



Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA)

An escalating problem that is
alarmingly underreported



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Disclaimer

Data presented and statements made do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level. The exact data can be requested from Child Helpline International.

Child Helpline International's work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children's right to privacy and protection from harm. To preserve the trust and confidence children and young people place in child helplines every day, any personal details cited in case summaries has been altered and anonymised.

Foreword

In its recent Global Threat Assessment, the WeProtect Global Alliance noted that “child sexual exploitation and abuse online is escalating worldwide.” Yet, we know that most of the children impacted by this crisis are truly “hidden victims.” More often than not they tell nobody about what has happened, or is happening, to them. This is a problem that remains under-recognized and under-reported. We must correct that.

UNICEF tells us that at least one in three of the world's more than 6 billion internet users is a child. This is a number that continues to grow at the same time that the seriousness and complexity of the problem of online child sexual exploitation and abuse is growing and affecting more lives.

In this digital era, the role of child helplines around the world is more important than ever. That is why this report by Child Helpline International is so timely and vital, and why it can and must serve as a wake-up call in every country and among the world's policymakers. The report's findings are startling and sobering. For example, just 2-4% of all violence-related contacts to child helplines worldwide in 2019-2021 were specific to online child sexual exploitation and abuse, yet the WeProtect Global Alliance reported an 87% increase in reported child sexual abuse material reports since 2019. Overwhelmingly, the child victims of these insidious crimes are not reporting to child helplines, the police, social services and, in most cases, even parents or caregivers.

In this powerful report Child Helpline International calls for **greater alignment and consistency in terminology and classification**, leading to **greater understanding of the true nature and extent of the problem** and **enhancing the ability of child helplines to respond**. It calls for **national awareness-raising activities**, including **engaging children themselves in the dialogue**, so that they better understand the problem and become more aware of the existence of child helplines and how child helplines can provide assistance at a critical time. It also emphasizes the **need for and importance of data**, and the key role of child helplines in capturing such data.

Most importantly the report is a call to action for governments and others to better support child helplines and ensure that child helplines are a central and integral part of every country's response to this growing, complex problem.

Child Helpline International proudly proclaims: “Every child has a voice.” Yet, in this digital era, **the vast majority of the victims of online child sexual exploitation and abuse suffer in silence**. They are effectively *voiceless*. We must change that. My sincere hope is that this important and timely report will awaken the world's leaders, advocates and decision makers everywhere and will lead to real change. It is a powerful and important first step.

Ernie Allen OBE
Chair, WeProtect Global Alliance



Key takeaways

Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse affects up to an estimated 20% of children worldwide.¹

However, for various reasons OCSEA cases are largely underreported to child helplines. For example, only 2-4% of all violence-related contacts made with child helplines worldwide between 2019 and 2021 were specific to OCSEA, a rate that does not reflect OCSEA's real prevalence.

In collaboration with our partner, Tech Matters, we launched a pilot survey of Child Helpline International's members to better understand the characteristics of victims of OCSEA and the barriers to reporting. 26 child helpline members completed the survey. 22 of these members reported an average of 59 OCSEA-related contacts each per year, or a total of 1,093 across all of them.



We found that, to a large degree, child helplines regularly train staff on topics related to OCSEA and engage in community awareness-raising activities around it.

Child helplines identified some common attributes of the victims of OCSEA that contact them. The most common form of OCSEA reported to the child helplines took the form of blackmail using intimate images that the victims had shared with the perpetrator. This is termed as sexual extortion of children. Members also suggested some key risk factors in the victims' background, such as their age (being younger than 17) or familial environment (living in dysfunctional households). Many of the child helplines mentioned the guilt and shame experienced by the survivors, and fear of their parents or caregivers finding out, as well as a lack of knowledge that a crime had been committed.

1. <https://www.end-violence.org/disrupting-harm#findings>

Child helplines estimate that the barriers to reporting are, first and foremost, feelings of shame and guilt that make the victims not want anyone to know. A limited understanding of OCSEA means that some children do not realise they are victims and that what has been done to them is wrong and illegal. Additionally, there is insufficient awareness of the existence and operation of child helplines, crucially, about their commitment to confidentiality. Another barrier mentioned is fear of reporting, sometimes due to threats made against the child and their family.



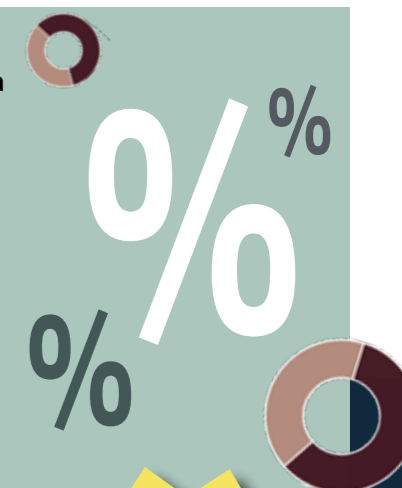
1 Week

A typical OCSEA-related contact is made with a child helpline within a week after the event, and the child helpline is often the first place the child or young person turns to, before disclosing to a friend, parent or anyone else. This highlights the tremendously important and potentially transformative power that child helplines have; their accessibility, confidentiality and professionalism mean they can respond to children when they are at their most desperate and set them on the path to healing.

Statistics from child helplines are low compared to the anticipated rate of OCSEA based on the Disrupting Harm research. While child helplines report high confidence in their counsellors' ability to detect and categorize OCSEA contacts, 75% of the child helplines who reported no cases assessed their counsellors' capabilities as either "Very Well" or "Moderately Well".

Our research confirmed that the majority of child helplines allow counsellors to select multiple reasons for categorizing a contact and also provide the ability to differentiate between online and offline-related cases within a category. For example, when a child or young person calls discussing suicidal thoughts after having been sexually abused online, the counsellor should be able to log both issues as reasons for the contact, including distinguishing the issue from offline sexual abuse.

Our research shows a potential area for intervention arises in recording cases that encompass both online and offline elements. Furthermore, the low level of consensus across child helplines in categorizing specific scenarios creates discrepancies and may distort compiled data. For those few child helplines whose data-logging systems neither accommodate the selection of multiple reasons for contact nor routinely differentiate between online and offline cases, the data they subsequently extract and share with partners, donors, research institutes and so forth is both skewed and incomplete.



Find our recommendations, based on these findings on page 17.

Introduction

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, that they are unable to give consent to, that they are not developmentally prepared for and/or is in violation of law. Child sexual abuse can take the form of, for example, sexual molestation and/or harassment (unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct that has a sexual nature).

Online **child sexual exploitation** includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that is at some stage connected to the online environment. This can be distinguished from online child sexual abuse by an underlying notion of *exchange*, for example, money, food, accommodation, drugs, affection, gifts, etc.

Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) is a growing and borderless issue, affecting children and young people around the world: No country is immune. A recent study carried out by Disrupting Harm in 13 countries in Africa and Asia found that **1-20% of children were subjected to OCSEA in the past year alone**, depending on the country.

OCSEA cases are notoriously underreported. According to Disrupting Harm, approximately one in three children does not disclose their abuse to anyone. On average, **only 3% of OCSEA victims across the 13 countries called a child helpline for support**. Similarly, only 3% contacted the police. To try and understand why, Child Helpline International launched a pilot study, gathering information and insights from our members about the barriers and facilitators of disclosing OCSEA cases.

Disrupting Harm

Disrupting Harm is a large-scale research project about online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The first phase of the project focused on 13 countries, providing crucial insights into how online CSEA manifests and mapping the gaps in existing systems at the country level. It also highlighted key recommendations in the form of tailored roadmaps for governments and other stakeholders to strengthen their prevention and response systems.

THE MODEL NATIONAL RESPONSE: A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

While governments, regional bodies and global treaty bodies have been making significant steps in responding to the threat of OCSEA, **a global response is needed** to tackle these borderless crimes.

Protecting children from online sexual exploitation and abuse requires coordinated action. Multiple interventions, approaches, policies and resources are required to create positive change. The WeProtect Global Alliance has developed a Model National Response (MNR) and a Global Strategic Response to help identify and guide actions.

There is an economic, operational and moral case to improve and speed up responses to OCSEA. As more and more children around the world go online, and as the technology landscape changes and evolves, an active multi-sector response is more vital than ever.

Child helplines are identified as one of 21 capabilities in the MNR as a key component of the response to victims of OCSEA. The child helpline should optimally have these key characteristics:

- Accessible to all children, nationwide, toll-free, available 24/7, voice and text-based, offering confidential support and counselling with appropriate referral mechanisms.
- Robust data protection systems.
- Counsellors with specific training in online harms.

With this in mind, and the imperative to act coupled with evidence of underreporting, we have undertaken this research to understand the barriers to reporting and how the role of child helplines can be optimized and reinforced.

METHODOLOGY

We took an open approach in this pilot study, in order to get as much information on OCSEA contacts from our members as possible. We asked them to fill in an online survey (using Qualtrics), which consisted of open-ended and multiple-choice questions, and we followed up with some specific child helplines who had reported contacts in the related categories in previous annual data collections.

Overview of submissions

We obtained data from **26 child helplines**, representing 17% of the 151 full members who had been invited to submit (see page 19 for a list of our members who submitted data).

Region	No. of members	% of members
Africa	8	30.8%
Americas & Caribbean	2	7.7%
Asia-Pacific	4	15.4%
Europe	9	34.6%
Middle East & North Africa (MENA)	3	11.5%
Total	26	100%

Not all child helplines were able to answer all of the questions in the survey. In our following analysis, we have indicated the number of responding child helplines for each question.

Findings

We received information about OCSEA-related contacts from 22 child helplines (26 child helplines responded, however four did not provide valid information about contacts). Of these 22 child helplines, eight (36.4%) reported not having any OCSEA-related contacts in 2022 at all (see page 13 for further information). We have excluded the responses of these child helplines from the analysis below. The other 14 report a total of 546 contacts. Responses ranged from three (in the child helplines based in Albania and Uganda) to 200 (Malta).

Time between event and making contact with a child helpline (n=18)



Did children disclose events to other people before contacting a child helpline? (n=18)



Did children contact a child helpline prior to disclosing event? (n=17)



OCSEA disclosure behaviour

The survey enabled us to gather insights about the commonalities in disclosing cases of OCSEA to child helpline counsellors.

First, we asked members how long after the events children typically tended to contact a child helpline. Of the 18 child helplines who answered this question, over half (10 child helplines, 55.6%) indicated that the contact was usually made within a month of the event, and of these, six indicated that contact happened within the first week (33.3%).

Second, we asked who else the victims usually disclosed to ("Did most of the children disclose what happened to them to anybody else prior to contacting the child helpline?"). Members report that, **in over a third of OCSEA cases, child helplines were the first place that children turned to** (38.9%, 7 of 18 responses).

Lastly, we were interested to know whether the contact relating to OCSEA was the first time the child had contacted the child helpline, or whether they had brought up other issues before ("Did you notice if children contacted the child helpline prior to disclosing OCSEA?"). We found that, in over half of the cases, the OCSEA-related contact was the first time the victim reached out to a child helpline (59.1%). Interestingly, seven of the 17 child helplines who responded to this question (41.2%) indicated that when children made contact with the child helpline they typically didn't disclose OCSEA right away, tending to discuss other issues until they had developed enough trust in the counsellor. None of the members indicated the option that "they had made contact with the child helpline on another occasion but without disclosing the OCSEA".

Together, these findings draw a compelling image: that child helplines are the first point of contact for children and young people experiencing OCSEA, often before telling anyone else, and as soon as within a week from the incident.

Characterizing victims of OCSEA

We asked our members an open-ended question about the commonalities they observed in the children and young people who contacted them with issues relating to OCSEA. These commonalities are interesting, as they tell us something about the population most likely to become a victim of such crimes. This information also tells us about those who are likely to reach out and disclose OCSEA and allows us to speculate about the characteristics of those who do not contact child helplines for help.

Qualitative analysis of the 14 answers we received to this question reveals several emerging themes.

The most common theme to emerge from typical cases of OCSEA received by our child helpline members was that the victims were made to share intimate images of themselves and were then **blackmailed** in order to prevent the images from being released (5 of 14 respondents, 36%): "Most of these calls or chats related to children chatting to an unknown person online and sharing intimate information with them, as well as images. They then reached out to us when the person would ask them to pay them a sum of money not to release their images."

Another theme concerned unsafe use of the internet and the **lack of victims' and their parents' knowledge and awareness** of its risks (4 of 14 respondents, 29%): "Parents/Caregivers of Victims do not have knowledge on how to assist their children when they experience abuse. Children/Victims are highly exposed to explicit content through friends and through parents' devices."

Some child helplines mentioned **risk factors** in the victims' background (3 of 14 respondents, 21%): "Those under the age of 17 are thought to be at increased risk. Children may be more at risk if they live in poverty, or in locations with poor access to services and education. Last but not least, kids from dysfunctional or abusive households may be more vulnerable."

A further theme concerned the **feelings of shame and guilt** experienced by the victims, and not wanting their parents and close others to find out (3 of 14 respondents, 21%): "Shame, guilt, fear of parents' reaction, fear that others know."

Finally, the child helplines observed victims' **difficulty in disclosing** the incidents (3 of 14 respondents, 21%): "The children had not reported their cases to any authorities."

We highlight the description child helpline members gave of the typical OCSEA contact, whereby children share intimate information about themselves which is then used to blackmail them. Considering there are other types of OCSEA (for example, someone sharing intimate information without the subsequent blackmail element), it is intriguing that the majority of contacts concern this blackmail dynamic. We can only speculate as to the reason, but perhaps being blackmailed drives the victims to seek help in a way that other forms of OCSEA do not, either because it forces them to take some form of action, or because it has clearer characteristics of constituting a "crime".

A typical case

"Mary" is a 14-year old girl from Kenya. Mary's teacher and neighbour noticed that Mary and her friend "Abby" were acting unusually in school. They would keep themselves in secluded places in school, and had been caught a number of times with phones even though phones were not allowed during school hours. The concerned teacher called Childline Kenya, who sent counsellors to the school to speak to the girls. The girls eventually told the counsellors that they were sharing self-generated child sexual abuse material online for money, that they needed the money for food and sanitary products. Mary's mother was a single parent, who struggled to make ends meet to pay the school fees and other basic necessities, and had herself resorted to prostitution. The girls provided the contact details for the perpetrators they were engaging with on the site to the counsellors, who reported this to the relevant authorities for tracing and legal action. Mary and Abby continued with counselling, and were reintegrated back to school, with financial support from their community.

The role of child helplines in responding to OCSEA

Thanks to their accessibility, trustworthiness and confidentiality, as well as their robust referral systems to other agencies, child helplines are essential for prevention, early detection and child-friendly victim support services for OCSEA cases. This is also clearly visible in the Model National Response (MNR), a framework for countries and organizations to support them to prevent and tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Child helplines play an invaluable and unique role in the **prevention** of OCSEA through the provision of information, guidance and support on the different issues that increase or decrease risk. Child helplines are a key stakeholder in **detecting** cases of child sexual abuse due to their accessibility, confidentiality and expertise in child counselling. Child helplines are also essential in the **support of victims** when they *do* report because of their expertise in child-friendly counselling and child participation, and because of their extensive professional referral network.

To effectively respond to cases of OCSEA child helpline staff undergo training on topics relevant to their work. Most of the members we surveyed indicated their latest training on OCSEA had been within the last year (61.5%, 16 child helplines). For six of them, it was within the previous six months (23.1%). This means that the majority of members who filled in the survey had recently trained their counsellors on OCSEA, and demonstrates the dedication of child helplines to continuously improve their counsellors' knowledge and skills, and remain up to date with emerging issues such as OCSEA. Of the eight child helplines that reported no cases, three had never undertaken any training on OCSEA.

Child helplines are often also involved in awareness-raising activities around issues that concern the children and young people who contact them. Indeed, of the surveyed members, 22 indicated they conducted such activities around OCSEA (84.6%), albeit that for 17 of them it was over a year ago (65.4%). This shows that the vast majority of the responding child helplines actively raised awareness around OCSEA, increasing the odds that concerned children or victims might know how to find the support they need, when they need it. Of the eight child helplines that reported no cases, two have never done any awareness-raising outreach around OCSEA, and three only recently started with this type of outreach.

Barriers to reporting

We asked our members for their educated guesses as to why victims of OCSEA did not tend to contact child helplines. Twenty-five child helplines answered, and we identified seven main reasons out of these responses.

The reason most mentioned (by 14 of 25 respondents, 56%) was that children feel **shame and guilt**, and **blame themselves** for what happened: *"They could be under the perception that they did something wrong and feel immense guilt, as well as fear of us reaching out to their parents/caregiver."*

The second reason mentioned most (by 11 of 25 respondents, 44%) was children's **limited understanding** of what constitutes an online sexual abuse or exploitation offence, or even seeing themselves as victims: *"Some children do not realize that they are being abused."* This can happen partly due to that fact that perpetrators often succeed in creating a sense that they are the child's friend or romantic partner.

The third reason (10 of 25 respondents, 40%) was the **lack of knowledge about child helplines** – their existence and their capabilities to help: *"Most children are not familiar with the existence of the child helpline and its support or benefits."* Notably, our members mentioned that children are not always aware that their contact with the child helpline is *confidential*: *"Another reason is the fact that they are afraid about the confidentiality of the data that they discussed with the child helpline."* This highlights the importance for child helplines to conduct awareness-raising activities around OCSEA in general and around their role in supporting child victims of OCSEA.

Respondents mentioned that children who were victims of OCSEA felt **helpless**, believing nobody could help them (4 of 25 respondents, 16%). For example: *"Their self-confidence, courage and motivation are so damaged that they generally do not know if they can turn to anyone for help."* Our members also reported that children were often afraid of reporting because they **feared the consequences** for them (3 of 25 respondents, 12%): *"Even after they do make contact, they are quite fearful of us assisting them in reporting the matter."* Often, this is due to **threats against them or their families** (3 of 25 respondents, 12%): *"Some have been threatened that if they make a disclosure, their families will be harmed."*

Finally, another reason mentioned by the respondents was **cultural obstacles** (2 of 25 respondents, 8%): *"Culturally, there is an element of victim blaming as even their own family members will insinuate that the child somehow caused it on themselves."*

The barriers identified by the child helplines delineate some clear recommendations and calls for action. First and foremost, awareness-raising activities about the nature of OCSEA and the criminal aspects of it are urgently needed. These will help with victims' limited understanding of OCSEA, but no less importantly will also help reduce the shame and guilt victims suffer when they assume that they are to blame for what has happened to them and that there is nothing to be done about it. Awareness-raising at the community level might also help dismantle some of the cultural obstacles mentioned, as it educates the public, reduces stigma and encourages disclosure.

Another crucial action to take is to raise the awareness of children and young people about the existence of child helplines, their functions and their mode of operation. Their reassurance about the confidentiality child helplines abide by might help with their fear of reporting, as well as with feelings of shame and their sense of helplessness.

"Some children do not realize that they are being abused."

"Most children are not familiar with the existence of the child helpline and its support or benefits."

"Some have been threatened that if they make a disclosure, their families will be harmed."

"They could be under the perception that they did something wrong and feel immense guilt, as well as fear of us reaching out to their parents/caregiver."

"Their self-confidence, courage and motivation are so damaged that they generally do not know if they can turn to anyone for help."

"Culturally, there is an element of victim blaming as even their own family members will insinuate that the child somehow caused it on themselves."

"...they are afraid about the confidentiality of the data that they discussed with the child helpline."

Categorizing OCSEA cases

Luxembourg Guidelines

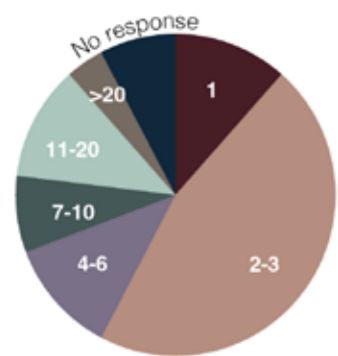
Adopted in 2016, the **Luxembourg Guidelines** aim to achieve international consensus on several terms or language that should be employed in data collection and identification of different modalities of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

While these guidelines are integrated into the data framework adopted by Child Helpline International and its members, actual integration to data collection systems at child helplines level is inconsistent.

Since OCSEA is multidimensional and dynamic, it could be that OCSEA-related contacts are in fact being supported by child helplines but are not being logged as such. For example, if cases often escalate from online to offline CSEA, they might be categorized as “Sexual Violence” and *not* “Online Sexual Abuse”. Also, as the victims do not necessarily identify themselves as such, their contact could be classified as referring to “Sexuality” or a form of “Bullying”. Therefore, we asked our members how their counsellors identified, processed and logged contacts relating to OCSEA.

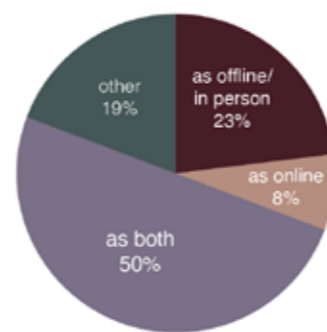
First of all, since OCSEA cases often have other components to them – such as mental health consequences – it is important for counsellors to be able to log more than one reason for each contact. Indeed, 21 of 24 child helplines allow logging of multiple reasons (87.5%).

Number of reasons for contacting child helpline (n=24)



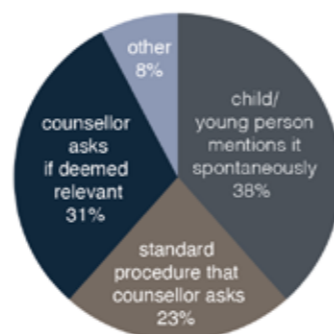
Second, we asked whether counsellors even distinguished between offline (in-person) and online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse when categorizing contacts. We found that 92.3% of the respondent child helplines did make this distinction. But what happens when a contact describes a case that has both an online and an offline component? Here, although counsellors in half of the respondent child helplines (13 of 26, 50%) did categorize such cases as both, the other half did not. Some would log them as online (7.7%) but more often than not they would log them as offline/in-person (23.1%), which obscures the magnitude of the issue.

How do counsellors categorize CSEA that happened both in person and online? (n=26)



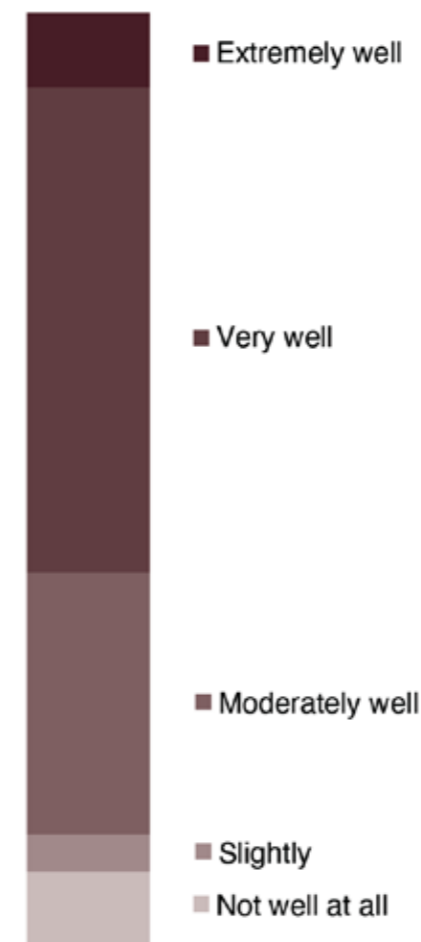
To be able to log OCSEA as online, counsellors would need to identify the online aspect of the contact. We asked our members how counsellors could achieve this. Mostly, counsellors would rely on the child or young people to mention it spontaneously during the contact (38.5%). 30.8% of child helplines reported that the counsellors would ask about it if it was deemed to be relevant. In 23.1% of the child helplines it was standard procedure to ask about it.

How do counsellors identify the online aspect of issues during contact? (n=26)



Lastly, we asked our members how well they thought their counsellors could identify OCSEA cases, as – due to presentation issues – these can be particularly difficult to identify. Members responded with substantial confidence, 88% of them rating their counsellors’ abilities as “Moderately Well” or better, but as noted above, that includes 75% of the child helplines who reported zero OCSEA cases.

How well can counsellors identify OCSEA cases? (n=25)



Child helplines reporting no OCSEA cases

Eight child helplines who responded to our survey reported no OCSEA cases in 2022. We examined their responses separately, to see what could potentially explain this, assuming that it was unlikely that no cases would have been presented to the child helpline.

In terms of training, only four of these eight child helplines had received training on OCSEA within the last year. Three had never had such training (compared with 5.6% of the child helplines with OCSEA cases). By training the staff on this matter, cases of OCSEA would be better identified, treated and consequently logged. Similarly, two of these child helplines responded that their counsellors’ ability to identify cases of OCSEA was “Not well at all”. In comparison, none of the child helplines with OCSEA contacts supplied this response.

In terms of the process of categorizing an OCSEA case that had both an online and an offline component – a fairly frequent occurrence – none of the eight child helplines with no OCSEA contacts responded that they would categorize it as “online”. Two replied that they would categorize such a case as offline, and three as both. Indeed, if a case that has an OCSEA component is not categorized as such, then it can not be reported later. This might explain why it appears that there were no OCSEA-related contacts for these child helplines. Further research is necessary, but this is assumed to be one factor in the underreporting of OCSEA.

Which reason for contact for which scenario?

With this question, we wanted to investigate how child helplines classified different scenarios described to them in accordance with the categories described in our Data Framework. We presented the respondents with seven different scenarios and nine possible sub-categories of "Reason for Contact" to choose from.

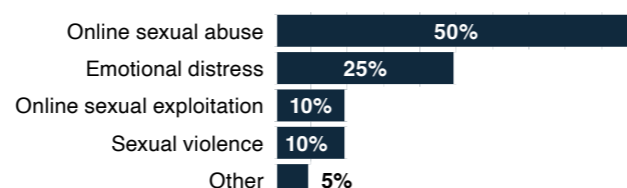
The results show that for some scenarios there was a clear consensus, with a substantial majority of child helplines agreeing on a sub-category of 'Reason for Contact', whereas for other scenarios such consensus did not exist.

Although there is no "correct" or "incorrect" classification, a misalignment between our members makes the aggregate data less reliable, which highlights the need for more clarity and agreement around these complex situations.

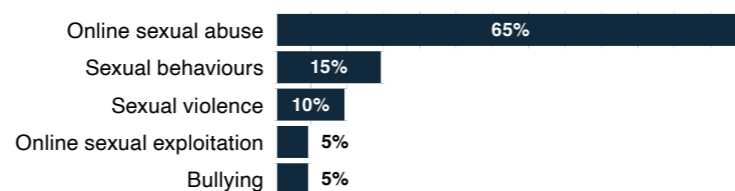
The following graphs below show the percentage of counsellors who would identify a scenario as belonging to a particular sub-category.

Scenarios for which there was a consensus

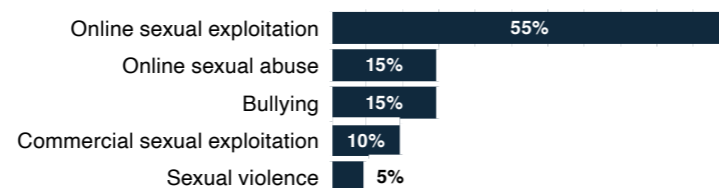
An adult is sending them lots of texts that make them feel uncomfortable



A schoolmate has sent them an unrequested sexual image

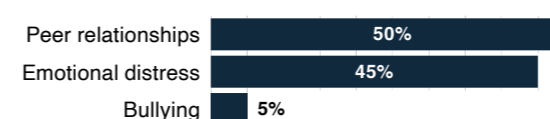


Someone is threatening to make pictures of them public unless they send them money

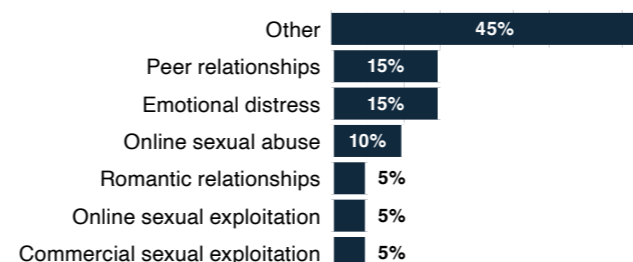


Scenarios for which there was NOT a consensus

They are upset about a conversation they had online with a friend



Someone they've met online suggests meeting in person, and they're not sure what to do



Someone has asked them for a picture of themselves, and they are unsure what to do



Their partner wants to film them being intimate



Our recommendations

1

Child Helpline International should lead a network-wide initiative to align on the classification, taxonomy and logging of OCSEA-related cases². Such capacity-building activities could flesh out any disagreements and discrepancies and delineate aspects of OCSEA as opposed to “Bullying” or “Sexuality”, for example. The ability to log cases across a number of categories, or at least the online nature of a case, is very important in relation to cases of OCSEA. The result would be a consistent and reliable form of OCSEA classification, providing a more accurate depiction of the magnitude of the issue as reported to child helplines. This, in turn, would strengthen the understanding of the scale of OCSEA and the role of child helplines in responding to it.

2

At the national level, awareness-raising activities are needed for all actors:

- Children, young people, their caregivers and communities should be made aware of the nature of OCSEA in order to reduce shame and stigma, and should be made aware of the existence of child helplines. This will make identifying cases easier and quicker and ultimately help prevent OCSEA altogether.
- Raising awareness about OCSEA will also reduce the stigma and shame which surround it – thus encouraging disclosure – and make a clear distinction between child helpline services and the CSAM reporting hotlines and portals.
- Children and young people affected or at risk of OCSEA need to know about the existence of child helplines. They need to know about their functions, their mode of operation and the confidentiality that they abide by. The data analysed here indicates that one in three victims contacts a child helpline within a week of an event of online child exploitation and abuse. This indicates the trust placed in child helplines and in the service being confidential, free of cost and accessible. These factors should be emphasized in any awareness raising.

3

Child helplines should continue to log data and contacts on cases of OCSEA.

For this data to be reliable, comparable and easily accessible to analysis, child helplines’ data logging and management systems must be convenient, efficient and dynamic. Child helplines around the world would benefit from adopting and integrating Asele or other equally powerful software into their operations. This transition often requires additional resources and support – financial or in the form of trainings – for the child helpline.

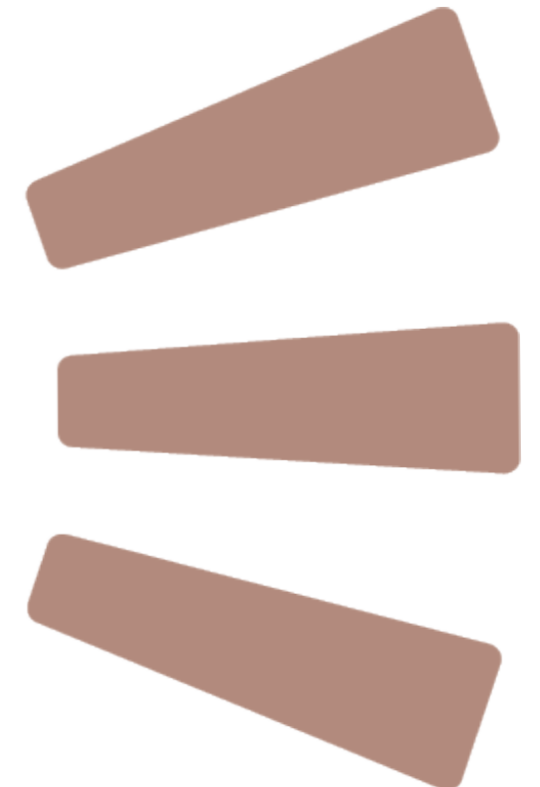
4

Child helplines and Child Helpline International should initiate and continue to partner with tech platforms such as Meta, Google, Discord and others, to find ways to streamline safe and accessible reporting mechanisms and referrals to child helplines, both in-device and in-app.

5

Governments and other institutional funders should support and adequately resource national child helplines so that they can continue to respond to cases of OCSEA and meaningfully take up their role as envisioned in the WePROTECT Model National Response (MNR). Governments should signpost child helpline services in their national strategies to respond to OCSEA.

2. Our data framework is already adapted to the Luxembourg Guidelines, although further integration work is needed.



RESPONDENTS LIST

Region	Country	Child Helpline
Africa	Ethiopia	Adama Child Helpline (ECFA)
	Kenya	Childline Kenya
	Namibia	Lifeline/Childline Namibia
	Nigeria	Cece Yara Child Helpline
	South Africa	Childline South Africa
	Uganda	Sauti 116 – Uganda Child Helpline
	Zambia	Childline Zambia
	Zimbabwe	Childline Zimbabwe
Americas & The Caribbean	Chile	Línea Libre
	Jamaica	SafeSpot
Asia-Pacific	Cambodia	Child Helpline Cambodia
	Maldives	Child Helpline 1412
	New Zealand	0800 What's Up? (Barnado's)
	Thailand	Saidek 1387 – Childline Thailand
Europe	Albania	ALO 116 Albania
	Bulgaria	National Telephone Line for Children
	Cyprus	Call 116111 Cyprus
	Germany	Kinder- und Jugendtelefon (Nummer gegen kummer)
	Italy	Hello Telefono Azzurro
	Malta	Kellimni.com (SOS Malta)
	Moldova	Ministry of Labour & Social Protection
	Netherlands	Helpwanted.nl (Offlimits)
	Norway	Kors På Halsen (Norwegian Red Cross)
Middle East & Northern Africa	Algeria	Je t'écoute 3033
	Lebanon	Nabaa
	Palestine	Sawa 121





Every child has a voice. No child should be left unheard.

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organisation with more than 150 members in over 130 countries and territories around the world.

We coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our child helpline members, partners and external sources. This exceptional resource is used to help and support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally, and to help our members advocate for the rights of children and amplify their voices.

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