

CSAE in family environment

CSAE in family environment is estimated to be the most widespread form of CSAE. In this section, we look at the details surrounding the victims and perpetrators, and highlight other factors including the length of time it takes a victim to report an incident.

An overview

Previous analysis in 2015 by the Children's Commissioner for England estimated that CSAE in the family environment comprises up to **two-thirds** of all reported CSAE, this figure is consistent with further research by the CSA Centre of Expertise. However, the 2022 data on police recorded crime data suggests it now accounts for a smaller proportion (**29%**) of all CSAE and **33%** of contact CSAE. This does not mean that this is less of an issue. It's highly likely that the lower proportion reflects the general **under-reporting of CSAE in family environment to the police** but may also, in part, be a result of growth in other forms of CSAE reported to the police and the breadth of definitions used.

This is in part supported when we look at the time it takes some victims to report an offence. Where the date of the offences was recorded, only **35% of victims reported abuse within 45 days** of it happening. **63% were reported after this period**. It's also thought that the **Covid-19 pandemic** may have exacerbated this. This challenging time of isolation and lockdowns meant there were fewer opportunities for authorities, teachers or friends to identify abuse signs. **It's highly likely that many of these crimes are going unreported and hidden for years.**

Definition

This analysis uses the term CSAE in family environment as defined by the Children's Commissioner for England in their previous work. Their definition seeks to recognise the different dynamics of domestic living and families and 'includes all relationships between the victim and the perpetrator which are mediated by the family or the family home.' Practically this includes CSAE by immediate family members as well as neighbours and family friends. There are some divergent views on how far this definition should extend out and further work is required to generate a universal cross partner definition on this.

The victims

First up, victim gender displays a consistent split compared to other types of CSAE offences.