

A new typology of CSA offending

In 2018, the CSA Centre set out to develop a typology that would provide a new way of understanding CSA. It sought to identify and describe a set of types of CSA offending that are not constrained by existing constructs of CSA; these types were based on empirical data, so that the typology would be grounded in actual experiences of CSA, drawing upon both perpetrator and victim perspectives.

The typology of CSA offending (CSA Centre with the Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies, 2020) was developed through research by Middlesex University and the CSA Centre. Focusing solely on offending by adults, it aimed to identify patterns of offending and the contexts in which CSA occurs.

The typology comprises nine types of CSA offending by adults. Although there are overlaps between different types, each type seeks to describe a specific set of contextual features – the connection between the perpetrator(s) and the child, the nature of the abuse, where/how it took place, and the process of gaining and maintaining access to the child – that define a particular type of abuse.

- ▶ **Child sexual abuse within the family environment:** sexual abuse of a child or young person by an adult family member, or by an adult who is connected to the family or to one of its members.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through trusted relationships outside the family environment:** sexual abuse of a child or young person by someone who holds a position of authority over them as a result of a professional or vocational role.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through an intermediary:** sexual abuse of a child or young person which is carried out by more than one perpetrator; the perpetrator who initiates the abuse (the initiating perpetrator) seeks to gain access to the child, or to images of the child, through another perpetrator (the intermediary perpetrator).
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through online interaction:** abuse where a perpetrator, operating online, encourages/deceives/coerces a child or young person to take part in online sexualised conversations or sexual acts, and/or to produce images (photos or videos) of themselves that they share with the perpetrator online.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through viewing, sharing or possessing images:** the viewing of images of CSA that have already been created. This can include viewing, possessing and sharing images (photos or videos) with others, generally (but not exclusively) online.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through groups and networks:** sexual abuse committed by perpetrators who are part of a group or network. This may be a social group, gang or network that meets in person, or a group or network in which members interact online and remain anonymous.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse arranged and perpetrated for payment:** sexual abuse of a child or young person by one or more perpetrators where, in return for payment (either financial or other), a perpetrator ('the seller') offers other perpetrators ('buyers') access to the child or young person for contact abuse and/or creates and sells images (photos or videos) of abuse, e.g. via live-streaming.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through a personal connection:** abuse committed by a perpetrator who establishes a personal connection with a child or young person and grooms or coerces them into sexual abuse.
- ▶ **Child sexual abuse through attack by an unknown person:** abuse where a perpetrator, who is unknown to the child or young person, attacks and sexually assaults them.

Further information is provided in the full typology report:

www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/new-typology-of-child-sexual-abuse-offending/