



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2017-0080, 10 March 2017

# April's Law: debate on an e-petition relating to sentencing for child abuse offences

## Westminster Hall Debate 13 March 2017 at 4.30pm

A Westminster Hall debate on an e-petition entitled "April's Law" is scheduled for Monday 13 March 2017 at 4.30pm. The debate will be led by Catherine McKinnell MP, a member of the Petitions Committee.

This is a debate on an e-petition which has attracted over 100,000 signatures on the petitions website. The subject for the debate was determined by the Petitions Committee.

The petition, [e-petition 166711](#), is entitled "April's Law".

The text of the petition, and the Government response, is available on the [petitions website](#). It is reproduced in section 2 below.

The text of the Parliamentary motion is:

That this House has considered e-petition 166711 relating to sentencing for child abuse offences

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Notification requirements: the 'sex offenders register'

Under [Part 2 of the \*Sexual Offences Act 2003\*](#), certain sex offenders are required to notify the police of personal information such as their name, address and bank and credit card details, and to update the police whenever this information changes. These are known as the "notification requirements", and the police record of information provided under the notification requirements is commonly referred to as the "sex offenders register". Section 2 of [Library Briefing Paper 5267 \*Registration and management of sex offenders\*](#) sets out full details of the notification requirements under the 2003 Act.

Notification requirements are imposed automatically on offenders convicted of certain offences in the UK, but can also be imposed by way of court order on offenders convicted overseas. The notification requirements are imposed for a fixed or indefinite period, depending on the sentence received (which in turn of course depends on the severity of the offence).

### Review mechanism

Part 2 of the 2003 Act as introduced did not include any review mechanism for offenders subject to an indefinite notification period. Such offenders therefore had no opportunity to make representations at some future date that they no longer presented a risk to the public and should be removed from the register. In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that this lack of review mechanism was incompatible with the right to privacy under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In 2012, the Government therefore legislated (by way of a remedial order) to introduce a review mechanism. See section 2.3 of the Library Briefing Paper for full details.

Those offenders subject to an indefinite notification period can now apply to the police for a determination that they no longer pose a risk and should no longer be on the register. The earliest point at which such an application can be made is 15 years after the date of the offender's first notification (or eight years, for those aged under 18 when convicted).

The petition's call for all sex offenders to be subject to an indefinite notification period no matter the crime would, therefore, clearly raise the issue of compatibility with article 8 of the ECHR.

## 1.2 Policing of child abuse images

[CEOP](#) (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre), part of the [National Crime Agency](#) (NCA), works across the UK to tackle child sex abuse (including online images). The [CEOP site](#) includes a range of resources as well as information on how to make a report to a child protection advisor.

The laws on child sex abuse images are [summarised](#) on the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) website. The IWF site also gives information on how it [combats](#) child sex abuse imagery including details of its [work with the police](#).

On 16 February 2017 the Government published an update on its 2015 programme of work on tackling child sexual exploitation.

- [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation](#), March 2015
- [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Progress Report](#), February 2017

The update includes a number of comments regarding the policing of child abuse images under its "Tackling offending" objective, including the following:

We have improved law enforcement capacity and capability:

- We provided an additional £10m funding to NCA-CEOP in 2015/16 to enable the command to target more offenders, strengthen victim identification and create additional intelligence and child protection advisor capabilities. This has included opening a second child sexual exploitation hub in the North West, eight new specialist teams, and recruiting 174 new dedicated officers to target the most serious child sexual exploitation offenders. Collaborative working between police forces and the NCA is now resulting in around 375 arrests each month for online child sexual exploitation offences, and the safeguarding of around 450 children each month.

### **Case Study: Collaborative working between police and the NCA**

Richard Huckle, an English school teacher in Malaysia, gained the trust of families and access to their children, whom he then went on to abuse.

NCA-CEOP Command launched an investigation into Huckle after he was identified as producing and uploading indecent images of children (IIOC) on the Internet. He was arrested in December 2014 at Gatwick airport, and following his arrest 20,000 IIOC were found on his computer, as well as a 'how to guide' aimed at other abusers advising them on abusing children.

The NCA-CEOP victim identification team searched and analysed the IIOC for time, date and location information to assist in identifying the children.

Richard Huckle had spent several years integrating himself into the community in which he lived, making himself a trusted figure. He abused that trust in the worst possible way. He deliberately travelled to a part of the world where he thought he could abuse vulnerable children without being caught.

The NCA worked to track down Huckle and end his prolific abuse, using appropriate legislation which allows UK nationals to be prosecuted in the UK for offences that have been committed overseas.

Huckle was subsequently charged with 91 offences, including 14 counts of rape of a child under 13 years old. He pleaded guilty to 71 offences and was sentenced to 22 life sentences; he will serve a minimum term of 23 years in prison.

We have provided tougher powers and more effective tools to combat child sexual abuse:

- The groundbreaking new Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) has been rolled out to all UK police forces and is transforming the way the police and NCA tackle online abuse. CAID uses the latest technology to transform how we deal with images of child sexual exploitation and abuse. It brings together all the images that the police and NCA come across. The images and their metadata provide law enforcement with vital clues on the identity of victims and offenders associated with them. The use of their unique identifiers – called hashes – reduces the time needed to review evidence from, in one example, three days to an hour, allowing police to identify and protect more victims more quickly than before.

#### **Case Study: Use of the CAID by West Yorkshire Police**

West Yorkshire Police used a forensic tool with the CAID hash set (the unique identifying code for each image of child abuse) to scan a suspect's hard drive. The scan matched 1200 images of abuse on the device against the CAID data within 15 minutes. The suspect was presented with this evidence during the first interview. Previously, it could have taken months to progress the case. The suspect was later convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and required to sign the Sex Offenders' Register for seven years.

West Yorkshire Police – in conjunction with NCA-CEOP – were also able to quickly identify and safeguard a young child who was a victim of child abuse by a close family member. This family member has subsequently been successfully convicted at court and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

(...)

#### **What else have we done?**

In the past year, we have gone even further than the commitments in the March 2015 Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation report. We have strengthened the tools available to law enforcement as follows:

- At the first WePROTECT summit in 2014 the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) committed to working with technology companies to share hashes – digital 'fingerprints' – of indecent images of children. The IWF subsequently shared almost 19,000 of these hashes – all of which originated from UK law enforcement's CAID – with six major global technology companies, enabling the removal of potentially thousands of images from their platforms and services. In October 2016, a further 15,750 image hashes were shared between the IWF and those technology companies. We continue to support industry's

efforts to remove known indecent imagery of children through the use of hash-sharing and to expand this to video.

- We launched a joint operations cell between the NCA and GCHQ to tackle the most technologically advanced serious and organised criminals, including online child sexual exploitation offenders.
- Specialist law enforcement capabilities, managed by ROCUs, are now being used to address the threat posed by those with a sexual interest in children. For example, their e-forensics capabilities have been deployed to suspected offenders' home addresses to interrogate digital devices in fast time with the aim of confirming if child sexual abuse has taken place.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3 Sentencing - indecent images

General information on sentencing can be found on the [website of the Sentencing Council](#) including [How sentences are worked out](#).

Put simply and briefly, usually Parliament sets a maximum sentence for each criminal offence. In an individual case, the sentencing judge or magistrate will then look at all the circumstances of the case to determine the appropriate sentence type and length within that maximum using any relevant sentencing guideline for that offence.

Sentencing guidelines are produced by the independent [Sentencing Council](#). The relevant guideline for sexual offences is the [Definitive guideline: sexual offences](#), in force from April 2014. Pages 75-79 contain the guidelines for offences concerning indecent images of children.

The maximum sentences for offences concerning indecent images of children are currently as follows:

- Possession of indecent photograph of child, s160 *Criminal Justice Act 1988* - 5 years' custody.
- Indecent photographs of children, s1 *Protection of Children Act 1978* - 10 years' custody.

Parliament could, of course, legislate to increase these maximum sentences. However, even if the maximum sentence were to be increased, the sentence in any particular case would continue to be decided by the sentencers in the individual case, using applicable sentencing guidelines and taking into account all the relevant circumstances.

Parliament could also legislate to introduce a mandatory minimum sentence for these offences. Such sentences are usually formulated to require the court to impose a minimum custodial sentence if certain conditions relating to the offence or the offender apply. However, such

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government, [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Progress Report](#), February 2017, pp12-15

sentences are extremely unusual and have so far only been introduced for a very limited number of offences.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Crown Prosecution Service website, [Legal guidance: Mandatory and minimum custodial sentences](#) for an overview of the small number of offences that attract a mandatory minimum sentence

## 2. Petition and Government response

### 2.1 Text of petition

#### **April's Law**

We the undersigned call on the prime minister to make all sex offenders remain on the register for life no matter the crime, for service providers and search engines to be better policed regarding child abuse images and harder sentences on those caught with indecent images of children.

### 2.2 Text of Government response

Protecting the public from harm remains a priority for this Government, and we have been clear that those offenders who continue to pose a risk will remain subject to notification for life. The public should rest assured that sex offenders will not automatically come off the register; the order only provides a mechanism by which a sex offender can apply for a review.

On 30 July 2012 the Sexual Offences Act 2003 was amended by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) Order 2012 to introduce a mechanism which will enable registered sex offenders who are subject to notification requirements for life to apply for those requirements to be reviewed.

This was as a result of an earlier Supreme Court ruling that our then law on indefinite sex offender registration without the right for review was incompatible with article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Government fully acknowledged the ruling of the Supreme Court and took appropriate action as is its duty; to uphold the independence of the judiciary by complying with the judgement.

Under the previous Government, we made changes to the notification requirements introducing additional measures which sought to strengthen the existing mechanism by making it mandatory for all registered sex offenders to notify to the police:

- all foreign travel;
- weekly, where they are registered as having 'no fixed abode';
- where they are living in a household with a child under the age of 18; and;
- their bank account and credit card details, and information about their passports or other identity documents.

We continue to work with the police and other law enforcement agencies to ensure that the right powers are available for the authorities to tackle sexual crimes and to bring perpetrators to justice.

#### Policing of child abuse images

The Government agrees that industry has a responsibility to work together with law enforcement and Government to prevent and inhibit the use of their services by those seeking to generate and share child abuse material. In 2015, Google announced that it had made changes to its search algorithm to prevent images and videos containing child abuse material from appearing in search results. They have publicly stated there has been an eight-fold reduction in child sexual abuse image related search queries since.

The Internet Watch Foundation, which is funded by industry, has been active in facilitating the removal of indecent imagery of children from the internet. Their efforts have helped the UK see a reduction from the UK hosting 18% of web pages of child abuse imagery, to 0.2% by 2015. Since April 2014 as permitted by Government, they have proactively sought out child sexual abuse material to take action to get this material removed.

At the WePROTECT summit in December 2014, industry committed to taking digital hashes of known child abuse imagery in order to ensure these could be identified and referred to the US National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, and removed. As of October 2016, over 34,750 image hashes have been shared among industry by the IWF.

#### Sentencing

Sentencing is entirely a matter for our independent courts. When deciding what sentence to impose the courts take into account the circumstances of the offence and any mitigating and aggravating factors, in line with the sentencing guidelines. Maximum penalties are kept under review to ensure that the courts have adequate powers to deal with offences effectively and proportionately.

The independent Sentencing Council are responsible for issuing guidelines to the courts. In December 2013 the Sentencing Council issued a revised guideline on sentencing for sexual offences, which came into force in England and Wales in April 2014.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1978 (as amended), the UK prohibits the taking, making circulation and possession with a view to distribution of any indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child under 16. Such offences carry a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. Section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 also makes the simple possession of indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children an offence. This carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment. This age was raised to 18 in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and there are defences for those aged over the age of consent (16) who produce sexual photographs for their own use within a marriage or civil partnership. These defences are lost, however, if such images are distributed.



The Sexual Offences 2003 Act significantly modernised and strengthened the laws on sexual offences in England and Wales to provide extra protection to children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It was designed to meet 21st century challenges of protecting children, and addresses issues including internet pornography and 'grooming' children for sexual abuse.

Home Office

## 3. Media

### 3.1 Articles and blogs

Independent

[Facebook reports BBC to police after requesting sexualised pictures of children](#)

Andrew Griffin 7 March 2017

Guardian

[Watchdog says police cuts have left forces in 'perilous state'](#)

Jamie Grierson 2 March 2017

Guardian

[MPs seek reassurance after police chief says not all paedophiles should be jailed](#)

28 February 2017

Guardian

[Number of child sexual abuse claims overwhelming police, says lead officer](#)

Chris Johnston 28 February 2017

Telegraph

[Police chief calls for paedophiles who view child abuse images to be spared prosecution as officers 'can't cope' with volume of reports](#)

Patrick Sawyer 28 February 2017

ITV online

[Sister of murdered schoolgirl April Jones reveals killer also targeted her](#)

22 February 2017

Powys County Times

[Family of April Jones furious over national paper's claims](#)

Jonny Drury 16 February 2017

Wales Online

[Parliament will debate a petition set up by April Jones' family calling for tougher sentences for sex offenders](#)

Katie Sands 15 February 2017

BBC online

[April Jones: family's campaign for tougher laws takes 'step forward'](#)

13 February 2017

Guardian

[Met police heavily criticised over child protection failings](#)

Vikram Dodd 25 November 2016

Guardian

[Scale of child abuse images online is 'shocking', says NSPCC](#)

22 July 2015

Guardian

[Cameron tells web companies to block child sexual abuse searches](#)

21 July 2013

## 3.2 Press releases

Home Office

[Government delivers £40 million to tackle child sexual abuse and child trafficking](#)

16 February 2017

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

[Children put at risk by Met's shortcomings](#)

25 November 2016

NSPCC

[Child abuse images: more action must be taken for children](#)

8 November 2016

NSPCC

[1 in 6 reported to police for indecent images are under 18](#)

1 September 2016

NSPCC

[Online child abuse images uncovered using digital fingerprints](#)

10 August 2015

## 4. Parliamentary Business

### 4.1 Ministerial Statements

#### [WePROTECT Global Summit to Tackle Online Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

##### **Theresa May (The Secretary of State for the Home Department):**

I am pleased to share with the House the Government's progress in galvanising a coordinated global response against online child sexual exploitation.

On 16 and 17 November the UK and United Arab Emirates brought together governments, companies and civil society organisations in Abu Dhabi for the second WePROTECT Summit, to protect children from online sexual exploitation. This built on the first Summit hosted by the Prime Minister in London last year.

While I could not attend due to the Paris attacks, Baroness Shields and His Highness Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan opened the Summit. I am pleased Baroness Shields was able to attend in my place, and welcome that she has been appointed as joint Minister for Internet Safety and Security for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office. This appointment serves to further underpin the importance this Government places on tackling online child sexual exploitation. The event secured a wider global reach for WePROTECT, with new countries from the Middle East and Latin America and, for the first time, China. This brought to 62 the total number of countries and international organisations signed up to the WePROTECT commitments.

The Summit commitments included an agreement on taking coordinated national action against online child sexual exploitation, guided by the WePROTECT Model National Response. To drive national action, governments will publish an analysis of their own response and use this to identify further capabilities needed.

I am pleased to say that the UK has already made significant progress in tackling this crime. All UK police forces and the National Crime Agency are now connected to the new Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) that was launched last year. A new operational victim identification strategy has been established around CAID by the National Crime Agency and is helping to identify even more victims of online child abuse. In the first six months of this year alone, UK authorities identified over 185 victims – already more than for the whole of any previous year.

In addition, the Internet Watch Foundation shared almost 19,000 digital fingerprints of child sexual abuse material – all of which originated from CAID – with five major global technology firms, to enable the removal and prevent the sharing of potentially thousands of images from their platforms and services. Companies have committed to build on this by coordinating the sharing of these digital fingerprints globally. The Prime Minister will hold international discussions next year to take this forward.

We are also fulfilling our commitment to support others to build their capabilities. At the London Summit, the Prime Minister pledged £50 million over five years to tackle violence against children globally. The first £10m of this funding is financing a global programme by UNICEF to tackle online child sexual exploitation in 17 countries.

To drive further progress, all WePROTECT signatories at the Abu Dhabi Summit agreed to put the WePROTECT Advisory Board on a firm long-term footing, as a body responsible to all those signed up to this initiative and charged with supporting countries and other stakeholders to implement their commitments. The Board will also take forward a joint proposal by the UK, US and EU Commission to merge WePROTECT with the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online to bring together global efforts to combat online child sexual exploitation.

### **3 December 2015 | Written statements | HCWS 356**

#### [Child Sexual Abuse](#)

#### **The Minister for Policing, Criminal Justice and Victims (Mike Penning):**

The Global Alliance consists of 54 countries around the world who have committed themselves to:

enhance efforts to identify victims and ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance, support and protection;

enhance efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse online and to identify and prosecute offenders;

increase children's awareness of online risks;

reduce the availability of child sexual abuse images online and the re-victimisation of children.

At a recent Global Alliance meeting in Washington, it was agreed to continue progress by:

Enabling law enforcement among Global Alliance countries to gain timely access to electronic information and evidence held by internet service providers and other repositories of electronic information that is material to the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse offences through central authorities and other legally authorised channels, so that no nation becomes a safe haven for such information.

Facilitating prompt and comprehensive exchange among law enforcement of information and evidence pertinent to child sexual abuse offences featuring trans-border offence conduct, victims, co-conspirators, or evidence repositories.

Enabling internet service providers and other repositories of electronic information to provide information pertinent to the identification, apprehension, and ultimate prosecution of online child sexual abuse offenders to law enforcement pursuant to legal process in a manner and time frame consistent with reasonable investigative and prosecutorial demands.

Augmenting existing, collaborative and trans-border efforts to identify and rescue victims of online child sexual abuse.

It was important to update and assure the House that the Government are committed to addressing the trans-border obstacles to identify and rescue victims of exploitation, and to identify and prosecute offenders. To facilitate continued progress, continued international co-operation is key to delivering real results. In December, the Prime Minister will hold an international summit in London to drive further progress in tackling these horrific crimes.

The fight to eradicate the online exploitation of children is far from complete but the Government will continue working closely with others around the world to maintain momentum.

**HC Deb 20 October 2014 c60WS**

[Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(Amendments\)](#)

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (James Brokenshire):**

The Home Office is today introducing tough new measures in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Notification Requirements) (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 which will extend and strengthen the system of notification requirements placed on registered sex offenders (commonly referred to as the sex offenders' register). We have also brought forward the draft Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) Order 2012, which will ensure that strict rules are put in place and a robust review is carried out on a case-by-case basis before any sex offender placed on the register for life can be removed. This will remove the legislative incompatibility identified by the Supreme Court in the case of R (on the application of F and Angus Aubrey Thompson) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2010] UKSC 17. In this case, the Supreme Court made a declaration of incompatibility under section 4 of the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the notification requirements for an indefinite period under section 82(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Government's response [Cm 8293] to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' (JCHR) report: Nineteenth Report of Session 2010—12 HC 1549 Proposal for the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) Order 2011, published in October 2011, has today been laid before the House.

Protecting the public is a priority and to this end, the Home Office continues to engage with public protection agencies to ensure that the risk posed to the public by sexual offenders is managed effectively. New measures will make it compulsory for all offenders subject to the notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to: notify the police of all foreign travel (including travel outside of the UK of less than three days); notify weekly where they are not registered as regularly residing or staying at one place (i.e. where a registered sex offender has no sole or main residence and instead must notify the police of the place where he can regularly be found); notify where they

are living in a household with a child under the age of 18; notify bank account and credit card details and notify information about their passports or other identity documents at each notification, tightening the rules so that sex offenders can no longer seek to avoid being on the register when they change their name. A summary of the responses received to the Home Office consultation on these changes is available on the Home Office website and will be placed in the House Library.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Remedial) Order 2012 will give offenders the ability to seek a review of their indefinite notification requirements only once they have completed a fixed period of time subject to those requirements (typically 15 years from the time of first notification following release from custody for adults, and eight years for juveniles). The review will be carried out by the police and will take into account a range of factors, including any information provided from agencies which operate within the multi-agency public protection arrangements framework. This will ensure that there is an individual assessment of risk before any offender is considered for removal from the notification requirements. A route of appeal to a magistrates court has also been included. We are clear that we have developed a process that is robust, workable and makes public protection a central factor, while at the same time preventing sex offenders being able to waste taxpayers' money by repeatedly challenging our laws. Sex offenders who continue to pose a risk will remain on the register and will do so for life if necessary.

The final impact assessments for these proposals can also be found on the Home Office website.

**HC Deb 5 March 2012 c52-53WS**

## 4.2 Parliamentary Questions

### [Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by: Nigel Huddleston**

Given the disturbing revelations this morning relating to Facebook and the use of sexualised images of children online, are we doing enough to protect our children, online and offline?

**Answered by: Elizabeth Truss | Department: Ministry of Justice**

I am working on this subject very closely with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. We need to ensure that more people are brought to justice—in fact, there has been an increase of 140% in those brought to justice for sexual offences—but we also need to make sure that internet companies are doing their bit to crack down on this practice.

**HC Deb 7 March 2017 c674**



### [Offences against Children](#)

**Asked by: Yasmin Qureshi**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many adults convicted of child sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 were placed on a rehabilitation programme as part of (a) custodial and (b) non-custodial sentences in each of the last five years; and what proportion of those rehabilitation programmes were completed by such adults in those years.

**Answered by: Andrew Selous | Department: Ministry of Justice**

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost because it is not possible, without incurring disproportionate cost, to link offenders undergoing Sex Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTPs) to their particular offence.

The number of accredited programmes started and completed by all sex-offenders, not specifically child sex offenders, is reported in the Accredited Programmes Annual Bulletin 2014/15, England and Wales, which is available at the link below. The report covers programmes delivered both in custody and the community.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/accredited-programmes-bulletin-2014-to-2015>

For those SOTPs delivered in the community, completion rates for all offenders are included in the Management Information Addendum to the Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15, which is available at the link below. Completion rates have remained relatively stable at just over 80 per cent since 2010/11.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-and-probation-performance-statistics-2014-to-2015>

**5 July 2016 | Written questions | 41338**

### [Violent and Sex Offender Register](#)

**Asked by: Philip Davies**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people on the dangerous persons database are (a) missing and (b) wanted; and for what offence or reason those people are on that database.

**Answered by: Karen Bradley | Home Office**

The Home Office does not hold this data. Statistical information from the ViSOR dangerous persons database is owned by the police, and the Home Office does not have access to this information.

**10 May 2016 | Written questions | 36608**

[Sexual Offences: Lie Detectors](#)

**Asked by: Douglas Carswell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions a lie detector test has been used for serious sex offenders as part of their licence conditions, upon completion of their custodial sentence, since August 2014.

**Answered by: Andrew Selous | Department: Ministry of Justice**

Since August 2014 there have been 820 polygraph examinations conducted on sex offenders on licence in the community.

**18 April 2016 | Written questions | 33485**

[Violent and Sex Offender Register: Wales](#)

**Asked by: Susan Elan Jones**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received from the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner on the removal of people convicted of child abuse and rape from the Sex Offenders Register.

**Answered by: Karen Bradley | Home Office**

The Home Office has not received any representations from the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner on the removal of people convicted of child abuse and rape from the sex offenders' register.

Offenders who are on the register indefinitely are only able to seek a police review after 15 years. In 2012, the Home Office issued detailed guidance to police forces on assessing applications for review. All decisions to release a sex offender from the notification requirements must be authorised by a senior police officer. Public safety is at the heart of all decisions taken by police, and those who continue to pose a risk will remain on the sex offenders' register, if necessary for life.

**24 March 2016 | Written questions | 32030**

[Sexual Offences](#)

**Asked by: Lord Campbell-Savours**

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what basis the accumulation of evidence obtained during the polygraph test of a given sex offender meets the threshold test of the repeat of criminal actions warranting the furtherance of a custodial sentence.

**Answered by: Lord Faulks | Department: Ministry of Justice**

The purpose of the polygraph is to check the compliance of high risk sexual offenders with their licence conditions and to monitor the risk they present to the public. It is also used to improve the way in which the offender is managed during release on licence.

An offender may be recalled if they fail to comply with the polygraph examination, attempt to 'trick' the test or if they disclose that they have failed to comply with their licence conditions.

The legislation for imposing the polygraph test on sexual offenders is enshrined in the Offender Management Act 2007. Section 30 of the Act specifically prohibits evidence of any matter mentioned in the polygraph being used in any proceedings against a released person for an offence in a criminal court.

**17 November 2015 | Written questions | HL 3239**

[Violent and Sex Offender Register](#)

**Asked by: Emma Lewell-Buck**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many registered sex offenders there are in the UK; how many people on the Violent and Sex Offenders Register have committed sexual offences against children; and what the reoffending rate is for people on that register who have committed such offences in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Answered by: Lynne Featherstone | Home Office**

Figures for the number of registered sex offenders in the UK are contained in the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements Annual Report, published by the Ministry of Justice. This includes MAPPA-eligible offenders who have been charged with a serious further offence. The report covering the period from April 2013 to March 2014 is available on the GOV.uk website. The Home Office does not hold data on the number of registered sex offenders who have committed sexual offences against children.

**22 January 2015 | Written questions | 221006**

[Sexual Offences: Reoffenders](#)

**Asked by: Emma Lewell-Buck**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the reoffending rate was for sex offenders whose original conviction was for sexual offences against children in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Answered by: Andrew Selous | Department: Ministry of Justice**

The one year proven re-offending rate for offenders convicted of sexual offences against children for the 2012 period (the latest data available) was 8.5%.

A proven re-offence is defined as any offence committed in a one year follow-up period and receiving a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one year follow-up. Following this one year period, a further six month waiting period is allowed for cases to progress through the courts.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has established a Sex Offender Management Board to coordinate the better management of sex offenders across the system, including the provision of treatment programmes in custody.

All high risk sex offenders and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) cases will be managed by the public sector National Probation Service (NPS).

**22 January 2015 | Written questions | 221005**

[Children: Abuse](#)

**Asked by: Frank Field**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reports her Department has commissioned into child abuse in the last 25 years; and what steps her Department took in response to the conclusions and recommendations in each such report.

**Answered by: Norman Baker | Home Office**

Data on reports commissioned is not collected centrally. However, the Home Office has published a number of potentially relevant research reports in the period in question which contain references to issues such as rape, young people and prostitution, child abuse victims and child sex offenders.

A full list of Home Office Research reports are published in various series and are available either on the Gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/research>

or on the National Archives website at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html>

Conclusions and recommendations from research and other reports are routinely used by the Department to inform evidence based policy making.

In addition, work is underway in the Home Office to establish what information was received in respect of Rotherham, and when that work has been completed, Richard Whittam and Peter Wanless will be looking at that process to make sure that it has been conducted absolutely properly.

**5 September 2014 | Written questions | 207502**

[Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by: Philip Davies**

The Secretary of State will be aware of the case of Geoffrey Bettley, who was a teacher at St Mary's in Menston on the border of my constituency, who downloaded child porn images, was rightly sacked by

the school and was put on the sex offenders register. Bizarrely, the Secretary of State appears to have allowed this gentleman to start teaching again. Surely he appreciates that people convicted of those offences are not welcomed back into the classroom by parents. Can he explain how he arrived at that decision, and what he will do to try to reverse it?

**Answered by: Michael Gove | Department: Education**

My hon. Friend is absolutely right to raise that very serious issue. Mr Bettley is not teaching at the moment and will not be teaching in future. The process we arrived at for ensuring that the National College for Teaching and Leadership reviewed cases was not as good as it should have been, to put it mildly. I do not put the blame at anyone's door other than my own, but one of the things I have been anxious to do following the Bettley case is to make sure that we have new guidance in place to ensure that the decisions taken in future are appropriate to keep our children safe.

**HC Deb 24 June 2013 c24**

## 5. Organisations and further reading

[Registration and management of sex offenders](#) , Commons Library Briefing paper SN05267, 23 May 2016

HM Government, [Tackling child sexual exploitation: progress report](#) , February 2017

National Crime Agency, [Child sexual exploitation and abuse](#) , Web page

National Crime Agency, [CEOP command](#) , Web page

[CEOP \(Child Exploitation and Online Protection\)](#) , Web page

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, [PEEL: police effectiveness 2016: a national overview](#) , March 2017

Section on “Preventing reoffending” discusses concerns about workload of teams supervising registered sex offenders

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, [National child protection inspections: the Metropolitan Police Service: 1 February – 27 May 2016](#), November 2016

Sonja Jutte, [Online child sexual abuse images: doing more to tackle demand and supply](#) , NSPCC, November 2016

### **Statistics**

Ministry of Justice, [Multi-agency public protection arrangements annual report 2015/16](#) , Statistics bulletin, 27 October 2016

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