

# Hidden in plain sight

A scoping study into the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK

Policy briefing

**Believe in children**



**Barnardo's**

August 2014

In partnership with

**NatCen**  
Social Research that works for society

**UCL**



## Acknowledgements

**We gratefully acknowledge the support of our funders – the Nuffield Foundation – and the members of our project advisory group. The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust that aims to improve social wellbeing in the widest sense. It funds research and innovation in education and social policy and also works to build capacity in education, science and social science research. The Nuffield Foundation has funded this project, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation.**

**More information is available at [www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)**

**This research would not have been possible without the generosity of all those who contributed through their participation in interviews, data provision or focus groups – and we particularly thank the young people involved.**



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Summary of findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary of recommendations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Barnardo's work on child sexual exploitation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overview of findings</b>	<b>4</b>
Differences between males and females affected by sexual exploitation	5
Similarities between males and females affected by sexual exploitation	5
Examples of male-victim exploitative relationships	6
Difficulties in identification	7
Disclosure of sexual exploitation	7
Referral routes	7
Best way to provide support?	9
<b>UK policy overview</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Policy and practice recommendations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Areas for further research</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What is Barnardo's doing?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>15</b>



# Introduction

Over the last few years, there has been an increasing public and political focus on child sexual exploitation (CSE). Large-scale criminal trials have highlighted the issue and several research projects and reports have contributed to our understanding.<sup>1</sup> However, the focus remains on female victims, with little attention given to males affected by sexual exploitation. This 10-month scoping research begins to address this gap. It was **funded by the Nuffield Foundation**. The project team consisted of a partnership between **the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)**, **Barnardo's** and **UCL (University College London)**.

The aims of the research were to:

1. Identify known characteristics of CSE cases involving boys and young men and compare them with those involving girls and young women
2. Explore professionals' views on perpetration and victimisation processes
3. Assess perceived support needs and the nature of existing service provision
4. Help inform future research, policy and practice.

Three strands of research were conducted, with a report produced for each:

1. Rapid evidence assessment – what information is already out there? (led by UCL – Brayley et al, 2014)<sup>2</sup>
2. Interviews with professionals working with males and females affected by CSE (led by NatCen – McNaughton Nicholls et al, 2014)<sup>3</sup>
3. Analysis of Barnardo's database of 9,042 CSE service users<sup>4</sup> (led by UCL with support from Barnardo's – Cockbain et al, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

A thematic summary report drawing together the findings of the three pieces of research is also available.<sup>6</sup>

# Summary of findings

- Of the 9,042 Barnardo's records for child sexual exploitation (CSE) that were analysed,<sup>7</sup> 33% of service users were male; however, this masks a significant variation in the figures for individual services (from 5% to 57%).
- Male service users were 2.6 times more likely to have a recorded disability than female service users (35% compared with 13%).
- 48% of male service users and 28% of female service users had a criminal record.
- The age of referral to Barnardo's services was slightly lower for boys than for girls.
- While there were differences between males and females, the research strands also identified similarities: experiences of running away and homelessness; being in care; and experiences of non-CSE-related violence.
- Sexual orientation of Barnardo's service users is not currently routinely recorded. However, professionals noted that while boys of any sexual orientation are at risk of sexual exploitation, there may be specific risks and impacts that relate to gay, bisexual and trans (GBT) young men.
- The research identified some prominent routes by which males become victims of sexual exploitation, based on different types of relationship: trusted friend, exploitation of vulnerable GBT and curious men, female perpetrators and commercial exploitation.
- The research indicates that boys are less likely to be identified as victims of exploitation, although by the time they are, they may present with particularly high risks and vulnerabilities compared with girls.
- In line with gender stereotypes and wider societal perceptions, professionals' attitudes towards boys and young men can be less protective than towards girls. Professionals working with sexually exploited boys and young men found that they are more likely to express their anger and trauma externally and be labelled as 'aggressive', 'violent', or an 'offender', whereas girls are more likely to internalise their distress.
- There are a number of barriers to disclosure specific to boys and young men: discriminatory social attitudes and stereotypes; expectations of 'masculine' behaviour; gender differences in educational initiatives; and gender differences in emotional responses.
- Male service users were more likely to be referred by criminal justice agencies and less likely to be referred by social services and education. Very few males or females were referred by health services.
- 80% of male service users were referred to Barnardo's services due to going missing.
- Professionals had different views on what type of service provision males should receive, based on their own professional experience.

# Summary of recommendations

- Work should be done to raise awareness of male-victim child sexual exploitation (CSE) among professionals, including those in schools, youth offending services, social services and healthcare.
- Support services and materials should be provided that are aimed at young men. They should also be welcoming of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) young people and young people of all ethnic and cultural identities.
- High-quality, age-appropriate sex and relationship education should be provided in schools, with information adapted for specific vulnerable groups, such as young people with learning disabilities, or emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Information should be incorporated into e-safety educational materials regarding the ways in which boys and young men can be targeted through the Internet.
- Commissioners and funders should consider the provision of funding to organisations that provide LGBT youth services; statutory agencies should support LGBT organisations to work as part of multi-agency structures; and the technology industry should provide 'safe online spaces' in partnership with LGBT organisations.
- Areas for further research were identified, including: evaluating what works for sexually exploited boys and young men; direct research about boys' and young men's experiences; the relationships between CSE and 'looked-after children'; and female perpetrators.

## Barnardo's work on child sexual exploitation

Barnardo's has been operating services for young people affected by sexual exploitation since 1994 and now delivers services in 35 locations across the UK. Our projects work with around 2,000 sexually exploited or at-risk children every year. These projects provide services to both females and males, with some projects employing male staff to work particularly with male service users.

## Overview of the findings<sup>8</sup>

Of the 9,042 Barnardo's records for child sexual exploitation (CSE) that were analysed,<sup>9</sup> 33% of service users were male; however, this masks a significant variation in the figures for individual services (from 5% to 57%). The proportion of male service users for each service may depend on where it is located, whether it has a specialist male worker, and the referral routes. This finding was in line with the literature on proportions of male CSE service users, which range from 11%<sup>10</sup> to 29%,<sup>11</sup> and with the figures provided in interviews with professionals (from Barnardo's and non-Barnardo's services), which ranged from 2% to 50%.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the figures referenced cover England, Northern Ireland and Scotland combined, which could mask national variations.

## Differences between males and females affected by sexual exploitation

### Disabilities

Analysis of the Barnardo's database found that **male service users were 2.6 times more likely to have a recorded disability than female service users (35% compared with 13%)**. The most common disabilities for boys were learning disabilities, behaviour-based disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.<sup>13</sup> This finding was supported by the interviews with professionals, who reported that they worked with more boys than girls with disabilities, with autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) being the most common.<sup>14</sup> In the interviews with professionals,<sup>15</sup> it was noted that boys with disabilities are sometimes recognised as being vulnerable in a way that other boys are not. Little research was found on the interaction between disabilities and CSE to explain why a higher proportion of boys present with disabilities, but it could be due, in part, to boys in the general population having higher rates of disabilities than girls.<sup>16</sup>

### Youth offending

**48% of male service users and 28% of female service users<sup>17</sup> had a criminal record.**

This would appear to reflect youth and adult offending rates, which are much higher among males than females.<sup>18</sup> While the research was unable to deduce why such a high proportion of Barnardo's service users affected by CSE also have a criminal record, the following may be factors:

- Children committing offences as a consequence of CSE
- Children coming into contact with perpetrators as a consequence of youth offending
- Children committing offences and being vulnerable to CSE as a result of shared environmental, psychological or social factors.<sup>19</sup>

The findings from across the research indicate that boys and young men are more likely to be criminalised for behaviour that may have links to being a victim of sexual exploitation (such as becoming involved in fights or knife crime as a result of their trauma<sup>20</sup>), whereas girls are more likely to be viewed as victims, rather than as offenders.<sup>21</sup>

### Age at referral

The age at referral to Barnardo's services was **slightly lower for boys than for girls**, with boys being referred when they were, on average, 13.9 years, compared with girls at 14.6 years.<sup>22</sup>

## Similarities between males and females affected by sexual exploitation

While there were differences between males and females, the research strands also identified similarities:

- Experiences of **homelessness and running away**: The complex relationship between episodes of boys and girls running away and CSE has been previously established;<sup>23</sup> running away can both lead children to be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and happen as a result of sexual exploitation. The research found that boys are often 'missing' for longer periods before they are reported as such. It was thought that this was the case because boys are more likely to be perceived as being able to look after themselves than girls.<sup>24</sup>

- **Being in care:** The research found that 18% of male and female service users are ‘looked-after children’.<sup>25</sup> In England, for example, where only 0.6% of under-18-year-olds are looked after,<sup>26</sup> this would indicate an over-representation of this group of young people affected by CSE, and may suggest that ‘looked-after children’ are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.<sup>27</sup>
- Experiences of **non-CSE-related violence:** 54% of males and 57% of females had experienced violence other than CSE.<sup>28</sup>
- **Reproductive history:** 6% of boys and 7% of girls indicated to service staff that they had, either directly or through a sexual partner, experienced parenthood, pregnancy, termination and/or a miscarriage.<sup>29</sup>
- **Ethnicity:** The ethnicity of the service users overall was broadly similar for males and females.<sup>30</sup> The proportion of black and minority ethnic service users ranged from 1% to 56% in the services that had 100 or more service users.<sup>31</sup> The variation between services may be due to the demographics of the areas, but the research was unable to look at issues such as whether young men from certain communities are less likely to be referred due to being at risk of sexual exploitation. Professionals did note that young men from some ethnic or cultural backgrounds may find it particularly difficult to disclose CSE due to the stigma of same-sex sexual contact or sexual contact before marriage.

## Examples of male-victim exploitative relationships

The research identified some prominent routes by which males are perceived by professionals as becoming victims of sexual exploitation,<sup>32</sup> which relate to different types of relationship. These models are not definitive or the only ways in which exploitation can occur, but provide an indication of predominant themes that emerged. The full research reports<sup>33</sup> provide in-depth analysis, but to summarise:

1. **Trusted friend** – older men establishing ‘friendships’ with young men, often based on a shared interest or hobby, such as attending football matches. Once trust is established, the relationship moves into sexual exploitation.
2. **Exploitation of vulnerable gay, bisexual and trans (GBT) and curious young men** – young men exploring their sexuality may have few safe spaces to do so due to homo-, bi- and trans-phobic attitudes; as a result, they may engage in same-sex relationships covertly, making them vulnerable to exploitation.
3. **Female perpetrators** – professionals identified cases whereby older women were sexually exploiting boys and young men, but felt that these are often not viewed as negatively as similar situations involving young women and older men. These could start out as female friends.
4. **Commercial sexual exploitation** – young men and boys could also become involved in commercial sexual exploitation, often supported by Internet contact rather than traditional street sites.

There was also evidence that **institutional settings** could be particularly facilitative of CSE of boys and young men.<sup>34</sup> Another factor that was seen as enabling the sexual exploitation of boys was **technology**, including the use of: gaming sites to build relationships and groom boys; dating sites; and online access to hard-core pornography, which can normalise certain sexual activities and also enable sexualised contact.



## Difficulties in identification

The research indicates that **boys are less likely than girls to be identified as victims of exploitation, although when they are, they may be at a higher risk of victimisation than girls.**<sup>35</sup>

In line with gender stereotypes and wider societal perceptions, professionals' attitudes towards boys and young men can be less protective than they are towards girls. Indicators of vulnerability or risk – for example, a relationship with an older person – are more likely to be identified by professionals when seen in young women, compared with young men. This was also the case in relation to boys who are the victims of trafficking, as professionals thought that boys being moved around by taxi, for example, may not be seen as potential trafficking, while the same movement of a female might.<sup>36</sup> The research also suggests that even when males are identified as being victims of abuse, they are more likely to be viewed as perpetrators than as victims.<sup>37</sup> The lack of awareness and lack of identification of indicators of sexual exploitation in relation to boys could help explain why boys are already victims, or at a high risk of victimisation, by the time they come to the attention of support services.

The effects of CSE on males were reviewed<sup>38</sup> and it was found that boys may react differently from girls, and in such a way that professionals may not be aware that they are displaying symptoms of abuse. For example, males may self-harm by getting into fights, which may not be recognised as a method of self-harm. Likewise, criminality may be a particularly common response to trauma for boys. Professionals also found that young men are more likely to express their anger externally and be labelled as 'aggressive', 'violent' or an 'offender', whereas girls are more likely to internalise their distress.<sup>40</sup>

## Disclosure of sexual exploitation

While few children came to the attention of Barnardo's services via a direct disclosure, this was particularly rare for boys.<sup>41</sup> The research highlighted a number of barriers to disclosure that are specific to boys and young men:

- Discriminatory social attitudes and stereotypes (e.g. fear of homo-, bi-, and trans-phobia, stereotypes of masculinity, stigmatisation of boys and young men as offenders or concerns that they will be viewed as a perpetrator)
- Expectations about 'masculine behaviour' (e.g. victimisation being seen as indicating 'weakness', or feeling that they will not be believed because of stereotypes that suggest that men are not victims of CSE)<sup>42</sup>
- Gender differences in educational initiatives (e.g. focus on female victims)
- Gender differences in emotional responses (e.g. boys being more emotionally isolated or having weaker communication skills than girls).<sup>43</sup>

## Referral routes

According to the findings of the analysis of Barnardo's database, **male service users were more likely to be referred by criminal justice agencies and less likely to be referred by social services and education.**<sup>44</sup> Very few males or females were referred by health services.



**80% of male service users were referred to Barnardo's services due to going missing.**

This was also the most common reason for females, but only accounted for 42% of their referrals.<sup>45</sup> The rapid evidence assessment found that females are also more likely than males to be referred when there are concerns about a relationship with an older person, as they may be viewed as more vulnerable than males in a similar position and more likely to be identified as victims of sexual abuse.<sup>46</sup>

## Best way to provide support?

Professionals had different views on the type of service provision males should receive, based on their own professional experience:<sup>47</sup>

- **Gender-neutral, but individualised approach:** In this approach, professionals worked with males as individuals, irrespective of their gender, as they felt that gender differences were a product of a young person's socialisation. While some of these professionals offered male-specific workers, this was generally seen primarily as a way to help identify boys and young men at risk.<sup>48</sup>
- **Gender-specific approaches:** The professionals who favoured this approach tended to explain gender differences as a result of innate biological differences. This approach was more tailored to 'boys as a group', for example, using more activity-based engagement and male-only support opportunities.<sup>49</sup>



# UK policy overview

The policy and political framework differs across the UK and will have a bearing on how professionals work with young males affected by sexual exploitation.

## England

The development of policy around child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England has been ongoing for a number of years. In 2009, the Government produced supplementary statutory guidance for England entitled *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation*. In 2011, the National Action Plan for Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation for England was published, following Barnardo's *Cut them free* campaign, and in 2012, the Association of Chief Police Officers launched its CSE action plan. Late 2012 saw a shift in the UK Government's response to CSE as responsibility moved from the Department for Education to the Home Office. In April 2013, the Government established the National Group for England on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People, publishing a progress report in July 2013.

## Northern Ireland

Following research published by Barnardo's Northern Ireland in 2011,<sup>50</sup> the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety announced an inquiry into CSE in late 2013, which is ongoing. A thematic review of CSE cases has also been undertaken by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, to look at the cases of 22 young people affected by CSE and involved in a large-scale police investigation. 2014 also saw the introduction of CSE into the Northern Ireland Policing Plan, and the issue has become a key priority area for the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. To support this as a key priority, guidance is being produced on CSE in Northern Ireland.

## Scotland

Policy around CSE in Scotland began to develop in the early 2000s but there has been a significant increase in activity in recent years. In 2011, as part of the *Cut them free* campaign, Barnardo's Scotland lodged a petition asking the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to commission research on the nature and scope of CSE in Scotland, and to review and develop dedicated Scottish Government guidelines on CSE. In 2012, the Scottish Government commissioned a prevalence study<sup>51</sup> and, in March 2013, the Public Petitions Committee launched an inquiry into CSE in Scotland. In June 2013, the Scottish Government announced that three local authorities would pilot the University of Bedfordshire's data monitoring tool. In January 2014, the Public Petitions Committee inquiry published a report making a number of recommendations, including a call for a national strategy for tackling CSE in Scotland.<sup>52</sup> By mid-2014, the Scottish Government had published a refresh of the national protection guidelines<sup>53</sup> for Scotland with a separate section on CSE, and agreed to the publication of a CSE national action plan, expected in early autumn 2014.

## Wales

Barnardo's Cymru carried out the first research on CSE in 2005,<sup>54</sup> which formed the basis for future work on CSE in Wales. The All Wales Protocol on Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation was produced by the All Wales Child Protection Procedures Review Group<sup>55</sup> in 2008. The first specific statutory safeguarding guidance on CSE was produced in 2011. Currently, CSE is a permanent item on the agenda of local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) in Wales. In May 2014, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 received Royal Assent, and will see the introduction of regional safeguarding boards to replace LSCBs.



# Policy and practice recommendations

## Raising awareness with professionals

It is vital that professionals, including those in schools, youth offending services, social services and healthcare, have a greater awareness of:

- models of male-victim child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- behaviours that can be indicators of vulnerability, including criminal behaviour, and the ways in which boys and young men may self-harm, which may be different from the ways in which girls self-harm
- additional barriers to disclosure, e.g. stigmatisation as an offender or feeling as though masculinity has been compromised
- trafficking of young men
- the need to recognise that females can be perpetrators
- the strong link between boys going missing and CSE.

*Statutory agencies in each nation, supported by their professional and representative bodies where appropriate, should ensure that these messages are disseminated to frontline staff by producing briefings, and incorporating materials specific to boys and young men into child protection and CSE training, existing toolkits and guidance.*

## Support services and materials

Support services can tend to be targeted at young women<sup>56</sup> and there was a perception among male service users<sup>57</sup> that services for sexually exploited children are advertised to girls. Messages in public campaigns about CSE are predominantly targeted at girls, with boys often portrayed as perpetrators only. This may deter boys from being aware of the support available and from disclosing abuse.

*Organisations that provide support services and materials aimed at young people must ensure that they can be related to by boys and young men.*

*Services for young people affected by CSE should ensure that they are clearly welcoming of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) young people – for example, by putting up LGBT-affirmative posters in reception areas, and providing sexual health advice that is relevant to LGBT young people. LGBT-appropriate materials should also be developed that deliver messages in a positive way for young people, with their participation.*

*All youth services should provide an environment where all sexualities and gender identities are respected.*

## Sex and relationships education

The research findings indicate that boys and young men may not be able to recognise themselves as victims or to identify risks and take steps to protect themselves.

*All schools should provide high-quality, age-appropriate sex and relationships education. This should reflect the fact that boys can be vulnerable to becoming victims of CSE, as well as girls. Messages should not focus on boys only being portrayed*

*as perpetrators. For example, relevant examples should be given and discussions facilitated about the impact of masculine/hyper-masculine cultures and attitudes. Teachers should also highlight where boys can go for support.*

*Schools should ensure that sex and relationships education is relevant for LGBT young people and supports an LGBT-affirmative culture.*

*Schools should specifically target and provide bespoke information for vulnerable groups, such as those with learning disabilities, or emotional or behavioural difficulties.*

## **E-safety**

Boys can be targeted through different (as well as the same) technological routes from those used to target girls, e.g. online gaming may be a particular risk for boys. This should be incorporated into educational materials aimed at helping children stay safe online.

*The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre should ensure that this is reflected in the Thinkuknow resources.*

## **LGBT young people**

Young people entering into same-sex relationships is in no way inherently problematic or harmful. They can develop healthy or exploitative relationships, regardless of their sexual orientation or whether the relationship is same-sex or different-sex. However, the lack of ‘safe spaces’ for young people to talk about their sexual orientation or develop same-sex relationships, a lack of relevant information and support, as well as homo-, bi- and trans-phobia may lead to young people exploring their sexual orientation in a way that increases their risk of exploitation. Isolation and even homelessness as a result of ‘coming out’ can also increase vulnerability.

*Commissioners and grant-giving bodies should give consideration to funding for organisations to provide LGBT youth services.*

*Statutory services should support LGBT organisations to work as part of multi-agency CSE structures and liaise with them on the provision of training so that professionals can support LGBT young people and signpost them to relevant organisations.*

*The technology industry should contribute resources and expertise to help develop ‘safe online spaces’, in partnership with LGBT organisations.*

## **Areas for further research**

This was a scoping study and, as such, identified several areas where further research would be beneficial:

- Evaluation of ‘what works’ with boys and young men up to age 25 (support and recovery) – evidence of effectiveness of interventions
- Direct research with boys and young men about their experiences, needs and the short-, medium- and long-term impact of child sexual exploitation (CSE) on them and the implications for service provision
- Further investigation of the relationship between CSE and ‘looked-after’ children





- Processes and impacts associated with female perpetrators
- Evaluation of whether existing risk assessments are effective at identifying boys and young men at risk of sexual exploitation.

## What is Barnardo's doing?

### **Raising awareness**

Barnardo's will incorporate learning on the exploitation of boys and young men into its internal and external child sexual exploitation training.

### **Support services and materials**

Barnardo's is committed to representing diversity in its materials – for example, we use images of boys and young men in our Bwise2 Sexual Exploitation education pack, and the recently launched WudU? application is designed to be used by boys and girls. We will seek to build on this when opportunities arise – for example, when producing new materials or reviewing existing ones.

### **E-safety**

Barnardo's is carrying out research into Internet-enabled sexual exploitation, to be published in late 2014.

### **Further research**

Barnardo's Cymru is carrying out further research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in Wales.

Barnardo's is working in partnership with Coventry University, Paradigm Research, the British Institute of Learning Disabilities and the Children's Society on a research project funded by Comic Relief into the needs of young people with learning disabilities who have been sexually exploited.



# Endnotes

- 1 See Brayley, H et al (2014).
- 2 Brayley, H; Cockbain, E; Gibson, K (2014) *Rapid evidence assessment – the sexual exploitation of boys and young men*. Barnardo's, London.
- 3 McNaughton Nicholls, C; Harvey, S; Paskell, C (2014) *Gendered perceptions: What professionals know about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK*. Barnardo's, London.
- 4 The majority of cases came from 2008-13. The database covers England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but not Wales.
- 5 Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Ashby, M (2014) *Not just a girl thing: A large-scale comparison of male and female users of child sexual exploitation services in the UK*. Barnardo's, London.
- 6 McNaughton Nicholls, C; Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Harvey, S; Fox, C; Paskell, C; Ashby, M; Gibson, K; Jago, N (2014) *Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men: A UK scoping study. Summary of findings*. Barnardo's, London.
- 7 Records from services in Wales were not included, due to a different recording system. The majority of cases came from 2008-13.
- 8 The majority of the findings referred to in the differences and similarities sections relate to the analysis of Barnardo's database.
- 9 Records from services in Wales were not included, due to a different recording system. The majority of cases came from 2008-13.
- 10 National Working Group (NWG) Network (2010) in Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 11 Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) (2011) in Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 12 This excludes one service that works with males exclusively and is therefore 100%.
- 13 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 14 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 According to the Department for Work and Pensions' *Fulfilling potential next steps* (2012), prevalence is higher among boys (8.8%) than girls (5.8%).
- 17 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 18 Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice (2014) *Youth justice statistics 2012/2013 England and Wales*. It is worth noting that there were disproportionately high rates of offending among female CSE service users compared with the general population (Cockbain, E et al (2014)).
- 19 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 20 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 21 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 22 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 23 Smeaton, E (2014) *Running from hate to what you think is love: The relationship between running away and child sexual exploitation*. Barnardo's, London.
- 24 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 25 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 The research was unable to ascertain whether a young person was in care because they had been abused prior to being taken into care, or was exploited only after they were in care. Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 28 Cockbain, E et al (2014). It should be noted that this category also included perpetration of violence against others.
- 29 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 30 Males – White 83%, Black 6%, Asian 5%, Mixed race 5% and Other 2%; Females – White 80%, Black 6%, Asian 5%, Mixed race 3% and Other 3%. These figures are broadly in line with figures from the last census, which found that 82% of the youth population in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland is White (See Cockbain, E et al (2014)).
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Some of these models are similar to the ways in which girls become involved in exploitation, but there were also some differences. For example, the main model often associated with girls is the boyfriend/girlfriend relationship that is developed in order to build trust before the abuse starts. This is less apparent with heterosexual male victims who are exploited by abusers who develop non-sexual friendships to build trust.
- 33 McNaughton Nicholls, C; Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Harvey, S; Fox, C; Paskell, C; Ashby, M; Gibson, K; Jago, N (2014) *Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men: A UK scoping study. Summary of findings*. Barnardo's, London.
- 34 Brayley, H et al (2014).
- 35 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 36 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Brayley, H et al (2014).
- 39 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Across all studies by Cockbain, E et al (2014), Brayley, H et al (2014) and McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 42 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 43 McNaughton Nicholls, C; Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Harvey, S; Fox, C; Paskell, C; Ashby, M; Gibson, K; Jago, N (2014) *Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men: A UK scoping study. Summary of findings*. Barnardo's, London.
- 44 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 45 Cockbain, E et al (2014).
- 46 Brayley, H et al (2014).
- 47 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 48 McNaughton Nicholls, C; Cockbain, E; Brayley, H; Harvey, S; Fox, C; Paskell, C; Ashby, M; Gibson, K; Jago, N (2014) *Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men: A UK scoping study. Summary of findings*. Barnardo's, London.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Beckett, H (2011) *'Not a world away': The sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland*. Barnardo's Northern Ireland, Belfast.
- 51 Brodie, I; Pearce, J (2012) *Exploring the scale and nature of child sexual exploitation in Scotland*. The Scottish Government, Edinburgh.
- 52 Scottish Parliament (2014) *Public Petitions*

*Committee 1st Report, 2014 (Session 4) Report on tackling child sexual exploitation in Scotland.* Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh.

- 53 Scottish Government (2014) *National guidance for child protection in Scotland.* The Scottish Government, Edinburgh.
- 54 Clutton, S; Coles, J (2007) *Sexual exploitation risk assessment framework: A pilot study.* Barnardo's Cymru, Cardiff.
- 55 Barnardo's wrote the protocol on behalf of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures Group. A sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF) developed by Barnardo's is referenced in national guidance and the All Wales Protocol and used throughout Wales.
- 56 McNaughton Nicholls, C et al (2014).
- 57 Feedback from young people was gathered during a one-day workshop of the What Works For Us? group. This enabled young people to give their views on the findings of the research.



## **Hidden in plain sight**

**A scoping study into the sexual  
exploitation of boys and young  
men in the UK**

**Policy briefing**

© Barnardo's, 2014  
All rights reserved

No part of this report, including images, may be reproduced or stored on an authorised retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without prior permission of the publisher.

All images are posed by models.

**Believe in  
children**



**Barnardo's**

**[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)**

Head Office, Tanners Lane,  
Barkingside, Ilford,  
Essex IG6 1QG  
Tel: 020 8550 8822

Barnardo's Registered Charity Nos.  
216250 and SC037605 16189nc0814