

United Kingdom

Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation

It takes place mostly in the shadows, but sexual violence against children is happening everywhere, regardless of a country's economic status or its citizens' quality of life. Yet, child sexual abuse and exploitation is preventable, and there are strategies that have been proven successful in reducing it. When government, civil society and the private sector act together, progress is possible.

The Out of the Shadows Index illustrates how countries are responding to the problem, highlighting areas for attention and advancement towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which include a target (16.2) to end all forms of violence against children by 2030.

Background indicators

GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (US\$ at PPP)	44,219
Population (m)	65.5
Population under 19 (%)	23.3
Access to broadband Internet (%)	38.3

Source: EIU



Brief summary

The United Kingdom has demonstrated its commitment to tackling sexual violence against children by introducing laws designed to prevent various forms of child sexual exploitation. Internet protections and data collection could be strengthened.

Where has progress been made?

Online grooming: The United Kingdom has comprehensive legislation specific to aspects of online grooming, according to 2017 data from the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children.

Frontline support workers: Guidelines—and, in some cases, training—are available for teaching professionals and health, social and psychiatric workers who respond to cases of sexual violence against children.

Access to offender support programmes: There are government-funded support programmes in place to assist prospective offenders, as well as those at risk of reoffending.

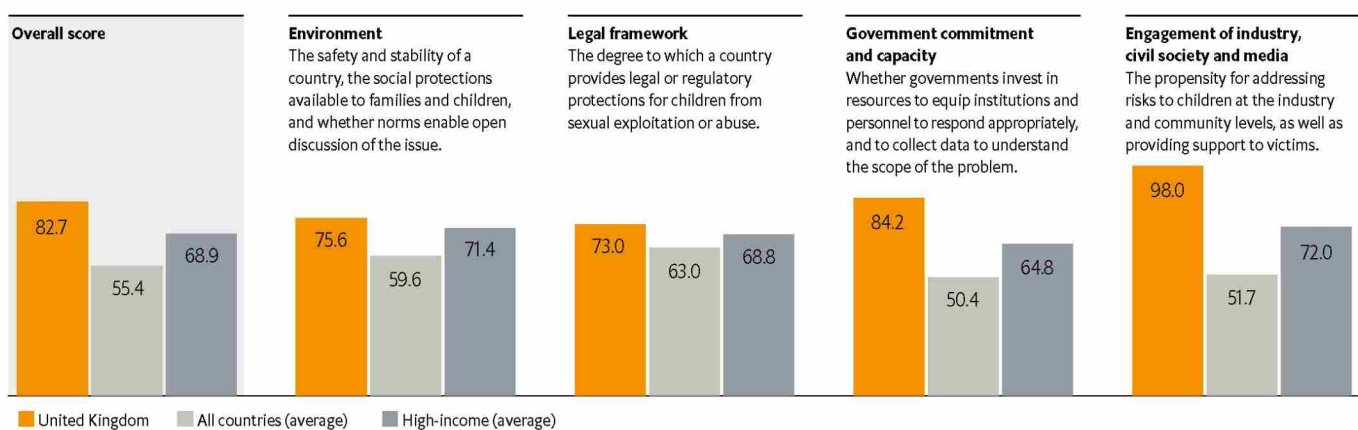
Technology industry engagement: The country is a member of INHOPE, a network committed to eliminating child sexual abuse from the Internet. The Internet Service Providers' Association is also actively involved in removing abusive online content.

What more needs to be done?

Internet protections: The United Kingdom does not have laws requiring Internet service providers to block child sexual abuse and exploitation content, nor does it require records of offending material to be maintained as evidence.

Data collection: While there have been some attempts to estimate the prevalence of child sexual exploitation, there is no official data on the extent of the problem in the United Kingdom.

Index scores



All countries average includes 40 countries across East Asia & the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, North America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. High-income average (as classified by the World Bank) includes 12 countries. Full methodology at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>.

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Indicator	Score / 100	Indicator	Score / 100
1.1) Instability	90.9	2.11) Online grooming	100.0
1.2) Livelihoods	69.8	2.12) Protecting child interests	0.0
1.3) Social protections	77.3	2.13) Internet protections	0.0
1.4) Consumption of stimulants	44.1	3.1) International standards or conventions	80.0
1.5) Societal attitudes	75.4	3.2) National plans and policies	100.0
1.6) Perceptions of violence	84.3	3.3) Resources for legal and enforcement professionals	100.0
1.7) Attitudes to law enforcement	70.1	3.4) Data collection: prevalence	46.2
2.1) Contextual legal framework	71.4	3.5) Reporting	100.0
2.2) Age of consent	100.0	3.6) Government and law enforcement capacity	100.0
2.3) Child sexual offenses	100.0	3.7) Complaint mechanisms	100.0
2.4) Child marriage	0.0	3.8) Access to victim support programmes	70.0
2.5) Child-specific rape laws	83.3	3.9) Access to offender support programmes	100.0
2.6) General sex laws	66.7	4.1) Technology industry engagement	100.0
2.7) Exemptions and qualifiers	100.0	4.2) Travel and tourism industry engagement	100.0
2.8) Purchasing sexual services	100.0	4.3) Frontline support workers	100.0
2.9) Procurement of minors	100.0	4.4) Civil society engagement	90.0
2.10) Visual depiction of minors engaging in sexual activities	100.0	4.5) Media industry engagement	100.0

■ First quartile (75-100)
 ■ Second quartile (50-74.9)
 ■ Third quartile (25-49.9)
 ■ Fourth quartile (0-25)

For a full explanation of indicators, underlying weightings and further details on the country profile, please see the interactive Excel model available at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>.

In addition to the full methodology, an interactive Excel model and a white paper outlining overall findings are available at <https://outoftheshadows.eiu.com>

What is the Out of the Shadows Index?

The Out of the Shadows Index examines how stakeholders are responding to the threat of child sexual abuse and exploitation in 40 countries. It does not attempt to measure the scale of the problem in each country, nor does the index incorporate information on the prevalence of sexual violence against children. It includes data and information from 34 indicators and 132 sub-indicators, grouped into four categories that measure the extent to which countries are acknowledging the problem of sexual violence against children, and whether they are implementing measures to address and prevent it.

While the index can help to highlight areas for attention, existing resources such as the “INSPIRE” package of seven strategies for ending violence against children (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en/) and the WePROTECT Model National Response for preventing and tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse (<https://www.weprotect.org/the-model-national-response/>) offer detailed guidance and support on implementation of solutions.

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