A STUDY OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED YOUNG PEOPLE

Final Report

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&

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</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the report

1.1 This report provides an account of a study of sexual exploitation of looked after and accommodated young people in and around the Glasgow area. The fieldwork for the study was carried out from December 2004 to mid-February 2005. The study consists of a sample of 28 young people, fourteen males and fourteen females. It involved gathering retrospective data from the young people by way of a semi-structured interview questionnaire and a psychometric measure.

1.2 This research was jointly funded by Barnardo’s and the Glasgow Child Protection Committee who had the previous year carried out a study that sought to obtain information from adults working with young people to find out what they knew about sexual exploitation of looked after young people. This study is in effect the next stage of finding out information from young people regarding their experience(s) and/or knowledge of sexual exploitation.

Definition and meaning of sexual exploitation

1.3 There are several meanings that can be inferred by the term sexual exploitation. During the initial consultation with the young people a definition of sexual exploitation was conveyed to them. For the purposes of this study, the definition that was used was:

   The provision of sexual services in exchange for some form of payment, such as money, drink, drugs or consumed goods, or even a bed and a roof over one’s head for a night (Greene, 1992).

1.4 In some cases there may not be an exchange of material goods and the child or young person may not recognise that they are being sexually exploited. Furthermore, the relationship will often be characterised by coercion and intimidation (Scottish Executive, 2003).

Main Aims & objectives

1.5 The main aim of the study was to obtain the views of looked after young people regarding any knowledge or direct experience that they might have of sexual exploitation. Other information that has been found to be relevant in relation to young people becoming involved in sexual exploitation was also sought.

1.6 Particular objectives were to explore:

   - Young people’s histories and patterns of running away
   - Young people’s knowledge or experience(s) that they might have had regarding sexual exploitation, such as how young people are approached and targeted
   - Why young people felt that they or someone else had been targeted sexually
   - Young people’s suggestions as to how they can keep themselves safe as well as increasing their awareness of this issue
   - Difficulties faced by young people when disclosing this type of information
• If a relationship exists between young people’s self-report of mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, and self-harming behaviour) and them becoming involved in at risk behaviour, specifically sexual exploitation.

1.7 Several hypotheses were formulated. It was hypothesised that certain factors would increase the likelihood of young people becoming involved in more at risk activities, namely sexual exploitation. In addition, it was likely that the young people’s level of vulnerability would be greater if their coping strategies were less effective, such as having higher dissociative tendencies.

1.8 The introduction provides an overview of the research procedures, the composition of the sample, ethical procedures, gaining the young people’s consent and the interview process. The main body of the report consists of the research findings. This is followed by a discussion, conclusions and set of recommendations.

Procedures

Ethical Procedures

1.9 The study had already received ethical approval from Barnardo’s research board, and prior to commencing the fieldwork a research proposal was submitted to the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted after some minor amendments were made.

Fieldwork

1.10 The contact with agencies commenced in September 2004 and the fieldwork started in mid-December 2004. It was carried out on a part-time basis for 2 months, until mid-February 2005. Once ethical approval was gained a number of residential schools and units were approached regarding the research and asked to take part. Within the tight time scales of the research study a lot of effort was made to go to as many as possible of the schools and units that had agreed to help with the study. By the end of the 2-month period, 28 young people had taken part in the study. The initial 14 interviews were conducted jointly, by a project worker from Barnardo’s Street Team along with a research fellow from the Glasgow Centre for the Child & Society, University of Glasgow, who carried out the final interviews alone.

Gaining the young people’s consent

1.11 An initial consultation meeting was held with each of the young people (although on one occasion this was done in a group) and this tended to last for approximately 10-20 minutes. Given the personal nature of the study the young people were met with on an individual basis, and young people were asked if they would like to have a member of staff present but none of the young people took up this offer. During the initial meeting it was explained to the young people that all of the information obtained during the interview would be anonymised and remain confidential. It was also emphasised that if a young person shared any information that suggested that they were at risk of harm or someone else, this would need to be shared with an appropriate person but that this would not happen without the young person being consulted about it.
The main aims of the study were explained to the young people and the meaning of sexual exploitation was also conveyed (please see definition that was provided, p. 1). It was added that the research sought to gain knowledge and or direct experiences that young people had about this. Other areas of the study were also explained, in relation to young people’s background and mental health problems and their history of running away. The young people were made aware that the interview could take anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour or longer and that following the interview they would also be given a psychometric measure to complete, the Adolescent Dissociative Experiences Scale\(^1\) (A-DES), that asks questions in relation to ways of dealing with different experiences. Young people were informed that if they were asked questions that they did not want to answer that they did not have to, and that they could withdraw from the study whenever they wished. The young people were also told that they would be asked if they would not object to their interview being tape-recorded.

The young people were told that as a way of thanking them for taking part in the study that they would be given a gift voucher. If the young person was okay with everything they heard and was willing to take part their written consent was obtained and an interview date was arranged. Young people were also informed about the free and confidential joint service that was being provided by Barnardo’s Street Team and CHILDREN 1ST and following the interview all of the young people were given their details and number.

Participants

In all, 47 young people were approached to take part in the study (see Table 1.1). Of these, 5 refused outright, 5 agreed but then withdrew at the time of the first interview, 2 agreed and then refused to take part and then changed their mind again, and two young people had agreed to take part but due to time constraints these interviews were not undertaken. A number of interviews were rescheduled in order to accommodate the young people’s needs.

Of the twenty-eight young people who took part in the study, fourteen were male and fourteen female, twenty-seven of the young people were White Scottish, and one young person was of African origin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total approached to take part in the study</th>
<th>47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refused outright</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed but withdrew at time of first interview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed but was then moved from placement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed but withdrew and then agreed to participate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed but due to time constraints interviews were not undertaken</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed but withdrew mid-way through interview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.16 As most of the young people were in school or college, the interviews were carried out during the late afternoon, evenings and weekends. The interviews took anywhere from 40 minutes to 1hr and 30 minutes, and the average interview time was 1hr. The length of the interview was dependent upon the young person’s level of engagement.

1.17 Most of the young people had little difficulty understanding the research questions. However, if there was something that the young people did not understand they often asked or the question was repeated. The young people were given a copy of the interview schedule in order that they could follow along with the research interview. It was emphasised to the young people that should they wish to stop at any time or take a break or discontinue the interview that they were free to do so. It was felt that the majority of the young people that agreed to take part in the study did so because they had something that they wanted to say and this is clearly evident in the data.
CHAPTER 2: RESULTS

2.1 This section of the report consists of both qualitative and quantitative results. Where differences were found between males and females these have been reported separately. Finally, only the statistically significant findings have been reported.

2.2 The results in this section are presented in the following order:

♦ Demographic information
♦ Placement history
♦ Educational history
♦ Mental health issues
♦ Relationship with parents
♦ Family demographics & environment
♦ Relationship with family members
♦ History and patterns of running away, including offending behaviour
♦ Sexual exploitation
  - Meanings?
  - Experiences of sexual exploitation
  - Targeting behaviour
  - ‘Grooming processes’
  - Differential targeting
  - Suggestions for how young people can keep themselves safe?
  - Disclosing information

Demographic Information

2.3 The sample consisted of fourteen males and fourteen females from the Glasgow area. The ages of the young people ranged from 12-18. The mean age for the males was 14.6, and the mean age for the females was 14.9. Most, if not all of the young people were from socially and emotionally impoverished backgrounds.

Placement History

2.4 Of the 28 young people who took part in the study, eighteen were from residential schools (64%), nine were in children’s units (32%), and one was in a throughcare placement (4%). A number of the young people that were currently in residential schools had already been in a children’s unit, and vice versa.

Table 2.1 Number of prior placements (N=28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.5 The young people were asked to list the number of prior placements that they had been in since leaving home. The types of placements listed were residential schools, children’s units (statutory and voluntary organisations), secure units, and foster carers. This also included residential day pupils. Table 2.1 above outlines the number of placements that young people have had, frequency, and percentage of these. Most had one or two, but one third had experienced three or more.

2.6 The length of time that the young people had been in their placement was also calculated. This varied quite considerably across the young people as some had only recently been admitted to a unit. The length of time in placement ranged from 1 month to 4 years. This differed for males and females but not significantly. The mean length of time that males had been in their placement was 16.1 months, and females, was 8.7 months. Table 2.2 below lists the length of time in placement in months, frequency, and percentage.

Table 2.2 Length of placement (N=28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time in placement (in months)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 Young people were also asked about their educational history; specifically, the number of primary and secondary schools that they attended and any difficulties that they experienced while they were there.

2.8 The number of primary schools attended ranged from 1 to 7. Differences were found between the males and females thus these are reported separately. The mean number of primary schools that the males attended was 2.9\(^2\) and for females was 1.6. The number of secondary schools attended ranged from 0 to 5. The mean number of secondary schools that the males attended was 1.7 and for females was 1.2. The mean number attended was 1.5.

2.9 Young people were also asked if they have missed a lot of school throughout their educational history. Five young people said ‘rarely’ (17.9%), one ‘sometimes’ (3.6%), one ‘often’ (3.6%), eight ‘very often’, and thirteen young people said that they had missed ‘weeks at a time’ (46.4%).

\[^2\] These differences were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level (t = 2.611, df = 26, p = 0.017, two-tailed).
2.10 There were various reasons that young people gave for missing school, some resulting from actions or inactions by their parents or other carers.

“Most of the time my Mum always kept me off school and the actual reason she kept me off school was because she was going to the doctor’s or she couldn’t be bothered getting out her bed” (male, aged 15).

“Aye, there was people about but it’s just ‘cause they weren’t my parents I never went. I missed a lot with trying to get a place in X High as well” (female, aged 15).

2.11 Young people were asked about any difficulties that they had experienced (or were still experiencing) while they were attending school. The nature of these difficulties, the frequency, and percentage are listed in Table 2.3 below.

**Table 2.3 Difficulties experienced during school years (N=28)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty experienced</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking back to teachers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truanting</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrating</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting into fights</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug/alcohol misuse</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being bullied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.12 A high number of young people said that they had difficulty concentrating in school, particularly when there were a lot of things going on in their family home. The following quote serves to illustrate the difficulties that this posed for the young people.

“Mm-hmm. I couldn’t concentrate ‘cause my mind just blanked out and I’d just sit there fidgeting. I couldn’t concentrate. I used to sit and stare” (female, aged 16).

“Dennis the Menace, that’s who I used to be” (male, aged 16).

“I’ve got ADHD. Do you know what that is? Attention disorder hyperactivity disorder, I think. Yeah, I’ve got that so, I like a bit of attention, I like to be the star of the show, as they call it. So, you get a wee bit of that in here, so it’s quite good”.

2.13 Quite a few young people indicated that they had been bullied and the following quotes illustrate some of the young people’s experiences of this.
“Because I got bullied I used to get stressed and angry I used to black out and just start fighting. I wouldn’t know what I was doing and I’ve been told that I’m pretty dangerous” (male, aged 16).

“...I was getting bullied a lot and my money and my phone, I had to keep on getting new phones, mobile phones, because people kept on stealing them and I just decided not to actually go to school. Then they started bringing in a teacher from one of my old schools into homecare to come up and help us on the computer and all that. After that, a couple of months later I ended up coming up here” (male, aged 15).

2.14 Three quarters admitted to truanting and several young people indicated that they did not need to truant as they were frequently suspended for prolonged periods of time. Here are some examples:

“I just got sent out of class, I didn’t need to dog it” (male, aged 14).

“I’ve never skipped school. If I was off school I was suspended or I was off because I wasn’t well and me, being a child, I was never not well, never, ever. That was one of the bad things. I was never not well. I used to be fit as a fiddle till I started smoking reefer. I was never off school unless I was suspended. I never dogged it. I don’t know why. Maybe that was a good thing, that I was actually going” (male, aged 16).

“Well I did at X, I never went to that one but I never missed any of my high school unless I was suspended” (Male, aged 14).

“... I went in 1st year and I just dogged it, I hated it. Then I went back. I got threatened and I never went back ever since. I stayed off high school for about 2 ½ years” (female, aged 16).

2.15 A number of other young people indicated that they used drugs and alcohol though a few said that they never did this while they were in school.

“Aye, I used to drink at high school. Used to go out, buy drink the night before and then go out at lunchtime and buy more drink and drink it before I went to school and then go into school drunk” (female, aged 16).

“I never used to even smoke when I was in school. It’s only when I actually went into care that I started smoking. Maybe, it’s because everybody else was doing it and you want to be one of the wee gang, don’t you? When you think about it, I think that’s what made me start smoking” (male, aged 16).

Mental Health Issues

2.16 Given the amount of adversity and traumatic experiences that looked after and accommodated young people have often experienced prior to coming into the care system, young people were asked if they had ever experienced any psychological problems, specifically depression, anxiety, panic attacks, feeling numb, and hearing voices. Other research has shown that these variables have been found to relate to traumatic experiences and as well as increase the likelihood that young people end up running away, becoming involved in offending, and putting themselves at risk of
sexual exploitation. The frequency with which young people experienced these and the percentages are listed in Table 1.5 below.

Table 2.4 Psychological problems (N=28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Problems</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Voices</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic attacks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.17 The young people’s comments serve to illustrate the problems that they have experienced. The initial quotes refer to young people’s experiences of depression and anxiety.

“A couple of times when I was younger but mostly when I felt down was when I was 14” (male, aged 15).

“Mm-hmm. I used to, a wee bit (referring to depression). Just with my Mum and that. Just feel… but I’m not bad now…I did (female, aged 18).

“Aye, well I’ve had that feeling (anxiety) a couple of times. Family problems and stuff like that” (Female, aged 15).

“Yes, the staff all says that I was worrying a lot about my Gran. Ever since I first found out that my Mum hurt my Gran” (Male, aged 15).

“I do worry…I worry about hundreds of stuff” (Female, aged 16).

“Aye… I feel jumpy all the time” and “when someone goes like that to me, I pure jump out of my sit, even if they were sitting over there”. I either fly for them or back away”. (male, aged 14)

2.18 Young people were asked if they had ever felt numb i.e. blocking out thoughts and/or feelings. It was also described as a way of coping with your emotions when people feel overwhelmed. One young person said the following:

“…In a way, that’s what I mean when you feel numb because you go through a, I think a pure long period of time like my Mum and that way, so my feelings towards them are numb, do you know what I mean? Because I’ve been there and I’m away from there that this is my life here, do you know what I mean? So, the way I see it is, all the problems that were there are still there but there’s a part of me that’s away from there” (female, aged 15).

2.19 A young person was asked how long she had been using this way of coping for and she said:

“All my life nearly, just about…” (female, aged 15).
2.20 Another young person had this to say:

“Well, my Mum... I don’t feel anything for her at all” (Male, aged 15).

2.21 Young people were also asked if they had ever heard any voices inside their head. Six of the twenty-eight young people indicated that they had or were still experiencing this phenomenon.

“Sometimes I hear people talking to me but whenever I look up I’m in here on my own” (male, aged 15).

“It sounded like a guy-19-30 something but I’m not actually sure. There’s a person that I did know and he did talk to me but I was really young at the time but he died years ago” (Male, aged 15).

“Everything goes to your head. That’s what was getting me, everything used to go through my head and I used to hear these voices and then I used to just dingy it. That’s what I done. I would go to my bed all day” (female, aged 16).

2.22 Young people were also asked if they ever self-harmed had any suicidal thoughts, and if they had used drugs or alcohol to cope. Table 2.5 lists the results in terms of their frequency, and percentage in relation to these behaviours.

### Table 2.5 Self-harming behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using drugs/alcohol to cope</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-harming</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide ideation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide attempts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.23 Young people were also asked how frequently they used drugs or alcohol as a form of escape or as a means of coping. Four young people said that they ‘never’ did, six said ‘rarely’, eleven said ‘sometimes’, two ‘often’, and five ‘very often’.

2.24 The following quotes serves to further illustrate the young people’s experiences of self-harming and suicidal behaviour, and using drugs and alcohol as a form of coping.

“It was getting done in this school for a while but I was just... I was sitting before that, even playing with the scissors, wanting to do it, but just... when my Gran died I was a nervous wreck and I didn’t know what to do so I just ended up cutting my wrists and that” (female, aged 16).

“No I did it on my own because there wasn’t a way out... If I was numb... I’d be able to block it and just do what I had to do” (female, aged 15).
“Just stupid things. Just wee feeble scratches and just, if I was arguing with staff or something, pull my hair out. Just, all that” (female, aged 18).

“When I’m drunk I try to jump off balconies. That’s just the thing I do. When I’m not drunk and I’m in a bad mood I’ll try and jump off of it or try and run in front of motors and that. That’s just a laugh though…it’s class but” (male, aged 14).

“I got a phone call when I was in class to come down to the office in the unit and they told me my Mum took an overdose and all that. I just had tears but I don’t actually cared that much. I still cared and I went and seen her. When she got out of hospital she said it was all my fault and I just ended up taking my tablets. I went up to the bedroom and took them all” (male, aged 15).

“Aye, I took em…paracetemol, I took 10 paracetemol and I tried to slit my wrists. I didn’t succeed” (female, aged 14).

“No, I just used to take drugs and alcohol all the time. It was just a stage I went through. I was just drinking and taking drugs and then I needed to stop doing but because I just end up killing myself. I ended up in hospital” (female, aged 16).

**Family Demographics & Environment**

2.25 Young people were also asked questions in relation to their family background, nature of their family environment, and description of their relationship with their parents, and about any abusive experiences. The table below contains the frequencies and percentages of information pertaining to young people’s parents, such as if their parents are separated, and if they lived with their Mum or Dad when they were growing up. In two thirds of cases the parents had separated and fewer than one in five had lived with both parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If parents separated</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If lived with Mum</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If lived with Dad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with both parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.26 Young people were also asked to describe their family environment when they were growing up. A number of descriptive words were listed and the young people were asked to indicate which ones applied. The frequencies and percentages of their choices are listed overleaf in Table 2.7.

---

3 Other refers to stepparent, relative, or foster parent.
Table 2.7 Description of family environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stressful</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.27 Statistically significant differences between young men and women were found for the following variables: happy and chaotic. The males were found to have a higher mean score than females in relation to their happiness. In relation to chaotic family environment, it was the females that were found to have a higher mean score.

2.28 There were a number of quotes that are listed below that serve to better illustrate young people’s experiences in relation to their family environment. Two young people outlined reasons relating to their happiness. One young person identified a specific time in his childhood that he was happy, and another young person had mixed feelings but also described a fairly chaotic family lifestyle.

“The only time that I was probably happy was when I was with my Gran” (male, aged 15).

“I was happy and then sometimes I was sad. It was just all different… There was that many stuff going on and we were getting moved about and then… it was all different, it was weird” (female, aged 16).

2.29 A large number of young people chose the words chaotic and violent to describe their family environment. There were examples of violence towards partners and other relatives as well as child abuse. Alcohol misuse also appeared to be a contributing factor.

“My Mum always had too many boyfriends. She was always getting on chat rooms, and one time I heard her saying ‘Want to lick my pussy’. I know it’s not a nice word but what could you do when she says it. It’s not like I could just say ‘stop that’” (male, aged 15).

“The first time I saw my Gran getting hurt and shouted at by my Mum, I would be 6-7. Only reason I knew that was, because, one time we were just going to leave and, say this was the chair, right, and the TV there and I was just sitting right there beside my Gran…” (Male, aged 15).

---

4 \((t = 2.110, \text{df} = 26, p = 0.045, \text{two tailed})\).

5 \((t = -2.163, \text{df} = 26, p = 0.040, \text{two tailed})\).
“My Dad used to, my Dad used to be an alcoholic and he used to violently abuse me. One thing led to another. When I got a wee bit older I, kinda, started wisening up. I used to hit him back and he used to hit me harder. He threatened to fling me out of windows and everything. He was good to us when he wasn’t drunk. He was alright. As soon as he had a drink in him he was a pain in the backside. A real pain” (male, aged 16).

“Her boyfriend, who she’s still with just now, he was being cheeky to me one day and I told him to shut up and my Mum got up and slapped me. Ever since then she just started hitting me” (female, aged 16).

“I ended up going back, she started shouting at me and I walked out again and I was like that ‘No, I’m not staying there’. I ended up phoning Childline that morning. She chased me down the street one time and when she caught me she just grabbed me by the hair and tried to drag me up the road and all my pals were pulling her off me” (female, aged 16).

“Hit her a couple of times but sometimes he…once he put a wheelie bin through my Mum’s window” (female, aged 16).

“…When I was about 3 and 4 I used to see my Mum getting battered” (Female, aged 14).

2.30 Thirty-two percent of the young people said that they felt ‘lonely’ during their childhood. Two young people said the following:

“Aye. All the time ‘cause I was that used to looking after everybody else and it came to a point where I had to stand on my own two feet and there was nobody there for me” (female, aged 15).

“I did, aye. I used to…when I went to…see when I used to lie in my bed I used to feel dead small. I used to just…it was a feeling…I used to just feel dead small. I never knew, I was just young and I never knew what it was” (male, aged 16).

2.31 The young people were also asked if they had ever been physically abused during their childhood and eleven young people reported this (39%), although several indicated that they did not want to comment. A further three young people (10%) reported being sexually abused during their childhood.

“I was battered and all that” (female, aged 15). “I remember when I was about 6 and I seen him hitting my Mum and I ran up and hit him and he battered me” (Female, aged 14).

“It was one of my Dad’s pals. I was quite young at the time. It went on for a good few years”. “It must have started when I was about 4 and finished when I was about 11” (Female, aged 18).
2.32 Young people were asked about their relationship with their parents. A number of young people identified that there were or had been problems with their relationships and were able to see how they contributed to their current situation. Discussing family issues was a difficult area for several of the young people, and in several instances this was not pursued. The young people were given a list of words and asked to identify those words that best reflected their relationship with their mother and father, or who ever was their main caregiver. The young people’s choices are listed below in Table 2.8. There is some data missing where it was simply not applicable, or appropriate for young people to answer e.g. loss of parent or they chose not to.

Table 2.8 Description of relationship with mother (N=25) and father (N=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of relationship</th>
<th>Relationship with mother Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Relationship with father Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>16 (57%)</td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>15 (54%)</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive</td>
<td>9 (32%)</td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurtful</td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
<td>11 (39%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.33 It is noteworthy that at least one third saw the relationship as abusive; half had caring relationships with mothers, but far fewer with a father figure.

2.34 The young people were also asked to rate the quality of their relationship with their mother on a scale from 1-5, with one being the lowest and five being the highest. Here again, several young people chose not to rate or it was not applicable to do so. One young person gave their mother a rating of –1 and another gave their father a rating of 0. The results of the young people’s choices are listed in the table 2.9 below.

Table 2.9 Rating of relationship with mother (N=24) and father (N=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating of mother Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Rating of father Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1/0</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 (21%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.35 The following two quotes serve to illustrate some of the difficulties that young people had with their carers.

“She’s never really been there, as much as… I love her and all that. Aye, I see her now. I take her to the pictures and all that now. Phone her, talk to her, go down to her house, cups of tea and get a chat. As much as I love her, she wasn’t there for me. It was basically my Step Mum that brought us up. So she was, like, a major part of
my life. So really, she didn’t have the right to hit us but, in a way, she did, if you know what I mean? Not hit us hit us but a skelp behind the ear or something. That just led to other things. Hitting us violently and that. My Mum was really never there and my Step Mum was always there. When I used to go home she was the one that I used to kiss and cuddle before I went to bed at night and that, know what I mean, so” (male, aged 14).

“…my real Dad, I don’t know because when he found out that Mum was pregnant with me, they split up…” (female, aged 16).

History of running away

2.36 This issue was explored at some length since being outwith adult care and supervision heightens the risk of exploitation. Twenty-two young people (79%) said that they had run away from their family home. Young people were also asked their age at the time when they ran away and the length of time that they ran away for. Most started between 11 and 13, but a few were younger. Gender differences were found but none of these were statistically significant. The mean age for males for running away from their family home was 12.0 years, and females was 12.9 years.

Table 2.10 Age when young person first ran away from family home (N=22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at the time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.37 The young people were next asked about the length of time that they ran away from their family home for. The results are listed in the table below showing that the periods were usually 1-2 days.

Table 2.11 Length of time they ran away from home (N=22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same day</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 days</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.38 The young people were then asked about their history of running away from a children’s unit. Nineteen young people said that they had run away from a children’s unit (68%). The young people were asked to list their age at the time and the length of time that they ran away for. The results are listed in tables 2.12 and 2.13 below. The age of onset for young people started to run away was higher, and the length of time that young people stayed away for increased in their looked after and accommodated placement. Two females one of whom was suffering from physical abuse and the
other sexual abuse ran away but only returned home after only for a few hours because they were resigned to what awaited them and described feeling helpless e.g. “no way out” and not being able to do anything about it.

Table 2.12 Age when young person first ran away from children’s or residential unit (N=19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at the time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.39 No significant differences for mean age of running away from a children’s or residential unit were found. The mean age for males was 10.9 years, and for females 11.3 years.

Table 2.13 Length of time young people ran away from children’s or residential unit (N=19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 days</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several of these</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.40 Young people were also asked the total number of times that they had ran away from either their family home, residential, or both. These are listed in the table below.

Table 2.14 Number of times ran away (N=28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 times or more</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many to count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.41 Young people were asked if they ran away to the same place, and half of the young people said yes and the other half said that they ran away to different places.

2.42 The young people were given a list of reasons to choose from for running away from their home and/or residential unit. The results are listed in Table 2.13. These results serve to identify the nature of some of the problems that this group of young people are experiencing while residing in their family home. Some of these
appeared to no longer be an issue for young people after being admitted to residential care. However, the category ‘for fun and excitement’ doubled, and ‘to see friends’ increased considerably, both of which can serve to increase young people’s level of risk, as the following quote shows:

“…I used to hang about the city centre with a bunch of other bad people. Used to hang around with them every day” (male aged, 16).

Table 2.15 Reasons why young people ran away from home (N=23) & residential unit (N=19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Family Home Frequency</th>
<th>Family Home Percentage</th>
<th>Residential Frequency</th>
<th>Residential Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional needs not being met</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/other Turmoil</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see friends</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Bullied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun &amp; excitement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being physically harmed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not feel understood</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being sexually harmed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being threatened</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see a family member</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.43 The following are some of the reasons young people gave for running away. The first represent a desire for stimulation.

No, it was just…I don’t know why I used to run away…it was just a regular thing I got into, it just became a habit, if you know what I mean? I didn’t like sitting in, I’ve never liked sitting in the one place. I’m dead fidgety. I can’t sit in the one place for too long. I like to go out and explore, if you know what I mean? I like to do things with my time instead of…there’s not point in sitting in the house all the time, when you think of it. (male aged, 16)

Aye, I used to. When I was running away from X I used to always be on my own, aye. (male aged, 16)

Others made clear they were escaping from ill treatment and/or unhappiness.

“When I ran away for X ‘cause, I was staying with my Auntie Ellen at that time and ‘cause she’d been horrible to me and my cousin had come up and called me all the names under the sun” (female, aged 12).
“Just wanted out of that place. I know I put myself in a home but I wanted out of it”
(Female, aged 14).

“Well, I’ve run away for weekends, I’ve run away for, like, a day and I’ve run away for whatever else. Every time I’ve always been drunk…” (female, aged 14).

2.44 Several young people with a history of physical abuse indicated that they had run away, but often only once given the retributions that they received when they returned. The following quote serves to highlight this point.

“It got into…although…I was too scared to do it again because of the shit I got into”
(female, aged 15).

2.45 A number of young people said that when they ran away they would go to see family members. The following quote serves to illustrate this point:

“I’d either go to my cousin’s house, my pal’s house, my pal’s house, my pal’s house, my pal’s house, aunties, aunties, aunties, aunties, uncle, uncle, uncle, uncle”
(male, aged 14).

“No, I ran to get to my brothers”
(Female, aged 12).

2.46 Young people were asked how they were returned to their unit. Of the 25 young people that had run away, seven returned voluntarily, seven by the police, and ten said either, and one young person said that she was brought back by family members. A number of young people reported returning voluntarily in order to have their basic needs met. The following examples serve to illustrate this point.

“Because I was hungry…”
(Female, aged 12).

“Just…to let them (staff) that I was alright and to get ready and just…to relax after the chaos of being out and hiding from the police and all that, because I knew that I was a missing person. Sometimes I did just get fed up and I’d say ‘Och, I’ll just go back’”
(female, aged 18).

2.47 Young people were also asked if they ran away on their own or with other young people. Fourteen young people said that they ran away with other young people (50%) (although they did not always remain together), and of those, twenty-two percent knew the young people that they ran away with. The following quotes serve to illustrate this:

“With other young people. I done it with somebody else, I wouldn’t go by myself”
(female, aged 15).

“Once we got into town we all went our separate ways after we got a drink or whatever. Aye, we’d always…it was just for the sake of us getting on the train and all that, so that there was always a crowd of us. If one wasn’t getting on then none of us were. It was always just…you know, like, one of them. Crazy”
(female, aged 18).
“We’d just put our money together and we’d always end up at Queen Street or something. We could always run away from there if the police came” (female, aged 16).

2.48 Young people were also asked about the types of risky behaviours that they became involved in while they were on the run. These are listed in Table 2.16 below, along with the frequencies and percentages.

Table 2.16 Risky behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviours</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Drugs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partying</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Behaviour</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having unsafe sex</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping rough</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to night clubs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.49 For the majority of young people a pattern of running away had already been established prior to them being looked after. Table 2.17 outlines the pattern and shifts in this behaviour. Males and females have been listed separately in order that the differences in their behaviour can be readily seen. X denotes an absence of running away. Each young person has been assigned a letter to represent an individual case.

Table 2.17 Patterns of running away in males (N=14) and females (N=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males: Running away from home</th>
<th>Males: running away from unit</th>
<th>Females: running away from home</th>
<th>Females: running away from unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o) 13</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 11</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>p) 12</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 14</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>q) 11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>r) 13</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) 13</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>s) 11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) 11</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>t) X</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>u) X</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) 11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>v) 11</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) X</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>w) 12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) 11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>x) 12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) 11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>y) 12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>z) 11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) 6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>aa) 12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n) 11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>bb) 6</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.50 A number of gender differences were found that warrant highlighting. Two males reported never having run away; whereas all of the females ran away at some stage either from home or from a unit. Two males stopped running away after being admitted to a unit, in comparison to five females (36%), and only one male started running away from a residential unit in comparison to two females. Overall though, both males and females running away behaviour was similar in that eight males and
seven females that had previously run away from home continued to engage in this type of behaviour after being admitted to a unit. This would serve to suggest that this pattern of behaviour was established prior to them being looked after and as a result there is a much greater likelihood of this behaviour continuing and indeed increasing in length over a period of time as we have found.

**Offending Behaviour**

2.51 Young people were also asked about their involvement in offending behaviour when they ran away from a unit or residential school. Fifty-three percent of the young people stated that they had been involved in offending. The extent and types of offences varied. The table below lists the types of offences, frequencies, and percentages of young people involved in offending behaviour. The extent of the young people’s involvement in offending was not found to be great.

Table 2.18 Types of Offences (N=15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of offence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft not specified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault &amp; robbery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housebreaking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several of these</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.52 The following quotes serve to illustrate some of the young people’s involvement in offending behaviour and show how some was related to needs.

“*Ran into wine shops, grabbed wine out of there. Ran into garages, stole some shortcake*” (male aged, 14).

“*I used to pick up charges for shoplifting and that*” (female, aged 16).

“*It was just like breaking into cars and all that…to steal cars most of the time*” (female, aged 18).

2.53 Young people were also asked if they ever got involved in other types of behaviour and one young person made the following comments:

“*Em…definitely we would end up having unsafe sex, unfortunately. Sometimes criminal behaviour like, I broke into a house once but that’s all been sorted now*” (male, aged 16).

**Meaning of Sexual Exploitation**

2.54 During the interview young people were asked if they knew what was meant by sexual exploitation. Mostly the responses described particular examples but a few referred explicitly to misuse of adult power.

“*Some young people <are> getting taken advantage of by adults*” (female, aged 15).
“Aye, I’ve had men approaching me and asking, basically, how much do you charge, do you know what I mean?” (female, aged 16).

“If I know someone who’s had their photographs taken or something like that or harmed or other things. I know what it means” (female, aged 15).

“Oh, like on programmes that they show on TV like, if someone approaches you and offers you like, money or sweeties or something like that” (male, aged 15).

“Yes. People like, people get…like parents have sex with their children or like with Michael Jackson bringing in children from the neighbourhood…” (male, aged 15).

“It can happen anywhere, do you know what I mean? Out at a party and a guy could up and take advantage. Walking home at night. Even in the daylight, do you know what I mean? Anywhere that’s closed in. Or if you need help, someone just decides to take advantage of you and the last thing they do is help you” (female, aged 15).

**Experiences of sexual exploitation**

2.55 Of the 28 young people that were interviewed, 8 of these (32%) shared that they had a direct experience of sexual exploitation, and there were another 8 young people that had been indirectly involved. Of the 8 that were directly involved, three were male and five were female. It is very clear from the young people’s descriptions that although there are similarities between them, a number of young people had very different experiences of sexual exploitation. Also a number of the incidents that were presented did not result in a sexually exploitive situation, as the young people resisted and were able to remove themselves from the situation in time. There were however, a number of young people that described continuously placing themselves at risk, and some of the young people seemed unconcerned about this fact.

2.56 The following situation is a description of a young person putting herself at risk, which led to her being sexually exploited. Sadly, she seemed unaware of the risk that she was placing her self in, but it is felt that she benefited from having the conversation with the researcher as it helped her to solidify some of her own thoughts.

“Well I knew the guy but...the first time...I’d known him from when I was in day care, and me and my pal had went over and we just got a drink and all that. Then he started getting a wee bit heavy and then I thought ‘Och It’d be worth seeing each other’ and all that and then he tried to get me to sleep with his brother and all that” (female, aged 18).

2.57 She then went on to say:

“Then I just felt awkward and uncomfy with that because I thought there was something happening with us but there wasn’t, obviously. What you were saying earlier on, about it all being planned and all that...it must have been” (female, aged 18).
2.58 A number of young people, particularly males, described scenarios where they were approached in the City Centre. Several of these occurred in the same place, (St Vincent St) and in a similar way, which demonstrates that, this is a well-known site for exploitation. One of the young people also briefly describes how he was approached and ended up becoming involved in the sex trade.

Aye. There was…once or twice it had happened…I had people approach me in the town. We used to…St Vincent Street toilets…we all used to use them when we were drunk and it was maybe a wee sign for paedophiles and beasts and all that to ‘oh, there a young yin drunk’, and they used to approach us but, with us being drunk, we used to batter them severely. I’ve been charged a couple of times in the town for assault and robbery. I used to pretty severely beat them up, rob them and was drunk (male aged, 16).

A mad guy, you know the St Vincent toilets?…Mad, poofy bit. I know it when it was a mad, poofy bit. So, I’m standing there tapping fags and a guy comes up to us and goes ‘Want to come back to my house and listen to music’? I’m wrecked and say ‘Aye’. Go back to his house and when we get there he’s like that, ‘Right, so you want to go to bed?’ Am like that, ‘Right then’, and walked out the door. Walked straight into his house, walked straight back out the door after getting a whisky (male, aged 14).

“I was down at the Barras and there was a boy that came up and asked me if I wanted to make money I said ‘aye’ and he said to get to St Vincent Street…” (male, aged 16).

2.59 The following scenario is of a young person who was clearly at risk of being sexually exploited and his family members helped him to get out of the situation.

“One time when I was 12… This guy, well, he wasn’t right in the heid, kept on trying to touch us and I was just trying to get away. I don’t think I had to do anything. I was going to kick him where it hurts but I didn’t need to. Two of my old mates, my 2 stepbrothers, was going to be my stepbrothers if my Mum got married to their Dad, went and came up and kept him in the building, pushed him on the floor and then I ran away” (Male aged, 15).

2.60 One young female describes the fear that she endured when she was being sexually exploited and constantly targeted by an adult male.

No, it wasn’t just once. It was going on for weeks and months. …but so did a lot of other people but other people had…they had fear in them, do you know what I mean? They had fear of the fact of actually standing up and saying it because it is a serious thing, do you know what I mean? Basically, wherever I was, he was like my shadow” (female, aged 15).

2.61 Another young person described a scenario that occurred whereby he went back to a man’s flat without even realising what the possible consequences might be.

“Got in, smoked a cigar, took a drink, he started taking off his clothes, the mad sit-ups…He was going to his bed and he was like ‘Are you coming in’? I was like ‘haaaa fuck off’ (male, aged 14).
2.62 Young people were also presented with standard questions/prompts about their experience of sexual exploitation and what this involved. The results in Table 2.19 lists the different types of experiences that young people encountered.

Table 2.19 Experiences of inducements for sexual exploitation (N=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given alcohol</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept drugged</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered money</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened to harm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given cigarettes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told ‘it was your fault’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph taken</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other things</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.63 Most of the young people reported having been offered some form of reward, or a combination of these. It is thought to be quite alarming the high levels of alcohol and drugs that were offered to young people clearly as a means to reduce their inhibitions and anaesthetise their thoughts and feelings in order to help disorientate the young people. Interestingly enough, young people were often aware of this but continued to allow this to happen.

2.64 The following two scenarios involve young males. The first one became involved in sexual exploitation and he describes one evening of being totally unaware of what was happening to him due to the amount of drugs and alcohol that he was given. The second account is of a young person not being able to remember anything, again, as a result of their alcohol intake. A number of young people described experiencing memory loss, and this is thought to originate from their own histories of childhood abuse. This is thought to have played a role in young people becoming involved in sexual exploitation but it also helps to facilitate their involvement in sexual exploitation e.g. acts as a protective mechanism as well as enabling the young people to place themselves at risk of harm.

“Aye, there was one time I went to this guy’s house and he asked us if I wanted blues and I said ‘aye’, and he gave us a few blues and a can of beer and a joint and I smoked a joint and drank a can and the next morning I woke up in my ma’s house and I couldn’t remember how I got there” (male, aged 16).

“Aye…just. It wasn’t really a blackout. It’s, I couldn’t remember that morning but it used to, it did used to come back to us, but not straight away. I used to find, I used to have to find out off other people what had happened and when I got told it’d come back to us. ‘Oh, aye, that’s right’. Other than that, aye, like a blackout” (male, aged 14).

2.65 A young person that became involved in prostitution was asked if they were forced or pressurised into having sex and he said:

6 Other things consisted of…blackmail, bed to sleep at night, cigars, medals etc.
“If I didn’t want to do it I could just leave if I didn’t want to do it” (Male, aged 16).

2.66 He was then asked how he was kept involved in street prostitution. It became apparent that a very subtle, non-coercive, brainwashing technique was used that simply shifted the responsibility to the young person.

“Aye, it was just like passing the buck onto me” (male, aged 16).

2.67 Young people were told that they did not need to discuss their own history of sexual exploitation; rather they could speak about a friend’s experience(s) or any knowledge of this area that they might have. The following incidents involve females that were sexually exploited and were approached in the city centre of Glasgow. A number of these second hand accounts occurred while other young people from the same unit were present.

“Sometimes they went and asked her or she would ask them. She would just stop them in their cars and everything and go in and they would say ‘Do you want to come back to my house’ or whatever but she never went back to their house or anything” (female, aged 12).

“He just kept following us about asking us for 20p and just trying to get…I don’t know…trying to get us to come back to his bit. We did ask him if he had a fag just after he said ‘Come to my bit’ and he said ‘You’re no getting any but if you want a fag you can come to my house’” (female, aged 12).

“Well, when we did run away, after she’d went with everybody she wanted to go up to somebody’s house who gave her eccies and everything” (Female, aged 12).

“There was another young person got dropped by a guy, that was the thing about trying to take us back to the house” (female, aged 12).

2.68 The following two quotes involve descriptions of young females that are targeted and then sexually exploited. In both instances they were other young people present.

“So, he kept following us and then he went to another young person and he was poking her and she started greetin’ and she came back to us and then he came back to us again and asked if we all wanted to come to his house and stay and everything I said ‘No, I’m going to stay at somebody else’s house’. I wasn’t really, I was just wanting to get rid of him and then the 2 boys came up because she had been crying but that wasn’t the young person that was picked up…we were all greetin’ and that so they came up and asked what was wrong and we told them and they went over and spoke to the guy because they asked why he was there. They spoke to him and came back and then we phoned our staff and said ‘If you don’t come and pick them up we’re getting them a taxi home’. The staff came” (male, aged 12).

“The one that was with me, no but, another one of my friends, she was, like, with us one night and went back and she was, like, getting into a car and we started shouting ‘No, don’t do it’ and stuff. We chased after them but by the time we got there she’d
already… the person had already pulled away and we couldn’t get to see them or anything. Then, the next day she had, like, £150…” (male, aged 16).

2.69 The following two quotes are female’s descriptions of other girls they know that become involved with local boys or gangs and how these girls are unknowingly being manipulated into having sex. Although this behaviour might not be viewed as ‘typical’ sexually exploitive behaviour, it is clearly along the same continuum, in that it involves young males exploiting females of a similar age.

“Aye, she got forced into sleeping with a boy, Brian from Linwood, not long ago. She got forced into it and that’s all I know about it” (female, aged 16).

“Aye, ‘cause most of the people I know try and bet on how many lassies they can sleep with so they just sleep with anybody and Naomi’s been getting it off of people from my bit. All the boys I know from my bit, they’ve been sleeping with most of all the lassies but Naomi’s been getting it off these boys now. There’s about 20 of them that hang about in the mad squad. They’re all from ages 13 to 16” (female, aged 16).

**Targeting Behaviour**

2.70 Young people were asked about how they were targeted. The following comments serve to highlight a number of young people’s views of being targeted sexually often for money or other incentives.

“Aye, that’s the first time that anything like that’s happened. Aye, so it was, kinda, strange because I didn’t really know what it was. Then you, kinda, start clicking on. City centre, young people, guys approaching you. So, you, kinda, click on when you’re sober but not when you’re drunk. You just end up battering them but when you’re sober you, kinda, click on and try and stay away from them as much as you can. If they’re going to approach you, they will approach you and they’ll try and offer you money. A couple of my pals have been offered money and all that. There’s a few of them out there” (male aged, 16).

“We were walking up there and a man stopped us in a motor. He went, ‘Are you available’? I went, ‘we’re not prostitutes’ and he went, ‘I’ll give you sixty pounds if you are right now’. We were like, ‘Nah, keep it’ and then the police came in and spoke to us about it” (female, aged 14).

“Down my way but he was just drunk. ‘Cause I lost a fiver, no a tenner and I was sitting on the bench and he says ‘What’s wrong’ and I says ‘Nothing’ and he says ‘Where are you going’? and I says ‘Nowhere, I’m just sitting here’ because I didn’t want to tell him where I was going. He says ‘I’ve only got a fiver’. I says ‘I don’t want your money, it’s alright’. I got up and I started walking away and he just went into the chippy and bought something to eat. He casually says ‘Are you coming back to my place for something to eat’? and I goes ‘No’ and walked away and that was it” (female, aged 15).

“I was up that way and a bunch of hookers were, like, asking me if I wanted anything, so I said ‘No’ and I started walking along further. Then, like these two guys rolled up in a car and asked me and my friend Barry, like if we wanted anything, wanted to do
anything and they would pay us, instead of us paying them, and they would give us somewhere to stay and all that. It was kinda, like, really freaky. So, me and John just went ‘No’ and ran the other way” (male, aged 16).

“You know them because you see the same people in town at night all the time and they walk by you 4 or 5 times. You’ve got people in motors that drive by and wave money to you…drive by and wave money, aye. We just take no notice of them.” (male, aged 16).

2.71 Other types of targeting behaviour were less overt e.g. offering transport.

“Last night as well, a mad guy asked us if we wanted a lift. Me and my pal and I told him ‘No’. He stopped the motor and went ‘Where are you going’? and I went ‘Home’ and he went ‘Are you wanting dropped off in Govan’? ‘We’re not even staying in Govan, we’re going to Pollok’” (female, aged 14).

2.72 A young person described a situation that she clearly frightened by, where she was targeted but she was with her friends and was able to get away safely.

“There was a guy at a bus stop tried to talk to me, asked me to get off with him. I didn’t even know who he was. There were 3 of us. He kept on coming up to me and touching me. I was like ‘Do you want to get away from me, don’t touch me. I don’t know who you are. I’ve got a boyfriend and he’ll batter you if you touch me’. He was trying to say to my other 2 pals…one of my pals is engaged to her boyfriend…and the other lassie I was with, Naomi, she’s only 13. I was babysitting her and she came through to Linwood to get her brother because her brother’s girlfriend was with us. He tried to get off with they two and he was about 18, 19 or something, or older. He ended up getting on the bus with us and then he tried to get with us and then walked away from us and sat down the front of the bus. I was like ‘Thank God, for that’” (female, aged 16).

2.73 Lastly, another young person described why he thought that he might have been targeted although he did not grasp the significance of what had been said to him:

“I was a busboy. Except, I had no idea what the hell that was until I was told. He was like ‘Are you a busboy’? I’m like that ‘I don’t know’” (male, aged 14).

2.74 There were also a few examples of where young people were targeted by other young people who they saw as more vulnerable than themselves, and who they could have taken advantage of, simply repeating what has happened to them.

That’s why the Goth lassies approached me…. You just eye up everyone when you go past them and eventually someone goes ‘Ooh hoo, aye right there’. That’s the way it goes. …About 20 or something… I’m experienced, I’ll have you know that. (male aged 14)

We just sat in Central. I was sitting next to them and they were sitting giving me cider and fags and that. Then I turned round and they were sitting getting off with each other. I’m like that, pure edging away. I fell down the stair. So did another bird, they fell after us. She spent the night in the hospital. I waited for her. I had the chance to
steal her Walkman, her phone and her money because I only had a fiver so, I bought 20 fags and left with no money to get home” (male aged, 14).

‘Grooming processes’

2.75 The grooming process, generally involves adult perpetrators (although these can also involve young people of a similar age) offering young people something or a type of reward e.g. drugs, money as a way of gaining their affection whereby manipulating young people into making them feel special. Given the difficulties that looked after and accommodated young people have experienced, they often have low self-esteem making them easier for adults to target and groom. Young people were asked if they had any experiences of being groomed. Suggestions of what this meant were given to the young people. Several described the use of flattery with regard to appearance:

He said ‘You’re a very attractive young man, I can see why all the ladies like you. Three birds at once, oh, if I were you, I’d have 4 or 5.’ (male aged 14)

“He was like that ‘You’re gorgeous’ and all that but he couldn’t even see” (female, aged 18).

“Aye, he made compliments about my breasts…” (female, aged 15).

2.76 An adult male tried to make a young person feel guilty for resisting.

“All he said was: ‘You’ve had me going for months” (female, aged 15).

Nobody would believe me anyway because everybody thought he was...he was quite popular... The family that I stayed with, the lassie that I stayed with, the woman that I stayed with, loved him to bits and she used to get awful jealous of me all the time (female, aged 15).

2.77 As with targeting, offering bribes/rewards and attempting to ply with alcohol and drugs were other forms of grooming.

“He came up and asked her for 20p and we said we didn’t have it. Then he went and opened this bag and gave us all these wee medals and all that” (Female, aged 12).

He said he’d give me a tenner next day so I could get home. Before I left he gave me a tenner, as a promise. He gave me a cigar. (male, aged 14).

“They offered us money. They offered us, like, booze and poppers, which is drugs. They offered us a house to stay in and stuff” (male, aged 16).

“No, he gave me hash and drink so I was...but I could remember it, I wasn’t as drunk as I was, the way he thought I was” (female, aged 15).

2.78 One scenario involved an adult man trying to impress and win over the young person by showing off their physical prowess.
“Aye, he started doing sit-ups. Aye, to make himself look hard. He was a fat wobbly person” (male, aged 14).

2.79 One young person described the following scenario that involved several elements of grooming combined, including rewards, deception and offering drink.

“Well, it’s just, I don’t know if this is what they’re looking for or nothing but, I know this person who used to work in a chippy. The person who she was working for kept on, like, getting dead close to her, and all that, and asking her to go to his house and everything. Telling her that she wouldn’t need to pay for taxis, and all that, he would give her a lift home and all that. She could come to a party, and all that, and get drink, if she wanted to but then there wasn’t really a party really. She found out that he was lying to her. He said that he’d give her a lift home so she didn’t need to pay for a taxi and all that. That she could go to his party, and all that, and get drink and everything, but there wasn’t really a party on because she asked the person she was working with if he was going to the party and he said ‘No, what party’? So, that guy was just lying. Trying to cuddle her and all that. The lassie felt that he was just staring at her all the time and all that. He was just freaking her out, I think. He was about 40. She was only 15” (female, aged 15).

2.80 One young person described how young people were used to groom other young people to become involved in sexual exploitation rather than adults as young people find it easier to trust young people that are of a similar age.

“I don’t know cause of the people that he’s involved with and have asked him to find somebody young to go with…I’ve had somebody asking me before to find another person, young, so I said I didn’t know anybody” (male, aged 16).

**Differential Targeting**

2.81 Young people were asked to comment on why they thought that they and/or other young people that they knew of were approached. Several suggested that an appearance of weakness or vulnerability played a part:

“I probably look like one of those lassies that’s pure vulnerable” (female, aged 14).

“Probably just because I looked easy to him, probably and he thought ‘Och, she doesn’t mean anything to me’. I don’t know why, I don’t know” (Female, aged 18).

“Right, see how the person, it’d be somebody that stays in here, right? Because he knew what she was like, that she’s kinda, slow, if you know what I mean, to pick up on things, do you know what I mean? Do you know what I mean when I say that? Like, it’s, kinda, she doesn’t think straight. Like, she can’t. She just thinks everybody’s dead nice” (Female, aged 14).

“If a man offers you money you’ll go right away and go ‘Oh money’ right away. I’m not like that and I wouldn’t do it” (female, aged 14).

2.82 Attractiveness was a factor in some cases:
“Well, she’s a very, very attractive girl but at that point she was only 15 so...and she’s very, like, for her age she’s really small. She’s, like, only up to about half my arm so...it could have been the person thought she was younger or something. Like paedophilia, but I can’t really say that because I never got to see the person in the car. I would understand but she was just dressed normal, jeans and a shirt on and stuff” (Male, aged 16).

2.83 Others referred to alcohol/drugs perhaps lowering awareness and resistance.

“Just, sort of, the same, just getting into positions when you’re drunk, just going back and not knowing what you’re going back to” (female, aged 18).

“I don’t know, it’s difficult because everybody’s all their own. I know a lassie who gets herself into situations all the time and she doesn’t even need a drink. With me, it’s always when I’m drunk that I put myself at risk, and all that” (female, aged 18).

2.84 Lacking evident family or peer support could heighten vulnerability:

“I’m just a...a wee lassie, I’ve had a hard life, I’m not even staying with my parents and I’m staying in a house that is not mine, do you know what I mean? He could do what he wanted to me. Who have I got? It’s not as though I can go and tell my Mum and that, do you know what I mean? That’s when I thought to myself; ‘Well, he thinks he’ll be able to do anything because this isn’t my family and I haven’t spoke to my family in a while’. It’s a case of ‘All the pain you’ve caused me’ and all that. It’s as if he all had it in a plan as if ‘Well, if she runs back saying what’s happened then they’re obviously not going to believe her because they hate her anyway’. Do you know what I mean? I don’t get on with my family and they don’t get on with me. So it was my word against his. I went and told about him, I don’t care... That’s my Dad’s drinking partner, so...and my Dad’s an alcoholic and he needs his drink...” (female, aged 15).

2.85 Another suggestion was that personal qualities did not matter—simply being in a place where an abuser was active.

“Well, it could be anything. It could be people are looking for, like, people are frustrated, sexually frustrated and, because their partners aren’t good enough and whatever. So, they look for other people and looking down the waterfront, seeing as how all the prostitutes and stuff have been moved down to there and...it could just be sick reasons like, people wanting to hurt people or paedophiles looking for prey or something. It could be anything” (male, aged 16).

2.86 Lastly, what one young person had to say was more about motives and power than the actual targeting of young people.

“I think that’s mostly the reason why, and when they do target them and they’re told ‘No’ I think that’s when a lot of it, when rapes and stuff like that come in because they can’t handle being told ‘No’. So, therefore, they’ve not got the power over that person because that lassie’s just told them ‘No’. I think, kind of, want to show them that they’ve got the power; do you know what I mean? Basically, they’re the boss and take what they want anyway. I think that’s probably why” (female, aged 16).
Suggestions for how young people can keep themselves safe

2.87 Young people were asked for suggestions that they might have in order to keep themselves safe. There were some varied opinions as to whether or not this was actually possible.

“I normally just hang around about, walking, if I was going to be running away I always make sure I’m going past lights. Facing like, lamp-posts or houses or…I know when you’re running away you’re not going to go anywhere near the police station but I always wander about the police station and that, so…” (male, aged 15).

“How can you be safe in this world? Truthfully, how can you be safe? You can’t really answer, can you? Look at that guy from Paisley; he was on that bus and stabbing people for no reason. You can’t be safe anywhere” (female, aged 14).

After… when I went into my first school and I actually started practicing my punches and my kicks as well and then I started carrying a penknife. But, like my old girlfriend says, if anything happened to me I wouldn’t be able to…I’d be too scared to use the penknife (Male aged, 15).

“If you’re ever drunk, don’t let your friends walk away” (female, aged 14).

“I’ve never warned anybody in here because none of them goes into town. I don’t know if they’ve experienced it. I don’t really, I don’t like talking about it in front of other young people. This is alright, but I don’t like talking about it in front of other young people, so I’ve never really discussed it. I think the other boys…even I’d be shy to say it in front of the other people that I’d been approached. I’ve said to the staff, aye, but I’ve never said it to any of the boys. I don’t think any of the boys would say anything either. I think they’d be too scared to, if you know what I mean?” (male aged, 16).

“Aye, that’s just about the best idea you can because they will approach you. I’ve seen them approaching people a few times. When you see them approach people, I’ve went up and says to people ‘Watch him, by the way, because he’s approached me as well’. I’ve said ‘Has he tried to offer you money’? There’s a few people that have said ‘Aye’. I’d say ‘Watch him because he’s a beast’. That’s basically what they’re called these days, aren’t they? They’re a beast. There’s no need for it at all. There’s been, I’ve seen, there’s hundreds and hundreds of wee guys jumping about that town these days. They’re all 12…10, 12. They’re all just far too young and they’re just a prime target” (male aged, 16).

“I think there should be some folk walking about places like that”. “I know there is some but I think there should be more folk” (female, aged 12).

2.88 Several young people highlighted the importance of street lighting when out at night and also CCTV.

“See like, in Girvan, there’s hardly any cameras. There’s three cameras in the main street and they’re hardly facing in the street, they’re always facing places that nobody really goes” (Female, aged 12).
2.89 Another young person had this to say about cameras:

“Put cameras in the St Vincents toilets. That’s where all the poofs hang about…”  
(male, aged 14).

2.90 One young person spoke very highly about his experiences with the liaison police.

“If you get undercover police right and I have been talking to couple of liaison police and they are like brand new…they talk to us and I think that’s what you need to get for the young people they are not looking to nail people they are just looking to keep people safe and talk to them and that”  
(male, aged 16).

2.91 Another young person suggested having a big brother style of system in order to control these problems.

“Well, definitely…I’d have curfews. Definitely, I’d have curfews if I was, like, the boss. I’d have, like, people watching, sorta, really dodgy, well known dodgy areas like the waterfront. Places like…what’s it called? Like Blythswood. Places like that. I’d have, sorta, like, I’d have more clubs that people could go to, young people could go to, instead of just being at the weekends. Like, you know how they have dance clubs?”  
(male, aged 16).

“I don’t know. Just…it’s kinda, a tricky one because you never really know when it’s going to happen to you. You could just be walking down the street and it could happen. You don’t know what’s going to happen”  
(female, aged 14).

“Stay on the phone to somebody while they’re walking…if they’re just walking to a wee bit…like, from a train station to a train station”  
(male, aged 14).

2.92 A number of young people also suggested more sex education classes, starting at age 12-13, would help prevent young people succumbing:

“And younger people are more vulnerable. Well, not to be discriminatory or nothing but, they are very vulnerable and they can be used easier, more easily manipulated into doing stuff for people. Nowadays a lot of young people are looking to have sex like, they think it’s some big thrill and like, it has to be done. I don’t think a lot of them realise that you should just wait until you’re older”  
(male, aged 16).

2.93 One young person suggested that counselling be offered more systematically to young people.

“People, sort of, that…who, sort of, get paid, so young people can talk to them. Like, say, a young person does have a problem and actually goes out looking for people. Instead of doing that they can go talk to this person”  
(male, aged 16).

2.94 He further stated:
“Well, a lot of teenagers get raped and get sexually exploited and stuff and they have no one to actually talk to because it has to get past others and so on and so forth, even though they don’t want it to. So, they get so low they end up going to the next level and just topping themselves or hurting someone else but if they did have someone to talk to it could, sort of, take away part of it at least. Do you know what I mean?” (male, aged 16).

2.95 There were a number of young people that showed a lot of resilient characteristics and regardless of what was asked or offered to them they would not accept it and they were determined to keep themselves safe.

“I wouldn’t…see if somebody went like that to me ‘I’ll give you a hundred pound if you sleep with me’, I’d say ‘No’” (Female, aged 14).

“The best thing that a lassie could do is probably…I mean, when I’m walking down the street, when it’s dark, I light up a fag in case anybody does try to do anything to me. It might sound sick but I’ll put the fag out in the first place I can and I’ll get them away from me, or else, I’ll hold keys or something like that. That’s my way of protecting myself. If I’m walking down the street and it’s dark, I’ve got no other way of protecting myself; do you know what I mean? I’ll do whatever I can, basically” (female, aged 16).

2.96 Young people were asked what they knew about Barnardo’s Street Team and most of the young people had positive comments to make, although a number of the young people felt that they should have more staff. The following quote serves to illustrate this point:

“‘Aye’…but they don’t have enough staff walking about…that time I was away for 9 weeks I didn’t see any of them at all” (male, aged 16).

**Disclosing information**

2.97 Young people were asked if they had shared any information with staff or anyone else. Six young people (21%) indicated that they had spoken to staff about their knowledge or experience of sexual exploitation but usually not in a lot of detail and it was often not young people that had had direct experiences. For those young people that experienced sexual exploitation it was much more difficult for them to discuss this and to share it. The young people made a number of comments in relation to difficulties that they had with sharing information with staff.

“No, she didn’t want anybody else…she didn’t want any staff to know…just to know she was out” (female, aged 12).

2.98 She further added:

“No, we never talked about it after it all happened and everything because, like the next day she just came in and she never said anything” (Female, aged 12).
“No, it was just I couldn’t. I felt because it was me that got myself into that position, as well. I didn’t want people thinking that that was what I was like. Just confidence and I felt dead embarrassed about it all and that” (female, aged 18).

“I didn’t want care staff thinking that I was horrible as well. After time it just went away and that was it” (female, aged 18).

“Just…I don’t know…it’s hard because in X unit I didn’t really feel that close with the staff anyway I wanted home and that was it. I don’t know if…I don’t know. I just didn’t want people to judge me, that was all. I didn’t want people thinking I was this mad…so, I don’t know” (Female, aged 18).

“No, not really. I think there might be something in the back of their minds saying ‘Is she…is that the truth…?’” (female, aged 18).

2.99 One young person made the following suggestions for staff when a young person is disclosing:

“You’ve got to be gentle with that person that it’s happened to” (female, aged 14).

“Like, don’t just come straight out with it and start asking questions about it. Just…I don’t know. Then once you know the person who did it, to make that person feel safe, that person should…I don’t know…the person that that person did it…do you know what I mean…did it to, needs to feel safe again. They wouldn’t feel safe if that person was still walking the streets” (female, aged 14).

2.100 A few young people felt very strongly that information should be shared with someone to help alleviate their feelings, and there was a tendency for young people to want to be able to share information and for it to remain confidential and a number of young people expressed how difficult it was that staff knew all their business:

“I think, maybe, more people, like, doing, kind of, what you’re doing. It’s a bit easier for you to be going round children’s units than going round their actual house, do you know what I mean? You can’t exactly do that. Maybe going round a school and taking the time to talk to individuals and stuff like that” (female, aged 16).

“Because, maybe you don’t feel comfortable around the member of staff and you feel more comfortable with somebody else” (male, aged 14).

“And don’t keep it locked up for days and days and days because, you know that way, it’s eating into you, do you know what I mean? You’re suffering, it’s like a disease, you’re suffering with it. Go and tell somebody and they’ll help you. That’s the reason I went to the police because it could happen to somebody else and I just didn’t want them feeling like that” (female, aged 15).

“…he was sexually abused when he was…what age was he? He was…he came into care when he was 12 and it had been happening before then and he kept…didn’t tell a soul, not one person, until he told me. I think he’s coped with it really, really well but probably, inside, he’s ripping, do you know what I mean? It’s not healthy for people to live like that” (female, aged 16).
“Well, a lot of teenagers get raped and get sexually exploited and stuff and they have no-one to actually talk to because it has to get past others and so on and so forth, even though they don’t want it to. So, they get so low they end up going to the next level and just topping themselves or hurting someone else but if they did have someone to talk to it could, sort of, take away part of it at least. Do you know what I mean?” (Male, aged 16)

“Because, if you close them in or keep them in you get worse, as I’ve been realising. It’s part of the reason I’ve been taking my pseudo-fits. Through closing anger. It’s not a nice feeling. So, I can understand how any other young person feels if they take stuff like that” (Male, aged 16).

“I just… because it’s never happened to me, I can’t understand where it comes from ‘It was my fault’. You know how, one of they ones, when you think ‘Oh, it’s my fault, I done this thing wrong’. No, it’s not your fault and it’s about time people started realising that and spoke up and say ‘Look, this happened to me and I want something done about it’. Do you know what I mean? Obviously, you need to be a strong person to be able to do that and I wouldn’t say there’s a lot of these, kind of, people out there. Not people I know anyway. Very few and far between” (female, aged 16).

“Give them a form and they can write it down and that way they do not need to put their name and that way they can tell you things that are happening” (male, aged 16).

2.101 A number of young people identified some of the difficulties that young people have with sharing information. The following comments relate to this:

“She only spoke to staff in here and then, when the police came up, she didn’t want to tell them” (female, aged 14).

2.102 When asked why she thought that young people had difficulty speaking to the police she said the following:

“I don’t know… because they’re scared. Maybe they feel sorry for that person… scared of what might happen to that person… because that person could get locked up when all they do is need help” (female, aged 14).
CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

3.1 In this chapter we review the main findings of the study and draw out some implications for people working with looked after and accommodated young people and or any other children and young people that might succumb or somehow be drawn in by sexual exploitive means. The key findings have been grouped under the following headings:

3.2 First, though, it is important to summarise the key features of the research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

3.3 In order to meet the set of objectives of examining the long-term and immediate circumstances associated with sexual exploitation, semi-structured interviews were carried out with looked after and accommodated young people (N=28) in order to gain their views of the following areas:

- educational history
- mental health problems
- family relationships and environment
- histories and patterns of running away, including offending behaviour
- knowledge and experience of sexual exploitation e.g. targeting, grooming
- ways to keep themselves safe
- disclosure issues

3.4 The research was undertaken on a part-time basis over a 4½ month period. During this time interview schedules were developed, ethical approval was obtained, and contact was made with numerous residential schools and units. Fieldwork started in mid-December and continued until mid-February. The initial fourteen interviews were carried out jointly by a project worker from Barnardo’s Street Team and a research fellow at the Glasgow Centre for the Child & Society, University of Glasgow. The remaining interviews, were conducted by the researcher.

3.5 During this time forty-seven young people were approached to take part in the study but for various reasons a number of young people were either unwilling or due to other circumstances unable to take part. The final sample consisted of twenty-eight young people, fourteen males and fourteen females, aged 12-18, with a mean age of 14.7. A semi-structured interview schedule was carried with each of the young people in order to gain their views of the above issues. The interview lasted on average for 1 hour. Young people were also given a psychometric scale to complete in order to ascertain if young people’s level of vulnerability was related to their coping strategies. At the time of the interviews the length of time that young people had been in their respective placement ranged from 1 month to 4 years, though the mean length of time for females was markedly lower at 8.7 months than for males (16.1 months).
LIMITATIONS IN THE STUDY

3.6 It is worth bearing in mind that the scope and nature of the research study had a number of limitations and therefore the conclusions need to be looked at tentatively. The short-term nature of the study restricted the number of interviews that could be conducted and as a result the sample size is relatively small, making it difficult to generalise from these findings. While every effort was made to establish a rapport and hence encourage openness, the sensitive nature of the topic will have affected young people’s willingness to talk. Nonetheless, this research is the start of a process to gather more comprehensively young people’s views in the area of sexual exploitation in order that these issues can be better understood and dealt with appropriately.

FINDINGS

Educational History

3.7 A large number of young people described having difficulties during their primary and secondary years. Almost half of the sample said that they had missed weeks of school at some time. Difficulties that young people experienced while attending school were: talking back to teachers (79%), truanting (75%), concentration problems (57%), getting into fights (54%), drug/alcohol misuse (46%), and bullying issues (29%). Poor educational attainment has been linked in other research to a number of issues such as family problems, peer-related issues, and becoming involved in delinquency, and other at risk behaviours.

Mental health problems and at risk behaviour, specifically sexual exploitation

3.8 A large number of young people reported having one or several psychological problems such as depression (68%), anxiety (50%), numbness (32%), and hearing voices (21%). Other research has shown that looked after and accommodated children and young people had higher levels of mental health disorders placing them at higher risk for serious and long-term psychiatric sequelae (Hill & Thompson, 2003; Kelly et al., 2003; Nicolas et al., 2003; Nicol et al., 2000; Kurtz, Thornes & Bailey, 1998; McCann et al., 1996). Conduct disorder (involving a history of truanting) has been found to be the commonest mental health disorder, the very nature of which serves to increase young people’s access and exposure to potentially risky situations (Hill & Thompson, 2003). Furthermore, it has previously been found that detection of disorders has been poor and access to treatment limited (Kelly et al., 2003).

3.9 A high number of young people reported having a history of self-harm. Eighty-six percent of young people reported using drugs and/or alcohol to cope or to numb feelings, and sixty-one percent reported having self-harmed e.g. cutting on at least one occasion. Thirty-nine percent reported having suicidal thoughts and a further fourteen percent had attempted suicide. The above behaviours show this group of young people to have a high level of potential harm to themselves and to others.
Family Relationships and Environment

3.10 Nineteen young people reported that their parents had separated, generally during their childhood. Of these, eleven lived with their mother and two with their father, and the remaining young people lived with a stepparent, relative or foster carer.

3.11 Young people were asked to pick from a list of words describing their family environment, and although sixty-eight percent described their family environment as happy, the other words that were predominantly chosen were: stressful (75%), argumentative (64%), chaotic (75%), violent (54%), and sad (43%). Only fourteen percent said that their family was respectful. Young people listed a number of family incidents involving violence as well as alcohol misuse. Over half of the young people interviewed described their mother as caring and loving, but far fewer had a loving father figure. Over a third said their mother and/or father was abusive.

History of running away

3.12 Previous research has found that 40% of looked after and accommodated young people run away and will do so repeatedly. Of these, the majority will run away because of problems they are experiencing at home and/or at school e.g. bullying. Children who live with their stepparents and lone parent families are more likely to run away than those living with both birth parents (Scottish Executive, 2003).

3.13 Seventy-nine percent of young people in this study reported having run away from their family home, and most were between the ages of 11 and 13, although some were younger. The usual length of time that the young people ran way for was 1-3 days, although most returned within 24 hours.

3.14 Sixty-eight percent of young people reported running away from a residential school and/or children’s unit. Compared with running away from home, this started at a later age, but the length of time that they stayed away for increased. It is noteworthy that several females were being physically or sexually abused reported only staying away for a few hours as they described feeling helpless to do anything about their situation. Given that definitions of running away generally constitute an overnight period it is thought that definitions need to be re-examined as some of the more at risk young people may in fact be too scared to run away for that long.

3.15 Young people listed a number of problems that were occurring in their family home around the time they were running away. The main concerns identified were: arguing (42%), emotional needs not being met (39%), family turmoil (36%), being bullied (21%), being physically harmed (14%), not feeling understood (14%), being sexually harmed (7%), and being threatened (7%). Most of these factors were no longer an issue once young people were accommodated. However, several other reasons for running away became more common after young people were admitted to a residential unit, these were to see friends (29 to 39%), and ‘for fun and excitement’ (21 to 43%).
3.16 Young people reported engaging in a number of risky behaviours while they were on the run. These included drinking (71%), using drugs (64%), partying (57%), and criminal behaviour (43%), having unsafe sex (25%), sleeping rough (21%), and going to nightclubs (18%). Other research carried out in Scotland has also shown running away to be associated with a number of short-term risks such as the behaviours listed above, and that one in six young people who run away report having been either physically or sexually assaulted (Scottish Executive, 2003).

3.17 It should be emphasised that for most of the young people a pattern of running away had already been established prior to them being accommodated. The results showed that although two males stopped running away as did five females, eight males and seven females continued to run away. Furthermore, the young people who continued to run away did so for increasing periods of time.

3.18 Fifty-three percent of young people became involved in criminal activity when they ran away from a residential school or unit. The extent and types of offences committed varied, but the majority of them were often needs led e.g. stealing food or drink rather then an entrenched pattern of antisocial behaviour.

Sexual Exploitation

3.19 Eight young people interviewed (32%) shared that they had a direct experience of sexual exploitation, and there were an additional 18 young people with indirect experiences of sexual exploitation. Of the young people that were sexually exploited, three were males and five were females.

3.20 It was the males who tended (brief/casual) off street sexual exploitation or to become involved in prostitution by adult males. This applied to fewer females. According to the young women, the perpetrators tended to form an intimate relationship with them and to start grooming them prior to having sex with them. By contrast with the males, this process tended to occur much faster, from the time they were picked up perpetrators were making sexual advances.

3.21 In the case of one young male who described having become involved in the sex trade, a number of very valuable pieces of information were divulged; especially the way other young people had enticed him to become involved. We seldom discuss the sexual exploitation of young people by other young people. In various parts of the world, this behaviour is viewed, by some, as a criminal act (Barnitz, 2001). Yet, it is the very same vulnerability that attracts other young people. Clearly criminalizing young people is not the way forward, but young people need to be made aware that it may in fact be other young people that target them for sexual purposes.

3.22 This young person also shared that he had the opportunity to engage other young people for purposes of sexual gain. However, he chose not to, serving to suggest that this young person had a certain level of control over what he was doing. Ironically, though it was this sense of autonomy that kept him involved.

3.23 Another young person only realized after speaking to the researcher that the sexual exploitation that she suffered had been planned. It is thought that it is much harder for females often to see that it is abuse when this occurs in the context of an
on-going relationship. It is suspected that these relationships tend to mirror abusive relationships that they have had with a parent/carer.

3.24 Young people were able to identify specific locations where sexually exploitive behaviour was taking place. These areas tended to be in the City Centre, the St Vincent Street toilets, the Barras, and the waterfront area in Glasgow.

3.25 A number of males described being targeted in the St Vincent Street toilets in the City Centre. One young person described becoming angry with the perpetrators advances and beating them up, yet this young person continued to place himself at risk by getting drunk and passing out and not being able to recall what had happened to him the night before. It is felt that some of this behaviour is simply bravado when in fact some young people are continuing to place themselves in harms way.

3.26 A number of young people’s accounts involved them being offered alcohol or drugs in order to facilitate the abuse. Young people described taking up the offers of drugs/alcohol and going back to someone’s flat without thinking of the possible consequences. Memory loss was also described by a number of young people who became involved in sexual exploitation and this is also thought to stem from their earlier histories of childhood abuse.

3.27 Young people from the units said they witnessed other young people being targeted and becoming involved sexually with adults. Although some felt that there is a level of protection afforded when part of a group, their level of risk can also increase as a result of them feeling perhaps too confident.

3.28 Young people also described being exploited by other young people and although this does not fit within the definition that was initially provided for this study, it is thought that there are parallels with some of the adult sexually exploitive behaviour and these cannot be ignored. Generally, there is a progression in risk taking behaviour, and these kinds of experiences may well lead to riskier types of sexual behaviour at a later stage. It is also felt that young males simply mirror the behaviour of other adult males that they then perceive to be acceptable.

3.29 Lastly, the following experiences of ‘inducements’ for sexual exploitation were identified: i.e. being given alcohol (25%), kept drugged (18%), offered money (14%), threatened (14%), given cigarettes (11%), made to feel it was their fault (7%), photographed (4%), and offered other things, consisting of cigars, a bed for the night, medals, and blackmail.

‘Being Targeted’

3.30 Young people were able to identify a number of factors to explain why they thought they were targeted. A number of the incidents occurred when young people were drunk and their inhibitions were lowered. Young people were often on their own or with other young people walking and were highly visible, and therefore easier to target. Thus, a number of young people experienced being offered money and other inducements from people in their cars. Young people were often in the City Centre at nighttime when this type of behaviour is more difficult to police given the numbers of people walking about and the reduced visibility e.g. CCTV cameras. There also seems
to be an assumption made on the part of the perpetrators that if they offered young people money that would be enough to get them to engage in this type of behaviour. Young people also gave accounts of targeting other young people.

‘Grooming processes’

3.31 Most of the accounts of that the young people gave involved adults grooming young people, although there were some isolated accounts where this process was done by other young people. This behaviour generally involved a type of reward or offer of affection in order to win over the young person. Females in particular were given compliments regarding their physical appearance. A number of young people described themselves as vulnerable and therefore an easy target. Young people also described how adult males attempted to con them into a situation that if they had fallen for it would have likely resulted in them sexually exploited. Alcohol and drugs played a significant role in the grooming process in helping to reduce young people’s awareness and resistance.

3.32 Young people were also found to have a number of misconceptions about people that sexually exploit young people in that they are “not right in the head” and that they must be “beasts” or “paedophiles” when in fact a lot of the evidence would serve to suggest otherwise. Other research has shown that it is often ‘normal’ adult males who apparently become involved in this type of behaviour (Barnitz, 2001). Although one could argue that sexual deviance plays a significant role in this type of behaviour, these adults may simply not be displaying this type of behaviour in their own backyard and therefore they are not construed as deviant.

Suggestions for how young people can keep themselves safe

3.33 Young people generated a lot of ideas as to how they could keep themselves safe and suggestions they had for other young people. A few young people did not feel that it was possible to have a plan for every eventuality or that it was even possible to keep yourself safe e.g. “nowhere is safe”. Nonetheless, most of the young people listed ideas they had for improving their safety. These were as follows:

♦ avoid risky places
♦ stick with your friends, especially when consuming alcohol
♦ always have a mobile phone on you
♦ stay in well lit areas
♦ always stay near a police station or know where one is
♦ warn other young people of possible dangers of certain areas
♦ have more people walking about e.g. Liaison Police and Barnardos Street Team workers
♦ improved street lighting
♦ putting CCTV cameras in known high risk areas
♦ introduce curfews and no-go areas
♦ extend the Neighbourhood watch-type idea
♦ more sex education and at an earlier age
Disclosing information

3.34 Young people identified a number of difficulties they had with disclosing and sharing information of a personal nature particularly with staff that they see on a daily basis. Six young people indicated that they had spoken with staff regarding their knowledge and/or experience of sexual exploitation. It was not just that young people had difficulty sharing information with staff; often, young people would not discuss this with their peers. A number of the reasons that young people gave for not wanting to disclose information were because of the way they thought they might be judged or come to be perceived, to protect their own feelings/personal well being, and defensive avoidance. These have been listed in the form of ‘I’ statements.

- ‘I didn’t want people thinking that I was like that’
- ‘I was feeling embarrassed’
- ‘I did not want care staff to think I was horrible’
- ‘I thought that it would all just go away’
- ‘I never really felt that close with the staff’
- ‘I didn’t want people to judge me’
- ‘I might not be believed’

3.35 A number of young people had suggestions as to how staff and others could help young people deal with these issues. They suggested that the approach used needed to be gradual and gentle. Several young people felt that the information should be shared with someone that they felt comfortable with in order to help alleviate their feelings. Most young people had mixed views about sharing this type of information with staff because they did not want staff talking about their personal business.

3.36 Other suggestions that young people had for how information could be disclosed was having other people go around units and schools in order to speak to young people about these issues, and for the information to remain confidential. For anonymised forms to be given out and a free phone line that young people can call in Glasgow where there can remain anonymous but provide information around sexual exploitation, their own experiences or a friend’s.

3.37 Lastly, although one young person had had very positive experiences with the liaison police, most young people perception of the police was for combating crime. Most young people expressed reluctance about speaking to the police about any incidents of abuse or knowledge that they might have. One young person that was sexually exploited felt that even the victims deserved a chance to be helped.

IMPLICATIONS

3.38 The main types of implications that emerge are recorded below, most for young people themselves:

a) There is a clear need to enhance staff’s awareness regarding sexual exploitation.
b) There is a clear need for staff that are working with looked after young people to increase their awareness of targeting behaviour and incentives used, risky locations and times

c) More education for both staff and young people about the consequences of drug and alcohol misuse and how it increases the risk of young people becoming involved in sexual exploitation.

d) Both, young people who are feeling under confident as well as young people that appear overconfident appear to be easier targets as they are more likely to place themselves at greater risk, and often repeatedly.

e) Greater understanding of safety mechanisms such as young people going out in groups, and the importance of young people staying together particularly when they have been drinking, but indeed at any time.

f) Staying in places with greater visibility e.g. street lighting, (albeit this is difficult at night time) and having access to a mobile phone or telephone if need be.

g) A number of young people emphasised the importance of disclosing information where young people had been sexually exploited rather then burdening themselves with it.

h) They also suggested that they should be given the opportunity to speak to someone other than staff about this, as they did not want staff knowing and discussing their personal business.

i) A number of community safety implications emerged. Young people felt that there should be more adults walking the streets, although it was not always stipulated whom that should be, they did indicate that Barnardo’s Street Team should be among these adults. One young person felt that liaison police were extremely helpful and that there should be more of them in order to help keep young people safe.
REFERENCES


