

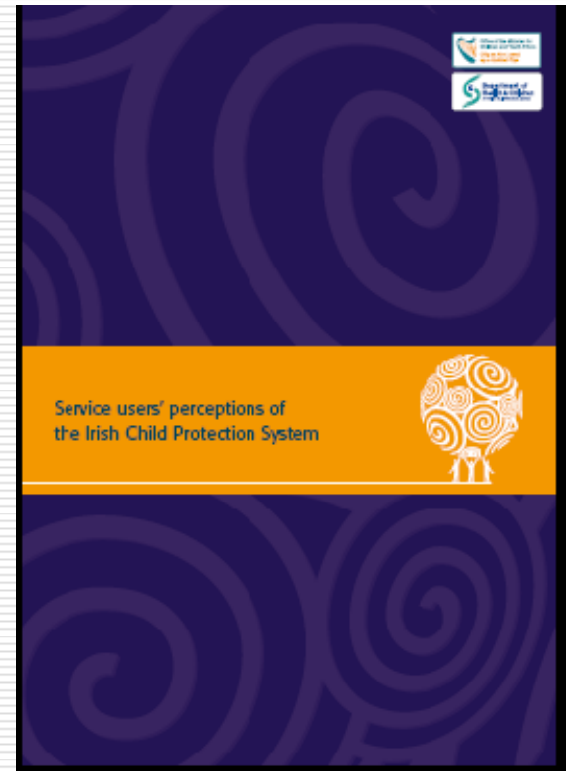
Service User's Perceptions of the Irish Child Protection System

Nicola Carr
Research Fellow
Children's Research Centre
Trinity College Dublin

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Buckley, H; Whelan, S; Carr, N & Murphy, C (2008)

Study commissioned
by the Office of the
Minister for
Children and Youth
Affairs



Study Objectives

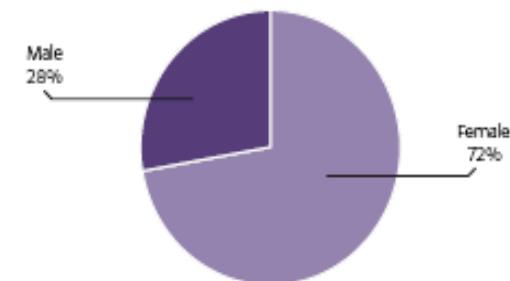
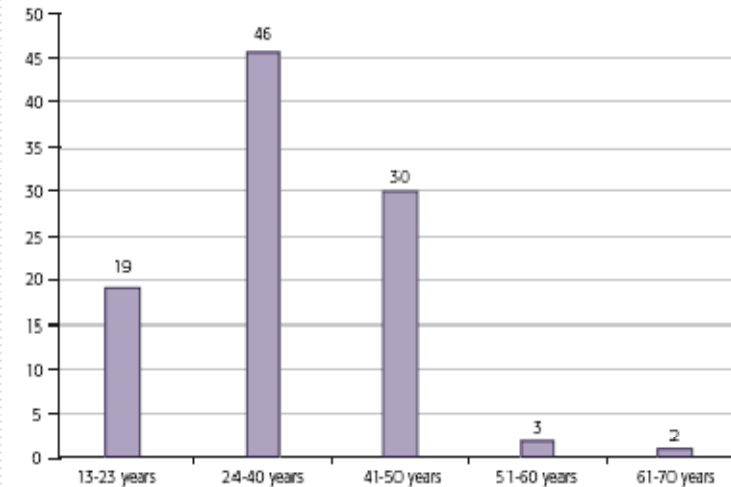
- **To examine service users' experiences of their first contact with the child protection services and ascertain if there was congruence between their perception of child protection concerns/risk and their perception of how child protection staff understood those concerns.**
 - **To examine service users' experience of involvement with the child protection services, specifically in relation to assessment, investigation of reported concerns, understanding of the tasks required of them, and their perception of genuine participation and involvement in the process.**
 - **To explore service users' perceptions of the quality of the child protection services, including organisational issues and worker qualities and competencies that impact on effectiveness.**
 - **To examine the degree of inclusiveness applied to work with children and families from service users' perspectives.**
 - **To explore the degree to which children and families considered that their identified needs had been addressed by the services.**
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Background to the Study

- Existing literature in this area
 - Legal and Policy Framework
 - Methodology
- **Methodology**
 - Qualitative Study
 - Purposive Sampling
 - Interviews with 67 Service Users
 - Thematic Data Analysis
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Sample Overview

- Interviewees recruited from a range of areas
- Some people had self-referred to child protection services, other people had been the subject of referrals



Principal Child Protection Concerns

Principal concern*	% of families**	No. of families
Sexual abuse	39	22
Physical abuse	32	18
Neglect	29	16
Behavioural difficulties	20	11
Emotional abuse	5	3
Leaving care	4	2
Multiple abuse	2	1

* Families could experience more than one main child protection concern.

** Proportion derived as a percentage of 56 families.

Key Areas

- ❑ First Contact with the Child Protection System
 - ❑ Experiences of Investigation and Assessment
 - ❑ Organisational, professional and practical issues
 - ❑ Qualities in service user-worker relationships
 - ❑ Children and young people's views
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Some Recommendations

Policy / Senior Managers

- Differential responses
- Information on the child protection system

Practitioners

- Sensitivity
 - Importance of 'relationship'
 - Communication
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Report available at:

http://www.omc.gov.ie/documents/publications/CF_service_users.pdf

Contact: Nicola Carr

carrn@tcd.ie
