

Young People, Alcohol and Sex:

What's consent got to do with it?



The Older Child and Sexual Violence: Questions and challenges in delivering a national response

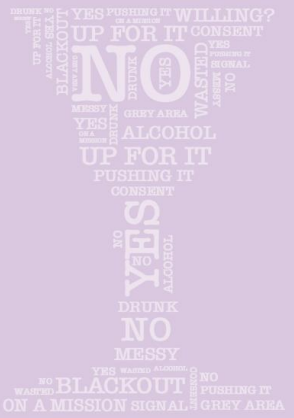
RCNI Policy Document

Dr Clíona Saidlár
Policy & Communications Director
Rape Crisis Network Ireland ©

Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)



- Rape Crisis Sector is the largest provider of specialist services for teenagers outside the statutory sector.
- 192 children and 1,562 people who had experienced sexual violence in childhood attended one of the specialist services in 2012.
- Over three decades of prevention education.
- RCNI partnership with Foróige to develop and deliver an integrated sexual violence, personal development and sexual health programme.
- Development of a bystander activation education programme.
- RCNI's guidance on awareness raising is nationally adopted.
- RCNI and RCCs continue to respond to individuals, survivors and educational institution requests for support regarding issues of sexual violence within their schools.



‘Young people who participated in this study reported being unprepared to negotiate sexual consent safely when challenging alcohol-driven situations arose, leaving them vulnerable to sexual violence.’

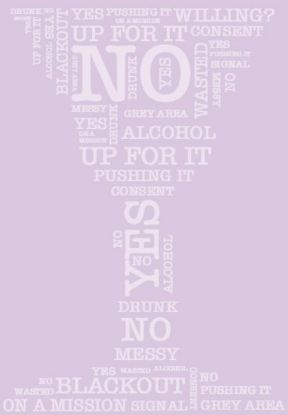
‘Young people, alcohol and sexual violence 2014’



What We Know



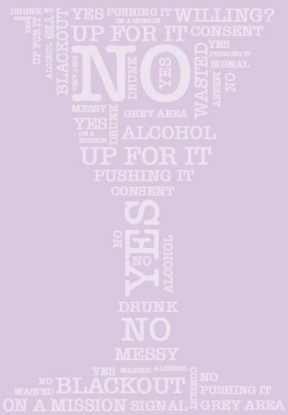
- The majority of all Irish child sexual abuse experiences occurred before the age of 12 (67% of girls and 62% of boys).
- 37% of the perpetrators of child sexual violence which was reported by children to specialist sexual violence services in 2012 were themselves under the age of 18.
- Girls over 13 who attended Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) in 2012 were most commonly subjected to rape (as opposed to sexual assault for the under 13s) and in the majority of cases, rape by their peers or those only slightly older.
- In the case of child abuse which occurred under the age of 13, the majority of perpetrators were family members. This contrasts with child victims between the ages of 13 and 18, where 91% of them were abused by non-family members, most commonly acquaintances, friends and neighbours



What we know - the current evidence and research

- Prevalence
- Service level information
- Justice system knowledge
- Enquiry information
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour
- Qualitative research





Questions for Evidence and Research



1. Reluctance to ask children
2. Silences around sexual violence



Questions for Evidence and Research



No child born after 1983 has had their experiences of sexual abuse measured in a prevalence study.



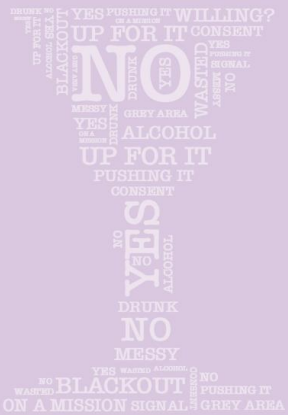
Questions for Evidence and Research



The Irish Study of Sexual Health and Relationships, (Oct. 2006)

'The largest nationally representative study on sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviour ever undertaken in Ireland.'

- Age of first sex
- Regret?
 - 'should have waited longer' - younger women much more likely to say they should have waited longer (approx. 26% of 18 – 34 yr olds) but rising to 78% for girls under 15.
- Willingness?
 - 13% of women said partner more willing than them.
- 356 page report – 8 pages give us some insight relating to potential sexual violence.



Questions for Evidence and Research



Recommendation 1

A set of priorities for generating an appropriate evidence base and monitoring mechanisms in this field should be agreed through a consultation process.



A Question of Infrastructure



Cosc: The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Violence.

- National Strategy
- Department of Justice
- Adult only

A Question of Infrastructure



Department of Children and Youth Affairs

- National Policy Framework
- Child and Family Agency
- Children First Policy

A Question of Infrastructure



Ombudsman for Children

- Has gaps in remit and does not disaggregate by age in reporting on work.

Special Rapporteur on Children

- Legislative infrastructure.

A Question of Infrastructure



Recommendation 2

RCNI calls for a whole of government assessment which examines whether the needs of the older child are being sufficiently met within this framework and if it is necessary to establish explicit age disaggregated remits into the various locations or alternatively to create a specific structure to promote and monitor the needs of the older child.

Policy



Children First

- One size fits all
- Tools to detect and respond appropriately

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BLACKOUT
YES PUSHING IT WILLING?
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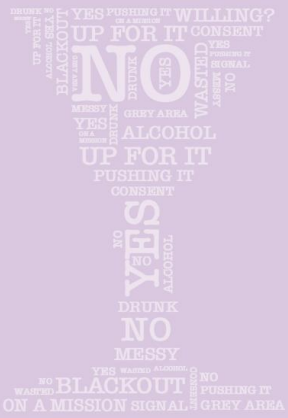
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Action Plan on Bullying

- Did not define sexual bullying
- Confined actions to sexting, and online forms of bullying using sexual imagery and language.

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Policy



Recommendation 3

It is vital we examine how our child protection infrastructure ensures the visibility of the full range of teen vulnerability, in particular, teen peer abuse.



A schools system response



- Formal learning opportunities - curriculum content and structure.
- Primary Prevention.
- Secondary Prevention.

A schools system response



Primary Prevention:

Tolerance to sexual harassment and sexual assault are learned behaviours.

A schools system response



Recommendation 5:

Effective primary prevention requires every school community to have an explicit zero tolerance of sexual harassment and violence.

RCNI believe a national whole of school policy and set of actions is an appropriate response to the scale of the problem of teenage vulnerability to sexual violence.

A schools system response



Secondary Prevention:

- an older child's primary peer community is most often the school community.
- The impact of peer abuse, even if perpetrated off the school grounds, rarely stays out of the school community.
- Appropriate medium and long term responses to a disclosure of sexual violence for the victim, the accused and the peer group are complex and essential.

A schools system response



Recommendation 6:

National guidance or standards need to be in place to ensure best practice and consistency to support the children involved, to

- reduce instances of secondary trauma,
- prevent negative impacts on their school performance, and
- support an appropriate justice response.

Responding and supporting a child who displays sexually harmful behaviour



- Ferns 5 Report 2007.
- Review of services 2011.
- Steering committees reviewing recommendations towards implementation.

Very limited and ad hoc level of services across Ireland.

Responding and supporting a child who displays sexually harmful behaviour



Recommendation 7:

Priority should be given to providing proven interventions with this cohort of children.

This is an essential element of any government's commitment to the prevention of sexual violence.

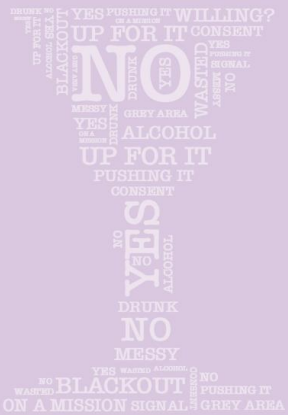
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Conclusion



1. How well informed are our policies and services about the older child's lived realities?
2. Is our child protection infrastructure sufficiently joined up to ensure an appropriate response to teenagers who may experience abuse that more commonly reflects adult experiences than the younger child?
3. Does Ireland's child protection response need a specific 13 to 18 year old focused response?



Thank You



www.rcni.ie

www.rapecrisishelp.ie

