



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

The Role of Schools

APRIL 2017

Contents

- 1. About the Children’s Commissioner for England 3
- 2. Executive summary 3
- 3. Background 4
- 4. Rationale 5
- 5. Methods 6
- 6. Findings 9
- 7. Summary and policy implications 20
- Appendix A 21
- Appendix B 28

1. About the Children’s Commissioner for England

The Children’s Commissioner for England is Anne Longfield OBE. She speaks up for children so that policymakers and the people who have an impact on their lives take their views and interests into account when making decisions.

She does this by talking to children, carrying out research and compiling evidence on the things that affect children’s lives. She also provides advice to children in care or living away from home.

Independent of Government and Parliament, the Children’s Commissioner has unique powers to help bring about long-term change and improvements for children, in particular the most vulnerable children including those in care. She is the ‘eyes and ears’ of children in the system and the country as a whole.

2. Executive Summary

From September 2019, primary schools will be required to teach Relationships Education, and secondary schools will be required to teach Relationships and Sex Education. Age appropriate universal education has an important role to play in preventing child sexual abuse. Professionals working in education settings are particularly well placed to deliver universal programmes designed to increase the propensity to disclose and reduce vulnerability; deliver targeted support for children at particular risk of abuse; and initiate an early intervention when children exhibit the signs and symptoms of abuse.

The Commissioner has assessed the current provision of education programmes related to the prevention of child sexual abuse in schools in England through a survey issued to all schools and a series of focus groups. The evidence suggests that the potential role of schools in preventing child sexual abuse – giving children the knowledge to recognise abuse and seek help where necessary and the early identification of victims – is not yet being fulfilled.

Around half of primary schools report that they teach subjects related to sexual abuse, and a significant minority of secondary schools do not yet offer any teaching on this issue.

Although the majority of schools that responded to the Commissioner’s survey stated that they offer PSHE lessons, the content and means of delivery of these lessons varies. While the vast majority of primary and secondary schools in the survey reported that they teach topics such as internet safety and bullying, only around half of primary schools reported that they teach topics related to sexual exploitation and abuse, compared to almost 90% of secondary schools. Among the primary schools that responded to the survey, sexual abuse related topics (e.g. consent, safe touching, sexual exploitation and abuse) are less likely to be covered than topics such as bullying, peer pressure, emotional wellbeing and mental health, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Schools are confident in identifying child sexual abuse, but substantiating concerns to the level necessary for a concern to be referred to the local authority is more challenging.

Schools generally believe they have sufficient knowledge and resources to identify and act upon concerns relating to child sexual abuse. However, if the signs of sexual abuse are not visible or if the child does not disclose abuse, then schools believe identification is more difficult, which reduces the likelihood of them bringing concerns to the attention of the local authority and substantiating those concerns with the evidence necessary to meet child protection thresholds.

The early identification of warning signs does not always result in early intervention – intervention is largely dependent on a disclosure of abuse

If a child or young person discloses they have been abused (in contrast to concerns being raised by members of staff without the child having made a disclosure), it is far more likely that the school will raise this with a local authority and that subsequent action will be taken. This pattern is even more pronounced in cases where the child reports sexual abuse. This suggests that the identification of sexual abuse is largely dependent upon children making a disclosure. Waiting for a disclosure, however, is not satisfactory – most victims do not spontaneously disclose sexual abuse.

As schools begin planning for the introduction of mandatory relationships education at primary level and RSE at secondary level, consideration must be given to the ways in which a school can create opportunities for a child to seek help and disclose abuse. In particular, guidance on safeguarding in schools should broaden the focus from the processes for reporting concerns to the ways in which teachers and other school professionals can support children who are the subject of concern to talk about issues of concern and, where necessary, disclose abuse.

3. Background

In November 2015, the Children's Commissioner published *Protecting Children from Harm – a critical assessment of child sexual abuse in the family network in England and priorities for action*¹. This report examined the scale and nature of child sexual abuse in England, focusing in particular on sexual abuse which occurs within the family. This work concluded that:

- > As few as 1 in 8 victims of child sexual abuse come to the attention of statutory authorities, and the scale of child sexual abuse is therefore much larger than is currently being dealt with by statutory and non-statutory services. CSA in the family accounts for two thirds of all CSA.
- > Sexual abuse by a family member or someone connected with the family is in itself a barrier to victims accessing help. Fear, coercion, loyalty to the perpetrator and/or a desire

¹ [Protecting Children from Harm – a critical assessment of child sexual abuse in the family network in England and priorities for action](#), Children's Commissioner for England, 2015.

to protect other family members may prevent a victim of child sexual abuse from telling anyone.

- > There is a high level of commitment to tackling this issue among professionals working with children. However, statutory services are largely disclosure-led, with the burden of responsibility placed on the victim.
- > Victims are likely to exhibit some sign or indicator suggestive of sexual abuse, though in some instances this will not always be obvious or conclusive. Proactive enquiry is therefore necessary to substantiate concerns.
- > Despite a high level of commitment to tackling this issue, professionals are not always confident in their ability to identify child sexual abuse. Some professionals are hesitant to seek information from a child for fear that such actions will be construed as 'leading the victim'.
- > Some groups of children and young people are under-represented in the criminal justice system as victims of child sexual abuse in the family environment.
- > Victims of child sexual abuse in the family with learning/physical disabilities may be less likely to be identified as victims, as the signs of sexual abuse may be misattributed to the disability.
- > The substantiation of a suspicion of sexual abuse requires different levels of proof in the family and criminal courts, though in practice, substantiating abuse 'beyond reasonable doubt' in the criminal courts is a considerable challenge.
- > There are three aspects to the impact of sexual abuse in the family – the impact of the sexual abuse itself, the reaction of the family, and the impact of service intervention.

4. Rationale

Schools play an important role in the prevention of sexual abuse. Teachers and other professionals working in schools and education settings see the same group of children regularly. They are likely to be the professional in the community, outside of the family home, with whom the child has the closest relationship. Research suggests that teachers are the trusted adult, located outside of the family and peer networks, most likely to receive a disclosure of sexual abuse². Besides a disclosure of abuse, schools also have a unique role in the identification of safeguarding concerns and the initiation of an intervention.

The Government has recently announced that Relationships Education (at primary level), Relationships and Sex Education (at secondary level) and, subject to further consideration, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE - both) will become statutory in all schools³. The content of RSE and PSHE will be subject to further consultation, though the

² Smith, N, Dogaru, C and Ellis, F 2015. A survey of adult survivors of child sexual abuse and their experiences of support services. University Campus Suffolk and Survivors in Transition.

³ Policy Statement: relationships education, relationships and sex education, and personal, social, health and economic education. March 2017. Department for Education, Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Government has recognised that an objective of statutory relationships education is to help children grow up safely through age appropriate education on boundaries, consent and healthy relationships. A systematic review of education programmes on child sexual abuse has previously identified a positive link between the propensity to make a disclosure and the provision of education programmes which aim to prevent child sexual abuse⁴, and research has found that integrating prevention messages across the curriculum as part of a 'whole-school approach' is an effective model for school-based prevention⁵.

The intention to strengthen the role of schools in preventing child sexual abuse – giving children the knowledge to recognise abuse and seek help where necessary, and making early identifications of victims is welcome. This research shines a light on the role currently played by schools in preventing sexual abuse through education programmes, and the capacity of schools to identify safeguarding concerns, illustrating the work which should take place to strengthen the role of schools.

5. Methods

In the scoping stage of this research, a series of focus groups were conducted with different professionals to explore the theme of child sexual abuse prevention. These focus groups included:

- > a focus group with parents of victims of CSA
- > three virtual focus groups with health professionals (GPs, Midwives, nurses and school nurses)
- > a survey with school nurses which asked questions about prevention in schools

It was found that little was known regarding the national picture of measures in schools to prevent child sexual abuse, including universal and targeted education programmes. This research was undertaken with the intention of filling this gap in knowledge.

In order to investigate the role of schools in the delivery of programmes designed to prevent CSA from happening in the first place, and the capacity of school staff to initiate early intervention, the Commissioner convened a series of focus groups and conducted a survey of schools.

5.1 Focus groups

In total, four focus groups were convened with staff from six schools (three primary and three secondary, including one Pupil Referral Unit and three special schools). A cross

⁴ [Walsh K, Zwi K, Woolfenden S, Shlonsky A. School-based education programmes for the prevention of child sexual abuse. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2015, Issue 4](#)

⁵ [Bovarnick, S and Scott, S 2016, Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Education – a Rapid Evidence Assessment, University of Bedfordshire, DMSS, Barnardo's](#)

section of staff participated in each focus group, including teachers, form tutors, pastoral support workers, head teachers and safeguarding leads.

Focus group	Type of school	Region	Participants
1	Two primary schools represented	North East	4 teachers, 2 pastoral support workers, 1 safeguarding lead, 1 Head Teacher
2	Secondary (Comprehensive)	London	8 teachers, 3 pastoral support workers, 1 safeguarding lead
3	PRU	London	4 key workers, 1 teacher, 1 Head Teacher, 1 safeguarding lead
4	Three Special Schools	London	1 Head Teacher, 3 teachers, 2 safeguarding leads

Each focus group was conducted according to the same semi-structured question schedule. Issues raised by participants were noted and explored in more detail through the survey.

5.2 Survey

In order to explore the issues raised in the focus groups, an online survey of Head Teachers in England was conducted. Survey questions were developed using information gathered from the focus groups. In order to test the validity and reliability of the questions, the survey was piloted with a primary school, a secondary school, academic specialists on child sexual abuse, schools and surveys and the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS).

The final survey was issued via email to all Head Teachers, alongside a letter explaining the purpose of the research and a ‘frequently asked questions’ document. The survey solicited information on the general background of the school, including type, number of pupils and number of staff; the provision of education programmes related to safeguarding issues; the experiences of the school in identifying and raising safeguarding concerns with their local authority; and their perception of the challenges in preventing and identifying victims of sexual abuse.

Overall, 1,093 schools responded to the survey (Table 1). Not all schools responded to all questions in the survey. Participation was voluntary. The Commissioner did not invoke her powers of data collection when issuing the survey, as it was expected that a sufficient number of schools would voluntarily participate in the research to generate generalisable findings. Where necessary, the number of missing responses is noted. The sample is not fully representative of all schools in England, however, the discrepancies are tolerable, and some conclusions can be drawn from the survey to suggest priorities for further research.

Table 1: Survey responses, regional breakdown

Region	National no. of schools in region ^a (% of national total)	Survey no. of schools in region (% of survey total)
North East	1,230 (5.1%)	53 (4.9%)
North West	3,493 (14%)	120 (11%)
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,425 (10%)	110 (10%)
East Midlands	2,227 (9.1%)	83 (7.6%)
West Midlands	2,633 (11%)	103 (9.4%)
East of England	2,824 (12%)	138 (13%)
London	3,037 (12%)	128 (12%)
South East	3,919 (16%)	196 (18%)
South West	2,584 (11%)	145 (13%)
Unknown		17 (1.6%)

a: Figures taken from Edubase

Approximately three quarters of schools that responded to the survey are primary schools (Table 2). Schools that belong to two or more categories (e.g. primary-nursery, college-secondary etc.) are counted to both categories.

Table 2: School type

School Type	Frequency (%)
Nursery	98 (9.0%)
Primary	828 (76%)
Secondary	236 (22%)
College	16 (1.5%)
No response	20 (1.8%)

Just over half of respondents were local authority maintained schools, with the remainder being academies, independent schools, faith schools and other types (Table 3).

Table 3: School type

School Description	Frequency (%)
LA-Maintained School	586 (54%)
Standalone Academy	92 (8.4%)
Standalone Academy in a Trust	3 (0.3%)
Academy in a Chain or Trust (MAT = Multi Academy Trust)	203 (19%)
Grammar School	6 (0.6%)
Free School (including UTCs and studio schools)	7 (0.6%)
Independent School (including boarding schools)	72 (6.6%)
Special School	62 (5.7%)
PRU or Alternative Provision	14 (13%)
Faith School	113 (10%)
Other	43 (4%)
No response	15 1.3%

6. Findings

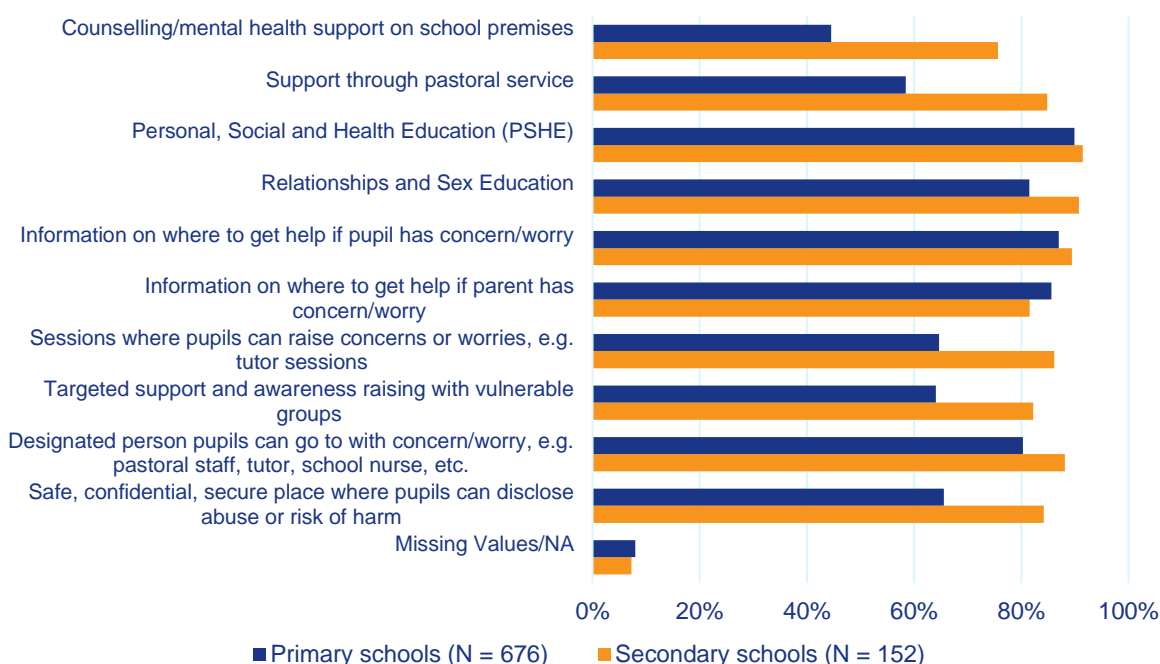
6.1 Education provision

A number of provisions were identified in focus groups as being particularly useful for helping children recognise and disclose abuse.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) is regularly highlighted as an important preventative measure in regards to sexual abuse and exploitation. Figure 1 shows the proportions of primary and secondary schools in the survey who reported offering different types of education provision associated with PSHE.⁶ While most schools in the survey offer PSHE education, approximately 1 in 10 did not. A substantial minority of schools in the survey – more than a third of primary schools and 15% of secondary schools – do not hold specific sessions with pupils to allow them to raise concerns. Furthermore, a substantial minority of schools do not have a safe/confidential/secure place where pupils can disclose abuse (34% of primary schools and 16% of secondary schools), or a designated person that pupils can go to if they have a concern (20% of primary schools and 12% of secondary schools).

⁶ The exact figures are in Appendix Table A1.

Figure 1. Support provided in primary and secondary schools



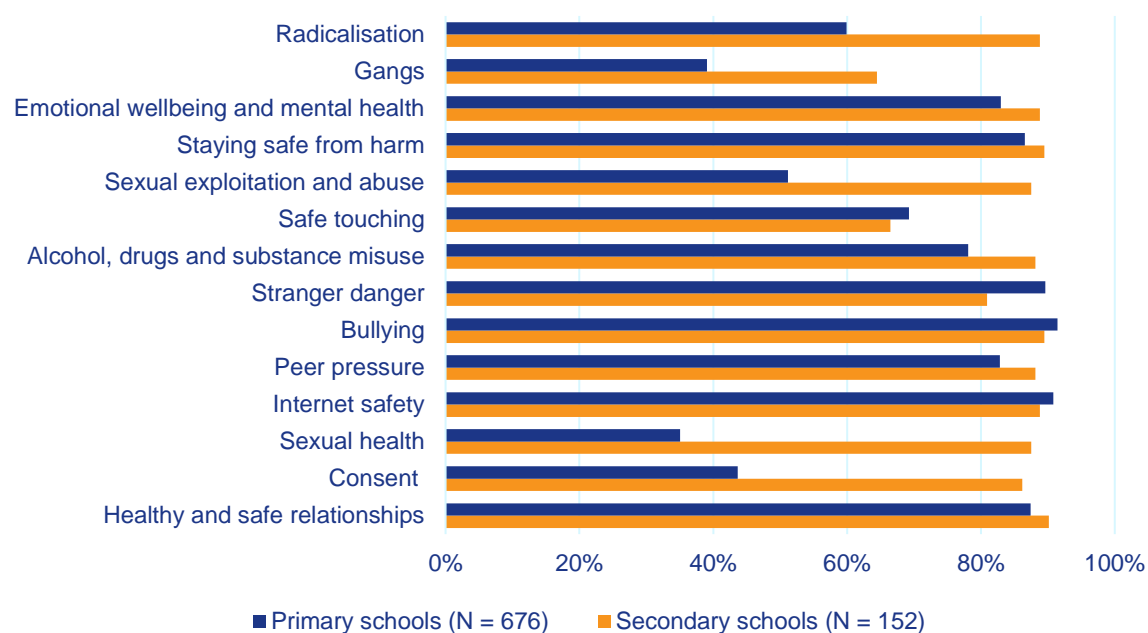
At primary schools, *counselling/mental health support* and *support through pastoral service* are less commonly available types of provision (offered to fewer than 45% of students), while others such as *information on where to get help if a pupil has a concern*, *information on where to get help if a parent has a concern* and *Personal, Social and Health Education* are offered in over 85% of schools. At secondary schools, all activities⁷ are offered in a larger portion of schools compared to the primary schools. The activity/provision which is least offered among the secondary schools in the survey is *counselling/mental health support* (in 75% of schools). In general, primary schools in the survey are less likely to offer any of the provisions noted by focus group participants as being important school functions intended to prevent abuse and enable children to make disclosures.

Although the majority of schools stated that they offer PSHE lessons, the content and means of delivery of these lessons varies (Figure 2). While the vast majority of primary and secondary schools in the survey reported that they teach topics such as internet safety and bullying, only around half of primary schools reported that they teach topics related to sexual exploitation and abuse – compared to almost 90% of secondary schools. Among the primary schools in the survey, sexual abuse related topics (e.g. consent, safe touching, sexual exploitation and abuse) are less likely to be covered than topics such as bullying, peer pressure, emotional wellbeing and mental health, and alcohol and drug abuse.⁸

⁷ With the exception of *Information on where to get help if a parent has a concern or worry*. For this type of provision, the proportion of primary schools who offered it was slightly higher than the proportion of secondary schools who did.

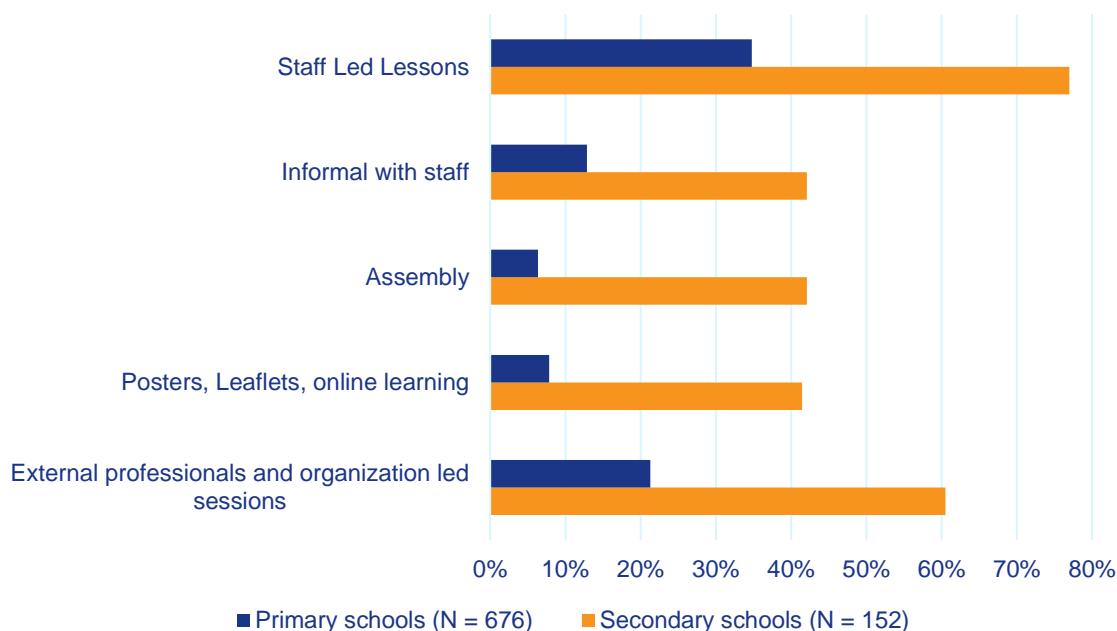
⁸ See Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix for the full detail of topics covered and teaching methods.

Figure 2. Proportion of primary and secondary schools delivering each PSHE topic



Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix provide further detail on each teaching topic and the teaching methods used, for primary schools and secondary schools respectively. In general, staff-led lessons are the most popular method of teaching but there does appear to be some relationship between the topic and methods. For example, posters, leaflets or online learning are used more widely for teaching internet safety and bullying. Informal chats with staff are used more often for emotional well-being and mental health and gangs. External professional-led sessions are preferred for topics such as consent, safe touching and sexual health. An assembly is used more for discussing and teaching themes such as stranger danger, bullying and healthy and safe relationships. Among the schools in this survey, the use of external professionals and organisations is the second most common teaching method (after staff-led sessions) for teaching about sexual exploitation and abuse (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Methods used for teaching about sexual exploitation and abuse



Note: See Tables A2 and A3 in Appendix for further details.

Qualitative insight – education programmes

Participants in the focus groups were asked about the initiatives currently in place in their school to prevent CSA and how these could be improved.

Universal lessons on healthy relationships were generally regarded by focus group participants as the most important contribution a school can make to the prevention of sexual abuse. Such lessons were considered adequate to provide children with the information necessary to recognise risky situations, understand the concept of ‘bodily autonomy’, and to tell a trusted adult about concerns relating to sexual abuse and unsafe relationships. Embedded universal lessons on healthy relationships and staying safe were cited by many participants as an anchor for a whole-school approach to safeguarding, particularly where lessons were given to children of all year groups, creating a sense of consistency and continuity among staff and pupils. Participants identified that a consistent approach through primary and secondary school is particularly beneficial to pupils, as it reinforces the key messages around staying safe, and cultivates a sense of vigilance among school staff. Although some participants expressed a preference for external facilitators, others emphasised that trained school staff delivering the lessons embedded a strong safeguarding culture within the school. In the focus groups with staff from a maintained secondary school and PRU, the perceived credibility of the content and facilitator of these lessons was considered vital to the engagement of pupils and consequently their learning outcomes.

It was also stated that lessons must start earlier – it was believed that sexual abuse is likely to occur when a child is primary school aged, so lessons should therefore begin at a younger age. Some participants expressed concern regarding the lack of guidance on age appropriate lessons, particularly for children at a primary school age and children with learning disabilities. Some participants stated that in the absence of lessons about sex and relationships, pupils may search for information online for themselves to find out about sex. It was therefore perceived that silence exacerbates vulnerability.

6.2 Identifying safeguarding concerns

Schools were asked to state the number of children for whom safeguarding concerns had been identified, during the period 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016. In the data that we received back, only 53% of the schools provided a number; the other 47% either had no cases of pupils with safeguarding concerns, or did not an answer. Among the schools who did provide a number, the average proportion of pupils with identified safeguarding concerns is 5.6%.

It is not possible to estimate the average proportion (across all schools in the survey) of children with safeguarding concerns identified without making assumptions about what this proportion might be among the 47% of schools who did not supply a number:

- > If we assume that they had *similar numbers of children with safeguarding concerns* to the other 53%, then the average proportion of children with safeguarding concerns would be 5.6% across all schools in the survey.
- > If we assume that they all had *no cases of pupils with safeguarding concerns*, then the average proportion of children with safeguarding concerns would be 3% across all schools in the survey.
- > If we assume that *half of these schools had similar numbers of children with safeguarding concerns* to the other 53%, while the other *half had no cases of pupils with safeguarding concerns*, then the average proportion of children with safeguarding concerns would be 4.3% across all schools in the survey.

Respondents were also asked about specific types of safeguarding concern. For the majority of pupils who were subject to a safeguarding concern, the concern related to a form of abuse or neglect. In a considerably smaller proportion of cases, the nature of the concern related to child sexual abuse. More specifically:

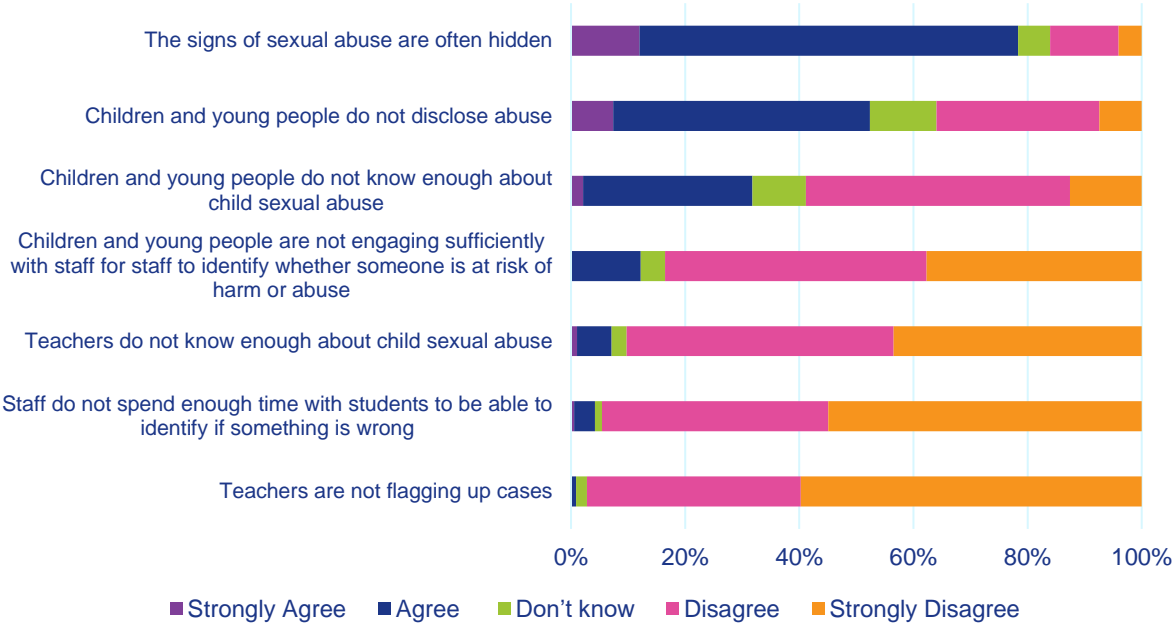
- > In around 59% of identified cases (i.e. 2.8% of all pupils in these schools) the concern related to some form of abuse or neglect.
- > In around 6.3% of identified cases (i.e. 0.3% of all pupils in these schools) the concern relates to child sexual abuse. In half of these cases (i.e. 3% of identified cases, 0.1% of all pupils in these schools), the concern was child sexual abuse in the family environment.

Respondents were also asked for their perceptions regarding the reasons for which safeguarding concerns are not identified (Figure 4). Here, for each question the bars show the proportion of schools agreeing with each response (Strongly Agree, Agree, Don't know, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), as a proportion of the schools who answered the question.

Most schools who responded to this question agreed with the statement that the signs of sexual abuse are often hidden, in which case the identification of such cases is difficult. The majority of schools who responded did not agree that staff not spending enough time with pupils to identify concerns was a barrier. Respondents also generally disagreed that there was a lack of knowledge and recognition on the part of teachers. Opinions were divided on

whether the lack of self-identification and disclosures from children are a barrier, but a slight majority of respondents felt that it was. Overall, a clear majority of respondents did not agree with the statements that teachers do not know enough about CSA, or that teachers are not flagging up cases of suspected CSA.

Figure 4. Perceived barriers to identifying child sexual abuse



Note: Data presented as percentages of all non-missing responses. See Table A4 in Appendix A for further details.

Qualitative insight – identifying child sexual abuse

There was a strong consensus that school staff can play a central role in the identification of concerns relating to child sexual abuse, and child protection issues more generally. The role of the school in identifying concerns and initiating an early intervention where there are suspicions of sexual abuse was consistently identified in all focus groups. However, when asked about the barriers they had faced in doing so, participants also noted the difficulties of identifying child sexual abuse. The confidence of school staff to identify signs suggestive of sexual abuse varied, with some focus group participants stating that the signs of abuse are very subtle, and may not necessarily present themselves to school staff, or are sufficiently ambiguous that they would be hesitant in attributing them to the possibility of sexual abuse. Secondary school teachers, who spend less time with a cohort of children, felt that they were at a particular disadvantage compared with primary schools.

The consistency of relationships was highlighted by many participants. Some participants noted that the signs of sexual abuse may be subtle, and can only be identified in the context of a child’s general behaviour over a longer period of time, or on very particular occasions. In the context of a consistent relationship, where professionals are better placed to identify more subtle changes against a general pattern of behaviour or demeanour, the identification of signs suggestive of sexual abuse is more straightforward.

Nonetheless, it was generally noted by participants in all focus groups that identifying abuse is largely dependent on a disclosure. Many participants highlighted the importance of

developing and maintaining relationships with pupils which are of a sufficient depth and quality to enable children to disclose. Participants generally acknowledged the central role of pastoral support staff for creating an environment within the school in which children feel that they can trust the staff, and in which staff members feel that they know the children well enough to identify the signs of abuse. Although participants recognised the importance of particular members of school staff, including form tutors who spend more time with children and members of the pastoral support team, it was also generally recognised that children form relationships with individuals they trust, regardless of their role. Participants in the focus group involving staff from special schools noted that where there are concerns regarding a child with special needs, it was noted that it is more difficult for teachers to substantiate their concerns to the extent where they think a referral to a local authority is necessary. Fears relating to leading questions and prompting children are particularly acute in special schools. For children with a learning disability, it is difficult to substantiate concerns without asking direct questions.

Participants in the focus group with the PRU staff noted that the culture and ethos was geared towards the development of positive, trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Given the significant proportion of vulnerable young people attending the PRU, participants noted that *“we’re all CAMHS workers”* and that *“an institution with a high proportion of vulnerable students needs to have an ethos which enables them to disclose abuse”*. Keyworkers in the PRU were regarded as essential to developing the ethos in the school. All participants strongly felt that the greater the level of confidence the child has in the staff member and their relationship, the more likely they are to disclose, and the greater the ability of the staff member to identify abuse.

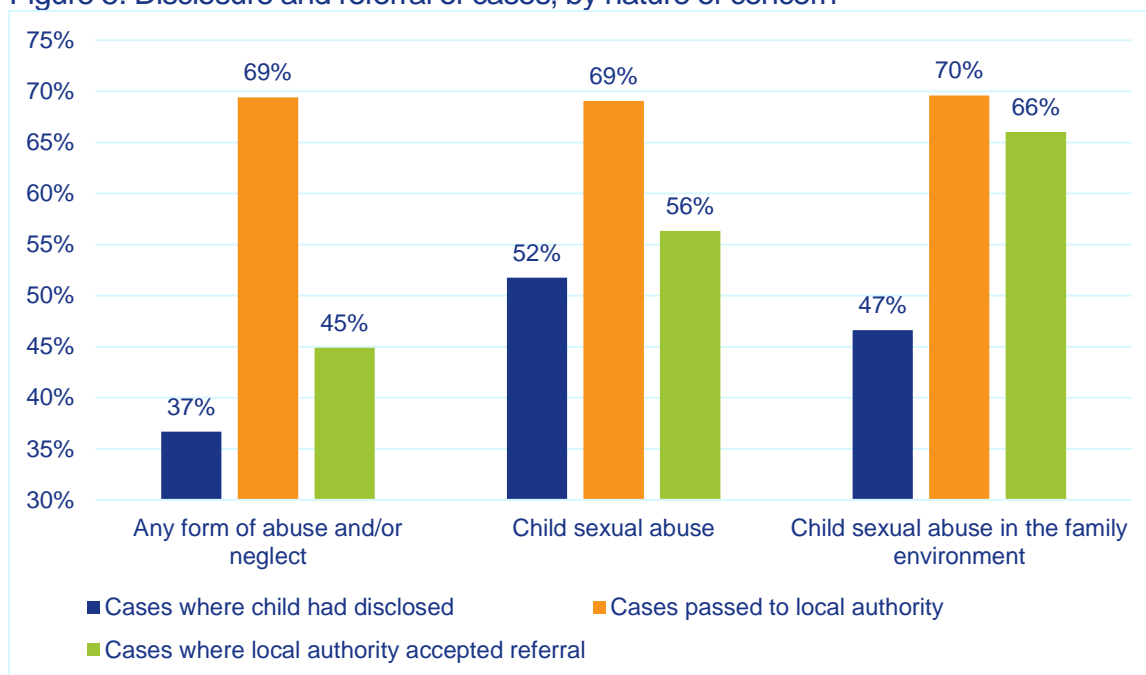
Participants in focus groups noted the importance of pastoral support staff. The system of pastoral support in place was cited by many participants across all focus groups as being central to a culture of vigilance, with staff working in pastoral support teams taking on responsibility for maintaining staff awareness levels of safeguarding issues and tying lessons of staying safe and healthy relationships to the school safeguarding culture.

6.3 Reporting safeguarding concerns

Schools were also asked a series of further questions regarding their experiences of reporting concerns to their local authority, and the actions which followed. Questions included the nature of the concern, whether the child had disclosed the issue, the number of such concerns which were raised with the local authority and the number which were then subject to further action.

Figure 5 below shows the likelihood that a concern is disclosed by a child, that it is passed on to the local authority, and that the local authority acts upon the referral, for three different types of concern: abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, and child sexual abuse within the family environment. As with Section 6.2, these figures are only based on the data from the schools who responded with actual numbers of pupils subject to a safeguarding concern (roughly 55% of all schools in the survey).

Figure 5. Disclosure and referral of cases, by nature of concern



Note: Data presented as percentages of children for whom schools had that concern. See Table A5 in Appendix A for further details.

Around 50% of the pupils for whom there are concerns relating to sexual abuse had made a disclosure themselves. This is higher than the rate of self-disclosure in cases where the concern is ‘any form of abuse/neglect’ (35%). *If a child or young person discloses they have been abused (as contrasted to concerns being raised by members of staff without the child having made a disclosure), it is far more likely that the local authority will investigate. This is even more pronounced in cases where the child reports sexual abuse.* Again, this confirms research findings which state that identification of sexual abuse is largely dependent upon children making a disclosure⁹.

According to the survey responses, in around 70% of cases concerns are raised with local authorities. This proportion is broadly the same across the three different types of concern in Figure 5 (red bars). Overall, there is a clear attrition in the process from recognition to reporting – not all cases are referred to local authorities, presumably because the concern is assessed by the school as not meeting the threshold for passing it onto the local authority, and not all of those are accepted by the local authority for further investigation.

However, this level of attrition does vary somewhat according to the nature of the concern. While survey responses indicate that local authorities investigated 56% of cases where the school had a concern about child sexual abuse, local authorities investigated 82% of the cases that were referred to them. Furthermore, when the concern related to sexual abuse in the family environment, around 95% of the cases referred to local authorities were subsequently investigated. By contrast, the corresponding figure for concerns relating to ‘any form of abuse or neglect’ is 65%. Note however that because cases where the concern related to abuse and neglect were far more prevalent than cases where the concern related

⁹ [Protecting Children from Harm – a critical assessment of child sexual abuse in the family network in England and priorities for action](#), Children’s Commissioner for England, 2015.

to sexual abuse, the former still accounted for 86% of all the reported cases referred to local authorities, and 82% of all the reported cases investigated by them.

Based on regression analysis, no statistically significant relationship was found between whether schools offered lessons on the topics shown in Figure 2 and:

- > the proportion of children for whom concerns were identified;
- > the proportion of children reporting abuse;
- > the proportion of cases raised with the local authority;
- > the proportion of cases investigated by the local authority.

This may appear to contrast with findings from the focus group, where participants stated that providing lessons in school may prompt children to disclose abuse and create a culture of safeguarding in which staff are better able to identify concerns. However, the focus group was based on a small and different sample. It may also be that only high-quality lessons or certain models of delivery are more effective at helping pupils to disclose abuse.

Similarly, no statistically significant relationship was found between numbers/functions of staff (e.g. pastoral, school nurse, safeguarding lead, counsellors/therapists) and:

- > the proportion of children for whom concerns were identified;
- > the proportion of children reporting abuse;
- > the proportion of cases raised with the local authority;
- > the proportion of cases investigated by the local authority.

Again, this contrasts with findings from focus groups, where participants expressed the view that a strong pastoral support system enabled staff to more effectively identify safeguarding concerns, and created the conditions in which children were more likely to disclose abuse.

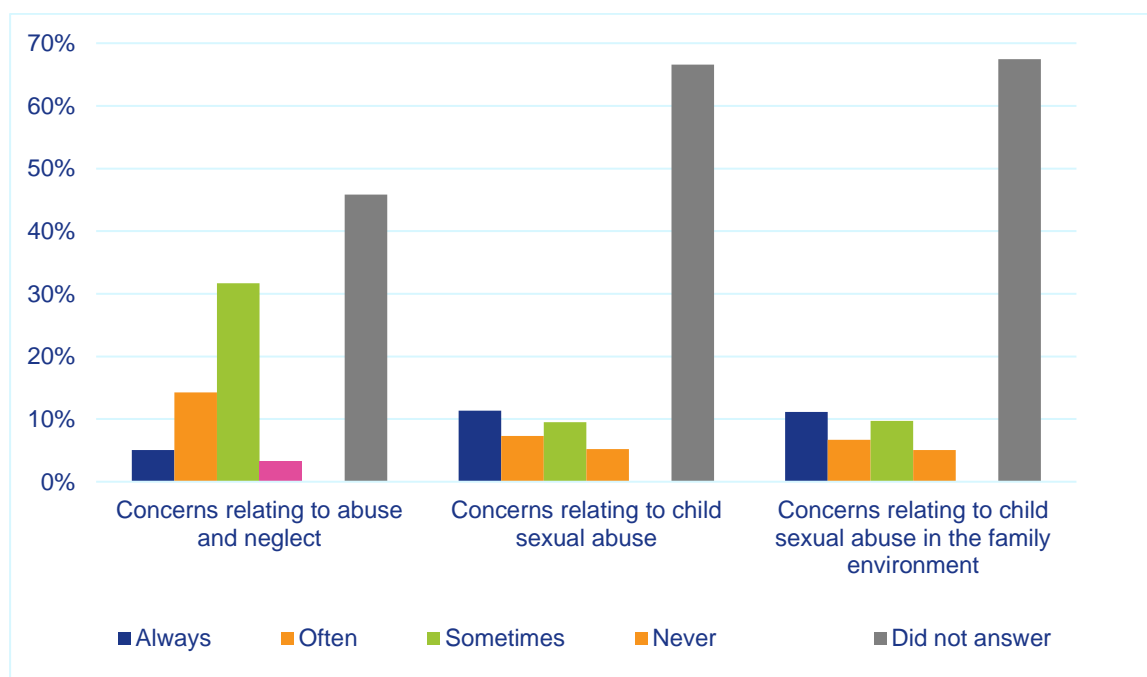
Qualitative insight – referrals and thresholds

When asked about the barriers to identifying CSA and taking action, participants had mixed experiences of referring concerns to their local authority. In general, participants stated that they had a positive relationship with counterparts in children's social care departments, though expressed some frustration regarding thresholds for accepting referrals. Safeguarding leads stated that referrals made on the basis of concerning behaviour suggestive of sexual abuse are unlikely to meet the threshold. It was generally felt that only concerns relating to children who had made a disclosure of abuse would result in an intervention by the local authority. Participants noted that children rarely spontaneously disclose sexual abuse, but reported mixed levels of confidence in being able to initiate discussions with a child for whom they had safeguarding concerns. Some participants reported a reluctance to initiate these conversations for fear of asking 'leading questions'.

6.4 Perceptions of thresholds

Schools were also asked how often, in their perception, concerns meet the thresholds of local authorities, for each of the three types of concern: abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, and child sexual abuse in the family environment. Figure 6 shows the responses among the schools who were able to answer these questions (because they had stated that there were pupils in the school for whom this concern existed).

Figure 6. Reported frequency with which safeguarding concerns meet threshold for further action



Note: Data presented as percentages of all schools in the survey (1,093). See Table A6 in Appendix A for further details.

There was a relationship between the nature of the concern and schools' views about whether such cases would often meet the threshold for further action. In cases of suspected abuse and neglect, the most common response from schools was "Sometimes". In cases of suspected child sexual abuse, the most common response from schools was "Always". This is consistent with the data in Figure 5.

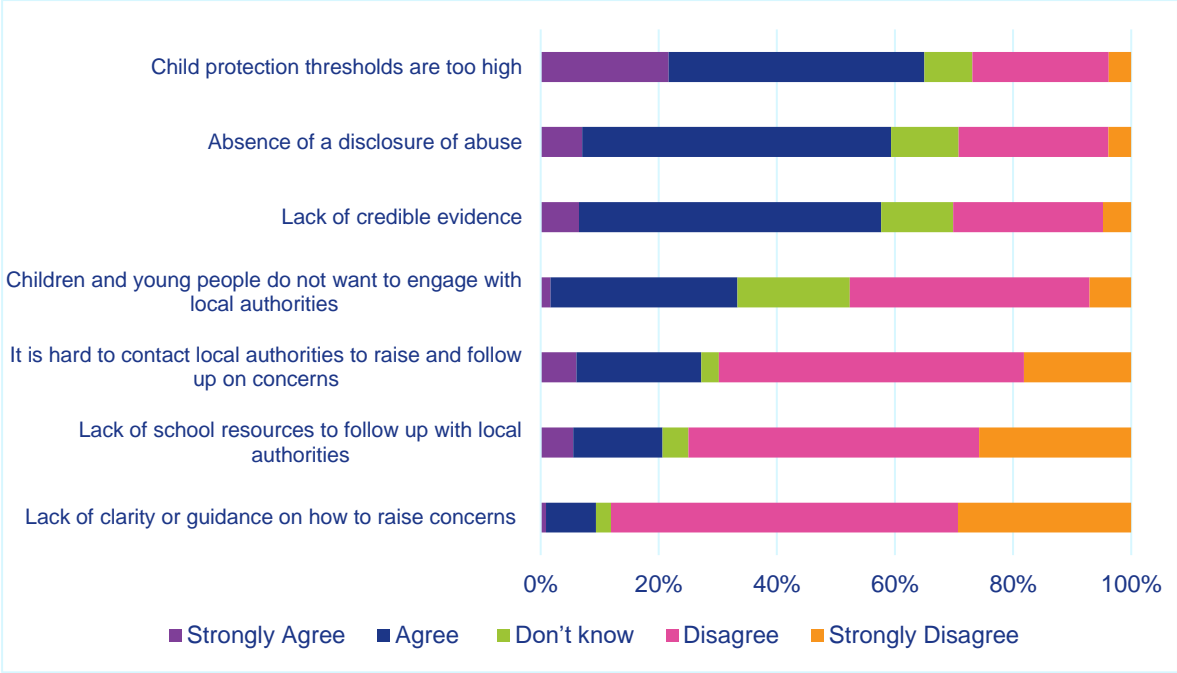
Finally, the survey asked schools about potential challenges that were faced in meeting thresholds, in order to understand reasons why a threshold might not be met. The responses from schools are shown in Figure 7. Here, for each question the bars show the proportion of schools agreeing with each response (Strongly Agree, Agree, Don't know, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), as a proportion of the schools who answered the question (roughly 50% of the sample). The majority of respondents to this question agreed or strongly agreed that the following act as barriers to thresholds being met:

- > child protection thresholds are too high;
- > abuse not being disclosed by the child;
- > insufficient credible evidence to proceed.

The majority of respondents to this question disagreed or strongly disagreed that that the following the barriers to thresholds being met:

- > a lack of clarity or guidance on how to raise concerns;
- > insufficient school resources to follow up with local authorities;
- > difficulties in contacting local authorities.

Figure 7: Perceived challenges in meeting thresholds



Note: Data presented as percentages of all non-missing responses. See Table A7 in Appendix A for further details.

Taken together with the responses in Figure 4, the responses in Figure 7 suggest that schools do generally believe they have sufficient knowledge and resources to identify and act upon concerns relating to child sexual abuse. However, if the signs of sexual abuse are not visible or if the child does not disclose abuse, then schools believe identification is more difficult. This also makes it difficult to bring concerns to the attention of the local authority, and also to substantiate those concerns with evidence to the point where they meet local authority thresholds.

7. Summary and Policy Implications

From September 2019, primary schools will be required to teach Relationships Education, and secondary schools will be required to teach Relationships and Sex Education. The decision to mandate all schools to teach children about healthy relationships has been motivated by a recognition that all children require help to navigate the risks they face growing up, and that age appropriate universal education has an important role to play.

In order to meet the objective of enabling children to stay safe, relationships education in primary schools and RSE in secondary schools should include age appropriate content which enables children to recognise abuse and seek help. This research highlights, however, that current provision of this type of education in schools is mixed. While the vast majority of primary and secondary schools report that they teach topics such as internet safety and bullying, only around half of primary schools reported that they teach topics related to sexual abuse, and a significant minority of secondary schools do not offer any teaching in relation to sexual abuse. It is important that all schools develop effective programmes which enable children to recognise abuse.

Research has identified that education is important in enabling children to disclose if they have been sexually abused. The importance of a disclosure is clear – spotting the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and making a report to the local authority is not always enough. Schools do generally believe they have sufficient knowledge and resources to identify and act upon concerns relating to child sexual abuse. However, if the signs of sexual abuse are not visible or if the child does not disclose abuse, then schools believe identification is more difficult, which in turn makes it more difficult to bring concerns to the attention of the local authority, and to substantiate those concerns with the evidence necessary to meet local authority thresholds.

Given the necessity of a disclosure for enabling services to take the steps necessary to protect a child, schools must create the conditions which enable children to speak out if they are being abused. Research has identified that education is important in enabling children to disclose if they have been sexually abused. The provision of age appropriate lessons on sex and relationships is therefore an important step. Waiting for a disclosure, however, is not satisfactory – many children will not spontaneously disclose sexual abuse. As schools begin planning for the introduction of mandatory relationships education at primary level and RSE at secondary level, consideration must be given to the ways in which a school can create opportunities for a child to seek help and disclose abuse. In particular, guidance on safeguarding in schools should broaden the focus from the processes for reporting concerns to the ways in which teachers and other school professionals can support children who are the subject of concern to disclose abuse. This includes establishing a supportive and trusted relationship with the child over time and asking the child questions regarding their wellbeing.

Appendix A

Table A1: Provision in primary and secondary schools

Available provisions/Activities	Primary (676 schools)		Secondary (152 schools)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Counselling/mental health support on school premises	301	45%	115	76%
Support through pastoral service	395	58%	129	85%
Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)	608	90%	139	91%
Relationships and Sex Education	551	82%	138	91%
Information on where to get help if a pupil has a concern or Worry	588	87%	136	89%
Information on where to get help if a parent has a concern or Worry	579	86%	124	82%
Sessions with pupils where they can raise concerns or worries, such as tutor sessions	437	65%	131	86%
Target support and awareness raising with vulnerable groups	433	64%	125	82%
A designated person that pupils can go to with a concern or a worry, e.g. pastoral staff, tutor, school nurse, etc.	543	80%	134	88%
A safe, confidential and secure place where pupils can go, to disclose that they or someone they know are at risk of harm or have been abused	443	66%	128	84%
Total No. of schools	676	100%	152	100%
Missing Values or NA	54 (8.0%)		11 (7.2%)	

Table A2: PSHE topics and methods of teaching: primary schools

Teaching Topics	Valid Answers	Missing or NA	Staff Led Lessons	Informal with staff	Assembly	Posters, Leaflets, online learning	External professionals and organizations led sessions	Other
Healthy and safe relationships	591 87.43%	85 12.57%	557 82.40%	189 27.96%	305 45.12%	166 24.56%	265 39.20%	8 1.18%

Consent	295 43.64%	381 56.36%	250 36.98%	50 7.40%	27 3.99%	19 2.81%	89 13.17%	17 2.51%
Sexual health	237 35.06%	439 64.94%	188 27.81%	34 5.03%	5 0.74%	18 2.66%	70 10.36%	17 2.51%
Internet safety	614 90.83%	62 9.17%	607 89.79%	257 38.02%	464 68.64%	464 68.64%	328 48.52%	22 3.25%
Peer pressure	560 82.84%	116 17.16%	519 76.78%	294 43.49%	397 58.73%	156 23.08%	136 20.12%	18 2.66%
Bullying	618 91.42%	58 8.58%	612 90.53%	374 55.33%	526 77.81%	385 56.95%	262 38.76%	25 3.70%
Stranger danger	606 89.64%	70 10.36%	578 85.50%	271 40.09%	450 66.57%	230 34.02%	248 36.69%	16 2.37%
Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse	528 78.11%	148 21.89%	478 70.71%	122 18.05%	93 13.76%	74 10.95%	183 27.07%	14 2.07%
Safe touching	468 69.23%	208 30.77%	375 55.47%	141 20.86%	80 11.83%	67 9.91%	192 28.40%	23 3.40%
Sexual exploitation and abuse	346 51.18%	330 48.82%	235 34.76%	87 12.87%	43 6.36%	53 7.84%	144 21.30%	21 3.11%
Staying safe from harm	585 86.54%	91 13.46%	552 81.66%	263 38.91%	352 52.07%	197 29.14%	238 35.21%	21 3.11%
Emotional wellbeing and mental health	561 82.99%	115 17.01%	495 73.22%	329 48.67%	279 41.27%	153 22.63%	220 32.54%	36 5.33%
Gangs	264 39.05%	412 60.95%	170 25.15%	95 14.05%	80 11.83%	25 3.70%	75 11.09%	18 2.66%
Radicalisation	405 59.91%	271 40.09%	310 45.86%	121 17.90%	149 22.04%	65 9.62%	81 11.98%	26 3.85%
Total	620 91.72%	56 8.28%	5926	2627	3250	2072	2531	282

The % in the third column refers to the missing or NA values with respect to the total number of responses from primary and secondary schools. Respondents could pick multiple options, so responses do not add up to 100%. This table estimates the % of schools offering a particular topic as a percentage of all answers, assuming that missing values are zeros/negative responses rather than simply missing. It is therefore assumed that respondents who ticked at least one of the boxes qualifies as a genuine response, and hence any non-ticked boxes represent a considered answer that they do not deliver this topic.

Table A3: PSHE topics and methods of teaching: secondary schools

Teaching Topics	Valid Answers	Missing or NA	Staff Led Lessons	Informal with staff	Assembly	Posters, Leaflets, online learning	External professionals and organizations led sessions	Other
Healthy and safe relationships	137 90.13%	15 9.87%	133 87.50%	79 51.97%	86 56.58%	79 51.97%	101 66.45%	4 2.63%
Consent	131 86.18%	21 13.82%	115 75.66%	65 42.76%	36 23.68%	47 30.92%	85 55.92%	2 1.32%
Sexual health	133 87.50%	19 12.50%	122 80.26%	61 40.13%	30 19.74%	59 38.82%	94 61.84%	4 2.63%
Internet safety	135 88.82%	17 11.18%	133 87.50%	74 48.68%	110 72.37%	98 64.47%	82 53.95%	6 3.95%
Peer pressure	134 88.16%	18 11.84%	118 77.63%	92 60.53%	100 65.79%	54 35.53%	47 30.92%	7 4.61%
Bullying	136 89.47%	16 10.53%	132 86.84%	103 67.76%	118 77.63%	99 65.13%	68 44.74%	13 8.55%
Stranger danger	123 80.92%	29 19.08%	98 64.47%	66 43.42%	69 45.39%	46 30.26%	28 18.42%	4 2.63%
Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse	134 88.16%	18 11.84%	129 84.87%	83 54.61%	81 53.29%	81 53.29%	92 60.53%	7 4.61%
Safe touching	101 66.45%	51 33.55%	74 48.68%	53 34.87%	15 9.87%	26 17.11%	45 29.61%	4 2.63%

Sexual exploitation and abuse	133 87.50%	19 12.50%	117 76.97%	64 42.11%	64 42.11%	63 41.45%	92 60.53%	5 3.29%
Staying safe from harm	136 89.47%	16 10.53%	128 84.21%	87 57.24%	89 58.55%	72 47.37%	70 46.05%	7 4.61%
Emotional wellbeing and mental health	135 88.82%	17 11.18%	122 80.26%	95 62.50%	82 53.95%	76 50.00%	84 55.26%	11 7.24%
Gangs	98 64.47%	54 35.53%	69 45.39%	55 36.18%	29 19.08%	27 17.76%	41 26.97%	4 2.63%
Radicalisation	135 88.82%	17 11.18%	116 76.32%	71 46.71%	87 57.24%	62 40.79%	65 42.76%	8 5.26%
Total	139 91.45%	13 8.55%	1606	1048	996	1389	994	86

The % in the third column refers to the missing or NA values with respect to the total number of responses from primary and secondary schools. Respondents could pick multiple options, so responses do not add up to 100%. This table estimates the % of schools offering a particular topic as a percentage of all answers, assuming that missing values are zeros/negative responses rather than simply missing. It is therefore assumed that respondents who ticked at least one of the boxes qualifies as a genuine response, and hence any non-ticked boxes represent a considered answer that they do not deliver this topic.

Table A4: Perceived barriers to identifying child sexual abuse

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Missing values- Total	Missing values- Invalid answers
Teachers do not know enough about child sexual abuse	6	35	15	269	250	518 (47.4%)	2
Teachers are not flagging up cases	0	5	11	216	344	517 (47.3%)	1
Children and young people do not know enough about child sexual abuse	12	168	53	262	71	527 (48.2%)	2

Children and young people do not disclose abuse	42	255	66	162	42	526 (48.1%)	3
Children and young people are not engaging sufficiently with staff for staff to identify whether someone is at risk of harm or abuse	1	68	24	259	213	528 (48.3%)	3
Staff do not spend enough time with students to be able to identify if something is wrong	3	21	7	227	314	521 (47.7%)	2
The signs of sexual abuse are often hidden	68	377	32	68	23	525 (48%)	3
Other	14	10	12	3	3	1051 (96.2%)	0

Table A5: Safeguarding concerns raised and referral routes

Nature of concern	Number of children subject to concern	Number of cases where child had disclosed	Number of cases passed to local authority	Number of cases where local authority accepted referral
Any form of abuse and/or neglect	5889	2160	4088	2644
Child sexual abuse	630	326	435	355
Child sexual abuse in the family environment	309	144	215	204
Missing values or zeros	481 (44.01%)	512 (46.84%)	488 (44.65%)	509 (46.57%)
For all responses, zero and missing values were removed. The number of zero and missing values varied by question and question category. Due to missing values, all figures should be treated as underestimates. The true figures quoted in this table could be up 30%-40% larger, should all respondents have provided accurate data.				

Table A6: Frequency with which safeguarding concerns meet threshold for further action

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Missing values
Concerns relating to abuse and neglect	55	156	346	35	501 (45.8%)
Concerns relating to child sexual abuse	124	80	104	57	728 (66.6%)
Concerns relating to child sexual abuse in the family environment	122	73	106	55	737 (67.4%)

Table A7: Perceived challenges in meeting thresholds

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Missing values or NA	Missing values-Invalid answers
Lack of credible evidence	35	277	66	137	26	552 (50.5%)	2
Absence of a disclosure of abuse	38	283	62	137	21	552 (50.5%)	1
Lack of school resources to follow-up with local authorities	30	82	24	267	140	550 (50.3%)	2
Lack of clarity or guidance on how to raise concerns	5	46	14	320	160	548 (50.1%)	2
Children and young people do not want to engage with local authorities	9	170	102	218	38	556 (50.9%)	1

It is hard to contact local authorities to raise and follow up on concerns	33	115	16	281	99	549 (50.2%)	4
Child protection thresholds are too high	120	240	45	128	21	539 (49.3%)	3
Other	10	8	12	2	1	1060 (97%)	0

Appendix B



Headteacher Survey

The Children's Commissioner for England has the statutory duty to protect and promote children's rights. We are currently undertaking a project on the ways in which schools help children grow up safely. We are interested in the work being done in schools to promote wellbeing and prevent children from being harmed.

Participation in this project is voluntary, but we hope that you will find the time to provide a response to this survey as your contribution will help us further understand the important work being undertaken by schools to promote wellbeing and prevent children from being harmed.

Your input will help us identify ways in which this work can be supported and strengthened. We would be grateful if you could take the time to complete this survey by 2 December 2016.

FAQs can be found [here](#). If you have any further questions regarding this survey please contact us on inquiry.research@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Tell us about your school

1. In which Local Authority is your school located?

2. In which region is your school located

- North East
- North West
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- Greater London

South East

South West

3. Are you a:

Nursery

Primary School

Secondary School

College

4. Please tell us which of the following describe your school? [You can select more than one option]

LA-maintained school

Standalone academy

Academy in a chain or trust

Grammar school

Free school (including UTCs and studio schools)

Independent school (including boarding school)

Special school

Pupil referral unit or alternative provision

Faith school

Other, please tell us below:

5. How many pupils did your school have in this academic year (2015/2016)? [Please provide numerical values]

6. How many full time equivalent (FTE) members of the following staff (excluding vacancies) are currently working in your school:

[Please provide numerical values. If the same person has more than one of these roles, please do not double count them, but provide an approximate time split between each of these roles]

Pastoral staff

Safeguarding leads

School nurses

Counsellors/therapists

Awareness Raising, Support and Prevention

We are interested in hearing about the work you are undertaking in public health education and prevention, and the provisions you have in place for children and young people in need of care and protection. The questions below seek to gain a better understanding of the provisions that are in place. We have designed these questions with the intention of capturing approaches of all schools from nurseries to colleges. Thus some of the options may not be relevant to your school. Please ignore the options that do not apply and select those that are relevant to your school.

7. Which of the following provisions/activities are available at your school:

- Counselling/mental health support on school premises
- Support through pastoral service
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE and RSE)
- Relationship and Sex Education
- Information on where to get help if a pupil has a concern or worry
- Information on where to get help if a parent has a concern or worry
- Sessions with pupils where they can raise concerns or worries, such as tutor sessions
- Target support and awareness raising with vulnerable groups
- A designated person that pupils can go to with a concern or a worry, e.g. pastoral staff, tutor, school nurse, etc

A safe, confidential and secure place where pupils can go, to disclose that they or someone they know are at risk of harm or have been abused

8. Does your school teach pupils about the following topics and how: [You can select more than one]

	Staff led lessons	Informal chats with staff	Assembly	Posters, leaflets or online learning	External professionals and organisations led sessions	Other
Healthy and safe relationships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent - (to have a choice in relationships and sex, understand that choice and be free and able to make that choice.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stranger danger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe touching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual exploitation and abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staying safe from harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional well being and mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gangs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radicalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you teach pupils about these topics through other methods, please tell us what these methods are:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

We are interested in understanding the ways in which safeguarding and child protection concerns are raised by schools and how they are addressed by local authorities. The following questions seek to establish the number of occasions where schools have raised child protection/safeguarding concerns with local authorities for further investigation/action, and these concerns were subsequently investigated and/or action was taken by the local authority. In particular we are interested in hearing about concerns involving abuse and neglect, and of the concerns involving abuse and neglect, how many relate to child sexual abuse, and how many of the child sexual abuse concerns happened in the family environment.

For the purposes of this survey we consider child sexual abuse to:

“Involve forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.”

We consider child sexual abuse in the family environment to be:

“A subset of child sexual abuse, which is perpetrated or facilitated in or out of the home, against a child under the age of 18, by a family member, or someone otherwise linked to the family context or environment, whether or not they are a family member.”

The following questions concern the period between 1st September 2015 - 31st August 2016:

- 9. Please tell us the number of children and young people attending your school for whom you have identified as having safeguarding and child protection concerns:
[Please provide numerical values]

10. Of the children and young people included in Q9, how many cases involved: [Please provide numerical values]

Any form of abuse and/or neglect

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

11. Of the children and young people included in Q10, how many children and young people, that you are aware of, had disclosed they had been victims of: [Please provide numerical values]

Any form of abuse and/or neglect

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

The following questions will ask you about concerns raised with the local authority in the period between 1 September 2015 - 31 August 2016:

12. Please tell us the number of children and young people for whom the following concerns were raised with the local authority:

[Please provide numerical values]

Any form of abuse and/or neglect

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

13. Of the children and young people included in Q12, in how many cases did these concerns result in further investigation / action: [Please provide numerical values]

Any form of abuse and/or neglect

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

Raising Concerns and Outcomes

We know that children will often report concerns or worries in school. We want to better understand how this happens in practice. We are interested in your experience of barriers to the effective work of schools and local authorities in promoting wellbeing and keeping children and young people safe from harm. This will help us identify how this process could be supported and strengthened. In this section, we will ask you about issues that may impact on raising concerns and also what happens as a result. These questions seek to gain a better understanding of these areas to identify ways in which safeguarding and child protection can be improved.

14. How often do concerns raised by your school with the local authorities meet their thresholds?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Concerns relating to abuse and neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns relating to child sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns relating to child sexual abuse in the family environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Please tell us to what extent do you feel that the following issues acted as a barrier to your school identifying cases of child sexual abuse? [you can select more than one]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Teachers do not know enough about child sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers are not flagging up cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and young people do not know enough about child sexual abuse: including the risks, warning signs and where to get help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and young people do not disclose abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and young people are not engaging sufficiently with staff for staff to identify whether someone is at risk of harm or abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff do not spend enough time with students to be able to identify if something is wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The signs of sexual abuse are often hidden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

16. Do you feel that any of the following reasons lead to local authority thresholds not being met? [you can select more than one]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Lack of credible evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Absence of a disclosure of abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of school resources to continuously raise concerns and follow-up with local authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of clarity or guidance on how to raise concerns with the local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and young people do not want to engage with local authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is hard to contact local authorities to raise and follow up on concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child protection thresholds are too high	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

17. If a child or young person discloses they have been abused, would you say that this is more or less likely to result in further investigation/action by the local authority, in cases involving:

	Far more likely	Slightly more likely	Slightly less likely	Not likely at all
Concerns relating to abuse and neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns relating to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

child sexual abuse				
Concerns relating to child sexual abuse in the family environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. What happens when the local authority decides not to investigate/take action:

	All cases	Most cases	Some of the cases	None of the cases
We offer in-house support, such as counselling and pastoral support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We monitor the child and their behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We refer the child to a voluntary sector/community based provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We continue contacting the local authority to raise concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We refer the child to CAMHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other [please specify]

Thank you for filling in our survey

Your responses will be used to inform our work and make recommendations for policy and practice. If you have any questions regarding our work, please email us on research.inquiry@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk. If you are interested in hearing about other projects involving schools, please click on the image below.

19. If you would like to be more involved in the Children's Commissioner's work, please register your interest below:

- I would like to hear about the findings from this survey
- I would like to be further involved in the Children's Commissioner's work on child sexual abuse
- I would like to be involved in the Children's Commissioner's work more widely

Please sign me up to the Children's Commissioner's newsletter

20. Please provide us with some contact details for us to send information regarding our work:

Name:

Email:



Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Visit: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Twitter: @ChildrensComm