

Expert testimony to inform NICE guideline development

Section A: Developer to complete

Name: Simon Hackett

Role: Principal/ Professor of Applied Social Sciences
(academic)

**Institution/Organisation
(where applicable):** Durham University, St Mary's College

Contact information:

Guideline title: Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Guideline Committee: Public Health Advisory Committee F

**Subject of expert
testimony:** Definitions, epidemiology and natural history of HSB

**Evidence gaps or
uncertainties:** [Research questions or evidence uncertainties that the
testimony should address are summarised below]

**What is known about the natural history and developmental lifecourse of
harmful sexual behaviours in childhood and adolescence?**

Section B: Expert to complete

Summary testimony: [Please use the space below to summarise your testimony in 250–1000 words. Continue over page if necessary]

This expert testimony highlighted the importance of definitions and terminology that distinguishes between inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours in childhood and adolescence. It reviewed the scale of the problem including recent statistical indicators. Attention was given to core aetiological factors implicated in the development of harmful sexual behaviours and to research into the persistence of such behaviours across the life course. Studies into recidivism rates were examined. Most children and young people grow out of harmful sexual behaviours in later adolescence and in adulthood and that the majority of young people committing sexual offences have only one police contact for a sexual offence. Early adolescence is the peak age for sexual offenses against younger children whereas sexual offenses against teenagers surge during mid to late adolescence, while offenses against victims under age 12 decline. A small number of 'sex-offending' youth are at elevated risk to progress to adult sex offenses. Violent sexual offending (coupled with non-sexual crime) in youth predicts rape type offences in adulthood. Sexual offences against younger children at older adolescence predicts 'paedophile' type offending in adulthood. Sex offenders appear to be similar to non-sex offenders in their criminal career patterns; i.e. a group of "life-course persistent" offenders are responsible for the majority of criminal behaviour. However, we know relatively little about the longer term developmental consequences (other than criminal recidivism) for young people with harmful sexual behaviours. Hackett and colleagues' (2014) study of longer term outcomes in a sample of young people with harmful sexual behaviours between 10 and 20 years following the end of professional interventions showed that whilst known criminal reoffending was relatively low, life outcomes were more mixed. Good outcomes were associated with stability in professional support and with positive intimate partner relationships.

References to other work or publications to support your testimony' (if applicable):

Hackett, S., Masson, H., Balfe, M. and Phillips, J. (2013) Individual, Family and Abuse Characteristics of 700 British Child and Adolescent Sexual Abusers, *Child Abuse Review*, 22, Issue 4, 232–245

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. and Chaffin, M. (2009) *Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offences Against Minors*. Washington, OJJDP.

Expert testimony papers are posted on the NICE website with other sources of evidence when the draft guideline is published. Any content that is academic in confidence should be highlighted and will be removed before publication if the status remains at this point in time.