#### WHAT WE KNOW [RQ1]

2,449 research studies – 54 were relevant

to C2CHAT.

**52** reports and resources – **7** were relevant to C2CHAT.

So only 2.43% of what we know focuses on language use, despite technology assisted sexual harassment between children happening through language – a clear gap that needs to be addressed.

# Research

#### WHAT IS NEEDED AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**Practitioners** / **Parents / Carers** 

Children

Language analysis

**O** d

Tell us that language matters in C2CHAT

needs to be at the heart of effective preventative resources.

and

#### UNWELCOME SEX TALK IS AN UNWELCOME SEX ACT

This project examines technology assisted sexual harassment between children. In a digital context:

- sexual harassment can only happen through language (e.g., words, emojis, emoticons) and other forms of communication (e.g., images, videos, and memes); and
- such language use is not 'only words' but causes physical and emotional harm

We therefore call this project Child To Child Abuse Talk (C2CHAT), which we define as:

Sexually abusive communicative behaviour that is carried out by children when interacting with each other across all technology-assisted platforms.

To create a blueprint to map out what we know about C2CHAT and how to help prevent it.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What do we know about C2CHAT?

How do children 'do' C2CHAT?

What do children and the adults who support them need to help prevent C2CHAT?

#### WHAT WE DID (AND WHEN)

[RQ 1] Searched for and reviewed all the academic research and practitioner reports published, between 2018 and 2023, on technology assisted sexual harassment between children / C2CHAT (November 2022 – February 2023).

[RQ 2] Analysed the language of C2CHAT (c. 28,000 words) and C2C online dating (c. 15,000 words) conversations (November 2022 - May 2023).

[RQ 3] Consulted twice (February and May 2023) with children (n=40; aged 14-15) and child safeguarding practitioners and parents/ carers (n= 38) from across Wales.

#### HOW DO CHILDREN 'DO' C2CHAT? [RQ2]

In the C2CHAT extracts children discussed the most extreme type of child sexual abuse images, using (from most to least frequently):

- Vague language ('it', 'content', 'stuff', etc.)
- Direct language (e.g., commands)
- No text-based language, i.e., just sending hyperlinks)
- Indirect language (e.g., hints, suggestions)

To manage interpersonal relations, children used a combination of standard politeness (e.g., 'thanks' and 'please') and impoliteness (e.g., sarcasm, name calling).

Highly offensive sexual and dehumanising language was also regularly used, including:

- Objectification of children ('it') and
- Broad references to group identities (e.g., 'toddlers', 'girls')

This contrasted with the language of online dating between children, in which sexual topics were half as frequent as relationship building topics.

**So** in C2CHAT contexts, children have normalised the use of direct/impolite language and both sexual explicitness and sexual implicitness (vagueness). Vagueness is used to create distance between them and the individual behind the images being discussed.

#### HEARING CHILDREN - EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE [RQ3]

We asked the children what C2CHAT means to them and what they want adults around them to know. They:

- Could explain what C2CHAT was, and used sexually explicit language to do so
- Talked about consent (or lack of it) and unwanted attention
- Clearly articulated that they need adults to show empathy and knowledge, and provide confidentiality

Children identified how C2CHAT is 'done' with words (Figure 1)

## piease send i won't show anyone lingerie you send i'll send I will send you some naked please show me give me your information

Figure 1: Word cloud of children's description of C2CHAT



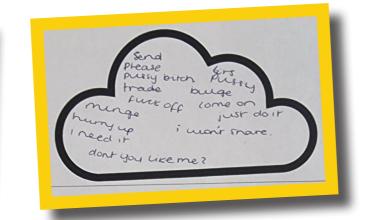


Figure 2: Sample images from the consultation sessions with children

#### NEXT STEPS

Children and practitioner / parent / carers were invited to vote for the type of resource (e.g., video, booklet etc.) they would like to see developed to help prevent C2CHAT. They all selected a digital animation.

Everyone agreed it should be co-designed, co-produced and user-tested by children, and it should:

- Show how words are action in C2CHAT and what makes this hard to recognise
- Take a child's rights and consent-centred approach
- Bring adults and children closer together to understand C2CHAT from the same position and viewpoint
- Complement and add value to existing resources and training into online sexual harassment between children

Children also gave us ideas on what they want to see from the animation:

It will help with spreading awareness

Needs to be colourful bright and eye-catching

Lots of informative ways to keep safe online, places to get help

How to block and report people on all social media apps

#### **Research Team**

Professor Nuria Lorenzo-Dus (Principal investigator), Ms Ruth Mullineux-Morgan (Co-investigator), Ms Keighley Perkins (Researcher), Ms Leonie Themelidis (Researcher), Ms Lara McNeill (Project officer). Poster by Croatoan Design.

> For more information and detailed results reports see: www.swansea.ac.uk/project-dragon-s/c2chat











### HEARING PRACTITIONER AND PARENT/CARER EXPERTS [RQ3]

We gathered insights into their awareness of, and expertise on, C2CHAT. We discovered that they:

- Saw language as being very important in C2CHAT
- Were very aware of children's use of sexual explicitness in C2CHAT and beyond
- Wanted to better understand sex, sexuality, and C2CHAT from a child's perspective
- Wanted to see broad access to consistent training for common understanding of C2CHAT

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