



**An Exploration of Contact Child Sexual Exploitation Victim-Perpetrator
Interpersonal Dynamics: Providing Indicators of Exploitative Language for Law
Enforcement and Safeguarding Agencies**

By

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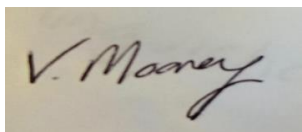
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Thesis APA 7th Formatting

For clarity, this thesis has been formatted following the American Psychological Association (2020) 7th Edition guidelines and therefore might differ from other University formatting standards, such as Harvard Referencing styles or earlier editions of APA styles. This will impact on the style of headings, spacing, fonts, text alignment, citations, and references. As the APA (2020) guidelines state, the “APA Style provides a foundation for effective scholarly communication because it helps authors present their ideas in a clear, concise, and organised manner” (p. xvii). For the APA (2020) publication manual, please follow the link:

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List of Key Abbreviations

ABE	Achieving Best Evidence
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CEOP	Child Exploitation Online Protection
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
GLCSE	Group Localised Child Sexual Exploitation
HO	Home Office
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviour
IICSA	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
LA	Local Authority
LIWC	Linguistic Inquiry Word Count
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
NCA	National Crime Agency
NPCC	National Police Chief's Council
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
MOSOVO	Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
RA	Responsible Authority
RASSO	Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
RQ	Research Question

SV	Sexual Violence
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

Peer Reviewed Publications and Presentations Arising from this Thesis

Publications

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Presentations

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(2023, May 21st – 24th). Contact Child Sexual Exploitation Victim – Perpetrator Dynamics: Exploring Interpersonal Communicative Patterns, The European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health LEPH 2023, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden. <https://leph2023umea.com/home>

(2022, May 23rd – 25th). Contact Child Sexual Exploitation Victim – Perpetrator Dynamics: Exploring Interpersonal Communicative Patterns, 10th International Symposium on Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics, Faculty of Humanities of Pablo de Olavide University, Seville, Spain. <https://eventos.upo.es/68581/detail/x-international-symposium-on-intercultural-cognitive-and-social-pragmatics-epics-x-23th-25th-may-20.html>

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(2021, March 3rd). Contact Child Sexual Exploitation Victim – Perpetrator Dynamics: Exploring Interpersonal Communicative Patterns, UCLan Connect Centre for

International Research on Interpersonal Violence and Harm, Online.

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Abstract

Until recently, empirical evidence exploring contact Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has been scarce, particularly where the convicted perpetrator seeks direct physical (offline) contact as opposed to solely targeting the victim online. This thesis aimed to investigate the relatively unexplored and typically hidden interpersonal dynamics that exist between contact CSE perpetrators and their victims, specifically the verbal and non-verbal communication patterns, when preparing for or during sexual activity, and the retrospective discursive constructions that follow. The thesis aimed to address prior research gaps and build on the existing knowledge by including recognised coding frameworks, analysis of non-verbal patterns of communication and genuine victims as opposed to decoys and explore the potential for victim agency. Data for the research consists of victim and perpetrator language (c. 16,000 words) extracted from 41 contact CSE police case files, involving 50 perpetrators (37 lone offenders and 4 groups) and 80 victims. These data were examined by computer aided psycholinguistic software (Language Inquiry Word Count [LIWC] v.2015) and a multi-modal discourse analysis (sequentially conducted to provide context to the LIWC language variables). The combined quantitative and qualitative analysis within this research suggests that there are distinct contact CSE psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE. The thesis findings also revealed that as well as the existence of typical retrospective discursive constructs, perpetrators, and victims of contact CSE would differ in their justifications for their involvement in the CSE relationship whilst in the context of a criminal investigation. This unique research will have implications for safeguarding, law enforcement disruption, research, and practice, in relation to contact CSE, with the introduction of the Indicators of Typical Exploitation (InTEL). The proposed InTEL is intended to be evidence-based and inter-disciplinary, prioritising contact CSE victim-perpetrator language to support clinical, child protection or criminal justice decision making and processes, and for improving awareness and preventative education.

Keywords: Child Sexual Exploitation; contact perpetrator, child victim; interpersonal dynamics; safeguarding

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

1.1 Outline of Chapter

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to provide the context and origins of the current research on *contact Child Sexual Exploitation* (CSE) victim-perpetrator dynamics and present an overview of the thesis. This chapter outlines the thesis aims, objectives, and rationale for the research focus and methodological approach. Gaps in the literature will be highlighted, originality outlined and intended advances in knowledge and research outcomes detailed. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an overview of the remaining structure of the thesis.

1.2 Brief introduction

CSE is situated under the umbrella term of *sexual abuse*, distinguished by the “imbalance of power” and “exchange” between the perpetrator and the victim as outlined in the Department for Education [DfE] (2017, p.5), and more recently defined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). Typically, perpetration of CSE is characterised by adults (over 18 years of age) who are convicted of CSE associated sexual offences as detailed within the Sexual Offences Act 2003. However, there is currently no distinct offence pertaining to CSE, but several offences that hold the perpetrators accountable for their crimes, such as rape, grooming, trafficking, preparatory and other sexual offences (CPS, 2022).

It is well documented that the CSE problem remains relatively hidden, as available CSE prevalence data is inconsistent due to variations in the terms of reference for measurement and therefore not reflective of the full scale of the problem (Kelly &

Karsna, 2017; IICSA; 2022; Radford et al., 2017). Consequently, the following data provided is based on the most recent CSE specific Office for National Statistics (ONS) data cycle (i.e., up to March 2022) and under the same limitations for those reporting CSE or those who were deemed to be at risk. The lower prevalence figures reveal that 2,500 victims *report* CSE annually, whilst 16,838 are being identified as *at risk* of CSE or as many as 40,000 who for which CSE is a *concern* within social care (Berelowitz et al., 2013; ONS, 2022; Sen, 2017). In 2019/20, 12,569 criminal offences were flagged as child sexual exploitation by police forces in England and Wales, up by approximately 1,000 offences from the previous year (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, IICSA, 2022). However, of the 12,569 identified, fewer than 2,000 child sexual exploitation charges were brought against perpetrators (ONS, 2022). The COVID-19 lockdowns perhaps provided brief protection from contact specific exploitation as such recorded crimes fell, however, the online exploitation of children increased (Harris et al., 2021). Arguably, the data itself provides little context behind those who are a concern, reporting or at risk and therefore few conclusions around prevalence can be drawn from it. Yet the lack of crime outcomes for sexual offences, including CSE, is said to reflect the greater complexity and extended time required to investigate such offences compared with other crime types (Home Office, 2023).

Nevertheless, as numbers of children are continuously reporting that they have had their human rights sexually violated, CSE is recognised as a significant and global problem due to the seriousness of the CSE related crimes and implications for victims and surrounding communities (Barnardo's, 2023; Beckett & Pearce, 2018; Spicer,

2018). The reach of CSE is pervasive, particularly since victims are sexually exploited regardless of their social or ethnic background, often unable to recognise that they are in an abusive relationship (Barnardo's, 2011; Beckett et al., 2017; Berelowitz et al., 2012; CEOP, 2013; Jago & Pearce, 2008; NSPCC, 2023; Pearce, 2018; Radford et al., 2017).

Positively, CSE is now considered a policing priority in the UK and is recognised globally, with pledges to end sexual violence and exploitation altogether (Home Office, 2015; National Police Chief's Council, 2023; United Nations, 2023). Increasing pressures are now being placed on UK governments, law enforcement agencies and safeguarding practitioners to prioritise CSE on child protection agendas (IICSA, 2022). The Home Office have made a commitment to reduce the threat of child sexual offences and ensure effective co-ordination and collaboration by law enforcement, intelligence agencies and relevant departments in the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy (2021). This follows various recommendations outlined in a series of high-profile UK national case reviews and inquiries, where collective failures were detailed (Barnardo's, 2014; Coffey, 2014; IICSA, 2022; Jay, 2014; NSPCC, 2023). Positively, the growing public and professional awareness in relation to CSE and calls for improved understanding (Dean, 2021; Eaton & Holmes, 2017), provides continued opportunities for researchers to explore the complexities of the phenomenon to respond appropriately to it. The following section (1.3) addresses these opportunities for future research and explores the implications for practices for such an improved understanding.

1.3 Situating the Doctoral Research

To situate the Doctoral research, the following sections (1.3.1 – 1.3.7) briefly establishes the current position for contact CSE research and practice and provides the motivation and direction for a timely evidenced based response.

1.3.1 Responding to Calls for Research

Until recently, empirical evidence exploring CSE has been scarce, particularly in relation to contact exploitation, where the offender seeks direct physical (offline) contact as opposed to targeting the victim online (Allnock et al., 2017; Beckett et al., 2017; DeMarco et al., 2018; Mooney, 2021). In sharp contrast, with the rise of online CSE (NSPCC, 2023), and its wealth of readily available public information and evidence trails, online CSE perpetrator chatroom textual data is suggested to be typically more ethically accessible and explored (DeMarco et al., 2016). It is also noted here that sexual offending against children has long been recognised and researched (i.e., pre-internet), albeit with different terminology to what is now known as CSE (Hallett, 2016). However, this will be reexplored in more detail in Chapter 3.

As a result of the above, significant gaps in the knowledge base remain, particularly relating to the prevalence, networks and pathways associated with contact CSE, therefore the true scale or knowledge of the threat is unknown (Barnardo's, 2023; Dean, 2021; Kelly & Karsna, 2017). The recent Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA, 2022) reports that despite a commitment to tackle exploitation, there is still no reliable picture of child sexual exploitation, and that less was known now than in 2015, when it was deemed a policing priority. This is suggested to be linked to the more

recent profiling of CSE and the difficulties of distinguishing one form of abuse from another as CSE is now often absorbed within the broader category of child criminal exploitation (IICSA, 2022).

Where research focuses on the perpetrator (predominantly online), it typically focuses on offending processes or behaviours, such as *grooming* methods (see Chapter 3) often referred to in practice as the boyfriend model (Barnardo's, 2011; Brown, 2019). However, as such research has been criticised for its methodological weaknesses, for sample bias or a poor evidence base for which its theoretical underpinnings are based upon (Alderson, 2019), therefore further empirical evidence is needed. Moreover, much of the CSE research has focused on victims in isolation, without consideration for the perpetrator's influence, such as the identification, risk factors and suitable interventions to safeguard victims of CSE (Beckett & Pearce, 2018; Drummond & Southgate, 2018; Hackett & Smith, 2018; Melrose & Pearce, 2013; Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b). Thus, seeking only to explore the basics of the phenomenon (Cockbain, 2018; DeMarco et al., 2018; Walker, Pillinger & Brown, 2018a, 2018b), and therefore preventing an understanding of the complex underlying issues of CSE. As increasing calls for a greater understanding of perpetrator behaviour, victim-perpetrator dynamics, rehabilitation, and disruption have been widely documented in literature (Cockbain, 2018; IICSA, 2022; Spicer, 2018) the current Doctoral research provides an opportunity to respond.

1.3.2 Opportunities to Build on what is Known

There are opportunities then to build upon what current child sex offender (i.e., online) knowledge exists to potentially shape future understanding of the contact CSE

victim-perpetrator dynamic. For example, there is potential value to understanding in greater depth how language functions to facilitate sexual activity in contact CSE interactions, as previously explored by analysing online interactions between adults and children. The central assumption underpinning such prior research is that language is considered a powerful social practice and fundamental when investigating social justice issues (Avineri et al., 2018; Okan 2020). Exploring language is suggested to be advantageous for providing insight, understanding, and contributing to achieving social justice, particularly when recognising its ability to empower or disempower others (Avineri et al., 2018; Okan, 2020).

Since Freudian times in the 1900s, language is posited to be a rich mechanism for revealing information about an individual and how a person has been shaped by socialisation (Boyd & Schwartz, 2020; Okan, 2020; Piller, 2020). An individual's linguistic repertoire is suggested to be shaped by their previous experiences but changes with context, embodying their values, and beliefs and what would be considered appropriate or inappropriate in that moment (Okan, 2020; Piller, 2020). Language use (exploring words, discourse, and social interactions) has long been valued for revealing information about individual's beliefs, thoughts and personalities, which can bring about wider social change (Avineri et al., 2018; Gottschalk & Gleser, 1969; Pennebaker et al., 2015; Schwartz et al., 2013; Weintraub, 1989). Furthermore, language is suggested to have a performative function, or alternatively regarded as language games or systems, whereby the actor's words provide the script for social actions (Rindova et al., 2004; Shotter, 1996; Wittgenstein, 1969). Although perhaps not as readily available as online

grooming interactions, language data still exists in police case files for contact CSE perpetrators and their victims, whereby similar language patterns can potentially be analysed. Such knowledge of exploitative language could therefore provide an indication to professionals of perpetrator intent, victim levels of engagement and areas for intervention.

1.3.3 Driving Lack of Evidence Informed Practice

The current lack of evidenced informed practice mentioned above (see Chapter 4 for further exploration) also suggests that safeguarding and law enforcement professionals are unable to use high quality research evidence in their decision-making for either the safeguarding of victims or in the pursuit of perpetrators. In recognition of this, the NSPCC (2023) found in a summary of previous serious case reviews, that professionals have not responded effectively to CSE, due to being hampered by personal perception and bias or missing the potential patterns and indicators. The poor recognition of CSE has therefore led to either a minimisation of risks or a more reactive response, prioritising the immediate harm rather than providing evidenced informed interventions, long term prevention and protection (NSPCC, 2023). Therefore, an evidenced informed set of exploitative language indicators is perhaps needed to support professionals in their decision-making process and ability to formulate more targeted interventions.

1.3.4 Acknowledging the Safeguarding Paradox

Making the response to CSE arguably more complex is the predominant safeguarding paradox that exists for CSE professionals (i.e., Police, Social Workers or

Youth Workers) acting protectively where young people might feel without voice, “alienated” and “engage in further risky behaviour” as Lefevre et al. (2019, p.1837) describes. Furthermore, it is suggested that safeguarding “professionals often feel that they are failing in their duty of care because they have not been able to dissuade” victims (Van de Vijver & Harvey, 2019, p.451) or that they are unable to strike the balance between protection and a child-centred participatory approach to safeguarding (Lefevre et al., 2019). Considering this, Hallet (2016) suggests that previous safeguarding agency failures and narrow child protection strategies have served only to compound victims’ abuse, and as such, there are now calls for improved care responses and intervention to address this.

The dominant belief system is that CSE is typified by sex-based oppression, vulnerability, power imbalances and violence (Beckett et al., 2017; DfE, 2017; Eaton & Holmes, 2017). CSE victimhood is associated with being voiceless, legally unable to consent to sex and necessitating safeguarding, whilst perpetration is linked with predatory behaviour requiring prosecution (Dodsworth, 2015; Pearce, 2014). Sex-based oppression and CSE related suffering has been compared to Finkelhor and Browne’s (1985) four examples associated with CSA by Van de Vijver and Harvey (2019) which includes: a) traumatic sexualisation b) feeling powerless to defend yourself against the world c) stigmatisation and shame, and d) the loss of faith that adults will protect. Furthermore, perpetrators are reported to take “advantage”, “coerce”, “manipulate” or “deceive” young people into sexual activity (DfE, 2017, p.5).

Young people who are victims of CSE have historically, but not without some debate, been constructed as “vulnerable” (Brown, 2019; DfE, 2017; Hallet, 2016; Lefevre et al., 2019). Brown (2017) has suggested that vulnerability narratives often frame the focus on protection in police and social care practices, and not always in a positive direction. The vulnerability narrative generally centres around victims being *passive* children, lacking in parental care, and capacity to consent, whilst being exposed to coercive sexual predators (Brown, 2019; Klatt et al., 2014). However, this narrative is said to deny young people agency (a term used in social sciences to describe the capacity to act independently and make free and informed choices), said to be important for the wellbeing of young developing adults (Vijayaraghavan et al., 2022). This is usually in direct conflict with the governance associated with child protection strategies because of the statutory safeguarding responsibilities and accountability for decision making (Brown, 2019; Pearce 2014). However, Sorbring and Kuczynski (2018) argue that safeguarding professionals “must engage or accommodate children’s perspectives and initiatives in order to promote children’s health and well-being” (p.1). Therefore, evidenced informed indicators might support safeguarding professionals in their decision making on how to recognise CSE but also guide the protective interventions that support young people involved in CSE to make informed decisions.

1.3.5 Navigating the Social Welfare and Justice Conflicts

Alongside the challenges of safeguarding children whilst supporting agency, there is also the recognition of the difficult balance or moral conflict between social welfare and justice (Juujärvi et al., 2020). The Criminal Justice System (CJS) finds

solutions based on similar related cases and established legal rules, to address anti-social or criminal behaviour (Juujärvi et al., 2020). On the other hand, the welfare system is more likely to adopt a holistic person-centred approach to the care of individuals considering their unique needs (Juujärvi et al., 2020). The CJS is recognised for making distinctions between the victim and perpetrator, with such labels said to “polarise” perception and oversimplify the narrative, instead of understanding the “complexity of either offending or victimisation” (Working Chance, 2020). The perpetrator is typically considered punishable and the victim requiring reparation within the CJS, despite each of these individuals potentially falling into the other category due to their own experiences of trauma and suffering (Working Chance, 2020).

The justice system therefore removes the opportunity for the perpetrator to have a solution focused intervention based on their unique needs or patterns of offending, or for the victim to try to fall in line with the ideal victim stereotype, which some might not. Thus, establishing contact CSE perpetrator patterns and indicators for recognising CSE, not only helps professional decision making at the earliest opportunity but perhaps throughout the criminal justice process, guiding the focus of rehabilitation and therapeutic interventions. A more interdisciplinary and evidenced based approach might begin to address the social welfare and justice conflict.

1.3.6 Aligning the Research with Social Justice

From this current study it is intended that professionals will be able to offer a protective response whilst respecting a young person’s autonomy by understanding more about contact CSE victim–perpetrator relationships and the interpersonal language used.

The premise is that by educating young people on the exploitative language commonly used to instigate sexual activity, they will be able to make more informed decisions to help them find healthier relationships. Moreover, young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour, which might lead on to CSE related crimes, can be offered preventative education on non-coercive approaches to relationships. Beyond the preventative benefits of understanding victim-perpetrator dynamics, law enforcement might also refer to the language data for improving investigative purposes or disruption strategies.

It is for the above reasons that this research aligns itself with the central concepts of social justice theories linked to vulnerability, sex-based oppression and protection (Brown, 2017). Social justice is described by Jost and Kay (2010) as the norms that preserve human rights, decisions that promote dignity and social systems that avoid “unnecessary suffering, exploitation, abuse, tyranny, oppression, prejudice, and discrimination” (p.1122). As widely documented, the impact of the victim-perpetrator dynamic goes beyond the individuals within the CSE relationship to peers, parents, educators, law enforcement/safeguarding agencies and to society (Beckett et al.,2017; Smeaton, 2018). Consequently, the outcomes for this research are not just beneficial to the individuals involved but have the potential to influence procedural decisions by informing effective child centred safeguarding responses.

1.3.7 Defining Central Constructs

Factoring in the safeguarding paradox and the welfare or justice debate, a research decision was made to attempt to take a more objective stance and explore the

CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic without such socially and legally constructed biases influencing the way the victim and perpetrators are typically perceived. Therefore, the researcher will consider the victim-perpetrator dynamic as an interpersonal *relationship* to gain insight into their interactions, despite the illegal nature associated with offenders, child victims, manipulative strategies, and lack of consent. The following definitions will therefore explain how key terminology will be used throughout this research and are based on established definitions:

The CSE Relationship. Defined in this thesis as a connection (Myers, 2014; Robison, 2023), or repeatable behaviour (Scott, 1956) between two or more people, involving a (positive or negative) attachment/bond (Kaya & Odaci, 2023; Vaeth, 2009), or an exchange (Walz, 2009), or co-operation with shared risk and benefits (Plugge et al., 2008). However, for clarity, despite being positioned and explored as a CSE *relationship* it is firmly recognised as child sexual abuse and is illegal (DfE, 2017).

The Victim. As victim data was accessed via police case files (following a conviction and subsequent court outcome), the victim will be described using the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime as “a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence” (The Victims’ Code, 2021, p.1).

The Perpetrator (i.e., offender). As perpetrator data was accessed via police case files (following a conviction and subsequent court outcome), the perpetrator will be described using the Code for Crown Prosecutors (2018) as a “person who has admitted guilt as to the commission of an offence, or who has been found guilty in a court of law” (p.2).

Victim Agency. The positioning of the victim throughout the thesis was to explore the potential for a capacity to act and respond independently to the CSE perpetrator as a young developing adult. Therefore, the victim responses are deemed as equally important to understand within a CSE relationship as the perpetrators

approach. As such, this will be discussed as victim agency, within what is recognised as a hidden illegal CSE relationship.

1.4 Personal Impetus for Research and Positionality

For the purposes of outlining the impetus and positionality in this section of the thesis, the researcher will refer to themselves in the first person, thereafter, will be in third person. The personal impetus for this research stemmed from my own professional experiences, working within safeguarding and educational positions, where I became aware of other people, both young and in their adulthood that found it hard to communicate their sexual boundaries between their partners. My work as an education outreach worker in sexual health enlightened me to people being exposed to an unspoken pressure or expectation from partners to go through with sexual acts, despite not always wanting to do so. These unspoken pressures or expectations would appear, from my professional discussions, to be non-gender specific, whereby both partners regardless of their gender could feel the need to “go through with” the sexual act. However, the motivations to “go through with it” might differ (e.g., fear of being sexually naïve, teasing that would occur by their peers for sexual under-performance, or feeling like they had led the other on).

My role as a multi-agency sexual exploitation team worker allowed me to see why some young people were not able to negotiate sex, predominantly due to the typical power-imbalance involved (between adult and child) and the victim vulnerabilities. Although, CSE relationship dynamics were usually concealed due to the criminality involved (according to sexual offence thresholds associated with legal consent), in

comparison to relationships (considered to be “normal” consensual intimate relationships), common themes remained the same as my own, and other peer, sexual experiences. Such typical patterns of sexual pressure and coercion might have been observed informally by professionals but evidenced based indicators to inform safeguarding decisions and support interventions were missing. Furthermore, with my educational background in psychology, countywide experience researching sexual violence and my professional roles in safeguarding young people, I found myself keen to research and understand the relationship dynamics at play in exploitative sexual relationships to address this criminal interpersonal dynamic and educate those most at risk.

As the introduction to the CSE phenomenon affirms, the motivation for conducting the research is primarily based on the critical need to provide insight into contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics, and therefore limit the significant impact that such illegal relationships can have on the victim and wider society. Having undertaken an initial review exploring contact CSE perpetration, I was aware that the literature had remained largely silent on the contact CSE perpetrator, and the interpersonal dynamics with their victims, which provided originality for my doctoral research. It became apparent from gaps in research that if safeguarding and law enforcement agencies had the potential to become adept at effectively identifying and analysing the typically hidden interactions between the contact CSE victim and perpetrator, they could have a more positive impact on protecting children. Furthermore, the motivation to introduce inter-disciplinary indicators that better identifies and informs decisions around when to

safeguard victims and pursue perpetrators was based on my professional experiences and personal drive to solve the real-world safeguarding problem as detailed above.

Despite the obvious enrichment benefits that my own personal and disciplinary perspectives can bring to this research as detailed in the brief biography above, I still acknowledge my positionality and possible bias that I might have towards perpetrators and victims of sexual crimes or openness towards more psychological and sociological realities as plausible interventions. This bias will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5 but is recognised here in relation to the motivation to undertake this research. The following section (1.5) briefly details how the thesis methodological decisions were influenced by the restricted nature of the data; however, Chapter 5 provides a more detailed explanation.

1.5 Data Access Guiding Methodological Decisions

The nature of such unexplored and sensitive research presented various barriers of how best to understand this hidden CSE dynamic, as common with other sex offender research (Blagden & Pemberton, 2010). The challenges with data access for the thesis, ultimately guided the methodological decision to focus on the available interpersonal language and communicative patterns from police case files (explored in more detail in Chapter 5). In relation to contact CSE, the perpetrators' discursive practices have the potential to action or instigate sexual activity with the victim. The victim and perpetrator language in this study is held within transcripts from police case files and the quest for its meaning and influence will be investigated by word frequencies (via Linguistic Inquiry Word Count [LIWC]) and discourse analysis. The discourse analysis

is considered appropriate for establishing sentiment and context for this study. The police transcripts are judged to be forensically relevant linguistic communication because of its evidential use in criminal proceedings (Filipovic & Gascón, 2018). The researcher believes that the analysis of language in police case files was the closest way to explore contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics, without observing the interactions in person within an experiment. This approach accounts for the recognised ethical and logistical issues involved in using victims and perpetrators as human participants (Hoover Green & Cohen, 2021). The following section (1.6) provides a statement of purpose, aims, research questions, objectives and hypotheses for the study.

1.6 Thesis Statement of Purpose, Aims, Research Questions and Objectives

To summarise the sections above, the purpose of this thesis was to improve understanding of contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics to provide a timely, and empirically based contribution to the existing CSE literature and to inform a more comprehensive safeguarding response within the United Kingdom.

This research aimed to address gaps in understanding contact CSE perpetrator and victim dynamics by focusing on interpersonal communication patterns and retrospective justifications of contact CSE cases. In addition, the research aimed to deliver evidence-based recommendations to improve practice in this field.

1.6.1 Thesis Research Questions

The thesis research questions (referred to as RQ throughout) guiding the quantitative and qualitative analysis are detailed below:

- RQ1. What are the typical psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE?
- RQ2. How do contact CSE perpetrators and their victims discursively construct their relationship retrospectively within the context of a criminal investigation?

1.6.2 Thesis Objectives

The key objectives of this thesis were to consider:

1. If typical demographic or psycholinguistic features and typologies exist between contact CSE victims and perpetrators concerning age, gender, ethnicity, offence profiles as categorised (or if available) within the police case files.
2. If typical interpersonal communication patterns exist between the contact CSE victims and perpetrators in their verbal and non-verbal exchanges.
3. How perpetrators and their victims retrospectively account for their contact CSE relationship, including the rationale for offending within the context of a criminal investigation.
4. How understanding contact CSE interpersonal dynamics might have benefits for delivering evidence-based recommendations to improve practice in this field.

1.6.3 Thesis Hypotheses

The thesis hypotheses guiding the quantitative analysis (i.e., LIWC) is outlined below.

Hypothesis 1: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences for victim and perpetrator demographics and general population natural speech benchmarks

Hypothesis 2: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences between victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks

Hypothesis 3: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences between retrospective accounts and both the victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks

Only the thesis research questions will be re-stated in Chapter 5 and 6 for clarity.

The following section (1.7) outlines the originality of the study.

1.7 Originality of the Study

To the best of the author's knowledge, there has not previously been any specific empirically informed contact CSE research focusing on the psycholinguistic differences and communication patterns (including verbal and non-verbal) between perpetrators and genuine victims as detailed in police case files. Previous conceptual or empirical studies

have either explored online grooming communicative techniques involving decoys (i.e., undercover police operations) rather than genuine victims, or the dynamics relating to human trafficking rather than CSE. Furthermore, new findings in relation to the retrospective justifications gained from this research will address what is lacking in literature by exploring both victim-perpetrator accounts pre and during sexual contact and retrospectively.

This research will provide unique insight to enable researchers, policy makers and practitioners to further increase the body of CSE research and implement strategies to protect victims (and potential victims). The increased knowledge base about the dynamics between the perpetrator and the victim will generate typical exploitative indicators to prevent the likelihood of interactions forming, continuing, and ending for both victims and perpetrators. To ensure an original contribution was made to understanding contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics, an up-to-date examination of existing research, publication trends and current practice is provided within the systematic review, thematic synthesis and focused review were undertaken (see Chapter 2, 3 and 4).

1.8 Thesis Structure

Following the introduction in Chapter 1, this thesis aimed to address the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics in the remaining eight chapters. A brief outline of each chapter follows. Firstly, the systematic literature review in Chapter 2 provided a critical assessment of the contact CSE (and online leading to contact CSE) perpetration literature, expanding on the systematic review completed for publication. This chapter

aimed to provide research context for the subsequent chapters and an understanding of why the findings from this thesis might be considered necessary insights that can inform and improve safeguarding practice.

Chapter 3 presents a succinct thematic synthesis of existing child sexual offending research, learning from methods and findings that may have the potential to be transferred to explore the core dynamics at play between contact CSE perpetrators and their victims. Gaps in the literature are presented to show the original contribution that this thesis makes to contact CSE research. Chapter 4 provides a more focused literature review to examine current safeguarding and law enforcement practice in relation to contact CSE and establish how the findings from this thesis may contribute to improving it. For the purposes of clarity, all the literature review methods of searching, selection and data extraction are detailed within each of the review Chapters 2, 3 and 4 rather than within the thesis research methods section in Chapter 5. This was a decision based on readability.

The research philosophy and design in Chapter 5 details the philosophical underpinnings, methods and techniques used to answer the research questions. A rationale is provided as to why the methods were chosen and how this relates to the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions. Ethical considerations and approvals are documented. The relevance and limitations of the techniques used are discussed in relation to the study's aims and objectives. The justification for the chosen analysis is outlined, and implications for the study examined. The discussions of

trustworthiness and rigour in the chapter highlight the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability of the research.

Chapter 6 summarises the key qualitative and quantitative findings for research questions 1 and 2 on typical contact CSE victim-perpetrator psycholinguistic differences and interpersonal communication patterns (pre and during the sexual act and retrospectively). Emerging themes and conclusions, including the unforeseen and expected outcomes that were drawn from the data, are outlined.

The discussion in Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the findings from research question 1 and 2, whereby results are interpreted, background research synthesised and related to the aims, objectives, and hypotheses of the study. Significant discoveries for the typical contact CSE perpetrator, victim and exploitative language are examined through a critical lens and aligned to previous research. Meanings are explored and implications discussed within the context of the wider CSE discipline. The Chapter ends with a discussion of the research limitations.

Chapter 8 presents the inter-disciplinary InTEL for improving safeguarding and law enforcement practice, based on the findings in Chapter 6. The new indicators are introduced following a summary of current practice and rationale for introducing a new evidenced-based solution. In addition, inter-disciplinary guidance, and examples of how the indicators can contribute to practice, are provided. The final Chapter 9 concludes with a synthesis of the thesis and provides a summary of its significance, limitations, and implications for future research. The thesis outline concludes the introductory chapter to summarise the written structure of the study.

Chapter 2: A Contact CSE Systematic Literature Review: Providing Context and Pointing a Way Forward for Future Research and Practice

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this systematic review is to provide a critical assessment of the contact CSE (and online leading to contact CSE) perpetration literature, providing research context for the subsequent chapters. The review synthesises what is known about all types of contact CSE perpetration, identifying four significant analytical themes including (a) barriers to examining a complex phenomenon, (b) recognising the contact CSE perpetrator, (c) understanding the contact CSE perpetrator and (d) responding to the contact CSE perpetrator. This chapter aims to provide an understanding of why the findings from this thesis might be considered necessary insights that can inform and improve safeguarding and law enforcement practice.

2.2. Literature Review Method

2.2.1 Search Strategy

This review was conducted by systematically searching academic databases to establish the frequency and relevance (to the Department for Education, 2017 CSE statutory definition) of UK empirical contact CSE research available. This included Academic Search Complete, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Criminal Justice, Social Sciences and Psychology interdisciplinary databases. An advanced search utilising Boolean operators (AND/OR), including the use of truncation and “wild cards”, such as * and “ symbols was performed to find any variation of the word within the database. After a preliminary sample search to find suitable search terms, keywords were chosen. Figure 1 details the search terms below:

Figure 1

Systematic Review Search Terms

"Child sexual exploit*" or CSE or groom* or "contact sexual contact" or CSA or "street grooming" AND gang* or group* or collective* or ring* or network* or traffick* AND belief* or perception* or view* or attitud* or opinion* or normalis* or characteris* or motivation* or justif* or predictor* AND perpetr* or offender* or hebephil*.

Additional searches examined the available grey literature, including organisation reports or non-peer reviewed research on the perpetration of CSE, which is a strategy considered optimal when attempting to capture the complete understanding of the phenomenon and evidence base (Mahood et al., 2014). This search strategy proved fruitful in scope, particularly utilising the “snowballing” technique of tracking references, which is recommended for finding sources in alternative locations (Wohlin, 2014). This research decision was based on a sampling method that would be considered purposive and therefore to reduce the risk of missing relevant studies, rather than using a more random sampling method (Raharjana, 2021). Documents considered for more detailed exploration included pertinent research from organisations, such as the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Centre of expertise and the Home Office. All articles and research publications were scanned for relevance by title and abstract (or summaries of findings) and selected for appraisal (see appraisal tool detailed in section 2.2.3 below) based on

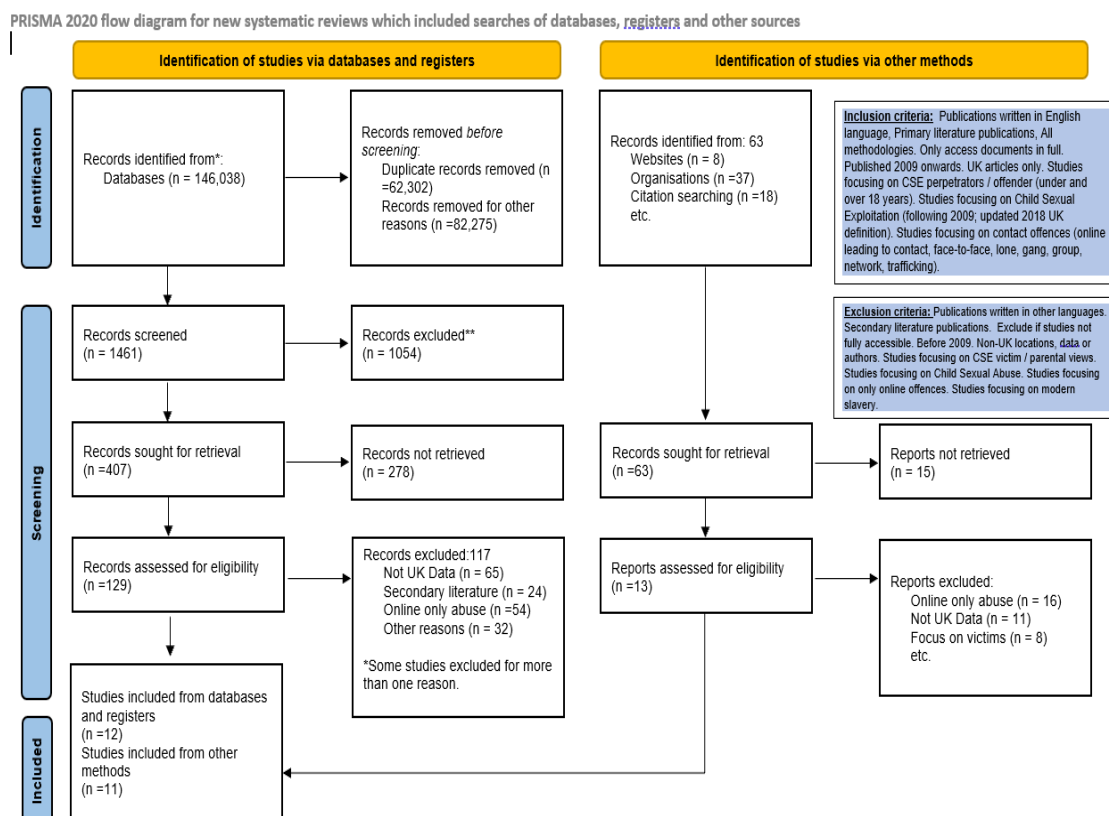
whether they referred to contact CSE perpetration. The search process is presented in its entirety, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria and results of articles retained at each stage in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 flowchart in Figure 2 below.

2.2.2 Selection Criteria

Studies that were excluded comprised of: a) secondary literature publications (i.e., Colley, 2019; Home Office, 2020; Wager et al., 2021), to avoid being too removed from the original data, b) publications discussing only online CSE or CSA rather than contact CSE (i.e., Bartels & Merdian, 2015; Gillespie et al., 2018; McManus et al., 2014; Steel et al., 2022), c) articles focusing on modern slavery (i.e., Dando et al., 2016), d) articles using data or being published outside of the United Kingdom (i.e., Babchishin et al., 2015; Briggs et al., 2011; Fortin et al., 2018; Jung et al., 2013; Krone & Smith, 2017; Webster et al., 2012), therefore not following the recognised UK statutory definition of CSE (2009, updated by DfE, 2017). It is worth noting here that, although considered important, exploring how other governments (including those in the commonwealth, following similar legal practices to the UK system) tackle CSE was beyond the scope of this study. However, there will undoubtedly be lessons that could be learned from non-UK government/law enforcement agencies for future research to explore.

Figure 2

PRISMA 2020 Flowchart for Contact CSE Systematic Review



Adapted from: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

2.2.3 Data Extraction and Analysis

As part of the data extraction process, critical appraisal was undertaken, utilising a Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool [MMAT v. 2018], to assess study quality, based on the suitability of study design and methodological soundness (Hong et al., 2018). The data extraction and MMAT appraisal were guided by the standards of the PRISMA Statement (Page et al., 2021) and the data extraction table can be found in Appendix A. As meta-analysis was not viable with the heterogeneous studies, narrative synthesis was

performed to unify findings from included studies. Narrative synthesis is the textual approach to explaining qualitative and quantitative findings with words (Guise et al., 2014). A thematic inductive analysis was performed to translate the data and establish analytical themes of interest between the findings in the different studies, as recommended by established Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) guidance and more recent peer reviewed articles (Popay et al., 2006; Sarraf-Yazdi, 2021). Themes of interest were coded and then progressively refined from singular ideas to higher level central concepts from the diverse body of research as Braun and Clarke (2021b) recommended. An example that can be provided from the *barriers to examining a complex phenomenon* theme (see 2.3.3.1 below) involved coding the singular ideas which the researcher coded if they are blocking advances to the understanding of contact CSE, such as inaccuracies with flagging CSE crimes or differences in the terminology used by professionals.

2.3 Findings

Twenty-three research articles were appraised, and the findings are detailed below under the headings of characteristics, quality, and narrative synthesis from Sections 2.3.1–2.3.3.

2.3.1 *Characteristics of Studies Appraised*

Of the 23 studies reviewed, 44% ($n = 10$) included peer reviewed empirical studies from academic journals, 52% ($n = 12$) comprised of organisational research (i.e., the CSA Centre of expertise), and 4% from one article ($n = 1$) via the Social Science Research Network (SSRN) platform for dissemination of early-stage research. With the

search spanning from 2009 to 2023, eight of the 23 reviewed studies were published within 5 years of the initial 2009 definition and this figure increases to 22 within a 10-year period, which highlights the increasing attention to the topic. The publishing academic journals were: Sexual Abuse ($n = 2$); Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice ($n = 2$); Crime Science ($n = 1$); Sexual Abuse - A Journal of Research and Treatment ($n = 2$); International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy ($n = 2$); Social Policy Administration ($n = 1$).

2.3.2 Quality of the Studies Involved

The MMAT was considered appropriate to provide markers of quality for the varied qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies (Hong et al., 2018). Overall, non-peer reviewed studies fell short on expected quality standards when discussing their chosen methodology, by not providing a detailed approach to their inquiry or limiting the detail about the process of collecting their data in the methods (Levitt et al., 2018). This was particularly relevant for the mixed methods approach found in the Quilliam (2017) report, whereby the recommended mixed methods criteria were not fully met, or one method was favoured over another as emphasised by Hesse-Biber (2010) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2017). Many of the organisational studies ($n = 11$) were commissioned by either the UK government or high-profile UK organisations. Most articles ($n = 12$) exclusively employed a qualitative approach to study design as would be expected for the more explorative stage of understanding a phenomenon and deemed appropriate to address the research questions (Guest et al., 2013). A more dated view postulates that a reliance on qualitative approaches impacts on interpretive precision and

generates difficulties with extending findings to the wider population (Atieno, 2009) as many of the reviewed articles documented ($n = 16$). However, there is now a recognition that qualitative research should not be judged by positivist standards but by markers of quality, (Levitt et al., 2018; Yadav, 2022) such as those found in the MMAT tool used in this study. The remaining articles ($n = 11$), employ mixed methods, potentially to overcome some of the issues raised for qualitative research, yet this combined method is also not without criticism, in relation to rigour, reductionist findings and accuracy and would require quality markers for both (Tafreshi et al., 2016).

Although sample sizes and study populations varied, many studies ($n = 13$) failed to provide clear descriptions or at least document the sampling processes involved in selecting their study population, which is typical when publishing for journals with limited word counts for manuscripts (Levitt et al., 2018). This is thought to have implications for replication, bias, and quality appraisal (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Typically, this was associated with the non-academic papers, however where details were included many involved would fit the description of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is said to be particularly useful in achieving data saturation but has the potential for bias and subjectivity, because it is based on the judgements of the researcher (Etikan et al., 2016). The study population characteristics of those ($n = 22$) articles reporting on samples were: 9,207 perpetrators (specifically 3,172 contact offenders); 11,293 victims, 341 professional/expert interviews or responses, 40 perpetrator interviews, 43 victim interviews, 101 groups or gangs and 2,100 newspaper articles/media reports. Much of the sample population were convicted perpetrators,

rather than suspects, which may potentially skew the true research sample available. An example of this might be linked to attrition within the CJS as highlighted by a study revealing suspected sexual offenders who were not initially convicted (i.e., due to a lack of conclusive evidence) but later identified via untested sexual assault kits (Lovell et al., 2020). Thus, suspects are arguably also important to include in a research sample for comparison and follow up.

2.3.3 Narrative Synthesis

Four analytical themes of interest have been synthesised narratively: (a) barriers to examining a complex phenomenon, (b) recognising the contact CSE perpetrator, (c) understanding the contact CSE perpetrator, and (d) responding to the contact CSE perpetrator (see Sections 2.3.3.1–2.3.3.4).

2.3.3.1 Barriers to Examining a Complex Phenomenon

Five of the studies were assigned to *barriers to examining a complex phenomenon* focused on CSE in a broad sense; thus, contextualising rather than solely discussing challenges in relation to contact CSE. The studies reviewed from 2009 to the present-day documented the difficulties faced by professionals, prosecutors, researchers, and even the perpetrators or victims themselves in understanding what constitutes CSE. This was despite the various statutory definitional updates. A lack of definitional clarity was reported to delay professional responses, impede prosecutions, and prevent researchers improving the knowledge base on such serious CSE crimes, due to difficulties with interpretation and differing threshold levels for protection (Drummond

& Southgate, 2018; Hackett & Smith, 2018; Kelly & Karsna, 2017; Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b).

The studies report that definitional clarification was attempted with the introduction of the Department for Education (2017) statutory definition of CSE; however, Radcliffe et al. (2020) argues that CSE will always be “a fluid and changing problem with no single local manifestation” (p. 1224). Similarly, there was agreement within the studies about the overlap between the many categorisations used to describe the CSE crimes committed, resulting in flagging and data recording issues, such as CSE cases being recorded as CSA, criminal exploitation or domestic abuse making it harder to analyse (CEOP, 2013; Kelly & Karsna, 2017).

Terminology used within the studies to frame CSE include child grooming (Gill & Harrison, 2015); internal trafficking (Cockbain et al., 2011); group localised CSE (GLCSE) (Bhatti-Sinclair & Sutcliffe, 2018); child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/E) (Kelly & Karsna, 2017); and associated with organised crime and offending networks (Senker et al., 2020; Skidmore et al., 2016). Societal expectations and reactions to CSE could potentially be blurred by such shifting terminology and therefore lead to a differing operational response from law enforcement teams, such as the comparison between organised offending networks and lone offenders. Moreover, if there is no consensus amongst practitioners in defining the phenomenon, it is not surprising that the victims themselves fail to recognise that they are involved in exploitative relationships, as reported in Radcliffe et al. (2020), resulting in serious safeguarding implications, with an obvious similarity to stalking (Richards et al., 2012).

Further analysis revealed that there are few effective (specifically national) centralised systems for initial identification, flagging, mapping, monitoring, and tracking perpetration through the CJS and thus the true scale of the problem remains hidden (Berelowitz et al., 2012; Bhatti-Sinclair & Sutcliffe, 2018; CEOP, 2011, 2013). Studies report: (a) poor responses to calls for evidence, (b) differing threshold levels, (c) variations in regional data based on jurisdictions, and (d) levels of awareness and resources impacting on accurate prevalence data (Berelowitz et al., 2012; CEOP, 2011, 2013; Kelly & Karsna, 2017; Perkins et al., 2018).

2.3.3.2 Recognising the Contact CSE Perpetrator

The ability for safeguarding agencies and law enforcement to accurately identify the contact CSE perpetrator is limited, firstly by the demographic data disparities (CEOP, 2013), yet a dominant debate in four of the studies is on whether race is a central feature of CSE perpetration. Two studies explored the validity of the media representations of the racialised threat finding that it is highly emotive, often unsubstantiated, and reliant on sensationalist reporting (Gill & Harrison, 2015; Tufail, 2015). Tufail (2015) prepared the most in-depth examination of media coverage (over a 4-year period from 2010 to 2014), in comparison to Gill and Harrison's (2015) 1-year timeframe (between 2012 and 2013). Despite the varying lengths of examination of media coverage, consensus coalesced around one single factor: of being a racially motivated crime, leading to moral panic. The research also explored the political repercussions of the coverage focusing on agencies fearing reprisals if they acknowledged CSE perpetrated by Asian males or the complete lack of media focus on

groups of white sexual offenders. The two studies also raise the inappropriate use of the generalised terms ‘Asian’, and ‘Muslim’ linked with ‘grooming’ scandals, suggested to have intensified Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, subsequently condemning whole communities. Tufail (2015) concludes that there should be less focus on race and more on identifying the scale of the problem. Despite this, the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, when unveiling a new grooming gangs taskforce to tackle CSE, openly criticised “political correctness” as a reason why “vile” and “evil” grooming gangs have not been stopped (Gov.uk, 2023).

At the height of the media coverage on grooming gangs, Rafiq and Adil (2017) published research via the Quilliam Foundation (a counter-extremism organisation) attempting to explore this issue further by analysing available secondary data from CEOP (2013), identifying 58 cases of ‘grooming gangs’ over an 11-year period (between 2005 and 2017 resulting in 264 convictions) and analysing 10 case studies for emerging patterns (from 2010 to 2017). The report found that there was a disproportionate number of Asian (of Pakistani origin) males perpetrating CSE crimes against white females, further claiming that this was due to their backgrounds in relation to views of relationships and treatment of women. Similarly, Bhatti-Sinclair and Sutcliffe (2018) concluded that Muslims, particularly Pakistanis, dominated GLCSE prosecutions from the data collected (involving 498 defendants in 73 prosecutions between 1997 and 2017) from newspaper articles and offered reasons for the over-represented offenders. Explanations focused on perpetrators bonding with ‘like-minded’ alliances, living lives away from partners, in front facing jobs, usually in the night-time

economy with access and power over vulnerable victims. Studies focusing on what is known about contact CSE perpetration highlight that CSE crimes can be committed by a lone offender or perpetrated by groups, gangs, and networks (Berelowitz et al., 2012; CEOP, 2011; Cockbain & Wortley, 2015).

Studies report on what characteristics of CSE perpetrators (such as age, gender, ethnicity) are available within their sample or from the calls for evidence and conclude that most CSE perpetration occurs by single, low skilled, young, white males, acting alone or in groups. For example, the CEOP (2013) study findings revealed young adult (aged 18–24 years) males (87%) from white (30%) or Asian (28%) ethnic backgrounds, although, 38% of ethnicities were omitted from this study due to lack of information making it difficult to draw conclusions. In the follow up to this study, CEOP (2013) identified variations between the perpetrator groups, the first being group 1 which is reported to involve anywhere between 2 and 25 offenders, with four being the most common and can be identified by their loosely organised networks. The age range was found to be similar to the earlier study involving mostly younger offenders (77% below aged 30 years). In comparison, group 2 differed in nearly every demographic or category. Offenders were older (58% above 40 years), involving smaller groups (between 2 and 5) and were ethnically classified as white. This group were more likely to be motivated by a paedophilic sexual interest in children and were deemed less likely to be involved in what is considered localised or street grooming. The final category CEOP (2013) included was gang associated abuse but the findings from only one case were not considered “sufficient to draw conclusions in relation to gang demographics”

(p. 21). Nonetheless, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012) inquiry into gangs and groups detailed that it was mostly male perpetrators against female victims.

Despite data inconsistencies, studies have reported that where offending takes place in groups or gangs, there is typically only loose connections, mostly via friends or relatives, often involved in criminality, and associated with ethnic homogeneity (Bhatti-Sinclair & Sutcliffe, 2018; CEOP, 2013; Cockbain & Wortley, 2015; Rafiq & Adil, 2017; Senker et al., 2020). Therefore, contradicting Skidmore et al.'s (2016) association between group perpetration and 'organised crime'. Senker et al.'s (2020) research did not find sophisticated networks or criminal hierarchies within the groups interviewed. Radcliffe et al.'s (2020) reported that the common group 'working together' stereotype was "unhelpful and inaccurate" (p. 1224). Despite such views, CEOP (2013) suggested that large offending groups did not always equate to more victims, but rather the same repeat victims where the gravity of offences becomes more serious.

The more recent study by Senker et al. (2020) created 3 groups where some distinctions in characteristics could be made. The first group being those adopting a double life and offending online. The second group living a hedonistic lifestyle where infidelity was frequent, and offending was opportunistic. The final group was considered more vulnerable and more likely to have been coerced or threatened to take part in group offending. The second group fits more with the hedonistic lifestyle likely to be taking place within the night-time economy, whereby legitimate and illegitimate behaviour, such as exploitation, drug dealing and opportunities to meet vulnerable young people can exist within society, as mentioned by Bhatti-Sinclair and Sutcliffe (2018).

The Hackett and Smith's (2018) study explored young people who perpetrate CSE yielding similarities with adult perpetrators detailed above, in that they were most likely lone (or in pairs), white and male targeting female victims. However, the ages were younger, ranging from 14 to 21 years yet still with considerable offending histories, and with a tendency for sexual offences to be committed against peers but not whilst part of a gang. Despite the small size of the sample ($n = 14$) and the analysis of data not initially intended for research, the study found patterns in young people's offending characteristics and deviance. It was posited that further investigation into the links between CSE pathways and deviance during adolescence would be particularly beneficial.

It is clear from the studies reviewed that understanding the characteristics and modus operandi of a CSE perpetrator is an important and a much-needed research focus to be able to fully recognise and understand the threat. However, studies report that an equally important factor are the methods used by the perpetrator which make CSE crimes distinct from any other sexual offence or form of abuse (Brayley et al., 2011; Kloess et al., 2019). CSE perpetrator methods have been described in nine studies, usually by way of models, such as the 'boyfriend,' party house, social networks, or lone predator (Cockbain et al., 2011; Senker et al., 2020).

Berelowitz et al. (2012) highlight that in cases involving groups, the 'boyfriend model' of grooming is less common and instead victims are either frequently contacted via phone or social media and taken to various locations where the abuse can occur with others, usually in cars, private houses, parties, food establishments and hotels, linked to

the 'night-time economy'. This was also supported in the findings from Radcliffe et al. (2020), whereby food establishments with free Wi-Fi were likely to be the most successful grooming location, where adult attention would be viewed as flattering and non-threatening. Social media and free messaging services, such as WhatsApp and Snapchat were reported to be the main method for initiating contact with victims.

Kloess et al.'s (2017) study found that exploitative strategies used to initiate face-to-face sexual contact via online mechanisms ranged from "flattery, compliments, and affection to severe manipulation in the form of persistent and pressurising requests and orders" (p. 573). The suggestive or direct discursive styles considered to be successful manipulative techniques, were found to be emotionally loaded, minimising the act, focusing on secrecy, and achieving sexual arousal. Although not included for review, Craven et al. (2006) used the term 'grooming' to describe the preparatory processes involved from gaining access to the victim to instigating sexual activity. Eighteen studies reviewed, used the term 'grooming' to describe perpetrator methods used in contact CSE, particularly referring to the 'boyfriend model'. However, Kloess et al.'s (2019) study contradicts the widely held face-to-face behaviours, reporting that online (leading to) contact CSE processes involve either indirect (rapport building) or direct (blunt, demanding, and aggressive) manipulative approaches, with no order, leading to highly sexualised but short-lived interactions. Therefore, lacking the traditional linear grooming techniques outlined in previous research.

Moving away from focusing on the presence of grooming in CSE crimes, Radcliffe et al. (2020) suggested focusing on the "risky sites" where groups informally

gather for parties and the likelihood for exploitation is increased would be more beneficial. Furthermore, Cockbain and Wortley (2015) suggest that unlike other forms of sexual abuse, exploitation in the form of internal trafficking is more likely to take place in semi-public or public places where ordinarily measures to avoid detection would be expected by the perpetrators yet were rarely adopted. Thus, bringing to the fore societal norms, lack of guardianship and normalised abuse in the absence of any sophisticated predatory behaviour. This is especially important when many of the offences in the Cockbain and Wortley (2015) sample (76%, $n = 32$) resulted in vaginal, anal, or oral penetration, considered the most serious as Sec. 1 Rape or Sec. 2 Assault by Penetration in the Sexual Offences Act, 2003, carrying a maximum of life imprisonment.

2.3.3.3 Understanding the Contact CSE Perpetrator

The analytical theme of *understanding the contact CSE perpetrator* involved studies relating to the perspectives of the perpetrator and reasoning behind the crime. Firstly, psychological profiles have been explored within three of the studies suggesting an association between poor attachments, difficulty establishing relationships, and a propensity towards having mental health issues with CSE perpetrators (Elliott et al., 2009, 2013; Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b). Walker et al. (2018a, 2018b) analysed redacted police interviews and conducted interviews with both CSE and non-CSE offenders, yielding notable individual internal, and relational/environmental external characteristics in the narratives. These characteristics were further broken down into

functions or dysfunctions, with functioning factors associated only with relationships, and dysfunctional factors linked to the individual, relational and environmental themes.

The most prevalent individual dysfunctional characteristic was poor mental health with participants describing difficulties with severe depression, anxiety, and stress. Other significant dysfunctional features for individuals included the extreme and addictive use of pornography, low self-esteem, and an excessive use of substances, such as drugs and alcohol. Within the dysfunctional relationship theme, absent fathers or minimal friendships was common, whereas a functioning relationship with a mother could be viewed as a protective factor. Similarly, dysfunctional environmental factors were mostly linked to unstable childhood environments. Furthermore, many perpetrators grew up in an environment that was described as chaotic, as many witnessed violence, had experienced bullying and abuse from adults and peers, moved schools and care placements and displayed disruptive behaviour resulting in further punishment at home or school. Many perpetrators justified their behaviour in terms of past and present features, such as, the build-up of internal and external dysfunctions, in addition to minimising offences and being deserving of sexual gratification. Walker et al. (2018a, 2018b) discusses their findings through an ecological lens, which recognised the interplay between the individual, social, familial, and cultural risk factors influencing offending behaviour.

Research from Elliott et al.'s (2009) study found that more social risks were associated with contact offending and avoided by online only offenders, argued to be linked with 'low self-esteem' and 'emotional loneliness'. However, contact offenders

were said to have higher levels of congruence with children, a bias towards favourable self-description, externalised locus of control and likely to respond over-assertively. Elliott et al.'s (2013) found that contact offenders had greater cognitive and victim empathy distortions than mixed or online offenders. Pro-offending attitudes, such as believing that the victim did not object to the act or was not harmed, manifested more with contact offenders than online perpetrators. Conversely, the mixed and online offenders had improved self-management skills, whereby they were more likely to demonstrate self-control favouring fictional online material over contact offending. Kloess et al.'s (2017) posits that the motivating factors for all types of perpetrators was said to be either sexual or financial, whereby interactions provided "sexual stimulation for offenders, and mental imagery for fantasy formation" (p. 576), even if the offender did not meet the victim in person. This was supported in the findings of the Walker et al. (2018a, 2018b) research where sexual or financial motivations were also reported.

Other research focusing on understanding group or gang CSE perpetration suggested that there was an apparent social acceptance of treating victims as sexual commodities associated with offenders who offend with others (Cockbain & Wortley, 2015; Senker et al., 2020). Moreover, it was posited that it is the normalisation and perception of entitlement within groups that perpetuates the crimes being committed (Cockbain & Wortley, 2015; OCC, 2012). For the perpetrator, there are benefits to remain socially connected if group members are assisting in accessing and sharing victims (Cockbain & Wortley, 2015). A proactive policing tool with the potential to combat offenders operating in groups or gangs was investigated by Cockbain et al.

(2011), involving Social Network Analysis (SNA). The technique was suggested to aid live operations involving networks by targeting, disrupting and prosecuting those involved. With “no clear ringleaders” of networks with perpetrators offending “en-masse,” defying previous “lover boy” stereotypes, recommendations were made to educate and increase the “perceived risk” of such offending. Examples of disruptive tactics linked to the SNA findings included campaigning to remove any “excuses for criminality”, improving opportunities for police informants and increasing pressure on offenders by way of targeting other aspects of their criminality.

Similarly, an additional proactive policing tool presented in the Brayley et al. (2011) study involved the use of crime scripts to deconstruct the internal trafficking crimes, whereby all agencies involved could contribute to map the features of the crime from initial meeting between perpetrator and victim, tracking through to the ending. Although this tool is not designed to solve crimes it is said to be useful for prevention and intervention, however, the systematic review did not locate any further reporting on whether it had been utilised in the 10 years following the initial study by Brayley et al. (2011).

2.3.3.4 Responding to the Contact CSE Perpetrator

The final analytical theme of *responding to the CSE perpetrator* included studies discussing CSE treatment programmes and interventions. As more CSE perpetrator research highlights patterns and areas to focus targeted prevention strategies to avert further CSE offending, little research exists about those already requiring recidivism intervention within the CJS. Drummond and Southgate's (2018) qualitative study

focused on scoping the available literature and conducting interviews with experts on appropriate CSE interventions. As the knowledge base on understanding the CSE perpetrator is scarce, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are no specific interventions available for CSE offenders (Drummond & Southgate, 2018). It was found that, in the same way that police monitoring of perpetrators is poor, there are also few systems in place to track the trajectories of CSE offenders through the CJS, thus impacting on determining eligibility for intervention programmes (Drummond & Southgate, 2018). Experts interviewed in the study referred to the distinct definitions between CSA and CSE as not helpful to tackling CSE. However, a consensus was made amongst experts in terms of permitting distinctions between how the offences were committed to provide a tailor-made response to prevent further offending. This view related to the many different possible CSE cases, such as lone or gang offending or those offences sexually or financially motivated. It was agreed that the available Sex Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTP) at the time were based on responses to the more mature, often paedophilic sex offender, conducted via a group-based approach, likely to be over-subscribed due to limited resources and an increase in numbers of sex offenders (Drummond & Southgate, 2018).

The experts critiqued the SOTP for younger perpetrators who might struggle with the group dynamics, particularly as the topics discussed failed to acknowledge the role of technology (arguably even more relevant to younger CSE perpetrators accessing victims or grooming via social media platforms) or exploring hostile attitudes to women (Drummond & Southgate, 2018). Future CSE perpetrator intervention might address the

types of offending (i.e., gang related) and would involve ways to re-engage offenders back into society, particularly if they are more likely to be younger offenders. The authors conclude by suggesting a more preventative community supportive approach to rehabilitate offenders.

Similarly, findings from the Perkins et al. (2018) study focusing on technology facilitated exploitation revealed flaws in the treatment response for online (including those leading to contact) CSE perpetrators who were seeking gain beyond sexual gratification. The report highlighted that offline and online perpetration were not 'clearly distinguishable' and often moved from one to another with the same victim. The results yielded information that interventions were often responding to need, with a rapid increase in online offending, rather than built on sound empirically tested or evaluated intervention and therefore placing high demands on under-resourced services. Existing interventions have adopted a psycho-educational approach, yet it is recognised that more knowledge is needed on risks presented by online offenders. Sex education and community action was suggested as suitable prevention approaches for those not convicted or known to the CJS.

2.4 Discussion

The aim of this review was to clarify what is known about how all forms of contact CSE occurs. Twenty-three publications were identified by a systematic search over a period spanning 14 years, involving interdisciplinary literature with either qualitative or mixed methods approaches. Analysis of lived experiences, statutory agency data or public sources of information from victims, perpetrators and

professionals yielded results that were coded and narratively synthesised into four analytical themes: (a) barriers to examining a complex phenomenon, (b) recognising the contact CSE perpetrator, (c) understanding the contact CSE perpetrator and (d) responding to the contact CSE perpetrator. Across the studies there was a consensus about the many barriers to researching all forms of CSE, whether it be online (leading to contact) or contact CSE perpetration, particularly related to the shifting CSE definitions and terminology.

The lack of accurate prevalence data, particularly perpetrator characteristics, has led to a dominant debate focusing on contact CSE crimes being racially motivated by predatory gangs, which has lasted the full 13 years under review. It is suggested that such polarising discourse, often fuelled by the media or reliant on rudimentary data has resulted in an unreliable assessment of threat from contact CSE perpetrators (Cockbain, 2013, 2018; Cockbain & Tufail, 2020; Radford et al., 2017). The outcome of this is the public perception of a racial problem that needs ‘fixing’ and results in solutions focusing on the broader yet crude concepts of culture and communities (Tufail, 2015). It is suggested that the demonised portrayal of minorities in the media is not a new phenomenon, but its implications are far reaching, having serious repercussions for Muslim communities, left and right-wing political debates and not least the disservice to the victims (Cockbain & Tufail, 2020; Rowe, 2018; Stubbs & Spooner, 2018; Tufail, 2015). However, until data disparities are addressed, this will likely continue. More recently, there have been calls to move away from focusing on one single factor and

prioritise addressing the large gaps around prevalence, patterns and pathways of offending and relationship dynamics involved in CSE (Dean, 2021).

Despite the barriers associated with the categorising of the contact CSE perpetrator, specific characteristics, motivations and behaviours have been found to be involved in contact perpetration of CSE (Elliot et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b). The young, lone, white, male is said to be the dominant contact CSE perpetrator (CEOP, 2013), but the behaviour and motivation to commit the crime appear to differ if offending with others and within the group typologies provided. Motivations were linked to either financial or sexual gain depending on age of the victim targeted and some perpetrators were likely to be leading more hedonistic lifestyles where access to victims was more opportunistic (Senker et al., 2020). Notably, those offending with others were more likely to act in a more abusive manner towards their victim, many of whom are repeat victims, which is suggested to be associated with the irregular social standards involved in co-offending and the coercive nature of the relationships (Cockbain, 2018). Thus, the impetus for research might be on establishing how to protect such repeat victims rather than focusing on how groups are associated.

Studies investigating the methods of exploitation found that the stereotypical preparatory stages known as grooming were not always present, particularly during online interactions leading to contact exploitation (Elliott et al., 2013). In such cases, approaches were direct in instigating sexual activity, involving highly sexualised discourse. Otherwise, more suggestive methods might be used to instigate sexual

activity, which was likely to involve normalising and desensitising techniques (Brayley et al., 2011).

Studies focusing on face-to-face contact offending suggested that more focus should be on “risky sites” or establishments that attract young people, such as food places with free Wi-Fi or private accommodation hosting parties. The night-time economy was reported to enable the perpetrator in leading a double life and having access to victims that might be lacking in appropriate guardianship. Good practice was discussed in relation to community-based projects targeting mosques and the night-time economy to further prevent and disrupt offending (Bhatti-Sinclair & Sutcliffe, 2018). It was common that contact CSE crimes were justified by offenders, blaming their victims for seeking their attention, which concurs with the discovery by Elliott et al. (2013) that contact perpetrators have greater cognitive and victim empathy distortions than other offenders.

Other significant dysfunctional factors associated with contact CSE perpetrators included previous adverse experiences, such as having witnessed domestic abuse and having deviant criminal histories (Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b). Poor mental health, low self-esteem and attachment difficulties were common psychological profiles reported in the available studies (Elliott et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2018a, 2018b). Operationally, there are few effective (specifically national) systems for initial identification, mapping, monitoring, and tracking perpetration through the CJS (NCA, 2018). This is likely to be linked to the blurred boundaries or ability to differentiate between other sexual offending (i.e., sexual abuse or sexual exploitation), particularly when collecting data

(Allnock et al., 2017; Cockbain, 2018; Kelly & Karsna, 2017). Furthermore, if the phases from being suspected of CSE perpetration to prosecution are regarded as inconsistent and faced with obstacles, it is unsurprising that prevention and recidivism programmes are too regarded as ineffective and focused on general sexual offending (Drummond & Southgate, 2018).

The current offender programmes fail to address the specific CSE elements of the offending such as co-offending, use of technology and preparatory methods to sexual activity (Drummond & Southgate, 2018). Additionally, Radford et al. (2017) acknowledge the lack of intervention for those not convicted or who present with harmful sexual behaviour, recommending more preventative work to managing offenders. This review faced several limitations. Firstly, definitional challenges resulted in difficulties with effective identification and cross comparison between the studies. Studies were included or excluded based on their compatibility with the UK statutory CSE definition involving contact offences and invariably there was overlap. An example of this was with studies involving internet contact sexual offenders, whereby it was not made explicit if they received any 'exchange' as typified in CSE offending but were included due to being contact. The DfE (2017) statutory definition raises the issue of 'exchange' (see below) and as such it would be helpful for studies to make this obvious:

If sexual gratification, or exercise of power and control, is the only gain for the perpetrator (and there is no gain for the child/young person) this would not normally constitute CSE but should be responded to as a different form of child sexual abuse (p. 6).

Similarly, this was also the case for studies involving CSE-Material (CSEM) users, where it was unclear if the users had progressed their sexual offending to contact offences, where the gain was sexual gratification solely for the perpetrator and were therefore excluded on this basis. Furthermore, studies focusing on CSE outside of the UK were excluded to ensure that the phenomenon and its legal responses were not conflated with countries who did not follow the same statutory definition. For example, most UK law enforcement agencies (with minor differences in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland) will follow the statutory definition and respond to CSE related offences by means of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and Serious Crime Act (2015). Thus, it is expected that despite a rigorous sifting process for appropriate research, there will undoubtedly be relevant studies that have been excluded because contact CSE offending is not an easily identifiable discrete group. As a single researcher, there was no ability to seek the opinions from other independent reviewers to check for accuracy, identify gaps, resolve potential discrepancies, and ensure completeness within the search process.

Moreover, the quality of the studies analysed in the review varied methodologically, by way of differences in study design, sample size, presentation of data and interpretation of results. Despite heterogeneity in designs, the MMAT was utilised to aid the analysis of quality of the studies, finding that those explicitly detailing the entire research process fared better. Strengths were found in studies that had considered a theoretical framework and detailed the full data collection and analytical methods used. Weaknesses were associated with how successful the sample was in generalising to the wider population.

Despite the systematic approach to this review, the use of the MMAT and subsequent narrative synthesis relies heavily on interpretation of the findings and thus influences the final conclusions drawn and potential for researcher bias. That said, any bias was balanced by the researcher constantly confronting subjective opinions and prejudices with the data and findings have been discussed in context in line with similar research.

Positively, there are many successes and advances in CSE research to be celebrated, firstly in acknowledging these group methods of exploitation, the ‘night-time economy’ has been proactively targeted to disrupt potential CSE activity in ‘hotspot’ locations (Kerr et al., 2017). Furthermore, the evidence base for proactive policing techniques, such as the use of SNA and crime scripts are being explored to disrupt the recognised methods of exploitation.

Lastly, there has been a significant increase in reporting of CSE crimes over recent years and perpetrators are more likely to be charged compared to any other sexual offence, suggesting improved awareness and response despite the well documented challenges (Kelly & Karsna, 2017). However, this might not transfer to prosecutions, and if not, could breed further opportunities for CSE, when the offender “*gets away with the offence*” and the victim is revictimised by the CJS. Overall, the review findings can contribute to providing a more comprehensive safeguarding response to contact perpetration and establish new insights for law enforcement disruption strategies within the UK. Lavis (2009) postulates that a systematic review, presented in this way, synthesises evidence for policymakers and stakeholders, highlighting “decision relevant

information” in comparison to studies presented individually. As such, policy makers can refer to this singular study to find alternative framings and the “review derived products” (Lavis, 2009), from the varied methodological approaches employed to understand contact CSE perpetration.

2.6 Conclusion

In summary, the four analytical themes that emerged from this systematic review have highlighted the many barriers to examining such a complex phenomenon and advanced our understanding of what is needed for future research and practice. The lack of available data has generated opportunities for inaccurate discourse, which until exact data is available, is simply a distraction to the progress, that is, or could be, being made in understanding contact CSE perpetration. An improved knowledgebase of how and why contact CSE crimes are committed is likely to be more helpful in informing prevention and response, than a definition that has continued to cause confusion throughout the period under review. This is particularly so when the gravity of sexual crimes committed becomes more severe when perpetrators offend with others, perceiving it to be socially acceptable. Significant findings for practice and research suggest that there is scope to explore correlations between contact offenders experiencing adversity, mental health issues, cognitive and victim empathy distortions to support treatment and rehabilitation. Furthermore, the targeting of harmful sexual behaviour in young people and educating society about manipulative strategies used by online (leading to contact) and contact perpetrators when interacting with victims, might safeguard potential future victims. As the findings suggest, the agencies policing and

responding to contact CSE crimes, particularly the rehabilitation of such perpetrators, require the most effective and evidenced based tools and programmes to be in place. The findings of this review may be useful to guide future research and prompt policy leaders to comprehensively address the equivocal classification, language, and characteristics of CSE.

Chapter 3: A Thematic Synthesis of Sex Offending Literature to Situate the Research and Advance Understanding of the Contact CSE Victim-Perpetrator Dynamic.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to address the gaps in knowledge identified in Chapter 2, specifically: a) the barriers to examining a complex phenomenon, and b) understanding and responding to the contact CSE perpetrator. The purpose of this thematic synthesis is therefore to review current sex offender knowledge, to further situate the Doctoral research, and shape future understanding of the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic. There is value to understanding in greater depth how the theoretical underpinnings, performative functions, and strategies pertaining to other types of sexual offending, such as child sexual abuse or online grooming, may be transferred for researching contact CSE interpersonal dynamics, which is currently missing, as identified in Chapter 2. The review identifies two overarching analytical themes including (a) understanding the cognitive behaviour of child sex offenders, and b) understanding the victims' cognitive responses to child sex offenders.

To begin, the methods utilised, including the research question, search strategy, data extraction and analysis are briefly outlined below. Following this, current knowledge and potential research gaps are thematically synthesised within the findings and discussion sections 3.3 and 3.4. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and next steps for the thesis and future research directions.

3.2 Literature Review Method

This chapter differs from the previous systematic approach in Chapter 2, which involved clearly defined research parameters for exploring contact CSE and a systematic appraisal of the UK's contact CSE perpetrator literature, which was recognised as somewhat limited by the quantity and quality of available literature. Instead, this review comprises a thematic synthesis of previous research to explore the strategies used to instigate sexual contact. A thematic synthesis involves the "generating of descriptive and analytical themes" (Nicholson et al, 2016, p.3), which supports the research decision taken to adopt a more broad and interpretative review of the literature, avoiding the pre-specified criteria and strict research parameters, as found with the systematic review in Chapter 2, primarily due to the changing nature of definitions, strategies, and datasets as replicated by Ringenberg et al. (2022). That said, the process for searching and analysing the articles within the thematic synthesis has still been conducted and documented systematically to ensure transparency and replicability, broadly following PRISMA 2020 updates by Page et al. (2021). This pragmatic approach of broadening the scope of the literature search methods to find viable solutions for improving contact CSE practice fits with the flexible philosophical stance discussed in Chapter 5. Therefore, in accordance with well-established guidance by Thomas and Harden (2008), this thematic synthesis involved adopting the following principles: a) the purpose of the thematic synthesis is for interpretative explanation rather than prediction and therefore the review sample is not exhaustive, b) the quality of the reviewed research is assessed (as detailed further in the selection criteria section 3.2.4 below) to avoid drawing

untrustworthy conclusions. With this in mind, the following research question guides this thematic synthesis:

3.2.1 Research Question

How can existing child sexual offending research contribute to addressing the current missing evidence base in relation to contact CSE victim-perpetrator interpersonal dynamics?

The research question was derived following abductive reasoning, which involves observing and making sense of a phenomenon to point a way forward for research and fill in the gaps, as outlined by Zelechowska et al. (2020). The conclusions drawn from the systematic review in Chapter 2 and the researchers professional experiences have formed such reasoning. This is with the aim to provide a clear and considerable research contribution to the contact CSE field. The following section (3.2.2) will now outline how the search for this thematic synthesis was undertaken.

3.2.2. Search Strategy

This thematic synthesis was conducted by the advanced searching of academic databases (those with a criminal justice, psychology, social science focus via the online research database, EBSCO Host). Search terms (as detailed in Figure 3 below) associated with the inclusion criteria were followed regarding, (a) interpersonal sexual communication, (b) online or contact sexual offences, (c) grooming or exploitation and d) perpetrator and/or victim of a child sexual offence. An advanced search utilising Boolean operators (AND/OR), including the use of truncation and “wild cards”, such as

* and “symbols was performed to find any variation of the word within the database.

Figure 3 details the search terms below:

Figure 3

Thematic Synthesis Search Terms

Sexually exploited* or "internet" or online or "child" or sexual offences* or grooming* or trafficker* or contact or CSE or OCSA or OCSE or ICAC AND "language*" or linguistic* or interactions* or discourse* or chat* or text* or communication* or interpersonal* or dynamics* or transcripts* or words AND perpetrat* or offender* or hebephil* or predator* or group or gang or network AND victim* or survivor AND tactics* or strategy* or manipulation* or behaviour* or deception* manoeuvrers* or persuasion* justif* or typology*

3.2.3 Selection Criteria

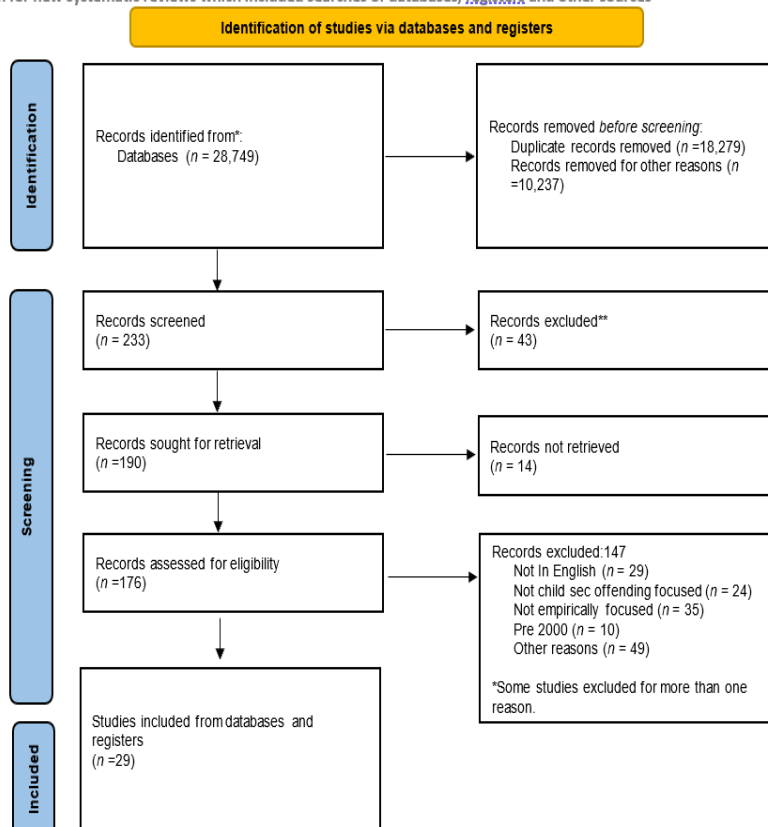
Articles were refined for screening by removing duplications or ineligible records as per automation tools, before scanning titles and abstracts to keep only relevant articles (as per inclusion criteria for exploring methods for interpersonal dynamics of child sexual crimes). Firstly, peer reviewed articles pre-dating the 2000s were excluded, which was a research decision taken to acknowledge when online chat rooms gained mainstream popularity and grooming children became more prevalent (Wolak et al., 2008). Other decisions for excluding articles were based on if the articles were not written in English, if not primarily empirically focused (i.e., scoping reviews), they did not align to explaining or researching the interpersonal dynamics or methods involved in sexual offending or if the type of offending or summary of findings were not

focused on the child or most comparable to CSE according to the DfE (2017) definition. An example of an excluded study that might not be comparable to CSE would be Lanning & Dietz (2014) as they focused on abuse in youth serving organisations, which the researcher considered as institutionally focused rather than exploring the interpersonal dynamics. Figure 4 below details a diagram that shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria and number of records at each step of the search and analysis.

Figure 4

PRISMA 2020 Flowchart for Thematic Review of Sex Offender Literature

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other sources



Adapted from: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

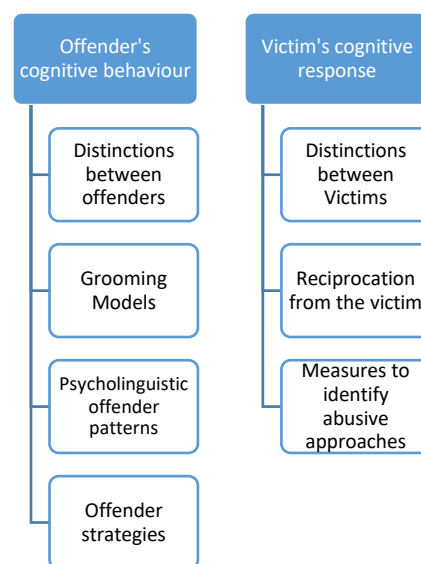
3.2.4 Data Extraction and Analysis

Out of the refined articles for screening, 29 studies were included in the thematic synthesis. As part of the data extraction process, initial quality appraisal of the reviewed articles was undertaken, utilising established criteria by Thomas and Harden (2008), which albeit dated, is still considered relevant criteria by current researchers (see Nielsen et al., 2023), for assessing the detail reported in descriptions (i.e., aims, context, methods and findings) and the strategies for establishing reliability and validity of the data collection tools, methods and interpreted findings. However, despite quality appraisal being important to the researcher, it was not the focus of the review, therefore aspects of quality were only detailed within the synthesis if considered to impact the reliability of the interpretations of themes (i.e., samples used decoys rather than victims). Following appraisal, the available data in published research articles was extracted to draw key comparisons from the articles (i.e., sample, procedure, data collection and analysis and focus of the study) and can be found in the data extraction table in Appendix A. Subsequently, the analytical stages from Thomas and Harden (2008) were undertaken inductively (i.e., based on observations from the data) with the research question in mind, which involved, “line-by-line coding of the findings of primary studies; the organisation of these 'free codes' into related areas to construct 'descriptive' themes; and the development of 'analytical' themes” (p.4). From entering all codes into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (i.e., the inputting of individual labels assigned to the content found in the findings), the researcher identified a total of seven descriptive themes, which primarily focused on methods for understanding the interpersonal dynamics in child sexual offences. These themes were progressively refined from singular themes into two

higher level analytical themes after identifying strong similarities between them (i.e., relevant to the offender or the victim). Examples of the different descriptive themes that were categorised into the analytical themes are provided in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5

Examples of Descriptive and Analytical Themes



Note: Blue represents analytical themes and white represents descriptive themes

The analytical and descriptive themes are detailed following a summary of the included studies in the findings section (3.3) below.

3.3 Findings

Of the 29 studies reviewed, 83% ($n = 24$) included peer reviewed empirical studies and 17% of the others comprised of: an article from a university research unit ($n = 1$), a book ($n = 1$) or the typically early-stage research for dissemination via alternative platforms (i.e., computers and society Cornell University website, ($n = 1$), PhD: The

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, ($n = 1$), and completed research paper from ResearchGate, ($n = 1$), with publications spanning from 2003 to 2021. The publishing academic journals were: Deviant Behaviour Journal ($n = 3$); Journal of sexual aggression ($n = 4$); Applied Linguistics ($n = 1$); International Journal of Cyber Criminology ($n = 1$); Child abuse & Neglect ($n = 2$); The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology ($n = 1$); Violence & Abuse ($n = 1$); Journal of Adolescence ($n = 1$); Computers in Human Behavior ($n = 1$); Sexual Abuse ($n = 1$); Context & Media ($n = 1$); Journal of Pragmatics ($n = 1$); Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies ($n = 1$); Communication Theory ($n = 1$); Language and Law ($n = 1$); Forensic Science International ($n = 1$); British Journal of Social Psychology ($n = 1$); Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma ($n = 1$).

The studies included within this review appeared to be driven by available online data, which focused predominantly on the online sex offender when exploring the processes involved in offender-victim interactions. Typically studies focused on a) investigating offender profiling or typologies (DeHart et al., 2017; Tener et al., 2015) or Modus Operandi (Kloess et al., 2017), b) drawing comparisons between offline versus online (Black et al., 2015), or the differing online predatory behaviours (Barber & Bettez, 2014), c) distinguishing between stings/undercover operatives (Drouin et al., 2017), gender (Aitken et al., 2018), and d) testing moves, deceptive strategies, grooming stages or theory (Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019; Gupta et al, 2012) or producing grooming models (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). Studies have recognised the co-occurring, interactional nature between victims and the perpetrator (Kloess et al. 2017b; Seymour-Smith et al., 2021; Winters et al. 2017), whilst others explore the victim's perspective or

response (Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019; Whittle et al., 2015). Other studies have focused on differing characteristics of the victims (i.e., gender) or have found measures to identify the abuse (Aitken et al., 2018; Wolf et al., 2018).

The reviewed research reveals a variety of analytical techniques which have been successfully used to study the strategies used in sexual offending, such as thematic analysis (Aitken et al., 2018; Kloess et al., 2017), smallest space analysis (Ioannou et al., 2018), natural language analysis (Drouin et al., 2018; Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019), offender persuasion Likert scales (Gamez-Guadix et al., 2018), discourse analysis, albeit in different forms (see Buchanan, 2016; Seymour-Smith & Kloess, 2021) and/or computerised text analysis (see Broome et al., 2020; Drouin et al., 2017), which have been utilised to differentiate between offenders, victims, or undercover agents. Studies such as Black et al. (2015) benefitted from the technological advances with computer assisted analysis, known as LIWC, to detect words matching psycholinguistic categories. In some studies, the reasons for selecting the analytical methods were based on evaluating its contribution to linguistic research (see the corpus assisted discourse studies method from Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019), where a mixed methods approach was suggested to best support investigating nuanced online grooming offender strategies).

Following appraisal of the reviewed studies and analytical stages detailed above, two analytical themes emerged, as synthesised in the finding's sections (3.3.1 – 3.3.9) below: a) understanding the cognitive behaviour of child sexual offenders, and b) understanding the cognitive response of victims involved in child sexual offending.

3.3.1 Understanding the Cognitive Behaviour of Child Sexual Offenders

As the above summary of included studies suggests, prior research makes distinctions between child sex offenders characteristics and offending patterns or strategies. The findings have typically been summarised in the various typologies, profiles, theories or models as synthesised below. The descriptive sub-themes therefore include a) distinctions between offenders, b) grooming models, c) psycholinguistic offender patterns, and d) offender profiles.

3.3.2 Distinctions Between Offenders

Perpetrators were predominantly distinguished between their online and offline (i.e., contact) child sex offending characteristics. Table 1 below details some of the various distinctions made by researchers for each category.

Table 1

Table of Distinctions Between Offender Approach

Offender Approach	Distinctions between approaches
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact-driven (i.e., motivated to engage in offline sexual behaviour) Fantasy-driven (i.e., engaged in online cybersex without an intention to meet offline) Cybersex only (i.e., engaged in or encouraged real-time masturbation and who did not attempt to schedule) Schedulers (i.e., attempted to schedule but who did not engage in real-time masturbation) Cybersex/schedulers (i.e., both masturbated while online and scheduled) Buyers (i.e., chats with a third party for purposes of child sex trafficking)
Offline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child sexual abuse (i.e., sexual activity with a child) Rapist (i.e., sexual intercourse without consent) Familial abuse (i.e., abuse within the family) Extrafamilial abuse (i.e., abuse outside the family) Contact (i.e., physical sexual contact with a child)

Online child sex offenders were typically white, single, working class, male and in their thirties (Ioannou et al., 2018; Winters et al., 2017). Winters et al.'s (2017) results revealed that the offenders had an average actual age of 35.33 in comparison to the age they claimed to be online (i.e., 32.35 yrs.). One third lied about their age, which would be on average nine years younger, yet none claiming that they were under 18. Bergen et al. (2013; 2014) found that an offender's interest in engaging with sexual conversations varied by age. Offenders (more typically single, heterosexual males between 25-31 years) were keener to interact with older adolescents (female between 14 and 18 years) rather than those under 13 years of age. Conversations were most likely to stop once the age of the under 13 was revealed. Male offenders were more likely to target females (Ioannou et al., 2018), although if the perpetrator targeted the same sex victims, they were found to be subjected to much more sexualised content (Aitken et al., 2018).

Online child sex offenders were found not to always be motivated to engage in offline sexual behaviour and were reported to have less criminogenic factors than other types of sex offenders (i.e., rapists) in their sexual outlet (Briggs et al., 2011). Online child sex offenders were differentiated by fantasy versus contact-driven behaviours (Briggs et al., 2011), where contact-driven offenders were more motivated to engage in offline sexual behaviour, in contrast to the fantasy-driven offender who engaged in online cybersex without an intention to meet offline. Similarly, DeHart et al.'s (2017) typology included four types of online offender: a) cybersex only offenders, b) schedulers, c) cybersex/schedulers and d) buyers. DeHart et al. (2017) made similar distinctions to Briggs et al. (2011) which involved contact-driven offenders (i.e.,

schedulers) who typically masturbated online to those more focused on cybersexual interactions (i.e., cybersex and cybersex/schedulers) in addition to the sex buyers, said to be like those found in child sex trafficking.

Online conversations involved 96% of the time being spent arranging to meet in person (89% by the offender and typically 3.4 days into the conversation), with conversations lasting 9.52 days with an average of 15 hours in direct communication, with more offenders initiating contact than victims (Winters et al., 2017). Furthermore, Winters et al. (2017) and DeHart et al. (2017) highlighted the rapid nature and sexual escalation of online interactions with offenders by providing examples of sexual images being exchanged or arranging to meet within 10 minutes of the conversation starting. Winters et al. (2017) also found that 89% introduced sexual content in the first conversation. Online perpetrators typically asked questions about virginity and the victim's family, used compliments, and alluded to sex (Ioannou et al., 2018). Furthermore, Bergen et al. (2013; 2014) found the offender's suggestions for secrecy appeared to increase the likelihood of both cybersex and engaging in sexual contact offline. The following section details the offline child sex offender.

Alternatively, offline offenders and their victims were more likely to know each other and maintain contact than online offenders (Black et al., 2015; Bourke et al., 2012; Ioannou et al., 2018). Offline offenders were found to be typically aged between 26-39 years of age (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2013). Moreover, offline only groups revealed typical patterns associated with touching, forming friendship, the offender being married and having access to children (Ioannou et al., 2018). The differences between online (as

mentioned above) and offline were suggested to be due to the different transactions at play or the functions that were being performed (i.e., friendship online involved building trust whilst offline friendship involved the way the victim is accessed) (Ioannou et al., 2018). However, both were similar in knowing the victim was under-age and encouraging deviancy (Ioannou et al., 2018).

Adding to the debate about offline or contact specific sexual offenders' differences in strategy or modus operandi, Rebocho and GonÇalves (2012) identified three types of rapists or child sex offender: a) manipulative, b) opportunistic and c) coercive. The manipulative offender was linked to child sex abuse (i.e., victim described in the sample as under 13 yrs. old) whilst the coercive offender was linked to rapists (i.e., victim described in the sample as 14 years. and above). The opportunistic offender was reported to include both child sexual abuse and rape. However, a potential flaw in making distinctions between CSA and rape offences based solely on age means that those below the age of 13 might not be considered as rape victims, when by UK law, they are. Similarly, Leclerc and Proulx (2018) proposed that most child sexual offences are opportunistic, rather than offenders seeking out potential victims. Yet in contrast, Gonultas et al. (2023) revealed that persons convicted of a child sexual offence differ in their approaches, and in their pre and post-abuse behaviours, depending on their relationship with the victim, so potentially are more reliant on the dynamic between victim and perpetrator. Furthermore, Gonultas et al. (2023) reported that a total of 85% of offences (from a sample of 46 police victim statements) were extrafamilial and 15% within the family, with only 21% of the extrafamilial offences described as opportunist.

Thus, a deeper relationship dynamic might influence the chances of the sexual act occurring, which the findings of the thesis detail how this might occur.

Offenders were also found more likely (almost half of the sample i.e., 44.8% of 346 adult male sex offenders) to be using non-persuasive techniques in favour of persuasive strategies (Leclerc and Proulx, 2018). The context of abuse was also discussed and a correlation between intra-familial abuse (i.e., victims related by family), and non-persuasive strategies was reported. Furthermore, the intra-familial non-persuasive abuse was more likely to intensify the severity of the sexual offence being committed. This research positions itself amongst previous criminological studies focusing on opportunistic criminal behaviour, particularly situational crime prevention (SCP). The study is based on the views of offenders in prison who could potentially be less sophisticated in their criminal activity than their persuasive counterparts. Arguably, those who are persuasive and highly manipulative have considered how to avoid being caught in their strategy towards accessing victims. Furthermore, aspects of intra-familial abuse might be different to the strategies used in child sexual exploitation although still potentially opportunistic.

Comparing intrafamilial abuse with extrafamilial abuse (i.e., victims not related by family) via a meta-analysis, Seto et al. (2015) found that extrafamilial offenders (which arguably best describes CSE perpetrators but was not explicitly stated in the research) were more likely to have anti-social tendencies, atypical sexual interests, be at higher risk of recidivism and have a greater denial and minimisation of sexual offences. Furthermore, despite victim empathy being lowest for extrafamilial offenders they were

more likely to have a greater emotional congruence with children (i.e., to emotionally identify with children). Seto et al. (2015) acknowledged the limitations of the meta-analysis due to comparing differing operational definitions, however the study highlighted distinctions that could be made between offending groups. CSE would arguably be like what is described as extrafamilial abuse but studies in the meta-analysis had not clearly defined this.

Ward and Siegert (2002) attempted to ascribe causal factors to differentiate child sexual abuse offenders in their Pathways Model. This included four distinct, and interacting, types of psychological mechanism (i.e., processes that cause specific effects), which were: a) intimacy deficits, b) deviant sexual scripts, c) emotional dysregulation, and d) cognitive distortions. The model suggests that in every sexual offence, there is one of the primary psychological mechanisms activating one (or more) of the other three 3 psychological mechanism as listed above. Research since then has supported various aspects of the Pathways Model (Connolly 2004; Gannon et al. 2012), with some attempting to empirically validate it (Osbourne & Christensen, 2020). The Pathways Model also received some criticism from Craven et al. (2006) arguing that it did not acknowledge that offenders are able to create their own opportunities to offend, rather than be predetermined.

Much of the research under review has focused on differentiating online or in-person offenders, breaking it down into subcategories (such as fantasy driven, contact driven, familial or extrafamilial) to further explore the behavioural measures and approaches used to facilitate the abuse. Other research has focused on the potential

psychological mechanisms associated with offending behaviours, such as social and emotional deficits. In addition to establishing typologies and characteristics of the offender, researchers have also attempted to map out the patterns for how offenders approach and abuse a child, prevent disclosure, and facilitate future sexual acts (Winters et al., 2022) as detailed below in the grooming models.

3.3.3 Grooming Models

Common persuasive processes that lead to sexual activity have been labelled as grooming, victimisation, solicitation, exploitation, or abuse (see Albert, 2014; DeHart et al., 2017; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016) and have often been presented as linear or non-linear grooming models. Table 2 below provides a comparison of the reviewed grooming models, and a discussion follows the table highlighting the similarities and differences between them.

Table 2*A Comparison of the Reviewed Grooming Research Table*

Author(s)	Research approach	Stages	Focus
O'Connell (2003)	50 hrs of online grooming transcripts involving female decoy victims aged 8-12 yrs.	1) Friendship forming 2) Relationship forming 3) Risk assessment 4) Exclusivity 5) Sexual 6) Concluding.	The sequential stages move from the perpetrator initially getting to know the victim, to deepening the relationship, to involve sexual content, whilst establishing secrecy to avoid detection.
Craven (2006)	Review of sexual grooming literature	1) Self-grooming 2) Grooming the environment 3) Grooming the child	Offenders initially move from initial motivation to targeting the child (i.e., beliefs that support sex with children, attempting to desist, or becoming entrenched in sexual offending). The offender then prepares to offend (i.e., using implicit or explicit skills in charming the people around them, fitting in and identifying vulnerabilities in victims). Grooming the child involves the offender using psychological relational aspects (i.e., sex education, building trust, threats, sexual desensitising, promoting secrecy, measuring victims' reactions) to achieve sexual gratification.
Olson et al. (2007)	Review of literature to produce OG Model of Luring Communication Theory	1) Approach 2) Deceptive trust Development 3) Grooming 4) Isolation (Within gaining access, cycle of entrapment, intervening, outcome)	Model of LCT begins with perpetrators gaining access to children, prior to the cycle of entrapment, and ending with perpetrator and victim responses maintaining or ending the sexually abusive relationship.
Williams et al. (2013)	First hour of online grooming transcripts involving 8 male offenders on female decoy victims	1) Rapport-building 2) Sexual content 3) Assessment	The non-sequential grooming stages involved co-ordination (synchronising behaviours or language), mutuality (discovering similar interests), and positivity/negativity (i.e., impatient traits), introduces sexual content into the conversation (i.e., as a game, offering sexual advice, sharing mutual fantasies, or forceful techniques), and will then maintain or escalate the sexual conversation (i.e., via repetition or force) and assessing the child (i.e., trust/vulnerability, receptiveness), or the environment (i.e., obstacles, opportunity, information).
Albert (2014)	Mixed methods research combining	1) Camouflage 2) Bait	The model suggests that predators were able to negotiate the conversation from

	critical discourse analysis and structured content analysis on 500 chats from Perverted Justice to develop theory	3) Trap	the camouflage category in what would be considered friendly, consensual, and appealing to emotions, through a distorted friendship building bait stage where compliance is tested to the trap of being victimised. The latter category is said to not follow consensual norms, bypassing the relationship building phases and showing minimal coercion and maximum control of the victim.
Winters & Jeglic (2017; 2020)	100 online grooming transcripts with decoy female adolescent victims but described as in-person sexual grooming model	1) Victim selection 2) Gaining access and isolation 3) Trust development 4) Desensitisation to sexual content and physical contact 5) Post-abuse maintenance	Development of the Sexual Grooming Model (SGM) which involved choosing and isolating victims (i.e., unwanted/unloved, overnight stays/outings), building trust (e.g., compliments), desensitising sexual content and physical contact (e.g., teach child sexual education), and post-abuse maintenance (e.g., encouraging secrets).
Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2016)	Online grooming transcripts	1) Access 2) Approach 3) Entrapment	The three phase OG Model has distinct perpetrator communicative processes and strategies. This included deceptive trust (i.e., sharing personal information, sociability, and praise), sexual gratification (i.e., desensitisation or reframing), compliance testing (i.e., role reversal) and isolation (i.e., mental).
Elliot (2017)	Review previous models/literature	1) Potentiality 2) Disclosure	The self-regulation model of sexual grooming has two distinct phases including rapport building, incentivization, disinhibition and security management for potentiality and goal relevant information for disclosure.
Kloess et al (2014; 2017)	Five offenders, comprising 29 transcripts of 22 online interactions, were discursively analysed using the qualitative approach of thematic analysis	1) Direct approach 2) Indirect approach (Approach, maintenance-escalation and closure)	Developing an offence process diagram of online sexual grooming and abuse based on offenders employing either an indirect or a direct approach to conversations with victims and initiating contact with them. This included initiating a sexual interaction, ranging from flattery to more persistent and pressuring requests or orders, seeking to normalise the sexual conversation and to test compliance, maintain secrecy, and achieve sexual gratification from a physical meeting.

Several of the grooming models or theories appeared to have stages that were alike, which included how the victim was accessed, contacted, or approached (see Elliot, 2017; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016) or outcomes or goal achievement (see Olson et al., 2007; Webster et al., 2012). Many of the models were provisional and were still needing to be tested empirically to offer validity (Elliot, 2017). Of the grooming models reviewed, there appears to be alignment between the processes or mechanisms involved in predominantly online grooming or exploitative relationships, despite some differing names to describe them. An example of this would be Elliot's (2017) security mechanism being similar to Webster et al.'s (2012) emphasis on risk assessment and management. An alternative would be Albert's (2014) camouflage category in line with the grooming and luring methods of communication identified by Gupta et al. (2012) and Olson et al. (2007).

Most of the models appear to include an offender focus on creating a relationship dynamic from their initial contact, which is favourable for the victim to engage and reach the offender's goal status, which is most likely to mean achieving sexual gratification (see Albert, 2014; Elliot, 2017; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). Agreement was found across the models for a typically favourable approach as detailed in Table 2 above but could also involve negative approaches (i.e., deceptive online personas, aggressive, control, power, and compliance testing), with victims sometimes replicating these moves in their interactions with the offender (Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019; Gamez-Guadix et al., 2018; Kloess et al., 2017; Lorenzo-Dus, 2016). However, as Elliot (2017) recognised, not all grooming models acknowledge the positive processes involved in

grooming. Furthermore, Albert (2014) highlighted that the earlier models had failed to recognise the coercive methods of communication, such as Olson et al. (2007), whereas Albert (2014) focused on the importance of the power dynamic and control.

Commonly, as the models reveal, the offender seeks to normalise (via desensitisation, reframing or disinhibition) the sexual nature of the relationship either by frequently discussing sexual related topics, reassuring the victim that sexual curiosity is normal or control decision-making/behaviours (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Olson et al., 2007; Webster et al., 2012). There is agreement across the models that the offender is aware of the illegal nature of the relationship, such as Webster et al. (2012) acknowledging the perpetrator's own modification of their online identity, which could be compared to the levels of deception in other models, where the offender seeks to avoid detection, build trust deceptively, and promote secrecy (see Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Olson et al., 2007; Whittle et al., 2015). However, there is some disagreement in previous research as to whether the offender is always deceptive in their approaches (Broome et al., 2020).

Whether the grooming models focus on the preparatory phase (i.e., grooming up to the point of a sexual act) or targeting and maintaining the sexual relationship, there is a consensus that the interactions will involve sexual content at various stages. This could either be what is described as supporting sexual fantasy, exchanging images, and engaging in mutual masturbation via webcam if online, or meeting for sexual intercourse offline. Some grooming models factored in the time and intensity of the interactions (Webster et al., 2012) and the potential for an escalation of sexualisation through the

distinct stages, as new tactics were brought in. However, none of the models appear to explore the possibility of the offenders' re-engagement with the victims post-conviction and stop at the arrest or end of goal/contact, despite some including feedback loops for initial stages of the model (see Elliot, 2017; Whittle et al., 2015). This does not therefore account for repeat offending or victimisation or post-offence patterns. Moreover, models have based the grooming process on assumptions about the victim (i.e., being unable to consent or being compliant) and offender (i.e., consciously manipulating), which some argue has not yet sufficiently been empirically validated to test victim retrospective guilt/shame or offenders' purposeful levels of deviance (Winters et al., 2022).

Some of the models provide a theoretical rationale with their use of a particular theory, such as Goal and Self-regulation Theory (Elliot, 2017), Relational Theory (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016) or relatedness to Attachment Theory (Whittle et al., 2015). Such theories acknowledge the motivation to engage a victim in sexual activity and the reasons why a victim might pursue an abusive relationship, whilst others provide a framework for exploring interpersonal communicative dynamics, like Speech Act Theory as mentioned previously. Other studies used Grounded Theory methodology to develop a new theory, such as the Theory of Luring Communication (Olson et al., 2007). Others, such as Albert (2014) centred their study on the basis that a paedophilic ideology exists, whereby the perpetrator takes advantage of power relations during their online interactions with victims. This fits with the UK government's definition of CSE (DfE, 2017), which emphasises the power imbalance that exists in such abusive relationships. The following section 3.3.4 details the psycholinguistic analysis and profiles.

3.3.4 Psycholinguistic Offender Patterns

Following the establishment of grooming theories and models, such as those detailed above, researchers sought to expand on such knowledge by analysing more of the psycholinguistic patterns involved in the grooming processes. Firstly, Gupta et al. (2012) created linguistic profiles using LIWC computerised software on Perverted Justice (PJ) data from 75 online chats (4,04,377 words) that were predictive of each of the six O'Connell's (2003) OG stages. The most prominent Relationship Forming stage of OG (40% of conversations in comparison to 20% in the sexual stage), involved the minimum number of predictors despite the amount of time spent in this stage. However, more social words and less sexual words were found. In comparison, but perhaps unsurprisingly, the sexual stage involved more sexual words, meaning that they are discussing sex more frequently at this stage. In the risk assessment stage, there was a high presence of family and negative emotion words, which was reported to be due to the discussions around secrecy and the consequences of the victim not maintaining it. Exclusivity on the other hand had the highest use of positive emotion words, which was linked to the offenders' expressions of their love and commitment to the victim.

As briefly highlighted by Lorenzo-Dus and Kinzel (2019), current research focusing on analysing frequencies of words is pertaining to the research being more descriptive rather than sufficiently explanatory (i.e., inquisitive or challenging as to why things happen). Thus, there is an opportunity for future contact CSE research to address this gap. This thesis intends to address this by the mixed methods of analysing

frequencies of words alongside the context in which they occur (i.e., via the discourse analysis).

Secondly, research focusing on the language used in 44 transcripts of convicted online CSE offenders and decoy data from the PJ website via LIWC and content analysis by Black et al. (2015) revealed that grooming strategies ran simultaneously. This was contrary to the five linear stages of OG research from O'Connell (2003). The perpetrator's assessment of risk early in the conversation with the victim was reported to be a significant feature in online grooming interactions, suggested to be more important than in face-to-face contexts as the offender is unable to verify the risk for themselves. However, offenders were reluctant to discuss exclusivity and sexual content until trust was established, typically in the latter parts of the conversation, which is similar to the previous grooming research (O'Connell, 2003). Out of the offender strategies explored, flattery was used by 89% of all offenders in the first stages of conversation. It would therefore be useful for future research to explore the patterns in face-to-face contexts.

Thirdly, like Gupta et al.'s (2012) and Black et al.'s (2015) studies, Broome et al. (2020) utilised LIWC to explore the different psychological categories that relate to OG models (via 65 chat logs of convicted males from the PJ Foundation). However, in this case, the study used the communicative processes from Lorenzo-Dus et al.'s (2016) OG model (see Table 2 above) to draw comparisons. Another difference between the two studies was the additional views sought from CSEA specialists (16 police and prison staff with either training in risk assessing, investigating, reviewing conversations, and facilitating treatment of OG cases) via focus groups.

The mixed methods (LIWC and focus groups) approach allowed for specialists to rate the relevance of the LIWC psychological categories within each of the model's processes. The aim was to analyse deception, which Broome et al. (2020) had identified as a previously untested research assumption about OG relationships being more deceptive for achieving sexual gratification. Broome et al. (2020) found that the intent of the offender might be to build a perceived genuine interpersonal relationship rather than an illegal or deceptive relationship, which contradicts that portrayed by typical offender stereotypes. However, the potential for a perceived genuine reciprocal emotional and loving relationship between the victim and offender was argued to leave the victim more vulnerable to abuse (Broome et al., 2020). Furthermore, although the perpetrator intent might be genuine for building an emotional and loving relationship with the child, that relationship is still illegal and considered to be an abuse of power by the adult according to the DfE (2017) definition. Thus, it is not a legally conventional reciprocal relationship given the imbalance of power, despite both parties perceiving it to be. This is a key point and is the nexus between a legal approach and an emotional approach. One party (i.e., victim/perpetrator) sees it as a typical "normal" relationship based on feelings and emotion, whilst others see it as illegal (i.e., law enforcement), which is quite a conflict in the safeguarding field. For the purposes of the current research, the researcher attempts to take a more objective stance on the CSE relationship to explore what is really happening within it.

Finally, Drouin et al. (2017) explored the patterns and trends between undercover agents' gender, offenders' age, and LIWC measures, such as sexual words,

clout and word count. Post-hoc analysis was also conducted on 1,180 text files from 590 PJ cases. Offenders were found to use more words when talking to undercover agents, but less likely to use as many words, if talking to boy undercover agents. Most offenders (98%) used sexual words in their conversations and 63% displayed more social dominance than the undercover agents via Clout. However, it is perhaps difficult to draw clear conclusions as to whether the greater use of words is down to the skill of the undercover agent in getting the perpetrator to talk or if it is more of a 'natural' event. Future research exploring genuine victims rather than undercover agents is needed to determine the full impact of these findings.

The study of language in use (i.e., exploring words and their functions, discourse, and social interactions) has long been valued for revealing information about individual's beliefs, thoughts, and personalities which can bring about wider social change (Avineri et al., 2018; Pennebaker et al., 2015), which is perhaps even more useful when exploring the typically illegal and hidden CSE interactions. The seemingly increasing research focus on analysing text, language or communication patterns might be due to the growing popularity of qualitative methods (Morse, 2020) or perhaps the growth of publicly available sex offender language data available online i.e., the PJ website (DeMarco et al., 2016). There is also the recognition from authors that such methods could be useful in digital forensics as a preventative or detection tool (Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019). As such, new analytical frameworks have been developed to support identification of online offenders (Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019).

What is evident from the existing research is that there are a variety of methods for analysing language (i.e., as previously undertaken on online sex offenders), which may provide a starting point for contact CSE researchers to explore previously hidden victim perpetrator interpersonal dynamics. It may, therefore, be possible for the contact CSE researcher to take a pragmatic approach to research design, combining the different strengths of the reviewed qualitative and quantitative methods and deepen understanding of the victim perpetrator dynamics. This is beneficial because it allows for context to be factored in when exploring word use of perpetrators and victims. The following section 3.3.5 will detail the offender modus operandi, identity and profiling.

3.3.5 Offender Strategies and Discourse

Alternative to the aforementioned psycholinguistic research that expanded on previous grooming models, unique frameworks were also adopted to explore offender strategies, specifically the offender's rhetorical moves. Chiang and Grant (2017) employed a unique method to explore online abusive interaction types, by adapting Swales (1981; 1990) move analysis framework. The move analysis framework had not previously been applied to grooming interactions but still had a popular theoretical following (Anjum & Masroor, 2023) and was tested for its rigor within the study by means of a pilot study and reliability testing. Colour-coded move maps were created to represent the broad structures of grooming conversations and visually showed discursive variations that exist in grooming interactions. Fourteen identified rhetorical moves (and 87 strategies) were found to be used in the PJ website chatrooms. The moves ranged from establishing friendship, seeking sexual gratification, planning offline contact, and

then maintaining, before choosing to sign off. Chiang and Grant (2017) acknowledged the similarities with the themes identified by O'Connell (2003), Williams et al. (2013) and Black et al. (2015) but observed additional themes within the rhetorical moves, such as extortion and overt persuasion.

Similarly, when exploring deceptive identity personas, Chiang and Grant's (2019) case study of a convicted child sex offender was used to show how rhetorical moves could inform deceptive online identity performance. Move analysis was used to explore the offender's numerous presented personas. One offender's conversation was analysed via 20 transcripts, which was accepted by the researchers as a potential limitation. Eight personas were analysed to draw rhetorical move comparisons (in structure and frequency) between the different online personas adopted by the offender. Micro-identity positions (i.e., described in the research as low level, temporary interactional roles taken up by the perpetrator) emerged which included sexual pursuer/aggressor, engaged listener, flirt, and friend/boyfriend. Many of the assumed personas involved the sexual pursuer (i.e., sexual moves without building rapport) and/or sexual aggressor (i.e., extortion alongside sexual moves) micro-identities. The least likely identity was friend/boyfriend (i.e., rapport) used in one persona, which might be viewed as the most reciprocal relationship.

An earlier study by Auburn and Lea (2003) provided a framework for the analysis of sex offender treatment talk, drawing on discursive psychology. The study aimed to present a new way of examining offender talk, differing from the widely recognised cognitive distortions as briefly described in section 3.3.2 of this Chapter. The

insights gained from the framework were posited to help offenders develop new narratives which would form part of their “reflexivity” and “repositioning” to create a ‘new’ “moral identity” (Auburn & Lea, 2003, p.297). This position assumes that sex offenders are capable of reframing towards a place of rehabilitation if opportunities to talk are facilitated correctly during treatment, rather than assuming an offender is solely discursively distorting or minimising their offences.

Similarly, research focusing on accountability for sexual offending was also examined by Hansen, O’Byrne and Rapley (2010). This study explored heterosexual males typically self-reporting sexually coercive behaviour and assault by the miscommunication of the female’s sexual refusals, closely aligned to Tannen’s (1992) miscommunication model of rape. This was where females were attributed potential blame for the males failing to interpret verbal and non-verbal consent or sexual refusal cues resulting in rape. However, such self-reporting research techniques were criticised by Hansen, O’Byrne and Rapley (2010) for failing to acknowledge the complexity of sexually coercive practices and instead proposed applied discourse analysis as a better method to examine such behaviours and achieve effective therapeutic interventions as a result of better understanding.

Offender strategies have also been explored and categorised without such a discursive focus as described above, yet still concur with the findings that relied upon such language in use. Leclerc et al. (2006) reported on the persuasive or non-persuasive strategies used by offenders to involve victims in sexual activity. The study involved interviewing 226 convicted adult male child sexual offenders to establish factors

influencing offending and the approaches used in such crimes. The findings were categorised into manipulative and coercive or opportunistic and non-persuasive strategies. Offenders were found more likely to adopt a manipulative, rather than a non-persuasive strategy. Leclerc et al. (2006) also highlighted limited numbers of the sample adopting a coercive strategy, which potentially contradicts existing research reporting on the frequent incidences of offenders using coercive methods (Kloess et al., 2014).

Exploring the roles that offenders assign to the victim, Ioannou et al.'s (2018) study compared online and offline grooming characteristics by applying Canter's (1994) Victim Role Model (i.e., the assigned role of the victim as a person, vehicle or object based on differing observed offending styles) to 103 offender and victim interpersonal transactions (split into online $n = 76$ via PJ website chat transcripts and offline $n = 25$ via Westlawuk court reports). In applying the Victim Role Model, the study focusing on the offenders' actions rather than the victim, found that offenders made distorted attempts to reduce interpersonal distance (i.e., showing intimacy) for *victim as a person*. However, in contrast the offender displayed criminal characteristics (i.e., abduction, demeaning sexual activity) for *victim as vehicle* and *victim as an object* (i.e., control, violence, forcible sex). In contrast to prior research (Black et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2013), Canter (1994) found that offline and online cases assigned the *victim as a person* role, therefore treating their victim with humanity rather than previously found violent and overtly controlled *victim as vehicle*. Thus, more research is clearly needed to confirm these differing distinctions made between the groups, and perhaps, for victims' roles to be assigned by comparing victim characteristics more directly rather than via the

offender in silo. The research acknowledging both the offender and victim dynamic is discussed below.

However, as mentioned, most studies have focused on online grooming behaviours rather than contact offending and have not usually compared offender patterns with victim patterns, only in silo. Arguably, without researchers exploring the way both parties are involved in an interpersonal interaction it is not possible to fully analyse the dynamics of CSE relationships. That said, findings from previous sex offender research on victims could provide a starting point to guide other researchers to better understand contact CSE, particularly if applying these offender/victim patterns as coding criteria when collecting contact CSE data. The following section details the reviewed victim themes.

3.3.6 Understanding the Victim's Cognitive Response to Child Sexual Offending

The following sections (3.3.7 – 3.3.9) detail the three descriptive themes, which include: a) distinctions between victims, b) measures to identify abusive approaches and c) reciprocation from the victim.

3.3.7 Distinctions Between Victims

While victims were typically white females aged between 11–17 years old and an acquaintance of the perpetrator (Chiu & Quayle, 2022; Ioannou et al., 2018; Whittle et al., 2015, Wolak & Finkelhor, 2013), previous research explored the distinctions between victims. Although relying on PJ website decoy data rather than genuine victims, Aitken et al. (2018) explored how male offenders communicated with male and female

targets and if distinctions could be made between them. Eight transcripts from the PJ website were analysed thematically, producing five main themes a) positivity, b) emotional connection, c) self-protection, d) sexual content and e) arranging to meet offline. Unlike Connell's (2003) linear grooming model, the themes were not consecutive, however, no thematic difference was found between target genders, but more sexually related words were used towards male targets. Conversely, Grosskopf (2010) found that online interactions involving decoy "boys" were less aggressive, coercive, and sexually explicit than decoy girls whilst exploring police experiences of posing as a child (aged between 13 and 14 years) as part of online child abuse investigations. Similarly, Seymour-Smith and Kloess (2021) discursive psychology analysis of chat logs between one offender (posing as a teenage girl) and five male victims under the age of 16 years found distinctions in male victimisation. However, in contrast to previous research, offenders interacting with male victims were generally less aggressive and forceful.

3.3.8 Measures to Identify Abusive Approaches

Wolf et al. (2018) developed a grooming subscale of the Computer Assisted Maltreatment Inventory (CAMI), which is an instrument that examines grooming from the perspective of the victim, albeit the study was based on the retrospective self-reports from adult survivors of child sexual abuse rather than recent child abuse victims. Similarly, following the development of Winters et al.'s (2020) SGM as detailed in Table 2 above, Winters and Jeglic (2022) later tested its validity via a pilot study. Using a sample of 115 adults who reported experiencing CSA prior to the age of 18, the

feasibility of the Sexual Grooming Scale Victim Version (SGS-V) to assess the stages and behaviours identified in the SGM (2020) was examined. The results from the pilot data suggested the SGS-V as a self-report measure can be easily implemented via an online survey. Moreover, respondents were appropriately interpreting the items based on their qualitative description of their experiences. Winters and Jeglic (2022) suggest this was a positive step forward in successfully identifying common abusive approaches via online self-reporting, however, they also acknowledge the limitations that retrospective self-reporting for adults of CSA brings, as the content and language included in the measure may not be easily understood by younger child victims, which would apply to victims of CSE. The following section 3.3.9 now details the victim reciprocation.

3.3.9 Reciprocation from the Victim

Some research explored the complexities of the victim-perpetrator dynamic, specifically the behaviours shaping the reciprocation from victims and the impact this might have on the severity of the abuse for crime prevention purposes. However, there did not appear to be any victim reciprocation models to match the perpetrator grooming models as detailed under the perpetrator theme. Leclerc et al.'s (2013) quantitative study on the patterns of interchange between both the offender and the victim of child sexual abuse, drawing on perpetrator's self-reports, found that the victim's reaction influenced the severity of the sexual crime. Reactions included physical resistance, forceful verbal resistance, and nonforceful verbal resistance, which were used differently between age and gender. This form of crime prevention appears to focus the attention on the victim, without consideration of the perpetrator's potential power or influence, which is an

approach found to place responsibility solely on the victim (Frazier & Falmagne, 2014). This thesis intends to address this by exploring the roles that both the perpetrator and victim play within the CSE dynamic.

Whittle et al.'s (2015) study compared the victim and offender perspectives of online grooming and contact sexual abuse from three interviews of victims and their abusers. The aim of the research was to understand the complexity of victim offender dynamics, provide insight and awareness of the signs and improve detection and prevention. Four themes and 14 subthemes emerged from a data driven thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. This included: a) initial contact, b) grooming techniques, c) sexualisation, d) perception of relationship. Findings revealed that grooming processes vary between individuals, in line with Williams et al. (2013), and most disagreement between victim offender accounts occurred in relation to discussing the sexualisation phase. The more unexpected results revealed a correlation between the victim's push/pull emotional response, alongside an offender's attempts to stop the relationship, particularly the victim not believing that they had been abused, or their positive feelings and desires associated with the sexualisation phase. Suggestions were put forward by Whittle et al. (2015) to account for the victim initiating sexualisation or the offender's victim blaming (which is where they are blamed for their sexual assault), such as the effective use of manipulation strategies, insecure attachments, preserving psychological comfort and avoiding judgement.

The study by Gamez-Guadix et al. (2018) used a sample of adolescents (rather than specifically CSE victims) to explore persuasion strategies that resulted in sexual

activity used by adults online. The researchers reported that two out of three of the 2,731 sample of adolescents had encountered persuasion strategies by adults via the internet, predominantly girls, whose interactions were more likely to result in sexual involvement. However, not all the adolescents could officially be verified as victims but rather a reciprocate of a sexual advance from an adult. The most frequent persuasion strategy (i.e., 55.9% of 2,731 adolescents) was liking, where adults emphasised their care, affection, or similarity towards the adolescent. Persuasion was found to be related to deceit, bribery, and sexual involvement, and similarly with deceit and bribery related to sexual solicitation. Therefore, if the adolescent was engaged with the adult, they were more likely to become abused, which was suggested to be linked to a strengthened emotional bond, dominant relationship forming stage, principles of reciprocity and being highly manipulated.

Unlike many other studies reliant on PJ data, Kloess et al. (2017b) was able to access a small sample (i.e., five cases, amounting to 29 transcripts) of UK police cases involving both real victims and offenders' online interactions, with two of the cases involving contact sexual offences. Thematic analysis revealed five themes a) getting to know each other (i.e., victim discussing hobbies, friendship and advice, b) seeking assurance regarding relationship status (i.e., victim establishing exclusivity), c) levels of engagement (i.e., compliant, initiating sexual content, asking to meet), d) secrecy of contact (i.e., victim asking for secrecy or keeping interactions secret), and e) victim vulnerabilities (i.e., self-esteem, mental health). This study, although acknowledged as being limited in impact by a small sample, was able to highlight the reciprocal nature of

CSE interactions and raised the possibility of future research sequencing data to show the victim perpetrator dynamic in more detail, perhaps as Chiang and Grant's (2018; 2019) study did for the offender via Move Analysis but not also for victims. Although not a direct focus of the Chiang and Grant (2019) study, victims' responses were coded by three categories of desired, undesired, and mixed responses, which highlighted a reciprocal response to the interaction for the desired response. The undesired response from genuine victims perhaps provided a reason why this study was unique in finding overt persuasion and extortion moves in comparison to other research involving decoy victims, which did not (such as, Black et al., 2015; Cano et al., 2014; Gupta et al. 2012; Inches & Crestani, 2012; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Marcum 2007; Williams et al. 2013; Winters et al., 2017). Chiang and Grant (2019) argued that this could be a reason to stop using PJ data for analysing offender victim interactions, which only their and Kloess et al.'s (2017b) study had done.

In summary, research including genuine victims highlighted the reciprocal nature of victims and perpetrators interactions, whether this being confirmed as the response to offender manipulation, intimidation, and exploitation, or not. However, such victim compliance or desire for an exploitative relationship is an area that clearly still needs further exploration with genuine victims, moving away from decoy data.

3.4 Discussion

3.4.1 Summary of Thematic Synthesis

The purpose of this thematic synthesis was to synthesise the findings of studies pertaining to perpetrators and victims of child sexual offending, with a view to applying

the knowledge to contribute to addressing the current missing evidence base on contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics. This synthesis, however, is by no means exhaustive but perhaps provides justification that there are various methods and themes presented in previous sexual offending research, which are likely to be transferable for researchers seeking to explore contact CSE in more depth than is currently available.

The synthesis of 29 studies resulted in identifying two higher level themes: a) understanding the perpetrator's cognitive behaviour, and b) the victim's cognitive response, with seven descriptive themes. For the perpetrator, themes included: a) distinctions between offenders, b) grooming models, c) psycholinguistic offender patterns, and d) offender strategies. For the victim, themes included: a) distinctions between victims, b) reciprocation from the victim, and c) measures to identify abusive approaches.

The synthesis affirms that there is a wealth of research that has moved beyond exploring the earlier offline, intrafamilial, child sexual abuse, to benefitting from examining more extrafamilial interactions via the publicly available online grooming and court data, utilising the available perpetrator's language in use and latest research software. The reviewed findings reveal that there are consistent distinctions, patterns, and strategies between child sex offenders and their victims, which are summarised in the various typologies, profiles, theories, or models proposed, in line with similar reviewed literature (Joleby et al., 2021; Broome et al., 2018). The findings also illuminate an interpersonal dynamic that is multi-faceted, by highlighting the potentially reciprocal nature of the relationships between the perpetrator and victim, albeit not

commonly investigated as they co-occur within their interactions, which is identified as a limitation below.

3.4.2 Reviewed Research Limitations and Gaps in Knowledge

A number of limitations and gaps have been acknowledged in the articles under review and centre around data challenges, criticisms of decontextualised methods of analysis, and the potentially distracting pursuit for a universal model of offending. In relation to data challenges, access to sensitive police crime data is commonly restricted (Ioannou et al., 2018), however, many of the studies reviewed relied on publicly available convicted online sex offender and decoy chat logs from the same PJ website (Black et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2012). This reliance on such PJ transcripts has led to potentially outdated, recycled, incomplete and unverifiable data (Black et al., 2015; Broome et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2012). However, Whittle et al. (2015) suggests that data (including research interviews with victims and offenders) must be verified with police evidence to avoid research findings being skewed by interpretation or missing crucial parts of the offending story in their recollections. While this approach allows researchers to check if the offence matches the accounts from victims or offenders, this assumes that police case files are always reliable, which might not necessarily be the case. Instead, there may be room for the contact CSE researcher to accept both schools of thought with a more pragmatic approach to the research; one that is not absolute, based on perception and lived experience and the other that is quantifiable, repeatable, and confirmative.

Computer assisted analysis could also potentially triangulate research data reliant on interpretation, increasing the credibility and validity of research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019), whilst addressing criticisms of using a singular method of analysis. The LIWC, however, as a singular method has been criticised for being reductionist, relying primarily on decontextualised word counting with analytical algorithms that are not transparent (Gupta et al., 2012; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019). The mixed analytical methods approach to explore the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics utilised in this thesis might address such criticisms, specifically applying the discourse analysis and use of LIWC software to analyse victim and perpetrator language. This is strengthened further in this thesis with general language comparison scores from non-sexual offender language to enable parallels to be drawn as suggested by Lorenzo-Dus and Kinzel (2019).

Despite recognising the victim-perpetrator dynamic, studies have either avoided writing up victim data for fear of identification (Kloess et al., 2017), or replace it at times with self-reports from adolescent participants who might not be considered victims (Gamez-Guadix et al., 2018). Studies have also relied on decoy victim information (such as., Winters et al., 2017) as highlighted by Broome et al. (2020), which might not accurately reflect the offender-victim relationship (DeHart et al., 2017). Other studies have chosen not to fully explore victims if they were not the sole focus of the study (Chiang & Grant, 2018; 2019). Therefore, the understanding around victim-perpetrator dynamics is arguably still relatively unknown and potentially not accurately

representative, which contact CSE researchers could prioritise, and is addressed within this thesis.

Over the years under review, some researchers have proposed models that represent the patterns of behaviours or methods used by predominantly online offenders to groom, communicate, coerce, or exploit children (see Elliot, 2017; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Webster et al., 2012; Whittle et al., 2015; Winters & Jeglic, 2022). With so many models proposed, it raises the question over the search for a model itself, as this could be distracting practitioners from what is happening or become what is referred to as the *dialogue for the deaf* (Harrison, 2021). Perhaps a more flexible and somewhat looser approach than a model may provide greater benefits to practitioners. This would allow for the development of common indicators, such as the InTEL introduced within this thesis, which practitioners could refer to and help them to prevent and disrupt without the need for a prescriptive model to follow i.e., learning the lessons from the underperformance of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) assessment (Turner et al., 2019).

3.4.3 Future Research Opportunities and Priorities

The future research opportunities or priorities identified in the reviewed articles were typically aligned with the aforementioned limitations and gaps in knowledge. The recommendations for future research included accessing more recent datasets that did not rely on the PJ website or to access larger samples or corpus size as suggested by Black et al. (2015), Broome et al. (2020), Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2016), and Whittle et al. (2015). In addition, Black et al. (2015), DeHart et al. (2017), and Winters et al. (2017)

suggest the need to differentiate between offenders, by collecting and analysing data specifically on gender, ethnicity, education, socio-economic status, psychological factors (i.e., personality traits, sexual interests, interpersonal functioning) and criminal histories. As such, some of the suggested demographic differences are addressed within this thesis by exploring psycholinguistic differences between both offenders and victims.

A more detailed analysis of genuine victims (rather than decoys) is needed, such as exploring their characteristics (i.e., genders) and to validate the grooming approaches or processes outlined in the grooming models (Aitken et al., 2018; Broome et al., 2020; Drouin et al., 2017; Ioannou et al., 2018; Kloess et al., 2017; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). In an earlier study, Olson et al. (2007) highlighted the need to capture the interactional nature of such cases to gain an accurate picture of victim-perpetrator dynamics. Other recommendations for exploring the language in interactions between offender and victim, include analysis of language style matching (Black et al., 2015), exploring the perpetrator-victim emotional bond and feelings of love rather than minimising it in illegal relationships (Gamez-Guadix et al., 2018), developing preventative indicators for spotting changes in victim behaviour and providing therapeutic support (Whittle et al., 2015), and to explore if Clout represents offenders leading the conversation or displaying their status and control with victims (Drouin et al., 2017). The aforementioned gaps in knowledge therefore are addressed within the thesis, by exploring the CSE interpersonal dynamic.

There are other potential transferrable opportunities to learn from the online offending research, such as the progression from online to offline (Kloess et al., 2017),

analysis of deceptive characteristics of the vocabulary (Broome et al., 2020), to establish the duration of grooming and how it shapes different groomer communicative profiles beyond compliment use (Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019), developing Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) as a method to explore interactions (Schneevogt et al., 2018) and building a framework to do more in depth linguistic analysis based on psychological thinking and behavioural patterns of sex offenders using OG theory (Gupta et al., 2012). Some of the transferrable opportunities detailed above have therefore been factored into the research design within this thesis.

In person offending, known as offline or contact could potentially differ in methods and approaches as technological communication barriers are removed and non-verbal communication is factored in. As Conte et al. (1989) recognised, perpetrators place a greater deal of emphasis on the physical aspects of the grooming approach, calling it “more important than verbal seduction” (p. 297). Exploring both the verbal and non-verbal approaches may enhance a more holistic understanding of contact CSE offending, which is addressed within this thesis. To summarise, Winters & Jeglic (2022) make the point that it is “imperative” that researchers “identify sexual grooming behaviours and tactics that are more easily measurable and observable in order to facilitate prevention and intervention efforts” (p.928). Thus, this thesis prioritises finding typical indicators of exploitative language that occur during contact CSE victim and offender interactions to contribute to improving safeguarding practice.

3.5 Conclusion

Since the early 2000s, it is evident that there have been continued efforts to understand the tactics that predominantly online sexual offenders use to encourage victims to engage in sexualised relationships, providing potentially transferrable research opportunities for exploring contact CSE. The reviewed findings reveal that there are a variety of research methods capable of exploring child sexual offender patterns, which can be differentiated and summarised in typologies, theories, or models. The findings also illuminate an interpersonal dynamic that is multi-faceted, by highlighting the potentially reciprocal nature of the relationships between the perpetrator and victim, albeit not commonly investigated as they co-occur within their interactions. It is hoped that such methods and findings can guide and be transferable when narrowing the research focus down to explore contact CSE as detailed in the next steps below.

Despite research efforts as outlined above, further development is still needed to understand the complex nature of such illegal interactions, to improve detection and safeguard young people effectively. The next steps should include more evidence and research that adopts a pragmatic approach, which is reliant on a mix of analytical methods and familiar constructs, to address the recognised limitations and deepen understanding of contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics. Such research insight could then support the development of a flexible framework which practitioners could use to help prevent and disrupt in-person offending. This thesis aims to address these gaps by adopting a pragmatic mixed methods approach which will improve understanding of

victim-perpetrator dynamics and provide practitioners with exploitative language indicators to support law enforcement and safeguarding agencies.

Chapter 4: A Focused Review Examining Current Contact CSE Safeguarding and Law Enforcement Practice: Providing a Rationale for Improvement

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have introduced contact CSE and identified gaps that this thesis aimed to address by drawing on prior sexual offending research, specifically to explore the interpersonal dynamics between a contact CSE perpetrator and genuine victim. This chapter provides a more focused review to examine the current inter-disciplinary law enforcement and safeguarding practice in relation to contact CSE, such as the approaches to safeguard young people at risk of/or involved in contact CSE and the ways in which law enforcement pursue and prosecute the perpetrators and to establish how the findings from this thesis may contribute to improving it. The review identified three themes which include: a) multi-agency CSE Teams, b) court systems, and c) management of offenders. The subsequent chapters expand on the methodological processes and evidence base, which informs the proposed inter-disciplinary operational indicators in Chapter 8, to respond to the identified contact CSE gaps.

4.2 Literature Review Method

This chapter differs from the previous systematic approach in Chapter 2 and thematic synthesis in Chapter 3, which involved clearly defined research parameters for exploring contact CSE perpetrator literature or broad interpretive themes for establishing what transferable knowledge exists. Here, this focused literature review is purposeful with an emphasis on answering the research question and examining current safeguarding and law enforcement practice, whilst also providing the preface to the

potential value of the thesis findings advancing such practice, as replicated in other focused reviews (Alderman et al., 2012; Walton & Rogers, 2017).

Predominantly, grey literature and non government organisations material were prioritised within this focused review, albeit academic databases were searched to ensure a comprehensive of examination of available literature was undertaken. Such a research decision to focus on grey literature was deemed appropriate and pragmatic on the basis of the following: a) due to challenges detailed in the systematic review in Chapter 2 in finding academic sources from databases specific to contact CSE, b) potentially omitting relevant and current work due to the delay between the research being conducted and being published (Godin et al., 2015; Pappas & Williams, 2011) and c) the viability of performing an exhaustive literature review due to the many differing local and national responses to CSE (Beckett et al., 2014; Kelly & Karsna, 2017).

There are recognised challenges in systematically searching, scanning, and refining grey literature, specifically, the lack of availability across academic databases, in comparison to the vast amount of information and lack of consistent organisation across websites (Godin et al., 2015). Despite this, the process for searching and analysing the articles within the focused review have been conducted and documented as systematically as possible to ensure transparency and replicability. This was achieved by applying the recommended systematic search strategies (as detailed in section 4.2.2 below) to grey literature, to address the review's research question (Godin et al., 2015). With this in mind, the following research question guides this focused review:

4.2.1 Research Question

How can current contact CSE safeguarding, and law enforcement practice be more effective in responding to contact CSE crimes?

The research question was derived following abductive reasoning with the aim to provide a clear and considerable research contribution to the contact CSE field, as outlined by Zelechowska et al. (2020). The following section 4.2.2 will now outline how the search for this focused review was undertaken.

4.2.2. Search Strategy

In addition to searching academic databases via Ebsco Host, this focused review was conducted following Godin et al.'s (2015) four searching strategies, which include searching grey literature databases, Google search engines (with limiters), targeted websites, and consultation with experts. Firstly, the advanced searching of grey literature databases (those with a criminal justice, social care or health focus, such as Social Care Online (SCIE), OpenGrey or the College of Policing National Police Library). Search terms (as detailed in figure 6 below) associated with the inclusion criteria were followed regarding, (a) child sexual exploitation, (b) safeguarding, child protection or prevention, and (c) law enforcement, police, CJS or offender management. An advanced search utilising Boolean operators (AND/OR), including the use of truncation and "wild cards", such as * and "symbols was performed to find any variation of the word within the database. Figure 6 details the search terms below.

Secondly, the same search terms were used (as detailed in Figure 6 below) for the Google search, finding publications, books, resources, reports, theses, and guidance

documents on all aspects of safeguarding, policing, crime, and criminal justice (such as, a book by Beckett & Pearce, 2017, *Understanding and Responding to CSE*). Thirdly, specific safeguarding and law enforcement websites were targeted (such as NSPCC, CSA Centre of expertise, Barnardo's, National Police Chief's Council, Gov.uk) where executive summaries, were screened and full texts read if matching the review focus. Finally, consultation with experts for the latest updates (i.e., UK Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) lead regarding current practice, national statistics and the latest reports i.e., the Creedon Report via the Home Office, 2023).

Figure 6

Focused Review Search Terms

Sexually exploited* or "child" or sexual offences* or grooming* or contact or CSE or AND safeguard* or child protection* or prevention* AND law enforcement* or Police* or criminal justice system* or offender management*

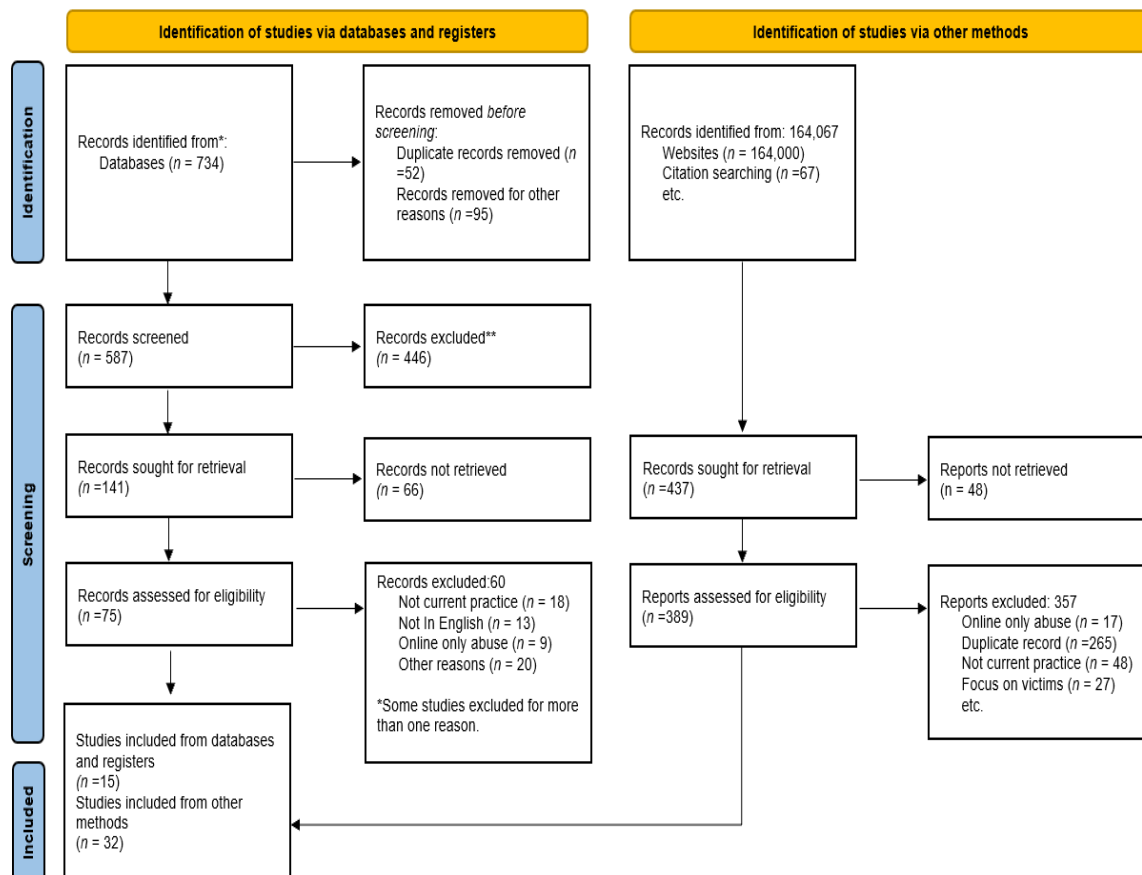
4.2.3 Selection Criteria

The literature search initially yielded 164,801 items that were subsequently refined for screening by keeping only relevant articles (as per inclusion criteria for examining current contact CSE safeguarding and law enforcement practice). Decisions for excluding articles were based on a) if the articles were not written in English, and b) if they did not align to explaining or researching the UK safeguarding or law enforcement practice in relation to contact CSE according to the DfE (2017) definition. Figure 7 below details the inclusion and exclusion criteria and number of records at each step of the search and analysis.

Figure 7

PRISMA 2020 Flowchart for Contact CSE Systematic Review

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other sources



Adapted from: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

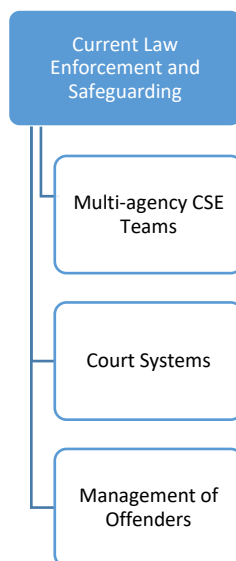
4.2.4 Data Extraction and Analysis

Forty-seven studies or publications were included in the focused review. Quality appraisal was not undertaken as it was not considered the focus of the review. This research decision was taken because the review itself was focused on examining how current practice could be improved and therefore appraisal of the contact CSE safeguarding, and law enforcement response would be undertaken throughout the

review. Instead, data was extracted on the organisation, year published, and findings/practice developments and can be found in the data extraction table in Appendix A. From this process, three themes were identified under the current law enforcement and safeguarding heading. Examples of the focused themes that are provided in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8

Examples of Focused Themes



4.3 Findings

Of the 47 reviewed articles, 68% included grey literature publications ($n = 32$) and 32% included peer reviewed academic journals ($n = 15$), spanning from 2012 to 2023. The publishing academic journals were: Journal of Criminological Research policy & practice ($n = 1$), Journal of Forensic Sciences ($n = 1$), Child Abuse Review Journal ($n = 1$), Journal of Children's Services ($n = 1$), International Journal for Crime

Justice and Social Democracy ($n = 1$), Criminal Investigations of Sexual Offences: Techniques And Challenges Journal ($n = 1$), Frontiers in Psychology Journal ($n = 1$), Internet Journal of Criminology ($n = 1$), Journal of Community Safety & Wellbeing ($n = 1$), Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling ($n = 1$), Offenders Supervision Journal ($n = 1$), Journal of Forensic Practice ($n = 1$), Journal of Sexual Aggression ($n = 1$), Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice ($n = 1$), Youth Justice Journal ($n = 1$).

Grey literature publications were sourced from the following organisations/websites: Institute of Applied Research ($n = 1$), TCE research in practice website ($n = 1$), College of Policing website ($n = 2$), Justice Inspectorates website ($n = 1$), Australasian Policing website ($n = 1$), Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse website ($n = 6$), CPS website ($n = 2$), Gov.uk website ($n = 8$), Institute for Fiscal Studies website ($n = 1$), Public Health Wales website ($n = 1$), Muslim Women's Network UK website ($n = 1$), Metropolitan Police Service website ($n = 1$), The Bar Standards Board website ($n = 1$), IICSA website ($n = 1$), Barnardo's website ($n = 2$), NSPCC website ($n = 1$), and Alexi Project website ($n = 2$).

The following section (4.3.1) synthesises the main themes of the focused review which includes the articles and publications detailed above.

4.3.1 Current Law Enforcement and Safeguarding Practices

The following sections (4.3.1.1 – 4.3.1.3) detail the current practices of multi-agency CSE work (from statutory and third sector agencies, such as social work, police, education, victim, court systems and the management of offenders).

4.3.1.1 Multi-agency CSE Teams

Current approaches to the safeguarding of victims and criminal investigation for CSE related crimes are typically (albeit not always) multi-agency in nature, drawing on specialists from different statutory and third sector agencies to build organised CSE teams (Sharp-Jeffs, et al., 2017; Shuker & Harris, 2018). Although not without some criticisms of structural challenges or ideological differences between agencies (IICSA, 2022; Shuker, 2018), multi-agency CSE teams have been considered effective for: a) protecting young people, b) sharing information, c) early identification of suspects and victims, d) enhancing professional learning and aiding decision making, e) generating holistic assessments, and f) holding perpetrators to account (Frost, 2017; Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2017).

There are key agency roles within multi-agency CSE teams, which typically includes social workers, police, health and other third sector agencies. Social workers are responsible for completing risk assessments, instigating Sec 47 Crown Prosecution (CP) procedures, holding strategy meetings, liaising with other services, and formulating CP plans (HM Government, 2018). However, the assessment of young people's risk and vulnerability is a contentious issue, being described as "problematic" due to the potential for missing harms that do not present at the point of assessment and being typically based on one professional's judgement (Beckett, 2021). Although there is a recognised comfort in completing risk assessments (Beckett, 2021), the multi-agency input on social worker CP decisions arguably moves away from the former narrow child protection perceptions and parameters for abuse referrals (such as CSE). Thus, reducing

the likelihood of No Further Action (NFA) decisions for those still at significant risk but not aligning with the previous CP practice (Lloyd & Firmin, 2020). This could include young people frequently missing from home, a recognised feature of CSE (IICSA, 2022), who could now be referred into the team for support based on collaborative professional curiosity and decisions, which might have previously been missed. Notably, national recommendations for enhancing the Missing from Home or Care (MFHOC) debrief and safety plans for young people are outlined in the IICSA (2022) report after finding that MFHOC inquiries were often inadequate.

Other recommendations for improving ways of working with young people and to holistically address risk have been put forward by scholars, such as Beckett (2021), Coy et al. (2017) and Firmin (2017) which include: a) offering a listening ear and encouraging the young person to talk, b) careful non-victim blaming language and trying to avoid recreating an abusive power dynamic, c) understanding the love the young person might feel towards their abuser and reassuring the normality of this to reduce potential anxiety and shame, and d) adopting a contextual safeguarding response, which targets the contexts in which harm occurs (i.e. risks in peer groups, schools, and public places), considering all interconnecting vulnerabilities especially the exploiters willingness to abuse the young person.

Police detectives in CSE teams are expected to deliver several operational duties. This includes investigating crimes, leading Achieving Best Evidence (ABE)/MFHOC interviews, making use of police orders, developing problem profiles, and gathering intelligence to disrupt offenders, all whilst liaising with other services (i.e., CPS,

RASSOs, forensic experts and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)), throughout the CJS process (Wager et al., 2021). However, it is accepted that solving sex crimes can be difficult (Van der Kemp, 2021), with “major challenges in compiling sufficient evidence to convict perpetrators” (Marsden, 2017 p. 16). That said, police investigations can also be assisted in many ways (Willmott et al., 2021), such as developing offender typologies to improve investigators understanding of the crime or likely suspect; offering insights into crime patterns; helping in the search and prioritisation of suspects and providing advice on an offender’s offence behaviour (Abreu et al., 2019; Chopin & Beauregard, 2021).

Despite the obvious benefits for developing an accurate understanding of the CSE problem, the quality of the problem profiles has been criticised by the recent IICSA (2022) for their incomplete evidence of prevalence, lack of information about perpetrator groups and basing profiles on inadequate data. Nevertheless, the National Police CSE Action Plan (although last updated before the IICSA (2022) inquiry in 2014), aims to improve frontline understanding of the complexities of CSE (i.e., training on victimology or the modus – operandi of offending by lone or group perpetrators), share best/research-informed practice and plans to target the problem through prevention, intelligence, and enforcement by following the four P’s (prepare, prevent, protect, and pursue). Furthermore, the new Professional Policing Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) curriculum also includes learning outcomes that support the training of all new police officers on key safeguarding issues, such as interviewing vulnerable witnesses, gathering intelligence, and assessing risk and threats

(CoP, 2023). Examples of such national policing curriculum learning outcomes under the vulnerability and public protection headings (version 4.1, 2021) are as follows: a) explain key considerations when responding to, identifying and supporting a person who may be vulnerable (p.47); b) take appropriate initial action when dealing with individuals who are or may be, vulnerable (p.47); and c) identify a potential public protection incident when acting as a first responder to an unrelated incident (p.48).

Pre implementation of the PEQF national curriculum, there has been a global recognition of the weaknesses in police knowledge and understanding relating to vulnerability and CSE (Coliandris, 2015). Yet, there remains some debate as to whether the PEQF route is fit for purpose for educating new recruits (McCanney & Taylor, 2023), however, there is no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to date. Until evaluation of the PEQF curriculum is conducted, we can only observe the positive learning that has been taken from other police vulnerability training, such as the improvements outlined by Ford et al. (2019) where officers collected more detailed information following training and created a more measured response in their behaviour and decision making when responding to calls.

With improved knowledge and understanding of contact CSE dynamics, child victims may also be supported to provide evidence that might progress an investigation (i.e., by providing accurate and detailed information in initial accounts about the suspects verbalised sexual intent for the early arrest of a suspect) within ABE interviews by officers building rapport and probing on the specific language in use. However, despite some improvements to the supportive interview practice offered by detectives

with the introduction of the ABE interview guidance in 2011 and Victims' Code in 2005, this does not always appear to follow throughout the criminal justice process (Marsden, 2017). As a result, victim withdrawal (or reluctance) is one reason reported for the high attrition rates for child victims of sexual offences, such as sexual abuse and exploitation (Allnock, 2015; Kelly & Karsna, 2017; Mooney, 2021), but other explanations have featured the decision-making and outcomes at each stage of the CJS (i.e., police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the court (Allnock, 2015).

Other services, such as, health or third sector children's charities will typically support social workers and the police to address the sexual health of victims, deliver community outreach or health campaigns, provide advice to the young person and their families, and liaise with other therapeutic services (Scott et al., 2019). Third sector agencies (i.e., the umbrella term for organisations that are neither public or private sector) are said to make a positive impact on engaging hard to reach young people (i.e., those perceived to be disengaged), intelligence gathering and educating communities as part of multi-agency CSE teams (Shuker & Harris, 2018). Outreach (a term describing the activity of providing a service to a population that might not otherwise have access) is also made easier through e-learning resources available free online, such as Brook's or Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE's) CSE resources.

CSE prevention focused activity takes place in many forms, with both statutory and third sector agencies embedding CSE awareness raising (i.e., annual national child exploitation awareness day) and specialist training (i.e., one day or weeklong) for organisational staff development, community education outreach or educating young

people in Schools on harmful sexual behaviour (Scott et al.,2019). This could involve the specialist Child Protection training required by Social Workers or Probation staff, PSHE days, Youth Offending Team (YOT) intervention or working in the community (Scott et al., 2019). Community outreach work is seen as crucial for reaching the local ‘eyes and ears’ of the community who can also form part of a protective network for CSE victims, including that which is sometimes described as the night-time economy (Sharp-Jeffs et al.,2017).

School-based programmes are said to “raise awareness of sexual exploitation, internet safety, consent and sexual harassment, and to promote healthy relationships” (McNeish & Scott, 2023, p.8). The recent DfE’s (2019) Statutory guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and making RSE compulsory in secondary schools from 2020 states “Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly” (p.26). Such statutory requirements mean that all children should receive some form of CSE prevention, but the debate has been ongoing since RSE has been made compulsory as to how consistent and effective this preventative input has been (OFSTED, 2021). This inconsistency again supports the rationale to provide an improved understanding of CSE dynamics for both practitioners and young people. As Scott et al. (2019) argue, the delivery of preventive education sessions to young people requires more of a whole school approach which includes making sure that teachers and leaders are confident in delivering such important preventative messages. This perhaps raises the need for a

more standardised, user-friendly, and evidenced based preventative CSE programme for all schools.

Overall, multi-agency working is said to remove agencies working in silos, therefore becoming better positioned to be a protective network, for recognising the significance of the information they hear, making informed decisions for escalation and achieving an immediate safeguarding response (Frost, 2017; NSPCC, 2023; Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2017). Despite a previous tendency to focus on the victim, stigmatising them further, and making perpetrators invisible in responses to CSE (Gohir, 2013), the multi-agency sharing of intelligence has the potential to improve knowledge of patterns of CSE victimisation and perpetration, which fits with the aims of this research of understanding the CSE victim and perpetrator dynamics. The caveat to multi-agency working is that the implementation of effective localised CSE teams relies on a Local Authority (LA) needs assessment and sustained funding levels, so there is arguably a real necessity to highlight what the local needs are and what is prioritised to avoid the CSE response worsening (Shuker, 2018). That said, rather than attributing a worsening of CSE safeguarding response to just LA funding and resourcing issues, this thesis arguably responds more to addressing the personal and professional capabilities of the practitioner (i.e., supporting the practitioner in their decision making for safeguarding and law enforcement) to improve CSE safeguarding responses.

4.3.1.2 Court Systems

Alongside the aforementioned investigative challenges and high attrition rates in child sexual offence cases, uncorroborated victim testimonies have also yielded low

conviction rates (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2021). It is for this reason that the CPS lays out the following guidance: “Police and prosecutors should seek to build a case which looks more widely at the credibility of the overall allegation rather than focusing primarily on the credibility and/or reliability of the child or young person” (CPS, 2023).

Furthermore, to prevent the prosecutors unnecessarily undermining the victims account, the CPS have provided offence corroborating factors (not exhaustive) that must be considered and understood by prosecutors when reviewing sexual offence allegations. In support of this, research by Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2021) suggests that convictions are more likely to occur with greater knowledge of how child victims might behave during sexual offences and whilst progressing through the CJS. Victim stereotyping (i.e., someone who is not considered a “genuine” victim if not matching preconceived views) was acknowledged in research as widespread and potentially preventing fair decision making in trials (Spohn, 2020). Positively, the national implementation of Advocacy and the Vulnerable Course Training by Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) in England and Wales has gone some way towards educating legal professionals and prioritising the wellbeing of the most vulnerable during trials.

The pursuit of a more child-friendly approach to questioning and evidence gathering, in comparison to the previous adversarial approach, has received positive acknowledgement from judicial perceptions of the quality of criminal advocacy in research commissioned by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board (Hunter et al., 2018). Victims are further supported by the “special measures”

arrangements given to child victims of sexual offences in court which can include giving evidence behind a screen or via video link or asking members of the public to leave the court (Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999) or the support from Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) prosecutors (CPS, 2023). Although there is a move towards improving the experience for child victims in court, the CPS guidance also recommends that the suspect circumstances are also considered as thoroughly as the credibility of the complainant. Moreover, although positive steps are being taken to reduce attrition rates for child sexual offences, such as the RASSO initiatives, more work is clearly required.

There has also been a recent shift within the policing community in victim terminology following the independent review of the Metropolitan Police Service's handling of non-recent sexual offence investigations alleged against persons of public prominence by retired High Court Judge, Sir Richard Henriques in 2016. Henriques (2016) recommended that police investigations should use the term "complainant" rather than "victim"; and that "the instruction to believe a victim's account should cease" (Recommendation 2). These recommendations were subsequently discussed at the College of Policing Professional Committee on 28th February 2018 supporting the need for impartiality during investigations and procedural fairness whilst ensuring that policing remains victim focused (Beckley, 2018). Furthermore, Beckley (2018) found there was "unanimity among the legal profession" in believing that a requirement for "the police to believe the allegation at the onset of an investigation (was) wrong" (p.11). Thus, any preconceptions about victims needing to be believed would be reviewed. The

impact of this on CSE cases could arguably be challenging because of shortcomings highlighted in previous case reviews about victim blaming or stereotyping or reluctance to disclose, but impartiality is arguably fairer for both victims and suspects in the legal process. Either way, better understanding the complex CSE dynamics at play, not only supports victims but also suspects within the CJS.

4.3.1.3 Management of Offenders

The management of sexual offenders, which includes CSE perpetrators, categorised as either, one (registered), two (violent offender), or three (other dangerous offender), relies on partnership work with Responsible Authorities (RA), including prison, probation, and the police (Kewley, 2017; HM Prison and Probation Service, 2023). The RA are required to establish local MAPPA under a Strategic Management Board (SMB) in England and Wales following the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (HM Prison and Probation Service, 2023). Sexual offenders are typically risk assessed and managed at levels one (ordinary statutory agency i.e., police, probation, or prison), two (active multi-agency) or three (active enhanced multi-agency) (Kewley, 2017). Not always without some criticism (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2022), these arrangements are suggested to be effective at a) bringing together criminal justice agencies to share information, b) identifying and managing dangerous individuals, c) offering necessary scrutiny and oversight in complex cases and d) supporting reasonable steps to protect the public (CJJI, 2022).

The most recent figures from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) (2022) reveal that 66,741 category one registered sex offenders who have committed a sexual offence

under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in England and Wales require some level of offender management, which is a 4% increase on the previous year, albeit not all offences involving CSE related crimes. Ninety-eight per cent of all category one offenders are currently managed at level 1 (Ministry of Justice, 2022). To add further perspective to the statistic, if all the category one offenders required police supervision, monitoring and control intervention, this equates to roughly one sex offender per two police officers (out of the 142,145 officers) in England and Wales (Home Office, 2023), which is not only resource intensive, but arguably financially unfeasible, with such uncertainty around public spending (Emmerson & Stockton, 2022). Therefore, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that MAPPA must establish the most effective methods of assessing and managing the risks posed by category one sexual offenders, which would include CSE perpetrators.

Risk management follows the *Four Pillars* approach, aiming to work smarter at managing the risks (Kemshall, 2012) which includes: a) supervision (i.e., agency oversight gathering offender views, relapse prevention, promoting pro-social behaviours); b) monitoring and control (i.e., predicting future offending, monitoring warning signs/triggers, polygraphing offenders, limiting offender's access to victim); c) interventions and treatment (i.e., specific intervention work around the nature of offending undertaken around motivation, internal inhibitors, external inhibitors or victim compliance); and d) victim safety (i.e., referral/liaison with Victim Liaison Officer, protecting current and potential victims identified in risk assessment). However, in a study reviewing how effective the police were at risk assessing sexual offenders using

the Active Risk Management System (ARMS) assessment, Kewley et al. (2020) reported that risk ratings and risk management plans were poor, predominantly resulting from low professional confidence when completing, due to undertraining. The study recommended the need for better training, a clear quality audit, and the opportunity to discuss complex cases with a supervisor (Kewley et al., 2020). Relating this back to the focus of the thesis, there appears to be no specific contact CSE assessment of offender risk, only online CSE (see details by Hirschtritt et al., 2019), which if established might be more useful as indicators for supporting professional decision making, based on the issues with traditional risk assessments (i.e., ARMS). Furthermore, as Creedon (Home Office, 2023) recommends there is a need for a) more research into escalating behaviours, b) a single inter-disciplinary risk assessment system assessment, c) a review of the MOSOVO training, d) introduction of force level discretion, e) mechanisms for intelligence sharing, and f) a MOSOVO focus on reoffending and risk. These recommendations were also supported by Mydlowski and Turner-Moore's (2023) research highlighting tensions between police policies and practices, the need for improving the MOSOVO training and to raise wider questions about the MOSOVO role in offender management. Therefore, future CSE practice will need to consider such recommendations, particularly for effectively recognising and managing risk. Regardless, Pemberton et al. (2023) recommend that there should be "provision of comprehensive support beyond risk management" (p.3), which for the purposes of this research is CSE specific and evidenced informed.

Pemberton et al. (2023) suggest that change is more likely if the RA (i.e., police etc) “actively promote hope and optimism and convey a belief that the person attempting desistance can change” (p.3). The most recent evaluation of the prison-based Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme (CSOTP), which involved cognitive, behavioural, and psychological interventions, undertaken by Mews et al. (2017), found that there was little or no changes in sexual and non-sexual reoffending. Due to the CSOTP interventions being found to be ineffective, the programme has now been replaced by the Horizon Treatment Programme. However, there remains no specific CSE SOTP delivered in prison, probation or the community, as Drummond and Southgate (2018) initially highlighted, which fundamentally needs to be addressed.

4.4 Discussion

The purpose of this focused review was to synthesise the findings of current inter-disciplinary law enforcement and safeguarding practice in relation to contact CSE, and to establish how the findings from this review and thesis research may contribute to improving it. This review established the foundations for the proposed inter-disciplinary InTEL outlined in Chapter 8, which responds to the contact CSE practice gaps identified in this chapter. As stated in the methods section 4.2 above, this review is by no means exhaustive but perhaps provides justification that there are opportunities for improving current practice.

The synthesis of 47 articles and grey literature publications resulted in identifying three main themes under the heading of current law enforcement and safeguarding practice, which included: a) multi-agency CSE teams, b) court systems,

and c) management of offenders. The reviewed findings revealed that despite sexual crimes being difficult to solve, such as contact CSE, there appeared to be some positive moves to improve ways of working and understanding the complexities of CSE, particularly following the recent national recommendations (e.g., IICSA, 2022; the Home Office's Creedon Report, 2023) and statutory guidance or professionalisation (e.g., PEQF curriculum or RSE requirements). Effective multi-agency working was recognised by the increased awareness of CSE, measured decision making, intelligence sharing, preventative education, third sector outreach, and child-centred practice. Moreover, special measures have also been successfully established to support victims beyond the initial safeguarding responses and throughout the criminal justice process (e.g., RASSO prosecutors, specialist jury training, supportive interview practices and arrangements for Court appearances). Lastly, the MAPPAs arrangements for the management of offenders were found to be effective at information sharing, identifying, managing dangerous individuals, and offering necessary scrutiny, oversight, and protection in complex cases.

The review affirms that although we have moved beyond the collective failures reported in the early UK national case reviews and inquiries in our response to CSE (Barnardo's, 2014; Coffey, 2014; Jay, 2014), there are practice improvements still needed. Consistent with the co-ordinated international response to tackling CSE (see ECPAT, 2023; IICSA, 2022; NCA, 2022; UN, 2023; UNICEF, 2023), this focused review highlighted the concerted collaborative response that is required between children's services, health, education, third sector or government organisations, beyond

just law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies in response to CSE harms. The multi-disciplinary approaches towards a shared understanding and countering future CSE threats detailed within the review draw parallels to responses to other national threats, such as counter terrorism, specifically detailed in the CONTEST counter terrorism framework (HM Government, 2023). The multi-disciplinary co-operation is considered vital to the Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare programme against terrorism, which includes a) sharing best practice and evidenced based knowledge, b) drawing on intelligence for problem profiling, c) strengthening investigatory capabilities, and d) creating indicators of terrorist threats (HM Government, 2023), which CSE responses can draw upon.

Finally, the review finding revealing that there are no CSE specific and evidenced based therapeutic responses is perhaps unsurprising when knowledge gaps exist, specifically empirical evidence detailing contact CSE perpetrators offence thinking as also detailed in Chapters 2 and 3. The one size fits all approach to sex offender rehabilitation has recently been criticised from research in the United States (see Levenson et al., 2023). It is argued that treatment should hold the offender accountable but be based on the specific needs of the offender, which is founded on evidenced based knowledge of the individual and the offence, including risks, strengths and needs. Future research could offer more informed solutions to therapeutic practice, specifically for CSE perpetrators. In recognition of the review's findings on the current practice limitations and knowledge gaps, the recommendations in section 4.4.1 below provides detailed suggestions for improving contact CSE practice.

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, the reviewed synthesis has succinctly captured the complex and dynamic contact CSE landscape in relation to the current law enforcement and safeguarding practice. Positively, collaborative steps have been taken since previous national failures were recognised, where agencies now work together to support victims, raise awareness, pursue, and manage the CSE offenders, which is consistent with international responses. Despite not being able to cover all aspects of current practice extensively, which was never the intention of the review due to the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics thesis focus, the findings highlight opportunities to improve the responses to CSE. The review recommendations direct policy, practice, and research to a) increase understanding, particularly contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics, b) create opportunities to support and empower professional decision making and c) improve contact CSE specific empirical research and evidence base for the identification and foundation for further professional/therapeutic dialogue.

It is beyond the scope of the thesis to address all the recommendations within the review, however, the following chapters will detail how the thesis findings may provide operational solutions for practice. Ultimately, this review and thesis may play a role in disrupting harm and make a valuable contribution to future safeguarding against CSE, facilitating the development of new knowledge in this domain.

Chapter 5: Contact CSE Victim-Perpetrator Dynamics Thesis Research Philosophy and Design

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have introduced the topic of contact CSE, provided context for the current research and highlighted the gaps that this thesis aimed to address, specifically exploring the interpersonal dynamics between a contact CSE perpetrator and genuine victim. The current chapter will now discuss the research design, and the methodological steps taken to reach the findings and interpretations in the following chapters.

This chapter begins by recapping on the central research questions of the thesis, then details the philosophical research approach and assumptions guiding the research methods selected. The mixed methods design is detailed with thick descriptions and explains how and why both the quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated. The discussions of trustworthiness and rigour in the chapter highlight the credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability of the research. As part of this discussion, reflexivity is outlined as a method for determining the most effective research method and analytical framework.

For the purposes of clarity, a recap of the thesis research questions is provided below:

RQ1: What are the typical psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE?

RQ2: How do contact CSE perpetrators and their victims discursively construct their relationship retrospectively within the context of a criminal investigation?

Research question 1 and 2 will be investigated in Chapter 6 under research question 1 and 2 headings. Research question 1 will explore the psycholinguistic and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns for pre and during the sexual act, whilst research question 2 will explore the victim and perpetrator retrospective discursive constructions of the contact CSE relationships. The section below (5.2) will provide a rationale for selecting a pragmatic research philosophy to explore an ever-changing contact CSE dynamic.

5.2 A Pragmatic Research Philosophy to Explore an Ever-Changing Contact CSE Dynamic

To achieve the aims of this thesis, a Pragmatic research philosophy was chosen to inform the study design and interpretation of research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The positioning of Pragmatism within this research ensures that the researcher's beliefs, values, and assumptions are guided by this preferred paradigm and epistemological framework (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The chosen pragmatic philosophy was considered the most appropriate approach, aligning the aims and purpose of the thesis with "the researchers' way of experiencing and thinking about the world" (Morgan, 2007, p 50). Pragmatists, such as Rorty (1991), deny that there is a definitive description of a single reality and believe that it is impossible for scientists or others to objectively determine absolute truth (Giacobbi et al., 2005), believing that "individuals have their own and

unique interpretations of reality” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017 p.35). This is considered particularly relevant when interpreting complex contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics, where multiple realities may exist at any given time between these ‘social actors. Thus, requiring investigation of potentially conflicting perspectives of the contact CSE victim and perpetrator’s reality.

As Feilzer (2010) suggests, pragmatism is particularly useful for “solving practical problems in the real world” (p.8), and therefore researchers can opt for methods that are useful to the specific problem, rather than attempting to find an accurate representation of truth (Giacobbi et al 2005; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, Rorty, 1991). Consequently, as Pragmatism “sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8), researchers are able to remain ontologically in the middle, moving along the “objectivity-subjectivity continuum” (Maarouf, 2019, p7). Pragmatism, in this thesis, emphasises a flexible and ‘what works’ approach to inquiry, using a combination of alternative and appropriate proponents associated with other paradigms, therefore allowing a shift between ontologies, from a more interpretivist/constructivist or positivist ontology, thus bridging any knowledge gaps (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713). Furthermore, as Feilzer (2010) argues “a pragmatic approach to problem solving in the social world offers an alternative, flexible, and more reflexive guide to research design and grounded research” (p. 7). It is this flexible, ‘what works’ approach that aligns itself to generating and constructing knowledge about the relatively unknown phenomena of contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics.

This thesis requires the ‘practical approach’ outlined by Saunders et al. (2009) whereby both ontological positions are adopted to collect and analyse data. In this thesis, it is acknowledged that the meaning behind the language involved in contact CSE relationships might never truly be known, because of its hidden nature (Barnardo’s, 2011), and is likely to evolve over time (Kelly & Karsna, 2017). However, the pragmatic approach for analysing data using the best available method offers a unique opportunity to explore the status of a potentially ever-changing dynamic and is said to provide a rich and realistic view of human behaviour (Farjoun et al., 2015). With this in mind, a mixed methods design was chosen to holistically probe the inner world of contact CSE, from what was being said by the perpetrator and the victim, to the potential interpreted [by criminal justice practitioners] meaning and intent behind it. This decision is supported by Kelly and Cordeiro (2020) who suggest that the pragmatic use of mixed methods permits researchers to effectively switch between multiple realities and offers a framework to map, triangulate and sequence the research problem.

The pragmatic research philosophy connects the qualitative interpretivist position to gain meaningful insight into the communication patterns that exist between the victim and the perpetrator, whilst the inclusion of quantitative analysis provides a more objective estimate for the more hidden psychological states, quantifying the psychological, social, and behavioural phenomena. In addition, the pragmatic philosophy guided the inclusion of both inductive and deductive reasoning to build on what validated knowledge already exists, assisting in interpretation to draw new conclusions and insights from the data.

Pragmatism guided the research strategy throughout by helping to identify information rich data and analytical frameworks most likely to provide knowledge advances inter-disciplinary safeguarding practice and further practice-based research. Pragmatism is suggested to have the ability to continue to transform practice if the knowledge leads to action, followed by reflection, which forms new and improved ways of acting (Biesta, 2010; Morgan, 2014a). The thesis therefore provides a foundation for further empirical enquiry “carrying us from the world of practice to the world of theory and vice-versa” (Kelemen and Rumens, 2012, p.1). The overall purpose of this thesis is to embrace pragmatic inquiry by producing research that provides what Kelly & Cordeiro (2020) describe as actionable knowledge which surfaces complex themes, has practical relevance and solves problems. The research agenda therefore aims to bring together research methods to explore contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics with a view to advance current inter-disciplinary safeguarding practices moving beyond the scope of a single disciplined response. Consequently, with an applied pragmatic philosophy, the findings can potentially benefit safeguarding practitioners from law enforcement, social care, health, and education to better prevent and protect against future contact CSE crimes. The following section 5.3 now details how the research methods were determined in line with the research philosophy.

5.3 Determining Research Methods that Aligned with the Research Philosophy

Methodological questions focus on how the inquirer drives the study to find out whatever is believed to be known about the research problem (Heron & Reason, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1994). As previously discussed, Pragmatism lends itself to discovering

the most appropriate methods for establishing what is known about a research problem, and in this case a mixed methods approach was selected. Mixed methods studies involve “integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in a single study or program of inquiry” (Creswell et al., 2004, p.7), rather than a reliance on just one method. Scholars suggest that the underlying assumptions associated with pragmatism lead to it being the most suitable ‘philosophical partner’ for mixed methods research which has risen in profile since its methodological beginnings (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson & Gray, 2010; Mitchell, 2018). However, this is not without debate, as Johnson and Gray (2010) argue, there are challenges in establishing a corresponding philosophical paradigm for mixed methods research, due to the various contradictions in assumptions in differing methods. Despite this, Walker and Baxter (2019) argue that scholars are now less focused on the epistemological divides with a singular method (i.e., quantitative, or qualitative) and instead recognise the value of a mixed methods contribution.

There are numerous justifications provided for using mixed methods, which include, improving validity, adding breadth and depth to knowledge, corroborating findings, allowing inferences to be made, and enhancing theory development and practice (Johnson et al., 2007; Molina-Azorin, 2016; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2019). Moreover, it is argued that the combining of typically distinct qualitative and quantitative methods has potential to deliver a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, rather than favouring one method over another, exposing potential paradoxes and contradictions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie,

2009). Favouring the pluralism and flexibility offered by the pragmatic approach, the researcher can choose from a continuum of methods and therefore strengthen the study's conclusions (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2019). In terms of contact CSE research, the mixed methods approach permits this inquiry to address common limitations, such as being weak in providing comprehensive solutions to social problems (Ojebode et al., 2018) reaching parts that other monomethod studies might not reach (O'Cathain, Murphy & Nicholl, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009).

In mixed methods studies, it is recommended that the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative methods should be carefully considered rather than taking an "anything goes" approach (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2019). The planning of 'how' and 'when' the mixed methods are combined or sequenced is considered crucial for a successful study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This is known as the 'point of interface' or 'integration' and can take place during data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Guest, 2013; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2019). Creswell (2003) recommends outlining the process of bringing the quantitative and qualitative components together (see the point of integration sec 5.3.5 and figure 9 of this chapter below) to detail the value and significance of using each method, and how one informs the other.

The dominant method in this study is qualitative and is given more weight and priority throughout, from data collection to analysis, which is an approach found to be widespread practice in more recent mixed methods studies (Walker & Baxter, 2019). This was considered appropriate because of the qualitative capacity to illuminate the

more nuanced features of the CSE phenomena (Bailey-Rodriquez, 2021). However, quantitative components also exist to achieve a more objective and holistic perspective of the language in use. Despite the criticisms of quantitative methods being “superfluous” providing only a “veneer of scientific credibility” (Boren, 2018 p.132), or just a snapshot of the phenomenon (Rahman, 2016), this study uses the quantitative analysis (i.e., LIWC) as a basis for further exploration with multi-modal discourse analysis, which is a mixed method approach suggested to generate diverse interpretive perspectives whilst utilising efficient analytical strategies for managing the volume of language data and providing insight into a phenomenon that a human analyst might potentially overlook (Rodriguez & Storer, 2020). This again aligns with the pragmatic philosophy of attempting to understand multiple realities that exist in a CSE interpersonal dynamic, including that which might be unconscious language choices.

The mixed methods analytical framework that will be employed in this study involves a qualitative multi-modal discourse analysis followed by the quantitative LIWC (lexical/psycholinguistic software) analysis to highlight differences between the perpetrators and victims with natural speech general population benchmarks comparisons. The following sections (5.3.1 – 5.3.5) detail the rationale for selecting the qualitative and quantitative methods, which is considered an important marker of mixed methods research quality as described in the quality and trustworthy section 5.7 of this chapter.

5.3.1 Rationale for Selecting Quantitative Method: Linguistic Inquiry Word Count

This section starts with briefly providing background on the use of lexical psycholinguistic analysis using LIWC software before detailing the research decisions for its use in this research. Psycholinguistics is the study of language from a psychology and linguistic perspective and has risen in popularity since the 1950s, often involving lexicon-based analysis (Blumenthal, 2019). The LIWC computerised software is described as a “psycholinguistic lexicon created by psychologists with a focus on studying the various emotional, cognitive, and structural components present in individuals’ verbal and written speech samples” (dos Santos & Vieira, 2017 p. 189). The LIWC software supports researchers to investigate the psychological content and style of what is being said (Pennebaker et al., 2003). Since being developed in 1993, the in-built LIWC dictionaries, based on psychometric research, have evolved and been subject to frequent reliability, validity, and judges’ rating testing phases (Pennebaker et al., 2007; 2015). The LIWC processes the words in a dataset by matching each word to predetermined dictionary categories, which provide differences in frequencies for further statistical analysis (Pennebaker et al., 2015). Pennebaker et al.’s (2015) LIWC programme is used in this research to focus on psychological constructs, such as *affect* (emotion) terms and was less attentive to the structural components present in the perpetrator and victim’s written and verbal speech, such as punctuation categories.

To support the external validity of this chosen method (i.e., whether the findings of a study can be generalised to different populations (Cabitza et al., 2021) and how the research strategy was shaped, previous studies exploring changes in language and

psychological function using LIWC software were considered. Firstly, relevant for establishing whether there are potential demographic psycholinguistic differences within the CSE dynamic, trends in language-based differences have been found in relation to age, personality, gender and performance (Barrett, 2020; Meier et al., 2019; Schwartz et al., 2013).

Secondly, the finding that LIWC was useful in detecting an increased first-person singular pronoun use (e.g., I) for people living with depression, physical or emotional trauma, historical abuse and suicidal tendencies and ideation could be useful for exploring the likelihood of depression within a contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic (Leonard & Folette, 2002; Rude et al., 2004; Stirman & Pennebaker, 2001), particularly as personal pronoun frequencies have been found to increase with contact driven sexual offenders (Chiu et al., 2018; Seigfried-Spellar & Soldino, 2020). The LIWC software has also been used to examine and measure sexual word usage, grooming processes, social dominance and hierarchy, emotional expression or detachments, and deceptive word properties with psychopaths, in undercover sex offender operations and online grooming conversations finding differences between communication processes, again, potentially useful for contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics (Black et al., 2015; Broome et al., 2020; Chiu et al., 2018; Drouin et al., 2017; Hancock et al., 2013; Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019). Furthermore, Broome, Izura and Davies (2020) concluded from online grooming research that the LIWC was “a useful tool in measuring the psychological and emotional constructs of online grooming conversations” (p.12).

Thirdly, relevant for exploring retrospective CSE related emotions and trauma, changes in language associated with attitudes, ideologies and recovery have also been researched, particularly the increase in emotional words following traumatic events, such as shootings, significant deaths, and terrorist attacks (Cohn et al., 2004; Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003; Liehr et al., 2010; Smirnova et al., 2017; Stone & Pennebaker, 2002).

This wealth of research suggests that not only have the LIWC dimensions been extensively validated (Boyd et al., 2022), but has strong relevance to the current study and the potential for subsequent real world impact. Therefore, the research detailed in this rationale above and in Chapter 3 has supported the formulation of the three non-directional hypotheses that are restated below from Chapter 1:

Hypothesis 1: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences for victim and perpetrator demographics and general population natural speech benchmarks.

Hypothesis 2: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences between victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks.

Hypothesis 3: It is predicted that there will be psycholinguistic differences between retrospective accounts and both the victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks.

Despite the success of studies utilising the LIWC software as noted in the rationale above, there have been criticisms of using this software from a linguistic perspective (Franklin, 2015; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019), which have been considered

when selecting this chosen method. It is argued that the narrow “bag of words” LIWC approach is reductionist and more of a content analysis, therefore limiting understanding of language and all its functions, structures, and processes (Franklin, 2015; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019; Windsor et al., 2019). This thesis addressed the limitations by considering Franklin’s (2015) assumptions and following the “good practice” guidance for future LIWC users (p.9). The assumptions included: a) the frequency of a word can tell us something about a person or about the content or tone of a text; b) a computer program is ideal for carrying out this task and c) words have meaning in isolation (Franklin, 2015, p.9). The recommendations followed were to avoid using misleading dictionary scores which can be taken at face value and to combine “top-down, predefined, quantitative analytical approaches with more bottom-up, inductive, qualitative approaches” (Franklin, 2015, p.13). Thus, prioritising and analysing words in context. Details of how the recommendations have been applied to this study are outlined within the research context, paradigm, methodology and methods sections of this chapter. However, one recommendation that was considered beyond the scope of the thesis was to further prioritise context by creating a customised, domain-specific dictionary suited to the research area, which perhaps is a valuable future research idea for the creation of a customised exploitative language dictionary. Based on these assumptions, the premise for using LIWC in this research was to measure the more implicit psychological differences in word use, which the researcher may overlook but considered relevant when attempting to reveal the more hidden or subconscious dynamics involved between contact CSE perpetrators and their victims.

In addition, LIWC natural speech benchmarks listed in the LIWC 2015 Development and Psychometric Properties of LIWC2015 Manual (Pennebaker et al., 2015) were included to enable direct comparison between perpetrators, victims, and the natural speech from general populations. Natural speech samples (including analysis of 2,566,446 words) from the manual were said to include “diverse transcripts from multiple contexts, including people wearing audio recorders over days or weeks, strangers interacting in a waiting room, couples talking about problems” (p.9), which the researcher decided was most like the sample in this study, rather than the blogs, expressive writing, or novels samples. This decision was made to gather a sense of the degree to which word use varies across contexts, particularly to detect psycholinguistic differences, suggested to help estimate effects more accurately (Lindsay, 2019). The text sample comparisons available within the LIWC 2015 Development Manual allows for context comparisons to be made across general populations.

A discussion of why a multi-modal discourse analysis drawing on Pragmatics (a linguistic method rather than the chosen research philosophy in this thesis), Kinesics and Proxemics was chosen to examine results in relation to the CSE context will be discussed below.

5.3.2 Rationale for Selecting Qualitative Method: A Multi-Modal Discourse Analysis

This section starts with briefly providing background on the use of discourse analysis before detailing the research decisions for its use in this research. Discourse analysis is known as the investigation of language in social life, from communicative description to action (Shaw & Bailey, 2009). Discourse analysis has been described as

an inter-disciplinary field of inquiry (Barron & Schneider, 2014, p. 1), made popular with linguistic, psychology and sociology researchers attempting to understand social practices (Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015). Discourse, or as Brown & Yule (1983) define it as the *language in use* that is analysed, where researchers seek to establish if there are shared language patterns that can be methodologically coded. Discourse analysis is often understood as a trinity involving language, practice and context that is interwoven (Angermuller et al., 2014; Zienkowski, 2017). Therefore, as Hodges (2011) argued, we do not “formulate utterances in a vacuum” (p.109) and as such interactions are multi-layered and reflect the social world that they have come from.

Acknowledging limitations, critics of discourse analysis argue that there are frequent limitations with rigour linked to propensity for methodological and procedural variation (Tseliou, 2013). In addition, critics suggest there is a “questionable status of evidence” generated by this method, where meaning can differ and even “compete”, based on the researcher’s own interpretation (White, 2004, p.7). To address some of these limitations, this thesis followed a combination of practical steps for undertaking discourse analysis in three phases, adapted from previous literature (Boeije, 2002; Carbo, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shaw and Bailey, 2009) as below:

Phase 1:

- a) establish the problem area or topic
- b) undertake background reading
- c) seek social validation from discourse analysis specialists

- d) refine research questions
- e) choose and collect suitable data

Phase 2:

- a) become familiar with the data
- b) look for patterns within the data with a focus on differences or similarities
- c) undertake constant comparison through iteration, questioning the data and noting interesting features, variability, consistency, or contradictions

Phase 3:

- a) locate the pattern and its function in the context of use.
- b) undertake data validation throughout via referential adequacy, negative case analysis, peer briefings and reflexivity (to be discussed in more detail in section 5.7.5 of this chapter)
- c) write up, re-read and redraft analysis

This qualitative method of analysis relies on using more of an interpretative approach, than that of LIWC, but arguably provides an understanding of how contact CSE perpetrator victim relationships are created, negotiated, and maintained through verbal and non-verbal language, within this usually hidden context or social world

(Starks & Brown-Trinidad, 2007). Therefore, the use of a multi-modal discourse analysis in this research also addresses some of the limitations acknowledged in the rationale for selecting LIWC above, such as the need to prioritise context by combining quantitative and qualitative methods and not simply taking the LIWC scores on face value.

The combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods has been selected to triangulate the data, which as Qiu and Tay (2021) suggests “further allows the exploration of macro linguistic patterns without losing sight of the dynamic linguistic processes and qualitative differences at the micro level” (p. 21). Alternative qualitative methods, such as interviewing convicted contact CSE perpetrators to establish the meaning behind the language were discounted due to the ethical decisions made by Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) relating to the IICSA (2022) CSE inquiry as outlined in section 5.6 of this chapter. Furthermore, victim interviews were excluded due to the potential to unnecessarily retraumatise victims. The specific multi-modal discourse analysis involving Pragmatics, Kinesics and Proxemics is detailed in the following sections (5.3.3 – 5.3.4) below.

5.3.3 Pragmatics

As part of the discourse analysis, language coding taxonomies relating to Pragmatics (a branch of linguistics different to the chosen research philosophy), pioneered by Morris in 1938 (Al-Hindawi & Saffah, 2017), and placing human users of language at the centre of the analysis, were incorporated in this research. Pragmatics is defined as doing things with words (Levinson, 1983, p.5) and is the ‘extralinguistic

information' that arises from an utterance (Back, 2004). More broadly, Kasper (1988) reverts to Wittgenstein's philosophical notion, as "language play" and Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory as "language as action" to understand the pragmatic process (p.119). It is such language analysis of "play" or "action" that can be interpreted to find "motive, circumstances of transmission, or any other factor relevant to understanding the sentence on the basis of its context of utterance", to explore the potential sexual intent behind the sentence (Katz, 1980, p14) in the contact CSE dynamic. The advantage of using pragmatics in this study can be best explained by Bryant (2005) positing that a speaker might know how to use their language "appropriately and strategically" (p.191) and that speakers have intentions for their words when relating to or for influencing others (Herring, 2004).

Micropragmatics is the analysis of the speech event in a localised speech situation, which in this case is a unique illegal interpersonal CSE dynamic (Al-Hindawi & Saffah, 2017; Cohen, 2019). Cohen (2019) summaries a localised speech situation as "the social distance between the respondent and the other interlocutor(s), their relative power, and the degree of imposition of any speech acts being assessed" (p.3). Whereas macropragmatics is said to involve speech units in combination with context, particularly the more global or external factors, such as the participants "language proficiency, ethnicity, age, socio-economic background, and gender", which is also considered within this thesis (Cohen, 2019, p.3). Beyond this, Mannheim and Tedlock (1995) argue that language or discourse is interconnected with or heavily influenced by prior discourse in different contexts. Thus, both the micro and macro pragmatic levels

have been analysed to reveal the potential language games at play within a CSE victim-perpetrator context.

Building on the previously validated and transferrable online grooming research and coding taxonomies based on Pragmatics and built from Relational Work Theory (Politeness/Impoliteness), Speech Act Theory and Appraisal Theory (Chiang, 2019; Gamez-Guadix et al. 2018; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016), a deductive approach was adopted. Therefore, a Pragmatics discourse analysis was used to explore language in its context of use within the datasets. However, alongside the deductive coding and analysis of the data, an alternative inductive approach was considered important to capture any emergent unique observable patterns that were not pre-determined and to gain a more complete understanding of the contact CSE dynamic to generate further theory (Blackstone, 2012; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2019). The multi-modal approach to the discourse analysis also included Kinesics and Proxemics, which are described in the section below.

5.3.4 Kinesics and Proxemics

Alongside discursive analysis of how verbal language is used within interactions, non-verbal communicative practices, or non-vocal behaviour, have also been explored in discourse analysis research, described as Kinesics and Proxemics (Bunning et al., 2013; Wieselmann et al., 2021). The study of Kinesics (i.e., gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and bodily movements) and Proxemics (i.e., physical/intimate space or distance between individuals) are said to provide further contextualization and intended meaning to the verbal language in use (Wieselmann et al., 2021). Bolinger (1975)

argued that language cannot be compartmentalised to solely verbal speech activity but is informed by non-verbal activity too.

Despite spoken language research often being prioritised over other methods of communication (Wieselmann et al., 2021), it is also recognised that non-verbal communication has the potential to be considered more powerful than verbal methods of communication (Bambaeroo & Shokrpour, 2017). Furthermore, as Norris et al. (2006) proposes, attending only to spoken language can limit understanding and distort the complexity of interactions. Therefore, it could perhaps be remiss to not investigate more broadly the non-verbal actions, and the layers of power they might have, in contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics. This is particularly so if expecting that such intimate interpersonal interactions might lead to increased feeling of arousal, threat or of intrusion, as found in a study by Kroczek et al. (2020). As such, analysis of non-verbal communication might provide insight for how those in fear or in a state of arousal might react. It was for the above reasons that the analysis of non-verbal communication was therefore deemed appropriate for this study. Written descriptions of any available non-verbal communication documented from the police transcripts was considered best suited to telling the story from the dataset (Wieselmann et al., 2021) for contact CSE interactions, especially when observation and use of a language transcription system was not possible. The procedure for collecting such non-verbal data and organising it is detailed in section 5.4.5.2 below, however the next section (5.3.5.) details the point of integration

5.3.5 Point of Integration

As Plano Clark (2019) states, the prior consideration of the point of integration for the quantitative and qualitative methods ensures that methods have “the potential to be in dialogue with each other...and have something to say to each other about the topic(s) being examined” (p.109). This means that the qualitative informs the quantitative results and vice versa. Each phase of the multi-modal discourse and computer aided LIWC software analysis permitted the different social and psychological states, sentiment, and communicative responses to be triangulated at each point of integration. Figure 9 below shows the point of integration and triangulation for each stage of the research.

Figure 9*Mixed Methods Point of Integration and Triangulation*

Point of Integration						
Pre analysis	Phase 1 analysis	Phase 2 analysis	Phase 3 analysis	Phase 4 analysis	Phase 5 analysis	Post analysis
QUAL Data collection from police transcripts	QUANT LIWC analysis on <i>categories of interest</i>	QUAL Multi-modal discourse analysis on pre and during contact stages	QUANT LIWC on Phase 2 discourse analysis themes	QUANT LIWC on victim and perpetrator retrospective accounts	QUAL Multi-modal discourse analysis	QUANT + QUAL Interpretation of merged results and synthesis of emergent themes
Methodological Triangulation: Qual + Quant + (Qual + Quant) + Quant + Qual Sample Triangulation: Perpetrator + Victims Communication Mode Triangulation: Verbal + Non-verbal						

The above sections (5.3) provide thick descriptions of the rationale for the chosen research philosophy, mixed methods approach, and selection of LIWC and a multi-modal discourse analysis. The following section (5.4) will outline the research design including further detailed descriptions on methods of data collection, analysis, and rigour.

5.4 Selecting and Defining the Research Design

5.4.1 Data Source

This thesis explored the language held within police case files provided by a UK police force (anonymised for the purpose of this thesis) of *contact* CSE investigations, which had been finalised at court. The county where the UK location of the force was pertinent to the wider CSE context, owing to its diversity in demographics, levels of employment, crime rates, transience, and urban/rural areas. Initially, the proposed research was successfully pitched to the local CSE safeguarding and regional police meetings with the aim of gaining access to the ordinarily restricted police case files. The local safeguarding members were keen to support the research intentions for improving the current understanding of CSE perpetration and informing practice.

5.4.2 Sample

The sample size was reliant on the suitability of available police data of convicted perpetrators matching the specific inclusion criteria outlined below. As the focus of this thesis was to reveal meaningful insights and understanding, judgements of quality were based on trustworthiness, rather than generalising from sample to population, as supported by Johnson et al. (2020). Purposive sampling was undertaken to identify suitable case files, which is a technique considered optimum for answering the research question by the “intentional selection of research participants” (Johnson et al. 2020, p141). Furthermore, purposive sampling is widely used in research for the identification and selection of information rich cases utilising minimal resources in the

most effective manner (Etikan et al.,2016). That said, limitations associated with purposive sampling are addressed in the discussion of the thesis in Chapter 7.

Due to the potential for accessing restricted data outside of the parameters of the proposed research and to overcome the recognised challenges with police CSE flagging, the UK police force stipulated that the sampling be conducted by nominated police staff from the public protection unit using the police intelligence Information Technology (IT) system. The sampling considered the following eligibility criteria: the perpetrator will, a) be convicted to ensure that the perpetrator has been proven guilty of the crime(s); b) be above 18 years of age; c) have committed the offence within the last 10 years; d) be the recipient of a police or court order; e) have committed a crime matching the DfE (2017) CSE definition; and f) be a contact offender. This study excluded the perpetrators solely convicted of internet CSE offences due to acknowledgements from researchers highlighting the saturation of online CSE research (DeMarco et al., 2016). However, conversations that occurred via text messages and social media accounts were reviewed in addition to the transcripts if the offender made physical contact with the victim.

5.4.3 Participants

For the current chapter, 41 police case files were sampled for analysis, involving 50 perpetrators (37 lone offenders and 4 groups) and 80 victims. All but two of the 50 offenders were male (males $n = 48$, female $n = 2$), aged between 16 and 55, but predominantly under 30, typically White British, who had committed an offence against a child under 18 and flagged as *contact* child sexual exploitation on the police

intelligence IT system. All but four of the 80 victims were female (females $n = 76$, males $n = 4$), aged between 10 and 18, but predominantly between 14-16 years of age, and typically White British.

5.4.4 Data

The language data was contained within the 50 electronic police case files provided by the UK police force via the police intelligence IT system. The data itself was the 16,000 word corpus of language (a technical term commonly used in linguistics to describe the body of real life text or language) which was isolated and extracted from the following evidential police documentation:

- Offence summaries (including primary offence and modus operandi)
- Official suspect, witness, and victim interview transcripts (i.e., witness statements (MG11), ABE or suspect (MG15) interview transcripts)
- Official written Record of Taped Interview (ROTI)
- Official case summaries (MG5)
- Specific evidential exhibits (exhibits were selected if they contained perpetrator victim communicative interactions i.e., WhatsApp messages or social media messages).

The preparation and building of the language data is explained in more detail in section 5.4.5 below. The use of suspect and witness transcripts was considered effective to ensure a standardised approach to aid comparison because of the formalised nature of case file building for CPS prosecutions. Opportunities to access visually recorded

interviews, such as ABE interviews were preferred to MG5 case and interview summaries as it was less likely to be a diluted account. Metadata was collected to provide contextual information about the language datasets and included demographics, flagging, types of sexual offences committed, modus operandi and previous convictions. The researcher considered the best available data options for the access that had been granted, although it is acknowledged that collecting language data from police transcripts will have some limitations which will be discussed in the discussion in Chapter 7.

5.4.5 Data Collection and Preparation

5.4.5.1 Initial Evaluation and Preparation of the Quality of Data.

Although the data sample had already been determined by the local police force public protection unit in collaboration with the researcher by following the CSE eligibility criteria outlined in the sample section above, the researcher quality assured the data to ensure that each CSE case met with the criteria. Firstly, the offence summaries were reviewed, and cross referenced with perpetrator and victim ages. Repeat cases that did not match the criteria were removed at this stage. Cases that were incorrectly assigned to CSE flagging rather than CSA were removed, such as offences that related to familial abuse. This initial evaluation and preparation of the quality of data ensured that the language data would be from both the contact CSE perpetrator and victim.

5.4.5.2 Building the Corpus of Language

Once the quality of the data had been assessed, the language data could be extracted to build the corpus and entered onto an Excel spreadsheet. For research question 1 (as detailed in section 5.1.), this included first reading the offence summaries and transcripts from the police case files and isolating the language which was either obvious from the use of speech marks (i.e., “ “) or how the investigating officer had described it as direct language from the victim or perpetrator (i.e., he then said) or a description of the non-verbal behaviours (i.e., he touched my leg). Language was also extracted from evidential exhibits, such as WhatsApp messaging if the perpetrator and victim had broken away from their face-to-face interaction and communicated via phone or social media.

The researcher had to ensure that no language had been missed from the transcripts or online messages, and that it followed the order in which it had been said, therefore each extraction was considered line by line. At the same time, the researcher would also extract language that would be considered non-verbal communication or non-vocal behaviour and again following the order in which it was written in the transcripts. This might include descriptions in the transcripts, such as “he moved closer to me” or “he moved my hand closer to his penis”. The language was then transferred to the NVIVO qualitative data analysis software to be coded and analysed following the previously validated linguistic framework detailed in the data analysis section below.

Similar to the approach taken for research question 1, the researcher read the interviews from the police case files before isolating the victim or perpetrator language as a similar marker of quality found in other research (i.e., Campbell et al., 2021), in

preparation to answer RQ2. The researcher extracted language that was considered to be a rationalisation of the offence, which included the reasoning that justifies or legitimises the behaviour, adapted from the definitions by Lambert et al. (2023) and Kazemian et al. (2019). These justifications were initially collected and stored on an Excel spreadsheet under admit or deny headings for both the victim and perpetrator until they could be transferred and coded using NVIVO. The previously validated rationalisation constructs used for the coding framework are detailed in the data analysis section below.

5.4.5.3 Collection of Meta-data

The researcher systematically reviewed the documents contained within each electronic police case file and extracted the relevant meta-data. The relevant meta-data included collecting demographics, such as age, ethnicity, marital status, and occupation, from the case files, which was subsequently grouped anonymously on an Excel spreadsheet to remove all identifiable information that might connect an individual to the case. Similarly, data was collected that related to the specific CSE offending, such as flagging, location, length of exploitation, primary offence, modus operandi, and number of perpetrators/victims involved in each case. Data that was also considered significant and extracted via intuitive selection if it provided further context to cases, such as, how the perpetrator was known to the victim, who reported to the police, what platform any social media interaction took place on, and any previous or subsequent convictions linked to perpetrators or victims. All data was entered on an Excel spreadsheet in preparation for qualitative and quantitative analysis. The following section (5.4.5.4) details how the language data was prepared for the LIWC analysis.

5.4.5.4 Preparation for LIWC

After the corpus of language had been isolated and extracted from police case files, the data needed to be prepared for LIWC analysis. A manual check was undertaken to ensure that the text was standardised in accordance with the LIWC2015 manual to fit the language dimensions of the software. This is considered standard research practice (Broome et al., 2020) for language that had been extracted, such as from WhatsApp (or other social media messages), where much of the language had been abbreviated to ‘text speak’, such as “WUU2” instead of “what are you up to”. Once the data had been prepared, it was categorised and grouped for LIWC analysis against the general population LIWC benchmark comparisons (as detailed in categories 1 – 13 in table 3 below). Categories 1-6 in Table 3 were grouped to establish any demographic psycholinguistic features that might exist between perpetrators and victims in comparison with natural speech benchmarks (i.e., age, gender and ethnicity). Once the discourse analysis was completed, categories 7 – 13 in Table 3 were grouped to explore any psycholinguistic patterns that might exist between the perpetrators and victims’ communication processes (pre and during and retrospective accounts) with natural speech benchmarks. These groups were established from the research questions and hypothesis as detailed in sec 5.1.2 and 5.3.1 of this chapter.

Table 3*Categories of Interest*

Categories of Interest	Variables within categories and LIWC benchmarks
1. Perpetrator age	20yrs and under, 21-29yrs, 30+yrs and natural speech benchmarks
2. Perpetrator gender	Male, female and natural speech benchmarks
3. Perpetrator ethnicity	Asian Pakistani, Black African, Traveller, White British, White Northern European and natural speech benchmarks
4. Perpetrator (pre and during)	Perpetrator (pre and during) and natural speech benchmarks
5. Victim age	Under 10yrs, 11-13yrs, 14-16yrs, 17-18yrs and natural speech benchmarks
6. Victim gender	Male, female and natural speech benchmarks
7. Victim (pre and during)	Victim (pre and during) and natural speech benchmarks
8. Perpetrator (pre and during) 5 processes	Access and approach, risk assessment and compliance testing, rapport building and trust development, sexual gratification, coercive control and natural speech benchmarks
9. Victims' response (pre and during) 3 processes	Desired, mixed, undesired and natural speech benchmarks
10. Perpetrator (retrospective)	Perpetrator (retrospective) and natural speech benchmarks
11. Victim (retrospective)	Victim (retrospective) and natural speech benchmarks
12. Perpetrator (pre and during versus retrospective)	Perpetrator (pre and during versus retrospective)
13. Victim (pre and during versus retrospective)	Victim (pre and during versus retrospective)

5.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis was split into the distinct research questions that contribute to the understanding of the victim-perpetrator dynamic and is summarised in Table 4 below. The first research question explores the victim-perpetrator

interpersonal dynamics via interactions (pre and during the sexual contact) described in the data between participant P (perpetrator) and V (victim). This study draws interpretation from the perpetrator or victims' representations of events (i.e., language extracted from the police transcript) or first-hand instances within chat logs (i.e., WhatsApp messages). The second research question explores the retrospective justifications provided for victim-perpetrator relationships via offender or victims accounts within a police interview setting.

Table 4

Outline of Research Focus for the Thesis

RQ	Focus	Data	Method	Analytical procedure	Phase
1	Interpersonal communication patterns (pre and during sexual contact)	Victim and perpetrator	Quantitative and qualitative	LIWC and discourse analysis	1.LIWC 2.Discourse analysis 3. LIWC
2	Perpetrator and victims' retrospective justifications of relationships	Victim or perpetrator	Quantitative and qualitative	LIWC and discourse analysis	4. LIWC 5. Discourse analysis

As the table shows, the research questions 1 and 2 were analysed in 5 phases using LIWC and discourse analysis, which will be explained below under the quantitative (i.e., LIWC) and qualitative (i.e., discourse analysis) headings to avoid repetition but will be differentiated throughout by research question 1 and 2 (i.e., RQ1 and RQ2).

5.5.1 Quantitative

The quantitative analysis involved using the latest Pennebaker et al.'s (2015) version of LIWC software. For research question 1 (see section 5.1), the dataset was grouped into the first nine of the 13 aforementioned *categories of interest* (e.g., victim/perpetrator demographics and pre and during language) and ran through the LIWC2015 software, selecting the LIWC language category variables ($N = 7$) to compare with as presented in Table 5 below. As stated in the rationale in section 5.3.1, the LIWC language category variables were selected because of the relevance to the contact CSE language found in the police case files used in previous validated online grooming research which relate to the thesis hypotheses, such as: Clout (Drouin et al., 2017; Personal Pronouns (Chiu et al., 2018; Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019); Negative Emotion Words (Chiu et al., 2018; Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019); Positive Emotion Words (Chiu et al., 2018; Seigfried-Spellar et al., 2019); Sexual (Drouin et al., 2017; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019); Reward (Ward, 2023); and Risk (Ward, 2023).

For RQ 2, the dataset was grouped by the victims' and perpetrators' collective retrospective accounts as the *categories of interest* (10 – 13) and followed the same seven LIWC language category variables as RQ 1 (as detailed in Table 5 below).

Table 5*The Seven LIWC Language Category Variables Selected*

LIWC Language Category Variables
Clout
Personal pronoun
Positive emotion
Negative emotion
Sexual
Reward
Risk

The 13 *categories of interest* were compared with natural speech benchmarks available within the LIWC 2015 Development Manual for the same seven language category variables detailed in Table 5 above. The natural speech benchmarks were included for all LIWC outputs to offer a general population comparison.

5.5.1.1 Interpretation of LIWC Scores and Inferential Statistics for Difference

The LIWC summary scores were interpreted using the Development and Psychometric Properties of LIWC2015 Manual (Pennebaker et al., 2015), which provides guidance on the scale ranges used and what each of the seven variables mean. Except for the summary variable clout, all seven LIWC2015 variable outputs are expressed as percentage of total words (Pennebaker et al., 2015). The meanings which aided interpretation are detailed using Pennebaker et al.'s (2015) descriptions in the LIWC2015 Manual, which can be found in Appendix B, however, Table 6 below provides a summary of clout. The LIWC output scores for the *categories of interest*

were then benchmarked against the LIWC natural speech general population scores as described above in section 5.5.1.

To further explore the significance of the CSE population LIWC outputs, comparisons were made with LIWC general norm population outputs, by gathering inferential statistics from independent sample t-tests, using the statistical analysis software (IBM SPSS, version 28 for Windows). The t-test was chosen for drawing comparisons between two sample means that are independent of each other (Kim, 2015). Tests for normality were conducted prior to running t-tests using the Shapiro–Wilk test to ensure that the data was normally distributed and address basic statistical assumptions (Kim, 2015). Other statistical tests were dismissed on the basis that they were not suitable for answering the research questions, such as an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test which would only be useful if analysing multiple groups, which was not required beyond the LIWC general population benchmark (Kim, 2014).

Table 6

Pennebaker et al. 's (2015) Description of the LIWC Summary Variable Clout

LIWC variables	Pennebaker et al. (2015) descriptions
Clout	A high number suggests that the author is speaking from the perspective of high expertise and is confident; low Clout numbers suggest a more tentative, humble, even anxious style.

Following the qualitative section above, the below section details the qualitative process for data analysis, using a hybrid of inductive and deductive coding.

5.5.2 Qualitative

As Neale (2021) recognises, data analysis is often recursive and non-linear. Therefore, the researcher embraced a more iterative and pragmatic process of coding and analysing the data to make direct links between the current thesis findings and more established sexual offending knowledge as detailed in Chapter 3. The researcher began by exploring emerging themes from the current data and then mapped directly onto a coding framework (based on the established sexual offending knowledge) to frame the analysis. However, if dominant themes were found in the open coding phase, new categories could be formed, and the original coding framework be adapted to capture knowledge that might be unique to the current research on contact CSE. The below sections (5.5.2.1 – 5.5.2.2) detail how this iterative process was achieved.

5.5.2.1 Inductive Open Coding Phase

Prior to the deductive coding, ‘line by line’ inductive open coding was conducted on the extracted perpetrator and victim language data whilst using the specialist qualitative software package NVIVO from the police transcripts for RQ1 and RQ2, to organise the text into discrete parts, explore any emerging concepts and build categories for further analysis (Williams & Moser, 2019). Therefore, there was no set coding framework to follow but the codes were intuitively and conceptually labelled by the researcher, based on the data itself. Following the process described in Boon’s (2015) research, each segment of the text was labelled with a name that best described its

communicative purpose (see summary example of perpetrator open coding NVIVO labels and frequency of references in Appendix C).

However, at this point, the researcher acknowledges the unlikelihood of being able to fully disassociate from all prior assumptions and thinking, particularly when reviewing the terms that could be perceived similar to those referred to in literature review, such as, Black et al.'s (2015) *flattery*, Gamez-Gaudix et al.'s (2018) *persuasion*, Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2016) *deceptive trust development* (e.g., small talk) and Chiang's (2019) *moves* (e.g. meeting planning). Although, by accepting this potential bias is in line with a pragmatic approach to the research, this bias is addressed in more detail in the limitations section of Chapter 7 and researcher reflexivity in Chapter 5.

Non-verbal language was also recorded at this stage if the descriptions within the transcripts matched what the researcher intuitively considered sending a message without words (i.e., via gestures, touch, proxemics). Analytical notes, commonly referred to as memo writing, were used throughout, which are said to be “the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83), which became the “result of open coding” (Flick, 2009, p.310). An example of the open coding process for the perpetrator and victim (verbal and non-verbal language) is provided below, where the excerpts were labelled, and the memo reveals the interpreted meaning behind the language:

Perpetrator Verbal Open Coding Label: Assent

“Am I allowed to touch your boobs?”

“I know you wanna try sucking so I’m gonna let you”

“So do you want me to cum on your face?”

Memo: The perpetrator uses the phrases “am I allowed” “I’m going to let you” and “do you want me to” whilst referring to a sexual act. This appears to reframe the request for sexual activity by placing some ownership on the victim to assent to the sexual act. However, legal consent is not possible due to illegal nature of the relationship, but the perpetrator may still be defining consent in a non-legal way.

Perpetrator Non-Verbal Open Coding Label: Violent sexual touch

“He forced my head to his penis”

Memo: The perpetrator appears to use violent sexual touch to force the victim to perform a sexual act and gain sexual gratification

Victim Verbal Open Coding Label: Flattery

“You are so hot”

“You are so funny”

Memo: The victim appears to pay compliments to the perpetrator or let them know what they think of their appearance/personality.

Victim Non-Verbal Open Coding Label: Undesired response

“I moved away from him and pretended to be asleep”

Memo: The victim appears to attempt to show the perpetrator non-verbally that they are not interested in performing a sexual act relying on proxemics to communicate this to the perpetrator.

Once open coding was completed, the researcher reflected on the codes and analytical memos to determine if further connectivity was possible and create higher order concepts or even to collapse into less categories and reduce overlap, thus making interpretation simpler. This step was conducted iteratively by summarising thoughts and ideas on a word document and either mapped onto the deductive coding framework or to create unique contact CSE categories. This included introducing a new coercive control process based on Stark’s (2007) theory and additional verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. The reflexive summary document details the research decision in the methodological log in Appendix F.

5.5.2.2 Deductive Coding Phase

Following the initial open coding phase, the researcher followed a deductive coding approach by drawing on an adapted coding framework to further aid accurate interpretation (Kiger & Varpio, 2020), based on previously validated research headings and transferrable discourse-based online grooming models (see Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016;). The adapted coding headings for addressing RQ1

included a) access and approach, b) rapport building and trust development, c) sexual gratification, d) risk assessment and compliance testing, and e) coercive control.

Appendix D summarises the full adapted deductive coding framework, however, one out of the five coding headings are provided below in Table 7 as an example.

Table 7

Adapted Coding Framework for RQ1

Process	Verbal Communicative Strategy or move	Examples from the extracted language held in case files	Examples of Non-verbal Communicative Strategy or move
Risk assessment & compliance testing	Reverse psychology role reversal assessing risk gaining assent	“You could be catfishing me and setting me up to be arrested.” “I can't hold your hand because people are around.” “It's a secret between you and me.”	Dropped victim's hand in public Walked away when police

In addition, RQ 1 included adopting the victim rhetorical move categories developed by Chiang & Grant (2019) to aid coding and interpretation of victim language. The three categories (i.e., desired, mixed, and undesired) are summarised in full in Appendix D but one example is provided below in Table 8 with a description of each category. These three categories were selected on the basis that the previously

validated research was linguistically focused and involved analysing victim responses, albeit not necessarily as the sole focus of the identity performance research.

Table 8

Adapted Victim Coding Framework

Response	Description	Verbal communication example	Non-verbal Communication example
Desired	Conveying acceptance, development, or approval of topics, requests or demands, threat compliance, returning compliments/sexual questions, sending material, friendly banter	<p>"I know it's stupid because I'm only 13 but I really love you", "You're my everything. I never want to lose you."</p> <p>"I like you too, some lads my age are just stupid and mess about"</p>	Hugs, kisses, touches without being asked

For RQ 2, post-offence perpetrator justifications from the police transcripts were analysed, following a coding framework (see Appendix C), based on well-established constructs from sex offender offence supporting cognitive distortions, reasoning, and implicit theories research (such as, Barbaree, 1991 and Ward & Keenan, 1999 as detailed below). This was considered useful to aid more accurate interpretation of victim and perpetrator's cognitive processing of the offence, on the basis that the prior research themes were previously corroborated with numerous sex offender focused research

(including studies that were cross cultural and with differing offender typologies) and in line with the preliminary open coding stage. The well established constructs have been merged from Barbaree's (1991) *denial of facts*; Da Silva et al.'s (2018) *influence of others and started as something else*; Happel and Auffrey's (1995) *denial of planning or intent*; Kettleborough and Merdian's (2017) *non-sexual engagement: means for emotion regulation*; Paquette and Cortoni's (2020) *child as partner*; Ward and Keenan's (1999) *implicit theories – nature of harm, uncontrollability, dangerous world, entitlement, children as sexual beings*). However, only one piece of research was linguistically focused (see Auburn & Lea, 2003 *offender shifting blame and responsibility*), arguably due to a research gap using such methodology to focus on cognitive distortions. Any adaptations to the constructs were made as a result of the open coding phase due to emergent themes (see child as emotional support). The justification themes were also differentiated by admittance or denial headings for lone and group perpetrators to show the direction of the justifications. All constructs are summarised in Appendix D; however, one example is provided in Table 9 below.

Table 9*Adapted Coding Framework for Perpetrator Retrospective Justification Coding**Constructs*

Coding construct	Explanation	Example
Dangerous world Ward & Keenan (1999)	The world is a threatening place and can harm the perpetrator. A response is to protect self, fight back or punish. Another response is to trust children more than adults because they are more reliable.	Victim grievance: “she is just jealous and getting back at her ex” Childhood adversity: “My mum just let me run wild and I was sexually abused when I was 5”

Victim coding followed the same three validated categories used for RQ1 (i.e., desired, mixed, and undesired) but different examples are provided for each construct based on an open coding stage as shown in full in Appendix D. However, one out of the three categories are provided as an example in table 10 below.

Table 10*Victim Retrospective Justification Coding Constructs Table*

Coding Construct	Description	Examples
Mixed	Related to their mixed feelings (confusion) Pressure (i.e., adverse response from ‘boyfriend’) Unwanted labels (i.e., unwanted victim or rape label) Perceived potential danger (i.e., physical imbalance, intoxication, environment)	Emotional confusion: “I was excited and worried at the same time” Rape label: “I’m not saying I was raped but he definitely put me under pressure” Pressure: “he got me to do it, but I don’t know how” Perceived potential danger: “I felt I wasn’t strong enough to get him off”

The quantitative and qualitative sections have broken down the coding phases for each research question. The following section 5.5.3 details the systems used to present the data.

5.5.3 System for Presenting Analysed Data in the Thesis

Only the most meaningful data (such as the most significant or observed patterns) are presented in both text and visual formats in the findings section of the thesis in Chapter 6, including written commentary, tabulation, and other visual displays. This presenting of meaningful data is suggested to “enhance the reading and comprehension of the article” (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013, p.377). However, all data will be presented in full in the appendices. Descriptive statistics of the demographic variables of this data set were included to allow simple interpretation of the data and provide further evidence towards understanding the CSE perpetrator and victim profiles. The significant LIWC data categories are presented in table format to provide comparisons between the coded perpetrator and victim *categories of interest*.

The use of verbatim words is presented as many consider verbatim words to be a rich data source and important to further develop the readers understanding (Corden & Sainbury, 2006), relevant in this thesis where it is exploring victim perpetrator dynamics. A linear narrative of the researcher’s analysis and interpretations will be provided alongside the verbatim words which will be presented in text. Names and additional labels, such as age or gender will not be attributed to the individuals from this data set to avoid any possible identification, particularly to protect victims and the

offender. Instead, transcripts will be identified by either using the letters P for perpetrator or V for victim, followed by a number. The following section 5.6 will detail the gatekeeping processes involved with the research, specifically the ethical considerations, data management and safeguarding.

5.6 Gatekeeping: Ethical Considerations, Data Management and Safeguarding

Ethical approval was granted from the researcher's academic institution at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) Science Ethics Review Panel on 6th February 2020 (unique reference number: SCIENCE 0021). Following this, data was collected from the UK police force case files and computerised intelligence systems rather than directly from human participants. As such, it necessitated consent from the Data Controller to access the data, which in this case was approved by the UK police force Chief Constable. A General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR] (2018) compliant Controller – Controller Data Agreement and memorandum of understanding was established between the UCLAN legal team and the UK police force (see Appendix E).

Once the researcher's police vetting was finalised, access was granted to the ordinarily confidential information stored on police systems and the data was cleansed of any direct or indirect identifiable information of individual participants, such as names, date of birth, addresses, dates, specific locations and replaced with pseudonyms to protect anonymity. The researcher further cleansed the data before reporting on the findings, to ensure that identifiable information has not been revealed in this thesis. Anonymity was afforded to both perpetrators and the victims to avoid potential for

further harm, regardless of whether the details of the case or the perpetrator's identity had been reported in the media.

It is worth noting at this stage that CSE research would be considered sensitive in nature as it is “secretive, stigmatised or deviant human activity and behaviour involving vulnerable research subjects” (Li, 2008, p.102). The sensitive nature of the research, particularly reviewing potentially distressing CSE cases involving serious sexual and physical violence, required consideration for the safeguarding of the researcher (Eneman, 2022). Despite being familiar with such sensitive cases, having a background working in safeguarding, criminal justice and in the CSE field, the doctoral supervisory team were asked to play a key role by the UCLAN's science ethics committee to form a supportive network for the researcher.

5.7 Quality and Trustworthiness

There is debate amongst scholars on how quality is established in mixed methods research, evident in the plurality of views, the heterogeneity of quality terminology, lack of consensus on quality criteria, or the need for such criteria to even exist (Fabregues & Molina-Azorin, 2017). Consequently, the following section outlines the quality considerations for the transparency of this thesis.

Consistent with the pragmatic philosophy outlined in Chapter 5 and the acknowledgement of multiple realities this thesis adopted a similar approach to quality decisions. This involved accepting the unique context of the research, with the overall aim of providing useful insight, whilst accounting for the diverse nature of mixed methods research and thus remaining flexible to the differing markers of quality. With

this in mind, the researcher applied Roller and Lavrakas's (2015) Total Quality Framework (TQF) to the mixed methods design, (an approach although ordinarily qualitative was supported by lead Author, Roller in 2017), whilst also drawing upon the specific mixed methods quality criterion outlined by Fàbregues et al. (2019) for the planning stages of research. The latter being validated by the successful application of the criteria to advance the work of mixed methods quality research by Hirose and Creswell (2023). Section 5.7.1. below on credibility details explores the completeness and accuracy of the data.

5.7.1. Credibility

During the data collection phase, great care was given to ensuring completeness and accuracy of the data, by firstly quality checking cases to establish if the police force's judgements for case selection were aligned with the CSE specific inclusion criteria in the initial purposive sampling stage with the final included sample being fit for purpose (see section 5.4.2). Secondly, the iterative process of scoping the available language data by reading, selecting, and re-reading the language from police case files ensured that all viable language data was extracted from the transcripts for completeness (i.e., constant comparison (Boeije. 2002)). Finally, for ensuring quality associated with the deductive qualitative data gathering phase, the research constructs were clearly predefined and based on previously validated research models which would subsequently act as a coding guide and aide construct validity (see Appendix D for full coding frameworks). Section 5.7.2 on analysability below details the completeness, verification and intended accuracy of the research analysis and interpretations.

5.7.2 *Analysability*

During the qualitative coding phase (see sections 5.5.2.1 – 5.5.2.2), any possible researcher effect was potentially mitigated by seeking specialist linguistic coding consensus and checking consistency throughout with researchers from an interdisciplinary background over the period of doctoral study to maximise the accuracy of the analysis (i.e., social and face validity). Furthermore, as the analysis of language was an unfamiliar area for the researcher, it was considered fundamental to seek advice from people with expertise to avoid potentially superfluous knowledge claims that could have ramifications for the safeguarding practices in future contact CSE cases.

Alternative options that were rejected would involve including inter-rater reliability measures via statistical coefficients, which is a process where researchers analyse data independently to find a consensus or a consistency in coding, thus attempting to ensure rigor and reliability (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). However, such a statistical measure is said to support underlying quantitative assumptions for discrete items (Roller & Lavrakas 2015), rather than to qualitatively explore more nuanced patterns of the language via consensus building using linguistic experts and the supervisory team. Despite the appeal of inter-rater reliability, Smith and McGannon (2018) argues that this process is ineffective and promotes the use of critical friends instead. With critical friends, agreement is not priority, nor does it equal “truth”, but rather “acknowledges that other and/or additional plausible interpretations of the data can exist that are also defensible but are not being utilised in a particular study or at that

time (Smith & McGannon, 2018, p.14). This coheres with the pragmatic philosophy, which as detailed in section 5.2 in this chapter, accepts multiple realities.

To uphold the trustworthiness of research interpretations, peer debriefings were performed to scrutinise the data with the aforementioned linguistic specialists to maintain consistency and encourage the most comprehensive approach to interpreting the data. For further social validity, field experts or scholars from a variety of disciplines were regularly drawn upon during the various international and inter-disciplinary (i.e., safeguarding, law enforcement and linguistic) workshops, symposiums and conferences attended. This involved gathering informal feedback or the exchange of critical dialogue on the preliminary findings, considering alternative interpretations to form part of the reflexive process (Smith & McGannon, 2018). This auditable research approach is suggested to be “invaluable” for reviewing and judging the “quality of data collection as well as the soundness of the researcher’s interpretations during the analysis phase” (Roller, 2020, p.26).

Additional verification strategies were used during the analysis phase, whereby the use of two methods (LIWC and discourse analysis), two sample populations (victim and perpetrator) and the use of data from different stages of the CSE offence (pre, during and post offence) were compared, looking for any outliers or to confirm that inferences were consistent across qualitative and quantitative findings, otherwise known as triangulation. Roller (2020) states that “the triangulation concept is just one way that researchers can add rigor to their research designs and manage the potential “ghosts” of groundless assumptions and misguided interpretations” (p.28). Although the use of

triangulation in mixed methods research is not universally accepted (Flick, 2018; Netanda, 2012), the researcher has previously acknowledged the criticism from scholars of not relying solely on one method of analysis, such as either the LIWC analysis or the discourse analysis. Therefore, the researcher has deemed it appropriate for gaining a more holistic insight into contact CSE interpersonal dynamics. Section 5.7.3 below details the importance of transparency during the research process.

5.7.3 Transparency

For the reporting phase of this research, transparency, detail, and clarity was prioritised when documenting each research phase. Firstly, following Roller and Lavrakas's (2015) suggestions for transparency and quality criterion outlined in Fàbregues et al.(2019) planning and undertaking research phases, the researcher ensured that the thesis research philosophy and rationale for using a mixed methods design were explicit (see Chapter 5), the purpose and research questions were made clear (see Chapter 1, and a literature review situated the research to inform the methods (see Chapter 3). Thus, such rich and detailed descriptions of the “purpose, phasing, priority, and process of integration of the quantitative and qualitative components” were deemed necessary to successfully match the design and implementation of each method, adhering to each research tradition and enhancing the overall quality of the research (Fàbregues et al.,2019, p.430). Furthermore, thick descriptions of the research process were deemed appropriate for transferability purposes, particularly as online and contact CSE communication research often overlaps in previous literature (see Chapter 3). It is argued that transparency offers researchers the most learning and assists the reader to

determine the quality of the research process, avoid similar pitfalls if attempting to replicate and to judge the worth for further critique or dissemination (Tuval-Mashiach, 2016). The impact section (5.7.4) below details the potential practical value of the research.

5.7.4 Impact

The researcher's motivation for completing this thesis was ultimately based on the value and practical impact of the research outcomes for advancing knowledge and understanding for the safeguarding of victims against contact CSE crimes. The research outcomes are intended to have: (a) real world impact for safeguarding practitioner training, (b) improving the detection of perpetrator communicative patterns in CSE investigations, and (c) raising awareness for the young people involved in contact CSE relationships. However, of equal importance was the trustworthiness of the research for the development of actionable next steps for supporting future research. As a way of assisting future research the limitations of the thesis were made explicit in Chapter 7 and recommendations outlined in Chapter 9. The researcher's reflexivity and disciplinary perspective is outlined in section 5.7.5 below to acknowledge the necessary bias intended to enhance the research directions.

5.7.5 Disciplinary Perspective and Researcher Reflexivity

The researcher's biography, (see Chapter 1, section 1.4), highlights the professional disciplinary perspectives and safeguarding positions that will have been embedded in the research, otherwise known as 'unconscious biases' and considered central when initiating an inquiry (Attia & Edge, 2017; Buetow, 2019; Dodgson, 2019).

Although the researcher acknowledges Bourke's (2014) idea that "we can never truly divorce ourselves of subjectivity" (p. 3), in the interests of presenting a less subjective view and offer a more balanced perspective, the researcher employed a reflexive approach to shape the research. Attiya and Edge (2017) suggest that being reflexive is a "mutual process" between the researcher and research and it embraces the researcher's awareness of the interaction between the two (p.33). A reflexive journal, encouraged by Meyer and Willis (2019) for novice researchers, was therefore established from the commencement of the doctoral research to document values, thoughts, and methodological decisions that might influence the thesis outcomes (Etherington, 2004). This was suggested to be important in the initial design phases of the research, to avoid being driven by an epistemological and ontological stance, or simply by favouring ideologies and beliefs (Scotland, 2012).

The reflexive approach began with a research grid that documented any prior beliefs and assumptions held about contact CSE that might influence future interpretations of the findings (see methodological log in Appendix F). After some initial self-scrutiny it was clear that the research was being solely led from a narrow child protection or victim-focused standpoint, instead of factoring in alternative world views for exploring the relationship dynamic in its entirety. Despite the motivation of the researcher being to safeguard young people at risk of contact CSE, this research had the potential to explore the interpersonal relationships from a non-protective position and to acknowledge the possibility of there being complex dynamics at play, such as the aforementioned 'victim agency' or even perpetrator vulnerability. Although a less

victim-focused position was not entirely comfortable for the researcher, the drive for less biased interpretation of findings to enable a greater insight superseded this discomfort.

Secondly, the review of literature was conducted in a systematic and transparent manner to raise a general awareness of the emerging themes rather than to select, distort or influence the reader's thinking as suggested good practice by Charmez (2006).

Thirdly, stemming from the research grid and literature review, the researcher utilised the 'necessary biases' by choosing the research questions and variables that serve to enhance the research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Ma, 2012; Maarouf, 2019). To understand how the researcher moves between objective and subjective viewpoints, the following section details the researcher's disciplinary perspective and reflexivity processes. Chapters will continue to acknowledge the researcher's philosophical stance and reasoning. To limit unconscious processing and be considered credible (i.e., for findings to be plausible and trustworthy (Stenfors et al., 2020), the researcher will consider Finlay's (2002) discussion on reflexivity, suggesting the use of introspective analysis, reflexive dialogue between peers and critiquing the research presented. This was achieved by making note of preconceptions or possible bias in a reflexive journal, discussing the findings with peers prior to writing and offering a critical analysis of the conclusions and recommendations. However, as Finley (2002) documents, the issue of reflexivity is highly contested and therefore it may be that unconscious bias could remain. The researcher therefore embraced and challenged their own lived experiences, by regularly discussing perspectives with academic peers that were willing to critically

challenge or offer a different lens from which to view it (see reflexivity in the methodological log in Appendix F).

5.8 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter established an alignment between the pragmatic philosophical underpinnings and the mixed methods design, acknowledging the ever-changing nature of contact CSE interpersonal dynamics, whilst finding ways to capture the typically hidden interactions using data that is ordinarily restricted. Key design decisions were detailed, including the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, to get the most out of the data and to offer research triangulation opportunities throughout. In addition, the rationale and process of integration for the LIWC and multi-modal discourse analysis were made explicit. Analytical frameworks were outlined by thick descriptions of the coding and analytical steps, differentiated by the qualitative and quantitative headings. The chapter finished by setting out the steps taken to meet the research governance requirements and standards for achieving research rigour. The following chapters will detail the findings and interpretations from the analysis detailed in this chapter. The next chapters produce the research findings and details how they are drawn upon to produce recommendations to improve future practice.

Chapter 6: Summary of Key Findings

6.1 Introduction

Following on from the identified existing knowledge and gaps (i.e., lacking the evidenced based understanding of contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics) detailed in the review of literature in Chapter 2, 3 and 4, the current chapter presents a summary of key findings addressing the thesis research questions (restated in section 6.1.1 below). The previous Chapter 5 detailed the philosophical underpinnings and design of the research that have guided the analysis of extracted language presented in the current Chapter 6. The findings section begins with the descriptive results that summarise the typical perpetrator, victim, and offences before continuing to address RQ1 and RQ2. The key findings are presented as quantitative (i.e., LIWC analysis) and qualitative (i.e., multi-modal discourse analysis) summaries, in tabular and written form, for both pre and during the sexual contact (RQ1) and retrospective discursive constructions (RQ2).

6.1.1 Aim

The primary purpose of this chapter was to address the thesis research questions and objectives by presenting a summary of key findings. The research questions that are informing the chapter and dividing the findings by headings are restated below:

RQ1: What are the typical psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE? (Section 6.2)

RQ2: How do contact CSE perpetrators and their victims discursively construct their relationship retrospectively within the context of a criminal investigation? (Section 6.3)

The chapter aims firstly to explore if there are typical interpersonal communication patterns (e.g., commands, requests, flattery, coercion, threats, or expressions of love) exist between the contact CSE victims and perpetrators in their exchanges pre and during the sexual act. Secondly, to discover if psycholinguistic features exist demographically between contact CSE victims and perpetrators concerning age, gender, and ethnicity as categorised (or if available) within the police case files. Finally, the chapter explores how contact CSE perpetrators, and their victims discursively construct their relationship retrospectively within the context of a criminal investigation.

6.2 Research Question One Findings

6.2.1 The Typical Contact CSE Perpetrator

Descriptive statistics, as detailed in Table 11 below, reveal that despite some outliers to the trends, the “typical” contact CSE perpetrator found within this research would be, predominantly single (or marital status unknown due to incomplete recordings in the police case files), White British males, under 30 years of age ($M = 28.2$, $SD = 10.98$), and in low skilled jobs or unemployment.

Findings revealed that typically the offences were committed alone, but if multiple offenders were involved the average size group was between three and four perpetrators and typically homogenous (i.e., ethnicity, age, gender, or employment status) to each other group member. In this sample, the largest group involved five White North European (i.e., Romanian), closely followed by a group of four Roma Travellers and the smallest two remaining groups involved two White British, all male perpetrators. For transparency, categories of ethnicity were based on the categories described within the police case file.

Patterns also revealed that whilst 26% ($n = 13$) of the perpetrators would use an alias whilst offending, the unknown alias category accounted for 74% ($n = 37$) of perpetrators. Table 11 below provides the frequency, mean and standard deviations for perpetrator descriptive statistics as discussed above.

Table 11*Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviations for Perpetrator Descriptive Statistics*

Perpetrator demographic characteristic/variable	<i>Freq</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender			
Male	48	-	-
Female	2	-	-
Lone or Group:			
Lone	37	-	-
Group	4 (totalling 13 offenders)	-	-
Alias:			
Known	13	-	-
Unknown	37	-	-
Age groups:			
≤20 years	15	16.9	2.05
21 – 29 years	15	24.3	2.11
≥ 30 years	20	39.7	7.48
All ages	50	28.2	10.98
Marital status:			
Married	6	-	-
Single	16	-	-
Divorced/separated	1	-	-
Widowed	3	-	-
Unknown	20	-	-
Ethnicity:			
White British	27	-	-
White North European	10	-	-
Asian Pakistani	7	-	-
Black African	2	-	-
Roma Traveller	4	-	-
Education/Employment:			
Student	9	-	-
Manual	4	-	-
Professional	3	-	-
Retail	4	-	-
Skilled	3	-	-
Social care	1	-	-
Unemployed	21	-	-
Unknown	5	-	-

For further context, and in response to issues raised in Chapter 2 about the media overreporting of Asian males following high profile cases, the current perpetrator sample ethnicity demographics are measured against the population norms of both the county in which the sample was collected, and nationally via the most recent census, for comparison (ONS, 2021). See Table 12 and further explanation below.

Table 12

Current Perpetrator Sample Ethnicity Demographics Measured Against County and National Population Norms

Ethnicity:	% of Perpetrator Sample	% of County Population (where sample was collected)	% of National Population
White British	54	88	81.7
White North European	20	-	6.2
Asian Pakistani	14	5.6	2.7
Black African	4	0.4	2.5
Roma Traveller	8	0.5	0.2

Although more than 50% (n = 27) of the perpetrator sample identify as White British, this is considerably less than the percentage of both the national (81.7%) and county (88%) populations. In contrast, Asian Pakistani (14%), Black African (4%) and Roma Travellers (8%) are over-represented in the perpetrator sample when compared to both the national (2.7%, 2.5% and 0.2% respectively) and county populations (5.6%,

0.4% and 0.5% respectively). However, it remains difficult to draw equivalent comparisons where the total of each sample differs.

Table 13 below details that previous criminal convictions were present for 52% ($n = 26$) of perpetrators, ($M = 5.2$, $SD = 5.06$), with just over one fifth of the perpetrator sample persistently offending. According to the CJS statistics, offenders with 8 or more convictions or cautions are defined as persistent offenders (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Using this definition, 12% ($n = 6$) of perpetrators would be classified as persistent offenders. This shows that for persistent offenders, the CSE perpetrator will arguably be familiar with the criminal justice process, albeit just under half of the sample have no previous history.

Table 13

Perpetrator Offending History

Perpetrator offending history			
No of previous offences	Frequency	M	SD
0	24	-	-
1-5	15	1.9	1.06
6-10	9	7.8	1.39
11+	2	19	1.41

Table 14 below reveals that the most common perpetrator previous offence was violence (32%, $n = 47$), closely followed by sexual offences (28%, $n = 23$), and the least

common was abduction (2%, n = 1) and arson (2%, n = 1). This shows that there are potential associations with CSE perpetrators having a sexually violent past, which is a finding perhaps not surprising given the nature of the CSE crimes but will be interpreted within the discussion in Chapter 7.

Table 14

Perpetrator Offence Details

Offence details		
Type of offence	No. of offences by Perpetrators	% of perpetrators
Sexual	23	28%
Drugs	17	12%
Violence	47	32%
Fraud	3	6%
Burglary/theft	16	18%
Criminal damage	7	12%
Public Order	5	10%
Harassment	3	4%
Weapons	7	14%
Motor vehicle/traffic	9	10%
Abduction	1	2%
Arson	1	2%

The typical contact CSE perpetrator section above outlines the descriptive statistics relating to perpetrator demographics and offender patterns, revealing predominantly a single, White British, male with a likelihood of previous offending history involving violence. The typical contact CSE perpetrator will be discussed in

more detail in Chapter 7 and comparisons drawn with other offender profiles. The section below continues with a focus on demographics but details the typical psycholinguistic features for contact CSE perpetrators.

6.2.2 The Typical Psycholinguistic Demographic Features for Contact CSE Perpetrators

For the psycholinguistic demographic features of the contact CSE perpetrator, only the t-tests comparing the significant LIWC variable outputs and LIWC general population benchmarks are summarised below in written formats. The results for all non-significant LIWC comparisons can be found in Appendix G. The hypothesis will be addressed before the significant t-test results are summarised below.

The results of the analysis did support the researcher's hypothesis that there were psycholinguistic differences for perpetrator demographics and general population natural speech benchmarks.

Hypothesis 1: Accepted

Table 15 below presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for LIWC natural speech benchmarks in relation to the seven selected variables that were compared for significant differences with all perpetrator and victim language in sections 6.2.2, 6.2.4, 6.2.10, and 6.3.3 of this chapter.

Table 15

Mean and Standard Deviation for LIWC Natural Speech Benchmarks in Relation for selected variables

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks	
	M	SD
Clout	56.27	19.93
Sexual	0.09	0.30
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91
Reward	1.73	1.19
Risk	0.30	0.41

The significant differences for each perpetrator demographic are detailed below.

6.2.2.1 For Perpetrator Ethnicity Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

Ethnicity t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between all police recorded ethnicities and natural speech general population benchmarks. clout (i.e., language of leadership, confidence, status) was significantly higher for White British and Asian Pakistani ethnicities, compared to Black African, White Northern European and Traveller police recorded ethnicities. Generally, more sexual (i.e., horny, love) and reward (i.e., take, prize, benefit) words were used by perpetrators across three ethnicity groups (White British, Asian Pakistani and White Northern European). Four out of five ethnicity groups (apart from Black African) were less likely to use words that were positive in emotion (i.e., love, nice, sweet). This shows

that different ethnicities use different approaches in their language styles to engage with victims based on comparisons with general norms.

Significant differences were found between White British perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(26) = -5.27$, $p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(26) = 5.54$, $p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(26) = -4.30$, $p < .001$ and higher personal pronoun use, $t(26) = 1.99$, $p = .03$. The largest effect size was clout (1.01), sexual (1.07) and positive emotion (-0.83). Significant differences were found between Asian Pakistani perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(6) = 2.12$, $p = .04$, higher sexual, $t(6) = 2.00$, $p = .05$, lower negative emotion, $t(6) = -3.00$, $p = .01$ and lower positive emotion, $t(6) = -6.31$, $p < .001$. The largest effect size was clout (0.80), negative emotion (-1.13) and positive emotion (-2.39). Significant differences were found between White Northern European perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher sexual, $t(9) = 3.29$, $p = .01$, lower positive emotion, $t(9) = -3.25$, $p = .01$ and lower reward, $t(9) = -1.53$, $p = .08$. The largest effect size was sexual (1.04) and positive emotion (-1.03). Significant differences were found between Traveller perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to lower positive emotion, $t(3) = -6.53$, $p < .004$, lower personal pronoun use, $t(3) = -2.51$, $p = .04$, and lower reward, $t(3) = -3.10$, $p = .03$. The largest effect size was positive emotion (-3.27), personal pronouns (-1.25) and reward (-1.55). The potential reasons why language differences exist between ethnicities will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.2.2 For Perpetrator Age Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For age, t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between all ages and natural speech general population benchmarks. Clout and personal pronoun (i.e., I, them, her) use was significantly higher in the above 30 age category. All ages were using significantly higher sexual words. All perpetrators under the age of 30 were significantly lower in positive emotion. The under 20s were also significantly lower in personal pronoun use whilst the 21–29-year-olds significantly lower in use of reward words. This shows that the perpetrator's language changes depending on age when engaging with victims based on general norms.

Significant differences were found between perpetrators who were under 20 and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher sexual, $t(13) = 3.52, p = .002$, lower positive emotion $t(13) = -13.25, p < .001$, and lower personal pronoun use, $t(13) = -1.82, p = .05$. The largest effect size is sexual (0.90) and positive emotion (-3.69). Significant differences were found between perpetrators who were between 21 and 29 years and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher sexual, $t(15) = 3.20, p = .003$, lower positive emotion, $t(15) = -6.26, p < .001$, and lower reward $t(15) = -5.67, p < .001$. The largest effect size is positive emotion (-1.57) and reward (-1.28). Significant differences were found between perpetrators aged 30 and above and the general population natural speech benchmarks LIWC scores in relation to: higher clout, $t(19) = 11.20, p < .001$, higher Sexual, $t(19) = 5.08, p < .001$, lower positive emotion $t(19) = -2.02, p = .03$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(19) = 3.73, p < .001$. The largest effect

size was clout (2.50), sexual (1.14) and personal pronouns (0.83). The potential reasons why language differences exist between ages will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.2.3 For Perpetrator Gender Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For perpetrators' gender, t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between genders and natural speech general population benchmarks. Clout and sexual word use was significantly higher, and for positive emotion, significantly lower, for both male and female perpetrators. However, only females were significantly higher in personal pronoun use and lower in words associated with reward. This shows that the perpetrator language differs based on their gender when engaging with victims.

Significant differences were found between male perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(47) = 2.55, p = .01$, higher sexual, $t(47) = 5.83, p = <.001$, lower positive emotion, $t(47) = -7.56, p = <.001$, and lower reward, $t(47) = -2.09, p = .02$. The largest effect was clout (1.81), sexual (1.03) and positive emotion (-0.88). Significant differences were found between female perpetrators and the general population natural speech benchmarks LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(1) = 38.11, p = .01$, and higher personal pronoun use, $t(1) = 5.80, p = .05$. The largest effect size was clout (26.95), sexual (2.35), positive emotion (-1.13), personal pronouns (4.10) and reward (-1.82). The potential reasons why language differences exist between ethnicities will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.3 The Typical Contact CSE Victim

While victim data was found to be incomplete due to less recorded flagging categories on the police IT system than for perpetrators, the victims were predominantly single, White British females, with 96% ($n = 77$) aged between 11 and 16, and 61% of victims ($n = 49$) in the 14-16 years category ($M = 14.2$, $SD = 1.40$). Victims were predominantly in education, although no detail on what type of education was recorded in police files). See Table 16 below for the frequency, mean and standard deviations for victim descriptives.

Table 16

Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviations for Victim Descriptive Demographic

Statistics

Victim demographic characteristic/variable	<i>Freq</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender:			
Male	4	-	-
Female	76	-	-
Age groups:			
≤10 years	1	10	-
11 – 13years	28	12.7	0.46
14– 16 years	49	15.0	0.73
17-18 years	2	17	0
All years	80	14.2	1.40
Ethnicity:			
White British	28	-	-
White North European	0	-	-
Asian Pakistani	0	-	-
Black African	0	-	-
Mixed Heritage	1	-	-

As Table 17 below shows, previous criminal convictions were also present for only 11% victims ($n = 9$, $M = 4.1$, $SD = 2.15$), although not deemed to be persistent offenders, but more likely to be between one and five offences. Potential reasons for victim offending history will be interpreted in Chapter 7.

Table 17

Victim Offending History

Victim offending history			
No of previous offences	Frequency	M	SD
0	71	-	-
1-5	7	3.3	1.60
6-10	2	7	0
11+	0	-	-

Similar to the typical perpetrator, the most common previous conviction for 26% of victims was violence ($n = 16$) and the least common stolen goods ($n = 1$) and weapon related offences ($n = 1$) as table 18 shows. Although, it was clear at the data collection stage that some of the victims had gone on to reoffend after the incident in older police cases, data was not collected as not all cases involved post-convictions to draw comparisons. Although beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to explore the rate of post victim criminal convictions in historical police cases to determine the criminal impact CSE might have on its victims.

Table 18

Type of Previous Offending by Victims

Type of offence	No of offences by Victims	% of total offences
Drugs	3	8.1%
Violence	16	43.2%
Fraud		
Burglary/theft	5	13.5%
Criminal damage	5	13.5%
Public order	2	5.4%
Harassment	4	10.8%
Stolen goods	1	2.7%
Weapons	1	2.7%

The typical contact CSE victim section above outlined the descriptive statistics relating to demographics and previous offending patterns, revealing predominantly adolescent, single, White British females, also with a criminal history of violence. This shows that there is a common profile of a CSE victim, albeit one that has reported to the police. The impact of this will be discussed in Chapter 7. The following section continues with a focus on demographics but will detail the psycholinguistic features for the contact CSE victims, reporting tests of significance.

6.2.4 The Typical Psycholinguistic Demographic Features for Contact CSE Victims

For the psycholinguistic demographic features of the contact CSE victim, only the t-tests comparing the significant LIWC variable outputs and LIWC general population benchmarks are summarised below in written formats. The results for all non-significant LIWC comparisons can be found in Appendix G. The hypothesis will be addressed before the significant t-test results are summarised below.

The results of the analysis did support the researcher's hypothesis that there were psycholinguistic differences for victim demographics and general population natural speech benchmarks. The significant differences are detailed below.

Hypothesis 1: Accepted

As with the perpetrator t-tests in section 6.2.2 above, Table 15 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for LIWC natural speech benchmarks in relation to the seven selected variables that were compared for significant differences with the victim language in the sections 6.2.4.1 and 6.2.4.2 below.

6.2.4.1 For Victim Gender Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For victim's gender, t-tests showed that that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the gender of victims and natural speech general population benchmarks. Both genders had a significantly high use of sexual words and significantly lower positive emotion. However, female victims had a significantly low clout and high use of personal pronouns. This shows that language differs with the victim's age in response to the perpetrator in comparison to general norms.

Significant differences were found between the male victim and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher sexual $t(3) = 2.86, p = .03$ and lower positive emotion, $t(3) = -7.31, p = .003$. The highest effect was sexual (1.43) and positive emotion (-3.65). Significant differences were found between female victims and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(75) = -10.43, p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(75) = 6.29, p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(75) = -20.19, p < .001$ and higher personal pronoun use, $t(75) = 8.58, p < .001$. The largest effect sizes were for positive emotion (-2.32), clout (-1.20) and personal pronouns (0.98), with a medium effect also found for sexual language (0.72). The potential reasons why language differences exist between gender will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.4.2 For Victim Age Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For victim age, t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between victim ages and natural speech general population benchmarks. Age 11-13 and 14-16 years had a significantly high use of sexual words and pronoun use. However, both age ranges had significantly low clout and positive emotion. The 14-16 age category had significantly high negative emotion and low reward words. This shows that victim language changes depending on age when responding to perpetrators based on general norms.

Significant differences between 11–13-year-old victims and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(27) = -7.19, p < .001$, higher Sexual, $t(27) = 3.57, p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(27)$

= -15.33, $p < .001$ and higher personal pronoun use, $t(27) = 4.44$, $p < .001$. The largest effect sizes were for positive emotion (-2.90), clout (-1.36) and personal pronouns (0.84), with a medium effect also found for sexual language (0.68)

Significant differences between 14-16 year old victims and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(48) = -8.33$, $p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(48) = 5.08$, $p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(48) = 0.96$, $p = .02$, lower positive emotion, $t(48) = -14.13$, $p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(48) = 6.91$, $p < .001$, and lower reward, $t(48) = -18.23$, $p < .001$. The largest effect sizes were for reward (-2.60), positive emotion (-2.02), clout (-1.19) and personal pronouns (0.99), with a medium effect also found for sexual language (0.73). The potential reasons why language differences exist between age will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.5 The Typical Contact CSE Offending Context

Patterns also revealed that 33% of contact CSE related offences categorised as sexual offences took place in cars or private residences ($n = 16$), and 33% also maintained online ($n = 16$), albeit not the same 16 relationships. The most typical length of relationship (41%) was found to be between one day and one month (and the longest two years). The victim was most likely (54%) to know the perpetrator, albeit not a close contact before the offence was committed. See Table 19 below, for the offending context frequency, mean and standard deviations.

The data revealed an average perpetrator age of under 30 ($M = 28.2$, $SD = 10.98$) engaged in a relationship with an average victim age of under 15 years ($M = 14.2$, $SD =$

1.40). The most common offences for perpetrators to be convicted of were rape of female (under 13) and engaging in sexual communication with a child (20%), followed by causing or inciting a female child under 16 to engage in sexual activity (13%). The primary offences were least likely to be categorised as domestic abuse, paying for sexual services or disclosing images with intent to cause distress. Crimes were most typically (19%) flagged as multiple crime categories (e.g., CSE, online, CSA etc), and closely followed by CSE (18%).

Table 19*Frequency for Offending Context*

Context	Freq
Location of offences:	
Park/woods	5
Beach	2
Shops/shopping centre	4
Residence	8
car	8
Food establishment	1
School/college	2
Online	16
Unknown	2
Length of <i>contact</i> CSE:	
< 24 hours	7
1 day up to and inc. 1 month	17
1 month up to and inc.1 year	6
+ 1 Year	4
Unknown	7
NB. Mean and SD not calculable as exact length of contacts not recorded in police files, only approximate lengths of time.	
Offending:	
Lone	37
Group	4 (<i>n</i> = 13)
Relationship:	
Known to each other before offence	22
Unknown before offence	19
Primary offence:	
Sexual assault on a female aged 13 or over	3
Engage in sexual communication with a child	9
Causing or inciting a female child under 16 to engage in sexual activity	6
Meeting a female child following sexual grooming	5
Rape of a female (under 13)	9
Rape of a female (over 16)	2
Causing or inciting a female child under 16 to engage in sexual activity by penetration under 18	1
Sexual activity with a child under 16 by penetration	3

Domestic abuse	1
Kidnapping false imprisonment/arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation	4
Paying for sexual services	1
Disclosing private sexual photographs or films with intent to cause distress	1
Police IT Flagging:	
Multiple categories	27
Individual category	6
CSE	25
CSA	15
OCAIT	4
CE	3
Youth related	6
Sexually motivated	17
Online	14
Child at risk	16
Clare's Law	1
Victim intoxicated	2
Public place	3
Domestic violence	1
Adult care home	1

Table 19 above shows that there are patterns in relation to the offending context, in relation to locations, crimes, flagging and CSE relationship lengths, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Following the descriptive statistics and psycholinguistic characteristics above, the section below summarises the key findings from the qualitative analysis, including the multi-modal discourse analysis for the typical contact CSE exploitative language (pre and during the sexual act).

6.2.6 Typical Contact CSE Exploitative Language (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

6.2.6.1 Perpetrator Verbal Communicative Processes (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

Table 20 and the written language extractions below summarises the five perpetrators communicative processes found in the multi-modal discourse analysis (for pre and during the sexual act), using the adapted coding framework as detailed in Chapter 5 (section 5.5.2.2). The five perpetrator communicative processes include a) access and approach, b) rapport building and trust development, c) sexual gratification, d) risk assessment and compliance testing, and e) coercive control. The most common communicative process used by perpetrators was coercive control (28%, $n = 391$). This was followed by sexual gratification (23%, $n = 324$), rapport building and trust development (22%, $n = 314$), risk assessment and compliance testing (19%, $n = 263$), and access and approach (8%, $n = 119$). This shows that perpetrators are more likely to attempt to engage with victims by force and control to achieve sexual gratification.

Table 20

Perpetrator Verbal Communication Process Frequencies for Pre and During the Sexual Act

Process	Overall Process Total (N =1411)	Communicative pattern with open coding results mapped against adapted coding framework	Frequency of Individual Strategy Total (N)
Access & approach	119 (8%)	Initial contact. (Access & checking identity)	66 (56%)
		Requests to meet offline. (Arrangements to meet)	53 (45%)
Rapport building & trust development	314 (22%)	Exchange of personal information (asking about prior sexual experience, perp experience, contraception/sexual health)	33 (11%) 121 (39%)
		Relationship (advice, building rapport and friendship, establishing relationship status, future together, protective, reassurance, terms of endearment, sexual lead in, took pictures)	8 (3%)
		Activities (bragging)	81 (26%)
		Praise/flattery (flattery & praise)	25 (8%)
		Sociability (small talk)	47 (15%)
		Gifts (gifts, offers gifts)	
		Sexual gratification	324 (23%)

		Implicit desensitisation (reminiscing, checking physical criteria)	27 (8%) 6 (2%)
		Reframing (educating/sexual naivety)	78 (24%)
		Proximity (proximity)	
		Touch (perp demand victim to touch self, perp masturbating, phys touch non private, phys touch private, sexual act, ejaculation))	
Risk assessment & compliance testing	263 (19%)	Reverse psychology (normalising & shift to victim ownership, reverse psych, seek sympathy, making up, apologising)	71 (27%)
		Role reversal (seeking reassurance, asking for thoughts on sex)	24 (9%)
		Assessing risk (age, establish age, establish secrecy, risk assess, secrecy)	123 (47%)
		Gaining assent (assent, gaining assent)	45 (17%)
Coercive control	391 (28%)	Isolation (control, deceit)	2 (0.5%)
		Reprimanding/regulation (name calling, reprimanding, fall outs, put downs)	10 (3%)
		Overt persuasion/demand (persuasion, repeat requests, demand)	106 (27%)
		Extortion/exploitation (extortion, bribery, exploitation)	21 (5%)
		Forcing sex (forced sex, use of force, videoed victim, multiple offenders, moves victims to touch perp)	65 (17%)
		Intimidation (intim, angry, blame, threat)	106 (27%)
		Degradation (deg, suggest to harm self)	31 (8%)
		Humiliation	13 (3%)
		Kidnap	3 (1%)
		Ownership	15 (4%)
		Subordination	19 (5%)

Table 20 sub-categories also reveal the most common approaches used within the 5 headline processes detailed above. The most frequent approach in access and approach was making initial contact (66%). The most frequent approach in rapport building and trust development was building a relationship (39%). The most frequent approach in sexual gratification was explicit desensitisation (60%). The most frequent approach in risk assessment and compliance testing was assessing risk (47%). The most frequent approach in the coercive control process was overt persuasion and demand and intimidation (27%). This shows that there are a range of positive and negative communicative approaches that perpetrators are adopting to engage the victim in sexual activity. This will be discussed in Chapter 7, however, a sample of perpetrator verbatim quotes are presented under each of the five perpetrator processes below to provide examples of the extracted language and support the written summaries.

6.2.6.2 Access and Approach

The data revealed that CSE perpetrators typically approach and access their victim initially either by means of social media or in person, and in some cases making attempts to establish proximity to potentially isolate the victim from members of the public, with both methods of approach resulting in a contact sexual offence.

Initiating Contact. The use of social media, such as Snapchat, KIK, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger were used to initiate or maintain contact and appeared to differ according to how well the perpetrator and victim knew each other. If the perpetrator did not know the victim in advance, social media was used as an initial method to gain access to their victim and appeared more opportunistic in approach. The perpetrators typically provided what could be described as an initial ‘hook’ or a method of to continue the conversation by sharing some personal information first (e.g., “I’ve just moved to ***** and I need some friends” P18 [via Snapchat]). The perpetrator might also try to confirm the victim’s identity if unknown (e.g., “show yourself on videocall” P4).

If the first contact between a perpetrator and victim was face-to-face, the approach appeared to be more opportunistic as opposed to targeted. This often took place whilst the perpetrator was passing the victim in a car by offering a lift (e.g., “Hey. Do you want a lift?”, “where are you going to? Get in” P39) and is perhaps the most effective way of getting the victim away from other members of the public. At times, the perpetrators would provide incentives for the victims to interact with them by offering what might be considered exciting experiences, or by offering illicit drugs and alcohol (e.g., “we are doing a DJ set near here ...I’ve got some bud in my boot. Come with us and then we will take you home” P11). This is in addition to the lift itself, which might be attractive to victims when many are restricted to walking or using public transport. However, it is important to note that the perpetrators were not always making an approach to

victims in a vehicle as it could take place in public spaces, in food establishments or wherever young people were gathering.

Actions After Contact Established. Once the perpetrator gained access to the victim either by social media or during a face-to-face interaction, the perpetrator would typically try to prolong this initial contact by finding out what other social media platforms the victim used. This would involve asking about the more private or encrypted mobile applications (e.g., “Are you on Snap [Snapchat]?” P45, “Call me on KiK” P19).

When the relationship was established between the perpetrator and victim, patterns from the data suggest that regular contact was maintained via social media platforms or encrypted mobile applications (as mentioned above). This would either be by the perpetrator checking in on the victim (e.g., “what are you doing up at this time?” P10) or to facilitate the face-to-face interaction (e.g., “I’ve booked train tickets to see you” P23).

The Establishment of Physical Proximity/ Presence. Once the perpetrator is in the physical presence of the victim, additional verbal direction or a demand might be placed on the victim to become closer to the perpetrator and potentially isolate themselves from other members of the public. This might include either the perpetrator suggesting moving to an alternative location (potentially more private) to commit a sexual act or being more forceful in their approach to stay with them. This would typically occur if the perpetrator were not in a vehicle and needed to move on foot (e.g., “walk to the park with me” P12, “come round here” P49) or if already inside a private house or hotel (e.g., “Come to the bedroom” P42, “shut the door.... you are staying here with me” P6).

6.2.6.3 Rapport Building and Trust Development

Data revealed that perpetrators spend time to build a rapport and develop trust with their victims during their interactions. This would take place via social media and in person between the perpetrator and the victim. It appears that perpetrators use this communicative process to both start and maintain the relationship. It ranges from using terms of endearment, making small talk, and/or requesting more information about their victim to offering incentives that might make the victim feel more comfortable with them, such as offering gifts or discussing the future together.

Using Terms of Endearment. When using terms of endearment, the perpetrator will either start their interactions with a flattering word (e.g., “hey babe” P24) or comment or will use these terms throughout their interactions to reassure or suggest some form of perpetrator ownership of the victim (e.g., “It's ok sweetness” P48, “you are my beautiful baby girl” P2,).

Small Talk. When using small talk, the perpetrator might attempt to find out more about the victim's day or to explain what they themselves are doing (e.g., “Hi. How's your day going?” P21, “I'm at work as usual” P36). Alternatively, small talk might be used to provide further reasons to talk or meet with each other (e.g., “will you keep an eye on my daughter and see if she is ok? P33).

Establishing Relationship Status. Typically, in the earlier stages of the relationship or interactions, the perpetrator might seek to establish the victim's relationship status (e.g., “you got a boyfriend?” P26) or their previous sexual experience or naivety (e.g., “have you had any experience with boys?” P34, “are you virgins?” P31). As the relationship develops the communication might become more sexual in nature (e.g., “have you ever explored yourself sexually?” P27)

Sexual Health Needs/Risks. As the interactions become more sexual in nature, some discussion takes place about the practicalities of having sex, such as using contraception (e.g., “Sorry, I will obviously use protection” P28). Some, but not all the perpetrators would attempt to address sexual health matters directly either by explaining that they don’t use condoms (e.g., “hopefully it won’t matter if I don’t have a condom when we have sex” P2) or by reassuring the victims that they would be accepting of becoming a parent as a result of the unprotected sex (e.g., “I don’t want to get you pregnant. But I love you so won’t use anything. Boy + girl = sex = girl gets pregnant. I will look after the baby if I’m the dad” P50).

Bragging. During the interactions, the perpetrators appeared to resort to boasting (e.g., “yeah I’ve been involved in drug dealing and driving illegally” P29), in a bid to impress about their own lifestyle, or potentially assert their claim over their victim (e.g., “put it on your Snapchat story that we are together for everyone to see” P8). The perpetrator would also brag about their previous sexual exploits with other people (e.g., “I knew a girl that liked to rub my hard joystick on her leggings between her legs” P38), maybe to influence the victim’s decision to engage sexually with them.

Offering Gifts. During the face-to-face interactions, perpetrators offer gifts that might demonstrate their attraction to the victim (e.g., “I’ll buy it. My valentines gift to you babe” P35) or that would appeal to a young person enough to put their trust in them, such as alcohol and drugs (e.g., “we are going for a smoke first. Do you want a line? Apple sours?” P42). Other perpetrator offerings given to victims included clothing, lifts, phones, or food (e.g., “I have a new phone you can use” P14, “we will buy the Ann Summers stuff for you” P7).

Discussing Future. As the relationship progresses, perpetrators are more likely to start discussing their future together with their victim (e.g., “one day it will just be me and you” P1, “I’m going to marry you one day” P27). The perpetrator would often state that they would be with the victim for the rest of their lives or try to establish the status of their relationship by labelling it as boyfriend and girlfriend (e.g., “BF GF?” P6, “we’ve got the rest of our lives” P43).

6.2.6.4 Sexual Gratification

The analysis revealed that the sexual gratification process of communication can be split into both verbal and non-verbal approaches and implicit and explicit communicative strategies. However, the non-verbal processes are detailed below within section 6.2.7. The more implicit perpetrator techniques appeared to involve desensitising the victim through discussing sexual activity and being more suggestive than directly expressed. This might involve checking physical criteria, reminiscing about being sexually active or by asking for more information that might be sexually gratifying and re-framing the act as sexual education or development.

Checking Physical Criteria of Victim. The checking of physical criteria might take place early in the relationship (e.g., “just tell me what size bra you are” P9, “have you got a 9-inch toll?” P33,), usually after some form of rapport building. Otherwise, it would be an acknowledgement of any physical changes commonplace during puberty that might be noticeable to the perpetrator (e.g., “your boobs are growing. Are you starting to feel it?” P36).

Reminiscing or Visualising the Sexual Act. The perpetrators would sometimes communicate as if they were reminiscing about being sexually active (with or without the victim) or would express their wish to be having sex the victim (e.g., “the last girl I fell for must have been 12 or 13” P21, “I wish we were having sex right now” P46). This was often used as an opener to an interaction (initially online) or to maintain sexually focused discussions.

Reframing the Sexual Act. Perpetrators would sometimes reframe the way they discussed sex with victims by suggesting that they could provide a form of sex education for the victim (e.g., “how good it would be to teach you. Do you want to try something?” P11). The perpetrator would often describe positive sexual outcomes or feelings for the victim from the sexual activity (e.g., “anal sex feels really good for a girl” P40, “I love licking pussy if you'd like to find out how good it feels” P41). This appeared to be used as a method of persuasion and would also involve persuading the victim to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator (e.g., “I hope you want to find out how good it feels to give me oral sex” P12).

Desensitising Victim to Engage in Sexual Talk. The more explicit perpetrator communicative methods were used potentially to further desensitise victims into engaging in sexual activity. This would involve using sexual humour or teasing (e.g., “bet you won't be able to sit at the table in McDonald's without spilling your drink when you get a boner” P37) and discussing desires and (sometimes illegal) fantasies (e.g., “what fetishes do you have? I like leather and I have a catsuit” P3). The example provided below highlights the level of detail that perpetrators offered to victims about their personal sexual desires.

“I'd take you to my house, pin you up to the wall by the throat and kiss you, gaze into your eyes, tell you to get into my bedroom and tell you to get ready to be punished for being a naughty argumentative bitch.” (P45)

Other sexually explicit and potentially desensitising communicative strategies involved requesting sexual pictures or visual content or discussing masturbation (e.g., “do you want to watch porn?” P16, “Facetime me whilst I wank” P47).

The most direct sexual verbal and non-verbal communicative exchanges would take place in the preparation phase immediately before the sexual act. This was likely to involve verbally demanding to have sexual activity (e.g., “well wank me off then” P31, “suck my penis” P49), or overcoming proximity issues by moving closer to the victim, which therefore indicates a non-verbal approach to sexual activity (e.g., “come on over and get to know me better” P13, “climb on top...it will be fun” P4,). At times, the perpetrator would try to reframe the request for sexual activity by placing some ownership on the victim to assent to the sexual

act (e.g., “am I allowed to touch your boobs?” P17, “I know you wanna try sucking so I’m gonna let you” P48, “so do you want me to cum on your face?” P26).

The remaining communicative approaches would appear to further enable or simplify the process for the perpetrator achieving their goal of having sexual activity with the victim (or multiple victims). This would involve requesting or demanding the victim to remove their clothes (e.g., “get naked” P39, “take the bra off” P19), touching non-private and private areas and asking the victims to touch others involved in the sexual activity, which might include other victims or perpetrators (e.g., “do you want a threesome?” P50, “we want you and your mate to finger each other” P38). The non-verbal processes that support the sexual gratification process are summarised in more detail below in section 6.2.7.

6.2.6.5 Risk Assessment and Compliance Testing

The data revealed that perpetrators devote time to undertake their own assessment of risk or establish a level of secrecy and compliance from their victims.

Acknowledging Risk. The perpetrator might do this by acknowledging the risk associated with the victim's age (e.g., "I know it is wrong for me to dating someone that is 12 or 13 years old and going to have sex with them as well" P9). At times, the perpetrators appeared to reveal a level of suspicion and mistrust towards the victim (e.g., "why are you taking SS (screenshots?) you are obviously going to show it to someone?" P11).

Avoiding Getting Caught/Establishing Secrecy. Alternatively, the perpetrator might find ways to avoid getting caught by the victim's family or by the police (e.g., "contact me when your mum has gone to work" P20, "are the police looking for you?" P46). A level of secrecy is often requested to maintain the relationship. The perpetrator discusses age and the need for secrecy indirectly or directly, by either highlighting the illegal nature of their relationship or by giving directions to the victim that will ensure that they are alone or in a private conversation (e.g., "what age are you then?" P1, "are you deleting your messages on here just in case someone can access your phone" P10, "I can't hold your hand because people are around. It's a secret between you and me" P41).

Providing Excuses. Notably, the discussion of age might be useful evidentially for law enforcement to prove the perpetrators awareness of the victim's age for the sexual offences that are committed. However, at times perpetrators also offered excuses to their victim to provide to the police if they get caught to minimise their involvement or suggesting ways to avoid detection (e.g., “tell them you were confused and that you were shagging someone else and got the names muddled up” P35, “wear a less bright jacket tomorrow when we meet so you don't look so young” P30).

Seeking Reassurance. The perpetrator also appears to establish a level of compliance from the victim to engage them in sexual activity. This usually takes place by reversing the adult–child roles, whereby the perpetrator seeks reassurance or sympathy from the victim (e.g., “hope not appearing like a stalker? Lol” P5, “tell me if you ever want me to leave you alone” P34, “do you feel comfortable with me” P6). Otherwise, the perpetrator appeared to shift the ownership for the interaction and relationship onto the victim (e.g., “so you are the curious one?” P13, “make you blush? Ha so not so innocent and naïve” P25, “cocky little devil, are you?” P36). Sometimes the perpetrators compliance testing of the victim appeared to overlap with other communicative strategies, such as threats or demands on the victim (e.g., “and I'm here with no sex, no pics, no love, no nothing... the slags don't want me, the virgins don't want me” P12).

Gaining Assent. The perpetrator would also seemingly try to gain assent from their victim to take part in sexual activity (e.g., “you don't have to if you don't want to” P8, “am I allowed to touch your boobs?” P32), and if the outcome is not as successful as planned, the perpetrator will apologise to the victim (e.g., “sorry about falling out. I love you. I didn't mean it” P43, “Sorry I made a mistake” P20). The perpetrator would make attempts to convince the victim to engage in sexual activity or at least have the same perspective as they do (e.g., “You understand what I mean though. That isn't me trying to get round you” P18, “see it wasn't that bad” P28).

6.2.6.6 Coercive Control

The most frequent communicative process was coercive control and would involve various methods to potentially intimidate, belittle, overpower, and control the victim.

Insults and Name Calling. This would include insults and name calling (e.g., “sick of being fucked around... stick to your little ugly council estate ramos [friends] P40”, “you are a slag” P32), making references to potential triggering issues which could be useful for further isolation from the victim’s family (e.g., “your mum doesn't care about you” P39) and reprimanding (e.g., “oh a little warning princess, if you’re going to be a ho and send nudes and someone threatens to post, don’t say go do it, that’s consent and you don’t have a leg to stand on” P15). This was in addition to overtly persuading or demanding the victim to follow their orders or to perform a sexual act (e.g., “the quicker you do it, the quicker it's over” P19, “I mean no last minute saying I can’t make it” P38 “you there yet?” P22).

Threats, Physical Force and Violence. The use of threats, physical force and violence would also be evident during this process, which would manifest from the perpetrator's verbal and non-verbal approaches. The non-verbal processes that support the coercive control process for sexual force and violence are summarised in more detail below in section 6.2.7. Examples of extortion, bribery and exploitation, such as being expected to be involved in criminal activities (i.e. selling drugs, fraud and burglary), became more noticeable (e.g., "work for me at the gym and sell the gear for me" P2, "bring your sister and I'll even pay you" P23, "if you want the phone you should stop playing games" P35). Extortion usually overlapped with a direct threat (discussed in more detail in the paragraphs below) as the example highlights below:

Right just going to show your family your true colours - so you have 10 minutes for it to send or everything moved across to Facebook... Well, your time was up the other day and yet I still gave you a chance
goodbye your nudes are being posted (P5).

Where there were multiple perpetrators involved, the victim appears to become more of a commodity that was either manhandled or passed around between co-offenders (e.g., "I will take the back and you can take the front" P31, "are we ketting her up again for another threesome" P42). In a lone perpetrator case, one perpetrator appeared to objectify or reveal their entitlement or urge to abuse a potential child victim (e.g., "I want to rape your 9-year-old sister" P38).

The perpetrators would also get angry with, and make threats towards their victims, potentially to intimidate them either directly or indirectly (e.g., "you live there don't you" [video of himself walking down my street] P11). Direct threats ranged from threats of physical violence to the victim, their friends, and their family (e.g., "If you don't do it I will punch you" P26, "you won't see your family if you don't do whatever I say" P48) or embarrassing them in person or online or by threatening sexual violence (e.g., "I'll take your virginity up the ass" P24).

The perpetrator would also threaten suicide (e.g., "I will kill myself if you don't tell me you love me" P44) or would suggest that their victim kills or harms themselves (e.g., "why don't ya just kill yourself?" P27, "Drink bleach" P41).

This appeared to be a way of controlling the victim to perform sexual acts or for the victims to reassure the perpetrator about their own suspicions.

Humiliation. The perpetrator finds various methods to humiliate, intimidate or make a victim subordinate whilst claiming ownership of them. If humiliating a victim, the perpetrator might laugh at them directly or encourage others to laugh at their expense either by reading out the victim's messages or taking pictures of the victim to share with others via social media as punishment (e.g., "who wants this slags nudes. Might teach her to keep messing people around. Her names *****on KIK and Insta. Okay posted" P40).

The Role of Ownership in Victim-Perpetrator Communications.

Perpetrators appear to claim ownership of the victim either by stating that the victim is theirs as a belonging (e.g., "I'd choose you again" P9, "you'll be all mine" P32) or to make sure that the victim avoids forming a relationship with anyone else (e.g., "we are boyfriend and girlfriend...don't do stuff with other boys" P21).

Normalising Adult-Child Relationship. The perpetrator appears to attempt to normalise the adult-child relationship or involvement in sexual activity by seeking their thoughts on sex (e.g., "that get you hard and horny thinking about it?" P45, "what goes through your mind if you think about me picking you up under your bum with your legs wrapped around me - does that sound sexy?" P7).

Subordination and Degradation of Victims. The subordination and degradation of victims appears to involve further examples of claiming ownership of the victim by either physically marking them, treating them as a ‘playmate’ (e.g., “you are the best teen victim a paedo could ask for” P13) or by practising in rough sexual behaviours that could be described as Bondage, Discipline, Submission, and Sadomasochism (BDSM). Other examples involved the perpetrator suggesting ways to sell the victims for sex and kidnapping of the victim. The non-verbal processes that support the coercive control process for subordination and degradation of victims are summarised in more detail in the next section below.

6.2.7 Perpetrator Non-Verbal Communication Processes (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

Table 21 and written summaries below details the perpetrator non-verbal communication processes (pre and during the sexual act) and includes a) spatial proximity, b) non-sexual touch, c) sexual touch, and d) sexually violent touch. The most common was sexually violent touch (39%, $n = 283$) and the least common was non-sexual touch (9%, $n = 52$). This shows that perpetrators are mostly achieving sexual gratification by force and violence, which will be interpreted in Chapter 7. The perpetrator’s non-verbal processes were extracted from the victims’ descriptions in the police case files and are documented to provide contact CSE specific context to the verbal approaches.

Table 21

Perpetrator Non-Verbal Communication Process Frequencies for Pre and During the Sexual Act

Non-verbal process	Overall process frequency <i>N</i> = 610	Description	Example	Frequency of subcategories for non-verbal process
Spatial proximity	86 (14%)	The positioning or changing the distance between the perpetrator and victim to signal a more intimate connection	Accidental touching moving closer sat closer on bed moving to quieter location (e.g., upstairs bedroom, quiet area of park, in car)	15 (17%) 26 (30%) 12 (14%) 33 (38%)
Non-sexual touch	52 (9%)	The touch of a non-intimate body part	Hand on: arm face shoulder leg cheek	8 (15%) 6 (12%) 14 (27%) 22 (42%) 2 (4%)
Sexual touch	189 (31%)	The touch of an intimate body part	Kissing perp touching intimate body parts (e.g., vagina, breasts, anus) perp moving victim's hand to touch perp's intimate body parts	44 (23%) 68 (36%) 77 (41%)
Sexually violent touch	283 (39%)	The violent or forceful touch of intimate body part and/or forced sex	Forced sex pushed objectified punched restrained imprisoned unconscious forced to commit a sexual act on another	101 (36%) 26 (9%) 41 (14%) 18 (6%) 13 (5%) 9 (3%) 8 (3%) 67 (24%)

The most frequent non-verbal move in the spatial proximity process was moving to a quieter location (38%). The most frequent non-verbal move in the non-sexual touch process was the perpetrator placing their hand on the victim's leg (42%). The most frequent non-verbal move in the sexual touch process was the perpetrator moving the victim's hand to touch the perpetrator's intimate body parts (41%). The most frequent non-verbal move in the sexually violent touch process was forced sex (36%). This shows that perpetrators isolate their victims and control the level of sexual gratification by force, either by the perpetrator raping the victim or by forcing the victim to touch the perpetrator's intimate body parts. The impact of this will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.7.1 Spatial Proximity

The spatial proximity process describes the positioning or changing of the physical distance between the perpetrator and victim to signal a more intimate connection. Examples include accidental touching (e.g. "he would brush past me when he was working" V78), moving closer (e.g. "he sat next to me on the bed" V12), or moving to a quieter location (e.g., "He wanted me to come upstairs to the bedroom" V43, "He took me over to the quiet area of park" V69, "She wanted to take me out in the car so we could chat" V68).

6.2.7.2 Non-Sexual Touch

The non-sexual touch process describes the touch of non-intimate body parts. Examples include placing a hand on the arm, the face, the shoulder, the leg, the cheek,

or the waist (e.g., “he wrapped his hands around my waist” V21, “she touched my leg in the car” V71, “he put two hands around my face” V78).

6.2.7.3 Sexual Touch

The sexual touch process describes the touch of an intimate body part. Examples include kissing (e.g., “he started kissing me” V50), the perpetrator touching intimate body parts (e.g., “he slapped my bottom” V2, “he put hands down my leggings and touched my vagina” V24, “he touched my boob and under my bra” V33), or the perpetrator moving the victim’s hand to touch private parts (e.g., “he moved my hand to touch his penis whilst he was driving” V26). The victims also reported regular episodes of sexual intercourse (e.g., “we had sex in the car, living room and on the bed” V42, “we were having sex 3 times a week between the ages of 14 and 16 years old” V66, “I was regularly expected to have anal sex” V31).

6.2.7.4 Sexually Violent Touch

The sexually violent touch process describes the violent or forceful touch of intimate body part and/or forced sex and was found to be the most common process. Examples are divided into the five differing categories include, firstly, forced sex (e.g., “he knocked the back of my knees, causing me to drop down. He grabbed my hair and forced my head into his penis, pushing my head up and down” V46, “he pushed me on the bonnet, face down and raped me” V35). Secondly, being pushed, punched, restrained (e.g., “he held my arms with one hand whilst covering my mouth to stop me from screaming” V55, “he demanded a blowjob, I said no, and he punched me in the stomach” V60, “he put a collar on me and pulled on it when I moved” V15, “he taped

my mouth” V26). Thirdly, being imprisoned (e.g., "he kidnapped me in the middle of the night. He locked me in car for 2 hours whilst he went to work. He returned as if nothing had happened and then wanted sex” V40). Fourthly, being humiliated or objectified (e.g., “he wrote “rape me” on my leg with a marker” V16, “he spread my vagina apart with his fingers and took a picture without my permission” V79 “everyone watched him rape me” V1). Fifthly, being forced to commit a sexual act on another or for co-offenders to force sex (e.g., “one had his fingers in my mouth to keep my mouth open and the other put his dick inside” V57, “he put his hands around my neck and said "get your pants off and start licking each other out" V7).

The following section will summarise the victim’s verbal and non-verbal responses to the perpetrator’s communication processes (pre and during the sexual act).

6.2.8 Victim Verbal Responses to Perpetrator Communication Processes (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

The victims’ verbal responses from the multi-modal discourse analysis are presented in written and tabular form below (see Table 22) to summarise the key findings. Victims ($n = 62$ of 80) appeared to respond to the perpetrator’s verbal approaches with either, (a) a desired, (b) mixed, or (c) undesired response. The most common response from a victim was a mixed response (50%, $n = 87$) followed by an equal split for undesired response (25%, $n = 42$) and desired (25%, $n = 42$). This shows that victims are more likely to respond in an ambiguous way to the perpetrator approaches. The individual verbal responses are detailed in the paragraph below.

Table 22*Victim Verbal Communication Process Frequencies for Pre and During the Sexual Act*

Victim verbal process	Overall process frequency references (N = 171)	Description	Frequency of individual verbal process
Desired	42 (25%)	Conveying acceptance, development or approval of topics,	8 (18%)
		requests or demands, returning	6 (14%)
		compliments/sexual questions,	18 (43%)
		sending material, friendly banter	10 (23%)
Mixed	87 (50%)	Conveying uncertainty/ambiguous, evasive responses,	42 (48%)
		challenging moves	35 (40%)
			10 (11%)
Undesired	42 (25%)	Rejection/refusing,	8 (19%)
		avoidance,	21 (50%)
		doubting/lack of trust	13 (31%)

The most frequent verbal process in the desired process was returning compliments/sexual questions (43%). The most frequent verbal process in the mixed process was conveying uncertainty/ambiguous responses (48%). The most frequent

verbal response in the undesired process was avoidance (50%). This shows that victims are likely to respond either positively (showing interest) or by being avoidant and ambiguous towards the perpetrator. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Further analysis of the discourse for each category is detailed under the desired, mixed, and undesired subheadings in Table 22 below to provide context for each category.

6.2.8.1 Desired Victim Verbal Responses

The data revealed that some victims would express a desired response in their verbal communications with perpetrators. This would include statements of approval towards the perpetrator, conveying approval/acceptance and desire, sending images/online material, wanting a mature partner detailed below.

Conveying Approval/Acceptance/And Desire. Victims would express approval/acceptance towards the perpetrator, which would involve endorsement of the relationship or the perpetrator's sexual touch (e.g., "I really like meeting you" V43, "I want you to touch me there" V5). Victims that were expressing their desire for the perpetrator might either explain that they were in love with the perpetrator or that they never wanted to be without them (e.g., "I know it's stupid because I'm only 13 but I really love you" V10, "you're my everything. I never want to lose you" V1).

Sending Images/Online Material. Victims would send perpetrators images and online material (i.e., nude pictures or masturbating videos) of themselves without being asked (e.g., "I've sent you a little something to get you through the day" [masturbating video] V55, "I thought you'd like to see my tits" V3).

Mature Partner. Some victims would explain that the perpetrator was the most important person in their life or justify why they were not interested in having a relationship with people their own age (e.g., "I like you too, some lads my age are just stupid and mess about" V6). This response might be in direct response to the perpetrator's flattery, but the outcome was usually successful in perpetuating their relationship, whether sexual or not after it was uttered.

6.2.8.2 Mixed Victim Verbal Responses

Results reveal that victims would sometimes be evasive and non-committal towards the perpetrator and convey uncertainty in their responses but still compelled to have sex as detailed below.

Emotional Confusion. Victims appeared to be in a state of emotional confusion when contemplating engaging with the sexual act which appeared to be in between feeling nervous or reluctant (e.g., “I’m just not sure if I want to” V56, “I’ve never done this before. I’m nervous” V74).

Compelled to Have Sex. Victims that were communicating a mixed response to the perpetrator would make some reference to an uncertainty about participating in a sexual act or highlight reasons why they were compelled to go through with the sexual act with the perpetrator (e.g., “ok I will. Just so you don’t get in a mood with me though” V52). However, these less explicit responses than the desired or undesired category would still likely result in the sexual act taking place.

6.2.8.3 Undesired Victim Verbal Response

Victims articulated a lack of interest in participating in a sexual act either explicitly or implicitly. This would include expressing rejection, refusal and dismissing advances, or implicit persuasion as below.

Explicit Rejection/Refusal and Dismissing Advances. The overt responses to stop the sexual act from either taking place or continuing might involve directly saying no, explaining that they wanted to stop (sometimes as a polite request) or asking the perpetrator to move away from them in an angry or violent manner (e.g., “just get off me, please stop” V48, “fuck off...I don’t want to do it” V39). Sometimes this overt response would be associated with the victim being in pain and no longer able to continue the sexual act (e.g., “no don’t...it hurts” V37).

Implicit Persuasion. The more implicit responses would involve the victim seemingly convincing the perpetrator that it would be wrong for their relationship to continue sexually and involve serious consequences (e.g., “if the police get involved, you will be in trouble, we best not do it” V76), or to highlight their own sexual naivety to prevent the sexual act from taking place (e.g., “I can’t - I’m waiting for the right person” V17). Other examples involving multiple victims would reveal that victims would use other communicative tactics to prevent them being alone with the perpetrator, other victims offering protection from a one-to-one scenario (e.g., “don’t leave me alone with him” V4).

6.2.9 Victim Non-Verbal Processes (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

Table 23 and written summaries below details the victims’ non-verbal processes pre and during the sexual act. This is categorised using the same headings as the verbal communication processes, which include a) desired, b) mixed, and c) undesired. The most frequent non-verbal category was undesired (23%), followed by mixed (55%), and

desired (21%). This shows that victims respond to perpetrator advances with uncertainty, which will be interpreted in Chapter 7.

Table 23

Victim Non-Verbal Communication Processes Frequencies for Pre and During the Sexual Act

Non-verbal process	Overall process frequency (N = 168)	Description	Example	Frequency of individual non-verbal process
Desired	36 (21%)	The victim's desired non-verbal process describes the conveying acceptance, approval or compliance by non-verbal actions involving non-sexual or sexual touch	Hugs	20 (56%)
			Kisses	10 (28%)
			touches without being asked	6 (17%)
Mixed	93 (55%)	The victim's mixed non-verbal process describes the conveying of uncertainty by non-verbal actions involving spatial re-positioning or proximity	Performs sexual act despite initially saying no	93 (100%)
Undesired	39 (23%)	The victim's undesired non-verbal process describes the spatial separation, rejection, avoidance or dismissing advances by non-verbal actions involving violent touch	moves self away	23 (59%)
			moves perpetrator away	5 (13%)
			looks away	6 (15%)
			pretends to sleep	5 (13%)

The most frequent non-verbal response in the desired process was the victim hugging the perpetrator (56%). The only non-verbal response in the mixed process was performing the sexual act despite initially saying no (100%). The most frequent non-verbal response in the undesired process was the victim moving themselves away from the perpetrator (59%). This shows that victims, although capable of showing affection, are likely to go through with the sexual act or make attempts to avoid it non-verbally. This will be discussed in Chapter 7. Although the written summaries below detail the non-verbal victim response the examples provided are verbatim as they described the non-verbal event.

6.2.9.1 Desired Victim Non-Verbal Response

The victim's desired non-verbal process describes the conveying acceptance, approval or compliance by non-verbal actions involving non-sexual or sexual touch. Examples include hugs, kisses, and touches without being asked (e.g., "I kissed him" V22, "I loved touching his body" V76), closer spatial proximity (e.g., I held his hand).

The victims' non-verbal responses indicate a level of reciprocation or desire towards the perpetrator to engage in sexual activity (acknowledging here the legal context of not being able to provide consent due to the victim's age).

6.2.9.2 Mixed Victim Non-Verbal Response

The victim's mixed non-verbal process describes the conveying of uncertainty by non-verbal actions involving spatial re-positioning or proximity. Examples include close spatial proximity but lying still, shrugs shoulders.

6.2.9.3 Undesired Victim Non-Verbal Response

The victim's undesired non-verbal process describes the spatial separation, rejection, avoidance or dismissing advances by non-verbal actions involving violent touch. Examples include distant spatial proximity (e.g., moves away self or perp, looks away, pretends to sleep) violent touch (e.g., pushed, punched, bitten).

Violent touch would be used to push the perpetrator away or to hurt the perpetrator enough to stop the sexual act taking place (e.g., "I pushed him off me" V15, "I bit him" V77, "he kept touching my leg and I batted his hand off" V62, "I punched and kicked him" V27). However, this was not as frequently used as the more subtle non-verbal ways used to avoid the perpetrator's sexual advances by re-positioning or changing the spatial proximity (e.g., "I sat with my legs crossed to make it harder for him to remove my pants" V51, "I left and hid from them" V18, "I tried to move head back to stop the kissing" V72, "moved as quickly as I could to another room" V39, "keep away from me" V32).

6.2.10 The Psycholinguistic Features of Contact CSE Typical Exploitative Language (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

For the psycholinguistic features of the contact CSE typical exploitative language (pre and during the sexual act), only t-tests comparing the significant LIWC variable outputs and LIWC general population benchmarks are summarised below in written formats. The results for all non-significant LIWC comparisons can be found in Appendix G. The hypothesis will be addressed before the significant t-test results are summarised below.

The results of the quantitative analysis did support the researcher's hypothesis that there were psycholinguistic differences for perpetrator at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks.

Hypothesis 2: Accepted

As with the perpetrator t-tests in section 6.2.2 above, Table 15 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for LIWC natural speech benchmarks in relation to the seven selected variables that were compared for significant differences with the overall perpetrator and victim language (pre and during) in the sections 6.2.10.1 and 6.2.10.2 below.

6.2.10.1 Overall Perpetrator Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For overall perpetrator comparisons with natural speech benchmarks, t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks. Clout and sexual word use was significantly higher whilst positive emotion and reward word use was significantly lower.

Significant differences were found between perpetrators (pre and during the sexual act) and general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(49) = 2.83, p = .003$, higher sexual, $t(49) = 6.19, p < .001$, lower positive emotion $t(49) = -7.66, p < .001$ and lower reward, $t(49) = -2.33, p = .01$. The largest effect size was sexual (0.88) and positive emotion (-1.08). This shows that the overall language that perpetrators use to engage with victims is confident and sexual

with little reliance on positive approaches or need to discuss the benefits of the relationship. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

To explore this further, the overall perpetrator comparisons are differentiated via the 5 communicative stages below (pre and during the sexual act). T-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks. All 5 perpetrator pre and during communicative processes were significantly high in clout and sexual words. Access and approach differed to the other processes with a significantly low use of negative emotion words, conversely, the coercive control, rapport building, and risk assessment processes were significantly high in negative emotion. All processes, apart from rapport building had a significantly low use of positive emotion words. Four out of five processes, excluding access and approach had significantly high personal pronoun use and risk words. The use of reward words was significantly low in the coercive control process.

Access and approach. Significant differences were found between the perpetrator's access and approach process and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to higher clout, $t(63) = 5.20$, $p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(63) = 1.93$, $p = .03$, lower negative emotion, $t(63) = -14.23$, $p < .001$, and lower positive emotion, $t(63) = -3.96$, $p < .001$. The largest effect size was negative emotion (-1.78) followed by a medium effect size of clout (0.65).

Rapport building and trust development. Significant differences were found between the perpetrator rapport building and trust development processes and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher clout, $t(304) = 10.50$, $p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(304) = 12.66$, $p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(304) = 7.16$, $p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(304) = 24.73$, $p < .001$, and higher risk, $t(304) = 6.55$, $p < .001$. The largest effect size was personal pronouns (1.42), followed by a medium size effect for clout (0.60) and sexual (0.73).

Risk assessment and compliance testing. Significant differences were found between the perpetrator risk assessment and compliance testing processes and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher clout, $t(255) = 7.85$, $p < .001$, higher sexual $t(255) = 10.03$, $p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(255) = 4.38$, $p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(255) = -4.19$, $p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(255) = 15.65$, $p < .001$, and higher risk, $t(255) = 5.09$, $p < .001$. The largest effect size was personal pronouns (0.98).

Sexual Gratification. Significant differences were found between the perpetrator sexual gratification processes and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher clout, $t(324) = 5.84$, $p < .001$, higher sexual $t(324) = 11.94$, $p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(324) = -4.39$, $p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(324) = 4.51$, $p < .001$, and higher risk, $t(324) = 2.00$, $p = .02$. The medium effect was sexual (0.66).

Coercive Control. Significant differences were found between the perpetrator coercive control processes and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: higher clout, $t(370) = 7.76, p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(370) = 7.29, p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(370) = 4.84, p < .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(370) = -11.27, p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(370) = 4.29, p < .001$, lower reward, $t(370) = -2.75, p = .003$, and higher risk, $t(370) = 1.49, p = .07$. A medium effect size was found for positive emotion (-0.59).

This shows that perpetrators avoid using negative emotion words during the initial approach whereas they use more negative emotion words during the coercive control, rapport building, and risk assessment processes, which is perhaps unsurprising because of the level of pressure, compliance testing and coercion occurs in accordance with the discourse analysis. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.10.2 Overall Victims' Comparisons with Natural Speech Benchmarks

For victims' comparisons with natural speech benchmarks, t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between victims at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks. Clout and positive emotion and reward words were all significantly lower, however personal pronoun and sexual word use was significantly higher.

Significant differences were found between victims (pre and during) and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(79) = -10.31, p < .001$, higher sexual, $t(79) = 6.62, p < .001$, lower positive

emotion $t(79) = -20.51$, $p = <.001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(79) = 8.34$, $p = <.001$, and lower reward, $t(79) = -30.62$, $p = <.001$. The largest effect size was clout (-1.15), positive emotion (-2.29), personal pronoun (0.93) and reward (-3.42). This shows that victims do not respond to perpetrators positively, or with confidence, and are not likely to discuss rewards, but are likely to engage in sexual conversation and often refer to each other (i.e., I and you).

The overall victim comparisons are differentiated via the 3 communicative stages below (pre and during the sexual act). T-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the victims at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks. All three processes had significantly high personal pronoun use and sexual words. The mixed process had significantly lower clout and higher risk words. Positive emotion was only significantly high in the desired process, otherwise it was significantly low for mixed and undesired.

Desired. Significant differences were found between victims' desired responses and the general population natural speech benchmarks LIWC scores in relation to higher sexual, $t(41) = 3.52, p = .002$, higher positive emotion, $t(41) = -13.25, p = <.001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(41) = -1.82, p = .05$. A medium effect size was positive emotion (0.55) and personal pronoun (0.54).

Mixed. Significant differences were found between victims' mixed responses and the general population natural speech benchmarks in LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(86) = -5.04, p = <.001$, higher sexual $t(86) = 4.28, p = <.001$, higher negative emotion, $t(86) = 5.30, p = <.001$, lower positive emotion, $t(86) = -1.78, p = .04$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(86) = 3.33, p = <.001$, and higher risk, $t(86) = 2.33, p = .01$. The medium effect size was clout (-0.54) and negative emotion (0.57).

Undesired. Significant differences were found between victims' undesired responses and the general population natural speech benchmarks LIWC scores in relation to: lower clout, $t(80) = -4.40, p = <.001$, higher sexual, $t(80) = 2.01, p = .02$, higher negative emotion, $t(80) = 3.11, p = .001$, lower positive emotion, $t(80) = -4.20, p = <.001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(80) = 2.54, p = .01$, and higher risk, $t(80) = 2.00, p = .02$. No medium or high effect sizes were present.

This shows that victims are not positive (unless in their desired response) or confident in their responses and are more likely to discuss risks. This will be discussed

in more detail in Chapter 7. Following the analysis of research question one, section 6.3 below will now detail the findings for research question two.

6.3 Research Question 2 Findings

6.3.1 The Typical Contact CSE Retrospective Discursive Constructs

The following sections will outline the perpetrator and the victim's retrospective accounts as part of the qualitative multi-modal discourse analysis, presenting the results from the open coding (i.e., admit/deny) before the adapted coding framework (as detailed in Chapter 5 and Table 24 below).

6.3.1.1 Admit/Deny Justifications for Lone and Group Perpetrators

At the open coding phase, the lone and group perpetrator retrospective justifications were divided into the initial direction of the interviews (i.e., admit, deny or no comment). The group perpetrator was considered a distinct and valuable category to report on by the researcher, despite only 13 perpetrators being included in the dataset. This allowed comparisons to be made with those offending on their own or in groups and either admitting or denying their offence, which as Chapter 2 reports, is identified as a research gap. The open coding discourse analysis revealed that all perpetrators were most likely to deny their involvement (all providing alternative justifications) in the CSE related offences (particularly when in groups), with some providing a "no comment" response. Where perpetrators admitted the offence, a justification was always provided as to why they were involved with the victim. Table 24 below shows the frequency of

use expressed as a number of the total between all three categories of interview direction for lone perpetrators and group perpetrators.

Table 24

Interview Directions for Lone and Group Perpetrators

Interview Direction (N = 1620)	Lone (N = 37)	Group (N = 13)
Admit with justification (n = 248)	8 (16%)	0
Deny with justification (n = 1366)	23 (46%)	13 (26%)
No comment (n = 6)	6 (12%)	0

The emergent admit or deny justification headings were subsequently categorised to expand on the initial interview direction using the adapted coding frameworks as detailed in Chapter 5.

The following Table 25 and written examples provides frequencies and a summary of the eight retrospective justifications used by both lone and group perpetrators (from the admitting and denying interview directions as detailed in Table 24 above). The eight retrospective justifications include: a) nature of harm, b) uncontrollability, c) dangerous world, d) entitlement, e) child as sexual being, f) child as emotional support, g) denial of facts, planning or intent, and h) reduced accountability or shifting the blame. The most common justification was reduced accountability or shifting the blame (24%) and the least likely justification was uncontrollability (5%).

Table 25*Perpetrator Retrospective Justification Frequencies for RQ2*

Coding construct	Overall Category Frequency (N = 1620)	Explanation	Subcategory and individual frequency
Nature of harm Ward & Keenan (1999)	88 (5%)	Degree of harm – The sexual act was of little or no consequence (or causes extreme harm). Sex is inherently beneficial as we are all sexual beings	a) romantic relationship / expressions of love (27) b) perpetrators apparent altruistic intentions (17) c) educating (10) d) just friends/Game (34)
Uncontrollability Ward & Keenan (1999)	75 (5%)	Beyond the perpetrators control e.g., sexual urges	reluctant feelings/socially legally wrong (75)
Dangerous world Ward & Keenan (1999)	138 (9%)	The world is a threatening place and can harm the perpetrator. A response is to protect self, fight back or punish. Another response is to trust children more than adults because they are more reliable.	a) victim grievance (87) b) childhood adversity (51)
Entitlement Ward & Keenan (1999)	131 (8%)	Perpetrator is superior to others (i.e., victim) and meeting their sexual demands is to be expected.	Entitled to sexual gratification (131)
Child as sexual being Ward & Keenan (1999)	135 (8%)	Children are driven by the need for pleasure. They have sexual desires and will initiate sex when they want it. Children are sexual objects that can be used as a sexual stimulus to meet one's sexual needs.	a) sexually experimenting (15) b) apparent sexually aroused response (120)
Child as emotional support (adapted from non-sexual engagement: emotional regulation, Kettleborough & Merdian, 2017 and child as partner, Paquette & Cortoni, 2020)	122 (8%)	Children can meet adults on an emotional level and offer reassurance.	a) inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits (56) b) victim attentiveness and reassurance (66)
Denial of facts (Barbaree, 1991), planning or intent (Auburn & Lea, 2003; De Silva et al., 2018; Happel & Auffrey, 1995)	287 (18%)	Denying the offence, or facts of the case, or the planning and intent of the crime. Total innocence. The Offender entered the lead up to the offence without prior planning. There by association.	a) did not know victim (46) b) scene setting (21) c) stating innocence of the perpetrator's co-offenders (37) d) dissociating self from paedophile status (77) e) disputing forensic evidence (35) f) unaware of victim's age (68)
Reduced accountability (Schneider & Wright, 2004) or shifting the blame (Auburn & Lea, 2003; De Silva et al., 2018)	385 (24%)	Mitigate responsibility for involvement in the offense-related thoughts and actions. Being passive or shifting the blame to someone else. Anomalous criminal response was provoked by someone with an active agentic position.	a) victim maturity (76) b) victim incited (64) c) discrediting victim's version of events (99) d) shifting the blame to co-offenders (47) e) impaired understanding (31) f) losing inhibitions from drug or alcohol use (68)

The most common retrospective justification for nature of harm was just friends/game ($n = 34$, 39%). The most common retrospective justification for uncontrollability was reluctant feelings/socially legally wrong ($n = 75$, 100%). The most common retrospective justification for dangerous world was victim grievance ($n = 87$, 63%). The most common retrospective justification for entitlement was entitled to sexual gratification ($n = 131$, 100%). The most common retrospective justification for child as sexual being was apparent sexually aroused response ($n = 120$, 89%). The most common retrospective justification for child as emotional support and partner was victim attentiveness and reassurance ($n = 66$, 54%). The most common retrospective justification for reduced accountability or shifting the blame was discrediting victim's version of events ($n = 99$, %26). This shows that perpetrators are typically trying to blame/discredit victims, minimise the offence, or appearing to need victims sexually or for emotional stability, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Verbatim examples are provided below for each of the eight discursive constructs (as detailed in Table 25 above).

6.3.1.2 Nature of Harm

The nature of harm justification was used to explain how the degree of harm caused to the victim was minimal (or extreme) and included a) romantic relationship/expression of love, b) perpetrators' apparent altruistic intentions, c) educating, and d) just friends/game as detailed below.

Romantic Relationship/Expressions of Love. Perpetrators describe themselves as being in a romantic relationship with the victim (e.g., “it quickly escalated into being a romantic relationship” P4) and would describe their positive feelings towards the victim (e.g., “I loved him” P40, “I became emotionally involved” P1). Therefore, suggesting that there was no intended harm towards the victim.

Perpetrators’ Apparent Altruistic Intentions. Where perpetrators displayed their apparent altruistic intentions, the offering support construct, the perpetrator explained their involvement with the victim as supportive in nature (e.g., “I was a listening ear” P10, “I thought she might just want to talk about these things like I did when I was her age. She said she liked talking to me” P47), this was sometimes attributed to the lack of self-esteem and confidence that the victim had in themselves (e.g., “she had no confidence in herself” P28).

Educating. The perpetrator would minimise the level of harm caused by suggesting that the victim needed to be taught about sex and therefore the perpetrator was acting as an educator (e.g., “well she was still a virgin and needed to know about sex like I did at that age” P24, “I just taught her a few things about sex that I thought might help her” P32).

Just friends/Game. Alternatively, the perpetrator would reframe the contact with the victim to be something other than a sexual assault, such as a game to establish the interaction as harmless fun (e.g., “we were only messing about and wrestling if I touched” P44, “we were just mates having a laugh – I didn’t want anything else” P19).

6.3.1.3 Uncontrollability

The uncontrollability justification was used to explain that the crime was beyond the perpetrator's control and included reluctant feelings/socially legally wrong, as detailed below.

Reluctant Feelings/Socially and Legally Wrong. The perpetrator would also describe some hesitancy in allowing themselves to feel positively towards the victim or their failed attempts to halt any feelings (e.g., "I hate how much I feel for him" P39). The perpetrator would acknowledge the illegal or socially unacceptable nature of the relationship (e.g., I knew it was wrong, but I couldn't stop it, I know I shouldn't be attracted to children" P50, "I never intended to do anything illegal" P16).

6.3.1.4 Dangerous World

The dangerous world justification is used to explain that the world can be (or has been) a threatening place towards the perpetrator, which results in the perpetrator seeking safe relationships in children or protecting themselves against harm. The justifications include a) victim grievance, and b) childhood adversity, as detailed below.

Victim Grievance. The perpetrator would explain motives for why the victim was making allegations against the perpetrator, which included a grievance or revenge against the perpetrator (e.g., “she is just jealous and getting back at her ex- just playing stupid games” P8, “she’s been forced into making the allegation” P21). Some perpetrators believed that they were the victim or the aggrieved (e.g., “I am the victim here...how could he say that about me” P41, “I was left feeling cheap when he got up and left after sex” P5).

Childhood Adversity. Some perpetrators would also refer to their own childhood adversity as a reason for their involvement in the CSE relationship (e.g., “I have always struggled with my mental health since I was a kid and after my dad left” P12. “My mum just let me run wild and I was sexually abused when I was 5” P45,).

6.3.1.5 Entitlement

The entitlement justification is used to explain that the perpetrator’s sexual needs are superior to the needs of the victim and are expected to be met, which includes entitled to sexual gratification as below.

Entitled To Sexual Gratification. The perpetrator would explain the need to act on their desires and lustful feelings (e.g., “I wanted to have sex with him” P18, “I’ve never felt such sexual chemistry before and I just wanted to sleep with her” P43, “I only wanted a blow job” P2). Children appear to be sexual objects that are used as a sexual stimulus to meet the perpetrator’s sexual needs.

6.3.1.6 Child as Sexual Beings

The child as sexual beings or justification is used to explain how children are driven by their own sexual desires and need for pleasure and will initiate or experiment with sex when needed. This included a) sexually experimenting, and b) displayed sexually aroused response.

Sexually Experimenting. The perpetrator explained that the victim would be keen to experiment sexually (“e.g., “he wanted to explore his sexuality on me” P26, “she wanted to know what it felt like to suck someone off” P37).

Apparent Sexual Aroused Response. The perpetrator also argued that the victim displayed sexual arousal by not actively making attempts to reject the perpetrator’s sexual approach or if they appeared sexually interested. The perpetrator used this justification to establish that they had just complied with the victim by satisfying them sexually (e.g., “well he didn’t reject it” P27, “they were loving it, so I just continued it” P48, “they were just turned on” P11).

6.3.1.7 Child as Emotional Support

The child as emotional support justification is used to explain how victims were meeting adults on an emotional level and offering them reassurance, which includes a) inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits, and b) victim attentiveness and reassurance, as below.

Inadequate Social Skills and Intimacy Deficits. Perpetrators appeared to seek a level of sympathy or hold self-defeatist beliefs for their involvement in the CSE related offences. The perpetrators appeared to excuse wanting the relationship because of their own inadequate social skills or intimacy deficits (e.g., “I have difficulty relating to other adults” P46, “I don't have any friends and have been looking after my mum for the last 10 years” P34).

Victim Attentiveness and Reassurance. Perpetrators would describe the benefits from the emotional bond and bolstering that they were getting from the victim. This would include how the victim flattered the perpetrator (e.g., “I didn't want to stop talking because she showed an interest in me and said things that made me happy” P5). The perpetrator would describe how the victim had a direct impact on their feelings of happiness. (e.g., “he was attentive and caring” P3). The perpetrator also described how they would receive reassurance from the victim about their CSE relationship (e.g., “she reassured me that it wasn't wrong and told me not to worry as we would always be together” P20).

6.3.1.8 Denial of Facts, Planning, or Intent

The denial of facts, planning or intent justification is used to either deny the offence and portray innocence, to explain that they were only there by association or with no prior planning/intention. This included a) didn't know the victim, b) scene setting, c) stating innocence of co-offenders, d) dissociating self from paedophile status, e) disputing forensic evidence, f) unaware of victim's age, as detailed below.

Did not know the Victim. The perpetrator would disown the victim so to remove the possibility of being culpable and therefore leaving it for the police to prove otherwise (e.g., “I don’t even know her – I think this is a misunderstanding” P50, “I’ve never even heard of her – I don’t know what you are talking about” P40).

Scene Setting. Unlike individual perpetrators, group perpetrators would deny their offence by attempting to set the scene as to why they were in the area at the time of the offence with others in the group (e.g., “look...I only went out for a mish with my mates after work like I usually do but didn’t think it would all kick off like this” P33, “I didn’t know where they were planning on going” P9).

Stating Innocence of Co-offenders. Beyond providing reasons for being in the location, the perpetrators would state the collective innocence of the co-offenders. (e.g., “we did see XXX near the bus station and chatted but none of us fucking did anything to her” P25, “none of us are into any of that shit when we go out, we’ve got girlfriends” P15).

Dissociating Self from Paedophile Status. The perpetrators would try to dissociate themselves from being linked to hebephilia, paedophilia or grooming (e.g., “I’m not into kids, I’m not a paedo” P38, “I’m not a fucking nonce” P49). The perpetrator would try and restate where or how they found themselves with a younger person (“I’m not guilty of grooming – I just had sex believing he was 16”).

Disputing Forensic Evidence. The perpetrators would also dispute police evidence, such as forensic (i.e., DNA) or technological evidence, such as mobile phone messages (e.g., “she swore at me and I spat at her so maybe that is how the body fluids got on me – I don’t know” P22, “When XXX was meeting with this girl he used my Facebook messenger because he wanted to avoid her dad seeing it was him – they weren’t allowed to meet. I didn’t message her” P13)

Unaware of victim’s real age. Perpetrators would state that they were unaware of the victim’s age, or that they thought the victim was older. (e.g., “I told him I didn’t want anything to do with him when I found out his age” P14, “I asked him to meet up when he was 18” P32). Perpetrators would also describe the victim as lying about their younger age (e.g., “I thought this person was not as young as they were saying”). Alternatively, perpetrators would minimise the age difference or highlight the ambiguity of the law (e.g., “I thought the age difference wasn’t so bad, so I thought it was allowed” P17).

6.3.1.9 Reduced Accountability or Shifting the Blame

The reduced accountability or shifting the blame category was used to mitigate the perpetrator’s responsibility for involvement in the crime by blaming others or providing reasons for their passiveness. This included a) victim maturity, b) victim incited, c) discrediting victim’s version of events, d) shifting the blame to co-offenders, e) impaired understanding, f) losing inhibitions from drug or alcohol use, as below.

Victim Maturity. Perpetrators would attempt to reduce their accountability for the sexual relationship by emphasising the victim's high levels of maturity making it hard for the perpetrator to believe that the victim was a child ("he had an old head on his shoulders. It was easy to forget he was just a child" P25, "He never acted like a kid, he was mature...it was like we were on the same level" P16).

Victim Incited. The perpetrator would make the victim entirely culpable. The perpetrator would explain that the victim incited the sexual contact or relationship ("e.g., "she wanted to do stuff with me sexually...not me" P17, "she sent me the nudes" P35, "she was always coming on to me" P29). This also included the perpetrator being dominated by the victim (e.g., "he was the dominant one and topped me," "he knew what he wanted and when" P20)

Discrediting Victim's Version of Events. The perpetrator would attempt to discredit the victim or to use them as a scapegoat to attribute blame (e.g., "I can't believe that little whore is trying to blame this shit on us. We were only going to chill, and she was acting all slaggy in front of us. She asked us for threesomes, and we told the little slut to fuck off" P7). The discrediting of the victim would also involve the perpetrator stating that the victim was not consciously able to accuse them of any crime because they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol (e.g., "she was off her face on Ket...so how can she fucking say anything about what went on that night... I'm not into shagging a fucking corpse" P38). The perpetrator would frequently use derogatory names to describe the victim when discrediting them during the police interview. Perpetrators would also describe rejecting the victim during the offence (e.g., "she would come with my mate, but I wasn't interested in her" P46,).

Shifting the Blame to Co-offenders. For group perpetrators, one member of the group would attribute blame to another member of the group and deny their own involvement (e.g., "I had nothing to do with this...I'm not responsible for my mate" P8, "he just carried her into another room when she had sparked out on the other sofa. I didn't know he would be fucking rape her in there" P44). Another blame attribution centred around the co-offender being a more persuasive or violent individual which resulted in an element of fear from the perpetrator being interviewed (e.g., "he can be a nasty bastard at times...he just flips, and I won't mess with him" P3).

Impaired Understanding. Another reason provided by the perpetrator for lessening their understanding of the law or their offence related decision-making or actions was linked to having a recognised disability and therefore being unable to comprehend the gravity of the offences (e.g., “I have autism - I didn’t understand why I couldn’t cuddle her” P9, “My mum says I’m only about 8 in my head so I didn’t get it was not allowed” P41).

Losing Inhibitions from Drug or Alcohol Use. The inhibitors construct, highlights where perpetrators attempt to remove any responsibility due to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol and therefore being not responsible for their actions, particularly by losing their inhibitions (e.g., “Look I was smashed...I make stupid decisions when I’m pissed” P47, “I couldn’t tell what I was doing – I was high” P13, “I was too pissed – I can’t remember what I did” P7).

After exploring perpetrator justifications, the following section will detail how the victim explains their involvement in the CSE relationship by their retrospective accounts.

6.3.2 The Typical Contact CSE Victim Retrospective Discursive Constructs

Table 26 below details the victim’s retrospective accounts and will be divided into the three themes found in RQ 1 of Chapter 5, which includes a) desired, b) mixed and c) undesired. The most frequent victim justification was undesired (40%), followed

by mixed (35%) and desired (25%). This shows that victims perceive the CSE relationship as negative retrospectively, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 26

Victim Retrospective Justification Frequencies for RQ2

Victim Justification Construct	Overall category frequency (N = 264)	Examples	Frequencies of individual patterns
Desired (found in 14 case files)	65 (25%)	Positive feelings	19 (29%)
		Perpetrator Charms	26 (40%)
		Related to attraction	20 (31%)
Mixed (found in 20 case files)	93 (35%)	Mixed feelings	37 (40%)
		Pressure	28 (30%)
		Unwanted Labels	15 (16%)
		Perceived potential danger	13 (14%)
Undesired (found in 24 case files)	106 (40%)	Fear	32 (30%)
		Verbal and non-verbal attempts to remove self	19 (18%)
		Powerless	39 (37%)
		Impact of offence	12 (11%)

The most common victim justification in the desired category was their response to the perpetrator charms (40%). The most common victim justification in the mixed category was mixed feelings (40%). The most common victim justification in the undesired category was powerless (37%). This shows that victims discursively construct their CSE relationship as one that responded to the charm of the perpetrator but had mixed emotions about engaging with it and felt powerless during it. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7. Emergent justifications are explored in more detail within each of the three written summaries below.

6.3.2.1 Desired

Under the desired retrospective justification, the victims were positive about their interactions with the perpetrator and would explain reasons for engaging with them. This included a) positive feelings, b) perpetrator charm, and c) attraction as detailed below.

Positive Feelings. The victims would refer to the reasons why they liked being in a relationship with the perpetrator and how the perpetrator made them feel (e.g., “I felt unique, mature and special, and apparently the love of his life and it kind of felt good” V41, “I felt comfortable with him at first - he was protecting me” V79, “it was like a massive rush of excitement” V20).

Perpetrator Charm. The victims would describe the effectiveness of the perpetrator’s charms during their interactions (e.g., “he was always flirting and was such a charmer” V11, “we had flirty banter all the time” V54). This charm would also be found in group contexts (e.g., “they always told me I looked good” V67).

Attraction. Some victims appeared to be interested in the perpetrator’s deviant behaviours and attracted to the lifestyle that they were being offered (e.g. “I liked his bad boy ways...he was naughty like me” V63, “it’s exciting seeing a man in front of you with a big wad of cash saying get whatever you want” V5, “I was accepted as part of the gang and being part of it felt better than anything before” V14). The victims would also describe an awareness of the short-term nature of their (sexual) interactions with the perpetrators (e.g., “I knew it was only a hook-up, but I just liked being with him” V25).

6.3.2.2 Mixed

Under the mixed retrospective justification, the victims would explain their emotional confusion and pressure they felt to engage with the perpetrator, whilst also

wanting to distance themselves from any rape label. This included a) emotional confusion, b) rape label, c) pressure, and d) perceived potential danger.

Emotional Confusion. In the mixed construct, the victim described their mixed emotions or how confused they were about their feelings towards the perpetrator (e.g., “he was charming and friendly but at the same time creepy and horrible” V49, “I was excited and worried at the same time” V80).

Rape Label. The victim would also appear to struggle to describe the act as an offence for which the perpetrator might have been charged with (e.g., “I’m not saying I was raped but he definitely put me under pressure” V45, “I didn't want to think I'd been raped.... I didn't want to think that they would hurt me... I didn't want to think of myself as a victim” V34).

Pressure. Reference was made to the coercion or pressure that might have been exerted on the victim (e.g., “he got me to do it, but I don't know how” V59). The victim would highlight the added pressures of being in a relationship and attempting to keep the perpetrator happy (e.g., “I went along with it because he was my first boyfriend and if I didn't, he would get in a mood and become aggressive” V16).

Perceived Potential Danger. The victim would also describe their inability to remove themselves from the situation because of the perceived potential danger they were in, such as the physical imbalance between themselves and the perpetrator, intoxication or unfamiliar environment (e.g., “I felt I wasn't strong enough to get him off” V23, “I was in a strange place, so didn't know how to get home and just stayed” V56, “It was like I was dead but alive. I couldn't physically move. I couldn't speak but was awake” V8).

6.3.2.3 *Undesired*

Under the undesired retrospective justification, the victim would provide reasons for not wanting to be in a relationship with or engage with the perpetrator. This included a) fear, b) attempts to remove self, c) powerlessness d) impact of the offence as detailed below.

Fear. The victim would discuss reasons why they were reluctant to be with the perpetrator for fear of what they might do to them (e.g., “I was so naive. I was nervous about meeting him, so I’d asked him if he was going to hurt or rape me? I didn’t want to have sex with him” V9, “I worried about what he would do to me” V47, “I felt sick. I just wanted to get out of there” V61).

Attempts to Remove Self. The victim would describe how they made attempts to remove themselves from the sexual act, which would range from non-verbal (physical) to verbal responses (e.g., “I lied about being ill so I could leave” V73, “I tried to pull away...I just kept saying no” V30, “I punched and kicked him to try and get him off me but he wouldn’t” V36, “I told him no and that it hurts...I begged him to stop and then I shoved him off” V28).

Powerlessness. Some victims described how they felt threatened, powerless, or tricked into having sex with the perpetrator (e.g., “he wasn’t the person he was pretending to be. He stopped being nice. He just wanted sex” V53, “I knew that I had to go through with it. He knew where I lived and had already threatened me and my family” V70, “he just kept pushing me down onto the bed every time I tried to get up – I didn’t have the strength to fight him” V3).

Impact of the Offence. Victims also discussed the impact that the offence had had on them (e.g., “I don’t want him to get away with what he has done to me, and I don’t want him to do it to anyone else. People even call me names and give me abuse for what has happened” V13, “I’ve not been the same since” V44, “it just keeps happening to me again and again” V65).

The section will now detail the psycholinguistic features present in the victims' and perpetrators' retrospective accounts and compare with LIWC general natural speech benchmarks.

6.3.3 The Typical Psycholinguistic Features of Retrospective Accounts

For the psycholinguistic features of the retrospective accounts of contact CSE victims and perpetrators, only the t-tests comparing the significant LIWC variable outputs and pre and during and LIWC general population benchmarks are summarised below in written formats. The results for all non-significant LIWC comparisons can be found in Appendix G. The hypothesis will be addressed before the significant t-test results are summarised below.

The results of the analysis did support the researcher's hypothesis that there were psycholinguistic differences between retrospective accounts and both the victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and general population natural speech benchmarks. The significant differences are detailed below.

Hypothesis 3: Accepted

As with the perpetrator t-tests in section 6.2.2 above, Table 15 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for LIWC Natural Speech Benchmarks in relation to the seven selected variables that were compared for significant differences with the retrospective perpetrator and victim language in the sections 6.3.3.1 – 6.3.3.4 below.

6.3.3.1 Perpetrator Retrospective Account Comparisons with General Population Natural Speech Benchmarks

Significant differences were found between perpetrator's retrospective LIWC scores and general population natural speech benchmarks in relation to: higher sexual, $t(37) = 1.83, p = .04$, higher negative emotion, $t(37) = 3.07, p = .002$, lower positive emotion, $t(37) = -16.00, p < .001$, lower personal pronoun use, $t(37) = -4.01, p < .001$, and lower reward, $t(37) = -3.64, p < .001$. The largest effect size was found for positive emotion (-2.60) with medium effect sizes for personal pronoun use (-0.65), reward (-0.59) and negative emotion language (0.50).

T-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the perpetrator's retrospective accounts with natural speech benchmarks. Three of the LIWC categories were found to be significantly lower retrospectively (i.e., positive emotion, personal pronoun use, and reward) whilst two were significantly higher (i.e., sexual, and negative emotion). This shows that compared to general norms, perpetrators use more sexual words but with negative feelings and less discussion of rewards. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3.3.2 Victims' Retrospective Account Compared to General Population Natural Speech Benchmark

Significant differences were found between victims' retrospective LIWC scores and general population natural speech benchmarks in relation to: lower clout, $t(29) = -1.91, p = .03$, higher sexual, $t(29) = 4.14, p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(29) = 2.83, p = .004$, lower positive emotion, $t(29) = -4.99, p < .001$, higher personal pronoun use, $t(29) = 3.14, p = .002$, and higher risk, $t(29) = 2.06, p = .02$. The largest

effect size was found for positive emotion language (-0.91), with medium effect sizes found for sexual language (0.76), personal pronoun use (0.57) and negative emotion language (0.52).

For victims, four LIWC categories were significantly higher than benchmarks (i.e., sexual, negative emotion, personal pronouns, and risk) whilst clout and positive emotion were significantly lower than benchmarks.

6.3.3.3 Perpetrator Retrospective Account Comparisons with Perpetrator Pre and During

Significant differences were found between perpetrator's language pre and during the sexual act and the perpetrator retrospective accounts in relation to: lower clout, $t(37) = -2.90$, $p = .003$, lower sexual, $t(37) = -9.05$, $p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(37) = 3.10$, $p = .002$, lower positive emotion $t(37) = -6.19$, $p < .001$, lower personal pronoun, $t(37) = -4.26$, $p < .001$, and lower reward, $t(37) = -2.26$, $p = .02$. The largest effect sizes were for sexual (-1.47), positive emotion (-1.00), with a medium effect found for negative emotion (0.50) and personal pronouns (-0.69).

T-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and the retrospective stage. Five of the LIWC categories were found to be significantly lower retrospectively (i.e., clout, sexual, positive emotion, personal pronoun use, and reward). Only negative emotion was found to be significantly higher. This shows that perpetrators become less confident and avoid discussing sex, rewards or positive

emotion associated with the CSE emotion which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

6.3.3.4 Victim Retrospective Account Comparisons with Victim Pre and During

Significant differences were found between victims' language pre and during the sexual act and the victims' retrospective accounts in relation to higher clout, $t(29) = 3.90$, $p < .001$, higher negative emotion, $t(29) = 2.66$, $p = .01$, higher positive emotion $t(29) = 4.11$, $p < .001$, and lower reward, $t(29) = -1.95$, $p = .03$. A medium effect was found for clout (0.71) and positive emotion (0.75).

The t-tests showed that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the victims at the pre and during the sexual act stage and the retrospective stage. Three of the LIWC categories were found to be significantly higher retrospectively (i.e., clout, negative emotion, and positive emotion). Only reward was found to be significantly lower. This shows that victims become more confident and use more positive and negative emotion words retrospectively. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Overall, this shows that there were significant psycholinguistic differences in word use between the victims and perpetrators at the pre and during the sexual act stage and the retrospective stage. Both perpetrators and victims were significantly high in negative emotion and lower in reward words in their retrospective accounts. In the retrospective accounts, perpetrators were significantly lower in positive emotion whilst victims were significantly higher than the pre and during language. Perpetrators were

also significantly lower in clout, sexual, and personal pronoun use, retrospectively. The following section 6.4 presents a summary of the key findings.

6.4 Summary of Key Findings

Finally, for the purposes of clarity and to summarise the current chapter's key written findings for the thesis research questions one and two, Table 27 below provides a tabular summary, specifically, the typical exploitative language and psycholinguistics for the pre and during and retrospective accounts, which will form part of the proposed InTEL in Chapter 8.

Table 27*Summary of Key Findings*

Perpetrator and victim verbal and non-verbal communication patterns (pre and during the sexual act)				Perpetrator and victim (retrospective) verbal justifications	
Perpetrator		Victim		Perpetrator	Victim
Verbal	Non-Verbal	Verbal	Non-Verbal	Retrospective	Retrospective
<p>Access and approach (i.e., establishing contact via social media, discussing availability for meeting in person, opportunistic approaches).</p> <p>Risk assessment (i.e., testing boundaries and compliance, having regret).</p> <p>Rapport building & trust development (i.e., Showing interest, flattery, reassuring, asking questions, making promises of commitment).</p> <p>Sexual gratification (i.e., implicit or explicit sexual requests or demands, sharing fantasies).</p> <p>Coercive control (i.e., insults, threats, questioning, creating doubts, belittling, degrading, bribery).</p>	<p>Spatial Proximity (i.e., the positioning or changing the distance between the perpetrator and victim to signal a more intimate connection).</p> <p>Non-sexual touch (i.e., the touch of a non-intimate body part).</p> <p>Sexual touch (i.e., the touch of an intimate body part). <i>Examples:</i></p> <p>Sexually violent touch (i.e., violent or forceful touch of intimate body part and/or forced sex).</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., conveying acceptance, development, or approval of topics, requests or demands, threat compliance, returning compliments/sexual questions, sending material, friendly banter).</p> <p>Mixed (i.e., neither positive nor negative, conveying uncertainty, ambiguous, non-committed, evasive responses, challenging moves).</p> <p>Undesired (i.e., rejection, avoidance, dismissing advances, doubting, declining, refusing).</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., conveying acceptance, approval or compliance by non-verbal actions).</p> <p>Mixed (i.e., neither positive nor negative, conveying uncertainty by non-verbal actions).</p> <p>Undesired (i.e., spatial separation, rejection, avoidance or dismissing advances by non-verbal actions).</p>	<p>Nature of harm (i.e., minimising harm).</p> <p>Uncontrollability (i.e., reluctant feelings, knowing it was socially and legally wrong).</p> <p>Dangerous world (i.e., victim grievance against perpetrator, self-pity, self-blame, inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits).</p> <p>Entitlement (i.e., Lust, sexual chemistry, sexual activity).</p> <p>Children as sexual objects (i.e., victim instigated, victim did not reject).</p> <p>Children as emotional support (i.e., victim flattering, offering reassurance and showing attention to perp).</p> <p>Denial of facts, planning or intent (i.e., excuses or an alternative explanation provided for involvement).</p> <p>Reduced accountability & shifting the blame (i.e., giving other reasons for why they were not accountable for the sexual crimes).</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., positive feelings about the relationship or the perpetrator).</p> <p>Mixed (i.e., mixed feelings about the relationship or the perpetrator, describing pressure, confusion, intoxication, dissociation or zoning out).</p> <p>Undesired (i.e., fearful or regretful feelings towards the relationship or perpetrator or descriptions of how they attempted to remove themselves or felt powerless).</p>

Psycholinguistic Indicators (Pre & During the Sexual Act)		Psycholinguistic Indicators (Retrospective)	
Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim
higher clout	lower clout	higher sexual	lower clout
higher sexual	higher sexual	higher negative emotion	higher sexual
lower positive emotion	lower positive emotion	lower positive emotion	higher negative emotion
lower reward	higher personal pronoun use	lower personal pronoun use	lower positive emotion
	lower reward	lower reward	higher personal pronoun use
			higher risk

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter firstly presented the descriptive results detailing the typical perpetrator, victim, offences, and associated psycholinguistics. This revealed some linguistic differences between race, age and gender, however, similarities existed between previous offending histories, current convictions and offending context. The chapter also addressed the thesis research questions by outlining typical exploitative language between the contact CSE victim and perpetrator (i.e., pre and during, retrospective, verbal and non-verbal), resulting from a multi-modal discourse and psycholinguistic analysis. To summarise, the findings revealed that perpetrators communicative approaches involve showing interest, love and some vulnerability, whilst also exposing some controlling features, and a common concern for protecting themselves. Victim's responses were predominantly mixed, leading to a hesitant or apathetic response. Both perpetrators and victims appeared to use proxemics to either encourage sexual activity or to attempt to remove themselves from engaging in it.

Retrospective accounts revealed a shift in the way the victim or perpetrator interpreted the pre and during sexual act stages. Perpetrators were most likely to deny the offence, providing justifications why they found themselves with the victim, whilst victims appeared to feel more negative about the initial interactions. Until the present study, no research appears to have combined the in-crime thoughts and retrospective accounts to see how they compare, either in discourse or psycholinguistics. The following Chapter 7 interprets the findings from the current chapter, whilst the

upcoming chapters outline the implications for this research for safeguarding and law enforcement practice.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Key Findings

7.1 Introduction

This chapter integrates and interprets the various phases of analysis (i.e., the LIWC and multi-modal discourse analysis) and results detailed in the summary of key findings in Chapter 6. This chapter situates the key thesis findings within the context of previous research related to contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics and other pertinent child sexual offending literature. This chapter starts by summarising the key findings, before expanding on the emerging demographic and offence profile patterns for the typical CSE perpetrator, victim and offences found within Chapter 6. Following this, the verbal and non-verbal communication processes and linguistic differences that exist between the contact CSE perpetrator and the victim (pre and during the sexual act) are discussed, addressing research question one. Finally, the retrospective discursive constructs of the contact CSE victim and perpetrators are interpreted to address research question 2, and distinctions are made between the pre and during and retrospective patterns. Limitations for both research question one and two are addressed.

7.1.1 Aim

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and interpret the thesis key findings from Chapter 6 on the contact CSE psycholinguistic features and communication patterns (section 6.2) and retrospective discursive constructs (section 6.3), and to contextualise with how they relate to existing literature.

7.2 Summary of the Thesis Key Findings

Reiterating the original research problem identified in the initial chapters of this thesis, empirical evidence exploring contact CSE is scarce, which is currently preventing the capacity to have an effective and evidence based safeguarding response. The thesis research questions have focused on providing a contribution to understanding the potential nuanced complexities that exist within the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic. To recap, this relates to the illegal interaction between a perpetrator and the victim, sometimes involving more than one offender or victim, and are summarised below.

Addressing research question one, the findings reveal that there are typical psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE. Firstly, this includes a typical profile of the demographic and psycholinguistic features of both the contact CSE victim and perpetrator, concerning age, gender, ethnicity, and offences. Differences were significant between the demographics and resulted in hypothesis one being accepted.

Secondly, five typical verbal and four non-verbal perpetrator communication patterns were identified, occurring at the pre and during the sexual act stage of exploitation, alongside three victim verbal and non-verbal responses. The perpetrator's verbal communicative patterns involved (in the order of most common) a) coercive control, b) sexual gratification, c) rapport building and trust development, d) risk assessment and compliance testing, and e) access and approach. The perpetrator's non-

verbal communication processes involved a) spatial proximity, b) non-sexual touch, c) sexual touch, and d) sexually violent touch. The victim's verbal communicative response involved a) desired, b) mixed, and c) undesired, with the mixed response being most common and desired being the least. However, non-verbal responses differed in order, whereby the most common was undesired rather than mixed, with desired remaining as least common. Finally, significant psycholinguistic differences were established for both the contact CSE perpetrator and victim verbal communication patterns at the pre and during the sexual act stage. As a result, hypothesis two was accepted.

Addressing research question two, the findings reveal that there are typical retrospective discursive constructions for both the contact CSE perpetrator and victim, providing justifications for their relationship within the context of a criminal investigation. The seven perpetrators' retrospective constructions, from most common to least include a) reduced accountability & shifting the blame, b) denial of facts, planning or intent, c) dangerous world, d) child as sexual beings, e) entitlement, f) child as emotional support, g) nature of harm, and h) uncontrollability. The victims' retrospective constructions included a) desired, b) mixed, and c) undesired with the undesired process being most common, followed by mixed and desired. Furthermore, significant psycholinguistic profiles were established for the contact CSE perpetrator and victim retrospective discursive constructions, and comparisons were drawn with the pre and during profiles. As a result, hypothesis three was accepted.

The thesis findings are congruent with previous online and child sexual offending literature as the interpretations of the key findings reveals below.

7.3 Interpretation of the Thesis Key Findings for RQ1

7.3.1 The Typical Perpetrator, Victim and Offences

Providing context to the CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic, the descriptive statistics reported in Chapter 6 for the typical CSE perpetrator supports previous research exploring perpetrator characteristics, particularly with regards to the debate and stereotyping around CSE being a racially motivated crime, where perpetrators are more likely to be white than Asian (Cockbain & Tufail, 2020; OCC, 2012; Senker et al, 2020; Walker et al., 2018). Congruent with previous research (Senker et al, 2020), those from other ethnic backgrounds were over-represented within the sample, in comparison to other local and national comparisons from the most recent census data. Similar to the reported characteristics in Chapter 6, the Home Office (2020) key findings for group based CSE offending, revealed that perpetrators were more likely to be male, under 30, older than lone perpetrators, ranging from a mix of social backgrounds and sharing commonalities of ethnicity, lifestyle and employment. Consistent with the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) of reported Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) report in 2022, the contact CSE perpetrator is heavily gendered, whereby males are more likely to abuse females. Despite this, the thesis findings revealed, albeit small in numbers, that females are also committing contact CSE crimes. Prevalence data on female sexual offenders is recognised to be unrepresentative of the actual problem (Cortoni et al., 2017), suggested to be due to societal stigma (Wendel,

2023), so it is likely that the thesis sample does not reflect the true female contact CSE perpetrator population.

Although research relating to online CSE report comparable profiles of white, young, single and unemployed perpetrators (Babchishin et al., 2011), there were some differences to the current thesis findings for contact CSE perpetrators with employment by Walker, Pillinger & Brown (2018b). In particular, perpetrators of online abuse were more likely to be working in professional jobs, which included positions of authority, also observed by Alexy et al. (2005), however, the contact CSE perpetrators detailed in Chapter 6 were more likely to be unemployed or work in low skilled jobs. As Webster et al. (2012) found from research involving online perpetrators, many had a high IQ, but had not achieved good levels of educational attainment and therefore this might explain the employment status of the contact CSE perpetrators in the current research.

Contradictory to Webster et al.'s (2012) online perpetrator research, Chapter 6 revealed that perpetrators were more likely to have previous convictions, and over half with repeat convictions. This is congruent with other earlier research involving convicted sex offenders who were also involved in other criminal activity (Soothill & Francis, 1999; Soothill et al, 2000). In the current research, the most common previous convictions involved violence, sexual offences, and burglary. It has been suggested that there are interrelationships between serious types of previous offending (Ramirez et al., 2015; Soothill et al., 2002). Although only a small number of previous convictions involving abductions or kidnapping were detailed in this study, Soothill et al. (2002) found that the offence of kidnapping was a potential precursor offence for both serious

sexual assault and murder. This has a potential bearing on how sex offender management agencies (i.e., police or probation) assess the likelihood of the perpetrator's future risk of significant harm. Howard et al. (2023) in a MOJ report on the escalation in the severity of offending behaviour, recommends effective therapeutic intervention to prevent further offending in cases where escalation is likely.

The typical CSE victim reported in Chapter 6 is also in line with previous research regarding average ages between 12 and 15 years (Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2017) and mostly female (Bereelowitz et al., 2012; Home Office, 2020; NPCC, 2015). Positively, in response to the predominant female victim profile, there are targets to end the recognised gender inequality and violence against girls, however, there is also the acknowledgement that male victims are underrepresented and have been relatively excluded with policy, research, and interventions (Josenhans et al., 2020). There is also a recognition in more recent research that male victims are more typical in sexual offences involving indecent images and younger children (VKPP, 2022).

From the current findings, victims, like perpetrators were found to have a history of criminality, with police records revealing prior convictions and repeat offending. Although, this finding is consistent with previous research which reported 40% of victims having offending records, with offences being considered symptomatic of CSE (Cockbain & Brayley, 2012), the percentage of victim offending records in the current findings explored here was nearly 29% lower, yet it is unclear why. Furthermore, Cockbain and Brayley (2012) found that children were most likely to be recognised as

offenders first before victims, despite the likely coercion and sexual violence associated with CSE perpetration.

In terms of the typical CSE offences, current perpetrator convictions found in this study, the most common convictions were rape of a female (under 13) and engaging in sexual communications with a child. Despite the average age of the victims within the sample being 14 years, it appeared less likely in this study for police to convict rape or sexual assault (for under 16) offences. Perhaps offences against younger children might be easier to convict as the courts believe that the sexual activity could not be consensual in comparison to that of an older child. This could also be associated with under 13s making “better” victims for juries to believe rather than older teenagers who have infamously been described as not making credible witnesses (Home Affairs Committee, 2013). Furthermore, digital sexual communication evidence is likely to positively impact on the viability of cases and numbers progressing through to charge for the sexual communications with a child offence, however, such evidence is not always reported as having a positive impact for victims if it discredits their credibility (George & Ferguson, 2021).

The typical offences outlined in Chapter 6 reveal potential difficulties in detecting and disrupting CSE related crimes because of the variation in the location and methods of offending, which has already been documented by Radcliffe et al. (2020), where most sexual offences might be taking place in private party houses or in cars. That said, some of the more opportunistic offences occur in parks or in places where young people gather, allowing for community policing patrols to focus on such areas.

Furthermore, from the findings it would suggest that the most typical CSE profiles to target for awareness raising, intervention and disruption, would be on the victim being female and 14 years of age, and the perpetrators being male and 28 years of age.

The data also revealed that victim-perpetrator interactions are typically 'short-lived', consistent with Kloess, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech's (2019) study of online perpetration. However, the findings in Chapter 6 suggest that the length of the CSE relationship does not necessarily reflect the frequency or severity of sexually abusive episodes within that brief time frame, as many victims were subjected to repeated episodes of sexual violence.

After addressing the typical perpetrator, victim and offence findings, the following section now interprets the typical psycholinguistic profiles for perpetrators and victims.

7.3.2 Typical Psycholinguistic Profiles

The current research made comparisons with the contact CSE victim-perpetrator LIWC outputs with a LIWC general population norm (offering an alternative context to CSE) to address the observation from Eckert (2008) and Schwartz et al. (2013) that language is dependent on context and not always generalisable beyond it. Triangulation from the discourse analysis also supports the interpretations of the LIWC findings, by adding further context, as detailed below, which begins with the demographic differences for age, gender, and ethnicity, and ends with the overall perpetrator and victim summaries for pre and during the sexual act.

The psycholinguistic profiles relating to demographics reveals that there are significant differences in word use between the perpetrator and victim's gender, ethnicity, and age in comparison to the general population. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is a unique finding from this research and begins to address the gaps in knowledge relating to perpetrator demographics as detailed in Chapter 2.

The higher clout (depicting social dominance or confidence) and use of sexual words across all perpetrator demographics, compared to the general population comparisons (apart from for age where clout was highest only in older individuals and sexual words were not a significant feature), is replicated in previous research (Black et al., 2015; Broome et al., 2020; Drouin et al., 2017). However, as victims were found to be significantly lower in clout and positive emotion than the general population for all ages, it would suggest that they are perhaps not as confident or as positive in their interactions as the perpetrator appears to be by their word use. Yet despite this, the significantly high use of sexual words across all ages, in comparisons to norms, means that victims are reciprocating and engaging in the sexualised conversations with the perpetrator.

Findings from previous research (albeit not in relation to victims or perpetrators) indicated that females use more first-person singular pronouns (Argamon et al., 2007; Chung & Pennebaker, 2007; Pennebaker & Stone, 2003), which is congruent with the current finding that both female perpetrators and victims (predominantly female) were more likely to use personal pronouns. Indeed, increased pronoun use has been associated with previous trauma related symptoms (Jaegar et al., 2014), particularly guilt

and dissociation, and as such, perpetrators may have experienced trauma themselves prior to offending, as found common by Levenson et al. (2016). In support of the current findings, research has found that older individuals use more positive emotion words (Pennebaker & Stone, 2003), however, contradicting previous findings from Pennebaker and Stone (2003) and Chung & Pennebaker (2007), the older perpetrators in this research were more likely to use personal pronouns (i.e., 'I', 'me') than younger perpetrators.

Contrary to the current finding that Black African perpetrators were less likely to use positive emotion than the general population, Preoțiu-Pietro and Ungar (2018) found that Black African American users on Twitter expressed more emotions than other groups. Drawing on the context that is provided from the discourse analysis alongside LIWC in this thesis, this might be due to the perpetrators (with different ethnicities) using more positive emotions to engage with, 'groom' and maintain the victim's interest over a longer period. The perpetrators recorded as Black African in this study appeared to be operating more opportunistically with an immediate focus on sexual gratification, by offering their victim a lift in their car where the sexual act took place. To summarise the demographic profile findings in the current research, there appears to be clear value in analysing differences in demographics and offence profiles, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, which Razi et al. (2023) supports with a similar finding that using LIWC to explore such differences most accurately detected unsafe sexual conversations.

The psycholinguistic profiles for overall perpetrator and victim LIWC outputs at the pre and during stage also revealed significant differences with the general

population. This shows that both perpetrators and victims are using language that is different to the norms of interpersonal interactions, based on natural speech benchmarks. As mentioned in the demographics section above, both perpetrators and victims were highly sexualised in their interactions, with only the perpetrators communicating with more clout (i.e., depicting social dominance or confidence). Supporting the finding that grooming processes are not linear and overlap (Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019; Whittle et al., 2015), the current research found that the use of sexual words runs through all the five perpetrator communication processes, showing that it is not just confined to the sexual gratification stage and is used from the initial contact, potentially demonstrating the efficacy of desensitisation and sexualisation of victims (Lorenzo-Dus et al. 2020). Similarly, high clout also runs through all five perpetrator processes, demonstrating that perpetrators communicate with social dominance and confidence at every opportunity (i.e., when they first meet victims, when building a rapport, during sexual gratification, when assessing risk and when they display coercive control).

In contrast, as victims are significantly lower than the general population for clout, the results arguably demonstrate that perpetrators have more of a social and sexual dominance over the victim in the CSE dynamic, strengthening the power imbalance description that is commonly used to classify CSE (Laird et al., 2022). Furthermore, as victims use more sexualised words but have lower clout, this might suggest that victims are mirroring perpetrator language, but are not as sexually dominant or confident as the general population. Furthermore, Krahe and Berger (2017) found associations between depression and sexual self-esteem with increased victimisation.

The increased use of personal pronouns and negative emotion words is widely accepted in LIWC studies, to be associated with depression, social anxiety and suicidal ideation (Eichstaedt et al., 2018; Lumontod, 2020; Stamatis et al., 2022). All victims were found to have a high use of personal pronoun use, whilst perpetrators did not. However, when comparing between the five perpetrator communication processes, higher personal pronoun use was found in four out of the five processes, being only lower in the initial contact and approach stage. Furthermore, high negative emotion words were also found to be higher than norms for perpetrators when building rapport and trust, assessing risk and being coercive. The combination of high personal pronoun use and high negative emotion words not only further supports the association with depression (Burkhardt et al., 2022), but arguably, with confirmation from the discourse analysis, suggests that perpetrators could be referring to their own or victim's depressive states to potentially build trust and test compliance with victims or mirroring the victim's mental state in line with Chiu et al.'s findings (2018).

Moreover, psycholinguistic differences between the victim's three communicative processes at the pre and during stage show that there is an increased use of positive emotion words in the desired response, which could imply that the victim is either attempting to generate feelings of social connection or co-operation with the perpetrator, be describing their desire for the perpetrator, or be displaying more extravert behaviour (as prior research findings reveal, albeit not specifically exploring CSE, from Brough, 2009; Cavanaugh et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2020; Rand et al., 2015).

In contrast, for the mixed victim response, victims appeared to be lower in confidence and higher for risk words, whilst higher in negative emotion and risk words for the undesired victim response. This shows, alongside the discourse analysis, that victims appear to be aware of the potential risks that they are in by being in a relationship with the perpetrator but are not always confident enough to remove themselves from the sexual direction of the interactions. This inability to verbalise an undesired response directly and assertively to an unwanted sexual advance, either by being more passive or even verbally withdrawing has been documented in previous research and is said to be associated with either a history of victimisation, the fear of the immediate threat, miscommunication due to new acquaintance or attempts for relationship maintenance (Hoyt & Yeater, 2009).

Retrospective comparisons with the pre and during stage reveal that both perpetrators and victims differ in their use of language between these two stages of the offence, and in comparison, with general population norms. This could be because the language is collected within the context of a criminal investigation, memories have been distorted or altered, for fear of criminal repercussion or impression management (Glomb, 2022; Steel et al., 2020). Nevertheless, findings reveal that perpetrators become less confident retrospectively and use less words associated with sex, positive emotion, personal pronouns and reward, which indicates that there is perhaps a shift to remove oneself from any association with the sexual gratification or enjoyment gained from their CSE relationship. Instead, an increase in words involving negative emotion is found. This suggests that perpetrators might have developed maladaptive

communication skills whereby they can adapt depending on context and switch to impression management during the interview (Turner, 2022).

In contrast, victims appear to become more confident in language use retrospectively and use words with more negative and positive emotion, potentially due to the descriptions needed for their involvement with the perpetrator during interview. Alternatively, the use of more positive and negative emotional words could be due to the victim re-experiencing the sexual crime that they are describing during the police interview as Ehlers and Clark (2000) report. Greenhoot et al. (2013) and Jaeger et al. (2014) found that an increased use of positive emotion words was associated with fewer trauma symptoms, which if comparing with the LIWC results in this research, would suggest that the victims (with fewer positive emotion words compared to natural speech benchmarks) might be displaying more trauma symptoms. This is however contradicted by Marshall (2016) who found that positive emotion words were associated with increased trauma symptoms and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis. However, Marshall's (2016) findings might be different to findings in this research as their participants were undergoing treatment at the time of analysis and therefore might be attempting to show that they were overcoming their difficulties, which is also known as positive self-presentation (Hewitt et al., 2011).

When comparing the retrospective accounts with general population benchmarks, the findings reveal that perpetrators are likely to use more sexual and negative emotions than the norms, which indicates that they describe any sexual involvement in a negative manner, which is confirmed in the discourse analysis as

detailed below. For victims, when comparing with general population benchmarks, differences showed victims were still discussing sex more, but with more words associated with sadness and risk. Furthermore. The high use of personal pronouns, low clout and low positive emotion may indicate that the victim was displaying a low mental state (see Lumontod, 2020).

The interpretations from the discourse analysis below further triangulate the reported interpretations above for the psycholinguistic profiles.

7.3.3 Typical Contact CSE Exploitative Language (Pre and During the Sexual Act)

7.3.3.1 Perpetrator Verbal and Non-Verbal Communicative Process

The perpetrator's verbal and non-verbal communicative processes for the pre and during sexual contact are interpreted below. The following sections (7.3.3.2 – 7.3.3.11) interpret each process from the most common to least frequent process. However, non-verbal patterns are documented under the verbal headings which were considered by the researcher to be most similar. This was a research decision taken to improve readability and to allow the findings to be interpreted together and highlight how one might influence the other.

7.3.3.2 Coercive Control Process

The analysis of perpetrator discourse revealed that the most common communicative process used by perpetrators was the use of coercive control. This included verbal processes that were in line with previously documented controlling and abusive tactics, such as name calling, ridiculing, or threatening verbally to hurt partners

(Hamel et al., 2015). Furthermore, the findings appear to replicate previous definitions and behaviour indicators that describe coercive control which include: a) the perpetrators' implicit methods of "constraining actions, thoughts and emotions" (Ehrensaft et al. 1999, p.21), b) imposing consequences on the victim (Dutton & Goodman, 2005) and c) explicitly attempting to control their target by using severe physical violence (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003). In fact, the most frequent tactic as perpetrators used within this category as described by victims, was overt persuasion and intimidation, which is consistent with Chiang & Grant (2018) and Schneevogt's (2018) findings. That said, the current thesis findings appear to have revealed additional tactics not seen in previous research. Specifically, more sexually coercive tactics such as a) the perpetrator videoing sexual activity without the victim's knowledge or consent, b) perpetrators asking other co-offenders to take sexual 'ownership' of the victim by forceable penetration and c) the use of non-consensual rough or sadomasochistic sex.

Although the existence of sexual coercion is acknowledged in literature, there have been limited efforts to distinguish between the potential verbal sexually coercive tactics (Mitchell & Raghaven, 2021). Nevertheless, Raghaven et al. (2014) outlines eight different sexually coercive tactics including, (a) threats of physical force, (b) exploitation, (c) humiliation/intimidation, (d) pressure, (e) relational threats, (f) hopelessness, (g) helplessness, and (h) bullying, which support the findings outlined in this study. Despite improved understanding of non-violent psychological tactics that exist (Mitchell & Raghaven, 2021) and the need to explore the more strategic sexual forms of dominance, there is limited acknowledgement in law about the use of rough sex

or forceful physical sadomasochistic contact during a sexual encounter (Palmer & Wiener 2021). Although, not evident in all the CSE cases, the data in Chapter 6 revealed (both verbal and non-verbal) forms of communication that may potentially fit into this sexually coercive grouping.

It has been suggested by Wiener and Palmer (2022) that laws that protect against rough or sadomasochistic sex within coercive relationships should have been captured within Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act, where the violent sexual act used as an enabler and behaviour manifestation of coercive control could be recognised. Victims who have experienced rough or sadomasochistic sex within a coercive and controlling relationship describe this as where their body is no longer their own due to the perpetrator conquering every part of them (McOrmond-Plummer, 2016; Wiener, 2022). Palmer (2020) suggests that such chronic sexual violation cements ownership and is a goal driven behaviour designed to “control and denigrate victims” (p.579). Furthermore, as what Dutton and Goodman (2005) propose as a necessary component of coercive control, violent sexual acts give “credibility” to the physical threat that the perpetrator poses to the victim. The rough sex within a controlling relationship is said to be different to a discrete sexual offence because of the ongoing methods perpetrators take to undermine the victim’s sexual autonomy (Palmer, 2020, p.595).

Considering this, in conjunction with the LIWC findings, the coercive control process might be showing that perpetrators are adept or accomplished at verbal sexual coercion, which ultimately presents some form of non-physical power imbalance if the victim is not aware of how they can be sexually coerced verbally, which is in line with

previous CSE definitions recognising power imbalances (DfE, 2017). An alternative view suggested is that some perpetrators are only able to show this level of confidence, boldness and dominance when developing relationships with minors (see Broome et al. 2020), or in group settings (see Cockbain, 2018) because of the control that they are awarded in this context.

7.3.3.3 Sexually Violent Touch

The findings reveal examples of the perpetrator using violent or forceful touch towards the victim, specifically touching intimate body parts, which included forced sex, and typically occurring in conjunction with the coercive control verbal patterns, such as overt persuasion and threats. Thus, drawing many comparisons with sexual coercion and acts of rape (Farvid & Saing, 2022). Research on intimate partner violence from Tarzia and Hegarty (2023) supports the simultaneous psychological abuse and use of sexual violence to develop and maintain an environment of fear and control. Furthermore, it has been reported that sexual violence is the output of sexual desire interacting with dominance/aggression and sensation-seeking, addressing the potential perpetrator motivation for adopting it (Toates et al., 2017)

An alternative suggestion for the increased levels of dominance and sexual coercion have more recently been linked to factors such as pornography exposure and alcohol use, particularly during sexual activity, such as hair pulling, spanking, facial ejaculation, confinement, double penetration, choking, and name-calling, which were all found in the current findings (Wright et al., 2015). Future research might explore the

link between CSE and previous porn exposure and substance misuse, given the examples provided in the results section of this thesis.

The next section 7.3.3.4 details the next most common communication process, which was the sexual gratification process.

7.3.3.4 Sexual Gratification Process

The sexual gratification findings are congruent with previous literature detailing implicit or explicit desensitising and sexualisation of victims of sexual crimes, either online or in person (Craven et al, 2006; Kelly and Karsna, 2017; Taylor, 2017). This has previously been reported to involve preparing the victim for sexual contact by discussing sex, requesting sexualised images, or offering to guide and mentor the victim through the sexual experience, which was found in the data in Chapter 6. The literature also supports the findings that highlighted the repetitive nature of the sexual requests, disclosures, discussion of fantasies (Taylor, 2017). The findings uphold the changing nature of sexual crimes as the perpetrator also maintained communication online (Kelly and Karsna, 2017), persuading the victim to send sexual images online or to touch themselves whilst on camera.

One of the interesting findings given the illegal nature of CSE, was the perpetrator seeking the victim's assent (i.e., approval or agreement, rather than legal consent, such as "would you like me to touch you?") before or during sexual activity. That said, offering reassurance or choices to victims is not uncommon for male or female perpetrators, however, it is suggested to be a manipulative tactic to redistribute blame to the victims (Kaylor et al.,2021; Marcum, 2007; Taylor, 2017). This highlights

the complexity of discussing consent during sexual crimes and supports the argument that those working in safeguarding and law enforcement require an understanding of victim consent in the context of manipulation (Brady & Lowe, 2019; Reisel, 2016). Aligned with sexual gratification, the next section addresses the remaining non-verbal categories, which include spatial proximity, non-sexual and sexual forms of touch.

7.3.3.6 Spatial Proximity, Non-sexual Touching and Sexual Touch

The use of non-verbal behaviours to instigate sexual activity was also in line with previous research, suggesting that the perpetrator progresses the child from non-sexual touching (i.e., tickling, stroking hair), to the sexual touching of intimate body parts (including touching on top of clothes and then under or without clothes), and was reported to involve the use of manipulation and force (Berliner & Conte, 1990; Craven et al., 2006; Leberg, 1997; Taylor, 2017). However, even before the perpetrator uses non-intimate or intimate touch, the perpetrator may have moved themselves into a closer spatial proximity to the victim, which is suggested to amplify personal liking (Shin et al., 2019), potentially isolates the victim, and creates a quick and easy opportunity to abuse the victim (Gonultas et al., 2023; McAlinden, 2013; Smallbone & Wortley, 2001).

7.3.3.7 Rapport Building and Trust Development Process

The rapport building and trust development process revealed the most common tactics involved the perpetrator building a relationship with the victim (i.e., establishing relationship status, disclosing information, using terms of endearment, and giving advice) and offering flattering comments or praise (i.e., commenting on looks). These are well documented perpetrator tactics of sexual crimes, which are often described as

goal-driven, manipulative, or grooming methods (Kloess et al., 2019; May-Chahal & Palmer, 2018; Radford et al., 2017).

One communicative perpetrator technique used to initiate discussions about the victim's previous sexual experiences as part of the rapport building is congruent with previous research exploring perpetrator entrapment, luring communication and victim sexualisation (Conte, 1990; Finkelhor & Browne, 1985; Olson et al, 2007; Smith & Woodiwiss, 2016). The perpetrators encouraging victims to discuss their own sexual experiences, is suggested to be an effortless way to exploit victims, as they "remove the protective cloak of childhood innocence" and therefore consider the victim as more knowledgeable and available for sex, despite still being a child (Smith & Woodiwiss, 2016, p. 2184). Such research is in line with other studies reporting that the communication is sexually deviant (Craven et al., 2006), and that the vulnerability of innocent children presents a target for sexual predators (Olson et al., 2007). That said, what is not acknowledged is the victim's agency (i.e., ability to make decisions and influence matters in their everyday lives as explained by Sirkko et al., 2019) to enter relationships from their own volition or where they might be exploring their own sexuality, rather than being passive victims, as acknowledged by previous abused victims (Smith & Woodiwiss, 2016). However, such views might not be accounting for the coercive control and manipulative tactics involved in such CSE cases and is perhaps a viewpoint that needs exploring to make sure safeguarding professionals are adequately trained. This is discussed in more detail with regards to the findings on victims' responses in section 7.3.3.10.

A similar finding to the perpetrator initiating discussions about the victim's prior sexual experiences, was the perpetrator discussing their own sexual experiences or perhaps considered sexual bragging. Jonason (2008) suggested that such sexual bragging might be due to the perpetrator's need to validate themselves externally to inflate their own prestige or ego, because of possible insecurities that they hold. Furthermore, the repeated introduction of sexual content (via conversation or images) is suggested to act as a method to desensitise the victim to sexual activity and make it normalised (Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019; Winters & Jeglic, 2022; Young, 1997). This is continued in the sexual gratification stage.

One other communicative tactic, which is perhaps lesser explored in research, is the perpetrator's discussion with the victim about sexual health issues, such as contraception, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections. Although sexual health issues and unintended pregnancy can be strong indicators of exploitation and abuse (IICSA, 2022; Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2017) it was interesting to see perpetrators offering reassurance to the victim that they would be a good parent to the unborn baby before the sexual activity took place. This could be another manipulative method of gaining the victim's trust by reassurance or even to avoid needing to use contraception. Further examples in the findings of the perpetrator making promises of a loving relationship and a future together would potentially create deeper victim dependency on the perpetrator as a result (Whittle et al., 2015).

7.3.3.8 Risk Assessment and Compliance Testing Process

The assessment of risk was a consistent feature in the perpetrators' communicative approaches, which is in line with previous findings (Black et al., 2015; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). Although language data extracted from the police case files was not analysed in this study for the sequence in which it occurred because of the nature of the way language is recorded in police transcripts, unlike Craven et al.'s (2006) or O'Connell's (2003) grooming step-by-step process, the researcher acknowledges that risk assessment would occur at various points throughout the interactions rather than in any one stage of the relationship. However, Black et al.'s (2015) research suggests that assessing risk online is more likely to occur at the earliest opportunity as the perpetrator seeks to establish the identity of their victim as quickly as possible. Perpetrators who approached the victim online in this study appeared to be aware of the potential for getting caught, possibly due to improvements in police investigatory powers (such as the covert operations enabled by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016) and were keen to remove any evidence trail. The face-to-face context perhaps provides the perpetrator with opportunities for them to assess the risk without verbally checking with their victim, such as observing to see if anyone is nearby. That said, the *contact* CSE perpetrators in this study still make attempts to find out more information to avoid being caught. Perpetrators gauging the level of risk, threat or danger with their victims is well documented in previous research (Black et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2012; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Lorenzo-Dus & Izura, 2017; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019).

Another interesting finding was the role reversal that appeared to take place between adult perpetrator and child victim. The perpetrator appears to seek reassurance or sympathy with the victim and at times they check to see if the victim shares the same perspective as them on various topics. This is accepted as a common grooming tactic (Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019), however, there is some recognition that role reversal could also be a result of previous childhood trauma creating an overdependence on needing others to meet their unmet emotional needs and is suggested to be more common in female perpetrators (Duncan, 2010). Early thoughts on role reversal suggested that it was a useful manipulation strategy, designed to reverse the reality of the victim and offender, almost becoming the victim themselves (Freyd, 1997) and more recently termed as “gaslighting” whereby victims believe a different reality than what is true (Sweet, 2019).

7.3.3.9 Access and Approach

The access and approach stage was the least frequently used communicative process, which is perhaps not surprising as this initial approach might only happen once between a perpetrator and victim when they first speak/meet. Once a perpetrator has approached or has access to a victim, they are able to move on to one of the other communicative processes, although it is acknowledged that maintaining the access to a victim can also help maintain the interaction. Although this research focuses on contact CSE perpetration, victims can either be accessed or approached online or in person. If online, the perpetrator appears to provide a hook to attract a response from the victim, and this, as recognised by Kloess et al. (2019) can take a very direct or indirect

approach. The more indirect approach, from the current findings, involved an initial self-disclosure from the perpetrator, such as the need to make friends as they were new to the area, which is suggested to help build trust and illicit a response from the victim (Chiu et al., 2018). The more direct approach found in the current research involved the perpetrator seeking confirmation of identity or to make their sexual intentions obvious as raised by Kloess et al. (2019). Once these direct and indirect approaches were made, the perpetrator would find other ways to maintain the interactions or create an intensified level of contact, either via other social media platforms or to meeting in person. This is suggested to increase the victim's dependency on, or "addiction" to, the perpetrator's interactions as the perpetrator becomes central to their daily life and creates a seemingly loving dynamic (Whittle et al., 2015). This increased initial contact was often made possible via encrypted mobile applications, which although protects the human rights and freedoms of individuals, is recognised for its negative role in preventing law enforcement protecting against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children (Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2020; Koomen, 2021).

Alternatively, contact perpetrator communicative methods of approaching victims appeared to occur more opportunistically, such as perpetrator offering lifts as victims passed by, therefore seizing the chance to open a conversation and seek sexual activity, congruent with Mooney and Ost (2013) and Leclerc and Proulx (2018). Furthermore, Cockbain (2018) and Senker et al.'s (2020) research exploring networks and organised group perpetration found that this form of contact CSE offending was more likely to be unsophisticated and opportunistic than planned and organised.

However, Elliot et al. (1995) identified methods of exploitation where perpetrators did seek out situations where victims were readily available, such as parks, shopping centres and arcades to gain access to victims. The night-time economy, including taxis firms and takeaways, has been identified as being problematic and requiring awareness raising interventions (Beckett & Pearce, 2017; Pearce, 2014). It also worth noting that such exciting experiences being offered to teenage victims, such as spending time with older men in cars, could be viewed as “thrilling” and one more likely to be accepted by victims (Joleby et al.,2021). Further discussion on this is found in relation to perpetrators offering gifts as part of building a stronger relationship.

The following section will detail the victim desired, mixed and undesired responses to the above perpetrator communicative processes.

7.3.3.10 Victim Verbal and Non-verbal Responses

The findings reveal that victims respond to CSE perpetrators with desired, mixed and undesired responses, with mixed being most common and desired being the least. Much of the previous research exploring victims’ responses to sexual crimes have adopted the “fight-flight-freeze” behavioural response to interpret responses to threats or traumatic experiences (Katz et al., 2020). However, there is a move to acknowledge the more complex, multi-dimensional, peritraumatic responses involved, since the earlier animal-based studies on threat response were reported (Katz et al., 2021). In particular, the recognition of innate social propensities, known as “tend and befriend” to protect others or seek social contact in times of distress (Taylor, 2006) or the passive or active, emotional, cognitive, and physiological reactions involved in such sexual crimes (Bovin

& Marx, 2011). Such emotional, cognitive, and physiological responses are said to involve fear, anger, disgust, dissociation, heart palpitations and so on, which many were identified within then desired, mixed and undesired responses below.

7.3.3.11 Victim Mixed Responses.

The most common victim response to the perpetrators verbal communicative processes was a mixed response. It is recognised in literature, that such grooming style tactics involved have an impact on the victim's ability to understand, process and respond to what is going on, which might explain the predominant mixed response in this research (Katz & Barnett, 2016; Plummer, 2018). The victim response is reported to be more confused when crimes are inflicted by a loving person, or perhaps the "perceived" loving relationship within the CSE context in this study (Herman, 1992), especially if the victim feels betrayed by that loving person (Sivers et al., 2002).

This mixed or perhaps more passive style of response is not uncommon in victims of sexual abuse or aggression (Scarduzio et al., 2018) and is often described as the freeze, flop or dissociative response (Katz et al., 2021). It has also been explained as the numbing of a child's emergency system, which is even more likely after previous traumatic experiences (Katz et al., 2021). The word "numbing" might suggest low cognitive activity taking place in this stage, but evidence showing that some cognitive activity exists provides an alternative view that there is a valuable active defensive response to the situation (Katz et al., 2021, p.11).

The findings also revealed that victims displayed mixed responses non-verbally. Prior research has described such mixed responses as a "sleep-like condition" when

lying still (Houge & Laugerud, 2023), or by discussing examples of ambiguity and confusion involved with sexual consent, such as shrugging shoulders (non-verbal) or verbal descriptions of grudging acceptance or passive acquiescence (Gruber, 2016; Siry, 2017). Supporting current understanding, most victims in these findings felt pressured to participate in the unwanted sexual activity (Williams et al., 2013). However, there were in the current research, also occasions where victims would assert their disinterest in engaging with the perpetrator either verbally or non-verbally as detailed in the undesired section below.

7.3.3.12 Victim Undesired Response

In the undesired category, the victim would mostly respond with anger, disgust, and fear. As much of the research explores emotional responses to sexual violence rather than during the sexual act, it is difficult to provide further explanation other than victims can get angry and will verbalise it. Fear also appeared to be a response in this category as the victim would become scared of the perpetrator and how they might escape the consequences of engaging in sexual activity. The other response observed in the findings was the victim's disgust, which according to Russell and Piazza (2015)'s study could be linked to perceptions on morality, and whether a person voluntarily engaged in, desired, or consented, to a sexual act.

The non-verbal undesired responses highlight that the victim is not always completely powerless to stop the perpetrator in their use of physical violence. However, the findings reveal that victims will sometimes use perhaps more subtle non-verbal ways of getting out of the sexual encounter, such as changing their proximity to the

perpetrator, or tightly shutting their legs to push the perpetrator away. This is in line with previous research, which documents recognising how unlikely victims of sexual crimes are likely to break free (Houge & Laugerud, 2023) and rely on subtle methods to get out of the sexual activity (Meyers, 2000). That said, victims also retaliated with violence, like the examples in the current findings (i.e., biting, kicking etc.), albeit these are suggested to be rare (Katz et al., 2020).

7.3.3.13 Victim Desired Response

The findings reveal some level of reciprocation, engagement, and intimacy between some of the perpetrators and victims. This finding perhaps challenges the typical coercive perpetrator conceptualisation in research and safeguarding responses and strengthens the rationale to explore victim reciprocation and develop our understanding of victim behaviour, which is clearly complex. That said, the victim's apparent willingness to engage in a relationship and sexual activity with the perpetrator could be explained in several alternative ways according to previous research.

Firstly, if the victim perceives the relationship as loving, and not under threat, the victim might be more likely to feel increased sexual desire, as found by Birnbaum et al.'s (2016) study, albeit using a sample involving consenting couples. The communicative approaches detailed within this study, otherwise recognised as grooming or manipulation (i.e., flattery), could be bolstering the feeling of being intimately connected to the perpetrator. Such emotional, symbiotic connections being built between victim and perpetrator is not uncommon and often associated with what is known as "Stockholm Syndrome" or "Trauma Bonding", whereby the victims (or perpetrator)

reframe the abuse and minimise behaviour within cognitive distortions (Julich & Oak, 2016; Lopez & Minassians, 2017).

Middleton et al. (2017) suggest that there is an innate need for victims to form close attachments with perpetrators (i.e., associated with Bowlby's Attachment Theory of a bond to the care giver) despite the sexual abuse, and that a loyalty can form within what is described as a complex dynamic, acknowledging a dutiful compliance (i.e., giving in to the commands of the perpetrator. Basson (2005) provides a model and reasons for instigating or agreeing to sex, which includes sharing physical pleasure, to feel emotionally closer, increase own well-being and to avoid the likelihood of negative responses from the partner. Furthermore, Basson (2005) reports that these reasons lead to a willingness to be receptive to sexual stimuli and results in arousal and excitement. It is therefore possible that the implicit and explicit sexual stimuli offered by the contact CSE perpetrators in their communicative processes are increasing the receptiveness of the victim emotionally, biologically, and physiologically to result in pleasure and satisfaction.

Although there are calls to move away from the "ideal" victim stereotype and victim blaming in CSE cases, associated previously with the failures recognised in national inquiries (IICSA, 2022), there is also debate about the potential for victim agency involved (Brown, 2019). McAlinden (2014) suggests that society needs to move beyond monochromatic understandings of victims and offenders, where perpetrators are constructed as "evil", and victims are portrayed as "innocent" and "good". By moving away from such constructs and accepting that the victim-offender dyad is "not always

easily identifiable...distinct, mutually exclusive or indeed fixed” (McAlinden, 2014, p.5), and therefore by acknowledging victim agency, there is potential for a more effective safeguarding response.

If victim agency is recognised within the illegal context of CSE, it becomes entirely plausible to accept the possibility that the victim did feel willing to engage in and consent to sexual activity, meeting their heightened adolescent need for autonomy, excitement, exploration of sexuality and newfound independence (Backes & Bonnie, 2019). Furthermore, drawing comparisons with the Gillick competencies and Fraser Guidelines associated with the sexual health advice and treatment offered to under 16-year-olds involving decisions on maturity to have sex, the same safeguarding decision making could be introduced in newly referred CSE cases. This would potentially balance the need to accommodate the victim’s autonomy and sexual needs whilst still maintaining responsibility to keep victims safe.

The lack of opportunity for the victim to seek out sex and relationship-based advice without immediately instigating child protection responses is not only preventing victims accessing support services but potentially further stripping the individual of their power and human rights. This might therefore further explain the victim’s common resistance to intervention from child protection and safeguarding services, coupled with the aforementioned loyalty awarded to the perpetrator, intensified by the grooming processes (West & Loeffler, 2015). This suggests a more nuanced and sensitive approach is required.

It is possible that within the desired category the victim feels confident, engages in sexual conversation and is comfortable sharing emotions, which has been supported by Giordano et al.'s (2006) research on emotional engagement with romantic relationships, although boys reported lower levels of confidence than girls. It is also possible that the victim felt it necessary to feign sexual desire to produce a positive outcome, such as avoiding relationship tensions or to satisfy the partner's needs, as found by a third of a sample in a study involving heterosexual and consensual dating relationships (O'Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). It is perhaps more likely for feigning sexual desire to occur where there is a power imbalance and the threat of violence if the victim does not comply. Another consideration for feigning sexual desire has been reported in relation to gender, such as the possible heteronormative subordinated expectations whereby young women elevate men's desire over their own (Kettrey, 2018). However, Meijer (2021) found that what is described as sexual subjectivity was also present for men and resulted in incidents of sexual violence.

Additional factors that might have influenced the victim's desire to respond positively and engage in sexual activity with the perpetrator might include inhibition through drug and alcohol consumption or previous childhood trauma (Norris et al., 2006). It is widely known that victims can be given alcohol and drugs (on a voluntary and involuntary basis) by the perpetrators of CSE (Radcliffe et al., 2020), or might be choosing to consume alcohol themselves during the more independent and experimental phase of adolescence (Keyes et al., 2015). Although it might superficially appear that the victim is desiring of sexual activity by the victim verbal accounts, studies report that

perpetrators are more likely to rape victims who are under the influence of alcohol and drugs (Basile et al., 2021) and therefore victims have not had the option or full capacity to consent, which makes the illegal nature of the CSE dynamic potentially even more dangerous. Furthermore, CSE victims being more likely to have adverse childhood experiences (Wager & Wager, 2016) also makes them more likely to engage in risky behaviour, including drug and alcohol misuse and risky sexual behaviour (Ports et al., 2016). Therefore, the potential for sexual victimisation is increased.

Victims would also display their interest in the perpetrator non-verbally by moving closer, engaging in non-intimate and intimate touch. Previous research highlights the juxtaposition that exists between the conceptualisation of the coercive and abusive perpetrator and the victim who want to be in an intimate relationship with them (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

The following section (7.4) will detail the retrospective justifications that both perpetrators and victims make about their relationship with each other during police interviews.

7.4 Interpretation of the Thesis Key Findings for RQ2

7.4.1 Typical Contact CSE Retrospective Discursive Constructions

Findings reveal that there are both retrospective perpetrator and victim discursive constructions, which are detailed following the perpetrator admittance and denial sections (7.4.1.1 - 7.4.1.2) below.

7.4.1.1 Perpetrator Denial

The findings reveal that perpetrators are more likely to provide retrospective justifications for offending under the overarching theme of denial (particularly when co-offenders are involved). Denial is recognised to be a complex core individual belief or value rather than simply lying (Lord & Willmott, 2004). Denial is said to be “best understood as the acceptance of explanations that reduce accountability and are reinforced by distorted beliefs and self-deceptive thinking processes” (Schneider & Wright, 2004 p. 3). It could also be argued that denial is a way of self-protecting against the guilt and shame typically associated with sex offending (Miller, 2012). Such distorted beliefs have been described in previous sex offender literature as cognitive distortions and includes the offender’s maladaptive thinking, rationalisations, blame attribution and offence minimisation (Pop, 2022; Szumski et al., 2018). It is worth noting here that these post offence disclosures could also be described as rational choices, remorse, justifications, and motivations for offending behaviour (Cornish & Clarke, 2017; Martel, 2010) but the cognitive distortion terminology is perhaps better suited for this study as all perpetrators were convicted and their denial disclosures subsequently refuted in court.

Research suggests that the perpetrator makes decisions on whether to confess or deny in the interview, based on the evidence against them, amongst other reasons (May et al., 2022). That said, May et al. (2022) found that suspects were more likely to make true statements to the police rather than false, and remain silent if guilty. Although cognitive distortions for denial might be a perpetrator’s core belief, they are recognised

as causing the victim additional distress as they undermine and discredit the victim's account and therefore perpetrators admitting their offences can potentially prevent such prolonged suffering for the victim (Cherry, 2000).

This thesis is therefore exploring the post-offence justifications, labelled as according to Szumski et al. (2018) as Mechanism III, by way of discursive constructs. Mechanism III describes cognitive processes in relation to the post-offence context, which in this case is the police interview, which is likely to have a direct impact on the offender's thinking and behaviour. It is acknowledged that these findings might differ from the pre-offence cognitive processes (involved in Szumski et al.'s (2018) Mechanism I and II) as there would be an associated offender motivation to avoid the penalties served by the police, CJS and the subsequent consequences from family and society. Each of the discursive constructs below will explore the distorted beliefs of the perpetrator, starting with the most frequent.

7.4.1.2 Perpetrator Admittance

For the overarching admit theme, Scott and Lyman (1968) most fittingly summarise justifications (i.e., found in each admittance discursive construct below) as where the perpetrator accepts responsibility for the unlawful sexual act and considers it appropriate behaviour. Interestingly, Howitt & Sheldon (2007) suggest that perpetrators with previous convictions, were more likely to admit to cognitive distortions which justify their offending, suggesting that the use of such distorted justifications might be a conscious decision.

Admittance during a police interview, although perhaps not always possible, can also be linked to the effective police approach to interviewing sex offenders, which includes showing the perpetrator more “humanity” and “compassion” (Kebbell et al., 2008). Furthermore, “when suspects feel that they are respected and acknowledged (they are said to) gain more confidence and mental space, allowing them to admit criminal behaviour” (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002, p.31).

There are alternative reasons why a perpetrator might need to provide justifications to support their admittance to an offence, which include self-preservation or lessening of the consequences (Ó Ciardha 2017), especially during police interviews (Paquette & Fortin, 2021). However, the following section (7.4.1.3) will explore the perpetrator’s reasoning attached to each of the eight retrospective discursive constructs, with the caveat that all the perpetrators were considered culpable in court, despite their belief that the unlawful sex was appropriate.

7.4.1.3 Perpetrator Retrospective Discursive Constructions

7.4.1.4 Nature of Harm

The findings reveal that as part of the nature of harm justification the perpetrator appears to either express a love for the victim, suggest they have altruistic intentions towards the victim or to minimise the severity of the sexual crimes. The sections below interpret these findings.

As the findings reveal, some perpetrators expressed a love for their victim and reasons have been provided in previous research as to why adults might be interested in teenagers, such as viewing the relationship as reciprocal and more like an affair than a

deviant sexual interest Pendergast, 2004). Moreover, perpetrators attracted to teenage victims are said to have selected victims who matched their own level of psychosexual development when they previously felt the most sexually secure (Blanchard, 1995; Pendergast, 2004). The findings in Chapter 6 reveals some instances of psychosexual matching, as the perpetrators refer to what they were like sexually in their own teenage years and how this was a motive for offering the victim opportunities to talk about sex.

Where the perpetrator describes their relationship with a victim as altruistic in nature (i.e., selfless and helpful) by their willingness to be a listening ear and boost the victim's self-esteem and confidence, research suggests there might be alternative motivations or intentions for such altruistic approaches (Mattis et al., 2009). These might include just responding to the individual need (in this case, of the victim, who might be considered by the perpetrator as "in- need" or "vulnerable") or attributed to their devotion to and affection for the victim (Mattis et al., 2009). Alternatively, the perpetrator could be trying to create the illusion of a non-threatening altruistic personality trait (i.e., relying on the victim's altruism bias) to promote likability or perhaps a co-dependency (Oakley, 2014), potentially making sexual reciprocation more likely with the victim. In support of the latter, research suggests that females seek altruistic traits for relationships as an honest signal of one's character (Bhogal et al., 2019).

Research suggests that victims are selected by perpetrators because of their neediness and low self-esteem (Knoll, 2010). However, other literature supporting the perpetrator's justifications suggests that victims actively seek reassurance and engage in

behaviour that reinforces self-worth, known as reassurance oriented victims (Petherick & Ferguson, 2012). Either way, the perpetrator could also be seeking someone with low self-esteem to feel good about themselves if suffering from low self-worth (Gilgun, 1988).

In relation to the results under the sex education justification, whereby the perpetrator would offer to educate the victims (i.e., sexually), Young (1997) suggested that the sexual behaviours disguised as education was a method of normalising exploitative sexual activity by presenting them as acceptable and appropriate. It could also be argued that by offering sex education to the victim, the perpetrator would be testing the possibility of being able to benefit sexually themselves, as Dronek (2023) also found.

Similar to the educating justification, the findings indicate that the perpetrator re-frames the offence to normalise their involvement with the victim as non-sexual. This typically involved perpetrators explaining that their interactions with victims were just as friends, an innocent game or were even trying to prevent it from becoming sexual. Although these reasons were found to be untrue from the court convictions, previous studies have explored whether offenders have processing deficits where the perpetrator inaccurately interprets normal social cues given by the victim, which might explain how a friendship or game might have developed into something sexual without conscious thought (McMurrin & McGuire, 2005).

7.4.1.5 Uncontrollability

The findings support the notion that perpetrators attempt to externalise their offending behaviours by explaining a level of uncontrollability. This justification includes explanations of having reluctant feelings and knowing that it was considered socially and legally wrong which is explained in more detail below.

Findings suggest that the perpetrator can have reluctant feelings about engaging in a sexual relationship with the victim and is aware of their wrongdoing. Where perpetrators describe their behaviour as uncontrollable and merely acting on impulse despite knowing the sexual relationship is considered socially or legally wrong has also been found in previous sex offender literature. For example, Beauregard and Leclerc (2007), Martin, (1995), Sen, (2017), and Young (2011) all argue that perpetrators are still capable of analysing the cost or benefits of their actions. However, it is perhaps only in the moment of sexual gratification that their decision making has overturned rationale thoughts (Beauregard & Leclerc, 2007).

7.4.1.6 Dangerous World

The findings reveal that the dangerous world justification involved mostly providing defeatist reasonings as to the negative world around them or the adversity that had led the perpetrator to become involved with the child victim. This included childhood adversity, inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits and being a potential victim themselves as interpreted below.

In relation to explanations about false allegations being linked to grievances held against the perpetrator by the victim, the successful police conviction for the victim

contradicts this explanation. However, it is accepted that false accusations of a sexual assault are a possible method for seeking revenge to discredit the individual (Grattagliano et al., 2014) or if the individual regretted the sexual encounter (De Zutter et al., 2018). Although, it has been said to be extremely rare, despite still being a contested area of law enforcement responses to rape (CPS, 2020; Kelly et al., 2005).

Finding that the perpetrator might describe how others (i.e., victims) are out to get them is supported in literature (Bancroft, 2002). Although dated and based on domestic abusive relationships not CSE, Bancroft (2002) summaries how the perpetrator can turn the situation into the opposite so that they appear to be the victim. Furthermore, Bancroft (2002) states that the perpetrator might also adopt the same language as an abused victim, such as describing the actual victim as controlling, dominant, powerful or that they had been abused themselves by the victim, which is replicated in this research.

The perpetrators in the current sample would sometimes refer to the social and intimacy deficits or childhood adversity that they might have faced within their own life or why they might feel like the victim themselves. Some perpetrators in the current sample would also describe their own problems with finding or maintaining intimate relationships as justification for being involved with the victim. In support of this justification, Ward et al. (1997) acknowledged the role that intimacy skills deficits had for sexual offenders in the development or maintenance of dysfunctional sexual behaviours. Furthermore, some of the perpetrators in this research described being rejected, feeling lonely and in need of feeling loved or wanted, which emerged as significant aspects of sexual offenders' perceptions of their intimate relationships in

Ward et al.'s (1997) study. Sexual offenders have also previously been shown to be low in self-esteem, which might support some of the descriptions that perpetrators in this research provide about their low feelings (Marshall et al., 2009).

The projections of helplessness and defeatism found in this research are suggested to “appeal to the victim’s compassion” to “make a difference” or might also prevent the victim from leaving for fear of abandoning the perpetrator and them ending their life (Bancroft, 2002, p. 275). The research in Chapter 6 found that the perpetrator would use what has been described as emotional or psychological abuse (i.e., threatening to kill themselves, self-pity) towards the victim who might feel compelled to stay with them for fear of the consequences (Crossman et al., 2016). The retrospective justifications that the perpetrator uses appears to be the same discursive tactic to justify why they are not completely at fault and potentially avoid further criminal proceedings.

Studies have also found that childhood adversity influences the onset, severity, and persistence of sexual offending (DeLisi et al., 2021; Puskiewicz & Stinson, 2019). However, other research (although not about CSE but intimate partner violence) by Mathews et al. (2011) found increased perpetrator emotional vulnerability. Although no direct link was found between traumatic childhood experiences and then adopting more violent approaches. Therefore, it might be more complex to determine what differentiates those who have experienced adversity and go on to offend with those who don't.

7.4.1.7 Entitlement

The entitlement justification appeared to reveal a perpetrator's belief that they were entitled to act as they wanted, even if that involved sexual interactions or activity with children as detailed below.

Where perpetrators explained that they were seeking sexual relief, acting on lust or responding to the apparent sexual chemistry, an entitlement to act on these feelings with the victim appeared to occur. As part of the entitlement justification, it is possible that rape supportive attitudes held by society and shared by the media (Cabrera, 2018), might have perpetuated a feeling of entitlement as an acceptable justification.

Finkelhor's (1984) and Ward and Keenan's (1999) suggest that perpetrators might view children as sexual beings, or that they are even entitled, compelled or have licence to rape them. Reasons for this distorted view of children have sometimes been attributed to the perpetrator's previous sexual abuse trauma, which is said influence moral disengagement and cognitive distortion towards children (D'Urso et al., 2019).

However, it would arguably be remiss to assume that all feelings of entitlement were associated with previous sexual abuse trauma. Furthermore, Beauregard et al. (2017) reports that certain behaviours from the victim might mean that they are more likely to be victimised, such as those that are exhibitionists and extraverted which might be misinterpreted by the perpetrator as a positive cue to pursue.

7.4.1.8 Child as Sexual Being

Under the child as sexual being justification, the perpetrator would suggest that the victim would instigate the sexual act or did not reject sexual advances. Indeed,

patterns suggest that perpetrators will justify the sexual relationship by stating that the victim had been keen to sexually experiment with them, particularly where the perpetrator and victim were of the same sex. Although homosexual (and heterosexual) experimentation is said to be common in adolescence (Tulloch & Kaufman, 2013), Hlavka (2017) addresses the invisible sexual victimisation that occurs for males, leading to additional barriers for disclosure and reporting to the police of an already hidden crime. Hlavka (2017) suggests that heteronormative scripts should be considered to make sense of male sexual victimisation, such as incompatible scripts with dominant notions of masculinity. Same sex sexual abuse is said to potentially threaten the victim's hetero-gendered selves, due to the additional stigma, shame and embarrassment attached to same sex relationships. The victims can feel emasculated and disempowered by their abuse and are then less likely to report their crimes. Therefore, where the perpetrator blames the victim for wanting to experiment sexually with them, the victim might feel blame and emasculated.

Findings reveal that perpetrators justify the sexual relationship by explaining that victims would not reject their sexual advances towards them and were therefore perceived as enjoying the sexual activity. One reason for this might be a common physiological arousal or sexual response to intimate body parts being touched during sexual encounters or from sexual stimuli (Goerling & Wolfe, 2022). However, Thacker (2019) argues that a danger of the victim saying no to the perpetrator is likely to result in a phenomenon known as rejection violence, which is the violent retribution directed at

the victim if the perpetrator feels distress, unable to understand the rejection and insulted.

7.4.1.9 Child as Emotional Support

Under the child as emotional support justification, the perpetrator emphasises the strong emotional connection that they have with the victim. The perpetrator believes this if the victim flatters, is attentive, listens to them or reassures them during the contact CSE relationship as interpreted below.

Although it is acknowledged that sex offenders are typically seeking sexual gratification from their victims (Chopin & Beauregard, 2020; Lussier & Mathesius, 2018), it is clear from this research that the perpetrator might be seeking more than a sexual connection, such as an emotional bond and bolstering. This might be more likely if the perpetrator has difficulties forming relationships with adults (Brankley, 2019), and therefore finds children easier to bond with because they are considered less judgemental and emotionally congruent with the perpetrator (Hefferman & Ward, 2019; Mann et al., 2010). Furthermore, Beauregard et al. (2017) found that perpetrators would seek out victims who were more caring and affectionate, making them more vulnerable to being approached. Once victims experience the perpetrator's manipulative grooming tactics to believe the relationship is mutual, the victim might also start to initiate a sexual relationship as they view this as another expression of love (Naidoo & Van Hout, 2021).

7.4.1.10 Denial of Facts, Planning or Intent

The perpetrator justifications associated with denial of facts, planning or intent includes the perpetrator providing alternative suggestions about the facts of the crime such as not knowing the victim or why they might have been in the location of the crime as interpreted below.

Hoke et al. (1989) supports the suggestion that some perpetrators act as if they do not know the victim or that the sexual assault did not happen at all as a denial of fact. In the current findings some of the perpetrators completely denied all knowledge of the victims, which in doing so arguably places the burden of proof back on the police/prosecution to provide enough evidence to establish if the crime was committed by the suspect being questioned (CPS, 2018).

The findings suggest that predominantly perpetrators in a group attempt to provide a plausible version of events that excludes other offence committing versions, whereby an initial scene involving the suspects is set (i.e., alternative reason for being in the crime location). This is congruent with a previous study by Auburn and Lea (2003) which utilised discursive psychology to analyse sex offender treatment talk, finding that offenders' descriptions were designed around a broad narrative structure, starting with scene setting to explain how their "sexual offence arose out of seemingly accountably ordinary activities" (p. 294). That said, Auburn and Lea's (2003) study resulted in offenders admitting the sexual offence after the initial scene setting, whereas the group perpetrators in this research did not. This could be due to analysis of narrative in Auburn and Lea's (2003) study being at the treatment phase rather than police interview stage.

Patterns reveal a collective innocence justification, where the perpetrator would report that all members of the group were innocent and not involved in the crime(s), rather than choosing to inform the police about the group's illegal behaviour. Previous research has explored reasons why individuals might be reluctant to inform the police about their peer's offending behaviour, aside from attempting to mitigate their own culpability. Firstly, this could be explained by what is termed an "anti-grassing culture", which is regarded as the socialisation culture of not informing the police from peers, family and other social networks (Yates, 2006). This anti-grassing culture is said to generate levels of silence in the threat of physical retribution amongst offenders (O'Connor, 2000). Another reason for claiming group innocence might be due to the perpetrator's knowledge of potential life changing ramifications when admitting offences as mentioned above.

Where the perpetrator appeared keen to disassociate with the label of being a paedophile is perhaps unsurprising given the overt societal stigma displayed via media channels and discussion forums (Jahnke et al., 2015). This dissociation from paedophilia or lack of acceptance was replicated in a study surveying male participants about their sexual preferences (Dombert et al., 2016). Out of the 8,718 participants, 4.1% admitted to sexual fantasies about children and 3.2% had offended against prepubescent children, yet only 0.1% reported a paedophilic sexual preference (Dombert et al., 2016). It is argued that the perpetrator acceptance of reality or paedophilic interest, can have positive or negative treatment outcomes, depending on whether their interest in children is considered by the perpetrator as integral to their personality or treatable (Lampalzer et

al., 2021). Perhaps more opportunities for individuals with sexual interests in children to seek support without stigma, such as the Lucy Faithful Foundation's 'stop it now' campaign, might go a long way to preventing child sexual abuse by offering deterrence and desistance strategies (Bailey et al., 2018).

Despite many scientific advancements, such as the use of forensic science assisting in the successful outcomes of many criminal cases (Peterson et al., 2010), perpetrators were still found to dispute the forensic evidence brought against them as also raised by Waltke et al. (2017). It is said that "DNA analysis has had an unprecedented impact on the criminal justice system. It has propelled investigations forward and made charging alleged perpetrators easier" (Waltke et al., 2017 p.2). However, the emphasis would ordinarily (if not a child) be to dis/prove sexual consent if the presence of DNA evidence was not useful in determining the crime (Waltke et al., 2017).

Perpetrators were found to justify their behaviour in relation to how it fitted within the law, which was centred around the victim's age. The victim's age was potentially important if the perpetrators had been made aware of the differences in sentencing options by their legal representation, which is often dependent on the age of the child victim (Sentencing Council, 2022). For example, the perpetrator admitting a sexual offence of either rape or sexual assault with a child under the age of 13 can receive a lengthier sentence (approximately 2 years longer) than a rape of a person above the age of 13 years (Sentencing Council, 2022), as supported by Hilinski-Rosick et al. (2014).

Perpetrators might also have an awareness of the wider negative public perceptions of sex offenders and their calls for longer sentencing for sex offences against children, (McNaughton Nicholls et al., 2012; Rothwell et al., 2021), which could also influence their decision to argue that they believed the child was an adult. Given that most of the sexual offences found in this study were committed against victims who were on average of 14 years, which is in line with previous research (Snyder, 2000), it could be assumed that perpetrators would be keen to avoid lengthier custodial sentences and would provide justifications as to why they thought the victim was older and therefore legally allowed to consent, albeit this is not specifically stated within the police transcripts in the current research. Similarly, research suggests that a high proportion of sexual offences are committed against child victims, with offences of Rape peaking at age 14 years (Snyder, 2000; Letourneau et al., 2017), so it will be important for law enforcement professionals to be able to verify or disprove such age-related justifications. However, this arguably remains difficult to prove. This justification may either be about the perpetrators perceived sexual maturity of the victim at 12/13, or alternatively, older victims may be less willing to engage, deeming a sexual relationship with an adult inappropriate if they have a greater understanding of the legality of it.

Despite some perpetrators arguing that they did not establish or recognise that the victim was a child (i.e., mistaken age) they were all convicted of the CSE related crimes. A study by Egan and Cordan (2009) exploring whether mistaken age is a “reasonable ground” for unlawful sex found that their participants consistently overestimated age by 3.5 years, which if added to the average age of the victims in this

study, would be 17.5 years, potentially adding credibility to the perpetrator's perceptions of age. Moreover, Egan and Cordan (2009) found their research participants to have preferences for immature faces over sexually mature faces, but this was not linked to their sexual preferences. In the same study, it was reported that alcohol consumption and make-up were not influences on the impaired perception of age and therefore not considered to be a valid excuse for unlawful sex. However, the perpetrators use of inhibitors and diminished responsibility as excuses will be discussed in more detail below.

7.4.1.11 Reduced Accountability or Shifting the Blame

The perpetrator justifications associated with reduced accountability and shifting the blame involves the perpetrator either removing responsibility for their actions or blaming others as interpreted below.

Howitt and Sheldon (2007) found similar distortions provided by perpetrators to support offending as in Chapter 6, such as blaming their interactions on the mature communications and advances by their victim. This was where the perpetrator might believe that the child is acting mature enough to “enjoy” sex with adults. Such discussions around maturity are similar to the justifications mentioned above, in that the perpetrator might believe children are sexual beings and is aware that sexual crimes against younger victims carries a longer sentence. As Akcan et al. (2019) reports the perpetrator will claim that victims were older than they appeared.

Following a similar theme to victims' maturity above, perpetrators in this research would suggest that the victim incited the sexual activity and was therefore

completely culpable. Perpetrators would also provide justifications that the victim had somehow brought the unlawful sexual act on themselves, as they were considered sexually “easy” as Cabrera (2018) and Beauregard et al. (2017) also reported. This moves beyond the issue of the victim consenting but where the victim is held more accountable than the perpetrator as the victim made the first sexual advance. Perhaps this view could again be shaped by societal rape myth acceptance, which as Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) suggest “serves to deny and justify” sexual violence (p.1). Such societal rape supportive attitudes which allow for situationally appropriate sexual responses towards victims (i.e., who might have initially made approaches towards the perpetrator), have previously been found to be significant predictors of perpetrator’s post-crime use of justifications and accepted blame attributions towards victims (Angelone et al., 2012; Scully & Marolla, 2005; Wegner et al., 2015).

Discrediting the victim’s version of events was the next most common discursive construct. In line with previous research from Scully et al. (1990) the perpetrators would suggest that the victim’s version was false, describing their involvement as an instigator/seducer for wanting group sex or that the victim was heavily under the influence of illicit substances when the offence that they were suspected of was taking place and would therefore be lying.

Where perpetrators in groups shifted the blame to the responsibility of a co-offender to become the instigator of the crimes, has previously been explored by Rowan et al. (2022) and found similar perceived shifts in accountability. Rowan et al. (2022) found that where there was an instigator in the group, the non-instigator or follower

would perceive themselves as less responsible for the crimes and would shift accountability to the other(s).

An alternative explanation for a perpetrator's diffused responsibility in a group context could be that the perpetrator could have become a passive bystander (i.e., spectator) to the offence. Therefore, the lack of action or bystander response might have been based on the situation that they were in, such as being fearful and pressured by the co-offender, rather than being complicit in the offending behaviour as suggested by Leonard (2014). The likelihood of a passive bystander might be more probable in the presence of group hierarchies/leaders or levels of violence from other group members as previously explored in relation to group dynamics and offending behaviours (Amir, 1971; Lantz, 2021; Porter & Alison, 2001).

The perpetrator's arguments for how their own disability or cognitive impairment prevented full understanding of the gravity of the offence is reported in the current research findings in Chapter 6. It is perhaps commonly known to the perpetrator, certainly when being legally represented, that The Sentencing Council (2022) sets out mitigating factors which could lower culpability and lessen the penalty for the offence. This could be a motivating factor if the perpetrator was attempting to lessen their sentence. Conversely, if the perpetrator was being truthful about their level of understanding some legal frameworks assign legal responsibility to correspond with the perpetrator's moral culpability, however, not all countries have adopted this approach (Midson, 2019), but sentencing decisions would arguably reflect this.

The findings reveal being under the influence of alcohol or drugs provided the excuse that the perpetrators unlawfully committed the sexual act because they were intoxicated and had lost their inhibitions or ability to think of possible repercussions. In a study by Kraanen and Emmelkamp (2011) one fifth to a quarter of the sex offenders had a history of drug misuse and about a quarter to half of the sex offenders appeared to be intoxicated at the time of the offence. Although it is a potentially credible explanation, the issue for sentencing is whether this resulted in reduced responsibility. However, whatever the outcome of the sentence, victim injuries were more common in assaults involving offender substance use, which perhaps raises the priority for further exploration if victims are to be effectively protected (Brecklin & Ullman, 2010).

Similar to variations of victim blaming as detailed above, in addition to perpetrator expectations for having sex, misperceptions of sexual intent, victims' alcohol consumption, attempts to be alone, and the number of consensual sexual activities prior to the unwanted sex, were significant predictors of perpetrators' post-assault use of justifications (Wegner et al., 2015).

Overall, whatever justifications were given during the police interview by the perpetrator, research has found that increased perpetrator accountability leads to greater therapeutic engagement with sex offenders (Ramsay et al., 2020). However, even justifications provided for the denial theme might be able to shed light on perpetrator motives for committing the offence, which is useful for future prevention strategies. The section below discusses the victim justifications.

7.4.1.12 Victim Retrospective Discursive Constructions

The victims' retrospective discursive constructions relating to their CSE relationship with the perpetrator were categorised into the three discursive constructs: a) desired, b) mixed, c) undesired, which remained the same themed headings as the categories in Chapter 6. However, the frequencies between the categories changed for victims during the retrospective accounts, shifting some of the desired or indifferent (mixed) victim responses to the undesired justifications. This might be due to the police influence and potential for secondary victimisation on victims during the interviewing process, prompting them to reflect differently or negatively on the CSE relationship after the offences had taken place (Green & Roberts, 2008). Alternatively, it could be linked to the realisation of the trauma and vulnerability that they had been placed in during the offences, causing acute or post-traumatic stress or depression as reported in Guay et al. (2019). The potential reasoning for such changes to their retrospective thinking will be explored in more detail within the three discursive constructs that follow.

7.4.1.13 Undesired

Within the undesired verbal retrospective justification, victims described a level of fear of being raped as a reason for not wanting to be involved with the perpetrator or to pursue an intimate relationship. This is perhaps unsurprising as it is a common fear shared with many victims, particularly women (Mellgren & Ivert, 2019), and in cases of CSE, could be associated with the threats, violence and group assaults as found in this research. It therefore appears that some victims can recognise the danger they are in, but perhaps only more so retrospectively.

There are other potential reasons found in literature for why victims might fear the CSE perpetrator, especially during sex. Herbenick et al. (2019) describes fears being linked to the prospect of scary sexual encounters, which might involve “anal sexual behaviours, STI/pregnancy risk, choking, multiple people, use of sex toys and BDSM, being held down, threats, and aggression” (p.427), in addition to being raped. Although Herbenick et al.’s (2019) study was based on a wider non-CSE specific sample of participants from ages 14–60, many of these issues generating fear during sex were found to be relevant in this research on CSE and documented in the findings section in Chapter 6.

For instance, the victims in this research would describe how they attempted to resist the perpetrator’s approach and remove themselves from the situation, either verbally or non-verbally, in the undesired construct. Leclerc et al. (2010) describes how victims respond in three ways to their potential sexual assault, which includes: a) physical resistance, b) forceful verbal resistance, and c) non-forceful verbal resistance, with younger victims using non-forceful verbal resistance (or a greater number of these strategies) to escape the abuse. However, it is worth noting, victims’ resistance might not always take a socially expected form and is perhaps more complex than just responding as what is often described as the “ideal” victim response, as the other discursive constructs reveal (Duggan, 2018).

Other factors influencing resistance could be victim sexual naivety, whereby the initial shock at the perpetrator’s sexual advances halts any resistance or knowing how to resist (within their own physical capabilities) actively and safely, before or during the

sexual encounter (Leclerc et al., 2010). Furthermore, Ullman (2020) found that victims would adopt similar behaviours to the perpetrator when resisting, such as, verbal resistance responding to verbal threats, and physical resistance responding to physical attacks. Therefore, perhaps the violence-resistance sequence for CSE victims in the undesired category could be linked to the perpetrator's threatening verbal and non-verbal/physically violent approaches. This violence-resistance sequencing is an area that Leclerc et al. (2010) recommends exploring however, is beyond the realms of the current research study because of the nature of the datasets (i.e., not sequential).

The victims in this research described how they sometimes felt fooled by the perpetrator within the undesired construct. Such perpetrator deception, trapping or misleading victims has previously been reported in research on sexual offenders, either by appearing like a nice person or by creating a false identity to impress their victim and convince them not to resist or consent to the sexual contact (Beauregard et al., 2017). Perhaps the retrospective accounts allow the victim the opportunity to reflect on the behaviour of the perpetrator and acknowledge how they might have had an ulterior motive. Chiu and Quayle (2022) and Wood and Wheatcroft (2020) found that young people did not always perceive that they were being deceived during the offence, maybe because of a lack of understanding about offender manipulation tactics and the lengths the perpetrator might have gone to build rapport and trust. However, this current research suggests that victims can reflect on their experiences retrospectively with even more clarity and awareness about the risky situation they were in.

The issue of victims' powerlessness features within the undesired construct, as victims described feeling powerless to get out of the sexual encounter with the perpetrator. Zerubavel et al. (2013) suggests that sexual powerlessness was a greater predictor of poor sexual assertiveness, which would explain why victims were unable to put their own needs first and express their sexual limits. For the victims in this research, the perpetrators would sometimes display their physicality over the victim if the victim displayed any (verbal/non-verbal) rejection or displayed agency. Such physical constraints appeared to prevent any successful assertion of disinterest and resulted in the unwanted and unlawful sex taking place. That said, for male victims in this research, where the physical power might not have been the main source of control, emotional power may take precedence and still have the same impact of silencing the victim (e.g., the female perpetrator in this research threatening to kill herself in front of the male victim). Furthermore, for group perpetration, Hauffe and Porter (2009) found that victims respond with less resistance as they feel more helpless, perhaps linked to the higher incidences of hostility, violence and aggression in group sexual offending resulting in forced vaginal and anal penetration (da Silva et al., 2018; de la Torre Laso et al., 2021).

Some victims reported the impact that the offence had on them in the undesired construct, which included threats, isolation and being discredited by the perpetrator and their networks. Sometimes victims would be verbally abused and blamed for the sexual assault or rape that they endured. Research documents the immediate and long-term impact that CSE can have on victims, which can include dissociation, hyperarousal,

running away, substance misuse, school exclusions, isolation from social and family networks, depression and sexualised behaviours (Cole et al., 2016; Shaw et al. 2017). It is perhaps unsurprising that victims do not resist or disclose their abuse if the ramifications are so significant beyond their encounter and into their future life.

Additional barriers for male victims disclosing their abuse have been highlighted by Widanaralalage et al. (2022) and centre around the role of masculinity perceptions in seeking help and prejudiced responses from child protection agencies. Furthermore, the negative social reactions or lack of social support following the traumatic incident are said to increase post-traumatic stress (Ullman, 2010) and be a significant risk factor of PTSD (Guay et al., 2006).

7.4.1.14 Mixed

The next most common discursive construct is the victim's mixed retrospective accounts, which provide reasons why victims might have mixed feelings and perceptions about their involvement with the perpetrator.

The victims would describe their confusion or mixed emotions associated with the unlawful sexual act (either prior to, during or after the sexual contact occurred). The issue with having mixed emotions towards any typical sexual encounter has been researched in previous literature and has been linked with increased risky behaviour in adolescents (Houck et al., 2014) and likelihood for victimisation (Zerubavel et al., 2013).

The inability to adjust to significant emotional experiences, such as being victim to an unlawful sex act, has been defined as emotional dysregulation (Gratz & Roemer,

2004; Linehan, 2018). Emotional dysregulation is said to be linked to a lack of emotional response and sexual assertiveness during unwanted sex (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Zerubavel et al., 2013). This barrier to sexual assertiveness might only be rectified if the victim is able to recognise the emotions they are feeling (prior to, during or post the sexual act), and therefore to act on this in a more mindful state (Linehan, 2018; Zerubavel et al., 2013). The lack of emotional response towards unwanted sexual activity, also known as sexual passivity, was explored by Bay-Cheng et al. (2008), finding that female sexual interests would often be subordinate to males, and they might therefore suppress their own feelings to accommodate their male partner. As most of the victims were females in this research, this might suggest that such gender specific sexual passivity might be a factor within the mixed response.

Some victims in this research acknowledged an assumed pressure to have sex with their partner (i.e., the CSE perpetrator) to avoid any adverse response. This is not uncommon for adolescents, or those in adult relationships, where individuals report engaging in sex to please their partners and will even feign enjoyment to convince the partner of their pleasure (Kanku & Mash, 2010; Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Such sexual compliance is said to be linked to the victim's attachment anxiety, whereby sexual assault is not only justified within the abusive relationship, but romantic rejection is avoided (Brewer & Forrest-Redfern, 2022). Similarly, reassurance orientated victims, as Petherick and Ferguson (2012) states, are said to place more emphasis and value on the perpetrator and if challenged will attempt to restore the status quo (even if that is abusive and causes them personal harm). Their passivity and avoidant responses result

in the acceptance of violence or abuse and can even form part of the victim's identity (Petherick & Ferguson, 2012).

Research has also found that there are other gender differences in relation to how people feel about sex and the pressure to have it. Boys were found to be more susceptible to social pressure to have sex than girls, but boys were more likely to feel positively towards it than females (Houck et al., 2014; Widman et al., 2016). Houck et al. (2014) reported on the reasons why females might feel more negatively towards the sexual encounter than males, which included the negative ramifications associated with sexual health, reputation, and stigma. Furthermore, females engaging in one-night stands (or hook-ups) expressed a greater regret than males (Eshbaugh & Gute, 2008). That said, such research was not specifically exploring the affective states in response to CSE but still highlights the different gendered emotional responses to it. However, gender differentiated affective states might be important to research in relation to CSE contexts in the future but are discussed in relation to the LIWC analysis for all victims in this chapter. However, for the non-typical sexual encounter, as in the case for CSE victims, the emotional response (i.e., revealing feelings of fear, anger/disgust, or ambivalence) is said to be largely influenced by the severity of the abuse (Long et al., 1993).

Where victims in this research did not recognise themselves as a victim of rape but blamed themselves for their relationship with the perpetrator, similarities have been found in previous literature by Woolf (2020) and Taylor (2019). Taylor (2019) reported on victims doubting themselves, over analysing the sexual encounter and holding themselves accountable for leading the instigator on. Moreover, Taylor (2019) found

that victims were sometimes trying to distance themselves from the label of rape because they did not always think that their sexual assault was as serious as the law made it sound. Otherwise, research suggests that in the aftermath of unwanted sexual experiences, participants were likely to reflect and attribute blame to themselves for the experience rather than on the perpetrator (Bay-Cheng & Eliseo-Arras, 2008).

Victims' perceptions of potential danger were centred around the perpetrators' physicality, their immediate environment, or levels of intoxication. This is not only congruent with previous research exploring the situations where victims feel most in danger but where the victims are more vulnerable and at risk of being attacked by the perpetrator (Beauregard et al., 2017; Valentine, 1990). Opportunities where offenders are likely to attack have been reported to be either where victims were in a risky situation, such as being isolated in their immediate environment or intoxicated, or if the victim was displaying any vulnerability to the offender, such as being helpless and submissive (Beauregard et al. (2017). Offenders have described the environment where the crimes are committed as their hunting ground and that their choice of where the crime is committed can be highly arousing for them, offering a thrill or excitement as they move from public to private spaces (Beauregard et al.,2017). As victims report in this research there is some recognition of the potential danger that they are in as they are moved from public to private spaces. Furthermore, it is suggested that they might feel at greater risk if there are groups (i.e., CSE perpetrators offending together) that dominate the space that they are taken to (Valentine,1990).

A study on sexual harassment in secondary school by Sweeting et al. (2022) found that young people were regularly subjected to either visual/verbal, or contact/personally invasive behaviours, ranging from sexual jokes to sexual touching, but were not always sure themselves what was considered acceptable behaviour. This could explain the victim ambivalence towards the perpetrator if contact invasive behaviours were the norm and had distorted the victim's view of sexual experiences. Furthermore, this study found that ambiguities were centred around pressure, how well the instigator was known, intent, persistence and physicality, which is what the victims described in their retrospective accounts in this research. It is perhaps made more complicated when factoring in the lack of attention given to what "normal" adolescent sexual and romantic development during puberty looks like as part of a young person's health and well-being education (Suleiman et al.,2017)

7.4.1.15 Desired

Within the desired category, which was the least frequent discursive construct found in the victim's retrospective accounts, victims would acknowledge their positive feelings towards the perpetrator or how the perpetrator made them feel. It is not uncommon for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation to report that the perpetrator made them feel special, as we see in the many different abuse cases, such as within sport, religion and inter/extrafamilial abuse contexts (Marcus, 1992; Offutt, 2013; Owton & Sparkes, 2015; Wormer & Berns, 2004)

Some reasons are provided in literature that support why victims might be sexually attracted to the perpetrators of CSE. These include preferences for liking

individuals associated with hook-ups and maturity, seeking excitement and to feel good about themselves. Firstly, research suggests that females are more likely to be attracted to older males with financial prospects, which might account for the victim being attracted to a mature perpetrator who might seemingly be very generous with money and gifts (Walter et al., 2020). Similarly, males are said to prefer women younger than themselves which would explain the perpetrator's attraction to younger victims (Walter et al., 2020).

Puigvert et al. (2019) reports on how young females would also have preferences for violent attitudes and behaviours, finding such individuals “more interesting, attractive and appealing”, which many of the CSE perpetrators would display, as found in Chapter 6. Moreover, Haynie et al. (2005) found that individuals (particularly girls) who described their own behaviour as deviant were more likely to be involved with a partner who also demonstrates delinquent behaviour. This fits with many CSE victims being involved in offending behaviour, as found in the current research and similarly with Cockbain & Brayley (2012), and as previously mentioned, not considered the “ideal victim” if displaying similar deviant behaviours. Thus, CSE victims are treated more often as an offender than a victim and are considered more vulnerable to further exploitation by CSE or criminal networks (Arthur & Down, 2019; Firmin, 2016).

This attraction to violent attitudes and behaviours would also explain why the group perpetrators were successful with their dominant and aggressive approach to victims, but perhaps placed the victims at more risk for gender violence during what Puigvert et al. (2019) describes as the victims' *sexual-affective relationships awakening*.

This coincides with Petherick and Ferguson's (2012) reassurance orientated victims who are said to accept violent and abusive behaviour because of their low self-worth or acceptance that this behaviour might be the norm if previously abused. Such acceptance of violence, particularly during sex, might explain the lack of resistance when perpetrators display violence during sex, such as choking, as Herbenick et al. (2022) found in their study entitled "It Was Scary, But Then It Was Kind of Exciting". Rough sex was accepted, and victims would go along with it to please their partners, and it appears from the findings in this study that this can occur even during a hook up. Puigvert et al. (2019) reported preferences for hook ups rather than long term relationships, which is more synonymous with the CSE cases in this study as most of the relationships only lasted one month. Similarly, Reeves et al. (2018), Woodhouse (2018) and Horskykh (2018) support the findings that victims feel excited when in a CSE relationship, even if short lived, as they are offered lifts in flash cars or given free food, alcohol, and clothing. Reeves et al. (2018) suggest that this desire for excitement is another vulnerability to grooming.

For perpetrators offering any hint of interest in the victim, Horskykh (2018) found that even the belief of being in a romantic relationship was found to add to the excitement for victims. The desired construct, when linked to a longer term but abusive CSE relationship, could be explained by Rusbult's (1983) Investment Theory, and Homans' (1961) Social Exchange Theory, whereby the more relationship satisfaction the individual (or victim) might feel, the more commitment they might offer to the partner (or perpetrator). This might include the victim being rewarded by the

perpetrator's interest and committing to it by offering forgiveness for any inappropriate abusive behaviour and willingness to sacrifice some of their own needs.

Porter et al. (2009) recognises the powerful influence that the perpetrator can have on people around them, such as the persuasive charm leading to increased attraction described by the victims in this study. Porter et al. (2009) found that high-psychopathy sexual offenders were approximately 2.5 times more likely to be granted conditional release than non-psychopathic offenders, which shows the convincing and believable personalities that create buy in from professional people that are well used to dealing with offenders. If such persuasive power exists, it is unsurprising that contact CSE victims believe and follow the perpetrator requests as found in Chapter 6 within the perpetrator coercive control and victim desired/mixed response category.

Other explanations were given by the victims as to why they enjoyed being in a relationship with the perpetrator, which firstly includes feeling protected and comfortable. Previous reports of victims feeling listened to and offered sympathy by an attentive perpetrator appear to concur with the findings in this current study (Offutt, 2013). This feeling of protection is also found to be reported by victims when abused by groups or gangs as they benefit from the respect afforded by others towards the perpetrators, which is suggested to be associated with trauma bonding (Egu, 2018). If we acknowledge that there is a power imbalance between the perpetrator and victim, we might accept that such protection is therefore offered physically and emotionally, being both the persecutor and protector.

Overall, the retrospective justifications from victims appeared to correspond more with the non-verbal methods of communication rather than verbal patterns. This indicates that the victim may be attempting to communicate disinterest with the perpetrator, but is unable to verbally, or alternatively, that the retrospective accounts were influenced by the police interview process, which will be explored in more detail in the limitations section below.

7.5 Limitations

The limitations identified involve challenges with the data itself (i.e., from identification, extraction to potential distorted language), analytical frameworks and methods, and interpretation as detailed in the following sections.

The recognised limitation of missing victim and perpetrator data in this research would suggest that information is not routinely collected when building police case files and highlights some of the well documented issues around collecting police data (Kelly & Karsna, 2017). This is particularly apparent for the flagging of CSE cases, where there remained numerous variations of flagging categories for CSE related crimes, meaning that current data might still underestimate the prevalence of CSE. That said, for the purposes of the current research, all police case files in the sample were checked following purposive sampling to ensure that they matched the CSE definitions, and those that did not were removed.

Another limitation is the incomplete nature of the language data extracted from the police case files. A significant constraint is the relatively small language dataset collected in comparison to online research detailed in Chapter 2. It has been

acknowledged that online grooming interactions leave an evidence trail for researchers to explore (DeMarco et al., 2016), therefore leaving a larger and complete dataset for researchers. In contrast, when exploring contact CSE cases via police files the available language is based on how well the victim and perpetrator report their relationship to the police, and the accuracy of the police officers interviewing and documenting language, rather than it being in 'real time' as in the case of the online grooming interactions. The overall impact of such incomplete or imperfect language data on the research itself is false positives or that it is misclassified (Wallis, 2021) and therefore might not always represent the CSE victim-perpetrator interaction especially if not in a typical conversational (i.e., back and forth) or linear style. However, to ensure visibility for the current research, it is assumed that the correct format for collecting victim and suspect accounts was followed in line with the ABE guidance for police in the UK (Davidson, & Bifulco, 2009), based on the researcher's impressions of reviewing the police transcripts, aiding detailed language extraction, which contributes to the unique insights gained.

Following on from the issues with extracting language from police case files is that the discourse has been collected within a criminal context and can therefore be influenced by the recognised institutional power dynamics that exist when conducting police interviews with both the perpetrator and the victim (Bruijnes et al., 2015). The purpose of a police interview is not for research but to obtain evidence by questioning suspects, victims, and witnesses (providing context to support forensic evidence) and therefore resolve investigations (Westera et al., 2016). Therefore, the style of police questioning can be more confrontational and challenging than a researcher might be if

interviewing for research purposes (Winerdal et al.,2019), which is likely to impact on the response of the victim and perpetrator and their openness to disclose when under such pressure. As such, the traumatic nature of the CSE sexual crimes may distort the victim's willingness or ability to form cohesive or complete memories (Dorey, 2018; Lavoie et al.,2019), whilst perpetrators can favour minimising, masking or denying illegal sexual behaviours (Levenson, 2011) to appear innocent or to avoid being labelled as a sex offender (Bettens & Warren, 2021; Witt & Neller, 2018). This is particularly the case within a criminal context because the ramifications for disclosing sexual offending can result in serious criminal sanctions and life changing consequences for the perpetrator (Witt & Neller, 2018). However, it is anticipated that post-doctoral research would further test the unique insights gained from the analysis of police case files.

Another potential drawback is the methods used to analyse the dataset which include LIWC and discourse analysis. Firstly, although the LIWC analysis is a validated analytical tool it is not without criticism from academics. Scrutiny of the *clout* LIWC language summary variable by Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel (2019) revealed limitations by the lack of potential to replicate the *clout* metrics due to being 'based on a closed source-code algorithm' (p.22), or that it was perhaps an over-simplified measure of groomers' influence due to its decontextualised linguistic analysis. Secondly, another potential limitation impacting on the research includes the LIWC output comparisons between the *categories of interest* or variations in word counts analysed. As there are differences in total numbers for each category of perpetrator/victim or the number of words used by each category, there is potential for a skewed result and therefore it might not be

possible to draw from this the most reliable comparisons. However, it was considered important that all categories were represented linguistically from the sample to provide the most insight, especially because of the aforementioned research gaps in relation to demographic data. Future research involving a larger sample might however limit the numbers in each category to more of an even split for analysis. Furthermore, the research is considered viable as the LIWC had been triangulated by the discourse analysis, providing further context.

Similarly, making benchmark comparisons with the natural speech data provided by the Pennebaker Conglomerates might not be a suitable “normal” population to draw comparisons from and therefore might skew the findings, which would prevent a fully reliable benchmark. The final LIWC method limitation relates to the accuracy of the LIWC output scores, which is acknowledged by the Pennebaker conglomerates within their discussion about reliability but is considered worthy of noting here. Whilst using the LIWC software, it became apparent from further exploration of each category that some words that might have been expected to be included within the selected language variables were missing (e.g., the slang terms for bum and touching of female body parts, such as, “ass” or “fingering” was not picked up as sexual words). This potentially distorts the accuracy of the LIWC output scores but can be caveated with further context from the researcher. Furthermore, this also provides the rationale for a specific CSE linguistic dictionary to be developed to prevent missing otherwise hidden words.

Although not necessarily a limitation but more of an observation, it might also have been useful to compare additional LIWC categories, such as relevant personal

concerns (i.e., work, home, money, religion) that might be relevant for analysing perpetrator or victims' language. However, a research decision was taken to use only the LIWC language variables that were recognised in previous child sexual offending literature to draw similarities or draw distinctions. Future research with a greater capacity might use a more comprehensive set of LIWC variables to analyse the contact CSE language and draw additional conclusions.

Despite all of the above LIWC limitations, the research is still viable because there are several empirically based studies that have been put forward by Pennebaker Conglomerates via the LIWC22 website to not only support the inclusion of the LIWC measure (such as, Kacewicz et al., 2014, Drouin et al., 2017 and Fox & Royne Stafford, 2021) but to highlight the extensive scientific backing from academics (e.g., a Google Scholar link via the LIWC website to over 20,000 scientific published articles using LIWC measurements). Furthermore, the impact that this has on the research has potentially been minimalised by the triangulation methods established via discourse analysis.

The discourse analysis is a method that is suggested to provide detailed analysis of text but is still criticised for not being easily replicable or objective, especially if the researcher using the method is without linguistic expertise (Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2018). To combat this, the researcher utilised a coding framework that was adapted from validated linguistic analysis from those with linguistic expertise and initially consulted with a linguistic expert. However, there is an additional category that has been added to explore verbal and non-verbal language in a face-to-face context, which was under the

heading of coercive control, which has not been validated by linguistic experts, despite the coercive control subcategories being based on the well-researched and peer reviewed coercive control concept by Stark (2007). However, this is acknowledged as a potential limitation and discussed differently to the linguistically validated codes.

Although the t-test was chosen for being the most robust measure for drawing comparisons between two sample means that are independent of each other (Kim, 2015), there is still an acknowledgement of the possibility of interpretation bias, as there is still an individual difference between the groups, and not every sample might react the same way.

To summarise, despite any potential limitations outlined above, the research is viable, and the extracted language still offers a unique and original opportunity to explore the contact CSE perpetrator and victims' offence acceptance, denial, minimisation, and motivation involved in contact CSE cases as part of their retrospective discursive constructs.

7.6 Conclusion

To summarise, this discussion further unified the quantitative and qualitative analysis by combining and interpreting the verbal and non-verbal (pre-and during) communicative patterns and linguistic differences for research question one. This formed the typical: a) perpetrator, b) victim, c) offences, d) psycholinguistics and e) exploitative language, for contact CSE. The discussion made further distinctions by categorising typical retrospective discursive constructions for both the contact CSE

perpetrator and victim, within the context of a criminal investigation, addressing research question two.

The discussion benefited from previous literature to provide explanation for the CSE victim-perpetrator interpersonal communication patterns found. Much of the prior research (predominantly online) supported that perpetrators can verbally invest in victims by devoting time to build rapport to engage the victim in sexual activity, whilst also destabilising the victim, by threatening, demanding, coercing, and controlling them. Unique to this research is how perpetrators were found to use non-verbal tactics to reinforce the level of harm they could cause the victim (or the threat of harm in a way which may feel more pertinent to the victim given the contact element of this CSE as opposed to online tactics) or to progress sexual activity by use of proximity and non-sexual/sexual touching. Also, in line with previous research, victims demonstrate similarities in their verbal and non-verbal interactions, such as engagement in building rapport, assessing risk (to the perpetrator), flattery, threats, self-disclosure, gaining and maintaining access to perpetrators, violence, touch, and proximity.

Overall, despite the acknowledged limitations, this discussion highlighted that there are typical linguistic and communicative features and patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE, with findings that are in line with, or at times unique to previous sexual offending research. The unique and original findings contribute to better recognising, understanding and responding to CSE for safeguarding and law enforcement purposes.

Chapter 8: Proposing Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language (InTEL) with Implications for Effective Safeguarding and Investigation of Contact CSE Crimes

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to propose the Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language (InTEL), bringing together the review of literature in the introductory chapters of the thesis, alongside the empirical evidence from the mixed methods fieldwork and analysis in Chapter 6 to establish how the indicators were developed. The themes emerging from the literature review in Chapter 2 reveal that there are several barriers to recognising, understanding, and responding to the perpetrators of contact CSE. However, more optimistically, the review in Chapter 3 outlined the potential for using transferrable OG analytical methods for overcoming some of these barriers, such as exploring patterns of exploitative communication. The findings in Chapter 4 feeds into the need to build upon current knowledge and provide safeguarding practitioners with an empirically founded and coherent solution specifically for understanding of contact CSE perpetrator-victim interpersonal dynamics.

To address this gap, this chapter draws upon the empirical evidence, discussions and findings revealed in this thesis so far, presenting new inter-disciplinary indicators for law enforcement, education, probation, and safeguarding agencies. The intended purpose of the InTEL is to contribute to current safeguarding practices by offering evidenced based indicators of exploitative language for practitioners to refer to and improve their own understanding and decision-making abilities regarding contact CSE. This chapter outlines the additional benefits of the inter-disciplinary indicators for improving contact CSE practice, such as preventative education (i.e., for potential

victims or offenders) and rehabilitation, providing practice guidance and examples of all its uses. To that end, the objective for this chapter is described below:

1. To propose succinct, evidence-based, inter-disciplinary and operational indicators to improve understanding and decision making in relation to contact CSE victim and perpetrator dynamics.

8.2 Introducing the InTEL

The InTEL is presented as an innovative and evidence-based set of indicators to be used by practitioners working with CSE across a variety of disciplines. InTEL has been developed as an extension of online grooming and sex offending research foundations, adapting recognised psycholinguistic concepts for analysis to form new contact CSE indicators. From the current research, InTEL is the first inter-disciplinary, evidenced based, indicators that prioritises CSE victim and perpetrator language aimed at supporting clinical, child protection or criminal justice processes, with the wider benefits for improving awareness and preventative education for contact CSE.

Its initial uses include supporting the professional judgements made by frontline educators, police, social workers and third sector agency staff for the purposes of early identification, informed and dynamic risk assessment, tailored interventions (i.e., preventative, therapeutic or enforcement purposes), and solution focused management of contact CSE cases. The InTEL also provides an evidence-base for developing improvements to prevention education/campaigns, victim care and practitioner training and clarifying misconceptions about CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics.

The development of the new inter-disciplinary InTEL embeds an expectation that everyone plays their role in disrupting harm and can make a valuable contribution to the future of safeguarding against CSE and facilitate the development of new knowledge in this domain. Figure 10 below illustrates the InTEL categories, including pre and during the sexual act (i.e., first three green categories) and the retrospective discursive constructs (i.e., last two orange categories). More detailed practitioner guidance can be found in section 8.7 of this chapter.

Figure 10

Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language - InTEL (PART A)

Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language (InTEL)					
Perpetrator and victim verbal and non-verbal communication patterns pre and during the sexual activity				Perpetrator and victim retrospective verbal justifications	
Perpetrator		Victim		Perpetrator Retrospective	Victim Retrospective
Verbal	Non-verbal	Verbal	Non-verbal		
<p>Access and approach (i.e., establishing contact via social media, discussing availability for meeting in person, opportunistic approaches). <i>Examples:</i> "Do you have WhatsApp?", "When can we meet up", "You want a lift?"</p>	<p>Spatial Proximity (i.e., the positioning or changing the distance between the perpetrator and victim to signal a more intimate connection). <i>Examples:</i> accidental touching, moving closer, sat closer on bed, moving to quieter location (e.g., upstairs bedroom, quiet area of park in car)</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., Conveying acceptance, development, or approval of topics, requests or demands, threat compliance, returning compliments / sexual questions, sending material, friendly banter). <i>Examples:</i> "I know it's stupid because I'm only 13 but I really love you", "You're my everything. I never want to lose you".</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., conveying acceptance, approval or compliance by non-verbal actions). <i>Examples:</i> Non-sexual and sexual touch, closer spatial proximity, Hugs, Kisses, touches without being asked</p>	<p>Nature of harm (i.e., minimising harm). <i>Examples:</i> "It was just a game", "I was just teaching her about the body", "I wasn't hurting him I really liked him", "I</p>	<p>Desired (i.e., positive feelings about the relationship or the perpetrator). <i>Example:</i> "I felt unique, mature and special", "it was exciting", "I love a bad boy", "I felt protected"</p>
<p>Risk assessment (i.e., testing boundaries and compliance, having regret). <i>Examples:</i> "Are you into older men?", "Our affair must be top secret, I am relying on you big time babe", "Sorry if it's wrong"</p>	<p>Non-sexual touch (i.e., the touch of a non-intimate body part). <i>Examples:</i> Hand on arm, face, shoulder, leg, cheek</p>	<p>Mixed (i.e., Neither positive nor negative, conveying uncertainty, ambiguous, non-committed, evasive responses, challenging moves. <i>Examples:</i> "I've never done this before. I'm nervous", "ok I will. Don't get in a mood with me"</p>	<p>Mixed (i.e., neither positive nor negative, conveying uncertainty by non-verbal actions). <i>Examples:</i> Close spatial proximity but lying still, shrugs shoulders</p>	<p>Uncontrollability (i.e., Reluctant feelings, knowing it was socially and legally wrong). <i>Examples:</i> "I knew it was wrong, but I just couldn't help myself"</p>	<p>Mixed (i.e., mixed feelings about the relationship or the perpetrator, describing pressure, confusion, intoxication, dissociation or zoning out). <i>Example:</i> "I was excited and worried at the same time", "I'm not saying I was raped but he put me under pressure",</p>
<p>Rapport building & trust development (i.e., Showing interest, flattery, reassuring, asking questions, making promises of commitment). <i>Examples:</i> "How are you babe?", "you look hot", "I won't ever get bored of you", "I'm going to marry you one day", "Don't worry, I'm genuine" "I won't hurt you"</p>	<p>Sexual touch (i.e., the touch of an intimate body part). <i>Examples:</i> Kissing, perp touching intimate body parts (e.g., vagina, breasts, anus), perp moving victim's hand to touch private parts</p>	<p>Undesired (i.e., Rejection, avoidance, dismissing advances, doubting, declining, refusing). <i>Examples:</i> "just get off me, please stop", "I don't wanna do this anymore"</p>	<p>Undesired (i.e., Spatial separation, Rejection, avoidance or dismissing advances by non-verbal actions). <i>Examples:</i> Distant spatial proximity (e.g., moves away self or perp, looks away, pretends to sleep) violent touch (e.g., pushed, punched, bitten)</p>	<p>Dangerous world (i.e., victim grievance against perpetrator, self-pity, self-blame, inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits. <i>Examples:</i> "I am the victim here", "she is just seeking revenge"</p>	<p>Undesired (i.e., Fearful or regretful feelings towards the relationship or perpetrator or descriptions of how they attempted to remove themselves or felt powerless). <i>Example:</i> "I lied about being ill so I could leave", "I tried to pull away", "I just kept saying no", "I punched and kicked him to try and get him off me, but he wouldn't", "I felt powerless"</p>
<p>Sexual Gratification (i.e., implicit or explicit sexual requests or demands, sharing fantasies). <i>Examples:</i> "Take off your clothes", "Can you have sex with me?", "I want a slag", "I don't mind a baby sucking me off"</p>	<p>Sexually violent touch (i.e., violent or forceful touch of intimate body part and/or forced sex). <i>Examples:</i> Forced sex, pushed, objectified, punched, restrained, imprisoned, unconscious, forced to commit a sexual act on another</p>			<p>Entitlement (i.e., Lust, Sexual chemistry, Sexual activity). <i>Examples:</i> "I wanted to have sex with him", "I only wanted a blow job"</p>	
<p>Coercive control (i.e., insults, threats, questioning, creating doubts, belittling, degrading, bribery). <i>Examples:</i> "You're a whore", "a little warning... you don't have a leg to stand on", "You're Mum doesn't love you", "Stick to your ugly council estate ramos", "I will pay you"</p>				<p>Children as sexual objects (i.e., Victim instigated, Victim did not reject. <i>Examples:</i> "she was asking for it" "she put it about a lot"</p>	
				<p>Children as emotional support (i.e., Victim flattering, offering reassurance and showing attention to perp). <i>Examples:</i> "He would say reassuring things that made me feel happy". "She flattered me"</p>	
				<p>Denial of facts, planning or intent (i.e., Excuses or an alternative explanation provided for involvement). <i>Examples:</i> "I'm not guilty of grooming – I just had sex because he was 16"</p>	
				<p>Reduced accountability & shifting the blame (i.e., giving other reasons for why they were not accountable for the sexual</p>	

Psycholinguistic Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language InTEL (PART B)

Indicators of Typical Exploitative Language (InTEL)	
<p>L1WC Psycholinguistic Indicators: Clout (i.e., social status, confidence, or leadership), Sexual (e.g., horny, love, incest), Positive emotion (e.g., love, nice, sweet), Negative emotion (e.g., hurt, ugly, nasty), Personal Pronoun (e.g., I, them, her), Reward (e.g., take, prize, benefit), Risk (e.g., danger, doubt)</p>	
Perpetrator psycholinguistic profile	Victim psycholinguistic profile
Pre & during	Pre & during
<p>During exploitative interactions the perpetrator is more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interact with more confidence - use more sexual language - use less positive emotion language - use less reward focused language 	<p>During exploitative interactions the victim is more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use more sexual language - use more personal pronouns - interact with less confidence - use less positive emotion language - use less reward focused language
Retrospective	Retrospective
<p>During retrospective accounts (i.e., in police interviews) the perpetrator is more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use more sexual language - use more negative emotion language - use less positive emotion language - use less personal pronoun - use less reward focused language 	<p>During retrospective accounts (i.e., in police interviews) the victim is more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use more sexual language - use more risk associated language - use more negative emotion language - use more personal pronouns - use less confident language - use less positive emotion language

8.3 Development of the InTEL

The development of InTEL was based on a six-stage approach; 1) define the scope, review the evidence base and identify the problem, 2) undertake fieldwork and analysis to develop the basis of a thematic and evidenced based indicators, 3) hold stakeholder meetings, 4) test and refine indicators, 5) disseminate effective indicators and 6) monitor and evaluate indicators in practice. Due to the timescales for completing a thesis, only stages 1-4 have been completed to date. The aim is to undertake stages 5 – 6 following completion of the doctoral study. Stages 1–6 are detailed below to highlight the development process.

Stage 1: Define the Scope, Review the Evidence Base and Identify the Problem. Three approaches were used to inform the development of the InTEL, which included defining the scope, reviewing the evidence, and identifying the problem. This involved a) a process of personal professional reflection on experiences of working within a multi-agency CSE team, b) consultation with agencies attending the regional safeguarding meeting regarding current practices and potential solutions, and c) undertaking a systematic, thematic, and focused review of contact CSE, online grooming literature and current practice to identify research gaps as part of this thesis (Chapters 2, 3 and 4). The researcher was subsequently able to summarise the information gathered from the reflections, consultations and evidence base to feed into Stage 2 of developing the new InTEL.

Stage 2: Undertake Fieldwork and Analysis to Develop the Basis of the Evidenced Based Indicators. The researcher conducted fieldwork by extracting, coding, and analysing language data from police case files (see Chapter 5 and the Appendices for the process). Following the multi-modal discourse analysis and LIWC software analysis, the verbal and non-verbal language data were interpreted following established sex offender research codes and categorised into language patterns that fit into either (a) pre, (b) during or (c) retrospective justification headings, depending on where the language occurred. The language patterns presented in the findings in Chapter 6 were subsequently amalgamated to formulate what would become the basis of the InTEL.

Stage 3: Hold Stakeholder Meetings. A range of stakeholders (See Table 28 below) provided input on the proposed InTEL, including professionals from clinical, child protection, and criminal justice services. In addition, academics and researchers were also consulted. Reflective memos of this input are included in the Appendices as evidence. Potential enablers and challenges of the indicators were discussed alongside dissemination strategies and how it could become a routine component of current practice. The main objective of the discussions was to generate and refine ideas before finalising the first draft of the InTEL. Table 28 below details the stakeholders involved in the development of the InTEL.

Table 28

Key Stakeholders Involved in the Consultation Table

Stakeholders	
High court judge	Police and probation
CSE lawyer	Regional safeguarding mtg – social workers, health,
National lead for MAPPA	Sexual health practitioners
Head of Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) team	Specialist victim interviewers
Assistant head of secondary school	Lucy Faithful Organisation staff member
Wellbeing co-ordinator at primary school	DoS – SIO and lawyer
Regional organised crime unit	Professor in applied linguistics specialising in discourse analysis
Researchers – CJP	

From these discussions and reflections, practice examples have been provided below to show how the InTEL can be applied. Stage 4 below details how the indicators will be tested and refined.

Stage 4: Test and Refine Indicators. Although beyond the scope of the thesis, on completion of the doctoral research, InTEL will be tested and refined. Firstly, specific outcome measures will be established (e.g., reduction in NFAs after MFH debriefs, an increase in knowledge of CSE dynamics for frontline staff, improved local and regional problem profiles). Secondly, a pilot test will be conducted using one agency from the multi-agency team before a wider scale multi-agency test of effectiveness will be carried out. Measures will be reviewed for the sample size, effect size, cost implications and improvements to safeguarding practice, with further validity and reliability testing undertaken through randomised control trials. A refined version of the indicators would then be produced with accompanying user guidance. Additionally, proposed future developments to the InTEL that are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9 could include analysing language data that compares repeat offenders, involves larger samples of co-offenders or to explore patterns of ACES with language. It is perhaps a strength of the indicators that it is flexible and adaptive enough to accommodate new knowledge and changes in context in the future. Once the InTEL has been tested and refined, dissemination as discussed in Stage 5 can begin.

Stage 5: Disseminate Effective Indicators. Dissemination options were canvassed during Stage 3 with stakeholders and the most viable option considered. The dissemination strategy would involve four different strands; firstly to present the research findings at relevant national and international conferences, secondly, to share with relevant national working groups (i.e., VKPP, MAPPA, MASH, CoP), thirdly, to provide training resources and guidance with training co-ordinators or educators (i.e., in CSE multi-agency teams, policing, probation, prison and schools) and finally to use social media to share examples of the typical exploitative language for a wider reach. Stage 6 below details how monitoring and evaluation will be factored into the development process.

Stage 6: Monitor and Evaluate Impact of Indicators in Practice. Once the indicators have been disseminated and is in use, monitoring will be undertaken to establish if the indicators can become a routine component of current practice. Evaluation will take place to determine if the indicators achieving the anticipated improvements to practice and associated outcomes and what might need to be modified if not meeting the original objectives. Although evaluation will have to take place, the proposed benefits of the InTEL are detailed below.

8.4 Proposed Benefits of the InTEL

8.4.1 Addressing Research Gaps and Promoting Practice Informed Research

The new indicators presented in this chapter are the first, to the authors knowledge, to build upon the foundations of online grooming and sex offending

research to address the contact CSE research gaps for victims and perpetrators identified in the earlier chapters of the thesis. Firstly, the new indicators go some way to resolve previous criticisms of data being outdated, incomplete, using victim decoys, recycled and unverifiable without access to police case files (Black et al., 2015; Broome et al., 2020; DeHart et al., 2017; Drouin et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2012; Ioannou et al., 2018; Inches & Crestani, 2012; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). The current indicators rely upon original, up-to-date, genuine, victim and offender language, which involves data verified by the police case files, such as the offence details matching the language data.

Therefore, capturing more of the interactional nature of CSE cases as Olson et al. (2007) recommended. The current indicators also acknowledge the findings from both contact and online offences integrating prior and current research. The data collected has factored in differentiating offenders and victims, specifically the ethnicity, gender, education, socio-economic status, and criminal histories as recommended by Black et al. (2015), DeHart et al. (2017) and Winters et al. (2017). However, for the proposed InTEL it is anticipated that the researcher would widen these demographic categories in future upgrades. More recently, IICSA (2022) recommended that police forces and local authorities in England and Wales must collect specific data, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, and disability, on all cases of known or suspected child sexual exploitation, including by networks, which has been factored into the InTEL.

Analytical methods have been triangulated by using both LIWC and discourse analysis to address the decontextualised interpretation issues, such as the “bag of words” criticism for LIWC or researcher interpretation bias as raised in Chapter 3 (see Gupta et

al., 2012; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019). The new InTEL is contact specific and attempts to build a more holistic understanding of the contact CSE interpersonal dynamics by also factoring in non-verbal communication in the analysis to address the importance placed on the physical dimensions (i.e., proxemics, behaviours) of the grooming approach as Conte et al. (1989) proposed.

The proposed InTEL not only responds to the gaps in literature but provides opportunities for improving future evidenced based knowledge of what might work when responding to victim-perpetrator contact CSE. The InTEL provides the foundations for developing future opportunities for research, testing the coding constructs, designing tailor-made interventions, and evaluating the outcomes for victims and perpetrators or multi-agency responses. Furthermore, the InTEL is designed to acknowledge the importance of practice experience as highlighted by Scott et al., (2019), by drawing on the knowledge of practitioners and service users involved in contact CSE cases and ensuring that what might work is shared and used to inform policy. Although the typical victim-perpetrator language in use (pre, during and retrospectively) has been presented in the InTEL and stakeholders consulted for social validation to form a snapshot of the current picture, the indicators must be responsive to the changing CSE landscape. Therefore, the InTEL could be adapted by CSE practitioners as language in use changes, offering a starting point for practitioners to raise awareness, build better problem profiles and targeted intervention programmes. The following section details how the InTEL might provide a solution for the current issues in practice.

8.4.2 Providing Solutions for Current Issues in Practice

8.4.2.1 Multi-Agency Response

The InTEL has been designed to offer original solutions for the current issues in practice running throughout the safeguarding and criminal justice processes as documented in the earlier section of this chapter. This is designed to provide a co-ordinated, pro-active, intelligence led approach for understanding the complex nature of such illegal interactions.

Such a collective understanding from the InTEL can generate dialogue for further action from all practitioners involved in CSE cases, from early identification of both victims (i.e., MFH debrief or clinical assessment of sexual health needs) and perpetrators (i.e., access, intent) through to planning appropriate safeguarding interventions. Assessments of risk (i.e., for purposes of clinical, child protection or criminal justice) can be assisted by the InTEL to establish and target specific areas of need, such as acknowledging the perpetrator levels of control or victims' desired response. Improved awareness of victim-perpetrator contact CSE dynamics might inform collaborative safeguarding interventions as replicated in domestic abuse safeguarding responses (Robinson & Clancy, 2021). The InTEL can support a shared sense of risk-ownership and responsibility across partners and contribute to disruption plans, potential solutions and prosecution activity as promoted in the recent CSE multi-agency practice principles (HM Government, 2023). Although multi-agency working is current practice, with guidance promoting information sharing and the responsibility to protect and respond (DfE, 2016; HM Government, 2023), to the researcher's knowledge

a shared risk ownership mental model does not exist, which the InTEL may provide the foundations for. The section 8.4.2.2 below details how the language information from InTEL could be used for preventative education and intervention.

8.4.2.2 Preventative Education, Intervention and Awareness Raising

The InTEL can support the development of tailor made, age-appropriate and preventative interventions that are based on real-life scenarios as recommended features of successful programmes by Scott et al. (2019). This preventative education could run in schools and target those nearing the age of 14, responding to the average age for victims as mentioned in the findings in Chapter 6 alongside other specific *categories of interest* (such as gender or ethnicity). Furthermore, Scott et al. (2019) would support the use of genuine language from victims that is representative of some young people's realities reflecting how young people might be sexually active, sociable, mature, and autonomous. By relying on the victim's voice via the language in use, safeguarding practitioners can develop their understanding of the complex, illegal, and typically hidden CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics in a way that was not possible before. The benefit of having this knowledge means that the well documented flaws with assessing risk and vulnerability, over or under protective reactions and a lack of evidenced based practice can be improved (Beckett, 2011; McNeish & Scott. 2023). The tool aims to help develop approaches that "work alongside children, young people and families rather than approaches that are done 'to' them" (HM Government, 2023, p.24) and enabling young people to find a way out.

Additional benefits of the InTEL include the direct comparisons between the victim and perpetrator language, which highlight the determination, power, and control from the perpetrator. Such indicators have advantages for prevention work with young people, focusing on harmful sexual behaviours and promoting healthy relationships, but also by providing knowledge and confidence beyond practitioners and young people. The InTEL could support the work from organisations such as PACE to help parents to also understand exploitative relationships to better protect their children. The section below details how the InTEL may support the police response.

8.4.2.3 Police Response

By the police following InTEL and gathering a better picture of the CSE dynamics, it may help to maximise intelligence gathering, support analytical activity and focus evidential opportunities when addressing the threat as promoted by the National Crime Agency Strategic Assessment (2023) Therefore, speeding up investigations to reduce long CJS delays (albeit not necessarily a performance indicator of a quality investigation), which formed an earlier action for the National Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2014-2016. It can focus enforcement activity on offenders posing the greatest risk (i.e., sexually violent) and early identification of victims (i.e., MFH interviews). This would then go some way to prevent missed opportunities for the early identification of CSE, which has previously contributed to inaccurate police statistics of CSE cases (Beckett et al., 2015). The point of intervention for frontline officers may become clearer as they feel confident to make informed decisions for further action from their interactions with victims or perpetrators and form a strategy of evidence gathering

from the outset. As the CPS (2023) guidance states “identifying such patterns depends upon careful, accurate and co-ordinated record keeping by the police and other agencies and also upon prosecutors being alert to the issue and asking the right questions” (Paragraph 16)

InTEL provides opportunities for enhancing strategic, tactical, and operational intelligence to disrupt and pursue perpetrators of CSE related crimes as part of the NCA’s (n.d.) established threat assessment activity of serious and organised crime by using the indicators to analyse the threat. This could occur by ensuring more accurate localised problem profiles and typologies based on critical information that is gathered, such as the characteristics of the perpetrators, the modus operandi, the location of the offence, the pattern of language showing intent behind the sexual offences being committed and if multiple victims or offenders/criminal networks are involved. This will also ensure that the most relevant information is gathered for disruption activities, prosecution or for intelligence gathering where a young person is reluctant to make a formal complaint. It would also support the early collaboration with the CPS in building the case as recommended by Sharp-Jeffs et al. (2017).

8.4.2.4 Court Systems

The InTEL can assist with improving victim care throughout the criminal justice process as practitioners improve on their understanding of the dynamics at play in CSE interactions. Practitioners could understand more about how to build rapport, respect, and care, which could potentially make it easier for the victim to provide an account as recommended by Sharp-Jeffs et al. (2017). The use of language indicators can help to

reduce the likelihood for judgement and stereotyping by jurors and prosecutors, as recognised in research (Spohn, 2020) and by the CPS (2023) as an issue for fair prosecutions and may prompt questioning and corroborate the victims' accounts as it follows the typical exploitative language patterns, suggested to assist the CPS prosecutor in forming an overall view of credibility in the case (CPS, 2023). The CPS (2023) also provides examples of how stereotypes can be further challenged in court, by the judge giving the court directions as to how to address the victim myths and stereotypes and challenging any members of the court when used in the courtroom. To be explicit, the improved understanding within the courtroom from prosecutors and jurors of how victims might respond positively in their language use to perpetrators as detailed in the InTEL tool may reduce any potential for the victim blaming as described by Spohn (2020).

8.4.2.5 Management of Offenders

The new InTEL can encourage better oversight and scrutiny of the assessment and level of risk for managing serious offenders under the MAPPA requirements. The language in use can support professional judgement to move away from the static risk assessments and assess the more dynamic risk factors associated with sexual offending, such as the language focused on gaining sexual gratification. The inclusion of the indicators of typical exploitative language may improve the nationally approved MOSOVO specialist investigators interview module for MOSOVO detective constables, as it highlights the specific language synonymous with an intent to commit child sexual exploitation related crimes. This could promote more subjective professional

judgement, whilst maintaining an investigative mindset, a term used to describe the ability to evaluate the evidential material, test theories and identify lines of enquiry or additional investigative actions by the College of Policing (2023). The improved knowledge of sexual offending (i.e., teaching about the psychology, pathways, or typologies during MOSOVO investigator interview), may prevent an over reliance on static risk assessments or fixed risk management criteria as highlighted in Chapter 4. Critical risks could then be prioritised helping the YOT, police, probation, and prison services to better manage sex offenders in the community. This could be by offering more joined up, developmentally sensitive interventions for young people under the age of 18 to avoid agencies under or overreacting to harmful sexual behaviours as highlighted by McNeish and Scott (2023), or to make more accurate relapse predictions for the most serious of offenders. Furthermore, specific CSE sex offender treatment programmes could also be developed, as highlighted as necessary by Drummond and Southgate (2018) from the indicators. Such treatment programmes could use the CSE specific offender language patterns and justifications to modify pro-offending thinking patterns that may have previously been used by offenders to excuse and justify their behaviour. Victim language and justifications could also be used in sex offender treatment to highlight how the abuse offenders might have perceived as harmless does have a negative impact on victims.

8.6 Applying InTEL to Operational Examples

The InTEL is a solution to avoid the possibility for disconnect between the current research findings and practitioners who would need to interpret them, diminished

potentially by the complexity of research terminology or differing language styles, otherwise known as the dialogue of the deaf (Harrison, 2021). The InTEL therefore attempts to condense and succinctly articulate the findings of the thesis in an accessible summary via clear indicators for practitioners to easily check and operationalise. To further assist the understanding of the InTEL, eight hypothetical inter-disciplinary operational examples and responses for its use are provided below. Stakeholders (as detailed above) have been consulted on each example or scenario provided to ensure accuracy of the circumstances in which the InTEL would be most useful. Context is provided in a textual form and the responses are detailed in Table 29 below.

Table 29*Practice Example Responses Using Intel*

Practice Examples	Practitioner Response
1. Newly qualified police officer	<p>The newly qualified police officer refers to the green InTEL indicators (Part A) following initial police training, to recognise ‘tell-tell’ signs and gather intelligence on victim-perpetrator language that the young person, family, or carers describe during the welfare check or return to home or care interview (i.e., the way the young person describes their relationship with the perpetrator). The InTEL could also be useful for police officers dealing with non-critical incidents where they could identify vulnerable young people at the precursor offence (i.e., young offenders who are also victims of CSE/involved in organised crime). Using professional judgement, the officer can determine if the risk posed is immediate or if the child is likely to be in danger (medium or high), such as threats to life or risk of abduction/trafficking. Any decision would need to be in consultation with a member of staff at a more senior command level to examine and approve initial enquiry lines or to deploy other police resources</p>
2. Police analyst	<p>A police analyst refers to the green InTEL indicators (Part A and B) to provide a basis for evaluating exploitative language data trends, assess threat, risk, and harm and to further develop language based analytical products to support strategic, tactical, and operational level decision making. Updates could be shared with multi-agency CSE teams. This would direct the prioritisation of resources, target disruption activities and inform the prevention agenda. An example of a disruption strategy might be to include InTEL scenarios in media campaigns.</p>
3. RASSO or MOSOVO specialist interviewers	<p>The InTEL (Part A) categories could help the RASSO or MOSOVO investigator to plan victim-perpetrator language focused topics consistently and strategically or to directly ask appropriate language focused questions that assist recall, demonstrate intent and elicit details that build context. Investigators can refer to the green InTEL indicators (Part A) following interviews with</p>

suspects or witnesses to emphasise the exploitative language documented and support CPS decision making on perpetrator intent. The Investigators can liaise with the police analyst to map out and run language through computer software and compare with InTEL (Part B). The inclusion of the InTEL indicators in the nationally approved MOSOVO specialist investigators interview module for MOSOVO detective constables would inform specialist investigators (in training) of the specific language synonymous with an intent to commit child sexual exploitation related crimes.

4. RASSO prosecutors

The RASSO prosecutor refers to the green InTEL indicators (Part A) to support their case building strategy. Forensic linguistic expert witnesses could refer to the green InTEL indicators (Part A) to support victims when persuading the jury of the suspects criminal intent.

5. YOT/probation

The YOT/Probation Worker refers to the green and orange InTEL indicators (Part A) during interventions (i.e., cognitive behavioural therapy) to help the perpetrator recognise their own harmful and coercive language patterns to restructure attitudes that support or permit sexual offending. The orange InTEL indicators (Part A) could support the MAPPa assessment of risk when decisions are made on the likelihood of recidivism or be useful for community sex offender support groups (i.e., Circles of Support and the Lucy Faithful Foundation).

6. Social worker

The social worker refers to the green and orange InTEL (Part A) indicators at each stage of intervention, such as the child protection decision making stage to identify risk, the strategy meeting to design interventions targeting the exploitation tactics identified and the therapeutic stage to support the child in their acceptance of exploitative patterns. Moreover, rather than focusing solely on the young person's risk, the exploitative language or behaviours of concern from the adult posing the risk could be identified at the same time and relevant agencies alerted, particularly useful as intelligence for building a case against the perpetrator and promoting contextual safeguarding

7. Secondary school teacher

The teacher refers to the green InTEL (Part A) indicators to educate children, parents, and staff, ensuring consent forms have been obtained for interventions. PSHE teaching activities can be designed from the indicators and relevant scenarios provided for role play, discussions and debates to allow young people to express an awareness of exploitation in a way that is more relatable to their peers. The indicators can be used to strengthen safeguarding training and referrals if child discloses exploitative interactions, and intelligence shared with MASE teams.

8. Sexual health nurse

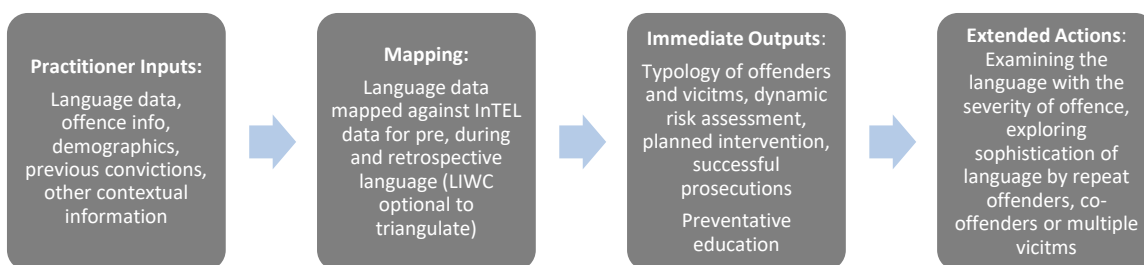
The nurse refers to the green InTEL indicators (Part A) and records descriptions of language given by victim. Nurse shares language intelligence with MASE team for problem profiles and as part of safeguarding duties. Similarly, the InTEL may also be beneficial for the more specialist sexual health nurse working in SARCs when assessing victims of sexual offences and gathering any language intelligence for the police.

8.7 Guidance for Practitioners

The InTEL is a starting point to assist people who work in safeguarding and criminal justice services to come to a collective understanding of contact CSE dynamics. It is designed to provide professionals with clearer warning signs (alarm bells) and a dialogue for further action. The indicators are not prescriptive, or exhaustive or specific to demographics (at this stage) and do not consider protective factors. The examples provided are not definitions but should be combined with multi-agency professional discussions and to support practitioner assessment.

Part A includes the descriptions and examples of the perpetrator and victims' verbal and non-verbal patterns of communication at the pre-and during stage in the green section. It also includes the victim and perpetrators' retrospective discursive constructions in the orange section. Part B includes the descriptions and examples of the psycholinguistic word categories.

The InTEL is designed to be user friendly, collaborative and to enhance current safeguarding practices. There is also possibility for the indicators to evolve as language in use changes over time. Figure 11 below summarises the multi-disciplinary process to be followed, which would ideally be led by the MASE Team and held in a central database that relevant teams could access. As Figure 11 illustrates, the first two stages will involve the practitioner inputting the relevant offence details and mapping the language before the immediate outputs can be achieved. The extended actions can then be developed as the data is collected and refined.

Figure 11*Multi-disciplinary Process for Operationalising InTEL***8.7.2 Immediate Outcomes and Extended Actions**

Once the evidence has been collected by the practitioner and shared with relevant agencies to be mapped, the data can be utilised by teams to either deliver interventions, disrupt offending or to provide preventative education. The extended actions can follow to ensure that the InTEL evolves with the changing nature of language and to ensure it reflects localised needs.

8.7.1 InTEL Practitioner Inputs

The following sections (Part A 1 – 7) are a summary of the evidence that the practitioner would be expected to collect by following each of the InTEL categories introduced in section 8.2. In each table there would be a blank area for the practitioner to

complete, to aid professional decision-making performance and for the potential sharing of language intelligence with relevant safeguarding and law enforcement agencies or MASE Teams.

PART A

1. Typical Characteristics and Profiles of perpetrators and victims

Crime Profile	Practitioner Evidence
<i>Perpetrator information</i>	
Gender	
Age	
Ethnicity	
Education/employment	
Relationship status	
Alias	
Lone or group offender	
Lone or multiple victim	
Location of offence	
Time of offence	
Previous convictions	
<i>Victim information</i>	
Gender	
Age	
Ethnicity	
Education/employment	
Relationship status	
Alias	
Lone or group offender	
Lone or multiple victim	
Location of offence	

Time of offence

Previous convictions

2. Perpetrator typical exploitative language pre and during offence

Perpetrator Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
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Access & approach

Rapport building & trust development

Sexual gratification

Risk assessment & compliance testing

Coercive control

3. Victim typical language response pre and during offence

Victim Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
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Desired

Mixed

Undesired

4. Typical retrospective perpetrator justifications

Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
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Nature of harm

Uncontrollability

Dangerous world

Entitlement

Child as sexual being

Child as emotional support

Denial of facts, planning or intent

Reduced accountability or shifting the blame

5. *Typical retrospective Victim Justifications*

Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
Desired	
Mixed	
Undesired	

6. **Typical perpetrator non-verbal language pre and during offence**

Non-verbal Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
Spatial proximity	
Non-sexual touch	
Sexual touch	
Sexually violent touch	

7. **Typical victim non-verbal language pre and during offence**

Non-verbal Indicator	Practitioner Evidence
Desired	
Mixed	
Undesired	

This chapter has proposed InTEL in the above sections by providing the indicators (Part A), the psycholinguistics (Part B) and a formatting example of the InTEL practitioner inputs (Part A), however as stated (in section 8.3) there is still development and refinement of the forms, guidance, and indicators themselves to be undertaken. The thesis provides the foundation for further dialogue and guidance for practical development.

8.8 Conclusion

To conclude, although there have been recent advances to law enforcement and safeguarding practice, there are still improvements to be made in the safeguarding of young people. This chapter highlighted that better preventative education, improved interventions and support during criminal justice processes, is still required, in addition to more effective ways to assess and manage child sex offenders. Addressing some of the current challenges of missing potential harms, narrowed CP safety plans, and inconsistent professional decision-making performance, this chapter introduced the InTEL as an evidence-based, inter-disciplinary instrument, prioritising contact CSE victim-perpetrator language, which can be iteratively updated. Developed from the thesis findings and building on the online grooming and sex offending research foundations, the InTEL is intended to be used by practitioners across a variety of disciplines working with CSE, to support clinical, child protection or criminal justice processes, with the wider benefits for improving awareness and preventative education.

Chapter 9: Thesis Conclusions

9.1 Synthesis

Based on a scarcity of contact CSE perpetrator empirical research, this thesis began with the premise that the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic was relatively unexplored, and there was scope to improve the knowledgebase and effectively advance current safeguarding practices. The thesis aimed to build on previous child sex offender research foundations and provide a contribution to understanding the potential nuanced complexities that exist within the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic, by exploring language in use. A pragmatic research approach was considered most suited to providing a real-world solution, utilising mixed methods that would find ways to capture the typically hidden CSE interactions from the available language data held in police case files.

The thesis findings revealed that there are typical psycholinguistic features and interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication patterns that characterise victim-perpetrator dynamics in contact CSE. The thesis findings also revealed that as well as the existence of typical retrospective discursive constructs, perpetrators, and victims of contact CSE would differ in their justifications for their involvement in the CSE relationship whilst in the context of a criminal investigation. Interpretations of these findings reveal that knowledge of the typical contact CSE: a) perpetrator, b) victim, c) offences, d) psycholinguistics and e) exploitative language, was in line with previous sexual offending research, albeit with some unique discoveries (i.e., non-verbal and differing psycholinguistic benchmark comparisons). Moreover, previous research

recommendations would indicate that such improved understanding of contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamics had the potential to be used to provide a more effective and evidence based safeguarding response. As a result of the thesis findings, interpretations and review of current safeguarding and law enforcement practice, the InTEL was introduced. The proposed InTEL is intended to be an evidence-based, inter-disciplinary instrument, prioritising contact CSE victim-perpetrator language. Although, still in development, the InTEL has the capacity to make a real impact in the contact CSE field if successfully used by practitioners to support clinical, child protection or criminal justice processes, or for improving awareness and preventative education.

9.2 Implications for Research and Practice

Sections 9.2.1 and 9.2.2 firstly summarise the research, policy and practice suggested following the thesis review of literature in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Then, the new insights gained from the thesis findings and practical guidance proposed within the InTEL are summarised and intended to provide opportunities for researchers and practitioners to better understand the nuanced complexities that exist within the contact CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic. The intended outcome for the research, particularly the contribution of InTEL, is that it will become a valuable operational solution to improving current safeguarding practices that respond more effectively to the CSE problem. The sections below (9.2.1 – 9.2.2) detail the implications first by research and then for practice.

9.2.1 Research

Future research directions would benefit from exploring similar research topics associated with other methods of sexual offending, such as familial abuse or rape, to determine if research parallels could be made with the CSE perpetrator. Other sexual offender studies have explored: normalisation; denial; blaming; preconditions; circumstances; opportunity; attitude towards or restrictions in discussing sex; social norms, masculinity; models of offending; victim-perpetrator dynamics; sexual violence prevention and identifying risk and protective factors, which could ultimately transfer to inform CSE prevention and response (Banyard et al., 2010; Cockbain, 2018; El Feki et al., 2017; Finkelhor et al., 2017; Fulu et al., 2013; McAlinden, 2014; McGrath et al., 2007; Radford et al., 2017; Smallbone & Rayment-McHugh, 2013). Further research could explore correlations between harmful sexual behaviours, deviance, or adverse childhood experiences as potential pathways to contact CSE perpetration.

Future research could focus on supporting police disruption and better management of offenders. This could be achieved by improving the empirical evidence to support more accurate contact CSE offender typologies and profiles (i.e., maximising intelligence, analytical activity and evidential opportunities) or by evaluating the assessment of risk (i.e., moving to dynamic rather than static) and being more responsive to the changing CSE landscape (i.e., the behaviours synonymous with intent to commit CSE, prioritising critical risks and desistance/rehabilitation). To ensure this happens a priority would be for all agencies to respond to the researcher or inquiry “calls for

evidence”, supporting research to achieve the better understanding of the contact CSE threat.

The thesis findings go some way to resolve previous criticisms of data being outdated, incomplete, using victim decoys, recycled and unverifiable without access to police case files (Black et al., 2015; Broome et al., 2020; DeHart et al., 2017; Drouin et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2012; Ioannou et al., 2018; Inches & Crestani, 2012; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016), yet there are still opportunities to address the acknowledged limitations identified in Chapter 7.

Firstly, although the data collected differentiated offenders and victims, specifically the ethnicity, gender, and age as recommended by Black et al. (2015), DeHart et al. (2017) and Winters et al. (2017), it is hoped that future researchers will explore comparisons with wider demographic categories than found in this thesis. These could include sexual orientation, marital status, income, education, and employment, which were unfortunately not identified within the police case files to allow further analysis. Future research to cease entering the racially divisive debates until more precise data is available, and to instead, address gaps in CSE perpetrator literature, using empirically robust methods to build on the established knowledgebase detailed in the thesis literature review.

Secondly, analytical methods were triangulated by using both LIWC and discourse analysis to address the decontextualised interpretation issues, such as the “bag of words” criticism for LIWC, or researcher interpretation bias, as raised in Chapter 3 (see Gupta et al., 2012; Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019). Future researchers could create

LIWC dictionaries from the current findings, which are specific to CSE so LIWC analysis can identify words found in a CSE context.

Thirdly, the current findings factored in non-verbal communication in the analysis to address the importance placed on the physical dimensions (i.e., proxemics, behaviours) of the grooming approach as Conte et al. (1989) proposed. It is hoped that future researchers will validate more robust ways of identifying non-verbal communication from police case files, or indeed via other observational methods.

Fourthly, the acknowledgement that the language data itself was imperfect in the current research allows future researchers to continue improving the analysis of CSE language in use with larger datasets, perhaps that are not extracted from files that are from a criminal investigation context and can attempt to better sequence the language occurring at the pre and during and retrospective stages.

Finally, the InTEL itself provides the foundations for developing future opportunities for research, testing the coding constructs, designing tailor-made interventions, and evaluating the outcomes for victims and perpetrators or multi-agency responses. The InTEL must move with the changing CSE landscape.

9.2.2 Policy and Practice

Policy changes are required to rectify the CSE definitional challenges, differing safeguarding threshold levels and earlier identification of harms as detailed in the thesis review of literature. Similarly, further work is needed for the better disruption and

management of offenders. The following sections explore the specific developments of policy and practice needed before the specific thesis insights are developed into recommendations for practice, regarding InTEL.

Firstly, policy is required to urge all relevant UK agencies to recognise CSE as one characteristic of CSA. Therefore, only one singular definition would exist to explain the sexual abuse involving a child using the different exploitative methods that is within the family, outside of the family, online or in groups.

Secondly, safeguarding policy and practices need to push for consistent safeguarding threshold levels for the protection of victims across all relevant UK agencies, promoting multi-agency working that is co-ordinated, pro-active, and intelligence led. Furthermore, a multi-agency sharing of intelligence should be developed and implementation of a memorandum of understanding that manages potential ideological differences.

Thirdly, there is a need to reduce the potential for missing contact CSE harms that do not present at the time of the assessment by improving frontline agency CSE knowledge and by implementing processes for reducing the likelihood of no further action or inadequate MFHOC interviews. Clear points of intervention are needed to empower frontline officers to make informed decisions or to enable dialogue for further action with their supervisors.

Fourthly, continuing on from the need for empirical research for more accurate data recording and reporting, as detailed in section 9.2.1 above, agencies need to provide clear policy, guidance and adequate resourcing for the accurate recording and evaluation

of contact CSE perpetrator data on centralised systems that monitor demographic data or attrition rates. All staff in relevant safeguarding services to be trained to flag and record CSE data more consistently and accurately. Furthermore, the media needs to be held more accountable for publishing spurious statistics which could be viewed as divisive and unhelpful in accurately understanding the nature of CSE perpetration.

Fifthly, further changes to practices that focus on disruption, management of offenders or preventative interventions for potential victims are required. This includes:

- a) improving disruption strategies to focus on group-based offending and target 'risky sites', particularly in the night-time economy, b) attempting to reduce victim withdrawal by avoiding victim blaming language, c) considering inter-connecting vulnerabilities for victims bolstering uncorroborated victim testimonies by creating indicators of exploitation, d) promoting preventative work to ensure that sexual exploitation is addressed sensitively via community outreach, in schools, practitioner training (including legal professionals), e) create tailor-made preventative interventions that are representative of young people's realities, relying on the voice of the young people involved, f) designing and evaluating sex offender therapeutic treatment programmes to address specific CSE offending characteristics, such as, contact, familial or online perpetrators, g) providing trauma informed therapeutic services for victims (and potential perpetrators) at the earliest opportunity to prevent the likelihood of lifelong problems associated with adversity and to support the building of healthy relationships, h) providing confidential, non-judgemental services to respond to the young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour or the potential perpetrators seeking help to avoid

instigating sexual activity with children, i) educating young people on the discursive styles commonly used by perpetrators to initiate sexual activity and the propensity for the more serious sexual offences to be committed in groups.

Finally turning to the thesis findings, InTEL has been designed to offer original solutions for the current issues in CSE practice running throughout the safeguarding and criminal justice processes, specifically for improving MASE Teams, police responses, court systems, preventative education, intervention, and awareness raising, and management of offenders. The following examples detail the implications.

Firstly, the InTEL has been designed to provide a pro-active, intelligence led approach for understanding the complex nature of such illegal CSE interactions, which can be co-ordinated by multiagency CSE teams. The typical features described within InTEL creates a collective understanding and shared sense of risk-ownership and responsibility, which ultimately generates dialogue for further targeted child protection action.

Secondly, for education purposes, the use of genuine language from victims that is representative of some young people's realities can aid the development of tailor made, age-appropriate and preventative interventions that are based on real-life scenarios, enabling young people to find a way out and those around them to have a better understanding. Furthermore, those displaying potentially harmful sexual behaviours can be identified earlier.

Thirdly, by gathering a better picture of the CSE dynamics it may help in the earlier identification and point of intervention for potential victims (i.e., MFH

interviews) as frontline officers feel confident to make informed decisions for further action from any interaction they have with victims or perpetrators and forms a strategy of evidence gathering from the outset. Furthermore, the findings may have other benefits for improving the victim's journey during the various stages of the criminal justice process, such as improved tactical disruption, better problem profiles and understanding of the victim who might have previously not received a fair trial because they would be judged for not making the "ideal victim". Thus, improved awareness and knowledge of the problem may have the potential to address some of the issues with attrition rates.

Finally, for the effective management of offenders, relying more on the language in use can provide a snapshot of the perpetrator's potential intent, which allows risk assessments to be more dynamic than static, to prioritise the critical risks and to offer more targeted and CSE specific rehabilitation. Victim language and justifications could also be used in sex offender treatment to highlight how the abuse offenders might have perceived as "harmless" does have a negative impact on victims.

9.3 Dissemination and Impact

As detailed in Chapter 8, the dissemination strategy will involve four different strands; firstly to present the research findings at relevant national and international conferences, secondly, to share with relevant national working groups (i.e., VKPP, MAPPA, MASH, CoP), thirdly, to provide training resources and guidance with training co-ordinators or educators (i.e., in CSE multi-agency teams, policing, probation, prison and schools) and finally to use social media to share examples of the typical exploitative language for a wider reach. Once the InTEL has been disseminated and is in use,

monitoring will be undertaken to evaluate the impact and establish if the InTEL becomes a routine component of current practice. Evaluation will take place to determine if the InTEL achieving the anticipated improvements to practice and associated outcomes and what might need to be modified if not meeting the original objectives.

9.4 Conclusion

To conclude, by acknowledging the perpetrator and victim dynamic we now have the potential to move beyond monochromatic understandings of victims and perpetrators “not always easily identifiable...distinct, mutually exclusive or indeed fixed” (McAlinden, 2014, p.5). We can start to provide a more pro-active, co-ordinated, intelligence led safeguarding approach to protecting those involved or targeted. The proposed InTEL is intended to be an evidence-based, inter-disciplinary instrument, prioritising contact CSE victim-perpetrator language. Although, still in development, the InTEL has the capacity to make a real impact in the contact CSE field if successfully used by practitioners to support clinical, child protection or criminal justice processes, or for improving awareness and preventative education.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Data Extraction Table

Table A1

Chapter 2 Data Extraction Table

** The table is found on the following page due to formatting*

Author(s) and publication date	Publication Title	Location of publication	Sample	Method	Findings	Themes	Methodological quality
Bhatti-Sinclair & Sutcliffe 2018	Group Localised Child Sexual Exploitation Offenders: Who and Why?	SSRN	Newspaper articles. 498 defendants in 73 prosecutions between 1997 and 2017.	Determined heritage of defendants. Regression analysis. Used census data for 404 local authorities analysing the relationship between GLCSE prosecutions, and the religion and heritage of each local population.	Muslims, particularly Pakistanis, dominate GLCSE prosecutions	Group Localised Child Sexual Exploitation Child Protection; Grooming Locality Pakistani Muslim	Attempt to assess disproportionality in CSE offending based on 'Muslim names' in media reports. Open to bias: Numbers on trial not convicted. They might not have been convicted. Media might not have reported on white offenders Some groups might have been missed i.e., white More likely to report on groups i.e., moral panic
Berelowitz, Firmin, Edwards & Gulyurtlu 2012	I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world. The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups: Interim report.	The Office of the Children's Commissioner in England.	Police and local authorities (LAs) data on 1,514 CSE perpetrators	Quantitative and Qualitative data collected. Content analysis. Frequencies	Perps: 28% boys and young men. Estimated ethnicities: white - 36%, Asian 27%, black - 16%, mixed - 3%, others 1%, and undisclosed - 16%. Data for those suspected of CSE not prosecuted including online group, lone and group or gang CSE 16,500 children at high risk of CSE. April 2010 - March 2011. 2409 confirmed victims. Based on LAs observing 3+ types of behaviour indicating risk. Lack of awareness around consent identified.	Data inconsistencies re: prevalence. Nature and scale of the problem.	Bias: Data only for those suspected of CSE, not prosecutions. Sample includes suspects of on-line group CSE, lone and group or gang CSE. Gaps in data for some areas and agencies. Agencies potential selection and area bias. Inconsistencies with the data – interpretation of groups and gangs.

BereLOWITZ, Clifton, Firmin, Gulyurtlu, & Edwards, 2013	"If only someone had listened": Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups. Final report. London: OCC	The Office of the Children's Commissioner in England.	96 agency responses LSCBs responded 148 police forces responses 39 GUM 37 Drug & Alc 81 CAMHS 69 as well as evaluations of interventions in place, research reviews, Academic input, and site visits.	qualitative and quantitative methods	The National Response to Child Sexual Exploitation – current failures, what is working Framework for action – principles of effective practice, See Me Hear Me Recommendations – compliant with National guidelines, information sharing protocol, problem profiling, RSE	The National Response to Child Sexual Exploitation Framework for action See Me Hear Me Recommendations	some inconsistencies in the submissions to the call for evidence. Not all completed the form. A singular LSCB data set response was received Whilst all police forces responded to the datasets all the percentages in the report are calculated based on their being 38 forces nationally (excluding City of London Police). This is due to the relatively small comparative size of this force and its resident population size. The health dataset responses were specifically directed at Substance Misuse, CAMHS and GUM clinics in place nationally. In the absence of accurate distribution lists to directly approach these services approaches to these agencies were made through a number of avenues. In some instances, this led to the dataset request being disseminated to agencies that were not part of the original plan, particularly broader sexual health services
BereLOWITZ et al 2012	Examine CSE in gangs and groups, with a special focus on children in care	The Office of the Children's Commissioner in England	115 submissions from agencies re: Gang CSE (*victim data excluded due to the current studies focus on perpetration)	Descriptive statistics, frequencies and content analysis on emerging themes	Prevalence of CSE in groups and gangs. Demographics, location of abuse and threats and violence documented. Victims and offenders often linked with each other. Intermediates being young boys, but all ages involved in gangs. Common substance misuse.	Prevalence. Gang and groups. Techniques. Victims.	Government report rather than peer reviewed journal. Some inconsistencies in the submissions to the call for evidence.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) 2011	Out of Mind, Out of Sight: Breaking Down the Barriers to Understanding Child Sexual Exploitation	CEOP	LCSE cases from 46 police forces, 22 children's services and local safeguarding children boards, and 12 voluntary sector providers.	Qualitative. Thematic assessment.	Establishes patterns of offending, victimisation, vulnerability & makes recommendations for future practice.	Scale of problem. Offender profile. Reliability of data. Agency & safeguarding approach.	Data inconsistencies. Incomplete information from agencies – only giving snapshot within the 3 year - timeframe. Difficulties retrieving data from systems for analysis. Potential for police selection bias sifting through sexual offences that match criteria.
CEOP 2013	Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation	CEOP	Summary of 2012 Threat Assessment of CSE * Only Contact CSE explored for this research	Update on previous document	Threat 4: Contact CSE	Contact CSE Threat Assessment	Accurately assessing prevalence is problematic. Analysis based on interpretation
Cockbain, Brayley, & Laycock 2011	Exploring Internal Child Sex Trafficking Networks Using Social Network Analysis.	Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice	25 offenders and 36 victims in total, drawn from two major police investigations	Descriptive statistics.	Social network analysis as a method is useful. Targets for removal are ringleaders. Men abuse en-masse and are likely to be in pre-existing social networks. Random and opportunistic targeting of victims. Not all fitting lover boy profile so profiling is difficult. Girlfriends aid recruitment to please boyfriend. Not all victims are in care.	Social network analysis. Sex trafficking networks. Victims Offenders. Challenges of offender profiling.	Data specific to two police operations – might not be the same for other operations. SNA not to be used in isolation but to compliment other sources of data. Not definitive answers or full picture for investigators. Comparisons only between offender/victim groups rather than average baselines. Potential for misleading results counterbalanced. Not all networks in entirety but no different to other SNA research.
Cockbain 2013	Grooming and the Asian sex gang predator: the construction of a racial crime threat.	Race & Class	Examining literature	Examining literature	Calling for a shift from the sweeping, ill-founded generalisations driving dominant discourse to date, towards open and level-headed discussions around child sexual exploitation, including but not limited to, examining relationships between race and offending.	Racial crime threat is ill founded	Not a systematic review but examining literature critically

Cockbain & Wortley 2015	Everyday atrocities: does internal (domestic) sex trafficking of British children satisfy the expectations of opportunity theories of crime?	Crime Science	6 ICST in Midlands & Northwest of England 55 (male) offenders and 43 (female) victims	Coding police files. Content analysis. Mixed methods.	<p>Characteristics of victims, offenders and crime events across six major cases. 96 % Asian heritage, mostly under 30s, half in adult relationships with high proportion unemployed or low skilled jobs, mostly in night-time economy, likely to offend or be linked with each by friendships or relatives.</p> <p>Myths and untested assumptions around internal trafficking:</p> <p>Testing opportunity theories.</p> <p>Offender criminal versatility</p> <p>Offenders' routine activities.</p> <p>Victim routine activities.</p> <p>Offender connectivity and offending rates.</p> <p>Locations for abuse.</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <p>Addressing myths & untested assumptions.</p> <p>Locations.</p> <p>Offender and victim activities.</p>	<p>Sample size not considered statistically representative of population</p> <p>No comparison sample – i.e., cases identified and investigated may differ from those that are not.</p> <p>Potential for other areas of the UK to differ from the Midlands and NW data.</p> <p>Coding framework implemented to maximise reliability</p> <p>Possible bias introduced by clustering individuals by case, addressed via case-by-case analysis and discrepancies highlighted in results.</p>
Cockbain 2018	Offender and victim networks in human trafficking.	Routledge.	<p>6 data sources; police files, court records, prosecution files, interviews with convicted traffickers, police investigators and prosecutors.</p> <p>6 cases – 55 offenders & 43 victims</p>	Mixed methods	<p>Lifestyle and Demographic characteristics of victims and offenders.</p> <p>Social structures of networks and co-offending.</p> <p>Interpersonal dynamics of networks and grooming.</p> <p>Justification of deviant behaviour via offender perspectives.</p> <p>Law enforcement responses.</p> <p>Social contagion</p>	<p>Characteristics</p> <p>Co-offending.</p> <p>Networks.</p> <p>Justification.</p> <p>Grooming.</p> <p>Law enforcement.</p> <p>Social contagion</p>	Methods offer a way to explore networks

Cockbain & Tufail 2020.	Failing victims, fuelling hate: challenging the harms of the 'Muslim grooming gangs' narrative.	Race & Class	Examining literature	Examining literature	anti-racist feminist approaches can help in centring victims/survivors and their needs and in tackling serious sexual violence without demonising entire communities	Racist framings of 'Muslim grooming gangs'	Not systematically documenting how literature was reviewed
Drummond & Southgate 2018	Interventions for perpetrators of CSE	CSA Centre of expertise	75 studies for review to inform 13 expert interviews 3 service user interviews.	Literature review to inform qualitative interviews	No specific CSE intervention. Definitional confusion amongst experts prior to 2017 definition. Gaps in perpetrator knowledge. Risk assessments – relevant to CSE gangs and groups to be explored. Community interventions to be explored. New prison programmes to be implemented.	Definitional challenges. Gap in perpetrator treatment knowledge and intervention. Role of gender-based belief systems and need for community intervention in addition to CJS.	Report written before changes were made to Probation and sex offender treatment programmes so potential for findings to be quickly out of date. Focused on adult men only for review. Limited sample (n=13) for relevance to a wider population however a variety of input had been considered i.e., Academics and professionals at frontline and strategic levels. Service users' perspectives were included but only 3 in the sample. Ethical approval and use of interview schedule documented. Verbatim quotes detailed within the findings section. Study in report format rather than as an academic article but sufficient to address research purpose.

<p>Elliot, Beech, Mandeville-Norden & Hayes 2009</p>	<p>Psychological Profiles of Internet Sexual Offenders. Comparisons With Contact Sexual Offenders</p>	<p>Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment</p>	<p>505 adult male IO and 526 adult male COs</p>	<p>Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (multivariate logistic regression) between types of sexual offenders</p>	<p>Contact offenders = more victim empathy distortions and cognitive distortions than Internet offenders.</p> <p>Externalised locus of control inflated positive self-description, increased scores with perspective taking, empathic concern, over assertiveness, victim empathy distortions, cognitive distortions, and cognitive impulsivity - predictive of contact offenses.</p> <p>Findings discussed in context of the aetiology of sexual offending.</p>	<p>Victim empathy and cognitive distortions.</p> <p>Fantasy.</p> <p>Impulsive.</p> <p>Differences in offences.</p>	<p>Potential for sample bias: convenience sample where group membership was allocated via offender's index offense - not accounting for previous offending histories. Possible overlap between groups prior Internet and/or contact offending.</p> <p>Large sample but all participants from the criminal justice community population – might not be representative of these offenders as a population, especially given that Internet child pornography offenses are notably difficult to detect</p> <p>Purpose of study designed after collection of data measures (i.e., clinical purpose)</p>
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Elliot, Beech & Mandeville-Norden 2013	The psychological profiles of internet, contact, and mixed internet/contact sex offenders	Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment	526 CO, 459 IO, and 143 MO (both CO and IO)	Descriptives, frequencies, and group comparisons (MANOVAs) between types of sexual offenders	Contact group = lower victim empathy, greater level of pro-offending attitudes, an externalized locus of control, more assertiveness, a diminished ability to relate to fictional characters, and greater impulsivity than the internet and mixed offender groups. The mixed offender group demonstrated a higher level of empathic concern and increased personal distress and perspective-taking ability than other two groups. Factors distinguishing groups relating to offense-supportive attitudes and identification with fictional characters and higher levels of empathic concern and poor self-management.	Low victim empathy. Pro offending attitudes. Impulsive Assertive External LOC	Reliant on self-reporting of community offenders whilst under supervision. Potential for differences in perspective after being caught or Small effect sizes. Categorisation flaws with DFA findings with subtle differences. Measuring constructs applicable to contact offending rather than internet so comparisons might be compromised. Potential for undetected offences making the offending 'mixed' rather than distinct No victim age data which would assist offences matching UK age of consent. No socio-economic data.
Gill & Harrison 2015	Child grooming and sexual exploitation: Are South Asian men the UK media's new folk devils?	International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy	122 newspaper articles from 5 national newspapers	Mixed methods. Qualitative: Content analysis Quantitative analysis: extent of reporting via Lexis Nexis database of legal documents and publications.	Moral panic and racial stereotyping from disproportionate media coverage of South Asian sex offenders grooming white girls. Linking ethnicity to the crime.	Media coverage. Moral panic Asian sex predator stereotype.	Potential for selection bias when targeting the reporting of specific cases i.e., Telford, Rotherham etc Varied newspapers considered i.e., right wing to cover broad perspectives.

Gillespie, Bailey, Squire, Carey, Eldridge, & Beech 2018	An evaluation of a community-based psycho-educational program for users of child sexual exploitation material.	Sexual Abuse	92 male adult users of CSEM	Descriptives, frequencies, and change over time MANOVAs	Benefits of the programme were evident across depression, anxiety, and stress, social competency, including locus of control and self-esteem, and distorted attitudes. Effects lasting up to 12 weeks post treatment. CSEM users are amenable to treatment in the community - beneficial outcomes in affective and interpersonal functioning following psychoeducation. Recognized risk factors for contact sexual offense recidivism.	Improving psychological issues Affective and interpersonal functioning. Treatment.	limited by the absence of a community control group at a similar stage of police investigation or criminal proceedings. The absence of a control group means that it is unclear whether the effects observed here reflect change brought about by the particular program, or more naturally occurring change over time. Absence of other outcome measures besides self-reports
Hackett & Smith 2018	Exploring perspectives about young people who engage in CSE behaviours	CSA Centre of expertise	14 cases – convenience and non-probability sample Over a 24-month period.	Qualitative. Secondary data analysis	*Not all adult offending. White British males aged 14-21. Majority over 16. (Must be under 18 at time of offence). Experiences of adversity in development histories in majority and non-sexual offending histories. i.e., Domestic violence. Anti-social thinking pathway.	Offending history. Antisocial thinking. Adversity.	Secondary data only from CSE team. Real life data of active CSE cases with links to historical data. Structured data collection approach. Small sample size – potentially not representative of UK Case records could be partial or limited No interviews with professionals, young people or their families for comparative perspectives.

Kelly & Karsna 2017	Measuring the scale and changing nature of CSA and CSE	CSA Centre of expertise	5 studies addressed in prevalence. 20 experts	Qualitative. Analysis of secondary data	Prevalence data – CSE not effectively included in prevalence studies CSE changing definitions makes tracing it even harder CSE remains hidden Offenders more likely to be males. Improvements needed in data collection, monitoring and analysis for victims and perpetrators	Prevalence Data issues Definitional challenges	Data originally collected for other purposes. Not all data relevant to the CSE definition – overlaps with CSA.
Kettleborough & Merdian 2017	Gateway to offending behaviour: Permission giving thoughts of online users of child sexual exploitation material.	Journal of Sexual Aggression	16 professionals who work with CSEM offenders	Qualitative. Thematic analysis	Themes: Perceived Nature of Children (perception of children portrayed in CSEM, as well as children in general), Non-sexual Engagement with CSEM (motivating factors that are not inherently sexual in nature), Denial of Harm (perception of the level of harm caused by CSEM), and Expression of a General Sexual Preference (general interest in deviant sexual behaviour). - permission-giving thoughts in this typology of offending	Permission giving thoughts. Typology.	based on the expertise of professionals working with CSEMOs, as opposed to knowledge obtained from CSEMOs themselves
Kloss et al 2017	A Qualitative Analysis of Offenders' Modus Operandi in Sexually Exploitative Interactions with Children Online	Sexual Abuse	5 cases – 27 transcripts. Offenders were men aged between 27 and 52 years ($M = 33.6$, $SD = 5.6$), and the number of children they communicated with ranged from one to 12 ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 4.5$).	Thematic analysis focusing on discourse. Qualitative	Interactions highly sexual Heterogeneous group Modus Operandi Offenders using various manipulative strategies to target victims Making use of security measures Discursive tactics used to overcome victims' resistance Purpose = sexual arousal, gratification and fantasy fulfilment	Sexual grooming, online sexual exploitation, Internet communication Modus Operandi Discursive tactics More studies needed to further understand of sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and victims	Small sample size due to sensitive nature and issues gaining access. Interpret findings with caution – not generalisable i.e., only police cases not undetected cases Unclear if made contact with victims

Kloss et al 2019	Offense Processes of Online Sexual Grooming and Abuse of Children Via Internet Communication Platforms	Sexual Abuse	5 cases – 27 transcripts. Offenders were men aged between 27 and 52 years ($M = 33.6$, $SD = 5.6$), and the number of children they communicated with ranged from one to 12 ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 4.5$).	Qualitative. Content driven. Thematic analysis.	Offence process of sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and children Process of Grooming. Focus on as how the offences unfold Offenders employed either an indirect or a direct approach to conversations with victims and initiating contact with them. The approach offenders employed was also reflected in the types of strategies they used. Only 2 offenders were found to engage in aspects of sexual grooming as part of an indirect approach. The majority of interactions by the other three offenders, were found to be a direct approach		Small sample size due to sensitive nature and issues gaining access. Interpret findings with caution – not generalisable i.e., only police cases not undetected cases data is limited due to chat room and instant messaging systems not always storing content of conversations. Unclear if contact specific offenders
McManus, Long, Alison & Almond, 2014	Factors associated with contact child sexual abuse in a sample of indecent image offenders	Journal of Sexual Aggression	244 offenders convicted of offences involving indecent images- 120 dual offence – contact CSA	Qualitative.	Dual offenders - Access to children, previous offence history, sexual grooming and possession of images. Non-contact had greater number of images. Homology of internet behaviours, victim selection and possession of images.	Differences between dual and non-contact offenders Criminal history. Access to children. More possession for non-contact offenders.	Stratified random sample: likely to be undetected contact offenders within the non-contact group within the coding of the offending groups, undetected offences may exist Data originally gathered for investigatory purposes rather than the study Based upon the offender's admission in interview Around 16% of dual offenders had historical charge/conviction for CSA but unclear if this would be considered CSE as terminology/sexual offences overlap

National Crime Agency 2020	National strategic assessment of serious and organised crime.	NCA	Threat assessment produced by partners across law enforcement, government, the third and private sector	Threat assessment	7600 children in the UK safeguarded or protected in relation to online CSA in the year ending September 2019. 300,000 individuals in the UK are estimated to pose a sexual threat to children. 8.3m unique first-generation images added to the Child Abuse Image Database between January 2015 and March 2019.8	Child Sexual Abuse Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	No detail about how the data was collected
Perkins, Merdian, Schumacher, Bradshaw & Stevanovic 2018	Interventions for perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation. A scoping review and gap analysis	CSA Centre of expertise	37 respondents (professionals) involved in survey to identify gaps in service. 6 Interviews with professionals from the survey sample.	Qualitative: survey and interviews	Intervention evaluations that have occurred are at the less impactful end of the evaluation spec interventions are cost-effective client-centred, individualised approach key strength of services Many concerns = high numbers of OCSA/E perpetrators, the lack of funding, insufficient staff, the need for specific training, the lack of an empirical knowledge base on risks and needs presented by this client group, and a lack of professional decision-making tools. Prevention through education. Enhancing existing services. Research and knowledge generation required.	Current interventions Strengths and weaknesses of interventions. Future improvements identified.	27.4% drop out rate of respondents. 4 from outside of UK with a different legal system. Absence of a service user voice. Survey and interview responses may have been biased by service providers' local agendas follow-up interviews enabled greater depth of questioning, this came at the cost of limited generalisability

Radcliffe et al 2019	A qualitative study of the practices and experiences of staff in multidisciplinary child sexual exploitation partnerships in three English coastal towns	Social Policy Adm	36 practitioners from a range of professional CSE relevant agencies – 3 English seaside towns	Qualitative. Sociological investigation. Focus groups. Thematic coding. NVivo.	Professional perspectives on perpetrators CSE perpetrators initiate and develop contact with young people and the role of incentives— including drugs and alcohol—as part of CSE exploitation.	CSE vulnerability; Discrepancy between young people's and practitioners' views of 'exploitation' Pull factors— incentives as part of exploitation How CSE perpetrators make and develop contact with young people.	Focus group topic prepared, and method used to reflect multi-agency perspectives. However, might not be reflective of perspective from other areas i.e., inner city, urban areas. Not equal number of staff for each seaside town i.e., SW had the least representation. No young people's views gathered. Coding frame detailed.
Rafiq & Adil 2017	Group based CSE: Dissecting grooming gangs.	Quilliam Foundation	CEOP secondary data. 58 grooming gangs & 10 case studies.	Mixed methods	Disproportionate representation of males with Asian heritage convicted of CSE crimes. Asian male perpetrator/white female dynamic. Pakistani Muslim origins. Cultural and historical context.	Disproportionate representation. Asian CSE offender/white victim dynamic. Cultural context.	
Senker, Scott & Wainwright 2020	An explorative study on perpetrators of child sexual exploitation convicted alongside others. London: Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.	IICSA	26 CSE perpetrators in prison	Qualitative. Exploratory study. Semi-structured Interviews. Thematic analysis.	Perpetrators clustered into 3 groups based on lifestyle, motivation, sexual interest and attitude toward conviction. Networks are loosely connected with no hierarchy Heterogeneous group Group A: Admitted offence. Double life. Excessive amount of time online. Group B: Denied or partially denied. No disclosure of attraction to children. Hedonistic lifestyle. Blaming victims. Group C: Denied, partially denied or admitted. Vulnerable – groomed themselves. Lacked understanding of law.	Networks loosely connected. Demographics included. Perspectives of perpetrators – unique.	CSE prison population might not be transferable to other perpetrators i.e., those in the community. Not generalisable. Groups not distinct as there was some overlap between perpetrators. No further detail or exploration provided. Female perpetrators need further exploration to establish grooming implications. Age at interview – not the offence. Participants motivated to attend rather than those who opted out for fear of repercussions. Self-reported rather than reality. Could be more pro-social. All female interviewers could have altered responses.

Skidmore et al. 2016	Organised crime and child sexual exploitation in local communities	The Police Foundation & Perpetuity Research	2 years of crime and intelligence records examined - 43 groups identified.	Data extraction from crime and intelligence records.	identify the victims and perpetrators of CSE and assess the links to organised crime. Group perpetrators had victimised or presented a risk to over half (58 per cent) of all young people known by local police to be at risk of CSE. Prevalence data.	Group based CSE Organised crime groups. Interconnectivity between crimes. Limited professional knowledge. Need for threat assessment.	Not explicit what crime and intelligence records involves – primary purpose of data most likely linked to aid investigative processes rather than research. Flagging system might not have captured the full sample. Sample involved suspected, alleged or convicted which allows comparison but some might not have been prosecuted and do not reflect the general population.
Tufail 2015	Rotherham, Rochdale and the racialized threat of the Muslim Grooming Gang.	International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy	Not specified but examined over 4 years.	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews and review of media articles.	Discourse of racialised and non-racialised reporting of CSA.	Racialised crime media reporting. Grooming Racism.	
Walker, Pillinger & Brown 2018b	Characteristics and perspectives of adults who have sexually exploited children: Scoping research	CSA Centre of expertise	Police intelligence briefings re: 27 perps Interviews with 18 sex offenders (11 CSE perps)	Qualitative. Inductive thematic analysis for interviews. Content analysis for briefings.	Little research in this area. Difficulty CSE categorising perpetrators CSE perps experiencing dysfunctional lives and many using excessive porn. Negative external experiences present in lives. Sexual gratification for motivation. Ecological framework.	Limited research. Categorising offence. Mental health & Psychological difficulties. Pornography. Motivation.	Consistency between intelligence briefings data unclear. police perspectives. Small sample size – 18 offenders only 11 CSE. However, comparison for perspectives offered by non CSE sexual offenders.

Table A2

Chapter 3 Data Extraction Table

**The table is found on the following page due to formatting.*

Author(s) and publication date	Publication Title	Location of publication	Sample	Method	Findings	Themes
Albert, 2014	Dark side of information systems and protection of children online: Examining predatory behaviour and victimization of children within social media	PhD: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro	500 chats from Perverted Justice	Critical discourse analysis	Predatory behaviour and victimisation of children within social media predators were able to negotiate the conversation from the camouflage category in what would be considered friendly, consensual, and appealing to emotions, through a distorted friendship building bait stage where compliance is tested to the trap of being victimised. The latter category is said to not follow consensual norms, bypassing the relationship building stage	1) Camouflage 2) Bait 3) Trap
Aitken et al., 2018	Online Sexual Exploratory Comparison of Themes Arising from Male Offenders from Communication	Deviant Behaviour Journal	PJ website: 4 transcripts male: male conversations 4 transcripts male: female conversations	Thematic analysis	No thematic differences between target genders were found. More sexually related words were used toward male targets. Further investigation of differences between grooming targeted at male victims and grooming targeted at female victims was warranted.	Grooming targeted at genders comparison
Bach, 2017	"Kind regards": an examination of one buyer's attempt to purchase a trafficked child for sex	Journal of sexual aggression	Case study 27 correspondences, 10 are presented that directly pertain to the process of buying a child for sexual exploitation.	Narrative Analysis	Buyers attempt to purchase a trafficked child for sex Correspondences between a buyer and an undercover agent advertising trafficked children for sex	Buyers/trafficked children for sex

Barber & Bettez, 2014	Deconstructing the Online Grooming of Youth: Toward Improved Information Systems for Detection of Online Sexual Predators	PdF Completed Research Paper from ResearchGate	90 PJ transcripts conversations between convicted online sexual predators and PVJ volunteers	Grounded Theory Analysis	Behavioural patterns emerging from predators using language to groom young people online	Assessment, Enticements, Cyberexploitation, control Self-preservation.
Bergen et al., 2013	Adults Sexual Interest in Children and Adolescents Online	International Journal of Cyber Criminology	257 discussions from chat rooms using decoys	Quasi-experimental design	Sexual interest rose as the impersonated age increased. A face-to-face meeting was suggested more often to impersonated persons above the legal age of consent (16- and 18-year-olds), then to persons below the legal age of consent (10 – 14-year-olds). In 53.5% of discussions with supposed 10- and 12-year-olds (age groups suggestive of paedophilic sexual interest among adults), the contacts wanted to continue a sexual conversation after the portrayed age was revealed.	Adult sexual interest in children online
Black et al., 2015	A linguistic analysis of grooming strategies of online child sex offenders: Implications for our understanding of predatory sexual behaviour in an increasingly computer-mediated world	Child abuse & neglect	44 convicted online offenders chat conversations via PJ transcripts	Computerised Text Analysis & Content analysis	Results reveal that while some evidence of the strategies used by offenders throughout the grooming process are present in online environments, the order and timing of these stages appear to be different. The types (and potential underlying pattern) of strategies used in online grooming support the development of a revised model for grooming in online environments.	Online grooming process compared with F2F models - communication stages

Broome et al, 2020	A psycholinguistic profile of online grooming conversations: A comparative study of prison and police staff considerations	Child Abuse & Neglect	Prison staff (n = 7) and police officers (n = 9) and 65 chat logs from adults convicted of an online sexual offence against a minor.	LIWC	Findings challenge the common perception that the relationship is centred on deception and identify the intention of some adults as the development of a perceived genuine interpersonal relationship. Online abuse/exploitation of minors can occur without deception. Adults who engage in OG behaviour use language that denotes affiliation with a positive emotional tone (p = .003, $\eta^2 = .59$). The communicative focus is the development of an interpersonal relationship, above engagement in sexual talk	Perceived genuine interpersonal relationship not necessarily deception Psycho linguistic profiles of OG conversations
Buchanan, 2016	The Dilemmatic Nature of Luring Communication: An Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis of Online Predator and P-J Member Interaction	Book: The University of Iowa.	40 PJM-OP instant messenger transcripts	Action implicative discourse analysis	Online predator interactions with undercover non-police operatives the researcher satisfied her primary goal of recognizing and understanding how PJMs and OPs attempt to reach their respective goals while avoiding risks. Extend research on traditional and online grooming, self-presentation online, and AIDA.	PJMs: Target Presentation, OP Safety, Sexual/Relational Contribution Management, and Bust Facilitation. OPs: Identity Establishment, Relationship Management, Safety Precautions, Sexual Communication Engagement, and Meet Facilitation.
Chiang, 2019; Chiang & Grant, 2019	Rhetorical moves & identity performance in online child sexual abuse interactions (2019) Deceptive identity performance: offender moves & multiple identities in online child abuse conversations (2019)	Applied Linguistics	Genuine online conversations between the offender and 20 victims	Move Analysis Framework	Linguistic expressions of identity using rhetorical moves (Chiang, 2019) Deceptive online identity performance – offenders' personas (Chiang & Grant, 2019)	Rhetorical moves Identity/personas online

Craven et al., 2006	Review of literature and theoretical considerations.	Journal of sexual aggression	Review of sexual grooming literature	Literature review	Offenders initially move from initial motivation to targeting the child (i.e., beliefs that support sex with children, attempting to desist, or becoming entrenched in sexual offending). The offender then prepares to offend (i.e., using implicit or explicit skills in charming the people around them, fitting in and identifying vulnerabilities in victims). Grooming the child involves the offender using psychological relational aspects (i.e., sex education, building trust, threats, sexual desensitising, promoting secrecy, measuring victims' reactions) to achieve sexual gratification.	1) Self-grooming 2) Grooming the environment 3) Grooming the child
Dehart et al., 2017	Internet sexual solicitation of children: a proposed typology of offenders based on their chats, e-mails, and social network post	Journal of sexual aggression	Offender chat logs, email threads, and social network posts from state and local task forces on ICAC for a sample of 200 offenders in communications with undercover officers.	Mixed methods	Typology of internet offenders – communicating with undercover officers	cybersex-only offenders, schedulers, cybersex/schedulers, and buyers
Drouin et al., 2017	Linguistic analysis of chat transcript from child predators undercover sex stings	The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology	590 undercover Internet sex stings	LIWC	Offenders and agents varied greatly in their scores in these word categories; however, generally, offenders used more words in each: 91% used more sexual words, 66% used more words overall, and 82% exhibited more clout than their respective agents. Linguistic analyses can provide the trier of fact with objective measures of psychometric properties that may help them assess the offender's predisposition and appropriateness of government conduct	sexual word usage online sex offenders with undercover agents LIWC

Elliot, 2017	A self-regulation model of sexual grooming. Trauma	Violence & Abuse	Review previous models/literature	Self-regulation Model of sexual grooming: theoretical review	Provide a universal grooming model of a grooming process. Evaluation of three process models of grooming is conducted. Using a process of theory knitting, an integrated universal model of illicit grooming is developed. (1) a potentiality phase of rapport-building, incentivization, disinhibition, and security-management and (2) a disclosure phase in which goal-relevant information is introduced in a systematic and controlled manner in order to desensitize the target. The theoretical quality of the model is appraised, and its clinical implications are discussed.	1) Potentiality 2) Disclosure
Gamez-Guadix et al., 2018;	Persuasion strategies and sexual solicitations in online sexual grooming of adolescents: Modelling direct and indirect pathways	Journal of Adolescence	2731 early Spanish adolescents between 12 and 15 years old (50.6% female). Of these, 196 adolescents (7.17% of the total; 53% girls) were involved in online grooming (mean age = 14.93, SD = 0.90)	Social influence framework	Persuasion strategies by the adult through internet increased the probability of using deceit, bribery, and the minor's nonsexual involvement. Deceit and bribery were associated with higher rates of sexual solicitation, which in turn increased abusive sexual interactions	Online persuasion strategies – pathways
Gupta et al., 2012	Characterising paedophile conversations on the internet using online grooming	Computers and Society Cornell University website	75 paedophile chat conversations with 6 stages of online grooming	Linguistic analysis & LIWC	Online grooming theory and linguistic analysis with LIWC testing paedophilic conversation stages relationship forming is the most dominant online grooming stage in contrast to the sexual stage. We use a widely used word-counting program (LIWC) to create psycholinguistic profiles for each of the six online grooming stages to discover	Relationship forming LIWC profiles

Ioannou et al., 2018	A Comparison of Online and Offline Grooming Characteristics: An application of The Victim Roles Model	Computers in Human Behavior	103 victims who were targeted online (n = 76) and offline (n = 25)	Smallest Space Analysis from content analysis	Canter's (1994) victim role model was successfully applied to both groups and the findings revealed a differentiation between victim as vehicle, person and object, as it has previously identified for other sexual and violent interpersonal offences (Canter & Youngs, 2012). There were some differences between online and offline groupings of characteristics when applied to victim roles, but the majority of the characteristics were consistent across the 2 groups	Canter's (1994) victim role model Interpersonal transaction between victim and perpetrator
Kloess 2015	A qualitative analysis of offenders MO in sexually exploitative interactions with children online	Sexual Abuse	Five offenders, comprising 29 transcripts of 22 online interactions, were discursively analysed using the qualitative approach of thematic analysis	Thematic Analysis	Perpetrator's MO with a discursive focus on engaging with victims Approaches used towards victims might be direct or indirect at various stages of the interaction	1) Direct Approach 2) Indirect Approach (Approach, maintenance -escalation and closure)
Lorenzo-Dus et al, 2016	Understanding grooming discourse in computer mediated environments	Context & Media	Online grooming transcripts	Computer mediated discourse analysis/model	Understanding online grooming discourse via chat logs from Perverted Justice – model of online grooming discourse The three phase OG Model has distinct perpetrator communicative processes and strategies. This included deceptive trust (i.e., sharing personal information, sociability, and praise), sexual gratification (i.e., desensitisation or reframing), compliance testing (i.e., role reversal) and isolation (i.e., mental).	1) Access 2) Approach 3) Entrapment

Lorenzo-Dus & Izura, 2017	“Cause ur special” Understanding trust and complimentary behaviour in online grooming discourse	Journal of Pragmatics	Corpus of 1268 compliments extracted from 68 online grooming interactions	Syntactic realisation and discourse analysis	A prevalence of compliments about physical appearance, of both a sexual and a non-sexual orientation, which increases alongside speed of grooming. High syntactic formulaicity levels regardless of speed of grooming. Use of compliments to frame and support online grooming processes that seek to isolate the targets, provide the online groomers with sexual gratification and enable them to gauge the targets’ compliance levels	Compliments Linguistics
Lorenzo-Dus & Kinzel, 2019	‘So is your mom as cute as you?’: Examining patterns of language use in online sexual grooming of children	Journal of corpora and discourse studies	The corpus consists of >600 grooming chat logs taken from the Perverted Justice Foundation archive, from which the groomers’ language was extracted (c. 3.3 million words).	Evaluating contribution of CADS	CADS Lexical dispersion (DPNorm), collocation and concordance analyses were conducted. analysis shows that LIWC may not be the most efficient software to analyse online grooming language due to a lack of general language comparison scores, the non-transparency of some of its analytic variables and a focus on de-contextualised words. Comparatively, CADS methods can shed light upon online groomers’ strategic use of language. They can also reveal the complex and nuanced ways in which discourse features such as (I’m)explicitness and interpersonal (in)directness operate alongside these strategies.	CADS approach LIWC not the most efficient on its own
O’Connell, 2003	A typology of child cyberexploitation and online grooming practices.	Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire	50 hrs of online grooming transcripts involving female decoy victims aged 8-12 yrs.	Qualitative analysis	The sequential stages move from the perpetrator initially getting to know the victim, to deepening the relationship, to involve sexual content, all whilst establishing secrecy to avoid detection.	1) Friendship forming 2) Relationship forming 3) Risk assessment 4) Exclusivity 5) Sexual 6) Concluding.

Olson et al., 2007	Entrapping the innocent: Toward a theory of child sexual predators' luring communication	Communication Theory	Review of literature to produce OG Model of Luring Communication Theory	Grounded theory methodology to analyse literature	Model of LCT begins with perpetrators gaining access to children, prior to the cycle of entrapment, and ending with perpetrator and victim responses maintaining or ending the sexually abusive relationship.	1) Approach 2) Deceptive Trust Development 3) Grooming 4) Isolation (Within Gaining Access, Cycle of Entrapment, Intervening, Outcome)
Schneevogt, 2018	Do Perverted Justice chat logs contain examples of Overt Persuasion and Sexual Extortion? A Research Note responding to Chiang and Grant (2017, 2018)	Language and Law	Offenders and adult decoys by applying corpus linguistic techniques to a corpus of 622 chat logs	Corpus Linguistic Techniques	Overt Persuasion and Sexual Extortion - Critique of using Perverted Justice data - Response to Chiang and Grant 2018/19 study	Overt Persuasion and Sexual Extortion Need for genuine victims
Seigfried-Spellier et al, 2019	Chat Analysis Triage Tool	Forensic science international	developed the Chat Analysis Triage Tool (CATT), a forensically sound investigative tool that, based on natural language processing methods, analyses and compares chats between minors and contact-driven vs. non-contact driven offenders.	Natural language analysis	Language based differences between contact or fantasy offenders and their victims Using the SVM classifier – the study was successful in differentiating the classes based on character trigrams. In seconds, the existing algorithms provide an identification of an offender's risk level based on the likelihood of contact offending as inferred from the model, which assists law enforcement in their ability to triage and prioritize cases involving the sexual solicitation of minors.	Contact driven Non-contact driven

Seymour & Kloess, 2021;	A discursive analysis of compliance, resistance and escalation to threats in sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and male children	British journal of social psychology	Chat logs between one offender (posing as a teenage girl) and five male victims under the age of 16 years,	Discursive psychology analysis of chat	<p>Real victims (not decoys), male (not female) – manoeuvrers – compliance, resistance and escalation</p> <p>The sexualized nature evidenced in our data contrasts with other findings which suggest that boys are not sexually solicited and that interactions with boys are less aggressive and forceful. Our findings demonstrate for the first time how an offender escalated his issuing of threats following victims' resistance and non-compliance to requests. Turning points that appeared odd in the online interactions suggest that they may be used to encourage children to be more reflective about any further engagement.</p>	Manoeuvrers Compliance Resistance Escalation
Tener et al, 2015	A Typology of Offenders Who Use Online Communications to Commit Sex Crimes Against Minors	Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma	Seventy-five reports made by law enforcement officers	Qualitative software analysis – typology	<p>Typology – 4 types of online offender – the expert, cynical, affection-focused and sex focused</p> <p>Each type of offender was characterized by patterns of online communication, offline and online identity, relationship dynamics with the victim, and level of sex crime expertise. The typology reveals the heterogeneous nature of sex offenders who use online communications.</p>	Expert Cynical Affection-focused Sex-focused

Williams et al., 2013	Identifying sexual grooming themes used by internet sex offenders	Deviant behavior	First hour of online grooming transcripts involving 8 male offenders on female decoy victims	Qualitatively analysed using thematic analysis	The non-sequential grooming stages involved co-ordination (synchronising behaviours or language), mutuality (discovering similar interests), and positivity/negativity (i.e., impatient traits), introduces sexual content into the conversation (i.e., as a game, offering sexual advice, sharing mutual fantasies, or forceful techniques), and will then maintain or escalate the sexual conversation (i.e., via repetition or force) and assessing the child (i.e., trust/vulnerability, receptiveness), or the environment (i.e., obstacles, opportunity, information).	1) Rapport-building 2) Sexual Content 3) Assessment
Winters et al., 2017	Sexual offenders contacting children online: an examination of transcripts of sexual grooming.	Journal of sexual aggression	100 transcripts online grooming transcripts	Coded transcripts	Coded for offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and dynamics of the conversation. Offenders were male, most of whom believed they were communicating with an adolescent female. Introducing sexual content early on into the conversation. contact ranged from one day to nearly one year, suggesting that the duration of the online grooming process may vary significantly. Also communicated over the telephone and attempted to arrange an in-person meeting, many within short periods of time.	Characteristics Dynamics of the conversation
Winters & Jeglic (2017)	Stages of sexual grooming: Recognizing potentially predatory behaviors of child molesters.	Deviant behavior.	100 online grooming transcripts with decoy female adolescent victims but described as in-person sexual grooming model		Development of the Sexual Grooming Model (SGM) which involved choosing and isolating victims (i.e., unwanted/unloved, overnight stays/outings), building trust (e.g., compliments), desensitising sexual content and physical contact (e.g., teach child sexual education), and post-abuse maintenance (e.g., encouraging secrets).	1) victim selection 2) gaining access and isolation 3) trust development 4) desensitisation to sexual content and physical contact 5) post-abuse maintenance

Table A3

Chapter 4 Data Extraction Table

**The table is found on the following page due to formatting.*

Author(s) and publication date	Publication Title	Location of publication	Findings	Themes
Abreu et al., 2019	Investigating Homicide Offender Typologies Based on Their Clinical Histories and Crime Scene Behaviour Patterns.	Journal of Criminological Research policy & practice	offender typologies, by furthering the investigators understanding of the crime or likely suspect; offering insights into crime patterns; helping in the search and prioritisation of suspects and providing advice on an offender's offence behaviour	Multi-agency teams
Allnock, 2015	"What Do We Know About CSA And Policing in England and Wales? Evidence Briefing for The National Policing Lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation.	Institute of Applied Research	Attrition - victim withdrawal (or reluctance) is one reason for the high attrition rates for child victims of sexual offences, such as sexual abuse and exploitation explanations - decision-making and outcomes at each stage of the CJS (i.e., police, the CPS and the court	Multi-agency teams
Beckett, 2021	Risk Assessing Child (Sexual Exploitation). Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme Online Community of Practice Event.	TCE research in practice website	assessment of young people's risk and vulnerability is a contentious issue - 'problematic' - potential for missing harms comfort in completing risk assessments Social Worker: Risk assessment t offering a listening ear and encouraging the young person to talk, b) careful non-victim blaming language and trying to avoid recreating an abusive power dynamic,	Multi-agency teams

Beckley, 2018	Review Into the Terminology "Victim/Complainant" And Believing Victims at Time of Reporting.	CoP Professional Policing Meeting	recommendations were subsequently discussed at the College of Policing Professional Committee on 28th February 2018 supporting the need for impartiality during investigations and procedural fairness whilst ensuring that Policing remains victim focused "unanimity among the legal profession" in believing that a requirement for "the police to believe the allegation at the onset of an investigation (was) wrong	Court systems
Chopin & Beauregard, 2021	Sexual homicide and its investigation: New perspectives to improve police practices.	Journal of Forensic Sciences	offender typologies, by furthering the investigators understanding of the crime or likely suspect; offering insights into crime patterns; helping in the search and prioritisation of suspects and providing advice on an offender's offence behaviour	Multi-agency teams
CJJI, 2022	Twenty Years On, Is MAPPA Achieving It's Objectives? A Joint Thematic Inspection of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.	Justice Inspectorates website), these arrangements are suggested to be effective at a) bringing together Criminal Justice Agencies to share information, b) identifying and managing dangerous individuals, c) offering necessary scrutiny and oversight in complex cases and d) supporting reasonable steps taken to protect the public	Management of offenders

Coliandris, 2015	County Lines and Wicked Problems: Exploring the Need for Improved Policing Approaches to Vulnerability and Early Intervention	Australasian Policing	Pre implementation of the PEQF national curriculum, there has been a global recognition of the weaknesses in police knowledge and understanding relating to vulnerability and CSE	Multi-agency teams
CoP, 2023	Introduction To Managing Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders	College of Policing website	PEQF curriculum also includes learning outcomes that support the training of all new police officers on key safeguarding issues, such as interviewing vulnerable witnesses, gathering intelligence, and assessing risk and threats	Multi-agency teams
Coy, Sharp-Jeffs and Kelly (2017)	Key Messages from Research on Child Sexual Exploitation: Social Workers	London Metropolitan University: Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse	careful non-victim blaming language and trying to avoid recreating an abusive power dynamic	Multi-agency teams

CPS, 2021	Special Measures	CPS website	Victims are further supported by the 'special measures' arrangements given to child victims of sexual offences in Court which can include giving evidence behind a screen or via video link or asking members of the public to leave the court (Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999) or the support from Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) prosecutors	Court systems
CPS, 2023	CSA: Guidelines on prosecuting cases of CSA	CPS website	"Police and prosecutors should seek to build a case which looks more widely at the credibility of the overall allegation rather than focusing primarily on the credibility and/or reliability of the child or young person"	Court systems
DfE's (2019)	Statutory guidance. Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.	Gov.uk website	Statutory guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) and making RSE compulsory in secondary Schools from 2020 states "Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly	Multi-agency teams

Drummond and Southgate (2018)	Interventions for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. A scoping study.	CSA Centre Website	no specific CSE SOTP delivered in prison, probation or the community	Management of offenders
Emmerson & Stockton, 2022	Outlook for the public finances	Institute for Fiscal Studies website	Offender supervision - resource intensive, but arguably financially unfeasible, with such uncertainty around public spending	Management of offenders
Firmin (2017)	Contextual risk, individualised responses. An assessment of safeguarding responses to nine cases of peer-on-peer abuse.	Child Abuse Review Journal	adopting a contextual safeguarding response, which targets the contexts in which harm occurs (i.e., risks in peer groups, schools, and public places), considering all interconnecting vulnerabilities especially the exploiters willingness to abuse the young person.	Multi-agency teams

Ford et al. (2019)	An evaluation of the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Informed Approach to Policing Vulnerability Training (AIAPVT) pilot.	Public Health Wales website	Officers collected more detailed information following training and created a more measured response in their behaviour and decision making when responding to calls. Vulnerability training success	Multi-agency teams
Frost, 2017	From 'silo' to 'network' profession – a multi-professional future for social work.	Journal of Children's Services	effective for: a) protecting young people, b) sharing information, c) early identification of suspects and victims, d) enhancing professional learning and aiding decision making, e) generating holistic assessments and f) holding perpetrators to account Multi-agency working is said to remove agencies working in silos, therefore becoming better positioned to be a protective network, for recognising the significance of the information they hear, making informed decisions for escalation and achieving an immediate safeguarding response	Multi-agency teams
Gohir, 2013	Unheard voices: The sexual exploitation of Asian girls and young women.	Muslim Women's Network UK website	previous tendency to focus on the victim, stigmatising them further, and making perpetrators invisible in responses to CSE	Multi-agency teams

Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2021	Greater knowledge enhances complainant credibility and increases jury convictions for child sexual assault.	Frontiers in Psychology journal.	un corroborated victim testimonies have also yielded low conviction rates convictions are more likely to occur with greater knowledge of how child victims might behave during sexual offences and whilst progressing through the CJ system	Court systems
Henriques (2016)	An Independent Review of the Metropolitan Police Service's handling of non-recent sexual offence investigations alleged against person of public prominence.	Metropolitan Police Service website	Police investigations should use the term "complainant" rather than "victim"; and that "the instruction to believe a victim's account should cease" (Recommendation 2).	Court systems
Home Office, 2023	Independent Review of Police-led sex offender management. An executive summary of the review written by Mick Creedon QPM	Gov.uk website	Recommends there is a need for a) research into escalating behaviours, b) a single inter-disciplinary risk assessment system assessment, c) a review of the MOSOVO training, d) introduction of force-level discretion, e) mechanisms for intelligence sharing, and f) a MOSOVO focus on reoffending and risk.	Management of Offenders

Home Office, 2023	National statistics Police workforce, England and Wales: 30 September 2022.	Gov.uk website	Category 1 offenders required police supervision, monitoring and control intervention, this equates to roughly one sex offender per two police officers (out of the 142,145 officers) in England and Wales	Management of offenders
HM Government, 2018	Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.	Gov.uk website	Social Workers are responsible for completing risk assessments, instigating Sec 47 CP procedures, holding strategy meetings, liaising with other services, and formulating CP plans	Multi-agency teams
HM Prison and Probation Service, 2023	MAPPAs Guidance.	Gov.uk website	The management of sexual offenders relies on partnership work with Responsible Authorities (RA), Duty to Co-operate (DTC) agencies and third sector agencies who are required to establish local MAPPAs under a Strategic Management Board (SMB) in England and Wales	Management of offenders

Hunter, Jacobson & Kirby, 2018	Judicial perceptions of the quality of criminal advocacy: Report of research commissioned by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board.	The Bar Standards Board website	The pursuit of a more child-friendly approach to questioning and evidence gathering, in comparison to the previous adversarial approach, has received positive acknowledgement from Judicial perceptions of the quality of criminal advocacy in research commissioned by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board	Court systems
IICSA, 2022	The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.	IICSA website	structural challenges or ideological differences between agencies frequently missing from home, a recognised feature of CSE MFH inquiries were often inadequate problem profiles have been criticised by the recent IICSA (2022) for their incomplete evidence of prevalence, lack of information about perpetrator groups and basing profiles on inadequate data	Multi-agency teams
Kelly & Karsna, 2017	Measuring the scale and changing nature of child sexual exploitation. Scoping report.	CSA Centre website	victim withdrawal (or reluctance) is one reason for the high attrition rates for child victims of sexual offences, such as sexual abuse and exploitation	Multi-agency teams

Kemshall, 2012	The role of risk, needs and strengths assessment in improving the supervision of offenders.	Offenders Supervision journal.	‘Four Pillars’ approach, aiming to work smarter at managing the risks, which includes: a) Supervision (i.e., agency oversight gathering offender views, relapse prevention, promoting pro-social behaviours); b) Monitoring and control (i.e., predicting future offending, monitoring warning signs/triggers, polygraphing offenders, limiting offender’s access to victim); c) Interventions and Treatment (i.e., specific intervention work around the nature of offending undertaken around motivation, internal inhibitors, external inhibitors or victim compliance); and d) Victim Safety (i.e., referral/liaison with Victim Liaison Officer, protecting current and potential victims identified in risk assessment).	Management of offenders
Kewley, 2017	Policing registered sex offenders.	Journal of Forensic Practice	Management of Offenders The management of sexual offenders, which includes CSE perpetrators, categorised as either, one (registered), two (violent offender), or three (other dangerous offender), relies on partnership work with Responsible Authorities (RA) including prison, probation, and the police. Sexual offenders are typically risk assessed and managed at levels one (ordinary statutory agency i.e., police, probation, or prison), two (active multi-agency) or three (active enhanced multi-agency)	Management of offenders
Kewley et al., 2020	How well do police specialists risk assess registered sexual offenders?	Journal of Sexual Aggression	Offenders using the Active Risk Management System (ARMS), Kewley et al. (2020) reported that assessor risk ratings and risk management plans were poor, predominantly resulting from low professional confidence when completing due to undertraining. The study recommended the need for better training, a clear quality audit and the opportunity to discuss complex cases with a supervisor	Management of offenders

Lloyd & Firmin, 2020	No further action: Contextualising social care decisions for children victimised in extra familial settings.	Youth Justice journal	reducing the likelihood of 'no further action' (NFA) decisions for those still at significant risk	Multi-agency teams
Marsden, 2017	Journey to justice. Prioritising the wellbeing of children involved in criminal justice processes relating to sexual exploitation and abuse.	Barnardo's website	Investigation - "major challenges in compiling sufficient evidence to convict perpetrators" Despite some improvements to the supportive interview practice offered by Detectives with the introduction of the ABE interview guidance in 2011 and Victims' Code in 2005, this does not always appear to follow throughout the criminal justice process	Multi-agency teams
McCanney & Taylor, 2023	Doing the job! Expectations of police recruits (pre and post graduate entry).	Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice.	debate as to whether the current PEQF route is fit for purpose for educating new recruits	Multi-agency teams

McNeish & Scott, 2023	Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour.	CSA Centre website	"raise awareness of sexual exploitation, internet safety, consent and sexual harassment, and to promote healthy relationships"	Multi-agency teams
Ministry of Justice (2022)	MAPPA Annual Report 2021/22	Gov.uk website	The most recent figures from the Ministry of Justice (2022) reveal that 66,741 Category 1 registered sex offenders who have committed a sexual offence under the Sexual offences Act 2003 in England and Wales require some level of offender management, which is a 4% increase on the previous year, albeit not all offences involving CSE related crimes. Ninety-eight per cent of all Category 1 offenders are currently managed at Level 1 (i.e., managed with the Primary Statutory Agency, such as police, probation or prison) with support	Management of offenders
Mooney, 2021	A Systematic Review of the UK's Contact CSE Perpetrator Literature: Pointing A Way Forward for Future Research and Practice	Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling	victim withdrawal (or reluctance) is one reason for the high attrition rates for child victims of sexual offences, such as sexual abuse and exploitation	Multi-agency teams

Mews et al., 2017	Impact Evaluation of the Prison Based Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme	Gove.uk website	Prison-based Core Sex Offender Treatment Programme intend to reduce sexual reoffending among participants by identifying and addressing known criminogenic needs. little or no changes in sexual and non-sexual reoffending, although some statistically significant differences might indicate that the true impact of the SOTP was not detected.	Management of offenders
NSPCC, 2023	Multi-Agency Working	NSPCC website	Multi-agency working is said to remove agencies working in silos, therefore becoming better positioned to be a protective network, for recognising the significance of the information they hear, making informed decisions for escalation and achieving an immediate safeguarding response	Multi-agency teams
OFSTED, 2021	Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges	Gov.uk website	Statutory requirements mean that all children should receive some form of CSE prevention, but the debate has been ongoing since RSE has been made compulsory as to how consistent and effective this preventative input has been	Multi-agency teams

Pemberton et al., 2023	The Police as formal agents of change: assisting desistance in individuals convicted of sexual offences	Journal of Community Safety & Wellbeing	There should be "provision of comprehensive support beyond risk management". Change is more likely if the RA (i.e., police etc) "actively promote hope and optimism and convey a belief that the person attempting desistance can change"	Management of offenders.
Scott, McNeish, Bovarnick & Pearce, 2019	What Works in Responding to CSE	Barnardo's	Third sector - deliver community outreach or health campaigns, provide advice to the young person and their families, and liaise with other therapeutic services prevention focused activity - CSE awareness raising (i.e., annual national child exploitation awareness day) and specialist training (i.e., one day or weeklong) for organisational staff development, community education outreach or educating young people in Schools on harmful sexual behaviour delivery of preventive education sessions to young people requires more of a whole School approach which includes making sure that teachers and leaders are confident in delivering such important preventative messages	Multi-agency teams
Sharp-Jeffs, Coy & Kelly, 2017	Key Messages from Research On CSE: Multi-Agency Working	CSA Centre of expertise	multi-agency in nature, drawing on specialists from different statutory and third sector agencies to build organised CSE teams effective for: a) protecting young people, b) sharing information, c) early identification of suspects and victims, d) enhancing professional learning and aiding decision making, e) generating holistic assessments and f) holding perpetrators to account 'eyes and ears' of the community who can also form part of a protective network for CSE victims, including that which is sometimes described as the night-time economy Multi-agency working is said to remove agencies working in silos, therefore becoming better positioned to be a protective network, for recognising the significance of the information they hear, making informed decisions for escalation and achieving an immediate safeguarding response	Multi-agency teams

Shuker, 2018	The Children and Social Work Act. The Role of Voluntary Sector CSE Services in New Safeguarding Arrangements	Alexi Project website	structural challenges or ideological differences between agencies the implementation of effective localised CSE teams relies on a Local Authority (L.A.) needs assessment and sustained funding levels, so there is arguably a real necessity to highlight what the local needs are and what is prioritised to avoid the CSE response worsening	Multi-agency teams
Shuker & Harris, 2018	Voluntary and Statutory Sector Partnerships in Local Responses in CSE	Alexi Project website	multi-agency in nature, drawing on specialists from different statutory and third sector agencies to build organised CSE teams Third sector - make a positive impact on engaging hard to reach young people (i.e., those that are perceived to be disengaged), intelligence gathering and educating communities as part of multi-agency CSE teams	Multi-agency teams
Spohn, 2020	Sexual Assault Case Processing: The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same	International Journal for Crime Justice and Social Democracy	Victim stereotyping (i.e., someone who is not considered a 'genuine' victim if not matching preconceived views) was acknowledged in research as widespread and potentially preventing fair decision making in trials	Court systems

Van der Kemp, 2021	The Modus Via of Sex Offenders and The Use of Geographical Offender Profiling in Sex Crime Cases	Criminal Investigations of Sexual Offences: Techniques and Challenges Journal	Investigating. Solving sex crimes can be difficult	Multi-agency teams
Wager, Myers & Parkinson, 2021	Police disruption of child sexual abuse. Findings from a national survey of frontline personnel strategic leads for safeguarding	CSA Centre website	Police Detectives in CSE teams are typically tasked with investigating crimes, leading Achieving Best Evidence/Missing from Home interviews, making use of Police Orders, developing problem profiles, and gathering intelligence to disrupt offenders, all whilst liaising with other services throughout the CJS process, such as CPS, RASSOs, Forensic experts and SARCs	Multi-agency teams
Willmott et al., 2021	Criminal geography and geographical profiling within police investigations – A brief introduction.	Internet Journal of Criminology	Police investigations can also be assisted in many ways	Multi-agency teams

Appendix B: LIWC 2015 Manual

Table B

LIWC2015 Manual Output Variables Extracted for Interpretation

Table 1. LIWC2015 Output Variable Information

Category	Abbrev	Examples	Words in category	Internal Consistency (Uncorrected α)	Internal Consistency (Corrected α)
Word count	WC	-	-	-	-
Summary Language Variables					
Analytical thinking	Analytic	-	-	-	-
Clout	Clout	-	-	-	-
Authentic	Authentic	-	-	-	-
Emotional tone	Tone	-	-	-	-
Words/sentence	WPS	-	-	-	-
Words > 6 letters	Sixltr	-	-	-	-
Dictionary words	Dic	-	-	-	-
Linguistic Dimensions					
Total function words	funct	it, to, no, very	491	.05	.24
Total pronouns	pronoun	I, them, itself	153	.25	.67
Personal pronouns	ppron	I, them, her	93	.20	.61
1st pers singular	i	I, me, mine	24	.41	.81
1st pers plural	we	we, us, our	12	.43	.82
2nd person	you	you, your, thou	30	.28	.70
3rd pers singular	shehe	she, her, him	17	.49	.85
3rd pers plural	they	they, their, they'd	11	.37	.78
Impersonal pronouns	ipron	it, it's, those	59	.28	.71
Articles	article	a, an, the	3	.05	.23
Prepositions	prep	to, with, above	74	.04	.18
Auxiliary verbs	auxverb	am, will, have	141	.16	.54
Common Adverbs	adverb	very, really	140	.43	.82
Conjunctions	conj	and, but, whereas	43	.14	.50
Negations	negate	no, not, never	62	.29	.71
Other Grammar					
Common verbs	verb	eat, come, carry	1000	.05	.23
Common adjectives	adj	free, happy, long	764	.04	.19
Comparisons	compare	greater, best, after	317	.08	.35
Interrogatives	interrog	how, when, what	48	.18	.57
Numbers	number	second, thousand	36	.45	.83
Quantifiers	quant	few, many, much	77	.23	.64
Psychological Processes					
Affective processes	affect	happy, cried	1393	.18	.57
Positive emotion	posemo	love, nice, sweet	620	.23	.64
Negative emotion	negemo	hurt, ugly, nasty	744	.17	.55
Anxiety	anx	worried, fearful	116	.31	.73
Anger	anger	hate, kill, annoyed	230	.16	.53
Sadness	sad	crying, grief, sad	136	.28	.70
Social processes	social	mate, talk, they	756	.51	.86
Family	family	daughter, dad, aunt	118	.55	.88

Category	Abbrev	Examples	Words in category	Internal Consistency (Uncorrected α)	Internal Consistency (Corrected α)
Friends	friend	buddy, neighbor	95	.20	.60
Female references	female	girl, her, mom	124	.53	.87
Male references	male	boy, his, dad	116	.52	.87
Cognitive processes	cogproc	cause, know, ought	797	.65	.92
Insight	insight	think, know	259	.47	.84
Causation	cause	because, effect	135	.26	.67
Discrepancy	discrep	should, would	83	.34	.76
Tentative	tentat	maybe, perhaps	178	.44	.83
Certainty	certain	always, never	113	.31	.73
Differentiation	differ	hasn't, but, else	81	.38	.78
Perceptual processes	percept	look, heard, feeling	436	.17	.55
See	see	view, saw, seen	126	.46	.84
Hear	hear	listen, hearing	93	.27	.69
Feel	feel	feels, touch	128	.24	.65
Biological processes	bio	eat, blood, pain	748	.29	.71
Body	body	cheek, hands, spit	215	.52	.87
Health	health	clinic, flu, pill	294	.09	.37
Sexual	sexual	horny, love, incest	131	.37	.78
Ingestion	ingest	dish, eat, pizza	184	.67	.92
Drives	drives		1103	.39	.80
Affiliation	affiliation	ally, friend, social	248	.40	.80
Achievement	achieve	win, success, better	213	.41	.81
Power	power	superior, bully	518	.35	.76
Reward	reward	take, prize, benefit	120	.27	.69
Risk	risk	danger, doubt	103	.26	.68
Time orientations	TimeOrient				
Past focus	focuspast	ago, did, talked	341	.23	.64
Present focus	focuspresent	today, is, now	424	.24	.66
Future focus	focusfuture	may, will, soon	97	.26	.68
Relativity	relativ	area, bend, exit	974	.50	.86
Motion	motion	arrive, car, go	325	.36	.77
Space	space	down, in, thin	360	.45	.83
Time	time	end, until, season	310	.39	.79
Personal concerns					
Work	work	job, majors, xerox	444	.69	.93
Leisure	leisure	cook, chat, movie	296	.50	.86
Home	home	kitchen, landlord	100	.46	.83
Money	money	audit, cash, owe	226	.60	.90
Religion	relig	altar, church	174	.64	.91
Death	death	bury, coffin, kill	74	.39	.79
Informal language	informal		380	.46	.84
Swear words	swear	fuck, damn, shit	131	.45	.83
Netspeak	netspeak	btw, lol, thx	209	.42	.82
Assent	assent	agree, OK, yes	36	.10	.39
Nonfluencies	nonflu	er, hm, umm	19	.27	.69
Fillers	filler	I mean, you know	14	.06	.27

Appendix C: Inductive Open Coding

Table C1

Example of Inductive Open Coding Phase for RQ1 Perpetrator Including Labels and Frequency of References to Codes and Case Files

NVIVO Perpetrator Code/Label	Code Memo	Frequency of reference to codes in the case files	No of Case files	References/Case file ratio
<hr/> 50+ references <hr/>				
Flattery	Praise, adulation, compliments	80	26	3.08
Demand	Insistent requests, command, orders	79	22	3.59
Access	Approach, opportunity, way in	65	26	2.50
Risk Assessment	Identifying hazards, minimising/avoiding chances of getting caught	64	20	3.20
Arrangements to meet	What needs to be done or happen before a meeting in person	53	19	2.79
<hr/> 30 – 49 references <hr/>				
Gifts	A present given willingly without payment	47	23	2.04
Threat	An intention to inflict harm	47	12	3.92
Assent	Seeking acceptance, approval or agreement	45	22	2.05
Requests for picture	Asking for an image of the other person to be sent	44	10	4.40
Reverse psychology	Subtly encouraging a behaviour by hiding the intention or suggesting an opposite behaviour	38	14	2.71
Intimidation	Frightening, dominating, or harassing the other person	37	11	3.36
Desires	Expressing a strong feeling or for something intimate to happen	35	12	2.92

Establishing secrecy	Asking for the CSE relationship to remain between themselves and not discussed with anyone else	30	20	1.50
<hr/>				
20-29 references				
Protective	Willing to defend or protect the other person	29	16	1.81
Degradation	Humiliation or shaming the other person	28	7	4.00
Educating/sexual naivety	Lacking in sexual experience and offering to teach	27	12	2.25
Small talk	Conversation about unimportant matters	25	11	2.27
Reassurance	Trying to remove doubt or fears in the other person	25	16	1.56
Establishing age	Seeking to find out the age of the other person	23	14	1.64
Forced sex	Unwanted sexual activity/rape	22	10	2.20
Terms of endearment	Words used to describe someone whom the speaker shows affection for	21	9	2.33
Seeking reassurance	A need for the other person to ease the speakers fears and doubts	21	9	2.33
Asked about previous sexual experience	Discussing/questioning other person about prior sexual experiences	20	10	2.00
Use of physical force	Power, violence or pressure against the other person	20	6	3.33
Physical touch non private	Non-sexual or non-intimate touch	20	9	2.22
<hr/>				
10 – 20 references				
Subordinance	Controlled in a way that makes the other person feel/appear in a lower status than the other person	19	6	3.17
Physical touch private	Sexual or intimate touch	19	11	1.73
Building rapport	Creating a meaningful relationship by finding similar	16	11	1.45

	interests, being honest and building mutual trust			
Normalising	Making sexual interaction as acceptable by desensitising and increasing tolerance in the other person	16	9	1.78
Expectations	Setting standards or holding a belief that something will happen	15	10	1.50
Future together	Making promises, showing commitment of a long future together with the other person.	15	9	1.67
Ownership	Talking as if the other person is a possession or is responsible for the behaviour	15	7	2.14
Persuasion	Coaxing or trying to convince someone to do something	15	11	1.36
Checking physical criteria	Asking about physical characteristics of the other person	14	5	2.80
Sexual acts	Sexual contact between two or more persons	14	6	2.33
Angry	Feeling or showing hostility towards the other person	13	4	3.25
Request to remove clothes	Asking the other person to remove items of clothing	13	10	1.30
Humiliation	Embarrassing or shaming the other person	13	4	3.25
Perpetrator request	Perpetrator asking for something from the other person	13	3	4.33
Repeated requests	Repeatedly asking for something from the other person	12	8	1.50
Asked for physical sexual contact	Asking for intimate sexual activity with the other person	11	6	1.83
Shifting to victim ownership	Perpetrator placing responsibility on the victim	11	5	2.20

Asked to perform sexual act	Perpetrator asked victim to perform sexual act	10	7	1.43
Contraception/sexual health	Discussing sexual health issues	10	8	1.25
Request/demand for sexual contact	Insistent requests for sexual contact	10	4	2.50
Request to pleasure perp.	Asking for the victim to touch the perpetrator's intimate body parts	10	4	2.50

Table C2

Results of Initial Open Coding for Admit/Deny Interview Directions for Lone Perpetrators for RQ2

Interview direction	Lone perpetrators	Open Coding Justification headings and frequency of use	Open Coding Justification subheadings
Admittance with justification (total 248)	8 (21.6%)	Being in a relationship (19) Offering support (25) Mutuality (65) Sexual gratification (19) Perpetrator's victim complex (38) Victim blaming (51) Legality (31)	Romantic relationships Expressions of love Reluctant feelings Perpetrator listening Boosting self-esteem Educating Victim flattering perpetrator Attentive victim Victim listening Victim reassurance Lust Sexual chemistry Sexual activity Self-pity Self-blame Grievance Inadequate social skills Intimacy deficits Victim instigated Victim did not reject

			Socially and legally wrong Age: Maturity, Children, acting younger/older
Denial with justification (total 1116)	23 (62.2%)	Legality (261) Re-framing (223) Victim blaming (237) Inhibitors (205) Disowned (190)	Diminished responsibility - Did not understand the gravity of offence/law/disability prevented understanding Dissociation self from paedophilia DNA/forensics/technology evidence trail Age Just friends Tried to stop Game Victim revenge (perp grievance against victim)– victim controlling perp – Drugs/alcohol Don't know victim
No comment/Right to silence	6 (16.2%)	N/A	N/A
	Total	37	

Table C3

Interview Directions and Open Coding of Group Perpetrator Justifications for RQ2

Interview direction	No of group perpetrators (across 4 groups)	Open Coding Justification headings	Open Coding Justification subheadings
Admittance with justification	0 (0%)	N/A	N/A
Denial with justification	13 (100%)	Setting the scene Collective innocence Discrediting the victim's version	Why the group were in the location where the crime was committed Stating the innocence of the perpetrator's co-offenders

		Shifting the blame (2)	Name calling and scapegoating the victim Blame to another member of the group
No comment/Right to silence	0 (0%)	N/A	N/A
Total		13	

Appendix D: Deductive Coding Frameworks

Table D1

Deductive Adapted Coding Framework for RQ1 Perpetrator Pre and During the Sexual Act

Coding Perpetrator Process Label	Verbal Communicative Strategy or move	Examples from the extracted verbal language held in case files	Examples of Non-verbal Communicative Strategy or move (*can happen at any stage of the interaction)
Access & Approach (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019)	Initial contact. Requests to meet offline.	“I’ll come to you. U tell me where” “Walk to the park with me” “Walk to the beach”	Spatial Proximity (Shin et al., 2019) Moved to a quieter location together
Rapport Building & Trust Development (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019)	Exchange of personal information Relationship Activities Praise Sociability Gifts	“I’ll buy the leggings. My valentine’s gift to you babe”. “Hey, did you have a good weekend?” “What are you doing up at this time?”	Non-sexual touch (Conte et al., 1989) Place hand on arm
Sexual Gratification (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019)	Explicit desensitisation Implicit desensitisation Reframing Sexual Health Proximity Touch	“Will you wear a skirt when we meet?” “Are you natural down there?” “Have you ever had an orgasm?”	Sexual Touch (Conte et al., 1989) She touched my leg in the car and kissed me He pushed me on the bed
Risk Assessment & Compliance testing (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016; Chiang & Grant, 2017; 2019)	Reverse Psychology Role Reversal Assessing risk Gaining assent	“You could be catfishing me and setting me up to be arrested”.	Spatial Proximity (Shin et al., 2019) Dropped victim’s hand in public Walked away when police drove past

		<p>“I can't hold your hand because people are around”.</p> <p>“It's a secret between you and me”.</p>	
<p>Coercive Control</p> <p>(* New process from open coding)</p>	<p>Isolation</p> <p>Reprimanding/regulation</p> <p>Overt persuasion</p> <p>Extortion/exploitation</p> <p>Forcing sex</p> <p>Intimidation</p> <p>Degradation</p> <p>Humiliation</p> <p>Deprivation</p> <p>Kidnap</p> <p>Ownership</p> <p>Subordination</p>	<p>"If she phones the police me and you are done forever".</p> <p>“Don't make me come to your house. Don't make me force you”.</p> <p>“If you want the phone, you should stop playing games”</p>	<p>Sexually Violent Touch</p> <p>(Bagwell-Gray et al., 2015)</p> <p>“He knocked the back of my knees, causing me to drop down”.</p> <p>“He forced my head to his penis”</p> <p>“He pushed me on the bonnet, face down and raped me”</p>

Table D2

Deductive Adapted Coding Framework for RQ1 Victim Pre and During the Sexual Act

Coding Victim Response Label	Verbal Communicative Strategy or move	Examples from the extracted verbal language held in case files	Examples of non-verbal Communicative Strategy or move (*can happen at any stage of the
<p>Desired</p> <p>(Chiang, 2019)</p>	<p>Conveying acceptance, development, or approval of topics, requests or demands, threat compliance, returning compliments/sexual questions, sending material, friendly banter</p>	<p>“I know it’s stupid because I'm only 13 but I really love you”, “You’re my everything. I never want to lose you”). “I like you too, some lads my age are just stupid and mess about”</p>	<p>Hugs, Kisses, touches without being asked</p>
<p>Mixed</p> <p>(Chiang, 2019)</p>	<p>Neither positive nor negative, conveying uncertainty, ambiguous, non-committed, evasive responses, challenging moves.</p>	<p>“I've never done this before. I’m nervous”, “ok I will. Don’t get in a mood with me”</p>	<p>Performs sexual act despite initially saying no</p>

Undesired (Chiang, 2019)	Rejection, avoidance, dismissing advances, doubting, declining, refusing	“just get off me, please stop”, “I don’t wanna do this anymore” “if the police get involved, you will be in trouble, we best not do it”	Moves self away, moves perpetrator away, looks away, pretends to sleep
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Table D3

Deductive Adapted Coding Framework for RQ2 Perpetrator Retrospective Discursive Constructs

Coding Perpetrator Retrospective Discursive Construct label	Retrospective Discursive Construct	Examples from extracted language held in case files
Nature of harm Ward & Keenan (1999)	Degree of harm – The sexual act was of little or no consequence (or causes extreme harm). Sex is inherently beneficial as we are all sexual beings	a) Romantic relationship / expressions of love: “I loved him” b) Perpetrators’ apparent altruistic intentions: “I was a listening ear” c) Educating: “I just taught her a few things about sex” d) Just friends/Game: “We were just messing about”
Uncontrollability Ward & Keenan (1999)	Beyond the perpetrator’s control e.g., sexual urges	Reluctant feelings / Socially legally wrong: “I hate how much I feel for him”
Dangerous world Ward & Keenan (1999)	The world is a threatening place and can harm the perpetrator. A response is to protect self, fight back or punish. Another response is to trust children more than adults because they are more reliable.	a) Victim grievance: “she is just jealous and getting back at her ex” b) Childhood adversity: “My mum just let me run wild and I was sexually abused when I was 5”
Entitlement Ward & Keenan (1999)	Perpetrator is superior to others (i.e., victim) and meeting their sexual demands is to be expected	Entitled to sexual gratification: “I only wanted a blow job”

<p>Child as sexual being Ward & Keenan (1999)</p>	<p>Children are driven by the need for pleasure. They have sexual desires and will initiate sex when they want it. Children are sexual objects that can be used as a sexual stimulus to meet one's sexual needs</p>	<p>a) Sexually experimenting: "he wanted to explore his sexuality on me" b) Apparent sexually aroused response: "they were loving it"</p>
<p>Child as emotional support (adapted from non-sexual engagement: emotional regulation, Kettleborough & Merdian, 2017 and child as partner, Paquette & Cortoni, 2020)</p>	<p>Children can meet adults on an emotional level and offer reassurance</p>	<p>a) inadequate social skills and intimacy deficits: "I have difficulty relating to other adults" b) Victim attentiveness and reassurance: "He was attentive and caring"</p>
<p>Denial of facts (Barbaree, 1991), planning or intent (Auburn & Lea, 2003; De Silva et al., 2018; Happel & Auffrey, 1995)</p>	<p>Denying the offence, or facts of the case, or the planning and intent of the crime. Total innocence. The Offender entered the lead up to the offence without prior planning. There by association.</p>	<p>A) Didn't know victim: "I don't even know her" b) scene setting: "I didn't know where they were planning on going" c) Stating innocence of the perpetrator's co-offenders: "none of us are into any of that shit" d) dissociating self from paedophile status: "I'm not a nonce" e) disputing forensic evidence: "I spat at her so maybe that is how the body fluids got on me" f) unaware of victim's age: "I thought the age difference wasn't so bad"</p>
<p>Reduced accountability (Schneider & Wright, 2004) or shifting the blame (Auburn & Lea, 2003; De Silva et al., 2018)</p>	<p>Mitigate responsibility for involvement in the offense-related thoughts and actions. Being passive or shifting the blame to someone else. Anomalous criminal response was provoked by someone with an active agentic position.</p>	<p>a) victim maturity: "He never acted like a kid, he was mature...it was like we were on the same level" b) victim incited: "she sent me the nudes" c) discrediting victim's version of events: "she was off her face on</p>

Ket...so how can she fucking say anything about what went on that night... I'm not into shagging a fucking corpse"

d) shifting the blame to co-offenders: "I had nothing to do with this...I'm not responsible for my mate"

e) impaired understanding: "I have autism – I didn't understand why I couldn't cuddle her"

f) losing inhibitions from drug or alcohol use: "I couldn't tell what I was doing – I was high"

Table D4

Deductive Adapted Coding Framework for RQ2 Victim Retrospective Accounts

Indicator	Example	Evidence
Desired (Chiang, 2019)	Related to their positive feelings (i.e., excitement, protected, accepted, special, mature)	a) Positive feelings: "I felt unique, mature and special, and apparently the love of his life and it kind of felt good"
	Perpetrator Charms (i.e., believable, persuasive, banter)	b) Perpetrator charm: "he was always flirting and was such a charmer"
	Related to attraction (i.e., sexual and physical)	c) Attraction: "I liked his bad boy ways...he was naughty like me"
Mixed (Chiang, 2019)	Related to their mixed feelings (confusion) Pressure (i.e., adverse response from 'boyfriend')	a) Emotional confusion: "I was excited and worried at the same time"

	Labels (i.e., unwanted victim or rape label)	b) Rape label: "I'm not saying I was raped but he definitely put me under pressure"
	Perceived potential danger (i.e., physical imbalance, intoxication, environment)	c) Pressure: "he got me to do it, but I don't know how"
		d) Perceived potential danger: "I felt I wasn't strong enough to get him off"
Undesired	Fear	a) Fear: "I felt sick. I just wanted to get out of there"
(Chiang, 2019)	Verbal and non-verbal attempts to remove self	b) Attempts to remove self: "I lied about being ill so I could leave"
	Powerless (i.e., threatened, tricked and powerless)	c) Powerlessness: "He just kept pushing me down onto the bed every time I tried to get up – I didn't have the strength to fight him"
	Impact of offence	d) Impact of the offence: "It just keeps happening to me again and again"

Appendix E: Gatekeeping

Figure E1

University of Central Lancashire Ethical Approval and Submitted Ethics Approval Form



06 February 2020

Rebecca Phythian / Vicky Mooney
School of Forensic & Applied Sciences
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Rebecca / Vicky

Re: Science Ethics Review Panel Application
Unique Reference Number: SCIENCE 0021

The Science Ethics Review Panel has granted approval of your proposal application 'Exploring the CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved by, the Ethics Review Panel
- you notify EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to the Ethics Review Panel
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (existing paperwork can be used for this purpose e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use the e-Ethics Closure Report Pro forma).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J. Judge'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeannie Judge
Chair
Science Ethics Review Panel

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed and necessary approvals gained as a result.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE
Ethics Application Form

PLEASE NOTE THAT ONLY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION IS ACCEPTED

This application form is to be used to seek approval from one of the three University Ethics Review Panels (BAHSS; PSYSOC & STEMH). Where this document refers to 'Ethics Review Panel' this denotes BAHSS; PSYSOC & STEMH. These Ethics Review Panels deal with all staff and postgraduate research student project. Taught (undergraduate and MSc dissertation projects) will normally be dealt with via School/Faculty process / committee.

If you are unsure whether your activity requires ethical approval please complete a UCLan Ethics Checklist. If the proposed activity involves animals, you should not use this form. Please contact the Ethics and Integrity Unit within Research Services – EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk – for further details.

Please refer to the notes for guidance on completion of the form.

If this application relates to project/phase which has previously been approved by one of the UCLan Ethics Review Panels, please supply the corresponding reference number(s) from your decision letter(s). **ONLY REQUIRED FOR PHASED PROJECT SUBMISSIONS**

Previous Ethics Approval Ref No

1.1 Project Type:

Staff Research

Commercial Project Masters by Research

MPhil Research

PhD Research

Professional Doctorate Taught MSc/MA Research

Undergrad Research

Internship

1.2 Principal Investigator:

Name Vicky Mooney

Email: VMooney1@uclan.ac.uk

Forensic & Applied Sciences (except Archaeology)

1.3 Other/Co- Researchers / Student:

Name School Email

Rebecca Phythian Forensic & Applied Sciences (except Archaeology)

RPhythian@uclan.ac.uk

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

1.4 Project Title: Exploring the CSE victim-perpetrator dynamic**1.5 Proposed Start Date:**

20/01/2020

1.6 Proposed End Date:

31/03/2023

1.7 Is this project in receipt of any external funding (including donations of samples, equipment etc.)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide details of sources of the funding and what part it plays in the current proposal.

1.8 Project Description (in layman's terms) including the aim(s) and justification of the project

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is of international significance due to the serious implications for victims, communities, responding practitioners and law enforcement agencies, calling for those involved in safeguarding to take notice (Beckett & Pearce, 2018; Cameron, et al., 2015; Casey, 2015; ECPAT, 2016; Jay, 2014; Spicer, 2018). The reach of CSE is pervasive, particularly when considering that victims are sexually exploited regardless of their social or ethnic background, often unable to recognise that they are in an abusive relationship or consider it a social norm (Barnardo's, 2011; Beckett, 2017; Berelowitz, 2012; CEOP, 2013; Jago

& Pearce, 2008; Pearce, 2018; Radford, Richardson-foster, Barter & Stanley, 2017). Additionally, no general population prevalence studies exist, meaning the true scale of the problem is unknown (Kelly & Karsna, 2017; Radford, Richardson-foster, Barter & Stanley, 2017). However, as increasing numbers of children have their human rights sexually violated, CSE is now considered a Policing Priority in the UK and is recognised globally, with pledges to end sexual violence and exploitation altogether (Home Office, 2015; United Nations, 2017). Estimates indicate that 7% of the prison population consists of perpetrators of CSE (National Police Chief's Council, 2016), yet knowledge gaps exist in how to tackle CSE crimes beyond the narrowed child protection responses (Hallet, 2015), whereby the emphasis is markedly on the victim rather than the perpetrator. After the collective agency failings identified in previous high profile CSE cases (Barnardo's, 2014; Bedford, 2015; Casey, 2015; Cockbain & Wortley, 2015; Coffey, 2014; Griffiths, 2013; Jay, 2014), Spicer (2018) asserted that this knowledge gap needs to be addressed in order to offer victims of CSE the most up-to-date and informed protection, and to effectively disrupt and reduce offending.

Research has highlighted a limited understanding of offender demographics, methods of exploitation, passage through the Criminal Justice System (CJS), effective interventions and re-offending (Allnock, Lloyd & Pearce, 2017; Drummond & Southgate, 2018; Hackett & Smith, 2018; Melrose, 2013; Radford, Richardson-Foster, Barter & Stanley, 2017; Walker, Pillinger & Brown, 2018). Moreover, existing research is argued to be flawed by data inconsistencies, small sample sizes, weak research designs, failure to gather the direct views of the perpetrator and seeking only to explore the basics of the phenomenon (Cockbain, 2018; DeMarco, 2018; Walker, Pillinger & Brown, 2018a, 2018b), thus preventing an understanding of the complex underlying issues of CSE. The purpose of this research is to make a timely, relevant and empirically rich contribution to the knowledge base on CSE perpetration to inform prevention, rehabilitation and disruption strategies. The key objectives of the research are:

- to identify key features of victims and offenders;
- to develop profiles of CSE offenders;
- to understand how relationships are initiated, maintained and/or ended;
- to establish if common grooming processes (e.g. flattery, threats or expressions of love) exist between the victims' and perpetrators' in their exchanges.
- to understand who perpetrators are

1.9 Methodology Please be specific

Provide an outline of the proposed method, include details of sample numbers, source of samples, type of data collected, equipment required and any modifications thereof, etc.

The proposed study involves qualitative investigation of case files held by X Constabulary of completed investigations (i.e. have already been recorded and gone through the Court process). This regionally specific partnership with X Constabulary is based upon the contacts and experience that the researcher had established whilst previously working in a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) team in X. The researcher pitched the research proposal to the local CSE safeguarding and X Regional Police meetings. The local safeguarding members were keen to support the research with the aim of improving understanding of CSE perpetration and informing practice. It is expected that the county of X will offer a contribution to the wider CSE research due to the diversity in demographics, levels of employment, crime rates, transience and urban / rural areas. The following sections will document the specific methods involved in the data collection and analysis.

Data collection: Details in relation to data collection are restricted at this stage due to a current inability to access the police data. Discussions have taken place with UCLan Legal Team and X Constabulary about the qualitative information available within the police data that may inform victim-perpetrator interactions, offender profiles and potential criminal networks. It is expected that case files, including convicted offender interview transcripts in relation to the specific CSE crime and basic victim and/or offender details, such as non-

identifiable demographics and criminal history information. It is anticipated that data will be collated for CSE perpetrators convicted in the last 10 years (i.e. subsequent to the first Government definition of CSE in 2009). Access to the data has been agreed and a GDPR compliant Controller-to-Controller Data Agreement was established between UCLan Legal Team and X Constabulary.

Although the topic choice is considered sensitive in nature, no human participation is required and the retrieval of such qualitative data are deemed suitable when researching new areas of study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007), as is the case in this research. Furthermore, discussions with the research team resulted in the decision to avoid interviewing CSE victims to prevent re-traumatisation, despite the potential for yielding richer evidence. Any victim information detailed within the Police transcripts will be anonymised so that any indirect identification will be avoided. Findings from initial analyses and the availability of police data will determine and guide the necessity to explore additional data sources, such as interviews with practitioners. However, this will be determined at a later stage with appropriate approval obtained (e.g. ethics).

Sample: Sample size is reliant on the suitability of available Police data of convicted perpetrators. This has been difficult to establish prior to ethical approval due to the inability to access data until approval is obtained. The most recent publicly available data in X recorded 529 CSE related crimes in one year (X Safeguarding Organisation, 2015). However, the crimes recorded do not necessarily equate to the amount of offenders, as one offender might have committed several crimes. Therefore, the suitability of the sample can only be decided following ethical approval. Purposeful sampling will be undertaken to identify the suitable files, which will be conducted by nominated Police staff (this is required by X Constabulary due to the access to data that does not fall within the parameters of the proposed research), using the following eligibility criteria. The perpetrator will be: convicted; above 18 years of age; offence committed within the last 10 years; recipient of a court order; crime matching DfE (2017) CSE definition; lone or group (by conviction) contact offender. This study will exclude the perpetrators solely convicted of internet CSE offences due to acknowledgements from researchers highlighting the saturation of online CSE research (DeMarco et al., 2016). Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information rich cases utilising minimal resources in the most effective manner (Patton, 2002).

Analysis: Descriptive analysis of victim and/or offender details will provide an initial understanding of the sample and its characteristics (as summary statistics). A thematic analysis will be conducted to explore the qualitative police data, adopting Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage model. This will involve a process of transcribing, coding, grouping themes, reviewing themes, refining themes and producing the thematic analysis report. All data collected will be collated and compared to ensure that emerging patterns and themes are not unique to the individual and provide wider context to the CSE phenomena. Any interesting features that might be considered more powerful will be reported in the findings of the thesis via verbatim quotes but will remain within confidentiality or anonymity boundaries. Limitations of the data collection processes and analysis will be highlighted, such as the effectiveness of the designated Police team sampling on behalf of the researcher and the researcher's inability to explore perpetrators who have not yet been convicted.

1.10 Has the quality of the project been assessed? (select all that apply)

Independent external review

Internal review (e.g. involving colleagues, academic supervisor, School process)

Research Programme Approval gained on October 2019 (Please that RPA is a prerequisite for Research Degree Student, including Prof Doc, projects to be able to submit for ethics)

None

Other

If other please give details

1.11 Please provide details as to the storage and protection of your physical / electronic data for the next 5 years – as per UCLan requirements – or whichever archive period is appropriate

The researcher will ensure that data is stored to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). This will involve the designated Police team minimising the availability of personal data (i.e. demographics only) and anonymising at selection stage, the researcher accessing case files on Police property and the researcher storing collected data using UCLan University's restricted access secure N-Drive network (password protected). Any computerised files on the secure network will be further encrypted to avoid unauthorised access. Any breaches or loss of data will be reported to the data controller within 72 hours of its occurrence. The retention of data will be in line with the UCLan University and X Constabulary retention of data guidelines as documented within the attached data agreement.

Police Case Files will be selected by law enforcement officers from X Constabulary and will follow the inclusion criteria previously detailed. Data will be cleansed of any direct or indirect identifiable information of individual participants, such as names, date of birth, addresses, dates, locations. This information will be replaced with pseudonyms to protect anonymity. The researcher will have further cleansed the data before reporting on the findings, therefore no identifiable information will be revealed in the thesis. The data will be grouped into themes that will be analysed and discussed holistically rather than case by case.

Any paperwork used to collect data will be shredded and disposed of using UCLan University's confidential waste system. All encrypted documents stored via UCLan's secure information technology systems will be deleted or destroyed in line with UCLan University's LIS guidance. The researcher will follow the LIS guidance to ensure that the data is no longer accessible or recoverable after the data is deleted.

As previously mentioned, a Data Agreement has been signed by the researcher, UCLan and X Constabulary. This document is a legal contract which stipulates the researchers working boundaries relating to data access, security, confidentiality, publication, data retention, indemnity and disputes.

1.12 How is it intended the results of the study will be reported and disseminated?

(select all that apply)

Peer reviewed journal – hard copy or online

Internal report

Conference presentation

Other publication

Written feedback to research participants

Presentation to participants or relevant community groups

Dissertation/Thesis

Other

If other, please give details

**1.13 Will the activity involve any external organisation for which separate and specific approval is required X
Constabulary have approved access to Police Case files and signed a data agreement with the UCLan Legal
Team**

Yes **No**

**IF YES, BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THIS FORM, click here to CHECK WHEN, HOW AND WHAT IS
REQUIRED**

If Yes, please provided details of the external organisation and attached letter of approval

Constabulary letter of approval attached

1.14 The nature of this project is most appropriately described as research involving:-

(more than one may apply)

Behavioural observation

Questionnaire(s) – please provide a copy of the questionnaire / survey

Interview(s) – please provide a list of questions to be asked, or if semi-structured the topics

Qualitative methodologies– please provide the questions/topics to be covered

Psychological experiments

Epidemiological studies

Data linkage studies

Psychiatric or clinical psychology studies

Human physiological investigation(s)

Biomechanical device(s)

Human tissue(s)*

Human genetic analysis

A clinical trial of drug(s) or device(s)

Lab-based experiment – please provide relevant COHSS / RA forms

Archaeological excavation/fieldwork

Re-analysis of archaeological finds/ancient artefacts

Human remains analysis

Lone working or travel to unfamiliar places (e.g. interviews in participants homes) – please provide relevant risk assessment form

Other - secondary police data (interview transcripts)

1.15 Human Participants, Data or Material – the project will involve:

Please select the appropriate box(es)

Participants [proceed to next question 1.16]

Data [proceed to question 1.30]

Tissues /Fluids / DNA Samples [proceed to question 1.31]

Remains [proceed to question 1.32]

1.16 Will the participants be from any of the following groups:

(tick as many as applicable)

Students or staff of this University†

Children/legal minors (anyone under the age of 18 years)

Patients or clients of professionals

Those with learning disability

Those who are unconscious, severely ill, or have a terminal illness

Those in emergency situations

Those with mental illness (particular if detained under Mental Health Legislation)

People with dementia

Prisoners

Young Offenders

Adults who are unable to consent for themselves

* Please email EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk if any project involves HT

† Where staff or students of the university are being used please explain how this is not a convenience sampling

Any other person whose capacity to consent may be compromised

A member of an organisation where another individual may also need to give consent

Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. those in care homes

Other vulnerable groups (please list in box below)

If 'Other' please provide details

1.16a Justify their inclusion

N/A

1.16b Is a DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB – Criminal Records Bureau) check required?

Certain activities and/or groups of individuals require DBS (formerly CRB) clearance. If unclear please seek advice.

X Yes No

If Yes, please advise status of DBS clearance (e.g. gained; in process; etc)

Renewed in 2019. I have also been successfully Police vetted which involves an enhanced check.

1.16c All staff should be aware of UCLan's Policy and Procedures on Safeguarding and Prevent. Please confirm that, where relevant to your project, the appropriate training has been undertaken.

Please refer to UCLan Safeguarding Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Prevent guidance

X Yes No N/A

If Yes, please give details of relevant training session – external or internal - and when (e.g. within last 3 years)

2016 – Safeguarding and Prevent Training at OLSJ Catholic College; 2018 – UCLan Safeguarding online

1.17 Please indicate exactly how participants in the study will be (i) identified, (ii) approached and (iii) recruited?

If an advertisement and/or information sheet is being used, please attach

1.18 Will consent be sought from the participants and how will this be obtained?

If a written consent form is being used, please attach

N/A

1.19 How long will the participants have to decide whether to take part in the research?

N/A

1.20 What arrangements have been made for participants who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information, or who have special communication needs?

N/A

1.21 Payment or incentives: Do you propose to pay or reward participants?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide details

1.22 Will deception of the participant be necessary during the activity?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide justification, and complete Question 1.28

1.23 Does your project involve the potential imbalance of power/authority/status, particularly those which might compromise a participant giving informed consent?

Yes No

Informed consent is not required by the perpetrator on this occasion as the data is 'owned' by X Constabulary. A legal document has been signed by X Constabulary and UCLan University and is called a 'controller to controller' agreement in line with GDPR.

1.24 Does the procedure involve any possible distress, discomfort or harm (or offense) to participants or researchers (including physical, social, emotional, psychological and/or aims to shock / offend – e.g. Art)?

No

The potential distress for the researcher is limited by the fact that the researcher is experienced in working with such distressing material due to her previous safeguarding role as a CSE key Worker in a CSE Multi-Agency Team. Although the content is familiar to the researcher, the supervisory team have discussed the need for regular breaks and debrief meetings with the supervisors at each stage of the data collection and analysis.

1.25 Does the activity involve any information pertaining to illegal activities or materials or the disclosure thereof?

Yes

All illegal activity highlighted within the Police case files is expected to have been prosecuted. However, the researcher will report any cases where a crime has been missed or involving Police misconduct. The independent Office for Police Conduct will be contacted if interview data revealed information about crimes which have not been investigated or which have been committed against the perpetrator.

1.26 What mechanism is there for participants to withdraw from the investigation and how is this communicated to the participants?

N/A

1.27 What are the potential benefits for the research?

This empirically informed research aims to provide new explanatory insights to the knowledgebase on CSE perpetration. This research will be of public benefit in the protection of CSE victims and will enable researchers, policy makers and practitioners to further increase the body of CSE research. It is hoped that the research will provide a useful framework for the Police to follow when implementing strategies to tackle offending. The more that is known about the dynamics between the perpetrator and the victim the more likely it is that prevention and treatment programmes can tackle the factors that influence the likelihood of the relationships forming, continuing and ending for both victims and perpetrators. Therefore, if the findings support tailor-made CSE treatment programmes, it is possible that offending / re-offending might be reduced and become less of a burden on the CJS.

1.28 Debriefing, Support and/or Feedback to participants

Describe any debriefing, support or feedback that participants will received following the project and when.

N/A

1.29 Will the project involve access to confidential information about people without their consent?

X Yes No

1.30 Confidentiality/Anonymity - Will the activity involve:

Yes No

a. non-anonymisation of participants (i.e. researchers may or will know the identity of participants and be able to return responses)? X

b. participants having the consented option of being identified in any publication arising from the research?
 X

c. the use of personal data

 X

1.31 Does the activity involve human tissue?‡ See Human Tissue Act (HTA) Supplementary list of Materials to check what is classified as human tissue.

Yes X No

If no, please skip to question 1.32

If yes, please detail and answer questions 1.31a-c

1.31a Who will be sourcing the human tissue? (e.g. a tissue bank governed by its own HTA licence)

1.31b Will the human tissue be stored at UCLan? (please note restrictions on storage)

Yes No

N/A

1.31c Is the human tissue being used for an activity listed as a ‘scheduled purpose’ under Schedule 1 Parts 1 and 2 of the Human Tissue Act 2004? (click here to see list of HTA ‘scheduled purpose’ activities)

Yes No

1.32 Does the project involve excavation and study of human remains?

Yes No

If yes, please give details

Discuss the provisions for examination of the remains and the management of any community/public concerns, legal requirement etc.

‡ Until such time as the University gains its own HTA Research License, human tissue that is for a ‘scheduled purpose’ and not sourced from a BioBank or part of an NREC approved project can only be stored for a maximum of 5 days

DECLARATION

This declaration needs to be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI), and the student where it relates to a student project (for research student projects PI is Director of Studies and for Taught or Undergrad project the PI is the Supervisor). Electronic submission of the form is required to EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk. Where available insert electronic signature – alternatively, provide an email in lieu from appropriate party.

Declaration of the:

Principal Investigator

OR

Director of Studies/Supervisor and Student Investigator

(please check as appropriate)

- The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I take full responsibility for it.
- I have read and understand the University Ethical Principles for Teaching, Research, Knowledge Transfer, Consultancy and Related Activities.
- I have read and understand the University's policy and procedures on Safeguarding and Prevent.
- I undertake to abide by the ethical principles underlying the Declaration of Helsinki and the University Code of Conduct for Research, together with the codes of practice laid down by any relevant professional or learned society.
- If the activity is approved, I undertake to adhere to the study plan, the terms of the full application of which the Ethics Review Panel* has given a favourable opinion and any conditions of the Ethics Review Panel in giving its favourable opinion.
- I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from the Ethics Review Panel before implementing substantial amendments to the study plan or to the terms of the full application of which the Ethics Review Panel has given a favourable opinion.
- I understand that I am responsible for monitoring the research at all times.
- If there are any serious adverse events, I understand that I am responsible for immediately stopping the research and alerting the Ethics Review Panel within 24 hours of the occurrence, via EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk.
- I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- I understand that research records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this application is required by the Ethics and Integrity Unit within Research Services, on behalf of the University, for the purpose of ethics review, and to evidence that the appropriate level of ethics review has been undertaken. Such data will be stored and managed in accordance with the principles established in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- I understand that the information contained in this application, any supporting documentation and all correspondence with the Ethics Review relating to the application, will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts. The information may be disclosed in response to requests made under the Acts except where statutory exemptions apply.
- I understand that all conditions apply to any co-applicants and researchers involved in the study, and that it is my responsibility to ensure that they abide by them.

* Ethics Review Panel refers to BAHSS, PSYSOC or STEMH

- **For Principal Investigator: I understand my responsibilities to work within a set of ethical and other guidelines as set out by the University Policies and/or professional standards.**
- **For Supervisor/Director of Studies: I understand my responsibilities as Supervisor/Director of Studies, and will ensure, to the best of my abilities, that the student investigator abides by the University's Policy on Research Ethics at all times.**
- **For the Student Investigator: I understand my responsibilities to work within a set of ethical and other guidelines as agreed in advance with my Supervisor/Director of Studies and understand that I must comply with the University's regulations and any other applicable code of ethics at all times.**

Signature of Principal Investigator: or

Supervisor or Director of Studies

Print Name: Dr Rebecca Phythian

Date: 3/12/19

Signature of Student Investigator:

Vicky Mooney

Print Name: Vicky Mooney

Date: 3/12/19

Figure E1

Data Processing Agreement between University of Central Lancashire and the Redacted Constabulary

DATA PROCESSING CONTRACT

THIS CONTRACT Is made on the day of

BETWEEN

1.0 The Parties

The Chief Constable of X

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) (as a Data Processor and Controller)

2.0 Purpose

The Purpose of the processing is described in detail within Schedule A.

This Contract sets out the terms and conditions under which Data held by X

Constabulary will be disclosed to and used by UCLAN.

The purpose for processing is consistent with the original purpose of the Data creation and/or collection – law enforcement. The secondary processing is to undertake research and therefore enable X Constabulary and the Police Service to develop improvements in the prevention, targeted Interventions, and future policy and practice concerning Child Sexual Exploitation.

Controllership of the Police Data shall at all times remain with the Chief Constable of X Constabulary, who is responsible for determining the purpose for which law enforcement data collected might be further processed.

Section 36(4) of the Data Protection Act 2018 limits the processing of law enforcement (Part 3) personal data for general purposes (GOPR) unless 'authorised by law'. Such authorisation may include statute, common law or statutory code.

The lawful basis under which X Constabulary will engage the research is derived from the Statutory Code relating to the Management of Police information and associated Guidance, i.e., evaluation of information to further protect life and prevent the commission of offences (the policing purpose").

This Agreement recognises that the means by which the personal data may be processed in relation to the specific purpose might fall to be determined by UCLAN, with whom the data is shared, and to this extent UCLAN will be deemed to be the Controller.

Where the secondary processing also meets a further academic purpose, e.g., development of academic knowledge and publications, the lawful basis will be derived from Section 124 of the Education Reform Act 1988. The content of any such academic products will be anonymised.

OFFICIAL

3.0 Definitions

The following words and phrases used in this Contract shall have the following meanings except where the context otherwise requires:

Purpose means the purpose of the Processing as set out within Schedule A.

Aggregated Data means Police Data presented to the extent that no living individual can be identified from the Aggregated Data or any other Data in the possession of, or likely to come into the possession of any person obtaining the Aggregated Data.

Data, Controller, Data Subject, Processor, Processing, Personal Data, Personal Data Breach, Pseudonymisation and Processing, have the same meaning as in Article 4 of GDPR.

Data Protection Impact Assessment means an assessment by the Controller of the impact of the envisaged processing on the protection of Personal Data.

Data Protection Legislation means (i) the GDPR, the LED and any applicable national implementing Laws as amended from time to time (ii) the Data Protection Act 2018 to the extent that it relates to processing of personal data and privacy and (iii) all applicable Law about the processing of personal data and privacy.

Special Categories of Personal Data has the same meaning as in Article 9 of GDPR. GDPR means the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU)

2016/679) LED means the Law Enforcement Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/680)

Data Loss Event means any event that results, or may result, in unauthorised access to Personal Data held by the Processor under this Contract, and/or actual or potential loss and/or destruction of Personal Data in breach of this Contract, including any Personal Data Breach.

Data Subject Access Request means a request made by, or on behalf of, a Data Subject in accordance with rights granted pursuant to the Data Protection Legislation to access their personal data.

Police Data means any Data including Personal Data and Special Categories of Personal Data, to be provided to, or collected by, the Data Processor and processed on behalf of the Controller as identified at Schedule A.

Services means the Data Processing activity and services to be undertaken by the Data Processor on behalf of the Controller, as identified in Schedule A.

Party means a Party to this Contract.

Police Manager means the Head of Corporate Development who has oversight and responsibility for ensuring the Processing on behalf of the Controller or other such

person as shall be notified to the Processor from time to time is in compliance with the terms of this Contract. The Police Manager will assume responsibility for co-ordinating data protection compliance, notification, security, confidentiality, audit and co-ordination of subject rights and Freedom of information requests as directed by the terms of this Contract

Protective Measures means appropriate technical and organisational measures which *may* include: pseudonymising and encrypting Personal Data ensuring confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of systems and services, ensuring that availability of and access to Personal Data can be restored in a timely manner after an incident, and regularly assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of such measures adopted.

Law means any law, subordinate legislation within the meaning of Section 21(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978, bye-law, enforceable right within the meaning of Section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972, regulation, order, regulatory policy, mandatory guidance or code of practice, judgment of a relevant court of law, or directives or requirements with which the Processor is bound to comply.

Contract means this Data Processing Contract together with its schedules and all other documents attached to or referred to as forming part of this contract.

Confidential Information means all Police Data and any other information relating to the Controller's customers and prospective customers, current or projected financial or trading situations, business plans, business strategies, developments and all other information relating to the Controller's business affairs including any trade secrets, know-how and any information of a confidential nature imparted by the Controller to the Processor during the term of this Contract or coming into existence as a result of the Processor's obligations, whether existing in hard copy form or otherwise, and whether disclosed orally or in writing.

UCLAN means the University of Central Lancashire, its staff and students.

Miscellaneous

Headings are inserted for convenience only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of this Contract and, unless otherwise stated, references to clauses and schedules are references to the clauses of and schedules to this Contract;

Any reference to any enactment or statutory provision shall be deemed to include a reference to such enactment or statute as extended, re-enacted, consolidated, implemented or amended and to any subordinate legislation made under it; and

The word 'including' shall mean including without limitation or prejudice to the generality of any description, definition, term or phrase preceding that word, and the word 'include', and its derivatives shall be construed accordingly.

4.0 Provision or collection of Police Data

The manner and frequency of transmission of Police Data from X Constabulary to UCLAN is set out in Schedule A.

OFFICIAL

5.0 Access to the Police Data

Access to the Police Data will be restricted to those individuals from UCLAN identified in Schedule B and authorised by the Controller, directly involved in the processing of the Police Data in pursuance of the Purpose.

6.0 Data Protection and Human Rights

The processing of any Personal Data shall be in accordance with the obligations imposed upon the Parties to this Contract by the Data Protection Legislation. All relevant codes of practice or data protection operating rules adopted by the Parties will also reflect the data protection practices of each of the parties to this Contract.

UCLAN shall notify the X Constabulary immediately if it considers that any of the Constabulary's instructions infringe the Data Protection Legislation.

The only processing that UCLAN is authorised to undertake is listed in Schedule A by the Constabulary. Where deviation from Schedule A is required, this will only occur where previously authorised in writing by the Police Manager to UCLAN.

UCLAN shall provide all reasonable assistance to the Constabulary in the preparation of any Data Protection Impact Assessment prior to commencing any processing. Such assistance may, at the discretion of the Constabulary, include:

- (a) a systematic description of the envisaged processing operations and the purpose of the processing;
- (b) an assessment of the necessity and proportionality of the processing operations in relation to the Services;
- (c) an assessment of the risks to the rights and freedoms of Data Subjects; and
- (d) the measures envisaged to address the risks, including safeguards, security measures and mechanisms to ensure the protection of Personal Data.

UCLAN may not contact any Data Subject except where permitted by Schedule A.

In relation to this agreement, UCLAN shall notify the X Constabulary immediately if it:

- (a) receives a Data Subject Access Request (or purported Data Subject Access Request);
- (b) receives a request to rectify, block or erase any Personal Data;
- (c) receives any other request, complaint or communication relating to either Party's obligations under the Data Protection Legislation;
- (d) receives any communication from the Information Commissioner or any other regulatory authority in connection with Personal Data processed under this Agreement;

{e) receives a request from any third Party for disclosure of Personal Data where compliance with such a request is required or purported to be required by Law;
or
(f) becomes aware of a Data Loss Event.

UCLAN's obligation to notify under the preceding clause shall include the provision of further information to X Constabulary in phases, as details become available.

Taking into account the nature of the Processing, UCLAN shall provide X Constabulary with full assistance in relation to either Party's obligations under Data Protection Legislation and any complaint, communication or request made under preceding clauses (and insofar as possible within the timescales reasonably required by the Controller) including by promptly providing:

- (a) X Constabulary with full details and copies of the complaint, communication or request;
- (b) such assistance as is reasonably requested by X Constabulary to compliance with a Data Subject Access Request within the relevant timescales set out in the Data Protection Legislation;
- (c) X Constabulary, at its request, with any Personal Data it holds in relation to a Data Subject;
- (d) assistance as requested by X Constabulary following any Data Loss Event;
- (e) assistance as requested by the X Constabulary with regards to any request from the Information Commissioner's Office, or any consultation by the Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office.

UCLAN shall maintain complete and accurate records and information to demonstrate its compliance with this clause.

UCLAN shall allow for audits of its Processing activity by the Constabulary or the Constabulary's designated auditor.

Before allowing any third party to process any Personal Data related to this Contract, UCLAN must:

- (a) notify X Constabulary in writing of the intended Sub-processor and processing;
- (b) obtain the written consent of the X Constabulary;
- (c) enter into a written contract with the Sub-processor which give effect to the terms set out in this Contract such that they apply to the Sub-processor; and
- (d) provide X Constabulary with such information regarding the Sub-processor as X Constabulary may reasonably require.

UCLAN shall remain fully liable for all acts or omissions of any Sub-processor.

The Parties agree and declare that the information accessed pursuant to this Contract will be used and processed with regard to the rights and freedoms enshrined within the European Convention on Human Rights. Further, the Parties agree and declare that the provision of information is proportional, having regard to the purposes of the Contract and the steps taken in respect of maintaining a high degree of security and confidentiality.

If any Party to this Contract receives a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 identified as originating from another Party, the receiving Party will contact the other Party to determine whether the latter wishes to claim an exemption under the provisions of that Act.

Where UCLAN receives a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in respect of information provided by or relating to the X Constabulary UCLAN will contact the Police Manager to ascertain whether the Constabulary wishes to claim any exemption including the determination of whether or not the Controller wishes to issue a response neither to confirm nor deny that information is held.

7.0 Use and Publication

At the conclusion of the research, the parties will agree copyright and intellectual property rights relating to any products/ publications arising.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing between the parties, all copyright, design rights and other intellectual property rights in any work, which is developed in the course of the provision of this Agreement, shall be vested with X Constabulary.

8.0 Confidentiality

UCLAN shall not use or divulge or communicate to any person (other than those whose province it is to know the same for the Purpose, or without the prior written authority of the Controller) any Data obtained from or created on behalf of the Controller, which it shall treat as private and confidential and safeguard accordingly¹.

UCLAN shall ensure that any individuals who process Police Data under this Contract are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of that Police Data and have confirmed so in writing by completion of Annex C: Undertaking of Confidentiality which will be provided to the Police Manager as a pre-requisite for that individual to process Police Data.

For the avoidance of doubt, the obligations or the confidentiality imposed on the Parties by this Contract shall continue in full force and effect after the expiry or termination of this Contract.

Respect for the privacy and rights of Data Subjects will be afforded at all stages of the Purpose.

The restrictions contained within this section shall cease to apply to any Data which may come into the public domain otherwise than through unauthorised disclosure by the Parties to the Contract.

9.0 Retention, Review and Deletion

The Police Data will be retained by UCLAN and then securely disposed by the Processor in accordance with Schedule A.

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The restriction within this paragraph shall not apply where disclosure of the Police Data is ordered by a Court or competent jurisdiction, or subject to any exemption under the Data Protection Act 2018, where disclosure is required by a law enforcement agency or regulatory body or authority, or is required for the purposes of legal proceedings, in which case the Processor shall immediately notify the Controller in writing of any such requirement for disclosure of the Police Data in order to allow the Controller to make any arrangements to the person or body making the requirement.

10.0 Security

UCLAN recognises that the Controller has obligations relating to the security of Data in his control under the Data Protection Legislation, ISO7799 and the ACPO information Community Security Policy. UCLAN will continue to apply those relevant obligations as detailed below on behalf of the Controller during the term of this Contract.

UCLAN shall, in relation to any Personal Data processed in connection with its obligations under this Agreement:

- (a) process that Personal Data only in accordance with Schedule A, unless UCLAN is required to do otherwise by Law. If it is so required UCLAN shall promptly notify the Constabulary before processing the Personal Data unless prohibited by law;**
- (b) ensure that it has in place Protective Measures, which have been reviewed and approved by the Constabulary as appropriate to protect against a Data Loss Event having taken account of the:**
 - (i) nature of the data to be protected;**
 - (ii) harm that might result from a Data Loss Event;**
 - (iii) state of technological development; and**
 - (iv) cost of implementing any measures;**
- (c) ensure that:**
 - (i) staff or students of UCLAN do not process Personal Data except in accordance with this Contract (and in particular Schedule A);**
 - (ii) it takes all reasonable steps to ensure the reliability and integrity of any employees who have access to the Personal Data and ensure that they:**
 - (A) are aware of and comply with their duties under this clause;**
 - (B) are subject to appropriate confidentiality undertakings with UCLAN or any Sub-processor;**
 - (C) are informed of the confidential nature of the Personal Data and do not publish, disclose or divulge any of the Personal Data to any third Party unless directed in writing to do so by the Constabulary or as otherwise permitted by this Agreement; and**
 - (D) have undergone adequate training in the use, care, protection and handling of Personal Data; and**
- (d) not transfer Personal Data outside of the EU unless the prior written consent of the Constabulary has been obtained and the following conditions are fulfilled:**
 - (i) the Controller or the Processor has provided appropriate safeguards in relation to the transfer (whether in accordance with GDPR Article 46/ DPA S. 75) as determined by the Constabulary;**
 - (ii) the Data Subject has enforceable rights and effective legal remedies;**
 - {iii) the Processor complies with its obligations under the Data Protection Legislation by providing an adequate level of protection to any Personal Data that is transferred (or, if it is not so bound, uses its best endeavours to assist the Controller in meeting Its obligations); and**

(iv) the Processor complies with any reasonable instructions notified to it in advance by the Controller with respect to the processing of the Personal Data;

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(e) at the written direction of the Constabulary, delete or return Personal Data (and any copies of it) on termination of the Contract unless UCLAN is required by Law to retain the Personal Data.

The Constabulary may wish to undertake suitability checks (including vetting) on any persons having access to police premises and the Police Data and further reserves the right to issue instructions that particular Individuals shall not be able to participate in the Purpose without reasons being given for this decision. UCLAN will ensure that each person who will participate in the Purpose understands this and provides their written consent as necessary.

10.0 Indemnity

In consideration of the provision of the Police Data for the Purpose, UCLAN undertakes to indemnify and keep indemnified the Constabulary against any liability, which may be Incurred by the Controller as a result of UCLAN's breach of this Contract.

Provided that this indemnity shall not apply:

(a) where the liability arises from information supplied by the Constabulary, which is shown to have been incomplete or incorrect, unless the Constabulary establishes that the error did not result from any wilful wrongdoing or negligence on his part;

(b) unless the Constabulary notifies UCLAN as soon as possible of any action, claim or demand to which this indemnity applies, commits UCLAN to deal with the action, claim or demand by settlement or otherwise and renders UCLAN all reasonable assistance in so dealing;

(c) to the extent that the Constabulary makes any admission which may be prejudicial to the defence of the action, claim or demand.

11.0 Disputes

In the event of any dispute or difference arising between the Parties out of this Contract, the Designated Police Manager and the signatory of the other party(ies), or their nominated representative, shall meet in an effort to resolve the dispute or difference in good faith.

The Parties will, with the help of the Centre for Dispute Resolution, seek to resolve disputes between them by alternative dispute resolution. If the Parties fail to agree

within 56 days of the initiation of the alternative dispute resolution procedure, then the Parties shall be at liberty to commence litigation.

12.0 Term, Termination and Variation

X Constabulary may at any time by notice in writing terminate this Agreement/Contract forthwith if UCLAN is in material breach of any obligation under this Contract.

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Either Party may terminate this Agreement/Contract by giving 30 days' notice in writing to the other Party.

X Constabulary will have the final decision on any proposed variation to this Agreement/Contract. No variation of the Agreement/Contract shall be effective unless it is contained in a written Instrument signed by both Parties and annexed to this Agreement/Contract.

13.0 Miscellaneous

This Contract acts in fulfilment of part of the responsibilities of the Controller as required by Articles 28 and 29 of GDPR and Sections 59 and 60 of the DPA.

This Contract constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties as regards the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior oral or written Contract regarding such subject matter.

half of the Chief Constable of


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Schedule A: Details of Police Data to be provided to, or collected by, UCLAN and processed on behalf of the Controller.

Subject matter of the Processing	<i>personal data relating to cases of Child Sexual Exploitation held by the police for research purposes.</i>
Duration of the Processing	<i>The processing to be undertaken until the completion of the research.</i>
Purposes of the Processing	<i>To enable research in relation to the perpetration of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) with a view to developing improvements in the prevention, targeted Interventions, and future policy and practice concerning CSE.</i>
Nature of the Processing	<i>Police records will be accessed on X Constabulary premises by the nominated researcher. This will include the review of po/lce case files Involving CSE offenders.</i>
Type of Personal Data	<i>Police case files: Perpetrator demographics, offence details, locations of crime, victim/witness statements, and police interviews.</i>
	<i>CSE perpetrators who have served their sentence may be invited to participate in semi-structured interviews with the researcher.</i>

Investigating Officers may also be invited to participate in an expert panel/ focus group.

Categories of Data *Offenders*

Subject *Victims*
Witnesses
Police Officers

[Examples may include police officers, employees, suppliers, members of the public suspects, victims of crime

Arrangements for *Most of the initial data collect/on will take place on police*
return or destruction *premises.*

processing Is *Notes will be taken by the researcher. As far as possible, police*
complete *data will be pseudonymised.*

Appendix F: Methodological and Reflexive Log

Table F

Methodological Log of Research Decisions

Research Decision Date	Action/Justification/Rationale	Supporting or socially validating the decision
2018 - onset	<p>Supervisors recommended developing a research grid to establish preconceived perceptions, bias, position. This task was also useful to promote reflexivity. The following link provided some useful questions as a starting point:</p> <p>https://researchdesignreview.com/2014/03/30/reflections-from-the-field-questions-to-stimulate-reflexivity-among-qualitative-researchers/</p> <p>Examples included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I think I “know” from this/these participants? • How do I think I “know” it? • Will this knowledge change the course of the research, in terms of objectives, methods, line of inquiry; and, if so, how? • What are my specific reflections on the experience • What are my pre-conceived assumptions • What do I expect to get from the data? • How do my assumptions affect or shape the research? • How do the participants values, beliefs, life story, social/economic status differ to my own • How might the emotional connection affect the analytical process and my ability to draw valid interpretations from the data? • How did the physical setting/location impact data collection? • Did any logistical issues (e.g., in gaining access) contribute to the “success” or weakness of the outcomes? 	<p>Discussions with Supervisors E. Cooper & R. Phythian</p>
2018 - PhD to focus on contact CSE perpetrators	<p>Decisions for research focus based on prior experience working with CSE victims and a prior scoping review undertaken at Masters level revealing gaps in the knowledgebase on Contact CSE perpetration.</p>	<p>Practitioner experience & MSc Scoping Review. Interviews with police colleagues.</p>
2018	<p>Consider broader research questions – funnel out. For example:</p>	<p>Dr Emily Cooper &</p>

- Geographical and contextual contributions pan county, targeted vulnerability, highly deprived, influence of transience, severity of crime
- Make the reasons for area of county explicit in research proposal – i.e., considering demographics, sexual deviance, transience issue and community factors, behaviours of young people, deprivation,
- Look up Braithwaite/ Durkheim Theory/Ecological theories of crime
- Look into Community membership – exclusion, geography, structural factors, set of beliefs, media representation
- Issues with police case files – Third hand if police are recording. Benefits of online CSE research is that it offers a digital footprint without the eye of the police. Less likely to have distorted views.
- Issues with attitudes and belief systems – how do we know what is ‘normal’? Is there a comparison?
- Issues with groups – Do we know enough about how groups in general interact and how they influence behaviour. Maybe comparisons with football hooligans to see if CSE groups operate in different ways. Is there a sense of safety compared to solo offending? Who are the intermediates? Peer, female and family exploiters – what are their attitudes in comparison to others in the group?
- Other research options include focus groups (Local to make it pertinent or young people’s views on victimisation), interviewing offenders on prevention programmes or consider comparing constabularies. Be specific in the proposal re: focus group – estimate numbers, where to conduct and how often will they take place, who is involved?
- Be careful with language – Use of NVIVO is merely a mechanical filing cabinet that is still free from bias – You decide codes!
- Consider the impact – feedback to partner organisations, inform policy and practice
- More likely to be a Qualitative study for this type of research
- Ethics re interviews: Strategies for coping, pre-empt issues – look at Social Research Organisation. Minimise harm to participants: Triggers, health warnings, opt out, withdraw, consent, option to withdraw transcripts, be alert to their interactions/body language. Thank you, debrief sheet, complaints, questions or signposting if they would like to talk to someone. Negotiate boundaries – duty of care. Safeguard self.

Professor
Lorraine
Radford

2019 - RPA/data
access and ethical
approval/pragmatic
research
approach

Access to data and ethical approval guiding
methodological decisions:

- HMMPS – declined access to interview perpetrators due to IICSA inquiry interviews taking place at the same time (i.e., fear of over analysing the same sample)

Mtgs with
police &
safeguarding
teams for
approval
DoS
RPA

2019 - CSE Symposium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with MASE Detective to discuss evidence available for data analysis in case files. Local police force granted access to police case files. • Victims not interviewed to avoid unnecessarily re-traumatizing if other data was available. • Needing to adopt a pragmatic research approach to analyse the available data <p>Inspired to transfer validated online grooming language analysis and previous sex offender research to contact CSE research – adapted coding frameworks</p>	Dr Izura – LIWC & prior sexual offending research Dr Ella Cockbain Prof Lorenzo- Dus
2020 Pre-reading completed to explore methods – LIWC and Discourse Analysis.	<p>Narrowing down focus to Contact CSE victim – perpetrator dynamic after reading CSE offending networks research and having discussion with Dr Ella Cockbain</p> <p>Methods to explore the dynamic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIWC = Psychological analysis • Discourse Analysis = Providing context to word use • Research questions <p>Social validation from Linguist Professor Lorenzo-Dus for data, chosen methods and research questions</p>	Example followed from Chiang 2018 Research methods reading Knowledge gap from reading Prof Lorenzo-Dus and Chiang & Grant reading Prof Lorenzo-Dus and other researchers in similar field Idea from Chiang thesis and to break down Discussion with DoS and retired SIO, Dave Brian Discussion with DoS and retired
2020 –Pilot study	Initial pilot study undertaken to establish opportunities for open coding and using the coding framework	
2021 - Sequential approach – quant/qual 2021 - LIWC categories of interest 2021 - Coding Framework for DA	<p>Sequential approach – quant/qual - Informing each other and allowing triangulation of data.</p> <p>LIWC categories of interest selected to address knowledge gap - Focus on Demographics due to lack of data and typology for interesting features</p> <p>Coding Framework for DA - Based on previous online grooming research as inspired at the 2019 CSE Symposium and adapted from open coding</p>	
May 2022 social validation	Seville conference – positive feedback on analysis (discourse, LIWC) described grooming as an emotional money bank.	
May 2022 - Reporting of results	Separating analysis quant/qual – interpreting both in discussion – Study 1, 2 and 3 Instigating and performing sexual act	
July 2022 – study 1	Pre & during contact – split the findings	
September 2022 – study 2	Retrospective perceptions – how do they justify the relationship post offence	

2022 – study 3	Need to combine findings to improve practice	SIO, Dave Brian Discussion with Stakeholders: Lead of CSE Team, Judge, Police, Schools, health etc.
December 2022 – in depth analysis	In depth analysis to situate the research findings	Previous sex offender research
January 2023	Changing studies 1 and 2 to findings and discussion to repeat overlap and tidying up headings. Preparing final Chapter of Markers	Supervisor - Jean Duckworth
February 2023	Sequencing? Pre contact, overlapping features and contact Non-verbal? Venn diagram.	DoS Dave Brian
April 2023	InTEL tool – pre and during, retrospective.	Retired SIO Mark Dale
May 2023	Guidance needed for practitioners. Feedback from Sweden conference.	Conference feedback
June 2023	Need to angle my research at improving practitioner performance rather than organisational failures.	DoS Dave Brian
July 2023	Age of consent – normal relationship – InTEL tool	Dr Ost
July 2023	Issue with results section: Summary of key findings. Need to reduce. Re-do LIWC analysis due to no standard deviations for NS benchmarks to run t-test on and no new categories that would appear more useful (i.e., power). Originally done LIWC 2015 28 variables but now using LIWC2022	Discussion with D. Powney
July 2023	Considering Patterns – matching of perpetrator and victim language	Discussion Debbie Powney
August 2023	Present only LIWC significant findings for 7 variables.	Discussion with Debbie Powney
September 2023	Make it explicit about how police case files were accessed, and language extracted. Explain why the demographic categories are as they are (i.e., unable to explore sexual orientation)	Conference feedback
October 2023	Change introduction to make it more explicit about the research motivations and addressing the interpersonal communication	Feedback from John Dempsey
November 2023	Add in Chapter 4 to introduce InTEL earlier	Feedback from Jen Hough

Appendix G: LIWC SPSS Results

Table G

LIWC SPSS Results

Perpetrators (Pre and During)

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	70.93	36.61	2.83	49	0.003	0.40
Sexual	0.09	0.30	3.07	3.41	6.19	49	<0.001	0.88
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.02	1.18	-1.01	49	0.16	-0.14
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.46	2.63	-7.66	49	<0.001	-1.08
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	13.76	8.72	0.32	49	0.38	0.05
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.29	1.33	-2.33	49	0.01	-0.33
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.33	0.45	0.44	49	0.33	0.06

Ethnicities of Perps

White British

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	83.63	26.98	5.27	26	<0.001	1.01
Sexual	0.09	0.30	3.54	3.23	5.54	26	<0.001	1.07
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.97	0.87	-1.29	26	0.10	-0.25
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	3.04	2.75	-4.30	26	<0.001	-0.83
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	16.25	7.53	1.99	26	0.03	0.38
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.47	1.24	-1.10	26	0.14	-0.21
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.35	0.44	0.62	26	0.27	0.12

Asian Pakistani

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	76.76	25.60	2.12	6	0.04	0.80
Sexual	0.09	0.30	4.35	5.63	2.00	6	0.05	0.76
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.49	0.62	-3.00	6	0.01	-1.13
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.38	1.65	-6.31	6	<0.001	-2.39

Pers. Pronoun Reward	13.37	2.91	12.97	7.53	-0.14	6	0.45	-0.05
Risk	1.73	1.19	0.90	1.77	-1.24	6	0.13	-0.47
	0.30	0.41	0.30	0.43	-0.03	6	0.49	-0.01

Black African

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	82.11	22.97	1.59	1	0.18	1.13
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.02	1.44	0.91	1	0.27	0.65
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.02	1.33	-0.17	1	0.45	-0.12
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.72	3.85	-0.95	1	0.26	-0.67
Pers. Pronoun Reward	13.37	2.91	16.00	6.27	0.59	1	0.33	0.42
Risk	1.73	1.19	2.98	0.36	4.88	1	0.06	3.45
	0.30	0.41	0.68	0.96	0.56	1	0.34	0.40

White North European

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	48.94	43.21	-0.54	9	0.30	-0.17
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.40	2.22	3.29	9	0.01	1.04
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.71	1.91	0.86	9	0.21	0.27
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.32	2.91	-3.25	9	0.01	-1.03
Pers. Pronoun Reward	13.37	2.91	11.13	10.80	-0.66	9	0.26	-0.21
Risk	1.73	1.19	1.10	1.31	-1.53	9	0.08	-0.48
	0.30	0.41	0.29	0.49	-0.07	9	0.47	-0.02

Traveller

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	24.47	48.94	-1.30	3	0.14	-0.65
Sexual	0.09	0.30	0.42	0.85	0.79	3	0.24	0.39
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.57	1.13	-1.11	3	0.18	-0.55
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.71	1.41	-6.53	3	0.004	-3.27
Pers. Pronoun Reward	13.37	2.91	3.81	7.63	-2.51	3	0.04	-1.25
Risk	1.73	1.19	0.42	0.85	-3.10	3	0.03	-1.55
	0.30	0.41	0.14	0.28	-1.14	3	0.17	-0.57

Perpetrator Ages

Under 20

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	61.37	42.52	0.45	13	0.33	0.04
Sexual	0.09	0.30	3.29	3.40	3.52	13	0.002	0.90
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.05	1.37	-0.39	13	0.35	-0.17
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.97	1.23	-13.25	13	<0.001	-3.69
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	9.48	8.01	-1.82	13	0.05	-0.56
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.46	1.56	-0.65	13	0.26	-0.22
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.20	0.33	-1.20	13	0.13	-0.43

Under 21-29

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	56.44	42.86	0.02	15	0.49	0.22
Sexual	0.09	0.30	3.80	4.65	3.20	15	0.003	0.93
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.88	1.32	-0.95	15	0.18	0.03
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.85	2.21	-6.26	15	<0.001	-1.57
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	12.60	10.93	-0.28	15	0.39	0.07
Reward	1.73	1.19	0.60	0.80	-5.67	15	<0.001	-1.28
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.29	0.47	-0.07	15	0.47	0.18

30+

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	89.21	13.18	11.20	19	<0.001	2.50
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.34	1.99	5.08	19	<0.001	1.14
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.12	0.96	-0.33	19	0.37	-0.07
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	3.99	2.93	-2.02	19	0.03	-0.45
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	17.69	5.19	3.73	19	<0.001	0.83

Reward	1.73	1.19	1.73	1.34	-0.01	19	0.50	-0.001
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.45	0.49	1.36	19	0.10	0.30

Gender of Perpetrators

Male

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	69.88	37.01	2.55	47	.01	1.81
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.97	3.42	5.83	47	<.001	1.03
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.02	1.19	-0.97	47	.169	0.06
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.40	2.66	-7.56	47	<.001	-0.88
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	13.25	8.51	-0.10	47	.46	0.48
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.32	1.35	-2.09	47	.02	-0.08
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.34	0.45	0.63	47	.27	0.26

Female

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	96.10	1.48	38.11	1	.01	26.95
Sexual	0.09	0.30	5.51	2.31	3.33	1	.09	2.35
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.97	1.37	-0.23	1	.43	-0.16
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	3.84	1.31	-1.60	1	.18	-1.13
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	25.99	3.08	5.80	1	.05	4.10
Reward	1.73	1.19	0.49	0.69	-2.57	1	.12	-1.82
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.18	0.25	-0.71	1	.30	-0.47

Victims all

Victims all (pre and during)

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	24.37	27.68	-10.31	79	<.001	-1.15
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.73	2.21	6.62	79	<.001	0.74
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.55	2.08	1.53	79	.65	0.17
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.94	1.85	-21.10	79	<.001	-2.36
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	19.24	6.30	8.34	79	<.001	0.93
Reward	1.73	1.19	2.53	5.84	1.23	79	.11	0.14
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.50	1.12	1.62	79	.06	0.18

Victim desired responses

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	60.57	36.60	0.76	41	0.225	0.12
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.89	5.59	2.09	41	0.02	0.32
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.33	4.46	0.20	41	0.42	0.03
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	13.16	14.36	3.54	41	<0.001	0.55
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	24.92	21.22	3.53	41	<0.001	0.54
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.85	5.84	0.13	41	0.45	0.02
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.77	2.90	1.06	41	0.15	0.16

Victim mixed responses

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	35.73	38.01	-5.04	86	<0.001	-0.54
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.31	4.84	4.28	86	<0.001	0.46
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	10.27	16.00	5.30	86	<0.001	0.57
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	3.63	8.77	-1.78	86	0.04	-0.19
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	17.32	11.08	3.33	86	<0.001	0.36
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.82	4.22	0.20	86	0.42	0.02
Risk	0.30	0.41	1.28	3.91	2.33	86	0.01	0.25

Victim undesired responses

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	38.83	35.65	-4.40	80	<0.001	-0.49
Sexual	0.09	0.30	0.96	3.90	2.01	80	0.02	0.22
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	5.80	13.32	3.11	80	0.001	0.35
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.84	7.43	-4.20	80	<0.001	-0.47
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	17.41	14.34	2.54	80	0.01	0.28
Reward	1.73	1.19	2.69	7.36	1.17	80	0.123	0.13
Risk	0.30	0.41	3.26	13.29	2.00	80	0.02	0.22

Perpetrator and general speech benchmarks

Access and Approach

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size

Clout	56.27	19.93	76.51	31.13	5.20	63	<0.001	0.65
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.03	3.91	1.93	63	0.03	0.24
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	0.78	0.63	-14.23	63	<0.001	-1.78
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.95	6.80	-3.96	63	<0.001	-0.49
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	11.34	13.25	-1.23	63	0.11	-0.15
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.68	5.46	-0.80	63	0.47	-0.01
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.31	2.50	0.04	63	0.484	0.01

Coercive Control

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	70.07	34.26	7.76	370	<0.001	0.40
Sexual	0.09	0.30	5.47	14.22	7.29	370	<0.001	0.38
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	4.28	12.31	4.84	370	<0.001	0.25
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.94	5.77	-11.27	370	<0.001	-0.59
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	16.35	13.45	4.29	370	<0.001	0.22
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.11	4.31	-2.75	370	0.003	-0.14
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.57	3.48	1.49	370	0.07	0.08

Rapport Building & Trust Development

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	72.52	27.02	10.50	304	<0.001	0.60
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.43	3.24	12.66	304	<0.001	0.73
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	2.72	3.74	7.16	304	<0.001	0.41
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	5.50	5.72	0.57	304	0.29	0.03
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	23.22	6.96	24.73	304	<0.001	1.42
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.86	2.72	0.82	304	0.21	0.05
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.94	1.71	6.55	304	<0.001	0.38

Risk Assessment & Compliance Testing

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	71.85	31.73	7.85	255	<0.001	0.49
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.23	3.42	10.03	255	<0.001	0.31
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	2.27	3.95	4.38	255	<0.001	0.27
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	3.93	5.26	-4.19	255	<0.001	-0.26

Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	21.39	8.20	15.65	255	<0.001	0.98
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.59	2.92	-0.77	255	0.22	-0.05
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.99	2.17	5.09	255	<0.001	0.32

Sexual Gratification

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	67.39	34.33	5.84	324	<0.001	0.32
Sexual	0.09	0.30	9.26	13.84	11.94	324	<0.001	0.66
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.37	6.30	0.51	324	0.30	0.03
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.90	9.89	-4.39	324	<0.001	-0.24
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	16.63	13.04	4.51	324	<0.001	0.25
Reward	1.73	1.19	2.07	5.80	1.04	324	0.15	0.06
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.92	0.98	-3.83	324	<0.001	-0.21

Victim Gender

Male

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	38.18	36.52	-0.99	3	.20	-0.50
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.88	1.25	2.86	3	.03	1.43
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.88	2.39	0.57	3	.30	0.29
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.94	1.20	-7.31	3	.003	-3.65
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	13.75	4.79	0.16	3	.44	0.08
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.75	2.36	0.02	3	.49	0.01
Risk	0.30	0.41	1.18	1.03	1.70	3	.09	0.85

Female

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	23.65	27.26	-10.43	75	<.001	-1.20
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.72	2.26	6.29	75	<.001	0.72

Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.53	2.08	1.14	75	.08	0.16
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.95	1.88	-20.19	75	<.001	-2.32
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	19.53	6.26	8.58	75	<.001	0.98
Reward	1.73	1.19	2.57	5.97	1.23	75	.11	0.14
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.47	1.12	1.30	75	.10	0.15

Victim Age

Under 10 years old – cannot conduct a T-Test due to only 1 victim of this age.

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks		T-Test results					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93						
Sexual	0.09	0.30						
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00						
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70						
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91						
Reward	1.73	1.19						
Risk	0.30	0.41						

11-13 years old

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks		T-Test results					
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	22.32	24.98	-7.19	27	<.001	-1.36
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.44	2.00	3.57	27	<.001	0.68
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.63	1.99	1.16	27	.13	0.22
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.82	1.55	-15.33	27	<.001	-2.90
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	19.33	7.09	4.44	27	<.001	0.84
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.92	4.88	0.21	27	.42	0.04
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.45	1.19	0.65	27	.26	0.12

14-16 years old

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	23.66	27.41	-8.33	48	<.001	-1.19
Sexual	0.09	0.30	1.79	2.35	5.08	48	<.001	0.73
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.49	2.19	0.96	48	.02	0.14
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.03	2.12	-14.13	48	<.001	-2.02
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	19.30	6.00	6.91	48	<.001	0.99
Reward	1.73	1.19	0.15	0.61	-18.23	48	<.001	-2.60
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.52	1.15	1.31	48	.10	0.19

17-18 years old

T cannot be computed for sexual, personal pronoun and reward because the SD is 0 – this is due to extremely small sample size in this category. Effect size and p cannot be computed either.

LIWC category	Natural Speech Benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	82.02	18.13	2.01	1	.15	1.42
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.50	0.00		1		
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	1.25	1.77	0.05	1	.49	0.03
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	1.25	1.77	-3.25	1	.10	-2.30
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	15.00	0.00		1		
Reward	1.73	1.19	0.0	0.0		1		
Risk	0.30	0.41	1.25	1.77	0.76	1	.29	0.54

RQ 2 Retrospective Accounts

Perpetrators compared to general population natural speech benchmark

LIWC category	Natural speech benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	59.54	24.23	0.83	37	.21	.14

Sexual	0.09	0.30	0.59	1.70	1.83	37	.04	0.30
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	17.06	31.88	3.07	37	.002	0.50
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	0.67	1.79	-16.00	37	<.001	-2.60
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	7.25	9.42	-4.01	37	<.001	-0.65
Reward	1.73	1.19	0.57	1.97	-3.64	37	<.001	-0.59
Risk	0.30	0.41	0.36	1.91	0.20	37	.42	0.03

Victims compared to general population natural speech benchmark

LIWC category	Natural speech benchmarks				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	56.27	19.93	45.77	30.10	-1.91	29	.03	-0.35
Sexual	0.09	0.30	2.07	2.62	4.14	29	<.001	0.76
Neg. Emo	1.19	1.00	7.33	11.89	2.83	29	.004	0.52
Pos. Emo	5.31	2.70	2.91	2.63	-4.99	29	<.001	-0.91
Pers. Pronoun	13.37	2.91	17.66	7.49	3.14	29	.002	0.57
Reward	1.73	1.19	1.74	2.24	0.01	29	.50	0.003
Risk	0.30	0.41	1.04	1.97	2.06	29	.02	0.38

Retrospective language

Perpetrators Pre & During with Retrospective Accounts

LIWC category	Perpetrator language pre and during.				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	70.93	36.61	59.54	24.23	-2.90	37	.003	-0.47
Sexual	3.07	3.41	0.59	1.70	-9.05	37	<.001	-1.47
Neg. Emo	1.02	1.18	17.06	31.88	3.10	37	.002	0.50
Pos. Emo	2.46	2.63	0.67	1.79	-6.19	37	<.001	-1.00
Pers. Pronoun	13.76	8.72	7.25	9.42	-4.26	37	<.001	-0.69
Reward	1.29	1.33	0.57	1.97	-2.26	37	.02	-0.37
Risk	0.33	0.45	0.36	1.91	0.11	37	.46	0.02

Victims Pre & During & Retrospective Accounts

LIWC category	Victim language pre and during				T-Test results			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	Effect size
Clout	24.37	27.68	45.77	30.10	3.90	29	<.001	0.71
Sexual	1.73	2.21	2.07	2.62	0.72	29	.24	0.13
Neg. Emo	1.55	2.08	7.33	11.89	2.66	29	.01	0.49
Pos. Emo	0.94	1.85	2.91	2.63	4.11	29	<.001	0.75
Pers. Pronoun	19.24	6.30	17.66	7.49	-1.16	29	.13	-0.21
Reward	2.53	5.84	1.74	2.24	-1.95	29	.03	-0.36
Risk	0.50	1.12	1.04	1.97	1.50	29	.07	0.27

