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AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHILD SEX OFFENDER DISCLOSURE SCHEME IN ONE
POLICE SERVICE AREA

Chloe McDermott

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters by Research

The University of Huddersfield

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GLOSSARY

Key terms

Child – a person below the age of 18 years (Sexual Offences Act, 2003).

Child sexual abuse (CSA) - the act of forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, and the child may be unaware the sexual abuse is occurring (Working Together, 2015).

Registered sex offender (RSO) – a person who has been convicted, cautioned, reprimanded or warned of certain sexual crimes, since 1997 Sexual Offenders Act. The offender must comply with notification requirements, and register personal details to the sex offender register (Sexual Offences Act, 2003).

Public protection officer (PPO) – an officer whose role is to safeguard the public from offenders and other concerning (non-convicted) individuals

Public protection unit (PPU) – a public protection team of officers dealing with violent and sexual offenders.

Central Governance Unit (CGU) – Northshire Police headquarters (Northshire Police: pseudonym).

Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) – the formal arrangement to combine police, probation and prison agencies to manage the risk of violent and sexual offenders (Sexual Offences Act, 2003).

Disclosure and public notification systems

Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) – also known as ‘Sarah’s law’. A process that permits members of the public to enquire whether a person in contact with a child has a previous sexual offending history, in order to make informed decisions on managing risk.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – also known as ‘Clare’s law’. A process that permits members of the public to enquire whether a new/previous intimate partner has a previous violent offending history, in order to make informed decision on managing risk.

Disclosure via ‘Working Together’ – a process that permits multi-agencies to disclose information to third party individuals, regarding previous offenders, or (non-convicted) individuals with concerning intelligence.

Disclosure via MAPPA or MARAC – a process that permits MAPPA agencies to disclose information to third party individuals, regarding a MAPPA managed offender (violent or sexual offender).

Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offenders Registration Improvements Act, 1997 – also known as ‘Megan’s law’. A United States law that builds upon the sex offender and crimes against children registry, introduced in the initial Wetterling Act, 1994. ‘Megan’s law’ subsequently provides public access to sex offender information that law enforcement deems relevant to protecting the public.

Databases used by the police and other agencies

PND – Police National Database (intelligence related)

PNC – Police National Computer (evidence related)

ViSOR – Violent and Sexual Offenders Register

Niche – Niche Technology records management system

Corvus – Case management system

HOLMES – Home Office Large Major Enquiry System

Definitions specific to CSODS, adapted from CSO disclosure scheme guidance document (Home Office, 2010)

Initial contact – anyone who makes an enquiry with the Police with regard to making a disclosure application.

Application – those enquiries that go on to be processed as formal CSO disclosure applications, excluding applications that are not ‘true’ disclosure scheme applications i.e. vetting and barring, intelligence giving opportunities.

Applicant – the person making the application. The disclosure should only be made to a person who is in a position to use that information to safeguard the child(ren). This will usually be the parent, guardian or carer of the child and may not always be the original applicant.

Subject – the person who the applicant is seeking information about who has some form of contact with a child or children.

Convicted of child sexual offences (CSO) – for the purposes of this scheme means anyone convicted of, or cautioned, reprimanded or warned for of an offence listed under Schedule 34A of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

'Some form of contact' – although the term 'contact' is used, actual 'contact' may not be confirmed. However, the safeguarding agencies must consider whether the likelihood of actual contact is sufficient to satisfy the test for disclosure. There must be sufficient access to or connection with the child by the subject to pose a real risk of harm and therefore justify disclosure. This contact does not necessarily need to be for a prolonged period of time as abuse can happen in a relatively short space of time.

Disclosure – includes both the disclosure of information about the subject's convictions for CSO and any other relevant information deemed necessary to protect a child(ren) from harm i.e. serious domestic violence. The disclosure should only be made to the person who is in a position to use that information to safeguard the child(ren). This will usually be the parent, guardian or carer of the child and disclosure to anyone else will, in any event, fall outside this scheme. The recipient of the information may not always be the original applicant.

ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHILD SEX OFFENDER DISCLOSURE SCHEME IN ONE POLICE SERVICE AREA

The study focuses on the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS), an under-researched area in the management of sex offenders within the UK. With the rise of child sexual abuse reports and sex offender populations, strategies on preventing child sex abuse and managing risk has been a central issue within the criminal justice system and related agencies. As part of a shift in ecological-community-based approaches to crime prevention, CSODS was introduced to empower members of the public to request information so that they could make informed decisions on managing risk. However, lack of take-up, user issues and misunderstandings of the scheme resulted in public and political criticisms, despite police perceptions of the scheme maintaining that the scheme is worthwhile. The current research therefore explored the process of CSODS, how CSODS works within practice, and established how CSODS contributes to the management of risk (and thus the safeguarding of children). The aim of this was to help shed light on why police officers believe CSODS is worthwhile, despite evidential issues of the scheme.

Using a mixed-method approach, data was gathered within two phases. The first phase explored typical CSODS applications, from a sample of 20 random CSODS case files. The data was used to contextualise and illustrate the process of CSODS investigations, and provide an overview of typical applications. Phase 1 aimed to explore:

- a. The nature of CSODS applications;
- b. The typology of applicant and subjects, and their relationship;
- c. The investigation of CSODS cases, following the process of CSODS;
- d. The extent and nature of multi-agency involvement throughout a CSODS investigation.

Phase 2 comprised of 12 semi-structured interviews with police officers from one policing area about their views and experiences of working with CSODS. Phase 2 aimed to:

- a. Determine the extent and nature of CSODS applications, as experienced by Northshire Police officers;
- b. Explore the investigation of CSODS applications and officers' experiences of the CSODS process;
- c. Explore how CSODS contributes to wider risk management strategies;
- d. Explore officers' perceptions on issues relating to CSODS;

- e. Explore officers' recommendations for development/implementation of CSODS policy and practice.

The file data revealed that the largest groups of applicants were female (60%) and were aged 30-39 years (40%). Subjects featuring most commonly in enquiries were: applicants' (own) new partners or applicants' ex-partners' new partners (39%), and applicants' neighbours (33%). All of the subjects (100%) were male and the largest age group were those aged 30-39 (30%). Fifty-five per cent of the cases involved either shared risk assessments with other agencies or had other agency engagement throughout the CSODS application. Of the 16 cases that provided completed data, only three were completed within the CSODS timescales (19%). The majority of delays were within stages 4 (*Full risk assessment*), 5 (*Decision of outcome*) and 6 (*Outcome and closure*).

The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, developing six main themes. The themes were integrated with the contextualising background of the file data, revealing three overarching themes: (1) The contribution of CSODS to wider risk management strategies; (2) Unintended (positive) consequences of CSODS; and (3) Implications of promoting CSODS. The current study reinforced previous research, policy and practice that, when used appropriately, multi-agency working and CSODS are useful for the community management of sex offenders. The present research shed light on how CSODS can contribute to the protection of children, as it provided a 'safety net' in cases where subjects are not managed under any other statutory arrangements (for example, children's social care, probation or MAPPA), thus the police will become the only responsible body working and managing risk posed by certain individual (subjects). However, poor take up and engagement from the public raises concerns about the scheme's legitimacy and effectiveness to act as a crime prevention tool. Officers reflected upon practical issues of promoting the scheme, such as issues on depleted resources, counter-productivity and targeting the appropriate audience.

Limitations and future directions of CSODS research are discussed, with wider reflection upon a new direction for the management of risk, through desistance and strength-based approaches.

Chapter I: Introduction

In 2016, 49,322 registered sex offenders were managed within England and Wales (College of Policing, 2016; Cited in McCartan, Kemshall & Hoggett, 2017). This number is likely to increase, with the rise in recorded sexual offences against children also increasing. Between 2014/15, there were 39,388 recorded child sex offences: an 87% rise from the total 21,372 recorded offences in 2012/13 (Bentley et al., 2016). The rise in reports and convictions of sexual offending is attributed to a 'perfect storm' created by increased social and traditional media reporting; increasing visibility of sexual offences; increased trust in the criminal justice system to take victims seriously and carry out appropriate responses; the impact of celebrity and historical cases; and sexual abuse government policies, practices, and strategies (Bentley et al., 2016; McCartan, et al., 2017).

The UK government has recognised the scale of offences and the impact of child sexual abuse (CSA), stating that CSA should be treated as a "national threat" (Cameron, 2015). Understanding the cause and prevention of CSA has shifted and evolved over time, with literature traditionally focusing on aetiologies of a child sex offender (Christie, Marshall & Lanthier, 1979; Finkelhor, 1979, 1984) moving towards a focus on victim-centred approaches of abuse prevention (Gilgun & Gordon, 1985; Kitzinger, 1997). However, recent literature from public health and ecological models of prevention propose a shift in responsibility from the child to the wider community (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010). Such a shift has been reflected in Home Office policies 'A New Approach to Fighting Crime' (Home Office, 2011) and 'Modern Crime Prevention Strategy' (Home Office, 2016a), adopting an ecological-opportunity-based approach to new and previously 'hidden' crimes such as CSA, whilst also aiming to prevent CSA in devolving more responsibility to communities and members of the public.

The growing recognition of the prevalence of child sexual violence, both globally (Internet Watch Foundation, 2017; UNICEF, 2014) and nationally (Longfield, 2015), reinforces the significant harm child sex offenders' pose to the public (Harris, Walfield, Shields, & Letourneau, 2016; Kemshall & McCartan, 2014; Nash, 2016). Concerns about CSA have underpinned the historical development of policy, legislative and strategy responses over time (Kemshall, 2017). A recent shift in the perception of CSA being a criminal-justice-only matter towards a wider multi-agency and civic issue (Dickson & Willis, 2017; Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008) has resulted in emerging perspectives and legislation around prevention, policing, rehabilitation and management of child sex offenders (McCartan, Kemshall, & Tabachnick, 2015; Nash, 2016). Recent sex offender management policies have established "public protection sentences", the sex offenders' register,

multi-agency risk assessment and risk management of sexual offenders (Kemshall & McCartan, 2014).

The UK has implemented a series of high-profile CSA policies and legislations in recent years (Kemshall et al., 2012), particularly in a reactionary and punitive context (Rogers & Ferguson, 2011). These policy changes reflect the changing societal perceptions around sex offenders as a result of high-profile media stories, child victims, and failings within the public sector systems (Davidson, 2008; Levenson & D'Amora, 2007). This has resulted in child sex offender policies being a reaction to these events and concerns without any sound evidential basis for likely success (Bierie, 2016; Terry, 2015). The rising numbers of the sex offender population and sexual abuse reports places heightened pressure on current risk management services (i.e. Police, Probation, Prison, etc.) to 'do more with less' (O'Sullivan et al., 2016) under financial, political, and practical strain (Bailey, 2017). A turn towards evidence-based practice, as opposed to traditional 'gut feeling' within policing practice (Lum, 2009) will provide substantial data that could be used to develop knowledge and inform practice.

A research opportunity

Amongst some of the policies set out in the new approach of crime prevention, the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) is centred on community involvement to prevent further CSA from occurring. A policy introduced in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the scheme enables parents, carers, or guardians to formally enquire if someone with access to a child has a record of child sexual offences (Home Office, 2010). Interestingly, the disclosure of offenders' personal details as a tool for crime prevention is widely used across the world (both controlled and full public styles of disclosure) (SMART, 2016), yet there is limited research evidence to support that this method works on a crime prevention level. The limited literature that is available is at best mixed (Drake & Aos, 2009; Fitch, 2006; Lovell, 2001; Ward, 2010; Shin & Lee, 2005; Socia & Stamatel, 2010). Despite warnings from both academics and politicians (Hughes, 2001; Lovell, 2001; Phillips, 2006) surrounding the potential implications of disclosing offender information, the Home Office announced that CSODS was to be rolled out across England and Wales by 2011 (Johnson, 2010). However, lack of take-up, user issues and misunderstandings of the scheme resulted in public and political criticisms (Evans, 2015; Kemshall et al., 2010; McCartan, 2013; O'Sullivan et al., 2016), yet research on police perceptions of the scheme maintain that the scheme is worthwhile (McCartan, Hogget & O'Sullivan, 2018; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). The current research will explore the process of CSODS, how CSODS works within practice, and establish how CSODS contributes to the

management of risk (and thus the safeguarding of children). This may help shed light on why police officers believe CSODS is worthwhile, despite evidential issues of the scheme.

The current study focuses on CSODS within one police service area, an under-researched area in the management of sex offenders within the UK (McCartan et al., 2018). As CSODS is primarily the responsibility of the police, the study adopted a mixed-method approach to explore police officers' experiences and perceptions of CSODS. The research was conducted through analysis of two phases. The first phase analysed 20 random CSODS cases, provided by one policing area (pseudonym: Northshire Police). This provided an illustrative background into typical CSODS applications and how the CSODS process works within these applications. Phase 1 aimed to explore:

- a. The nature of CSOD applications;
- b. The typology of applicants and subjects, and their relationship;
- c. The investigation of CSOD cases, following the process of CSODS;
- d. The extent and nature of multi-agency involvement throughout a CSOD investigation.

The second phase involved a purposive sample of Northshire police officers (ranging from Detective Constables to Detective Chief Inspectors) to conduct 12 semi-structured interviews on officers' perceptions and experiences of CSODS. Phase 2 aimed to:

- a. Determine the extent and nature of CSODS applications, as experienced by Northshire Police officers;
- b. Explore the investigation of CSODS applications and officers' experiences of the CSODS process;
- c. Explore how CSODS contributes to wider risk management strategies;
- d. Explore officers' perceptions on issues relating to CSODS;
- e. Explore officers' recommendations for development/implementation of CSODS policy and practice.

Overview

The following chapter Two provides a review and critical discussion of the relevant literature of sex offender policies and the contextualising events that led to the introduction of CSODS. The theoretical framework of situational theories of CSA and crime prevention will be considered to understand the theoretical underpinnings of CSODS. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology used for a mixed-method approach and discusses the justification for the chosen method. Chapter Four presents the results from the analysis of Phase 1 and Phase 2, and in Chapter Five the results are discussed. The final Chapter Six draws upon the conclusions made from the results and discusses the implications of CSODS within wider policy and practice.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The Sex Offender Register: precursor to CSODS

The Sex Offenders Act 1997 was the first law in the UK that created notification requirements for all convicted, cautioned, reprimanded or warned offenders of listed sexual crimes since 1997. The length of time an offender is registered is dependent on the severity of the offence and the sentence they receive, ranging from one year to lifetime registration (Thomas, 2010). The offender is required to abide by the notification requirements within 72 hours of release into the community, providing personal details such as name, address, driving licence and national insurance number with police or other agencies (probation, corrections, parole services).

The register was intended to provide a management tool to strengthen the monitoring of offenders in the community and improve information sharing between agencies such as police and probation (Kemshall & Maguire, 2001). As found in the Home Office guidance document, it specifically states that the primary function of the register was to 'ensure that the information on convicted sex offenders contained within the police national computers was fully up to date' (Home Office 1996: para. 43). However, there was limited reference regarding prevention, management, or deterrence (Thomas 2010), with the Home Office only going as far to say that the register could 'possibly' prevent or deter CSA crimes (Home Office, 1996: para 43; Cited in Thomas, 2008). Compliance with notification requirements to register details within the specified timescale (72 hours) was considered 'good', with a 94% rate in year one (Plotnikoff & Wolfson, 2000), and 97% in year two (Home Office and Scottish Executive, 2001). Despite the additional work and strain on resources following the legislations introduction, police in England and Wales were generally supportive of the register (Plotnikoff & Wolfson, 2000). However, the Home Office-commissioned evaluation was unable to comment on the overall effectiveness of the register (Plotnikoff & Wolfson, 2000). It became apparent that attempting to provide evidence to demonstrate that registration requirements prevented reoffending and enhanced public safety proved difficult (Kemshall, 2017). In addition to this, differences of registration laws across (and within) countries make comparisons difficult and challenged the methodological robustness of some studies that attempted to evaluate the efficacy of registration laws (Tewksbury et al., 2012; Harris, 2016).

However, the register received criticism in the Bichard Inquiry (2004), following the murder of Holly and Jessica Wells by Ian Huntley. The inquiry addressed the investigative failings in the management of sex offenders within the police, which revealed that although the sex offender

register was operational across all UK forces, the utility of this information was problematic. In particular, inconsistencies with recording, storing and sharing information across forces impacted their ability to manage sex offenders. In light of this, a new overarching intelligence database called ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offenders' Register) was developed (Edwards, 2003; ViSOR National User Group, 2013). Thus, initially the register was intended to support law enforcement in their offender management and investigative roles (Harris et al., 2016; Thomas, 2010). However high-profile cases such as Megan Kanka (USA) and Sarah Payne (UK) as well as Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman (UK) shifted its role towards risk management and public protection (Jenkins, 2004; Thomas, 2010, 2016), leading to notification policies.

Global overview of sex offender notification laws

There are two types of notification requirements amongst differing countries: agency only notification [sex offender register for police and wider agency use] or community notification [sex offender register AND community access to the register for both agency and public use]. Agency only or full community notification is used within most countries, although some countries impose a balance of the two [controlled disclosures].

The events in mid-1990s USA were important factors that shaped sex offender policies in the UK today (Thomas, 2010). High-profile abductions and murders of children provoked both policy and legislative developments in America, resulting in the introduction of numerous 'memorial laws' such as the Jacob Wetterling Act in 1994 and 'Megan's law' in 1996 (Kemshall, 2017). Under Megan's law all states are required to establish community notification systems to allow members of the public access to information on all 'dangerous' sexual offenders (Ackerman et al., 2012; Lipscombe, 2012; Thomas, 2010). Since the first registration law in the America (Jacob Wetterling Act 1994), 29 additional countries across the world have since enacted registration laws over the last 20 years, with a further 13 countries considering the enactment of sex offender notification and community notification laws (SMART, 2016).

Despite USA's influence for countries to enact their own notification laws (Lipscombe, 2012; Shin & Lee, 2005; SMART, 2016), and apparent public support (Cochrane, 2010; Levenson et al., 2007) Megan's law has yet to prove its ability to prevent sexual abuse (Fitch, 2006; Lovell, 2001; McGinnis & Prescott, 2007; Ward, 2010), with ambiguous evidence on Megan's law success (Tewksbury et al, 2012; Pryzbylski & National Crime Justice Association, 2015). Drake and Aos' (2009) meta-analysis research on the effects of Megan's law found no statistically significant reductions on sex offender recidivism. A subsequent meta-analysis by Socia and Stamatel (2010) supported these findings, in

addition to the substantial supporting literature of the scheme's inability to reduce recidivism (Adkins et al., 2000; Barnoski, 2005; Levenson, D'Amora & Hern, 2007; Walker et al., 2005; Welchans, 2005; Zevitz, 2006).

However, research on the impacts of Megan's law has consistently shown notification to be counter-productive, such as encouraging offenders to not comply with the requirements and go 'underground'. This has serious detrimental impact for the management of sex offenders but also impacts their reintegration in terms of housing, social support and employment (Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Mercado et al., 2008; Tewksbury & Lees, 2006; Thomas, 2012). Lasher and McGrath (2012) found sex offenders who do comply with notification, however, struggle to reintegrate and rehabilitate into their community (Lasher & McGrath, 2012; Whitting, Day & Powell, 2014), experiencing issues such as harassment, threats, damage to property, loss of job, psychological distress, relationship breakdown, and loss of housing (Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Levenson, D'Amora and Hern, 2007; Tewksbury, 2005). Newburn (2010, pg 582) acknowledged the consequences of USA's registration and notification laws and argued the laws are 'invasive and ineffective'; socially excluding, socially isolating and detrimental to rehabilitation. Megan's law also received media and public criticism when reports emerged that the sex offender register in USA was somewhat inaccurate and unreliable. Mullvihill et al. (2003) found the whereabouts of 49% of RSOs in Massachusetts were unknown. The ability for Megan's law to provide accurate information of sex offenders was therefore only as reliable as the information the register contained. The public's trust (or mistrust) in Megan's law, therefore, is built upon the register's supposed accuracy, as this is a key component in community notification and its ability to protect the public (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).

Shin and Lee (2005) reviewed South Korea's legislation for public access to sex offender information [community notification]. They noted similar evidence to research on Megan's law, such as, violation of individual privacy, protection issues for both the offender and victim, and vigilantism (Oakes, 1998; Sim, 2002; Small, 1999; Zevitz & Farkas, 2000). Despite this, the Korean Commission on Youth Protection (KCYP) stated the primary aim of the policy was to increase public awareness of sex offenders in order to deter future crimes against children (KCYP, 2001), suggesting that the social consequences of the register and public notification are necessary to effectively deter sexual offenders. Shin and Lee (2005) argued that there was a lack of empirical evidence to show the effectiveness of South Korea's policy but also a lack of evidence with other public notification laws in Western countries.

In Canada sex offender information is only accessible to law enforcement agencies and is not within the public realm [agency only notification]. This is considered a key component to higher levels of

sex offender compliance with the requirements of the Canadian registries (Kemshall, 2017). Unlike Megan's law, the Canadian notification law balances the need for public protection with individual rights to privacy. Murphy et al. (2009, pg 70) argues that notification requirements of this nature are 'optimally effective and minimally intrusive', supporting the consideration of both parties (public and offender). Similarly to Canada, many countries operate sex offender notification laws without community notification. However, an alternative, limited disclosure of sex offender information is used in some jurisdictions, which permits information on registered sex offenders (RSOs) to be shared with certain members of the public. Jersey, Bermuda, Kenya, Portugal, Nigeria, New Zealand, Guernsey, Bahamas and the England and Wales share similar legislative procedures in that the public do not have full access to sex offender information – as is the case with Megan's law. However, the limited use of disclosure allows for any member of the public to enquire about a person of concern and if this person poses a risk of harm, the applicant will receive disclosure of sex offender information relating to that person (SMART, 2016).

Development of England and Wales Disclosure

Eight-year-old Sarah Payne was abducted and murdered by Roy Whiting, a known and registered sex offender. The subsequent media and public reaction resulted in the News of the World tabloid launching a "For Sarah" campaign (Bell, 2002; McCartan, 2010; Williams, 2015). The media used the term "Sarah's law" to portray the claimed public demand for England and Wales's own version of Megan's law. Throughout the campaign, the News of the World published the names, photographs and general locations of alleged convicted child sex offenders, causing vigilante towards alleged (and mostly misidentified) sex offenders (Thomas, 2010).

The murder of Sarah Payne continued to receive attention and contributed to the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003 that amended and replaced the Sexual Offences Act 1997 (see Kemshall, 2017 and Thomas, 2010), resulting in reformed sex offender legislation (O'Sullivan, 2016; Thomas, 2010). As part of the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000, MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) was introduced to formalise the process of information sharing between agencies. Within these arrangements, police probation and prison services form the 'Responsible Authorities', whose duty it is to ensure that the risk of sexual and violent offenders are assessed and managed appropriately (Craissati & Quartey, 2015). Other agencies such as health, youth justice and local authority also have a 'duty to co-operate' with the Responsible Authorities and the management of the sexual and violent offenders (Criminal Justice Act, 2003, section 325). This has been an important step within public sector

services, as the shift of safeguarding and protecting children is now the responsibility of all agencies and no longer the sole responsibility of Children's Social Care (CSC) (Goldthorpe, 2004).

Under MAPPA, third party disclosures were introduced. This involves "the sharing of specific information about a MAPPA offender with a third party for the purpose of protecting the public" (Home Office, 2012). It is the role of the police, therefore, to disclose such information in a controlled way to third party members, such as head teachers, leisure centre managers, employers and landlords, as well as parents. The concept of limited disclosure was emphasised by the inclusion of "lay advisers" to the multi-agency public protection panels, as allowing public access to sex offender regulation was to be in a controlled and proportionate manner (Kemshall, 2008). Additionally, The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre also provide details of high-risk offenders who are missing to authorities on their website (www.ceop.gov.uk). The MAPPA arrangements and the CEOP were important initiatives that opened up the concept of limited and controlled disclosure of sex offender information to the public.

Despite new amendments placed on sex offenders, a poll in England in 2005 indicated that the public was not satisfied with the government's effort to protect the public from sex offenders (Levenson et al., 2007). A sample of 558 adults found that 69% of respondents did not believe that enough was being done to protect potential victims from sex offenders. Respondents were overwhelmingly (86%) in favour of the public having access to information regarding registered sex offenders. Fifty-seven per cent believed that the public has a right to know about all convicted child molesters living in the local area, while 29% believed the public should be told only about those judged to pose a risk to children. Only 16% of those surveyed believed that convicted child molesters could live safely in a community without posing a threat to children (News of the world, 2005).

The Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme

In 2006, the Home Office announced that it was examining the operation of Megan's law. However, this was criticised by authorities and academics, following public protection concerns and evidence of the unintended consequences of USA's approach to community notification (Fox, 2017; Harris, Walfield, et al., 2016; Levenson, Ackerman, & Harris, 2014; Pittman, 2013), such as fear of vigilantism (Sutton, 2010) and offenders going 'underground' (Kemshall et al., 2012). The Home Office concluded that 'Sarah's law' would make protecting children even harder for the police (Hughes, 2001), thus dismissing the idea of introducing a policy of full public disclosure (Thomas, 2010), in favour of an alternative scheme – the partial public disclosure of sex offender information,

known as the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) (Home Office, 2007). The scheme was to be an extension of existing MAPPA disclosure procedures, with the emphasis on a 'two-way' transfer of disclosure of information between the police and the public. This model enshrined within CSODS demonstrates how the police and the public can work together to enhance intelligence regarding the management and potential risk of offenders, whilst also considering the safety and rights of the offender (Home Office, 2007).

Pilot scheme

In 2008, a 12-month pilot study commenced across four police force areas in England. The take-up and potential disclosure rates across the four areas were expected to be around 2,400. This was based upon population size, known number of RSOs in each area, known offence rates for sexual offending and significant media campaigning for disclosure (Wilson & Silverman, 2002; Thomas, 2012). However, evaluations of the pilots revealed low take-up against projections (585 total enquiries against expected 2,400). Of the total 585 enquiries, only 315 met the CSODS criteria and only 21 applications resulted in a disclosure of information to a member of the public (Kemshall et al., 2010). The pilot study also analysed 159 pilot CSOD applications, interviewed 82 staff, other practitioners and stakeholders involved, as well as 43 applicants and 61 RSOs. They revealed that applicants were mostly satisfied with the scheme, although some applicants remained anxious following the closure of a CSODS, highlighting improvements on follow-up support. Applicants were aware of confidentiality restrictions although some expressed difficulty in maintaining these. Police staff believed CSODS enabled a formalised route for the public to voice concerns although felt this mechanism already exists within current third party MAPPA disclosures (some pilot staff described CSODS as a "parallel programme" to MAPPA). RSOs felt anxiety towards the potential of negative community reactions, however no breaches of compliance from RSOs were found as a result of the pilot scheme. Overall Kemshall et al., (2010) concluded that the pilot showed benefits with the formalisation of processes, the provision of increased intelligence, and a formalised route for the public to make enquiries about concerning individuals.

Roll out of the scheme

The CSODS scheme was rolled out in England, Wales and Scotland in 2010, and recently in Northern Ireland (McCartan et al., 2018), although there are slight variations between each country's scheme (see McCartan, 2012 and Chan et al., 2010 for full explanation). The following research concerns the England and Wales's CSODS scheme. The introduction of CSODS was intended to serve two functions: to empower members of the public to request information so that they could make informed decisions on managing risk; and to contribute to the overall risk

management of RSOs by extending upon pre-existing information sharing systems (Kemshall et al., 2010; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). The scheme differs greatly to USA's community notification scheme as the parameters of the CSODS scheme are limited compared to 'Megan's law' (Kemshall et al., 2010). The scheme is specific in that the enquiry must be made via the police (primarily responsible for CSODS) about a named individual who has contact/access to a child(ren), and the person enquiring will only be disclosed information if the subject of the enquiry meets certain criteria of risk, and/or has previous convictions for sexual offences against children. To summarise, the scheme has three main stages: stage one, an enquiry to the police; stage two, the enquiry processed to a formal application (if criteria is met); and stage three, disclosure of information (if risk levels and previous conviction requirements are met) (McCartan et al., 2017).

Initial pilot research in England and Wales (Kemshall et al., 2010) as well as in Scotland (Chan, Holmes, Murray, & Treanor, 2010) revealed poor take-up and engagement with the scheme by the public, raising concerns of their legitimacy and effectiveness (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan, Hoggett, Kemshall, & McCartan, 2016). Since the roll out of the England and Wales CSODS, the Association of Chief Police Officers found that application and disclosure rates have continued to be low – more so, the number is falling. By December 2013, 4,754 applications had been made, resulting in 700 disclosures (Wall, 2012). Figures also show that from 2011/12 there were 1,944 applications made, whilst in 2015/16 only 1,252 applications and 192 disclosures made across 21 police forces in England and Wales (College of Policing, 2016; Cited in McCartan, et al., 2017). This indicates a significant reduction in the volume of applications and disclosures since its first implementation in 2010, suggesting that the scheme is not working in the way that it was expected to with poor utility and engagement (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; Wilson, 2011).

The poor take-up and engagement of the scheme resulted in criticisms over its contribution to current information sharing systems and protection to children. Christopher Stacey, director of services at offender reform charity Unlock, said:

It is important to strike the right balance between the need to protect the public and enabling people who have served their sentence and rehabilitated themselves to move on positively with their lives... There already exists a detailed framework in place [MAPPA], which is designed to enable the police, probation services and other agencies to share information with members of the public where there is a safeguarding concern... As a result, it is unclear what value this scheme is adding, with serious questions about the statistics being used to defend the effectiveness of the scheme (Stacey, 2013)

Current research on the scheme

Whilst there is substantial international research on the policy and practice of sex offender community notification schemes (e.g. Harris et al., 2016; Thomas, 2010, 2016), research on the England and Wales CSODS scheme is somewhat limited.

O'Sullivan et al. (2016) explored police officer and sex offender manager attitudes towards CSODS. They found that offender managers (OM's) perceived CSODS positively when the scheme was used effectively and appropriately. They felt that the scheme enabled the public to become more aware of sex offenders in their communities, allowing them to make informed decisions to safeguard children. Despite this, OM's were aware that CSODS can be problematic when applicants do not understand the intention of the scheme (e.g. if disclosure recipients were to breach confidentiality this would create risk management issues for sex offenders in the community). Additional problems such as the public not fully understanding the information provided in a disclosure resulted in applicants expressing increased fear/anxiety towards sex offenders and the potential for vigilante action. In terms of the CSODS process, officers argued that the scheme was time consuming; affecting their time spent managing sex offenders. Officers acknowledged the practicalities of the scheme are more useful for the public to manage risk, as opposed to law enforcement, as much of the utility of the scheme is part of their core business already. Overall, officers felt current volumes of applications were manageable, as demand for the scheme has been limited. They argued that despite the lack of public awareness (and poor take-up), increasing the awareness and potentially the demand for the scheme would be counter-productive for the police to manage offenders and protect the public.

McCartan et al. (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study into police officers' perceptions of CSODS and wider risk management strategies. They found that officers felt CSODS reduced recidivism due to empowerment for the public to protect rather than as an offender management tool. However, officers highlighted the scheme's limitation as a tertiary crime (prevent further crime) prevention tool. They argued that CSODS may not prevent CSA as most common perpetrators of CSA are those with close relationships with the child and will often not be suspected or reported, therefore the scheme can only disclose whether someone has a history of sexual convictions and cannot determine if someone has a sexual interest in children. Officers also highlighted the burdens of the CSODS process, explaining that CSODS applications typically require days of policing time, thus impacting their ability to adequately manage sex offenders within their role. Officers felt they were currently coping with workloads, although this would become too much if enquiries increased. Officers highlighted some unintended consequences that affect community protection: 76% of officers were concerned of harassment of RSOs following a disclosure, 60% major/moderate

concern that disclosure caused unnecessary fear within the community and 69% major/moderate concern that disclosure could be misunderstood/misinterpreted. Overall, officers felt when CSODS is used properly, it can enable communities to protect themselves, become more aware of RSOs in their community and prevent reoffending.

McCartan (2013) explored public attitudes towards CSODS in a Welsh and Northern Irish sample. The interviews revealed that the public believed they had a right to access information regarding sex offenders living locally to them, but when the practicalities of disclosure were discussed, participants became divided on the merits of the disclosure scheme. Some participants felt the scheme was too restrictive. They disliked the structure (particularly the background checks and the confidentiality agreement) and expressed mistrust towards the authorities (the police) regarding their operation of the scheme. Participants felt that communities need to be more involved regarding sex offenders living in their area but opinions were divided as to whether communities could handle this role. These results reinforced the findings from the previous research on the CSODS pilot (Kemshall et al., 2010, 2012; Chan et al., 2010) that more work needed to be invested in the administration of the disclosure process.

Situational Crime Theory

Situational crime prevention theories are necessary to understand the aims of CSODS as this demonstrates the mechanisms of the scheme and how these attempt to address crime prevention theory.

Situational theories adopt a person-situation interaction model, which focuses on the interaction between individual behaviour and the situation in which the behaviour is contextualised within. The assumption of the model is that humans are intelligent beings; therefore human behaviour is not a product of instinct or a conditioned response, rather, a response to the meaning of a stimulus. In this sense, human behaviour is a product of active cognitive processes of learning, thinking, and perceiving. This is the 'person' variable of the model and the 'situation' variable contextualises an individual's behaviour (Kihlstrom, 2013). This perspective of criminality focuses on the relations between internal psychological processes of the person and the external social processes of the person's environment. The person-situation interaction model has much more pragmatic contributions to crime prevention as situations are more readily accessible and easier to modify than the psychological characteristics of offenders – particularly those who have not yet offended (Smallbone & Cale, 2015).

Situational theories of crime are founded upon two distinct conceptions: rational choice (Cornish & Clarke, 1986) and routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The former seeks to explain crime as an individual's rationality, weighing up the cost and benefit of a criminal act, whereas the latter focuses on the social and behavioural patterns to explain crime. Whilst each theory is different in their approach, both theories centre the notion that crime is situational, and only when certain factors are offered to allow the opportunity, does crime occur. Previous research on situational crime prevention theory has focused mainly on property crimes, though research has recently begun to apply this perspective to interpersonal crime, including CSA (Marshall, Serran, & Marshall, 2006; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

Rational Choice Perspective (RCP)

'Rational' refers to any purposeful behaviour that is chosen to benefit the offender in some way (Cornish & Clarke, 2014). RCP is a theoretical framework, which focuses on the decision-making processes of offenders. According to RCP, criminals offend as crime provides the most effective means of achieving desired benefits (e.g. money, material goods, prestige, sexual gratification). Individuals, therefore, make rational decisions based on the cost and benefit of the criminal act (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Cornish & Clarke, 2014). A crime is most likely to be committed when circumstances require minimal effort for the offender, when they perceive low-risk of apprehension, and when the reward is highly desirable (Cornish & Clarke, 2014).

Wortley and Smallbone (2006) drew on the theoretical framework provided by Cornish and Clarke (2003) to apply opportunity-reducing techniques to child sexual abuse. For example, the concept of 'target hardening' is important for CSA prevention as this may increase the effort of offending so that offenders perceive an offence to be more inconvenient or likely to be detected. Target hardening in CSA prevention uses techniques such as educating children about protective strategies (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006; Wyles, 1988). Offenders are therefore perceived as rational decision makers, whose choices are shaped by their values and the situation they perceive to be in. This perspective, applied to CSA, is particularly relevant as it offers a dynamic picture of the offender, exploring both the individual and situational variables that influence their behaviour (Beauregard, Leclerc, & Proulx, 2009). For example, the resistance of the victim is considered an important situational factor as it influences the decisions of the offender, and subsequently, the offender-victim interaction when sexual abuse is committed (Leclerc et al., 2009; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Evidence of this from Elliott, Browne and Kilcoyne (1995) found that in their sample of child sexual offenders, 39% said that they would use threats or violence to overcome child resistance, if it was necessary to do so. As RCP focuses on the criminal decision making in regards

to crime commission (Cornish, 1993), including the strategy adopted by the offender, RCP is a useful framework to explore the modus operandi of child sex offenders. This area of research has used the behavioural and situational variables of CSA to provide evidence-based methods of offender's modus operandi, which has in-turn informed current crime prevention efforts (Beauregard et al., 2009; Beauregard, Rossmo & Proulx, 2007; Leclerc, Smallbone & Wortley, 2014; Proux et al., 1995).

Routine Activity Approach

Developing from the conscious, deliberate offender of the rational choice perspective, Cohen and Felson (1979) focuses on the social and behavioural psychology of the offender. In line with the person-situation interaction model, routine activity theory argues that all human behaviour, including criminal behaviour, is an interaction between the individual and the immediate situation in which the individual's behaviour is enacted (Smallbone & Cale, 2015).

Routine activity approach focuses on the micro factors of crime, in that risk of victimisation is strongly influenced by the everyday life routines of individuals. Offenders therefore, do not generally search for opportunities to commit crime outside of their daily routine (Bernard, 2010).

Three elements must be present for a crime to occur (Fig 1):

1. An offender motivated to commit an offence
2. A vulnerable target/victim who is available
3. A situation/place that has insufficient protection to prevent the crime

The lack of any one of these elements is typically sufficient to prevent criminal acts from occurring (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Crime can therefore be prevented when criminal opportunities are reduced but also through the removal of instigating conditions that render criminal behaviours. Applying this to CSA focuses on crime depending on the structural change in individual's lifestyle. For example, CSA may occur when capable guardians are absent due, for example, to full-time work commitments, families becoming more dispersed (i.e. family members living further away), or reduced contact time with capable guardians; thus increasing risk for child victims.

The problem analysis triangle (PAT) (Fig 1) explains the role of the capable guardians and the importance of the interactions between offenders, victims and the location of the criminal opportunity (Leclerc et al., 2015). It was adapted from the routine activity approach to guide crime prevention efforts (Clarke & Eck, 2005; Felson, 1995).

Figure 1 Problem Analysis Triangle (Adapted from: Clarke & Eck, 2005; Felson, 1995)



The inner level of the PAT represents the elements of the routine activity approach whilst the outer level represents three foci of crime prevention. The notion of a 'capable guardian' refers to any person who has the ability to directly or indirectly disrupt crime commission. The presence of a capable guardian, either in sight of the offender or in close proximity, is sufficient to prevent crime from occurring (Felson, 1995). This is particularly significant with CSA as it is assumed that when a capable guardian is present, it would prevent a potential offender from sexually abusing a child (Beauregard and Leclerc, 2007; Leclerc, Smallbone & Wortley, 2015; Terry & Ackerman, 2008). Felson (2002) explains: "a guardian is not usually someone who brandishes a gun or threatens an offender with quick punishment, but rather someone whose mere presence serves as a gentle reminder that someone is looking. With a guardian present, the offender avoids attempting to carry out an offense in the first place." (p.22). Cohen and Felson (1979) maintained that many crimes (particularly domestic crimes such as CSA) are committed because of the absence of a capable guardian. To educate parents and guardians about effective supervision would provide them the ability to recognise behaviours that may be dangerous or suggest they are of abusive conduct (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

The concept of a capable guardian as a crime prevention measure against CSA has been a relatively new and emerging area, with currently little research evidence. However, Beauregard and Leclerc (2007) found that most sexual offenders take into account factors such as the presence of others as an estimate of the potential risk of apprehension. Leclerc et al. (2015) also acknowledged

the lack of empirical attention given to this emerging area within criminology, despite its critical importance towards crime prevention. Evidence within their study has contributed to the literature that capable guardians, to some extent, prevent victimisation of CSA. Specifically, Leclerc, Smallbone and Wortley (2015) found that the presence of a capable guardian decreases the duration and severity of CSA, stating that guardianship decreases the risk of sexual penetration by 86%. Although there is lacking research to explore how effective guardianship is in preventing CSA, Leclerc et al.'s (2015) findings are a starting point to illustrate how the mere presence of capable guardians are sufficient to reduce the severity of sexual offending. Sexual offenders may still have the desire to have sexual contact with a child when a guardian is within proximity, but they are nonetheless constrained by the presence of a person who may suddenly intervene. Consistent with Felson's (1995) assertion of guardianship, with "their simple presence, people can discourage crime from happening at specific times and places" (p.53).

The concept that offenders take into account capable guardianship in planning or deciding to commit an offence aligns with Finkelhor's seminar work exploring the conditions in which CSA takes place. Finkelhor's (1984) theory applied a multi-factor model of both psychological and sociological assumptions to explain why CSA occurs. Taking into account the proximal and distal factors that contribute to sexual abuse, Finkelhor's model integrates the traditional dispositional factors of sexual abuse, with the situational and contextual variables that underpin the assumptions of rational choice and routine activity theory (Ward & Hudson, 2001). According to Finkelhor's precondition model, there are four pre-conditional factors that must be satisfied before CSA can occur:

1. Motivation to sexually abuse a child
2. Overcoming internal inhibitors (e.g. distorted beliefs)
3. Overcoming external inhibitors (e.g. capable guardians)
4. Overcoming child's resistance

In line with situational crime theories, the predisposition to overcome external inhibitors involves an individual to create a possibility for CSA to occur, through planning and opportunistic behaviour (Ward & Hudson, 2001). Finkelhor argues a number of conditions that increase the possibility of CSA. Primarily, the absence of a capable guardian is a prominent element to the vulnerability of CSA targets (e.g. a mother who is absent or ill, lack of supervision of the child, opportunities for the child and the abuser to be together). Finkelhor's precondition of external inhibitors draws upon the theory of rational choice and routine activity theory, in that a likely offender partakes in planning (rationalising) to overcome the external inhibitor of potentially being caught (risk), yet with the presence of a capable guardian, the opportunity of CSA is unlikely to occur. The protective element of a capable guardian is central within the CSODS rationale, as it aims to provide individual's information to empower their abilities to be vigilant and protect vulnerable children.

Theoretical underpinnings to CSODS

Situational crime perspectives argue that in order to prevent crime, a preventative factor(s) within the problem analysis triangle (handler, manager and guardian) must be present in order to protect from the precipitators of crime (offender, place, target/victim). The use of guardianship to protect children from CSA is central to the policy of CSODS. The scheme is the first policy that allows a formal mechanism for members of the public to enquire about a person of concern. CSODS, therefore, intends to inform guardians to become capable guardians, who would in turn strengthen external inhibitors and increase the risk of apprehension of potential sexual offenders. However, when considering practicalities of CSODS in relation to situational crime perspective and crime prevention theories, the scheme is problematic.

Sex offender risk management strategies such as CSODS are predominantly the function of the criminal justice system (i.e. police, probation, prison), with a focus on response after an offence has occurred and how to prevent further reoffending (i.e. a tertiary preventative approach) (McCartan et al., 2015; McCartan et al., 2017; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). However, this limits the preventative capabilities of the scheme as the parameters focus only on offenders within or known to the sex offender register. It is well documented that CSA is a domestic crime as many CSA cases occur within the home (Bentley et al., 2016; Leclerc et al., 2010; Terry & Ackerman, 2008; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), between an offender who has a close relationship to the victim, or is somewhat known to the victim (Leclerc, Wortley & Smallbone, 2011; Lalor & McElvaney, 2010). Therefore, CSODS cannot protect children from offenders who have not yet been apprehended. This is a great weakness for CSODS as tertiary crime efforts do not affect sexual offenders who are unknown to the sex offender register, thus these offenders continue to amplify the 'hidden crime' of CSA. Sex offender risk management strategies such as CSODS have, therefore become increasingly restrictive, controlling, punitive and prohibiting (Brayford et al., 2012), with limited and mostly ambiguous evidence regarding their effectiveness on long-term offence prevention (Tabachnick et al., 2016).

Chapter Summary

Current research of CSODS is limited within the UK (McCartan et al., 2018). To summarise, research on the pilot studies (Chan et al., 2010; Kemshall et al., 2010), examination of police data (McCartan et al., 2016; Wall, 2012), police perceptions (McCartan et al., 2018; O'Sullivan et al., 2016), public perceptions (McCartan 2013) or research touching upon CSODS within wider exploration of the sex offender register (Hudson et al., 2015; Nash, 2016) is the extent to research on the scheme. Research into sex offender management strategies does not have the academic weight in the UK as it does in the USA with limited significant research into perceptions and attitudes towards the utility of CSODS (Harris, Levenson, Lobanov-Rostovsky, & Walfield, 2016). Given this lack of UK research, the current study aims address this gap through exploring the process of CSODS, how CSODS works within practice, and establish how CSODS contributes to the management of risk (and thus the safeguarding of children). The aim of this was to help shed light on why police officers believe CSODS is worthwhile, despite evidential issues of the scheme.

Chapter III: Methodology

The following chapter presents the methodology employed within the research project, and what methods were used in the fieldwork. A pragmatic, mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods, was used. The first section of the methodology introduces pragmatism as a methodological stance, and the key reasons why pragmatism was appropriate for the current research. The design of the research, sampling methods, data collection, ethical considerations and data analysis are also outlined and explained.

Research paradigm: pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical approach that centres on the importance of efficiency and practicality within research (Rescher, 2004). Pragmatism has become a well-established philosophy within social sciences (Morgan, 2007; Maxcy, 2003). A number of authorities have advocated the use of pragmatism within mixed method research (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Although quantitative and qualitative are fundamentally opposed research methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), mixed method paradigms aim to integrate these contrasting strategies, thus providing alternative methodological framework. Proponents of mixed methods argue that research is diverse in nature, thus there should be a diverse methodology to reflect this (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Pragmatism, therefore, is particularly beneficial within the complexity of human and health research. As researchers in this field explore complex and diverse concepts, thus to restrict their design towards quantitative or qualitative would not be sufficient to address these problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Mixed-methods itself, however, also comes with methodological downfalls. Mixed-method research generally takes more time to collect data and analyse, as opposed to a researcher using a single method. The researcher is also required to learn multiple methods and approaches, and how they should be appropriately integrated within the data collection and analysis stages (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Mixed-method design

Within the mixed-method design, data was collected through two sequential phases.

Phase 1 involved analysing 20 randomly selected CSODS case files, from Northshire Police. This was provided in the form of a database, and the role of this was to support and contextualise the findings within Phase 2. Phase 1 aimed to explore:

- a. The nature of CSOD applications;
- b. The typology of applicant and subjects, and their relationship;
- c. The investigation of CSOD cases, following the process of CSODS;
- d. The extent and nature of multi-agency involvement throughout a CSOD investigation.

Phase 2 employed a purposive sample of Northshire police officers (ranging from Detective Constables to Detective Chief Inspectors), to conduct 12 semi-structured interviews on officers' perceptions and experiences of CSODS. Phase 2 aimed to:

- a. Determine the extent and nature of CSODS applications, as experienced by Northshire Police officers;
- b. Explore the investigation of CSODS applications, and officers' experiences of the CSODS process;
- c. Explore how CSODS contributes to wider risk management strategies;
- d. Explore officers' perceptions on issues relating to CSODS;
- e. Explore officers' recommendations for development/implementation of CSODS policy and practice.

Phase 1: research design

The following section concerns the research design of Phase 1 only.

Instrument design and collection

A data extraction template (Appendix A) was developed to extract data from a random sample of CSODS case files. The ordering of the questions was structured to follow the process of CSODS (i.e. initial applications, decision making, final decision, and post-decision experiences), to allow clarity, and avoid ambiguity of the questions (Brace, 2008).

The file data was gathered within Northshire Police headquarters, from their normal recording of information through a CSODS investigation. Information officers interrogated their local police system (Niche) to provide in-depth case files on 20 investigations. The data extraction template was

translated to an excel spread sheet, and information of the individual cases corresponded to each question.

Sampling and recruitment

Due to the volume of questions and the limited time Northshire Police could dedicate to the research, a random sample of 20 CSOD cases were provided. Although random sampling is a traditional sampling method within social science research (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007), there are considerations of misrepresentation of analysis, as a result of the sample lacking representation of the target population. This is known as sampling error (Loftland & Loftland, 2006). In most quantitative research the effects of sampling error can be reduced with a large sample size (Brace, 2008). However, as 20 CSOD cases lacks sampling power, the consideration of sampling error must be taken into account when analysing the data.

Phase 2: research design

The following section concerns the research design for Phase 2 only.

Instrument design and collection

To address the research aims through the exploration of officers' perceptions and experiences, a reflective interviewing technique was adopted within a semi-structured framework (Roulston, 2010). Unlike structured, non-reflective interviewing, reflective interviewing utilises follow-up questions to expand the officers' responses, as well as allowing for the development of new concepts throughout the research (Lee & Barnett, 1994). As knowledge around CSODS is limited within the current literature, the structure of the interview was designed to follow an open-ended, reflective interviewing style. This allowed for officers to naturally influence the direction and order of the interview, to discuss their perceptions of the scheme and their experiences of the day-to-day workings of CSODS freely and without a prior framework of understanding to shape the interview and their responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The nature of the research and the sensitivity of information also emphasised the importance of building rapport with the officers (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). Opening statements and explanations of ethical protocol (such as right to withdraw etc.) are important in setting a comfortable and trusting interviewing environment (Rabionet, 2011). Additionally, the development of questions and follow-up probes is important to allow a flowing conversation around the subject matter. This method of interviewing style (reflective) not only provides in-depth, exploratory data, but

it also encourages the officers to expand and comfortably discuss potentially sensitive topics (Rabionet, 2011).

The interview schedule after this opening work consisted of 12 main sections, following a broadly chronological journey through the life-course of a CSODS enquiry (Appendix B). This was a particularly beneficial, as sectioning the interview provided clear structure, as well as allowing broader theory-related questions to be explored within each section (Galletta, 2013). For example, if the researcher directly asked why the public may be unaware of CSODS, the officer may be unsure on how to provide an in-depth response, or result in a superficial response (Galletta, 2013). Therefore, it is important for the researcher to explore officers' experiences and build the topic around their response (such as, exploring participants' perceptions on volumes of applications, nature of enquiries, perceptions on public understanding of the scheme), to allow the officer to develop and move into more theory-related areas.

Prior to the data collection stage, a pilot interview was conducted to test the appropriateness of the interview schedule, recording equipment and time schedules (Galletta, 2013). Minor changes were applied to the structure of the interview schedule. Background questions relating to the officer were extracted from the interview schedule and emailed to officers prior to the interview. The interview schedule was also structured to follow the order of the CSODS process. This allowed for smoother progression and shorter time for each interview.

The location, date and time of the interviews were agreed upon the researcher and the individual officer. Once informed consent was established, officers were emailed background demographic questions to complete prior to the interview (Appendix B). All interviews were conducted within each district's headquarters and consisted of one-to-one, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Sampling and recruitment

Officers' demographics (Appendix C) included years of service, police rank and volume of officers supervised. The sample included a wide range of officers from various ranks and differing career lengths within the police (ranging from new to 40 years) and differing roles (officers had experience within wide areas of risk management, although all officers had CSODS experience). This variety of officers was found within a similar study exploring police perceptions of public protection policies (Harris et al., 2015; McCartan et al., 2018). The initial demographic and background information of the officers (Appendix C) was to be broken down within each district. However, to present the

information in this nature raised ethical concerns in preserving the anonymity of officers. Therefore, the information is summarised to prevent identifying individual officers.

A purposive sampling method was utilised based on precise selection criteria: officers in the chosen policing area that worked within CSODS or had CSODS integrated within their role. Twelve officers were recruited across all five districts of Northshire Police. The DCI of Northshire Police provided formal access to officers within the districts, but those officers were able to voluntarily consent to take part or not without the knowledge of the DCI.

An important element of the research was achieving access to officers via gatekeepers. The DCI of Northshire Police was particularly supportive for the University of Huddersfield to conduct the research, as they valued the importance of agency-academic collaboration, and the lack of research in the area. In addition to this, the University of Huddersfield and Northshire Police have an established and trusting relationship, based upon previous research projects. The DCI therefore, was a valuable contact to grant access to the target sample, and subsequently negotiate the research project (Duke, 2002).

It was also important to maintain rapport with the gatekeeper throughout the research, as a positive relationship and professionalism ensured the continuation of the research (Reeves, 2010). For example, arriving to interviews in a timely manner, as well as dressing professionally were considered key in maintaining the professional research relationship. Additionally, the SOLER model (Egan, 2002) was considered throughout the interview process. This provided a framework for a researcher to consider their body language and non-verbal communication to establish a balance between professionalism and rapport (O'leary, 2004). The SOLER elements are:

Square on – face the participant to indicate full attention

Open posture – to indicate an accepting, non-defensive posture

Lean forward – to indicate involvement

Eye contact – to indicate interest/attention

Relax – concerning both flow of conversation and body movement

(Adapted from: O'leary, 2004)

Following formal access from Northshire Police, 15 officers were emailed information regarding the research project (Appendix D). The sample aimed to interview a variety of officers within each rank (sample gained was 5 DC, 3 DS, 5 DI, 2 DCI). Based upon guidance of the gatekeeper, it was informed that DC and DI officers have the most involvement in CSODS, therefore the sample prioritised officers within these ranks. Twelve of the 15 officers agreed to partake in the research.

However, two officers opted out of the research as they were new to their roles and felt they did not have enough experience to be interviewed regarding CSODS. One officer did not respond to the research project.

Ethical considerations: Phase 1 and 2

The research project design was reviewed at the University of Huddersfield and received full ethical approval by the School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) on 15th March 2017. The methodology received minor amendments and was subsequently approved on the 22nd August 2017. The following section explores key ethical considerations within the research project, and how these were addressed within each phase. Where appropriate, Phase 1 and 2 are broken down within each ethical consideration, although some considerations only concern Phase 2.

Confidentiality and anonymity (both phases)

For Phase 1, information officers within Northshire Police were responsible for extracting 20 random cases from their Niche database. The researcher was not permitted to access NICHE, as Northshire Police requested the data to be made anonymous prior to passing to the researcher. This required police time and resources, and as a result, caused delays within the data collection process.

For Phase 2, officers completed background demographic questions prior to the interviews; these included their full name, date of birth, gender, rank etc. All identifying information was extracted from the data and stored within a separate encrypted file. Additionally, demographic information (Appendix C) was summarised as opposed to allocated to district code (A-D). This ensured that confidentiality was maintained by eliminating potentially identifiable information. Furthermore, officers were informed prior to the interview that they must not disclose any identifying information, such as names or locations, about any members of the public that are currently, or previously, involved with CSODS. Additionally, officer's quotes were reported in the findings by individual participant numbers (allocated to each officer) and edited to remove identifying information (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013).

Within research, preserving confidentiality may be problematic in cases where an officer or the general research uncovers potential illegal activity (O'leary, 2004). To prevent this issue, officers were informed that information disclosed to the interviewer would be treated in strictest confidence, with the exception that if the officer discloses that they have, or may, cause serious harm to themselves or to others, or commit a criminal offence, the research team would have an obligation to share that information with Northshire Police.

Data storage (both phases)

Password encrypted files of the file data (Phase 1), interview audio recordings and transcripts (Phase 2), ensured that only the researcher and supervisors have access to the data. To comply with University regulations the encrypted files were saved onto the University desktop for 10 years.

For Phase 1, anonymity of the data was ensured within Northshire Police headquarters, therefore no identifying information was required to be stored separately.

For Phase 2, all identifying information has been extracted from the transcripts and allocated a district code (A-D). To maintain anonymity, identifying information was stored separately from the data (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Consent and right to withdraw (Phase 2 only)

Officers were initially recruited via a gatekeeper (DCI of Northshire Police). The hierarchical culture within the police (Reiner, 2010) raises potential issues regarding consent and right to withdraw. As officers were requested by a DCI to take part in the study, there was a potential issue of the officers' feeling obliged to consent to the study, as well as an obligation to not withdraw from the study. However, it was expressed to officers before each interview that they had the right to withdraw at any time before, during, and after the interview. Officers were also given the right to withdraw their interview transcript, up to four weeks after the interview, without giving a reason, and that their DCI would not be informed.

Psychological support (Phase 2 only)

Although the interview schedule primarily focused on the processes of CSODS, the scheme itself concerns potential child sex offenders and child sexual abuse. The semi-structured nature of the interview was beneficial to facilitate the focus on the CSODS process, and reduce ethical concerns of potentially uncovering distressing experiences (Ritchie et al., 2013). To address this possibility, however, officers were given an information sheet (Appendix E) outlining the background and aims of the research. This allowed officers to have a clear understanding and expectation of the interview. Information for psychological support was also detailed in the information sheet (Appendix E), in addition to the available support for officers within the police.

Analysis: Phase 1

Due to the small sample size and lack of statistical power of the file data, the data was limited in quantifiable analysis. However, a descriptive quantitative analysis of the rich, in-depth data provided greater understanding and contextualisation of the qualitative findings (Morgan, 2007). The structure of the file data (Appendix F) reflected the chronological order of CSODS process within Phase 2. This was beneficial, as the findings from Phase 1 reflected and contextualised the primary findings in Phase 2.

To descriptively analyse the data, percentages were calculated and presented in chart format, to illustrate proportional findings (e.g. nature of enquiry). Additionally, text data was extracted and coded to report frequencies of data (e.g. socio-demographic characteristics of applicant and subject, agency involvement).

Analysis: Phase 2

To address officers' experiences and perceptions of CSODS, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage process of thematic analysis (TA) was adopted to analyse the qualitative data:

1. Familiarising yourself with the data and identifying items of potential interest
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing potential themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Stage one of data analysis

To familiarise with the data set, the researcher became naturally immersed with the data throughout the transcribing process (Bailey, 2008). The researcher also wrote notes next to areas of interest in each interview, this helped the researcher begin to accumulate potentially significant areas across the data.

Stage two of data analysis

Once the interviews had been transcribed, the researcher added notes in the right-hand margin of the transcripts. The initial codes were broken down into semantic (surface meaning) and latent

(deeper meaning) codes (Clarke & Braun, 2014). For example, in cases of officers discussing the type of applications, this may be coded under the public's misunderstanding of the parameters of the scheme, summarising the latent code 'Misunderstanding'. Although preliminary coding relies on interpretive analysis, the codes remained relevant, and closely linked, to the raw data. This is important in thematic analysis, as over analysis can result in themes 'emerging' beyond the data, as a reflection of the researcher seeking to find data that may not exist (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Stage three of data analysis

The third stage of data analysis developed themes and sub-themes through drawing together broader patterns of meaning. This process occurred by clustering similar codes under large and complex main themes (Clarke & Braun, 2014). An ideal theme is distinctive and independent, although themes also need to address the relevant research questions, and connect in order to contribute to a coherent analytical 'story' within the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Preliminary coding was analysed and considered as to how they could address the officers' experiences of working with CSODS and their perceptions on wider CSODS related issues.

Stage four of data analysis

Evaluation of initial themes explored whether the codes were relevant to the research question and sufficiently addressed the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To do this, the researcher reviewed the potential themes by reading over the raw data and cross-referencing each code and their themes. The researcher noted occasional overlaps with similar codes, which subsequently became clustered themes.

Stage five of data analysis

The fifth stage consisted of producing an initial coding template (Appendix G). The codes were clustered and formatted into a coherent structure that addressed the research questions. Due to the large quantity of data, there were 12 main themes found within the dataset.

Stage six of data analysis

Throughout the data analysis process, the initial coding template developed a vast amount of themes and sub-themes. This formed the revised coding template of the entire dataset (Appendix H). When reporting the findings, final modifications were made to the template, as it was necessary to restructure the findings in a coherent nature (Appendix I).

Chapter IV: Findings

The following chapter presents findings from Phase 1 and 2. The first phase provides an overall summary of 20 random CSODS case files, which contextualise the findings within Phase 2. Phase 2 explores police officers' perceptions of CSODS within one policing area.

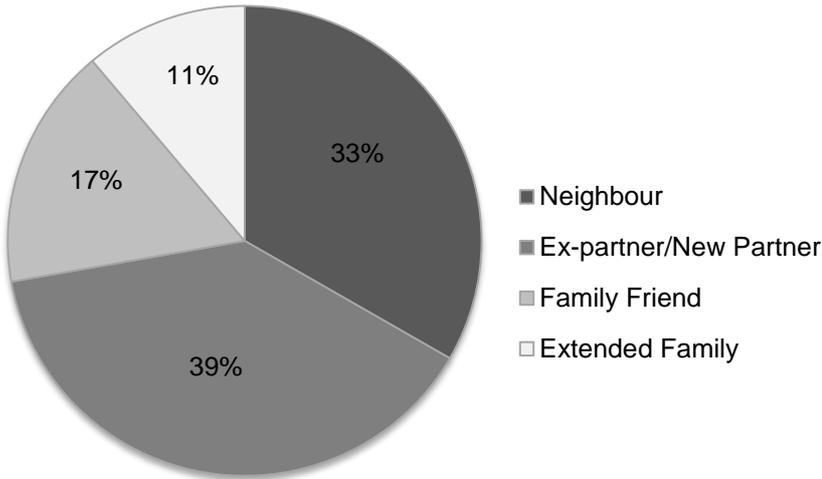
Phase 1: case file analysis

The file data provided by CGU is to illustrate the overall nature of CSODS case files. Whilst it would have been beneficial to conduct larger scale quantitative analysis on CSODS cases, the small sample size of the file data provided in-depth and contextualising data. The structure of this section will follow the general structure of the CSODS process (initial enquiry, to decision of outcome).

Enquiry of subjects

The most common subjects of enquiries were the (female) applicant's new (male) partner, or the (male) applicant's concerns about their ex-partner's new (male) partner (grouped as 'Ex-partner/New Partner'), although neighbours also made a large proportion of enquiries (Fig 2).

Figure 2 Enquiry subjects (20 random cases)



Typology of applicants and subjects

The most frequent age group for applicant and subject was 30-39 years, and the most frequent gender of applicants was female (Table 3). All of the subjects were male. Both applicants and subjects were predominantly of white ethnicity (with one case of an African subject). This suggests that the scheme is used exclusively by one ethnic group (White), and other ethnic groups are either unaware of, or choose not to use CSODS (see Appendix K).

Table 3 Summary of applicant and subject socio-demographic characteristics from 20 random cases

Description		Applicant	Subject
Age	20-29	5	5
	30-39	8	6
	40-49	7	1
	50-59	-	3
	60-69	-	2
Gender	Male	8	20
	Female	12	-
Ethnicity	White	20	19
	African	-	1
Relation to child	Mother	12	-
	Father	8	1
	Neighbour	-	6
	Other family	-	2
	None	-	11

Timescales for the CSODS process

Nearly all face-to-face visits were completed within the 10-day timescale (18 of the 19 visited within 10-days, one application did not provide data) (Table 4). All applications that consisted of immediate risk concerns were visited within 48 hours (information was missing from one application), suggesting that officers will respond quickly to immediate risk concerns. One application that did not show immediate risk were visited in 18 days. However, all non-immediate risk applications barring one was visited within 10-days, suggesting that the 18 day application may have been due to unforeseen circumstances (Home Office, 2010).

Over one half of applications (76%) received a full risk assessment within the 10-day timescale (13 of 17 applications, three applications did not provide information). Although for one case where the subject was a RSO, the full risk assessment was completed in 20 days (guidelines state this stage may experience delays due to additional checks/unforeseen circumstances, although the data does not indicate reason for delay). Eight applications received a full risk assessment within 24 hours, whilst the longest duration of a risk assessment was 25 days.

Only 3 of the 18 applications (two applications did not provide information) received a decision of the outcome within the 10-day timescale. The shortest duration of decision was 3 days, whilst the longest duration of decision was 67 days.

Of the 6 cases that provided available information of a disclosure outcome, only half of the cases disclosed information to the applicant within the 45-day timescale. The longest duration of disclosure outcome from initial enquiry was 93 days (this case involved a RSO who had self-disclosed, and the CSODS form was filed after the disclosure). Eight of the 20 cases did not receive disclosure, and five cases did not provide information on this stage.

Overall, only 3 cases (case 3, 4 and 10) were completed within all the CSODS timescales. Although 4 cases (case 5, 18, 19 and 20) could not provide completed information in relation to the timescales, the data suggests that the majority of CSODS cases fulfil the time requirements of the first two stages (immediate risk checks and face to face visit), however, once no immediate risks have been established, cases seem to show delays.

Multi-agency involvement

The file data (Table 4) indicates that 11 of the 20 cases had either shared risk assessments with other agencies or had other agency involvement throughout the application. Children's social care (CSC) was the most frequently involved agency, with one case receiving MAPPA involvement.

Whilst 2 cases had no agency involvement, the remainder of the applications provided no information as to whether they had received involvement from other agencies. As all cases were retrospective (i.e. the cases were closed before data collection), the data was not recorded at the time, nor was it possible to currently access this information.

Table 4 CSODS timescales and agency involvement. Note. N/A = missing data

Cases of NO immediate risk	Days until face-to-face visit (10 day timescale)	Days until full risk assessment (10 day timescale)	Days until decision of outcome (10 day timescale)	Days until disclosure made (45 day timescale)	Identification of concerns?	Information shared to agencies?	Agency involvement/Disclosure?
1	2	3	17	No Disc	N	N	N
2	18	25	29	No Disc	N	N/A	N/A
5	1	N/A	32	N/A	Y	CSC	N/A
7	2	2	14	No Disc	N	N	N/A
8	<1	20	67	No Disc	N	N/A	N/A
9	<1	4	14	No Disc	N	N/A	N/A
10	1	7	10	No Disc	N	N/A	MAPPA Disc
11	6	12	22	No Disc	N	CSC	CSC
12	5	1	22	No Disc	N	N/A	CSC
13	1	<1	56	62	Y	N/A	N/A
14	<1	<1	37	39	Y	N/A	CSC
17	1	1	61	93	Y	N/A	N/A
18	<1	<1	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	CSC
19	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cases of immediate risk							
3	<1	1	3	N/A	Y	CSC	CSC Disc
4	2	3	10	N/A	Y	CSC	DVDS
6	1	20	37	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A
15	<1	<1	32	32	Y	CSC	CSC
16	1	1	36	36	Y	N/A	CSC
20	N/A	N/A	63	63	Y	N/A	CSC

Phase 2: Police officer interviews

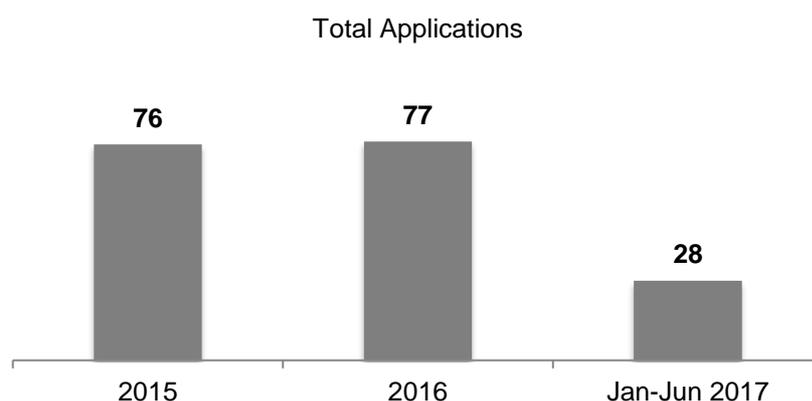
Twelve interviews were conducted across the five districts that covered Northshire Police Service. Interview duration was between 52 minutes and two hours, 45 minutes. Average interview time was one hour, 51 minutes.

Six major themes were identified that structure the findings section: (1) Police perceptions of the extent and nature of CSODS enquiries and applications, (2) The role of CSODS and its contribution to wider safeguarding procedures, (3) CSODS process, (4) Police and staffing aspects, (5) A cultural shift in multi-agency working, and (6) Public education and awareness of CSODS.

Police perceptions of the extent of CSODS enquiries and applications

To provide an overview of the extent of CSODS applications, Central Governance Unit (CGU, see glossary) provided official figures over a three-year period (Fig. 3). Findings indicate a consistent number of applications between 2015-16 (76 and 77 applications per annum). However, projections of 2017 suggest there will be around 56 applications in total, a 27% decrease in applications from the year before (2016-2017).

Figure 3 Official applications, provided by CGU, over a three-year period (January 2015-June 2017)



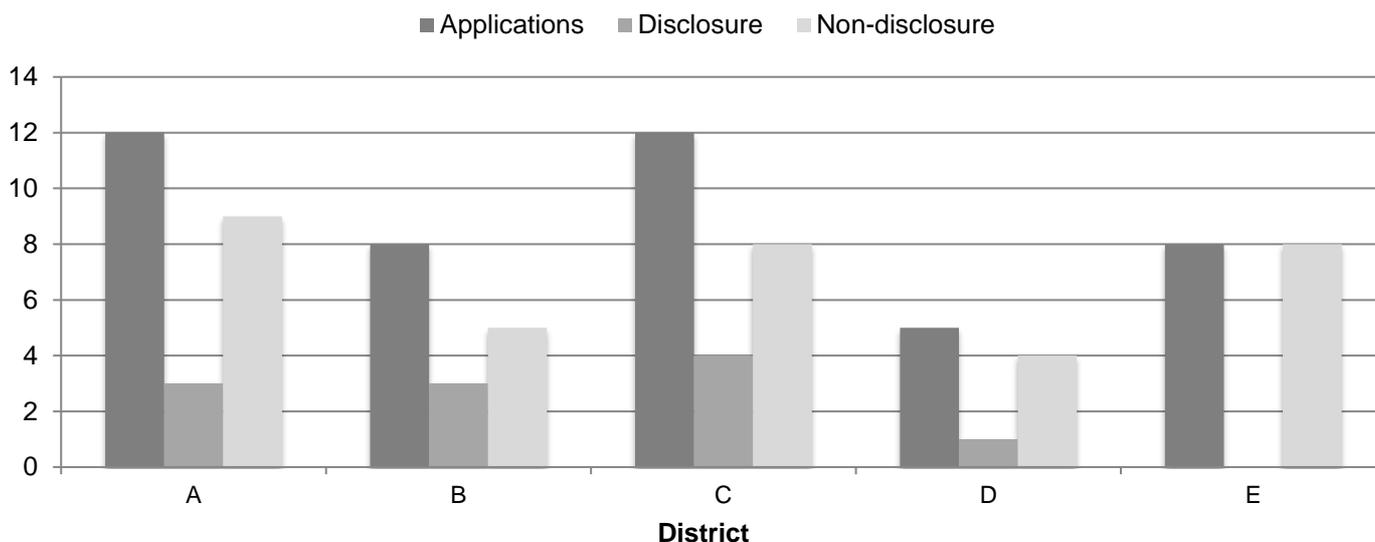
Estimates of the number of applications per annum were found to be quite similar across the five districts (range 5-12 applications per annum) (Fig. 4). The ratio of disclosures to non-disclosures across was also quite similar across the five districts, with the majority of applications resulting in non-disclosure (an estimated 26% disclosure to 73% non-disclosure rate). Four disclosures per annum were the most frequently reported, whilst two officers in one district reported no disclosures during

their time in the CSODS role (District E). Amongst non-disclosures, nine were the highest reported, whilst four were the lowest reported estimates. When officers' from District E were asked why they had not experienced a disclosure in their time in post, one officer explained that:

We tend to do a lot of ours [disclosures] through social services more so because when children are involved, there are usually social services involved somewhere down the line anyway. (Participant 11, District E)

Therefore, officers' perceptions of disclosure and non-disclosure outcomes may be affected by the individual styles of working by each officer and district. Differing working styles suggest that the police have the flexibility to direct applications through different avenues of public information sharing due to the nature of current multi-agency efforts. In this case, the use of 'Working Together' is an alternative way to share information with members of the public.

Figure 4 Police estimates of numbers of CSODS applications, disclosures and non-disclosures

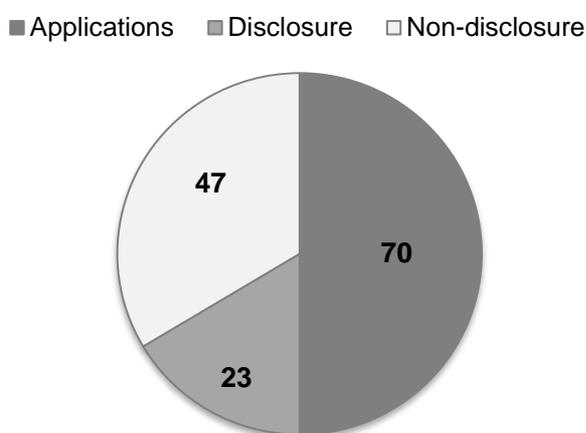


Estimates of applications, disclosures and non-disclosures from Fig. 4 must be approached with caution. Detective Constable (DC) and Detective Sergeants (DS) frequently stated that their perceptions on the extent of CSODS applications were limited to their experience of personally allocated CSOD cases. Although some Detective Inspectors (DI) were able to estimate an overall number of applications from their districts, initial enquiries were filtered by the CGU, as enquiries that reflect an immediate risk were dealt with directly and without any involvement of the districts. These applications would subsequently be registered via another source (for example, immediate

information sharing procedures through 'Working Together' or MAPPA), and the CSODS application would terminate.

One officer previously in the Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) role provided an additional overview of applications, disclosures and non-disclosures across all five districts (per annum) (Fig. 5). He estimated a 33% disclosure to 67% non-disclosure rate. Although this is a slight variation between other officers' estimations of disclosure and non-disclosure, findings indicate that the majority of applications result in non-disclosure.

Figure 5 DCI estimations of applications, disclosures and non-disclosures (per annum)



Police perceptions of the nature of CSODS enquiries

Across the five districts, the most common reason for a CSODS enquiry was concerns over the applicants' new partners or applicants' ex-partners' new partners. The remainder of the enquiries were said to relate to situations where the enquirer had concerns about neighbours or extended family members. Although officers reported that this cluster of groups only contribute to approximately a third of the enquiries, findings from the CSODS case files suggest that neighbours were as common as estranged partners among enquiries (see Figure 2). Amongst the types of enquiries, officers reported applications occasionally did not meet the criteria. They state that some inappropriate applications stem from the public not understanding the parameters of the scheme, and believing that it operates like the much more extensive 'Megan's law' scheme in USA:

Megan's law is that in America. Sarah's law is Sarah's law [CSODS]. Clare's law is Clare's law [DVDS]. You've got to try and understand but the public just have this massive

conception you can just pick up [contact] the police and ask about anyone...not quite that simple. (Participant 2)

Public perceptions of CSODS and other notification laws were explored in more depth in theme (6) 'Public education and awareness of CSODS'.

The role of CSODS and its contribution to wider safeguarding procedures

CSODS is intended to provide a formal mechanism for the public to enquire for information to make informed decisions on managing risk (Home Office, 2010). Officers explained that where they raise the awareness of a subject's concerning history, this allows the applicant to make an informed decision regarding safeguarding the child in question:

Realistically there wasn't a way of anybody finding out anything about them [subjects] but now there's actually an avenue for somebody [applicants] to contact the police and have the right to know some information. (Participant 8)

Some officers felt, however, that the ability to receive such information existed prior to CSODS, and that these information sharing systems were unaffected by the introduction of CSODS:

Quite often social care when they're involved, they will just tell them anyway. If we used Working Together right, then we would probably wouldn't even need it... all the form filling and all the disclosure [process] etc. So there is a lot already done through Working Together. (Participant 1)

Despite concerns over the necessity of CSODS officers explained that CSODS contributes to the wider management of sex offenders, as current sex offender management systems cannot provide protection at all times. Officers argued that although many applications may not meet the CSODS criteria for a disclosure, the information the police receive as a result of the application can prove useful in terms of 'monitoring' individuals who may be of concern:

Having the scheme [CSODS] like this we might find out about a sex offender who is in an inappropriate relationship or actually committed an offence by virtue of the fact that someone's made a CSODS application. And that can't be helped because we can't put a tracking system to see where they [subject] are all the time. It's also invaluable to us as it

helps us keep an eye on people... So CSODS is probably an intelligence system that is used for the police. (Participant 5)

Officers explained that although CSODS relates to child sex offenders, the scheme does not include sex offenders who are currently on the sex offender register. Enquiries that concern a subject who is a RSO are referred to, and handled within, MAPPA procedures. Although some officers thought current safeguarding procedures are unaffected by CSODS, officers argued that CSODS was necessary to aid current safeguarding procedures. They explained that in cases where probation, CSC and adult services are not involved with an individual (subject) about whom there are concerns, the police will become the only responsible body working with that individual:

We may well be the only professional body that are working with these individuals, and as a result we need to have that legislation that allows us to disclose their convictions, and gives us the conviction to disclose as well, that legal framework. (Participant 4)

CSODS was seen, therefore, to cover potential gaps within established safeguarding policies, such as if a subject was an archived RSO (sex offenders with expired notification requirements); a sex offender who offended prior to 1997 (the introduction of the 1997 Sex Offenders Act, which established the sex offender register); an individual who had a history of concerning sexual behaviour (intelligence that did not result in a conviction); or had a serious offence history (e.g. serious domestic violence). Officers explained that many applications that are initially sent as a CSODS might be subsequently directed through alternative safeguarding procedures such as DVDS, MAPPA, MARAC or 'Working Together' (see glossary for explanation of wider information sharing systems).

All officers were confident that, overall, CSODS contributed to the safeguarding of children. They argued that any policy that can protect at least one child is worthwhile, and that the introduction and success of CSODS also led to the development of other public protection policies:

We considered it to work well and the CSODS process, hence the 'Clare's law' coming out. So if Sarah's Law had come out and not been valuable in any way, then 'Clare's law' equally would have never been looked at. (Participant 8)

'Clare's law' was said to provide an additional scheme to enable the police and other agencies to work together to share information and safeguard the wider public in respect to domestic abuse – further complimenting current multi-agency public protection efforts.

CSODS process

Table. 5 illustrates how CSODS operates within one policing area (further details of the CSODS process from the officers' perspective is found in Appendix J). The operation of the scheme in Northshire Police is influenced by national guidance on CSODS. Each police service in England and Wales, however, implements CSODS in accordance with its local policing requirements:

There will be a national guide, but all that they have done is put it in locally into their policy, so it can work out correctly how they do it, within their own force. (Participant 1)

Table 5 A summary of the CSODS process. Adapted from the CSODS guidance document (Home Office, 2010).

	Stage	Action	Timescale
CSODS 1	1	Initial enquiry	24 hours
CSODS 2	2	Face-to-face visit	10 days
	3	Empowerment/information	
	4	Full risk assessment	
	5	Decision of outcome	
CSODS 3 & 4	6	Outcome and closure	45 days

During the interview, officers were asked to describe a typical CSODS enquiry, explaining what happens at each stage of the application (from initial contact to decision of outcome). This section is therefore structured to follow the chronological order of the CSODS process (as shown in Table 6).

Table 6 An overview of the CSODS process and their respective themes

CSOD stage	Sub-themes
CSOD 1 Initial enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria of eligibility • Imminent risk • Customer Contact Centre • Background check
CSOD 1 Face-to-face visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant interview • Information sharing (public) • Motive/relationship to child and subject • Explanation of scheme • Timescale
CSOD 2 Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full risk assessment • Concerns • Proportionality • Intelligence • Computer systems • MAPPA • Timescale
CSOD 2 DI recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Community impact • Policing experience • Child's safety versus subject's rights • Insufficient information
CSOD 2 DCI considers outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed decisions • Subjective • Proportionality • Timescale
CSOD 3 Applications that did not raise concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate applications • Counter productive • Public reliance of scheme • Applicant satisfaction • Lack of understanding and dysfunctional fear
CSOD 4 Applications that did raise concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community impact assessment • Confidentiality • Applicant response
Post outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and empowerment • Additional child protection measures • Subject protection • Subject response

CSODS 1: Initial enquiry

In the first stage of a CSODS enquiry, all enquiries are advised to call the Customer Contact Centre (CCC) to make a formal application. Police staff at the CCC will take details of the applicant, basic information about the nature of the enquiry and any immediate risks to a child. The CCC staff will then consider whether it is appropriate for the enquiry to progress onto a CSODS application, drawing

upon the local guidance concerning CSODS' criteria procedures. Although districts across England and Wales adapt Home Office guidelines to fit their local area, there were two main criteria that determined whether an enquiry would progress to a CSODS application:

Previous convictions, it might be previous arrests, but it's always relating to offences of, sexual offences against children. (Participant 2)

Direct contact [between subject and named child] or if there's a relationship link. (Participant 11)

Issues within initial enquiry

Once an initial enquiry is accepted as a CSODS, a log is sent to a local dispatch unit, which allocates the task to the local child safeguarding unit to assess whether there are immediate child safeguarding concerns. Officers noted that this stage could cause delays in the CSODS process:

They put a log on, a control log, and it goes to a local dispatch unit, who sometimes don't know where to send that log to and who to ask...They might send it to the CGU by mistake, or somewhere else...it can take days to get to the right people (Participant 1)

Officers also highlighted various issues surrounding the CCC. The most frequent issue related to CCC staff not asking appropriate questions in the initial telephone call with the enquirer. This could result in CCC staff sending inappropriate applications to the public protection unit (PPU), due to not having the relevant information, confusion between the policies 'Clare's law' [disclosing information regarding a subject's domestic abuse history] and 'Sarah's law' [disclosing information regarding a subject's sexual abuse history], as well as enquiries which do not meet the specified criteria being sent to PPU as an application. Officers indicated that they found such situations quite frustrating, explaining that their time and other resources were limited so they could ill-afford to be dealing with inappropriate applications. Inappropriate enquiries also resulted in some enquirers being unhappy because they had been given false expectations that a disclosure might be made:

It's about the CCC making sure they're asking the appropriate questions... they should be able to deal with that log and either send it through when it is a CSODS or eliminate it at the first call. So then that doesn't raise expectations, because our unit is very busy. We have rising numbers to manage with depleted resources so our time is very valuable. So if that can be eliminated in the first instance it saves an officer going out and speaking with

the caller and doing all that research for something that because the appropriate information hasn't been obtained in the first place. (Participant 6)

One officer described a case where a full investigation was conducted on an inappropriate application due to the applicant complaining, thus wasting police resources. Although officers acknowledged a general lack of awareness of CSODS across Northshire Police Service, they felt that the lack of awareness within the CCC was particularly important, as all initial CSODS enquiries were directed to the CCC:

Even if somebody presents at a counter or they stop at an officer in the street, they're supposed to be advised to contact the force call centre. (Participant 6)

One officer, however, argued that although it can be time consuming for the PPU to deal with inappropriate applications, it is preferable on occasions that expert officers in child safeguarding should make the decision on whether an application is appropriate.

Applicants receive a phone call or face-to-face visit, if the enquiry is inappropriate, explaining why it does not meet the criteria for non-a disclosure. These applicants are, though, given general safeguarding advice.

Background checks

The PPU would, if the enquiry proceeded to an application, check whether other agencies were currently involved with the applicant, subject or child, and would conduct background checks and additional immediate risk concerns. Officers explained that applicants are initially background checked to determine if it is appropriate for the applicant to receive a disclosure. Officers interrogated police databases (PNC, PND, Niche, HOLMES, Corvus, ViSOR) (see Glossary for definitions) to establish whether the applicant had any previous convictions or intelligence to suggest they were a person of concern. Risk assessing the applicant was important in cases where a disclosure may not be sufficient to safeguard the child (the mother decides to remain in relationship with subject after a disclosure has been made), resulting in the child(ren) relocating from the subject's residence and into the applicant's residence (e.g. estranged husband/father of child(ren) of concern). Therefore officers, in these situations, made an informed decision regarding the applicant's capabilities to safeguard the child, based upon the applicant's risk assessment.

Some officers pointed out that there had been a surge recently in "paedo-hunters" (members of the public who take it upon themselves to detect child sex offenders, often ones who groom children over

the internet). Officers explained that such applicants with a history of “vigilante” action or other misuse of information about RSOs would not receive disclosures.

Officers also have the ability to use police protection orders to protect children, as well as performing immediate disclosures in cases of immediate risk. These additional safeguarding measures contribute to the broader safeguarding procedures available to the police. Although these cases would still be filed as a CSODS disclosure, they do not require the consideration of the DCI.

Officers stated that their police service is able to respond to immediate risks in a timely manner. Delays in processing applications could arise, though, in cases where there were not any immediate risks:

The immediate response is really good, but after that there can be a bit of a lull. It's that ability to do urgent immediate disclosures if we need to. (Participant 4)

Timescales

Officers noted that the Home Office guidelines to complete CSODS 1 (immediate risk checks) within 24 hours is ‘very strict’, although a number of them indicated that they experienced issues in completing CSODS 1 within this timeframe. The main reason for this was potential training issues (such as the CCC or some PPOs who have little experience dealing with a CSODS case), as well as depleted police resources across the UK. This has caused a training and resource impact upon the efficacy of CSODS applications, due to limits of staff that are experienced on the process, and limitations of resources to alleviate these pressures:

CSODS 1: Face-to-face visit

The DC and/or DS officer to whom the CSODS case is allocated would make contact with the applicant after the enquiry is received. The officer telephones the applicant and arranges to meet the applicant face-to-face within 10 days of the initial enquiry. Officers pointed out that this stage of the CSODS application was considered one of the most important, as the in-depth information gathered from applicants, subjects and children heavily informs assessments of applications:

You go out and they [applicant] know an awful lot, sometimes stuff that we don't necessarily know. (Participant 11)

The officers to whom cases are allocated would take the opportunity to establish the motivations of the applicants and to explain the parameters of the CSODS scheme (using a leaflet) to them, so they have a clear understanding of its nature and operation:

I want to look in your [applicant] eye and see what you're saying, so I can get that feeling...is it just fishing, is it malicious? Can't always get that on the phone, so you've got to go out. (Participant 3)

Risk assessment

The assessment of risk and the consideration of the safety of the child and/or adults are considered throughout the entire investigation. As part of this, officers explained that officers would make safeguarding assessments beyond the process of CSODS (i.e. risk assessments regarding the safety of the child's residence). Risk assessing the child's residence and parenting capabilities of the child is not explicitly part of the CSODS policy. However, CSODS is integrated within the wider safeguarding roles of the PPO, which becomes reflected within the CSODS investigation.

Issues within face-to-face visit

The information gathered during the face-to-face visit (and subsequently presented to the DI and DCI) is recorded on the interview template/form. Although the applicant interview is considered to be the most important source of information for the application, officers across all districts criticised the structure, accessibility and space on the interview forms. They explained that the face-to-face visit and interview can take two to three hours, and that a clear and structured interview form is vital to gather and record effectively the large amounts of information generated. They added that DIs and DCI require a comprehensive understanding of applications to make an informed recommendation and decision about them. Officers pointed out that without adequate text space to collect this information, they had to resort to completing additional minute sheets in order to provide sufficient information.

The current DCI stated that the police service was aware of this issue, and that a "task and review" has been set up to render the forms more accessible and 'user-friendly'. One officer suggested that one way in which the forms could be made more accessible and structured was by utilising digital technology:

I can't see why we couldn't have it online [CSODS 1]... We have online devices now so I don't know why we couldn't just access the CSODS on there. (Participant 10)

Another officer stressed the time constraints within the service, and pointed out some of the burden of CSODS upon the police could be reduced by amending the policy around who completes the initial visit:

Do you need a police officer to do the first bit [CSODS 1, initial check and face-to-face visit]? Is it necessary for a safeguarding detective to do it? I would say it's not. I think you could have an enquiry officer, a police staff member, certainly dealing with the paper [administration] side of it. Going out and seeing the applicant and doing all that part of it... I think the police could cope if they changed the policy and did a shift in responsibility. I mean your PCSOs [Police Community Support Officers] could do it, up to a certain point and if they were trained. They're looking for factual information; they don't have to be subjective, because that would be going to safeguarding DI. (Participant 8)

CSODS 2: Investigation

Depending on the application, a DC, DS or DI officer would conduct a full risk assessment on the subject, during the investigation, to determine whether there are any concerns for the child's safety. Below is a summary from an officer of what are considered 'concerns' during a CSODS investigation:

Whether the subject has an offending history in relation to child sexual offences. You're also looking at whether they've got other convictions in relation to domestic abuse, violence and sexual offending against adults. (Participant 1)

Applications are "clear cut" in cases where there are child sexual offending (CSO) convictions, with most of these cases resulting in a disclosure. Officers pointed out, however, that 'intelligence' is becoming increasingly important in investigations, as a result of convicted perpetrators with a history of serious offence allegations (reflecting the Soham murders). Therefore 'concerns' are not exclusive to convicted offenders, but include non-convicted, and non-charged concerning individuals. Intelligence therefore includes all non-definite information (of serious offending) that may suggest a person is of concern (such as allegations, warnings, public complaints). The police, however, are mindful of the data protection/human rights issues surrounding intelligence sharing with applicants:

The difficulty is when somebody has been investigated but they haven't been convicted, or they haven't been charged. Just because we haven't charged them doesn't mean to say it didn't happen, it just hasn't crossed the evidential threshold for some reason. (Participant 5)

Intelligence

The police will try to maintain the balance between the protection of the public, and the rights of the subject. The police are bound by the law to be proportionate in disclosing offending history and/or intelligence to the public. If the police unnecessarily disclose information, they may be breaching the human rights of subjects. This was particularly an issue, when considering that intelligence information may not always be reliable:

Intelligence is graded so you'll know how reliable the intelligence is that you're reading...it may well be that it's malicious or some of the information may not be factually correct. Intel is only as good as the person giving the information. (Participant 8)

Although the unreliability of public information sharing may be problematic for risk management, intelligence gathered from the applicant regarding the subject is expected to contribute around “50%” (Participant 4) of all police held subject information on subjects. Officers felt that intelligence provided within public information sharing was an important aspect of the wider management of sex offenders and other non-convicted individuals of concern, and that CSODS explicitly facilitates this information sharing provision:

What we have on our intelligence systems, will be a fraction of what they will know. They'll [the public] know much more about the subjects generally... what they've got from other people, that aren't written down on our databases. So it just builds upon what we've already got. (Participant 4)

Investigative systems

The officers will interrogate their computer systems when conducting an investigation, in order to gather as much intelligence on the subject as possible to ensure decisions that are taken are as informed as possible. Officers were aware that the reliability of the computerised information depended, in part, on the ability of the officers who inputted the information to do this accurately. However, officers thought that they were able to effectively interrogate a range of policing systems and provide comprehensive investigative reports. Investigations were considered particularly strong in policing in terms of officers' experience and expertise of investigative capabilities. Many officers thought this expertise was due to investigating and gathering information as part of their daily role. The storage and accessibility of information on police computer systems was said to be becoming ever more effective as a result of the use of digital technology, with officers recalling the weaknesses of previous systems.

The investigation can be within two hours of them ringing us. 'Cause everything is instant, it's all there... we don't have to go searching through cupboards and drawers for bits of paper anymore. (Participant 3)

All officers noted that there were not any issues in completing the CSODS 2 stage within the 10-day timescale. Officers explained that the CGU track all applications as the nature of the enquiries are of high importance and therefore have to be completed in a timely manner:

If someone's made an applicant then we don't know whether they or the child is at risk so it's not something we can sit on. It has to be done. It's got timescales on it but you would like to think that we'd do that quickly anyway. (Participant 5)

CSODS 2: DI recommendations

The DI considered all the information and provided their recommendations and rationale for the potential outcome, following the completion of the applicant interview and investigation. Although officers follow a set criteria of what counts as a CSODS application, each application varies in terms of the decision outcome stage, and requires subjective assessment of situations where there are said to be concerns or no concerns.

Officers explained that it is important to also consider the potential impact of a disclosure on a community, as some communities are especially close-knit with more risk 'gossip' spreading about the subject. Officers explained that although the assessment of community impact is considered in all applications, only around "20-30%" (Participant 2) have a full community impact assessment. An officer and a neighbourhood police inspector will gather information around the subject's community to establish whether information or concerns relating to the subject may be circulating in that community.

The DI will consider whether there may be a potential breach of information sharing following a disclosure that might threaten the safety of the subject. Officers were also conscious of the notification requirements in the USA and felt that disclosures must be approached with caution to maintain the proper management of offenders:

If you just disclose about every sex offender, where he's living and the rest of it, you've got the same issues as in America and then it becomes unmanageable and more dangerous. (Participant 5)

Investigative experience

The DI felt that both experience in policing and investigative knowledge were important in making appropriate and accurate recommendations to the DCI. Officers pointed out that CSODS work takes place in a multi-agency context, and it is important for DIs to be aware of the different disclosure and child protection policies that are available:

We would look at the CSODS policy, what are the other powers I have to do this disclosure, other people that can do it. The option is open to me... its every day decisions, not just disclosures, but the management of these individuals, how we're going to do it and how we can best protect the public. So it's something that you're constantly doing in your day-to-day working life. (Participant 4, DI)

Some DIs explained that cases involving 'archived sex offenders' (i.e. offenders who are no longer on the sex offender register) are the most difficult in which to determine whether or not there are concerns, as they must consider the subject's right to privacy and following on from this the proportionate sharing of information to the public:

It's historic stuff, so they're no longer a RSO, so they're not under any management, and yet they may be a worrying individual, or they may have been years ago. Or whether they are or not now, we don't know. (Participant 2)

CSODS 2: DCI considers outcome

The DCI role in the CSODS process is to make the ultimate decision as to whether an application results in a disclosure or not. Officers are expected to provide in-depth and comprehensive case files in order that the DCI's decision is well informed as possible. One DI felt that when other DIs do not provide enough information or explanation for their recommendation it highlights "complacency" within the investigations, and thus impacts on whether the DCI can make an informed decision. Officers argued that more training on rationalising and articulating why DIs have made their recommendation provides for clearer evidence about, and scrutiny of, the CSODS process. Some officers suggested training on explaining how to clearly rationalise decisions within the investigations would improve the service:

If something does go wrong, or your decision to disclose is challenged in the future... it's all written down and dealt with properly... You're able to look back and understand maybe a few years later your decision. (Participant 4)

Although the length of the "120 page [applicant, subject, child details, risk assessments, recommendations, decision outcome, community impact assessment]" (Participant 3) CSODS application was considered time consuming and burdensome, officers argued that a thorough investigation was a necessity due to the importance of the CSODS policy.

The DCI argued that a comprehensive case file is important, as the decision to disclose or not disclose is a subjective judgement, based on the information of each individual application. Therefore, an ill-informed case file may result in an ill-informed decision. Some officers argued that investigative styles of staff members vary, resulting in the DCI requesting more information about the application:

Some staff leave gaps and some are thorough. (Participant 10)

One officer also explained that the DCI can reach a different assessment of risk in a case compared to that of the DIs:

I think some people would disclose a lot more than others. I suppose it depends on where you feel your risk level comes. I'm quite happy to hold a bit of risk myself, whereas others aren't. (Participant 1)

Consideration of disclosure

The DCI, in cases of disclosure, will provide DCs/DSs with a format as to what they should say to the applicant:

The CGU type up the disclosure and what you're allowed to say, it's very scripted and that's all the information you give. Any question's she asked, unless it was around what I'd told her, she wasn't told any more than she needed to be told. (Participant 6)

The proportionality of information shared is key and it must be in accordance with the nature of the application. For example, disclosing one previous conviction may be sufficient in most applications, whereas in cases where the subject has minimised the nature of his previous convictions, it may be proportionate to disclose more detail for child protection purposes:

It's in proportion, so you might not need to go into detail about what the conviction is. It might be enough to simply say 'this person has sexual convictions in relation to a child and we believe they may pose a significant risk to your child'. For some it may be that we need to disclose a little bit more. So for example if they're going down the routes of "well consent is a difficult issue and it could have been..." if they're trying to defend their partner, when consent isn't an issue. It's about a 9-year-old child, in control of, then you might end up saying "no it wasn't a 15 year old that lied about their age, this is something..." (Participant 9)

Officers explained that the main purpose of a CSODS disclosure is to increase an applicant's awareness of risk (posed by the subject) and thereby be better able to protect the child in question. Officers stated that offenders (or those with about whom there is intelligence to suggest they are a risk to children) frequently form concerning relationships (threatening the safety of the child and/or new partner) and will have a tendency to understate, distort or avoid disclosing their offending history to their new partner:

If you don't have a clue that a person you're giving access to your child has sexual convictions in relation to a child, you might not know not to give him unsupervised access. It's a case of equipping that person with the knowledge that they need to protect the child. (Participant 9)

Timescales

Some officers felt that the DCI decision-making stage of the CSODS process was subject to delays. They indicated that the CGU is responsible for applications across the whole police service, so a rise in the number of applications can impact upon this unit's ability to respond in a timely manner. One officer recommended removing the CGU from the process and devolving responsibility to district/DI level in order to improve the speed of response:

I think the process we have is quite burdensome in terms of a form, back, forwards. I can understand the reasons for that but I think the decision to disclose or not should be in the hands of DI's division. (Participant 10)

CSODS 3: Applications that did not raise concerns

Officers explained that a large proportion of applicants may attempt to exploit the scheme, for example, to gain custody of their children, to delay a divorce, to terminate their previous partner's new relationship or to use the subject's potential offending history for ulterior motives (e.g. to slander).

Officers argue that many applicants are already aware of the subject's offending history as a result of discussions within the community, access to internet information, or information shared on social media. Officers argue that disclosure in cases where the applicant is requesting more details would not be appropriate, as it defeats the purpose of CSODS which is to provide information to unaware applicants.

Although applications may seem inappropriate, if it fits the CSODS criteria, it must be investigated. Officers argue that this can waste police time and can be counter-productive in the management of offenders:

Sometimes you're going and filling the form out for the sake of it. That would be my only thing...It's quite time consuming in those cases where I know full well they're not going to get it but we've still got to do it... So while were doing that were not managing our high risk ones (Participant 11)

Over-reliance of the scheme

Officers also argued that although CSODS is in place to protect children, the scheme should not replace the child protection measures that parents and other family members can use alongside the scheme. As part of the non-disclosure meeting with the applicant, officers stressed the importance of providing general safeguarding advice to applicants, as they felt that some applicants had raised expectations of CSODS, relying on the scheme to provide child safeguarding measures.

Officers argued, in addition, that public reliance on CSODS information could lead to complacency. As CSODS is a tertiary crime prevention tool, the police can provide disclosure information only on individuals who have a previous history of concerning behaviour:

It's not there to replace parental responsibility and just because we're not disclosing anything, doesn't devolve that responsibility and doesn't stop them from being aware. Just because somebody's not got a record doesn't mean to say they've not got a sexual interest in children. So if you're not happy with them then don't let your child have contact with them or you don't let them have unsupervised contact. (Participant 7)

Understanding the parameters of the scheme also contributed to applicant's satisfaction/dissatisfaction towards a non-disclosure outcome. Officers noted that it is important for officers to explain the decision for non-disclosure, so the applicant is reassured but maintains proper safeguarding procedures regarding the child in question. Officers found that face-to-face visits, both in the initial and outcome stages are important to reassure the applicant that the police have taken the application seriously and investigated the subject:

Everyone that I've done has been absolutely fine about the fact that they've not got disclosure because I think they just appreciate that you've been out, you've sat with them and taken that time. A lot of the time they're just happy that they've brought it to your attention and off loaded. Once they've off loaded and we know about it, they're fine with it because we're aware. (Participant 11)

Lack of understanding of the scheme and general understanding of how sex offenders are managed within the community has also contributed to applicants experiencing anxiety from a non-disclosure outcome. Although officers provide safeguarding advice to address this issue, officers were aware that applicants still have 'fear' of potentially dangerous people:

Unfortunately some of the applicants understanding of the process and what they're being told can be quite limited so the fact that we sent them a letter saying there's nothing to disclosure doesn't mean their fears are taken away. (Participant 5)

CSODS 4: Applications that raised concerns

Disclosures are made to those who are capable of protecting the child from harm (this may not be the applicant). The mothers of the children in question are the recipients of disclosures in most applications. Fathers/ex-partners and grandparents may also receive disclosures, as this can provide additional awareness for guardians to monitor potential changes in the child's behaviour (and to intervene if they are concerned).

An officer will hand-deliver the disclosure letter and explain safeguarding procedures to the disclosure recipient, who may read the letter, but cannot keep it as it would breach confidentiality laws. The applicant is required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving a disclosure and if they breach confidentiality they run the risk of being prosecuted. Although none of the officers stated that they have experienced any breaches of confidentiality, they acknowledged that disclosure recipients may have told immediate family and other close family/friends, without their knowledge.

Applicant response to disclosure

Officers stressed that, once a disclosure has been made, it is important to provide adequate safeguarding advice to the applicant. The officer will use this advice to manage the potentially negative response of the applicant, directing their thoughts and behaviours towards empowerment and practical safeguarding procedures. The applicants are, as a result, more aware and empowered in terms of protecting the child and this fulfils the CSODS policy – providing a mechanism for an applicant to become a ‘capable guardian’. This contributes to the wider management of sex offenders and other non-convicted individuals about whom there are concerns:

She's [applicant] watching out, she's seen what the children are like and what this man [subject] is like. We dip in these people's lives and we're gone. But she's there everyday. So she might think, not happy with that. (Participant 3)

One officer explained that the scripted letter acts as a ‘control mechanism’ to maintain proportionality of information sharing when applicants may be dissatisfied with the amount of information shared during a disclosure:

They're very upset because they've found out this information, it's very easy to be drawn into giving them additional information. So I think what is good is that it's a standard letter that the officer is serving on the person with no expectation that the officer elaborates on it. (Participant 8)

Issues

Despite the schemes’ ability to empower some applicants, officers explained that often applicants do not adopt child protection measures as a result of receiving a disclosure. Officers stated that “over 50%” (Participant 3) of parents of the child(ren) and their new partners (the subject) remain in the relationship in cases where the disclosed information concerns that new partner. CSC would, as a result, become the lead agency working with the family in these cases, monitoring the family and alerting the police to any concerns.

One officer argued, however, that CSODS is especially important in cases where the mother fails to safeguarding the child(ren), as it makes adults who are capable of protecting the named child(ren) aware of the risks (without the involvement of the mother):

It's more important to people like the grandmother, the neighbour, it's probably more for the third party observing to be able to do something about it. So it does allow other third

party with interests in children, to take some action where the parent is failing, that's where is most worthwhile. As we know there are people who will knowingly put their children at risk for their own end because they're in love with the person. (Participant 8)

Subject protection

Officers considered individual circumstances as to whether it would be appropriate to disclose to the subject also. Officers explained that the subject would not be informed of a disclosure if the subject's awareness raised potential safeguarding concerns for the applicant or child(ren). However, an officer would inform the subject of the disclosure in cases where there is a potential safeguarding issue surrounding community impact. Subjects can remain vigilant and report any concerns as a result of being informed of the disclosure, for example, if they felt they were being followed/watched. None of the officers reported any vigilante or negative behaviour towards a subject as a result of CSODS disclosure. Officers were, though, aware of the potential impact of risk:

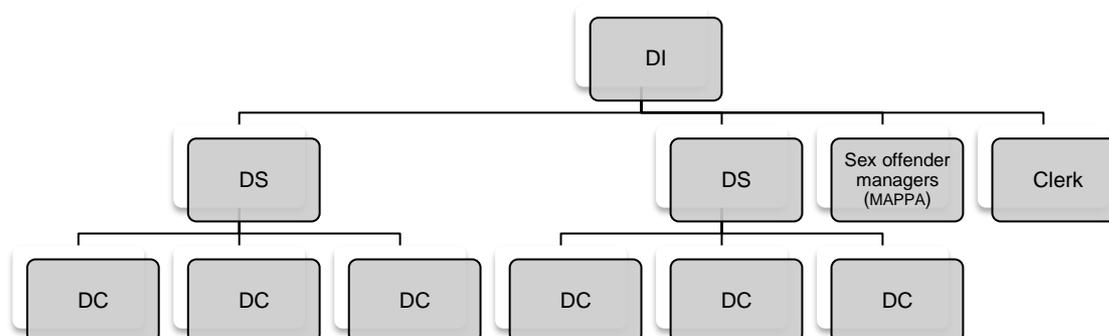
If it gets out into the community were talking about people being at risk and us having to move them, alarms, police logs that sort of thing. So we have appreciation of how important that information is, we need to make sure get it right. (Participant 7)

Officers explained that managing the responses of the subject is as important as managing the applicant's response to disclosure. The police are required to protect all members of the public, so officers will also provide the subject with safeguarding advice and support. Officers explained that subjects can react positively or negatively towards a disclosure, and that this will depend on the subject's previous experiences of community impact.

Police and staffing

Officers described a typical set up of the PPU (Fig 6). The officers within the PPU have CSODS integrated within their wider role of sex offender management/public protection.

Figure 6 An illustrative diagram of the staffing set up within a typical public protection team



Officers praised the clarity of the CSODS procedure, with each officer involved having clearly defined roles within each stage of the CSODS process:

Probably one of the most well structured. (Participant 11)

Training

In total, 4 officers had received training on CSODS and 8 officers had not. Officers who were in a public protection role prior to the implementation of CSODS received training on the scheme following its introduction, whereas all officers who came into the role after CSODS had been initiated did not receive training.

Officers who received training praised the content and quality of the scheme's guidance. They explained that they were given a presentation on the CSODS policy, within police headquarters. They were also provided with case files of possible eventualities of CSODS cases, and explanations of each stage within the scheme.

Officers in management roles (DS, DI, DCI) felt that it was more important for front line staff (DC) to receive CSODS training, as their role in this process is heavily governed by CSODS policy. Although the DCI makes the ultimate decision, his decision is reliant on personal policing experience as opposed to awareness training of the CSODS process:

It's not something it can be provided 100% in training. A lot of it is kind of your thought on it. You rationalising, your decision making process. (Participant 4)

Of the 8 officers who did not receive CSODS training, all officers felt 'comfortable' conducting a CSODS investigation. This was partly due to the fact that policy information and guidance on CSODS is available on the police service's intranet. Officers also valued peer supervision from experienced staff.

When officers were asked as to how the training could be improved, they suggested clearer guidance on the CSODS process and officers' roles, but also to explain/contextualise as to why the scheme was implemented. One officer suggested that more training is required on CSOD 1 stage.

Awareness issues

Officers understood that CSODS awareness across the wider force is limited. They speculated that the majority of front line officers would not be aware of the scheme's criteria or parameters. More training, therefore, is important for front line officers who are in contact with the public, as this would diminish false expectations given to applicants, but also raise awareness among the public of what services are available to them (if their concerns fit the criteria).

Officers also noted that there is a high turnover of police staff within the force, resulting in a large proportion of new staff that lack training and awareness of CSODS:

We've probably got another 300/400 members of staff starting in the last 18 months because they've just started recruiting [in one district]. So the issue is at the front end when they're first recruited, what are we telling them? (Participant 5)

Officers argued that more awareness on the law surrounding CSODS and other sex offender policies is important to avoid mistakes or ill-informed judgements within the force. They argued that despite the recent push for multi-agency working, there is still a lack of understanding surrounding the role of the PPU, as well as a lack of awareness among some agencies in how to direct applicants towards CSODS.

Despite training issues within the force, officers praised the experience and specialism of the PPU, and felt they are the most suited personnel for dealing with CSODS. Officers explained that officers in the PPU have an expert understanding of sex offender laws and legislation, and also have the most

experience of dealing with RSOs, resulting in a strong professional relationship with their offenders. This is considered to be valuable within disclosure work, as many RSOs are difficult to contact and are apprehensive about cooperating with the police (and probation):

We understand risk really well in here and obviously it's what we do day in and day out so I think we're able to make quite good and rapid decisions on risk because we understand it and we have really good contact with the professionals, probation, mental health, social care, housing. (Participant 6)

Police culture

All officers explained the importance of their role and the culture within the PPU. Officers were aware of the level of risk regarding sex offenders and child sexual abuse, and that CSODS is considered a high priority within the force. As a result, officers were aware of the expectation regarding their role as a PPO and that risk management is at the centre of the policing culture. For example, one officer explained that officers will work out of office hours (evening and weekends) if an application is made, as the officers must be assured that the child is safe. One officer explained that the expectation of PPOs is high as they cannot afford to make a wrong decision, and he highlighted previous 'failures;' within police and CSC:

Baby P, Victoria Climbié, all these cases that we hear and read about. There's always lessons to be learned, "we knew about this a week ago, the social services never told the police, the police never told us"...it's all this kind of we've made a mess of it really...the minute we do anything wrong or drop the ball, we've had it. I don't want to the drop the ball, I don't want my name dragging through the news. The minute we get some information, we're on it. (Participant 3)

Officers in management roles reported that some policing staff did not understand the level of risk sex offenders could present and were, as a result, moved out of the public protection team. They argued that when dealing with CSODS and other sex offender policies, a wrong decision could potentially lead to a "...dead child, and that's the difference." (Participant 4)

A cultural shift in multi-agency working

The police and other agencies experienced a shift in multi-agency working following the introduction of MAPPA in 2000. Officers are, as a result of these changes, able to consider multi-agency alternatives during the investigation if he or she feels that an application does not meet the CSODS criteria, but there are concerns regarding the child's/applicant's safety.

We do a lot of disclosures that don't fall under CSODS banner. We've got 'Clare's law' that runs parallel with a lot of the offenders that we deal with... There's lots of times that we will want to do disclosures, and we do them either through a MAPPA process or through social services. (Participant 3)

One officer also argued that the 45-day timescale to complete a CSODS application provided the opportunity to take advantage of this integration of CSODS within a multi-agency setting:

I think other forces, they have the same sort of set up, a multi-agency set up for a CSODS. And I think that as a force, that's something we should do because you get a much better picture, and social care might hold their hand up and say actually we've already told that individual that information so you don't need to do anything. So we might be doing a lot of repetition, but we don't really need to. (Participant 1)

Officers explained that the introduction of MAPPA procedures had improved the working relationship between agencies and their ability to protect children. Recent developments in joint police and CSC hubs, known as MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), had allowed for a close working relationship and information sharing between the police and CSC. The CSC team within some districts had also relocated offices next to the police safeguarding unit. This complimented the current MAPPA initiatives as it allowed teams within different agencies to have face-to-face contact and build a stronger working relationship.

The increase in multi-agency information sharing has improved the ability to conduct informed investigations and maintain comprehensive and current information of concerning individuals. During an investigation, all CSODS enquiries are referred onto CSC. This allows CSC to be informed of the application, but also for the police to gather potentially new information from the CSC system:

They [social services] have information on their systems that we don't have on ours that kind of heighten your concerns about potential risks, that's why it's important to link in with other agencies. (Participant 6)

Issues

Although information sharing between agencies has become standard safeguarding practice, some officers felt that more information and willingness to share between agencies would improve current child protection practices. Officers argued that even with the current multi-agency efforts, there had been cases of CSC withholding information about members of the public from the police. Officers were aware of the importance of transparency and information sharing between agencies, as this has contributed to more effective awareness and management of individuals with convictions and/or concerning intelligence:

That's where the issue was with the Soham stuff, where there was not enough information shared. We've got the police national database now, that not only shares information about convictions, but information around police intelligence. (Participant 4)

Public education and awareness of CSODS

Officers explained that the use of the internet and community 'gossip' are the main means by which the public become aware of CSODS and/or the subject of concern. Applicants are, with the growing power of digital technology, increasingly likely to 'Google' the names of individuals to investigate whether they are a sex offender. Officers pointed out that the details of many court cases are available on the internet and that applicants will know more from these online 'documents' than what the police can legally disclose. Applicants in these types of case often involve individuals who want to 'fish' for more information, which can lead to a non-disclosure. Although officers were aware that 'fishing' applicants waste police time, they argued that online information can be sufficient for many individuals, removing their desire for a CSODS application.

Public awareness of CSODS is also dependent on the awareness and provision of guidance of CSODS amongst the police and other agencies (i.e. CSC, social housing and solicitors). Many applicants will ring the police or CSC expressing their concerns, without realising that they may be triggering a CSODS investigation. This highlights the importance of CSC and CCC, in particular, having sufficient awareness of CSODS, as they will be routinely dealing with public requests and concerns about child safeguarding.

Some officers argued that the media play a role in surges of applications, with documentaries relating to CSA cases (such as Shannon Matthews) (Participant 11) focusing attention on the 'Sarah's law' campaign and specific child safeguarding policies such as CSODS. Officers explained that the

Sarah's Law campaign was an important factor in the public's current misconception of the scheme. The scheme was initially publicised as being somewhat akin to 'Megan's law' (BBC, 2007) in USA:

The way it was sold, was this CSODS, 'Sarah's law' thing... people thought you could just ring up and we'd tell you everything. But that's not how it works. I think there was a bit of a misunderstanding. (Participant 3)

Promoting the scheme

Officers were asked whether publicising CSODS would be beneficial in terms of raising awareness of the scheme and reducing inappropriate applications, by educating the public around the parameters of the scheme. Officers provided mixed responses as to whether the scheme should be publicised. Many officers felt that public protection is at the core of all policing work and they believed, therefore, that the scheme should be promoted so that all members of the public have access to its child protection measures. They were also conscious, however, of the practical repercussions from promoting the scheme. A common issue they raised was the lack of resources within the service, with this pressure being accentuated owing to current terrorist threats:

Terrorism is a big part of everybody's life now. So there's a massive push, trying to encourage people to contact us about terrorism, or anything that they think might seem to be terror related. So that's at the top, everything else kind of gets shunted down a couple of places. (Participant 3)

Applicants 'abusing the system' were also a major concern for officers. As CSODS is an additional workload within the PPU, officers felt the current volume of CSODS applications was "manageable", although publicising the scheme would make the demand from CSODS excessive. They also argued that officers would become inundated with the investigation and administration of inappropriate applications, with this being counter-productive towards the management of sex offenders.

One officer suggested publicising the scheme within schools would be a positive way to educate children on appropriate relationships and what they can do if they have concerns. Moreover, as findings (Kemshall et al., 2012 and Phase 1) indicate that applicants are predominately of white ethnic backgrounds, officers were asked how they could publicise CSODS to ethnic minority groups. Officers noted the difficulties of promoting the scheme to an ethnically diverse community. One officer suggested an effective way of publicising the scheme to all those for whom it is most appropriate:

*If you had information leaflets within that pack or the midwife or health visitor that goes out after you've had your baby. They bring the information leaflet then and give it to you, cause you can get it in all different languages. Then instead of targeting a community, it's just like "now you're a parent you need to have this awareness to protect your child."
(Participant 7)*

Chapter V: Discussion

The following chapter reflects upon the findings within wider literature, policy and practice. Officer's experiences (coupled with the contextualising case files) revealed three overarching themes in the operation of CSODS. The following section locates these themes in the context of the wider literature, and policy and practice, concerning child sex offending, and wider child and adult safeguarding measures. Limitations of the research are also explored (see Appendix K for reflections). A summary of the findings are initially presented, which contextualise the subsequent discussion.

Summary of findings

The first phase of the research examined the typology of CSODS enquiries, applicants and subjects, as well as examine the process of CSODS' applications and subsequent police involvement with other agencies. The largest groups of applicants were female (60%) and were aged 30-39 years (40%). Subjects featuring most commonly in enquiries were: applicants' (own) new partners or applicants' ex-partners' new partners (39%), and applicants' neighbours (33%). All of the subjects (100%) were male and the largest age group were those aged 30-39 (30%). Fifty-five per cent of the cases involved either shared risk assessments with other agencies or had other agency engagement throughout the CSODS application. CSC (under 'Working Together') was the most frequently involved agency (82%). 'Clare's law' (DVDS) and MAPPA procedures were used as alternative methods of public information sharing. Of the 16 cases that provided completed data, only three were completed within the CSODS timescales (19%). The majority of delays were within stages 4 (*Full risk assessment*), 5 (*Decision of outcome*) and 6 (*Outcome and closure*).

The second phase explored police officers' perceptions and experiences of CSODS. When exploring the extent and nature of CSODS enquiries, officers in the districts estimated that they dealt with between 5 (minimum) and 12 (maximum) applications (per annum). The DCI estimated that there were 70-77 applications (across all five districts) per annum. The most common reason for enquiry, as perceived by Northshire Police officers, was concerns regarding the applicant's new partner/applicant's ex-partner's new partner (60-65%). Officers highlighted process issues, such as the scheme's lengthy administrative process, difficulties of information sharing between agencies, issues with the clarity of interview schedule, and occasional delays. Although, officers praised the clarity and smoothness of the scheme's process, and they felt that they had well-established roles within each stage of the scheme. Overall, officers thought public information sharing already existed

in practice prior to the implementation of CSODS (i.e. MAPPA, 'Working Together' and other alternative methods of information sharing) although they maintained the scheme acted as a 'safety net' for non-registered and/or non-convicted offenders. Officers suggested various improvements to the CSODS process. Key among these were: more training for the CCC (to reduce inappropriate applications); more training on the CSODS 1 stage to improve recording/decision making; improving the clarity and space on the interview forms; introducing community support officers to the CSODS 1 stage, to alleviate resource issues; and removing the role of the DCI to reduce delays. Officers felt that CSODS training – where they had received it – was sufficient to enable them to conduct an effective CSODS investigation.

The contribution of CSODS to wider risk management strategies

CSODS was intended to serve two functions: 1) to empower members of the public to request information, so they could make informed decisions on managing risk to children; and 2) to contribute to the overall risk management of RSOs by adding to extending pre-existing third party disclosures measures (Home Office, 2010; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). The following theme will address officers' perceptions as to whether CSODS achieves these aims, and whether CSODS provides additional value to the already established information sharing systems.

Empowerment to enquire

Officers thought CSODS provided a formal avenue for the public to ask for information about individuals about whom they had concerns (Kemshall et al., 2010), and that the public did not have a mechanism to request this information prior to the inauguration of the scheme. Public access to information is also reflected in the subsequent Domestic Violence Disclosure System 'Clare's law' (DVDS), that follows the ethos: 'right to ask [enabling the public to enquire], right to know' [enabling the public to receive information] (Home Office, 2016c). Although third party information sharing systems enable agencies (with concerns) to share information with the public, CSODS and DVDS are the first disclosure schemes that provide a formal a route for members of the public to make these enquiries. This shifts the responsibility back onto the public to be proactive about concerns and managing risk (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010; McCartan et al., 2018). This is also reflected in Home Office (2016a) 'Modern Crime Prevention Strategy', which, like CSODS, shifts its approach to community responsibility to report, and prevent CSA.

Risk management

Some officers reflected upon their roles as offender managers and argued that the use of MAPPA was more widely used to manage sex offender risk than CSODS, suggesting the scheme added little to the community management of sex offenders (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). They argued that police officers are specialists in managing sex offenders and the risk they pose, and that officers would already be aware of some the concerns raised by CSODS applicants. This reflects O'Sullivan et al. (2016) and Kemshall et al. (2010) found that officers would likely know about new relationships RSOs had developed, if they were doing their job effectively.

In terms of preventing CSA, officers reported that in their area no on-going case of CSA had been uncovered, as a result of a CSODS application. There is a general lack of empirical evidence to support CSODS as a crime prevention measure (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2016; Wilson, 2011). This suggests that there are important questions concerning the effectiveness of public notification systems, both nationally and internationally (Brooks, 2011; Socia & Stamatel, 2010; Wilson, 2011). Despite the lack of evidence that CSODS has prevented crime, officers maintained that scheme does contribute to the protection of children, reiterating the findings of McCartan et al., (2018) and O'Sullivan et al., (2016). Officers felt that CSODS is more beneficial to the public, as opposed to the police, in managing risk, as it helps the public make informed decisions on risk management (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). This finding supports the arguments that were originally made in favour of community notification schemes in the USA (Thomas, 2010) and CSODS in the UK (Chan et al., 2010; Home Office, 2010; Kemshall et al., 2010; McCartan et al., 2018).

CSODS and multi-agency work relationship arrangements

CSODS, and wider multi-agencies like MAPPA and CSC, have a key role in managing risk by means of supporting the information exchange, risk assessment and risk management requirements of multi-agency procedures (McCartan et al., 2017). This is highlighted when officers stressed the importance of multi-agency collaboration in risk assessments and decision-making in the disclosure process. It is increasingly recognised that no single agency can address complex social problems, such as crime and risk management. Effective multi-agency working is crucial in order to achieve successful strategies in preventing crime and managing risk (Crawford & Cunningham, 2015). Consequently, multi-agency risk management strategies, such as CSODS, utilise a range of professional perspectives and information sources to enable informed and accurate decisions to be made to manage risk (Ashmore-Hills, Burrell & Tonkin, 2017). Officers identified various benefits between CSODS and multi-agency collaboration, such as improved information sharing between agencies (O'Sullivan et al., 2016), more transparency of working culture through the integration of police and other agencies [relocated agency offices and increased involvement of detectives and police ground

staff], introduction of MASH (Stanley & Humphreys, 2014), and the ability of CSODS to act as a 'safety net' within the wider risk management strategies (Richardson & Asthana, 2005).

Despite these benefits, officers were critical of partner agencies, particularly when they withheld information in cases. They stated that CSC staff sometimes felt they were not permitted to share certain information with the police, which in turn caused delays within the risk assessment and decision-making stages. Officers highlighted previous failings in information sharing between agencies as had occurred and they argued that this area of practice still required improvement. Inquiries, such as those by Sir Michael Bichard, into the 'Soham murders' (Bichard, 2004) and Lord Laming, into the death of Victoria Climbié Inquiry (Laming, 2003) highlighted the inadequacies of information sharing between agencies and has resulted in 'information sharing' becoming a moral and political imperative across the UK for improving the welfare and protection of children (Thompson, 2013). Issues surrounding 'information' have, though, been identified in respect of CSODS and other risk management schemes, such as the sex offender register and ViSOR (O'Sullivan et al., 2016; McCartan et al., 2018). These issues include outdated and incomplete data, as well as issues with inputting, recording and sharing data (McCartan et al., 2018), all of which will likely have an impact on officers' abilities to make informed and accurate decisions on CSODS applications.

Officers pointed out that CSODS had parallels with already established information sharing systems like MAPPA and 'Working Together' (Kemshall et al., 2010). They argued that these systems still operate and are unaffected by the introduction of CSODS, raising questions as to whether CSODS provides additional benefit in terms of the protection of children (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). Officers highlighted the repetition and overlap in information sharing between CSODS and other schemes, and many officers preferred to make disclosures via alternative routes, particularly 'Working Together' and MAPPA (see glossary). Officer's preference to use alternative procedures was due to the lengthy administrative burdens of the CSODS and pre-existing CSC involvement with many of the applications via 'Working Together' [already know about the subject and/or new relationship]. This situation underlines arguments elsewhere that CSODS is not able to claim the same level of success as other established multi-agency strategies in the UK (McCartan et al., 2017; Wilson, 2011), as well as other countries' mechanisms similar to MAPPA (Munro & Manful, 2012; Richardson & Asthana, 2005). Officers argued that, when used appropriately, 'Working Together' replaced the need for the CSODS scheme, suggesting that the scheme did not add value to pre-existing systems.

Unintended (positive) consequences of CSODS

Although there are some questions regarding the value of CSODS, in terms of its 'official objectives', officers revealed some unintended (positive) consequences of the scheme.

Public reassurance

Kemshall et al. (2010) found, in the piloting of CSODS, that applicants experienced anxiety and fear following a disclosure. Officers in the present study emphasised that applicant' empowerment and reassurance were central goals in their CSODS practice. They pointed out that public protection staff had the expertise whereby they could provide adequate safeguarding advice to, and could reassure, applicants who had concerns over the safety of children. Kemshall et al. noted that more follow-up support should be given to applicants following the closure of a CSODS' application. Officers in the present, and other studies, have argued, however, that when doing their job properly, they should be able to provide sufficient support when conducting the face to face decision outcome meeting, and that additional follow-up support is not realistic given current resource constraints within the police service (O'Sullivan et al., 2016).

Officers felt that applicant satisfaction and reduced anxiety following a closure of a CSODS application was due largely to the scheme providing a mechanism for applicants to voice their concerns and 'off-load' on relationship issues that might otherwise not have been addressed. The scheme itself also provides reassurance that applicant's concerns have been dealt with, and an officer has taken the time to investigate the subject and evaluate his level of risk. The use of sex offender policies as a method of public reassurance has been examined by a number of researchers (Cain, Sample & Anderson, 2017; Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; Sample, 2011), suggesting that community notification policies, such as 'Megan's law' and CSODS provide mainly a symbolic function (public reassurance) i.e. that sex offenders can be monitored and managed (Sample, Evans & Anderson, 2011). This reassurance may, in turn, generate a sense of security and support surrounding protection for the public regardless as to whether community notification policies *actually* protect children (Brannon et al., 2007; Levenson et al., 2007).

Intelligence systems

Some officers felt the CSODS was useful as an 'intelligence system', as many applications involve subjects who are not known to the police. Participants felt that intelligence shared by the public is an important aspect of the wider management of sex offenders, and other non-registered and/or non-convicted individuals of concern, and that CSODS explicitly facilitates this information sharing

provision. They reported that around half of the intelligence gathered regarding the subject of enquiry is public-led. Intelligence-led policing has recently become a central part of crime management, following the failings of formalised intelligence sharing (as highlighted, for example, in the Soham murders, Bichard, 2004). The police and other agencies are reliant on the public to share information (Carter & Carter, 2009), in order for risk management and preventative strategies to be effective (Kruger et al., 2016). In particular, previous studies have highlighted issues with inaccurate and out of date sex offender databases (such as the register and ViSOR) (O'Sullivan et al., 2016; McCartan et al., 2018). Therefore, systems that encourage public-led intelligence, such as CSODS, are beneficial in improving the overall intelligence and management of risk.

Reinforcement of crime prevention strategies

Officers argue that despite the overlaps with CSODS and other information sharing systems, they felt the scheme acted as a 'safety net' for non-registered and/or non-convicted individuals. This reinforces findings that despite evidence of overlaps in some multi-agency strategies, this provides protection against offenders who may 'slip through the net' (Richardson & Asthana, 2005). The officers explained that in cases where subjects are not managed under any other statutory arrangements (for example, CSC, probation or MAPPA), the police will become the only responsible body working and managing risk posed by certain individual (subjects). This chimes with Kemshall et al. (2010) and O'Sullivan et al.'s (2016) who found that officers felt that CSODS formalised good practice in child protection, as it prevents unmanaged offenders from 'slipping through the net'.

Implications of promoting CSODS

Officers reflected upon their expectation regarding initial volume of applications, and that applications have remained much lower than expected since the inception of the scheme. Some participants noted that they had not received a CSODS application in months or years, and some officers recalled other public protection staff having no experience with a CSODS application. This reflects previous findings that reveal public use and engagement with CSODS has tended to be relatively modest throughout the life of the scheme (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012). There was a low take-up of the scheme during its pilot phases in England and Wales (Kemshall et al., 2010), and Scotland (Chan et al., 2010). This raises concerns as to the usefulness and legitimacy of CSODS in terms of protecting the public (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). Considering reports of CSA are increasing (Bentley et al., 2016) and registered sex offender populations have risen 82% in the last decade (Ministry of Justice, 2018; McCartan et al., 2017; O'Sullivan, et al., 2016), it might have been expected that the number of CSODS' applications would have increased.

Concerns

Officers raised concerns about the public's understanding of the scheme (Kemshall et al., 2010), which could be the reason for the relatively low number of applications. Officers believed that the public has a general understanding that the police can share information with members of the public, however they do not understand the parameters of the scheme. Officers thought that this lack of understanding explained both the low take-up of the scheme (Chan et al., 2010; Kemshall, Kelly, & Wilkinson, 2012; NSPCC, 2015; Wall, 2012), but also why some applicants made inappropriate applications to the scheme, which was similarly found within the pilot studies (Chan et al., 2010; Kemshall et al., 2010). In particular, officers thought the public had a misunderstanding that they had a 'right to know' about sex offenders living in their community (McCartan, 2013), which led to dissatisfaction, among some applicants, regarding the process and its outcomes. The introduction and mottos of DVDS may have had an impact on the public's perception of 'right to ask, right to know' towards domestic violence, which may have led them to believe this could apply to all dangerous individuals. Additionally, public misunderstanding may reflect the media coverage and subsequent misconception of 'Sarah's law' and CSODS, as the scheme does not resemble the circumstances in which Sarah's law would have been applicable (i.e. stranger-perpetrated CSA) (Wilson, 2011), thus CSODS would not have protected Sarah Payne. Many officers felt that people have some awareness of 'Sarah's law', but not CSODS, and that the media had fuelled public dissatisfaction with the scheme, with the public having misinformed expectations that do not fit the parameters of CSODS. Sex offender policies, such as 'Megan's law' and 'Sarah's law', are initiated by child abductions and sexually motivated murders (Levenson et al., 2007). This creates the presumption that children are at most risk from sexual predators who target schools, playgrounds, and gardens – reinforcing the 'stranger danger' narrative (Cricher, 2002). However, it is rare for child sex offenders to target children who are not known to them (Healey et al., 2016; Radford et al., 2011, 2013), and even less likely they will kill their victims (Sample, 2006; Francis & Soothill, 2000).

Practical implications

Despite this lack of take-up and understanding, officers warned about the practical implications of promoting the scheme. Officers noted that due to diminishing police budgets, any promotion of CSODS among the public would cause a major resource issue with the likely increase in enquiries being unmanageable (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). The impact of diminished resources within the police was reflected in the immediate and non-immediate risk case files, suggesting an informal triage system was utilised to address the immediate risk concerns within the resource constraints. Additionally, the officers argued that more staff, support and training are required to better manage sex offenders (McCartan et al., 2017; Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). This reflects

the wider debates on the funding of policing, probation and other criminal justice agencies in the UK (Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, 2017; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2017), with officers being required to make the most of the limited resources they currently have (O'Sullivan et al., 2016).

In addition to the strain on resources, officers argued that promoting the scheme would be counter-productive, suggesting the public has a lack of understanding of sex offenders and how they are managed within the community (Kleban & Jeglic 2012; McCartan & McKenzie 2014). This lack of understanding about sex offenders and their management spans beyond CSODS, as findings both nationally and internationally indicate that there is a public moral panic about sex offenders (Boone & van de Bunt, 2016; Huffman, 2016; Stevenson et al., 2015; Furst & Evans, 2015). This has led to overestimations of sex offender recidivism rates (Fortney et al., 2007; Sample & Bray, 2006), exacerbated perceptions of sex offender risk, causing public anxiety (Harper & Bartels, 2016; Harper et al., 2017; Harris & Socia, 2016; McCartan, Kemshall & Tabachnick, 2015), and encouraged strong support for community notification laws – regardless of effectiveness (Edwards & Hensley, 2001; La Fond, 2005; Levenson et al., 2007). As findings from America's 'Megan's law' indicate (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007), providing increased public access to sex offender information in the UK may not diminish public fears of sex offenders, but would likely heighten their fears (Kemshall et al., 2012). Evidence in the USA regarding fear of sex offenders has led to an array of negative public action, such as vigilantism (Newburn, 2010; Thomas 2012) and social exclusion of sex offenders (Lasher & McGrath, 2012; Whitting et al., 2014). This was briefly mirrored in the UK, during the 'naming and shaming' of public accessible sex offender information (Thomas, 2010). Promoting the scheme so that more members of the public have access to sex offender information would therefore likely counteract the current protection within communities (McCartan, 2013; Williams, 2015; Wood, Kemshall & Maguire, 2007), raising risk management issues for perpetrators (Home Office, 2007; Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; Levenson et al., 2014; Pittman, 2013) victims, and their families (McCartan, 2013; McLean & Maxwell, 2015). This finding is common within sex offender notification research, reiterating national and international research, policy and practice (Harris, Levenson, et al., 2016; Nash, 2016; Thomas, 2010, 2016).

Suggestions on promoting the scheme

Officers focused on methods to promote the scheme to individuals who need it, as opposed to the entire public. Officers thought that providing an information leaflet to mothers with new born children (either in hospital or during nurse home visits) would be beneficial to target mothers and their children. They argued that developing leaflets in many different languages would overcome the language barrier of ethnic minority groups, allowing effective communication amongst an ethnically

diverse community (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2015). In addition, some officers felt it was important to promote CSODS within schools so that children were aware of the support that is available. This could integrate into the government's initiative to promote education of safe sex and relationships within schools (Department for Education, 2017; Pearson et al., 2015; Macdowall, 2015). Promoting the scheme appropriately and effectively is therefore important for police, as they rely heavily on the public for intelligence, community assistance and general cooperation; meaning that effective and established communication is vital for policing strategies to be successful (Bradford, 2014; Hohl, Bradford & Stanko, 2010). There has been particular investment of resources into improving the relations towards racially and ethnically diverse communities, as well as younger individuals, as these groups generally have less trust and confidence in the police (McNeeley & Grothoff, 2016; Schuck, Rosenbaum & Hawkins, 2008; Abubakar, Othman & Mustafa, 2017). This is particularly important within underreported crime like CSA, as the extent to which individuals trust the police is an important predictor of their willingness to report crimes and cooperate with the police (Kruger et al., 2016).

Limitations

Phase 1 of the research was problematic owing to the small sample size that meant it was not possible to provide statistical power within the data. This case file the data could, then, only be used to illustrate and contextualise the findings within Phase 2. The research initially intended to analyse a large, random selection of CSODS cases, from each year, since implementation of the scheme (i.e. 20-30 cases from each year, since 2011). The findings would have provided an overview of trends and patterns throughout the course of its initial implementation and up to current practice. The data extraction template, however, was rich in detail in terms of the information that was requested by the researcher from Northshire Police databases. This resulted in a prolonged data collection process, as Northshire Police had to ensure anonymity of the data they provided for each case. It took the police approximately five months to extract the data from 20 case files and then input it into the data extraction template. The researcher appreciated, though, that the police currently have very finite time and resources.

Sex offender management strategies like CSODS, and other systems such as MAPPA, 'Working Together' and the sex offender register, are also utilised by prisons, probation and social services (McCartan, et al., 2018). The current study is therefore limited to one type of agency, highlighting a gap in research to explore a variety of professional attitudes towards CSODS and the wider sex offender management strategies.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

The current study aimed to examine CSODS practice within one police service area; this is an under-researched area in the management of sex offenders within the UK (McCartan et al., 2018). The first phase aimed to explore typical CSODS applications from a random sample of CSOD case files. The second phase aimed to explore police officers' perceptions and experience of CSODS. From the contextualising data within Phase 1 and the in-depth themes established within Phase 2, the current study supported previous research, policy and practice in finding that, when used appropriately, multi-agency working and CSODS are useful for the community management of sex offenders (Kemshall et al., 2010; McCartan et al., 2018; O'Sullivan et al., 2016; Peck, 2011). However, the current study could not establish whether CSODS works effectively as a crime prevention measure. Wider literature also stresses this gap within the research, as there has been no evidence to prove this (Kemshall & Weaver, 2012; O'Sullivan et al., 2016; Wilson, 2011). The present research is, though, able to shed light on how CSODS may contribute to the protection of children, in cases where subjects are not managed under any other statutory arrangements (for example, CSC, probation or MAPPA), the police will become the only responsible body working and managing risk posed by certain individual (subjects). Multi-agency approaches to crime prevention have become increasingly effective and successful within the UK (Kemshall, 2017; Robinson & Cottrell, 2005). It might be, therefore, that expanding involvement of sex offender management, treatment and rehabilitation to wider public health agencies could help alleviate pressures upon the police and reduce reoffending without disproportionately burdening a single organisation (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). Findings also indicated that officers did not value CSODS as a risk management tool for the police, similarly to O'Sullivan et al. (2016) findings, although they did value CSODS as a management tool for the public, in terms of applicant awareness. In addition to this, findings revealed that CSODS has some unintended (positive) consequences, such as its symbolic function to reassure the public of the scheme's action against CSA (Sample, Evans & Anderson, 2011), the use of CSODS as an 'intelligence system', reiterating the importance of public-led intelligence in the wider management of risk (Carter & Carter, 2009), and the reinforcement of crime prevention strategies to prevent offenders 'slipping through the net' (Kemshall et al., 2010; O'Sullivan et al., 2016). These unintended (positive) consequences therefore demonstrate that CSODS provides an important contribution to the management of risk. However, these 'unintended' contributions need to be made more explicit as academics and the public may assume on face value that the scheme is unnecessary or ineffective (McCartan et al., 2017; Wilson, 2011).

CSODS is a reflection of the on-going 'populist punitiveness' towards sex offenders in the UK (Garland, 2001; Kemshall, 2003), resulting in a contradictory approach to understanding, responding and mitigating the risk from sex offenders. Some aspect of sex offender management centre on punitive and conservative measures, such as longer sentencing and tougher punishment (Brayford & Deering, 2012), whilst other focus, on the contrary, on the promotion of restorative justice and community reintegration programmes for sex offenders (McAlinden, 2008; McCartan & McKenzie, 2014), such as Circles of Support and Accountability (Clarke, Brown & Völlm, 2017) has seen a growth in alternative rehabilitative approaches to risk management. Proponents of desistance approaches, which focus on strengths promotion and the broader approaches of public health prevention methods (Kemshall, 2017), argue that current management tools of registration, restrictions, ViSOR, and community disclosure do not enable practitioners to focus on clinical needs, reintegration and positive development, or self-risk management (Laws and Ward 2011). Increasing attention on an alternative focus on desistance and 'living a good life' (see 'Good Lives Model', Hulley, 2017; Kemshall, 2017; McCartan et al., 2017; O'Sullivan et al., 2016) has raised questions as to whether current risk management strategies promote or hinder self-risk management of desistance (McCartan et al., 2017). However like many newly emerging approaches, desistance and strengths-based approaches do not currently have the empirical evidence to be considered a true alternative to community protection approaches (Kemshall, 2017). Sex offender policies (both nationally and internationally) have often resulted in a divergence between evidence and policy-making (Freiberg and Carson 2010) caused by myths and fears perpetuated and reinforced by the media and moral panics (Kemshall, 2017; McCartan et al., 2015; Levenson et al., 2007; Quinn, Forsyth & Mullen-Quinn, 2004). Whilst this fear of sex offenders exists, the public will continue to demand punitive protection measures (Kemshall, 2017; Stevenson et al., 2015).

Implications for practice and policy

It is evident that officers are trying to manage CSODS within the current depleted resources of the police (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). Perhaps the use of an informal 'triage' system to manage children who are at most risk should be formalised within the CSODS process, in order to maintain efficiency of the scheme in protecting children, without burdening officers' role in effectively managing sex offenders. Guidance documents and supervisory guidance seems sufficient enough for officers without formal training on the scheme. Although there is an awareness issue amongst the wider force that should be addressed in order to overcome issues (such as inappropriate applications and applicant dissatisfaction). Multi-agency working has evidentially improved the practices of agencies in the management of risk (Kemshall et al., 2010; McCartan et al., 2018; O'Sullivan et al., 2016; Peck,

2011), however there is still more to be improved in terms of communication between agencies (McCartan et al., 2018; Thompson, 2013).

Sex offender risk management practices account for a significant proportion of the work undertaken by the police, probation and prison services, and MAPPA, both locally and nationally (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). However, increases in sexual abuse reports and 'known' sex offenders means the workload surrounding the management of these offenders is likely to grow (CPS, 2016) and may become unfeasible within current systems (Bailey, 2017). Given the practical burdens of sex offender management, greater emphasis should, perhaps, be placed upon more novel initiatives, such as self-risk management and desistance strategies (McCartan et al., 2017) would be beneficial in order to address to the increasingly onerous task of sex offender management.

Future research directions

Research needs to be carried out on wider agency perceptions of CSODS. Although CSODS is the responsibility of the police primarily, other agencies such as prison and probation services, and children's social care could provide further insight into the broader impact of CSODS on agency practice.

Additionally, there is limited research on the public and subject perceptions of CSODS. The pilot study touched upon applicant experiences of CSODS (Kemshall et al., 2010), although there is no current research on the impact of disclosures on applicants, particularly whether applicant's experience 'dysfunctional fear' following a disclosure. Although the pilot study interviewed RSOs, they had not been subject to a disclosure, thus could not provide insight into subject's perceptions and experiences of a CSODS disclosure.

Although academics argue there is lacking research as to whether CSODS prevents CSA, there is no empirical way to measure the success of parents/guardians being disclosed to, and being enabled to act effectively as capable guardians. General statistics of CSA rates, in relation to the implementation of CSODS, would not be a sufficient way of measuring its success towards CSA prevention, given that there's a complex combination of factors relating to the current increase of CSA reporting (Bentley et al., 2016; McCartan, et al., 2017). Future research should measure the impact of CSODS as a crime prevention tool. This could represent an important contribution evidence-based policing in the UK around CSA and a move away from the current 'gut feeling' approaches (McCartan et al., 2018).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A) POLICE DATA EXTRACTION TEMPLATE

CSODS/NICHE database – Data Extraction Template*

(*for all enquiries, full applications, disclosures and non-disclosures)

1. Key dates

- a. Date of initial enquiry
- b. Date of face to face meeting with applicant
- c. Date of completion of full risk assessment
- d. Date of final decision whether or not to disclose
- e. Date disclosure made
- f. Date of enquiry disclosure to subject

2. Initial enquiries regarding CSODS

- a. Nature of enquirer's enquiry/concern: behaviour of subject, subject's appearance in child's life, 'anecdotal' information received about subject, subject a known offender, other – please specify
- b. Format of initial enquiry (telephone, face to face at police station, other face to face, other – please specify)
- c. Nature of contact between subject and child
- d. Length of time subject and child have been in contact
- e. Frequency of contact between subject and child
- f. Have **other enquirers** made enquiries about **same subject**.
- g. Number of such enquirers
- h. Has **enquirer** made enquiries about **other subjects**
- i. Number of other subjects enquired about

3. Response to initial enquiry

- a. What actions did police take in response to enquiry: checked records (please specify which records), contacted other agencies (please specify), other (please specify)
- b. Were any immediate child safeguarding actions taken

- c. Nature of these actions
- d. Which agencies took these actions
- e. Was the enquiry progressed to an investigation
- f. What was the reason for progressing to an enquiry
- g. What was the reason for **not** progressing to an investigation
- h. Did the enquirer receive any other response e.g. enquirer given child safeguarding information pack; enquirer referred to CRB check, Subject Access or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, or Vetting and Barring Scheme check; other – please specify

4. Initial enquiries progressed to CSODS applications

- a. Was a face to face meeting held with the applicant
- b. Was a face to face meeting held with a member of the public other than the applicant
- c. Who was the above other person (relationship to child)
- d. What actions did police take in response to enquiry: checked records (please specify which records), contacted other agencies (please specify), other (please specify)

5. Risk assessment

- a. Was a risk assessment carried out
- b. What did the risk assessment involve
- c. Who carried out the full risk assessment
- d. Did the police make contact with any other agencies as part of the CSODS risk assessment
- e. Which were these agencies
- f. Did these agencies provide any relevant information
- g. What was this information
- h. Was application categorised as “concerns” or “no concerns”
- i. Did the police share information with other agencies following its risk assessment

6. Disclosure/non-disclosure

- a. Was a disclosure made
- b. What was the reason for the disclosure
- c. What was the reason for the non-disclosure

- d. Was applicant informed of **non-disclosure** face to face or by other means (e.g. letter or telephone call)
- e. Was a disclosure made to the applicant
- f. What information was disclosed to the applicant
- g. Was information disclosed to person other than the applicant
- h. Who was this other person to whom a disclosure was made (relationship to child)
- i. What information was disclosed to this other person
- j. Was the subject informed of the disclosure
- k. In what setting/situation was the decision whether or not to disclose taken e.g. police only, MAPPA meeting, child safeguarding-related meeting or other (if other, please specify)
- l. If 'other', what setting/situation was this

7. Confidentiality

- a. Was disclosure recipient asked to sign a confidentiality agreement
- b. Did disclosure recipient sign confidentiality agreement
- c. Was there a "self-disclosure" by subject to the applicant/carer
- d. Was there any breach of confidentiality in relation to the disclosure information.
- e. What was this breach.

8. Other police matters

- a. Did the police take any further action in respect of the applicant (including provision of other advice or support)
- b. Did the police learn, for the first time, of genuine concerning information regarding the suspect from the applicant (part of "two way disclosure")
- c. Did the police learn, for the first time, of genuine concerning information regarding the suspect from another source
- d. What/who was this source
- e. Was a community risk assessment (re subject) carried out following a disclosure
- f. Was a final intelligence report submitted onto police service intelligence system following closure of the enquiry
- g. Were concerns raised, as a result of this enquiry, for any other children who were not subject to the original enquiry and who did not live in the same household as the children of then original concern

9. Other agency action

- a. Did other agencies take action in respect of child
- b. Which agencies took action
- c. What action did agencies take

10. WYP Police officer dealing with enquiry

- a. Age
- b. Gender
- c. Rank
- d. Job title
- e. Months in current role
- f. Months in police service

11. Police service(s) involvement (where applicants, subjects, child or other person to whom disclosure made live in different police service areas)

- a. Receiving police service
- b. Co-ordinating police service
- c. Responding police service

12. Sociodemographic characteristics - to be completed for

- Enquirer/applicant
 - Subject
 - Child(ren)
 - Any other person to whom a disclosure was made
- a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Ethnicity
 - d. Religion
 - e. Physical disability
 - f. Learning disability
 - g. Accommodation type (owner occupier, private renting, social housing, other)

- h. Cohabitation status
- i. Employment status
- j. Police district resident in (or police service is not WYP)
- k. WYP Partnership Working Area resident in
- l. Relationship to applicant
- m. Relationship to child
- n. Relationship to subject
- o. Relationship to any other person to whom disclosure was made
- p. Does this individual have a criminal record
- q. Nature of criminal conviction (child sexual abuse, other child maltreatment, other sexual (adult) offence, other physical assault offence, theft, drugs, other)
- r. Source of information re criminal convictions
- s. Is there other separate criminal intelligence/suspicion against individual
- t. Nature of intelligence/suspicious (child sexual abuse, other child maltreatment, other sexual (adult) offence, other physical assault offence, theft, drugs, other)
- u. Source of information for intelligence/suspicious
- v. Are there any pre-existing concerns in relation to the welfare of any child/young person in this person's household (e.g. child neglect, witnessing domestic violence, bullying, abusive boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, truancy, alcohol misuse, consensual sexual activity with under-age peers, missing episodes, CSE, ASB)
- w. Nature of welfare concerns
- x. Source of information re the concerns

APPENDIX B) INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Initial email questions)

1. Administrative details

- a. Location
- b. Date
- c. Start time
- d. Interviewer

2. Interviewee socio-demographic characteristics

- a. Age
- b. Gender
- c. Ethnicity
- d. Rank
- e. Job title in current post
- f. Time spent in current post (years and months)
- g. Have you received any training for your CSODS role?
- h. If you have, what training have you received?
- i. If you haven't, would you like to receive such training?
- j. Have you received any training of child protection work more generally?
- k. If you have, what training have you received?
- l. If you haven't, would you like to receive such training?
- m. Number of police officers supervised/managed in current post?
- n. Outline of duties in current post?
- o. Time spent in police in total (years and months)?
- p. Previous posts, time spent in them in police and whether this involved any child protection work (reverse chronological order)

Previous post	Time in post (yrs & mths)	Child protection involvement

I will ask you about how the police respond to CSODS enquiries, all the way from when an initial enquiry is made to when a disclosure is made, if any, and the investigation is closed. I would like you to think about and share with me any and all aspects of these cases that are relevant e.g. the legitimacy of enquiries, your ability to obtain sufficient information, concerns over disclosing information and cooperation

(Interview questions)

3. Case study

a. Can we start by your describing a typical or fairly recent CSODS application, taking me through all the various stages and what work you did?

4. CSODS enquiries

Frequency and nature of enquiries

- a. How often on average do you receive CSODS (initial) enquiries?
- b. How do enquirers first become aware of CSODS?
- c. Who are the types of people who make CSODS enquiries (i.e. relationship to child e.g. cohabiting parent, non-cohabiting parent, neighbour, other relative, family friend)
- d. Do you get any particularly common types or category of enquiry/concern e.g. partners with genuine concerns, neighbours being malicious or other individuals who misunderstand the purpose of CSODS?
- e. When these **particular** types or category of enquiry are put together, what proportion of **all** enquiries do they account for?

Responding to enquiries

- f. What are all of the actions that you can take or and have taken in response to these enquiries?
- g. Overall, how well, in your experience, do you think the police are able to respond to these enquiries?
- h. What would your say works well in the police response to these enquiries (e.g. cooperation from members of the public; working with other police depts, or services; accessing data or databases; ability to protect children, educating or reassuring members of the public about child protection,

detering child sex offenders, wider management of offenders, detecting offenders, resources, staffing, ability to make well-informed decisions, overlap with other child protection systems, legislation, internal police supervision?

i. What would you say works less well in the police response to these enquiries?

j. How do you think the response to enquiries could be improved?

k. What are the final decisions you can take in response to an initial enquiry (e.g. take no further action whatsoever, provide enquirer with child safeguarding information, refer enquirer to other organisation/service, embark upon CSODS investigation)?

l. What are the types of response you get from enquirers to these final decisions?

m. Have enquirers ever then complained to the police or any other organisation about the final response they have received?

5. CSODS investigations

Numbers, reasoning and actions

a. What proportion of enquiries would you say are subject to a CSODS investigation?

b. What are the factors that you take into account/that influence your decision when you decide not to embark upon an investigation?

c. What are the factors that you take into account/that influence your decision when you decide to embark upon an investigation?

d. What are all of the actions that you can take or have taken in carrying out a CSODS investigation?

Interviews with CSODS applicants

e. What has worked well in your interviews with CSODS applicants

f. What has worked less well in your interviews with CSODS applicants

g. How could interviews with CSODS applicants be improved?

Risk assessments

h. In what proportion of investigations do you carry out risk assessments?

i. What are all of the actions you can or have taken in a risk assessment (including what information obtained from what sources and whether any risk assessment 'tools' were used)?

j. How valid (i.e. accurate) do you think these risk assessments are?

k. Do you share these risk assessments with other agencies?

l. Which other agencies do you share these risk assessments with?

m. What proportion of risk assessments do you share with other agencies?

Identifying concerns

- n. What proportion of investigations lead to the identification of “concerns”?
- o. What types of concern are identified?
- p. In what proportion of investigations are concerns raised in respect of children who were not the focus of the original enquiry?
- r. Who are these other children (relationship to children in original enquiry and/or subject) and concerns raised?
- s. What actions are taken in respect of these other children?

Investigations rating

- t. How well, in your experience, do you think the police are able to carry out CSODS investigations?
- u. What would you say works well in these investigations?
- v. What would you say works less well in these investigations?
- w. How do you think these investigations could be improved?

6. CSODS disclosures

Decision making

- a. In what proportion of investigations do you make a disclosure to any person?
- b. In what settings/situations are decisions whether or not to disclose taken e.g. police only, MAPPA meeting, child safeguarding-related meeting or other - please specify

Non-disclosures

- c. What are the factors that you take into account/that influence your decision to not make a disclosure?
- d. By what means are applicants informed of non-disclosure (e.g. face to face, by letter, telephone call, etc)?
- e. How do applicants respond to your decision not to make a disclosure e.g. grateful, reassured, anxious, angry, confused as to what to do, etc?
- f. What other actions, if any, have you taken after not making a disclosure e.g. provide applicant with child safeguarding information, contact child’s parent, contact subject, contact agency etc
- g. How well do you think non-disclosure work goes?
- h. What would you say works well with non-disclosure work?
- i. What would you say works less well with non-disclosure work?
- j. How do you think non-disclosure work could be improved?

Disclosures

- k. What are the factors that you take into account/that influence your decision to make a disclosure to any person?
- l. To whom do you make disclosures e.g. child's carer, non-cohabiting parent other person (please specify)?
- m. By what means are applicants informed of disclosure (e.g. face to face, by letter, telephone call, etc)?
- n. What types of information do you disclose (e.g. convictions against subject, suspicions against subject, etc)?
- o. Do you think disclosures fulfil a useful purpose?
- p. In what ways do you think disclosures are useful/are not useful?
- q. How do applicants respond when you make a disclosure e.g. grateful, reassured, anxious, angry, confused as to what to do, etc?
- r. What other actions, if any, have you taken after making a disclosure e.g. provide applicant with child safeguarding information, contact child's non-cohabiting parent, contact subject, contact agency etc?

Other aspects of disclosure work

- s. How often do you make a disclosure not to the applicant but to some **other** person?
- t. Have there been "**self-disclosures**" by subject to the applicant/carers?
- u. In what circumstances have "**self-disclosures**" occurred
- v. In what proportion of cases do you inform **subjects** of disclosures?
- w. What are the reasons as to why you inform **subjects** of disclosures?
- x. What are the reasons as to why you do not inform **subjects** of disclosures?

Evaluating disclosure work

- y. How well do you think disclosure work goes?
- z. What would you say works well with disclosure work?
- a1. What would you say works less well with disclosure work?
- b1. How do you think disclosure work could be improved?

7. Concerns versus disclosures

- a. In what proportion of investigations where you have identified concerns, have you then not made a disclosure?

- b. What have been the circumstances where you have had concerns but where you have not made a disclosure?
- c. In these circumstances, have you taken other action, and if you have, what action have you taken e.g. contacted children's services, liaised with other organisations, spoken to the subject etc
- d. In what proportion of investigations where you have not identified concerns, have you then still taken some action in respect of a child?
- e. What have been the circumstances where you have not identified concerns, but where you have still then taken some action in respect of a child?
- f. What are these actions that you have taken e.g. contacted children's services, liaised with other organisations, spoken to the subject etc?

8. Confidentiality

- a. Are disclosure recipients always asked to sign a confidentiality agreement?
- b. If not: how often and in what circumstances do recipients not sign a confidentiality agreement?
- c. Have you dealt with any cases where a disclosure recipient breached confidentiality?
- d. In what proportion of your cases has this happened?
- e. What form did these breaches take (e.g. recipient telling extended family members, recipient telling neighbours, recipient placing information on social media, etc)
- f. How did you know of these breaches?
- g. Why did recipients breach confidentiality?
- h. What impacts have such breaches had?
- i. What actions have the police taken in response to such breaches (including legal action)?

9. "Two way disclosures"

- a. In what proportion of enquiries have you learnt, for the first time, of genuine concerning information regarding a subject from the **applicant** (as part of a "two way disclosure")?
- b. What are the types of genuine concerning information that you have received from **applicants**?
- c. In what proportion of enquiries have you learnt, for the first time, of genuine concerning information regarding a subject **from another source** (part of "two way disclosure")?
- d. What are the types of genuine concerning information that you have received **from other sources**?

10. Community risk assessments

- a. In what proportion of investigations have you carried out community risk assessment?
- b. What are the reasons why you have carried out community risk assessments?
- c. What information do you collect in a community risk assessment?
- d. How do you obtain information for a community risk assessment?

11. Other police matters

- a. In what proportion of initial enquiries have you been able to complete initial checks (as to whether a child is at immediate risk) within the expected 24 hours?
- b. In what proportion of investigations have you been able to decide whether there is a “concern” or “no concern” within the expected 10 days from the initial enquiry?
- c. What proportion of investigations have you been able to complete and close within the expected 45 days from the initial enquiry?
- d. Do you always submit a final intelligence report into the police service intelligence system following closure of the enquiry?
- e. If you do not: what are the reasons for this?
- f. What are your overall views of CSODS e.g. is it worth having, does it protect children, should it be publicised more, is it a worthwhile investment of police resources, could these police resources be better invested elsewhere to protect children?

12. Other agency action

- a. Did other agencies take action in respect of child?
- b. Which agencies took action?
- c. What action did agencies take?

13. Other comments

- a. Is there anything else you would like to say about any aspect of the CSODS scheme, and in particular what works well, what works less well and how the scheme could be improved?

APPENDIX C) PHASE 2 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 Phase 2 sample demographics. *N = 12.* * = Average ** = DCI – Detective Chief Inspector, DI – Detective Inspector, DS – Detective Sergeant, DC – Detective Constable (ordered in rank).

Sample Demographics	
Age	37-59 (48)*
Ethnicity	White
Gender	5 Female 7 Male
Rank	2 DCI** 4 DI 1 DS 5 DC
Officers and staff supervised by participant	0-120
Time in current post (years)	0.5-12 (6.25)*
Total time in police (years)	9-40 (24.5)*

APPENDIX D) PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTORY LETTER/EMAIL

An examination of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in a single Police force area

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am undertaking research on the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSOD) as part of my Masters degree at the University of Huddersfield. The research is being undertaken in conjunction with West Yorkshire Police, and my findings will hopefully inform its policy and practice around the CSOD.

I am contacting you to see if you would be prepared to take part in this research. I would like to interview you for about one hour on your views and experiences, if any, of the CSOD in regards to child protection. The interview will be carried out at a time and place that suits both you and the researcher, and is deemed safe. Your travel expenses will be reimbursed by the University of Huddersfield.

I have attached a sheet that provides further information on the research. You would be asked questions about yourself (such as age and gender), the experiences you have had, what you think of the CSOD and why you think this way. If you agree to take part, you would be asked to sign a consent form to show you have taken part in the research voluntarily.

It is up to you entirely whether you take part in the research. If you do take part, you can refuse to answer any question you want or withdraw from the research completely and this will have no effects for you or anyone else.

In general, all the information you provide to the research would be treated in confidence and you would remain anonymous. However, if you provide information that indicates yourself or another person is at risk of harm, or may commit a criminal offence, this information will have to be shared with West Yorkshire Police.

The main aim of this research is to examine the use and perceptions of the CSOD since its national roll out. I sincerely hope you will take part in it.

I would be very happy to talk to you, if you want, before you decide whether to take part in this research.

Yours sincerely

Chloe McDermott (Researcher)

APPENDIX D) CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: An Examination of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in One Police Service Area

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

- I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research as outlined in the information sheet.
- I consent to taking part in the current study.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving any reason.
- I understand that I have up to four weeks to withdraw my interview after it has taken place.
- I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym).
- I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of 10 years at the University of Huddersfield.
- I understand that no person other than the researchers and supervisors will have access to the information provided.
- I understand that this research is conducted under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, except where I provide information that indicates that I or another person is at risk of harm or may commit a criminal offence. Under such situations, this information will have to be shared with West Yorkshire Police.

Signature of Participant	Signature of Researcher
Print:	Print:
Date:	Date:

(One copy to be retained by Participant / one copy to be retained by Researcher)

APPENDIX E) PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

An Examination of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in One Police Service Area

INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to take part in a study about your experiences of using the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSOD). Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with the researcher if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

The purpose of the current study is to examine how well the CSOD is working in a single police service area. Since the pilot scheme in 2008, there has been no formal exploration of how the scheme is used within society. I am examining police records to determine how much use is made of the CSOD and by whom and for what reason. However, I would also like to conduct interviews with people who are familiar with scheme to determine their views of the experience.

Why I have been approached?

You have been asked to participate as you have had experience of the CSOD. As a result, your experiences will be used as a broader exploration of the scheme and how useful it has been for you.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. This decision will not have an effect on you or anyone else.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be interviewed regarding your experiences of CSOD. The interview will last about one hour and it would – with your permission – be audio recorded. The time and location of the interview will be agreed with yourself and the research team based on what is convenient and safe, and your travel expenses will be reimbursed by the University of Huddersfield.

Will my identity be disclosed?

All the information you provide will be treated in confidence and you will not be identified in any way. The only exception to this is where you provide any information that someone else or yourself are at risk of harm then the research team may have to share that information with the appropriate authorities.

What will happen to the information?

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names will be removed in order to ensure anonymity. The researcher will write a project report and this will be shared to West Yorkshire Police. The current research is also part of a Masters project, and it is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a report.

Your anonymity will be ensured in all of the above publications, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Chloe McDermott
E-mail: chloe.mcdermott@hud.ac.uk

Or the lead supervisor for the research:

Name: Bernard Gallagher
E-mail: b.gallagher@hud.ac.uk
Telephone: 01484 473158

Useful contacts if you are affected by sex offender disclosure

- If you are worried about someone's behaviour to a child or if you are worried about any child more generally, contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000
- If you are worried about your thoughts about or behaviour towards children, contact the Stop it Now helpline on 0808 1000 900

APPENDIX F) DATA EXTRACTION TEMPLATE AND THEME TEMPLATE

Table 2 Overview of data extraction template, and its relation to Phase 2 data

Phase 1: data extraction template	CSOD stage	Phase 2: themes
Key dates	CSOD 1-4	Timescales
Initial enquiries	CSOD 1	Typology of enquiries Criteria
Response to initial enquiry	CSOD 1	Background check Immediate risk
CSODS application/investigation	CSOD 1	Face to face visit
Risk assessment	CSOD 2	Full risk assessment Concerns Intelligence MAPPA Information sharing
Non-disclosure	CSOD 3	No concern
Disclosure	CSOD 4	Awareness and empowerment Proportionality
Confidentiality	CSOD 4	Confidentiality
Other police matters		Police and staffing aspects
Other agency action		A shift in multi-agency working
Northshire Police officer dealing with enquiry		Police and staffing aspects
Sociodemographic characteristics of: applicant, subject, child(ren)		Typology of applicants and subjects

APPENDIX G) INITIAL CODING TEMPLATE

1. Info

1.1 Sociodemographics

2. Training

2.1 Formal

2.2 Lack of

2.2.1 Comfortable

2.2.1.1 Explicit guidance

2.2.1.2 Clear form

2.3 Positive

2.3.1 Guidance from staff

3. Ways to improve

3.1 More training

3.2 Explicit rationale

4. Experience

4.1 Personal

4.1.1 Hands-on

4.1.2 Sex offender policy

4.1.3 Familiarity of RSOs

4.2 Other staff

4.2.1 Expectation of staff

4.3 Advantages

5. CSODS stats

5.1 Type of applicant

5.2 Lack of

6. Awareness

6.1 Staff

6.1.1 Lack of

6.1.1.1 Time wasting

6.2 Agencies

6.3 Public

6.3.1 Lack of

6.3.2 Misunderstanding

6.3.2.1 Megan's Law

6.3.2.2 Clare's Law

6.3.3 Sarah's law campaign

6.3.4 Expectation of scheme

6.3.5 Social media (internet)

6.3.5.1 Vigilante

6.3.5.2 Mistaken identity

6.3.6 Word of mouth

7. Promoting the scheme

7.1 Low priority

7.2 Resources

7.3 Other schemes

7.4 Advantages

7.4.1 Parameters of scheme

7.5 Disadvantages

7.5.1 Counter-productive

7.5.2 Exploiting the scheme

7.5.3 Vigilante

7.5.4 Malicious

8. CSODS process

8.1 Standardised

- 8.1.1 Criteria
- 8.1.2 Roles
- 8.1.3 Advantage
 - 8.1.3.1 Well structured
 - 8.1.3.2 Technology
- 8.2 Policy overlap
 - 8.2.1 Types of disclosure
 - 8.2.2 Social services
 - 8.2.3 Advantage
 - 8.2.3.1 Safety net
 - 8.2.3.2 Information sharing
- 8.3 Decision making
 - 8.3.1 Rationale
 - 8.3.2 Child protection v subject's rights
 - 8.3.3 Concerns
 - 8.3.3.1 Criteria
 - 8.3.3.2 Intelligence
 - 8.3.4 Subjective
 - 8.3.5 Comprehensive case files
- 8.4 Investigation
 - 8.4.1 Immediate risk
 - 8.4.2 Initial checks
 - 8.4.3 Interview
 - 8.4.3.1 Advantage
 - 8.4.3.1.1 Motives (proportionate disclosures)
 - 8.4.3.1.2 Interaction
 - 8.4.3.1.3 Information sharing
 - 8.4.4 Advantages
 - 8.4.4.1 Sharing systems
 - 8.4.4.2 Intelligence
 - 8.4.4.3 Consistent
 - 8.4.4.4 Accessible
 - 8.4.4.5 Immediate
 - 8.4.4.6 Informed decisions
 - 8.4.5 Disadvantages
 - 8.4.5.1 Gaps
 - 8.4.5.2 Delays
 - 8.4.5.3 Interview forms
- 8.5 Disclosures
 - 8.5.1 Capable guardian
 - 8.5.2 Proportionate
 - 8.5.3 Confidentiality
 - 8.5.4 Community impact
 - 8.5.5 Best protect child
- 8.6 Non-disclosures
 - 8.6.1 Self-disclosure (already aware)
 - 8.6.2 Criteria
 - 8.6.3 Remaining vigilant

9. Importance of CSODS

- 9.1 Importance of role
- 9.2 Quality of work
- 9.3 Immediate response
- 9.4 High priority
- 9.5 Severity of consequences

10. Advantages

- 10.1 Multi-agency approach
- 10.2 Immediate response
- 10.3 Importance of PPU (public protection unit)
- 10.4 Formal legislation
- 10.5 Specialised staff
- 10.6 Manageable
- 10.7 Management of RSOs
 - 10.7.1 Awareness
 - 10.7.2 Familiarity
- 10.8 Information sharing (public)
- 10.9 Clear process

11. Disadvantages

- 11.1 Inconsistencies
- 11.2 Administration
 - 11.2.1 Time consuming
 - 11.2.2 Necessary
- 11.3 Interview form
- 11.4 Time-scales (with limited resources)
- 11.5 Inappropriate applications
- 11.6 Lack of resources
- 11.7 Tertiary prevention
- 11.8 Current safeguarding measures

12. CSODS role/aims

- 12.1 Child protection
- 12.2 Public reassurance
- 12.3 Applicant awareness

13. Applicant satisfaction

- 13.1 Explanation of the scheme
- 13.2 Explanation of decision
- 13.3 Responses
 - 13.3.1 Negative
- 13.4 Functional/dysfunctional fear
- 13.5 Applicant support
 - 13.5.1 Safeguarding advice
- 13.6 Police/applicant interaction
 - 13.6.1 Help and advice
 - 13.6.2 Risk assessing

14. Subject/offender responses/support

- 14.1 Safeguarded
- 14.2 Move residence

APPENDIX H) REVISED CODING TEMPLATE

- 1. Police perceptions of the extent and nature of CSOD enquiries/applications**
 - 1.1 Numbers of
 - 1.2 Typology
- 2. Policy (issues)**
 - 2.1 CSODS doesn't add much to safeguarding
- 3. Process**
 - 3.1 Procedures/flow chart
 - 3.1.1 What exists; how much used; quality etc? and role (decision making)
- 4. Process (issues)**
 - 4.1 Investigation
 - 4.1.1 Criteria
 - 4.1.2 Computer systems
 - 4.1.3 Evaluation
 - 4.2 Home visit
 - 4.2.1 Risk assessment during information gathering (home and community)
 - 4.3 Face to face meeting
 - 4.3.1 Good to meet person face to face
 - 4.3.2 Imminent risk [pre-outcome], then immediate disclosure but still do file [and other tasks]
 - 4.3.3. No immediate risk; background checks, call applicant
 - 4.4 Interview
 - 4.4.1 Applicant info, decide what to disclose, may be limited; explain scheme; legal restrictions; low sentences
 - 4.4.2 Unknown intelligence; rounded feel
 - 4.4.3 Delay in meeting with applicant
 - 4.4.4 Insufficient space on form (DI left "wondering"?)
 - 4.5 CSODS-1
 - 4.5.1 Interview; interview applicant; motive
 - 4.5.2 Establish concern; subject history; contact with child
 - 4.5.3 Child
 - 4.5.3.1 Child safeguarding
 - 4.5.4 Quality
 - 4.5.4.1 Help DI/DCI make decision
 - 4.6 Disclosure
 - 4.6.1 Who disclosed to; proportionality; confidentiality; community impact
 - 4.6.2 Subjective; DCI need more info; disagreements with DI and DCI
 - 4.7 Non-disclosure
 - 4.7.1 Self disclosure; MAPPA route; doesn't fit criteria; remain vigilant; parenting skills; public reliance on disclosure
 - 4.8 Outcomes/effects (intended and not)
 - 4.8.1 Applicant
 - 4.8.1.1 Empowerment
 - 4.8.1.2 Investigation reassures public
 - 4.8.1.3 Satisfied (explanation of scheme)
 - 4.8.1.4 Satisfied (explanation of decision)
 - 4.8.1.4 Satisfied more generally
 - 4.8.1.5 CSODS-4: Give safeguard advice (even without disclosure)
 - 4.8.1.6 Awareness
 - 4.8.1.7 Non-protection and awareness
 - 4.8.1.8 Types: CSODS, Clare's Law, MAPPA, SSD
 - 4.8.2 Subject
 - 4.8.2.1 Informing of outcome

- 4.8.2.2 Meet with subject
- 4.8.2.3 Warn subject about community
- 4.8.2.4 Help subject move accommodation
- 4.8.2 Public (wider)
 - 4.8.2.1 Reassurance
 - 4.8.2.2 Behaviour and perception
- 4.9 Multiagency working
 - 4.9.1 Information sharing
 - 4.9.2 Non police agencies
 - 4.9.2 MAPPA
 - 4.9.3 Transparency
 - 4.9.4 Willingness to share – locally and nationally
 - 4.9.5 Quicker to share (technical and cultural)
 - 4.9.6 Social services
 - 4.9.6.1 Risk assessment
- 4.11 General processing issues
 - 4.11.1 Deadlines/timescales
 - 4.11.1.1 24hrs difficult, 10 days OK, 45 days OK

5. CSODS generally

- 5.1 CSODS fits well with wider safeguarding systems
- 5.2 Public education/awareness
 - 5.2.1 Method of awareness
 - 5.2.2 Reduce inappropriate applications; increase appropriate ones/workload
 - 5.2.3 Should CSODS be more publicised
 - 5.2.4 Resources
- 5.3 Strengths/advantages
 - 5.3.1 Immediate response; MA (Multiagency Working); PPU
- 5.4 Decision-making
 - 5.4.1 Inevitable subjective element
 - 5.4.2 Intelligence ranked by “strength/quality”
- 5.5 Aspects of:
 - 5.5.1 Community impact assessment
 - 5.5.2 Breaches of confidentiality
 - 5.5.3 Gossiping
 - 5.5.4 Written guidance
 - 5.5.5 Child safety v subject’s rights
- 5.6 Intelligence
 - 5.6.1 “more seriously”; independent; two way disclosure; intel helps CSODS and vice versa
 - 5.6.2 Pre-1995 intel
- 5.7 Viewed as another measure to add to the raft to measures
 - 5.7.1 Archived RSOs, offended pre-1995, violent/sexual history (intelligence without conviction)

6. Organisational issues

- 6.1 Police
 - 6.1.1 Training
 - 6.1.2 Awareness
 - 6.1.3 Experience
 - 6.1.4 Staffing
 - 6.1.4.1 Personal suitability regarding sex offenders policy, knowing perps well and awareness of relationships/whereabouts (specialised staff)
 - 6.1.5 Time consuming files (admin side) – DCs
 - 6.1.6 Styles of working

- 6.1.6.1 DCs are consistent re intel gathering, investigation and pulling/inputting case files
- 6.1.6.2 Committed (and other aspects of “office culture”)
- 6.1.7 Supervision
 - 6.1.7.1 Informal peer supervision
- 6.1.8 Attitude
 - 6.1.8.1 Importance of safeguarding role; quality of work; priority of CSODS; taken seriously due to anxiety of media backlash
- 6.1.9 Practice
 - 6.1.9.1 Check applicant, subject, child, produce big file, thorough

APPENDIX I) FINAL CODING TEMPLATE

Final coding template.

1. Police perceptions of the extent and nature of CSOD enquiries/applications

- 1.1 Numbers of
 - 1.1.1 Styles of working
- 1.2 Typology
 - 1.2.1 Inappropriate applications

2. The role of CSODS and its contribution to wider safeguarding procedures

- 2.1 CSODS doesn't add much to safeguarding
- 2.2 Viewed as another measure to add to the raft to measures
 - 2.2.1 Archived RSOs, offended pre-1995, violent/sexual history (intelligence without conviction)
 - 2.2.1.1 Types: CSODS, Clare's Law, MAPPA, SSD

3. CSODS process

- 3.1 Procedures/flow chart
 - 3.1.1 What exists; how much used; quality etc? and role (decision making)
- 3.1 CSODS 1: Initial enquiry
 - 3.1.1 Criteria
 - 3.1.2 Computer systems
 - 3.1.3 Evaluation
 - 3.1.4 Imminent risk [pre-outcome], then immediate disclosure but still do file [and other tasks]
 - 3.1.5 No immediate risk; background checks, call applicant
- 3.2 CSODS 1: Face-to-face visit
 - 3.2.1 Risk assessment during information gathering (home and community)
 - 3.2.1.1 Good to meet person face to face
 - 3.2.2 Interview
 - 3.2.2.1 Applicant info, decide what to disclose, may be limited; explain scheme; legal restrictions; low sentences
 - 3.2.2.2 Unknown intelligence; rounded feel
 - 3.2.3 Interview; interview applicant; motive
 - 3.2.4 Establish concern; subject history; contact with child
 - 3.2.5 Delay in meeting with applicant
 - 3.2.6 Insufficient space on form (DI left "wondering"?)
 - 3.2.7 Child
 - 3.2.7.1 Child safeguarding
 - 3.2.8 Quality
 - 4.2.8.1 Help DI/DCI make decision
- 3.3 CSODS 2: Investigation
 - 3.3.1 Intelligence
 - 3.3.1.1 "more seriously"; independent; two way disclosure; intel helps CSODS and vice versa
 - 3.3.1.2 Pre-1995 intel
 - 3.3.2 Written guidance
 - 3.3.3 Child safety v subject's rights
- 3.4 CSODS 2: DI recommendations
 - 3.4.1 Who disclosed to; proportionality; confidentiality; community impact
 - 3.4.2 Investigative experience
 - 3.4.3 Decision-making
 - 3.4.3.1 Inevitable subjective element
 - 3.4.3.2 Intelligence ranked by "strength/quality"
 - 3.4.3 Issues
- 3.5 CSODS 2: DCI considers outcome

- 3.5.1 Subjective; DCI need more info; disagreements with DI and DCI
- 3.5.2 Disclosure letter
- 3.5.3 Issues
- 3.5.4 Reasoning for disclosures
- 3.6 CSODS 3: Applications that did not raise concerns
 - 3.6.1 Self disclosure; MAPPA route; doesn't fit criteria; remain vigilant; parenting skills; public reliance on disclosure
 - 3.6.2 Give safeguard advice (even without disclosure)
 - 3.6.2.1 Non-protection and awareness
- 3.7 CSODS 4: Applications that did raise concerns
 - 3.7.1 Applicant
 - 3.7.1.1 Investigation reassures public
 - 3.7.1.2 Satisfied (explanation of scheme)
 - 3.7.1.3 Satisfied (explanation of decision)
 - 3.7.1.4 Satisfied more generally
- 3.8 Post disclosure outcome
 - 3.8.1 Public (wider)
 - 3.8.1.1 Reassurance
 - 3.8.1.2 Behaviour and perception
 - 3.8.1.3 Empowerment
 - 3.8.1.4 Awareness
 - 3.8.1.5 Community impact assessment
 - 3.8.1.6 Breaches of confidentiality
 - 3.8.1.7 Gossiping
 - 3.8.2 Subject
 - 3.8.2.1 Informing of outcome
 - 3.8.2.2 Meet with subject
 - 3.8.2.3 Warn subject about community
 - 3.8.2.4 Help subject move accommodation
- 3.9 General processing issues
 - 3.9.1 Deadlines/timescales
 - 3.9.1.1 24hrs difficult, 10 days OK, 45 days OK

4. Police and staffing aspects

- 4.1 Training
- 4.2 Awareness
- 4.3 Experience
- 4.4 Staffing
 - 4.4.1 Personal suitability regarding sex offenders policy, knowing perps well and awareness of relationships/whereabouts (specialised staff)
- 4.5 Time consuming files (admin side) – DCs
- 4.6 Styles of working
 - 4.6.1 DCs are consistent re intel gathering, investigation and pulling/inputting case files
 - 4.6.2 Committed (and other aspects of “office culture”)
- 4.7 Supervision
 - 4.7.1 Informal peer supervision
- 4.8 Attitude
 - 4.8.1 Importance of safeguarding role; quality of work; priority of CSODS; taken seriously due to anxiety of media backlash
- 4.9 Practice
 - 4.9.1 Check applicant, subject, child, produce big file, thorough

5. A cultural shift in multi-agency working

- 5.1 CSODS fits well with wider safeguarding systems
- 5.2 Strengths/advantages
 - 5.2.1 Immediate response; MA (Multiagency Working); PPU

- 5.2.2 Multiagency working
 - 5.2.2.1 Information sharing
 - 5.2.2.2 Non police agencies
 - 5.2.2.3 MAPPA
 - 5.2.2.4 Transparency
 - 5.2.2.5 Willingness to share – locally and nationally
 - 5.2.2.6 Quicker to share (technical and cultural)
 - 5.2.2.7 Social services
 - 5.2.2.7.1 Risk assessment

6. Public education and awareness of CSODS

- 6.1 Method of awareness
- 6.2 Reduce inappropriate applications; increase appropriate ones/workload
- 6.3 Should CSODS be more publicised
- 6.4 Resources

APPENDIX J) OVERVIEW OF CSODS PROCESS, AS EXPERIENCED BY NORTHSHIRE POLICE OFFICERS

CSOD stage		Action	Other Actions
CSOD 1 Enquiry stage 24hr deadline	Initial contact	All initial applications are dealt with by the Customer Contact Centre (CCC). The CCC will decide the nature of the enquiry and gather applicant contact information. A log will be sent to the district's child safeguarding unit. The child safeguarding unit will assess the enquiry, and may reject if it is not a CSODS/child safeguarding matter. Child safeguarding will also check for immediate risk concerns. If the enquiry meets the criteria, and there are no immediate risk concerns, the enquiry is sent to PPU, and allocated to a DC and/or DS within the relevant district.	The district child safeguarding unit will conduct initial risk assessment checks to determine whether there is an immediate risk to a child or vulnerable person. These include background checks on applicant, child and subject. Initial immediate risk checks must be completed within the 24-hour deadline. If the subject is a current RSO, the enquiry is referred to the officer managing the offender, where a MAPPA disclosure would be considered.
CSOD 2 Investigation	Face-to-face visit	A DC and/or DS will arrange to visit the applicant within 10 days. The officer will verify the identity of the applicant, and verify the applicant's relationship to the child and the subject. The officer will also use the visit to gather information about the reasons for their enquiry and how they might intend to use any information provided. At this point, the officer should be able to determine whether the enquiry fits the criteria and whether it should go any further. A risk assessment, of the child's circumstances, is carried out and any relevant concerns that emerge are shared with children's social care.	Officers use the face-to-face visit to explain the parameters of the scheme. They will emphasise that the police are legally bound to disclose information only if a child is at "genuine risk of harm". "Managing expectations" at in these early stages is essential for enquirer satisfaction. Enquirers are provided with an "empowerment" information pack, in which the CSODS is explained and provides advice on child safeguarding.
	Full risk assessment	Depending on the application, a DI, DS or DC officer conducts a full risk assessment on the applicant, subject and child. The officer gathers information from local and national police systems (PNC, PND, Niche, HOLMES, Corvus, ViSOR) (see glossary for abbreviations), as well as any information logged by children's social care, MAPPA agencies, or any other relevant bodies, such as social housing organisations.	If, during the full risk assessment, the officer finds information to suggest that the child or vulnerable person is at immediate risk of harm, s/he will conduct an immediate disclosure (or any other relevant safeguarding procedure). The alternative procedures of safeguarding may result in the application developing into an outcome other than a CSODS (e.g. Children's social care (Working Together) disclosure or DVDS).
10 day deadline	DI recommendations	The officer sends the completed CSODS 1 form to the DI for him/her to consider all the information. The DI will then send this to the CGU, with his/her assessment as to whether (or not) there are child safeguarding concerns and the evidence behind this judgement.	The CSOD 1 form must be thorough and in-depth for the DI to make an informed decision. The DI can instruct the request DC/DS to gather more information, or the DI can him/herself seek additional information before making a recommendation to the CGU.

	DCI considers outcome	All applications from the districts are sent to the CGU. The DCI from the CGU makes the ultimate decision on whether there are concerns and the outcome of an application. In cases of immediate risk disclosure, The CGU is informed if there have been any immediate disclosures and these actions are recorded as a CSOD 4 (concerns) for administrative purposes.	The DCI has the ability to request more information before making his/her decision as to whether there are concerns. The DCI may, at times, disagree with the recommendations of the DI. The decision of the DCI is final, however, and the DI must follow his/her decision.
CSOD 3 Outcome 35 day deadline	No concerns	A standard letter is provided to the applicant, explaining that the police do not have any information, which indicates a risk, to disclose. A DC delivers the letter to the applicant in person, explaining to the applicant the parameters of the scheme and managing the applicant's responses. The CSOD 3 is then completed and all agencies that are involved with the applicant, child or subject are informed on that there was nothing to disclose.	The DC will use the face-to-face contact to further emphasise child safeguarding procedures, and for the applicant to remain vigilant. The DC aims to make applicant more empowered, in terms of child safeguarding, and s/he stresses that they should make the police aware immediately of any concerns they have in the future.
CSOD 4 Outcome 35 day deadline	Concerns	The DCI will consider the appropriate response to the concern. The consideration of a disclosure will apply if: (a) the subject is an archived sex offender (i.e. no longer a RSO), (b) the subject offended prior to the 1997 Sex Offenders Act (subject not added to the sex offender register), (c) the subject has a pattern of sexual offending intelligence (no convictions to be a RSO), and (d) the subject has a history of violent behaviour (although this may result in a "Clare's Law" disclosure). The DCI may consider disclosing under Working Together or other equivalent official provisions (i.e. MARAC or Vulnerable Adult if no child is at risk).	The DCI is responsible for considering the wording of disclosure. The wording must be such that the information provided is appropriate to the concern. This is in order that the disclosure is in line with the human rights of the subject. The DC/DS delivers this letter to the applicant face-to-face. The officer reads the exact words provided by the DCI, and is not eligible to comment any further on the disclosure. The applicant cannot keep the letter and s/he is required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The agreement contains a statement explaining that if the applicant shares any information about the disclosure to members of the public, this may result in legal action being taken against them. The officer will manage the responses of the applicant, and provide support and safeguarding advice, aiming to make the applicant be and feel more empowered in terms of child safeguarding. The DCI will consider whether the subject should be informed of the disclosure, and the DC may conduct a community impact assessment on the potential outcome of any disclosure. The subject is provided with safeguarding

			advice, if they are informed of the disclosure. . Additional protection measures may also be considered (for example, moving a subject to an alternative address). The time limit for the closure of an enquiry, including all actioned outcomes being logged and filed, is 45 days.
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APPENDIX K) REFLECTIONS

Throughout the study, a number of pragmatic changes had to be made to overcome various practical and ethical challenges. As the study depended upon police file data and police officer participants, I was required to negotiate with a gatekeeper to enable access for the data collection process. A key ethical issue for the study was maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of the collaborating police force. Thus, myself and my supervisor, an information officer, and the gatekeeper negotiated (over the course of three meetings) the parameters of the research project [nature of the file data, interview questions, and reporting of the findings]. The file data was intended to be statistically analysed. However, the data evolved into descriptive findings, due to the time constraints of ensuring anonymity of a large data set. For future research, I would recommend researchers to negotiate a way to have access to the entire anonymous police dataset. The researcher would then utilise her own time to extract the data without having to draw upon police resources. Perhaps this would not be practical in a Master's research project (where the research team is usually small, between 2-3 people), although a large team that could distribute roles/tasks would be beneficial to deal with a large piece of data such as the CSODS case files.

The gatekeeper and participants were professionals, in significant roles. Therefore, I ensured that I maintained a trusting and professional relationship throughout, in order to maintain cooperation and reiteration of the importance of the research project. My commitment to the research, particularly during my travel across all five districts of the policing area, and the time spent collecting the data (around five months in total) also reinforced my professionalism to conduct research.

Findings revealed that the scheme is predominantly used by one ethnic group (White), which was also found in the pilot phases and roll-out research. This suggests a gap in the research to explore perceptions of CSA prevention strategies such as CSODS, as there is generally lack of research in this area.