“Everyone deserves to be happy and safe": A mixed methods study exploring how online and offline child sexual abuse impact young people and how professionals respond to it

# Details

## Year

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## Language

English

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Publisher

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## Place

London

## Topics

* Risks and harms
* Wellbeing
* Online safety and policy regulation

## Sample

32 young people aged between 15 and 19 years old who had experienced sexual abuse (either fully offline and/or technology-assisted) and 52 professionals who worked in the field of sexual abuse

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Fighting against child sexual abuse and child exploitation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Healthcare

# Abstract

This study sought to develop an understanding of:
• How young people who have experienced online
or offline sexual abuse are impacted by it – with a
focus on their voices and perspectives
• Any specific effects of technology-assisted
sexual abuse and related support needs
• Professional responses to young people affected
by sexual abuse and professional perceptions of
technology-assisted abuse and its impact
• Young people’s views on how prevention and
intervention around sexual abuse, particularly
technology-assisted, could be improved

Key findings
• Online abuse is sometimes perceived
as having less impact and being of less
immediate concern than offline abuse by
professionals.
• TA-CSA abuse is no less impactful than
offline-only sexual abuse.
• Technology provides additional routes both
to access young people to abuse, and to
manipulate and silence them.
• With TA-CSA, there are additional elements
for young people to contend with, related
to control, permanence, blackmail,
revictimisation and self-blame.
• Some professionals noted that victims are
more often ‘blamed’, seen as participating in
the abuse or do not see it as abuse when it
is online.

# Outcome

"To conclude, this exploratory study into the
experience and impact of technology-assisted and
other forms of child sexual abuse in the UK today,
and associated professional responses, has findings
that merit action now to dramatically improve
prevention and intervention. These include training
across the sector about the dynamics and impact of
sexual abuse, including technology-assisted forms;
preventative initiatives aimed at parents and young
people, run by government, schools and others; and
easily accessible, sensitive therapeutic support.
Further research building upon this study’s findings
will help to map out the longer-term impact of
technology-assisted abuse and to understand
better the impact of its different forms (for example,
offline abuse widely disseminated online, as
separate from online grooming without images
further shared). Furthermore, the implementation
of recommendations from this report and others in
the field will provide further information on which to
build best practice. We know enough to act, and we
need to act to know more." (Hamilton-Giachritsis et al., 2017: 57).