

Truth Project Research *Methods*

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truth
project

 INDEPENDENT INQUIRY
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Disclaimer

This research report has been prepared at the request of the Inquiry's Chair and Panel. It complements Truth Project research reports as well as the periodically published Truth Project 'dashboard' of statistics. The views expressed are those of the authors alone. The information presented in Truth Project research outputs does not constitute formal recommendations by the Inquiry's Chair and Panel and is separate from legal evidence obtained in investigations and hearings.

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('the Inquiry') aims to consider the extent to which state and non-state institutions¹ in England and Wales have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to make meaningful recommendations for change.

The Truth Project is a core part of the Inquiry alongside Public Hearings and Research. It was set up to hear and learn from the experiences of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales. It offers victims and survivors an opportunity to share experiences of child sexual abuse in a range of ways. The Inquiry takes a trauma-informed approach to its work and all victims and survivors who come forward to share an experience of child sexual abuse are offered support throughout their engagement with the Truth Project.

The Truth Project was piloted in November 2015, with the offer of private sessions commencing in June 2016. Up to the end of April 2019 over 3,200 people have come forward to share an experience. These experiences will influence the Inquiry's findings and help inform its recommendations for improving child protection in institutions across England and Wales and ensuring they are focused on the best interests of children.

Information gathered through the Truth Project provides the Inquiry with rich insights into child sexual abuse. With the consent of participants, the Inquiry uses this information in a variety of ways, including for ongoing research and data analysis carried out by the Inquiry's Research Team. Using this information for research helps to build the evidence base around child sexual abuse. It is an important building block in helping the Inquiry to develop recommendations to prevent child sexual abuse happening in the future and improve institutional responses to it.

The analysis of Truth Project data explores two overarching research questions: What have victims and survivors shared about their experiences of child sexual abuse and the institutional contexts in which it occurred and was responded to? (research question I) and What similarities and differences are there in victims and survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse across time periods, groups and institutions? (research question II). The questions are broken down into ten themes that underpin and guide the analysis process, as set out in Figure 1.

Truth Project data are used to produce a series of thematic reports and a periodically published 'dashboard' of statistics. There will also be a full analysis of all Truth Project research findings at the end of the Inquiry. This methods report accompanies these different outputs by explaining how the experiences shared with the Truth Project are recorded, analysed and reported on.

¹ Please see the glossary in Appendix A for the definition of institution.

Figure 1 Research questions and themes



Overview of research approach

The main purpose of the Truth Project is to hear and learn from victims and survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse. The Truth Project has not been designed as a way of gathering research information specifically, so when victims and survivors share an experience with the Truth Project, traditional research methods are not used. The process is participant led and does not utilise topic guides or interview schedules. Our research subsequently uses the data gathered through the Truth Project to try to address two main research questions and associated sub-questions. This means that the design of the research has been developed to make the most effective use of the accounts that have been shared.

The research utilises a mixed methods approach, which includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The process of using Truth Project data for research consists of four key stages: data collection; sampling; analysis; and reporting. Quality assurance processes are in place throughout.

The overall method for Truth Project research has been quality assured and approved through the Inquiry's internal governance procedures. This includes approval from the Inquiry's Research Steering Group which is chaired by Panel member Professor Sir Malcolm Evans. All social research conducted or commissioned by the Inquiry is subject to approval from the Inquiry's Research Ethics Committee. The Committee has approved the use of Truth Project data for research purposes and the work is subject to ongoing ethical scrutiny. All Truth Project participants can choose to opt out of their information being used for research. Only the accounts of those who have not opted out of having their information used in this way are included in the analysis. The overall sample used in the analysis cannot be considered to be representative of all victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales.

Data collection

For participants who want to share an experience in person or via telephone, private sessions are hosted by trained facilitators and assistant facilitators. The sessions are audio recorded and the recordings are stored on a secure system within the Inquiry. If selected for inclusion in the qualitative analysis, audio recordings are transcribed – that is, they are converted from audio files to text files. For participants sharing experiences in writing, these are also securely stored. For both private sessions and written submissions, certain information about participants' experiences is recorded by assistant facilitators in a data collection sheet. The data collection sheet captures as much relevant information as possible relating to child sexual abuse and institutional failure. The data collection sheet was designed so that information from each private session, or experience shared in writing, is recorded in a standardised way. Assistant facilitators are given training on how to fill in data collection sheets and a range of ongoing activities take place to ensure the quality of data captured. When data collection sheets are completed, they are stored on a secure system within the Inquiry. A monitoring form is also completed which captures key demographic information about the individual and how they came to engage with the Truth Project. This is securely stored along with any other material that the individual shares with the Inquiry.

Information from the data collection sheets is used for the quantitative analysis. Information in the form of audio recordings from private sessions and written submissions are used for the qualitative analysis.

Sampling

Quantitative analysis is focused on the breadth of experiences. Therefore all Truth Project participants who do not opt out of their data being used for research purposes are included in the quantitative analysis and subsequent publications of statistical information in the form of the Truth Project dashboard. For individual thematic reports, the sample used to inform the quantitative data presented will be driven by the focus of the report. For example, the *Truth Project Thematic Report: Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions* includes the data of participants sexually abused within a religious institution and/or where the abuse was perpetrated by clergy or church-related staff. In the full analysis at the end of the Inquiry, as many accounts as possible will be included in the quantitative analysis.

Qualitative analysis of Truth Project data is carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of victims and survivors' experiences. Whereas the quantitative analysis produces descriptive statistics based on all accounts that have been shared (and consent given), the qualitative analysis seeks to analyse a smaller number of these cases in detail, in accordance with the research questions. In the full analysis, a total of around 70 cases are used for qualitative analysis. From these cases, analysis is carried out on a smaller, sub-sample of cases for each of the thematic reports. Qualitative analysis is not carried out for the Truth Project dashboard, which presents quantitative statistics only.

The key criteria informing the selection of individual accounts to include in the qualitative analysis are the institution where the sexual abuse occurred and the circumstances of abuse. This is critical to the research questions and the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. Within the sample, a range of institutions are represented in terms of where the abuse took place or the institution the perpetrator(s) was employed by or linked to. The sample also includes cases where the abuse has taken place in a domestic setting and institutions have failed to adequately intervene.

Secondary to this and to ensure a diverse range of participant experiences are included, we also sample by the time period in which the sexual abuse took place, and by sex and age of the child at the time the sexual abuse commenced. The three time periods sampled by are: pre-1970; 1970s–1980s; and 1990s–present. The age at which the sexual abuse commenced is divided into two groups: 11 years and under and 12 years and older, generally reflecting the difference between pre-pubescent and pubescent or post-pubescent age groups and the difference between primary and secondary school aged children. Within these predefined parameters, cases are randomly selected from those which meet the critical criteria for inclusion. The audio recordings and written statements are checked by the researchers to ensure that they are suitable for analysis.

Analysis

Quantitative analysis is carried out using the information recorded in data collection sheets. This information is entered into a spreadsheet for analysis and is cleaned and checked for errors and discrepancies before analysis begins. Most of the information collected for the data collection sheet are 'categorical variables', meaning a thing or characteristic that can be divided into different groups or categories. Analysis of the data involves basic descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages, and the relevant numbers and information are presented in Truth Project reports and the dashboard of statistics.

Qualitative analysis is carried out using verbatim transcriptions of audio-recorded Truth Project sessions and written submissions of the selected sessions. This includes analysis of what participants have shared about the sexual abuse, the impacts and responses to it, as well as participants' suggestions for how things should change to prevent child sexual abuse in future. A framework approach (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) is used to both organise and analyse the qualitative data. It is a way of analysing information in themes and being able to identify patterns emerging from the data in a systematic way. The framework approach is applied through the creation of a coding framework. The coding framework is made up of themes and sub-themes against which information from Truth Project sessions is categorised – or 'coded'. The use of a coding framework ensures a consistent approach between researchers and allows comparisons to be made between different people's experiences of specific elements of child sexual abuse as well enabling each individual's experiences of abuse to be looked at across the ten themes that address the two overarching research questions. The coding framework consists of 57 sub-themes. To carry out the coding, NVivo, a computer software package for qualitative data, is used. The coding framework is tested at the start of each thematic piece of work and modified slightly where necessary.

Reporting

The Truth Project data analysis produces a series of thematic research reports focusing on abuse within particular institution types, including but not limited to: child sexual abuse in religious institutions; child sexual abuse in welfare institutions; and child sexual abuse in schools. Each Truth Project research report contains research findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Research findings from the two analysis types are grouped together within the reports (where possible) under topic headings. Research reports contain tables and figures of the Truth Project data as well as verbatim and indirect quotes from selected participants. All published tables and figures are checked, and all quotes are anonymised and checked to ensure no information or details are included that may identify participants. All Truth Project research reports are subject to a review and sign-off process prior to publication. Once finalised, they are published on the Inquiry's website.

In addition to the research reports, a dashboard of key statistics is published every quarter. This is also subject to a sign-off process. A full analysis of all our Truth Project research findings will be published at the end of the Inquiry. The Inquiry may also wish to use information from Truth Project analysis to deliver further Truth Project specific outputs before the close of the Inquiry.

Note on language

Please see Appendix A for a glossary which contains definitions of various terms used throughout this report.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This methods report accompanies Truth Project research outputs delivered by the Inquiry's Research Team. This chapter provides background information about the Inquiry and the Truth Project. It sets out the purpose of using Truth Project information for research, and the specific research questions and themes.

1.1 Background to the Inquiry

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('the Inquiry') was set up as a statutory inquiry in March 2015. The Inquiry aims to consider the extent to which state and non-state institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to make meaningful recommendations for change, to help ensure that children now and in the future are better protected from sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person under the age of 18 to take part in sexual activities. It includes contact and non-contact sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Although it is challenging to measure child sexual abuse accurately, on account of its hidden nature, the latest research evidence suggests that in England and Wales at least one adult in 14 (7 per cent) was sexually abused as a child (Office for National Statistics, 2016).

1.2 Background to the Truth Project

1.2.1 What it is and who it is for

The Truth Project is a core part of the Inquiry alongside Public Hearings and Research. It was set up to hear and learn from the experiences of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales. It offers victims and survivors an opportunity to share experiences of child sexual abuse. By doing so, Truth Project participants make an important contribution to the work of the Inquiry. The Truth Project was piloted in November 2015 with the offer of private sessions commencing in June 2016. Up to the end of April 2019 over 3,200 people have come forward to share an experience. These experiences will influence the Inquiry's findings and help inform its recommendations for improving child protection in institutions across England and Wales and ensuring they are focused on the best interests of children.

The Truth Project is open to anyone who, as a child:

- was sexually abused by a person in an institution; or
- first came into contact with the person that sexually abused them in an institution; or
- reported the child sexual abuse to a person in authority and the report was ignored or not acted upon appropriately; or
- where someone in an institution could have known about the sexual abuse and ignored it or did not act upon it appropriately.

In line with the Inquiry's terms of reference, the experiences of child sexual abuse shared through the Truth Project should also relate to abuse that has taken place in England and Wales or is linked to the failures of institutions in England and Wales. In examining institutional failings, the Inquiry is also considering how child sexual abuse occurring within the family and community has been dealt with. The Truth Project is therefore also open to individuals who have experienced child sexual abuse in these contexts, where institutions have failed to respond appropriately.

It is recognised that the Truth Project is not suitable for everyone. However, it is designed to be as inclusive as possible. The Inquiry encourages all victims and survivors to participate if they want to share an experience – whatever their background, sex, gender, age, faith, sexuality, or culture. Various activities are undertaken to raise awareness of the Truth Project and to engage victims and survivors from diverse and minority communities, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and those with disabilities. Victims and survivors are able to contact the Inquiry to participate in the Truth Project (be a ‘participant’) and the Inquiry endeavours to facilitate all expressions of interest, accommodate participants’ requirements and do everything possible to make the experience a positive one.

1.2.2 Sharing experiences

Victims and survivors are able to share their experiences in a range of ways. It is up to the individual to decide what they are comfortable sharing and they can share as much or as little information as they wish. All experiences are shared in an informal, non-legal and confidential manner (with some exceptions when absolutely necessary to keep individuals safe). The different ways of sharing an experience are set out below. Where participants are non-English speaking or have a preferred first language, interpreters can be arranged as necessary. The Inquiry also has facilitators who are trained in British Sign Language to accommodate participants who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

Private sessions in person

The face-to-face private sessions are hosted by a facilitator, all of whom have backgrounds working with vulnerable groups and undertake full training for the role. An assistant facilitator is also present in the room and a support worker if the participant wishes. After the facilitator introduces the session, the assistant facilitator runs through a number of statements covering information that needs to be shared with the participant. These include how police referrals are managed² and how information is used for experience summaries and research purposes if the participant consents to this. Following this, the facilitator explains to the participant that they can share as much or as little information as they would like, in their own way and their own time. This enables the sessions to be conducted in a way that allows participants to lead and have control over the way in which they progress. Some participants prefer to share their experience with limited input from the facilitator, others prefer to be prompted or be asked questions. The facilitator is responsive to this and may help guide the participant through the session by, for example, asking them gentle questions or helping them to articulate certain points to make sure they correctly understand everything the participant is sharing. The main role of the facilitator, however, is to listen and hear the experiences being shared.

² The Inquiry’s Terms of Reference requires it to pass on all allegations of child abuse it receives to the police. This includes those that have been reported before or where the perpetrators are dead or convicted. For those sharing an experience with the Truth Project, a summary of the allegation of child abuse is given to the police. Personal details are not shared with the police unless the individual agrees. The exception to this is where a current child protection issue has been identified or someone is at risk of serious harm. In such cases, details are given to the police or another service if they have been shared with the Inquiry. Operation Hydrant acts as a single point of contact for the Inquiry, receiving and disseminating allegations that a crime has been committed to the relevant police forces in England and Wales.

Assistant facilitators are responsible for capturing a record of the session. Information is captured and a data collection sheet is then completed. It is also the role of assistant facilitators to explain to participants at the start of the session how the information they share may be used by the Inquiry. They ensure participants understand what types of information the Inquiry is obliged to pass on and its responsibility to process and manage any police referrals required.

Private sessions in person are audio recorded if participants consent to this (see also Chapter 3).

Private sessions by telephone

Private sessions by telephone work in a similar way to private sessions in person but victims and survivors share their experiences in their own space. Sessions are audio recorded, with the consent of the participant, and participants are again offered a support worker, if they wish, to help them through the process.

Written submissions

Victims and survivors can share an experience in writing in one of two ways. They can fill in a booklet that the Inquiry has developed, which contains questions to help individuals think about what they would like to share. Alternatively, victims and survivors can choose to not use the booklet and write directly to the Inquiry by post or email.

Other methods

Victims and survivors may also choose to submit an audio recording of themselves talking about their experiences or share drawings or creative writing that communicate their experiences.³

1.2.3 A trauma-informed approach

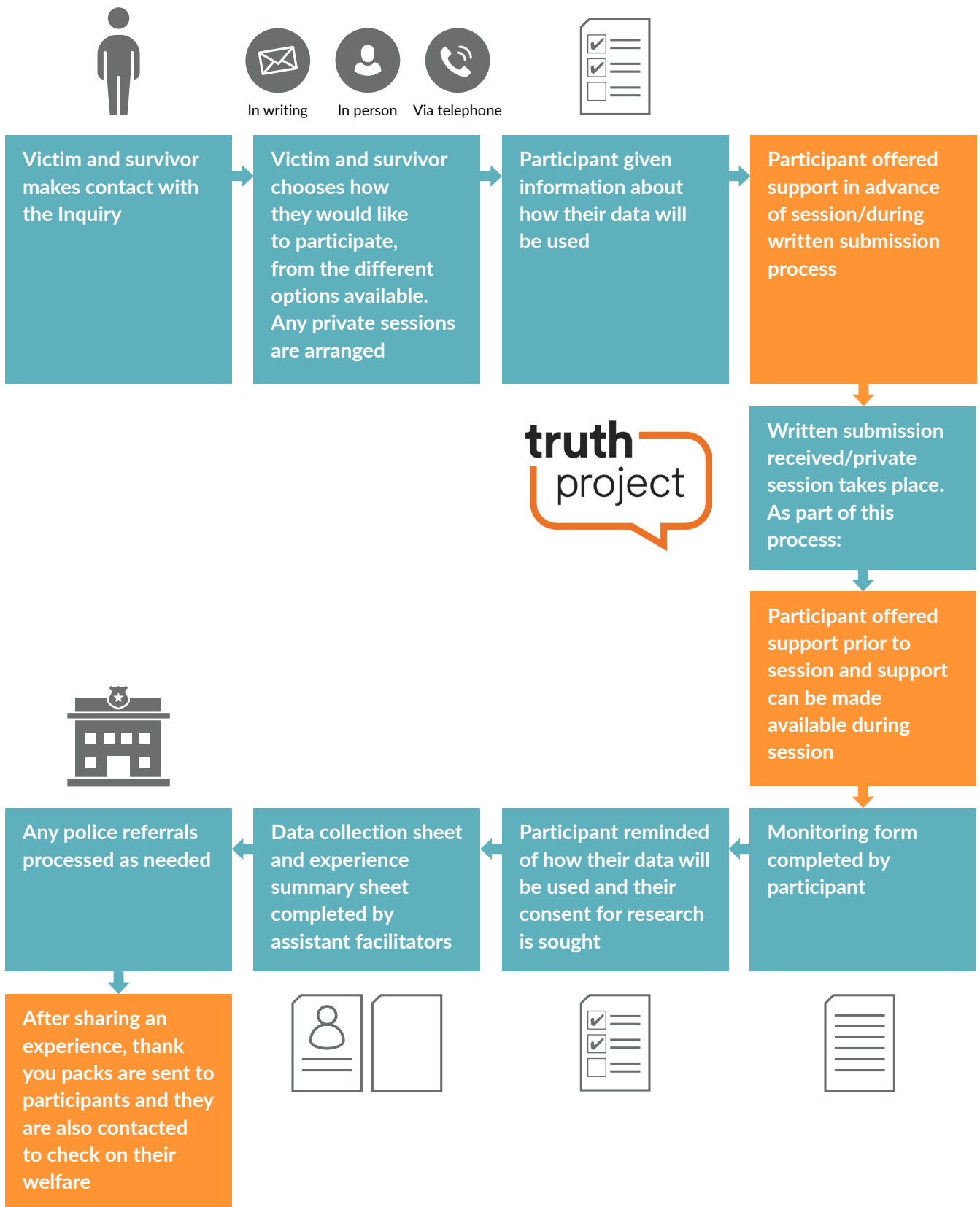
The Inquiry takes a trauma-informed approach to its work⁴, ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors is prioritised. For the Truth Project, this means working with each victim and survivor at different points throughout their engagement with the Truth Project, ensuring they know what to expect, that they feel supported and respected, and that they are given choices as far as is possible.

A summary of the Truth Project process is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

³ Further details about sharing experiences with the Truth Project can be found on the Inquiry's website: <https://www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard>

⁴ There are five principles that underpin the Inquiry's trauma-informed approach: Recognising that the experience of child sexual abuse is subjective and individuals should be respected; Being aware that trust is not to be taken for granted, but fostered; Empowering victims and survivors in their interactions with the Inquiry; Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors and working to prevent re-traumatisation; Acknowledging the impact of child sexual abuse and institutional failures, therefore, looking out for staff wellbeing.

Figure 1.1 Overview of the Truth Project process



1.3 Using Truth Project data for research

Information gathered through the Truth Project provides the Inquiry with rich insights into child sexual abuse. The Inquiry uses this information in a variety of ways. For example, participants have the option to consent for their information to be used by the Inquiry to produce short anonymised summaries called 'Experiences Shared'. A selection of these are published on the Inquiry's website. They also have the option to consent for the experiences they share to be used for ongoing research and data analysis carried out by the Inquiry's Research Team.⁵

It is important to note that the main purpose of the Truth Project is to hear and learn from victims and survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse. The Truth Project has not been designed as a way of gathering research information and when victims and survivors share an experience with the Truth Project, traditional research methods are not used. As highlighted above, the process is participant led and does not utilise topic guides or interview schedules. The research subsequently uses the data gathered through the Truth Project to try and address the two overarching research questions. This means that the design of the research has been developed to make the most effective use of this existing data set and information-gathering process. How Truth Project participants' information is used for research and analysis is the focus of this report.

1.3.1 Research questions

The experiences shared through the Truth Project are used for ongoing research and data analysis. Analysis of Truth Project data is important because:

- it ensures that the voices of victims and survivors are heard;
- the data present a unique opportunity to build the evidence base around child sexual abuse; and
- participants' experiences are an important building block in helping the Inquiry develop recommendations to prevent child sexual abuse happening in the future and improve institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

The Truth Project analysis has two overarching research questions which have been broken down into ten themes, with associated research sub-questions that guide the analysis (see Table 1.1).

⁵ More information about the Truth Project and how information is used can be found on the Inquiry's website at: <https://www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard>

Table 1.1 Research themes and associated sub-questions

Research themes		Research sub-questions
Research question I: What have victims and survivors shared about their experiences of child sexual abuse and the institutional contexts in which it occurred and was responded to?		
1	Backgrounds of victims and survivors	Who has come forward to the Truth Project to share an experience of child sexual abuse?
2	Nature of sexual abuse experienced	What do people share about the nature of the child sexual abuse they experienced?
3	Institutional contexts	How much did institutions know about what was happening? What have victims and survivors said about whether anything could have been done by the institution at the time to prevent the sexual abuse?
4	Disclosure	What were victims and survivors' experiences of disclosing child sexual abuse (as a child/adult) and what has helped or hindered disclosure? How were disclosures or allegations of child sexual abuse responded to by those within and outside institutions?*
5	Impacts of sexual abuse	What are the impacts of child sexual abuse?
6	Experiences of support	What has helped or hindered victims and survivors' recovery?
7	Victims and survivors' suggestions for change	What changes do victims and survivors suggest to improve child protection and prevent child sexual abuse in the future?
Research question II: What similarities and differences are there in victims and survivors' experiences of sexual abuse across time periods, groups and institutions?		
8	Comparison over time periods	How have victims and survivors' experiences and impacts changed over time?
9	Comparison over different groups	How have these experiences affected different groups of people in different ways?
10	Comparison over institution type	What differences and similarities can be identified between victims and survivors' experiences in different institutions?

* Within institutions includes for example, police, local authorities, the criminal justice system, and the health sector. Outside these institutions includes for example, family and local communities.

1.3.2 How the analysed data are used

The analysis of Truth Project data is used to produce three key outputs:

- A series of thematic reports on specific institutions and circumstances in which child sexual abuse has occurred. This includes but is not limited to reports exploring child sexual abuse in religious institutions, welfare institutions, and schools. These reports will be published in stages throughout the remaining life of the Inquiry.
- A periodically published dashboard of statistics relating to participants who have participated in the Truth Project and the experiences they have shared.
- A full analysis of all Truth Project research findings at the end of the Inquiry.

The outputs have been developed with the two research questions in mind. Exploring the research questions, themes and their associated sub-questions enables a comprehensive picture of experiences of child sexual abuse and institutional failure across a range of institutions and circumstances to be provided (see also Chapter 6). It is important to note, however, that not all outputs address both of the research questions. For example, the *Truth Project Thematic Report: Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions* addresses the first research question but not the second. In particular, it does not fully explore comparisons between experiences of sexual abuse in religious contexts and sexual abuse in other institutional contexts or comparisons of experiences of sexual abuse across different time periods. The second research question looking at similarities and differences across time periods, groups and institutions will be considered towards the end of the project when we have the opportunity to carry out a fuller comparative analysis.

In order to fully utilise the opportunities that Truth Project data present, it is important that the experiences of victims and survivors are recorded, analysed and reported in a robust and systematic way. The remainder of this report presents in detail how this is done.

1.4 Report structure

The report is structured in the following way:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of how Truth Project data are used in research and the ethics, limitations and caveats surrounding this body of work.
- Chapter 3 explains what and how Truth Project data are collected.
- Chapter 4 provides information on the sampling process and how Truth Project participants' accounts are included in Truth Project data analysis.
- Chapter 5 details the analytical approach to the research data and the actual methods of analysis used.
- Chapter 6 sets out what outputs are produced from the analysis, how research findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis are reported, and the process followed to ensure no participants can be identified in the published research.

Chapter 2

Overview of research approach

This chapter provides an overview of how Truth Project data are used in research and the ethics, limitations and caveats surrounding this body of work.

2.1 Mixed methods approach

This research utilises a mixed methods approach, which includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

- **Quantitative analysis** refers to all analysis of numeric data, including numbers, figures and proportions. We use numbers to answer the research questions, for example the number of people who were sexually abused in a particular type of institution. The quantitative analysis is useful for providing an overall picture of what participants have shared with the Truth Project.
- **Qualitative analysis** refers to analysis that relates to words, language and images. It involves the analysis of more detailed descriptions and the context in which sexual abuse has occurred to understand participants' experiences in more depth. Words are used to answer the research questions, for example when people describe how they were let down by institutions. The qualitative analysis enables a picture of the lived experiences of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to be generated which is then illuminated in our reporting.

2.2 A four-stage process

The process of using Truth Project data for research consists of four key stages:

- **Data collection:** When participants share their experiences with the Truth Project, the information is collected and recorded. These records of information are then used to carry out the analysis and research.
- **Sampling:** This is the process for selecting which Truth Project participants' accounts are included in the analysis. A sample is selected for the qualitative analysis and all accounts where the participant has given their consent are included in the quantitative analysis.
- **Data analysis:** Once the data have been collected, sampled and quality assured, the data are then organised, analysed and interpreted.
- **Reporting:** At the end of the analysis, and once the key messages from the data have been identified, these are written up into a report and/or set out in the Truth Project dashboard.

Figure 2.1 presents a visual overview of this process. The subsequent chapters explain each of these stages in more detail. For each of these four stages, there are systems in place to ensure the quality of the work. These processes ensure that the data in the Truth Project research reports are accurate, robust and defensible. Details of these quality assurance processes are provided throughout the relevant sections of the report.

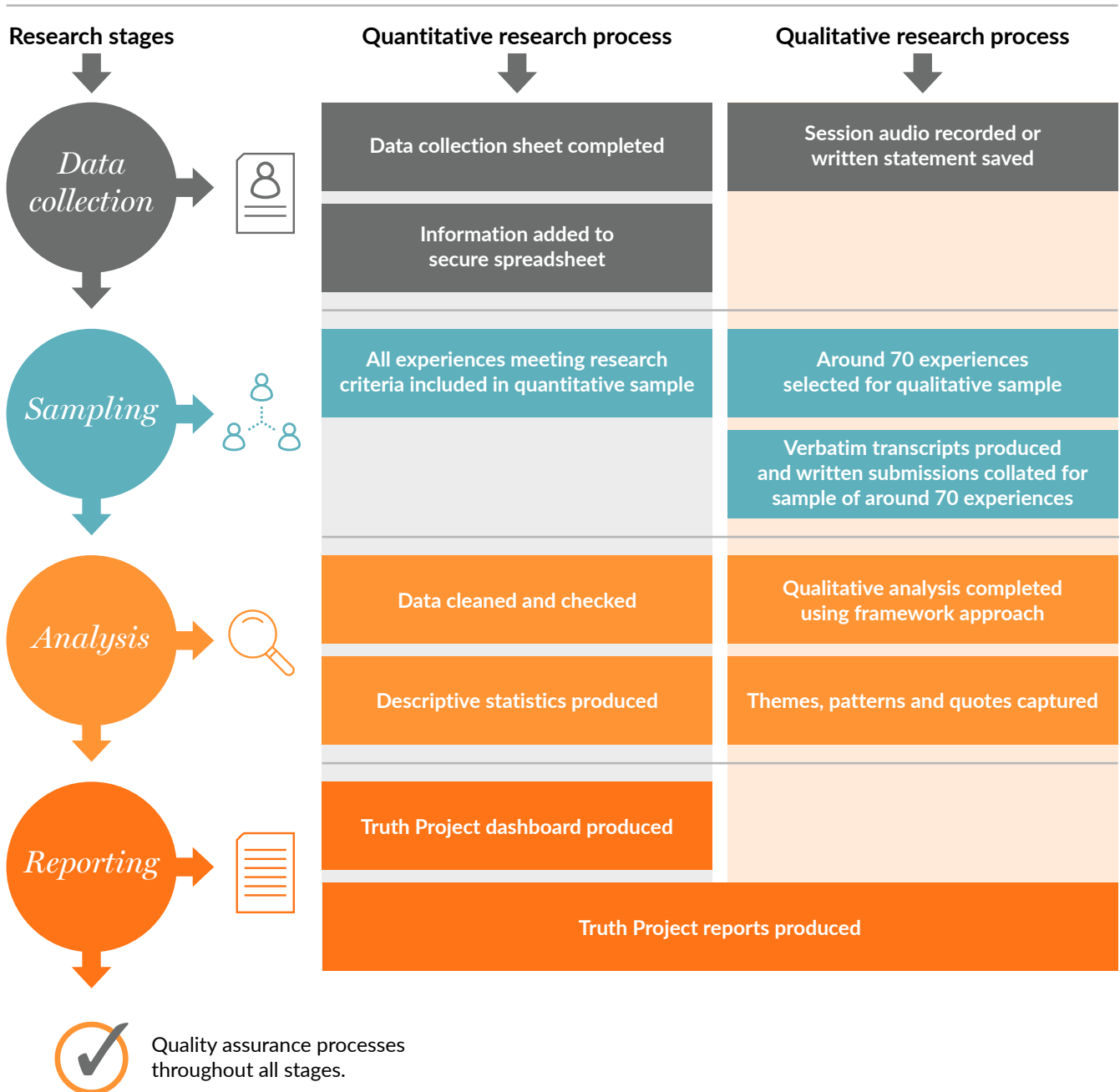
Figure 2.1 Overview of process of using Truth Project data for research



Participant shares experience with the Truth Project and permission is sought for their information to be used for research purposes.



Ethical approval given for Truth Project data to be used for research purposes.



2.3 Governance and ethics

2.3.1 Governance and ethical approval

The overall method used for Truth Project research has been quality assured and approved through the Inquiry's internal governance procedures. This includes approval from the Inquiry's Research Steering Group which is chaired by Panel member Professor Sir Malcolm Evans. All social research conducted or commissioned by the Inquiry is subject to approval from the Inquiry's Research Ethics Committee. It ensures that all Inquiry research complies with the Inquiry's Research Code of Ethics.⁶ The Committee is formed of external academics and experts in addition to relevant internal staff, including a member of the Inquiry's Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel and a member of the Inquiry's Support and Safeguarding Team.

The Truth Project deals with highly sensitive and personal material and the Inquiry's Research Ethics Committee ensures that any Truth Project data used for the purposes of research adhere to strict ethical standards. The Inquiry's Research Ethics Committee has approved the use of Truth Project data for research purposes and it is subject to ongoing ethical scrutiny.

2.3.2 Consent

Participants receive information about taking part in the Truth Project prior to their participation. This is in the form of a booklet and details are also available on the Truth Project website. The booklet contains a 'consent for research' statement, which informs participants that their information may be used to conduct research throughout the life of the Inquiry, unless they would prefer their information not to be used in this way. The consent statement was piloted and subjected to cognitive testing⁷ to ensure that all participants are able to make an informed decision. For participants who are unable to read, for example, consent is sought verbally.

At the start of a private session, all participants are reminded how their information may be used for research by the assistant facilitator, who reads out a number of statements that include how the Inquiry manages their data. Participants can choose to opt out of research at this point, or they can change their mind later and have their information removed from the analysis and reports up until the point that reports are finalised for publication. In the event that a participant shares an experience with the Truth Project on more than one occasion, they hear the statements about how the Inquiry manages their data on each occasion.

⁶ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/1382/view/iicsa-ethical-approval-guidance.pdf>

⁷ Cognitive testing is a process which tests the understandability of consent materials and the way in which individuals use this information to make decisions regarding participation (Willis, 2006).

2.4 Limitations and caveats

Given Truth Project information is collected from victims and survivors who choose to take part in the Truth Project, the sample is 'self-selected' – participants have not been randomly selected or purposively selected for research purposes. Therefore, the overall sample used in the quantitative and qualitative analyses cannot be considered to be representative of all victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales. Only those participants who consent to their information being used for research purposes by the Inquiry are included in the analyses. Truth Project research findings should not and cannot be used to develop a general picture of the prevalence or impact of child sexual abuse more broadly, or in relation to specific institutions.

It is also important to highlight that participants who attend the Truth Project share only the information that they wish to and are not asked direct questions. This means that the information captured is not entirely comprehensive in all cases and there may be instances of sexual abuse or aspects of abuse participants choose not to share.

The research findings presented in Truth Project research outputs – including Truth Project participants' suggestions for change – do not constitute formal recommendations by the Inquiry's Chair and Panel and are separate from legal evidence obtained in investigations and hearings.

It should be noted that our methods are subject to change. This is because the analysis is ongoing and certain aspects of it may therefore evolve as the work progresses. Should the methods change, this report will be updated as necessary.

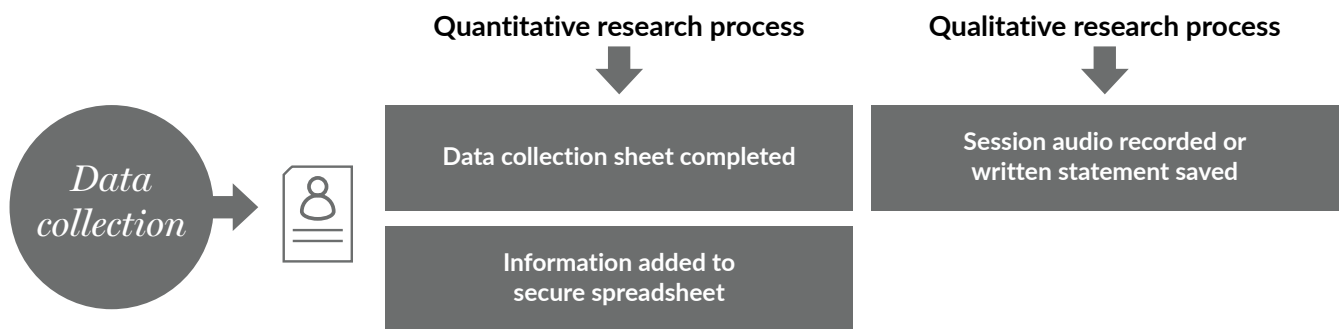
Chapter 3

Data collection

This chapter explains what and how Truth Project data are collected (see Figure 3.1).

For participants sharing experiences in private sessions (both in person and via telephone), their sessions are audio recorded and the recordings are stored on a secure system within the Inquiry. For participants sharing experiences in writing, these are also securely stored.

Figure 3.1 Overview of data collection stage



Participants are asked to complete a monitoring form either prior to or post their private session or written submission. The monitoring form contains ten questions for capturing key demographic information about the individual as well as how they came to learn about the Inquiry and anything that specifically prompted them to get in touch. It is up to the individual what information, if any, they choose to share about themselves on the monitoring form. For example, participants have the option to self-select answers relating to characteristics such as their ethnicity and sexuality, but may choose not to share this information.

For both private sessions and written submissions, certain information about participants' experiences is recorded by assistant facilitators in the data collection sheet. The data collection sheet contains eight sections capturing as much relevant information as possible relating to child sexual abuse and institutional failure. These are shown in Figure 3.2 (see also Appendix B for how information from the data collection sheet falls under the themes of our two research questions). As all Truth Project sessions are participant led, participants are not asked specific questions about the topic areas. The assistant facilitator only records the information the participant chooses to share and no assumptions are made by assistant facilitators in relation to either the personal characteristics of participants or their experience of sexual abuse. The amount of information recorded therefore varies from person to person and assistant facilitators do not always have information on specific things for every individual. Where quantitative data are presented in our research reports, this is reflected in the tables which may not always be fully populated due to the nature of Truth Project data collection.

The data collection sheet was designed so that information from each private session, or experience shared in writing, is recorded in a standardised way. Recording the information in this way ensures that the data are defensible. The Research Team developed the data collection sheet through consultation with Inquiry colleagues and the Inquiry's Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel. Researchers also drew on the form the Australian Royal Commission had used in their work with victims and survivors

Figure 3.2 Data collection sheet categories of information captured

<i>A</i>	Information about session	<i>E</i>	Information about where the sexual abuse occurred
<i>B</i>	Information about victim and survivor	<i>F</i>	Institutional knowledge of the sexual abuse at the time
<i>C</i>	Information about episodes of sexual abuse	<i>G</i>	Reporting abuse after sexual abuse had ended
<i>D</i>	Information about perpetrator	<i>H</i>	Accountability and reparation

and on information from early private sessions held by the Inquiry, to ensure relevant information would be captured. The data collection sheet was included in the Inquiry’s piloting stage of the private session model and was subsequently refined. The reliability of the data collection sheet has been tested using a statistical technique called ‘inter-rater reliability’. This involved checking that different assistant facilitators (the ‘raters’ in this test) were recording information from test cases in a consistent and reliable way. The testing demonstrated a very good to excellent level of agreement between raters⁸.

Assistant facilitators are given training on how to fill in data collection sheets. They have access to a ‘codebook’ to help guide them and can contact the Research Team for advice on any queries. The codebook includes definitions of, for example, the different forms of sexual abuse, different types of institution, different positions of perpetrators, and different types of impacts. It is updated where relevant in line with ongoing training and quality assurance processes. Information on the data collection sheet is supplemented with any other relevant information submitted by participants on the day of, or prior to, attending their session – including the information captured on the individual’s monitoring form. Once completed, the data collection sheet is stored on a secure system within the Inquiry.

The data collection sheet information, along with the saved audio recordings and written statements, becomes ‘the data’ used for research and analysis. To enable us to use the data for analysis, information from the data collection sheets is added to a secure spreadsheet and this is used for the quantitative analysis. Information in the form of audio recordings and written submissions are used for the qualitative analysis. If selected for inclusion in the qualitative analysis (see Chapter 4), audio recordings are transcribed – that is, they are converted from audio files to text files.

Access to the information recorded on the data collection sheets and to audio recordings, transcripts, and written statements is restricted to Inquiry staff who need to access this information.

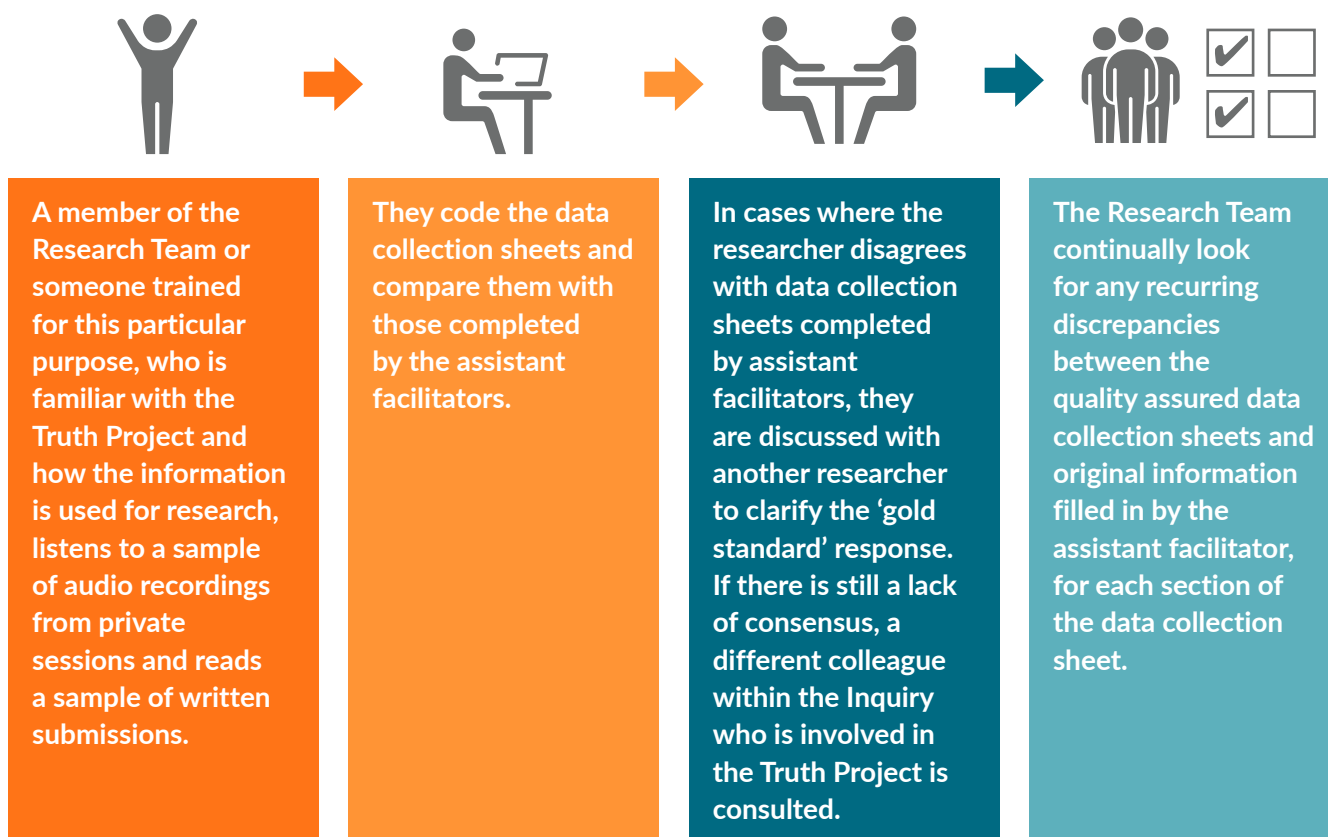
⁸ Three test case ‘gold standard’ scores were compared to the ratings of the assistant facilitators, using average percentage agreement and Cohen’s Kappa statistic as estimates of reliability. The results were as follows: Case 1, 91 per cent, $k = 0.77$; Case 2, 94 per cent, $k = 0.87$; and Case 3, 94 per cent, $k = 0.88$.

Following the initial inter-rater reliability testing undertaken to ensure assistant facilitators fill in the data collection sheet consistently, a range of ongoing activities take place to ensure the quality of data captured in data collection sheets. These include:

- **Training** – assistant facilitator training includes filling out a test case of a private session and responses are then compared with a gold standard response produced by the Research Team. Following training, each assistant facilitator receives a report with their scores and pointers for improving data collection. Refresher training is offered following the distribution of generic feedback reports and is also provided on an ad hoc or intermittent basis as necessary.
- **Audit of data collection sheets** – on an ongoing basis a full audit is carried out on 5 per cent of completed data collection sheets. This flags omissions, inconsistencies and any issues that need clarifying to improve the overall process. This also improves the quality of the existing quantitative data held, forms the basis of ongoing feedback and identifies areas where assistant facilitators may need further training. A targeted approach is taken to the selection of data collection sheets to quality assess in line with the planned research outputs. For example, ahead of the publication of the *Truth Project Thematic Report: Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions*, the quality assurance of data collection sheets focused on those relating to this specific type of institution. In the sampling of data collection sheets to quality assess, a spread of different assistant facilitators are included. The method for carrying out this audit is shown in Figure 3.3.

The Research Team are available for advice and support for assistant facilitators. Suggestions, feedback and updates are provided to them as needed as well as any additional training.

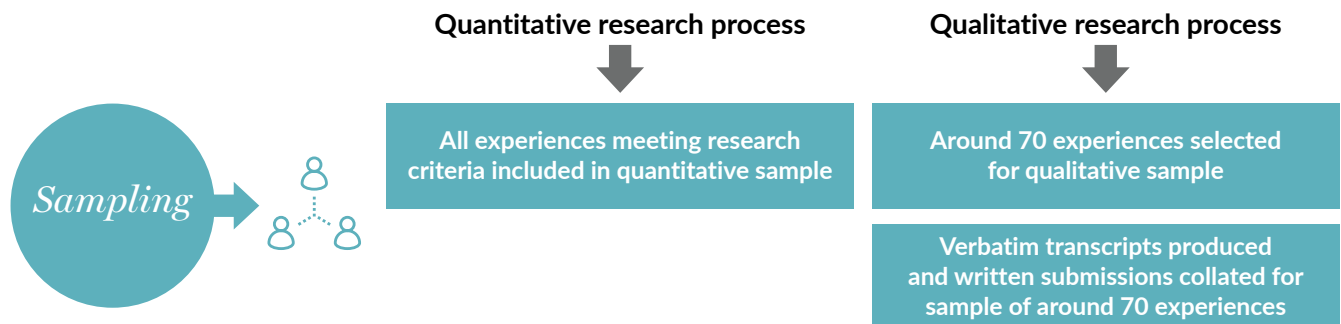
Figure 3.3 Process for quality assuring data collection sheets



Chapter 4 **Sampling**

This chapter provides information on the sampling process and how Truth Project participants' accounts are included in the quantitative and qualitative analysis (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Overview of sampling stage



4.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative analysis is focused on the breadth of Truth Project participants' experiences. Therefore all Truth Project participants who do not opt out of their data being used for research purposes are included in the analysis and subsequent publications of statistical information in the form of the Truth Project dashboard. The full analysis of the Truth Project research findings will also include all the quantitative data from the secure spreadsheet.

For individual thematic reports, the sample used to inform the quantitative data presented is driven by the focus of the report. For example, the *Truth Project Thematic Report: Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions* includes the data of participants sexually abused within a religious institution and/or where the abuse was perpetrated by clergy or church-related staff. As the thematic reports are being published in stages, it is only possible to include the data collected at that particular point in time. For example, the *Truth Project Thematic Report: Child sexual abuse in the context of religious institutions* does not include accounts relating to these contexts that have been shared with the Inquiry after the cut-off point for the publication of the report. However, as many accounts as possible will be included in the quantitative analysis for the full analysis.

Cases are only included where the victim and survivor has shared their own account. Information shared by third parties is not included.

It may also be possible to explore different groups of victims and survivors to reflect the targeted work done by the Truth Project. For example, victims and survivors with disabilities and victims and survivors from ethnic minorities. In addition, more contemporaneous experiences of child sexual abuse may be looked at by analysing the reports of children and young people. These would all depend on having sufficient numbers for meaningful quantitative analysis.

4.2 Qualitative data

Qualitative analysis is interested in understanding a particular phenomena in detail. It is interested in depth rather than breadth of experiences and so qualitative analysis requires a smaller sample than required for quantitative analysis. The purpose of the qualitative analysis of Truth Project data is to gain an in-depth understanding of victims and survivors' experiences. Whereas the quantitative analysis produces descriptive statistics based on all accounts that have been shared, the qualitative analysis seeks to analyse a smaller number of these cases in detail, in accordance with the research questions.

A total of around 70 cases are used for qualitative analysis in the Truth Project research study. This provides necessary diversity and reflects a range of experiences and circumstances. It also allows victims and survivors' experiences to be described and summarised in sufficient detail. A sample of this size is anticipated to provide a large enough number to reach 'saturation point'. In a research context this refers to the point at which the addition of further cases would not provide new insights or themes in the analysis (Katz et al., 2017; Bowen, 2008) and it is felt there are adequate data to answer the research questions. More than 50 is considered to constitute a large sample in qualitative participant-based research (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Sandelowski, 1995). It is possible that the number of cases that make up the overall qualitative sample will be revisited in line with the growing number of victims and survivors participating in the Truth Project and the total amount of Truth Project data collected.

From the complete sample of cases, analysis is carried out on a smaller sub-sample of cases for each of the thematic reports. For example, in the thematic report relating to child sexual abuse in religious contexts, the descriptive statistics produced from the quantitative analysis are based on a total of 183 cases and the qualitative analysis is based on exploring 12 of these 183 cases in more detail. Qualitative analysis is not carried out for the periodically published Truth Project dashboard, which presents quantitative statistics only.

A sampling framework was developed to inform how the individual accounts (audio files and written statements) to be included in the qualitative analysis are selected. This ensures a diverse range of participant experiences is captured. As part of this process, some sample inclusion and exclusion criteria have been developed.

4.2.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Again, only those participants who do not opt out of their data being used for research purposes are included in the qualitative sampling process. Likewise, cases are only included where the victim and survivor has shared their own account. Other criteria critical for sample inclusion are:

- Truth Project private session audio recording is intelligible for transcription or written submission is sufficiently intelligible for analysis.
- The information shared relates to institutional abuse or the failure of institutions regarding child sexual abuse.

Cases are not included in the sample where they do not meet the above criteria.

For participants who shared experiences in Truth Project private sessions (in person or via telephone), the qualitative analysis only includes the transcript of the session and does not include analysis of any supplementary documentary material provided by participants during the Truth Project process, for example, letters or documentation that participants may bring along to sessions in relation to their case.

This is due to consent not being explicitly obtained for the use of such material, the possible volume of such material and the fact that the nature of the material may not be suitable for the qualitative analysis methods used. This material is, however, read and used by those directly involved in the participant's Truth Project session.

4.2.2 Sampling process

The qualitative sample selection is primarily based on the institution or context in which sexual abuse occurred and the circumstances of abuse. This is critical to the research questions and the broader terms of reference of the Inquiry.

Across the circa 70 cases that make up the qualitative sample, a range of institutions are represented in terms of where the sexual abuse took place or the institution the perpetrator(s) was employed by or linked to. This includes, for example, religious institutions, welfare institutions and schools. [The Truth Project dashboard](#) published in February 2019 showed that these three types of institution were the most commonly mentioned amongst Truth Project participants in relation to where their experience of institutional child sexual abuse took place. Custodial institutions and a range of other institution types are also included in the sampling framework. Cases are also sampled where the sexual abuse has taken place in a domestic setting and institutions have failed to adequately intervene and/or provide appropriate support.

Secondary to this, we also sample by the time period in which the abuse took place and by sex and the age of the child when the sexual abuse commenced. This is done to ensure the analysis reflects the range of victim and survivor experiences.

The time periods sampled by are:

- pre-1970
- 1970s–1980s
- 1990s–present.

The total sample comprises an equal amount of transcripts or written experiences from each of these three periods. These periods were selected because they reflect significant changes in institutions, legislation and policy regarding child protection. They represent fairly distinct periods of major societal development regarding: views of the child; institutional care; awareness and attitudes towards child abuse and child sexual abuse in particular; legislative and policy developments around sexual offending and child protection. Child sexual abuse has been understood and talked about in a variety of ways over time and throughout these different periods. How it is constructed and defined is critical to how perpetrators, victims and survivors, and the context of sexual abuse are presented and responded to (see also Lovett et al., 2018).

The total sample is broadly evenly split between males and females. It is worth noting, however, that the final number of male and female cases included in the sub-sample for each thematic report may be more heavily weighted to a particular sex or age group depending on the institution or circumstances the report relates to as well as the data available to us.

The age at which the sexual abuse commenced is divided into two groups: 11 years and under and 12 years and older, generally reflecting the difference between pre-pubescent and pubescent or post-pubescent age groups and the difference between primary and secondary school aged children.

Within these predefined parameters of institution, time period, sex, and age at which the sexual abuse began, cases are randomly selected from those that meet the critical criteria for inclusion. The random cases are generated by applying a formula in the spreadsheet. The audio recordings and written statements are checked by the researchers to ensure that they are suitable for analysis. This includes checking that audio files are audible and in the case of thematic reports that there is sufficient information relating to the institution being focused upon.

While the sample cannot be considered to be representative, the sampling framework for the qualitative analysis is designed to ensure as wide a range of victim and survivor experiences as possible are included and to ensure that sufficient information emerges about different institutions over different time periods. Where necessary the sample numbers will be boosted to help reflect the diversity of Truth Project participants and capture any other institutions or environments where sexual abuse has occurred, not included in the thematic reports. This could include sexual abuse that took place in a domestic environment but where institutions failed to act, or foster care, sports and recreational clubs, youth groups, medical environments, or the military.

4.2.3 Final sampling framework

Using these criteria, the qualitative sampling framework shown in Table 4.1 was developed. Some projected numbers are included to illustrate what our final sample might look like in terms of the number of cases from particular institutions and across different time periods. This is an illustration only, showing 70 cases in total. This is subject to change and final details relating to the sampling process and eventual sample informing each report will be detailed in individual reports themselves.

Table 4.1 Illustrative sampling framework for qualitative analysis of Truth Project data

Characteristic	Category	Number of participants*
Institutional context in which sexual abuse occurred	Schools	12
	Welfare institutions	12
	Religious institutions	12
	Other sexual abuse circumstances or institutions	18
	Boost to increase under-represented groups	16
Time period of abuse	Pre-1970s	24
	1970s-1980s	24
	1990s-present	22
Age when abuse began	11 years and under	35
	12 years and older	35
Sex	Female	35
	Male	35
Total	70 cases	

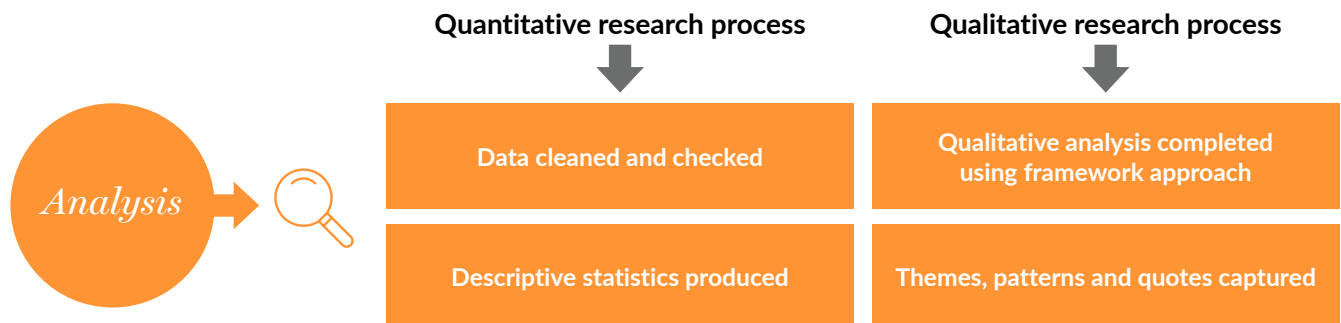
* This illustrative sampling framework is based on a total of 70 cases. Therefore, all sub-categories within each characteristic should add up to 70.

Chapter 5

Analysis

This chapter details the analytical approach to the research data and the methods of analysis used (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Overview of analysis stage



The process for analysing Truth Project data starts from the overarching research questions: What have victims and survivors shared about their experiences of child sexual abuse and the institutional contexts in which it occurred and was responded to? (research question I) and What similarities and differences are there in victims and survivors' experiences of sexual abuse across time periods, groups and institutions? (research question II).

As explained in Chapter 1, in order to answer these questions they have been broken down into ten themes that underpin and guide the analysis process. Full details of how both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the analysis link to each of the research questions, themes and sub-questions can be found in Appendix B.

5.1 Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis of Truth Project data is carried out on the information recorded in the data collection sheets filled out by the assistant facilitators at each private session, or on the basis of information received from written statements. The quantitative data are analysed using descriptive statistics. This includes, for example, frequencies, calculations of averages, and proportions. Due to the limitations set out in section 2.4, tests of statistical significance – which can be used to determine the likelihood that the observed difference between two groups will also occur in the wider population – are not undertaken. The analysis is based on what can be robustly reported, and avoiding assumptions that could undermine confidence in the research findings.

Information from data collection sheets is entered into Google forms to generate a Google spreadsheet for analysis. The data are cleaned and checked for errors and discrepancies. Most of the information collected for the data collection sheet are 'categorical variables', meaning a thing or characteristic that can be divided into different groups or categories. Examples of categorical variables include ethnicity or area of residence. For some of the variables collected on the data collection sheet, people may only belong to one category, for example age. With other variables, multiple categories may apply, for example individuals may have more than one disability or condition.

The data are thoroughly cleaned and any issues with data quality are flagged before analysis begins. To make the data amenable to analysis and reporting, some variables are re-coded; for example, the age of participants is converted into age bands. This process of re-coding is quality assured by the Inquiry's Analytics Team to ensure accuracy and to check for errors.

Analysis of the data involves basic descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages, and the relevant numbers and information are presented in Truth Project reports and the data dashboard. This approach, with the resulting tables and outputs, has been quality assured by academic experts external to the Inquiry.

5.2 Qualitative analysis

Qualitative data from the Truth Project are extracted from the verbatim transcriptions and written submissions of the selected sessions. The analysis includes what participants have told us about the abuse, the responses to it and the impacts upon them, as well as the suggestions participants have made for changes they consider would help to protect children and support victims and survivors in the future. The process used to conduct the qualitative analysis is described below.

5.2.1 Framework approach

A framework approach (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) is used to both organise and help analyse the qualitative data. It is a way of analysing information in themes that has been widely used in applied social policy research. The approach is a comprehensive, dynamic and flexible method of organising and analysing research data that is easy to replicate. The way in which a framework approach is applied is through the creation of a coding framework of themes⁹ and sub-themes, against which information (in this case information from Truth Project sessions) is categorised or 'coded'.

The framework approach as a method is heavily based in and driven by the original accounts and observations of the people it relates to (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009), in this case Truth Project participants. In this sense it is considered to be a method where the understanding of an issue is 'grounded' in the accounts of the participants. This approach allows comparisons to be made between different people's experiences of specific elements of sexual abuse (for example, how the abuse began) and enables the researcher to look at each individual's experiences of abuse across a range of themes, such as the type of institution where the abuse occurred, how adults responded to any disclosures made, how the abuse impacted upon them as a child, adolescent and in later life.

A framework approach is a particularly suitable method to use in the qualitative analysis of Truth Project data because the research:

- has specific questions about child sexual abuse and institutional responses it seeks to answer;
- is conducted in a limited period of time; and
- is based on the observations and accounts of Truth Project participants and is concerned with describing and analysing: what has happened in cases of child sexual abuse; institutional responses to it; and victim and survivor experiences.

⁹ The framework approach uses the terms 'theme' and 'sub-theme' to describe the hierarchical categories that form the basis of data management in the approach. Other research approaches generally refer to 'themes' as developing later in the research process as a way of categorising findings.

The initial themes and codes used to organise and analyse the qualitative data were developed from existing theory and described experiences of child sexual abuse (a 'deductive' approach). However, the framework method enables the researcher to add to, develop or change these themes during the analysis stage, depending on what participants have said in their accounts (an 'inductive' method). This enables a focus on the information shared by participants which most directly relates to key areas of interest to the Inquiry, whilst also incorporating the richer meaning included in victim and survivor accounts and developing an understanding directly from them.

5.2.2 Coding framework

A coding framework was developed from the overall research questions and themes to support the analysis of the selected Truth Project transcripts and written submissions. The coding framework provides the overall structure for managing the qualitative analysis at the initial stage. It was developed from a review of existing literature and research into child sexual abuse and institutional responses to it, the early analysis of Truth Project data, the research questions, and the coding framework used by the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Katz et al., 2017).

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) was also considered in developing the framework. This theory can be used to help understand a child's experiences of sexual abuse and the impacts of it through understanding how different social and cultural environments (including institutions) have interacted and influenced their development. The coding framework sets out the range of themes and sub-themes explored in the qualitative analysis. It provides a reference tool for researchers undertaking the analysis by detailing and describing the type of information to be captured and recorded, helping ensure a consistent approach between researchers undertaking the qualitative analysis work.

The coding framework was tested for suitability before using it for Truth Project data analysis. This was done by two experienced qualitative researchers using it to analyse several transcripts of Truth Project sessions. The framework covers the ten themes relating to our overall research questions. Overall the framework includes 57 sub-themes (see Appendix B).

The framework is modified slightly where necessary for each of the different thematic reports. This ensures that the analysis takes account of particular issues of relevance to different types of institutions or circumstances of sexual abuse, while still allowing for comparisons to be made across all of the cases used in the qualitative sample in the key areas of interest. The framework also leaves opportunities for any additional themes or sub-themes to be included in the overall analysis.

The framework approach is carried out using NVivo, a computer software package for qualitative data. The coding framework is used to create framework matrices within NVivo where information shared by participants is captured and summarised in relation to the themes and sub-themes. Researchers then analyse the organised data to identify patterns emerging from the data in a systematic way, explore similarities and differences in victims and survivors' experiences, and identify key elements and categories reflecting the types of experiences shared.

The coding framework was designed by the Research Team and reviewed by the Inquiry's Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel, Truth Project leaders and Policy colleagues. The quality assurance activities that take place in relation to the qualitative research and analysis largely relate to this framework. There are two key elements to this, which are set out below.

Testing of the framework ahead of each piece of work

At the commencement of each thematic piece of work, the relevant coding framework for the work is tested as being fit for purpose and to ensure that the specific researchers undertaking the coding and analysis are capturing the data in the framework in a similar way. All researchers involved in the data management and analysis work (a minimum of two) undertake initial thematic recording of one case in the sample separately, then come together to check and agree the themes the data has been assigned to. The framework is then amended accordingly where necessary. The researchers develop guidance on using the coding framework.

Ongoing quality assurance of the coding framework

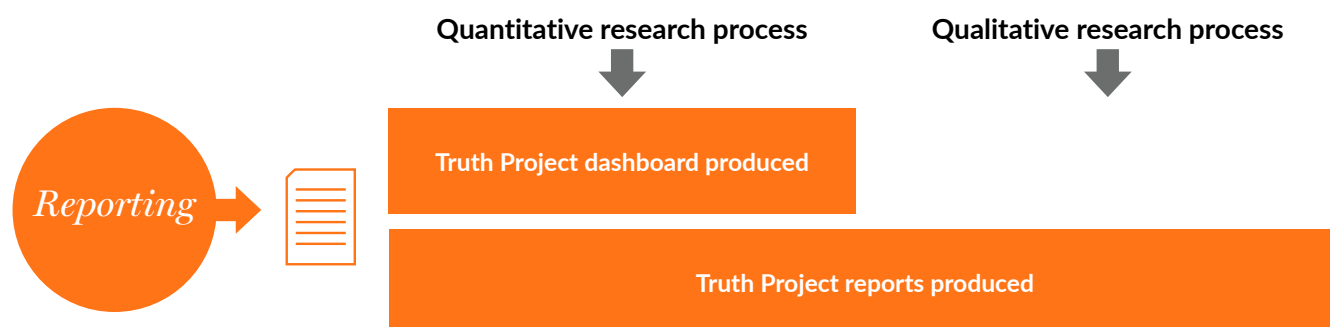
All researchers working on qualitative analysis undergo training in how to use the coding framework and NVivo if required, and refer to the guidance. Discussion continues between researchers throughout the analysis process to agree and resolve any disparities. The significant themes identified are verified and agreed between the researchers and possible interpretations for these are discussed. Where required, frameworks are amended to clarify any agreed changes or revisions. This allows for an ongoing and iterative quality assurance process most suitable for qualitative research methods. Reliability of the data analysis is assured by carefully detailing the approach in the description of methods used, as well as through ensuring consensus is reached between analysts on codes and themes used.

Chapter 6

Reporting

This chapter sets out what outputs are produced from the Truth Project analysis, how research findings are reported from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, how it is ensured that no participant can be identified from any research publications and how the published outputs are quality assured (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Overview of reporting stage



6.1 Research outputs

6.1.1 Research reports

The Truth Project data analysis produces a series of thematic research reports focusing on abuse within particular institution types, including but not limited to: child sexual abuse in religious institutions; child sexual abuse in welfare institutions; and child sexual abuse in schools. The thematic reports are structured around the first main research question (What have victims and survivors shared about their experiences of child sexual abuse and the institutional contexts in which it occurred and was responded to?). Each chapter in a report aims to address the themes (for example, disclosure) and, where possible, answer the specific research sub-questions associated with these. The Inquiry was tasked with understanding the extent to which institutions failed to protect children from sexual abuse. This means the analysis is focused on what Truth Project participants have shared about the institutions connected to the abuse to gain a better understanding of them where possible.

Each of the thematic reports follows the methods set out in this report, and so contain a short summary of these methods and information about the specific samples (both qualitative and quantitative) used for the analysis. Research findings from the two analysis types are grouped together within the reports (where possible) under topic headings. For example, the topic of perpetrators may include quantitative information such as percentage of perpetrators who were male or female, followed by qualitative information such as how the perpetrators' reputation within the community facilitated access to children.

For purposes of comparison within the reports, quantitative data from participants who were sexually abused in the particular institution type the report is focused on are compared with quantitative data relating to experiences of sexual abuse that did not involve that institution type. As mentioned in section 5.1, no tests of statistical significance are conducted as part of the quantitative analysis, so these differences should not be interpreted as being statistically significant and are indicative only.

The number of Truth Project participants' accounts available for analysis is growing as Truth Project sessions continue to be held. The final set of Truth Project participants' information will comprise a large sample of original data that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the evidence base on child sexual abuse. From this information a full analysis of all the research findings will be produced, with a particular focus on answering the second main research question (What similarities and differences are there in victims and survivors' experiences of sexual abuse across time periods, groups and institutions?).

The Inquiry may also wish to use information from Truth Project analysis to deliver further Truth Project specific outputs before the close of the Inquiry.

6.1.2 Truth Project dashboard

As well as research reports, a dashboard of key descriptive statistics from the analysis of Truth Project data is also published. These figures include information about the participants who have come forward to the Truth Project, the abuse experienced, the perpetrator(s) of the abuse, the location and impacts of the abuse, and disclosure of the abuse. The dashboard is updated quarterly and further information will be added as the amount of information from Truth Project sessions and submissions grows.

The Truth Project dashboard is based entirely on descriptive statistics from the quantitative analysis of Truth Project data available at the time of the dashboard's production. For example, the dashboard published in February 2019 includes experiences that were shared between June 2016 and November 2018. Information is presented as percentages in an infographic dashboard format.

6.2 Ensuring anonymity of participants

6.2.1 Quantitative considerations

Research reports contain tables and figures of the Truth Project data. All published tables and figures are checked to ensure no individual can be identified from the available information. Where there is a risk that an individual may be identified in one of the tables or figures, the numbers are suppressed and presented as an asterisk.

6.2.2 Qualitative considerations

Care is taken to ensure that participants remain anonymous in the published Truth Project research outputs. The Research Team follow a number of processes in line with the Inquiry's anonymisation and pseudonymisation policy. Anonymisation processes for Truth Project research (which begin prior to the reporting stage) include the following steps:

- All Truth Project participants are allocated a reference number. This number is used as a pseudonym to identify individuals throughout the research process.
- During the transcription process, all personal names and names of institutions are redacted, as well as any other information that would allow specific individuals or institutions to be identified, for example, specific geographical locations or addresses.

- When using verbatim and indirect quotes from Truth Project participants in the reports, the Research Team check each quote to ensure no information or details are included that may identify the participant.
- Prior to the publication of reports, a member of the Inquiry's legal team also carries out a final redaction check of the overall document.

6.2.3 Participant data at the end of the Inquiry

All reports are published on the Inquiry's website. At the end of the Inquiry, all published research reports from the Truth Project will be publicly available in the National Archives. The full set of anonymised data, comprising the quantitative information, transcripts and written experiences, will be retained for seven years after publication of the full analysis, after which time it will be destroyed. A retention period of seven years was agreed with the Inquiry's Information Management team.

6.3 Quality assurance of Truth Project research outputs

All published research outputs are subject to a review and sign-off process prior to publication. This process offers other colleagues within the Inquiry an opportunity to review drafts of reports and offer feedback. The Inquiry's Chair and Panel along with the Inquiry's Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel are included in this process as well as colleagues from teams such as Policy, Communications and Legal. All research reports are also subject to external peer review by academics and/or other individuals with particular expertise relevant to the specific report. All Truth Project reports and the dashboard are signed off by the Inquiry's Head of Research and Research Director.

Appendices

Appendix A

Glossary

Assistant facilitator	The trained individual who joins the facilitator in hosting Truth Project private sessions and whose role is to capture a record of the session, including completing the summary of experience form and data collection sheet for each session.
Child	A person under the age of 18.
Child physical abuse	Physical abuse of children involves someone deliberately hurting a child, causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. Children may suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped, having objects thrown at them or intentionally being made unwell.
Child protection	Activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
Child sexual abuse	Sexual abuse of children involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, and non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. Child sexual abuse includes child sexual exploitation.
Child sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation of children is a form of child sexual abuse. It involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child receives something, as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.
Codebook	A booklet containing various definitions and guidance that Truth Project assistant facilitators can use to help them fill in data collection sheets.
Coding framework	A set of themes and sub-themes produced to categorise or 'code' information in a systematic way.
Cognitive testing	A process which tests the understandability of consent materials and the way in which individuals use this information to make decisions regarding participation.

Consent for research statement	Defined in this report as the statement Truth Project participants are given which informs them that the information they share may be used to conduct research throughout the life of the Inquiry and in what way their information would be used for research. This enables participants to make an informed choice about whether they are happy for their information to be used in this way, and an opportunity to 'opt-out' of having their information being used for research purposes if they wish.
Data collection sheet	A form that assistant facilitators complete to capture the key details about experiences of child sexual abuse shared by Truth Project participants. It contains eight sections and allows information about child sexual abuse and institutional failure to be captured in an anonymised and standardised way.
Experience summary sheet	A form that assistant facilitators use to record details of an experience of child sexual abuse and/or an institutional failure to protect, shared by a Truth Project participant during private sessions or in the form of a written submission. It captures detailed information about the circumstances of the abuse, the failure of an institution to protect and the impact of the failure to protect.
Facilitator	The trained individual who hosts Truth Project private sessions.
Grooming for child sexual abuse	Building a relationship with a child in order to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.
Institution	Means the same as 'organisation'. That is, a group of people who work together in an organised way for a particular shared purpose. For example, a business, a government department, a school or a church.
Institutional sexual abuse	Sexual abuse perpetrated by someone within a particular setting or service. For example, a teacher in a school or a priest within a church. See also: institution.
Inter-rater reliability	A statistical technique used to ensure the systematic and consistent recording of information. For the purpose of this report, this relates to the recording of information in Truth Project data collection sheets.
Mixed-methods research	A research approach which uses more than one method to try to answer research questions. Often used to refer to studies which use both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
Monitoring form	A form that Truth Project participants are asked to complete either before or after a private session or written submission. The form captures key demographic information about the individual which helps the Inquiry learn more about those people who choose to take part in the Truth Project. It is entirely up to the participant whether or not they wish to provide the information being asked for.
Police referral	Relates to the requirement of the Inquiry to pass on allegations of child abuse it receives to the police.
Prevalence of child sexual abuse	The proportion of a population who have experienced child sexual abuse.

Private sessions	Relates to individuals who share experiences of child sexual abuse with the Inquiry in the form of a session carried out face to face or via telephone.
Qualitative research	Qualitative research uses words and themes, rather than numbers, to answer research questions. Qualitative social research seeks to observe and understand social situations without measuring them using numbers, for example, through interviews with people involved.
Quantitative research	The collection and use of numerical data (such as statistics, proportions, and percentages) or numerical methods to answer research questions. Quantitative social research aims to measure and understand social situations through measuring them in numbers, through methods such as surveys.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protecting children from maltreatment; ● Preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ● Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and ● Taking actions to enable all children to have the best life chances.
Sampling	Defined in this report as the process for selecting which Truth Project participants’ accounts are included in Truth Project data analysis.
Social research	Research which is concerned with questions about society and which uses methods from the social sciences to try to answer these questions.
Support worker	Defined in this report as a trained individual who is able to offer Truth Project participants support during their engagement with the Truth Project if requested, signpost them to support services in their local area and assist them in beginning the process of accessing support.
Trauma-informed approach	A way of working within the Inquiry that ensures that the safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors is prioritised.
Victims and survivors	Defined in this report as individuals who have been sexually abused as children.
Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel (VSCP)	The Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel assists and advises the Inquiry on all aspects of its work. This includes sharing their expertise and knowledge in developing the work of the Inquiry and advising the Inquiry on the way in which it engages with victims and survivors and the public.
Written submissions	Relates to individuals who share experiences of child sexual abuse with the Inquiry in the form of writing.

Appendix B

Overview of research questions, themes and quantitative/qualitative analysis

Themes		Sub-questions	Quantitative analysis	Qualitative analysis (coding framework)
Research question I: What have victims and survivors shared about their experiences of child sexual abuse and the institutional contexts in which it occurred and was responded to?				
1	Background of participant	Who has come forward to the Truth Project to share an experience of child sexual abuse?	Demographic information about the victim and survivor (age, sex, residence, disability, relationship status, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation)	Family and community background Childhood experiences Childhood vulnerabilities Schooling/education
2	Nature of sexual abuse	What do people share about the nature of the child sexual abuse they experienced?	Dates, duration and frequency of sexual abuse Type of sexual behaviour involved in the abuse (sexual behaviour involving contact; sexual behaviour without contact; grooming; exploitation) Multiple forms of abuse (physical, psychological, emotional entrapment, neglect, child labour, witnessing victimisation of others) Information about perpetrator(s) (age, position in institution, whether deceased, relationship to victim or survivor)	Location of abuse Timing Nature of abuse Perpetrator(s) Commencement End of abuse Grooming Victim vulnerability at time of abuse Additional abuse experiences (non-sexual)

Themes		Sub-questions	Quantitative analysis	Qualitative analysis (coding framework)
3	Institutional contexts	<p>How much did institutions know about what was happening?</p> <p>What have victims and survivors said about whether anything could have been done by the institution at the time to prevent the sexual abuse?</p>	<p>Institutional information (type, location)</p> <p>Institutional knowledge of the abuse (including if there were any other known victims)</p>	<p>Characteristics of institution</p> <p>Perceptions of institution</p> <p>Enabling features of institution</p> <p>Protective features of institution</p> <p>Institutional knowledge of abuse at the time</p> <p>Reporting to institutions at the time and outcomes</p> <p>Interaction between institutions</p> <p>Other victims</p> <p>Adult awareness</p> <p>Child awareness</p>
4	Disclosure	<p>What were victims and survivors' experiences of disclosing child sexual abuse (as a child/adult) and what has helped or hindered disclosure?</p> <p>How were disclosures or allegations of child sexual abuse responded to by those within and outside institutions?</p>	<p>Outcomes of reporting or disclosure at the time of the abuse and afterwards</p>	<p>Experience of disclosure (as child/as adult)</p> <p>Impact of disclosure experience (as child/as adult)</p> <p>Facilitators or barriers to disclosure (as child/as adult)</p> <p>Reporting to the police</p> <p>Experience of period between reporting and case conclusion</p> <p>Experience of court</p> <p>Complexity and coordination</p> <p>Other experiences or views regarding the criminal justice system</p>

Themes		Sub-questions	Quantitative analysis	Qualitative analysis (coding framework)
5	Impacts of sexual abuse	What are the impacts of child sexual abuse?	Specific impacts the sexual abuse has had upon the victim and survivor (including mental health, relationships, school and employment, sexual behaviour, direct consequences, criminal behaviour and physical health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts of abuse whilst a child Impacts of abuse whilst an adolescent and in young adulthood Long-term impacts Other impacts Triggers Re-victimisation Coping strategies Hindrances to recovery Aids to recovery Life journey narrative
6	Experiences of support	What has helped or hindered victims and survivors' recovery?	Who participant told about the abuse at the time and/or after the abuse had ended (including people within institutions such as police, or medical personnel, and people outside of institutions such as family or friends)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal support Support from institutions Formal support: Counselling Formal support: Other
7	Victims and survivors' suggestions for change	What changes do victims and survivors suggest to improve child protection and prevent child sexual abuse in the future?	Suggestions for change by Truth Project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Professional and Political Structural Financial Any other suggestions

Themes		Sub-questions	Quantitative analysis	Qualitative analysis (coding framework)
Research question II: What similarities and differences are there in victims and survivors' experiences of sexual abuse across time periods, groups and institutions?				
8	Comparison over time periods	How have victims and survivors' experiences and impacts changed over time?	Breakdowns of quantitative analysis from research question I by time period of abuse	Qualitative analysis from research question I by time period of abuse
9	Comparison over different groups	How have these experiences affected different groups of people in different ways?	Demographic information about the victim and survivor Breakdowns of quantitative analysis from research question I by group characteristic	Qualitative analysis from research question I by group characteristic
10	Comparison over institution type	What are the differences and similarities of victims and survivors' experiences in different institutions?	Breakdowns of quantitative analysis from research question I by institution type	Qualitative analysis from research question I by institution type

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