

# Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

## **Roundtable no. 1**

The Psychology of Individuals Who Abuse Children

Roundtable Sessions: 22 and 23 March 2022



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# | Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

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## Foreword

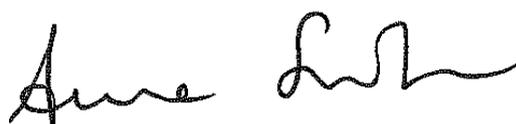
The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (“SCAI”) held roundtable sessions on 22nd and 23rd March 2022, at its premises in Edinburgh. The sessions were open to the public.

The purpose of the sessions was to explore aspects of the psychology of those who abuse children with relevant experts in a way that would help me to understand it and to apply that understanding when deciding, at a future date, what recommendations I need to make to protect children in care from abuse.

The roundtable was convened by me and facilitated by Colin MacAulay QC, lead senior counsel to SCAI. We were supported by Anne

McKechnie, forensic clinical psychologist, who was present throughout to provide technical clarification as required.

During the roundtable sessions, I had the benefit of hearing from experts who participated willingly and gave generously of their time. I am extremely grateful to them for their frank, open, and thoughtful contributions both written and oral.



**Lady Smith**



From left to right: Lady Smith, Colin MacAulay QC (lead senior counsel to the SCAI), and Anne McKechnie (forensic clinical psychologist)

## Participants

The experts who participated in the roundtable were:

- Lorraine Johnstone, consultant clinical forensic psychologist
- Morag Slessler, consultant forensic clinical psychologist
- Stuart Allardyce, social worker
- Michele Gilluley, forensic psychologist
- Judi Bolton, consultant forensic clinical psychologist
- Liz Gilchrist, forensic psychologist and professor of psychological therapies (University of Edinburgh)
- Martin Henry, retired social worker and independent consultant.

Katharine Russell, consultant clinical psychologist, was also due to participate but, late in the day, unfortunately became unable to do so.

We had hoped that Fiona Munro, consultant clinical psychologist, would be able to participate but, from an early stage, she was not available to attend the sessions. She did, however, helpfully submit a paper.

The experts' knowledge and experience was drawn principally, but not exclusively, from cases involving the sexual abuse of children in residential care and also of children living in other circumstances.

Prior to the roundtable, a series of questions had been issued to all nine experts to assist in their preparation for the discussions; they all drafted papers in response, the final versions of which are on our [website](#).

In this volume, I record what I find to have been the most significant points that emerged from the roundtable discussions, particularly those that may have relevance for future recommendations in relation to the protection of children in care from abuse. These points are those opinions and conclusions in relation to which I find that the participants were in broad agreement and which I am satisfied I can accept as being cogent and reliable. A full transcript of the discussions is available on our [website](#).<sup>1</sup>

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1 See [Transcript, day 274](#) and [Transcript, day 275](#).

## Themes

The broad themes discussed emerged from the questions that had been notified to the participants and were:

1. What are the characteristics of child abusers, what are their perceptions of children and how do these contribute to the perpetration of abuse? Is there a link between viewing of pornography and/or indecent images of children and the abuse of children?
2. Despite being subject to the strict rules and requirements of religious orders including some designed to protect children,<sup>2</sup> some of their members abused children. Is that surprising? How does it happen? And does celibacy play any role?
3. How and why abusers deny and minimise their abuse of children and whether and how they may shift from that position to one of acceptance?
4. Why some people abuse in isolation, some in groups, and some in both?
5. Why children in the same care setting may be treated differently by their carers and the role played by attachment?
6. Grooming of children by abusers.
7. The “victim to perpetrator” journey—does it happen, and if so, how can the risk of a victim of childhood abuse becoming a perpetrator be reduced?
8. Awareness of risk when recruiting, and reducing the risk of recruiting an abuser.

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2 For example, be kind to children and provide them with the best possible care (see Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no.2: The provision of residential care for children in Scotland by the Sisters of Nazareth between 1933 and 1984 in the Nazareth Houses in Aberdeen, Cardonald, Lasswade, and Kilmarnock](#), (30 May 2019), p.3); refrain from corporal punishment, never be alone with a child, and never fondle a child (see Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no.4: The provision of residential care for children in Scotland by The Christian Brothers between 1953 and 1983 at St Ninian’s Residential Care Home, Falkland, Fife](#), (17 February 2021), pp.3-4, and 5).

# 1 What are the characteristics of child abusers, what are their perceptions of children and how do these contribute to the perpetration of abuse? Is there a link between viewing pornography and the abuse of children?

## Characteristics of abusers

All participants were clear that there is no prescribed abuser type or homogeneity in their characteristics. Rather, they are a heterogeneous group and that is critical to any understanding of their psychology. Like all human behaviour, it is nuanced, and there is no single answer to the question of why some people abuse children. Stereotyping should be avoided: “people who commit sexual offences or are at risk of sexual offences don’t have a stamp on their head. We can’t identify people by what they look like”,<sup>3</sup> “what we need to do is seek to embrace the complexity”.<sup>4</sup>

The overall impression given was that the abuse of children is likely to arise from the actions and choices of a person having a particular bio-psycho-social make-up and their own unique history when they interact with children in particular circumstances. The psychological factors ought not to be overemphasised because context and the particular circumstances matter. Contextual drivers are extremely important because all behaviours are an interaction between a situation and the factors brought to it by the particular individual—a person may not, for

example, have any sexual interest in children until they take a job as a residential carer working with children.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst there are some characteristics that may increase the risk of an adult abusing children, they are not clear predictors. Further, it was clear that the learning about the psychology of abusers and how to apply that learning with a view to reducing risk, is continually evolving.

In relation to sexual abuse, there is a wealth of research available but, as yet, no definitive answer as to why it happens. The abuser may not have achieved a “theory of mind”<sup>6</sup> or may have a reduced capacity to do so. In these circumstances they may seek to satisfy their own needs without considering or being able to consider the feelings or thoughts of the child. Some who sexually abuse children are completely driven to do so and will design their lives accordingly but others act in response to opportunities presented to them rather than created by them. It is, though, important to appreciate that a range of studies indicate that no more than 40-50% of those who sexually abuse children can properly be classed as paedophiles.<sup>7</sup>

3 Transcript, day 274: Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.40.

4 Transcript, day 274: Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, p.20.

5 See, for instance, Transcript, day 274: Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.16. See also Transcript, day 274: Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001.

6 The term “theory of mind”, as used by psychologists, connotes where a person is able to understand that others, including children, may not think or feel the same as you; if a person has achieved “theory of mind”, s(h)e is able to ascribe mental states to others that are different from their own. See Transcript, day 274: Michele Gilluley, at TRN-9-000000001, p.83.

7 See Seto, M.C. (2004), “Pedophilia and sexual offenses against children” *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 15(1): 321-361. Paedophilia refers to a sexual attraction by an adult to pre-pubescent children, which in itself may or may not lead to sexual abuse (World Health Organization (2019), “ICD-11”. Available at <https://icd.who.int/en>).

Some seek connections with children because they fail to connect or have difficulty connecting with the outside adult world; children present them with fewer emotional demands.<sup>8</sup> The abuser may feel unloved and communicate that to a child in a way that enables the formation of a “trauma bond”.<sup>9</sup> Some attribute adult intentions to or blame the children they sexually abuse for having caused it.<sup>10</sup> Some believe that children are capable of consenting to sexual intimacy or even that by engaging in sexual contact with children, they are showing loving care.

Some abusers target children who they see as vulnerable. That vulnerability may arise in different ways. For example, the child may appear as unlikely to disclose the abuse or, even if they do, likely to be a poor witness. Children just may not be able to talk about the abuse: “developmentally children do not have the language, framework, theory of body or experience to label what has happened to them.”<sup>11</sup> Even where children are confident and articulate, there may be too much at stake for them to countenance disclosing, in terms of potential outcome, if they do so. A good example of the latter are children who were found by the Independent Review of Sexual Abuse in Scottish Football<sup>12</sup>

to have been abused where their potential careers as successful footballers were at stake.<sup>13</sup>

Adults can escalate into becoming abusers due to external circumstances such as major life events—“life can trip people up”.<sup>14</sup> Or, drawing on learning from the “Good Lives Model” as developed by the New Zealand psychologist, Tony Ward,<sup>15</sup> an adult’s “good life” gets out of balance and s(h)e ends up overvaluing, for example, sexual intimacy or control, and seeking it to the exclusion of all else even if with a child. Or neglect of a child (which transcends social boundaries) can persist so as to slip into emotional abuse.

Behaviour towards children that starts as non-abusive can escalate through incremental violation of boundaries.<sup>16</sup> For example, apparently innocent “banter” can become so pervasive as to become emotionally abusive,<sup>17</sup> horseplay can escalate into abusive physical confrontation,<sup>18</sup> and encouraging staff to show children they are loved can be used by the opportunistic to overstep boundaries and may thereby facilitate sexual abuse.<sup>19</sup>

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8 [Transcript, day 274](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, pp.75-76.

9 [Transcript, day 274](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, pp.80-81. See also [Transcript, day 274](#): Michele Gilluley, at TRN-9-000000001, p.84; and [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.14.

10 [Transcript, day 274](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000001, p.77.

11 [Transcript, day 275](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000003, p.19.

12 See [The Report of the Independent Review of Sexual Abuse in Scottish Football](#), (February 2021).

13 See, for example, [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.12-13.

14 [Transcript, day 274](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, p.57.

15 Referred to by, for example, [Transcript, day 274](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000001, p.58. The “Good Lives model” is an approach to offender rehabilitation that involves recognising that all individuals have needs and aspirations that are normal, good and worthwhile but the means by which they seek to achieve them can become maladaptive and cause harm to others in the process.

16 See [Transcript, day 274](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.37. See also [Transcript, day 274](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001.

17 [Transcript, day 274](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, p.61.

18 [Transcript, day 274](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, p.61-62.

19 [Transcript, day 274](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.50.

Separately, abuse can arise where staff in an institution do not know how to deal with difficult behaviour, erroneously see it as deliberate, or fail to allow for the child having suffered previous trauma. This can lead to the child being harmed, albeit unintentionally.

### **Pornography and indecent images of children—is there a link between viewing such material and contact abuse?**

The participants made observations regarding how pornography has become normalised in modern society. It has “in a sense become part of the world, it’s part of the real world and it’s part of the world that young people navigate every day.”<sup>20</sup>

Relevant research and understanding is growing but is still in its relatively early stages. The use of all forms of pornography is increasing exponentially and there needs to be more research. The participants did not conclude that there is an established link and it seems that most who view such pornography do not progress to contact abuse. Some viewers of indecent images of children do, however, move on to grooming children online.<sup>21</sup>

Whilst there are those who are specifically sexually attracted to children and seek out indecent images of children, there are others who find themselves doing so as a result of boredom, isolation, desensitisation due to extensive prior viewing of legal material, and curiosity. These others are less likely to escalate to contact abuse.

### **Attachment**

The presence or absence of secure attachment, ideally established in early childhood, was highly relevant when considering both those who abuse children and the children they abuse or may seek to abuse.

Secure attachment is “an innate relational bond between a primary caregiver and an infant that ensures the physical, emotional and all other needs are protected and promoted through interactions...multiple positive care-giving interactions that fundamentally determines the neurological development and brain structures of the developing child” and “if you get attachment right, then adversity is likely to form a more resilient person. If attachment is problematic, adversity becomes more consuming and problematic and defining. So to invest in attachment is absolutely critical”.<sup>22</sup>

A child who has had secure attachment in early life is more likely to have developed an understanding of interpersonal boundaries and so is less likely to fall victim to abuse. Even if abuse does happen, the child is less likely to suffer from the psychological impact of trauma. A child lacking secure attachment in early life is more likely to fall prey to an abuser and, instead of healthy secure attachment, a trauma bond may develop.

The participants considered that the absence of secure attachment in the background of the abuser is relevant when considering why an adult may or may not abuse children. Whereas good attachment and the resilience that arises from it usually enables a person to become a fairly well functioning adult; giving them “some kind of integrity”,<sup>23</sup> insecure

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20 Transcript, day 274: Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, p.100.

21 Transcript, day 274: Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.95.

22 Transcript, day 274: Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, pp.66-67.

23 Transcript, day 274: Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, p.64.

or deficient attachment, such as that which may arise where a child is dependent on someone who abuses them, can lead to replication by them, in adulthood, of their abuser's behaviour.

### **Culture and environment**

Participants repeatedly made the point that culture within an organisation and the working environment is critically important. Managing the culture and the environment in a way that properly addresses risk may be easier than trying to change an individual; the focus should not simply be on the abuser or potential abuser.

## 2 Despite being subject to the strict rules and requirements of religious orders including ones designed to protect children,<sup>24</sup> some of their members abused children. Is that surprising? How does it happen? And does celibacy play any role?

Not all participants had direct experience of working with or in relation to those who abused children within the religious order environment but some did, including Martin Henry who was, formerly, lay adviser on safeguarding to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh for 22 years,<sup>25</sup> Judi Bolton, and Stuart Allardyce.

The lack of what was referred to as “human formation”—that is, who you are as a person, your individual psychology, how you handle emotions and relationships, is thought to play a significant role here. It is not simply a matter of the individual’s religious training.<sup>26</sup> Also, priests and members of religious orders who have sexually abused children—who I will refer to as “abusers from religious settings”—have engaged in patterns of behaviour similar to other sex offenders.

It may, it is thought, have been easier for abusers from religious settings to perpetrate abuse because within religious orders, God was “weaponised” in the sense that there was a habit of taking advantage of the subservience by others to the power of the religious; they could rely on routinely

being held in high regard and that could operate as a mechanism to silence children. That may have enabled the abuser to feel he had permission to abuse children, it may have helped the abuser to feel he could “act with impunity”,<sup>27</sup> and it may have made it even harder for a child to be believed by parents who would find the idea of a priest or member of a religious order being an abuser “very hard to process...it would be so profoundly shocking it’s going to rock your whole life...if you’re going to try and believe the child, think of all the implications it’s going to have for you.”<sup>28</sup>

Participants were clear that the culture of an institution is highly influential; those within it conform to its norms. The Catholic Church reinforced that sense of permission to abuse children: “as an institution, there was this message: avoid bringing scandal on the church. Which essentially translated across institutions into: protect the institution and its reputation before you protect the child or the young person. And that has been, I think, a theme that has been very strong in our child protection/sex offending debate in relation to institutions in Scotland.”<sup>29</sup>

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24 For example, be kind to children and provide them with the best possible care (see Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no.2: The provision of residential care for children in Scotland by the Sisters of Nazareth between 1933 and 1984 in the Nazareth Houses in Aberdeen, Cardonald, Lasswade, and Kilmarnock](#) (30 May 2019), p.3); refrain from corporal punishment, never be alone with a child, and never fondle a child (see Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no.4: The provision of residential care for children in Scotland by The Christian Brothers between 1953 and 1983 at St Ninian’s Residential Care Home, Falkland, Fife](#), (17 February 2021), pp.3-5).

25 Martin Henry also served as a member of the Scottish Catholic Bishops’ Conference Working Party on Child Sexual Abuse and chaired the Safeguarding Commission of the Conference for Religious in Scotland for four years.

26 [Transcript, day 274](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, p.110.

27 [Transcript, day 274](#): Morag Slessor, at TRN-9-000000001, p.120.

28 [Transcript, day 274](#): Morag Slessor, at TRN-9-000000001, p.120.

29 [Transcript, day 274](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000001, p.122-23.

The possibility of God being “weaponised” was a reminder of and chimed with references in case study evidence during, for example, the Benedictines case study, when clericalism was referred to as a factor that helped to enable abuse. Pope Francis has frequently denounced clericalism, and Hugh Russell, an applicant in that case study, has since referred me to an address the Pope made on 3 October 2018, to the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, in which he said:

“Clericalism arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation, that interprets the ministry received as a *power* to be exercised rather than a free and generous *service* to be given...*Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church.*”<sup>30</sup>

In his evidence, having observed that it was not possible to question the catechism, Hugh Russell said:

“Without that opportunity to question it is tied in with this clericalism, which again Pope Francis is abhorrent of. It’s the position of power that is vested in the clergy and if the clergy subscribe to that power and go on that power kick, there is no end to the damage they can do. Whilst I was at Carlekemp, the priests who were abusing me were all-powerful.”<sup>31</sup>

Participants also felt that, separately from taking advantage of their status, abusers from religious settings had a capacity for self-delusion, engaging in thinking that

was illogical, and also that they could be theologically naïve. Some handed the moral responsibility for the abuse back to God. A study of priests who had sexually abused children,<sup>32</sup> records this quotation:

“When I was offending, I couldn’t convince myself that God didn’t know. I brought it into prayer, treated it as a problem. I handed the problem over to God. It doesn’t fit with how I am, but this is the way you made me. It’s up to you to sort it out. I treated it as God’s problem rather than mine. It didn’t outweigh the good I was doing. I hoped God would intervene.”<sup>33</sup>

Whilst it is something that can also occur in non-religious families, it was thought that the personal backgrounds of some abusers from religious settings may have been relevant to the extent that they could include growing up in families where sex was viewed negatively, power was expressed cruelly, and there was but ill-informed understanding of relationships.

All those who contributed to this part of the discussions stressed the importance of context and culture. There was some reflection on the extent to which abusers from religious settings may have grown up with very limited life experiences and were then isolated, living closed adult lives in closed environments, the inference being, it seemed, that these factors (rather than any particular psychological factors) could be highly relevant: “I know we’re here to

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30 [Address by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment](#), 3 October 2018, as cited by Hugh Russell’s letter to SCAI, 31 October 2019, at WIT-3-000000342, p.3. Emphasis in the original.

31 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3194.

32 See the Findlater study by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, cited in Scorer, R. (2014), *Betrayed: The English Catholic Church and the Sex Abuse Crisis*, London: Biteback Publishing, pp.30-35.

33 Scorer, R. (2014), *Betrayed: The English Catholic Church and the Sex Abuse Crisis*, London: Biteback Publishing, p.32.

talk about psychology but I think we can't overemphasise context enough."<sup>34</sup> An interesting parallel was drawn with what can happen during wartime invasions. Whilst sexual violence and abuse is prevalent in war zones, that is not because many of those who fight have deviant sexual thoughts but it is more a matter of context: "if you think about war/conflict situations, we have situations where there are lots of power, there are lots of oppression, there's lots of hierarchy, there's lots of opportunity to keep things secret, there's often little accountability... when you begin to take that contextual perspective on it...then we begin to get the clues about what safety and prevention looks like that goes beyond just screening individuals out. Because actually screening may not be very effective at all, but the transformation of our institutions might be."<sup>35</sup>

### **The role of celibacy**

Celibacy may involve problems ranging from many of those who are celibate finding it difficult to talk about to the use of pornography by religious abusers who do not regard that as a breach of their vows. However, there is no established causal link between celibacy and the abuse of children. Sexual abuse of children is not the result of sexual frustration and celibacy is not likely to shift a person away from their primary sexual orientation. Even if the role of celibacy ought not to be overlooked, it should not be over-emphasised.

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34 [Transcript, day 274](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, p.140.

35 [Transcript, day 274](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000001, pp.141-42.

# 3

## Why do abusers deny and minimise their conduct and can their responses shift from denial/minimisation to acceptance?

### Denial and minimisation

Denial is very common, it is a coping strategy, it helps abusers to survive things that are difficult, and it can be compounded if the reaction of friends and family is that the person alleged to have abused children cannot possibly have done so.

Denial may occur for a wide spectrum of reasons including because being an abuser is “not an identity people want to take on”<sup>36</sup> and would be destructive of their sense of self, or because they do not see it as having harmed the child, or because they fear losing their liberty. They may also cite examples of subsequent positive behaviour on the part of the victim that they erroneously believe are incompatible with the abuse having happened and therefore prove that it didn’t happen; I say “erroneously” because as the participants explained, the formation of genuine attachment between abuser and victim is not uncommon.

On the rare occasions that abusers do not deny the abuse, they are likely to engage in significant minimisation and distortion. Minimisation could involve believing there is a hierarchy of abuse, saying “I’ve never hit a woman” whilst admitting to having stabbed a man<sup>37</sup> or whilst admitting to the abusive conduct alleged, giving an explanation such as “but it was only because of this or it was because of the culture...it’s not just me, we

were all doing it”.<sup>38</sup> An example of cognitive distortion would be where the abuser blames the child as, for example, saying that the child wanted it or that it was the child’s fault.

An example of minimisation by his abuser, Guy Ray-Hills, was spoken to in evidence by Don Boyd, in the boarding schools case study in relation to his time at Loretto School during which he was abused by the man over an extended period from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. Guy Ray-Hills eventually admitted the abuse, but he sought to minimise it. He wrote to Don in terms that included this:

“There is no doubt whatsoever that what I did was wrong, but that took place over 30 years ago and I have paid a heavy price. I lost my job after 16 years at the school and was out of work for the best part of two years when I lived in Islington. Today, looking back to those days I feel thoroughly ashamed of myself and try very hard to forget. You and I always got on so well together, and what started as a good friendship gradually got out of hand. I have no excuses to offer and ought to have known better. Probably I should never have taken a job in a school in the first place, but I loved teaching French, and look back at my time there as a very happy period of my life...I am now 74 years old, and not in particularly good

36 Transcript, day 274: Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000001, p.146.

37 Transcript, day 274: Judi Bolton, at TRN-9-000000001, p.154.

38 Transcript, day 274: Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000001, p.155.

health, and the thought of having to face my friends and relations, should anything come to light, is unbearable.

I am desperately anxious at the moment to talk to you about it all.”<sup>39</sup>

Don observed that the expression “a friendship gradually getting out of hand” was “somewhat...an understatement” and it was “probably a man desperately trying to defend himself in the situation, without necessarily thinking it would ever appear in public, but trying to reduce it to its lowest common denominator” and make it “[m]ore acceptable.”<sup>40</sup>

Another example of an abuser admitting the abuse, but engaging in minimisation, arose in the evidence of Bernard Traynor, who pled guilty to six charges of indecent assault involving four children, in the 1970s.<sup>41</sup> In evidence, whilst accepting that what he did was quite wrong, he sought to present himself as vulnerable at the time, referring to his youth (he was a teenage trainee priest) and having been abused himself both at home and at school, between the ages of 11 and 16, causing him to be dysfunctional.<sup>42</sup> He referred to having had “a repressed adolescence. I never had my own adolescence because of what happened to me at home and at school and I was seeking the adolescence that I never had”<sup>43</sup> and “I suppose I was—pathetic though it sounds, I was wanting to be one of the gang.”<sup>44</sup> Regarding the abuse, in response to other evidence that it happened “regularly” he

said, “I would say I don’t think it happened regularly, but it happened often”<sup>45</sup> and on it being suggested to him that—as was demonstrated by the evidence—he “essentially preyed on vulnerable children” his answer was “I think that is harsh on me. I think I took advantage, but I don’t think I preyed.”<sup>46</sup>

A small proportion of abusers deny because they are ashamed. Some deny and give, as their reason, that the victims have colluded or are motivated by a desire to obtain compensation. Those that blame their victims can be very hostile and angry.

Some abusers genuinely believe they have done nothing wrong.

Whatever the reason(s) for the denial, it does not indicate that there is a higher risk of recidivism. Nor, importantly, does it mean that there is no prospect of psychological or other treatment intervention being successful.

### **Shifting from denial of abuse to acceptance**

This is very difficult and may depend more on external factors (for example, can the abuser’s family accept it happened and be supportive or not? What is the reason for the denial?). Abusers broadly fall into four categories when it comes to denial: the shame deniers, the deniers who accept what they did but do not believe it was wrong, the victim blamers, and those who deny

39 Letter from Guy Ray-Hills to Don Boyd, dated 5 January, at WIT-3-000000736, pp.1-4. Emphasis in the original.

40 See [Transcript, day 219](#): Don Boyd, TRN-8-000000010, p. 62.

41 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN.001.002.4398.

42 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN.001.002.4422-4423.

43 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN.001.002.4405.

44 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN.001.002.4421.

45 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN. 001.002.4417.

46 See [Transcript, day 42](#): Bernard Traynor, at TRN.001.002.4432.

when in prison for self-protection.<sup>47</sup> The victim blamers may be the hardest to work with when it comes to helping them move towards acceptance.

Acceptance is not often a treatment goal, and whilst perhaps consideration should be given to whether it ought to be, there are other factors at play; some abusers may become a suicide risk if they realise what they have actually done. Much may, however, depend on whether acceptance means accepting responsibility for all the details of the abuse or not.

Overall, the participants felt that acceptance could and did happen—Don Boyd’s abuser, referred to above, is an example—but it was questionable whether, of itself, it was of value in terms of reducing risk.

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47 [Transcript, day 274](#): Morag Slesser, at TRN-9-000000001, p.164.

# 4

## Where people abuse in groups rather than as individuals, why does that happen?

The participants, very fairly, indicated that their experience of abusers offending in groups was limited. Some thought it could be associated with a desire to maintain relationships within the group since dynamics within a group can “pull people along into a trajectory of perpetrating offences that escalate and become more serious.”<sup>48</sup>

Also, the group dynamic can come into play where victims are used to recruit or retain other victims. There is a clear example of that in the findings of the independent Review into the Abuse by John Smyth of Pupils and Former Pupils of Winchester College by Jan Pickles and Genevieve Woods, published in July 2020.<sup>49</sup> Smyth abused boys he had

drawn into a tight circle in a school society, the Christian Forum (which had a link with evangelical holiday camps founded by the Iwerne Trust). When a boy moved away to university or even overseas, Smyth’s other victims would be sent to check on them to keep them from backsliding. Smyth was an evangelical leader whose faith and practices had been shaped by his own time at the Iwerne camps under a man called Eric Nash. Once drawn into the group, boys such as Smyth would receive “long and ‘heavily theological’ letters” that would often not only enforce “principles of moral conduct”, but also contain “instructions for recruitment of boys to the camps.”<sup>50</sup>

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48 Transcript, day 274: Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, p.179.

49 Jan Pickles OBE and Genevieve Woods, *Review into the Abuse by John Smyth of Pupils and Former Pupils of Winchester College*, (2022).

50 Jan Pickles OBE and Genevieve Woods, *Review into the Abuse by John Smyth of Pupils and Former Pupils of Winchester College*, (2022), p.119.

## 5 Why children in the same care setting may be treated differently by their carers and the role played by attachment?

It may not be helpful to label children or adults as vulnerable because you “can be vulnerable for 15 minutes of your life or vulnerable for 15 years”<sup>51</sup> and because “[w]e find ourselves vulnerable in different contexts, at different times in our lives, just depending on circumstances and how life is treating us we are more or less vulnerable. No different for children or young people.”<sup>52</sup>

The participants seemed, however, to be in no doubt that at the heart of this issue lay the fact that some children displayed characteristics that caused them to attract the attention of adults who were either already abusers or who became their abusers.

Examples were:

- Children who have disorganised attachment disorders (this is more likely in the case of children in care)
- Children with communication disorders
- Children who have needs that are met by the abuser and they, in turn, meet the abuser’s needs; there is a mutuality of sorts—“some abusers are very good at... meeting these unmet needs...constructing a relationship that can meet some of the unmet needs that young people have”<sup>53</sup>

- Children in care who do not have visitors<sup>54</sup>
- Children who are shy<sup>55</sup>
- Children who were unloved in their home environment—the abuser shows the child what they perceive as love, the child increasingly turns to the abuser and a bond develops<sup>56</sup>
- Children who are available to the abuser—it is then a matter of opportunism on the part of the abuser as opposed to planned abuse. But opportunistic abusers can become serial abusers<sup>57</sup>
- Children who as individuals are such as to make a person who has not previously abused or had sexual thoughts about children feel drawn to them<sup>58</sup>
- Children who have witnessed their parents apparently approving of the abuser<sup>59</sup>
- Children who are susceptible to being controlled, for example, by threats that something bad will happen to them or they perceive they will be deprived of an opportunity to achieve a goal to which they aspire
- Children who have previously been physically abused. They may not realise that excessive physical punishment

51 [Transcript, day 275](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000003, p.51.

52 [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.11.

53 [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.14.

54 [Transcript, day 275](#): Morag Slesser, at TRN-9-000000003, p.3.

55 [Transcript, day 275](#): Morag Slesser, at TRN-9-000000003, p.3.

56 [Transcript, day 275](#): Michele Gilluley, at TRN-9-000000003, p.4.

57 [Transcript, day 275](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000003, p.7.

58 [Transcript, day 275](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000003, p.7.

59 [Transcript, day 275](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000003, p.9.

was abuse, the abuser is able to move on to sexual abuse and the child is left wondering whether s(h)e consented or deserved the abuse as punishment<sup>60</sup>

- Children who have a prior history of being abused—they are more likely to be abused again as they “get an imprinting of what’s normal, and quite often...they will seek what’s familiar, not necessarily what’s safe” and what’s familiar may be the traumatising dynamic.<sup>61</sup>

Regarding the role of attachment, attachment bonds can form between children and their abusers. Attachment may be the result of grooming, but its formation is not necessarily by design. It can be difficult to distinguish between genuine affection within the care giving process, and exploitation.

Particular features of child/abuser attachment include:

- Attachment can arise where the child thinks their interaction with the abuser is a loving one rather than grounded in exploitation
- Having grown and become established, attachment may lead to abuse where that is not what was originally intended by the abuser
- Attachment between an abuser and a particular child may arise where the child tolerates the abuse as a trade-off for what is good in their relationship (for example, attention, validation, recognition, and other aspects of being made to feel special); the trauma bond then becomes really strong—“it’s almost there’s an investment”<sup>62</sup>

- Attachment may develop as a survival mechanism; the child learns to understand the abuser’s moods and how to appease or please the abuser on a “bad” day<sup>63</sup>
- Attachment may form in an environment where loyalty to “team” is important in the particular environment (such as in the sporting or schools context), and where, accordingly “[t]hat sense of bond between peers and indeed adults is constructed so strongly and so firmly that it needs to become almost impenetrable. Your individual responsibility as a member of that group is very clear, you have to maintain loyalty at all costs.”<sup>64</sup>

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60 [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.26.

61 [Transcript, day 275](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000003, p.29.

62 [Transcript, day 275](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.33-36. For an example of this sense of trade-off, see the evidence of “James” in the Quarriers, Aberlour, and Barnardos case study, where he described the severe sexual abuse perpetrated on him : “the reality of that was it was probably 20% or 25% of the relationship that I had with that man; the other percentage was amazing.” See [Transcript, day 94](#): “James”, at TRN.001.004.3245.

63 [Transcript, day 275](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000003, p.38.

64 [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.42.

# 6

## Grooming of children by abusers

Participants referred to various ways in which adult abusers groom children. Whilst they each stressed different aspects of grooming practices, they all appeared to be comfortable with the working definition arrived at by Professor Anne-Marie McAlinden, of Queen's University, Belfast:

"The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in a range of interpersonal and social settings in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or prohibiting exposure."<sup>65</sup>

It was observed that grooming could be conscious or unconscious—the latter where abusers convince themselves that they are just doing the right thing for the child, that it could involve grooming parents and/or family as well as the child. It was also observed that the term "vulnerable subject" may not always be helpful given that the subject of the abuse may not be permanently vulnerable. It was perhaps more helpful to think in terms of exploitation of opportunities that exist or arise.

As for awareness of when grooming is or could be taking place, training staff about appropriate boundaries was felt to be extremely important whilst recognising that some behaviours were benign and

proportionality was called for. Also, whilst it had to be recognised that not all "nice interactions" between an adult abuser and a child are grooming,<sup>66</sup> effective protection of children requires staff to understand how grooming can occur and to speak up if something in the child/adult relationship seems to be not right.

Looking at matters from the point of view of assessing the child, it might be possible to identify that grooming is taking place where not only is there a special relationship between child and adult but the child seems more withdrawn, more isolated, there are changes in their interactions, or apparent fear.<sup>67</sup> But previously established secure attachment may, because of its potential for engendering a stable sense of self and of the world (so making the child less needy), counteract grooming.<sup>68</sup>

The protection of children in care from abuse requires an understanding of grooming and its insidious nature. Halting it may be effective in preventing abuse that would otherwise have ensued from occurring at all. In [Appendix B](#), some examples of the grooming practices detailed in the evidence and findings covered in case studies that have been published thus far are, accordingly, set out as being instructive examples.

65 Quoted in [Transcript, day 275](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.49-50.

66 [Transcript, day 275](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000003, p.40.

67 [Transcript, day 275](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000003, p.57.

68 [Transcript, day 275](#): Liz Gilchrist, at TRN-9-000000003, p.58.

# 7

## The Victim to Perpetrator Journey—does it exist and if so, what might protect against it?

### The Journey

The participants were clear that there are different pathways to becoming an abuser of children and there was no simple correlation between being abused as a child and becoming an abuser in adulthood. It is difficult to research. Whilst a person who was abused as a child might develop emotionally and psychologically in distorted ways that could lead to depression, anxiety, and mental health problems rather than to them becoming abusers themselves,<sup>69</sup> particularly in the case of sexual abuse. Indeed, there appeared to be quite a strong feeling that the majority of those who are sexually abused as children do not go on to sexually abuse children.<sup>70</sup>

There was, however, a feeling that if the childhood abuse was physical violence, then it is more likely that the victim will engage in violent behaviour as an adult “because they just haven’t learned how not to be violent.”<sup>71</sup>

### Protecting against the risk

Discussions considered various ways in which adults might be helped to live pro-social lives in which they would, for example, not give way to illicit thoughts when challenged by the vicissitudes of life. This included initiatives to teach positive and appropriate attitudes to women to young men, to support the avoidance of substance abuse, to give access to support to those who recognise they have developed risky thought patterns, and to afford education in how to have healthy relationships, but none of that was fool proof.

Separately, however, the point was clearly made that the most effective protection would be to prevent children from being abused in the first place. That involves promoting “what a positive childhood looks like. Because just having people not doing bad things to kids is part of the picture but it’s not the whole picture. We need to have childhoods that are filled with something else, other than the possibility of abuse.”<sup>72</sup> Such childhoods would ideally include at least one positive role model, one reliable, protective, kind, and loving adult, a positive support network, and secure attachment.

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69 See, for example, [Transcript, day 275](#): Morag Slesser, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.96-98.

70 See, for example, [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.111 and 114.

71 [Transcript, day 275](#): Morag Slesser, at TRN-9-000000003, p.99.

72 [Transcript, day 275](#): Martin Henry, at TRN-9-000000003, p.137.

# 8

## Risk, recruitment, and training, barriers to implementation, and how to strengthen current practices

Whilst the experience of participants has focussed more on assessing the risk of recidivism in offenders, their experience had also enabled them to consider risk assessment when recruiting adults to work with children.

### Risk assessment

Whilst, ideally, good risk assessment is less about ticking boxes and more about gathering information that is widely recognised as being relevant, that is an approach that takes time—time that may not be available. Overall, there seemed to be a feeling that recruitment processes are not sophisticated enough to identify those who are going to be a risk to children if appointed to the role for which they are applying. The way matters work, it seems to be more a question of whether the person seems to be a “good fit” and whether the system in which they are going to work will enable them to be the best carer of children that they can be. It is then more a matter of whether or not training is of a sufficiently high standard.<sup>73</sup>

All agreed that disclosure under, for example, the PVG scheme,<sup>74</sup> was of limited value, yet it utilises much energy and focus that could be better directed.

Various ideas that could help were aired including:

- Assess applicants as individuals, looking at whether there are personality problems, mental health issues, or problems with anger, anxiety, or low self-esteem, and, conversely, whether or not they have the capacity for self-reflection, whether they have self-knowledge, self-awareness, and a credible understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Understanding what, in the working environment, might increase or decrease the risk they could pose to children
- Using probationary periods of three or six months
- Not recruiting those who have only recently graduated from further education
- Using placements, supervision, and mentoring
- Looking for positive indicators, such as a track record of successful prior work as a foster parent
- Embedding continuing learning and development—one-off assessment is not enough
- Mentioning child protection in all advertisements for roles involving the care of children

73 See, for example, [Transcript, day 274](#): Lorraine Johnstone, at TRN-9-000000001, p.144.

74 The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme, managed by Disclosure Scotland, aims to ensure that those “whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do ‘regulated work’ with these vulnerable groups” through the use of criminal record checks and other relevant information (see <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme>).

- Following up references and finding out why the person left their last job
- Asking interview questions that show whether or not the person understands boundaries
- Having and adhering to a policy that encourages and enables the flagging-up of low level concerns
- Valuing care workers, recognising that those who staff any organisation, institution, or system that cares for children are its greatest asset
- Developing a culture of support, facilitation, and learning
- Being alert to signs of compassion fatigue and/or burnout.

system that's a bit like putting ambulances at the bottom of a cliff and waiting for people to fall off.

We need to stop people falling off the cliff in the first place.<sup>75</sup>

Also, some agreed with Stuart Allardyce, that Scotland needs a national child sexual abuse strategy:

In England , there is a national strategy for tackling child sexual abuse, signed off by the Home Office last year. There is a similar one that was signed off by the Welsh government the year before. There is no such strategy in Scotland.

What there is is a kind of raft of different action plans, some of which speak to each other but many don't, so there's an action plan about online safety, there's an action plan about child sex exploitation, there's an action plan about gender-based violence in schools. But, once again, they don't coalesce and cohere into a very clear strategy which in my view would need to be a public health approach to what prevention of child sexual abuse means, by which I mean something that has tertiary, secondary and primary prevention...At the moment we have a

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75 [Transcript, day 275](#): Stuart Allardyce, at TRN-9-000000003, pp.169-171.



## 9

### Final Thoughts

During the roundtable, participants had been invited each to offer one hope, thought, or recommendation that, by the end of the discussions, they had in mind.

I am very grateful to them for agreeing to do so and sharing them before the sessions formally closed. They will be helpful when I am formulating recommendations and can be summarised as follows:

1. We need to help advance a wider understanding of the fundamental importance of secure attachment because it reduces the risk to children and promotes their resilience.
2. When a child enters care, it should be explained to them that they may encounter things they are not comfortable with and they should be told what to do about that—there needs to be someone

they can go to, and that does not need to be an allocated mentor. The child should also be told what will happen if they share a concern with a view to allaying any worries they may have about provoking a catastrophic reaction.

3. A national training programme should be established for situational prevention of abuse in organisations and make it available for all care settings. The programme would need to include training in the risks of incremental boundary violation and being aware of all that seems not right, not just those things that call for a whistleblowing response. Allied to the programme would be helping organisations to look for both systemic and practical solutions. We need to establish the idea that abuse is preventable.

4. We should not forget the need to work with families from whom children have been removed and placed in care; they may—indeed, they often—go on to have further children.
5. We should broaden the narrative of abuse to take it beyond young people in care to young people throughout society, bearing in mind all their circumstances including the current widespread use of pornography.
6. Where care institutions are isolated and separate, we should make them open and porous, in the community, and surveyed by the community.
7. We should establish what bystanders and the community need to know if they are to spot what is not right in a care situation; do not always push people into a corner or make them resort to whistleblowing and fix small problems before they get worse.

## Appendix A - Terms of Reference

### Introduction

The overall aim and purpose of this Inquiry is to raise public awareness of the abuse of children in care, particularly during the period covered by SCAI. It will provide an opportunity for public acknowledgement of the suffering of those children and a forum for validation of their experience and testimony.

The Inquiry will do this by fulfilling its Terms of Reference which are set out below.

1. To investigate the nature and extent of abuse of children whilst in care in Scotland, during the relevant time frame.
2. To consider the extent to which institutions and bodies with legal responsibility for the care of children failed in their duty to protect children in care in Scotland (or children whose care was arranged in Scotland) from abuse, regardless of where that abuse occurred, and in particular to identify any systemic failures in fulfilling that duty.
3. To create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children in care in Scotland during the relevant time frame.
4. To examine how abuse affected and still affects these victims in the long term, and how in turn it affects their families.
5. The Inquiry is to cover that period which is within living memory of any person who suffered such abuse, up until such date as the Chair may determine, and in any event not beyond 17 December 2014.
6. To consider the extent to which failures by state or non-state institutions (including the courts) to protect children in care in Scotland from abuse have been addressed by changes to practice, policy or legislation, up until such date as the Chair may determine.
7. To consider whether further changes in practice, policy or legislation are necessary in order to protect children in care in Scotland from such abuse in future.
8. To report to the Scottish Ministers on the above matters, and to make recommendations, as soon as reasonably practicable.

## Definitions

'Child' means a person under the age of 18.

For the purpose of this Inquiry, "Children in Care" includes children in institutional residential care such as children's homes (including residential care provided by faith based groups); secure care units including List D schools; Borstals; Young Offenders' Institutions; places provided for Boarded Out children in the Highlands and Islands; state, private and independent Boarding Schools, including state funded school hostels; healthcare establishments providing long term care; and any similar establishments intended to provide children with long term residential care. The term also includes children in foster care.

The term does not include: children living with their natural families; children living with members of their natural families, children living with adoptive families, children using sports and leisure clubs or attending faith based organisations on a day to day basis; hospitals and similar treatment centres attended on a short term basis; nursery and day-care; short term respite care for vulnerable children; schools, whether public or private, which did not have boarding facilities; police cells and similar holding centres which were intended to provide care temporarily or for the short term; or 16 and 17 year old children in the armed forces and accommodated by the relevant service.

"Abuse" for the purpose of this Inquiry is to be taken to mean primarily physical abuse and sexual abuse, with associated psychological and emotional abuse. The Inquiry will be entitled to consider other forms of abuse at its discretion, including medical experimentation, spiritual abuse, unacceptable practices (such as deprivation of contact with siblings) and neglect, but these matters do not require to be examined individually or in isolation.

## Appendix B - Some examples of grooming from case study evidence

**Joseph Duffy**, a volunteer worker at Nazareth House, Cardonald, abused “Olive” for several years from when she was about 12/13 years old. He was about 13 years older than her. He drove the minibus to take a group of children swimming, he would show them videos and he got closer to “Olive” by giving her little hugs, telling her she was special and that he loved her, taking her to a room where he could kiss her in circumstances where “[w]e were in care. We were—we had nobody—and I think everyone was vying for attention, so you took attention from wherever it came...we were teenagers but we were just kids, and wherever you got attention, you took it. If somebody told you they loved you, you believed it.”<sup>76</sup>

The nuns must have noticed that something was going on as they accused her of being infatuated with the man; as an adult, she looked back and thought “wow, you knew there was something there, so why wasn’t that man removed. Why wasn’t I taken aside and put into a room and asked by somebody, what’s going on here, is there anything you want to tell us.”<sup>77</sup> “Olive” said that Joseph Duffy had groomed her. Her relationship with him continued, even to the extent of her becoming engaged to him after leaving care but she broke it off when she discovered he was in the habit of going to Thailand with a

friend and she found he had photographs of children and young people taken there. Joseph Duffy was subsequently convicted of serious sexual offences involving a number of complainers, including “Olive”.

**LQH**, a priest, sexually abused “Natalia”, at Nazareth House Kilmarnock and she, in a recorded message, said “I never ever thought of what LQH was doing as being sexual abuse. I thought he loved me. He made me feel special.”<sup>78</sup> When she saw LQH having sex with another child, she “felt so angry”—“He was my LQH, I was the one who was special, and now he was having sex with H.”<sup>79</sup>

**“Bob”**, an employee of Barnardos, sexually abused “James” for a lengthy period, after having groomed him to the extent that “I worshipped him. I mean I actually loved this man and would have done anything for him.”<sup>80</sup> “My relationship with [“Bob”] was love, it was cuddles, it was sweeties, it was him taking me out to do things...I had to put up with the small part that I hated because I so wanted the other parts, the sweeties, the attention, all of that.”<sup>81</sup> “[W]hen I look back I see the magnitude of the whole grooming process. He always ended up with his head between my legs when we were play fighting and he used to let me drive his car across bumpy bits of the road when I was sitting on

76 Transcript, day 56: “Olive”, at TRN.001.003.1629-1633.

77 Transcript, day 56: “Olive”, at TRN.001.003.1632.

78 Transcript, day 64: “Natalia”, at TRN.001.003.2674.

79 Transcript, day 64: “Natalia”, at TRN.001.003.2675.

80 Transcript, day 94: “James”, at TRN.001.004.3330.

81 Written statement of “James”, paragraph 123, at WIT.001.002.0041.

his knee”.<sup>82</sup> “Bob” was about nine years older than “James” who, looking back, described him as a “perfect hunter, a predator.”<sup>83</sup>

**“Richard”**, a care worker employed by Barnardos, abused boys over a number of years in the 1970s. He explained that, before abusing one of the boys “we just formed a friendship”, he accepted he made efforts to “make him feel special” and “comfort him when he was upset” and he engaged in “play fighting”<sup>84</sup> with him.

**Guy Ray Hills**, a teacher of French at Loretto School who abused numerous boys both sexually and physically, was a flamboyant and charismatic man who groomed his victims. When teaching French “he made it such fun. He was extraordinary”, he would demonstrate “overtly sexual innuendo” to a class of 10 year olds with his wooden figure of a woman he kept propped beside the blackboard: “it was like street theatre”. He would bring garlic salts into dining room and exotic things boys could put on food: “you were given the privilege of doing that”. He would give gifts of Kia Ora juice and a box of Black Magic chocolates: “to get these gifts and to be one of his ‘special friends’ was a fantastic feeling to somebody so young” particularly when a child’s parents were thousands of miles away and taking little interest in them.<sup>85</sup>

**Brother “Frederick”**, a Marist, groomed then abused “Jim” at St Joseph’s, Dumfries, in the early 1960s. “Jim” thought he was “terrific”, an inspirational teacher and loved him reading “Biggles” books in class on Friday afternoons.

He specifically groomed “Jim”, writing to him at his home during a school holiday<sup>86</sup> following which he sexually abused “Jim” when he was back at school the following term.

**CFK**, a music teacher at Merchiston Castle School, groomed “James” before he started at the school by getting close to his family. He allowed his brother, who was already a pupil, to look after and drive his car when he, CFK, had broken his leg. When his brother invited CFK to stay at the family home: “he arrived with a cape—it was obvious what was going on...and the hands and the whole bit, and my father’s face was an absolute study... and he was ‘darling this’ and ‘darling that’<sup>87</sup> and, the following morning, “he came in with the flamboyant scarf and the whole bit and he said to my mother...‘Please forgive me, I went into your bedroom...and he said ‘I noticed Chanel number 5 on your dressing table, I hope you don’t mind but I put some on.’”<sup>88</sup> In the course of this visit, CFK discovered that “James” had a guitar. When “James” started at the school shortly after that, CFK invited him to bring his guitar to his, CFK’s, room, where he abused him.

**William Owen**, an art teacher at Fort Augustus School, groomed boys including “Michael”, in the mid-1970s, before sexually abusing them. “Michael” was about 14 years old. When “Michael” was “at a loose end”,<sup>89</sup> having had to stay at school during a half term, Owen drove him to his house on the shores of Loch Ness, gave him whisky to drink, showed him pornographic films,

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82 [Written statement of “James”](#), paragraph 124, at WIT.001.002.0041.

83 [Transcript, day 94](#): “James”, at TRN.001.004.3330.

84 [Transcript, day 97](#): “Richard”, at TRN.001.004.3808.

85 [Transcript, day 219](#): Don Boyd, at TRN-8-000000010, pp.27-32.

86 [Transcript, day 156](#): “Jim”, at TRN.001.006.4230.

87 [Transcript, day 262](#): “James”, at TRN-8-0000000057, p.73.

88 [Transcript, day 262](#): “James”, at TRN-8-0000000057, pp.73-74.

89 [Transcript, day 148](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3057

sexually abused him, told him that “this was a bit of fun, it was quite normal, that loads of boys from the school came to see him, this was something that went on all the time, I shouldn’t be worried about it, this was quite a normal practice”,<sup>90</sup> tried to take naked photos of him and invited him to his next “orgy”.<sup>91</sup> Hugh Kennedy felt he was passed on to Owen from his previous victim. Owen “took a keen interest in” Hugh Kennedy and became his “prolific abuser”.<sup>92</sup> Hugh “really liked the guy an awful lot. I was very fond of him.”<sup>93</sup> As with “Michael”, he took Hugh to his house on Loch Ness where he showed him pornographic photos of boys in a state of arousal and abused him. There was a whiff of excitement about the visits “almost as though it was clandestine”<sup>94</sup> with him and another boy being picked up and dropped off outside the village of Fort Augustus. Hugh left Fort Augustus School when he was about 13 years old, but Owen continued to pursue and groom him, phoning, driving to his home, picking him up and taking him to a hotel: “At the time, of course, this didn’t feel oppressive to me, it didn’t feel nasty to me... he was always very kind towards me... maybe I wasn’t getting much attention as a child... He was showing me a lot of attention. He always bought me a steak dinner and what he was asking me to do didn’t seem that awful. When I look back on it now, I see how dreadful it was and what he was up to.”<sup>95</sup>

**Father Robert McKenzie** groomed “Duncan”, a pupil at Fort Augustus School, and his parents. “Duncan” explained: “he identified very quickly how lonely I was so I became very quickly his favourite...I would be invited to his study. I could spend break time there, which no other boys did.”<sup>96</sup> “Duncan” was bullied because of his close friendship with Father McKenzie, so the only safe place was the man’s study and that perpetuated the grooming. Father McKenzie gave him many gifts, particularly sweets (encouraging “Duncan” to keep his tuck box in his study). He gave the boy cash, a silver chain with a gold crucifix, a bracelet, and a penknife. He also made regular contact with his parents, getting to know them. He even paid “Duncan’s” school fees. Although the boy’s parents were Protestants, “they both saw this individual as a holy man to be respected and he would encourage us all to call him [by his given name] when not at school.”<sup>97</sup>

**Aidan Duggan** groomed David Walls at Carlekemp, a preparatory school run by the Benedictines. He was initially violent to the child but then “[f]unnily enough, the violence you could almost sort of take. That sounds odd, but you just got kind of used to it and accepted it as part of the routine” and “he’d start cuddling me and being very nice to me”.<sup>98</sup> That turned out to be the prelude to sexual abuse, Duggan using the time he was alone with the child after they had served mass together to start sexual contact which then moved on to sexual abuse in Duggan’s room.

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90 [Transcript, day 148](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3062.

91 [Transcript, day 148](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3063.

92 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugh Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2925.

93 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugh Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2925.

94 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugh Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2926.

95 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugh Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2932.

96 [Transcript, day 146](#): “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2728-2729.

97 [Transcript, day 146](#): “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2728-2738.

98 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2170-2173.

## Appendix C - Questions

The following questions were asked of the nine expert participants.

### 1. Individual Abuser Psychology

- 1a. Drawing on your professional experience, what characteristics of child abusers impact upon the likelihood and/or nature of their abuse of children?
- 1b. What does your professional experience tell you about abusers' perceptions of children and how those perceptions may contribute to their perpetration of abuse?
- 1c. What does your professional experience tell you about the link, if any, between the viewing of pornography including indecent images of children and the abuse of children?

### 2. Individual Abuse in Religious Institutions

- 2a. Some members of religious orders were obedient to most of the strict rules, requirements, and practices of their orders, yet they flouted rules of their orders devised for the protection of children (for example, being kind to children and providing them with the best possible care,<sup>17</sup> refraining from corporal punishment,<sup>18</sup> never being alone with a child<sup>19</sup> and never fondling a child<sup>20</sup>) and abused children. What does your professional experience tell you about this?
- 2b. What role, if any, does the celibacy of an abuser play in the sexual abuse of children?

### 3. Denial & Minimisation

- 3a. What does your professional experience tell you about denial and minimisation of offending by abusers?
- 3b. What does your professional experience tell you about the shift in attitudes of abusers from denial and minimisation to acceptance?

### 4. Individual & Group Abuse

- 4a. Drawing on your professional experience, why do some people abuse in groups, some in isolation, and some both in groups and in isolation?

### 5. Victims & Attachment

- 5a. Drawing on your professional experience, please explain (if you can) why different children within care settings may be treated differently by caregivers—some favoured and well-cared for, whilst others are abused?
- 5b. A strong attachment may be formed between a child and her/his abuser. How can you, drawing on your professional experience, explain this?

### 6. Grooming

- 6a. Drawing on your professional expertise, how would you define the term "grooming"?
- 6b. In your experience, how do abusers groom children and/or children and their families? How do they create opportunities for abuse?

## **7. Victim to Perpetrator Journey**

- 7a. Some victims of abuse go on to abuse.  
What is the current understanding of this victim to perpetrator journey? What does your professional experience tell you about it?
- 7b. What protective factors, if any, may minimise the risk of victims becoming perpetrators?

## **8. Risk, Recruitment, & Training**

- 8a. In your professional experience, what risk assessments do you use, and what are the barriers to the implementation of the risk management strategies?
- 8b. Drawing on your professional knowledge and understanding, if you were asked to design a process to ensure recruitment meets with child protection requirements, what would you advise?
- 8c. In your opinion, how could existing child protection requirements and recruitment practices be strengthened?

## Appendix D - Expert biographies

### Stuart Allardyce

Stuart Allardyce is Director of the child protection charity Stop It Now! Scotland which focuses on the prevention of child sexual abuse. He also heads up research at their UK parent charity, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. Stuart is a social worker who has worked in the sexual violence field for over 20 years. He is vice chair of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse, the principal membership organisation in the UK and Ireland for professionals who work with sex offenders. He is a visiting researcher at Strathclyde University and trustee of White Ribbon Scotland. He is the author of several journal articles and book chapters on child sexual abuse and its prevention. He is co-author of the 2018 book 'Working with Children and Young People Who Have Displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviour'.

### Judi Bolton

Judi Bolton is a Consultant Forensic Clinical Psychologist working in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Prior to Scotland she worked internationally, including Canada, Sri Lanka, China, and Hong Kong.

### Liz Gilchrist

Liz Gilchrist is an HCPC Registered Forensic Psychologist and a Chartered Psychologist, Professor of Psychological Therapies at the University of Edinburgh, Chair of the Scottish Advisory Panel for Offender Rehabilitation, past-Chair of the Division of Forensic Psychology-Scotland (DFP-S), and a member of the Community Justice Scotland Academic Advisory Committee. She has researched

and published in the area of intimate partner abuse, substance use, parenting risk, and justice. She is also an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, holding an M.A. (Psychology) (Edin.) M.Phil. (Criminology) (Cantab.) and a PhD (Criminology) (Cantab.), having served for 13 years as a member of the Parole Boards for Scotland and for England and Wales, and holding the roles of research advisor and training provider for the Risk Management Authority in Scotland. She provides training for professionals in criminal justice, social work, and child protection.

### Michele Gilluley

Michele Gilluley is a Chartered Psychologist, HCPC Registered Forensic Psychologist, and Associate Fellow of the BPS. Working in forensic psychology for over 23 years and currently employed as the Priory Healthcare Professional Lead for Psychology and locally as Head of Psychology at Priory Ayr Clinic, she has a breadth of experience in forensic psychology. Michele is the elected chair of the Division of Forensic Psychology Scotland (DFPS) and Co-programme lead for the MSc Forensic Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her areas of clinical expertise include risk assessments, treatment, assessment of intimate partner violence, complex trauma, personality disorder, and forensic risk factors. In the last five years, she has also been an international expert to the Council of Europe in risk assessment and management of forensic populations, and appointed to the Board of the Risk Management Authority (RMA) and as a panel

member to the Scottish Advisory Panel for Offender Rehabilitation (SAPOR) by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

### **Martin Henry**

Martin Henry is an independent consultant, with decades of experience in child protection. Martin completed his CQSW, DSW in 1974 and M.Phil (Child Protection Studies) in 1993. He has 20 years' experience as a Child and Family social worker, supervisor, and manager at the local authority level. Also at the local authority level, Martin served 11 years as the Child Protection Co-ordinator and Lead Officer (Child Protection Office). Martin was a Visiting Lecturer and Consultant for the Scottish Police College for 22 years. In 1992, he was a member of the Scottish Catholic Bishops Conference Working Party on Child Sexual Abuse. He has worked as the Safeguarding Adviser to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh for 22 years, and as Chair of the Safeguarding Commission, Conference of Religious in Scotland, for four years. Martin was the National Manager for Stop it Now! Scotland for eight years, and an Independent Consultant on Public Protection for five years. He was also on the Scottish Executive Committee of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) for four years, and was the Vice-Chair of the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Survivors of Sexual Abuse for five years. He was the Chair of the Independent Review of Child Sexual Abuse in Scottish Football, between 2017-2021.

### **Lorraine Johnstone**

Lorraine Johnstone is a dual trained and chartered consultant clinical forensic psychologist. She has extensive experience working in senior positions with children, adolescents and adults across a range of settings including secure children's

homes, residential settings, prisons, forensic hospitals, inpatient settings, and community mental health provisions. Lorraine has published extensively on various topics concerned with developmental psychopathology, offending, mental health and risk assessment. She has also presented at many local, national, and international meetings and recently gave a keynote speech on the need for a paradigm shift for understanding severe behavioural disorders in children. The main tenet of this was the need for a focus on attachment and trauma to ensure effective interventions. Lorraine has also regularly given evidence across the range of legal fora. She provides expert evidence in family law case, criminal law cases, and is often instructed to provide opinions in relation to children in the care system.

### **Fiona Munro**

Fiona Munro is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist working in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

### **Katharine Russell**

Katharine Russell is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist. She studied both Psychology and Clinical Psychology at the University of Glasgow and has worked in forensic settings since becoming a Clinical Psychologist. She has worked in high and medium secure settings and in 2006 she was the co-founder of the Serious Offender Liaison Service (SOLS). This service provides MAPPA agencies with clinical expertise through consultation, liaison, and assessment in relation to high-risk offenders in the community, as well as developing and delivering training for staff working with high-risk offenders. In 2016, she took on the Professional Lead role for Clinical Psychology within the Orchard Clinic medium secure unit. Between 2015 and 2018 she was a

Psychologist Board Member for the Risk Management Authority (RMA) having previously been an RMA Accredited risk assessor. She has chaired various forensic clinical psychology groups in the NHS and both been participant and Chair in working groups for the Forensic Network on personality disorder related issues. She is currently Head of Complex Care for Psychology in NHS Lothian. She has a number of publications based on her work with multi-agency risk management and high risk offenders.

### **Morag Slesser**

Morag Slesser is a consultant forensic clinical psychologist who has worked throughout her 30-year career in forensic mental health and criminal justice services. She has specialised in the assessment and management of high-risk sexual and violent offenders. Her last NHS post was as head of psychological services at the State Hospital. She is a member of the Parole Board and the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland. She works on a freelance basis providing psychological assessment and advice to the criminal courts and to the national crime agency.

