Are parents in the picture?

Professional and parental perspectives of child sexual exploitation

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Foreword

The charity Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) in partnership with Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy commissioned two YouGov surveys in September and October 2013. We are confident that **this national research – with 750 parents and 945 professionals made up of 510 teachers, 209 police officers and 226 social workers – is a first**.

The aim of the surveys was to assess parental and professional understanding, experience, opinions and knowledge of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England, with a particular focus on the role of parents and the impact of child sexual exploitation on families. The findings have provided new and significant insight, information and evidence on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation.

It is good to see an **increasingly positive picture of confident professionals and organisations** now able to respond to child sexual exploitation. Parents are also aware. This shows the significant progress of the last two years and reflects the commitment of many organisations to tackle this terrible crime.

But it is concerning that **parents appear to have fallen into a safeguarding black-hole**, with statutory agencies side-lining their role in preventing CSE. For children to be protected from sexual exploitation these surveys evidence that **parents need to be brought out of the safeguarding shadows and into the centre of the prevention picture**.

Of equal concern are the **complex and at times contradicting opinions towards families affected by child sexual exploitation**. Once a perpetrator commits a crime against a child, their parents are no longer 'forgotten safeguarders' but 'failed carers'.

Affected parents are often blamed for the exploitation of their child and disempowered by agencies. Yet on the other hand, they suffer terrible trauma and are acknowledged as key partners in police investigations. This complex set of results needs further investigation as they may in part explain why affected families can find it difficult to engage with statutory agencies and why independent intermediaries can be beneficial.

In response to the survey results Pace and Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy has launched an e-learning course for parents on the signs of child sexual exploitation which is free to access and can be found at http://keepthemsafe.safeguardingchildrenea.co.uk.

It will hopefully contribute to building awareness across our communities and support a new and stronger statutory focus on informing and working with parents.

We would like to thank Ceop at the National Crime Agency, the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the NWG for their invaluable assistance with the development of the survey.

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Executive summary[1]

Prevention of child sexual exploitation

1.1   Educating children in secondary school and providing parental support and information are considered the top ways of preventing cases of CSE. Professionals consider a lack of parental knowledge as the main barrier in identifying and preventing cases of CSE with half of professionals (51%) disagreeing that parents have the right information and knowledge they need to safeguard their children from CSE.

1.2   For a minority of children in England, parents[2] are the individuals that a child needs to be protected from; but for the majority of children their parents are their main safeguarders from risks including sexual exploitation. These survey results are important as parents are currently on the peripheries of statutory safeguarding strategies with often only passing mention to them in recommendations. For children to be protected from sexual exploitation parents need to brought more into the centre of the prevention picture.

1.3   Working through schools, community groups and local public campaigns, parents with age appropriate children can be effectively and efficiently identified and provided with information that will enable them to safeguard their children. At least 70% of the parents interviewed said they would attend such a briefing at their child's school. Families with children already identified at particular risk could be given extra support and information to assist in safeguarding their child.

Parental awareness of child sexual exploitation

2.1   Six out of ten of parents (63%) and professionals (60%) think that society in the UK acknowledges CSE but it should be more openly discussed.

2.2   Parents continue to focus more on stranger danger than risks from family or friends.

2.3   Six out of ten parents know 'something' about CSE and would most likely turn first to the police for support and advice. One in ten (13%) admit that they know 'not very much' about the dangers of CSE. Over half of parents (56%) are concerned that cases of CSE may occur in their local area.

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[1] This executive summary has been jointly written by Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) and YouGov
[2] Parents describes biological parent/s, step-parent/s, foster parent/s, kin carer/s and carer/s. A child will be in a 'family environment' which has one or two parents living there.

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2.4   It appears parents are aware of sexual exploitation but over half (53%) of professionals think that parents do not understand what CSE is. This professional concern is supported by the fact that 40% of parents stated that they would not be confident in recognising the difference between indicators of child sexual exploitation and normal challenging adolescent behaviour.

Professional awareness of child sexual exploitation

3.1   Overall, 92% of professionals report they are confident any concerns in reference to CSE would be acted upon and just 6% that they would not. Two thirds of professionals (66%) report that CSE is a recognised priority in their organisation. The vast majority of professionals (88%) feel that their organisation has a good level of knowledge of what to do in response to a case of child sexual exploitation.

3.2   Teachers surveyed were the least confident, with half (49%) reporting they were confident and 43% that they were not confident that they would be able to spot the signs that a child is a victim of CSE.

3.3   Six out of ten professionals (62%) have had training on CSE.

3.4   Half of professionals (49%) surveyed report that they have been shown a list of the signs that a child may be being sexually exploited, with 44% reporting that they have not and 7% did not know. This is noteworthy as it is a year since the publication of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Interim Report on Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups (OCC CSEGG Nov 2012) which recommended all frontline staff where to be shown a list of the warning signs of child sexual exploitation.

Signs of child sexual exploitation

4.1   Low self-esteem or low self-confidence was identified by parents and professionals as the most important factor that places a child at a higher risk of being sexually exploited. Police and social workers (76%) surveyed were much more likely to mention that drug or alcohol abuse is a key sign of CSE than parents (45%) and teachers (55%). Unsupervised use of social networking sites and chat rooms also ranked very high.

4.2   This points to further research may be needed as there is a discrepancy between the factors identified in the surveys and the most consistent factors identified by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) as placing a child at higher risk of sexual exploitation - in particular the OCC

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identified 'loss through bereavement' (identified by only 2% of parents and 1% of professionals) and children living in 'gang-affected neighbourhoods' (identified by 9% of parents and 6% of professionals).

Potential impact of child sexual exploitation on a family

5.1   Eight out of ten professionals surveyed (84%) agree that perpetrators of child sexual exploitation will seek to break the bond between the child and their family. Parents feeling guilt, relationship breakdown between parents and a general disruption to the family routine are considered likely impacts by more than 85% of parents and professionals if a child is sexually exploited while they are still living at home. 69% of professionals reported parents feeling disempowered by agency involvement in the family as a likely impact if a child is sexually exploited while they are still living at home.

5.2   The results evidence CSE will have a traumatic and negative impact on the family unit as a whole and the individuals within including siblings. As a result, affected parents and families need a high level of support to enable them to help a child through disclosure, the criminal justice system, possible intimidation and therapy.

5.3   Nine out of ten professionals (87%) surveyed think there are potential benefits to statutory agencies working in partnership with parents to safeguard a child during a police investigation. This highlights the importance of working alongside parents and enabling them to share knowledge on their child and intelligence on perpetrators.

Victims and their families

6.1   Eight out of ten professionals (80%) surveyed think that some types of families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE; with 90% of the police surveyed thinking this. The reality that a chaotic or dysfunctional home is a consistent vulnerability found in cases of child sexual exploitation is correct, but it is not correct for all affected families.

6.2   It is emphasised by all statutory agencies that children from all parts of society who grow up in stable and loving homes can be vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There are risks that if a child's background or family does not fit the stereotypical one of a sexually exploited child that professionals and parents alike will not focus on the signs a child is exhibiting. Another risk could be professionals assuming a family of a sexually exploited child will be dysfunctional without the evidence.

6.3   The myth that the majority of sexually exploited children are living in care has yet to be fully dispelled. Over a third of police officers, a quarter of parents and teachers, and a fifth of social workers were unaware that the vast majority of exploited children are living at home when the abuse starts.

6.4   However, one myth seems to be almost dispelled with professionals and parents in strong disagreement with the assertion that sexual exploitation only happens to girls, with 96% of professionals and 95% of parents in disagreement.

Residue of victim blaming

7.1   The survey identified that although society is finally moving away from blaming a victim for their sexual exploitation, parents are still being held responsible in part for the crimes committed against their child. Over two fifths of professionals (44%) and parents (41%) agreed in most cases parents are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child.

7.2   This residue of victim-blaming needs to be removed as the final vestige of excusing the perpetrator for the crimes they have committed.

7.3   The Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) new guidance on prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse has identified there is a society myth that, 'Parents should know what is happening to the victim and be able to stop it'. The CPS asks prosecutors to challenge this in court with the repost, *"This is an attempt to excuse the abuser of rape or sexual assault and place the blame on the victim's parents. Even if they suspect that something is not right, they may not be in a position to stop it due to the control over the victim exercised by the abuser. There can also be risks to parents when seeking to protect their child and they can need support as well as the child"*[3].

Perpetrators

8.1   Eight out of ten professionals (80%) and parents (77%) think that perpetrators can come from any English region. The internet and social media are considered the most common ways that perpetrators come into contact with children.

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[3] Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). October 2013

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Technology and child safety

9.1   Children are most likely to have access to a mobile phone by the age of 11.

9.2   For all the benefits and enjoyment social media and the web has brought society, the surveys highlight how the twenty first century issue of online parenting is as much about setting virtual boundaries and curfews with a child as it is about understanding the actual technology.

9.3   A national conversation about how parents can best address the issue of privacy with young adolescent children within a social media and mobile phone environment is needed.

9.4   The survey highlights how parents are struggling with identifying virtual risk and how much virtual privacy they should be giving their young adolescent children.

9.5   Parents of children aged between 9 and 14 think it is most intrusive to be checking their children's text messages, with 56% reporting this is intrusive and 35% that it is acceptable.

9.6   Parents perceive a child's mobile phones as the most 'private' technology device and the one item they are the least likely to check. Professionals are clear that parents need to be doing more and monitoring more - in particular mobile phones.

9.7   Professionals who have direct experience of cases of CSE are more likely to agree that mobiles are used as a tool to communicate messages to intimidate children being sexually exploited (94%) and that mobiles are more important than computers (72%) for perpetrators contacting children.

9.8   Six out of ten (60%) professionals with direct experience of cases of CSE disagree that parents are aware of the use of mobile phones as a tool by perpetrators compared with 41% of those professionals with no direct experience.

9.9   Professionals put a greater importance on the unsupervised use of social networking chat rooms/sites as a risk factor linked to higher risk of a child being a victim of CSE than parents do, with 44% of professionals rating this as an important risk factor compared with 25% of parents.

The role of schools

10.1   Parents and professionals are consistent in their view that primary and secondary schools should be educating about CSE. Nine out of ten parents (89%) agree that secondary schools should be educating children about CSE, with over a third (37%) on strong agreement.

10.2   Overall 87% of parents report that no education of CSE has taken place at their child's school.

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10.3   Three quarters of parents (74%) say that they would expect their school to tell them if the school knew that some pupils were being sexually exploited or at risk of being exploited. Further consideration is needed as to why nearly two fifths of teachers (38%) stated they would not, as a matter of urgency, inform the parent of a child they thought at risk of sexual exploitation. This is concerning.

10.4   A majority of teachers, police and social workers disagree that currently schools do enough to educate parents about CSE. Just a fifth (20%) of teachers and lower proportions of police (11%) and social workers (15%) agree that schools are doing enough to educate parents.

10.5   Less than half of teachers surveyed (42%) agree that there is enough evidence and guidance available for them to work effectively with children who have been sexually exploited.

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Background and methodology

Background

This report presents the findings of a Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) and Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy commissioned project to investigate parents' and professionals' (teachers, police and social workers) views on child sexual exploitation (CSE).

While this subject is of considerable importance to families and statutory agencies in England there has previously been little research that has compared and contrasted the views of parents and professionals on the issue of CSE.

A survey was developed that focused on parents' attitudes and experiences and one that explored the views of professionals. The surveys had a degree of comparability in the questions but also explored issues specific to the two groups.

Two surveys were designed in conjunction with experts in the field that covered the following broad themes:

- Understanding and perceptions of CSE

- Awareness of CSE/Likelihood

- Accessing support/Prevention

To inform the development of the surveys and provide additional insight for this report two online focus groups were conducted. One was conducted with parents in England and one with the professionals from the three roles (teachers, police officers and social workers).

Throughout the report a series of quotes have been included that are drawn from the discussion at the focus groups.

Sample profile

The surveys were carried out online and administered at random to members of the YouGov Plc. GB panel of 350,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. The fieldwork was undertaken between 30th September and 7th October 2013.

Parents' survey

Total sample size for the parents' survey was 750 parents of children aged 9-17 living in England.

The data have been weighted and are representative of all parents in England by region, gender, social grade and marital status.

Gender	
Male	270
Female	480
Social grade	
ABC1	423
C2DE	327
Age	
18-34	59
35-44	289
45-54	318
55+	84
Region	
North East	38
North West	98
Yorkshire and the Humber	83
East Midlands	64
West Midlands	83
East of England	92
London	98
South East	121
South West	73

Professionals' survey

The sample for the professionals' survey was defined as teachers, police officers and social workers in England. No weighting was applied to this data. The table below shows a breakdown of the responses by professional role:

Role	
Teacher	510
Police	209
Social workers	226

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Section 1: Awareness of CSE

Professionals' experience of CSE

Under half of the professionals' surveyed (45%) have had direct experience of cases of CSE in their professional life. However, police (61%) and social workers (59%) are significantly more likely to have experienced cases of CSE than those teachers surveyed (33%).

Figure 1: Direct experience of cases of CSE in their professional roles
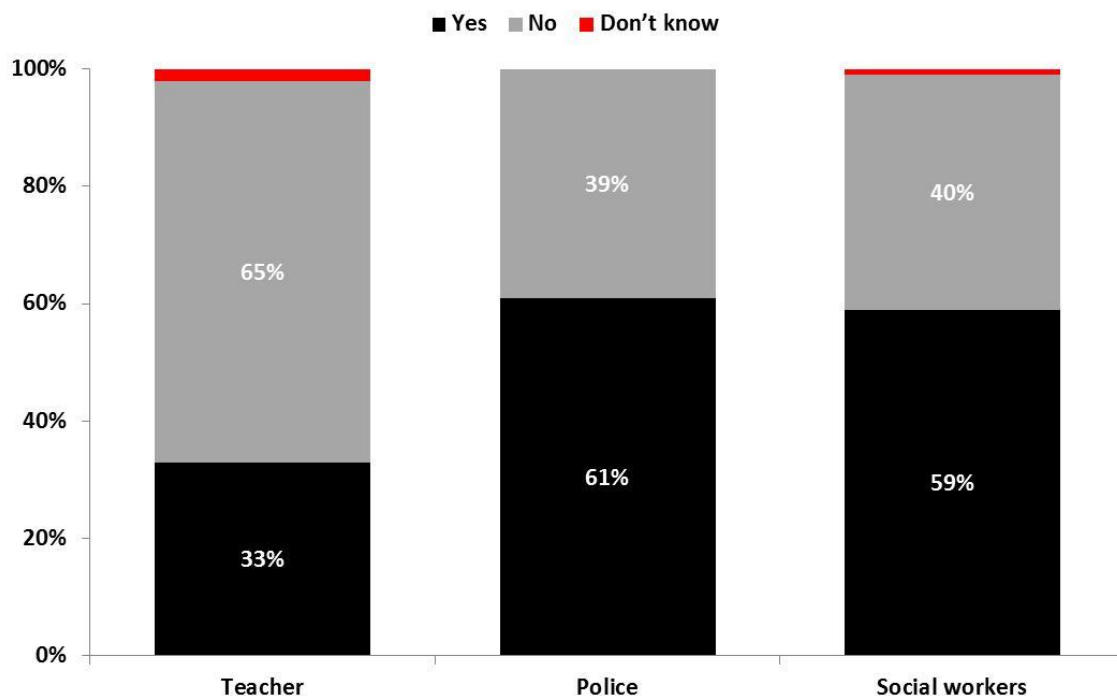
Base: Police (n=209), Social workers (n=226), Teachers (n=509)

The media drives awareness of child sexual exploitation

The vast majority of parents (93%) have heard the term child sexual exploitation (CSE) before. Just 3% of parents have not heard of CSE and 5% were unsure. It is clear that the media plays a large part in parents' awareness of CSE, with 90% of those who have heard of CSE reporting that they have heard about it from the media and news coverage (figure 1).

TV programmes are also a popular source of information on CSE, with 55% of parents reporting they have heard about CSE from this source. For the majority of parents, schools only seem to play a small part in raising awareness of CSE with just 8% of parents reporting they have heard about CSE from their children's school.

Figure 2: Where parents have heard about CSE from
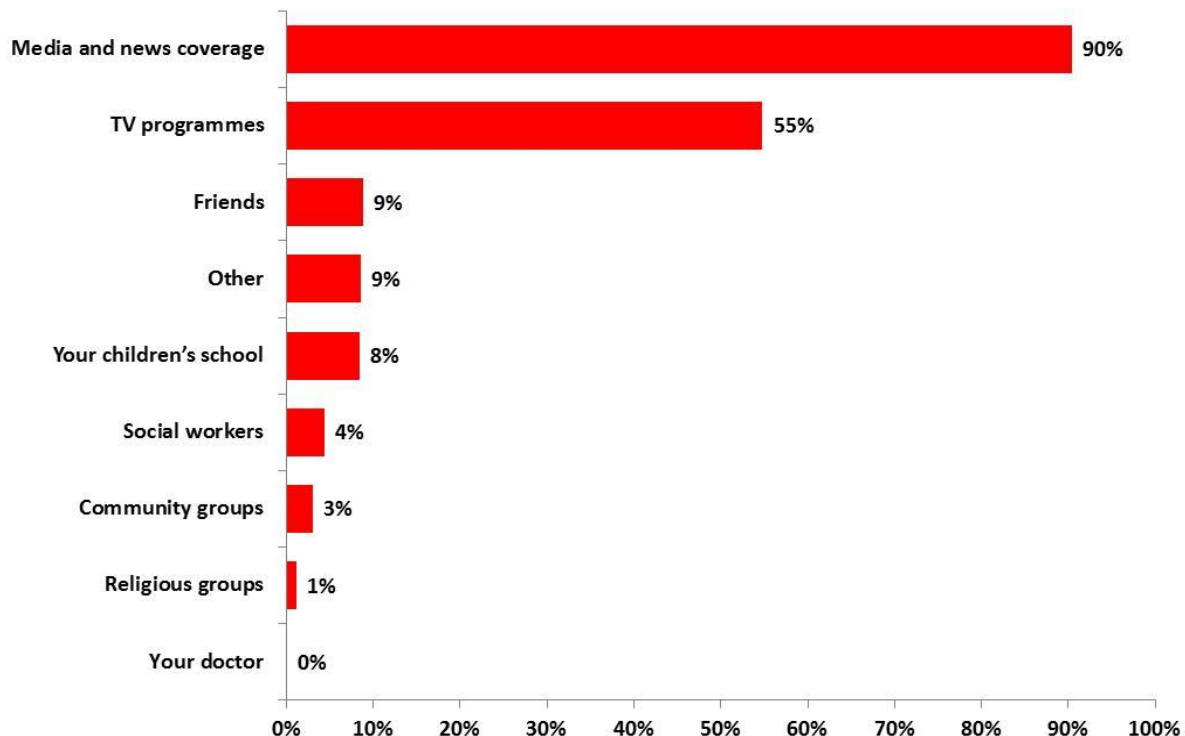
Base: All parents who have heard of CSE (n=694)

Awareness of the issues related to CSE is not consistent

As discussed in the introduction this study questioned parents and people in professional roles on a variety of issues related to CSE. As we would expect professionals have higher levels of awareness of the issues related to CSE than parents do (figure 2).

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Figure 3: Levels of awareness about the issues related to CSE
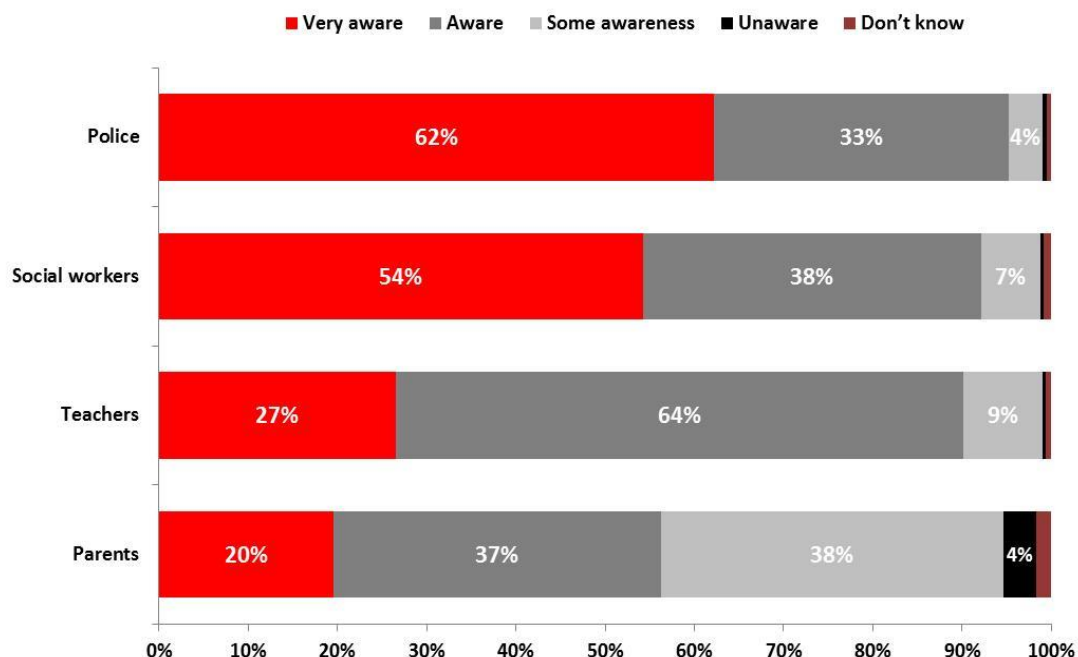
Base: All parents (n=750), Police (n=209), Social workers (n=226), Teachers (n=509)

In fact four out of ten parents (42%) in England say that they only have some or no awareness of the issues related to CSE. Online focus group research with parents highlighted some of the attitudes and misconceptions that exist:

> *'I see this as more of an overseas problem' (Parent)*
>
> *'I suppose I wasn't really thinking about children aged 16 -17 who are possibly already having sex whether being groomed for it or not' (Parent)*

This evidence shows that more work is needed to educate parents on the issues around CSE and increase the proportion of parents, (currently 56%), who say they are aware of issues related to CSE.

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Reported level of awareness on the issues related to CSE is very high across all professionals. However, the degree of awareness does vary by type of professional. The police appear to be most aware with 62% reporting they are very aware compared with 54% of social workers. But in comparison only a quarter (27%) of teachers feel that they are very aware with a further 64% aware.

Over half of professionals don't think parents understand what child sexual exploitation is

Professionals surveyed were asked their views on whether parents in England actually understand what CSE is. Over half (53%) of professionals think that parents do not understand what CSE is. This figure is higher for respondents from the police and social workers (who themselves reported they were most aware of issues related to CSE), with six out of ten of the police (63%) and six out of ten social workers (61%) who think that parents do not understand what CSE is.

Social workers in the focus group reflected:

'Many people find information on this type of situation quite unpalatable and really do not want to know about the signs - they just want it to stop but struggle with seeing they may be able to play a part in making that happen. Many people will think "not my child" as in it won't happen to them' (Social worker)

'I think many people know about the headline stories, but may think that the children they come into contact with are not at risk because they don't understand how it happens' (Social worker)

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Figure 4: Do parents understand what CSE is?

■ **Teacher** ■ **Police** ■ **Social workers**
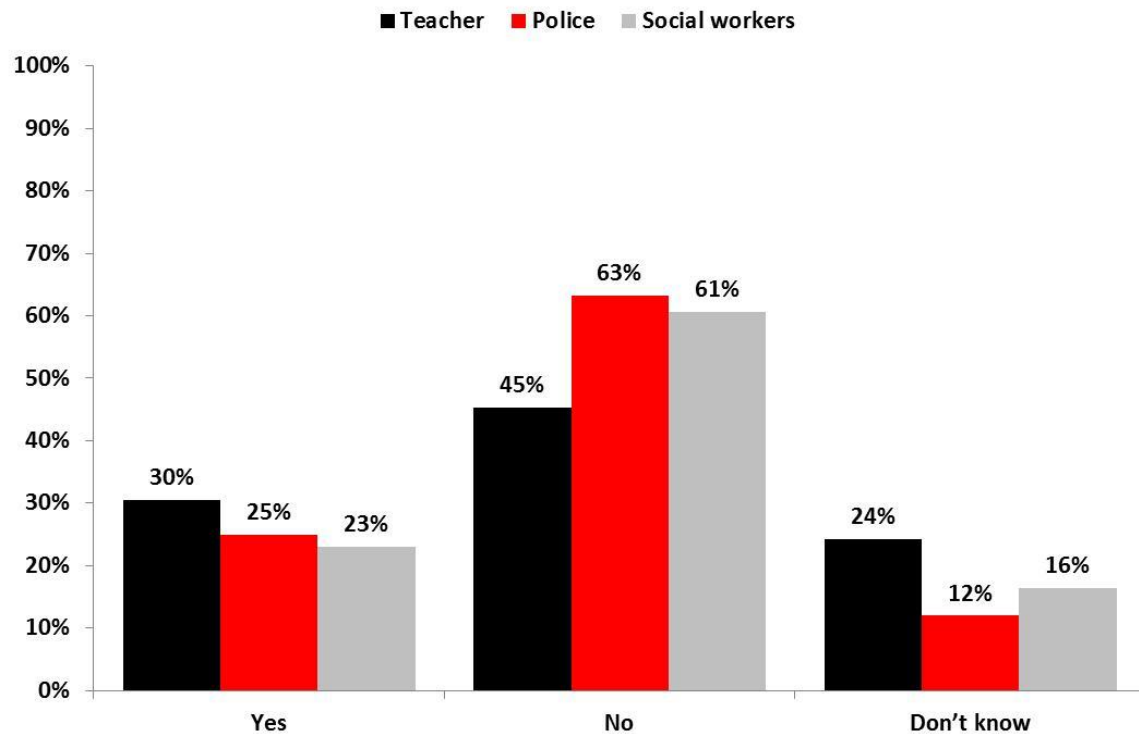
Base: All parents (n=750), Police (n=209), Social workers (n=226), Teachers (n=509)

Knowledge of child sexual exploitation varies across organisations

In line with professionals own awareness of the issues related to CSE, the vast majority of professionals (88%) also feel that their organisation has a good level of knowledge of what to do in response to a case of child sexual exploitation. The police are most likely to report a good level of knowledge in their organisation, with 93% saying this compared with 86% of teachers and social workers.

'We have a document with similar factors (related to CSE) that we use to give a score based on level of concern in each area' (Social worker)

'We have repeated training on it' (Teacher)

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Although professionals report a good level of knowledge within their organisations, they do report that the level of knowledge varies throughout the organisation (figure 5). In particular, three quarters (74%) of respondents from the police think that knowledge varies with just a quarter reporting that knowledge is consistent.

Figure 5: Which of the following best describes the level of knowledge of child sexual exploitation in your organisation?
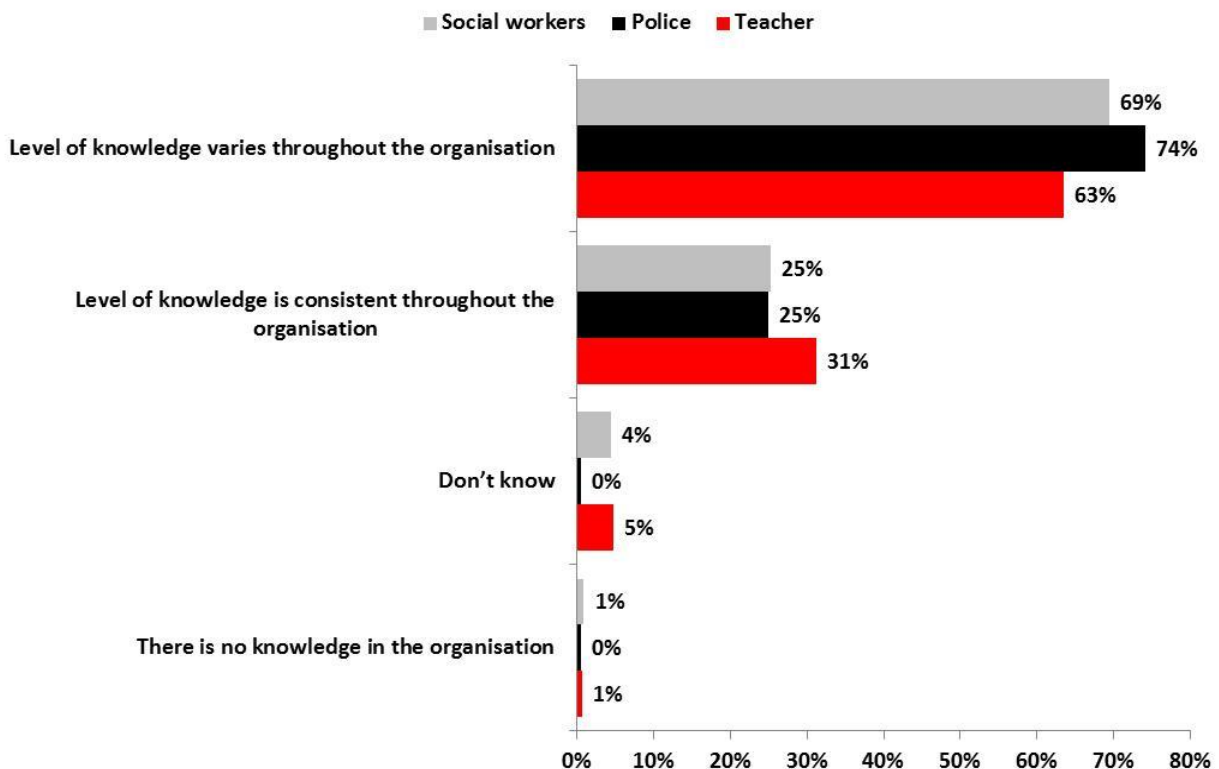
Base: Police (n=209), Social workers (n=226), Teachers (n=509)

Parents and professionals agree that CSE should be more openly discussed in society

Six out of ten of both parents (63%) and professionals (60%) think that society in the UK acknowledges CSE but it should be more openly discussed. As figure 6 shows a quarter of professionals (26%) do think CSE is an issue that can be openly discussed compared with a fifth (22%) of parents who think this.

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Figure 6: How do you think child sexual exploitation is treated by society in the UK?
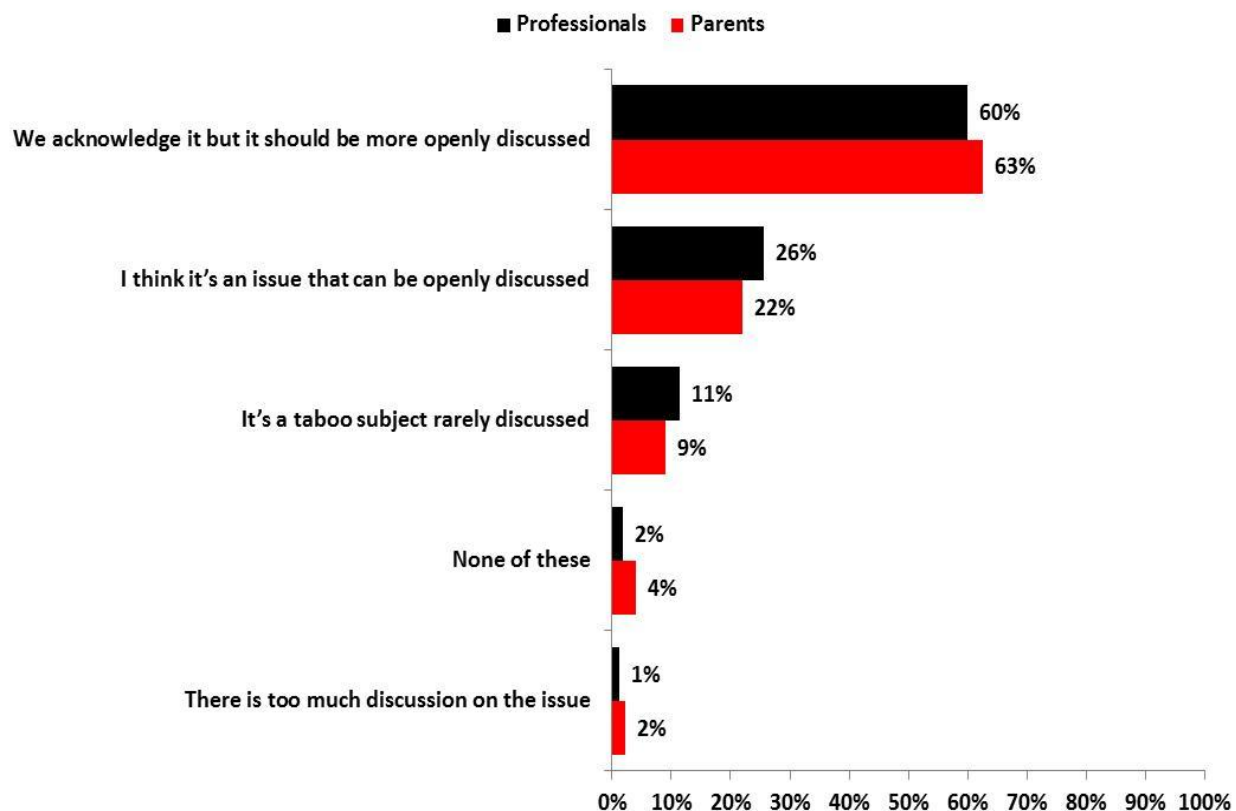
Base: All parents (n=750), Professionals (n=944)

'Is it a general consensus that it 'won't happen to people I know?' Does that then stem from ignorance or a reluctance to find out? Most people simply see the headlines. I doubt many would follow up on the circumstances, and as such, keep their knowledge very limited' (Police)

Of the professionals surveyed it is social workers who are significantly more likely to think that CSE, while acknowledged, should be more openly discussed, with 69% of social workers thinking this compared with 58% of teachers and 55% of police.

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With regards to parents, although over half report that they are aware of the issues related to CSE and as seen above 63% think CSE should be more openly discussed it is the case that over a third (36%) of parents have not discussed the issue of CSE with anyone (figure 7).

Where parents had discussed CSE, this was most likely to be with their children (47%), friends (36%) and other family members (33%). As children get older it is more likely that their parents will discuss issues of CSE with them, with 38% of parents with a child aged 4-8 having discussed CSE with their children compared with 57% of parents with a child aged between 15-17.

Figure 7: Types of people that parents have ever discussed CSE with

Base: All parents (n=750)
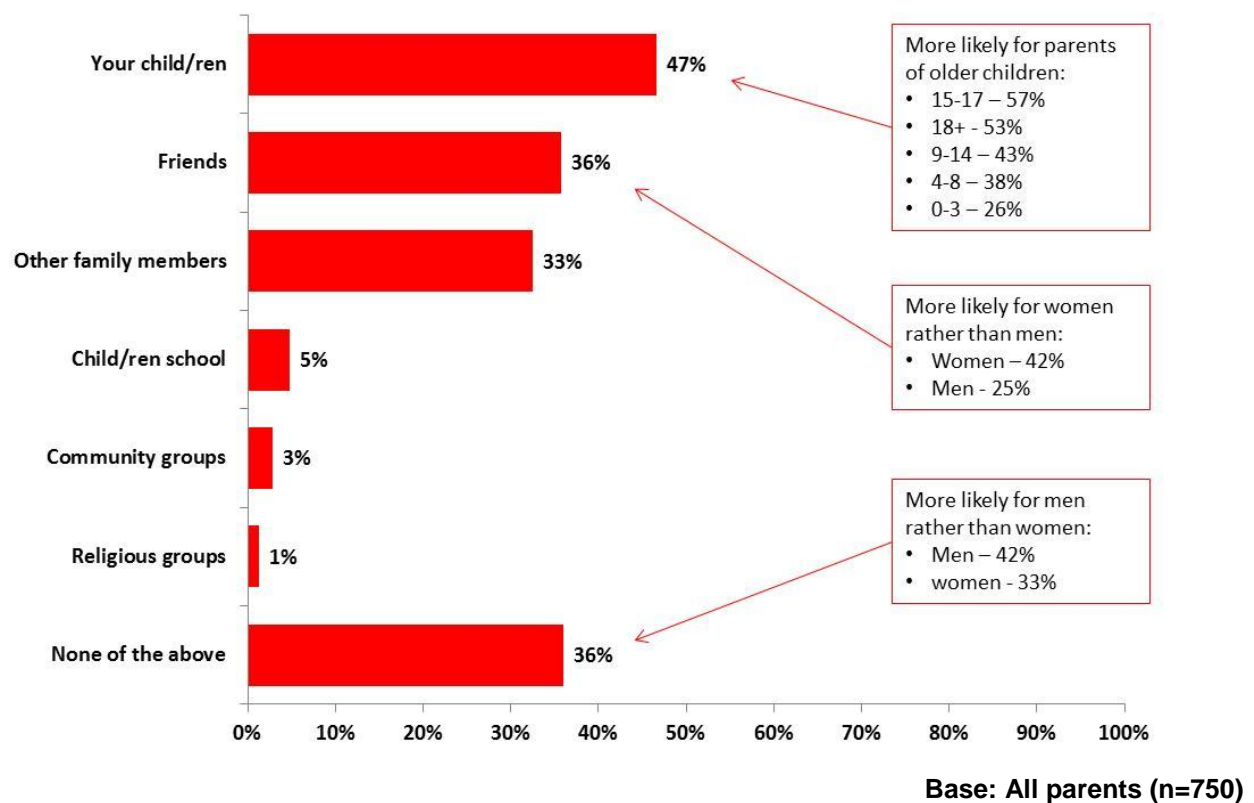
In the online focus groups, some professionals and parents felt that CSE is not openly spoken about in society due to stigma surrounding it:

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'There is a stigma. Also I think children might be embarrassed and not tell their parents but stop contact with the abuser and not report it or the families themselves may intervene and take matters into their own hands without involving the authorities.' (Parent)

'There is a stigma attached, maybe shame that you were vulnerable enough to be exploited or that people will say you deserved it because of your background.' (Parent)

'Kids may be very reluctant to come forward due to the stigma attached and being worried about repercussions for themselves and others.' (Social worker)

What do parents and professional think are the most common methods involved in CSE?

When shown a list of different methods of CSE, the vast majority of professionals surveyed are able to identify each of these as a method of CSE. Parents in comparison provided much more mixed views on which methods are involved in CSE.

For both parents and professionals CSE is strongly related to grooming (97% of professionals and 85% of parents) and sexual abuse (97% of professionals and 78% of parents). For parents though only a third reported that internal trafficking (32%) or violence towards a child (32%) are methods of CSE.

It was also very unlikely for parents to consider that intimidation of the child's family is a method involved in CSE, with just 16% reporting this. To some extent this was not considered a method by the professional surveyed, with the lowest proportion mentioning it (72%).

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Figure 8: Which of the following, if any, do think are methods that are involved in CSE?

Base: All parents (n=750), Professionals (n=944)

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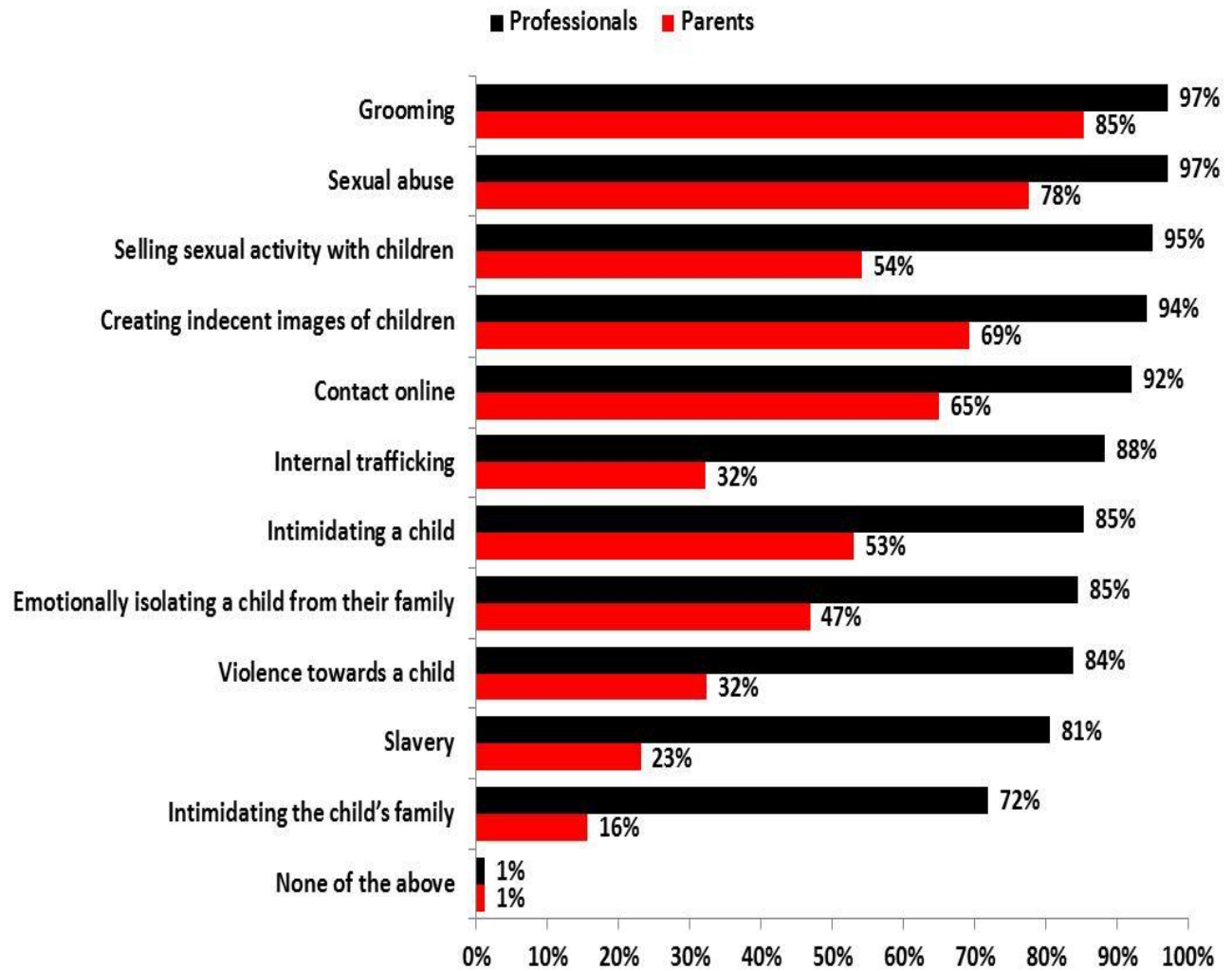
Respondents in the focus groups described the methods of CSE as including:

> *'Befriending a child by pretending to be a child is a form of grooming. This then develops a false friendship of trust and secrecy which may involve the sharing of sensitive information, either in media or otherwise - even just the language used can be considered grooming' (Parent)*
>
> *'Giving compliments, gifts, listening to them. Making them think they understand them, sharing secrets, gaining trust. Giving them money' (Parent)*
>
> *'Adults using children for sexual gratification, both directly and to pass on to others via filming; grooming; giving children drink and drugs to make them dependent; prostitution; internet; other children taking advantage of each other' (Teacher)*

Parents most strongly relate CSE with techniques of fear and mental manipulation

When asked what the most likely techniques are in which children can be negatively influenced and controlled by adults, parents are most likely to mention fear (68%) and mental manipulation (64%). Mother (67%) are significantly more likely than fathers (57%) to mention the mental manipulation of children was a technique in controlling children.

The least mentioned techniques that parents think would be used to control children are paying off debts (4%) and providing food treats (14%).

Figure 9: Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most likely techniques in which children can be negatively influenced and controlled by adults?

Techniques	%
Fear	68%
Mental manipulation	64%
Rewards e.g. mobile phone top-ups	56%
Giving the child or young person attention (e.g. listening to them or showing an interest in them or what they are doing)	55%
Promises of love and/or affection	46%
Blackmail	44%
Promises of opportunities e.g. modelling, photography, acting	44%
Drugs	39%
Alcohol	39%
Physical violence	35%
Food treats	14%
Paying off debts	4%
None of the above	1%

Base: All parents (n=750)

Section 2: Technology and child safety

How much virtual privacy do parents give their children?

Children today have access to range of different communication devices and ways of obtaining information and communicating with other people. Recent research from the Office of the Children's Commissioner highlighted the importance of technology in cases of CSE:

"The use of mobile phones, social networking sites and other forms of technology are highlighted in the report as channels through which perpetrators groom, bully and pursue victims as part of CSE.[4]"

This virtual world therefore creates opportunities but also risks to children that parents may think they need to monitor. As figure 10 shows, parents feel differently about how intrusive monitoring their children's use of technology is depending on how old their children are.

Parents of children aged between 9 and 14 think it is most intrusive to be checking their children's text messages, with 56% reporting this is intrusive and 35% that it is acceptable. Four out of ten (43%) think it is intrusive to check messages received or given through social media but 46% do think this is acceptable.

However, over half parents of children aged between 9 and 14 think it is acceptable to filter their children's internet access (67%), check the internet history after a child has used a computer (62%), check social media accounts/profiles (60%) and check contact/friends lists on social media sites (62%).

Parents of children aged between 15 and 17 are much more likely to think that it is intrusive to monitor their children's use of technology. Nine out of ten parents (85%) think it is intrusive to check the text messages of their children aged between 15 and 17, with just 12% thinking this is acceptable and just 1% that it is not intrusive.

Filtering internet access is the only aspect of virtual security for children aged between 15 and 17 where a greater proportion of parents think that this is acceptable (46%) rather than intrusive (45%).

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[4] http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/csegg1

Figure 10: How much of an intrusion to your child/ren, if at all, do you see the following?

Aged 9-14

	Net: Intrusive	Acceptable	Not intrusive
Filtering your child's internet access	17%	67%	14%
Checking your child/ren's text messages	56%	35%	7%
Checking the internet history after a child/ren has used a computer/laptop	26%	62%	11%
Checking the contacts in your child/ren's phone	43%	46%	9%
Checking social media accounts/profiles	28%	60%	10%
Checking messages received or given through social media sites	43%	46%	9%
Checking contacts/friends lists on social media sites	30%	57%	10%

■ Net: Intrusive   ■ Acceptable   ■ Not intrusive

Aged 15-17

	Net: Intrusive	Acceptable	Not intrusive
Filtering your child's internet access	45%	46%	14%
Checking your child/ren's text messages	85%	12%	1%
Checking the internet history after a child/ren has used a computer/laptop	53%	39%	11%
Checking the contacts in your child/ren's phone	77%	17%	9%
Checking social media accounts/profiles	54%	37%	10%
Checking messages received or given through social media sites	70%	23%	9%
Checking contacts/friends lists on social media sites	56%	35%	10%

■ Net: Intrusive   ■ Acceptable   ■ Not intrusive

Base: All parents of children aged 9-14 (n=539) and aged 15-17 (n=341)

Note: Net intrusive = very intrusive + quite intrusive + slightly intrusive

Professionals were also asked how intrusive or non-intrusive they thought each of these activities are in relation to what parents can do to safeguard their children. Professionals are even stronger in their

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opinion that monitoring children's use of technology was more acceptable and less intrusive. As the following statistics show:

Figure 11: Professionals views on how much of an intrusion to children each of the following is.

	Net: Intrusive	Acceptable	Net: Non-intrusive
Checking your child/ren's text messages	47%	41%	10%
Checking messages received or given through social media sites	33%	53%	12%
Checking the contacts in your child/ren's phone	26%	57%	14%
Checking social media accounts/profiles	19%	62%	16%
Checking contacts/friends lists on social media sites	19%	63%	15%
Checking the internet history after a child/ren has used a computer/laptop	14%	65%	18%
Filtering your child's internet access	5%	66%	27%

Base: All professionals (n=945)

Note: Net intrusive = very intrusive + quite intrusive + slightly intrusive

As we have seen, parents consider various aspects of monitoring their children's virtual activity more or less intrusive. Parents also consider different aspects of their children's virtual privacy more or less important, with again clear differences by the age of children.

For children aged between 9 and 14, 85% of parents think it is important to filter their children's internet access and 82% that it is important that they check their children's social media accounts/profiles. In comparison around a half of parents (53%) of children aged between 15-17 think it is important that they filter 15-17 year olds internet access or check their social media accounts/profiles (43%).

For both age groups parents think it is least important to check contacts in children's phones, with 65% of parents of children aged 9-14 and only 33% of parents of children aged 15-17 thinking this is important.

Figure 12: How important do you think doing each of the following is in helping keep your child/ren safe? – Net important scores shown
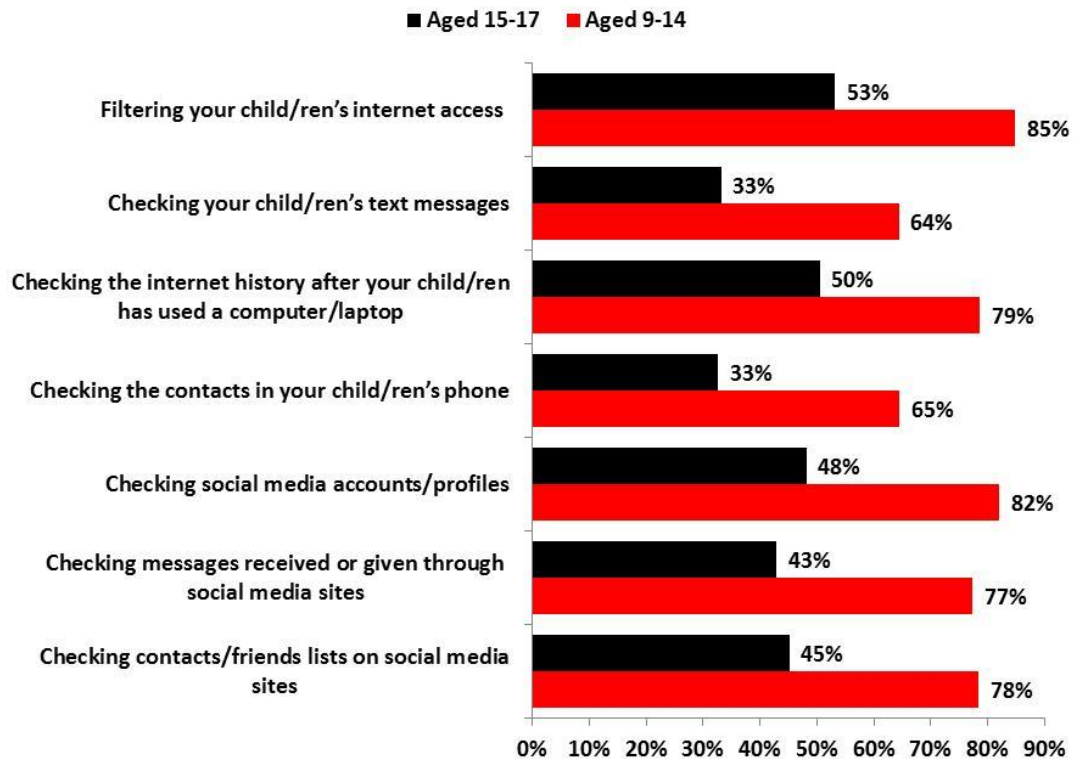
Base: All parents of children aged 9-14 (n=539) and aged 15-17 (n=341)

What things do parents do to help keep their children safe?

The vast majority of parents (93%) report that they regularly talk to their children to make sure they are ok. Parents are also very likely to be explaining the dangers children face from unknown people (83%) and explaining the dangers children face on the internet (79%).

However, parents are less likely to explain the dangers children face from people they know including family and friends, with only half of parents (52%) reporting that they do this.

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> *'I drum it in to my 11 year old daughter that anyone and everyone is a stranger and potentially dangerous - I even told her about Holly and Jessica's murders and how it was the teaching assistant so as she knows not to trust anyone' (Parent)*
>
> *'My eldest child is not allowed out of the house after 5.30pm. He has a phone and is to tell me where he is all the time. Bit paranoid but better safe than sorry. My kids know about all the bad things and can openly talk to us about anything that worries them. I check the internet history just in case and make sure I drop them off and pick them up whenever they go anywhere' (Parent)*

However, given the importance placed on checking children's mobile phone messages and contacts it is interesting to note that just a quarter of parents (24%) admit to checking their children's text messages and a fifth (18%) their children's mobile phone contacts.

Figure 13: What do parents do to help keep their children safe?

Regularly talk to my child/ren to make sure they are ok	93%
Explain the dangers children face from unknown people	83%
Explain the dangers children face on the internet	79%
Set curfews for what time my child/ren have to be home	70%
Provide limits on how far my child/ren can go from home	65%
Explain the dangers children face from people they know including family and friends	52%
Have restrictions on which internet sites my child/ren can access	46%
Check internet history	43%
Have restrictions when they can access the internet	35%
Check their mobile phone text messages	24%
Check their mobile phone contacts	18%
None of these	1%

Base: All parents (n=750)

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Mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to say that they check their children's text messages (28% compared with 16%) and mobile phone contacts (21% compared with 16%).

As can be seen from figure 13, the majority of parents regularly talk to their children to make sure they are ok. Of these parents the vast majority (86%) think that their children would tell them if they had experienced or witnessed abuse.

Children are most likely to have access to a mobile phone by the age of 11

Only 15% of parents report that their children do not have a mobile phone. Having a mobile phone changes with the age of a child, with 46% of parents who have a child who is 9 years of age reporting their child does not have a mobile phone compared with just 1% of parents who have a child aged 17. Eleven years of age is on average the age when parents let their children have a mobile phone.

In cases of CSE, children might have more than one mobile phone but nine out of ten parents (89%) would be confident that they would know if their children had more than one phone. While still confident, just under three quarters of parents (73%) would be confident that they would know if their children had more than one account on a social network e.g. Facebook.

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Figure 14: How confident would you be that you would know if your child/ren had more than one phone or more than one account on a social network e.g. Facebook?
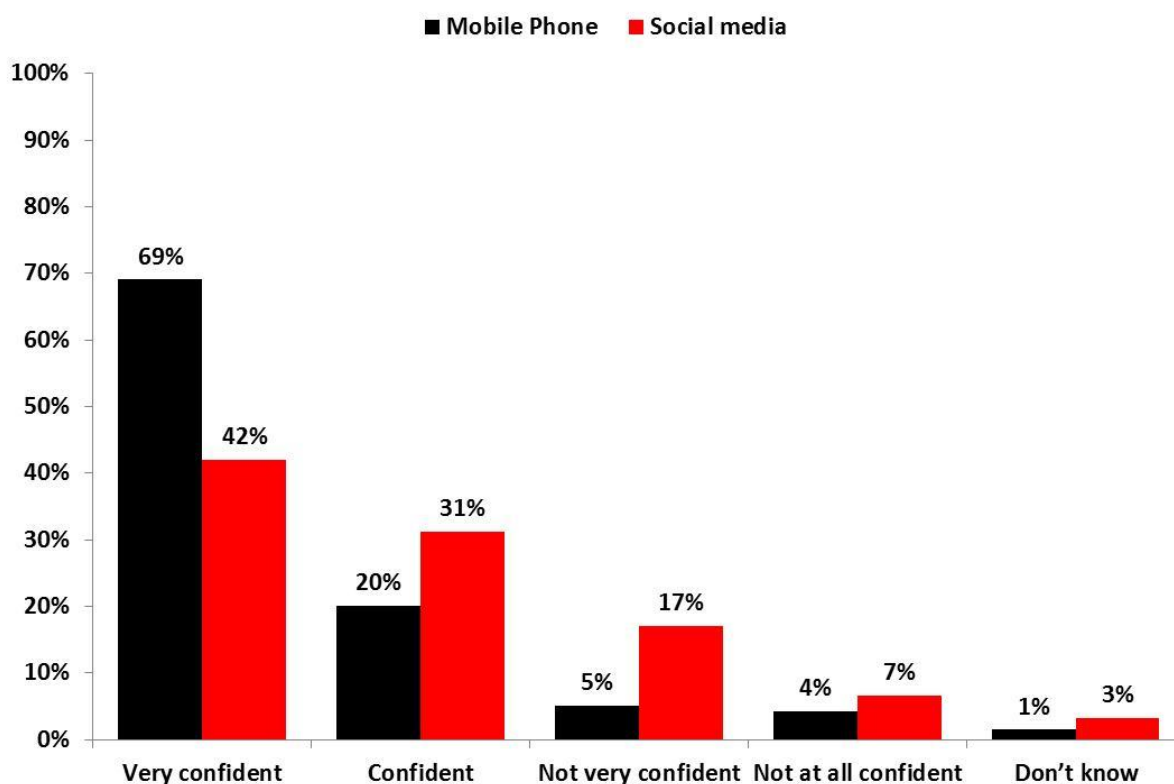
Base: All parents (n=750)

Professionals' attitudes to the relationship between mobile phones and CSE

Research from the OCC has shown that mobile phones are considered a key device in cases of CSE[5]. As figure 15 shows 87% of social workers, 81% of police and 78% of teachers surveyed all report that mobile phones feature most in cases of CSE.

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[5] http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/csegg1

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> *'One example that I see on a VERY regular basis is via Blackberry messenger...It could be where a friend of the child would send a BBM saying add 'so and so he's cool'...*
> *...the child would then add that person to their contacts and communications begin. Blackberries can be purchased without ID etc. and so, false identities can be created' (Police officer)*

There is some recognition of the use other forms of communication. A fifth of teachers (19%) and social workers (20%) and 29% of police also reference the use of new technology in the form of 'Apps'.

Figure 15: Which of the following do you think feature most in cases of child sexual exploitation?
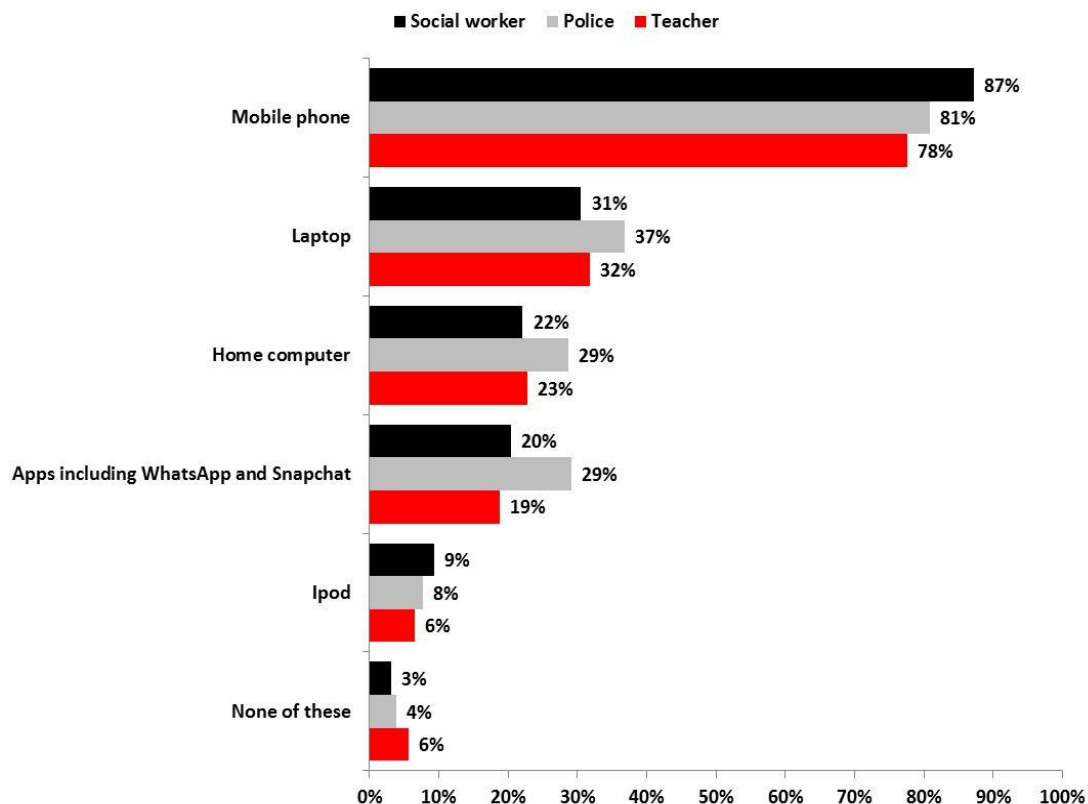
Base: Police (n=209), Social workers (n=226), Teachers (n=509)

The importance of the use of mobile phones in cases of CSE can also be seen from professionals' attitudes to their use. Overall 89% of professionals agree (28% strongly agree and 61% agree) that mobile phones are used as a tool to communicate messages to intimidate children who are being

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sexually exploited. While the vast majority of all professionals are in agreement the police (92%) and social workers (93%) are stronger in their agreement than teachers (86%).

> *'I think we underestimate the technology aspect' (Social worker)*
>
> *'It had a very large role and will grow, because the perpetrators can hide behind a false front' (Teacher)*

Two thirds of the professionals surveyed (66%) agree that mobile phones are more important than computers for perpetrators contacting children being sexually exploited. Agreement with this is similar across teachers, police and social workers but it is apparent that teachers have some uncertainty on this issue with a fifth (22%) reporting that they don't know whether mobile phones are more important than computers for perpetrators contacting children being sexually exploited.

As figure 16 shows it is important to note that those professionals who have had direct experience of cases of CSE are significantly more likely than those who have no direct experience to agree that mobile phones are used as a tool to communicate messages to intimidate children being sexually exploited (94% compared with 86%) and that mobile phones are more important than computers for perpetrators contacting children being sexually exploited (72% compared with 62%).

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Figure 16: Professionals views on the role and importance of mobile phones in cases of CSE
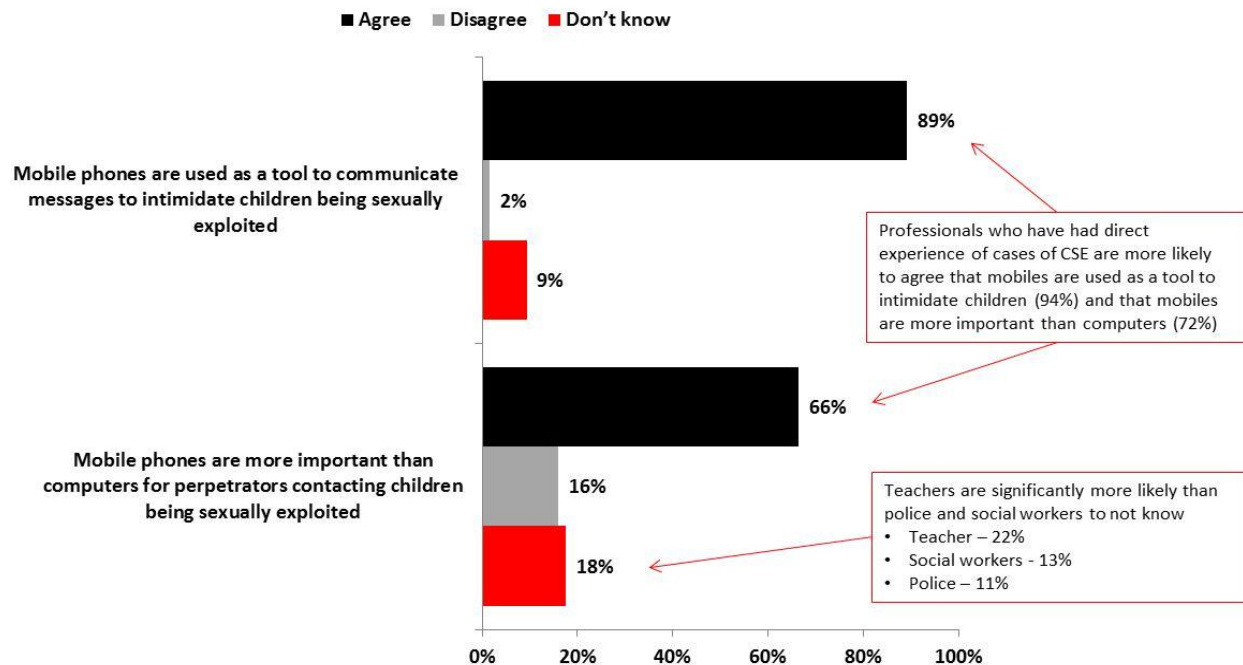
Base: All professionals (n=945)

Figure 17 (below) shows a comparison of professional's views on whether they agree or disagree that parents are aware that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE and professionals views on their own awareness. Professionals are consistent in their view that professionals are aware that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE, with 88% in agreement and just 5% who disagree.

However, professionals have a different view when they consider how aware parents are that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE. Half of professionals surveyed disagree that parents are aware that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE, with just over a third in agreement (35%).

Police (59%) and social workers (55%) are significantly more likely than those teachers surveyed (44%) to disagree that parents are aware that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE. There is also a link between having direct experience of cases and CSE and disagreement that parents are aware that mobile phones are used as a tool in CSE. Six out of ten (60%) professionals with direct experience of cases of CSE disagree that parents are aware of the use of mobile phones compared with 41% of those professionals with no direct experience.

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Figure 17: Professionals' agreement that they and parents are aware that mobile phones are used in CSE

Base: All professionals (n=945)

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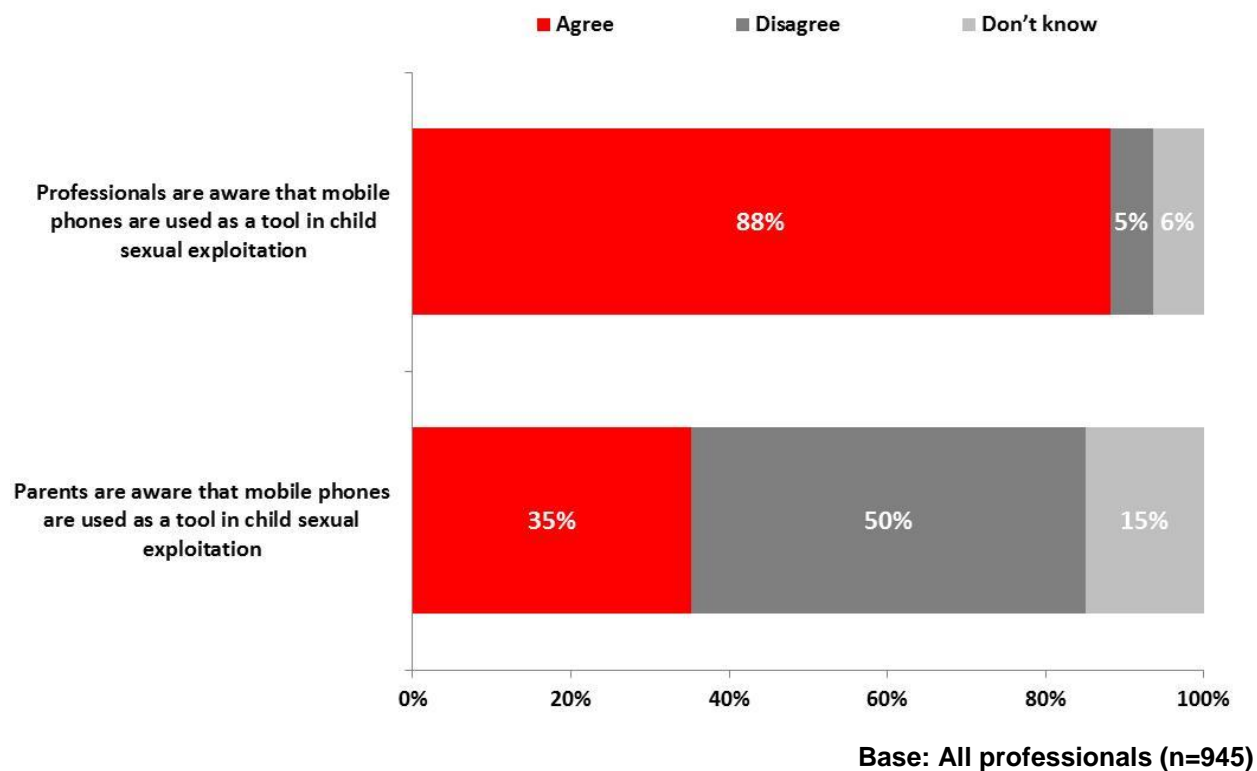
Section 3: Victims and perpetrators

Victims and their families

Parents are most likely to think that most victims are aged between 11 and 13 years old when CSE starts. Forty-two per cent of parents think this, with a further 35% stating that they think most victims are aged between 5 and 10 years of age when CSE starts.

Figure 18: What age do you think most victims are when CSE starts?
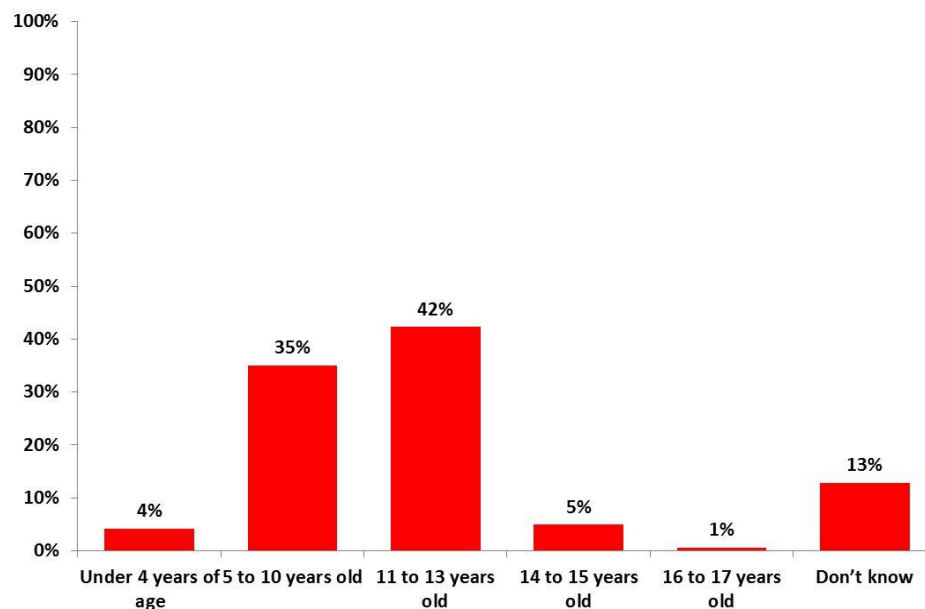
Base: All parents (n=750)

> *'I would say……those around in early teens who are going through puberty and emotionally feeling stressed/vulnerable due to the demands of life' (Parent).*

Professionals and parents were also asked to consider whether they thought that some types of families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE. As figure 19 shows, eight out of ten professionals surveyed do think that some types of families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE, with 90% of the police surveyed thinking this.

In comparison six out of ten parents think that some types of families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE, with fathers and those from an ABC1 social grade more likely to think this.

Figure 19: Do you think some types of families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE?
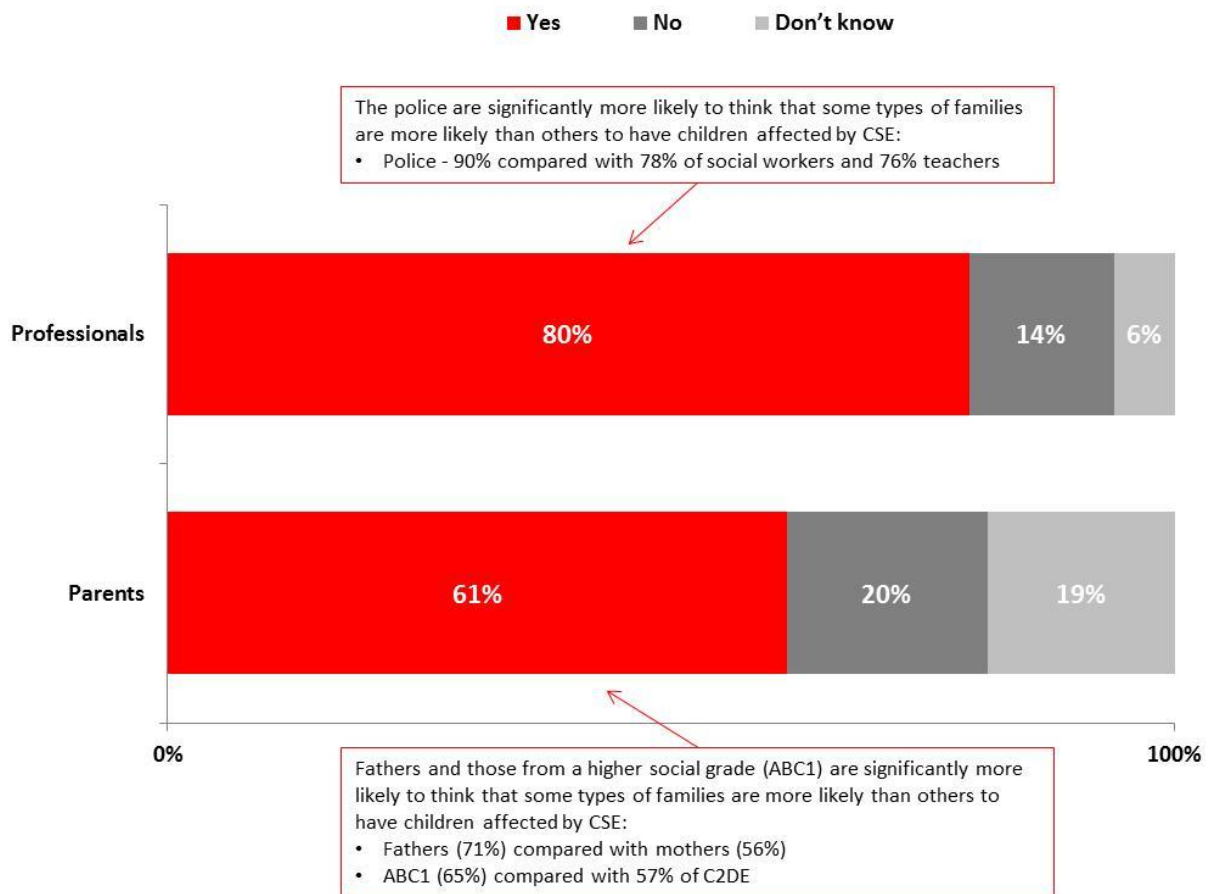
Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)

What types of families are perceived as more likely to be affected by CSE?

Parents used a variety of words to try and describe the types of families they feel are more likely to have children affected by CSE. A visualization of these comments can be seen in figure 20; the larger the word the more times it was mentioned.

Figure 20: <u>Parents</u> descriptions of the types of families that are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE

What was clear from these responses is the perception that it was a variety of factors within each family that meant they were more likely to be affected by CSE. The most common factors concentrated on income, social status or education standards; for example *'poor families'*, families on *'low incomes'*, families from the *'lower social class'* or *'less well educated'*.

Another strong theme within the comments was the perception that families with a previous history of drug, alcohol or other forms of abuse were also more likely to be affected by CSE. Typical phrases used were; *'parents with drug or alcohol problems'*, *'drug takers'*, or *'families that abuse alcohol and drugs'*. A further theme in the comments received focused on the family situation with a perception that children from *'broken families'*, children who are *'less likely to have 2 parents'*, *'single parent'* families or families described as *'dysfunctional'* were more likely to be affected by CSE.

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> *'Well a rocky home life can be a factor (Parent)*
>
> *'I think a distressing life in general can certainly make the child more vulnerable. It certainly only gets worse if they realise the situation they're in after it's too late' (Parent)*

Professionals also provided a range of comments that describe the types of families that they consider to be more likely to have children affected by CSE.

Similar themes emerged from professionals as those mentioned by parents. Again those families with '*lower levels of education'*, previous *'history of abuse'* and those families from *'poor backgrounds'* were the main themes mentioned.

Figure 21: <u>Professionals</u> descriptions of the types of families that are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE

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Professional and parental attitudes to CSE

Both professionals and parents strongly disagree with the assertion that sexual exploitation only happens to girls, with 96% of professionals and 95% of parents in disagreement. There was also some disagreement that the majority of sexually exploited children live in care. A small majority of professionals (58%) and just over half of parents (52%) disagreed with this. A quarter of professionals (26%) and parents (28%) do agree with the misconception that the majority of sexually exploited children live in care.

Perhaps showing some of the misconceptions that exist around CSE, social workers (69%) and those with previous experience of cases of CSE (63%) are significantly more likely than other professionals and those without experience of CSE to disagree the majority of sexually exploited children live in care. There is most agreement from professionals and parents that the victims of CSE mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families. Overall 52% of professionals surveyed agree with this but those police surveyed (67%) are significantly more likely than teachers (48%) and social workers (49%) to agree that sexually exploited children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families. There is however no significant differences in the attitudes of those professionals who have direct experience of CSE and those who do not.

Nearly half of parents (48%) agree that sexually exploited children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families, with 36% disagreeing and 16% who do not know.

This was also reflected in the focus group with professionals:

> *'Families who are struggling for different reasons, i.e. complex family dynamics or economic reasons meaning they are preoccupied might be more at risk. Young people who are experiencing multiple care givers are probably more at risk'*
> *(Social worker)*
>
> *'Young person feeling unloved, pushed out of the family i.e. mum/ dad in a new relationship. Family breakdown…'* *(Police officer)*

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Figure 22: Professionals and parents agreement with statements concerning victims of CSE

Professionals

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Don't know

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Sexual exploitation only happens to girls	2%	96%	2%
In most cases of child sexual exploitation the child/young person is in part responsible	6%	89%	5%
Sexually exploited children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families	52%	38%	9%
In most cases parents/carers are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child	44%	43%	14%
The majority of sexually exploited children live in care	26%	58%	17%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Parents

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Don't know

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Sexual exploitation only happens to girls	2%	95%	3%
In most cases of child sexual exploitation the child/young person is in part responsible	6%	88%	6%
Sexually exploited children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families	48%	36%	16%
In most cases parents/carers are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child	41%	39%	20%
The majority of sexually exploited children live in care	28%	52%	20%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)

There is also strong disagreement from both professionals and parents that any blame is put on the young person, with 89% of professionals and 88% of parents disagreeing that in most cases of child sexual exploitation the child/young person is in part responsible.

However, some of the respondents in the focus groups spoke about the stigma attached to CSE and how this can lead some victims to feel blamed for being a victim of CSE - *'there is stigma attached….victims are made to feel like it is their own fault' (Parent).*

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The survey also highlights that for over two fifths of professionals (44%) and parents (41%) in most cases parents/carers are considered to be in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child. Views are mixed though on this issue with conversely 43% of professional and 39% of parents disagreeing with this assertion.

Of those professionals who have had direct experience of cases of CSE, half (50%) disagree that in most cases parents/carers are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child – significantly higher than the 37% of those with no experience who disagree. A further 42% of those with direct experience of CSE agree and 8% did not know.

Low self-esteem is considered the most important risk factor to CSE

Previous research by the Office of the Children's Commissioner has identified risk factors which are linked to vulnerabilities of a child being a victim of CSE. As figure 23 shows parents and professionals strongly link a child having low self-esteem or self-confidence with being at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

'Young person feeling unloved [is at risk]' (Police officer)

'Someone with a need to be loved and wanted' (Teacher)

'The person who could be targeted would have low self-esteem or lack confidence in themselves' (Parent)

Other factors considered important are children living in a chaotic or dysfunctional family, with those police surveyed significantly more likely to report this than other professionals. It is also interesting to note that professionals put a greater importance on the unsupervised use of social networking chat rooms/sites than parents do, with 44% of professionals rating this as an important risk factor compared with 25% of parents.

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Figure 23: Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most important factors that place a child at a higher risk of being sexually exploited?

	Parents	Teachers	Police	Social workers
Low self-esteem or self-confidence	64%	63%	57%	67%
Lack of feeling loved	45%	35%	30%	36%
Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household	42%	45%	**56%**	40%
Neglect by parents/carers	41%	41%	38%	43%
Sexual abuse within the family home in earlier life.	33%	44%	45%	42%
Physical or emotional abuse	28%	31%	**40%**	24%
Unsupervised use of social networking chat rooms/sites	25%	45%	44%	43%
Having social or learning difficulties	23%	25%	27%	**36%**
Lack of role models	21%	15%	18%	11%
Homeless	18%	17%	13%	**24%**
Lack of education in sex and relationships	16%	23%	14%	16%
Living in residential care	15%	12%	17%	20%
Friends with young people who are sexually exploited	14%	17%	19%	23%
Witnessing domestic abuse	9%	9%	10%	8%
Being from a poor background	9%	6%	10%	4%
Live in a gang neighbourhood	9%	6%	8%	4%
Lacking friends from the same age group	8%	8%	4%	5%
Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited	5%	2%	4%	4%
Don't know	4%	3%	4%	3%
Been or are excluded from mainstream education	4%	7%	6%	10%
Recent bereavement or loss	2%	1%	-	2%
None of these	1%	1%	-	-
Adoption as a child	1%	0%	0%	0%
Being a young carer	0%	2%	1%	-

Base: All parents (n=750), teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

Note: Figures in red are a statistically significant difference between the view of professionals

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The internet and social media are considered the most common ways that perpetrators come into contact with children

'IT plays a big role and I don't think society has really got to grips with its possibilities and opportunities for creating dangerous situations' (Social worker)

When provided with a list of the different ways in which perpetrators of CSE can come into contact with children, both professionals and parents were most likely to think that the internet and social media were the most common ways.

The clearest difference between the views of parents and professionals is on the risk of family members being used as a way in which perpetrators come into contact with children they sexually exploit. A third of parents do consider the role of family members (32%) but nearly half of professionals (47%) think that perpetrators make contact via family members.

Those professionals with direct experience of CSE are more likely than those with no experience to consider family members (53% versus 42%) and friends their own age (38% versus 25%) as ways that perpetrators come into contact with children they will seek to sexually exploit.

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Figure 24: What are the most common ways that perpetrators come into contact with children they will seek to sexually exploit?
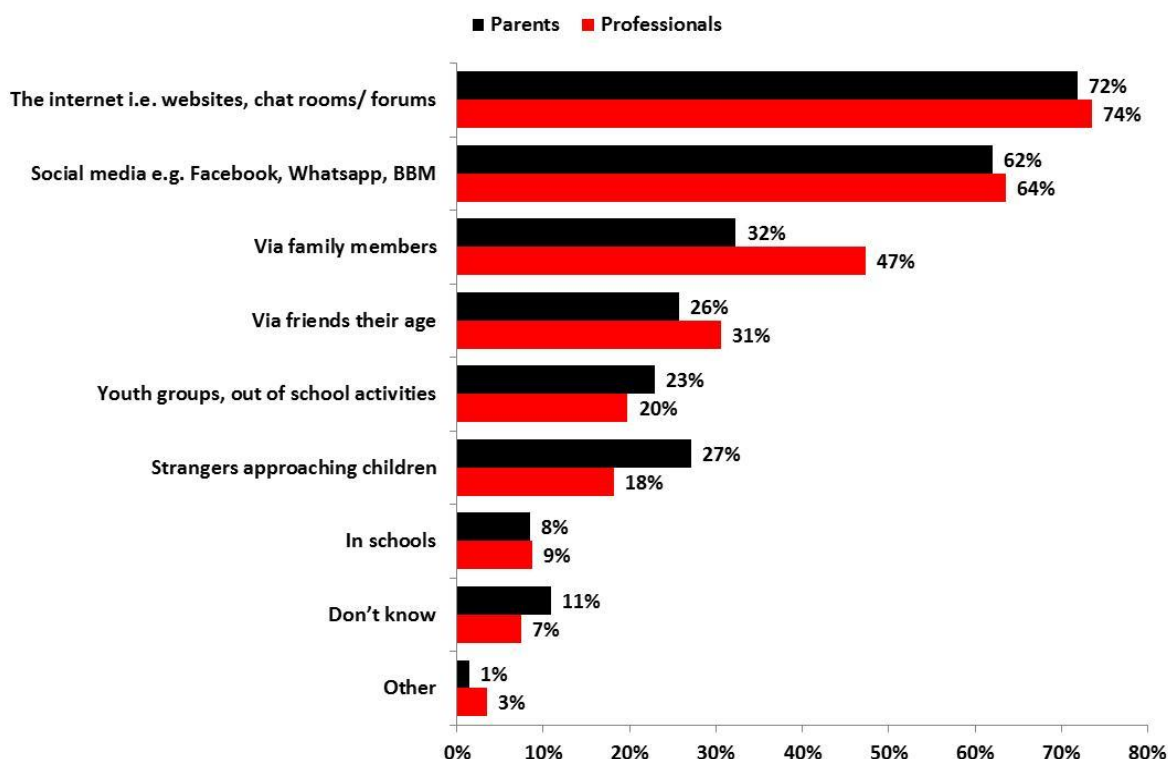
Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)

Regardless of the different ways in which perpetrators can come into contact with children, professionals agree that an objective of perpetrators will be to break the bond between the child and their family. Eight out of ten professionals surveyed agree that perpetrators of child sexual exploitation will seek to break the bond between the child and their family, with this being a consistent view across teachers, police and social workers and between those with or without direct experience of CSE.

Just 5% of professionals surveyed disagree that perpetrators will try to break the bond between the child and their family.

What characteristics are perpetrators of CSE perceived to have?

A majority of both parents and those professionals surveyed don't perceive that CSE perpetrators are more likely to live in any particular region of the UK or be more likely to be from any particular ethnic group.

Eight out of ten professionals (80%) and parents (77%) think that perpetrators can come from any English region. Of the regions mentioned by parents, just 6% stated the north of England and 5% London, with other areas being mentioned by 3% or less. Similarly, 5% of professionals mentioned the north of England with other areas being mentioned by 3% or less.

With regards to the ethnicity of perpetrators of CSE, as figure 25 shows seven out of ten parents (72%) think that perpetrators are not likely to be from any particular ethnic group. Of the ethnic groups mentioned there is a perception from one in ten (12%) that perpetrators are likely to be from an Asian/ Asian British ethnic group.

Figure 25: From which ethnic group do you think child sexual exploitation perpetrators are more likely to be from?

Base: All parents (n=750)

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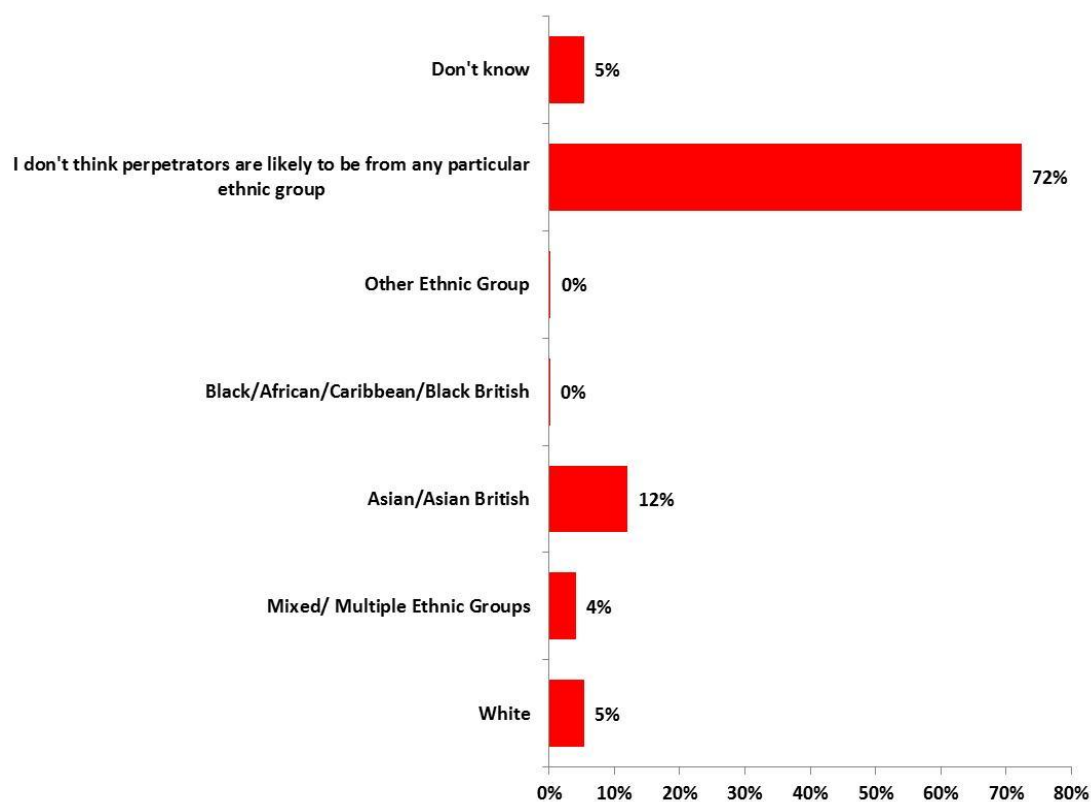
Section 4: Signs and potential impacts of CSE

Are professionals and parents confident they can spot the signs of CSE?

The level of confidence in spotting the signs that a child is being sexually exploited varies between social workers, police and teachers. Police are the most confident with 77% reporting they are very confident or confident that they could spot the signs. A majority of those social workers surveyed are also very confident or confident (65%).

Those teachers surveyed are the least confident, with half (49%) reporting they were confident and 43% that they are not confident that they would be able to spot the signs that a child is a victim of CSE.

Figure 26: How confident are professionals that if a child was a victim of child sexual exploitation they would be able to spot the signs?
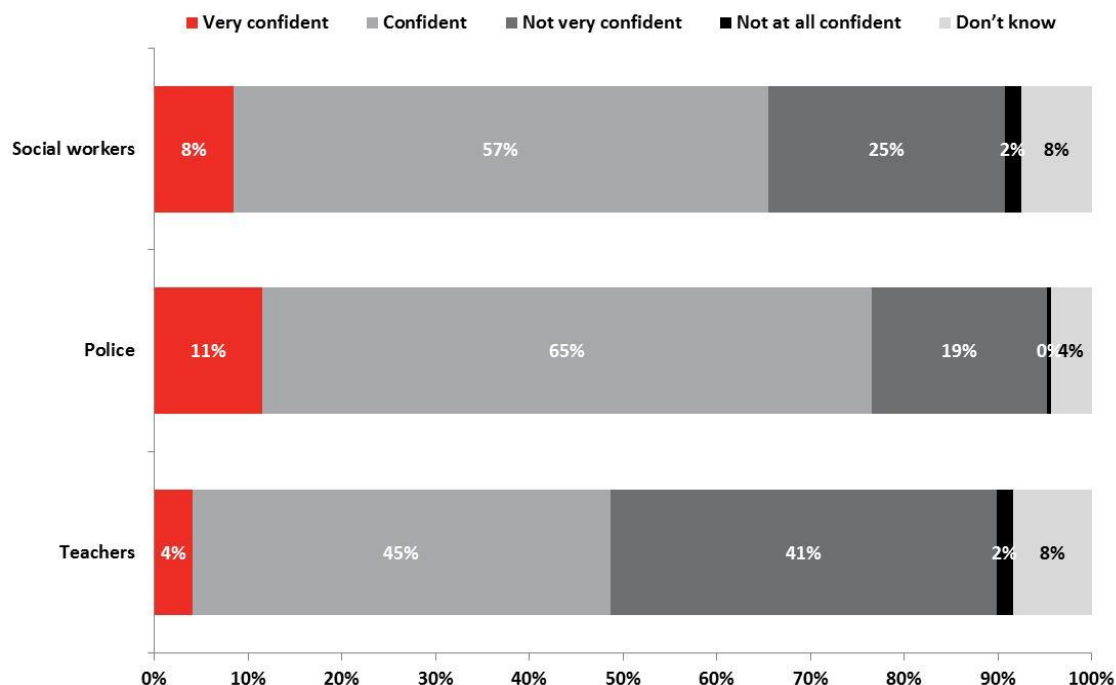
Base: All parents (n=750), teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

There is also a relationship between the organisation having 'tackling CSE' as a recognised priority and staff having received training on CSE and having confidence in spotting signs of CSE. As the following statistics show:

- 72% of professionals who work in an organisation where tackling CSE is a recognised priority are confident of spotting the signs of CSE compared with 37% of professionals in an organisation where tackling CSE is not a priority
- 71% of professionals who have had CSE training are confident of spotting the signs of CSE compared with 40% of professionals who have never had any CSE training

Parents were also asked how confident they would be in recognising the difference between indicators of child sexual exploitation and challenging behaviour which is sometimes can be part of growing up.

There is variation in how confident parents feel in spotting these signs, with 53% reporting they would be confident and 40% that they would not be confident in recognising the difference between indicators of child sexual exploitation and challenging behaviour.

What do parents and professionals consider the signs of CSE to be?

Figure 27 below shows a comparison between parents, teachers and police/social workers of the top 7 most mentioned signs (from a prompted list) that a child is a victim of CSE. Both parents and teachers are more likely to mention things they would spot more easily such as mood swings and changes in academic performance than police/social workers.

All three groups think that the receipt of gifts from unknown sources is a key sign that a child is a victim of CSE. But those police/social workers (76%) surveyed are much more likely to mention that drug or alcohol abuse is a key sign of CSE than parents (45%) and teachers (55%).

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Figure 27: The top 7 signs of CSE mentioned by parents, teacher and police/social workers

Parents	
Mood swings	70%
Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.	67%
Self harming	52%
Change in academic performance	52%
Change in physical appearance	51%
Missing from home or care	50%
Absence from school	46%

Teachers	
Change in academic performance	70%
Mood swings	68%
Receipt of gifts from unknown sources	68%
Absence from school	67%
Self harming	66%
Change in physical appearance	65%
Missing from home or care	57%

Police/Social worker	
Receipt of gifts from unknown sources	84%
Drug or alcohol misuse	76%
Missing from home or care	74%
Self harming	71%
Mood swings	68%
Absence from school	65%
Change in physical appearance	64%

Base: All parents (n=750), teachers (n=509), police/social workers (n=435)

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Respondents in the online focus groups thought that signs of CSE included:

'Going missing, unexplained gifts, lots of phone calls, alcohol/drug use, going to areas of concern, becoming more secretive, withdrawing from activities they previously enjoyed, STDs' (Social worker)

'A new phone, new items, secretive, not saying where they are going/who with. Changes in behaviour, withdrawing from regular friends and family' (Police)

'From what I understand there would be a sense of withdrawal as they rely more on their new 'friend' then those close to them' (Parent)

'A change of attitude in the child, the behaviour towards people or situations in particular. They usually become more withdrawn and burdened, and therefore are less interactive' (Parent)

Over half of parents in England are concerned that cases of CSE may occur in their local area

This survey highlights that over half of parents in England (56%) are very concerned or concerned that cases of CSE may occur in their local area. A third of parents (35%) remain not concerned or not at all concerned and 8% did not know how concerned they were.

As figure 28 shows the level of concern is higher for those parents who feel they are aware of the issues around CSE. There is also some aspect of differences by gender, with 61% of mothers reporting they are concerned compared with 49% of fathers.

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Figure 28: Level of parental concern that cases of child sexual exploitation may occur in your local area

Those who are aware of the issues around CSE are more concerned (64%) than those unaware (47%)
Mothers (61%) are more concerned than fathers (49%)

56% - concerned

Very concerned 17% | Concerned 39% | Not very concerned 32% | Not at all concerned 3% | Don't know 8%
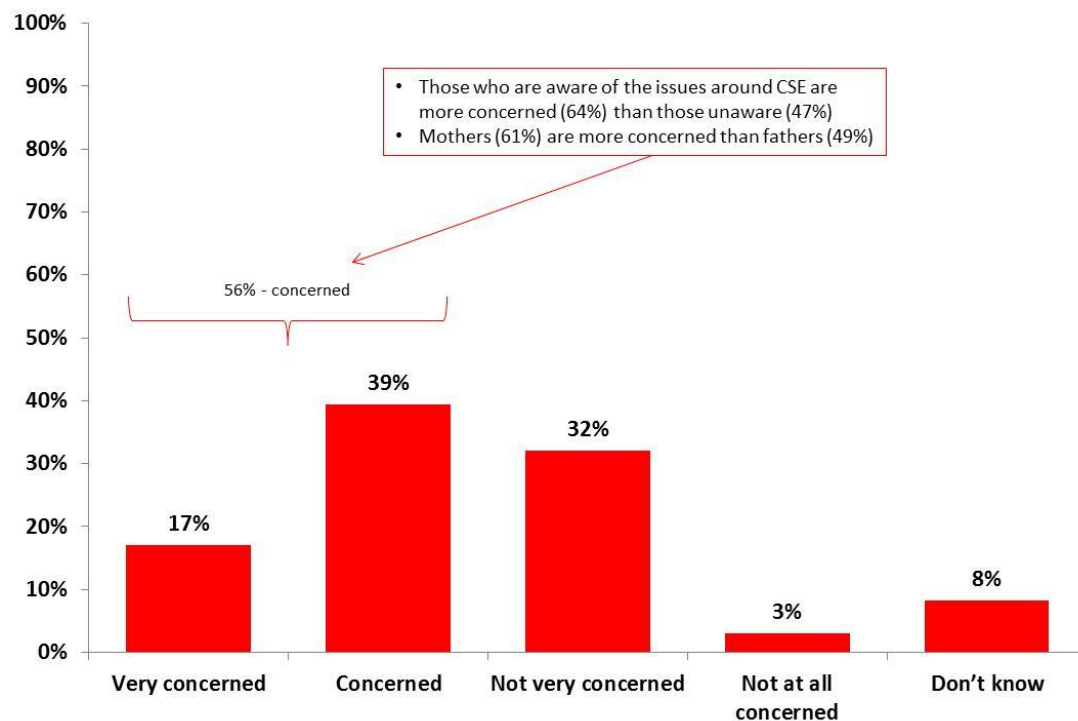
Base: All parents (n=750)

There is also a realisation from half of parents (51%) that CSE is a problem that could affect a family like theirs, with a third (33%) disagreeing and 16% who do not know. This is a consistent view across demographics with only parents in London (47%) significantly more likely to disagree that CSE is a problem that could affect a family like theirs than parents in the Midlands (29%), the North (31%) and the South (30%).

This recognition that CSE is a problem in the UK is also highlighted by the fact that only 9% of parents agree that they don't think that CSE is a big problem in the UK, with 79% disagreeing with this assertion.

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Figure 29: Attitudes to the problem of CSE

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Child sexual exploitation is a problem that could affect a family like mine	51%	33%	16%
Child sexual exploitation does happen but its not a problem where we live	26%	43%	31%
I don't think that child sexual exploitation is a big problem in the UK	9%	79%	12%

Base: All parents (n=750)

Conversely a quarter of parents (26%) acknowledge that CSE does happen but agree that it isn't a problem where they live. Showing a lack of awareness, a sizeable proportion of parents (31%) did not know whether CSE was a problem where they live and 43% did acknowledge it was a problem by disagreeing that CSE does happen but it is not a problem where we live.

What are the likely impacts of CSE on family life?

Parents and professionals are very consistent in their views on what the potential impacts to family life might be if a child is sexually exploited while they are still living at home (figure 30).
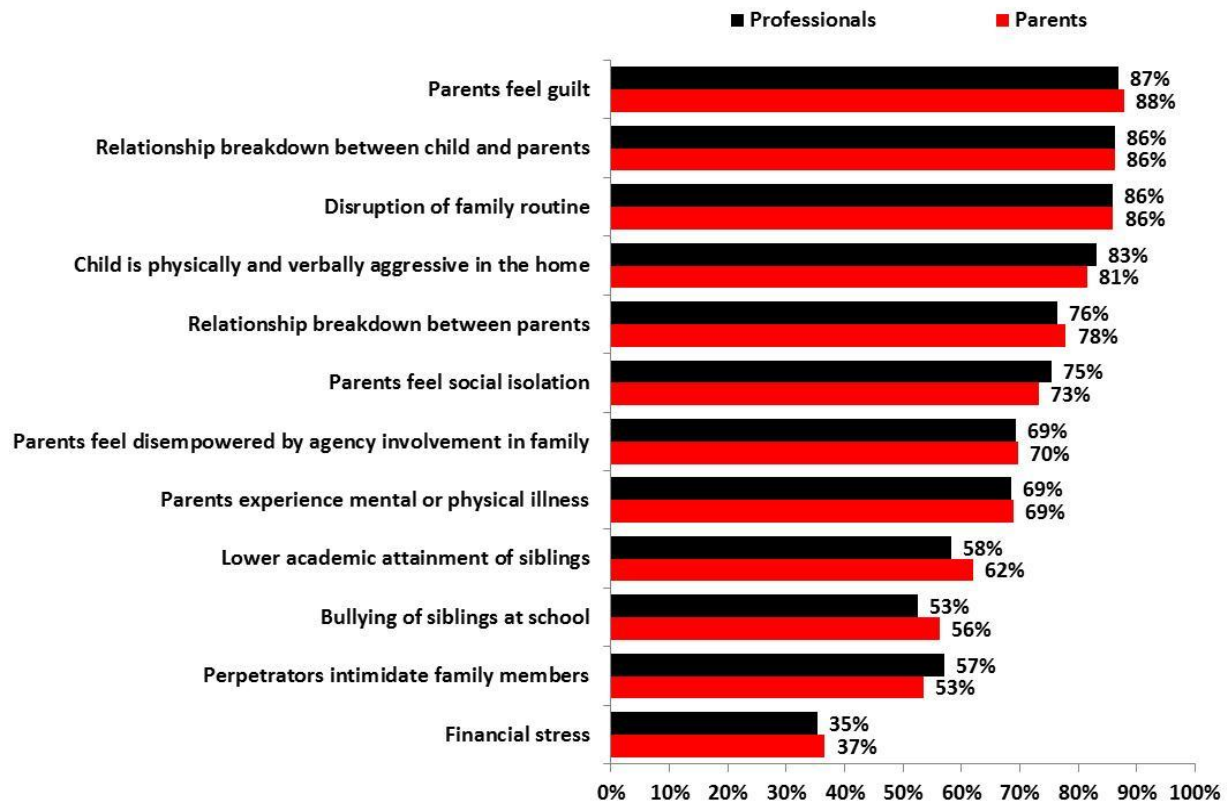
Parents feeling guilt, relationship breakdown between parents and a general disruption to the family routine are considered likely impacts by more than 85% of parents and professionals.

In fact parents feeling guilt is considered to be very likely by 56% of parents and 50% of professionals. In the focus group, parents said: *'all the family would be affected with feelings of guilt'*, *'the family have to live with the guilt of not being able to protect their child, and of their child no longer being innocent and protected from the harsh world'* and '*guilt for not being able to stop the abuse, protect the child'.*

While still mentioned by over a third of parents (37%) and professionals (35%) the impact of financial stress was considered the least likely impact to happen if a child is sexually exploited while they were still living at home.

It is also interesting to note that seven out of ten professionals (69%) and parents (70%) think that parents feel disempowered by agency involvement in the family.

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Figure 30: If a sexually exploited child is living at home with their family, how likely do you think each of the following will happen as a result of the child being sexually exploited? - % reporting very likely or likely shown

Legend: ■ Professionals ■ Parents

Category	Professionals	Parents
Parents feel guilt	87%	88%
Relationship breakdown between child and parents	86%	86%
Disruption of family routine	86%	86%
Child is physically and verbally aggressive in the home	83%	81%
Relationship breakdown between parents	76%	78%
Parents feel social isolation	75%	73%
Parents feel disempowered by agency involvement in family	69%	70%
Parents experience mental or physical illness	69%	69%
Lower academic attainment of siblings	58%	62%
Bullying of siblings at school	53%	56%
Perpetrators intimidate family members	57%	53%
Financial stress	35%	37%

Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)

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Section 5: Raising awareness and seeking help

Six out of ten parents know 'something' about CSE and would most likely turn first to the police for support and advice
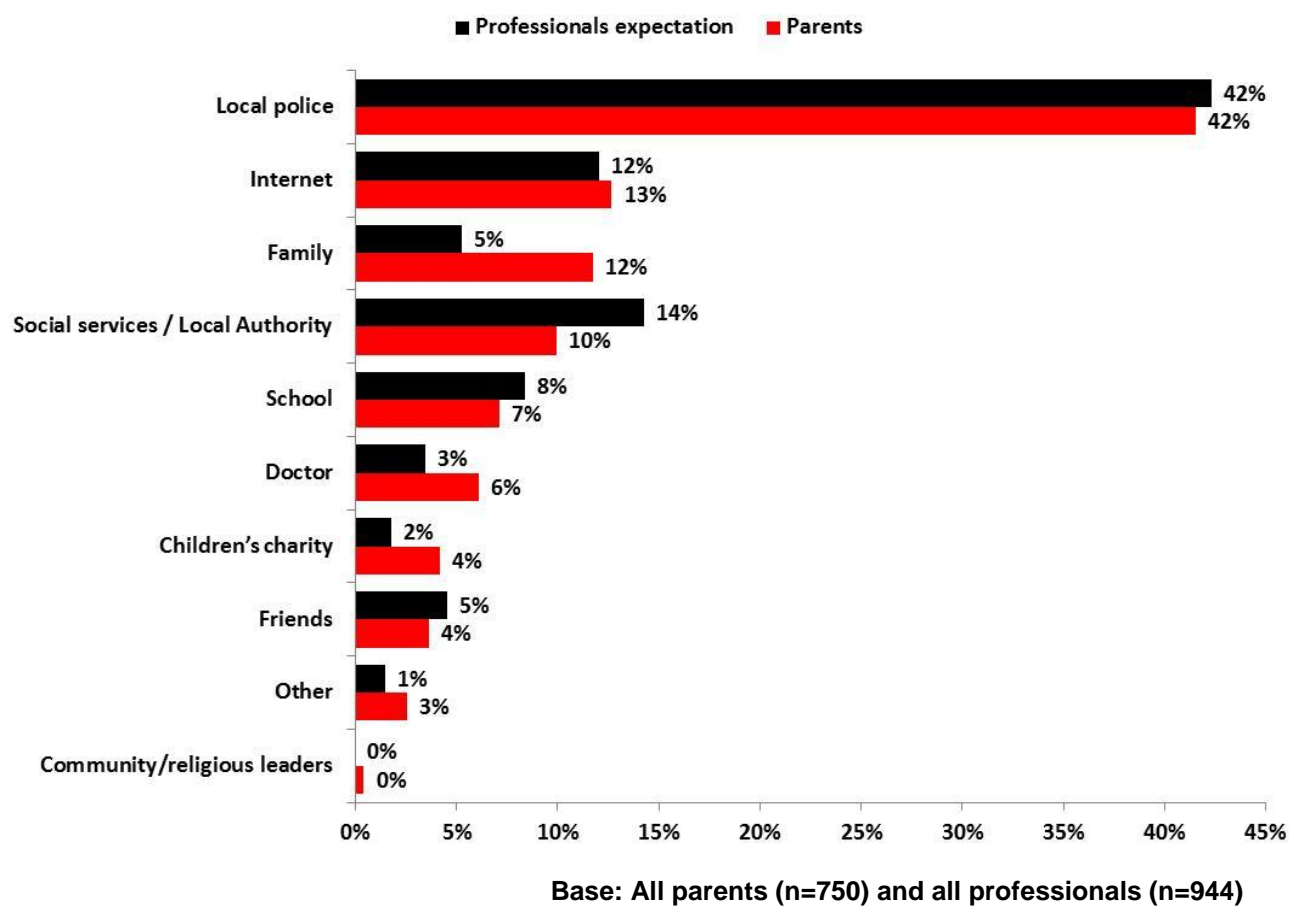
A majority of parents (58%) report that they know at least 'something' about the dangers of CSE. Just 7% say that they know 'a great deal' about the dangers and 22% that they know 'a lot'. One in ten (13%) admit that they know 'not very much' about the dangers of CSE.

Fathers are significantly more likely than mothers to report that they know 'not very much' about the dangers of CSE, with 16% of fathers reporting this compared with 11% of mothers.

For parents thinking about where they go for advice and support, the police are clearly the organisation that parents would turn to first if they had concerns that their child was being sexually exploited, with 42% of saying they would go to the police first. The internet was mentioned by 13% of parents as the first place parents would go to. These findings are in line with professional's expectations of where parents would go first for support and advice (figure 31).

The internet is more likely to be a first source of information for those parents who are currently only have some awareness or are unaware of the issues related to CSE, with 18% of parents with lower awareness saying they would turn to the internet first compared with 9% of those who are more aware of CSE.

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Figure 31: Where would you first go to for support and advice if you had concerns about your child being sexually exploited?

■ Professionals expectation ■ Parents

Category	Professionals expectation	Parents
Local police	42%	42%
Internet	12%	13%
Family	5%	12%
Social services / Local Authority	14%	10%
School	8%	7%
Doctor	3%	6%
Children's charity	2%	4%
Friends	5%	4%
Other	1%	3%
Community/religious leaders	0%	0%

**Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)**

Over half of parents think there are no barriers to seeking advice and support

Parents were most likely to report that they felt there would be no barriers stopping them seeking advice and support if they were concerned about a child in their family being sexually exploited.

Where parents did think that barriers existed, the potential trauma caused to their child (30%) or the threat of losing their child (27%) were the most mentioned barriers to seeking advice and support.

In the focus group a parent said: '*a barrier is that you could be wrong and involve social services etc. in a family that had other problems - imagine if someone did that to your family and they were wrong'*.

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Figure 32: Reasons why parents might not seek advice and support if you were concerned about a child in your family being sexually exploited
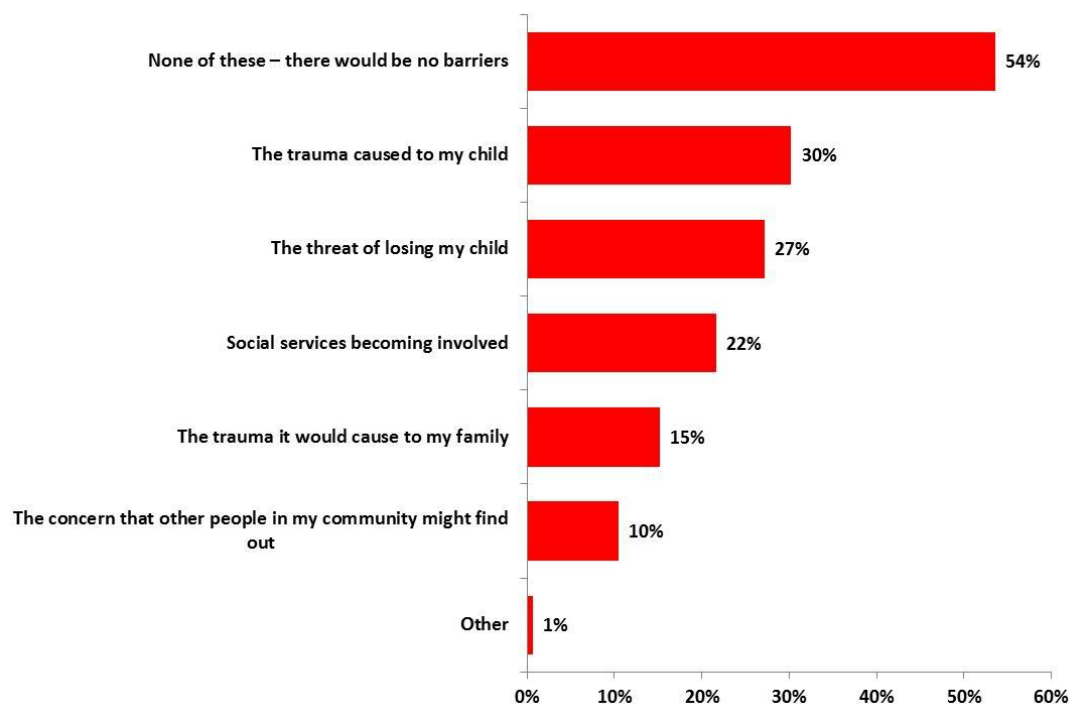
Base: All parents (n=750)

Parents expect their school to inform them about cases of CSE

Parents do see their school as playing an important role in informing them of the risks of CSE. Three quarters of parents (74%) say that they would expect their school to tell them if the school knew that some pupils were being sexually exploited or at risk of being exploited. Just 16% reported that they would not expect to be told.
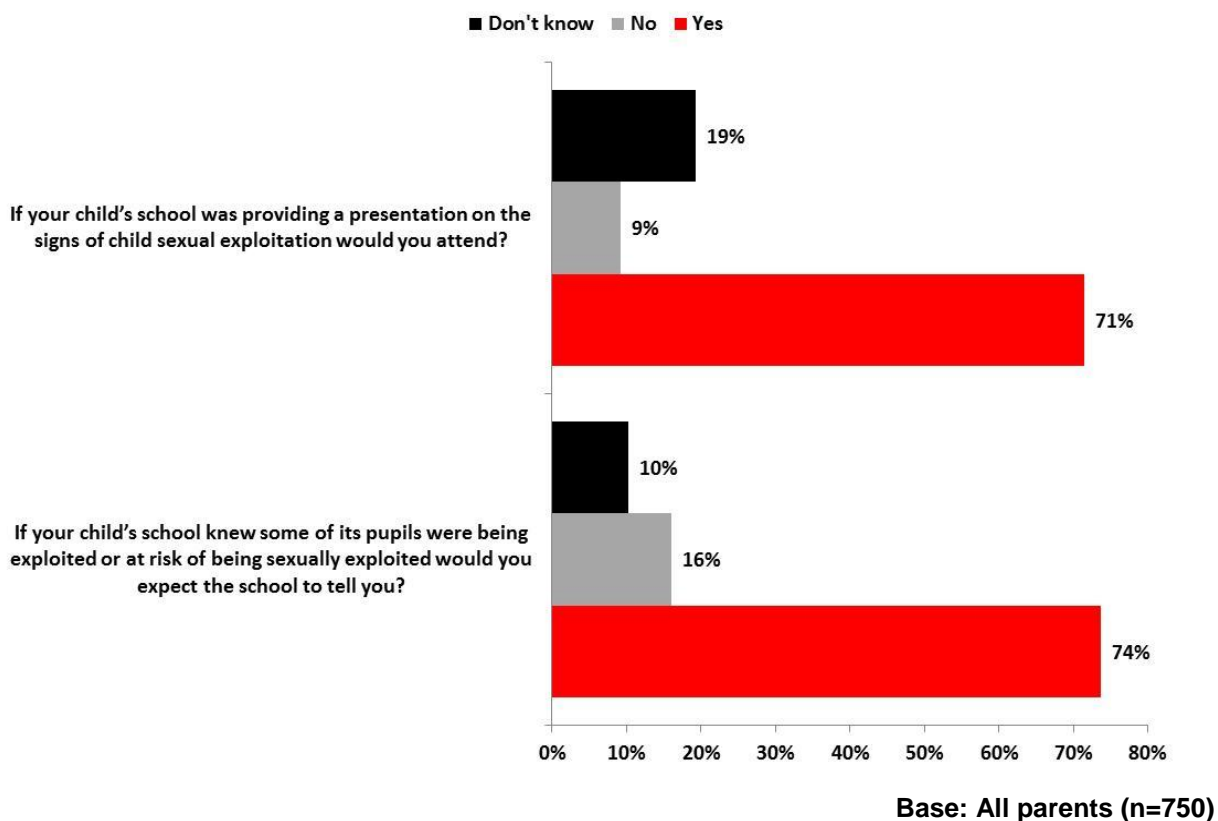
In contrast to this two fifths of teachers (38%) surveyed said that if through their work they encountered a child they thought was being sexually exploited, or at risk of being sexually exploited, by a perpetrator from outside the family home, they would not tell the child's parents/carers as a matter of urgency. The same proportion of teachers (38%) reported they would tell the child's parents/carers

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In comparison 14% of police and 15% of social workers reported they would not tell the parents/carers if through their work they encounter a child that they thought was being sexually exploited, or at risk of being sexually exploited, by a perpetrator from outside the family home.

Parents also report an appetite to gain further information about the signs of CSE, with seven out of ten (71%) reporting they would attend a presentation on the signs of CSE if their child's school provided it. A fifth (19%) don't know if they would attend and 9% would not attend.

Mothers (76%) are significantly more likely than fathers (63%) to indicate that they would attend a presentation on CSE. There is also a relationship between current awareness of the issues of CSE and gaining further information, with those who are currently more aware (75%) significantly more likely to indicate they would attend a presentation than those who are currently less aware (67%).

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Figure 33: Parents views on the role of schools in providing information on CSE

■ Don't know ■ No ■ Yes

If your child's school was providing a presentation on the signs of child sexual exploitation would you attend?
- 19%
- 9%
- 71%

If your child's school knew some of its pupils were being exploited or at risk of being sexually exploited would you expect the school to tell you?
- 10%
- 16%
- 74%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

Base: All parents (n=750)

There is a limited focus on educating around CSE and parents don't think schools are doing enough

Although parents do indicate an interest in finding out more information about CSE from schools, parents report that at the current time there doesn't appear to be a focus on providing CSE education to children in school. Overall 87% of parents report that no education of CSE has taken place at their child's school, with 13% saying there has been education on CSE. This is a consistent response across parents with children of different ages.

**Figure 34: Level of agreement amongst parents that currently schools do enough to educate
<u>children</u> about child sexual exploitation**
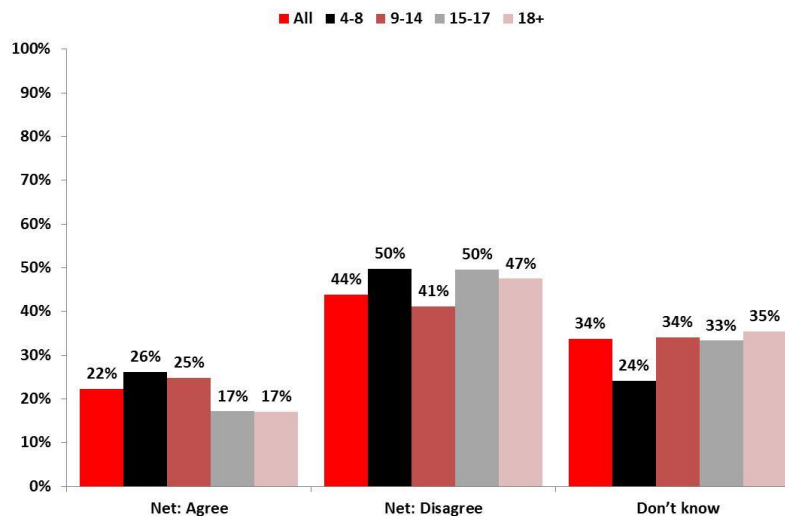
Base: All parents (n=750), 4-8 (n=157), 9-14 (n=539), 15-17 (n=341), 18+ (n=193)

**Figure 35: Level of agreement amongst parents that currently schools do enough to educate
<u>parents</u> about child sexual exploitation**
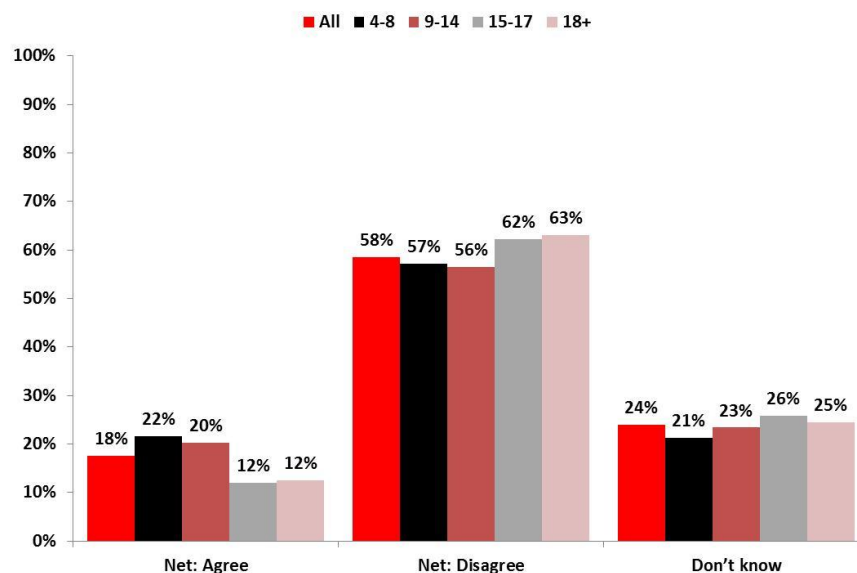
Base: All parents (n=750), 4-8 (n=157), 9-14 (n=539), 15-17 (n=341), 18+ (n=193)

As figures 34 and 35 show, there is also more disagreement than agreement from parents that schools
are currently doing enough to educate children and parents about CSE. Just a fifth (22%) of parents

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agree that schools are doing enough to educate children about CSE compared with 44% who disagree. A third of parents are ambivalent to this issue and don't know whether their child's schools are doing enough.

Similarly just a fifth (18%) of parents agree that school are doing enough to educate parents about CSE compared with three fifths who disagree (58%). Parents who have older children (aged 15-17 or 18+) are more likely to disagree that schools are doing enough to educate parents than those parents with younger children.

Professionals think there is a gap in the education of parents about CSE

Professionals were also surveyed on whether schools were doing enough to educate children and parents about CSE. With regards to the education of children, teachers' views are mixed, with 42% agreeing schools do enough and 45% that disagree that schools do enough. Police and social workers are more likely to agree than disagree that schools are doing enough.

> *'It can't always be schools that pick up on things, others' have more time per child than a school does' (Teacher)*
>
> *'My school gives briefings to all parents re drugs, internet safety etc. It's pretty hard-hitting and may be valuable in raising awareness' (Teacher)*

Figure 36: Level of agreement amongst professionals that currently schools do enough to educate <u>children</u> about child sexual exploitation
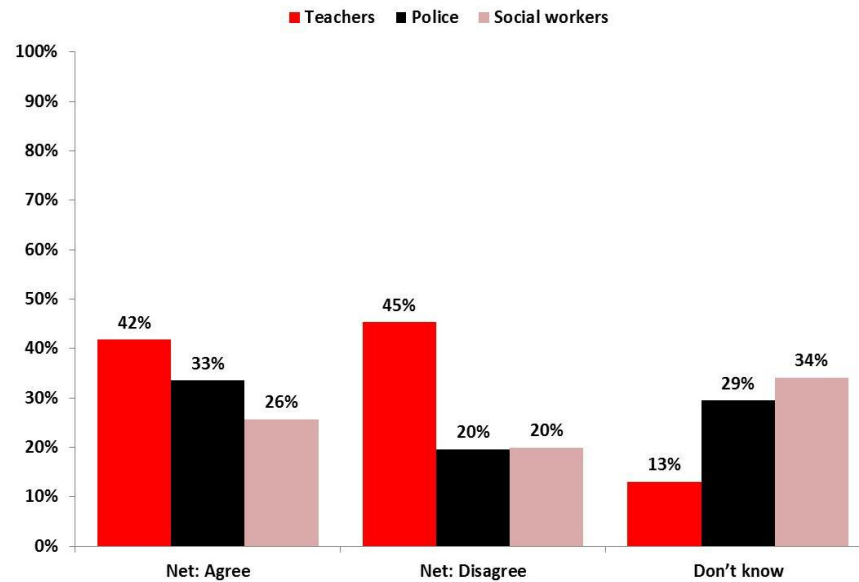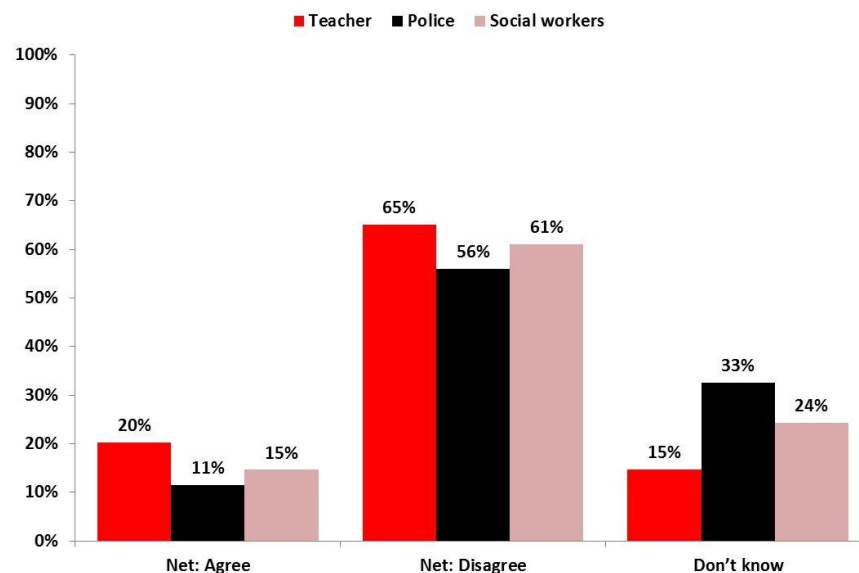
■ Teachers ■ Police ■ Social workers

Figure 37: Level of agreement amongst professionals that currently schools do enough to educate <u>parents</u> about child sexual exploitation

■ Teacher ■ Police ■ Social workers

However, with regards to the education of parents a majority of teachers, police and social workers disagree that currently schools do enough to educate parents about CSE. Just a fifth (20%) of teachers

and lower proportions of police (11%) and social workers (15%) agree that schools are doing enough to educate parents.

Parents and professionals are consistent in their view that primary and secondary schools should be educating about CSE

Nine out of ten parents (89%) agree that secondary schools should be educating children about CSE, with over a third (37%) in strong agreement. While a lower proportion of parents think primary schools should be educating children about CSE, a majority (61%) agree that this should be happening but a fifth (22%) do disagree. These findings are in stark contrast to the 87% of parents who reported they are not aware of any CSE education in their children's school.

Professionals are also strong in their views that secondary schools should be educating children about CSE, with 88% in agreement and just 3% disagreeing. Professionals also provide a very similar view to parents on the role of primary schools, with six out ten professionals agreeing primary schools should educate children about CSE. Teachers (61%) and social workers (69%) are more likely to agree to this than those police surveyed (52%).

Figure 38: Parents' and professionals' views on whether primary or secondary schools should be educating children on CSE


Base: All parents (n=750) and all professionals (n=944)

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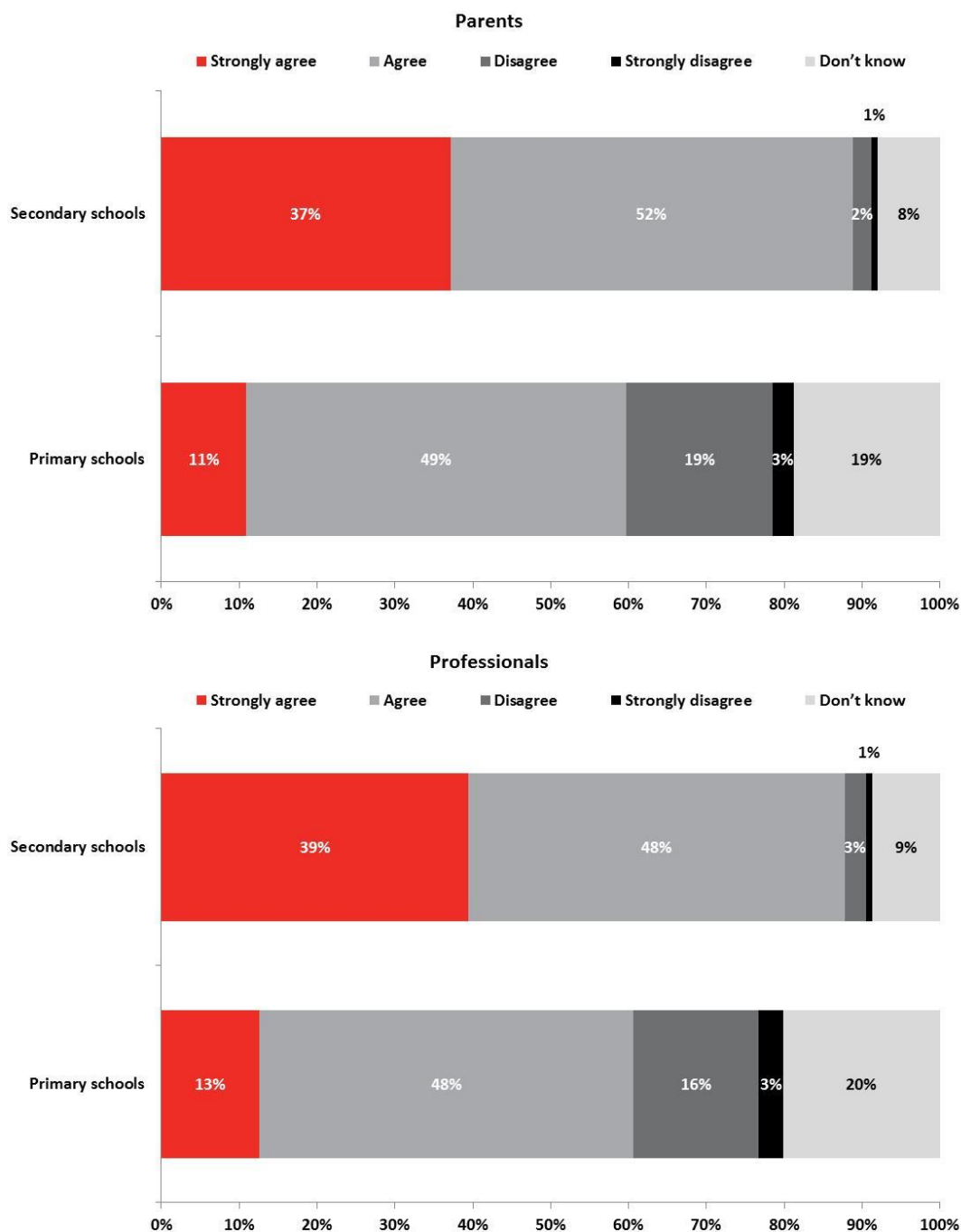
Section 6: Preventing CSE

Two thirds of professionals report that CSE is a recognised priority in their organisation

CSE is significantly more likely to be a recognised priority in the organisations of those police surveyed (82%) than social workers (74%) or teachers (56%).

Figure 39: In your organisation, is tackling child sexual exploitation a recognised priority?
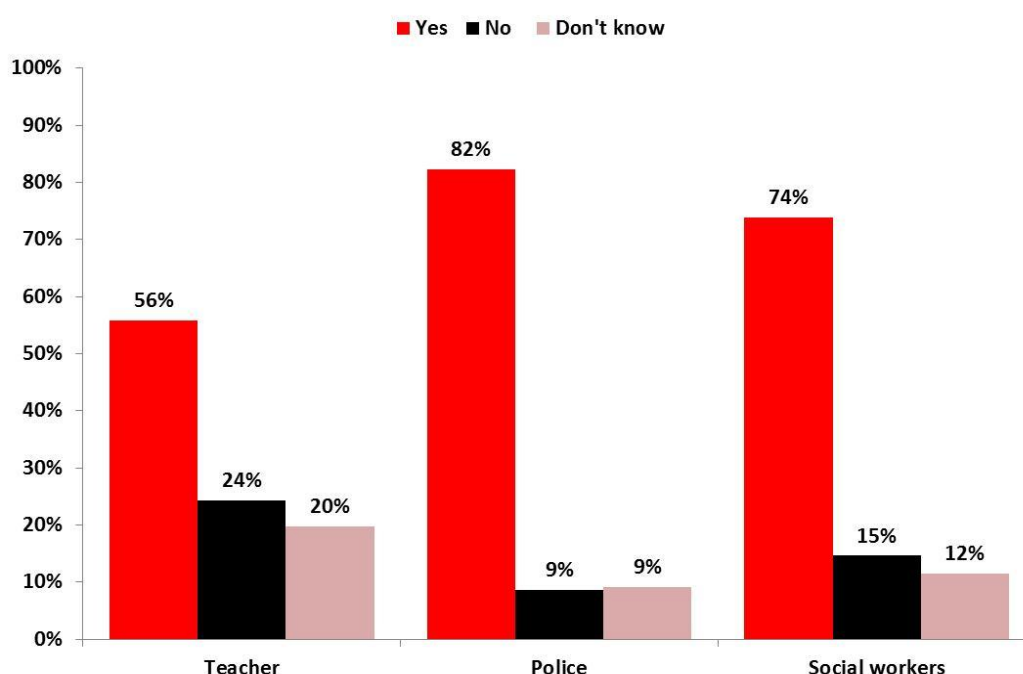
Base: All teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

Half of professionals (49%) surveyed report that they have been shown a list of the signs that a child may be being sexually exploited, with 44% reporting that they have not and 7% who did not know. This was a consistent picture across the teachers, police and social workers surveyed.

In the focus groups, some of the professionals had seen the list of warning signs of child sexual exploited from the OCC CSEGG Interim Report published in November 2012.

However, most of the professionals' organisations had adapted the list:

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> *'It's similar to others I've seen - there are plenty of documents on the signs of CSE, but a lot fewer on effective interventions!' (Social worker)*
>
> *'I think it can be useful as it encourages workers to look at the wider picture - these areas can be compartmentalised, with YOS dealing with offending behaviour, CAMHS dealing with mental health issues, police dealing with missing episode etc.' (Social worker)*

Some of the professionals raised the concern that the OCC list should not be taken literally as there can be other signs of CSE. Training was felt to be important in conjunction with a checklist of CSE signs.

> *'Good list but some issues can also apply for reasons not related to CSE [signs of other issues]' (Social worker)*
>
> *'Because some people would treat the list far too literally and would not necessarily pick up on the 'grey areas' that may not conform with that list. Better overall training would in my opinion be far more beneficial' (Police officer)*
>
> *'To inform it's helpful but I'd be worried if people use it as a tick the box list - not every situation will show all the items on the list. Some may not show any signs; there could be other reasons why young people get into i.e. crime not related to CSE - would not want people to jump to conclusions. The list is good as guidance' (Social worker)*

Regardless of profession, the vast majority of professionals report that they are confident that if they had concerns that a child was being sexually exploited and they escalated these concerns they would be acted upon by their organisation.

Overall 92% of professionals report they are confident any concerns would be acted upon and just 6% that they would not. However, while still a majority who are confident, 15% of professionals who work in an organisation where CSE is not a priority are not confident their concerns would be acted upon, compared with just 3% of professionals in organisations where CSE is a priority.

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Those professionals who work in an organisation where CSE is not considered a recognised priority are significantly less likely to have been shown a list of the signs of CSE. Just a quarter (26%) of professionals who report CSE is not a priority have been shown a list compared with 59% that have been shown a list of a signs who work in an organisation where CSE is a recognised priority.

Six out of ten professionals have had training on CSE

Overall 62% of professionals report that they have received training on CSE to support their work. Teachers (65%) are most likely to report that they have had CSE training compared with police (62%) and social workers (55%).

Figure 40: Have you ever received any training on child sexual exploitation to support you at work?
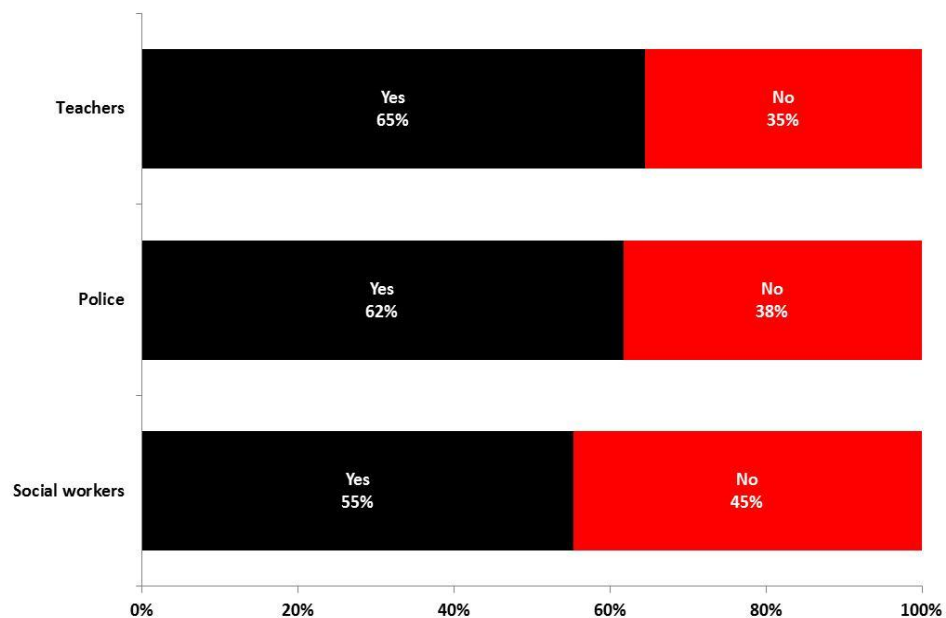
Base: All teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

Of those that have received training, half (51%) have received training in the last 12 months and a further 29% had training between 1 and 2 years ago. Teachers were significantly more likely to have received training in the last 12 months with 60% of them reporting this compared with 37% of police and 42% of social workers. A fifth of the police (19%) reported that their CSE training was more than 5 years ago.

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The vast majority (91%) of professionals who have received training on CSE think that this training has been useful in enabling them to recognise the signs of CSE and if necessary take appropriate action. Social workers in particular found their training very useful, with 46% reporting this.

In the focus groups the professionals said that more training would be beneficial. They felt confident in their ability to identify some of the signs of CSE and what practical steps they needed to implement, but a few felt that training should also focus on the emotional impacts of CSE, how technology is used for CSE and what effective interventions exist. A few of the professionals also felt that training should be more joined up between social workers and the police.

Figure 41: How useful do you think this training has been in enabling you to recognise the signs and take appropriate action?
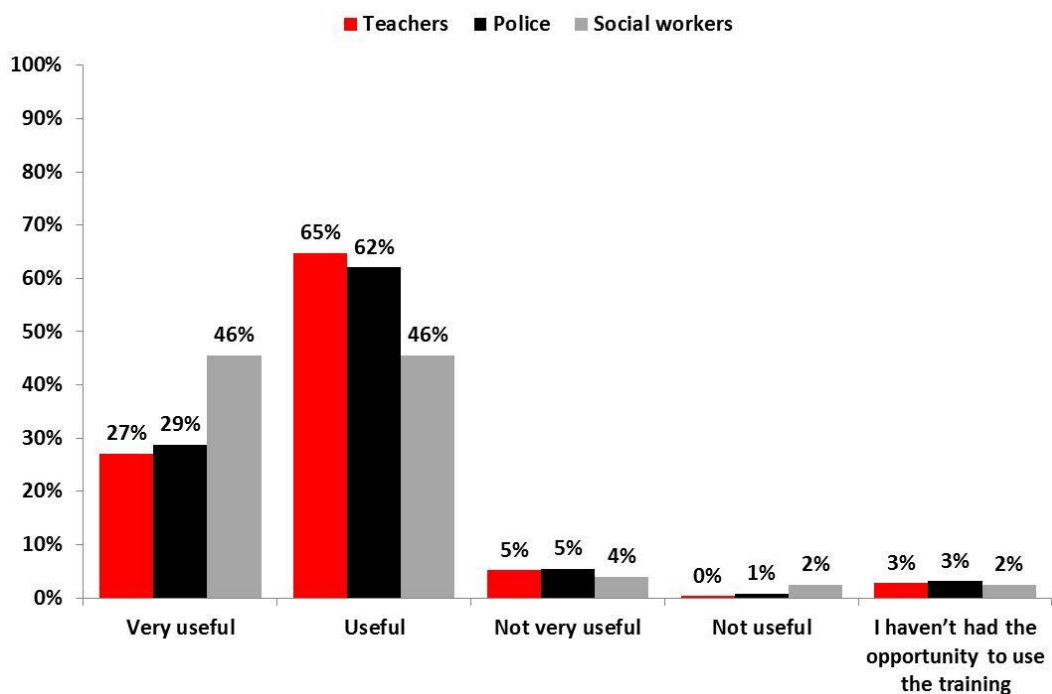
Base: All teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

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Educating children in secondary school and providing parental support and information are considered the top ways of preventing cases of CSE

Between teachers, social workers and those police professionals surveyed there was some variation in what are considered the most effective ways of preventing cases of CSE. Both teachers (71%) and social workers (74%) most mentioned the education of children in secondary schools about CSE as the most effective way of preventing CSE.

> *'Teachers have a role to educate along with the parents and to be aware of any possible signs of abuse' (Parent)*
>
> *'Teachers definitely. They spend so much time with the children in a different environment to home, they should always be aware of looking for and teaching children about CSE as well as the parents' (Parent)*

Another common theme mentioned by all three types of professionals was the need to target information at parents to help prevent cases of CSE. Providing parental support and information (63% of all professionals) and delivering public awareness campaigns aimed at parents (60% of all professionals) were both key strategies professionals think would be effective. Police (65%) were the only professionals to identify disrupting offender activity as an effective way to prevent CSE.

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Figure 42: Top 7 most effective ways of preventing cases of CSE according to professionals

Teacher	
Educating children in secondary schools about CSE	71%
Parental support and information	59%
Multi agency information sharing as part of policy and procedure	56%
Public awareness campaigns aimed at parents	55%
Mandatory training to all working with children, young people and families	55%
Targeted work with vulnerable individuals and parents	55%
Public awareness campaigns aimed at children	50%

Social workers	
Educating children in secondary schools about CSE	74%
Mandatory training to all working with children, young people and families	73%
Parental support and information	73%
Multi agency information sharing as part of policy and procedure	72%
Targeted work with vulnerable individuals and parents	68%
Public awareness campaigns aimed at children	66%
Public awareness campaigns aimed at parents	65%

Police	
Disruption of offender activity by the police	65%
Public awareness campaigns aimed at parents	64%
Multi agency information sharing as part of policy and procedure	64%
Parental support and information	63%
Educating children in secondary schools about CSE	58%
Tough sentencing in high profile court cases	58%
Targeted work with vulnerable individuals and parents	53%

Base: All teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

The finding that providing more parental support and information would be an effective method of preventing cases of CSE is supported by the finding that half of professionals (51%) disagree that parents have the right information and knowledge they need to safeguard their children from CSE. Just over a third (35%) of professionals do agree that parents have the right information they need to safeguard their children and 15% did not know.

> *'Essentially, I believe in education. Education of parents, children (everybody) as to what risks are actually & realistically out there' (Police officer)*
>
> *'Educate the parents about risk to young people and how to manage this. Give facts, dispel myths, help them with developing strategies for dealing with their worries and help them to talk to their kids' (Social worker)*

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Professionals' views on what parents can do to best to safeguard their children

Professionals think the best things parents can do to help safeguard their children are to ensure they are *'open and honest, talk to them'* and that they *'build and keep a loving and trusting relationship'*. The need to talk regularly and ensure they maintain an effective relationship with their children is a common theme in many of the comments from professionals.

More practical actions are that professionals think parents should *'monitor'* their children's communications, internet use and use of different technologies.

Figure 43: Visualisation of open ended comments from professionals on what parents can do best to safeguard their children

These quotes highlight the range of comments from professionals on how best parents can safeguard their children:

'Be open to talk about the subject; be alert and vigilant; create an atmosphere in the home which enables the child to tell.'

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'Bring their children up to feel loved, confident and have high self-esteem with plenty of outside interests. Monitoring use of the internet, especially social media is vital in protecting children from sexual exploitation.'

'Check, check, check!'

'Educate child about sexual exploitation - be warm and receptive towards child- listen to child - help the child feel valued and important. Watch for changes in attitude and secretive behaviour.'

Professionals consider a lack of parental knowledge as the main barrier in identifying and preventing cases of CSE

Seven out of ten professionals report that the man barrier they face in identifying and preventing cases of CSE is a lack of parental knowledge and engagement. This is a consistent view across responses from teachers (68%), police (73%) and social workers (68%).

> *'Too many parents are too busy, too preoccupied, too alone, too unsupported by extended family to be able to do the right thing for their children' (Teacher)*

The second main reason, mentioned by 63% of professionals, was that the fear of victims in coming forward prevents professionals from identifying and preventing cases of CSE. Social workers (69%) in particular were more likely to report this as a barrier. This was reflected in the focus groups, where many of the professionals felt that a major barrier was victims not coming forward.

The third main barrier listed by half of professionals was ineffective sharing of information between organisations, although teachers (51%) and social workers (55%) were significantly more likely to report this than the police (40%).
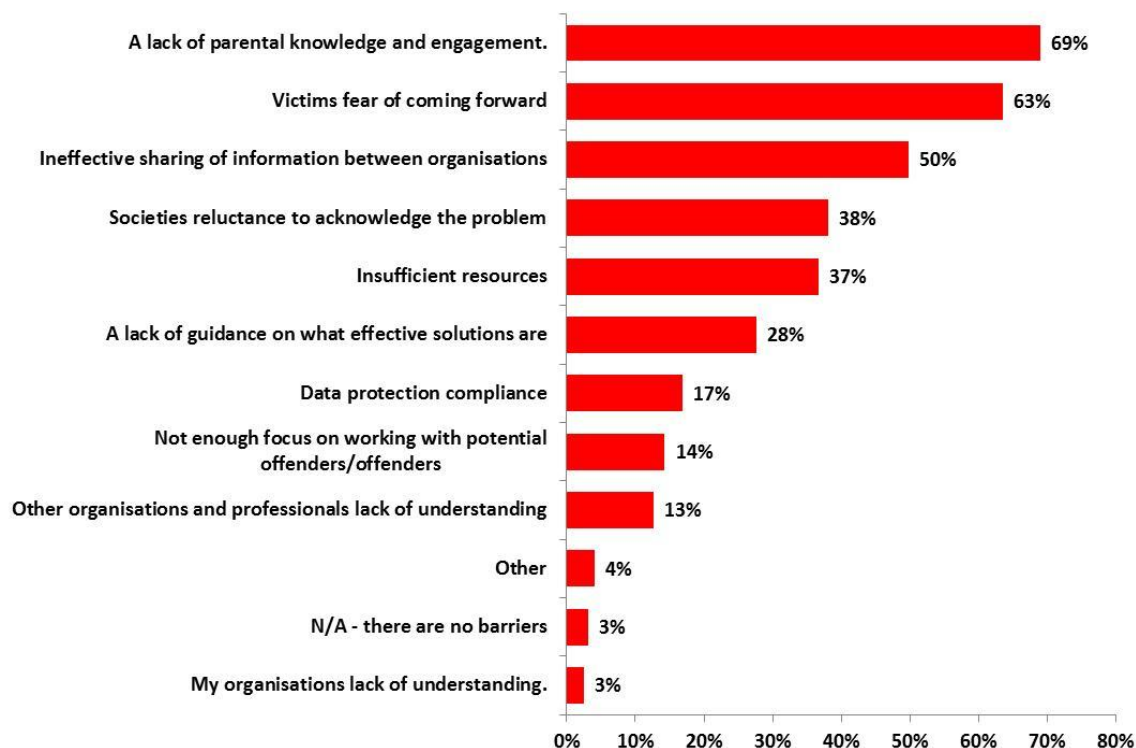
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> *'A barrier is communication- victims not feeling able to come forward and be believed' (Social worker)*
>
> *'Victims not feeling that they will be taken seriously - but also problem of the victim trying to protect perpetrator' (Social worker)*

> *'There needs to be more focus on co-ordination bringing together other agencies for a more joined up approach, need to skill/knowledge share' (Teacher)*
>
> *'Safeguarding boards can do much to encourage recognition, support prevention initiatives, encourage different agencies to work together, cascade information on good practice and try to learn the lessons from where it goes wrong' (Social worker)*

Figure 44: Main barriers in identifying and preventing cases of child sexual exploitation

Barrier	%
A lack of parental knowledge and engagement.	69%
Victims fear of coming forward	63%
Ineffective sharing of information between organisations	50%
Societies reluctance to acknowledge the problem	38%
Insufficient resources	37%
A lack of guidance on what effective solutions are	28%
Data protection compliance	17%
Not enough focus on working with potential offenders/offenders	14%
Other organisations and professionals lack of understanding	13%
Other	4%
N/A - there are no barriers	3%
My organisations lack of understanding.	3%

**Base: All professionals (n=945)**

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Local-level or multi-agency work can be improved

The finding that ineffective sharing of information between organisations is a barrier in identifying and preventing cases of CSE, is supported by the finding that less than half (47%) of professionals rate local-level joint working or multi-agency work to safeguard children as effective. A further 38% report that it is 'ok' and 4% that local-level joint working is ineffective.

Teachers were least likely to rate local-level working as effective, with 39% reporting this compared with 56% of those police and social workers surveyed.

An area where there is strong support for further effort is for statutory agencies to work in partnership with parents to safeguard children during police investigations. Nine out of ten professionals (87%) surveyed think that there are potential benefits to statutory agencies working in partnership with parents to safeguard a child during a police investigation. The police (91%) and social workers (92%) were significantly more likely than teachers to report this (83%).

Figure 45: Do you think there are potential benefits to statutory agencies working in partnership with parents to safeguard the child during a police investigation?

Base: All teachers (n=509), police (n=209), social workers (n=226)

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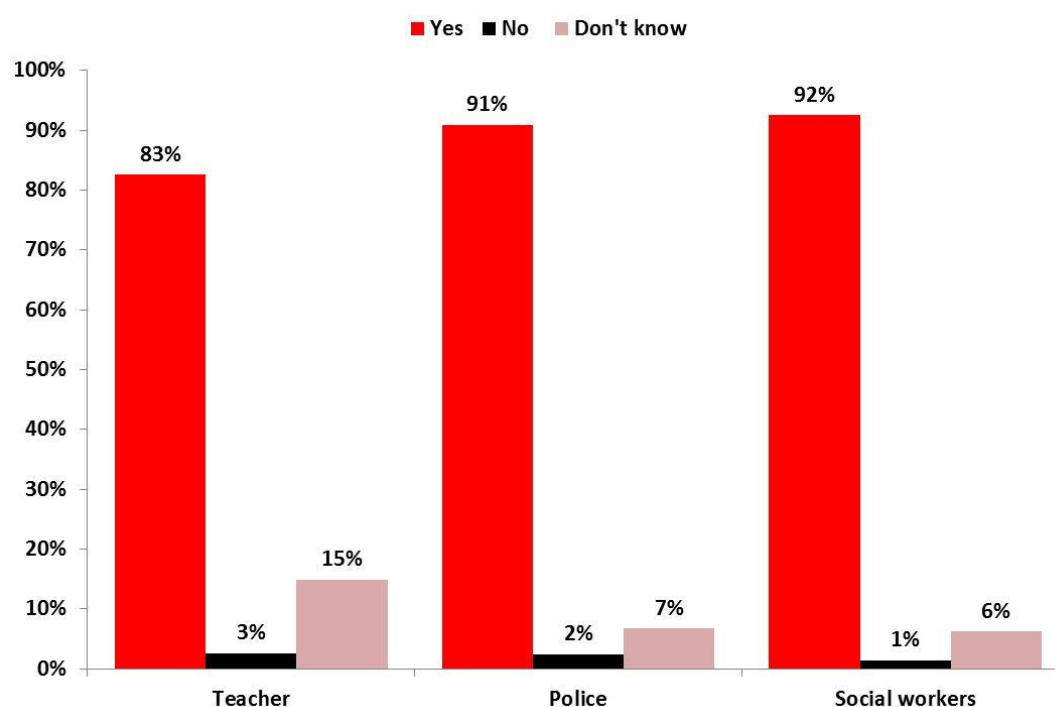
In working with children who have been sexually exploited, less than half of teachers surveyed (42%) agree that there is enough evidence and guidance available for them to work effectively with children who have been sexually exploited. The police (65%) and social workers (54%) are more likely to agree that enough evidence and guidance is available.

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Section 7: Information on Pace and Virtual College Safeguarding Children e-Academy

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace)

Established in 1996, Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) is the leading English charity working alongside parents and carers of children who are, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited by perpetrators external to the family. Pace has worked with hundreds of affected families across the country.

The charity acts as a bridge between affected parents and partner agencies. Pace's Parent Support Workers are based at multi-agency hubs tackling CSE in Lancashire, Bradford and Rochdale as well as providing national telephone support from their main office in Leeds. Parent Support Workers work with parents one-to-one, by telephone or face to face to provide:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Emotional support
- Advocacy
- Support through investigations and court
- Opportunities to meet other affected parents

Pace also offers guidance and training to professionals on how child sexual exploitation affects the whole family. Parents come to Pace a result of referrals from the police, social services and other NGOs plus self-referrals. Affected parents and families benefit from Pace's work as to do statutory partners and crucially the exploited child.

Further information can be found on the Pace website www.paceuk.info or contact info@paceuk.info or call 0131 240 3040.

Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy

Since 2006, the Safeguarding Children e-Academy has grown into a member-focused training community of 72 UK organisations, including Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, from across England, Scotland and Wales. Their ethos of collaborative development has led to a large portfolio of more than 40

safeguarding and child protection courses that have been enjoyed by over 375,000 learners. The aim of the e-Academy is to improve the education and training process for those individuals and organisations that work within, and provide support to, the children's workforce. Roles are varied and differ in levels of specialism, but one thing is key - safeguarding children is everyone's business. This means it can be difficult to reach all of the people who need to be trained using face-to-face courses alone. Their prime focus is to make strategic use of online solutions to help enhance the traditional approach to education and training.

In response to the survey results Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy has launched an e-learning package for parents on the signs of child sexual exploitation which is free to access and can be found at http://keepthemsafe.safeguardingchildrenea.co.uk.

Virtual College is one of the UK's leading e-learning providers with over 1.2 million online learners. Establishing itself as a major force in e-adoption for over 18 years, it has a team of over 100, a market-leading Learning Management System and over 300 online courses. The company is an Investor in people, a Microsoft Partner Silver Independent Software Vender, a CPD Member and successfully completed an Ofsted Inspection. It was voted by Edtech 20 as one of the top six European e-learning businesses in terms of innovation, market impact and growth.

Further information can be found at www.safeguardingchildrenea.co.uk or via 01943 885083.