truth project

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

June 2016 – June 2021

Dashboard

This dashboard is based on the accounts of

5,440

of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences with the Truth Project

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse was set up because of serious concerns that some institutions had failed and were continuing to fail to protect children from sexual abuse.

Our Truth Project offers victims and survivors of child sexual abuse the opportunity to share their experiences and be respectfully heard, and helps us to better understand child sexual abuse.

The Truth Project has heard the experiences of thousands of victims and survivors, and every experience is unique. This dashboard includes the experiences of those who were abused within a family, an institution or other context.

We have produced this dashboard as part of our research programme. It provides information from the Truth Project about:

- the victims and survivors of child sexual abuse
- the nature of the abuse that they experienced
- where the sexual abuse took place and who the perpetrators were
- the impacts of child sexual abuse, and
- whether those victims and survivors told anyone about the abuse.

We would like to thank all of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences with the Truth Project.

You can find out more about the Truth Project, and read some of the experiences shared with us, on the Truth Project website: **truthproject.org.uk/ i-will-be-heard**

To find out more about our research programme, please visit our website: **www.iicsa.org.uk**

Characteristics of those who have taken part in the Truth Project

Current gender of victim and survivor

7 in 10 of those taking part in the Truth Project so far have been female.
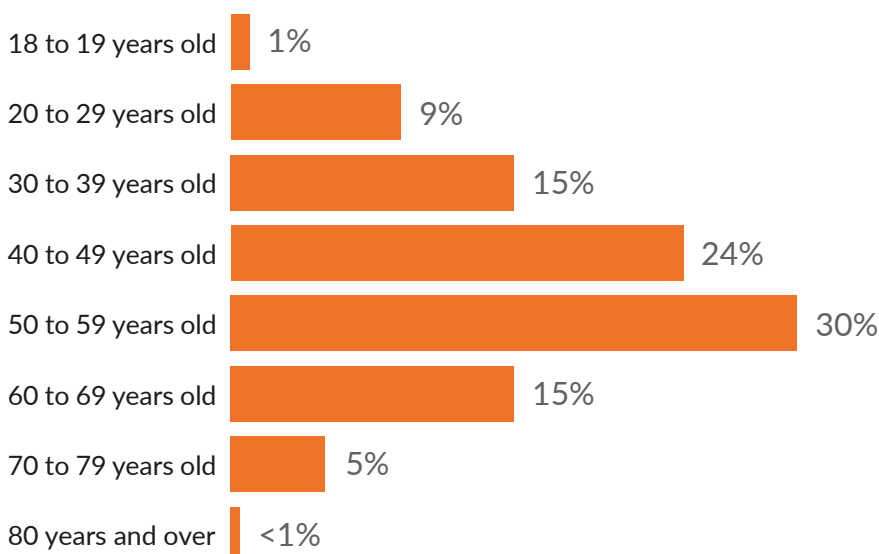
70%
Female

30%
Male

<1% Other / Prefer not to say

Age when took part

The Truth Project hears from adult victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. Those taking part so far have ranged in age from 18 to 87. The most common age for those sharing their experience is between 50 and 59.

Age	Percentage
18 to 19 years old	1%
20 to 29 years old	9%
30 to 39 years old	15%
40 to 49 years old	24%
50 to 59 years old	30%
60 to 69 years old	15%
70 to 79 years old	5%
80 years and over	<1%

Where percentages do not add up to 100 this is due to rounding.

Ethnic background

Around 9 in 10 people so far have been from a white ethnic background.
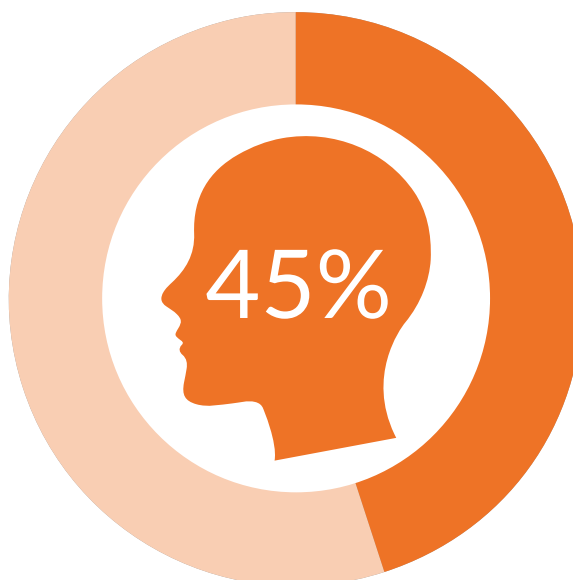
90%
White

10%
Black, Asian, ethnic minority

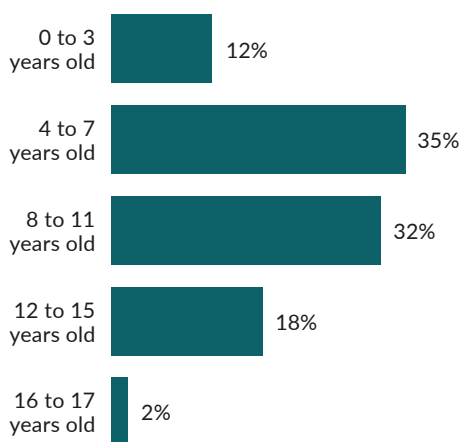## Illnesses or conditions that affect daily life

Nearly half of victims and survivors told us that they have an illness or condition that affects their everyday lives.

45%

Nature of abuse experienced

Age when sexual abuse started

Child sexual abuse means sexual abuse that a person experienced before the age of 18. The majority of victims and survivors first experienced child sexual abuse when they were primary-school age.
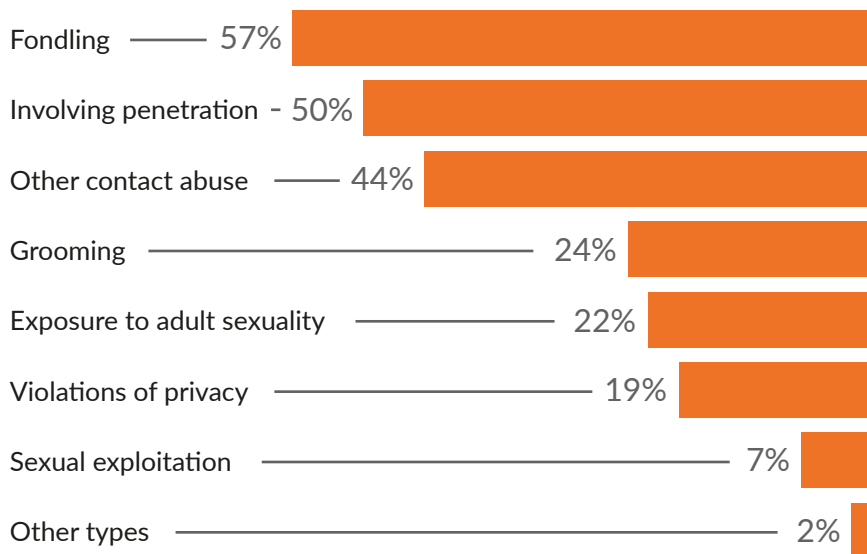
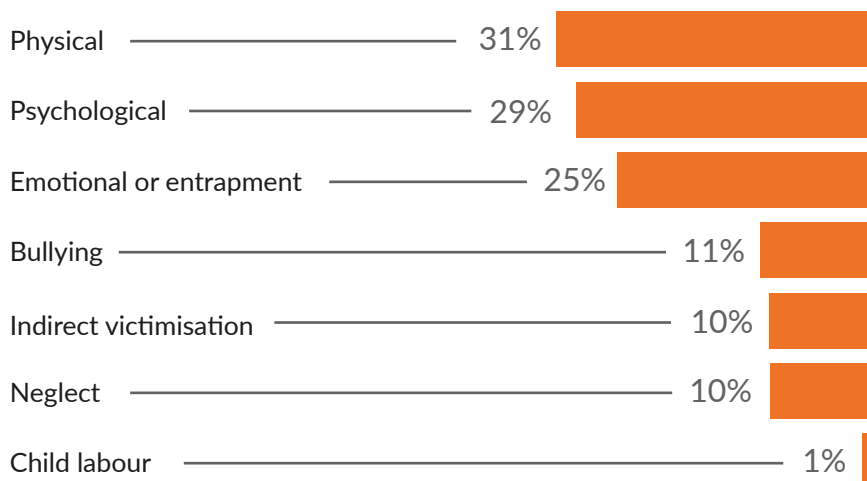| Age	%
0 to 3 years old	12%
4 to 7 years old	35%
8 to 11 years old	32%
12 to 15 years old	18%
16 to 17 years old	2%

Sexual abuse experienced

Over half of victims and survivors told us that they had experienced sexual abuse involving fondling, and half experienced abuse involving penetration.

Type	%
Fondling	57%
Involving penetration	50%
Other contact abuse	44%
Grooming	24%
Exposure to adult sexuality	22%
Violations of privacy	19%
Sexual exploitation	7%
Other types	2%

Some victims and survivors told us about experiencing more than one type of sexual abuse, so the percentages add up to more than 100. There are definitions of these types of sexual abuse on page 7.

52%

of victims and survivors told us about experiencing other forms of abuse in addition to sexual abuse

Other forms of abuse experienced

The most commonly experienced forms of abuse were physical and psychological abuse.

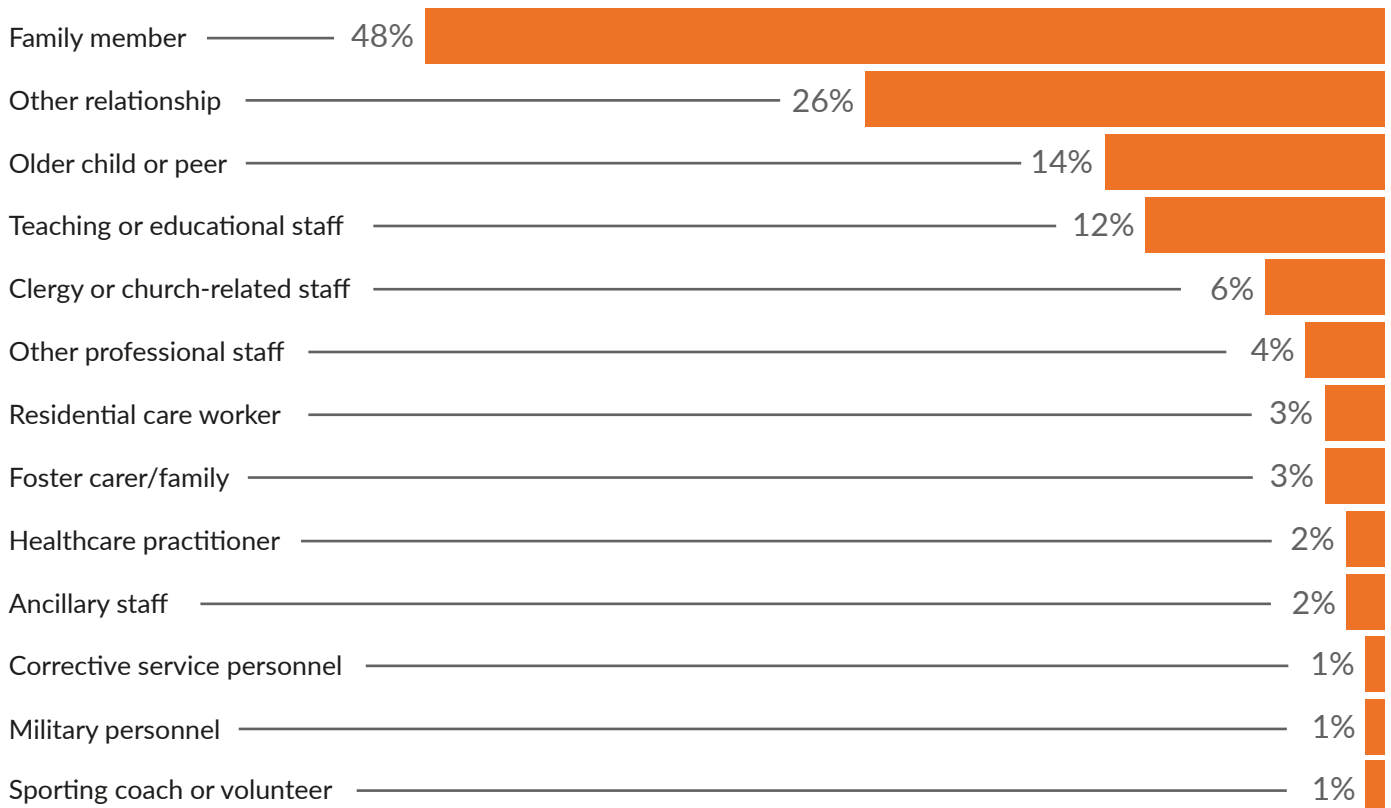| Form	%
Physical	31%
Psychological	29%
Emotional or entrapment	25%
Bullying	11%
Indirect victimisation	10%
Neglect	10%
Child labour	1%

Some victims and survivors told us about experiencing more than one other form of abuse, so the percentages add up to more than 100. There are definitions of these other forms of abuse on page 7.

Contexts in which child sexual abuse took place

Victims and survivors may have experienced child sexual abuse in a family, institution or other context. Some of the victims and survivors told us they were let down by someone in authority.

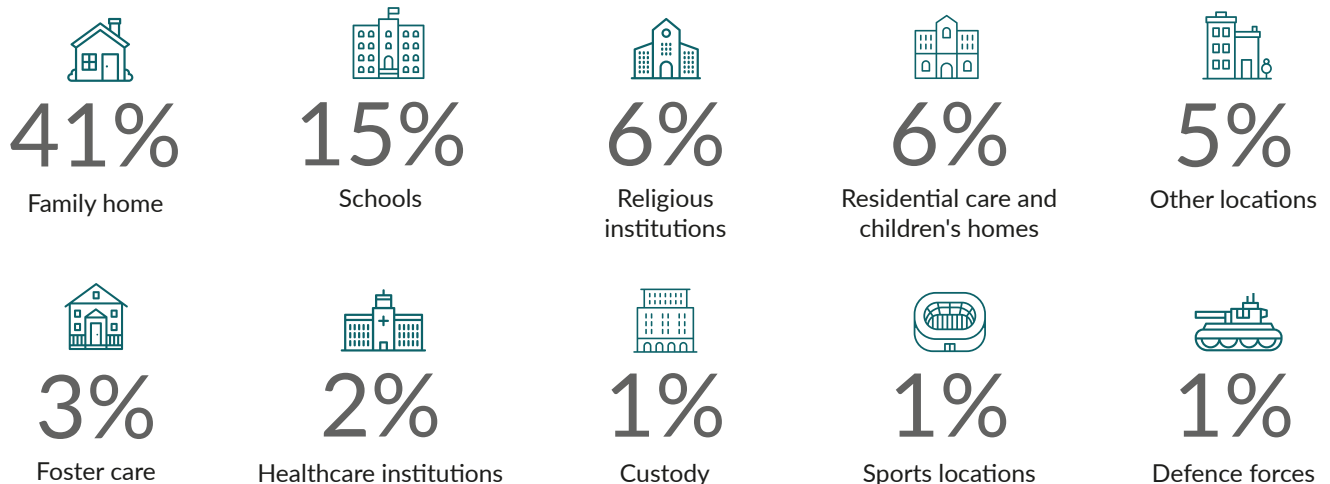## Relationship of the perpetrator to victim and survivor

Almost half of victims and survivors told us that the perpetrator of the child sexual abuse was a family member.

Relationship	Percentage
Family member	48%
Other relationship	26%
Older child or peer	14%
Teaching or educational staff	12%
Clergy or church-related staff	6%
Other professional staff	4%
Residential care worker	3%
Foster carer/family	3%
Healthcare practitioner	2%
Ancillary staff	2%
Corrective service personnel	1%
Military personnel	1%
Sporting coach or volunteer	1%

Some victims and survivors reported being abused by more than one category of perpetrator, so the percentages add up to more than 100. There are definitions of these perpetrator groups on page 7.

Where child sexual abuse took place

35% of victims and survivors who have shared their experience with the Truth Project told us that at least one incident of sexual abuse they experienced took place in an institution, outside the family home. Again, aside from the family home, schools are the most frequently reported location so far.

41%	15%	6%	6%	5%
Family home	Schools	Religious institutions	Residential care and children's homes	Other locations

3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Foster care	Healthcare institutions	Custody	Sports locations	Defence forces

The impact of child sexual abuse experienced by victims and survivors
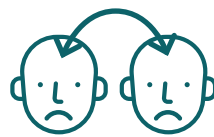
Child sexual abuse can have short-term and long-term effects. Everyone is unique, and so the impact they experience is also varied. **94%** of victims and survivors told us they had experienced some impact from the child sexual abuse. Some victims and survivors reported more than one impact, so percentages will add up to more than 100.

Impact on
mental health

88%

The most commonly reported is **depression**, which **37%** of all victims and survivors reported experiencing.

Impact on
relationships

54%

The most commonly reported is **trust and intimacy difficulties**, which **37%** of all victims and survivors reported experiencing.

Impact on
school or employment

42%

The most commonly reported is **academic difficulties**, which **16%** of all victims and survivors reported experiencing.

Impact on
sexual behaviour

31%

The most commonly reported is **avoidance or phobic reactions to sexual intimacy**, which **13%** of all victims and survivors reported experiencing.

Impact on
physical health

27%

The most commonly reported is **musculoskeletal**, which **12%** of all victims and survivors reported experiencing.

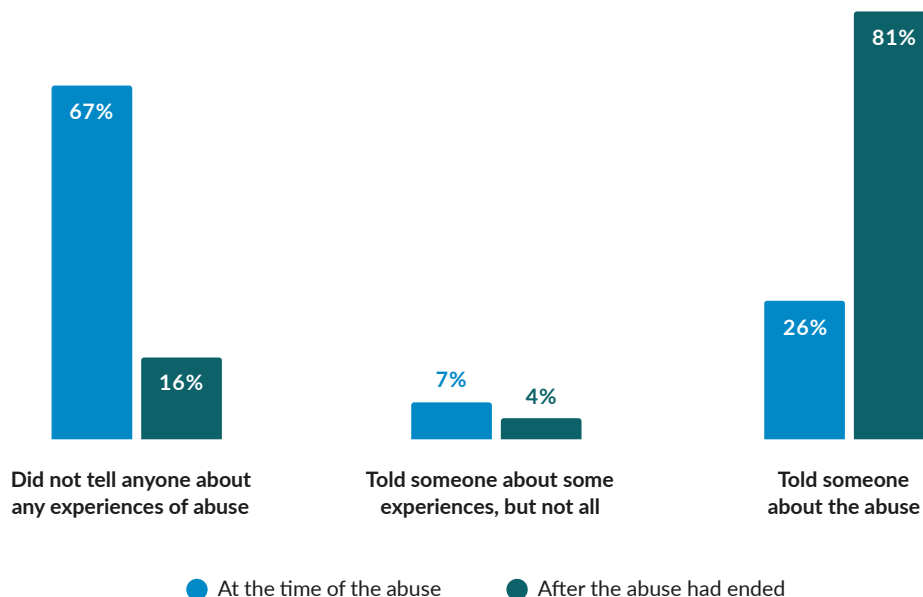**Criminal behaviour**

9%

The most commonly reported is **committing minor offences**, which **5%** of all victims and survivors reported.

Telling people about child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is often very difficult for children to talk about, and so can go unreported or even unidentified for many years. Over time, society's and individual attitudes towards topics that may be considered taboo, such as child sexual abuse, are likely to change, so people may feel more able to share their experience later in life. We found that the proportion of victims and survivors who talked about their experience after the sexual abuse ended was much higher than those who did so at the time.

The majority of victims and survivors told us that they **had not told anyone** about the child sexual abuse **at the time it was happening**.

The majority of victims and survivors told us that they **had told someone** about at least some of the sexual abuse they experienced **after it ended**.

67%

16%

7%

4%

26%

81%

**Did not tell anyone about
any experiences of abuse**

**Told someone about some
experiences, but not all**

**Told someone
about the abuse**

● At the time of the abuse   ● After the abuse had ended

1 in 10 people who have taken part in the Truth Project so far have told us that they shared an experience of child sexual abuse for the first time through the Truth Project.

10%

For more information on sharing experiences with the Truth Project visit
https://www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard

Notes

This dashboard only includes information where victims and survivors shared their own experiences (some people have taken part in the Truth Project on behalf of victims and survivors) and agreed to their accounts being used for research purposes.

Victims and survivors can share as much or as little as they want about their experience. There are no specific questions. This means that those taking part do not always provide information for each area reported in this dashboard.

Our findings cannot be applied to the general population of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

Nature of sexual abuse experienced

Definitions of the different types of sexual abuse experienced by victims and survivors

- **Fondling** relates to touching, masturbating or kissing a child's genitals or making a child fondle an adult's genitals.
- **Involving penetration** relates to vaginal, anal or digital penetration, cunnilingus, fellatio.
- **Other contact abuse** relates to sexual behaviour that involved contact but not penetration such as prolonged kissing, cuddling, french kissing, excessive touching.
- **Grooming** includes both online and physical world grooming for the purposes of sexual contact.
- **Violations of privacy** relates to forcing a child to undress or spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom.
- **Exposure to adult sexuality** includes exposure to adult sexuality online or in the physical world.
  - *Online* relates to images, voice, text, gaming.
  - *In the physical world* relates to performing sexual acts in front of a child, exposing genitals, child to be nude for the sexual gratification of the adult, videotaping, or filming of children with the intent to create sexual stimulation.
- **Sexual exploitation** includes sexual exploitation occurring online or in the physical world.
  - *The physical world* here relates to selling a child's services as a prostitute, having a child perform in pornography or exchanging or purchasing child pornography.

Perpetrator groups

This is how we have defined certain groups of perpetrators

- **Other relationship** refers to, for example, friends of the family, known (or trusted) members of the community, media personalities and MPs / Welsh Assembly Members.
- **Teaching or educational staff** refers to teachers, dormitory or house masters and tutors.
- **Other professional staff** refers to professionals coming into contact with children, not captured in other categories. This includes medical practitioners, corrective service personnel, social workers and police.
- **Foster carer/family** refers to people with caring responsibilities towards the child, including foster carers and their family members, also pre-school and after-school carers.
- **Sporting coach or volunteer** includes sports coaches, Scout/Guide leaders and youth workers.
- **Ancillary staff** relates to staff working in an institution/ organisation but with a role that provides support necessary for the operation of the institution, for example gardeners, cleaners, bus drivers, caretakers.

Other forms of abuse experienced

Definitions of other forms of abuse experienced by victims and survivors

- **Physical abuse** relates to experiencing being punched, slapped, pushed, shoved, pinned, choked, kicked, dragged by hair.
- **Psychological abuse** relates to experiencing general fear, fear of abuse continuing, humiliation, strip searches, solitary confinement, lack of intellectual stimulation.
- **Emotional abuse/entrapment**
  - *Emotional abuse* relates to the ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child.
  - *Entrapment* covers all those factors which make it impossible to end the relationship. It may also relate to experiencing exchanging privileges for sexual favours.
- **Indirect victimisation** includes witnessing the abuse of others, or the victimisation of child sexual abuse victims and survivors as a result of an insensitive, unhelpful or negative societal response to the disclosure or identification of the abuse. Such a response could come from the victim's close network (e.g. family and friends) and/or from the wider system (e.g. the criminal justice system or health services).
- **Bullying** is defined as repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, sex or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability. Bullying can take many forms including physical assault, teasing, making threats, name calling, cyber bullying.
- **Neglect** includes experiencing deprivation of basic necessities, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- **Child labour** relates to children working before they have reached the lawful minimum age (16 years of age in UK).

Where child sexual abuse took place

This is how we have defined institutions where child sexual abuse took place

- **Healthcare** includes settings such as hospitals, GPs and dentists.
- **Other institution** relates to any type of institution not captured by the other overarching categories.

Impacts

This is how we have grouped impacts experienced by victims and survivors

Participants often told us about the impacts of child sexual abuse on their lives. We have grouped these impacts into the 6 overarching categories shown.

- **Mental health** is made up of 23 subcategories.
- **Relationships** is made up of 4 subcategories.
- **School/employment** is made up of 9 subcategories.
- **Sexual behaviour** is made up of 7 subcategories.
- **Physical health** is made up 13 subcategories.
- **Criminal behaviour** is made up of 4 subcategories.