

# Learning Together to Safeguard the City

26<sup>th</sup> November – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015

## Children & Young People who display Harmful Sexual Behaviours



**Safe in the city**  
Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership

Brighton & Hove  
**SAB**  
Safeguarding  
Adults Board

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(Training, Assessment,  
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# What we will cover:

- The extent of HSB displayed by children and young people
- Distinguish between 'normal' and harmful behaviours
- The reasons why children and young people develop HSB
- Online Sexual Behaviours & Pornography
- Assessments – models and approaches
- Interventions – therapy, treatment and systemic issues

# Terminology

- Children and young people with
  - abusive sexual behaviour
  - problematic sexual behaviour
- Umbrella term: harmful sexual behaviour

# A Developing Level of Knowledge

- Most knowledge has emerged since the late 80s – relative infancy
- Initially focus was adopting adult interventions
- Research and practice has shown there is a need for more developmentally sensitive approaches
- Large body of clinical knowledge, but small number of rigorous studies
- ‘Knowledge pile’ rather than ‘knowledge base’
- Indicative rather than conclusive

# Scale of the Problem

- Young people who commit HSB are recognised as causing significant harm: high proportion of sexual offences committed.
- Studies differ – estimates from a fifth up to a half of all sexual abuse
- Nearly half of all adult sex offenders begin harming sexually in adolescence.

# Overview of Sexual Offending (2013)

- 5977 offenders found guilty of sexual offences in 2011
- 491 were young people (8.2% of all convictions)
- In 2005 figure was 20.1%, so a decrease of 11.9%
- But overall figure has increased by 25% in that period

# Scale of the Problem (2)

- Criminal statistics only record a minority of sexual offences
- A general population study found 65.9% of contact sexual abuse reported by children and young people was perpetrated by under 18 year olds
- But overall rate of coerced sexual acts involving children fell between 1998 and 2009. (Radford et al 2011)





# A Continuum Sexual Behaviours (Hackett, 2010)

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected	Single instance	Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	Victimisation	Physically violent
Socially acceptable	Socially acceptable in peer group	No overt elements of victimisation	Misuse of power	Highly intrusive
Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	Consent issues may be unclear	Coercion and force used	Instrumental violence
Shared decision making	Generally consensual, reciprocal	May lack equal power	Informed consent lacking	Sadism
		Levels of compulsivity	Elements of expressive violence	

# The Importance of Context

- Deciding where a child's sexual behaviour fits on the continuum depends on:
  - Type of behaviour demonstrated
  - The child's developmental stage / age / ability
  - The child's family / environmental situation

# Developmental context

- Sexual behaviours may have different motivations and significance across developmental stages
- Perceived appropriateness of sexual behaviours is culturally and historically influenced

# Sexual Behaviour: Children Under 12

- Study by Friedrich et al (1998)
- More frequent: self stimulating, exhibitionism, behaviour related to personal boundaries
- Less frequent were more intrusive, adult nature
- Inverse relationship between sexual behaviour and age – peak at 5

- Sexual behaviours seem largely exploratory
- Part of a child's curiosity about his/her and other's bodies
- As the child grows curiosity get satisfied
- Develop more knowledge of social expectation and appropriate behaviour
- So largely diminishes in middle childhood before re-emerging in adolescence, when it takes on new meaning and significance

# Healthy Sexual Behaviours

(AIM Project, 2014)

- Mutual
- Consensual
- Choice
- Exploratory
- No intent to cause harm
- Fun
- Humorous
- No Power differentials

# Problematic Sexual Behaviours

(AIM project, 2014)

- Not age appropriate
- One off incident/low key
- Peer pressure
- Spontaneous
- Self directed
- Lack of understanding
- Other children uncomfortable but not scared
- Carers concerned and supportive



# Harmful Sexual Behaviours

(AIM Project, 2014)

- Not age appropriate
- Elements of planning, secrecy, force or coercion
- Power differentials
- Response of others, e.g. fear, anxiety
- Response of child, e.g. fear, aggression
- Child blames others
- Frequent / increasing incidents
- Compulsive / impulsive
- Other difficult behaviours

- Sexual health charity Brook have an online sexual behaviour traffic light tool:
- <http://www.brook.org.uk/old/index.php/traffic-light-tool-0-to-5>

# Range of abusive acts

- Sexual penetration
- Touching sexual body parts
- Exposure of sexual organs
- Intrusive observation
- Stealing underwear
- Masturbating into others clothes
- Obscene / sexual communication
- Accessing child sexual abuse images ('child pornography')
- Facilitating sexual behaviour by others

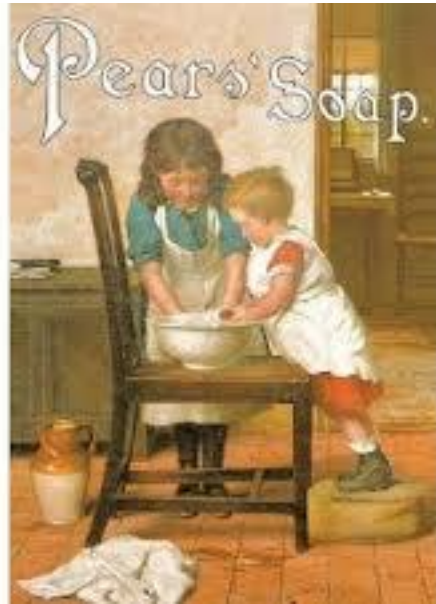
# Causes of HSB

- The majority of children who are sexually abused do not go on to sexually abuse
- But a significant proportion of young people who sexually harm have been sexually abused (25- 65%)
- Sexually abusive experience alone is a poor single explanation
- Other forms of victimisation – emotional and physical abuse – are as significant
- Significant proportion have multiple disadvantages
- ‘the etiologically significant factor in the emergence of sexually abusive sexuality is the exposure to trauma not sexual abuse per se’ (Gray and colleagues 1999)

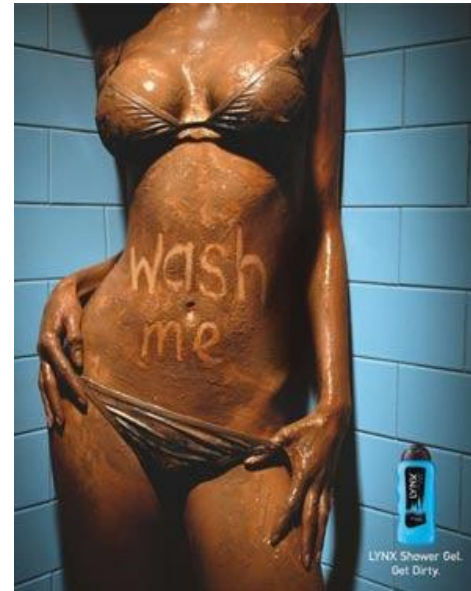
# Internet, Pornography and Sexting

- But first...
  - Sex is in the very fabric of our society

1960



2013



1970

Munsingwear stay-sized cotton T-shirts cuts shrinkage to less than 1%. No neckband sag. Munsingwear briefs are the only briefs with the scientifically designed Male Pouch for health and comfort. Fine combed cotton briefs \$1.25 T-shirt \$1.50



**M**unsingwear  
Minneapolis 1, Minnesota

Skivler [www.munsingwear.com](http://www.munsingwear.com)

2014



# The Progression of Pornography

- “If you were a teenager in the 90s, your porn came from three trusty sources: magazines shamefully bought from the newsagent and hidden inside a newspaper on your way home, those soft porn B-movies on late-night Channel 5 and – when utter, unavoidable desperation hit – the lingerie section of the Argos catalogue... That shift to online didn't only make us pick up on fetishes that older generations went to their graves unaware of and normalise hard-core smut that would have Mary Whitehouse spinning furiously in her grave, but also made porn instantly more accessible, driving up viewers' demand” (Walters, 2013)



“Basically... porn is everywhere” (2013)

- **pornography can affect children and young people’s sexual beliefs:**
  - unrealistic attitudes about sex and relationships
  - more sexually permissive attitudes
  - greater acceptance of casual sex
  - beliefs that women are sex objects
  - more frequent thoughts about sex

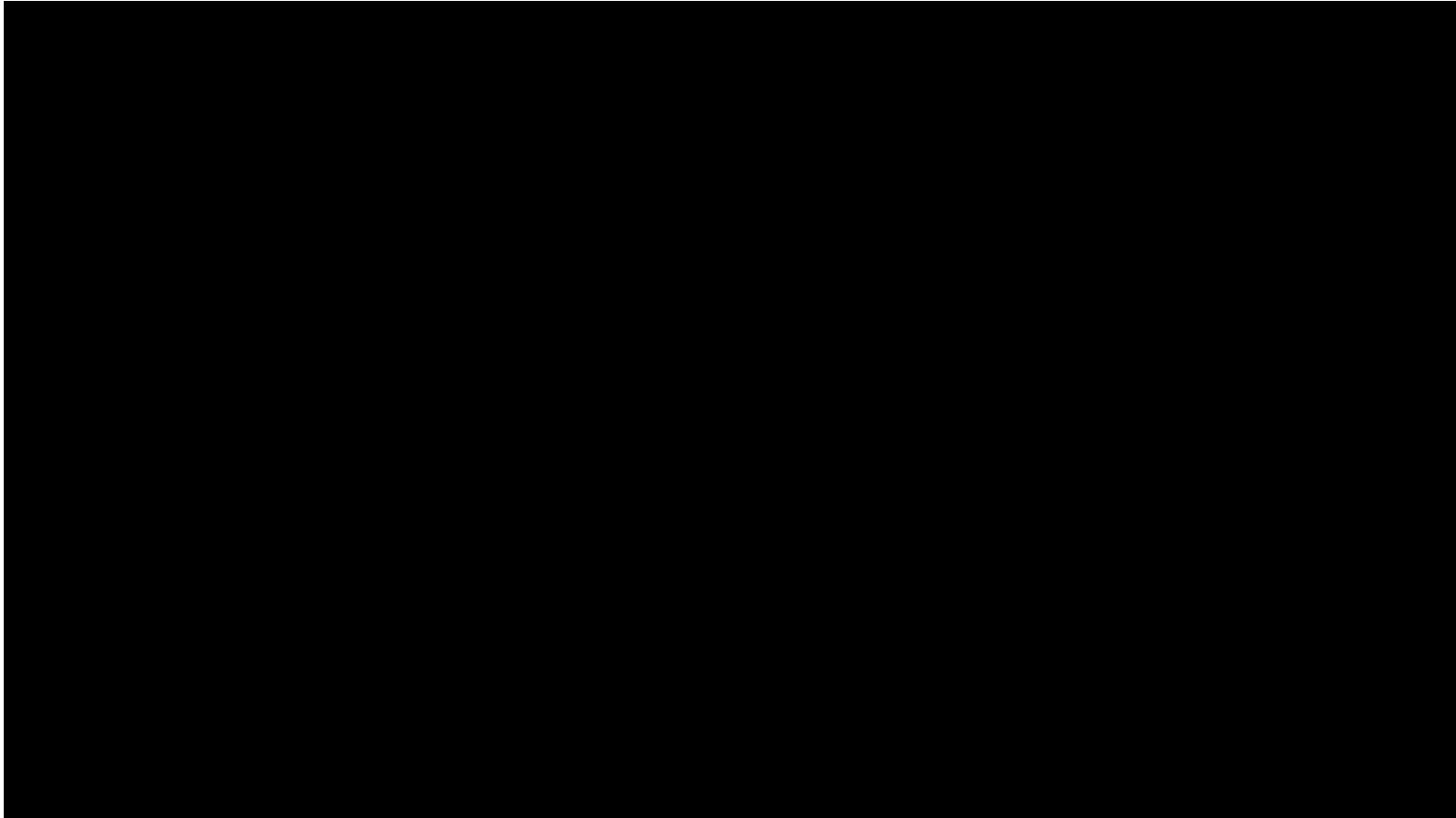
- sexual uncertainty (e.g. the extent to which children and young people are unclear about their sexual beliefs and values)
- and less progressive gender role attitudes (e.g. male dominance and female submission)
- children and young people learn from and may change their behaviour due to exposure and access to pornography.

# Pornography has a link to children and young people's engagement in "risky behaviours"

- e.g. engagement in sexual practices from a younger age, engaging in riskier sexual behaviours such as unprotected anal or oral sex, and the involvement of drugs and alcohol in sex
- However, the majority of the research that has found this is cross-sectional and/or correlational, therefore causal relationships cannot be established

# Cyberbullying and Sexting

- **Cyberbullying:** the use of the internet and other mobile technologies to harass, threaten or harm other people, usually in a deliberate and sustained manner
- **Sexting:** 'sex' + 'texting' - the sending sexually explicit messages and/or photographs primarily between mobile phones
- **Peer-Peer Grooming:** the actions of adolescents in particular in establishing trust with another child or young person in order to *facilitate and maintain* abuse or exploitation either by themselves or others



#LearningTogether #Safeguarding #EveryonesResponsibility



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# Risk assessment and tools

- Clinically based assessments
  - Subjective view of the practitioner about an individual, within the practitioner's broader experience of work with other similar individuals
- Actuarial models of assessment
  - Predicting behaviour on the basis of statistical evidence about how others have behaved in similar situations

# Assessment Tools

- No empirically validated model
- But promising developments
- J-SOAP-II, ERASOR
- AIM2 & AIM for U12s
  - Research guided clinical judgement model
  - Strengths and concerns assessed
  - Static and dynamic

# Four key domains of AIM2

- **Offence specific factors:** offending history, nature of sexual behaviour, previous offence history
- **Developmental history:** child's own abuse and trauma, early life experiences, behavioural issues
- **Family:** family attitudes and beliefs, sexual boundaries, parental competence
- **Environment:** opportunities for further offending, degree of community support/hostility
  - **An holistic assessment**



<b>Harmful</b>	<b>Developmental</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>Environmental</b>

# Static and dynamic factors

- Static:
  - Features of child's presentation which are unchangeable and historical: e.g. whether abused themselves, gender, age at which first abused
  - Useful in predicting longer term risk but cannot be used to assess changes in level of risk

- **Dynamic:**
  - Features of child's presentation which are open to change: e.g. impulsivity, self-esteem, degree of social isolation, attitudes and beliefs
  - These are the factors which interventions seek to target and change

# Predictive of Recidivism (young people)

(Griffin and colleagues, 2008)

- Previous contact abusive behaviour
- Abused a stranger
- Threatened / used violence during abuse
- Any general conviction
- Peer group is pro-criminal
- Impulsive behaviours
- Difficulties emotionally regulating
- Most important person in young person's life has not addressed their own traumatic /problematic background

# Predictive of Desistance (young people)

(Griffin and colleagues, 2008)

- Healthy physical development
- Above average intelligence
- Positive talents / leisure activities
- Protective attitude of the most significant adult
- Positive emotional coping strategies of most significant adult
- At least one emotional confidant
- Positive evaluation from school/work
- Positive relationships with professionals

# Parental Responses

- Disbelief & denial, shock & alarm, anger & rage, guilt & anguish, depression & loss.
- The challenge for workers is to enable parents to manage the transitions from shock, disbelief, denial to acceptance and responsibility taking.

# Child/Young Person's Response

- Shame
- Anger
- Fear
- Disempowerment
- Avoidance
- Hostility

- ‘The young person may anticipate his time in the intervention programme as yet another chapter in the list of his experiences of injustice and marginalisation...’
- ‘So we should not be surprised if they appear irresponsible and unmotivated.’
- (Jenkins 2007)



# Interventions

- Interventions should
  - follow on from assessment
  - respond holistically
  - be sensitive to child's developmental stage
- They should target abuse-specific and wider aspects of functioning, and family and social circumstances

# Interventions

- **Cognitive behavioural**
  - Interconnection between thoughts, feelings and behaviours
  - Structured, goal focussed, collaborative
- **Multi-systemic**
  - Link between identified problems and their broader family, educational, peer and social context
- **Strengths based and focus of resilience**
  - Develop broader life skills and social competence
  - Good Lives Model and restorative justice

# Key implications for practice.

1. Children and young people account for a significant proportion of sexual abuse coming to the attention of professionals.
2. Children's sexual behaviour exists on wide continuum.
3. Children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours need to have their behaviours placed into context and holistically understood.

4. Interventions should balance holding the young person to account for their own actions on the one hand and being sensitive to their past experiences on the other.
  
5. Interventions need to be focused on the child's living and social environment as much as on individual treatment.

# Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility

Thank you for attending this **Learning Together to Safeguard the City** event. We hope that you found it informative and that you will be able use what you have learnt to in your practice to improve outcomes for people in Brighton & Hove and help keep them safe.

Please let us know what you thought about this session by completing our quick survey at:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/LearningTogether2015](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LearningTogether2015)

or completing one of our postcards before you leave



Your feedback will help us plan future Learning Events and will be considered in the **Learning Together to Safeguard the City** fortnight Final Event



## What can the **Safeguarding** Boards teach one another?

10 December 2015, 2pm – 4pm, The Great Hall, Moulsecoomb

Join us for our finale event which will pull together the themes the **Learning Together to Safeguard the City** activities. It will be an opportunity to reflect on the subjects, issues/ barriers and areas of good practice that have been identified during the fortnight's eclectic events.

This is an opportunity for managers, frontline practitioners and professionals with an interest in developing and enhancing safeguarding to come together with senior managers and strategic leads.

The event will be hosted by Graham Bartlett, the Chairperson of the **Local Safeguarding Children Board** and **Safeguarding Adults Board**, and will consider the ways in which the two boards can learn from, and influence, each other to help make Brighton & Hove a safer city to live in and be part of.

[www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk](http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk)

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