



Bristol Safeguarding
Children Board

making safeguarding everybody's business

Q&A with Fiona Birch & Olivia Henry - National Probation Service

Why do you think the reoffending rates are so low?

Not all people who commit the offences have a specific sexual interest in children. Many offend for all sorts of different reasons. For many getting caught is enough of a deterrent. Obviously reoffending data by nature underrates actual risk as it only counts those where a further conviction has happened. There will be some who have offended but not been convicted. However even if doubled it would still be relatively low.

Are the offenders better at hiding it?

Once they have a conviction it is commonplace for computers and phones to be regularly looked at whilst under the register so it's not that easy to avoid detection.

Or are the programmes very effective?

There have been recent concerns regarding the effectiveness of earlier prison programmes and this is still being debated. Community programmes are known to be more effective. The current suite of programmes are now the same across prisons and community. These have drawn on more recent academic research on strengths based approaches, and use the bio/psycho/social model of offending behaviour. These are currently being evaluated but it will be a while before long term effectiveness can be established.

What do the programmes involve?

The programmes cover five areas:

- Healthy sexual interests
- Healthy thinking
- Positive relationships
- Managing life's problems
- Sense of purpose

These mirror the segments in the success wheel in Fiona's presentation.

Are people who view CSEM monitored once they are a known offender - is reoffending low because they haven't been caught yet? Is their technology use reviewed regularly?

See above. Yes technology is usually reviewed regularly. This is the case for known offenders with a conviction who are on the register. Those that are known but have no conviction would not be under the same restrictions/monitoring regime.



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Are there statistics which reflect the frequency of or how long an individual has viewed CSEM, prior to being caught?

Not that I am aware of. Kieran may have this. We tend to get this information on an individual basis from investigating officers. It isn't always available.

Is there any research that suggests the age of an individual viewing CSEM has a higher or lower percentage of committing contact offences?

Static risk assessment tools include age as a risk factor. That is, the younger the person is at time of offending then the more likely they are to re-offend. However it is important to note that this is for adults only. When looking at children who offend, the majority do not go on to reoffend as adults. It should also be noted that if their conviction is of images then they may have been looking at images of girls/boys of a similar age to themselves so although illegal it would not necessarily demonstrate an inappropriate sexual interest.