Understanding Organisational Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment: A Review of Literature

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November 2005

Contributors

The primary contributors to this report from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse research team and their roles in writing this report were:

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- Dr Daryl Higgins – Senior Research Fellow and Manager, was responsible for scoping the project and coordinating with the CSMAC Child Safe Organisations working group, writing the original brief and some sections of the report, contributing to the theoretical frameworks and structure, the conclusions and implications, and reviewing and editing the report.
- Leah Bromfield –Research Fellow and Assistant Manager provided input into the structure of this report, and was responsible for writing several sections of the report and assisting with reviewing and editing the final report.

Acknowledgements

Sections of this report were drawn from previous documents written by Bromfield (2005) and Higgins (1998; 2001).

The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of:

- Nicholas Richardson, Research Officer, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies whose research on Working with Children legislation in each of the States and Territories has been included here in Appendix A.
- Melissa Aldana, Intern, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies for assisting with editing this report.
- Jennifer Harvey – Senior Policy Officer, Department for Families and Communities, South Australia, CSMAC Child Safe Organisations Policy Officer and Janice Brown, Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- New South Wales Children's Commission, for providing access to their review of the literature, and information about their risk assessment procedures, and the current evaluation they are conducting.
- Julie Harcourt – Queensland Children's Commission, for providing information about their risk assessment procedures.
- Carole Jean and Joan Kelleher – Australian Institute of Family Studies library for assisting in the sourcing of publications.

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Concepts and definitions

A number of terms and concepts are referred to throughout this document. Definitions and explanations used by other researchers, statutory bodies and agencies may well differ. Lack of clarity in definitions of key terms has a number of negative repercussions (van Dam 2001). For example, at a practice level, it means complainants are uncertain; people may lack the ability to stand up to opposition from sometimes very powerful players in the event they make a complaint or express a concern. Additionally, lack of definition can lead to toleration of potentially risky behaviours. It can lead to wrong accusations, or to draconian and inappropriate rules about not touching children at all. Of fundamental importance to strategy, policy, practice and communication are standardised and uniformly accepted definitions of key terms. This is a vital part of developing consistent and equitable approaches to issues associated with developing and maintaining child-safe organisations. Definitions of key terms are various, often uni-dimensional or alternatively are so broad as to be open to wide interpretation.

What is important is that there is common understanding of what the concepts and definitions are. In a broader sense, nationally accepted understandings and definitions may need to be developed for key terms in the future to enhance consistency and understanding. The definitions and explanations offered here are those used for the purposes of this document.

Child
A child refers to a person under the age of eighteen years.

Child-based organisation
A child-based organisation is one that provides services to children under eighteen years of age, either directly or indirectly, paid or voluntary, where the organisation and those working with the children are responsible for their welfare or owe a duty of care (see definition of 'working with children' below).

Child-safe environment
A child-safe environment is one where there is staff and volunteer awareness and strategies in place to keep children safe from any type of abuse or maltreatment. A child-safe organisation will have identified and scoped the risk factors present in the physical and interpersonal environment and taken steps to eliminate or safely manage them. A child-safe environment will be one that has a careful and thorough staff selection process, child-friendly policies, clear guidelines and management systems in place, including strategies to reduce opportunities and cues for offending and will enable early detection, reporting and investigation of allegations.

Commission
Acts of commission refer to acts directed towards the child and are typically denoted by the term *abuse*. Acts of commission include physically abusive behaviours (e.g., hitting, shoving, kicking), sexually abusive behaviours (e.g., genital fondling), and psychologically abusive behaviours (e.g., yelling, taunting, demeaning). Intra- or extra-familial members can perpetrate acts of commission upon a child.

Child maltreatment

The literature shows that there is no general agreement about the definition of what constitutes child abuse or unacceptable behaviour in relation to children. Different definitions relate to time, place and culture with people having different views on what they consider acceptable, problematic, abusive or reprehensible actions (Baird and Wagner 2000; Department of Health 2002; Wolfe, Jaffe, Jette and Poisson 2002).

In this report, maltreatment is defined as non-accidental behaviour towards a child, which is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or psychological harm. Behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and include acts of omission and commission. Specifically *abuse* will refer to acts of commission and *neglect* acts of omission. Maltreatment is used to describe any of the five maltreatment types: sexual abuse; physical abuse; psychological maltreatment; physical neglect; and witnessing family violence (see Bromfield 2005; Higgins 2004). "Maltreatment" and "abuse or neglect" are used interchangeably.

Intra-familial child maltreatment is most likely to be in the form of neglect, physical abuse or psychological maltreatment. Extra-familial child maltreatment is more likely to be in the form of 'abuse'. In this report the term 'abuse' is generally used to describe the behaviour of extra-familial perpetrators of child maltreatment.

Omission
Acts of omission in the context of child maltreatment refer to the failure to provide appropriate care to a child and are typically referred to as neglect. Acts of omission include physically neglectful behaviours (e.g., failure to provide food), medical neglect (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical care), supervisory neglect (e.g., leaving a child unattended), and psychologically neglectful behaviours (e.g., ignoring) (Lawrence & Irvine, 2004). Only a person who has a responsibility to provide appropriate care to a child can fail to provide that care, therefore acts of omission are typically only perpetrated by a parent or a person acting in the role of the parent.

Organisation
'Organisation' is a broad term that includes institutions, organisations that have paid or voluntary staff; in the public, voluntary or private sector; in residential or non-residential settings; and where adults may work either directly with children or be in an ancillary role (Gallagher 2000). A broad definition of organisation is in line with current Australian policies, which take a broad interpretation of what constitutes 'working with children'.

Organisational abuse
Organisational abuse is abuse by an adult who works with children and who is employed in a paid or voluntary capacity; in the public, community or private sector; in residential or non-residential settings; and may work either directly with children or be in an ancillary role. The definition applies to all adults who share the same basic relationship with children – that is they are involved with them in some kind of 'work' capacity (Gallagher 2000). The broadness of the definition of organisational abuse is necessary at this point in time because little is known about the subject and enables subsequent refinement of what those issues are once further data are collected (Gallagher 2000).

Organised abuse
Organised abuse refers to cases where there has been more than a single abuser and the adults concerned have acted in concert with each other to abuse one or a number of children, such as in paedophile or child sex rings.

Paedophile
Definitions of paedophile have varied between those that are inclusive and those that are exclusive. The latter reserve the term only where an adult has an enduring and often exclusive sexual interest in children. The inclusive definition is preferred as it is more readily identifiable. The inclusive definition is an adult who has a conscious sexual interest in pre-pubertal children, either through actual sexual contact with them or who has masturbated to sexual fantasies involving children (Finkelhor and Araji 1986). Children and young people may also sexually abuse another child or young person, however juvenile perpetrators of child sex abuse are not referred to as 'paedophiles'. Research described in this report refers to adult perpetrators of child sex abuse unless otherwise specified.

Perpetrator
Perpetrator refers to the person who has maltreated a child in some way, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, psychological or physical neglect, or exposing the child to family ('domestic') violence. 'Perpetrator', 'abuser' and 'offender' are interchangeable terms. While 'offender' is most commonly used in criminological literature, 'perpetrator' and 'abuser' are more common in social welfare, psychological and health literature.

Protective factor
The term 'protective factor' is used to describe factors that protect against negative outcomes such as poor psychological functioning (e.g., Masten and O'Dougherty-Wright 1998; Rolf, Masten, Cicchetti, Nuechterlein and Weintraub 1992; Stevens and Higgins 2002). A protective factor can also indicate either absence of a specific risk factor (e.g., an 'in-tact' family represents the absence of parental divorce), or a factor that reduces the impact of a known risk factor (e.g., a positive attachment relationship reducing the impact of parental divorce).

Resilience
Resilience refers to "the manifestation of competence in children despite exposure to stressful life circumstances or the presence of other risk factors and resulting vulnerabilities" (Pellegrini 1990: 205). It is not so much that the child is invulnerable but rather, that the child is less vulnerable to the negative consequences of the stressors. Coping abilities vary enormously between individuals. For example, constitutional or genetic factors, sex differences and temperament are three aspects of children's individual differences affecting resiliency (Neiman 1988).

Risk
The concept of risk was traditionally value-neutral and described the likelihood of an event occurring; however it has, in modern usage, taken on a negative connotation (Kemshall 2002). In the context of child maltreatment research, a risk factor refers to
> "a measurable characteristic of individuals [and organisations] that heightens the probability of a worse outcome in the future for groups of individuals who share the risk factor or who have more of the risk variable

than a comparison group who do not have the risk factor or have less of the risk variable" (Masten and O'Dougherty-Wright 1998, p. 10).

Risk assessment
In child protection, risk assessments refer to processes designed to assess the level of risk a child has of being abused in the future, usually in the context of their family situation. Various methodologies are used for this purpose. Risk assessment may also be used to assess the potential of an individual adult to abuse or neglect a child in their care. Whether a child protection risk-assessment approach is transferable, and whether it is an ethically, legally or practically sound method to use as part of a staff selection process for work with children is yet to be tested. Presently, screening based on identification of past behaviours such as a criminal record is a less problematic method of predicting future behaviours. Data on 'past behaviour' beyond criminal records is not available to employers centrally or nationally in Australia (unlike in the United Kingdom). Risk assessment can be more comprehensive through the use of thorough background and previous employment checks by individual organisations. During this process, past problematic behaviour that is below a level leading to conviction before a court, may be identified.

Screening
Screening refers to pre-employment suitability checks for workers and volunteer applicants. It involves a minimum of a criminal records check but may include other checks including checks with previous employers.

Selection and recruiting
This may involve a whole range of processes used to identify the best person for a particular job. The process may include criminal record checks, qualification checks, interviews, referee checks, employment checks and trial periods.

Sexually abusive behaviour
Sexually abusive behaviour is any sexual activity between a child and an adult or older person (five or more years older) or non-consensual sexual activity between minors. Sexual activity includes fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism and exposing or involving the child in pornography (Higgins, 1998; James, 1994a; US National Research Council, 1993).

Vulnerability
Vulnerability describes individual susceptibility to undesirable outcomes, which increases or decreases as a result of individual characteristics or traits (Masten and O'Dougherty-Wright 1998).

Working with children
The definition of 'working with children' developed in the United Kingdom is used in this report and includes people working with children in health, social welfare, education, accommodation, leisure, sporting, religious activities and criminal justice systems and extends to the voluntary sector. Working with children is also extended to first line managers and above including Directors of Social Services in order to prevent cover ups and collusion when abuse of a complex or organised nature is taking place (Thomas 2001).

Executive Summary

Scope

On behalf of the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council Child Safe Organisations Working Group, the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs commissioned the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies to conduct this project. The aim of this report is to provide an evidence base for Australian jurisdictions to inform decision-making in the area of pre-employment screening checks for child-related employment.

In this project publicly available material (primarily published academic literature) was reviewed to form the material presented in this report. Material is presented to describe the evidence available in the core areas of:
- child, perpetrator, familial and organisational factors that increase the risk of a child experiencing maltreatment;
- strategies for managing risk on child-based organisations and high-risk groups;
- issues to consider in screening and selection; and
- the efficacy of risk assessment tools for determining the potential for a sub-group of the general population working with children to perpetrate maltreatment.

In addition the report includes a discussion of theoretical frameworks for understanding and preventing organisational maltreatment and a consideration of legal issues that may arise in the course of developing policy and procedures for child-safe environments.

Key messages drawn from the research presented are identified throughout the report. Messages from research are clearly delineated in the body of the report.

Messages from research

This project comprised two key theoretical approaches to child-related employment screening: a developmental-ecological approach provided a systematic means of identifying risk factors associated with the occurrence of child maltreatment. The 'situational crime prevention' model provided a useful framework for extending the prevention of child maltreatment in an organisation setting beyond individual-based risk assessment and risk management strategies.

The broad findings from this report across the key areas of inquiry are described.

All children are potential victims and as such protection efforts should consider the welfare of all children. However, child sex abuse offenders were found to be careful in their selection of victims preferring vulnerable groups of children.

Perpetrators of intra- and extra-familial child maltreatment shared many similar risk factors, suggesting that there are some risk factors that increase the risk of maltreatment occurring regardless of environment or perpetrator type. However, there did not appear to be one 'type' of perpetrator of child sexual abuse the characteristics

of whom could be assessed in a purpose designed risk assessment tool for organisational abuse potential.

The most common pre-employment screening method is a police record check. It is well established that persons who pose a risk to children are rarely convicted of a crime. Thus only limited assurance can be gained from screening methods that rely on criminal convictions.

The efficacy of a broader risk assessment tool based on a 'profile' of child maltreatment offenders for use in child related employment screening was explored. There is a paucity of literature specific to risk assessments of employees and volunteers. However, actuarial instruments were shown to weight risk patterns more consistently than professional judgement and guided professional judgement models in the field on intra-familial child maltreatment. There is no reliable profile available to help identify individuals likely to perpetrate maltreatment in an organisational setting. The absence of a reliable 'profile' describing the characteristics of individuals likely to perpetrate child maltreatment in an organisational or institutional environment mean that assessments are largely limited to screening out individuals with known problem behaviour.

No selection processes can guarantee exclusion from organisations of all individuals who pose a risk to children. Employment screening is one component of a broader approach to minimise the risk of child abuse. Environmental conditions play an influential role in facilitating child abuse. Child abuse and maltreatment can be minimised through appropriate organisational management. There is a greater risk of child maltreatment in the absence of clear guidelines and protocols for dealing with accused or convicted perpetrators.

Comprehensive child abuse prevention strategies seek to minimise the risk of child abuse occurring in organisational settings by targeting at least four distinct domains, including victims (and potential victims), offenders (and potential offenders), specific places and circumstances, and whole communities.

1. Background

The purpose of this document is to inform a national framework for creating safe environments for children. The Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council Child Safe Organisations Working Group is supporting the development of a national framework for child-safe organisations throughout Australia. All states, territories, the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Australasian Police Ministers' Council, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and CrimTrac are represented on the Working Group. The deliberations of the Working Group have highlighted the need for a comprehensive and coherent approach to maintaining safe environments for children in organisations that extends beyond pre-employment screening.

The commitment of all jurisdictions and related portfolio areas in Australia is considered vital in examining the complexities and national implications of screening and information sharing. A national approach can be achieved through a sound, relevant national framework that collectively frames commitments, standards and guidelines while being responsive to state and territory needs and priorities. Related work concerning the safety of children and measures to be adopted by organisations is already being undertaken by a number of national forums, including:

- development by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs of model uniform legislation for the education sector;
- development of uniform spent conviction legislation by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General working party; and
- development of the Australian National Child Offender Register by the Australasian Police Ministers' Council.

The current literature review is intended to inform the development of a framework concerning an evidence-based guide for risk assessment and decision making when undertaking background checking. The objective of the proposed framework will be to ensure that there is a basis for sound decision making about acceptance or exclusion of persons in areas of child-related employment/volunteering.

The current literature review will involve an extensive review of risk factors in order to assist with identification/development of models that can be used by organisations wanting to be 'child-safe'. Although attention to recidivism is considered important, risk factors that are not linked with a known history of offending (i.e., risk factors associated with a first-time offence) are equally important. This topic requires identification and review of the relative merits of risk-assessment models that can be used by organisations to make valid, empirically based assessments of the risks of adults working for (or volunteering with) children harming those children in their care. Currently, such models are used to inform child protection practice – in making decisions about the relative risks faced by a child in their family or home situation.

As well as conducting a review of international literature on known risk factors for child maltreatment, this research will involve a review and critique of risk-assessment

models used in Australia and overseas and risk-management strategies in child-related employment.

The purpose of this review is not to be prescriptive about how jurisdictions should undertake risk assessments or endorse particular risk-management strategies, but rather to draw conclusions from the available literature about the evidence base that currently exists – and the limits of this – to highlight what factors need to be considered within such a model.

The literature

The majority of health and social research on child abuse is in the context of families. Assessment of risk of abuse to children is primarily applied to children already identified as having been abused. Assessments are focused on the family – the probability of the child being re-abused by the family or of being the subject of a further notification to authorities. The majority of criminological, psychological and psychiatric research has focused on the specific criminogenic behaviours and motivations of child abuse offenders – particularly child sex offenders. The focus has also been on the individual characteristics of the offenders and victims and the impact the abuse has had on victims of specific types of abuse. In short, the focus has been on individual characteristics. The contexts in which the offending has occurred and the cues and situations in which the offending was enacted are largely ignored in the literature. Risk assessments in these disciplines are primarily focused on the probability of recidivism of known (often convicted) child abusers (mainly sex offenders).

'Risk' refers to the possibility that an undesirable event will occur. Actuarial or 'risk assessment' involves evaluating the likelihood of future events, and designing ways to reduce the likelihood of undesirable events. Assessment tools designed to predict the potential for a subset of the general population of adults (people applying for employment or volunteer positions working with children) to engage in abusive or neglectful behaviours is a very new field. In fact, the field is so new that there is very little research literature. Risk assessments in the selection of staff and volunteers, research into abuse in organisations generally, and research into how risk of abuse may be reduced or eliminated in organisations is scarce. Although there is a paucity of specifically relevant literature, there certainly exists literature that can guide development in this area.

Structure of the present review

In this review, previous research will be drawn on that has not necessarily been designed with the theme of child safety in organisations being the central focus. Nevertheless, the existing literature reviewed here gives clear guidance about how issues of child safety can be developed and applied in any organisation where employees or volunteers work with or are responsible for the welfare of children. This report begins with a review of literature in which the child-related risk factors for abuse and neglect of children are identified, followed by the risk factors present for abusers and finally the risk factors that have been identified in organisations where abuse occurs. These risk factors provide a basis for future work on child-safe

organisations that will be expected to include management of risk in organisations and identification of appropriate risk ratings and assessments.

The factors that have been identified as necessary for prevention of abuse and neglect of children in organisations will then be discussed. These will include:
- risk-management strategies internal and external to the organisation;
- screening and selection processes; and
- risk-assessment processes, including the validity of using risk-assessment instruments for employment that have been designed for another purpose.

Key messages drawn from the research presented are clearly identified throughout the body of the report.

2. Introduction

Abuse in organisations

In the wake of investigations, inquiries and media reports that have revealed widespread and systemic abuse of children in institutions (often over many years), the public has become distrustful of the ability of many organisations to ensure the safety of children. Knowledge that institutions and organisations have been willing to suppress and ignore reports of abuses and further, have intimidated victims and protected perpetrators is also of grave concern:

> "[there is] a deep feeling of cynicism, scepticism, disappointment and distrust…about the internal processes and policies used by institutions to deal with allegations of sexual abuse" (Altobelli 2003: 2).

> "The damning reality is that it has taken media exposure of these large institutions not only to reveal that widespread abuse is incubated inside but also to force the hierarchies of such organisations to admit to it and to deal with the abusers they have been ignoring and sometimes hiding" (Doran and Brannan 1996: 159).

A review of literature on the abuse of children in organisations showed there is a paucity of research and a limited body of knowledge in this area. However, available research shows is that institutional abuse is a small but significant problem (Gallagher 2000). Although data on the prevalence of abuse and neglect are available from studies of incidence of abuse, these studies do not generally provide key information for developing an understanding of organisational abuse because they tend not to identify the relationship between victim and perpetrator, nor the method or situation in which the abuse occurred (for example Bagley, Wood and Young 1994; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994). Similarly, in Australia, data collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare classify child protection service activities in relation to different types of maltreatment or risk of harm, but not the context or location (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005). In other words, data on abuse of children in organisations currently are not being collected centrally in Australia.

A diverse range of issues has been addressed in the small amount of literature that exists – the focus of which has primarily been on sexual abuse. The possible reasons for the focus on sexual abuse, such as greater societal revulsion for sexual victimisation than more common forms of maltreatment such as neglect, are briefly addressed by Higgins (2004). Most research has been produced within the last 10 years, coinciding with the emergence of widespread concern and several government inquiries across a number of countries (Gallagher 1999b). Four major themes have emerged from the literature on abuse of children in public care:

- the extent of the abuse;
- the nature of the abuse;
- the investigation of abuse; and
- the prevention of abuse (Gallagher 1999b: 357).

Reports and inquiries that have revealed widespread abuse of children in organisations have appeared regularly over the decades and presently (Mullighan 2005). However, as pointed out by the Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee (2004), the problem with these inquiries is that they focused on the problems of particular institutions, rather than on institutional care generally. Lack of action on a broader scale has resulted in continued use of systems and management practices that are not specifically designed to minimise the opportunity for abuses to occur. Some abuse in organisations – especially that in children's homes in the past – may be explained in part by long-term and extensive neglect by the state in particular, and society in general (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004; Utting 1997; Westcott 1991). Lack of concern has manifest itself in a variety of ways including minimal policy and practice guidance; lack of resources; staff who are inadequate for the work due to a lack of qualifications, experience or personal skills; and inadequate recruitment, training and supervision of staff (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004).

Traditionally, explanations of child abuse have focused on the vulnerabilities of the victims and the backgrounds and psychological drivers of the perpetrators. Very little focus has been on the environmental factors and contexts in which the abuse was able to occur. For development of greater child safety in organisations this latter focus is a critical dimension.

In terms of perpetrators, two archetypes of institutional abusers exist:
- the charismatic, articulate, well-networked caring professional who is usually part of the leadership of the institution; and the
- isolated but dutiful staff member who is perhaps over helpful to colleagues and children and frequently does things outside normal duties. These actions simultaneously enhance relationships with staff, children and sometimes the children's families (Gallagher, Hughes and Parker 1996: 158).

Both these 'types' of abusers are similar in education, language, training and social class to most members of the wider staff. This makes it easier for the abuse to escape detection and harder for professionals to confront. Through labelling institutional abusers who are caught as 'cunning deviants', co-workers, managers and governing bodies have been able to release themselves from any sense of responsibility. However, investigations have concluded that thorough checks and monitoring systems in the organisations would have either prevented the abuse developing at all, or stopped it at a much earlier stage. System and environmental issues such as inspections and registrations and appropriate internal systems are very important in preventing individuals from attempting abusive behaviour (Doran and Brannan 1996). Nevertheless, little research has focused on situational factors in the environments in which abuse takes place.

Differences between abuse in familial and organisational contexts
It is clear from the literature that critical differences do exist between familial maltreatment and maltreatment occurring in the context of organisations and as such requires a different approach to that typical for child abuse within the family context. Some of the key differences are that for organisations, the scope and method of investigation is much more complicated (Blatt 1992; Blatt and Brown 1986; Durkin 1982; Groze 1990). Children (especially in residential facilities) are more vulnerable

because they do not have parental or wider family support and protection, and under-reporting is a typical feature of organisational abuse (Lerman 1994). What is permissible behaviour by adults in family settings may be unacceptable and even illegal in organisations (Rosenthal, Motz, Edmonson and Groze 1991). Finally, culpability extends beyond the immediate abuser to those responsible for managing the staff and the facility (Nunno and Motz 1988).

This present review of literature will report the characteristics of victims and perpetrators and identify the factors present in organisational environments that increase or decrease risk of abuse occurring. Staff selection and assessment tools will be discussed in greater detail.

A coordinated approach

Organisational abuse is one of the most challenging issues to confront social work in the past decade (Gallagher 2000; Stanley, Manthorpe and Penhale 1999). World-wide, government responses to the increasing emergence of evidence of widespread abuse of children in organisations fall into two broad fields: (1) a focus on childcare practice, and (2) a focus on attempts to control abusers (Gallagher 2002). In his study in the United Kingdom, Gallagher (2000) found substantiated cases of abuse in institutions were very diverse and occurred within a wide range of organisations – not just those that were residential. All children are potential victims and as such protection efforts should consider the welfare of all children, not just those identified as particularly vulnerable:

> "Some victims of abuse are only vulnerable in the sense they are naturally vulnerable in the face of adults who have malign intentions towards them" (Gallagher 1999b: 814).

Selection procedures for workers and volunteers can be an important deterrent for potential abusers. People intent on abusing children may often look elsewhere in order to place themselves in organisations where there are less stringent selection procedures and where there is less diligence in education and training, systems, management and supervision. Perpetrators have been shown to use the special features of an institutional environment to facilitate their abuse and prevent disclosure (Brannan, Jones and Murch 1993). As some child-related organisations become harder for paedophiles to enter and harder for their activities to remain undetected, displacement may become an issue:

> "It would seem that as opportunities to abuse children within institutions and organisations are restricted then perpetrators will adapt to gain access to children in other settings" (Sullivan and Beech 2002: 159).

In order to obscure previous offending behaviour against children and to continue working with children, perpetrators of abuse may change their names and move geographic locations.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- All children are potential victims and as such protection efforts should consider the welfare of all children, not just those identified as particularly vulnerable.
- As some child-related organisations become harder for paedophiles to enter and harder for their activities to remain undetected, displacement may become an issue.

3. Theoretical framework

This section begins by discussing the importance of future work in child protection being based on theories that are well established and which take into account the complexity of the issues and factors. By doing this, all current and future work may have a solid and consistent underlying basis ensuring policy, strategy and practice developed from findings will be reliable and evidence informed. A majority of research into child maltreatment is limited by the fact that the research is not based on accepted theory or viewed within the context of an acceptable theoretical framework. The findings are largely descriptive and provide no insight into why certain factors combine to predict emergence or outcomes of child maltreatment. Earlier theoretical perspectives were aimed at identifying the cause of child maltreatment and primarily focused on single elements which were hypothesised to be causal (Mash and Wolfe 1991) such as parental pathology (Garbarino 1977) and inter-generational transmission (Belsky 1993). Uni-directional approaches like these have resulted in inconsistent findings and failure to find any single factor that reliably predicts and explains child maltreatment (Bromfield 2005). The unidirectional approach also fails to consider interactions between the multiple variables and systems in which children and adults most typically function (Belsky 1993; Garbarino 1977; Garbarino and Eckenrode 1997; Lynch and Cicchetti 1998).

Developmental ecological theory

The 'ecological' model of child development originates from Bronfenbrenner (1979). In this model, child development is seen as a process in which biological and other child characteristics interact reciprocally with the environment over the course of life, so children affect their environments as well as being influenced by them. Parents and family remain significant influences throughout childhood, but are increasingly added to by other sources of environmental influence such as peers and the school environment (Sanson, Nicholson, Ungerer, Zubrick, Wilson, Ainley, Berthelsen, Bittman, Broom, Harrison, Rodgers, Sawyer, Silburn, Strazdins, Vimpani and Wake 2002).

Ecological models can be applied to research into both cause and consequences of child maltreatment. An ecological perspective takes into account all victimisation experiences rather than focusing on the impact of one specific type of child abuse or neglect (Briere and Runtz 1989). The ecological-transactional model has four levels: (a) the macrosystem (cultural beliefs and values), (b) the exosystem (neighbourhood and community settings), (c) the microsystem (family environment) and (d) ontogenic development (the individual's own developmental adaptation) (Lynch and Cicchetti 1998). Lynch and Cicchetti (1998) proposed that these levels including the ontogenic level, both interact and transact with one another to shape individual development.

The developmental stage of the child is now considered very important in research into child maltreatment, particularly because of the rapid changes that occur during childhood and adolescence. A major limitation of the first ecological models (e.g., Garbarino 1977) was the failure to incorporate human development into the research. Researchers adopting an ecological approach examine the processes by which

dysfunctional family dynamics – as well as contexts outside of the family – affect the emotional and behavioural problems of children and young people. The developmental stage of the child has implications for a range of issues including determining if an adult action fits within the realm of child maltreatment. For example, shaking a 7-year-old child by the shoulders is a vastly different level of abuse to the same action on a 7-month-old (Bromfield 2005).

Developmental stage is thus important in determining the severity of the immediate harm to the child and the effects that the maltreatment may be expected to have in later stages of development (Bromfield 2005). A developmental approach to understanding the impact of childhood trauma accounts for the changing expression of maladjustment across time as new developmental issues are encountered. It is also important in considering risk and protective factors that can act to heighten or ameliorate the consequences of child maltreatment and maltreatment sub-types. More research is needed to determine the unique vulnerabilities of the different developmental stages of childhood and adolescence. However, risk frameworks used in statutory child protection services have begun to incorporate child development into risk assessments (Child Protection Professional Development Unit 2003; Fluke, Edward, Bussey, Wells and Johnson 2001).

Risk factors in the child's environment such as parental divorce, low social and economic status, maternal depression, parental alcoholism, or unemployment may increase the child's risk of being maltreated or may interact with child maltreatment to increase the child's risk for later maladjustment (Finkelhor 1979; Paveza 1988). Risk and protective factors can be used to predict both the likelihood of maltreatment occurring and the likelihood of adverse effects for the child as a consequence of child maltreatment. The balance of protective factors is believed to explain the range of different outcomes observed (Cicchetti and Howes 1991) and helps explain why the same incident can affect different children in remarkably different ways and why not all children who have been maltreated will be observably harmed.

In the field of child maltreatment, risk and protective factors can be identified in three key areas. They can (a) influence the likelihood of being exposed to child maltreatment; (b) influence the short and long-term impact of the maltreatment on the individual; and (c) they can increase the risk of psychopathology, independent of maltreatment (Higgins and McCabe 1998a). Risk factors may also interact with maltreatment to increase the likelihood of the child experiencing further abuse or neglect; increase frequency or severity of abuse; and decrease the individual's ability to cope with the negative experiences. The effects of risk factors on adjustment confounds the direct effects of child maltreatment on adjustment (Higgins and McCabe 1994). A more commonly accepted hypothesis now is that the factors associated with the individual, their parents, family, community and social culture all combine to increase or decrease likelihood of maltreatment. A number of researchers in the field of child maltreatment have adopted frameworks for understanding the impact of child abuse and neglect that are grouped together as developmental-ecological models. The developmental-ecological theory was recommended as the underpinning theory for future research into child maltreatment by the US National Research Council (1993).

No single factor has been shown to cause child maltreatment and there is considerable overlap between maltreatment types: sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, neglect, and witnessing family violence (Higgins and McCabe 1998b). Researchers therefore need

> "a new model of maltreatment types and a comprehensive theory of the causes and consequences of child maltreatment that reflects the likelihood that there are not discrete maltreatment types, but that different maltreatment groupings emerge based on the severity of perpetrator behaviours. A new theory should enable prediction of effects and account for existing research data. It should give practitioners... an integrated perspective for understanding the multiple causes of clients' problems and provide a theoretical basis for the provision of family support, multi-dimensional approaches to prevention of child maltreatment..." (Higgins 2004:53).

Explanations of paedophilia

As shown in Table 1, theories to explain paedophilia in the literature have tended to fall into one of four categories of explanation for the behaviour:

1. *emotional congruence*: explanations based on finding out why a person would find relating sexually to a child emotionally gratifying and congruent;
2. *sexual arousal*: explanations based on finding out why a person would be capable of being sexually aroused by a child;
3. *blockage*: why a person would be frustrated or blocked in efforts to obtain sexual and emotional gratification from more normatively approved sources; and
4. *disinhibition*: why a person is not deterred by the conventional social restraints and inhibitions against having sexual relationships with a child (Finkelhor and Araji 1986).

Table 1: Four Theories of Paedophile Behaviour

Theory type	Explanation	
	Individual	Social/Cultural
Emotional congruence	Arrested development Low self esteem Symbolic mastery of trauma Identification with aggressor Narcissistic identification	Male socialisation to dominance
Sexual arousal	Arousing childhood experience Traumatic childhood sexual experience Operant conditioning Early modelling by others Misattribution of arousal	Child pornography Eroticization of children in advertising
Blockage	Oedipal conflict Castration anxiety Fear of adult females Traumatic experience with adult sexuality Inadequate social skills Marital disturbance	Repressive norms about masturbation, extramarital sex
Disinhibition	Impulse disorder Senility Alcohol problem Psychosis Situational stress Failure of incest avoidance mechanism	Cultural toleration of pornography, patriarchal prerogatives

Source: (Finkelhor and Araji 1986: 147)

Situational crime prevention

Factors external to the family have been examined to a limited degree by a number of authors researching the causes and influences of maltreatment recurrence (Terling 1999; Wollock, Sherman, Feldman and Metzger 2001). Research has however been patchy and inconclusive. Understanding environmental factors external to the individual and which influence behaviour is the cornerstone of much of the current crime prevention work. Situational crime prevention is based on the premise that all behaviour is the result of interactions between the actor, the characteristics of the actor and the circumstances in which an act is performed. It has two distinct theoretical roots: (a) the rational choice perspective which is adapted from the 'expected utility model' in economics and (b) the 'psychological decision-making' literature (Cornish and Clarke 2003).

Similarly, from a behavioural, social and environmental psychology perspective there is a subtle and intimate relationship between individuals and their environments. The behaviour of an individual may be highly variable from one situation to the next. For example, a person who may be described by some as aggressive does not behave uniformly in an aggressive manner, but rather, aggression is displayed occasionally and only when certain 'favourable' conditions are met (Wortley and Smallbone submitted). While people obviously differ in their propensity to commit crime, it is suspected that, given the right circumstances, most people are capable of committing

criminal acts (Mischel 1968). The classic psychological experiment by Stanley Milgram and his team (in which they asked naive participants to administer electric shocks as part of an experiment on learning) demonstrated the capacity of most individuals, under the right circumstances, to acquiesce to authority and inflict harm on others (Milgram 1974). The important factor is the environmental context.

A situational crime prevention approach is about creating *safe environments* rather than creating *safe individuals*. This approach has been successful in reducing a range of criminal behaviour such as physical and sexual assaults of adults, car thefts, robbery and shop stealing and may be equally applicable to reduction of abuse and assaults of children in organisational settings. To implement this principle, the criminal event or environment – rather than the offender or the victim – becomes the unit of analysis (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

Situational prevention involves opportunity-reduction through manipulation of environmental dimensions – making crime more risky, increasing the effort to commit crime, reducing the rewards of crime and removing the excuses used to circumvent moral constraints on behaviour (Clarke 1995, 1997; Clarke and Homel 1997). Evaluations of situational prevention projects have not shown significant displacement and indeed can have positive benefits beyond what was originally intended (Clarke 1997; Sherman 1990).

A promising addition to current preventive efforts in child sexual abuse are those based on developmental and situational crime prevention models (Smallbone, Marshall and Wortley submitted). The sexual offending literature, however, has largely ignored the role of situational factors in the prevention of sexual offending against children (Wortley and Smallbone submitted), as has child maltreatment literature generally. In the context of child-safe organisations, situational crime prevention has promise in giving an appropriate theoretical context for the construction of child-safe strategies. It strikes a balance between sensible precautions on the one hand and the need to maintain aesthetic and personal freedoms on the other (Laycock 2003). Situational prevention can be implemented without responsibility for the offending being taken away from the offender. Instead such an approach acknowledges that abuse of children is influenced by environmental factors (Smallbone et al. submitted). Situational prevention is described in greater detail below, in the section on risk management.

Situational crime prevention: Typologies for offending
Situational offending is the criminological term that is used to describe the interaction of factors that result in decision-making about committing crime, including the environment or situation in which the offending is to take place. Cornish and Clarke (2003) proposed three offender types based on the strength of the offender's criminal disposition and the role situational factors play in his or her offending:

1. *Anti-social predators*. These possess ingrained criminal dispositions and utilise situational data to make rational choices about the relative costs and benefits of criminal involvement. They may operate on the environment to increase criminal opportunities. The antisocial predator equates to the stereotypic high-fixated, predatory child molesters who are high-frequency chronic offenders. For predatory offenders, situational data inform their target

selection and they will expend considerable effort to achieve their goals. Obstacles to offending are seen as challenges to be overcome. Thus the stronger the individual's antisocial commitment, the more likely he/she will be an active manipulator of – rather than a passive responder to – environments. Predatory offenders will be the most difficult to deter from offending but frequency of offending may be significantly reduced through situational prevention.

2. *Opportunistic offender*. These offenders engage in occasional, low level criminality. They have a greater stake in conformity and are therefore subject to stronger personal and social constraints on their behavior. These constraints however, weaken from time to time. To facilitate their engagement in morally proscribed behavior, offenders may make excuses for their crimes (Sykes and Matza 1957), especially where situational factors serve to obscure personal responsibility (Wortley 2001). For this type of offender, organisational controls will be influential in preventing offending.

3. *Situational offenders*. These offenders react to particular sets of environmental circumstances. Their crimes include crimes of violence that erupt in the heat of the moment, or impulsive ones committed when overcome by temptation, or a temporary failure of self control (Cornish and Clarke 2003). The motivation for crime is supplied by the situation and the offence may represent an aberration in an otherwise law-abiding life. Situational offenders generally have no other criminal involvement and their offending will be a relatively isolated event, often committed as a reaction to cues.

These three classifications are useful for understanding a range of maltreatment types, not just sexual abuse. For both opportunistic and situational offenders in particular, the environment is critical to their decisions to offend or not. Reducing cues and opportunities for offending through manipulation of the organisational environment can be very effective in preventing abuse with minimal danger of displacement to other targets. While predatory offenders are likely also to commit opportunistic and situational offenses, the reverse is generally not the case: opportunistic and situational offenders will not, as a rule commit predatory crimes (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

Work related to child-safe organisations that begins with mutually agreed, well-established and respected theories underlying it will ensure all current and future work has a solid and consistent underlying basis and that policy, strategy and practice development will be based evidence informed.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- 'Developmental-ecological' theory is a useful model from which to conduct and evaluate research in the field of child protection and to identify risk and protective factors for maltreatment.
- Theories to explain paedophilia have tended to fall into one of four categories: emotional congruence, sexual arousal, blockage, and disinhibition.
- Crime prevention models – particularly 'situational crime prevention' – provide a useful basis for the development and enhancement of child safety and prevention of abuse strategies and programs in organisations.

- Situational crime prevention theorists posit three typologies for offenders: anti-social predators, opportunistic offenders, and situational offenders. Situational crime prevention strategies applied to the prevention of maltreatment in organisations are likely to assist in preventing maltreatment perpetrated by situational and opportunistic offenders.

4. Methodology

A literature search was conducted to identify research on risk factors for child abuse and neglect, particularly where abuse was in the context of organisational settings. An extensive national and international literature search has been conducted using a variety of databases including:

Australian
- Australian Federal Police Digest.
- Australian Institute of Family Studies Library Catalogue.
- Australian Public Affairs Information Service.
- Australian Family & Society Abstracts.
- CINCH (Australian Criminology Database).

International
- CareData
- Child Abuse, Child Welfare and Adoption (NISC).
- Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse.
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service.
- Sociological Abstracts.
- Social Services Abstracts.

For identifying research on organisational risk factors, management, recruitment and assessment, search words included:
- child and worker;
- paedophile and recruitment;
- paedophile and staff;
- personnel selection;
- institutional abuse;
- staff and child;
- exploitation and institutions
- recruitment and child;
- actuarial and child; and
- actuarial and risk and assessment.

For identifying research on child-related and perpetrator-related risk factors, search words included:
- child abuse;
- child abuser;
- perpetrator and child;
- extra-family perpetrator;
- paedophile and institution; and
- professional and perpetrator.

As other relevant data may not have been published, government and non-government bodies were approached to locate as many relevant reports as possible.

5. Risk Factors

Child-related and perpetrator-related risk factors are discussed in the following sections to provide a broad context for then discussing organisational risk factors and ways in which risks may be eliminated or managed. Child-related risk factors are particularly relevant for assessment of heightened or changing risk for individual children or groups of children. However, all children are at risk of abuse merely by virtue of being children. Some children however, particularly when in high risk organisational environments (such as those that are 'home-like') are more vulnerable and thus at heightened risk.

Vulnerability of a child to victimisation inside or outside the family situation is a heterogeneous factor influenced by different capability characteristics, developmental stage of the child and the activities and environments in which he or she interacts (Finkelhor 1995; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994). Using statistics on various forms of victimisation, Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman (1994) demonstrated that children are generally more prone to victimisation than are adults, and that social toleration of child victimisation and children's lack of social power contribute to their vulnerability. They concluded that

> "the sensitive psychological vulnerability of children in their dependent relationship to their caretakers renders such parental behavior... a major threat to normal child development" (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994: 177).

Explanations in the literature for why a child is abused may focus on the perspective of abusers, how the opportunity for the mistreatment of a child is potentiated, or on the particular characteristics of the child (Finkelhor 1979; Malkin and Lamb 1994). Considerable research has been conducted on risk factors for abuse in families, whereas there is a paucity of research examining risk factors for abuse within organisational contexts. Sexual abuse of children is the most frequently examined child maltreatment type (Higgins 2004). This is particularly evident in research investigating extra-familial child maltreatment.

Sexual abuse is often assumed to be one of the most damaging forms of abuse for children. However, research on sexual abuse of children is often examined in isolation of other 'toxic' factors present in the child's environment such as other forms of abusive and neglectful behaviours (Higgins 2004). These latter types are known to be equally harmful to children, in both their immediate and long-term adjustment and coping. There is strong evidence that the more pervasive types of maltreatment – such as neglect – are just as (or more) damaging than sexual abuse (Higgins and McCabe 2000; Ney, Fung and Wickett 1994).

By far, most of the literature related to extra-familial perpetrators of child abuse is in relation to perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Sex abusers may be expected to also inflict psychological and emotional abuse on their victims through for example their manipulation of the victim for compliance and secrecy. Evidence from inquiries revealed sexual abuse in residential institutions has co-existed with physical abuse, psychological maltreatment and neglect (Utting 1997). Thus sexual offenders may be

offending across multiple maltreatment types, even though the behaviour under examination in research has been their sexual offending. However, researchers have largely ignored the presence or absence of other forms of child maltreatment when investigating a particular maltreatment type.

Researchers who have investigated the prevalence of multiple maltreatment types reported that the majority of children who had been maltreated experienced more than one sub-type of abuse (Higgins & McCabe, 1998, 2000a, 2001b; McGee, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1997) and that maltreatment types often overlap and co-occur, confounding the search for separate effects (Howing et al., 1989; Kinard, 1994). Therefore, it is unproductive to focus on particular types of maltreatment rather than the abusive or neglectful experience as a whole for prevention efforts. Nevertheless, the characteristics of extra-familial abusers (and the children they maltreat) derived from data that has focused on only one type of offending (i.e., sexually abusive behaviour) may still provide important guidance for prevention efforts.

Another limiting factor of the research on perpetrators is that it is focused almost exclusively on detected abusers. Little is known about the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual or other abuse types who have avoided detection. Nevertheless, characteristics of perpetrators who have had a long history of sexually abusive behaviour before being detected, provides some illumination. (These are discussed in the section below on extra-familial perpetrator risk factors.)

Risk differentiation
It should be noted that currently, there is debate about the efficacy of examining risk factors as independent entities and using these to seek explanations for abuse and its consequences.

> "What researchers rarely ask... is whether child maltreatment is best understood as a single, broad construct – or whether the diverse elements that constitute maltreatment are so clearly differentiated from each other that they should be considered separately" (Higgins 2004: 51).

Theories of why particular children seem to be more at risk of maltreatment than others have not been articulated clearly in the child protection literature. Empirical research has been aimed more at identifying particular risk factors without necessarily organising the findings into a coherent theoretical rationale for how the presence or absence of the particular factor influences the likelihood of a child being subjected to abuse or neglect (Higgins 1998).

Although various risk factors have been identified, it should be remembered that ranking level of risk or harm on the basis of maltreatment type may be artificial and problematic. Because of the high degree of overlap between adults' retrospective reports of sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, neglect and exposure to family violence, a focus on specific maltreatment sub-types for prevention efforts may not be as valid as considering the whole abusive experience and taking a holistic approach to the environment (Higgins and McCabe 2000).

In this next section, the risk factors present for children are examined, followed by risk factors for perpetrators in the family and in extra-familial contexts. The risk

factors for adult workers identified by the research (overwhelmingly sex abusers) and the risk factors for organisations that are unaware of (or ignore) the possibility of abuse will be discussed. Following this section there will be a discussion of what the literature says about organisational risk-management strategies, which can assist to avoid organisational abuse occurring and provide a child-safe environment.

5.1 Child risk factors

Child factors increasing the risk of intra-familial maltreatment

Child age
Child age is a significant risk factor for maltreatment. Previous research has shown that where a young child was present in the home or where maltreatment began when the child was young were more likely to experience chronic child maltretment (Marshall & English, 1999). In another study, age of the youngest child in the home was the strongest predictor of maltreatment recurrence (the younger the child the greater the risk for maltreatment recurrence) (Fuller et al., 2001). Hamilton and Browne (1999) found that younger children were more likely to be maltreated by more than one family member and that children abused by non-family members tended to be older.

Child gender
Child gender is generally not a significant predictor of whether a child will experience intra-familial maltreatment (Hamilton & Browne, 1999; Terling, 1999). However, gender may be associated with the type of maltreatment a child is likely to experience and the degree of severity.

Child problems
Child problems were included in five of the 15 studies reviewed (DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999; Fuller et al., 2001; Hamilton & Browne, 1999; Marshall & English, 1999; Terling, 1999). More problems or the presence of specific child problems was a significant risk factor for maltreatment occurrence, re-referral and recurrence. Child problems included, child vulnerability (a composite of developmental problems, mental health problems and being under 6 years of age) (DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999), number of child problems (Fuller et al., 2001), developmental problems (Marshall & English, 1999), victim handicaps (Terling, 1999), behavioural problems, conduct disorder, learning difficulties, and severe medical problems (Hamilton & Browne, 1999).

Research shows that children who have experienced one form of maltreatment are more likely to be victimised again and to experience multiple maltreatment types (Bromfield 2005; Higgins 1998). A review of several studies showed that approximately two or three in every 10 children who were maltreated suffered at least one additional incidence of maltreatment of a severity warranting (at least) a referral to a statutory child protection body (Bromfield 2005). These data suggest that a child's experience of prior victimisation increases their vulnerability for experiencing further victimisation.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- The younger the child the greater the risk for maltreatment.
- Child gender is generally not a significant predictor of whether a child will experience intra-familial maltreatment.
- The more problems and the presence of child problems (e.g., developmental problems, behavioural problems) heightened the risk of the child experiencing intra-familial child maltreatment.

- A child's experience of prior victimisation increases their vulnerability for experiencing further victimisation.

Child factors increasing the risk of extra-familial maltreatment

Variations in risk and vulnerability factors for children can be explained in part by the targeting behaviour of the abusers. For example, a sex abuser may target particular children out of 'sexual preference' or from a belief that they are more susceptible to abuse or are less likely to disclose it (Kelly 1992).

Child age
The age of a child preferred by multiple child sex offenders investigated by the Child Exploitation Unit in Melbourne (between 1988 – 1996) was found to be very broad, although the largest group preferred 8-12 year olds (42%) (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). A study of victimisation by babysitters in FBI records found that child victims aged 1-3 were at greatest risk of physical assault while victims aged 4-5 were most vulnerable to sex offences (Finkelhor and Ormrod 2001).

Child gender
A study of victimisation by babysitters showed that boys were more likely to be victims of physical assault, whereas girls were more likely to be victims of sexual assault (Finkelhor and Ormrod 2001). Similarly, within the family, girls seemed more at risk of sexual abuse, whereas boys were more likely to be sexually victimised by extra-familial abusers (Bagley and Pritchard 2000; Beech 1998). McFadden and Ryan (1992) also found the group most at risk for being sexually abused in foster homes (family type environment) were girls (83%), and older children (mean age = 13.8 years). Researchers have shown that in the UK, boys seem to be most at risk in residential schools, while girls may be at greatest risk in children's homes (Gallagher 1999a; Westcott and Clement 1992). Thus gender combined with environment may heighten risk of sexual abuse – in family or family-like environments, the risk was highest for girls; for boys, sexual assault was more common outside the familial context.

While boys accounted for about half (52%) the officially recognised victims in a study of child sex offenders incarcerated in Queensland, offender self-reports suggested about 74% of victims were boys (Smallbone and Wortley 2001). The researchers suggest that sexual victimisation of boys may be underestimated perhaps both in victimisation surveys, and official statistics. Boys have been found to be at far greater risk of sexual assault from perpetrators who have *multiple* victims and are more likely than girls to report multiple male offenders (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). However, Petraitis and O'Connor found it was also not uncommon for some paedophiles to have no gender preference.

Child problems
Child sex abuse offenders were found to be careful in their selection of victims preferring vulnerable groups of children such as those with learning disabilities, special needs or those in care (Gallagher 1998, 1999b; Sullivan and Beech 2002). Organised paedophile rings may more often target children with special needs and disabled children because of the increasing awareness of professionals to abuse generally (Doran and Brannan 1996). Children with learning difficulties are less likely

to be believed by social work and legal professionals and may not be considered competent witnesses in court because of their cognitive and communication impairments.

These factors include a previous experience of any type of maltreatment, and physical or social isolation. Children who have experienced any type of abuse or neglect have been shown to be more vulnerable as preferred targets for extra-familial abuse (Gallagher 1999b; Kelly 1992; Westcott and Clement 1992; Jones 1994a; Sloan 1988). Similarly, Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that multi-child sex offenders targeted children who were in care, lacked parental interest and supervision, had social, emotional, or learning difficulties and those who were suffering love or attention deprivation. Children who had contact with social services prior to detection of organised abuse tended to suffer the more extreme and bizarre abuse and were often not receiving sustained intensive input from any agency (Gallagher et al. 1996). Factors that precipitate children being taken into care are the same as those that make them more vulnerable to further abuse outside the family (including being targeted by child sex abusers), which reinforces the notion that child maltreatment prevention requires multi-dimensional approaches (Higgins 2004).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- Variations in risk and vulnerability factors for children can be explained in part by the targeting behaviour of the abusers.
- The age range for child victims of extra-familial maltreatment is very broad. Research has shown that younger children are more likely to experience physical abuse than older children and that older children are at greater risk of experiencing sexual abuse than younger children.
- Research suggests that girls may be more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys and that boys may be more vulnerable to physical abuse than girls. However, these findings should be approached with caution as other research suggests that sexual abuse of boys may be under-estimated. There appears to be an association between child gender and environment that combines to increase a child's risk of particular abuse types.
- Child sex abuse offenders were found to be careful in their selection of victims preferring vulnerable groups of children.
- Children who have experienced any type of abuse or neglect have been shown to be more vulnerable as preferred targets for extra-familial abuse.

5.2 Perpetrator risk factors

Perpetrator characteristics increasing the risk of intra-familial maltreatment

The presence of parental problems increases the risk of a child experiencing intra-familial child maltreatment (Bromfield 2005). A plethora of parental characteristics have been examined in research investigating the cause of maltreatment. No one factor has been found to predict a child's experiencing maltreatment, however several key parental factors have been identified as being associated with the occurrence of maltreatment: family violence, substance abuse, social isolation, parental experience of maltreatment as a child, and parental attitudes and personality.

Demographics

Parental age
Parental age has frequently been associated with intra-familial child maltreatment. The younger the parent (particularly the mother) at the age of their first child's birth the greater the likelihood of the child experiencing maltreatment (Beckett, 2003).

Perpetrator gender
Research has shown that mothers are more frequently the perpetrators of intra-familial child maltreatment than fathers. However, it has previously been noted that mothers are predominantly the perpetrators of maltreatment as they are the primary carer of children in the vast majority of families and therefore spend the greatest amount of time with the children relative to any other adult (Beckett, 2003).

Social support
The less social support a family received the greater the likelihood of maltreatment and chronic maltreatment occurring (Haapasalo & Aaltonen, 1999; DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999; Kotch et al., 1999; English & Marshall, 1999; Terling, 1999).

Substance abuse
The presence of substance abuse (alcohol abuse, drug abuse or both alcohol and drug abuse) was a significant predictor of maltreatment and chronic maltreatment (DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999; English & Marshall, 1999; Hamilton & Browne, 1999; Kotch et al., 1999; Terling, 1999; Wollock et al., 2001). In terms of sexual abuse, substance abuse may remove inhibitions and allow for convenient rationalisations for inappropriate behaviour. Substance abuse also exacerbates any pre-existing psychopathology (Curtis 1986), which is a risk factor for child maltreatment. Physical abuse of children and parental alcoholism (West and Prinz 1988) or other substance abuse (Malinoscy-Rummell and Hansen 1993) have been found to frequently occur together. The higher risk for physical abuse observed in children of alcoholics may, however, be the result of other variables such as low socio economic status or reporting bias (West and Prinz 1988).

Family violence
Studies in which domestic violence or spouse abuse was investigated showed domestic violence to be a risk factor for (DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999; English & Marshall, 1999; Hamilton & Browne, 1999). One study showed that children from

families with a prior reported incidence of spousal assault were five times more likely to be the victim of a substantiated incident of child maltreatment than those families in which spousal abuse did not occur (Rumm et al., 2000).

Inter-generational transmission
A parent's experience of maltreatment as a child was found to be a significant risk factor for their child being re-referred to statutory child protection services or experiencing recurrent child maltreatment (English & Marshall, 1999; Marshall & English, 1999). Haaspasalo and Aaltonn (1999) attempted to create a model that predicted the occurrence of child physical abuse, child psychological abuse and parental punitiveness from variables relating to the mother's experience of childhood abuse. The resulting model explained one third of the variance, however the findings were mixed for different maltreatment types.

Parental impairments
The presence of parental problems and impairments have been shown to increase the risk of a child experiencing intra-familial child maltreatment. Examples of parental problems and impairments shown to be related to maltreatment include: mental health problem, problem solving deficits, maternal depression, psychiatric problems, a criminal history or history of victimising others presence of psychopathology and inadequate coping (Curtis 1986; DePanfilis & Zuravin, 1999; English & Marshall, 1999; Hamilton & Browne, 1999; Kotch et al., 1999; Radhakrishna et al., 2001; Terling, 1999). In relation to child sexual abuse, Curtis (1986) suggested that "mental illness seems to cloud rational judgement and weaken customary restraints possibly leading to inappropriate sexuality with children" (p. 593).

Poor impulse control is common in physically abusive parents and sex offenders. Physically abusive parents have been shown to have higher levels of cognitive disturbances resulting in unrealistic expectations of children and lack of parenting skills (Azar, Barnes and Twentyman 1988). Other risk factors are lack of skills in dealing with child non-compliance, parents who interact poorly and infrequently with the child, or who have poor problem-solving skills. These parental characteristics place children at risk of physical abuse in particular (James 1994). Using the Standardised Personality Assessment tool (Todd and Gesten 1999) found the most prevalent abusive personality style for fathers was that which is emotionally aloof, rigid, prone to irritability and temper outbursts, high in aggression, low in empathy and social connectedness and with a tendency toward antisocial or sociopathic traits.

Parenting attitudes and personality traits
'Traditional' attitudes to parenting, such as support of corporal punishment to discipline children has been shown to negatively influence perceptions of what are abusive behaviours (Ashton 2001). The high prevalence of physical punishment as a discipline technique appears universal in abusive homes (Boss 1995). Families at risk of child abuse often employ ineffective and inconsistent discipline (James 1994) and if smacking is found to be ineffective or does not elicit the desired response, it may lead to an escalation of violence (Boss 1995) – many cases of child abuse have resulted from an escalation of what begins as low level hitting (McCord 1991; Rohner, Kean and Cournoyer 1991; Straus 1991). Corporal punishment has been associated with a variety of psychological and behavioural disorders of children and adults including anxiety, alcohol abuse, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem,

impulsiveness, delinquency and substance abuse. The holding of traditional attitudes about corporal punishment may be problematic in families and also potentially problematic in staff (McCord 1991; Rohner, Kean and Cournoyer 1991; Straus 1991). Higgins and McCabe (1994) found patriarchal and authoritarian views about the role of women and children in the family were risk factors for child sex abuse.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Mothers are more likely to perpetrate intra-familial maltreatment than fathers.
- The younger the parent when their first child is born the greater the likelihood of their children experiencing maltreatment.
- The presence of family violence, substance abuse, social isolation, parental impairment or parental experience of maltreatment as a child have been shown to increase a child's risk of experiencing intra-familial child maltreatment.
- Parent's with poor impulse control or who interact poorly with children are a greater risk of perpetrating maltreatment.
- Patriarchal and authoritarian views about the role of women and children in the family and traditional' attitudes to parenting, such as support of corporal punishment to discipline children have been shown to increase the risk of children experiencing intra-familial maltreatment.

Perpetrator characteristics increasing the risk of extra-familial maltreatment
Because the vast majority of the literature on extra familial perpetrators focuses on sexual assault and the individual characteristics of perpetrators the characteristics of sexual abuse perpetrators feature most prominently in the following discussion. As stated previously, sexual abuse is not the only type of maltreatment that the sex abuse perpetrator is inflicting on a child when they sexually abuse. However, the interaction and complexities of various forms of maltreatment are commonly not the focus of research. Additionally, little is known of the characteristics of perpetrators who are *not* caught.

Demographics

Gender
One of the most consistent findings in all the research on child abuse offending is that males are overwhelmingly more likely to be perpetrators of child sex abuse than are females. Where females are involved, it is most often with a male partner who instigated the offending (Gallagher et al. 1996). Nineteen percent of sex abuse perpetrators in 51 multiple abuser cases in the UK were found to be female by (Gallagher et al. 1996).

Women sex abusers may be more common than the research suggests; however, given that women are more typically assigned tasks of child care and child hygiene, abuses may be more easily masked as part of their care-taking role. Social attitudes toward women make disclosures about female sexual abuse less likely. Young boys are considered 'lucky' if sexualised by older females and younger children are simply not believed (van Dam 2001). Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) also suspected that female offenders were more common than reported.

Age
Of 205 extra-familial child sex offenders examined in Melbourne, 85% were found to be aged between 20 and 50 years (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). In comparison with intra-familial abusers, Bagley and Pritchard (2000) found that extra-familial child sex abusers were younger with an average age of 38 years compared to intra-familial sexual abuse perpetrators' average age of 47 years. (This was thought to be because the opportunity for sex offenders to sexually abuse their own children did not arise until their own children were old enough, however they were able to offend outside the family at a much younger age).

Adolescent offending
Although reliable prevalence data are notoriously difficult to obtain, estimates are that children and adolescents may be responsible for between 17% and 40% of all sexual offences (Christodoulides, Richardson, Kennedy, Graham and Kelly 2005). In particular, child/adolescent offenders are thought to be responsible for between 30% and 60% of all sexual offences against children (Bourke and Donohue 1996; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994).

According to some researchers, around 20% of sexual offending begins in adolescence (LeGrand and Martin 2001; Prendergast 1993; Rasmussen 2001). Of 6,400 sex offenders cautioned or found guilty in the UK in 1997, just under one quarter were aged between 10 and 21 years (Home Office 1998). A large proportion of adult sex offenders were found to have committed sex offences in adolescence (Christodoulides et al. 2005) or to have had some form of sexually deviant behaviour or interest prior to age 18 (50%) (Abel, Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, Mittelman and Rouleau 1988). However, some commentators have argued that adolescent and adult sexual offenders may be largely distinct populations (Hanson 2002; Smallbone in press-b). While most teens appear to desist by early adulthood, adolescent sexual offenders are at substantial risk of committing further sexual offences while still in adolescence (Nisbet, Wilson and Smallbone 2004; Smallbone and Wortley 2004) and a large minority of adolescent sexual offenders will be observed to commit nonsexual offences as adults (Nisbet et al. 2004; Righthand and Welch 2001).

Marital status
Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that a majority of extra familial multiple child sex offenders (63%) had never married – however, some were married with children. Many child sex abusers do not have sexual relationships with adults (Salter 1993). Two thirds of extra-familial multiple child sex offenders in Melbourne were found to have had an adequate to high standard of living. It was common for the offenders to report that they grew up with no father or a father who was ineffectual (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999).

Substance abuse
In a review of the child sex abusers literature, Langevin and Watson (1996) showed that: Alcohol abuse was a significant risk factor for sexual abuse with approximately 52% of sex offenders being alcoholics or heavy drinkers. However, drug abuse was rare and appeared in only 2%–3% of abusers.

Violence and other criminal offending

Across all child sex perpetrator types (biological, non-biological family and extra-familial) there is a high likelihood of the presence of criminal convictions for other, non-sexual offences (Bagley and Pritchard 2000; Cox and Pritchard 1997; Pritchard and Stroud 1999; Simon, Sales, Kaszniak and Kahn 1992; Weinrott and Saylor 1991). Extra-familial perpetrators are more likely than familial perpetrators to have convictions for violence and other types of offences (Bagley and Pritchard 2000). The study by Smallbone and Milne (2000) suggested that where violence was used, it was actually not part of the gratification but rather an instrument used to achieve their aims.

Pritchard and Bagley (2000) examined the police files of a 2-year cohort of 462 men *charged* with a sexual offence against a minor in two English counties of whom 374 were convicted. Multi-crime child sex offenders were classified as being either violent or not violent. The pattern of convictions produced a typology based upon judicially substantiated parameters. It was found half the men found guilty of sex offences had prior convictions for non-sexual crimes, including one in four who had convictions for violence offences. Sex-only offenders tended to be of an older age and a higher proportion of them offended within the family (36%). Offenders with other non-violent offending were more likely to have a history of early delinquency and long term criminal recidivism, whereas offenders who also had violent offending also had early delinquency and long term criminal recidivism but were more likely to offend against non-family victims than were the non-violent sex offenders. Many of the child sex offenders who also had other violence offences were often brought to the attention of police earlier through their cruelty to animals.

Prior convictions

Of 205 extra-familial multiple-child sex abusers presented at court in Melbourne, nearly 70% pleaded guilty at trial and only 5.4% were acquitted. Nearly 60% of the multiple-victim offenders were sentenced to imprisonment (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). In many cases, however, charges were not laid until a long time after first abuse occurred. More than 50% of reports of abuse among the Melbourne child sex offenders were disclosed five years after the first offence occurred and only 25% of the offenders had prior convictions for sexual offences against children (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999).

Of the five cases of abuse reported to police from a psychiatric institution in Sydney in the 1990s, none resulted in charges because the victims did not present as 'good witnesses' as they had mental illnesses. Perpetrators who were inmates were considered likely to be acquitted on the basis of diminished responsibility and the perpetrators had merely been "moved on" to other institutions to continue abusing with impunity, sometimes for years. Although staff perpetrators may have been considered to have breached their code of ethics, they would not necessarily be charged with a criminal offence since there was a question of 'consent' despite there being a huge difference in power relationship (Davidson and McNamara 1999).

Extra-familial child sex perpetrators have been found to be more likely to be convicted of the offence for which they are charged, while those abusing within their own family are less likely to be convicted (Bagley and Pritchard 2000).

Childhood victimisation

The rate of sexual victimisation in childhood experienced by child sex offenders varies from study to study (Craissati, McClurg and Falla 1999; Dobash, Carnie and Waterhouse 1993; Eliott, Browne and Kilcoyne 1995; Fisher, Beech and Browne 1998; Hanson and Slater 1988; Weeks and Widom 1998). Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that some extra-familial child sex offenders had been abused themselves as children. Smallbone and Wortley (2001) found 50% of men incarcerated for sexual offences against children in Queensland said they had been abused as children.

Looking overall at the research that has been done, it appears that approximately one in every four perpetrators of child sexual was sexually victimised as a child. However, research that showed that many males incarcerated for sexual offences did not identify themselves as having been sexually abused but when further questioned reported that they had experienced sexual contact with a person more than five years their senior during their childhood or adolescence (Briggs and Hawkins 1996). Briggs and Hawkins (1996) found that the child sex offenders in their study were more likely to have been abused by an adult woman, to have been abused by a greater number of people and to regard their own abusive behaviour as normal than did a non offending control group. Other research has found a link between multiple episodes of maltreatment and multiple perpetrator abuse in childhood and later child abuse offending in adulthood. Hamilton, Falshaw and Brown (2002) found 74% of those committing violence and/or sex crimes as adults had experienced some form of re-victimisation in childhood by different perpetrators, compared to 33% of those committing non-violent offences.

Other factors associated with the abuse may also be significant to later offending in adulthood. Children often replicate the interpersonal and child-rearing styles learned from their parents (Kolko 1992) and children who are exposed to any type of chronic abuse often go on to become depressed, violent and alcoholic as adults – factors often present for adults who sexually abused a child (Straus and Kantor 1994). Those children not overcome by patterns of family violence and who do not go on to abuse children tend to be those who had a higher IQ, or a stable attachment to at least one parent figure who was not neglectful or abusive (Rutter 1999). Watkins and Bentovim (1992) concluded there was evidence to demonstrate that the long-term effects of childhood sexual victimisation are associated with psychological disorders in adult males and also with marked risk for the development of alcohol and drug misuse. It was considered that these latter problematic behaviours (arising possibly from the abuse) were what influenced child abusive behaviour in later life (Craissati, McClurg and Browne 2002). No research has clearly demonstrated whether the abuse itself or the related consequences of the abuse in adulthood determine likelihood to become a perpetrator.

Perpetrator impairment

Physical impairment. Langevin and Watson (1996) showed that endocrine disorders were present in 5%–10% of offender samples. These disorders included diabetes and thyroid disorders, which are associated with mood swings, depression, aggressiveness and cognitive dysfunction.

Psychological impairement. Langevin and Watson (1996) also identified a number of psycho-social factors as common for (detected) child sex abusers:

- Up to 80% had a *sexual disorder*, although disinhibiting factors such as alcohol were often present at actual commission of the crimes.
- *Inadequate socialisation* and *pro-criminal orientation* were reflected in about 40% of sex offenders.
- *Psychoses* and loss of touch with reality was present in 5%–10% of sex offender samples.
- *Neuropsychological impairment* was reported in 40%–60% of sex offenders, with paedophiles and sadistic, sexually aggressive offenders showing higher incidences.

Perpetrator attitudes and personality traits

Perpetrators of extra-familial sexual abuse have often been described as outwardly trustworthy and often vocal against paedophiles. They often have highly developed interpersonal skills with both adults and children, and are likeable, respected by others, and often are important to the child's family (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). Extra-familial perpetrators in the study by Beech (1998) had very high levels of emotional identification scores with children, suggesting the perpetrators were highly fixated on children and saw them as their primary sexual interest and emotional outlet. High-risk individuals are those who spent inordinate amounts of time with children; focus on children of the same age and sex; try to see children outside the boundaries of the organised activity; and to give them gifts, trips and other favours (Salter 1993).

Unlike extra-familial abusers, intra-familial abusers have low levels of emotional identification with children (Beech 1998). Other researchers have found that adult males who sexually abuse children have comparatively poorer empathy with their child victims than non-sexual criminals, even where they themselves were victimised in childhood (Fisher, Beech and Browne 1999; Haywood and Grossman 1994). In one study, child sex offenders and rapists were more introverted compared to violent offenders but their use of alcohol was similar (Gudjonsson and Sigurdssn 2000).

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse were found to often deny the reality of their crimes and the possible damage to their victims and sometimes claimed the victim was in part responsible for what occurred (Fischer, Beech and Browne 1999). Despite their 'respectable' external personas, Beech (1998) reported that extra-familial perpetrators tended to have very deviant personalities and attitudes and distorted beliefs about children that they used to justify their offending (as measured by a battery of tests). On the other hand, intra-familial abusers were found to have less deviant attitudes (Todd and Gesten 1999). Cognitive disorders are addressed again below under the section on 'Recidivism'.

Characteristics of child sex offending

Viewing pornography
Marshall (1988) found that up to one-third of child molesters viewed pornography immediately prior to offending. Smallbone and Wortley (2000) also found that 19% of offenders showed their victim pornography to incite their curiosity and help prime them for sexual contact. Collecting pornography, child erotica, and records of victims is "extremely prevalent" with paedophiles (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). Of the 205

perpetrators in their study, Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that 66% had pornographic material in their possession detected by police investigators. Of these, 135 (43%) had adult pornography only and 57% had child pornography or erotica. Location of the pornography collections was mostly in the perpetrator's home.

Grooming
Contacting the children outside organised activities, having children take sweets out of an adult's pocket, engaging in wrestling play and so on may be part of a 'grooming' process used to desensitise a child for sexual abuse. Equally, it may be innocent behaviour.

In developing and maintaining child-safe organisations, all abuse and maltreatment types are of concern. However, there is a need for clarity in particular about what constitutes sexual abuse, and the behaviours that often precede it. Knowledge of the entrapment and control mechanisms (i.e., 'grooming') used by child sex abuse perpetrators to obtain compliance and silence from their victims is very important for staff and managers and in the development of strategies that define and limit what might be termed 'ambiguous' behaviour. This "would help everybody steer a safer course through a maze of unnecessary complexities" (van Dam 2001: 52).

Quite sophisticated entrapment techniques are used by some child sexual abusers, including inducements, to draw the children into abusive situations and increase their difficulty in disclosing the abuse (Gallagher 1998). Being incremental, entrapment acts to draw victims into an ever more abusive situation while also enabling the abuser to identify and avoid children who might disclose or might not be sufficiently compliant as the abuse develops (Gallagher 1998). Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that every offender had a grooming process they used, which centred on breaking down the child's inhibitions and defences. For all types of sex offender, children are made acquiescent through touching them non-sexually, playing with them and giving them a lot of attention (Beech, Friendship, Erikson and Hanson 2002; Smallbone and Wortley 2001).

Offenders usually knew the child prior to the offending, often for significant periods of time before sexual contact occurred. For example, the study of incarcerated child sex abusers in Queensland showed 76% of intrafamilial offenders, 28% of extrafamilial offenders and 39% of mixed-type offenders had known the child for more than one year before having sexual contact with them.

Place of contact and offending
Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that multiple child sex offenders had often deliberately placed themselves in an occupation, sporting or service activity, geographic location or family situation that allowed them to access children. For 39% of the 205 offenders examined, access to children was achieved through participation in some type of organisation. A further 49% of perpetrators accessed children through being a friend of the family, relative or neighbour. Just over one in four was professionally employed as a teacher, youth or welfare worker, babysitter or religious leader.

In Smallbone and Wortley's (2001) study of incarcerated child sex offenders in Queensland, organisational settings accounted for a small but nevertheless significant

number of offences, with 20% of extra familial offenders accessing children via an organised activity. Only 8% of extrafamilial offenders, however, said they joined a child or youth organisation for the purpose of accessing children for sexual abuse (Wortley and Smallbone submitted). Offenders need opportunities to be alone with the child for most types of sexual abuse to occur. Although children may have been met in the context of organisations, a large proportion of abuse was committed in private homes or cars. Half of the offenders committed the abuse in a private home and one quarter in a car. Smallbone and Wortley (2001) found that:

- for *intra-familial* sex offenders, the most common means for organising time alone with the child was being at home alone with the knowledge of their wife or girlfriend (57.7%) and through watching television with the child (36.6%);
- for *extra-familial* sex offenders, the most common venue was similarly watching television with the child (32.2%), letting the child sleep in the same bed (30.5%) and going for car rides with the child (30.5%); and
- for *mixed-type offenders* (offending in and outside the family), the most common means was similarly watching television with the child (73.3%), sneaking into the child's bedroom at night (63.3%) and letting the child sleep in the same bed (60.0%).

Settings for offending described by the offenders were domestic, organisations and public places, with the majority of all offences (69%) occurring in the home of the perpetrator (Wortley and Smallbone submitted). In a review of literature on the spatial behaviour of sex offenders (adult and child victims), researchers found that most offenders commit their crimes close to their own homes (Beauregard, Proulx and Rossmo 2005). The authors noted there was surprisingly little empirical research existing that examines the interlinkage between offender characteristics, modus operandi, crime scene variables and spatial behaviour.

Characteristics by occupation
Except for a growing body of research on cleric sexual abusers, there is little research that examines child abuse based on occupational type. Offending by two different occupations are described here. In a study of FBI records by (Finkelhor and Ormrod 2001), it was found that male perpetrators constituted 77% of sex-offending babysitters reported to police, while females made up the majority of physical assaulters (64%). In a survey of US teenagers, females were shown to be twice as likely as males to have had babysitting experience (Kourany, Gwinn and Martin 1980) and among adult babysitters, the ratio is considerably higher (US Bureau of the Census 1990). Nevertheless, male babysitters who were convicted for child sex offences outnumbered the female offenders (63% male compared to 37% female). Thus the true risk of a male babysitter offending is much greater than the two-to-one ratio of male to female offenders found in the data by (Finkelhor and Ormrod 2001). These findings are based on cases in which abuse is detected and reported and the perpetrator convicted, it is possible that because of stereotypical attitudes within the community about the gender of child sex abusers, that a female babysitter is less likely to be suspected or convicted of abusing children in her care.

In a study that compared 24 male clerics with 24 other sex offenders (matched on offence type, age, education and marital status) and also compared them to the whole population of sex offenders, it was found that the cleric child sex offenders:

- were a more highly educated, older and predominantly single (i.e., not married or dating) subgroup of sex offenders;
- showed less antisocial personality disorders;
- had a longer delay before criminal charges were laid, or lacked any criminal charges; and
- tended to use force more often (Langevin, Curnoe and Bain 2000).

Although a majority of cleric sex offenders suffered from a sexual disorder (71%) they did often not differ from the control groups in this respect (Langevin et al. 2000). The hypotheses about low levels of sexual outlets and high levels of childhood sexual abuse histories in clerics were not supported. The authors concluded that treatment of cleric sex offenders should focus especially on sexual deviance, substance abuse and endocrine disorders.

Another study compared 30 Roman Catholic cleric child sex offenders with 39 non cleric alleged child sexual offenders and 38 normal control subjects using the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Inventory (DSFI) (Haywood 1994 in Sullivan and Beech 2002). In most respects the two groups were similar. Haywood et al. (1996a; 1996b) found that, similar to (Langevin et al. 2000), cleric child sex abusers were significantly older and better educated, showed less sociopathy and mental disorder; and were more likely to abuse boys. Haywood et al. (1996a; 1996b) also found clerics had significantly older victims compared to other child abusers with 63% having victims aged 14-17 years. Abuse in churches (whether perpetrated by clergy or laity) will be discussed further below in the section on organisational risk.

Opportunity

Recent research has challenged the view that most sexual offenders are dedicated, serial offenders driven by irresistible sexual urges. For example, some disquieting research among a 'normal' male population indicates that sexualisation of children may be more widespread than previously assumed (Smallbone in press-a). Widespread use of the internet for transmitting child pornography reported by Elmer-Dewitt (1995) is consistent with information suggesting sexual interest in children may be common among adult males (van Dam 2001). Canadian research based on 750 randomly sampled males in the city of Calgary aged 18-27 years, showed that many would sexually offend against a minor if the opportunity arose (Bagley, Bertrand, Bolitho and Mallick 2001). The study showed that:
- 1.2% admitted having sexual contact with a male or female under 13 years;
- 7.6% admitted at least sexual touching involving a male or female aged 13 – 15 years; and
- 4.6% said they were currently interested in sexual relations with a boy or girl aged less than 13 years.

When the Canadian sample was asked why they had not acted on their interest in children:
- one third (of the 4.6% who self reported as being interest in sexual relations with a child) said they had not had the opportunity;
- half of those interested in sexual relations with a child said they were afraid they would be found out; and

- 15% of those interested in sexual relations with a child said they had someone in mind and will have sex with them when they can (Turner 1998).

When the respondents who had actual sexual contact with children under 13 years was extrapolated out, it was estimated that up to 5% of adult Canadian males will have actual sexual contact with someone aged under 13 years at some time in their adult lives. The relatively young age of the males surveyed (18 to 27 years) may have impacted on the likelihood of their reporting a sexual interest in minors.

Recidivism

A consistent finding in the juvenile and adult sex offender literature is that officially recorded recidivism is a significant underestimation of the actual number of offences committed (Hanson and Bussiere 1998). This is due to a number of factors including reluctance of Crown Prosecution to rely on child witness testimony, and victims' families preferring their child not to experience the potential distress of providing evidence (Christodoulides et al. 2005). A total of 1,010 children (748 boys and 262 girls) were reported to have been abused by the 169 incarcerated child sex offenders in Queensland who admitted committing at least one sexual offence against a child. Only 393 (39%) of these victims were associated with the official convictions (Smallbone and Wortley 2001). Intra-familial offenders disclosed an average of 1.5 victims each, extra-familial offenders 6.1 victims and mixed-type offenders an average of 20 victims. Nearly three quarters of offenders had more than one sexual encounter with their first victim and just over one quarter had more than ten sexual encounters (Smallbone and Wortley 2001). Additionally, 29.5% had a sexual relationship that lasted less than one day, while 37% had a relationship that lasted longer than 12 months. Similarly, Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) found that the abuse was often committed over extended periods of time before first report of abuse. Nearly 60% of offenders offended against a child for periods of 1-10 years before being reported and in more than one third for periods in excess of 5 years.

Analysis of the behaviour patterns of detected multiple child sexual abuse perpetrators in Melbourne found that offending started with some form of deviant sexual behaviour (often in their teenage years) like stealing underwear and which subsequently escalated to engaging children or adults in inappropriate sexual conversations, touching and peeping, followed by sexual contact. Over time, violence to the victim has been found to increase and periods between offending is reduced (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999: 103). In other studies, violent offending patterns of individuals, however, have been found to tend to stay similar over time: non-violent sex offenders generally remained non-violent over time, whereas violent offenders continued to be violent (Hanson and Bussiere 1998; Haywood, Kravitz, Howard, Wasyliw and Goldberg 1996b; Pritchard and Bagley 2000; West 2000). If escalation of offending is a common pattern for serial child sexual offenders, it may be relevant to take low-level deviant-type offending more seriously and provide some form of treatment as part of any sentence.

Multiple offending appears to be particularly associated with offenders who target male victims. Beech (1998) found that extra familial child sex perpetrators who abused boys commonly had multiple different victims. Similarly, (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999) found that male-to-male child sex offenders were much more likely to have multiple victims than were males who targeted females. Additionally, males

who offended against boys were found to have greater networks, communication and association links with one another (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). Similarly, there appears to be significantly increased likelihood of abuse involving more than one abuser and a sharing or passing of boy victims between a number of different abusers (Beech et al. 2002; Finkelhor, Williams and Burns 1988; Gallagher 1999b; Gallagher et al. 1996; Sullivan and Beech 2002; Waterhouse 2000; White and Hart 1995). Organised child abuse cases where more than one perpetrator has been involved, have been found occurring in families, communities, and institutions. In some cases the perpetrators specialised in the settings in which they abused children. In others, perpetrators moved between a number of different settings. Thus there is a need to retain an open mind as to the context in which organised abuse may take place (Gallagher 1998).

The literature shows that a significant amount of child abuse is 'organised', that is where there was more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to have acted in concert to abuse the children, such as in paedophile rings. Finkelhor, Williams and Burns (1988) found that 17% of cases of sexual abuse in daycare for example involved 'multiple perpetrators'. The overlap between institutional and organised abuse has been reported in the United Kingdom (Gallagher et al. 1996; White and Hart 1995). An abuser in a residential special school set up a hierarchy among the victims with a 'top dog' at the apex. This method was used as a means of exerting greater control over children (Brannan et al. 1993). In an examination of 78 organised abuse cases involving 279 perpetrators in the UK, the researchers were unable to identify a 'typical' case because there was considerable diversity with settings being various, numbers of perpetrators in each case ranging widely from two to twenty, and number of children abused ranging from one to twenty (Gallagher et al. 1996). However a set of factors that tended to cluster was apparent:

- children who had contact with social services prior to detection of the organised abuse tended to suffer the more extreme and bizarre abuse and were not receiving sustained intensive input from any agency;
- family members and relatives were involved in almost two thirds of all organised abuse cases and many involved only two perpetrators typically father/step-father and mother/girlfriend cohabitee;
- the second largest group was of perpetrators who were neighbours and friends of the child or their family;
- the third largest group were paedophile rings - only casually acquainted with their victim;
- 55% of victims were boys; and
- 19% of perpetrators were female (these women were counted as perpetrators only where it was clear they were willing participants in the abuse – often not initiating, but following the lead of a male partner).

Identifying risk factors for recidivism of child sex offenders is strongest in follow-up research of known offenders. Through an analysis of existing studies the most reliable predictor of sexual deviancy was penile arousal to 'deviant' material using phallometric assessment (Wright 2003). The most consistent psychological risk factor for intra-family child sex abusers was diagnosis of a personality disorder, typically antisocial personality disorder or psychopathy. Measures of depression, anxiety or social skills however, were not related to sex offence recidivism (Wright 2003). Risk for re-offending was increased when offenders:

- had prior sex offences;
- had victimised strangers;
- had an extra-familial victim
- began offending sexually at an early age;
- selected male victims; and/or
- had engaged in diverse sex crimes (Wright 2003).

Dynamic risk factors for recidivism of child sex offenders (i.e., factors that may potentially change over time) are:
- poor social supports;
- intimacy problems;
- attitudes including low remorse, victim blaming, feelings of sexual entitlement (i.e., cognitive distortions);
- generally antisocial lifestyles such as using leisure time aimlessly, resisting personal change, holding strongly antisocial attitudes;
- poor self-management and taking few precautions against high risk offending situations; and
- poor cooperation with their supervising support person.

Craig, Browne, Stringer and Beech (2005) considered that too much reliance was placed on static risk factors in assessing risk of offending in actuarial tools, particularly given that dynamic risk factors may be very influential in decisions to offend or not. As such, the authors concluded that dynamic risk factors should be incorporated into risk assessments and actuarial measures for predicting re offending. In relation to assessing the risk of recidivism of sex offenders, they identified the following risk factors shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Risk Factors for Sex Offence Recidivism

Static risk factors:

Developmental:	• Juvenile sex offences present
	• Poor family background
	• Victim of sexual abuse
Sexual interest:	• Male victim
	• Atypical sexual outlets (paraphiliacs)
	• Extra -familial victim
Forensic factors:	• Criminal history
	• Sexual convictions
	• Violence convictions
	• Time spent in custody
	• Non-contact sex offences
	• Stranger victims
	• Multiple victims
Clinical factors:	• Age of offender (negatively correlated)

	•	Lower IQ
	•	Marital and relationship history
	•	Discontinuation in community treatment programs
	•	Psychopathy (PCL-R)

Stable dynamic risk factors:

Sexual interest:	•	Deviant sexual urges
	•	Sexual deviance-children (PPG)
	•	Attitudes tolerant of sexual assault
Clinical factors:	•	Cognitive distortions
	•	Lack of victim empathy
	•	Low self esteem
	•	Anger
	•	Substance abuse
	•	Impulsivity
	•	Personality disorder

Acute dynamic risk factors:

Sexual interest:	•	Frequency of sexual fantasies
Treatment behaviour:	•	Delinquent behaviour during treatment
	•	Deterioration in dynamic risk during treatment
	•	Poor treatment cooperation
	•	Deterioration in awareness of high risk situations and relapse prevention strategies
	•	Short duration of treatment program
	•	Poor cooperation with supervision
Clinical factors:	•	Isolation
	•	Unemployment
	•	Deviant social influences
	•	Chaotic lifestyle
	•	Poor social support
	•	Affective disorders
	•	Substance abuse

Source: (Craig et al. 2005)

Additional acute predictors that may immediately precede abuse are an increase in anger and subjective distress (Wright 2003). Assessment tools for prediction of recidivism are discussed below in the section on risk assessment.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- Males are overwhelmingly more likely to be perpetrators of child sex abuse than are females.

- Extra-familial child sexual abuse perpetrators typically range in age from 20 to 50 years with an average age of 38 years.
- Children and adolescents may be responsible for between 17% and 40% of all sexual offences.
- The majority of extra familial multiple child sex offenders (63%) had never married.
- Alcohol abuse was a significant risk factor for sexual, however drug abuse appeared to be rare.
- Extra-familial perpetrators are more likely than familial perpetrators to have convictions for violence and other types of offences.
- Only 25% of the offenders had prior convictions for sexual offences against children, and in those cases where charges were laid, charges were not laid until a long time after first abuse occurred.
- Research suggests that approximately one in every four perpetrators of child sexual was sexually victimised as a child.
- Several psycho-social factors were identified as common for (detected) child sex abusers.
- Extra-familial child sexual abuse perpetrators often have highly developed interpersonal skills with both adults and children, and are likeable, respected by others, and often are important to the child's family.
- Research suggests that some perpetrators were highly fixated on children and saw them as their primary sexual interest and emotional outlet.
- Perpetrators of child sexual abuse were found to often deny the reality of their crimes and the possible damage to their victims and sometimes claimed the victim was in part responsible for what occurred.
- Up to one-third of child molesters viewed pornography immediately prior to offending and one-fifth of offenders showed their victim pornography to incite their curiosity and help prime them for sexual contact.
- Every offender had a grooming process they used, which centred on breaking down the child's inhibitions and defences.
- Child sex offenders often deliberately placed themselves in an occupation, sporting or service activity, geographic location or family situation that allowed them to access children.
- Although children may have been met in the context of organisations, a large proportion of abuse was committed in private homes or cars with the majority of all offences occurring in the home of the perpetrator.
- Male perpetrators constituted 77% of sex-offending babysitters reported to police, while females made up the majority of physical assaulters (64%), however as females are significantly more likely to undertake babysitting than males, ratio of male to female babysitters found to have sexually abuse children is higher than that indicated by descriptive data.
- In research comparing cleric and non-cleric child sex offenders showed that in most respects the two groups were similar. However, cleric child sex abusers were significantly older and better educated, showed less sociopathy and mental disorder; and were more likely to abuse boys.
- Canadian research based on 750 randomly sampled males in the city of Calgary aged 18-27 years, showed that up to 5% would sexually offend against a minor if the opportunity arose.
- Intra-familial offenders disclosed an average of 1.5 victims each, extra-familial offenders 6.1 victims and mixed-type offenders an average of 20 victims.
- Nearly 60% of offenders offended against a child for periods of 1-10 years before being reported and in more than one third for periods in excess of 5 years.

- Some studies have reported that the violent offending patterns of individuals have been found to stay similar over time, other research has reported that over time, violence to the victim has been found to increase and periods between offending is reduced.
- Multiple offending appears to be particularly associated with offenders who target male victims.

Perpetrator characteristics: Summary

The characteristics of perpetrators of extra-familial maltreatment drawn from research and presented in this report are predominantly the characteristics of child sexual abuse perpetrators as child sexual abuse has been the main focus of researchers investigating extra-familial maltreatment. Little is known about other forms of offending by extra-familial perpetrators although, as has been indicated previously, other types of maltreatment often occur concurrently with child sexual abuse.

The demographic characteristics of extra-familial perpetrators of maltreatment appear to be quite different from those of intra-familial maltreatment perpetrators. However, both intra- and extra-familial maltreatment perpetrators are characterised by the presence of: substance abuse, violence, childhood victimisation, and physical and psychological impairments. Both intra- and extra-familial maltreatment perpetrators demonstrated attitudes and personality traits that appeared to be related to offences against children. The majority of child sex offenders did not have a prior conviction when charged indicating that criminal record checks are inadequate as the sole form of child abuse prevention within organisations. The majority of child sex offenders engaged in some form of 'grooming' behaviour prior to abusing their victim.

There did not appear to be one 'type' of perpetrator of child sexual abuse. For example, some child sexual abusers were assessed as having low levels of impulse control and poor empathy (in combination with opportunities to abuse children), while others had high emotional empathy and were 'fixated' on children to the extent they actively sought out and manipulated environments to achieve access and opportunities to sexually abuse. Recent research suggests that the idea of a 'child sex abuser' should be conceptualised in very broad terms, rather than considered as a small 'deviant' group.

Researchers have attempted to encapsulate the varied characteristics and motivations of child sex offenders through the development child sex offender typologies. Some of the categorisations or typologies of child sex offenders that have been developed by researchers are summarised in Table 3:

Table 3: Child Sex Offender Typologies

Authors	Typology	Characteristics
Pritchard and Bagley (2000) UK	1. Commit sex offences only	Older age, higher proportion offending in the family
	2. Commit sex and other offences	Early delinquency and long-term criminal recidivism
	3. Commit sex and violence offences	Early delinquency and long-term criminal recidivism.

Authors	Typology	Characteristics
		Higher proportion offending outside the family
Smallbone and Wortley (2001) Australia	1. Intrafamilial offenders Offend only within family settings	Average of 1.5 victims each
	2. Extrafamilial offenders Offend only outside family settings	Average of 6 victims each Significantly more likely to have never married. More likely to report being homosexual or bisexual. First contact in friend's home (36%) or organisation (19%)
	3. Mixed-type offenders Offend inside and outside family	Average of 20 victims each More likely than other offenders to have been sexually abused (3 in 4). First contact is in friends' homes (48%) neighbourhood (30%) babysitting (30%)
	4. Deniers (do not admit to offending)	No victims admitted to
Groth and Birnbaum (1978) UK	1. Regressed offenders	Typically incest abusers
	2. Fixated abusers	Typically are paedophiles with a long history of offending since adolescence
Simon, Sales, Kaszniak and Kahn, (1992) USA; Weinrott and Saylor (1991)	Suggest a continuum rather than a dichotomy, identifying an intermediate, perhaps more numerous group.	Incest offenders who also have histories of violence and other offending outside the family
Knight (1989); Abel, Becker and Mittelman's (1987) USA	1. High social competence, High fixation on children	
	2. High social competence, Low fixation on children	
	3. Low social competence, High fixation on children	Most likely to be processed by the criminal justice system
	4. Low social competence, Low fixation on children	
Waterhouse et al. (1994) UK	1. Paedophile only	
	2. Paedophile with multiple criminal history	Often appear to be dangerous psychopaths with undeveloped moral consciences often due to the cruelty in their own childhoods

Wyre (1996) summarised in more detail the characteristics and factors present in fixated paedophiles as follows:

- Their main arousal and orientation is toward children.
- They may engage in highly addictive behaviour.

- Despite appearances they may feel inadequate.
- They may molest large numbers of children.
- They may adopt pseudo-parental roles or deliberately set out to gain the trust of the parents or other caregivers.
- They may be seductive in their approach.
- They take time to form relationships with children.
- They use child erotic material and sometimes child or adult pornography to lower the inhibitions of children.
- They may seek to portray their behaviour as normal.
- Their friends and associates are probably paedophiles and share information and a common language.
- They may have strong cognitive distortions and beliefs.
- They are usually over 25 years of age yet may have no dating pattern with men or women.
- They do not usually marry, but if they do, it may be a marriage of convenience.
- By intuition and design they may select vulnerable children who may be physically and or emotionally neglected.
- They may belong to children's organisations.

High social competence combined with high or low fixation (as in the first two typology categories in Table 3 (Abel, Becker, Mittelman, Cunningham-Rather, Rouleau and Murphy 1987; Knight 1989) may be the most difficult offender type to detect in organisations. Where opportunities to offend in one environment are diminished, the highly fixated offender is likely to seek other avenues for access to children. However, the extent of offending committed by even a fixated offender may be considerably limited through greater organisational awareness of the methods they use in grooming children and their adult carers, and through environmental and situational prevention strategies in organisations.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Perpetrators of intra- and extra-familial child maltreatment shared many similar risk factors, suggesting that there are some risk factors that increase the risk of maltreatment occurring regardless of environment or perpetrator type.
- There did not appear to be one 'type' of perpetrator of child sexual abuse.
- Researchers have attempted to encapsulate the varied characteristics and motivations of child sex offenders through the development child sex offender typologies.
- Where opportunities to offend in one environment are diminished, the highly fixated offender is likely to seek other avenues for access to children.

5.3 Family risk factors

There has been a large body of research in which the familial factors that increase the risk of a child experiencing inttra-familial maltreatment have been investigated. In this report those factors that have been identified relatively consistently in research are briefly discussed.

Family stress
Family stress has consistently been found to be a significant predictor of inter familial child maltreatment, re-referrals and recurrence (DePanfilis and Zuravin 1999; English and Marshall 1999; Hamilton and Browne 1999; Terling 1999; Wollock et al. 2001). Family stressor variables have included composites of mother's age, child bearing span in years and number of children (DePanfilis and Zuravin 1999), stress on caregiver (English and Marshall 1999), the presence of a family member with psychiatric problems or learning difficulties (Hamilton and Browne 1999), family conflict (Terling 1999) and a composite of parental affective state, social isolation, family conflict, child behavioural problems, parental difficulties in child rearing and financial difficulties (Wollock et al. 2001). Children are at greater risk of chronic child maltreatment in families that are facing a number of physical, emotional and fiscal demands and in families experiencing high levels of stress and disadvantage (Bromfield 2005).

Socio-economic status
Findings for socio-economic status have been mixed. For example, in overseas research, receipt of family welfare payments has been found to be significantly related to maltreatment occurrence, whereas general income measures have not (Kotch, Browne, Dufort and Winsor 1999; Radhakrishna, Bou Saada, Hunter, Catellier and Kotch 2001; Wollock et al. 2001). Differences between abuse types need to be considered: while sexual abuse has been shown to occur across all socio-economic groups, researchers acknowledge a relationship between poverty and neglect, particularly in disadvantaged subgroups such as Indigenous Australians (2000).

Number of children
Number of children in the family has more consistently been found to be positively related to maltreatment occurrence and recurrence (Kotch et al. 1999; Wollock et al. 2001). The more children in the family the more likely the maltreatment was to occur (Kotch et al. 1999) and for the family to have repeated reports and substantiations (Wollock et al. 2001). The more children there are in a family the greater the demands that would be expected on family members physically, emotionally and financially. This finding is consistent with evidence that family stressors including socio-economic status are related to maltreatment occurrence (Bromfield 2005).

Father surrogate
A father surrogate (for example, a stepfather, maternal boyfriend etc.) in the home has been found to be a factor increasing risk for all types of child maltreatment. Radhakrishna et al. (2001) reported that more maltreatment occurred in families with father surrogates than in single parent or two biological parent households. In terms of

maltreatment recurrence, children were more likely to be victimised by multiple perpetrators if a stepfather was living in the home (Bromfield 2005).

MESSAGE FROM RESEARCH
- In families under stress children are at heightened risk for intra-familial maltreatment. Children from families with risk factors for intra-familial maltreatment present may also be at heightened risk for extra-familial maltreatment as perpetrators can purposely select vulnerable children for victims.

5.4 Organisational risk factors

A number of organisational factors that are associated with greater risk of abuse – particularly sexual abuse – of children have been documented. The following section summarises key findings from research with offenders and victims (in Australia and internationally), as well as conclusions from some of the major government reports concerning historic practices, focusing on abuse that occurred in a range of institutions, many of which no longer exist. However, it is important to examine the elements that allowed these high-risk environments to occur, so as to ensure all organisations that work with children avoid these in the future, or implement risk-mitigation strategies.

Staff alone with children
A significant proportion of abuse of children has been found to occur within the home of the victim or the perpetrator, even where the perpetrator is an extra-familial abuser (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999; Smallbone and Wortley 2001). Thus, high-risk environments are those contexts that are 'home-like' or where employees have time alone with a child including in their own or the child's home. Being able to make contact with children outside the organised activity or seeking time alone with them, including car rides are therefore high-risk behaviours and situations. Babysitting, foster care, residential institutions and groups that involve sleepovers must be considered high-risk environments for abuse. A high-risk environment that is 'home-like', coupled with children who have characteristics that make them especially vulnerable to abuse (very young, disabled, previously abused or neglected and so on) would be one of the highest risk environments.

Hierarchical or Patriarchal Management
In her study of abuse in day care, Faller (1988) found that many perpetrators had actively sought situations that afforded them the opportunity to sexually abuse, rather than being simply 'opportunistic' offenders. Organisations can present themselves as very attractive to paedophiles when they have certain types of management styles. For example, in some religions, being a member of the priesthood gives a legitimate excuse for not having an adult intimate relationship (which is an identified risk factor for paedophiles) gives access to children, and gives authority. In the unlikely event of victims speaking out, the organisation has been able to silence them (Salter 1993: 228). Few of the known offenders were reported to police and most were passed on to another parish. These are "strong perks from a paedophile's point of view" (Salter 1993: 228). Organisations managed along hierarchical lines are often so highly controlled that no one can permeate their structures, nor challenge their practices. The abuser in this type of organisation is more commonly an authority figure in the institution and is protected by the hierarchical systems in place. The patriarchal organisation provides an environment for sexual abuse to flourish and is used by paedophiles in order to systematically abuse children:

> "It cannot be emphasised enough that in cultures that adhere to male elders having to be obeyed without question, challenging is viewed as betrayal" (Gill 1996: 84).

Culture of bullying

Bullying has often been found to be a prevalent part of the culture in many institutions where abuses are known to have occurred. In some institutions the use of peers as bullies "was seemingly sanctioned as a form of control (by abusive staff). Often bullies had a brother or senior staff member as a patron" (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004: para 5.8).

Economic independence

Organisations that are economically independent are more risky to children, primarily because of the lack of external scrutiny. The power and 'untouchability' of heads of independent institutions is reinforced when the head is the owner and is responsible for the livelihood of staff. There is often no legislation or policy to prevent a person both owning and running a residential care facility. Regulatory authorities are advised to be particularly cautious when dealing with owners or large investors who either spend unsupervised time in an institution or who also are involved in the day-to-day running of it (Doran and Brannan 1996). Expert knowledge is another form of control and an effective way to isolate management and fellow professionals, and disempower staff caring for the children. All these characteristics protect abusers and make disclosure of abuse practically impossible. Data are not available on the degree to which such situations may occur in Australia.

Lack of staff accountability

Staff in Australian children's homes (originally set up as orphanages, but also including children removed from their homes for a range of reasons) were found to be for the most part not held accountable for their actions because inspections by child welfare authorities were infrequent and ineffective. When children did complain they were usually not believed, even where there was evidence of physical and sexual abuse (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004: para 5.27). Lack of external and independent scrutiny and "excessive trust in the 'goodness' of the religious administering homes" meant institutions were allowed to operate virtually without question (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004: para 5.16).

Inadequate resources

Adequate funding and resources to attract and retain quality staff is required. Many residential children's homes in Australia in the past were run by voluntary organisations that received very little funding and were reliant on volunteers prepared to work long hours for minimal remuneration and as a result were unable to attract or keep suitable staff or maintain an appropriate level of staffing (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004: para 5.18). The Australian Senate Committee found that in many instances, staff lacked the training and vocation necessary to provide care for large numbers of children. Staff were also not trained to deal with disclosures of sexual abuse or abuse of any kind. It should be noted, however, that training and qualifications are not a guarantee of a quality worker and that without scrutiny and evaluation of staff members' suitability for the work (i.e., ongoing supervision), qualifications can actually assist abusers through elevating their credibility and status in an organisation (Doran and Brannan 1996).

Lack of professionalisation or accreditation

Educational and welfare sectors are relatively unregulated in respect to the professionalisation of workers. Anyone can practice as a youth worker for example.

While there are now formal professional registration processes affecting teachers and psychologists, there is no equivalent for youth workers, social workers or community development workers in Australia. Training for qualifications can also vary considerably between universities.

Poor disclosure policies

Barriers to reporting abuse in institutions are many but include a lack of procedures and policies for reporting and investigating complaints. Also mitigating against disclosures is the belief system that views institutional abuse as a problem of the individual member of staff, not the institution. Institutions and organisations are self protective by nature and thus tend to discourage employees from drawing attention to deficiencies, failings and abuses by staff (Sullivan and Beech 2002).

Studies have repeatedly found that staff have ignored signs of abuse and dismissed or failed to act upon disclosures by children (Sullivan and Beech 2002). All recent inquiries have identified managers attempting to protect the reputation of the institution or cover the lack of procedures in the organisation by not reporting the abuse (Sullivan and Beech 2002). Even where investigations have proceeded, research has shown that staff had been reluctant to cooperate with an investigation or had actively tried to thwart it (Nunno 1992, cited in Gallagher 1999a).

Based on interviews conducted in the 1990s, Davidson and McNamara (1999) reported on the disclosure of abuse by victims and staff in a psychiatric institution in Sydney. Their disclosures had been met with inaction, further victimisation and threats of retribution. Frequent and direct attempts were made to silence and punish staff who attempted to take action about an incident of sexual abuse. Whistleblower staff were ridiculed, reprimanded, discredited, encouraged to resign or were sacked, their expertise called into question, threatened with loss of promotion, with transfer, less favourable work hours, assigned the worst rosters and refused leave at times they wished to take it, given the silent treatment and some began to feel fearful in the workplace. Other staff may often be intimidated by a system that does not support disclosure and does not take action on disclosure. Although many of the institutions such as the one described by Davidson and McNamara (1999) have now been closed in Australia during a process of 'de-institutionalisation', the organisational risk factors they identify can still be identified as characteristics to avoid in existing or future service provision options for vulnerable people including children and young people.

Internal investigation

Although some organisations have put in place strategies to more effectively handle allegations of abuse, these have not necessarily alleviated public unease, as they commonly fail to see the public as a legitimate stakeholder and consider internal inquiries adequate (Altobelli 2003). However, it is not the role of the manager of an organisation – or in the case of a religious institution, the minister or other leaders – to determine guilt or otherwise. Most abuse and all sexual abuse is a criminal offence that should be reported to the statutory child protection authority or to police (Bromfield and Higgins 2005). However, too often there is a failure to recognise the abuse as a criminal offence (Higgins 2001).

Some organisations have used mediation to try and resolve complaints of abuse in-house. However mediation is not appropriate to settle allegations of abuse,

particularly as it is almost invariably a confidential process (which can be used to hide information about other victims). Additionally, there is a significant power differential between victim, perpetrator and organisation which no alteration to the mediation process will ever change. With this level of power imbalance in mediation, the outcome most likely will reflect that imbalance. Thus, there is no integrity in mediation concerning allegations of abuse. No matter how well-intentioned, such processes are unethical as a substitute for formal reporting (Higgins 2001).

External investigation
Use of litigation to adjudicate a contentious issue – a tactic often driven by insurance companies – is also not considered to be a good way to settle allegations of abuse particularly as it may further damage the public image of the organisation. Instead, Altobelli (2003) believed there are several forms of arbitration that could be equally effective. Low cooperation between investigating agencies with overlapping responsibilities was another issue identified as mitigating against proper handling of child abuse allegations in organisations. Police and social services may encounter major difficulties in working together particularly if the allegations involve an employee from one of the investigating agencies (White and Hart 1995).

Risky physical attributes
In Australia, institutions providing a supportive environment for abuse were often found to be physically isolated from the community. The buildings and grounds were behind high fences and gates, or placed at a distance from towns and other dwellings; children were prevented from having any interaction with other outside students and communities (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004). Doran and Brannan (Doran and Brannan 1996: 157) reported that isolation seemed to increase the likelihood of all types of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and general neglect. Physical isolation also means outside professionals and family members visit less frequently and the organisation is not well networked into the larger affiliation organisation:

> "Failure to create regular professional and organisational management monitoring procedures and guidelines that ensure the protection of children and to provide for the training for staff in such isolated environments has led to chaos and to a vacuum which allows abuse to flourish" (Doran and Brannan 1996: 157) .

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- High-risk environments are those contexts that are 'home-like' or where employees have time alone with a child including in their own or the child's home.
- Organisations managed along hierarchical lines are often so highly controlled that no one can permeate their structures, nor challenge their practices. The abuser in this type of organisation is more commonly an authority figure in the institution and is protected by the hierarchical systems in place.
- Bullying has often been found to be a prevalent part of the culture in many institutions where abuses are known to have occurred.
- Organisations that are economically independent are more risky to children, primarily because of the lack of external scrutiny. The power and 'untouchability' of heads of independent institutions is reinforced when the head is the owner and is responsible for the livelihood of staff.

- Staff not be held accountable for their actions, children not being believed and a lack of external and independent scrutiny and excessive trust in the 'goodness' of the institutional administration were all factors that were associated with abuse in institutional care.
- Inadequate funding and a reliance on volunteers prepared to work long hours for minimal remuneration increase the risk of an organisation being unable to attract or keep suitable staff or maintain an appropriate level of staffing – factors shown to be associated with abuse in institutional care.
- A lack of procedures and policies for reporting and investigating complaints, and managers attempting to protect the reputation of the institution or cover the lack of procedures in the organisation by not reporting the abuse increase the risk of an alleged perpetrator committing further offences against children.
- Internal inquiries are inadequate in ensuring a perpetrator is held accountable for their actions and preventing a perpetrator from offending against other children.
- Institutions providing a supportive environment for abuse were often found to be physically isolated from the community.

For a summary of current national mandatory reporting obligations see (Bromfield and Higgins 2005).

6. Risk-management strategies

Safety measures are only effective if there is commitment of the responsible agencies to implement them fully in a concerted and coordinated fashion (Doran and Brannan 1996). Jones (1994b) also observed that improvements to legal rules and regulations have little effect on institutional abuse unless the non-formal methods that perpetrators use to counteract legal controls are addressed (i.e., the internal management strategies and processes employed by institutions and organisations (Gough 1996). A situational prevention model encompasses this focus.

Prevention of abuse

No matter how sophisticated selection and screening processes are, the possibility that some unsuitable and abusive individuals will slip through the net will always exist. There are two additional reasons why employment screening alone is inadequate: first, there may already be unsuitable people working in a child-based organisation; and second, existing workers may, over the course of time, become unsuitable, or be faced with certain cues or environments that subsequently render them unsuitable:

> "The Scouts have found through painful experience that they cannot tell – with any kind of screening known to humankind – who will or won't turn out to be a child molester. They know too that letting their thousands of Scout leaders take kids alone on overnights is an invitation to paedophiles to fill out an application" (Salter 1993:226).

Selection, screening and assessment of employees or potential employees is thus one component of a strategy designed to make organisations safe. Criminological research and numerous inquiries into organisations where widespread abuse has occurred have indicated the importance of organisational systems and procedures to either support or prevent abuse of children. Minimising the likelihood of abuse can be achieved through manipulation of situational cues and environments and through factors such as staff selection and screening, management styles, processes, supervision, training, registration, accreditation and so on. At least four distinct domains for preventive intervention can be identified:

1. victims (and potential victims);
2. offenders (and potential offenders);
3. specific place and circumstance; and
4. whole communities.

Each of these four components should be considered as part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent abuse of children in organisations.

1. *Victim-focused prevention programs.* These include counselling and support services for known victims, programs designed to encourage as-yet-unidentified victims to report sexual abuse, and programs on how to avoid abuse. Few child-focused programs have been systematically evaluated for their ability to prevent abuse. However, a number of programs have resulted in demonstrable increases in levels of awareness and knowledge (Rispens, Aleman and Goudena 1997). They

have also been shown to increase disclosure rates (Wurtele 2002), suggesting a potentially important secondary or tertiary prevention effect. Child-focused prevention programs have been widely criticized (Chalk and King 1998; Kaufman and Zigler 1987; Melton 1992; Melton and Flood 1994). However, if these risks are acknowledged and controlled for, child-focused programs may have an important role to play in a comprehensive strategy to increase child safety in organisations (Smallbone et al. submitted). As discussed previously, there is some evidence that children with secure parental attachments are at less risk of sexual victimisation than are those with insecure attachments (Alexander 1992) and that child molesters are more inclined to target already-vulnerable children (Conte, Wolf and Smith 1989). Sexual victimisation for already-vulnerable children also tends to be worse than for those who can rely on their families for post-victimisation support (Kendall-Tackett, Williams and Finkelhor 1993) so their protection is particularly important. Preventive strategies to lessen vulnerability of children may therefore include strengthening relationships in the family or increasing education and training for youth in interpersonal and intimate relationship skills (Smallbone et al. submitted).

2. *Offender-focused approaches*. There are at least six ways in which potential, unidentified, or known offenders may be targeted with preventive interventions: (a) developmental prevention; (b) specific and general deterrence approaches; (c) reporting and investigation of sexual offences; (d) treatment of adolescent sexual offenders; (e) treatment of adult sexual offenders; and (f) incapacitation of known offenders (Smallbone et al. submitted). The perception that a potential perpetrator has of the risk of being detected is a more powerful influence on decision making for offending than is actual risk or severity of penalties (Gibbs 1975). In developing child-safe organisations, deterrence would generally be best achieved by certainty (and to a lesser extent, swiftness), rather than severity, of punishment (Blumstein, Cohen and Nagin 1978; Paternoster 1987). Criminal justice responses are not the only source of deterrence. Informal controls such as threats to personal reputations are thought to be powerful inhibitors to criminal behaviour, particularly for those who are not socially marginalised (Hirschi 1969).

3. *Specific place and circumstance*. This aspect of prevention is discussed below in situational prevention. It involves controlling situations and cues to offending. Within organisations, environmental strategies include assessment and recruitment methods, management and supervision of staff, education and awareness, clear standards of behaviour and reporting mechanisms.

4. *Community-based prevention*. Media reports of child abuse generally present highly selective and distorted information that may contribute to public fear without contributing to prevention (Smallbone et al. submitted) and giving the erroneous impression that abuse is an aberration perpetrated by a small number of deviants. Because Smallbone and Wortley (2000) found 42% of a sample of convicted child molesters had used time watching television alone with the child they were yet to sexually abuse as a grooming measure, they believe television messages may be a critical window of opportunity for reaching potential offenders before they offend. Situational prevention principles including controlling prompts, reducing permissibility and increasing perceptions of risk of detection would be used to guide the images and content (Smallbone et al. submitted).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Employment screening alone is inadequate as a child abuse prevention tool as there may already be unsuitable people working in a child-related setting and existing workers may become unsuitable.
- As a result, employment screening is one component of a broader approach to minimise the risk of child abuse.
- Comprehensive child abuse prevention strategies seek to minimise the risk of child abuse occurring in organisational settings by targeting at least four distinct domains, including victims (and potential victims), offenders (and potential offenders), specific places and circumstances, and whole communities.

Child abuse prevention programs
In their review of the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs, Richardson, Higgins and Bromfield (2004) divided prevention programs into three domains: primary prevention programs (universal programs); secondary prevention programs (those targeted at people who are 'at risk' of abusing their child/children); and tertiary prevention programs (therapy for maltreated children). Programs they selected for examination were divided into those that were:
- *child-focused*, such as personal safety programs for children generally and therapeutic programs for abused children;
- *family-focused*, such as parent education programs, home visiting services and family preservation programs; and
- *community-focused*, such as media campaigns and training programs for professionals and community groups designed to change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate, the problem of child abuse and neglect in the community.

An overview of knowledge about the effectiveness of these various prevention programs identified an acute need for rigorous evaluation of Australian child maltreatment prevention programs and a need for researchers, policy makers and service providers to develop frameworks to enhance critical analyses of current interventions and identify questions and cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed.

Public health model
The public health model of prevention provides a clear conceptual framework for distinguishing interventions aimed at preventing sexual – and other child abuse – offending before it occurs (primary prevention); reducing outcomes in circumstances where known risk factors are already present (secondary prevention); and preventing further sexual offences by persons who have already offended (tertiary prevention). A fundamental problem with transposing the public health prevention model to the problem of child sexual abuse is that, unlike illnesses such as heart disease, abuse involves multiple potential targets including potential or actual offenders, potential or actual victims, families and institutions. Although the public health model is conceptually useful – particularly in drawing attention to alternatives to tertiary interventions – applied prevention may best be guided by models that distinguish specific types of interventions, and that identify specific targets for intervention (Smallbone et al. submitted).

Situational prevention model

The importance of a focus on organisational characteristics to prevent abuse is possibly more important than previously acknowledged particularly in light of research that has challenged the view that most sexual offenders are dedicated, serial offenders driven by irresistible sexual urges (Pritchard and Bagley 2000; Simon 1997, 2000; Smallbone and Wortley 2000; Smallbone and Wortley 2001; Soothill, Francis, Sanderson and Ackerley 2000; Weinrott and Saylor 1991).

Smallbone and Wortley (2000) examined the official records of 323 convicted child-sex offenders and 169 detailed self-reported psychosocial and psychosexual histories in Australia. Their study suggested that environmental factors were very important to the offending. A lack of previous sexual offending and a high incidence of other criminal offending for many of the child sex offenders suggested that the problem may be less one of special motivation and be more associated with the general problem of failure to inhibit urges and impulses, especially within the interpersonal domain. Many offenders had sexual contact with children with whom they had immediate or convenient access and there was a low incidence of paraphillic interest among them. Thus many offenders were better portrayed as 'opportunity-takers' than sexual deviants (Wortley and Smallbone submitted). As research increasingly emphasises the lack of specialised paedophilic commitment of many sexual offenders and the role situations have in triggering aggression and abusive behaviours, then greater attention needs to be paid to the role that conducive environmental conditions play in facilitating the behaviour.

A situational prevention perspective does not assume crime is opportunistic in the sense it is a 'spur-of-the-moment' reaction to a chance circumstance. Even planned crimes by highly motivated offenders involve situational considerations. The professional burglar, for example, does not steal arbitrarily but rather carefully selects targets that experience has shown will deliver maximum pay-off and entails minimum risks (Wortley and Smallbone submitted). Situational crime prevention, in which the organisational factors are used to reduce opportunities for abuse, can be grouped into several overall objectives that are known to influence offending behaviour:

1. *Increasing the effort required to offend*. This involves strategies designed to make the offending behaviour more difficult or inconvenient to carry out. For offending against children, this principally means making it harder for potential offenders to obtain access to children to abuse. While predator offenders described by Wortley and Smallbone (submitted) may, at best, be slowed down by this strategy, situational and opportunistic offenders may be fully deterred. Specific tactics may include controlling access to facilities, teaching children to be assertive and to know how to report any issues they are uncomfortable about, use of controlling strategies such as staff supervision, regular audits of internet use, or on a broader level by governments making internet server managers legally responsible for the pornographic sites under their control (Cornish & Clarke, 2003).

2. *Increasing risk of detection*. This is perhaps the most salient variable in the potential offender's decision-making process (Cornish and Clarke 2003). In organisational settings, those in authority need to take responsibility for supervising the behaviour of employees and volunteers. Sensible protocols governing interaction with children need to be considered and the physical design

of facilities modified to help increase natural surveillance (for example, interviewing rooms with glass panels in the doors). Improving knowledge and confidence of staff and children in reporting and discussing concerning behaviour also increases risk of detection of abusers (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

3. *Controlling prompts.* Learning theories emphasise the role of immediate environments in cueing behaviour. For example, accommodation pressures such as sharing beds can create the temptations and opportunities to sexually offend (Finkelhor 1984). Similarly, open-plan housing where families are forced to share cramped sleeping quarters – such as in some semi-remote Australian Aboriginal communities – may be contributing to the high prevalence of child sexual abuse reported (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Task Force on Violence 1999).

4. *Reducing permissibility.* Offenders tend to minimise the criminality of their behaviour by invoking various excuses to free themselves from the inhibitory effects of self-blame (Sykes and Matza 1957). This tendency has been particularly prevalent in residential institutions where children may be divested of human qualities and individuality, and staff are afforded a degree of anonymity and collective responsibility that minimise their sense of personal accountability ('everyone is doing it'). Abuse may be reduced by strategies that empower and humanise residents and curb the sense that staff may have to act as they please (rule setting, clarifying responsibility). Alcohol is a chemical disinhibitor and its link with sexual offending may be particularly strong in some specific settings. Alcohol abuse was identified as the single biggest causal factor of sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities; ready availability of pornography and remoteness were also considered contributing factors (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Task Force on Violence 1999).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Environmental conditions play an influential role in facilitating child abuse.
- To reduce the likelihood of environmental conditions facilitating child abuse organisations should:
    - increase the effort required to offend through supervision and regular audits;
    - increase the risk of detection by governing interaction with children and in the design of the work place;
    - control prompts, for example, shared bedding and accommodation; and
    - reduce permissibility by humanising and empowering children in institutional settings.

High-risk factors

Males
All types of abuse by women may be under reported; however, it is currently accepted that particularly for child sex offending, males are overwhelmingly more likely to be the perpetrators. In terms of organisational safety then, the most promising targets for situational prevention are those places where adult males are likely to be in authoritative and care-giving roles with children and young people, such as schools, churches, sporting and recreation associations.

Home settings

Research consistently shows it is in homes or home-like settings where most child sex abuse occurs, regardless of where the child has originally come into contact with the offender. Thus priority should be given to working out how situational approaches may be applied in domestic settings such as in foster care or in staff-child contact outside organised activities (Smallbone et al. submitted).

Awareness and assertiveness against child sex abusers

Child sexual abuse overwhelmingly involves perpetrators related to or known to their victims. Even where the victim is not related or living with the offender, the parents in many cases were believed to have known their child was spending time with the perpetrator and to suspect or know about the abuse but not report it (Smallbone and Wortley 2001). Public education campaigns need to include recognition of the danger that exists for children in the home, in organisations and among friends and be made aware of the common tactics used by offenders such as seeking opportunities to have time alone with the child and to ingratiate themselves with their victim and parents.

There is evidence that child molesters are more inclined to target already-vulnerable children (Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989) and there is evidence that the effects of sexual victimisation for already-vulnerable children tend to be worse than for those who can rely on their families for post-victimisation support (Kendall-Tackett et al. 1993). Therefore strengthening the family or other supports for children is also important to their wellbeing in this context.

Bilchik (1989) considered that children – especially those vulnerable by virtue of the factors that may have led them to be in care – need skills and knowledge to help them identify what is or is not acceptable behaviour. Children's reaction to potential perpetrators can have a significant effect on the perpetrator's subsequent behavior. The most common means employed by victims to stop the sexual contact were telling the offender they did not want to do it (40%), saying no (31%), demanding to be left alone (26%) and crying (19%). These strategies were the most successful in deterring offenders from continuing to abuse a child (Smallbone and Wortley 2000, 2001). The researchers reported that the multiple child sex perpetrators they examined were of the view that the most successful tactic for potential victims was being assertive and saying 'no'. In contrast, perpetrators did not consider struggling and calling for help particularly effective strategies.

Smallbone and Wortley (2000) also found that many offenders were seeking an emotional relationship with their victims. Thus, confident and assertive children (who are less likely to form dependency relationships) did not tend to provide the emotional responses that many offenders sought. This might be considered an example of Cornish and Clarke's (2003) idea of reducing rewards in decision making about whether to commit crime. Showing distress was also relatively successful, seemingly to jog the conscience of the offender. In terms of what these offenders were reporting, it appears child-focused prevention programs should arguably concentrate more on general confidence (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

Risk of abuse in residential institutions was considered by Jones (1994b) to also be reduced by raising children's self-esteem, as did increasing their contact with the community and placing them nearer their home town.

Low confidence to disclose

Early disclosure is extremely important to prevent further victimisation of current victims and abuse of future potential victims. Many child sex offenders offend over many years and abuse multiple children before coming to the attention of authorities. More than 50% of the 205 extra familial multiple child sex offenders examined by Petraitis and O'Connor (1999) were only reported to authorities five years after their first offence occurred. Reasons children did not disclose the abuse were considered by the perpetrators to be a combination of things including that children are taught to respect and obey adults and that they (the abusers) were likeable and respected by others. The authors concluded there needed to be strong emphasis on developing early disclosure through children being clear about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how they could express the concerns they may have (Petraitis and O'Connor 1999). Reviews into child abuse in institutions have all noted that abuse was able to continue for long periods of time due to the children and non-abusing staff feeling powerless to report it, particularly in cases where the abuse was perpetrated by people of good standing or in authoritative roles (for example, see Bichard 2004; Utting 1991; Waterhouse 2000).

High-risk behaviour for sexual abuse

Staff and supervisors in organisations need to be able to recognise the 'grooming' process used by child sex abusers toward both adults and children. People intent on grooming children for sexual abuse are commonly charming and helpful, and have insider status and commonly go on the offensive when behaviour is challenged. Worrying behaviours that may be 'grooming' include:

- peer-like play with children;
- preference for the company of children;
- engagement in 'roughhousing' and tickling;
- touching games;
- failing to honour clear boundaries of behaviour; and
- seeking one-on-one contact with children (van Dam 2001).

Principles and specific behaviour guidelines for staff are outlined in (Brewster 2001). When supervisors or other staff challenge inappropriate or concerning behaviour, it is important to listen to the content of the excuses while not being mesmerised by the delivery and to stand firm in the face of intimidation or attack (van Dam, 2001). There should be organisational guidelines established to reflect this knowledge by stating clearly what are or are not acceptable interactions with children.

De-humanising clients

All institutions tend to evolve an ethos or culture. Sometimes this process results in the rights of 'users' being increasingly disregarded. Under the latter regime, abuse may become legitimised and normalised. Some writers have suggested that institutional child abuse can be explained by the same processes (Wardhaugh and Wilding 1993). Humanising residents and personalising potential victims together with curbing any sense by staff of license to act as they please will deter and minimise likelihood of abuse.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- Situational prevention should target places where adult males are likely to be in authoritative and care-giving roles with children.
- Situational prevention should also target homes, or home-like settings, as research consistently shows that it is in these settings that most child sexual abuse occurs.
- There is evidence that child abusers are more inclined to target already vulnerable children.
- Children's reactions to potential perpetrators can have a significant effect on the perpetrator's subsequent behaviour.
- As a result, there may be some benefit in child abuse prevention programs developing confidence and assertiveness in children.
- Early disclosure is extremely important to prevent further victimisation of current victims and the abuse of future victims.
- Staff and supervisors in organisations need to be able to recognise the 'grooming' process used by child abusers toward both adults and children, for example, peer-like play with children, touching games, and seeking one-on-one contact with children.
- An organisaton's culture or ethos can be influential in minimising the likelihood of abuse. Organisations that humanise and personalise potential victims, and curb any tendencies by staff to act as they please, minimise the risk of child abuse.

Organisation risk management strategies

Many inquiries have concluded that physical, emotional, neglect and sexual abuse can be prevented from occurring in organisations by appropriate organisational management and systems. Management styles that are open and egalitarian, have a culture of knowledge and empowerment to speak out, and management that seeks to avoid high risk situations and which has a thorough selection and assessment process as well as clear, written strategies are those where abuse is unlikely to occur. As far back as the 1990s, major reports in the UK were recommending changes in systems and procedures in organisations as key preventative strategies for any type of abuse (Department of Health 1992; Hughes 1985; Lawson, Ambrose and Clough 1986). These included:

- progress and performance monitoring for staff;
- clear job descriptions;
- better staff training and development;
- improved recruitment systems;
- provision of statements of aims and objectives;
- unannounced visits and independent visits;
- complaints procedures and access to enable residents to disclose; and
- local registration and inspection.

In addition to the above, the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse in Canada recommended:

- adherence to the relevant legislation;
- written policies and procedures;
- clear behavioural guidelines and a clear corrective or disciplinary policy and grievance procedure for staff;
- provision to new staff of orientation and instruction;
- new staff to be on probation to assess their suitability;

- strategies to ensure the health, safety and support of staff such as regular breaks, more than one staff on night duty, time out to recuperate, emotional and physical support and adequate pay and benefits;
- training in positive child management techniques; and
- opening institutions more to the public and promoting institutional children's involvement and activities with community children (Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse 1992).

Organisations, managers and peers need to ensure:
- that the adults provide involvement, guidance and direction and not act as a big playmate (van Dam 2001);
- no child should have an exclusive relationship with a member of staff (Utting 1991);
- there should be clearly set out rules on physical contact between children and staff (Hunt 1994); and
- supervision structures that are capable of quickly addressing ambiguous behaviour and worrying attitudes should be established (Wyre 1996).

Participation of staff, volunteers, clients and families in developing a Child Protection Policy for each organisation and establishing clear boundaries of behaviour, encourages a culture of openness and enables anyone who is involved with the organisation to raise a concern and have it dealt with fairly and effectively (Hermann 2002: 45).

A clear set of behavioural boundaries for staff and volunteers will help prevent child sexual abuse and other forms of abuse. If structures and guidelines are not in place, staff will feel less able to express their concerns about a colleague's behaviour and it becomes much easier for paedophiles to control the environment they are working in (Wyre 1996: 93). Boyle and Leadbetter (1998) underlined the importance of ongoing supervision and monitoring of staff as ways of preventing abuse, supplemented with regular evaluation of staff and their skills (Bilchik 1989). Specific guidance for supervisors, behaviour standards and training are provided by the US National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (2005).

Better design of buildings to permit adequate supervision of all those in the institution has been proposed to minimise chances of abuse and improved coordination and communication between agencies (Hunt 1994). The latter was put forward as a means of preventing abuse through reducing isolation of the organisations and improving integration in the wider community – both strategies identified by government inquiries into child abuse in institutions as important to prevent abuse. Improving knowledge and interest in other organisations that may share the same client group will additionally assist service providers to develop a more holistic idea of the child's experiences (for example, between social services, health and education agencies within the same area; Gallagher 1999b). Strategies to ensure there is not a tendency to dehumanise child clients are also important. These include:
- ensuring that residents receive adequate levels of physical care that affords them human dignity;
- minimising institutional features and unnecessary regimentation in the environment;

- introducing explicit codes of conduct and induction procedures for staff that clearly spell out acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and leave no room for the exploitation of ambiguity;
- providing formal opportunities for residents to make complaints if abuse occurs; and
- opening the institution to outside scrutiny, including instituting a process of regular independent inspections and reviews (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

In addition to recruitment practices that explicitly address issues about safety for children in the written position descriptions, advertising process, interview technique and reference checking, Hermann (2002) considered that new staff and volunteers receive induction, a trial or probation period and be reassured that they can raise any concerns at the earliest possible stage.

Disclosures
Staff (like the children they are responsible for) may work under oppressive conditions where challenging a colleague, especially if he or she is in a more senior position, is extremely difficult (Gallagher 1999a; Ogden 1993). There needs to be positive action and new procedures to ensure whistle blowing is encouraged and a requirement of staff in child care institutions (Waterhouse 2000). Research has shown that in relation to sexual abuse,

> "offenders need opportunities to get to know your child, to gain his or her trust, and finally they need time and a place to abuse them. No opportunity. No abuse" (Salter 1993: 226).

Training for staff should, as a matter of course, include training on abuse and safety issues and on how to encourage and develop a safe and supportive environment (Higgins 2001). Training staff to be aware of the possibility of abuse in organisations – and to recognise abuse when it does occur – is important in creating conditions where staff are more willing and able to report concerns they may have (Utting 1991). Although the duty to report should be covered in basic training, it is essential that it is also seen as a part of ongoing responsibilities in the workplace (Hunt 1994). A serious commitment to dealing with abuse means organisations adopt standards more rigorous than those provided under law (Altobelli 2003). When an allegation against staff is made, the following organisational procedure is suggested:
- The child's safety will guide what is done.
- The needs of the adults involved and the reputation of the project are also important.
- Keep an open mind – it is not your role to judge the truth of anything but merely to act properly on the facts you are given.
- Check the agency's procedure manuals.
- Suspension may be considered but if the accusations are not grave or well supported, agreed paid leave or changes to shift or duties may be alternatives.
- Listen carefully to the child without making suggestions or asking leading questions.
- Keep good records of who said what, when; what you do, and why.
- Obtain advice about dealing with the press.

- Never do nothing: If a child is making obviously false allegations the abuse may be happening elsewhere, which needs exploring.
- Obtain immediate legal advice if allegations are made against you and consult your trade union or professional association (White and Hart 1995).

Bullying prevention
Creating child-safe environments means also preventing peer abuse, victimisation and bullying. Part of an assessment of organisational risk level should include an assessment of the extent to which children are managed to prevent and disclose bullying, and the presence and operationalisation of strategies in the organisation to promote anti-bullying environments. Strategies may include developing tolerance, respect and understanding between children and development of feelings of pride and attachment to the organisation. Children who bully others have typically been found to be not well integrated into the community and to not feel appropriate feelings of shame (Rigby 2003). No single view is sufficiently comprehensive in providing a definitive answer to what is best practice in the prevention of bullying. However, schools should consider the strengths and limitations of each suggested approach and the appropriateness of its application to particular bully/victim problems (Morrison 2002).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Child abuse and maltreatment can be minimised through appropriate organisational management.
- Clear behavioural boundaries for staff and volunteers will help prevent child abuse and encourages a culture of openness in which staff feel able to raise concerns.
- Induction for new staff, and ongoing supervision, monitoring, and training are important factors in reducing the likelihood of child abuse and maltreatment.
- Training staff to be aware of the possibility of abuse in organisations, and to recognise when it does occur, is important in creating conditions where staff are more willing and able to report concerns they may have.
- Creating child-safe environments also means preventing peer abuse, victimisation and bullying. Part of an assessment of organisational risk level should include an assessment of the extent to which children are managed to prevent bullying, and the presence of strategies to promote anti-bullying environments.

Managing high risk environments

Religious organisations
Many organisations and institutions for children in Australia have been run by religious-based organisations. Churches (and other faith communities) themselves are gathering points for youth participation. In recent years, it has been publicly shown that churches have been vulnerable to infiltration by perpetrators of child maltreatment, particularly (but not exclusively) child sexual abuse (Parkinson 2003). Abuse in church-based (and other) institutions in Australia was highlighted in three separate inquiries: *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*; *Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*; and *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record* (Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee 2004, 2005; HREOC 1997).

The prevalence of abuse within churches has prompted the establishment in Australia of *Broken Rites* (2005), a non-denominational victim support group for people who have been abused sexually, physically or emotionally in religious institutions; and the international research community established the academic journal *Religion and Abuse*, a forum for investigation and discussion of issues of abuse occurring in the context of any faith.

The problem presented by perpetrators of maltreatment gaining access to children through churches and church-based organisations has been further complicated by the perception that churches have 'covered up' abuse and failed to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. Past 'cover-ups' of abuse within churches created conditions in which offenders were able to continue to abuse children with whom they had access.

In a case study of child sexual abuse within a church community, Higgins (2001) examined the practical, pastoral, ethical, legal and theological context that contributed towards the mishandling of an allegation of child sexual abuse. He provided suggestions for appropriate alternative courses of action, which are summarised below.

1. Minimisation and denial of initial allegations of sexual abuse
The failure to recognise abuse when it occurs may stem from a lack of understanding about the nature of abuse, the legal aspects of an age-discrepancy in sexual activity with a minor, and the victim-perpetrator dynamic (may lead to inappropriate attempts at "reconciliation"). Also, leaders may fail to recognise there can be a delay in (a) victims recognising that what they experienced was abuse, and (b) the development of abuse-related symptoms.

2. Failure to encourage victims to report alleged assaults
Whether or not ministers of religion are covered by mandatory reporting laws in their jurisdiction, they still have a moral and ethical obligation to provide appropriate counsel to victims of sexual assault, and this should include encouraging them to make a report to the police of criminal behaviour. This performs three important roles. First, it sends a clear message to the victim that she/he is not responsible for the sexual activity and will be supported by the church community. Second, it removes the need for the church to try and act as judge and jury in the matter (it is the role of the police to investigate matters, and—if their investigations uncover sufficient substance to the victims' allegations—to prosecute the perpetrator). Finally, it shows responsibility for the safety of other minors who may already be – or are at risk of becoming – a victim.

3. Inappropriate response to legal actions
The role of law enforcement authorities is either ignored or downplayed in the practices and even the policies (where they exist) of many churches (Parkinson 2003). Churches need to respond appropriately to the instigation of legal actions that follow from a victim's report of events to the police – and not see themselves as being a 'law unto themselves'.

4. Sex-role beliefs

Religious institutions, and individual churches have a responsibility to consider how their beliefs and behaviours perpetuate a misogynistic, patriarchal or stereotyped view of gender and sexuality. Males are presented as being (at least to some degree) unable to control their 'natural' urges for sexual gratification. In contrast, females are viewed as the source of the incitement of this overflowing male sexuality. Such stereotypes of males also make it hard for males to disclose or seek appropriate assistance in dealing with unwanted sexual experiences, as they may fear being seen as 'less masculine' (Watkins and Bentovim 1992).

5. Doctrines and practices that support patriarchy

It is important for religious leaders, communities, theologians, and those who teach and train people for ministry (either lay or clergy) to consider how theological beliefs and church structures engender and maintain patriarchal views. This is a crucial issue, as these points of doctrine set a culture within the church about gender and power that can either be supportive of, or undermine the ability of a victim of sexual assault to (a) see the experience as 'assault', (b) to be able to speak up about the experience, and (c) to expect that appropriate action will take place.

Doctrines and practices that need to be considered here include:
   a) The absence of women in key leadership positions with any authority (absence of gender appropriate role models and support).
   b) Patriarchal and authoritarian beliefs about the family (creating an environment in which victims are less likely to question the authority of their abuser, see Finkelhor 1979; Higgins and McCabe 1994).
   c) Doctrines about sin (an emphasis on 'personal sin' to the exclusion of issues of social justice can easily lead to victim-blaming).
   d) Teachings regarding repentance and forgiveness (may lead premature attempts to seek forgiveness from the victim or to holding victims partially responsible for their own abuse, see Parkinson 2003).
   e) The role of civil authorities (teachings against the use of court proceedings, based on biblical passages referring to civil suits can lead to confusion about the appropriateness of reporting abuse).
   f) Reverencing of church leaders (e.g., priests being viewed as 'indelibly marked') can lead to a reluctance for (i) victims to be able to speak about abuse at the hands of clergy; (ii) members of the church to question the actions church leaders take in dealing with situations of abuse within the church.

6. Appropriate support for victims and perpetrators

Religious organisations should be sensitive to the needs of the victim (e.g., for the church to be a safe place), while at the same time providing accountability for perpetrators:

> "Part of the problem concerning the church's complacency about child sexual abuse is that church leaders have tended to accept offenders' own explanations for their behaviour" (Parkinson 2003: 55).

7. Polarisation of the church community

Conflicts of interest that arise at a leadership level need to be addressed, particularly if matters are brought before the courts.

8. Poor leadership

Poor leadership can be demonstrated and exacerbated by not having a clear set of policies and procedures before any situation has arisen, and not following accepted guidelines for dealing with accused or convicted perpetrators (for example, Parkinson 2003; or the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Child Protection Guidelines, available at www.presbyterianireland.org/bsw/index.html); and misunderstanding the legal system (it is not the church's role to determine 'guilt' – that is the role of the legal system, which the church needs to support and uphold).

Issues For Prevention of Abuse

An examination of these eight issues addressed above will help churches to put in place measures to assist in the prevention and appropriate intervention of abuse within the church. Churches need to have developed (and to have accepted as a community) policies and procedures to deal with abuse before the issues arise. The policy should address:

- abuse of a minor or an adult by clergy
- abuse of a minor by laity
- abuse of a minor by non-ordained church leader (e.g., pastoral care worker, Sunday school teacher, Youth group leader, Elder, Warden, etc.)

In response to past problems of abuse in churches, the absence of protocols to respond to new allegations and the need for procedures to prevent abuse from occurring, the National Council of Churches in Australia organised a forum to discuss the issues surrounding sexual misconduct in Australian churches. Arising from this forum was an agreement by Australian Christian Churches to develop protocols for responding to allegations of abuse (O'Blake, Chapman and Ryan 2004). An example of one such program is the recently formed New South Wales Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia Child Protection Unit (McClean 2004).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- In recent years it has been publicly shown that churches are vulnerable to infiltration by perpetrators of child maltreatment, particularly (but not exclusively) child sexual abuse.
- Attributes within church environment which may lead to greater risk of child maltreatment include the minimisation and denial of initial allegations of sexual abuse; a failure to encourage victims to report alleged assaults; inappropriate response to legal actions; stereotyped sex-role beliefs; and doctrines and practices that support patriarchy.
- As with other organisational settings, there is a greater risk of child abuse and maltreatment in the absence of clear guidelines and protocols for dealing with accused or convicted perpetrators.

Indigenous and minority group issues

There are likely to be core cross-cultural risk factors for maltreatment occurring within organisations or institutions. However, there may also be specific cultural issues that place children at increased risk of maltreatment. For example, Shalhoub-Kevorkian (1999) examined the socio-cultural and political context that resulted in victims of child sexual abuse within a Palestinian community being married to their rapist, having their hymen reconstructed, being forced to have an abortion and in 10% of cases the victims being killed. Conversely, cultural characteristics may act to protect children from maltreatment. For example, US research has shown that

African-American children are at a heightened risk for maltreatment, whereas Asian-American children are at a decreased risk of child maltreatment (English and Marshall 1999).

An additional issue to be considered in relation to cultural differences is differing definitions of what constitutes maltreatment. Aptekar (1991) examines whether Columbian street children are 'neglected' or whether their portrayal as 'abused' was a reflection of the challenge street children represented to the concept of 'family' depicted by the dominant social class. In Australia, different religious groups advocate female and/or male circumcision, whereas other groups consider circumcision to be an unnecessary and cruel surgical procedure and as such to be abusive.

Australia is a multicultural nation, thus there are various culturally and linguistically diverse minority groups living in Australia. Australia's Indigenous people – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – are the traditional inhabitants of this country and comprise 2.4% of the Australian population, as such they represent a significant cultural group (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003). Risk factors and issues to be considered that are unique to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are discussed. Although this discussion will focus upon the needs of Indigenous people, screening measures developed need to take into account culturally appropriate practice for all culturally and linguistically diverse groups, not only for Indigenous people.

Abuse in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) children are over-represented in statutory child protection services and out-of-home care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005). The Gordon Report (Gordon, Hallahan and Henry 2002) found the rate of child sexual abuse of Aboriginal children was significantly greater than for non-Aboriginal children and the Robertson Report concluded that murders, bashings and rapes of Indigenous people including sexual violence against children, had reached epidemic proportions with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people being perpetrators (2000). On the basis of these reports and national data, it appears that violence is a significant problem within ATSI communities.

Social factors and the historical context
The over-representation of ATSI children in statutory child protection services and out-of-home care is a reflection of a wider problem: ATSI communities face significant social and structural disadvantage, and are over-represented in negative domains and under-represented in positive domains (for example, higher levels of economic disadvantage, lower education and employment levels, poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancies) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003).

The history of white settlement and subsequent government policies and practices in relation to the Aboriginal community have directly contributed towards many of the present problems experienced by ATSI people and communities. Many of the practices now attributed with having marginalised the ATSI community, originated in Victoria before being adopted in other Australian states and territories. The earliest legislation gave an extraordinary degree of control over Aboriginal people's lives to a white 'Board of Protection', including the power to regulate residence, employment,

marriage, social life and other aspects of daily life. Policies were based on principles of assimilation and contributed towards the destruction and loss of culture for the next generation. Aboriginal people of mixed descent were removed from the Aboriginal stations or reserves to merge into white society. Children were also removed for compulsory apprenticeships and domestic labour. It was not until the Aboriginal Voting Rights was passed by the Commonwealth in 1961 that all Aboriginal and part Aboriginal people were given the federal franchise and the same rights and privileges (including recognition of Aboriginal customs and beliefs) as white Australians; the spirit of this principle resonates through the current political and policy push (Bromfield, Richardson and Higgins 2005).

A number of prominent Indigenous spokespersons believe that unresolved grief associated with multiple layers of trauma – often spanning many generations – become internalised within the family. This expresses itself in destructive behaviours such as family violence, substance abuse, depression and suicide (Atkinson 1994; Pearson 2000; Robertson 2000). The large-scale removal of Indigenous children from their families as part of what has become known as the "Stolen Generation" is seen as a major contributor to the experience of trauma (Cuneen and Libesman 2000) and a structural factor behind the current problem of violence in ATSI communities (Mow 1992).

Atkinson (1996) listed some of the contributing situational factors to family violence in Indigenous communities. These include: poverty; unemployment; substandard or inadequate housing; limited access to societal resources and services; loss of identity and self esteem; abusive styles of conflict resolution; sexual jealousy; imbalance and inequity between male and female roles, responsibilities, status and contribution to family life; neglect of family responsibilities; lack of respect within families; emotionally damaged family members; suicide; and alcohol abuse. Similarly, Robertson (2000) reported that there is an association between violence in Indigenous communities and high unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and poverty.

Female heads of households often care for large numbers of children (which may in itself be due to family violence) and are forced to live in derelict houses that cannot be adequately locked to prevent external intruders entering the house and assaulting residents (children or adults). Poverty and traditional practices in relation to accommodation may result in shared sleeping quarters, A situation which has the potential to be exploited by perpetrators of child sexual abuse living in the household (Smallbone, Wortley and Lancefield 1999). This issue may be of particular relevance in considering juvenile perpetrators of child sexual abuse and their access to potential victims (Finkelhor 1986).

A high prevalence of child sexual abuse has been reported in some semi-remote Australian Aboriginal communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Task Force on Violence 1999). Further research needs to be conducted to determine whether the heightened rates of abuse are a reflection of the communities isolation resulting in decreased scrutiny, or whether other environmental or socio-economic factors are at play.

The literature commonly draws an association between violence in Indigenous communities and alcohol or drug abuse. The link between alcohol and sexual offending may be particularly strong in some specific settings (amenable to situational intervention). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Task Force on Violence identified widespread and chronic alcohol abuse as the single biggest causal factor for sexual abuse and cited the ready availability of pornography in these communities as a contributing factor to the high levels of sexual abuse (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Task Force on Violence 1999). The Cape York Justice Study (Fitzgerald 2001: 13) noted that "the available evidence indicates clear links between alcohol consumption, violence and injury, although the relationship is complex and not necessarily one of simple causality." Recently, many communities have developed alcohol management plans that involve severe restrictions on the sale of alcohol and in some case have established 'dry' communities. However, there has at this stage been no formal evaluation of the impact of these measures on sexual offending (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

Cultural interface

There are difficulties documented for disclosure of child abuse occurring in a sub-culture that exists within a different majority culture (Gill 1996). Group cohesion that may emerge as a consequence of being marginalised by the wider community may act as a 'buffer' against the dominant culture. Revealing abuse in this context may be perceived as a betrayal to a whole community. Investigations of child abuse need to take this into account for example when interviewing victims.

Different understandings of key terms may be problematic (Powell 2000). Research has shown that there are marked differences between the communication style of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians which may result in Aboriginal people giving misleading, unreliable or self incriminating information when interviewed. In particular, police and court officials have been critiqued for the use of jargon, leading and closed questions with Aboriginal people. These practices by non-Indigenous people when interviewing Aboriginal people may result in a lack of comprehension by the interviewee. Aboriginal people may seek to hide any embarrassment they experience as a consequence of poor comprehension by repeating back words or phrases of the interviewer, providing a stereotypical response or answering in the affirmative to yes/no questions – even if they do not understand the question (Powell 2000).

Culturally appropriate practice

Current approaches in Indigenous child and family welfare have a basis in a broad shift in government legislation and policy that occurred the 1970s. The policy shift was based on the principle that ATSI people should have a right to self-government and management of all their political, economic and social affairs (Lock 1997). This shift toward what is broadly defined as self-determination occurred as a response to the increased civic activism of Indigenous people in Australia and internationally, and to the government realisation of the failure of the policies of assimilation to address the many problems facing Indigenous people (HREOC 1997).

Indigenous Australians view the right to participate in their children's welfare as a key tenet of self-determination (Lock 1997). As such, Indigenous groups continue to lobby for legislation and organisational structures that provide more attention to the

special needs of Indigenous children. An example of this was the formation of Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs), which have played a leading advocacy and service provision role since the 1970s in assisting ATSI people with parenting, family support or dealing with child protection issues and authorities (Stanley, Tomison and Pocock 2003). The specific responsibilities of each agency in child protection varies between states and territories, according to the capacity of the organisation, the level of demand, and support the organisation receives from funding bodies (Crime and Misconduct Commission 2004).

Some minority groups have taken control of organisational safety by developing their own sets of procedures and strategies. For example, the Coquille Indian tribe in the US has developed its own Child Protection Ordinance to protect the health and welfare of the Tribe, its members, employees, residents, visitors, and especially its children. It has established comprehensive and legally binding policies and procedures for screening persons coming into proximity with their children (National Tribal Justice Resource Center 2005). Similar models may need to be considered in developing culturally appropriate practices for assessing risk factors and developing screening mechanisms – however, minimum standards, consistency, and the ability to maintain a central register of information would need to be considered were a model of this kind to be adopted.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- There are likely to be core cross-cultural risk factors for maltreatment occurring within organisations or institutions, however, there may also be specific cultural issues that place children at increased risk of maltreatment.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over represented in statutory child protection services and out-of-home care.
- The large-scale removal of indigenous children from their families as part of what has become known as the "Stolen Generation" is seen as a major contributor to the experience of trauma and a structural factor behind the current problem of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Current child and family welfare policies are based on the principle that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the right to self-government and management of all their political, economic, and social affairs.

Investigations

The literature suggests there are major differences in the investigation of child abuse in institutions compared to abuse in other settings such as families (Groze 1990). For example, the scale of investigations is much larger. Investigation of abuse in children's homes in Cheshire and Merseyside for example produced 13,563 witnesses, 885 complainants and 162 suspects (Merseyside Police 1999).

A variety of agencies from a number of different areas may be involved jointly in the investigation, so sophisticated coordination is required and if not handled properly, an organisational investigation may be quite abusive to children (Gallagher 1999a) and there must be additional care taken that the interests of children are not forgotten in the welter of competing demands (Kelleher 1987). In a comprehensive research study into investigation of abuse in institutions in England and Wales, Barter (1999) conducted interviews with child protection practitioners and managers involved in an

investigation. It was found that investigations of sexual abuse in organisations were particularly difficult and problematic, especially in maintaining independence, in determining the remit and scope of the inquiry and ensuring provision of adequate and appropriate support. There was a lack of agreed guidelines and protocols, particularly in relation to post-substantiation procedures and this made the investigations especially challenging.

In order to avoid being overwhelmed by the various difficulties involved in investigating organisational or organised abuse, investigative agencies need special protocols for investigating multiple abuser or multiple victim cases. One agency (usually law enforcement) takes charge of investigation and coordination with other agencies using previously agreed protocols, specially trained child interviewers and other staff with training and experience in multiple case investigations. See for example the one developed in Los Angeles (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse 1990: 132-140). The official guidance governing the investigation of out-of-home allegations of abuse in England and Wales is mainly contained in a UK report (Department of Health 1991). A review of investigative processes resulted in a major proposition that there be dedicated local groups of suitably trained and experienced police officers and social workers to undertake such investigations. The consultation paper also sets out a number of recommendations for consideration on procedures for vetting and selection of staff and better avenues for making complaints (Barter 1999).

Institutional abuse inquiries must anticipate that other offenders and victims may be revealed. Thus it is important to follow up to establish if:
- other perpetrators are involved;
- victims have been abused in institutions attended previously;
- children have been abused in the perpetrator's previous place of employment;
- non-abusing staff have actively tried to cover up abuse to protect themselves or the institution; and
- other children have been involved in abusive roles (Gallagher 1998).

Altobelli (2003) argued that all institutions should act in ways consistent with public policy and accept the legitimacy of public interest in any external or internal investigations. The public should be considered as legitimate stakeholders for four key reasons:
1. As a matter of public policy, the protection of children from harm has long been regarded as a public matter and not just a private family or organisational matter. It is not clear why the designers of institutional processes for dealing with allegations seem to have lost sight of this.
2. The public bears the social, economic and other costs of treating the consequences of abuse. It necessarily follows that the public does have an interest in the amounts of compensation awarded, even in private settlements.
3. Thirdly, there is a close link between transparency, accountability and education directed towards prevention. Each allegation of abuse can be used as another opportunity to educate about the extent and consequences of abuse and how it may be avoided or minimised. When allegations are dealt with internally and privately, an insidious public problem is effectively hidden just like family violence has been in the past.
4. Finally, public allegations can lead to information about other past victims and

the public has an interest in protecting potential future victims as well
(Altobelli 2003).

The public has an interest in ensuring that the internal processes used by institutions
are sufficiently rigorous, appropriate and fair (Altobelli 2003: 7). For this assurance,
there needs to be a central, independent review process for decisions made by internal
managers of institutions regarding notifications of abuse. Without external,
independent review, there is potential for institutions to ignore the results of their
inquiries and ignore the processes they have put in place to respond to allegations of
abuse. The public interest and the confidentiality of victims and alleged perpetrators
can be protected through an independently appointed ombudsperson, operating either
nationally or on an industry basis. The ombudsperson would have the power to review
on a random basis any institutional process and have unfettered access to all
documents and evidence.

> "The ombudsperson assumes the defacto role of the protector of the
> public interest by ensuring that the processes used are transparent,
> rigorous, accountable and protect the interests of all stakeholders, but
> particularly other possible survivors" (Altobelli 2003: 12).

Confirmation of abuse in organisations should not need to be at a level of proof
required by a court. Clauses in application information and employment agreements
similar to those contained in the report from the National Tribal Justice Resource
Center (2005) and The Young Mens' Christian Association (2005) enable dismissal
where staff or volunteer worker behaviour compromises the clear standards and
limitations set for staff behaviour and interaction with the children, without legal
recourse by the employee.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- There are pronounced differences in the investigation of child abuse in institutions
  compared to abuse in other settings such as in families.
- In institutional investigations a variety of agencies from a number of different areas may be
  involved, therefore sophisticated coordination is required.
- The public has in interest in ensuring that the internal processes used by institutions are
  sufficiently rigorous, appropriate, and fair. Arguably, for this assurance there needs to be a
  central, independent review process for decisions made by internal managers of institutions
  regarding notifications of abuse.

Professionalisation

Worker registration
Although it does not guarantee high quality practice, requiring professionals working
with children to be formally registered has the capacity to help regulate conduct,
improve knowledge and skill base and enhance professional credibility (Bessant 2004:
11). A registration body – and a code of practice – for workers with children may help
secure an occupational identity, clarify shared values, and be used to make practical
decisions. A code of practice offers some accountability mechanism for service users
and the public more generally. To be successful, however, codes need to be regulatory
and enforceable by an organisation that adjudicates complaints of breaches of the
code. Without legislative mandating and proper sanctions effectiveness of codes can

only be minimal (Bessant 2004). Currently professional status is recognised or regulated on a profession-by-profession basis with some having legislated registration, others professional association membership and others having neither.

Staff and volunteers working with children need training to better understand abuse of children – to be aware through professional training of what abuse is and when and how it should be reported. Such training also needs to develop an understanding of how their own beliefs may affect their judgement. In a sample of 325 potential entry-level social workers in the US, it was found for example that attitudes about corporal punishment were important predictors of whether abusive behaviour would be reported. It was concluded that:

> "Social service agencies face a challenge to provide workers with training which will enable them to detect and report maltreatment despite workers' own individual beliefs about discipline and punishment" (Ashton 2001: 389).

A professional association for those professions that currently do not have one would help determine matters like curriculum, student staff ratios, and research agendas in training institutions, as well as build professional identity, status and public trust (Bessant 2004: 12). Currently these can vary widely for the same profession depending on the training institution attended.

Accreditation
An accreditation system for child organisations is one way in which to encourage and guide adoption of child safety strategies. All organisations working with children could be subject to the same quality control processes including minimum standards and processes of external validation. In out of home care placements only New South Wales and Queensland have legislated for a quality control framework (Hermann 2002). Members of Family Services Australia have implemented a 'Family Relationship Services Program Quality Strategy', which gives organisations working with children and young people agreed standards and accountability through a process of external validation for adherence to those standards. An accreditation process is being developed by Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations through its National Training & Accreditation Project (Australian Council for Children and Youth Organizations 2005) and is heavily influenced by the 'Choose with Care' model (ChildWise 2005). As organisations become perceived as difficult to enter, more able to identify 'grooming' behaviour, and offering fewer opportunities to offend and remain undetected, there is a possibility of displacement of fixated paedophiles to less child safe organisations. Accreditation perhaps linked to insurance may ensure most organisations introduce the necessary strategies to discourage or avoid abuses.

Queensland is the only state in Australia that has a system where people who wish to work with children obtain a card or license current for a set period. Such a system was mooted in the UK where it was observed that a photograph and biometric details in the license card would be necessary to enable verification of identity. Change of identity had been shown to be a serious problem for detecting people who had previously abused children since abusers were easily able to change their names and move to other areas (Bichard 2004). The table at the end of this report summarises legislation related to working with children on a state-by-state basis for Australia.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- Although it does not guarantee high quality practice, requiring professionals working with children to be formally registered has the capacity to help regulate conduct, improve knowledge and skill base, and enhance professional credibility.
- An accreditation system for child organisations is one way in which to encourage and guide adoption of child safety strategies.

7. Screening and selection

There is agreement in the national and international literature that there should be some sort of screening process for individuals entrusted with the care of children. However, no literature was found to support assessing likelihood of offending by an individual applying to work with children who already has a record of child abuse or sex or violence offending (or who has a pattern of concerning behaviour from previous employment). Rather the aim of screening is largely to screen these people out of positions working with children or to deter them from attempting to enter child related positions.

The main aim of developing and implementing screening and selection processes for employees and volunteers seeking work with children and vulnerable people, is to make it as difficult as possible for unsuitable people to succeed (Bichard 2004). Although staff selection processes are critical, they cannot alone guarantee that well-qualified and skilled people that pose no risk to children are selected. The current focus on staff selection practices does tend to presume that good selection can eliminate most staffing problems. However, this is not necessarily so. By focusing too much on screening and selection there is a danger of diverting attention from other critical areas such as those involving organisational management and staff support (Kiraly 2001: 5). In particular paedophiles will never be dealt with successfully unless there is a holistic or "strategic approach" (Bibby 1996: 262). Similarly, other forms of maltreatment are best prevented, not by pre-employment screening alone, but through ongoing organisational policies and procedures.

Knowledge of the characteristics of known child abuse perpetrators may assist in the development of tools for screening, recruitment and monitoring of suitability of staff working with children. In practice, however, child sexual abuse perpetrators – particularly 'fixated' perpetrators – are not easy to identify (Sullivan and Beech 2002). Many paedophiles are intelligent and may be well qualified and present with the responses of a highly competent child care worker and are resourceful in gaining access to children via their employment (Moriarty 1990). They are often credible in appearance, intelligent and know how to circumvent systems designed to identify them, are often well liked and respected and their offending may often be well planned and supported by other similar minded offenders.

> "We are often naïve about the degree of contacts between abusers... Paedophiles work for each other twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Examples abound that include abusers clearing property as soon as friends have been arrested, or attending courts taking detailed notes that are then circulated around prisons as pornography. I am continually shocked at the single-mindedness and ruthlessness of these people" (Bibby 1996: 261).

Brief overview of screening in Australia

All Australian states and territories use some form of structured screening procedures for child-related employment. They vary across the country, but usually involve

police checks. Private school staff and paid employees of churches, sport and other clubs are regularly screened only in New South Wales and Queensland. Other jurisdictions screen Child Care Centres only. Others include family day care and outside school-hours service staff. The scope of screening differs among employment sectors as well. In the health care system, New South Wales is the only jurisdiction that conducts background checks of all employees while in other states and territories, only medical doctors go through some form of screening through having to submit statutory declarations to the registration board during their registration process. In a less formal approach, Northern Territory officials refer to a list of factors when assessing criminal record information about applicants for child care licenses and in other sectors and jurisdictions officials rely more heavily on their professional judgement in assessing screening information.

Queensland and New South Wales have the most comprehensive screening systems although differing significantly from one another. These systems highlight some of the issues that need to be considered when selecting an approach to pre-employment screening. New South Wales has a centralised system for screening paid employees working with children. It involves three checks: criminal records; apprehended violence orders; and employer disciplinary proceedings. The individual also completes a declaration indicating they are not a prohibited person as defined in the New South Wales Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998.

If a 'relevant record' is found (that is, a serious sex offence, serious child pornography or child abuse offence, a relevant apprehended violence order or disciplinary proceedings arising from allegations involving child abuse) a Risk Assessment is undertaken by an Approved Screening Agency. The assessment rates the individuals for their likelihood to abuse a child in the future while taking into account the type of role and employment offered by the employer. The 'Working with Children Check Risk Assessment model' uses a semi-structured decision-making model. The cumulative score of the three records checked and the characteristics of the intended workplace determine a numeric 'risk rating'. Employers are notified of the risk rating and it is up to them to make the decision about whether to employ the person or not, regardless of the score. While there is no formal appeal process available each assessment score can be internally reviewed and lowered by a risk assessor (Johnson 2003).

Queensland's system is almost as comprehensive as that of New South Wales and additionally includes volunteers. However, the processes are devolved across different government agencies, as it is in most other states. In Queensland, the check covers criminal history and investigatory information from professional bodies about disciplinary matters, and gives a suitability card to an individual that is current for two years and transferable across employment situations. Various work sectors in South Australia have screening regimes including comprehensive ones for selection of secure care staff in child and adolescent institutions. Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are currently reviewing their legislation. Victoria has announced an intention to develop a confidential register of sex offenders and the Commonwealth is proposing the initiative be at a national level (Waters 1997). NSW has had a sex offender register since 2000 and it is the model for the proposed National Sex Offender Register.

In Victoria, the *Working with Children Act* 2005 was passed by Parliament in September 2005. As a result of this legislation there will be, for the first time in Victoria, minimum state wide standards for those who work with children, whether in paid employment or as a volunteer.

The *Working With Children Act* requires all employees, self-employed persons and volunteers who are involved in defined categories of child-related employment, and have regular, direct and unsupervised contact with children, to apply for a *Working With Children Check* and be the holder of a valid Assessment Notice. The Working with Children Check will consider a person's criminal record and any findings from prescribed professional disciplinary bodies. If an individual has passed a Working with Children Check they will be issued with an Assessment Notice and Card. An applicant who does not pass the check will be issued with a Negative Notice, which will prohibit that person from working or volunteering with children.

Assessment Notices are valid for five years and will be monitored for any new Victorian charges, convictions or findings of a prescribed kind. It is this continual monitoring that makes the Working with Children Check more robust than a standard police records check. A number of Victorian Public Sector employees will be required to undergo a Working with Children Check under this legislation.

The legislation comes into effect in April 2006 and will commence with a trial period from April to June 2005. As part of the trial period, Department of Human Services' employees in the areas of child protection and juvenile justice and foster carers, will be required to undergo a Working with Children Check. On 1 July 2006, a five year phasing plan will begin, and it is envisaged that by 2011 all persons undertaking child related work in the defined categories as either paid employees or on a volunteer basis will be required to have applied for a Working with Children Check.

Table 4 gives an overview of which sectors within each jurisdiction are mandated to screen employees (as at 2004). For a comprehensive comparison of working with children legislation in Australian states and territories see Appendix A.

Table 4: Mandatory screening ('working with children') in Australia

	NSW	QLD	SA	WA	VIC	ACT	TAS	NT
Education sector:								
Schools	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Other (e.g. tutors)	●	●		●	●			
Child & family sector:								
Child care	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Foster care	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Health sector:								
All employees	●			●	●			
Medical doctors only		●	●			●	●	●
Church sector	●	●		●				
Volunteers in child-related sectors								
All volunteers							●	●
Volunteers defined by legislation		●	●	●	●			

Note: There are exceptions to each category. In NSW, persons with a prohibited employment declaration are also prohibited from volunteering with children. SA is currently developing legislation as to whether a person related to a child would be exempt from a Check or not. In Victoria, health workers in paediatric wards, the church sector and volunteers will be required to undergo a Working with Children Check under the staged implementation of the Working with Children Act which comes into effect on 1 July 2006.

The screening process

> "The need to adopt rigorous recruitment and appointment policies is at the forefront of ensuring that staff working in community homes and other child centred environments are not seeking access to vulnerable children for their purposes" (Welsh Local Government Association submission in Utting 1997: 133).

Planning for screening

The basic principles of screening are to have:
- legislation and regulations requiring that basic screening processes be used;
- incentives that reduce the financial burden and, or provision of recognition for the use of model screening practices (screening to form a part of certification or licensing requirements with penalties for non-compliance and covering employees and volunteers);
- appeal and review procedures that meet natural justice requirements, notification to applicants explaining the screening and checking process, and provision of opportunity to refute the information found as appropriate; and
- statutes or regulations that encourage abuse prevention training for all workers and volunteers (Bilchik 1989).

In setting up screening processes, the following issues should be initially identified:
- How should the screening be done and who should decide?
- Should all who may (or do) come into contact with vulnerable populations be screened (volunteers versus employees; individual service providers versus group and institutional providers)?
- What kind of screening should be done?
- Who should have access to these information databases, what limitations should be on access to the information and what determinations should be left to individual organisations?
- Should a worker be working in the capacity pending results of their screening?

- Who should bear the cost of the various screening practices? (For example the Central Register Bureau provides free Disclosures (police checks) in Scotland for volunteers in the voluntary sector working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. (See www.youthlink.co.uk/childprotection).

Bilchik (1989) recommended a three-step approach to implementing a screening model:
1. assess the 'triggers' that pertain to the setting of the care such as the level of contact and the vulnerability of the care receiver;
2. establish the availability of information, the cost of screening and the human resources needed; and
3. select the most appropriate screening practices that are to be used in addition to 'basic screening'.

Basic screening includes reference checks, interviews and written application. The need for supplementary screening depends on whether there are factors present in the organisation that increase risk such as repeated, direct, one-on-one contact with children or the limited ability of the organisation to monitor the visits such as in remote locations, or children who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse (Bilchik 1989). Many national, inter-state, local and agency-based recommendations are listed by Bilchik (1989) for screening, including:
- establish clear policies for abuse, licensing, and certification registries for purposes of screening (including definitions and specific guidelines consistent with due process in use of registries for screening, guidelines on retention of information, and including accurate results of dispositions, hearings and appeals by those listed on the registries);
- separate the registries' screening function from the data used for research, diagnosis and risk assessment;
- collaborate between states to ensure registries are consistent and exchange of information among jurisdictions is easy and clear cut (a national network of abuse registry directors or other interstate panels could facilitate the development of standardised definitions);
- develop mechanisms within and between states to track convicted offenders and prevent their continued work with children;
- implement a system for sharing reported complaints of abuse among social services and agencies;
- adopt clearly written policies on information sharing between agencies;
- develop mechanisms to clearly establish common statutory definitions of abuse and neglect and to clarify the rights and responsibilities of all parties;
- develop licensing and registration laws that included minimum staff qualifications, professional and personal reference checks, training to staff, guidelines for supervision, signed statutory declaration verifying the truthfulness and accuracy of the information coupled with clear statement that dismissal, suspension, fiscal penalty or revocation of license with untruthfulness;
- involve insurance agencies in requiring screening mechanisms and consequences to maintain insurance cover;

- consider statutory requirement for employers to report terminations from employment due to inappropriate conduct toward a consumer (child or vulnerable client);
- develop strategies for dealing with the assessment information (especially when the screening yields questions about the applicant); and
- have a clear policy on factors for automatic rejection (including untruthful applications) and discretionary rejection.

Police records check

The most common pre-employment screening method is a police record check (Community Services Commission 1996; Moriarty 1990). Where a police check yields relevant conviction records, authorities generally bar the applicant from child-related employment. Some jurisdictions may perform a case-by-case assessment to determine whether the convictions are relevant to the particular job.

The proportion of adults who have inflicted other types of abuse on children and who have criminal records is unknown. Many child abusers do not however have a criminal record – estimated as only 1% to 5% of child abusers (Community Services Commission 1996; Moriarty 1990). Additionally, there is no reliable profile available to help identify the overwhelming majority of abusers – those that remain unconvicted (Stanley, Ranck, Perreault and Neugebauer 1986).

Job application forms

"It is relatively easy for an offender-aware organisation to make... clear in their advertisements, policy statements and staff selection procedures... that would-be applicants know they are applying for a job with an organisation which has an aware culture. This encourages good applicants and actively discourages offenders" (The Lucy Faithfull Foundation submission, in Utting 1997: 133).

In order to discourage unsuitable applicants from applying for work, the application form may include information that makes it clear the organisation is an organisation aware of child-safety issues. The Young Men's Christian Association of the East Valley in the US, for example, sets out on the back of its employment application form that they make every effort to prevent child abuse. A number of statements about how this is achieved are listed, including:
- that they will seek information in an applicant's background related to child abuse;
- allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously and will be reported to the state for investigation;
- periodic interviews/evaluations are conducted with children and parents about day to day experience, encouraging reports of anything out of the ordinary; and
- staff will not fraternise with children outside of the programs, including babysitting or inviting children home (Young Mens' Christian Association 2005).

Interviews

Selection and recruitment processes are essential safeguards for selection of staff. Primarily, selection and recruitment will consist of interviews, referee checks,

previous employment checks and perhaps trial periods while under observation for suitability. Qualifications and experience are obviously an important other half of the selection process to ensure the most suitable person for the job is selected. The Bichard Inquiry (2004) in the UK found that as the selection process was so crucial, training was necessary for all individuals involved in appointing staff working with children. For school appointments there is a requirement that interview panels only be convened when at least one panel member has been properly trained. Inspectors review recruitment arrangements in schools to confirm evidence of effective recruitment and vetting procedures being in place (Bichard 2004).

References
Given the severe limitations of other background checking methods such as criminal history there is a need for organisations to be especially diligent and thorough in checking the background employment history of applicants and in speaking to those who would have had the opportunity to observe the applicant. A number of authors have emphasised the importance of thorough and adequate checks with previous employers prior to appointing staff to work in organisations (Bichard 2004; Brannan et al. 1993; Kirkwood 1993).

Observations
A method for screening to avoid employing people likely to physically or emotionally abuse is to use direct observation of applicants interacting with children. Candidates might be asked to come prepared to conduct an activity with children and observations would be taken. Observations would include whether the candidate has realistic expectations for the children's stages of development; shows interest, enthusiasm, warmth and patience with children, participates in all kinds of activities including messy ones, comforts children who are distressed, appears comfortable caring and seems to enjoy him/herself (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information 2005). This has the added advantage of focusing employment selection processes not just on screening out unsuitable applicants, but also positively selecting for characteristics indicating the applicants are sensitive, child-focused, developmentally aware and will create positive environments for the children and young people in their care.

Involving young people in staff selection has emerged as a useful tool in selections in the UK and is doubly valuable through being consistent with the rights of the child to participate and be heard (Berridge and Wenman 1995; Lindsay 1995).

Screening of employees and volunteers is one way of managing risk and an important part of making organisations safe for children. It should be explicitly understood, however, that no selection processes can guarantee exclusion from organisations of all individuals who pose a risk to children. Therefore, the second half of an approach to manage risk and develop child safe organisations is internal risk management. The need for this should have as its underpinning philosophy an assumption that there will be managers, employees or volunteers who may abuse children if the opportunity arises. This approach has precedents in harm minimisation approaches to drug use and the 'blood rule' in sports and fits well with situational crime prevention theories. Rather than trying to eliminate the problem by focusing on individuals, the risk is managed through environmental factors.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- Maltreatment is prevented, not by pre-employment screening alone, but through ongoing organisational policies and procedures.
- The need for supplementary screening depends on whether there are factors present in the organisation that increase risk such as repeated, direct, one-on-one contact with children or the limited ability of the organisation to monitor the visits such as in remote locations, or children who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- The most common pre-employment screening method is a police record check. Where a police check yields relevant conviction records, authorities generally bar the applicant from child-related employment.
- There is no reliable profile available to help identify the overwhelming majority of abusers – those that remain unconvicted.
- The screening process is enhanced through clear and transparent policies and protocols describing the screening process and subsequent decision making.
- The screening process is enhanced through the development of mechanisms within and between jurisdictions to track convicted offenders and prevent their continued work with children.
- In order to discourage unsuitable applicants from applying for work, the application form may include information that makes it clear the organisation is an organisation aware of child-safety issues.
- Accurate and detailed information about the characteristics of applicants – not just criminal history checks – will assist with determining their suitability for a position in a child-based organisation. For example:
  - a method for screening to avoid employing unsuitable or 'risky' candidates is to use direct observation of applicants interacting with children; and
  - employment selection processes are enhanced through broadening the screening process to focus not just on screening out unsuitable applicants, but also positively selecting for desirable characteristics.
- The Bichard Inquiry (2004) in the UK found that as the selection process was so crucial, training was necessary for all individuals involved in appointing staff working with children.
- A number of authors have emphasised the importance of thorough and adequate reference checks with previous employers prior to appointing staff to work in organisations.
- No selection processes can guarantee exclusion from organisations of all individuals who pose a risk to children. Therefore, the second half of an approach to manage risk and develop child safe organisations is internal risk management.

Databases and registers

It is well established that persons who pose a risk to children are rarely convicted of a crime. Thus only limited assurance can be gained from screening methods that rely on criminal convictions. The Bichard Inquiry (2004) in the UK was prompted by the murder of two primary school girls by a school cleaner who was screened and selected as a suitable employee. It subsequently became clear that he was known to social services for his relationships with underage girls (not notified to police) and that he had five separate allegations of sexual assault reported against him to police (Bichard 2004). The criminal check process did not reveal these facts. It was concluded that many high-risk individuals do not have criminal convictions and, as police and social services treat episodes of offending in isolation, they fail to detect patterns of behaviour that might flag an individual as high risk.

The observation that high-risk individuals who have patterns of concerning behaviour but do not have a criminal conviction was also made by the inquiry into abuse in foster care in Queensland (Crime and Misconduct Commission 2004). Here it was found that incidents of abuse were responded to as isolated incidents, without reference to any former incidents that may show a pattern of behaviour. Compounding the problem in identifying individuals at risk of harming children in the UK was that social service workers were not required to record perpetrator names (a similar situation exists in some Australian states). Additionally, police data systems were severely limited in usefulness because of serious systemic and corporate failures, including the inability to identify change of name by individuals (Bichard 2004).

Screening processes cannot be considered thorough without a database that enables a check of *all* relevant information. As a result of the Bichard Inquiry (2004), the criminal offences that automatically exclude a person working with children have been broadened and there is now inclusion of complaints that do not proceed to conviction as well as concerning behaviour while in employment and criminal convictions. Childcare organisations in the UK have to report unsuitable adults to the central register and they have to consult the register before appointing new workers (BBC News 2000).

The national central database system in the UK (specifically for employment suitability checks on people working with children) is administered by a private company, thus relieving police of the duty of conducting criminal record checks. Within this database is a range of information against which measures of reliability are given and which can be taken into account by background checkers when assessing a person's suitability for a position. Legislative change to the 1997 Police Act and the 1999 Protection of Children Act enables inclusion in the database of data from the United Kingdom's existing Department for Education and Employment data 'List 99' and the Department of Health Consultancy Service Index. 'List 99' is an informal method of identifying individuals considered to be a risk to children via employment and was developed by the Department for Education and Employment. The Department of Health's Consultancy Service Index allows departments to disclose concerns about individuals to 'appropriate agencies'. These actions and lists were given statutory status in 'The Protection of Children Act of 1999' (Sullivan and Beech 2002). Additionally, the central register staff liaise with local police to obtain 'other relevant information' and intelligence to be included in the central database (Thomas 2001). Similarly in Scotland, 'The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003' establishes a list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children and young people (Scottish Executive Education Department 2004).

The value of the central Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in the UK is that it minimises overlaps, duplications and inconsistencies and the inherent 'snapshot' approach of previous screening searches. The register is designed so that any employer – large or small – can easily access it (including parents employing tutors, sports coaches, or nannies). It simplifies the process for employers and provides them with greater reassurance. It also relieves police of the responsibility of deciding what information should be released (Bichard 2004). The CRB is run by the private company who won the government tender (Thomas 2001). Recommendations made by Bichard (2004) about the central database are associated with the type and quality of the information in the database and include the need for:

- clear guidance, standards and training for record creation, retention, review, deletion and sharing of information in and between agencies;
- training of police, social workers and other professionals to enhance confidence in using the information and reduce the fear of breaching privacy or data protection laws;
- national guidance to assist social services departments in making decisions about when to notify police of sexual offences against children (social services records must record cases where a decision is taken *not* to notify the police and the decision making in these cases be inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection); and
- underage sex to be taken more seriously by police and social services particularly when one of the parties is noticeably older or appears to have been 'grooming' the other, younger party in some way (Bichard 2004).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- It is well established that persons who pose a risk to children are rarely convicted of a crime. Thus only limited assurance can be gained from screening methods that rely on criminal convictions.
- The assessment of episodes of alleged offending in isolation may result in a failure to detect patterns of behaviour that might flag an individual as high risk.
- In the UK, (2004), the criminal offences that automatically exclude a person working with children have been broadened and there is now inclusion of complaints that do not proceed to conviction as well as concerning behaviour while in employment and criminal convictions.
- Some police and social service data systems have been shown to be severely limited in usefulness because of serious systemic and corporate failures – these failures have prevented the identification of "high-risk" individuals during the screening process.
- In the UK, a privately administered central database has been established to facilitate child related employment screening.

8. Risk assessment

Risk assessment models try to predict the likelihood of a particular adverse event occurring in the future. Organisations may wish to be able to assess the risk a prospective or current employee poses to children in that organisation. Despite significant recent developments in risk prediction methods in the child protection field (which is a more developed field than is risk assessment in employment screening), there is still no accurate and reliable method of predicting risks for individuals. Current risk assessments also do not take into account the magnitude and type of error involved, nor the potential consequences of the errors (Smallbone et al. submitted).

Because (possibly because they are not much used or where they are used are not publicly available), much of this discussion of risk assessment is based on the risk assessment models used in child protection and criminal justice environments. Research confirms that human service professionals are inadequate predictors of future behaviour for their clients (Skeem, Mulvey and Lidz 2000), with their predictions compromised by contextual and individual circumstances that can change on a daily basis (Dawes, Faust and Meehl 1989; Gambrill and Shlonsky 2000). Referring to the difficulties in predicting future child abuse and neglect, Marzouki stated that the

> "causes of the phenomenon (Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse) are so numerous, their interaction so complex, the slightest difference in one risk factor so important for the output, that the most sophisticated model would not permit any scientific prediction"
> (Marzouki 1997:119)

There are three major methods of assessment: actuarial, professional judgement and structured decision making. Each will be discussed in turn below. In addition, the section below describes one other category of assessment: psychological tests.

Professional judgement assessment

The most widely used approach in child protection risk assessment is professional judgement – also known as the case study model, clinical judgement or unstructured professional judgement model. Professional judgement is sometimes supported by a decision-making framework. However, a meta-analysis has shown that professional judgement predicts outcomes correctly at a rate only slightly better than chance – lower than for more formal risk scales (Grove, Zald, Lebow, Snitz and Nelson 2000; Hanson and Bussiere 1998; Hetherington 1998). Reasons for the poor predictive validity of professional judgement may be related to the fact that professional decisions are frequently inconsistent across decision-makers (Hendryx and Rohland 1997; Rossi, Schuerman and Budde 1999; Schuerman, Rossi and Budde 1999). Social workers have been found to justify treatment decisions using appeals to values and agency policy rather than to empirical research (Rosen 1994) and to make decisions that have high stakes based on perceptions of the social worker-client relationship, instead of client characteristics (Holland 2000). Professional predictions are probably compromised too by contextual and individual circumstances that can change on a day-to-day basis (Dawes et al. 1989; Gambrill and Shlonsky 2000). In sum, the

professional judgement method of risk assessment remains subjective and dependent on individual professional's interpretations of case characteristics and events (Baird and Wagner 2000; Ostrom, Kleiman, Cheesman, Hansen and Kauder 2002).

Structured professional judgement assessment

All structured risk-assessment models predetermine what information should be considered in the risk assessment. However, in some models, the scoring of risk factors is left to the individual assessor, which causes variations in risk ratings between assessors. Although variation in structured professional judgement may be lower than for professional judgement approaches, it can still be substantial (English and Graham 2000). In this approach, an individual's professional judgement is guided by a predetermined set of risk factors, which may be based on practice wisdom, empirical literature and/or field-testing. In many cases, professionals, researchers and other experts discuss possible risk factors and come to a consensus about which ones are important and should be included in the model. This is called a consensus-based approach. Some models assign numerical weights to risk factors so that the assessment yields a numerical risk score. Assessors check whether the risk factors are present in a particular case and use this information to determine the extent of the risk of offending. Examples are:

- the Working with Children risk assessment model used in New South Wales since 2000 (a risk assessment is undertaken whenever a relevant record is found in order to determine the risk that applicants with prior relevant criminal convictions might pose to the children they will work with in a specified position in the workplace); and
- the Victorian Risk Framework introduced into child protective services in Victoria in 1998 (Boffa and Armitage 1999; Department of Human Services 1999).

Actuarial assessment

Actuarial assessment methods have strongest evidence for predictive accuracy (Dvoskin and Heilbrun 2001; Litwack 2001). Actuarial procedures are based on an objectivist perspective that views risk as an objective reality that can be reliably assessed and measured. The advantages of actuarial instruments are that they weight risk patterns consistently and provide decision makers with objective probability estimates. The models include procedures for combining and scoring risk factors as well as rules for translating numerical scores into risk levels. Researchers and policy makers design structured risk assessments to reduce errors. They do this by standardising information collected for decision making and by integrating case information into accurate classifications using actuarial methods (Baird and Wagner 2000; Baird, Wagner, Healy and Johnson 1999; Ruscio 1998). When used properly, risk assessment promises to ensure that high-stakes decisions are equitably based on the presenting risk profiles of clients served by human services professionals (Schwalbe 2004).

The predictive validity of actuarial models of risk assessment shows that this model has the most empirical support. In a review of 135 studies conducted over a sixty year time span Grove and Meehl (1996) found that in only eight studies were predictions

using professional judgement more accurate than actuarial instruments. Rather, the predictive accuracy of professional judgement was about the same as chance. A well-constructed actuarial instrument, while not perfect, does however improve prediction above the level of chance. Of the few studies which have focused on people who sexually abuse children in the workplace, none identified any clear risk factors that would have led to the identification of the perpetrators (Gallagher 2000; Sullivan and Beech 2002; Trocmé and Schumaker 1999).

Actuarial assessments, however, depend heavily on data in the system being reliable, consistent and valid and can only be developed from extensive empirical research. Thus they can only be developed where extensive empirical data exists. Currently, data on child abuse in Australian organisations are sparse. Some professional associations collect complaint data against their members but there is no central point for data collection. Additionally, no police agency in Australia collects victim-offender relationship data that would indicate the perpetrator was the child's carer or had a professional relationship with the child. (Further work on this topic is being investigated by the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, with a report due to the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council by December 2005).

To ensure useful risk assessment from actuarial instruments, continuous attention must be paid to their predictive validity. The sheer volume of validation studies conducted to date reflect acceptance of this ideal (Belfrage, Fransson and Strand 2000; Camasso and Jagannathan 2000; Douglas, Ogloff, Nicholls and Grant 1999; Hawkins, Smith, Hill, Kosterman, Catalano and Abbott 2003; Jones, Harris, Fader and Grubstein 2001; Jung and Rawana 1999). In sum, actuarial models are developed through:
- analysing empirical data;
- identification of statistically significant risk factors; and
- set rules for combining and weighting these risk factors.

Actuarial prediction methods are not without their problems. Standard statistical measures of predictive accuracy, such as the Area Under the Curve (AUC) or the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) statistic for example can conceal problems with the accuracy of classifying recidivists and have problems in accuracy of classifying non-recidivists. For example, (Campbell 2003) pointed out that the sensitivity and specificity of the Static-99 (Hanson and Thornton 1999) was maximized with cut-off scores of >1 and <6, respectively. However, with maximum *sensitivity* almost all (92%) of the sexual recidivists would be correctly identified, but more than half (55%) of the non-recidivists would be incorrectly classified as recidivists. With maximum *specificity*, 93% of the non-recidivists would be correctly classified, but 65% of the recidivists would be incorrectly classified as non-recidivists.

The application of actuarial-derived predictions must take into account the consequences of false positives (exceeding the cut-off on the risk assessment but the individual is actually not a child sexual offence recidivist) and false negative predictions (the individual is actually a child sexual offence recidivist, but is not detected by the assessment tool). The threshold of tolerance for prediction error will vary according to the consequences of the error. It may be that false positive errors should be more widely tolerated for employment screening than it should be for post-

sentence imprisonment, and on the other hand false negative errors should be more widely tolerated for less serious offending than for more serious offending behaviour (Smallbone et al. submitted).

Another problem is that workers will not always consistently apply actuarial risk assessments to reach a risk assessment outcome, even when the agency mandates they do so. Many assessors in real world situations are sceptical about relying exclusively on a statistically based decision-making tool, preferring instead to base their final assessment on subjective factors (professional or clinical judgement) (Schwalbe 2004). In attempting to increase utilisation and validity of actuarial models in a manner that informs clinical judgement without undermining it, Baumann, Grigsby, Farris, Holoubek, Robinson and Sheets (Baumann, Grigsby, Farris, Holoubek, Robinson and Sheets 2002) introduced a concept-guided risk assessment model and incorporation of 'alerts' or electronic warning flags into the model. The concepts were based upon empirical work conducted in the United States (English 1996; English and Pecora 1994; Gober, Graham, Baumann and Kern 1998; Schwab, Baumann and Gober 1997) and in Canada (Reid 1996; Reid, Sigurdson, Christianson-Wood and Wright 1995) as well as reviews of the literature (Belsky 1993). Similarly, Schwalbe (2004) is of the view that the accuracy and utility of actuarial models can be enhanced through use of decision-making theory.

One procedure for making rational decisions is 'Maximizing Subjective Expectation of Utilities' (SEU). This procedure for decision making is commonly taught in economics and business and identifies four components to all decision problems regardless of setting: outcomes, options, utilities and probabilities.
1. *Outcomes* might be defined by decision makers as child safety vs. repeated child maltreatment.
2. *Options* would include the array of intervention choices ranging from case closure to termination of parental rights (i.e., removing the child).
3. *Utilities* are the preferences, or values, that the child welfare system attaches to some anticipated consequences over others. Often, utilities are defined in financial terms, such as the cost of intervention, although Lindley (1985) demonstrated procedures for quantifying subjective preferences such as child safety and client self determination.
4. *Probabilities* are estimated for each outcome, given each intervention choice.

In formal decision analysis, utilities and probabilities are quantified and integrated mathematically to recommend an optimal decision; that is, a recommended decision that provides the greatest likelihood of achieving the most favourable result among an array of choices. Lindley (1985) outlined a process of SEU decision-making. Schwalbe (2004) contended that when used, SEU promises at least three benefits prized by administrators and policy-makers:
1. *Decisions will be consistent.* Because SEU uses mathematical formulas, inconsistency should disappear when decisions are based upon precise calculations using the same information (Ruscio 1998).
2. *Decisions will be rational.* That is, they will conform to the laws of probability (Lindley 1985; Pratt, Raiffa and Schlaifer 1995).
3. *The decision-making process will be transparent and open to critique.* While the assignment of utilities and to some extent probabilities, is subjective the SEU process requires clear specification of all elements of the decision-

making process resulting in greater transparency which is a key feature of decision making in settings marked by high levels of administrative and legal accountability (Abel et al. 1988; Hammond 1996, 2000; Payne and Bettman 2001).

Actuarial assessment models, even with supplementary decision-making tools and concept guidance, suffer from the unpredictability of an individual's behaviour and while they may accurately predict group behaviour they cannot accurately predict individual behaviour (Goddard, Saunders, Stanley and Tucci 1999; Johnson 2003). Craig et al. (2005) pointed out that in spite of increased levels of predictive accuracy, actuarial measures to predict future offending are nevertheless unrepresentative, lack specificity, rely on information provided by the offender and are heavily reliant on static risk factors without taking into account dynamic risk, psychological emotional states and treatment effects. A combination of structured professional and actuarial risk assessments may be useful in the future if enough quality data is generated over a period of years and on which such a system can be based.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- There is a paucity of literature specific to risk assessments of employees and volunteers.
- The child protection field is a more developed field than is risk assessment in employment screening.
- There are three major methods of assessment: actuarial, professional judgement and structured professional judgement.
- The professional judgement method of risk assessment remains subjective and dependent on individual professional's interpretations of case characteristics and events.
- Structured risk-assessment models predetermine what information should be considered in the risk assessment. Variation in structured professional judgement may be lower than for professional judgement approaches, however variation can still be substantial.
- Actuarial instruments weight risk patterns consistently and provide decision makers with objective probability estimates.
- Actuarial assessments, however, depend heavily on data in the system being reliable, consistent and valid and can only be developed from extensive empirical research.
- Many assessors in real world situations are sceptical about relying exclusively on a statistically based decision-making tool, preferring instead to base their final assessment on subjective factors (professional or clinical judgement).
- Actuarial assessment models may accurately predict group behaviour they cannot accurately predict individual behaviour.
- Actuarial models of risk assessment have consistently been show to produce more accurate assessments than predictions using professional judgement.
- There is insufficient evidence on maltreatment extra-familial perpetrators of maltreatment or child maltreatment in an organisational context to support the development of an actuarial risk assessment tool.

Risk assessments and maltreatment potential
Although some patterns emerge, from the literature, perpetrators appear to be a very diverse group of individuals with different sets of characteristics and whose behaviours vary in response to environmental cues and opportunities. There is little research to support the contention that commission of one type of abuse precludes or predicts another type of offending. Previous offending of all types may be an

indication of poor impulse control, poor anger management, poor judgement or lack of respect for others rather than a particular propensity to offend in one or a number of ways. On this basis, previous offending may provide a warning signal for suitability. It cannot, however, provide information for judgements about the nature and extent of future offending. Literature has shown for example that sexual offenders have often manipulated victims – using what may be considered psychological abuse – to have used physical abuse and to have had both male and female victims and had victims of various ages. Other perpetrators may not exhibit violent behaviour and may prefer a particular sex or age of child. Others may not have been detected but given the right cues and circumstances will offend. In sum, no reliance or assurance is provided in the literature that could support a contention that one type of abuse or particular characteristic or context of abusive behaviour means the individual is unlikely to offend in other ways and contexts. The lack of a reliable 'profile' describing the characteristics of individuals likely to perpetrate child maltreatment in an organisational or institutional environment mean that assessments are largely limited to screening out individuals with known problem behaviour (e.g., a conviction).

In this emerging policy area, many countries and organisations perform criminal record checks on people applying to work with children. In New South Wales, risk assessment is only conducted when relevant criminal records are found for a person applying for work with children. The 'recognised agency' completes a 'Working with Children Check' that includes evaluation of the conditions in which the applicant would be interacting with children in the workplace. One of five risk classifications is allocated: low, low-medium, medium, medium-high, or high. Employers may consider this risk level in addition to other information when deciding whether to employ an applicant. Thus, a high risk score does not necessarily prevent an individual's employment (Johnson 2003). In this and other general employee risk assessments, reliance is predominantly on professional judgement because there is a lack of historical data on which to develop an actuarial assessment instrument. Professional judgement risk assessment is typically augmented by a decision-making framework which in New South Wales includes items such as the duties of the position, the length of time since prior offences occurred, vulnerability of the children and the rehabilitative efforts undertaken by the applicant (for example, see District School Board Ontario 2001).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- There is little research to support the contention that commission of one type of abuse precludes or predicts another type of offending. However, previous offending may provide a warning signal for suitability.
- The absence of a reliable 'profile' describing the characteristics of individuals likely to perpetrate child maltreatment in an organisational or institutional environment mean that assessments are largely limited to screening out individuals with known problem behaviour.

Assessments of specific traits

Assessments have been developed to assist in predicting the abuse potential of individuals with specific traits or prior patterns of behaviour. Personality disorders in adults and adolescents and their relationship with abuse potential and characteristics of convicted offenders and the prediction of recidivism are discussed.

Personality disorders
A number of factors present in child abusers have been isolated. Factors in (detected) abusive individuals for sex offending include psychopathology and cognitive disturbances, and - in the context of families - lack of skill in dealing with child non-compliance, poor problem solving skills, poor impulse control and poor interaction skill with children. The most consistent psychological risk factor for child sex abuse is a diagnosis of a personality disorder, typically antisocial personality disorder or psychopathy. Measures of depression, anxiety or social skills, however, were not related to sex offence recidivism (Wright 2003). Risk for recidivism of sex offenders increased when offenders had prior sex offences, had victimised strangers, had an extra familial victim, began offending sexually at an early age, selected male victims and/or had engaged in diverse sex crimes (Wright 2003). Most psychosocial tests that are designed to predict recidivism have been developed among already confirmed perpetrators, notably sex offenders. The validity of using the same or similar measures on 'normal' individuals for employment purposes is not established or validated in the literature and in many cases their administration in this context may be considered an invasion of privacy.

Most research into psychological testing for employment purposes centres around two main areas: Cognitive Aptitude Testing (general intelligence) and Personality Testing. In many situations, intelligence testing has been found to outperform other measures of job performance (Barrett and Depiner 1991; Hunter 1986). Other studies have sought to explore psychometric measures that recognise potential professional perpetrators at the employment selection stage (Langevin et al. 2000; Plante, Manuel and Bryant 1996). However, these latter measures are based on the characteristics of *detected* child sex abusers. Their ability to identify characteristics for the majority of sex abusers (who remain undetected) is uncertain. In screening volunteers for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, Hermann (2002) reviewed some of the available scales for measuring behaviours and personality characteristics that may be detrimental to children, but found there was a lack of reliability and or validity for each scale.

Abuse Potential in Adolescents
Todd and Gesten (1999) used Milner's (1986) Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAP) with 144 students aged 13-18 years who were known victims of abuse attending six schools. They found that:
- delinquency (externalizing behaviour) was the best predictor of future potential to abuse among girls;
- internal states of depression, anxiety and withdrawal accounted for more variance in abuse potential than did aggressive or acting out behaviour (this was unexpected); and
- internalising was the only predictor which explained the unique variance between abuse potential for students under 15 years of age. It was found that externalising factors come later after 15 years of age.

The last finding was considered to have potential for early detection and intervention (Milner 1986). The American Psychiatric Association (1994) has identified that physical child abuse and neglect is a common factor in those with antisocial personality disorder. Since conduct disorder is the childhood prerequisite for adult antisocial personality disorder (American Psychiatric Association 1994), an examination of features of conduct disorder provides theoretically relevant adolescent

predictors of abuse potential. For adolescents who have increased potential as perpetrators of physical abuse on children in adulthood, it was found that youth and teacher reports of internalising behaviours, sociopathic personality characteristics and delinquency were reasonably accurate predictors (Todd and Gesten 1999). Risk assessment instruments for juvenile justice decision making could be informed by the Social Development Model, an empirically supported theory of delinquency (Catalano and Hawkins 1996; Hawkins et al. 2003). The findings of such an instrument could show that a youth is high risk for future offending owing to a lack of bonding to pro-social others and a lack of skills for pro-social involvements, for example.

Criminal Recidivism Assessments

A number of risk factors have been identified for adult child abusers (primarily in the family context). These were discussed above in the section of perpetrator risk factors. In terms of what factors should be considered for inclusion in a risk assessment tool developed for employees, the following factors could be considered. There appears to be a cluster of characteristics common to a significant number of abusive individuals and commonly they are found to be those reflective of sociopathic or antisocial personality characteristics (American Psychiatric Association 1994; Todd and Gesten 1999). It should be remembered however that the following personality and behaviour factors have been identified within the context of the family:

- aggressive tendencies (Altemeier, O'Connor, Vietze, Sandler and Sherrod 1982; Kazdin 1992; Spinetta and Rigler 1972; Straus 1980);
- egocentricity or narcissism (Gilgun 1988; McCarthy 1990);
- hostility and suspiciousness (Brunnquell, Crichton and Egeland 1981);
- isolation from community and extended family resources (Elmer 1967; Garbarino and Crouter 1978);
- low levels of empathy and higher levels of alcohol and drug use (Milner and Dopke 1997); and
- immaturity, self centredness and impulsivity (Kaplan, Pelcovitz, Salzinger and Ganeles 1983).

An investigation of 1,000 families with severe abuse found the following common factors present,

- spouse abuse;
- substance abuse;
- marital conflict;
- social isolation; and
- financial and employment problems to be common factors (Cohn and Daro 1987).

Finally, an examination of seven hundred articles and books identified the following factors as common for abusive individuals in families,

- high level of interpersonal relationship problems;
- rigid attitudes, impulsivity;
- immaturity;
- feelings of inadequacy;
- isolation;
- loneliness;
- depression;

- unrealistic expectations; and
- childhood history of abuse and neglect (Milner and Williams 1978).

The following table (Table 5) summarises some of the risk assessment tools used in predicting recidivism for violence and sexual offending. It should be noted that these tools have been developed from 'clinical' samples, (i.e., people identified as having already offended). The assessments are designed to be applied to offending individuals for the purposes of assessing their risk of re-offending and for other decisions about them, such as treatment and supervision. The ability of the instruments to assess abuse potential in individuals from a general population or a sub-group from a general population such as applicants for work with children is unknown.

Table 5: Risk Assessments for Recidivism

Violence Offending Recidivism Assessments		
Instrument	*Author*	*Risk Factors Measured*
CAP Child Abuse Potential Inventory	(Milner 1986)	CAP is a 160-item self-administered screening device to measure physical child abuse potential in adults. Subscales include: • Distress • Rigidity • Unhappiness • Problems with child and self • Problems with family • Problems from others It also includes faking-good, faking-bad and random response indices.
DSM-IV Diagnostic and Statistical Measure of Mental Disorders	(American Psychiatric Association 1994)	• conduct disorder in childhood • high levels of internalising, depressive or avoidance behaviours • high levels of externalising or aggressive behaviours • conflicted interpersonal relationship style • presence of criminal behaviours, recurrent substance use • egocentric or sociopathic personality style •
SIRS Statistics Information on Recidivism Useful as a measure of risk for general recidivism, less effective at predicting sexual offending	(Bonta, Law and Hanson 1996)	A 15 item scale related to: • criminality • first conviction • age at conviction • mental status and • social functioning.
VRAG Violent Risk Appraisal Guide Are based on complex and time consuming clinical assessments	(Quinsey, Harris, Rice and Cormier 1998)	• lived with both biological parents to age 16 • school maladjustment • history of alcohol problems • marital status • criminal history- non violent • fail to comply with parole or probation conditions • age • victim injury
RM2000-V **RM2000-S** Risk Matrix 2000 Has separate indicators for risk of sexual recidivism *or* non-sexual assault and overall violence. Contains easily available offence records data but not the more expensive and intrusive	(Thornton, Mann, Webster, Blud, Travers, Friendship and Erikson 2003)	Ratings: low risk; medium risk; high risk; and very high risk *RM2000-V (Violence)* • Age on release from prison • Number of Violence offending court appearances • Any convictions for burglary *RM200-S (Sex offending)* Step 1: • Number of sentencing occasions that include a sex offence • Number of sentencing occasions for any kind of criminal offence • Age at next opportunity to offend Step 2 – Aggravating Factors: • Any conviction for a sex offence against a male

	Single – never married?
psychological or phallometric measures	• Any convictions for a noncontact offence • Any convictions for a sex offence against a stranger

Sex Offending Recidivism Assessments

Instrument	Author	Risk Factors Measured
Static-99 Combines the Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism (RRASOR) and the Structured Anchored Clinical Judgement Scale (SACJ).	(Hanson 2000)	Static-99 contains 10 items concerned with four broad categories shown to be associated with increased likelihood of committing further sexual offences: *Sexual deviance* (offended against males) *Range of potential victim* (unrelated or stranger victim) *Persistent sexual offending* (N. of previous sex convictions) *Anti-sociality* (current or previous non-sexual violence or 4 or more previous criminal convictions).
RRASOR Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism	(Hanson 1997) Sample large. Studies used from various countries.	Based on data from 7 different follow-up studies, cross-validated on a different sample. Factors: prior sexual offences, age, victim gender, relationship to the victim.
SACJ Structured Anchored Clinical Judgement Scale Can assess risk over time as more information becomes available	(Thornton 1997)	1st step – Rating of high, medium and low, based on convictions, previous or current sex offences and other violent offences, more than 3 past convictions of any sort. 2nd step – 8 items, stranger victims, any male victims, never married, convictions for non contact sex offences, substance abuse, placement in residential care as a child, deviant sexual arousal, psychopathy.
SPRASI Sexual Predator Risk Assessment Screening Instrument	(English 1999)	• 1st part: severity of the sexual offence • 2nd part: relationship with victim (stranger, history of establishing a relationship prior to assault) • 3rd part: risk variables relating to employment, offending and substance abuse histories • 4th part: extent of mental abnormality (PCL-R score, narcissistic, antisocial and paranoid personality scales) Sexual predator = part 1 + part 2 + (part 3 *or* 4)
MnSOST Minnesota Sex Offender Screening Tool – revised Contains complex and hard to identify items of criminal history (Eg: location of sex offence, N. of distinct sex acts committed in a single offence)	(Epperson, Kaul and Hesselton 1998)	Dynamic variables – • age at release from prison, discipline history, sex offender treatment, drug dependency treatment while imprisoned Offence variables – • use of threat/force, stranger victim, 13-15 year old victims and 5 year age difference, committed in a public place, while on supervision or involving multiple sex acts in a single event Unstable life style – • history of substance abuse and unemployment. Unstable employment
J-SOAP Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment	(Prentky, Harris, Frizzell and Righthand 2000)	23 item protocol consists of 4 rational scales, Scale 1 - sexual drive/preoccupation and Scale 2 - impulsive, antisocial behaviour Scale 3 – clinical/treatment Scale 4 – community adjustment
SORAG Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (Developed from a version used for violent offenders – VRAG) Are based on complex and time consuming clinical assessments	(Quinsey et al. 1998)	Contains 15 static risk factors including • Criminal history of violence offences • Number of previous convictions for sex offences • Personality disorder • Schizophrenia • Phallometric test results • Psychopathy scores (PCL-R, Hare 1991

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- The most consistent psychological risk factor for child sex abuse is a diagnosis of a personality disorder.
- Most psychosocial tests that are designed to predict recidivism have been developed among already confirmed perpetrators, notably sex offenders. The validity of using the

same or similar measures on 'normal' individuals for employment purposes is not established.

- Physical child abuse and neglect is a common factor in those with antisocial personality disorder. Conduct disorder is the childhood prerequisite for adult antisocial personality disorder and may provide an adolescent predictor of abuse potential.
- Several risk assessment tools have been developed and used in predicting their risk of re-offending (violence and sexual offending). The tools were developed using data from known offenders. The ability of the instruments to assess abuse potential in individuals from a general population or a sub-group from a general population such as applicants for work with children is unknown.

Assessing the risk for maltreatment in organisations

Intuitively it makes sense to try and identify known risk traits in an individual applying for work with children as a way of eliminating them from selection. However, apart from the legitimacy of using risk assessments for this purpose, there are other problems with psychological testing including verification of accuracy, difficulty in administration and cost. There are mixed findings about their usefulness and there is controversy around the ethics of using cognitive or personality testing in personnel selection at all. With issues of fairness remaining prominent in both the current debate and legislation concerning the use of psychological tests, more work is needed to validate the tests that currently exists (Kiraly 2001). It may be just as relevant to assess cognitive skills by asking relevant problem solving questions at interviews with applicants and then verifying these through reference checking.

Many actuarial risk assessment models in criminal justice are based on specific information collected for specific types of offending. For example, in Table 5, the likelihood of recidivism is assessed through tools designed specifically for sexual abuse offending and specifically for violence offending using criminal justice data. Sex offending risk assessment tools, particularly those for child sex abusers have additionally frequently been developed from data obtained from known offenders measuring their psycho/social risk factors. Thus risk assessment tools for prediction of offending tend to be very specialised. Tools developed for assessing intra-family abuse have also been developed from abusive families, rather than a general population of families, and are designed to be used with a population already identified as abusive.

A generalist risk assessment tool that could predict for all types of offending was not found and it is uncertain if specialised risk assessments combined in some way could usefully predict risk of offending of all types, especially on a general population. Indeed the validity of using measures developed from, and designed to be used on, what in effect is a 'clinical' sample, on 'normal' individuals is not established in the literature.

There are a number of important limitations to using assessment tools to predict risk of offending by an individual. One limiting factor is that most psycho-social tests applicable to both child sex abusers and intra-familial abusers are developed from – and designed to be used with – individuals who are confirmed perpetrators. The validity of using measures from what is in effect a 'clinical' sample on 'normal' individuals is not established in the literature.

One of the most serious problems of using risk prediction models generally in the real world, however, is that they concentrate on questions of probability rather than seriousness of the offending. Clearly, risk assessments should take into account the probability of recidivism but also the level of potential harm that the re-offending may have – indicated by the nature, type and method of abuse by the individual (Smallbone et al. submitted). However, this is commonly not assessed. Another problem is that risk assessments focus on individual factors while giving little explicit attention to the circumstances external to the offender that will influence whether recidivism is likely to occur (Smallbone et al. submitted).

Critics of the view that child sex offenders possess motivations that are pathological and long-standing and which differentiate them from non-sexual offenders, consider attempts at classification of sex offenders to be very limited because the classifications rely on what the client admits to during an assessment. Most child abusers engage in a variety of different sexual activities with children and operate both within and outside the family (Abel and Osborn 1992), making classification efforts artificial (van Dam 2001). What the research shows is that child sex abusers and probably other types of maltreatment perpetrators are far from being an easily identified group with a discrete set of characteristics. Indeed, although some patterns emerge in the research on detected sex perpetrators for example, they are otherwise a diverse group of individuals. Accurate prediction of who poses a risk to children in general terms is not yet possible due to:

- inadequate definitions of the behaviours considered to constitute child abuse or risk to children and a lack of a generically applicable definition of child abuse;
- a lack of data on cases where children have been harmed;
- insufficient understanding of the causes of harm to children;
- insufficient knowledge of the extent and nature of child abuse in the workplace;
- high number and complicated interactions of factors causing child abusive behaviour; and
- statistical limitations of predictive models and statistical difficulties in predicting complex and relatively rare events (Johnson 2003).

Possibly because of the above limitations (which exist even in more well-established bodies of work such as child protection and criminal justice), few risk assessments have been developed for adults who apply to work with children.

Solutions to a problem are heavily influenced by the way the problem is conceptualised. Historically, and currently, child abusers have been defined as a problem of the individual. Therefore prevention efforts have largely focused on individual treatments and individual risk assessments. Research has shown that a large number of seemingly normal males have some sexual molestation fantasies and a large percentage has actually engaged in sexual behaviour with young children. Further, research suggests that of those known to have offended against children there are a diverse range of offenders. This means that narrow classifications will be problematic in the context of strategies designed to prevent child abuse. In terms of child-safe organisations, this is a very important conceptual shift because it leads to consideration of alternative, environmental solutions – rather than individual-based

solutions. If it is accepted that a diverse range of potential child abusers exists, greater consideration, status and impetus is required for risk prevention strategies that involve manipulation of organisational systems and procedures to reduce offending cues and abuse supportive structures – that is, situational prevention. Preventive environmental factors act to either weaken or strengthen social controls and to either facilitate or prevent offending such as those affecting opportunity, moral brakes and probability of being caught. These probably play a much more important role than generally acknowledged (Wortley and Smallbone submitted).

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH

- A generalist risk assessment tool that could predict for all types of offending was not found and it is uncertain if specialised risk assessments combined in some way could usefully predict risk of offending of all types, especially on a general population.
- Risk assessments focus on individual factors while giving little explicit attention to the circumstances external to the offender that will influence whether recidivism is likely to occur (e.g., organisational culture and environment).
- Few risk assessments have been developed for adults who apply to work with children.
- Narrow classifications and individual-based prevention may be problematic in the context of strategies designed to prevent child maltreatment in an organisational setting.
- Environmental factors may act to either weaken or strengthen social controls and to either facilitate or prevent offending such as those affecting opportunity, moral brakes and probability of being caught.

9. Legal Issues and Implications

Conceptualisations

Perhaps because of the preoccupation of researchers and professionals with distinct types of child victimisation, the victimology of childhood is currently conceptually undeveloped (Finkelhor 1995: 177-193).

> "An important shortcoming of much of the discussion of children and crime is the failure to grasp fully the developmental nature of childhood and its implications for criminal victimisation. Childhood is a period of enormous change in size… cognitive capacities, gender differentiation, relationships, and social environments – all of which affect the potential for victimisation" (Finkelhor 1995: 178).

Ten years on, this is still a shortcoming. The fundamental premises underlying developments in child-safe organisations should be (a) very clear definitions of children as 'vulnerable parties' (Bessant 2004), (b) recognition of the construct of childhood as a period of dependency and powerlessness, and (c) a perception of children and young people as a discrete social group in their own right with their own sets of interests (Frost and Stein 1989).

Obligation to Vulnerable Parties
A fiduciary relationship exists when young people are placed in care at the behest of the state. Fiduciary relationships also apply in less obligatory contexts to other organisations with care of children. The state however, as the overriding sovereign authority, has the ultimate 'fiduciary' obligation to children (Bessant 2004). Formal policy measures are required to give effect to the fiduciary duties of government and other organisations in their obligations to keep children, with whom they have a relationship, safe from harm (O'Neill 1989).

A recognition of children's rights – including the right to a safe environment and freedom from abuse and exploitation – as well as the duty of care and obligations adults have toward children, need to be very clearly stated because they specify and clarify who is bound and to whom the obligation is owed (O'Neill 1989). The Children's Charter and Framework for National Standards for the protection of children in Scotland is an example of what can be done (see www.scotland.gov.uk/about/ED/CnF/00017834/page1423929284.pdf).

Part of young people's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters or procedures affecting them (Article 12) (9) (Bessant 2004). This right should be incorporated into statements of rights and obligations and likewise incorporated into organisational practice. Young people must be given opportunities to give opinions and suggestions as part of the organisational processes and to have them considered in a serious manner. Part of this process is enabling children to report abuse without fear and with an expectation that they will be protected.

Balancing Adult and Child Rights

The concept of offender rehabilitation (and the notion of reintegration into the community after lawful penalty has been completed) is important to our concept of justice. Australia has signified this through its commitment to international conventions that unfair discrimination on the basis of criminal record in employment and occupation is an infringement of all Australians' human rights. The federal 'Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986' puts into effect Australia's commitment to ILO Convention No.111, the 'Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958'. However, these rights must be balanced by Australia's commitment to the 'Convention for the Rights of the Child 1990', which notes that all actions and decisions concerning children need to take into account the best interests of the child (Article 3, Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Australia in December 1990) (Waters 1997). Children's rights must be given equal or greater weight than adult rights because children are the vulnerable party and it is to them that adults owe an obligation of care (Batley 1997).

The strategies being implemented in the UK following the Bichard Report (Bichard 2004) clearly tip the scales in favour of the rights of the child over those of adults including former criminal offenders. The UK has created a register of people unsuitable to work with children which includes adults with a relevant criminal background and also those with alleged patterns of inappropriate behaviour towards children. Banning persons from working with children who have not had the benefit of being presented before courts and having the evidence assessed in a court of law, has civil liberties implications (Home Office 1999). However, it is considered that duty of care and positions of trust do not require testing of evidence before a court to establish good character or suitability to work with vulnerable people. In New South Wales, at least one appeal has been lodged by an individual nominated as a prohibited person under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 (see NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal Community Services Division 2004). This and other appeals will test this type of restriction on employment in Australia.

Individual states have their various legislations relevant to employment, selection and work management issues. National legislation that is relevant is contained in:
- The Disability Discrimination Act (Australia) 1992;
- The Sex Discrimination Act (Australia) 1984; and
- The Human Right and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (Australia) 1986.

Collection and use of information about adult behaviour that extends beyond criminal convictions can be contentious from legal and natural justice perspectives. However, detection of concerning patterns of behaviour may be very relevant to a decision about a person's suitability to safely work with children – and to the organisation's obligation to protect children from abuse and exploitation by employees and volunteers. In the UK model, non-conviction data (such as victim allegations to police and family abuse detected by social services) are collected to assist in the identification of concerning *patterns* of behaviours. Through this means, it is possible for example to identify adults who have engaged in a number of underage relationships, or who have been reported to police for abusive behaviour by a number of different victims. On inquiry to the register, an employer is informed only of

whether the person is listed on the child safe register and thus avoids the giving of information about past convictions to prospective employers without reference first to the individual concerned (Bichard 2004).

In Australia, a newly established national register of suspected and convicted paedophiles was considered by Waters (1997) to enable decisions to be made based on unsubstantiated claims. However, a threshold approach is being considered to ensure that non-conviction information is only released where it meets criteria which strongly points to a propensity to offend and that an appeals mechanisms will be put in place giving individuals rights to challenge their inclusion in a register (Waters 1997). The appeal process in the UK model for banned people is very restrictive and includes a requirement that appeals will only be heard ten years after the individual is banned or five years if the person was an adolescent (Thomas 2001). In New South Wales, under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998, appeals against a tribunal order may be made only after a period of five years (NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal Community Services Division 2004).

Legislation is now in place in the UK to make it a criminal offence for banned persons to apply to work with children, or for employers knowingly to appoint such persons (Gallagher 2000). Similarly, under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act (NSW) 1998 and the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act (2000) in Queensland, persons who are 'prohibited persons', such as those convicted of serious sex offences and other offences (as indicated in the Acts) face a specific offence of applying, undertaking or remaining in child-related employment.

MESSAGE FROM RESEARCH
- In the UK, children's rights (in relation to pre-employment screening) have been given equal or greater weight than adult rights because children are the vulnerable party and it is to them that adults owe an obligation of care.

Employer Responsibility

Litigation brought against organisations for their failure to protect a child is not currently a widespread phenomenon in Australia. Although there is no evidence that it is emerging in the Australian context, it may in the future. Therefore, observation and monitoring of such issues overseas is important. Some issues relating to employment of people in child-based organisations have emerged in the US. For example, it is considered that aside from ethical and quality-of-care considerations, care in recruiting staff and volunteers may become increasingly necessary from a legal perspective. For example "negligent hire" (a legal term used in the US when a party takes court action claiming damages as a result of poor employment practices) is increasingly being instituted by innocent third parties, such customers, who have been injured by the criminal, violent or negligent acts of an employee (Besnoff 1989; Kiraly 2001).

> "As in many other areas of practice which arguably should have been addressed for ethical and professional reasons, the issues of competent carer selection may finally be addressed through the fear of litigation" (Kiraly 2001:34).

In *NSW v Lepore*, the High Court of Australia was asked to decide whether an educational authority could be held liable for the sexual assault of a pupil by a teacher. Five judges considered that vicarious liability was the more appropriate way to view the issue of responsibility for institutional child sexual assault. However there were many legal ramifications discussed by the judges. In her critique of the case, Wangmann considered that

> "the decision in Lepore has not assisted in clarifying the implementation of vicarious liability. In fact, it has left it open to considerable confusion" (Wangmann 2004: 182).

Wangmann (2004) concluded that the Lepore case revealed a lack of understanding by judges, in contrast to those in Canadian and English cases which have clearly held that an organisation can be vicariously liable for the sexual assault of a child in the care of the organisation by an employee. In consideration of the Canadian and English cases, one Australian judge in the Lepore case observed that in Canada and England the courts did not see themselves as making new law but rather,

> "as simply applying traditional common law approaches in the context of a significant new problem – the increased reporting of physical and sexual assaults against children in a variety of institutional settings – which called forth a fresh examination of past decisional authority" (Wangmann 2004: 187).

Another contentious area is the use of selection and assessment tools in recruitment and assessment of suitability. It is well documented that professional judgement, structured professional and actuarial risk-assessment tools have severe limitations and cannot accurately predict individual behaviour. Knowing their serious limitations the use of risk assessments, particularly on individuals known to have criminal histories for violence or dishonesty for example, may leave organisations open to negligence claims if the assessments were used to guide selection for positions of trust. In the US, employers are not able to use an assessment instrument to exclude individuals from employment because discrimination based upon a test is not allowed unless the test is shown to be valid and has some relationship to the work performed (Johnson 2003). If used, it would be important that risk assessment tools in Australia be directly related to the specific type of work being applied for and were able to stand up to legal challenges from applicants who are excluded from child-related employment as a result of the assessment process.

Referees

As has been indicated elsewhere, a criminal record is rare among child sex abusers. Thus to reduce the chance of recruiting a child sex abuser and other individuals who may be a risk to children, there is a need for thorough background, employment and referee checks. There has been concern in the past that negative comments made about an applicant by a referee may leave the referee open to liability for defamation. It may be that to ensure honest and full information about an applicant is given to an employer from a child-based organisation, referees need to be given specific protection against the threat of such action. Consideration may also be given to compelling a referee or previous employer to give full and accurate information to a child-based organisation employer, seeking references and information about a potential employee or volunteer. The Utting Report in the UK (1997) recommended an examination of legislation such as the law on defamation, employment protection

legislation and judicial review – to establish if a protocol can be developed to legitimise exchange of information between parties with an interest in protecting children and provision of some immunity from prosecution for individuals who pass on information they believe to be true to a third party (Utting 1997: 150).

After they have already commenced work, having clear definitions of behaviour specified in work contracts, performance plans or codes of conduct, as well as having knowledgeable appeal boards and clear guidelines may assist to ensure unsatisfactory staff are able to be dismissed in a timely but fair manner. The Utting report (1997) recommended that:

- in the contract of employment a condition be included that disciplinary proceedings will be completed, even if an employee resigns during the process;
- regulatory bodies make arrangements to look at staff turnover and reasons for departure as part of the inspection process; and
- there should be a guarantee that the duty and professional obligation of staff is to raise legitimate concerns about colleagues or managers and that there is a guarantee that the process is discharged in ways to ensure a thorough investigation without prejudice to the whistleblower's own position and prospects (Utting 1997: 150).

These strategies to ensure safety of children in the UK could be considered in Australia. These and other issues outlined above do however need to be examined in the context of relevant legislation. The legal issues and implications touched on in this section are only some of those that will arise in the context of developing child-safe organisations and which need to be anticipated and addressed. Certainly, effective efforts to develop and maintain child-safe organisations require that they be supported by legislation.

MESSAGES FROM RESEARCH
- Litigation brought against organisations for their failure to protect a child is not currently a widespread phenomenon in Australia.
- In the US, it is considered that aside from ethical and quality-of-care considerations, care in recruiting staff and volunteers may become increasingly necessary from a legal perspective in order to avoid court action on the basis of "negligent hire".
- In the US, employers are not able to use an assessment instrument to exclude individuals from employment because discrimination based upon a test is not allowed unless the test is shown to be valid and has some relationship to the work performed.
- There has been concern in the past that negative comments made about an applicant by a referee may leave the referee open to liability for defamation, thus compromising the ability for employers in child-based organisations to obtain information from referees about an applicant's concerning behaviour during their prior employment.
- Legal issues and implications arising from developing child-safe organisations may need to be addressed.

10. Conclusion

The purpose of this document is to inform a national framework for creating safe environments for children that focuses on organisations, employees and volunteers. This review found a variety of health and social research literature on child abuse, especially in the context of the family. Similarly there was considerable literature on abusers, primarily in the criminal justice and psychology literature, although mostly focused on sexual abuse of children. Much of the literature focused on the characteristics of individual victims and offenders. Thus solutions to problematic behaviours have had a focus on the treatment and management of individuals. Less work has focused on the situations and environmental factors in which the offending was able to occur, especially in the extra-familial context. Such a focus however is critical to development of greater safety for children in organisations.

Although it is important that the risk factors for children, adults and organisations are identified, it is equally important to draw on the knowledge about the features that make organisations safer for children. This latter point was also a focus of this review. After examination of the literature, it appeared that a situational crime-prevention model is particularly appropriate for establishing organisations that are safe places for children. Primary focus on organisational and environmental factors provides opportunities to protect children every day and as such are arguably a more important and efficacious focus for prevention of child abuse in organisations.

The use of risk assessments in selection and recruitment of staff was problematic from a quality, reliability and legal perspective. However, clear principles for selection of safe, suitable and skilled employees emerged. These focused primarily on the thoroughness of the recruitment process, especially background checks. Recruitment and selection processes are an important first stage in child-safe organisations but do not provide a guarantee that abusive staff will not be selected. Screening only catches potential second-time offenders. In other words, to be detected by police checks, a person would have to (a) have already offended; (b) have been apprehended for that offence, and (c) have good cross-jurisdictional data sharing.

Police checks are not adequate for detecting those who have not yet abused but are at risk of doing so. As other reliable risk factors for perpetrators (that could be used by organisations to screen or assess) are not known, there is a need to focus on organisational characteristics in order to ensure safety for children.

A primary focus on the recruitment stage without other subsequent strategies means there is only one chance to get it right. To be too preoccupied with staff selection and assessment means that other, perhaps more important areas, particularly organisational structures, cultures, policies and procedures, are neglected.

A strategic and 'whole of organisation' approach is fundamental to protection of children against individuals who have a deliberately predatory approach and for those who, given the right circumstances, cues and opportunities will abuse children. It is hoped this review will provide a useful guide in developments in this very important area of focus – child-safe organisations.

Research implications

Very little research has focused on child abuse in organisations. A difficulty in addressing child abuse in organisations is therefore lack of any systematic research data that might assist to formulate effective preventative strategies and counteract the professional disbelief and denial often present because of the absence of 'hard' research (Doran and Brannan 1996: 160). Centrally collected data would be a significant benefit to research and monitoring of prevalence and trends.

Based on the current literature review, the following issues are identified as important priorities for future research:

1. *An examination of the circumstances in which organisational child abuse has occurred to inform about criminogenic organisational environments (Wortley and Smallbone submitted: 16).*

2. *Collection of data on current practices and experiences to build a database that may increase the validity of any actuarial risk assessment tools that may be developed in the future.*

3. *Testing of psychological assessment tools currently used on known intra and extra-familial child abusers to establish if they would screen out abusers from among a general population (Crime and Misconduct Commission 2004).*

4. *Identification of the characteristics and behaviours of 'professional' (fixated) child sex perpetrators to better understand their motivations to abuse children within the work setting - essential to comprehensive child protection in schools, and other agencies (Sullivan and Beech 2002: 162).*

5. *Investigation into organisational abuse investigation practices – for example, research to identify the views of those involved in investigations to better inform procedures and practices (Barter 1999).*

6. *Identification of methods to better monitor the prevalence of organisational child abuse.*

7. *Collection of data that would assist better targeting of crime prevention strategies and development of best practice guidelines for building capacity in organisations.*

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