# The new ways children – and technology – are being abused to create online child sexual abuse imagery

**IWF**
Internet
Watch
Foundation

PRESENTED BY

## Emma Hardy

Internet Watch Foundation Communications Director
& UK Safer Internet Centre Co-Director

# Who we are

**IWF**

- We're a **not-for profit child protection organisation**.

- We **identify images and videos** showing the sexual abuse of children, wherever they are found on the internet. We then work **with partners and law enforcement globally** to have them removed.

- For 28 years we've given people a safe place to report child sexual abuse imagery, anonymously – now **in 53 countries.**

- More than **200 global technology companies** make up our membership.

# Our Members

**IWF**

| £80,000+ | £50,000+ | £25,000+ | £20,000+ | £15,000+ | £10,000+ | £5,000+ | £2,500+ | £1,000+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|



This slide is a visual grid of member company logos organized by contribution tier:

**£80,000+:** amazon.com, PLDT, Smart, Apple, Safaricom, BT, Sky, cisco, TalkTalk, Globe, Telefónica, Google, TikTok, Meta, VERISIGN, Microsoft, Virgin media, MTN, VISA, PayPal, Vodafone

**£50,000+:** ATLASSIAN, BrightCloud, BROADCOM SOFTWARE, coinbase, FORTINET, Marriott International, McAfee, paloalto networks, ROBLOX, Snapchat, TREND, ZOOM, zscaler

**£25,000+:** 3, BAE SYSTEMS, CLOUDFLARE, CONVERGE, Discord, Dropbox, Forcepoint, linx, medialab, NIANTIC, SOPHOS, X, Yandex

**£20,000+:** Barracuda, exoClick, Hwb, JAGEX, jamf, SANDVINE, SONICWALL, The FA For All, VERAFIN, The Walt Disney Company UK & Ireland, WatchGuard, WITH secure

**£15,000+:** allot, bitly, Chainalysis, depop, Education Scotland, F-Secure, GRAYSHIFT, iomart, ALSI Group NetSTAR

**£10,000+:** ENEA AdaptiveMobile Security, iboss, NOMINET, SS8, AdEPT, identity digital, North Dakota University System, switchshop, AT&T, Impero, OMICRON, TESCO mobile, BBC, iNEQE, PA, unitary, Kroll, Jisc, pir, WeChat, CYACOMB, JT, Qintel, wgtwo, cyta, KCOM, radius, zen, DNS Filter, LGfL, REVERSING LABS, zvelo, Eastern Communications, Lightspeed Systems, RM, element, mt, SafeToNet, ENEA, schools broadband, exa, NetClean, securly, G2 A TransUnion Company, netcraft, senso, NetSupport, smoothwall, Gamma, GoDaddy Registry, netsweeper, sure

**£5,000+:** auDA, Manchester Metropolitan University, a, OMGID, CleanDNS, names.co.uk, CoCCA, Nottingham Trent University, domain name commission nz, Performance Networks, GIGANEWS, SAFEDNS, HYPERSLICE, SCORECHAIN, IMAGE ANALYZER, SEGPAY, ISPA UK, Sheffield Hallam University, IT Systems, ShortDot, last.fm, XYZ, You

**£2,500+:** BRAND-fi, US University of Sussex, dhiraagu, University of Winchester, E2BN, USENEXT, fastvue, verifymy, Free Discussions, VIDENTIFIER, HUMANDIGITAL, vigilai, iQ, VPN WHOLESALER, Jurassic Fibre, wightfibre, Ko-fi, wykop.pl, plan.com, Securus, yubo

**£1,000+:** 3SIDES, natterhub, Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Initiative, OAKFORD, bublup, Opendium e-Safety, CleanBrowsing, Precedence Technologies, Diladele B.V., QUICKLINE, FlashStart, Schools Mobile, Go Fibre, seekr, Jigidi, STRAWBERRY SOCIAL, Krystal, The Social Element, .LONDON, MeWe, wildanet, mojeek, XS NEWS

Every one and a half minutes, IWF analysts assess a webpage.

**Every two minutes**, that webpage shows a child being sexually abused.

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# Scale of the problem in 2023

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**275,655**

**Reports were confirmed** to contain images or videos of children suffering sexual abuse

**254,070**

reports included child sexual abuse images/videos where children are often **groomed/coerced/exploited online –** "self-generated"

As each report contains at least one, and sometimes thousands of images, **this equates to millions of criminal images** removed from the internet.

# Sex of victims over 10 years

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Girls seen in imagery — Boys seen in imagery
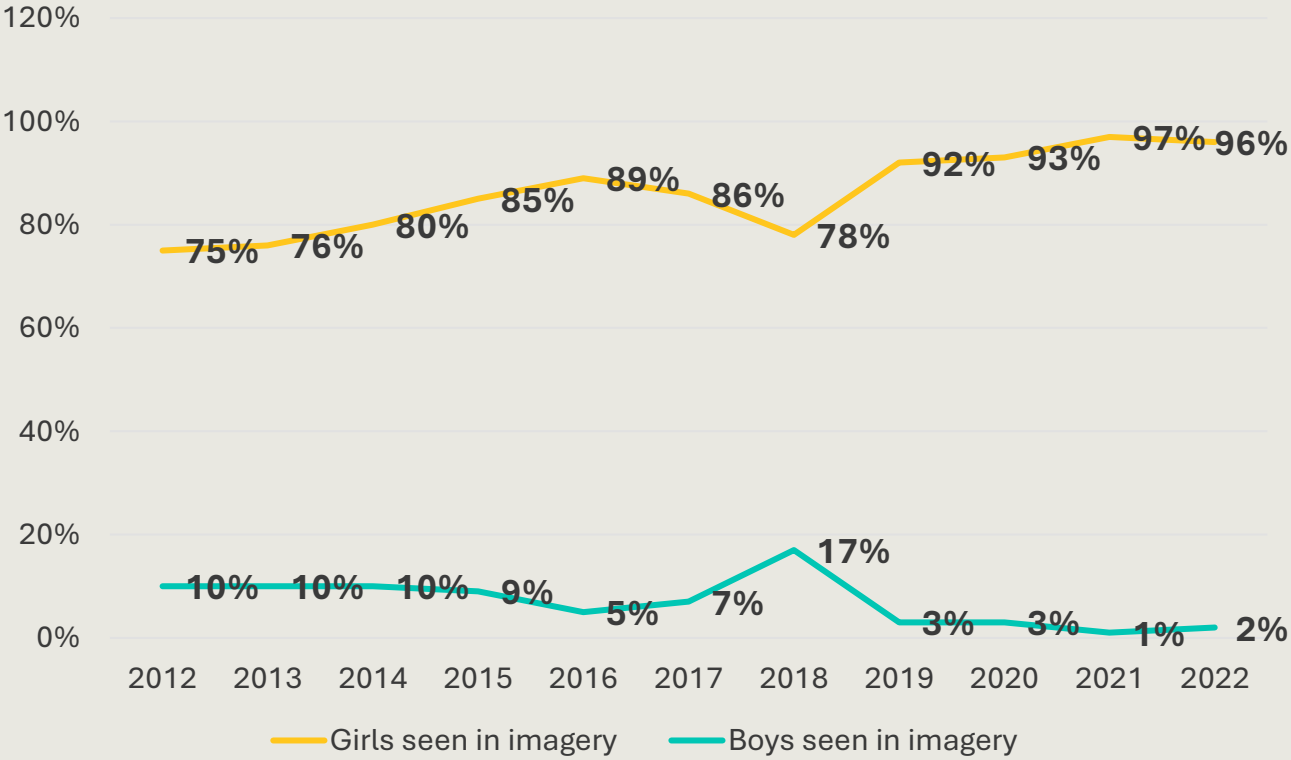
In 2022

**96%**
of the reports showed girls
(242,989)

**2%**
of the reports showed boys
(6,253)

**2%**
of the reports showed both sexes
(4,016)

A small number
were unidentifiable.

# 2022 reports by age breakdown

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| Age | Number of reports |
|-----|-------------------|
| 0–2 | 1,001 (0%) |
| 3–6 | 11,351 (4%) |
| 7–10 | 90,368 (36%) |
| 11–13 | 146,044 (58%) |
| 14–15 | 3,357 (1%) |
| 16–17 | 1,266 (0%) |

Number of reports

● Age 0–2   ● Age 3–6   ● Age 7–10   ● Age 11–13   ● Age 14–15   ● Age 16–17
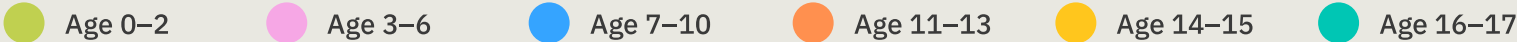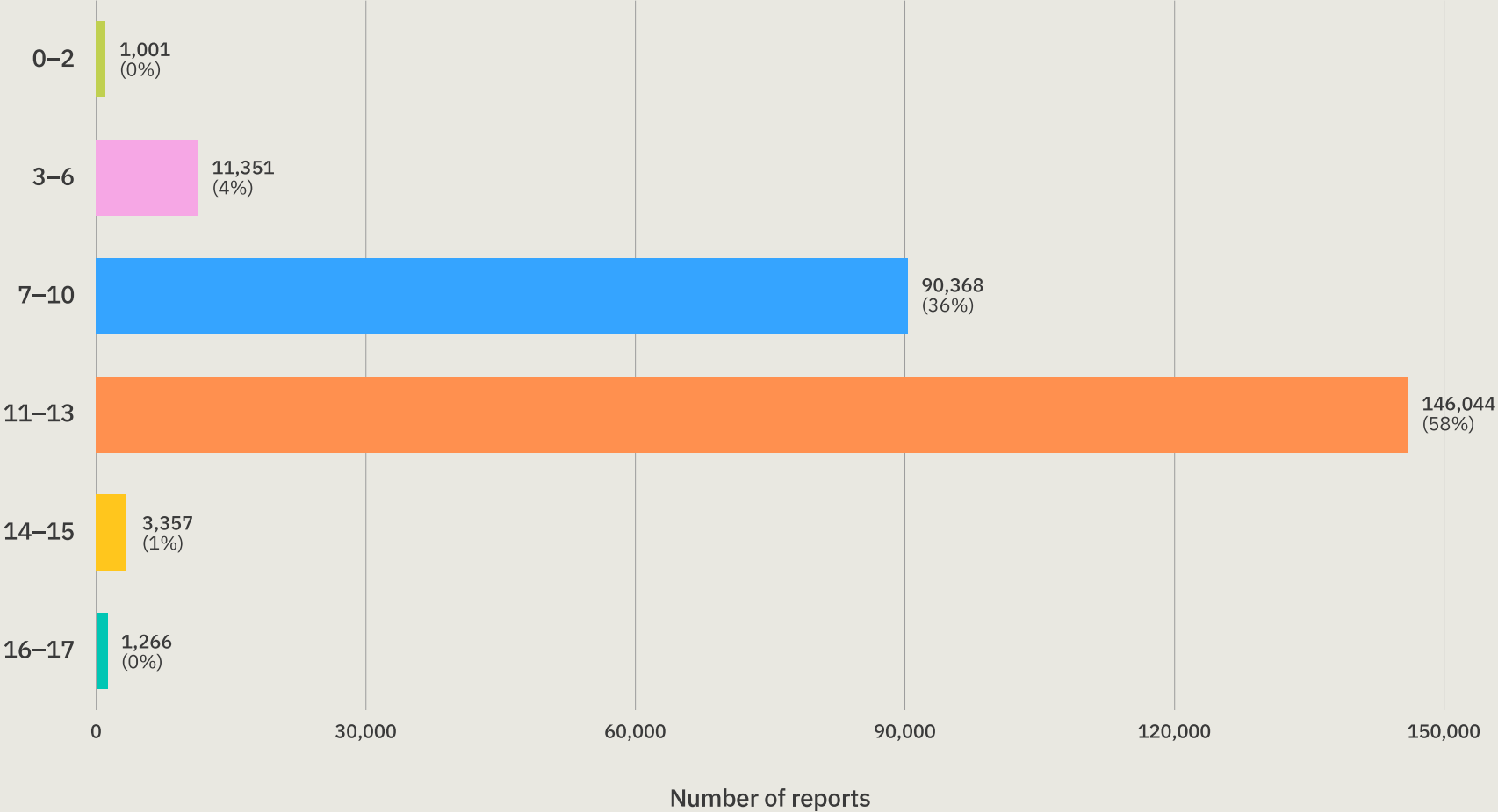
# Location of content 2022

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**North America**
41,464 Reports | 16%

**South America**
6 Reports | 0%

**Europe**
(Including Russia & Turkey)
167,809 Reports | 66%

**Africa**
60 Reports | 0%

**Asia**
45,048 Reports | 18%

**Australasia**
16 Reports | 0%

**Grand Total:**
255,571 | 100%

**Hidden Service:**
1,067 Reports | 0%

**Report Remove:**
101 Reports | 0%

# UK-hosted child sexual abuse: 2022

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The **UK hosted 0.25%** of all child sexual abuse URLs which IWF identified in 2022

**3 Minutes**
Fastest removal time

- The UK hosts a small volume of online child sexual abuse content.

- Since 2003, UK hosting is less than 1%.

- In 2022 this figure was just **0.25%.**

- All **16** companies whose services were abused were **not IWF Members.**

# 'Self-generated'

The capturing of activities while there is no abuser physically present in the room with the child

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# Total number of actioned reports
## Abuser present vs "Self-generated"

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2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022

78,589
**0**

85,349
**19,698**

94,252
**38,424**

85,369
**68,000**
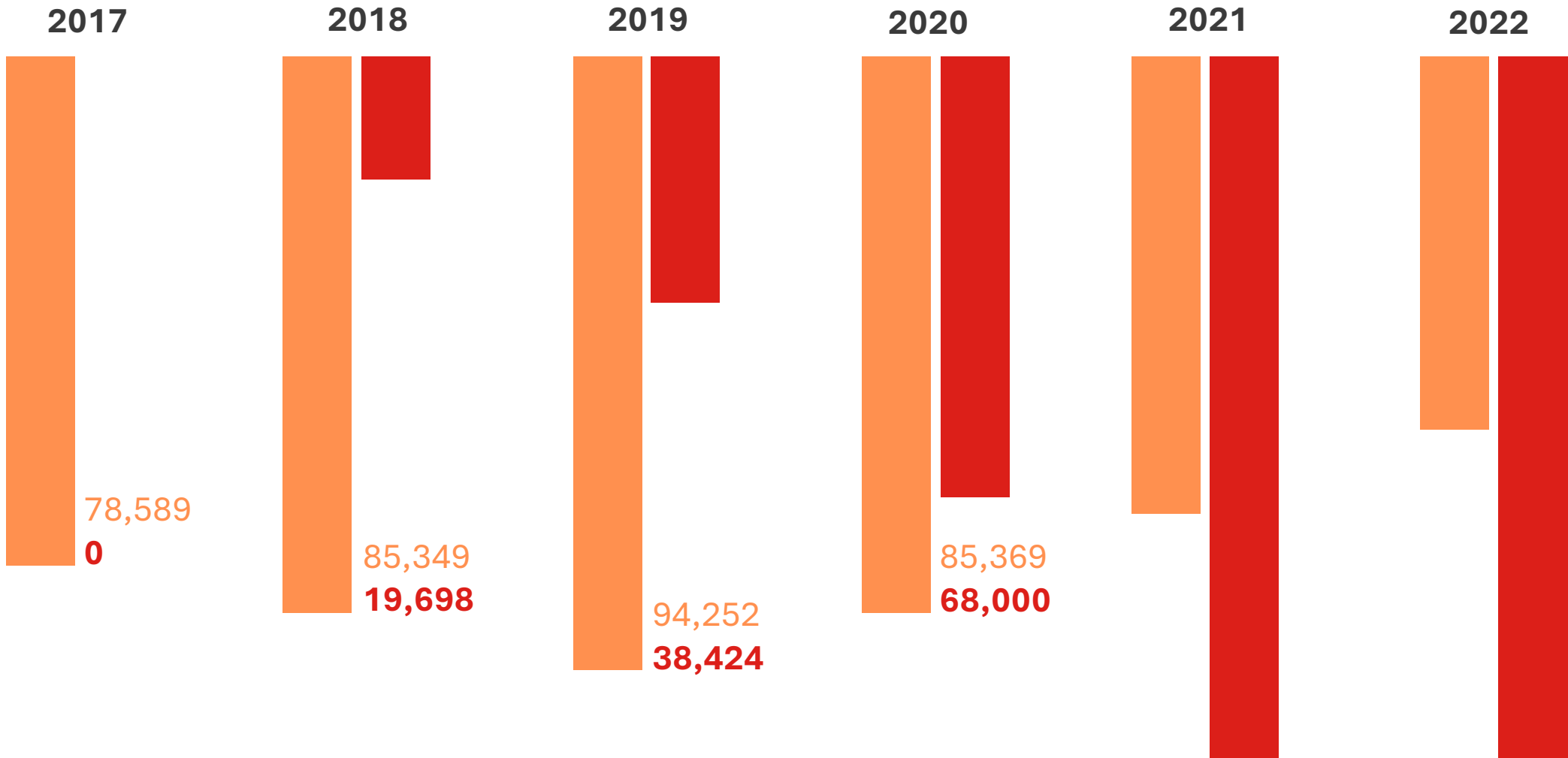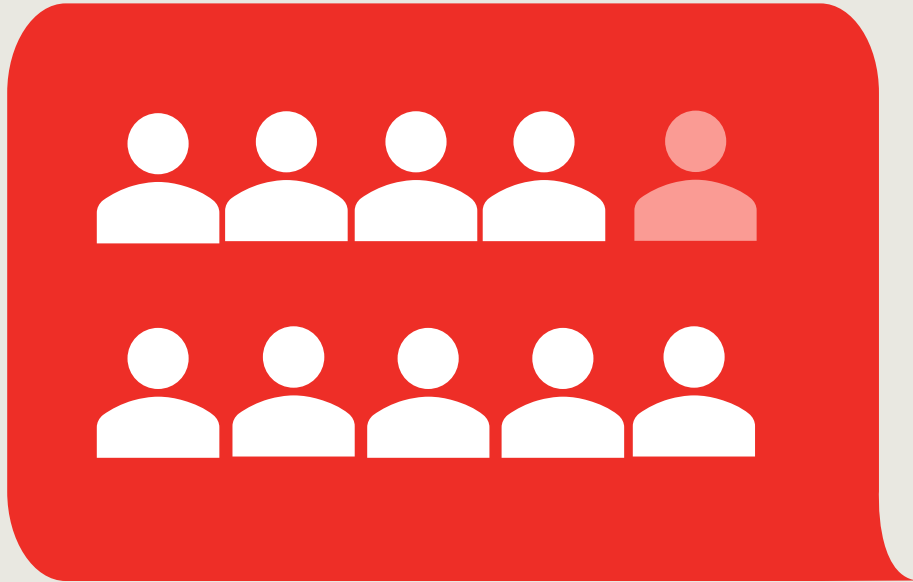
In 2023, we found that sexual imagery created of children when they are online, often in the supposed 'safe spaces' of their bedrooms, now accounts for more than **nine in every ten** reports.

69,913
**182,281**

56,208
**199,363**
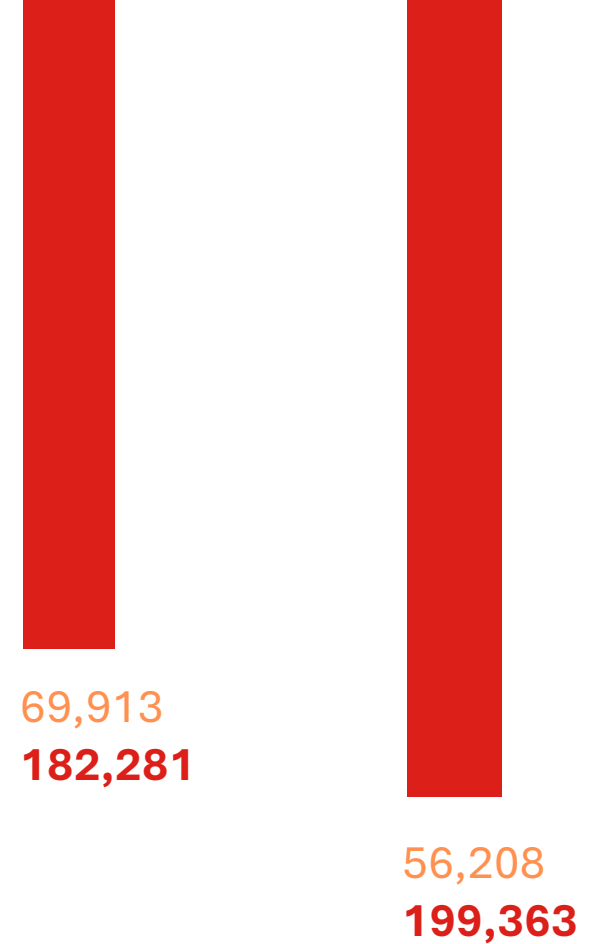
# Vulnerabilities
## -the child is **never** to blame*

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- Key stage of sexual development (amplified feelings of anxiety, sensitivity + vulnerability, curiosity + riskier behaviours);

- Popularity – "likes" rule;

- Believe it's just a game / some fun;

- Naivety about the honesty of others & a misplaced confidence in themselves;

- Special educational needs increase vulnerability;

- Having use of an internet-enabled device with a camera.

*Informed by research by BritainThinks on behalf of IWF, 2019

# Tactics observed by our analysts

**Offenders will:**

- 'Scattergun' large volumes of requests

- Apply pressure / persuasion / coercion

- Encourage them into a "harmless game"

- Tell them how beautiful / pretty / grown up they are

- Show them recordings of other children doing sexual activities to 'normalise' it to their victim.

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Hey, fancy doing a challenge? 🫣

what kinda challenge?

# Sexually coerced extortion

Blackmail, involving the exploitation of nude, explicit or sensitive images of videos to coerce victims to share more explicit imagery or paying to prevent further sharing.
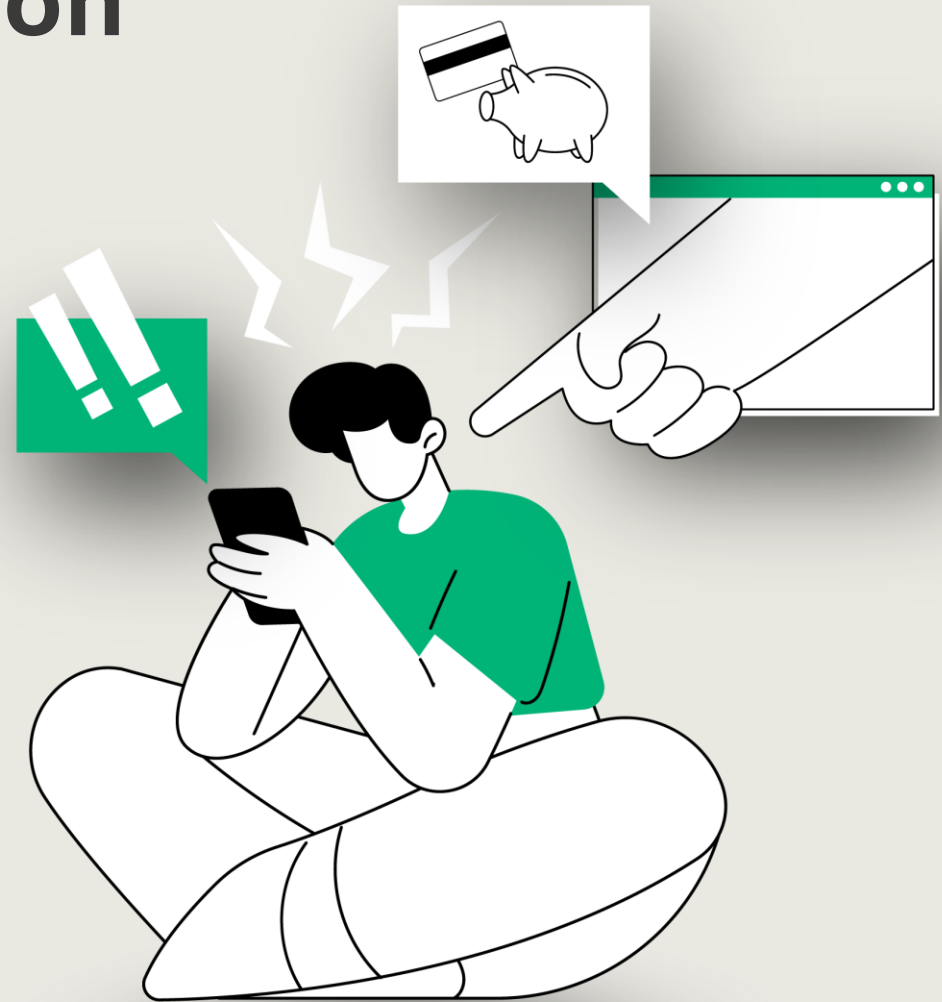
# 2023 'sextortion' data

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**Older teens (14-17 years old) are the most at risk, with boys apparently being targeted most often.**

- Many abusers are adults posing as girls, who gain the trust of teenage boys so they believe they are having an online conversation with a female peer.

- Once the image is received, abusers threaten to share imagery with friends, family or more widely on the internet if they are not paid money.

- Contact details of the victim's friends and family are often shared to make the abuser's threats appear more credible.

JANUARY – AUGUST 2023

**IWF received more reports of sexually coerced extortion than the whole of 2022.**
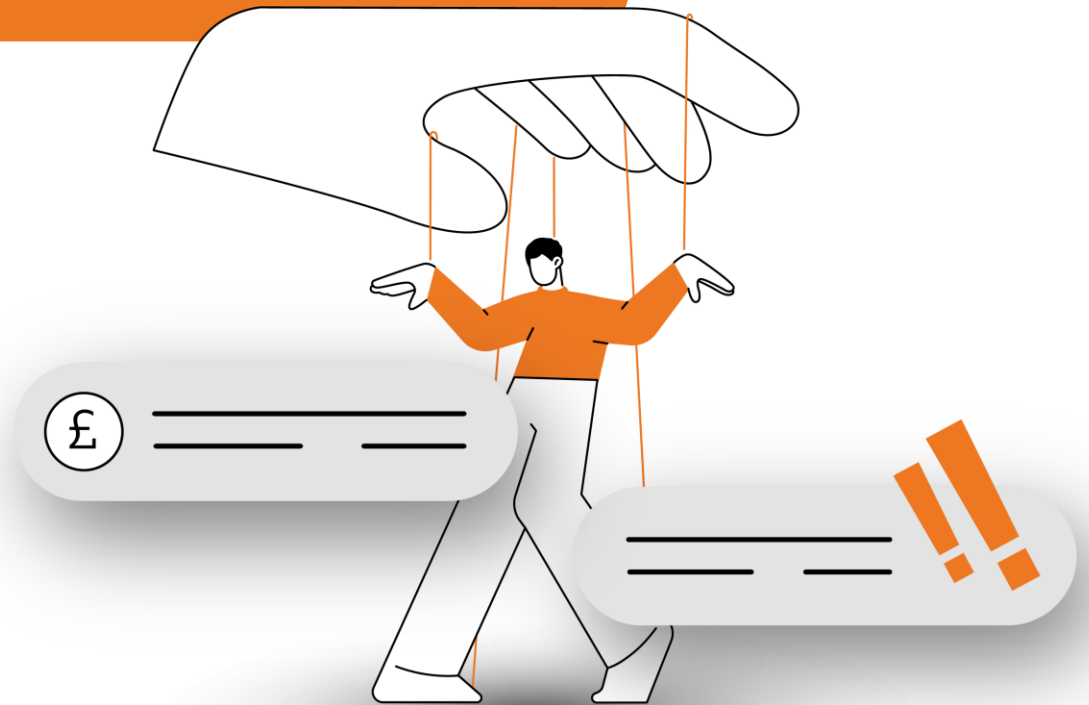
# Sextortion reports by year



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| Year | number of reports |
|------|------|
| 2021 | 6 |
| 2022 | 21 |
| 2023 | 176 |
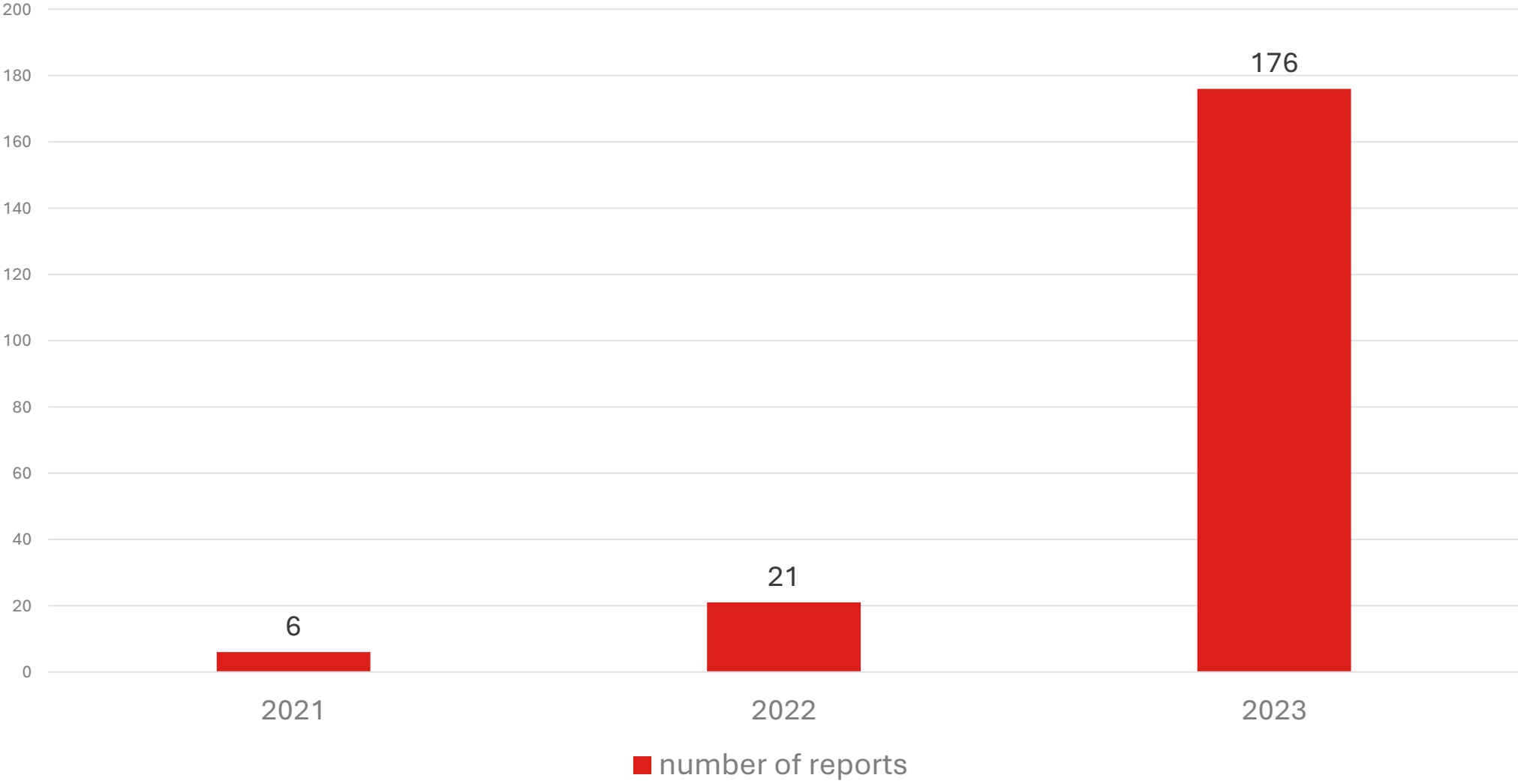
# Ages & sex of children in sextortion 2023
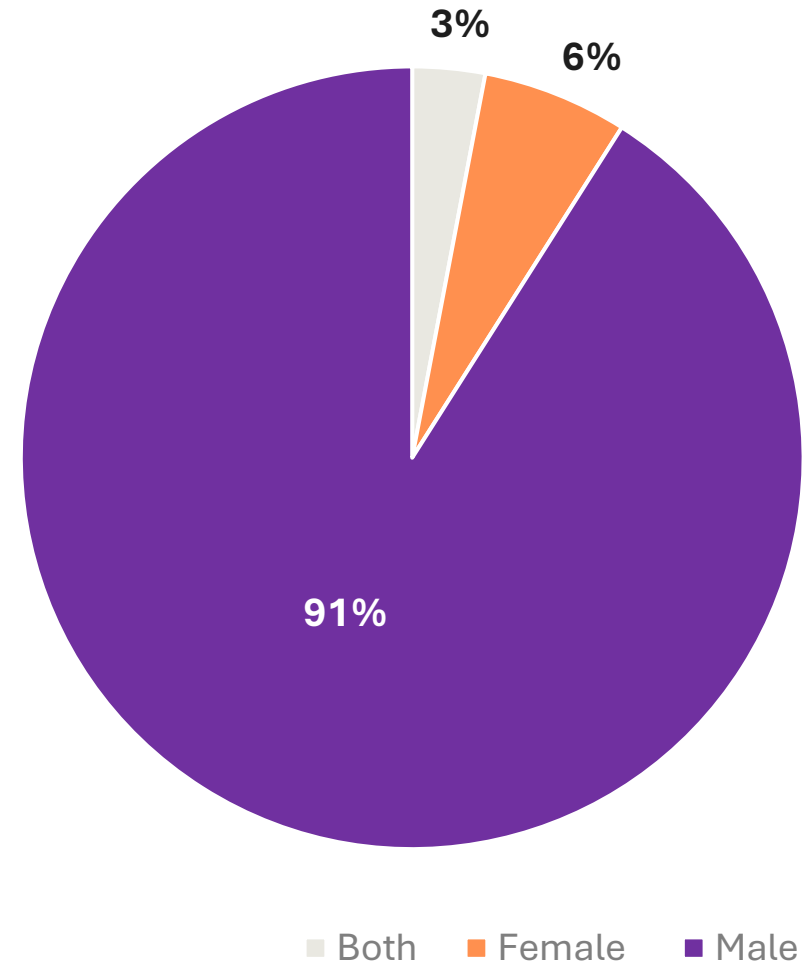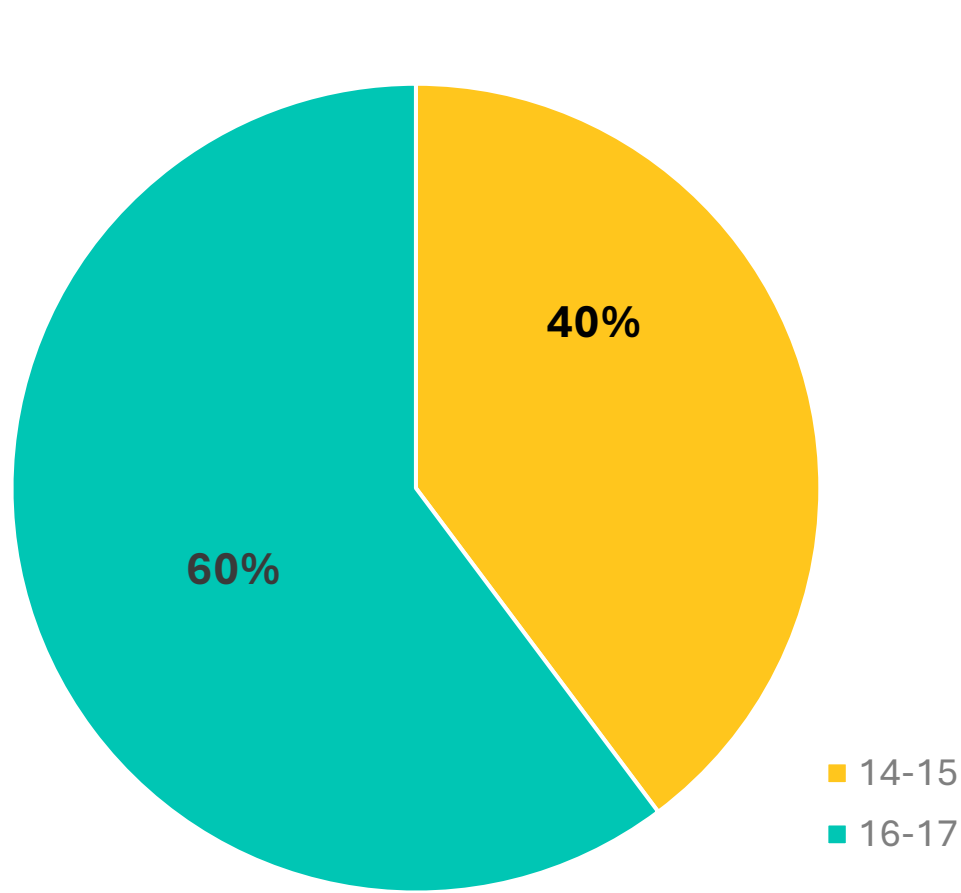
# Sextortion guide discovered online

- **60,358 words / 198 pages**. Written in English, well-educated

- **Chapter headings include:**
  - Selecting New Identity
  - Creating Profiles
  - Requesting Sexually Explicit Content From A Target
  - Gathering Information On Your Target
  - Stockholm syndrome - Making Your Victims Fall In Love With You
  - Making Money From Sextortion
  - Avoiding Law Enforcement
  - Safely Storing Your Sextortion Content

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"This is not a handbook to teach victims how to protect themselves or seek help, but rather to teach perpetrators how to exploit their victims."

– handbook author

# Report Remove



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IWF & NSPCC developed Report Remove to support a young person in reporting their own sexual images or videos for removal from the internet.

**The process is child-centred; does not identify them and ensures the child will not inadvertently be criminalised.**

The child reports their image/video to IWF through Report Remove tool.

↓

IWF analysts assess the imagery against UK law. A criminal image will be hashed & removed from internet, safeguarding the child.

↓

**Childline contacts the child to provide updates on their report & offers emotional support as well as tips & advice where appropriate, further safeguarding the child.**

# Take It Down.
## Having nudes online is scary, but there is hope to get it taken down.

This service is one step you can take to help remove online nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit photos and videos taken before you were 18.

**Get Started +**

# AI-generated child sexual abuse images and videos

You are only limited by your imagination, and the words you can find to express it.

# Text-to-Image Technology



Text-to-image UI **(eg: Midjourney)**

**You type in what you want to see; the software generates the image.**

- Available as local opensource (Stable Diffusion) or closed cloud (DALL-E, Midjourney) software.

- Accepts positive text **'prompts'** (desirable attributes) and negative (non-desirable attributes).

- Trained on enormous tagged datasets of real imagery.

# Perpetrators can turn to AI CSAM* for many reasons

One dark web forum user provides a typical view in listing five benefits:

," 
- ✓ **Users can create images on their own devices;**
- ✓ **Everything can be custom-made and edited to specification;**
- ✓ **AI CSAM\* can show what is impossible in the real world;**
- ✓ **It is very secure;**
- ✓ **AI is always getting better."**

To some extent, all these points are true.

*child sexual abuse material.

# Realism

# AI CSAM: Prevalence

## One month period, one dark web forum

### SEPT – OCT 2023

**20,254**

In total, 20,254 AI-generated images were found to have been posted to **one dark web CSAM forum in a one-month period.**

**11,108**

Of these, 11,108 images were selected for assessment by IWF analysts. These were the images that were judged most likely to be criminal.

**2,562**

2,562 images were assessed as criminal pseudo photographs.

**416**

416 assessed as criminal prohibited images.

# What are we seeing?

1. Hundreds of new AI CSAM images based upon known victims;

2. AI CSAM generated from online images of children in non-abusive situations;

3. Children as creators;

4. De-aging of celebrities to make them look childlike, depicting them in sexually abusive contexts;

5. Likenesses of famous children in sexual abuse situations;

6. Celebrities as offenders. This could affect anyone with enough images available of them in the public domain.

7. The commercialisation of this imagery.

# What's the risk?

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**Suojellaan Lapsia (Protect Children) and their Redirection Survey Report:**

- More than half (52%) of the respondents have felt afraid that viewing CSAM might lead to sexual acts against a child;

- 44% said that viewing CSAM made them think about seeking contact with a child,

- More than a third (37%) said they had sought direct contact with a child after viewing CSAM.

> *These are truly stunning. Some of the realism in these is about 95% of the way to indistinguishable from real photos.*
>
> Anonymous dark web user

> *A picture of a couple random kiddies I seen playing outside at the park one day I went and made it a fake*
>
> Anonymous dark web user

# 🔗 Resources, help & advice

# 🔗 Helpful links

**IWF**

Internet Watch Foundation : iwf.org.uk

Sextortion advice : iwf.org.uk/sextortion

AI-generated child sexual abuse : iwf.org.uk/aireport

IWF YouTube account : youtube.com/c/IWFhotline

Girls' advice / campaign : gurlsoutloud.com

Parents' advice / campaign : talk.iwf.org.uk

Report Remove - for children and young people to remove a nude : childline.org.uk/remove

UK Safer Internet Centre : saferinternet.org.uk

# 🔗 Helpful links

Safer Internet Day : saferinternetday.org.uk (Tuesday 6 February 2024)

Project Evolve, free toolkit for schools : projectevolve.co.uk

Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) : saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline

360 Degree Safe (free online safety self-review tool for schools) : swgfl.org.uk/services/360-degree-safe/

UK Safer Internet Centre advice for Governors and Trustees : saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/governors-and-trustees

See how your area ranks nationally in the Online Safety School's Index : swgfl.org.uk/research/online-safety-school-index-2023/

TakeItDown : https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/

# Thanks for listening

**Contact us:**

iwf.org.uk

media@iwf.org.uk

+44 (0) 1223 20 30 30

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