol Sex Offender Management Sub-Group

The Norwegian Police Child Sexual Exploitation Unit

Family Protection and Criminal Justice Social Services, Scotland

The National Probation Service, England and Wales

Sex Offender Programme, University Hospital, Basel, Switzerland

Chair, National Police Sex Offender Working Group, Scotland

John Carr , Internet Watch Foundation and NCH the Children's Charity

Alexis McDade, The Clyde Quay Project, Scotland

Cedric Fulwood, UK National Probation Service

Professor Anthony Beech, University of Birmingham

Matthew O'Brien, HM Prison Service

Professor David Finkelhor (representative), University of New Hampshire, US

Professor Marc Graf, University Hospital, Basel, Switzerland

Professor Donald Grubin, Newcastle University

Paul Kiff, British Society of Criminology

Professor Ronald Langevin, University of Toronto

Dr Ewan Lundie, Head Of Psychology, SPS, Scotland

Robert Shilling, Chair, Interpol Sex Offenders Management Sub Group and Seattle Police

Ruth Mann, HM Prison Service

David Middleton, National Probation Directorate, Home Office, London

Professor Reinhard Pfaefflin, International Association For The Treatment Of Sexual Offenders

Professor Ethel Quayle, COPINE Project, University College Cork

Professor Michael Seto, University of Toronto

Professor Tony Ward, University of Wellington, Victoria

APPENDIX B

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The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Internet Behaviours & Attitudes Questionnaire (IBAQ)

Matt D O'Brien and Stephen D Webster

Offending Behaviour Programmes Unit, HM Prison Service, London, England

IBAQ Behaviour Items

Please respond to the questions below. Each relates to a behaviour relating to your use of child pornography on the internet.

Please circle to indicate whether you used the following for a purpose relating to child pornography:

<i>b1</i>	Usenet news	YES	NO
<i>b2</i>	Internet Relay Chat	YES	NO
<i>b3</i>	File Transfer Protocol	YES	NO
<i>b4</i>	MUD (Multi-user dungeon)	YES	NO
<i>b5</i>	Video-conferencing software and hardware	YES	NO
<i>b6</i>	Chat rooms	YES	NO
<i>b7</i>	Web sites	YES	NO
<i>b8</i>	Specific image sharing software	YES	NO
<i>b9</i>	Bulletin Boards	YES	NO
<i>b10</i>	Newsgroups	YES	NO

Please circle to indicate whether the statements apply to you:

<i>b11</i>	I made efforts to contact others in order to share or discuss child pornography.	YES	NO
<i>b12</i>	I made efforts to cover my child pornography activity.	YES	NO
<i>b13</i>	I created a new personality to aid my child pornography activity.	YES	NO
<i>b14</i>	At times I accessed child pornography when children were in close proximity.	YES	NO
<i>b15</i>	I downloaded child pornography video clips.	YES	NO
<i>b16</i>	Adult pornography also aroused me.	YES	NO
<i>b17</i>	I had purchased child pornography before looking for it on the internet.	YES	NO
<i>b18</i>	I used a nickname for a reason relating to child pornography.	YES	NO
<i>b19</i>	I made contact with a child unknown to me online.	YES	NO
<i>b20</i>	I exchanged information about children with other adults through the internet.	YES	NO
<i>b21</i>	I pretended to be someone else online in order to get closer to a child.	YES	NO
<i>b22</i>	I felt better whilst looking at sexual pictures of children on the internet.	YES	NO
<i>b23</i>	I felt worse after looking at sexual pictures of children on the internet.	YES	NO
<i>b24</i>	I usually looked at child pornography on the internet at the same time(s) of day.	YES	NO
<i>b25</i>	I planned my internet searches for child pornography before I went online.	YES	NO
<i>b26</i>	I used to carefully categorise into 'folders' the child pornography I'd downloaded.	YES	NO
<i>b27</i>	I knew that the child pornography I was downloading was illegal.	YES	NO
<i>b28</i>	I usually masturbated at least once a day.	YES	NO
<i>b29</i>	I planned my day around when I could look at sex sites on the internet.	YES	NO
<i>b30</i>	I have pretended to be a child in chat-rooms to win a child's trust.	YES	NO
<i>b31</i>	I have arranged to meet, or met, with other users of internet child	YES	NO

	pornography.		
b32	I have paid fees to a site to access child pornography.	YES	NO
b33	I have sent a child an e-mail containing sexual suggestions.	YES	NO
b34	I have attempted to access child pornography from more than one computer.	YES	NO
b35	When I was not online I tended to think obsessively about going online again.	YES	NO
b36	I was part of an internet community that was involved in the trade of images.	YES	NO
b37	I attempted to learn new terms to obtain credibility online.	YES	NO
b38	I used to seek out progressively more intense sexual experiences.	YES	NO
b39	I was open with family members about my involvement in Internet pornography.	YES	NO
b40	I had a digital video/still camera that I used to create images for the internet.	YES	NO
b41	I traded images with others on-line.	YES	NO
	<i>If you answered YES to the above statement then respond to the next 2 statements</i>		
b41a	I then requested certain images.	YES	NO
b41b	I asked others to produce specific images.	YES	NO
b42	I produced images myself.	YES	NO
	<i>If you answered YES to the above statement then respond to the next 3 statements</i>		
b42a	The images were of children in my own family.	YES	NO
b42b	There was other sexual contact with them in addition to taking images	YES	NO
b42c	I was worried that if I didn't produce any then others would no longer share with me.	YES	NO

IBAQ Attitude Items

- *a1. I feel more confident on the internet than I do talking to people in real life.
- a2. I am not addicted to internet child pornography.
- a3. Using the internet makes me feel important.
- a4. The child was often smiling in the child pornography that I have looked at, and so I believe that the child is not being harmed.
- a5. I feel I have committed a victimless crime given that I have not created any contact victims in these internet offences.
- a6. I have found myself aroused at the illegality of the child pornography.
- *a7. I believe that looking at sexual pictures of children on the internet should be classified as a criminal sexual offence.
- a8. If I can't use the internet to view pornography when I want to, I feel bad.
- a9. The sexual pictures of children on the internet were there anyway, so I was not harming anyone by looking at them.
- a10. Sex is always on my mind.
- a11. I feel panicky and anxious if I have not been able to view sexual pictures.
- *a12. I do not use the internet to escape from my problems.
- *a13. All children who feature in pictures involving sexual acts on the internet have been sexually abused.
- a14. I prefer the idea of casual sex to sex in a relationship.
- a15. I have few friends outside of the internet.
- a16. I think my life is better when I'm able to view child pornography from the internet.
- a17. Looking at sexual pictures of children on the internet does not mean I have committed a sexual offence.
- a18. As an adult my sexual relationships with other adults have been very dissatisfying.
- a19. Child pornography is similar to art.
- a20. I like to look at child pornography pictures when I masturbate.
- *a21. Children pictured in sexual positions on the internet experience bad effects afterwards.
- a22. Looking at child pornography on the internet makes me feel good.
- a23. I feel that my use of internet child pornography encourages me to act in ways that I would not normally act.
- a24. There were no negative consequences associated with downloading child pornography.
- a25. Other people look at internet child pornography and therefore it is OK for me to do it.
- a26. I feel more powerful after I use the internet to look at child pornography.
- a27. I believe that the children in the pictures I view enjoyed the experience.
- a28. I have wanted to commit a contact sexual offence after looking at child pornography on the internet.
- a29. Child pornography is no different from adult porn.
- a30. The internet is a safe outlet for my fantasies.
- a31. I prefer 'virtual' communication to 'face to face' communication.
- a32. I believe that a child doesn't mind an adult doing sexual things to them.
- a33. My life is too boring without viewing pornography on the internet.
- a34. Looking at child pornography is just a game.

