Report on Parental Consultation

for the

RQIA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland

Parenting Forum July 2014

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Executive Summary

Parenting NI have been commissioned to undertake this consultation with parents on behalf of the RQIA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland. The consultation ran throughout June 2014 and consisted of 4 focus groups and an online survey.

24 participants attended the focus groups across four sites and there were 183 responses to the online survey.

Key Findings:

1. Local Context
Three main themes were identified in focus group discussions of what constitutes a safe society for children: the responsibility of the family for keeping children safe; the importance of systems that keep children safe including education, safety checks, security checks; and the role of the wider community.

When asked how safe an environment children are growing up in in Northern Ireland, over half of the online respondents thought it was safe or very safe (53%). However most parents in the focus groups said they were either unsure about how safe the local environment is for children, or else thought it was increasingly unsafe. The specific themes in the focus group discussions around safety related to: Stranger Danger; Racism; Domestic Abuse; Absent Parents; Licensing laws/Access to Alcohol and Poor attitude of Police. Discussions also took place about 'dangers to children' including: behaviour of children themselves; Family environment; Local environment and the potential risks posed by technology.

Online respondents gave feedback on the main ways in which they try to keep their children safe which they identified as through 'Good Communication' and 'Monitoring or Taking control as parents'. Parents in focus groups raised issues relating to both of these themes in their discussions along with an additional aspect which was the importance of 'Networking with the wider community'.

2. Understanding/Perception of CSE

Nearly all online respondents (95%) and all parents in the focus groups except one, had heard of the term CSE before. The main source of information about CSE for parents was: Media, news coverage and TV programmes including Adverts. Parents related high profile

cases of child abuse to CSE. Focus groups gave examples of memorable messages about CSE such as a storyline in Eastenders and two adverts – one was the NSPCC ad 'PANTS' and the other was an ad about children mirroring what adults do, however some parents had no recall of these ads or any other ads about CSE. Parents' overall perception of CSE was that it was part of child abuse and the sexual abuse of children.

Focus Group participants and online respondents both produced their own definitions of CSE, and a number of overlapping themes were identified: a child's innocence/rights being taken advantage of/used/robbed/exploited for someone else's gratification/gain/benefit that could have impact on the child/young person's health and wellbeing.

Parents were asked to identify examples of CSE. The online respondents and the focus group participants both produced very similar lists. Five key themes were identified as examples of CSE: grooming, sexual abuse, creating indecent images of children, contact online and selling sexual activity with children.

Online respondents identified the top five ways in which they think children may be exploited as through: mental manipulation, fear, giving attention, rewards or alcohol. The Focus Group participants identified similar ways in which perpetrators of CSE are able to access children & young people however they put more emphasis on manipulation via substances and party houses.

Two thirds of online respondents felt that CSE is acknowledged in Northern Ireland, but that it should be more openly discussed. Almost one in five thought it was a taboo subject rarely discussed.

3. Awareness of CSE/likelihood of CSE

Over half of the online respondents and three quarters of focus group participants said they were aware of the issues relating to CSE. This higher level of awareness in the focus groups may be related to the particular insights and experiences of the participants involved. It is also important to note that throughout both focus groups and the online responses, parents showed varying levels of awareness of the issue but when examining the content of some of the responses, it is apparent that some were not fully aware of the detail and extent of CSE in relation to, for example, the role of coercion and peer-to-peer related incidents.

Most of the online respondents thought that CSE was most likely to start between ages of 5-10 (39%) or 11-13 (35%). There were wide variations across the Focus Groups from 9-15 years with two groups also adding that it is mainly girls that are vulnerable.

Almost three fifths of online respondents (59%) and most of the focus group participants thought that some types of families may put children at more risk of CSE. They included: a family with a manipulative predator in their environment; vulnerable families; mothers with mental health problems; those families where parents show a lack of engagement/vigilance with their children; families with a looked after child and families where parents work long hours. The specific environment in Northern Ireland was also suggested as a reason for children being at risk here.

Online respondents gave further views on what makes children and young people vulnerable to CSE: 17% thought that most sexually exploited children live in care; 31% thought that parents/carers are partially responsible; 36% thought that these children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional homes; 5% thought children were partially responsible and 2% believed that only girls are victims of CSE.

The top five risk factors for CSE identified by the online respondents were: low self-esteem (76%); sexual abuse within home in earlier life (52%); living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (51%); lack of feeling loved (49%) and neglect by parents or carers (49%). In the Focus Groups there were 3 overarching themes in relation to children who may be at more risk of CSE: Characteristics of the Family; Characteristics of the Child and Characteristics of the systems supposed to keep children safe.

The top 5 warning signs that a child may be experiencing CSE were identified by the online respondents as: receiving gifts from unknown sources (82%); self-harming (79%); inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age (79%); mood swings (73%); and returning home in an agitated/stressed state (70%). Parents in the Focus Groups identified 4 very similar factors: Changes in behaviours; Mood changes; Physical signs and External signs.

Over half of the online respondents (54%) expressed confidence of some degree that they would be able to tell the difference between "warning signs" of CSE and normal "difficult" teenage behaviours. However, in the focus groups, less than half expressed confidence with regard to recognising the difference, with 58% of parents saying they would not be confident at all.

Approximately 74% of the online respondents expressed concern that CSE could happen in their neighbourhood and a similar proportion agreed that CSE could affect a family like theirs (78%). 89% of respondents thought that CSE may be a problem in Northern Ireland.

4. Accessing Support

While most of the online respondents and the focus group participants were able to name agencies to contact if they had concerns about CSE, a number of those agencies listed do not actually provide front line services in relation to CSE. Furthermore, some parents said that they did not know which agency to contact in the event of this type of concern surfacing.

Parents were asked if there were any reasons why they might not seek advice and support. Almost two thirds (65%) of online respondents said there would be no barriers to seeking help. For the remaining one third of online respondents the main reasons for not seeking support included potential trauma to the child or fear of losing their child. Parents in the focus groups identified that the main reason parents may not contact the authorities about CSE is mainly around lack of trust in the authorities but they also offered other suggestions including: protecting the perpetrator; maybe they are not sure if it is true; parent in denial that it is happening or in some families it may be more about the stigma/ fear of blame / embarrassment to family.

Approximately 71% of online respondents and 88% of focus group participants expected their child's school to contact them if they knew that some of its pupils were being sexually exploited or at risk of this. All of the focus group parents and nearly all of the online respondents (93%) said they would attend a school presentation on CSE. To date, 27% of the online respondents and 13% of focus group participants were aware of CSE related education sessions being run in their child's school. Most of the educational sessions listed by parents had a focus on stranger danger or internet safety rather than CSE specifically. There was commendation about the work of many of the schools and agencies involved, however a number of parents also commented on not really being aware of what CSE education was being delivered or by whom, nor where they aware of the detail. Approximately 90% of online respondents thought that primary schools and secondary schools should be educating young people about CSE.

5. Recommendations

Nearly all online respondents (98%) agreed that everyone has a responsibility for the safety of children. Focus Group participants identified a wide range of people who have responsibility for keeping children safe and identified their main concerns about CSE as: Vulnerability of children/young people; Not knowing how to deal with this as a parent; Living in a highly sexualised society and Inaction by authorities.

Parents made 8 key recommendations on what needs to be done to deal with CSE in Northern Ireland:

- Provide clear information/education about CSE;
- Use Effective Methods of Delivering CSE Safety Messages;
- Help empower parents who play a key role in preventing CSE;
- Strengthen the Law around CSE;
- Undertake CSE related Research to inform good practice;
- Training for all professionals in contact with children;
- Clarify Protocols for reporting;
- Invest in Preventative work & Support Services for children and their families.

Parents were grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this consultation and look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Inquiry's Report.

Parenting NI

Parenting NI have been advocating on behalf of parents since 1979, and are keen to ensure that the views of parents are taken seriously in the planning and delivery of all services for children in Northern Ireland.

Parental consultation is now an integral part of the work of the Parenting Forum within Parenting NI, and as such the organisation has developed an effective methodology to carry out such consultations. It is important that parents are confident that the consultation process is worthwhile and that they feel comfortable sharing their views. Consultation with parents requires skilled and experienced facilitators who are capable of working sensitively with diverse groups.

If any parent indicates distress or the need for support during a consultation process, Parenting NI Facilitators can signpost them to the free Parenting NI telephone helpline service (0808 8010 722), or to other support services as appropriate.

Parenting NI's Helpline has received calls from parents and carers on the issue of CSE and are currently monitoring the number and nature of these calls. Since April 2014, the Helpline has received 5 calls relating to CSE (2 where a parent called in relation to CSE and 3 where a parent called in relation to another issue but where CSE was also found to be present). A number of those case studies are available in the Supplementary Evidence report.

Background to RQIA Inquiry – Terms of Reference

An Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland was established and the following terms of reference were agreed in November 2013 which would enable the Inquiry to:

- "seek to establish the nature of Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland and a measure of the extent to which it occurs;
- examine the effectiveness of current cross sectoral child safeguarding and protection arrangements and measures to prevent and tackle CSE;
- make recommendations on the future actions required to prevent and tackle CSE and who should be responsible for these actions; and
- report the findings of the Inquiry within one year of its commencement"

In addition, the Inquiry also sought to:

- "consider specific safeguarding and protection issues for looked after children, taking into account the ongoing thematic review by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI);
- seek the views of children and young people in Northern Ireland and other key stakeholders;
- engage with parents to identify the issues they are facing and seek their views on what needs to be done to help them keep their children safe from the risk of CSE" (RQIA Press Release November 2013)

Parenting NI were commissioned by the Independent Inquiry to carry out a consultation with parents across Northern Ireland during May - July 2014. Throughout this report child sexual exploitation will now be referred to as CSE.

Development of the Consultation Tool

A facilitation pack was developed in conjunction with the Inquiry Team, and this was used to guide the consultation (a copy of which is contained in the Supplementary Evidence report). The initial meeting with the Inquiry Team identified key questions to be posed to parents. To facilitate this consultation process, it was decided to use both a focus group approach and an online survey to gather information from parents across Northern Ireland.

Questions for the focus group were developed by Parenting NI using questions suggested by the Inquiry Team. These questions were then adapted for use in an online survey and tested with a small group of parents. The tool was developed further with the inclusion of pre-tested questions from a report 'Are Parents in the Picture?' – A study on the awareness of CSE by parents and professionals in England. This study was commissioned by the charity Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) in conjunction with the Virtual College's Safeguarding Children e-Academy and undertaken by YouGov in 2013. Parenting NI obtained permission from PACE to use their pre-tested questions thus increasing the robustness of this consultation tool and also enabling comparison with the YouGov/PACE study which is available online http://www.paceuk.info/what-we-do/publications/parents-picture/)

The consultation tool subsequently evolved to contain the following themes:

1. Local Context - Keeping Children Safe
2. Understanding/Perception of CSE
3. Awareness of CSE/likelihood of CSE
4. Accessing Support
5. Recommendations from Parents

Similar questions were posed in both focus groups and the online survey, however a key difference was that most questions in the focus groups were open ended, without prompts, while the online survey contained lists and options to choose from.

Consultation with Parents

Focus Groups

Focus groups have the potential to bring parents together in a way that allows them to share their views and identify issues both of individual and common concern through informal, stimulating discussion. For this consultation, Parenting NI sought the involvement of parents, and through collaboration with a range of specific agencies and individual parents, were able set up four focus groups, 2 in Derry-Londonderry, 1 in Omagh and 1 in Belfast. Each focus group was facilitated using the consultation tool developed by the Parenting Forum. Throughout this report, parents who were involved in the focus group will be referred to as participants.

Online Survey

Online surveys offer a number of advantages including convenience for parents who can respond in their own time, with easy access through computer or mobile phone, assurance of anonymity and potential to complete the survey in much less time than would be required to participate via a focus group. This survey was initiated on 6 June 2014 and closed on 4 July 2014. Publicity to promote the survey was generated via Parenting NI using Facebook and Twitter as well as through professional networks, the Parents Forum database and e-brief. Parents who completed the online survey will be referred to as respondents in this report.

Opportunity to contribute

Both the focus group participants and online respondents were given an opportunity to comment about the consultation. Many of those attending the Focus Groups expressed

appreciation for having an opportunity to participate even though it was not an easy subject to discuss. Following the completion of the draft report, two participants from each group were sent a copy of the findings to ascertain if this feedback was a fair reflection of the focus group consultation. No amendments or changes were suggested and one of the participants gave the following feedback:

> *"A very comprehensive report. On reading it, it would be impossible to not be struck by the diversity of people who inputted and care about our children. So many things that need to be acted upon; and so many of them that don't even require funding; rather good will and a desire to make them happen."*

Respondents to the online survey were asked if there was anything they would like to say about this survey. Here is a range of some of the feedback:

> *"Thank you for the opportunity to think about this topic. It is not generally a topic for everyday discussion and i found that it did make me realise that i would like to learn more"*

> *"Very taboo topic, needs to be brought into the open and it's great to see surveys like this but needs to reach more people"*

> *"thought provoking survey"*

> *"very useful, opened my eyes and will check my 16 year old daughter is not affected by any of this, but i know in my heart she is not, but don't know for certain about all her friends"*

> *"I think this survey has shown me that i am very ill informed about this issue. My children are at the younger scale of the survey but I need to increase my awareness as they grow older"*

> *"Good survey...keen to see results and compare with other places"*

It is clear that parents who took the time to complete the online survey (which took approximately 20 minutes) or attend a focus group thought that this was worthwhile to contribute to, despite it being a difficult subject.

It is hoped that the parental views and suggestions arising from this consultation will be seriously considered by decision makers, in order to effectively tackle the issue of CSE in Northern Ireland.

Profile of Focus Group Participants

In total, twenty four participants attended the focus groups: 9 in Focus Group A; 4 in Focus Group B; 5 in Focus Group C and 6 in Focus Group D. Participants consisted of 16 females and 8 males; half were divorced or separated; 7 were married or living with their partners and 5 were single. 1 had a disability or additional needs and 3 participants had children with a disability. 5 participants were from ethnic minority/migrant communities including 3 Lithuanians, 1 Russian and one member of the Travelling Community. Between them participants had a total of 49 children ranging in age from a few months old to over 19 years old. In total 18 lived in urban areas/suburban areas and 6 lived in rural areas. Educational qualifications ranged from none to Level 4. Almost half of the participants were in employment, 4 were unemployed, 4 looked after family/home and 2 were students, while 1 was retired and 1 was long term sick. The following table gives an overview and a breakdown of the demographic details of those who attended each focus group:

Figure 1: Demographic overview and details of focus group participants

Demographic details	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Total
Male	2			6	**8**
Female	7	4	5		**16**
18-34	1	2	3	2	**8**
35-44	3	1	1	1	**6**
45-54	4		1	3	**8**
55 and over	1	1			**2**
Married/Partner		4		3	**7**
Single	1		2	2	**5**
Separated	1		1		**2**
Divorced	7		2	1	**10**
Other – including widowed					
Ethnic minority or migrant?		4	1		**5**
Disabled or additional needs?	1				**1**
Total number children in group?	22	7	11	9	**49**
Children in these age bands?					
0-3	✓	✓	✓		✓
4-8		✓	✓	✓	✓
9-14	✓		✓	✓	✓
15-17	✓		✓	✓	✓
18 and over	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child disabled/additional needs?	3				**3**

Demographic details	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Total
Rural	4		1	1	**6**
Urban	1	4	1	4	**10**
Suburban	4		3	1	**8**
Educational level to date:					
No qualifications	1		1		**2**
Level 1				1	**1**
Level 2	2	1	1		**4**
Apprenticeship				1	**1**
Level 3	3		2	1	**6**
Level 4		3	1		**4**
Other				2	**2**
No response	2			1	**3**
Employment status					
Working part-time	1			1	**2**
Working Full time		2	1		**3**
Self-employed		1		5	**6**
Unemployed	2		2		**4**
Student	2				**2**
Retired	1				**1**
Looking after home/family	1	1	2		**4**
Long term sick/disabled	1				**1**
Carry out voluntary work					
Other					
No response	1				**1**

Profile of the Online Survey Respondents

The online survey was active for a period of 4 weeks and during that time 203 people opened it and 183 people responded to it. Responses to set questions were optional, not compulsory. So not everyone replied to all questions with 155 being the highest number of responses (Q2) and 114 being the lowest number of responses to a closed question (Q48). Where possible, both percentages and base line figures are provided in the findings. 88% of the online respondents were females and 12% were males; 80% were married or living with their partners; 9% were divorced or separated; 7% were single; 4% of respondents had a disability or additional needs and 14% respondents had children with a disability. Between them participants had over 284 children ranging in age from 0-18+ years old. 3% respondents were from ethnic minority/migrant communities.

Most respondents (81%) had Level 4 or Level 3 educational qualifications. Similarly most respondents (78%) were working either full time or part time. In total 40% lived in rural areas, 60% lived in urban areas/suburban areas and the survey contained feedback from all six counties in Northern Ireland. The following table gives an overview and a breakdown of the demographic details of those who responded to the online survey:

Figure 2: Demographic overview and details of online respondents

Demographic details	Total	Percentage*
Male	14	12%
Female	104	88%
18-34	10	9%
35-44	55	47%
45-54	48	41%
55 and over	4	3%
Married/Partner/Civil Partnership	95	80%
Single	9	7%
Separated	5	4%
Divorced	6	5%
Other – including widowed	3	3%
Ethnic minority or migrant?	3	3%
Disabled or additional needs?	5	4%
Total number children?	284+	
Children in these age bands?		
0-3	10	9%
4-8	25	22%
9-14	86	75%
15-17	51	44%
18 and over	36	31%
Child disabled/additional needs?	16	14%
Rural	40	34%
Urban	47	40%
Suburban	31	26%
Educational level to date:		
No qualifications	3	3%
Level 1	5	4%
Level 2	13	11%
Apprenticeship	0	0%
Level 3	23	19%
Level 4	73	62%
Other	1	1%

Employment status		
Working part-time	**21**	**18%**
Working Full time	**68**	**60%**
Self-employed	**4**	**4%**
Unemployed	**5**	**4%**
Student	**1**	**1%**
Retired	**1**	**1%**
Looking after home/family	**10**	**9%**
Long term sick/disabled	**2**	**2%**
Carry out voluntary work	**2**	**2%**
What county do you live in?		
Antrim	**40**	**34%**
Armagh	**7**	**6%**
Derry~Londonderry	**40**	**34%**
Down	**13**	**11%**
Fermanagh	**3**	**3%**
Tyrone	**14**	**12%**
Outside Northern Ireland	**0**	**0**

*percentages are rounded off so may not add up to exactly 100%

Limitations

Two limitations about this consultation that should be taken into account when reading the findings:

i. Focus groups provide a useful flavour of the views of a range of individuals. Although this approach does not provide a representative sample of the population, the groups included parents who were selected from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, including some who have personal insights into the issue of CSE.

ii. The online survey has proven to be a useful method of obtaining views from a large number of parents across Northern Ireland. It is important to bear in mind that parents who responded to this survey, self-selected to do so. When we compare the characteristics of the respondents with those of the parent population (over 18) in NI, we can see that the parents who responded to this study are more likely to be women, educated to level 3 or 4 and be in employment. However, while not statistically representative of the parent population of Northern Ireland, this online survey produced very similar findings to the PACE/YouGov study which was based on a representative sample of 750 parents in England.

Findings

Section 1: Local Context - Keeping Children Safe

We began the consultation process with a series of questions relating to how parents viewed the general safety of their children and asked them to identify some of their concerns around the safety of children and young people here in Northern Ireland.

In the focus groups, parents were asked to consider the words: **'A safe society for children'** and were specifically asked:

1.1 What comes to mind when you see these words?

1.2 What does 'a safe society for children' mean to you personally/ in your day to day life?"

The focus groups identified a wide range of issues about what constitutes a safe society for children, and these ideas were categorised into 3 overarching themes:

- the responsibility of the family for keeping children safe
- the importance of systems that keep children safe including education, safety checks, security checks
- the role of the wider community

The responsibility of the family: participants highlighted the importance of children being "reared properly", "protected from bad things, bad people and bad experiences" and the need to keep children "out of harm's way".

The importance of systems: to ensure a safe society for children included the need to educate children "about keeping themselves safe", the need for safety/security systems at school, messages about internet safety and education for parents as well. Parents acknowledged good systems that were already in place such as safer schools, background checks on people in contact with children.

The role of the wider community: Parents expressed a need to be able to trust others with their children; some parents lived in communities with "people looking out for each other" while other parents identified the need for "a more positive attitude towards foreign nationals" as they felt that current negative attitudes were impacting on their children's sense of safety and belonging. Some participants pointed out the need to tighten licencing laws to ensure a safer society for children and young people.

1.3 Children's safety in Northern Ireland

Approximately 53% of the online respondents thought NI was safe or very safe while just under half (47%) thought it was unsafe, very unsafe or did not know as outlined in the table below.

Figure 3: Online Respondents assessment of safety of NI environment for children

Answer		Response	%
Very safe		4	3%
Safe		77	50%
Unsafe		62	40%
Very unsafe		6	4%
Don't know		5	3%
Total		154	100%

In the focus groups, most parents were either unsure about how safe the local environment was for children, or else thought it was increasingly unsafe. The specific themes in the focus group discussions related to:

- Stranger Danger
- Racism
- Domestic Abuse
- Absent Parents
- Licensing laws/Access to Alcohol
- Poor attitude of Police – towards racism, law breaking and CSE

Stranger Danger: some parents in Group A referred to media reports of an attempted snatching of a two year old in the local area the previous day. This incident made many parents unsure about safety in the local environment, as one parent said "children are not safe even in their own garden".

Racism: parents in Group B identified that a safe environment for children may depend on the area that you are living in and the neighbours/friends you have. One parent said that many towns in Northern Ireland seems to have areas where it is unsafe for adults as well as children. These areas were described as 'anti-social with religious issues and not accepting or welcoming of newcomers'.

Domestic Violence: this was a key theme in Group C, where participants described moving out of domestic violence situations and how this created a safer environment for their children. However some still had concerns about access to children and the risk that this might pose to their children.

Absent Parents: Group D described their locality as "an increasingly unsafe place for children and young people". This group had a unique insight into CSE given their occupation: "we are the eyes and ears of the community". Taxi drivers in the group identified that over their many years in the business (one man had been a taxi driver for 26 years), they could see a lot of deterioration in the community. They expressed their concerns about parents who do not know where their children are at night, and suggested that many of these parents are possibly "too drunk themselves to look after their children". Participants lamented that "kids were becoming old before their time" and there were "too many kids having kids". They felt that the novelty of having a baby soon wears off and that these teenagers soon "want to be back out socialising" and said unless the teenagers parents could look after the child, many of these babies are being looked after by a wide range of different people which meant that they were not getting "proper parenting". Participants felt that a cycle of dysfunctional behaviour was inevitable as more babies are being born into this "blue bag culture" where there is apparent unrestricted access to alcohol and drugs at increasingly younger ages.

Licencing Laws/Access to Alcohol: Group D were concerned about the lax interpretation of licencing laws by licenced premises and off licences in their city. Underage young people gaining admission to adult night clubs was a particular concern as was the specific vulnerability of these young people to predatory adults. Participants described certain premises that stay open and continue to serve alcohol after 2am when they are supposed to be closed - despite CCTV cameras nothing happens to stop this. Further risks on the premises include availability of a wide range of drugs and the possibility of having drinks spiked. Participants gave examples of rescuing young people from risky situations on the streets including potential sexual assault, extreme intoxication and distress resulting in having to bring children home or to A&E.

Another source of concern was the availability of alcohol from off licences, via adults who buy drinks for children and young people. Participants were also aware of certain taxi drivers who deliver alcohol to houses for underage young people. Taxi drivers in Group D said that they sometimes collect young people who are already drunk before they go out to the night clubs. Furthermore for many young people the night does not stop after the bar/club closes as they proceed onto parties or party houses.

Taxi drivers in Group D also reported bringing young people to school on Monday morning who smell of drink. They expressed concern about the impact this might have on schooling.

Poor attitude of Police: Participants in Group D reported that Police appear to be observing unlawful situations without intervening; that Police only appear to take action if there is violence. One participant described watching a young girl coming out of a licensed premises, appearing disorientated due to drink/drugs and proceeded to go to the toilet at the corner of the street. Three adult males approached her and two taxi drivers had to intervene to prevent what they considered to be a potential sexual assault. All this occurred with a police car sitting nearby, with occupants looking on. One participant said: "it seems the police do not give a shit about this town, and don't care what happens to these kids".

Parents in Group B also expressed concerns about the Police: Parents described contacting police about the racist attacks on their families, and were told by Police that they were doing everything they could. However parents themselves felt that nothing was really being done by the police to address these issues, and one parent said this was confirmed to her by a policeman she confronted. Families pointed out that police have little visibility in their localities. It appeared to parents in this group that Police do not seem to know how to handle situations involving racism. Furthermore, participants said that many BME families are scared and do not contact the police about racist attacks. Parents suggested that police appeared afraid to do anything about racism, drug dealers etc., so how can they deal with sexual abuse? Parents identified that Police need cultural competency training to improve their attitudes towards migrant people which they regarded as unfair and biased. "Some police have stereotypical views of migrants – they think that we are stupid".

1.4 Dangers to Children
Four main themes arose from focus group discussions about 'dangers to children':
- children themselves
- Family environment
- Local environment
- Potential risks posed by technology

Children themselves: Parents identified that many children may have a "lack of knowledge of dangers" and that many are "growing up too quickly". Of particular concern was "kids dressed up as Barbies", the increasingly younger ages of children accessing alcohol and drugs and "kids having kids" which then perpetuates this dysfunctional cycle of behaviour.

Family environment: Parents expressed concern about the prevalence of "Absent Parents" and parents who are "not equipped to deal with dangers posed to children".

Local environment: this was regarded as a potential danger to children with worries expressed about the intentions of strangers or acquaintances towards children, racism and the impact of this on children, the easy access to drink and drugs and the lack of regulation or enforcement towards those who flout these laws.

Potential risks posed by technology: Parents spoke about the impact of outside influences on their children. This mainly related to children's use of mobile phones and the internet; parents shared their worries about potential dangers posed to children in this unfamiliar environment. Some parents also expressed concern about the explicit nature of some TV & films which appear to endorse a casual attitude towards sex and sexuality; parents in Group B described their difficulty in explaining bisexuality to their children during the recent Eurovision Song Contest. Parents said while they agreed with equal rights for all, they felt that sexuality of all types is being over promoted. Parents said they would appreciate guidance about explaining these issues to their children as they had difficulty dealing with the issue themselves.

1.5 Keeping children safe?

In the online survey, parents were asked which of the following they did to keep their children safe:

Figure 4: Online Respondents feedback on what they do to keep their children safe

Answer	Response	%
Regularly talk to my child/ren to make sure they are ok	147	99%
Explain the dangers children face from unknown people	142	95%
Explain the dangers children face on the internet	139	93%
Provide limits on how far my child/ren can go from home	134	90%
Set curfews for what time my child/ren have to be home	131	88%
Explain the dangers children face from people they know including family and friends	100	67%
Check internet history	94	63%
Have restrictions on which internet sites my child/ren can access	93	62%
Have restrictions when they can access the internet	71	48%
Check their mobile phone text messages	57	38%
Check their mobile phone contacts	46	31%
None of these	1	1%

Total number of responses = 149

The two key approaches identified by online respondents were talking with their child and/or monitoring their activities – online as well as offline. This was very similar to the three key methods identified by participants in the focus groups on keeping their children safe which were:

- Good Communication
- Taking control as parents
- Networking with wider community

Good Communication: Parents in all groups highlighted the need to talk to children, to communicate well with them "so that they can discuss anything with you". Parents also linked the importance of good communication in developing close relationships with children and in conveying awareness of keeping safe. Parents agreed that communication is the key, but stated that it can sometimes be difficult to talk to children, particularly teenagers.

Taking control as parents: this overarching theme included a wide range of approaches by parents including "knowing where your children are"; having a "curfew for children/young people"; "being careful about what children watch on TV"; "monitor child's phone and internet use"; "keeping children busy" and "not to give into peer pressure". Parents in Group C also identified that it was important for single parents to be careful when choosing partners and that this was part of their responsibility towards their children. Participants in Group D shared their insights into what they considered to be the lack of "proper parenting" by many parents of the children and young people who use their taxis at all times of day and night: overall participants thought that parents needed to exercise tighter control on the whereabouts and behaviours of their children.

Parents in Group A discussed general parenting approaches to keeping children safe and this ranged from examples of over protecting children to concerns about apparent complacency by some parents who assume that their own children are ok. Parents also shared tips about keeping children safe such as a secret password – which could be useful for an unexpected school lift arrangement or if a child is in a difficult situation and wants to alert you.

With regard to the online environment, it was apparent that some parents were unclear about the ethics of monitoring children's phone and internet use – parents who did this said there were mixed messages about whether this was the right thing to do or whether they were invading their child's privacy. One parent described how she recently became concerned about her child's use of her smart phone and confiscated the phone and replaced it with an ordinary basic phone.

While some parents said they do not want to be seen as 'nagging' in response to children and young people who say 'everyone else is doing it', other parents shared how they try to

influence their children despite peer pressure. Parents agreed it was important not to give in to peer pressure, not to allow children to go to places that were unsuitable for their age. Parents identified a need for safe, age appropriate places for children and young people to meet which would have good supervision. Parents also expressed frustration with other parents for their lack of proper parenting and how that impacted on everyone in the society.

Networking with the wider community: parents in Group C discussed the need for everyone to help keep children safe and the importance of good community to help with this. A number of parents mentioned the use of Facebook pages particularly one entitled 'Joe G Mccloskey' which includes reports of criminal proceedings and locations of convicted paedophiles.

1.6 Mobile phones

Figure 5: Online Respondents rate confidence in knowing if child/ren had more than one mobile phone

Answer		Response	%
Very confident		97	69%
Confident		33	23%
Not very confident		6	4%
Not at all confident		1	1%
Don't know		4	3%
Total		141	100%

Almost all online respondents were either very confident or confident (92%) about how many phones their child had. This reflected the discussions in the focus groups. Most parents in Group A (n=8) were confident that they knew how many phones their child had, particularly in relation to their own control in buying the phone and in paying for the top-ups. However one parent (who also worked in the helping services) was aware of situations where children/young people have had more than one phone without parents realising. With further discussion, parents identified that it was possible that children / young people have only one phone but actually have more than one SIM card that parents may not be aware of. All parents in Group B and Group C were also very confident that they knew about their children's mobile phone behaviour. In Group D, participants pointed out that there are other ways in which children/young people can use internet or apps for connecting with people that they might not want parents to know about: they thought that the actual number of mobile phones was not really the issue.

With regard to what age a child should have access to a mobile phone, this was considered by the focus groups to be dependent on the situation. Parents unanimously agreed that by

time child is in first year at secondary school, they would probably have a phone. Some parents said they felt safer if their child had a mobile phone, and gave examples of asking their children to ring them when they had reached their destination such as school or an activity safely – for some parents this safety aspect was extremely important in light of previous racist attacks on their children.

1.7 Social Media accounts

The following table demonstrates a high degree of confidence among online respondents about the number of social media accounts held by their child.

Figure 6: Online respondents confidence levels about number of social media accounts owned by child/ren

Answer		Response	%
Very confident		67	48%
Confident		37	26%
Not very confident		26	18%
Not at all confident		6	4%
Don't know		5	4%
Total		141	100%

Almost three quarters of the online respondents would be very confident or confident (74%) about the number of social media accounts owned by their child. This contrasted with participants in the focus groups where only 25% of parents said they would be confident about knowing if their child had more than one Facebook account. One parent said that she has access to her child's Facebook account and will hold the password of this until her child is 18 as agreed with her child. Another parent described finding a site her child had been looking at about "how to hide your history on the internet", and it was agreed by other parents that they knew very little about different ways in which their children are using the internet. They also said that they knew very little about internet safety although some had heard of different apps / sites that are available that have been the source of problems for some young people.

Some parents expressed concerns about how mobile phones and the internet was being used by strangers to access children and young people. A number of parents suggested the need for education/classes for parents and grandparents about keeping children safe online. There was also a discussion about the use of the word 'friends' – one parent thought that children and young people do not seem to have 'friends' in the same way that she did when she was growing up. She felt that most of her children's friends were acquaintances and that many children do not have real friends anymore. Some parents were also concerned about

the use of the mobile phone and the way in which we all use them all the time, even when we are with others instead of talking.

Some parents felt confident about their children online because they keep a close eye. However they thought that many other parents are not internet savvy and may not know how to do this. They discussed the dangers of 'a child who feels like a boss' in this environment, posting up own photos or photos of the family etc., Parents discussed the importance of monitoring children's usage of the internet, as well as the need to check history of online activity.

Summary of Section 1: Local Context - Keeping Children Safe

Three main themes were identified in focus group discussions of what constitutes a safe society for children: the responsibility of the family for keeping children safe; the importance of systems that keep children safe including education, safety checks, security checks; and the role of the wider community.

When asked how safe an environment children are growing up in in Northern Ireland, over half of the online respondents though it was safe or very safe (53%). However most parents in the focus groups said they were either unsure about how safe the local environment is for children, or else thought it was increasingly unsafe.

Online respondents gave feedback on the ways in which they try to keep their children safe which can be summed up by the following two overarching themes: 'Good Communication' and 'Monitoring or Taking control as parents'. Parents in focus groups raised issues relating to both of these themes in their discussions along with an additional aspect which was 'Networking with the wider community'.

Most parents were confident about the number of mobile phones their children had and expressed appreciation that this technology enabled them to know where their children were; there was acknowledgement that if a child wanted to hide contacts on phone, they could do this via an additional SIM card, apps or mobile internet without parental knowledge. In general parents said that the appropriate age for mobile ownership depends on the child and the circumstances. While most of the online respondents were confident about the number of social media accounts (such as Facebook) that their children might have, very few parents in the focus groups expressed this confidence.
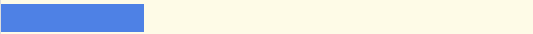
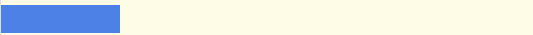## Section 2: Understanding and perceptions of CSE
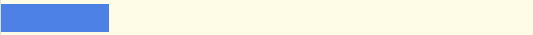
2.1 Awareness of CSE

Nearly all the online respondents (95%) had heard the term CSE before which was similar to the findings (93%) in the YouGov/PACE study (p.14).

In the focus groups, everyone except one participant had heard of this term before, but it was not something that was familiar. Everyone in Group A had heard this term before (n=9). In Group B, three parents had heard the term but had never discussed it before, while one parent had received training at work about child sexual abuse. Most parents in Group C had heard the term before (n=4). Participants in Group D (n=6) had not heard the specific term before a recent conference that was geared towards informing the hospitality trade about CSE.

2.2 Where parents had heard about CSE

Figure 7: Online respondents identify where they had heard term CSE before		Response	%
Media and news coverage		123	90%
TV programmes		90	66%
*Other		41	30%
Your children's school		34	25%
Social workers		31	23%
Friends		30	22%
Community groups		28	21%
Religious groups		10	7%
Your doctor		0	0%

Total number of responses = 136
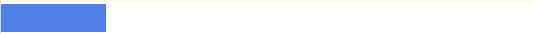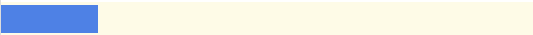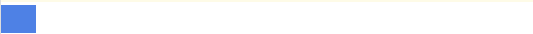
* consisted mainly of information acquired through work, workshops/training, independent reading or social media

The most common source of information about CSE for the online respondents was from the media and news (90%) followed by TV programmes (66%)**.** This is similar to the findings of the YouGov/PACE study which identified media and news (90%) and TV (55%) as the main sources (p.15). This finding was reflected in the responses of the participants in the focus groups who identified that their main source of information about CSE was also:

- Newspapers
- TV
- Adverts

2.3 Messages about CSE and how effective they are

Parents in the Focus Groups identified that Newspapers and TV have been the primary source of information about CSE with news of celebrity cases in particular and high profile cases such as the disappearance of Madeline McCann. Some TV programmes were mentioned as being a source of information about CSE, for example a recent storyline in Eastenders where a step-dad was grooming a young girl. Parents also pointed out that conversely some TV programmes such as 'Celebrity Juice' seem to be actively promoting sexual exploitation.

Adverts that stood out for some parents in both Group A and Group D were the NSPCC Pants adverts on the radio as well as an advert about children mirroring what they see their parents doing (parents thought this may have been a Barnardos ad but were not sure). It is of note that none of the parents in Group B could recall anything outstanding or memorable in recent advertising. Group C thought that there is not enough in the news about this issue and there needs to be better use of social media and schools to educate children and parents. Participants in Group D suggested the use taxis as an effective media for publicity.

2.4 Own Definitions of CSE

Definitions varied from simple descriptions such as "Someone taking advantage of a child's innocence for their own gratification" (Participant, Focus Group A) to complex, comprehensive definitions:

> "Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that involves the manipulation and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status. The manipulation or 'grooming' process involves befriending children, gaining their trust, and often feeding them drugs and alcohol, sometimes over a long period of time, before the abuse begins. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power which limits the victim's options. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. Although it is true that the victim can be tricked into believing they are in a loving relationship, no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused" (Online Respondent)

Parents in the Focus Groups worked on this task individually or in small groups. Analysis of the definitions of CSE produced by the focus groups identified the following 4 key components:

(1) a child's innocence/rights/childhood

(2) being taken advantage of/used/robbed/exploited/ manipulated/groomed

(3) to make child participate inappropriate sexual behaviour

(4) for someone else's gratification/gain/benefit

In the online survey, 117 respondents provided their own definition of CSE. The following word cloud highlights the most common words used by respondents:

Figure 8: Word cloud of definitions of CSE by online respondents

In order to get a handle on the extensive range of definitions put forward by the online respondents, it was decided to assess these definitions using the 4 components identified in the focus group definitions.

Key components in definitions identified by focus groups	Similar expressions/concepts used by online respondents
Figure 9: Validating definitions of CSE using components identified by Focus Groups	
A child's innocence/rights/childhood	Trust; child's lack of knowledge or experience; whether child perceives themselves as vulnerable or not; child may be unaware of what is occurring; child may believe they are in a caring relationship; vulnerable; naïve; imbalance of power which limits the victim's options;
Being taken advantage of/used/robbed/exploited/ manipulated/ groomed	a form of abuse often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual; in some circumstances child is sold or given away for sex; Techniques and ploys; bribed; forced; inappropriate behaviour; unwanted or suggestive physically, emotionally or verbally; befriends; rewards or to avoid punishment; threats; intimidation, financial help, friendship; money; gifts; status; affection; compliments, sweets; online flirting; befriending; gaining trust; drugs and alcohol; can be tricked/persuaded into taking sexual images/engage in sexual acts which are then recorded and used against them; use of texts, social media, video; someone pretending to be a child online to groom other children; includes media pressure to be sexy; having to do things to stay friends or to be part of the gang; for food and shelter; being controlled by the perpetrator;
To make child participate inappropriate sexual behaviour	Illegal and immoral acts, Indecent behaviour, sexual assault or rape; inappropriate touching; online and offline activity that involves inappropriate behaviour; engaging in or exposed to sexual behaviour or literature or images which are not age appropriate; emotional or physical abuse; recruiting children or young people into circles of abuse; a child being made to do something he/she does not want to; any form of abuse that affects the child's health and well-being; child pornography; sexually explicit websites
For someone else's gratification/gain/benefit	Even another teenager; adults; paedophiles; sexually mature peers; people they know or strangers; older child, same age or even younger child can be perpetrators; for own sexual gratification or to provide gratification for others

	psychologically damaging to children and teenagers, confusing sexual and emotional development with sexual acts; affects the child's health and wellbeing;
• Additional component identified in online survey: **Potential impact on the child**	

This exercise affirmed that the four components identified in the definitions provided by the focus groups were also found in the definitions given by the online respondents. Furthermore an additional fifth component was found in some definitions put forward by the online respondents: 'the potential impact on the child'. Together these 5 key components provide a potential basis for a user friendly definition of the concept of 'CSE'.

2.5 Examples of CSE

The online survey presented a list of different types of CSE and asked respondents to identify the most common methods:

Figure 10: Online respondents views on the most common methods involved in CSE		
Answer	Response	%
Grooming	126	95%
Sexual abuse	120	90%
Creating indecent images of children	118	89%
Contact online	117	88%
Selling sexual activity with children	107	80%
Intimidating a child	96	72%
Internal trafficking	81	61%
Violence towards a child	80	60%
Emotionally isolating a child from their family	80	60%
Slavery	63	47%
Intimidating the child's family	46	35%
Other	1	1%
None of the above	0	0%

Total number of responses = 133

The top five methods of CSE identified in the online survey were grooming; sexual abuse; creating indecent images; contact online and selling sexual activity with children. Although not all in the same order, these were the very same top five methods identified by parents in the YouGov/PACE study (p.23).

Five similar key themes emerged from the lists of issues raised by participants in the focus groups about what they considered to be different types/methods of CSE:

- Inappropriate photos/videos shared via phones/social media
- Grooming of children by adults

- Peer pressure into doing inappropriate things
- Early sexualisation of children
- Trafficking and Child Brides

Inappropriate Photos/videos shared via phones/social media: Parents were aware of children/teenagers taking inappropriate pictures of themselves and posting them online as well as situations where pictures were being taken under duress or against the will of the child. Parents acknowledged pressure put on teens to post topless photos on Facebook as they may feel need to demonstrate that they are nearly adults, however they may not realise the full implications of doing this. Parents described 'dare games' that involve young children taking pictures and sending them on their phones or on social media. In Group B, one parent shared how the school dealt effectively with an incident involving her child where a photo was taken in the toilet and her friend posted it on Facebook. The parent thought that the school handled the situation very well and involved both children and their families.

Grooming of children by adults: parents described how 'grooming' can be undertaken within the family, by friends/neighbours or by strangers in real life and increasingly via the internet.

Peer pressure into doing inappropriate things: Some parents said that children and young people can feel pressure to conform or to join in with peer group and that this can result in CSE. One mother explained that her daughter (aged 11) has friends who already have 'boyfriends'. One of her child's friends recently described how her boyfriend had 'touched' her. This parent spoke of the quandary for her child, who obviously does not want to be left out, but is not old enough or mature enough to have boyfriends. From the parents perspective, her child is still of an age where she can enjoying playing, but her friends want to go to discos and have boyfriends.

Sexualisation of children: all focus groups made some reference to sexually explicit clothing being marketed at children and named a number of shops which they were aware of that were previously lobbied to remove such merchandise including Primark, Adams & New Look. A number of parents also referred to child beauty pageants which they viewed as inappropriate and abusive of children.

Trafficking and Child Brides: Three of the focus groups referred to trafficking. In Group A, one parent was aware of trafficking of young people for sexual purposes in Northern Ireland while other parents expressed surprise that this issue exists here. Participants in Group D

felt that some prostitute rings in the city included young women who were there against their will. Participants said that they believed police know about these, but appear to be doing nothing about it. There are websites which are used to book into these venues. One parent also identified 'Child Brides' as another form of CSE as the child was being given away by the family either for financial gain or under duress.

2.6 Perpetrators of CSE

Online respondents were asked to select a maximum of 5 ways in which perpetrators can access children and young people in relation to CSE

Figure 11: Online respondents' assessment of the most likely techniques by which children can be negatively influenced and controlled by others		
Answer	Response	%
Mental manipulation	101	76%
Fear	94	71%
Giving the child or young person attention (e.g. listening to them or showing an interest in them or what they are doing)	94	71%
Rewards e.g. mobile phone top-ups	91	68%
Alcohol	83	62%
Drugs	79	59%
Promises of love and/or affection	76	57%
Promises of opportunities e.g. modelling, photography, acting	75	56%
Blackmail	59	44%
Physical violence	51	38%
Food treats	32	24%
Paying off debts	19	14%
Other	3	2%
None of the above	0	0%

Total number of responses = 133

The top 5 listed ways in which children can be accessed/influenced or controlled identified in this study were the same as 4 out of the top 5 techniques identified by parents responding to the YouGov/PACE study (p.25). Comments made under "Other" were that all of the above could be used to influence/control children. Focus Group participants also identified five key ways in which perpetrators of CSE are able to access children & young people: while some of these are similar to the online findings, there was more emphasis on manipulation through substances and contact via party houses:

- Using their own position of trust to sexually exploit a child
- Online Contact
- Use of gifts or paying attention
- Manipulation via substances
- Party houses

Using their own position of trust to sexually exploit: Perpetrators can be family or extended family members who are able to access children in their own home; others may gain access by close association with the family – for example friends, neighbours, babysitters etc; professionals such as teachers, clergy, youth leaders or other trusted pillars of society; peer group members may also be source of sexual exploitation. Parents in two focus group spoke about their concerns and the dangers of 'Sleep Overs' which they considered to be something that potentially puts a child at risk. Parents in Group C described perpetrators as "highly manipulative", and can include people in power. Parents said that convicted paedophiles can be a source of continuous danger to children and were annoyed about the re-homing of paedophiles close to schools and parks. Some parents suggested that paedophiles and others who sexually exploit children appear to have more rights than children and their families.

Online Contact: parents spoke of adults pretending to be young people online in order to gain access to children.

Use of gifts or paying attention: this can take the form of sweets, drink, cigarettes, drugs, offering lifts or giving compliments

Manipulation via substances such as drink, drugs, spiked drinks, date rape drugs. Parents in Group B expressed particular concerns about the use of drugs disguised as sweets (that looked like strawberry flavoured candy or vitamins). These parents had heard rumours from their children about older children drugging younger children and sexually assaulting them in the toilets. Parents were not sure if these rumours were based on incidents in Northern Ireland.

Participants in Group C & D expressed concern about the culture of drink spiking in certain premises in the city. Participants pointed out that drink spiking is also taking place in night clubs that are allowing admission to teenagers aged 14 – 17 if business is quiet. Some participants described how vulnerable young people are if they have their drink spiked as they can be taken advantage of; also in some cases if they are unmanageable inside the club (due to alcohol consumption/spiked drink) and get thrown out onto the street, they are then at the mercy of others on the street. Participants asserted that this issue is being ignored by both police and health authorities as there does not appear to be any investigation into this activity. Concern was also expressed about the role of drugs in suicides locally, including the use of legal highs which are still available in certain shops in the town.

Party houses: Some parents were aware of these; others were not. Group D were very aware of them and expressed concerns about the number of young girls (aged 14-15 years old) who are attending these parties which sometimes go on for several days. A specific issue of concern is that some of these parties are attended predominantly by men/boys.

2.7 Official definitions of CSE

Figure 12: Focus Group participants were asked to consider the following SBNI definitions of CSE

Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland professional working definition of CSE*:

"Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse."

Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland definition of CSE for children & young people:

"It is a form of abuse in which young people (boys or girls) are tricked or exploited into taking part in sexual activity for something. The something could be attention, love, food, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or money."

*Note that this definition is a work in progress and would usually be accompanied by pages of explanatory notes for professionals which were not shared with parents in this consultation.

Taking into account their own understanding of CSE, parents in the focus groups were asked what they thought of these official definitions.

Some parents thought that these definitions were overly wordy, and that some of the definitions given by other parents were easier to understand. Of the two definitions presented here, parents in Group A favoured the definition for children. However, one parent queried the suggestion that children may be sexually exploited for 'something' which was positive like a gift; as she thought that the 'something' could also be something negative like fear. Parents in Group C reiterated how important it was to give children time/attention they needed, so that "there would not be a lack in them that someone else might then exploit". Group D said that the terminology (CSE) was relatively new to them and suggested that there needed to be more in the definition about mental exploitation and impact of CSE on the mental health of a child.

In Group B, parents thought that the general definition was good but 'too academic sounding' and felt that the children's definition was much better. They also thought that the term 'CSE' was confusing and would maybe be wrongly perceived by many parents as either sexual abuse within the family or trafficking, without realising that all children are at risk. It is of note that this viewpoint was shared by some in the online survey: "I think the name 'child sexual exploitation' can make uneducated parents think it does not concern them".

2.8 CSE in Northern Ireland?

Most of the online respondents were of the view that this subject should be more openly discussed (66%). Approximately one in five thought that it is rarely discussed because it is a taboo subject (18%) as outlined in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Online respondents' views on how CSE is treated by society in Northern Ireland		
Answer	Response	%
We acknowledge it but it should be more openly discussed	90	66%
It's a taboo subject rarely discussed	24	18%
I think it's an issue that can be openly discussed	19	14%
There is too much discussion on the issue	1	1%
None of these	2	1%
Total	136	100%

One of the respondents commented:

> "this island has a big problem and history in this area that will take generations to deal with effectively (even if the right funding and prorgammes are instituted)".

Similar levels of parents in the YouGov survey (63%) shared the view that this subject should be discussed more openly (p.20).

Summary of Section 2: Understanding/Perception of CSE

Nearly all online respondents (95%) and all parents in the focus groups except one, had heard of the term CSE before. The main source of information about CSE for these parents was: Media, news coverage and TV programmes including Adverts.

Focus Group participants and online respondents both produced their own definitions of CSE, and a number of overlapping themes were identified including: a child's innocence/rights being taken advantage of/used/robbed/exploited for someone else's gratification/gain/benefit that could have impact on the child/young person's health and wellbeing.

Parents were asked to identify examples of CSE. The online respondents and the focus group participants both produced very similar lists which is noteworthy given that the focus groups did not have any prompt sheets on this. Five key themes were identified: grooming, sexual abuse, creating indecent images of children, contact online and selling sexual activity with children.

Online respondents identified the top five ways in which children may be exploited as: mental manipulation, fear, giving attention, rewards or alcohol. The Focus Group participants identified similar ways in which perpetrators of CSE are able to access children & young people however they put more emphasis on manipulation via substances and party houses.

Two thirds of online respondents (66%) felt that CSE is acknowledged in Northern Ireland, but that it should be more openly discussed. Almost one in five (18%) thought it was a taboo subject rarely discussed.

Section 3: Awareness of CSE/likelihood of CSE

3.1 Awareness of the issues related to CSE

In the online survey, 57% of respondents said they were aware/very aware of the issues relating to CSE as outlined in the figure below. This reflects the combined findings of the YouGov/PACE report were 20% of parents said they were very aware & 37% were aware (p.16).

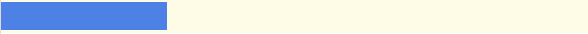**Figure 14: Online respondents rate their level of awareness of the issues relating to CSE**

Awareness of issues related to CSE

- Unaware; 2%
- Very aware; 27%
- Aware; 41%
- Some awareness; 30%
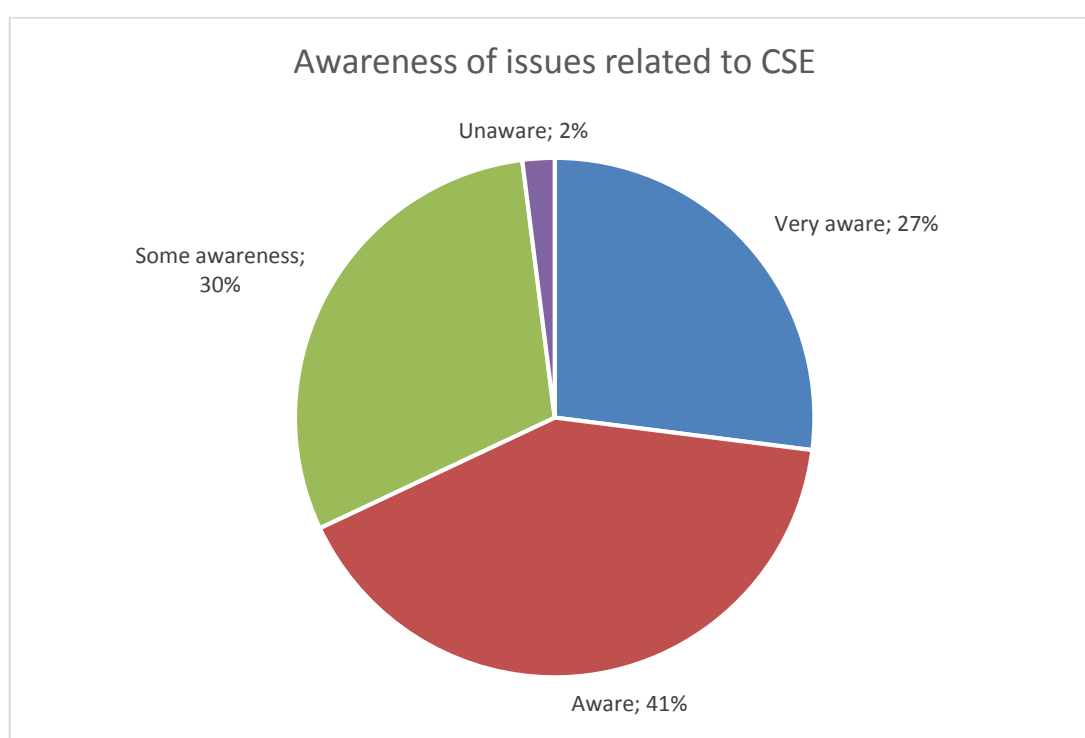
Number of responses = 138

In the Focus Groups, there was mixed feedback on this question. In total, 67% of participants said they were either aware/very aware of the issues relating to CSE while 33% felt that they had only some awareness of CSE. This high level of awareness among some parents may be related to the particular insights of the participants. Parents in Group C said they were very aware of the issues and were particularly concerned about the lack of action by authorities even when issues of concern are reported: for example one parent who contacted the police about her reluctance to leave her young child with her ex-partner when she knew he was having parties in the house at the weekends. Group D participants said they were aware of CSE and the issues associated with it, mainly due to their profession as taxi drivers.

3.2 Age of CSE 'victims'

Most of the online respondents thought that CSE was most likely to start between ages of 5-10 (39%) or 11-13 (35%). This is similar to findings of YouGov/PACE study where the majority of parents selected one of these two age groups (5-10 (35%) and 11-13 (42%) (p.37)).

Figure 15: Online respondents view on age of most victims when CSE starts

Answer		Response	%
5 to 10 years old		50	39%
11 to 13 years old		45	35%
Don't know		18	14%
14 to 15 years old		9	7%
Under 4 years of age		6	5%
16 to 17 years old		1	1%
Total		129	100%

The consensus across all Focus Groups was that CSE could start at any age. With regard to the age of most victims, parents in Group A suggested that children 10+ may be more vulnerable while Group B thought that the most vulnerable children would be aged 9-13 and that it can affect boys as well as girls. Group D thought that girls aged 13-15 were most vulnerable.

3.3 Families at risk

Almost 60% of online respondents thought there was a higher risk of CSE in some types of families as shown in the figure below. This is similar to the finding of the YouGov/Pace study where 61% of parents also agreed with this statement (p.38).

Figure 16: Online respondents views on whether some families are more likely than others to have children affected by CSE

Answer		Response	%
Yes		78	59%
No		31	23%
Don't know		23	17%
Total		132	100%

Online respondents who did not agree with the view that children from certain families are more vulnerable expressed views such as:

> "All children are susceptible to this type of abuse as most go through times of uncertainty as they grow and develop so abusers just need to find the weak point and manipulate the child so any family can be a target"

Initially each focus group indicated that children from specific types of families with particular issues may be more vulnerable to CSE. However following a lot of debate, including reflections on personal experiences, most parents agreed that while all children were potentially vulnerable, some children may be more at risk.

The Focus Groups compiled lists of family types where children may be more at risk. Similar issues from all the groups were batched together until themes became evident. These themes were where:

- a manipulative predator was in their environment
- a family was experiencing difficulties
- a mother had mental health problems
- a lack of engagement with children or vigilance by parents was experienced

These over-arching themes arising from the focus groups were then used as a framework to assess the types of families identified by the online respondents.

Figure 17: Focus group participants and online respondents' descriptions of the types of families where children may be at more risk of CSE

Types of families / children more at risk	Focus Group participants	Online Survey respondents
Manipulative predator in environment	Parents thought that perpetrators can use positions of authority to access children from any backgrounds. One parent made the point that given outcomes of recent high profile cases of child sexual abuse, that perpetrators will be able to use this as propaganda to scare victims "nobody believed them, why would they believe you?" One parent suggested that better off families may be better at keeping this issue hidden. With increasing numbers of children online, predators are able to access children via this environment too.	internet grooming of middle class families when young adults are left to explore the viral world and their own sexuality in the privacy of their home. Middle class or 2 parent working families are under the illusion it is not going to happen to their child. I think predators who target children look out for signs that a child is being neglected or has an emotional need not being met. This can happen in any 'kind' of family. Predators will look for hooks to get into children, so if they can provide money, or

		alcohol or anything that they feel the child needs. Families where there is a reduced level of emotional involvement for whatever reason are more likely to be target. This can happen for a wide variety of reasons from poverty, to a busy workaholic parent situation. Could happen in any family or with any child as well due to peer pressure and wanting to fit in
Families experiencing difficulties This theme has been renamed **'Vulnerable families'**	children may be more vulnerable if they live in families where there is some type of underlying or ongoing situation such as poverty, lack of education, alcohol/drug abuse/domestic violence/previous child abuse within the family/child in care. Furthermore, it was suggested that some children of parents in stressful situations may be reluctant to tell if they are worried about the impact on the parent/s who are already stressed.	Families where there are vulnerable adults. Social and economic deprivation or affected by other social issues- eg alcohol and drugs, lack of education, mental illness, isolation. Dysfunctional families. Children in care. Families with a history of abuse who perhaps see it as a norm. Families who live in more deprived areas, or where there is substance misuse in the home. Single parented families or where there's a history of parent alcohol/drug taking or domestic abuse. Chaotic families. Families where relationships with children are not working well. Children in care. low income. Perhaps broken families where the child has limited parental intervention/attention and/or their parent(s) are abusing substances? relative and absolute poverty, especially where parental neglect and/or alcohol or drug abuse, mental illness or domestic violence are present in the child's life. Where children from a very young age are allowed to roam the streets unsupervised and have no structure, boundaries, rules maybe even love and affection in other words **vulnerable families**. Isolated families and migrant workers children who may be targeted by criminals more easily. Families that may be known to social services. Families where children are carers. Vulnerable families, maybe with a disability or mental health issue. Vulnerable families who Society has deemed as having no contribution to make. parents

		been abused ,parents no /little parenting skills. children who regularly go missing from home. Single mothers with high numbers of partners
Mothers with mental health problems	Group C thought that children who were most vulnerable, are children of mothers with mental health issues and children of parents who have been abused themselves as they may not be able to care properly for their children.	
Lack of engagement or vigilance by parents	Some participants felt that a key factor influencing vulnerability is where parents may not be engaging enough with their child to know what is really happening in their lives – online as well as offline. Within this theme, participants pointed out that some parents may not be familiar with the internet. Some parents may be naïve or unaware of the range of situations where children may be at risk. Parents who are working long hours, may not be checking up on their kids. Group D thought that children/young people at most risk are those whose parents did not know where they were most of the time, or worse, that they might not care.	children not adequately supervised and/or empowered/coached. Poor communication. Families where parents are unaware of where their children socialise, how they socialise and who they socialise with. Families who do not regularly check what their children are doing and with home, this includes online activities. children who are away from home , unsupervised, for extended periods of time. parents are not as IT literate or aware and their child may be much more internet savvy. Families where parents are, for whatever reason, are not fully engaged in the childs life i.e school work, after school activities, or have a proper family homelife i.e having meals together, spending time on activities which involve the whole family including wider family circle. Families who don't monitor internet access for kids or families who maybe neglect their child's emotional needs. families who have so much else going on in their lives they take their eye off the ball. Parents need to be continuously monitoring their children which is not an easy thing to do at this age. Disjointed families - parental split where it may be difficult to keep track of the child's social contacts and activities because he/she may be living between homes. Not knowing their childrens friends
Additional theme - **the specific environment in Northern Ireland**		"I think child abuse is more likely to occur in NI than any other country I have lived in and

		parents need to be very vigilant. The basic inhumanity that leads to the high levels of racism, sectarianism, homophobia and every other kind of discrimination underlies the lack of care of children". "vulnerable and isolated from help and advice, either due to environmental or social issues: eg living in paramilitary controlled areas, migrants pressured by peers or criminal elements in the local community and families blighted by alcohol or drug issues"
Additional theme - **families with a looked after child**		families where there is a looked after child may also be at an increased risk
Additional theme - **Families where parent/s work long hours**		Single parent families or parent who work long hours and children often left unattended or with minders. Maybe extended families where the child has daily interaction with a family member other than parent or sibling. Economically deprived families when parent(s) may have to work longer hours. Busy parents that perhaps work all the time. Where parents are away a lot working. families where both parents work in low paid or high pressure jobs

This analysis confirmed that most views put forward by online respondents (n=79) about increased risks of CSE within certain types of families, contained some combination of themes identified by the 4 focus groups. There was a large number of references to families experiencing difficulties or dysfunction (n=60) and lack of vigilance by parents (n=30). The theme of 'families experiencing difficulties' was renamed 'vulnerable families' due to this recurrent phrase in descriptions provided by the online respondents. There were also three additional themes identified by online respondents: **the specific environment in Northern Ireland** which referred to historical legacies as well as current day para-military/criminal type activity in certain areas**; families with a looked after child** where the child was considered as being at a higher risk of CSE and **families where parents work long hours**.

3.4 Children at risk/vulnerable to CSE

Figure 18: Online respondents gave their views on the following statements:

Question	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total Responses
The majority of sexually exploited children live in care.	17%	73%	10%	129
In most cases parents/carers are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child.	31%	56%	12%	129
Sexually exploited children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional families.	36%	56%	8%	130
In most cases of child sexual exploitation the child/young person is in part responsible.	5%	92%	2%	129
Sexual exploitation only happens to girls.	2%	98%	0%	129

Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) disagreed with the statement that the majority of sexually exploited children live in care.

Less than a third of respondents (31%) thought that parents are in part responsible. Just over a third (36%) believed that victims of CSE mainly come from dysfunctional families. Only 5% thought that the child/young person was partly responsible and 2% said that CSE only happens to girls. Most of these viewpoints are similar to those reported in the YouGov/PACE study (p.42), however the English study found a much higher proportion of respondents stating that parents are in part responsible (41%) and that sexually exploited children mainly come from broken families (48%).

Online respondents were also shown a list of factors that may place children at higher risk of CSE and were asked to select the 5 most important as outlined in Figure 19:

Figure 19: Online respondents selection of what they consider to be the most important factors that place a child at a higher risk of CSE

Answer	Response	%
Low self-esteem or self-confidence	97	76%
Sexual abuse within the family home in earlier life.	67	52%
Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household	65	51%
Lack of feeling loved	63	49%
Neglect by parents/carers	63	49%
Unsupervised use of social networking chat rooms/sites	59	46%
Having social or learning difficulties	53	41%
Physical or emotional abuse	53	41%
Lack of education in sex and relationships	42	33%
Friends with young people who are sexually exploited	38	30%
Lack of role models	31	24%
Living in residential care	29	23%
Homeless	24	19%
Witnessing domestic abuse	22	17%
Lacking friends from the same age group	16	13%
Live in a gang neighbourhood	15	12%
Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited	13	10%
Been or are excluded from mainstream education	11	9%
Being a young carer	9	7%
Recent bereavement or loss	8	6%
Being from a poor background	8	6%
Adoption as a child	2	2%
Other	2	2%
Don't know	1	1%
None of these	0	0%

Number of respondents =128

The top five risk factors for CSE identified by the online respondents are: low self-esteem; sexual abuse within home in earlier life; living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household; lack of feeling loved and neglect by parents or carers. Although not listed in the same order, these are the same top risk factors identified by the parents in the YouGov/PACE study (p44).

In the Focus Groups, there were 3 overarching themes in discussions about children who may be at more risk of CSE:

- Characteristics of the Family

- Characteristics of the Child

- Characteristics of the systems supposed to keep children safe

Characteristics of the Family: this theme had a number of sub-themes including lack of discipline or boundaries in the home; deliberate neglect of the child; children who were not given time/attention as parents appear to be too busy; latch key kids or children left on their

own for long periods of time; children or young people whose parents do not know where they are; families where there has been abuse; families who do not discuss everything that needs to be discussed; families who have secrets.

In one group there was an extensive discussion on the role of parents and the following questions and points were raised: "Why do some parents not know where their children are?" "What is going on in society that parents have lost confidence in their role as parents?" "Why are children calling the shots?" Some parents said that they thought a lot of parents feel insecure particularly in situations where parents are separated – "children can threaten to live with the other parent if they do not get their way". Some parents also expressed concern about teenage pregnancies and did not think it was appropriate that 'children are bringing children up' – they felt that many of these teenagers are not ready to be parents. Some participants discussed the need for parents to assert themselves as role models. Concerns were also expressed about the influence of celebrities as role models and the impact this can have on children – for example the use of drugs by One Direction.

Characteristics of the Child: this overarching theme also had a number of sub-themes including children: with a lack of confidence; who have poor educational attainment or additional needs; whose families often do not know where they are; who are naïve or very trusting; children who are bullied; who are involved in alcohol/drug use and sexual experimentation at an apparently much younger age than previous generations. It was also suggested that some children who are being exploited may not know what 'normal' is, and maybe do not know the difference between 'caring' and 'abuse'.

In one group, parents were particularly concerned about the way in which some children/young people dress when they go out at night: while concern was expressed about the media and the legal system blaming the victim for the way in which they were dressed and therefore by implication "asking for it", parents were concerned that children and young people are dressing inappropriately and that "the previous generation would not get away with dressing in this way". Some parents thought that "children should not be allowed out dressed like this", while other parents thought that even if children went out looking appropriately dressed they may go elsewhere to get changed. Participants in Group D affirmed this behaviour of young people leaving their own house looking like 15 year olds; then collecting them from a friend's house a short time later after they had got dressed up for the night and were unrecognisable as teenagers.

Characteristics of the systems supposed to keep children safe: some of the places where society expects children to be safe can be the source of sexual exploitation for

example children living in care; or places where predators can gain access to children or have some sort of hold over them – examples include teachers, youth leaders and clergy. In Group D, participants expressed concern about the risks to children who travel unaccompanied with taxi drivers who may take advantage of the situation, and they also highlighted risks to Taxi Drivers who are falsely accused of sexually abusing children.

3.5 WARNING SIGNS that a child may be a victim of CSE

The online survey contained a list of potential 'warning' signs of CSE. Respondents were asked to identify the key signs of CSE and these are listed in the Figure 20 below

Figure 20: Respondents are asked to identify which of the following, if any, are key signs that a child may be a victim of CSE?

Answer	Response	%
Receipt of gifts from unknown sources *	103	82%
Self harming*	99	79%
Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age	99	79%
Mood swings*	92	73%
Coming home in an agitated/stressed state	88	70%
Change in physical appearance.	86	68%
Change in academic performance	85	67%
Agitated/stressed before leaving the house	83	66%
Drug or alcohol misuse.	81	64%
Getting lifts with unknown adults	77	61%
Physical symptoms or infections	75	60%
Missing from home or care.	70	56%
Physical injuries.	67	53%
Absence from school.	64	51%
Estranged from their family.	60	48%
Older boyfriend/girlfriend	59	47%
Evidence of cyber bullying	58	46%
Offending.	53	42%
Becoming pregnant	53	42%
Having new friends	47	37%
Other	4	3%
Don't know	3	2%
None of these	0	0%

Number of respondents =126

The top 5 warning signs identified by the online respondents were: receiving gifts from unknown sources*; self-harming*; inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age; mood swings*; and returning home in an agitated/stressed state. Three of these (marked with *) were also listed in the top five factors selected by parents in the YouGov/PACE study (p.50).

Parents in the Focus Groups discussed what they considered to be warning signs of CSE. These turned out to be very similar to the top factors identified by the online respondents. The 4 main themes which emerged in the Focus Group discussions were:

- Changes in behaviours
- Mood changes
- Physical signs
- External signs

Changes in behaviours: included being withdrawn; secretive; reluctance to go places; overly attached to the phone; overly compliant; pre-occupied; not sleeping properly; over-eating or under-eating; jumpy; distancing from those around them

Mood changes: ranging from aggressive to quiet; maybe tearful/feeling down/confused; afraid/scared; unhappy; closed up; crying without explanation;

Physical signs: bruises; acting out in a sexual way; bedwetting; poor hygiene; sexualised language; self-harming; suicidal

External signs: such as receiving gifts; or wanting to lock bedroom door

In the focus groups, 76% of participants said they would not be confident recognising the difference between CSE and normal 'difficult' teenage behaviours whilst 54% of the online respondents were either confident or very confident that they would be able to tell the difference in signs. This is similar to the finding in the YouGov/PACT study with 53% of parents expressing confidence (p.49).

Figure 21: Online Respondents rate their confidence in recognizing difference between signs of CSE and normal challenging behaviour


Confident in recognising difference between signs of CSE and normal challenging behaviour?

Not at all confident; 2%
Don't know; 3%
Very confident; 7%
Not very confident; 40%
Confident; 48%
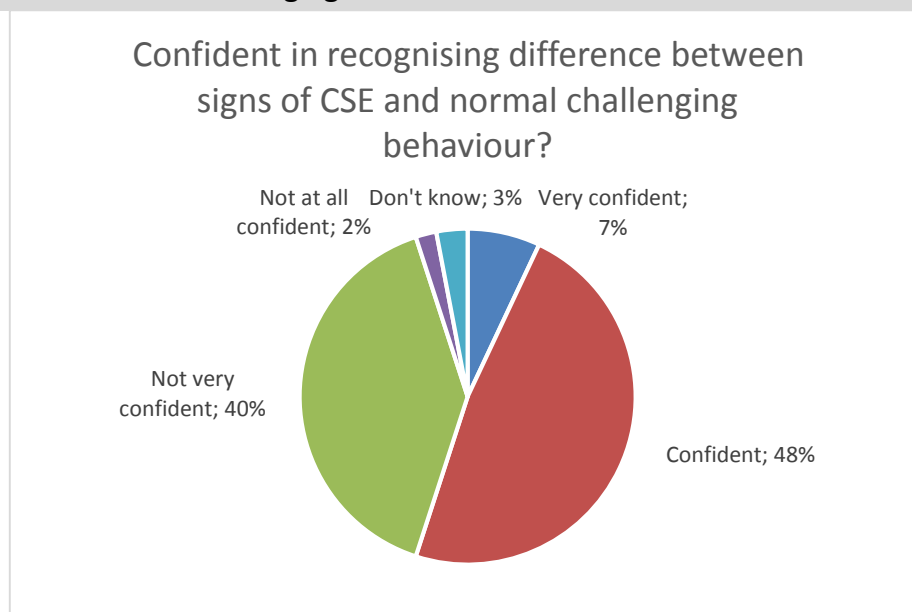
Number of respondents = 126

3.6 CSE in your area

Online respondents were asked if they were concerned that cases of CSE might happen in their area.

Figure 22: Online respondents views on likelihood of CSE occurring in their area

Answer		Response	%
Concerned		55	44%
Very concerned		38	30%
Not very concerned		26	21%
Don't know		5	4%
Not at all concerned		2	2%
Total		126	100%

Approximately 74% were either concerned or very concerned that CSE could happen in their neighbourhood. The level of net concern expressed by respondents in this Northern Ireland survey is much higher than that identified by parents (56%) in England in the YouGov/PACE study (p.51).

Online respondent were also asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

Figure 23: Online respondents views on CSE in relation to themselves as a family, local neighbourhood and Northern Ireland in general

Question	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total Responses
Child sexual exploitation is a problem that could affect a family like mine	78%	17%	6%	123
Child sexual exploitation does happen but its not a problem where we live	17%	71%	13%	120
I don't think that child sexual exploitation is a big problem in Northern Ireland	4%	89%	7%	120

The key differences between these results and that of the You Gov/PACE study (p.53) is that there was more concern expressed by NI online respondents that CSE could affect a family like theirs (78% v 51%); less confidence that it is not a problem where they live (17% v

26%) and more disagreement with the statement "I don't think that child sexual exploitation is a big problem in Northern Ireland" (89% v 79%). Furthermore, there was less uncertainty (ie "don't know") in the responses in this study compared to the English survey.

Summary of Section 3: Awareness of CSE/likelihood of CSE

Over half of the online respondents (57%) and 75% of focus group participants said they were aware of the issues relating to CSE.

Most of the online respondents thought that CSE was most likely to start between ages of 5-10 (39%) or 11-13 (35%). There were wide variations across the Focus Groups from 9-15 years with two groups also adding that it is mainly girls that are vulnerable.

Almost three fifths of online respondents (59%) and most of the focus group participants thought that some types of families may put children at more risk of CSE, mainly in families where a manipulative predator was in their environment; families were vulnerable; had mothers with mental health problems; there was a clear lack of engagement/vigilance by parents; the specific environment in Northern Ireland had an impact; families had a looked after child and families had parents who work long hours.

Online respondents felt that 17% of the most sexually exploited children live in care; 31% thought that parents/carers are partially responsible; 36% thought that these children mainly come from broken or dysfunctional homes; 5% thought children were partially responsible and 2% believed that only girls are victims of CSE.

The top five risk factors for CSE identified by the online respondents are: low self-esteem (76%); sexual abuse within home in earlier life (52%); living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (51%); lack of feeling loved (49%) and neglect by parents or carers (49%). In the Focus Groups there were 3 overarching themes in relation to children who may be at more risk of CSE: Characteristics of the Family; Characteristics of the Child and Characteristics of the systems supposed to keep children safe.

The top 5 warning signs of CSE identified by the online respondents were: receiving gifts from unknown sources (82%); self-harming (79%); inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age (79%); mood swings (73%); and returning home in an agitated/stressed state (70%). Parents in the Focus Groups identified 4 very similar factors: Changes in behaviours; Mood changes; Physical signs and External signs.

Over half of the online respondents (54%) expressed net confidence that they would be able to tell the difference in signs between CSE and normal difficult teenage behaviours. In the focus groups less than half expressed confidence with regard to recognising the difference with 58% of parents saying they would not be confident at all.

Approximately 74% of the online respondents expressed concern that CSE could happen in their neighbourhood and a similar proportion agreed that CSE could affect a family like theirs (78%). Almost 9 out of ten respondents (89%) thought that CSE may be a problem in Northern Ireland.

Section 4: Accessing Support

4.1 Initial support and advice

Among the online respondents the most likely source of support that they would turn to was the police (45%) or social services (20%) as identified in the table below. This closely reflects the findings of the YouGov/PACE study where 42% of parents said they would contact the local police in the first instance (p.56).

Figure 24: Online respondents identify where they would first go to for support and advice if they had concerns about their child

Answer		Response	%
Local police		53	45%
Social services / Local Authority		24	20%
Doctor		12	10%
Internet *		8	7%
Family		8	7%
Children's charity		6	5%
School		3	3%
Friends		4	3%
Other		1	1%
Community/religious leaders		0	0%
Total		119	100%

Words used in internet* searches were: **"**child sexual exploitation, sexual exploitation of children, indicators of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse on a child, child sexual exploitation resources how to spot child sexual exploitation, child sexual exploitation, guidance supporting your sexually exploited child reporting child sexual exploitation perpetrators, to the police - evidence needed?, Protecting my child from sexual exploitation surviving sexual exploitation reporting sexual predators, child abuse sexual help advice support".

Parents in the focus groups identified through small group discussions that the main places that they would go to look for support if they had concerns about their child were: helplines such as Child Line / Barnardos / NSPCC/ Parenting NI / Women's Aid / Samaritans; a Close friend; Doctor; Internet; Parenting Group; Police; School; Social Services / Welfare.

Despite listing these services, parents were unsure about what help was actually available to them within those organisations.

4.2 Barriers to seeking support/advice

Almost two thirds (65%) of the online respondents said there would be no barriers to seeking support. For the remaining one third of parents the main reasons for not seeking support included potential trauma to the child or fear of losing their child. The ranking of all the reasons put forward in the figure below perfectly reflects the hierarchy of reasons identified by parents in the YouGov/PACE (p.57).

Figure 25: Online respondents' assessment of reasons why parents might not seek advice or support for CSE

Answer	Response	%
None of these – there would be no barriers	77	65%
The trauma caused to my child	32	27%
The threat of losing my child	25	21%
Social services becoming involved	22	18%
The trauma it would cause to my family	13	11%
The concern that other people in my community might find out	9	8%
Other	2	2%

Number of respondents =119

One of the online respondents also made the following comment which contains a number of considerations including an assessment of whether others might be at risk:

> "it would depend on the extent of the abuse /exploitation. If i felt it was at a very early stage/low level, i may feel equipped to deal with it myself and prevent it. if a more severe incident had occurred or i thought others were at risk, my actions would be different and would depend on the situation".

In all of the focus group discussions, the main concern expressed about disclosure or seeking support was:

- Lack of trust in the authorities – afraid of impact of disclosure on child & lack of confidence in the system dealing appropriately with those who exploit

One aspect of this was concern about the impact this may have on the child. Concerns were expressed about the way in which some authorities might handle cases, which may cause further distress to the child. Some parents also wondered if disclosure might increase risk of further CSE or bullying if it is not treated in confidence. One parent said "there currently appears to be no reassurance that this information is going to be contained". One parent

remarked that it would be important to her to be able to be anonymous if she was seeking support.

The other aspect of this lack of trust in the authorities was described by a parent who said she knew "from experience that this would not be handled properly and that the perpetrator would get away with it". Another parent said "I would take matters into my own hands" and a number of parents said that they would specifically not contact the police due to the poor relationship between police and their community.

Other reasons that were offered by the focus groups as speculation about why parents may not contact the authorities about CSE of their child was:

- Parent them self may be involved
- Protecting the perpetrator who may be a family member or partner
- Not sure if it is true / Denial?
- Stigma/ fear of blame / embarrassment to family

4.3 CSE and schools

Among online respondents, 71% said they expected the school to alert them in such a scenario. This reflects the finding of the YouGov study where 74% of parents expected to be informed (p.57). Almost all parents in the focus groups (88%) expected the school to tell parents; those who had no expectation of this said they were not sure if the school would disclose if their own child was not at direct risk stating "they would perhaps tell but not necessarily name the individual involved." Another parent suggested that too many Boards of Governors are "full of pillars of society and may not like the school to get a bad name by giving out that type of information".

Almost all (93%) of the online respondents said they would attend a school presentation on CSE. This is much higher than the proportion of parents (71%) in the YouGov/PACE study who said they would do this (p.59).

Figure 26: Online respondents state whether they would attend a school presentation on signs of CSE

Answer		Response	%
Yes		110	93%
No		1	1%
Don't know		7	6%
Total		118	100%

All parents in the focus group said they would attend such a presentation. However, one participant suggested that not all parents would attend such an event, and that consideration would need to be given to a wide range of approaches to ensure the message gets across to everyone.

Over one quarter (27%) of online respondents said they were aware of some form of CSE education having been delivered at their child's school. This education appears to have been mainly delivered by the schools themselves or in conjunction with the Police, ChildLine, CEOP, or various community groups and individuals. Most of the education listed appeared to focus on stranger danger and internet safety. A number of parents praised the police in particular for their delivery of internet safety programmes including "Chat Share Think". One parent also mentioned the new RADAR facility - an interactive, safety & life skills centre due to open in September 2014 which will have a focus on staying safe online.

There were a few mentions of education on keeping safe/how to protect yourself however parents did not always appear to be aware of the content or who was delivering it:

> "I think it was part of either religion class or LFLW, there were group discussions and outside speakers"

> "A guy coming in to Year 11 and telling them of the dangers of being plied with alcohol, etc. and leaving the teenagers vulnerable to sexual advances and being unable to fend them off"

> "sponsored drama on CSE and follow up lessons for older young people   Policing partnership / Women's Aid project on appropriate relationships for older young people (sadly no longer funded)"

> "My daughter had informed me that during the world around us section of their education they were taught about the importance of keeping their privates private and her and I discussed what this meant. They also informed the class that it was important talk about any worries they had with a responsible adult whom they trusted".

> "Slides etc discussing ways of keeping safe online and how perpetrators are sometimes family and neighbours"

> "a day for P7 children on child protection. Unaware of content - was asked for permission to attend before by letter saying it was age appropriate workshops".

Only a few parents in the focus groups (n=3) were aware of any such education sessions on CSE taking place at their child's school. These parents had either been invited to a presentation in the school or were aware that this is a subject that teachers have discussed with their child. In Group A, C & D, none of the parents could recall any CSE education taking place. The overall experience of the focus group parents reflect the findings of the YouGov/PACE study which identified that very few parents (13%) were aware of their child's school offering any education on CSE (p.59).

Online respondents were asked if they agree/disagreed with the following statements about CSE education in schools.

Figure 27: Online respondents' views on school involvement in education about CSE				
Question	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total Responses
Currently schools do enough to educate children about child sexual exploitation	21%	59%	20%	116
Currently schools do enough to educate parents about child sexual exploitation	16%	71%	13%	117
Primary schools should be educating children on child sexual exploitation	87%	3%	9%	116
Secondary schools should be educating children on child sexual exploitation	96%	1%	3%	117

One in five online respondents (21%) felt that schools are currently doing enough to educate pupils. It is of note that a further 20% did not know the answer to this question. A similar proportion of respondents to the YouGov/PACE study (22%) thought that primary schools were doing enough to educate children about CSE (p.60)

Approximately 16% of the online respondents thought that enough was being done by schools to educate parents about CSE. A similar proportion of respondents to the YouGov/PACE study (18%) shared this view (p.61)

Almost all online respondents (87%) thought that primary schools should be educating children about CSE; interestingly there was less enthusiasm (61%) from the YouGov/PACE respondents for CSE education to be delivered to primary school children. This is underlined by the fact that 22% of the YouGov/PACE study respondents disagreed with the concept of primary schools educating children about CSE (p.63).

There were more similarities in responses to the concept of secondary schools educating young people about CSE, with 96% online respondents in this survey and 89% of YouGov/PACE respondents agreeing with this (p63).

4.4 Support organisations

While a number of respondents said that they were not aware of who provided specific support around CSE, 81 respondents listed out sources that they were aware of. The sources listed are provided here in alphabetical order: Action for Children, Any Children's Charity, Barnardos, CAMHS, CEOPS, Community organisations, Gateway Teams, Gingerbread, Falls Women's Centre, GP/Nurse, Hope Centre, Internet, Lifeline, Nexus, NSPCC, PACE, Parenting NI, Praxis, PSNI, Rape Crisis, Relate, Safe Guarding Authority, Samaritans, Save The Children, SE Trust, Social Services, Sure Start, Teacher, Victim Support, Voypic, websites such as ThinkUKnow, Women's Aid, Women's Centres, and Youth Workers.

In the Focus Groups, parents proposed the following list which was similar to those agencies that parents already identified that they would go to for support about CSE: Barnardos Safe Choices Project; Childline; Doctor; Nexus; NSPCC; Omagh Women's Aid; Parenting NI; Police; Rainbow Project; Samaritans; Social Services; Victim Support; Woman's Centre and Women's Aid.

It is of note that a number of parents listed agencies that do not actually offer specific support around CSE, although they may be able to offer a signposting service.

It is also of note that quite a few parents said they were not sure of the appropriate agencies that offer support about CSE. One parent stated that despite media attention and advertising about this issue, it was still not clear "Who do you tell?" and "What will happen when you do tell?"

Summary of Section 4: Accessing Support

While most of the online respondents and the focus group participants were able to name agencies to contact if they had concerns about CSE, a number of those agencies listed do not actually provide front line services in relation to CSE. Furthermore, some parents said that they did not know which agency to contact in the event of this type of concern.

Parents were asked if there were any reasons why they might not seek advice and support. Almost two thirds (65%) of online respondents said there would be no barriers to seeking

help. For the remaining one third of online respondents the main reasons for not seeking support included potential trauma to the child or fear of losing their child. Parents in the focus groups identified that the main reason parents may not contact the authorities about CSE is mainly around a lack of trust in the authorities.

Approximately 71% of online respondents and 88% of focus group participants expected their child's school to contact them if they knew that some of its pupils were being sexually exploited or at risk of this. All of the focus group parents and nearly all of the online respondents (93%) said they would attend a school presentation on CSE. To date, 27% of the online respondents and 13% of focus group participants were aware of CSE related education sessions being run in their child's school. Most of the educational sessions listed by parents had a focus on stranger danger or internet safety. There was commendation about the work of many of the schools and agencies involved, however a number of parents also commented on not really being aware of what CSE education was being delivered or by whom. Approximately 9 out of 10 online respondents thought that primary schools and secondary schools should be educating young people about CSE.

Section 5: Recommendations
5.1 Keeping children and young people safe from CSE

Online respondents were asked if they agreed/disagreed with the following statements which are presented in Figure 28.

Figure 28: online respondents' views on responsibility for keeping children safe			
Question	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
It is solely parents' responsibility for keeping children safe	41%	59%	154
Everybody has a responsibility for the safety of children	98%	2%	154
My children feel safe in the community in which we live	88%	12%	151
My community is one where everybody knows each other well	43%	57%	148

Approximately 41% of online respondents agreed that it is solely parents' responsibility to keep children safe. This was slightly higher than level of agreement (35%) on this issue in the YouGov/PACE study; 98% of online respondents agreed that everyone has responsibility for safety of children (versus 93% in the YouGov/PACE study); 88% thought their children felt safe in their community (versus 83% in the YouGov/PACE study); and 43% said they were living in a community where everybody knows each other well (compared to 39% - based on unpublished data from the YouGov/PACE study).

In the focus groups, parents identified that the following have responsibility for keeping children safe: Parents; Children themselves; Churches etc; Families; Friends; Government via legislation; GPs and Health Services; Media; Police; Schools; Social Services; Society / Community; Taxi drivers. Parents also identified that some people do not intervene and wondered "how do we change this as a society to help protect children?"

5.2 Concerns around CSE

Wide ranging discussions among focus group participants concentrated on 4 key concerns:

- Vulnerability of children/young people
- Not knowing how to deal with this as a parent
- Highly sexualised society
- Inaction by authorities

Vulnerability of children/young people: many parents expressed fears for children especially when dealing with perpetrators who can be so manipulative; there was also acknowledgment that children may be aware of the issue/dangers but are still vulnerable

Not knowing how to deal with this as a parent: concern that this situation might happen to their child; that it may be perpetrated by someone they know; that they may "not be able to catch it in time"; "not being able to restrain yourself if you discovered this"; how to help your child get over this; blaming yourself for not spotting the signs; not knowing who your children/young people are actually mixing with in real life and online; "parents need more knowledge to be able to talk to children about this issue"; parents need to value themselves more as parents – do not give in/or give up too easily – take control, parent your children.

Highly sexualised society: A number of parents were concerned about the impact of living in a society that is so dominated by sexualisation/commercialisation. Concerns were expressed about the retailing of inappropriate sexualised clothing for babies and children and the general portrayal of women and girls as sex objects in order to sell products. Parents expressed concern about the relationship between the way in which sex is used to sell in our culture and our current problems with child sexual exploitation.

Inaction by authorities: parents identified the need for a more effective way of dealing with this issue including education, publicity, guidelines, safeguards and legal structure. Concerns include apparent lack of police action over this issue; perpetrators who get away with this crime against children; perpetrators appear to have more rights than children and their families

5.3 What needs to be done about CSE in Northern Ireland

There was a lot of overlap in the suggestions put forward about what needs to be done in relation to CSE in Northern Ireland, so in order to reduce duplication, the responses have been combined. In order to write up the key themes, the initial themes raised in the focus group discussions were used to analyse the feedback from the online respondents.

Parents made 8 key recommendations on what needs to be done to deal with CSE in NI:

- Provide clear information/education @ CSE
- Use Effective Methods of Delivering CSE Safety Messages
- Help empower parents who a key role in preventing CSE
- Strengthen the Law around CSE
- Undertake CSE related Research
- Training for all professionals in contact with children
- Clarify Protocols for reporting
- Invest in Preventative work & Support Services for children and their families

Using this framework, a number a number of additional themes were also raised by online respondents. This information is outlined in the following table:

Figure 29: Main themes arising from suggestions about (a) what needs to be done to raise awareness and (b) what Government needs to do to deal with CSE put forward by both focus groups and online respondents

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
Provide clear information/ education @ CSE to the public	Basic messages about how to keep children safe and where to get help. Provide good information about CSE – what it is; how to prevent it; how to spot it if it is happening and what to do if it happens. Include info @ about keeping safe online. Include facts: It is mainly men who abuse, but some women too – families need to know this; Include helpful tips: single women with young children need to be aware of the partners that they attract; Information about everyone's responsibility for keeping children safe	Please make everyone aware that it happens A more child focused approach needs to be taken to prevent rather than cure. Education is the key .ordinary people don't know what to do or look for and don't know what support is out there. Too late when reaches authorities. It should be talked about – not a hidden subject. This is real for a lot of young people so should be an open discussion. A common sense publicity campaign Training for kids and adults Practical info @ privacy settings Age appropriate education Skills to empower / protect themselves – assertiveness, self- esteem – so they can say no and seek help. Promotion of open communication with trusted adults. Make it a visible issue with clear signposting for people, including children and young people , who may need help A more confident message regarding how the matter will be handled to protect your family and child Offer practical advice on how to

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
		understand, tackle the issue in language that a child can understand without scaring them and where best to get help Direct approach … using clear case examples given that it is difficult to detect at the initial 'grooming' stage Songs, play, exploration that make children know the difference between attention that is good and is bad. Helping children to grow and maintain good self esteem. Helping children to problem solve eg through role play or drama at school. Learning about other childrens stories learning about empathy etc.Learning how to speak out how to communicate and how to find people to trust in any situation that worries them. Up the profile of help organisations Names of agencies & helpline numbers Raising public awareness that it is not just children in care that are risk (that is the perception you get when you sometimes see it mentioned or referenced in media), but that all children are at risk of being exploited. They needs to be a big campaign to tell the difference between the signs and normal changes as I constantly worry that I may miss something.
Use Effective Methods of Delivering CSE Safety Messages	Figure out the most effective ways of getting messages across; Important to work with parents and schools in providing this information to children. Use of role models in publicity talking in their own words and offering suggestions of what children/young people in this situation should do. More ads on TV including during children's programmes: similar ads to the Early Years animated ad about Bullying; the Haribo ad with adults talking with children's voices; the PANTS campaign – useful as a conversation starter with kids Use language that children will understand. Need for publicity to be in local accents. Info on free fridge magnets or calendars; picture boards for young children. Use taxis as vehicles to promote publicity about CSE	Need a culture of openness "Get it out in the open to break the taboo" Our society is generally very safe. The correct message of openness to allow children to be heard is a must. **Focus on Who?** Education of children, young people, parents, child minders and teachers **How?** TV, Radio, Social Media campaigns have info commercials on tv during children's programmes as well as evening times Send information home to parents Ads Documentaries Posters in community areas such as GP surgeries, youth clubs etc., Leaflet drops info evenings Road Shows surveys like this sent out to parents Also an advertising campaign similar to the one like the young person physical violence campaign

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
		There should be an umbrella approach to the education of children within the school environment - especially regarding sex education and a more 62epts.62e62ary approach like role-play, theatre, video regarding 62epts.62e relationships The use of age –appropriate shared stories could be especially useful and informative for young peope.

Channels to deliver CSE messages?
Parents
Schools – make it part of curriculum
Youth Clubs
Scouts/Guides etc.,
Community Meetings
Community Police
Churches
Peer education – Empowering children to look after themselves and others.
Info on NI Direct
Women's Group
Gov 62epts.. & agencies should work together – co-ordinate the message, pool resources & plan campaigns instead of "professional ring fencing of territory"
"there is a lot of orgs out there, the problem is navigating through the various agencies .. but parents don't even know where to start"
"more media coverage so the offenders can also see its being campaigned and gets the message out on the streets"

Special request: Concerns about publicity about CSE

Educate not just scare mongering "Don't over emphasise the problem to the extent that it fuels an industry based on children and parents living in fear Best to boost young people's self esteem so they are able to say NO when a boyfriend wants to take intimate pictures, etc. which could end up on the web"
"Everyone is more than aware. We do not need to generate more fear in our children Teach self-esteem and mutual respect"
"Don't make this an industry. Social Workers are already failing families and I believe that this should be left within the Education Sector and to parents"
Don't generate fear in the parents or children - provide recreational centres for youth so that they can enjoy their youth instead of trying to be adults too soon.

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
Help empower parents who have a key role in preventing CSE	Encourage parents to live up to the role of parents; parents are the main carers of their children	Parents don't know what it is about or how to deal with it: "It is very difficult to know when to introduce the subject to children and how to broach it" "I don't know enough about it as am sure most parents would admit to and to protect our children and others around us, there should be more awareness and people can sometimes maybe be afraid to speak out but should never and always think of the child first" "I think it is incumbent on parents to educate their children about CSE – not schools – and so information should be more readily available to them. This should come, preferably, from children's charities etc – I have no trust in social services or "the system". Encourage parents to build relationships and ability to talk at home. Children need to be taught to keep themselves safe and never be afraid to tell their parents. Lines of communication need to be kept open especially between teenagers and their parents not just around sexual exploitation. Educating young parents and parents- to-be. "I wish it didn't exist but sadly it does so as parents/ adults we can only educate our children/young people on the dangers and also teach them about their own self-worth and value, and teach them to love themselves, also keep a good open communicative relationship with children so they would be likely to come to their parents if someone approached them in a manner with which they were unsure about" "Teenagers seem to be much more advanced than we were at that age and they pretend they can handle everything but I find it really hard to know what's going on with mine. They only tell you what they know you want to hear – how can we get the message to them about the dangers of this. I certainly wouldn't have a clue where to start that conversation with my boys"
Strengthen the Law and safeguarding around CSE	What is the law on this issue in Northern Ireland? The Law needs to be clearer re: GROOMING – currently no clear message that this is an offence, and that it will be	Regular vetting of staff Tougher sentences on perpetrators. Long sentences for abusers which will raise awareness. Castration could be considered (totally

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
	treated seriously; there needs to be proper support for the victim; Need for stronger sentences for anyone who tries to sexually exploit a child or young person; Need to change law to see register of paedophiles – but danger of them going underground; Problems in relation to border in Ireland – paedophiles able to hide on either side; More controls needed within social media; With regard to vulnerability of young people who are intoxicated or using drugs, there is a need to tighten up the Licensing Laws with regard to sale of alcohol. Big issue in Northern Ireland – need more prosecution of drug dealers; Need to pursue and prosecute those who engage in drink spiking – seems to be an ignored issue. Introduce safety measures in taxis so that taxis cannot lift unaccompanied minors – to protect children and to protect taxi drivers from false accusations. This issue has been raised before, but owners of taxi companies are reluctant for such legislation/guidance to be introduced as they are afraid of losing contracts to other companies who might be willing to take unaccompanied minors; taxi company owners do not want the backlash from parents who currently do not accompany their children on journeys to school etc., Taxi drivers would also like to see CCTV installed in all Taxis	serious here!!) Educate teenagers that it is an offence to take and distribute inappropriate photos of friends Someone told me young people can be doing this to their friends, do they know the implications and legal side of it? Policing of the internet and effective controls/reduction of pornography on internet Sterilisation of culprits when guilty named and shamed for life Legislation to be tougher and tighter Tougher sentences to show examples of what is done if these people are caught. Ensure laws are up to date and relevant for the Internet age. Specific offences for online grooming etc. The executive should appoint a joint sub group between DoJ, Education and health to coordinate strategy and action planning Going to the top – I am aware that CSE is perpetrated by individuals acting autonomously; however there is serious child sexual abuse being perpetrated by large groups within the system, and every level – police, judiciary, church, social services – is complicit. Creating task forces with real powers to track down those responsible for this type of crime. Making it easier and safer for families and children to provide evidence. Tough sentences for those found guilty. Making sure it stops. That jail for life is introduced and it means life; that children can feel safe that the person is paying for taking their life away from them IT IS a SERIOUs CRIME. Parents should be made aware when there is a risk within their community. They should also be given the right to object to someone with a history of child exploitation offence living within a certain distance to them. Naming and shaming those who are involved in this disgusting type of activity – Sarah Payne's law should be enforced, publish regular reports and make the community actually aware of how much of this goes on. Cracking down on porn legislating against ISP's who stream porn into families homes. Strict legislation re inappropriate use of internet and discussion debate and consultation on what is appropriate/inappropriate on line. Look into trafficking. Helping people from

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
		cultures where this is more prevalent understand it is unacceptable. There is a real danger to children, families and communities with ex-offenders being allowed to live near schools, youth facilities. This is very threatening for families.
Undertake CSE related research	What can be done to prevent people exploiting children? What if anything is effective? There was previously a centre provided by Barnardos for perpetrators. Why does there not appear to be anywhere where the perpetrators can go to get help to stop what they are doing? Some parents also suggested the links between addiction and CSE and would like to see more detox facilities for those addicted to substances to stop cycles of dysfunction and abuse of children	They should run an expanded version of the SAVI sexual violence in Ireland study carried out more than a decade ago in the republic of Ireland, including NI, reflecting prevalence comparisons N&S. I think we need to take this issue more seriously I think on line games and the effects on children should be researched incorporating the effects of violence and sex, for instance Grand Theft Auto where avatars attend a sex club. Research should also be considered around the effects of Pornography and viewing of same on young boys. More research into the causes of abuse and why people do this
Training for all professionals in contact with children	This includes everyone who has formal & informal contact with children ranging from teachers to taxi drivers: Schools have child protection policies but do not appear to take any action re prevention – need for same policies and actions across all schools in Northern Ireland; "Shake up of Police on this issue as they currently appear to be uninterested in CSE and the impact on children in this town".	Last year I attended a talk in WHSCT that was aimed on this issue, and it was a workshop on educating taxi drivers about the different signs etc to look for, maybe more regional innovative workshops with taxi men, hotel and bar staff etc would also add another sign of safety regarding the issue of CSE
Protocols for reporting		Easier reporting mechanisms especially online. When someone has concerns and reports them to Social Services Social services should LISTEN and NOT ignore it. Social Services should NOT go to the family concerned and tell the family who reported them this should be CONFIDENTIAL. This happened near us here and an innocent man was badly beaten up by the family reported – as social services told the family the guy who reported them. The guy did not report the family it was someone else who had given the guy's name. They should provide clearer guidelines to voluntary organisations like churches and community groups about how to safeguard

Theme	Points raised by Focus Groups	Points raised by Online Respondents
		children. If this is standardised and if parents and organisations know about it, it should be possible to have better accountability.
		Target the perpetrators
		It goes on where you least expect it and when reported nothing is done sometimes – which makes it worse for the child and the person brave enough to report it.
Invest in Preventative work & Support Services for children and their families		Supporting vulnerable families and children from an early age
		Provide facilities for our youth - sports, drama, recreation so that they have something to do in their free time.
		Good recovery services-specialised psychological services available to survivors of any age
		Help those who have already been affected and to raise awareness to help prevent as many as possible from suffering this horrific abuse
		Protect vulnerable children, provide social workers with the means to help children and the perpetrators.
		More caring professionals who can work with the children and follow up each complaint in it's own right

Two additional themes were raised by the online respondents: 'Protocols for reporting' and 'Invest in Preventative work & Support Services for children and their families'.

Summary of Section 5: Recommendations

Nearly all online respondents (98%) agreed that everyone has a responsibility for the safety of children. Whilst 88% said they felt that their children felt safe in the community in which they lived.

Focus group participants identified their main concerns about CSE as: Vulnerability of children/young people; Not knowing how to deal with this as a parent; Living in a highly sexualised society and Inaction by authorities.

Parents made 8 key recommendations on what needs to be done to deal with CSE in Northern Ireland:

- Provide clear information/education about CSE;
- Use Effective Methods of Delivering CSE Safety Messages;
- Help empower parents who a key role in preventing CSE;
- Strengthen the Law around CSE;
- undertake CSE related Research to inform good practice;
- Training for all professionals in contact with children;
- Clarify Protocols for reporting;
- Invest in Preventative work & Support Services for children and their families.