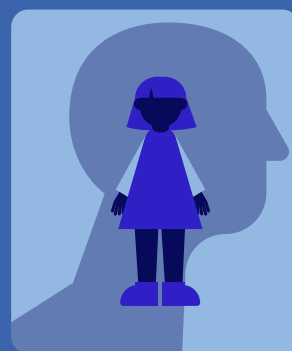
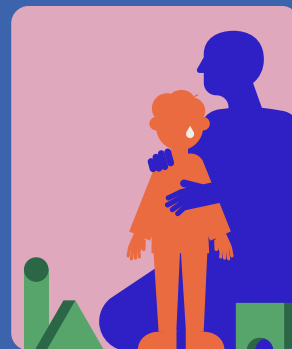
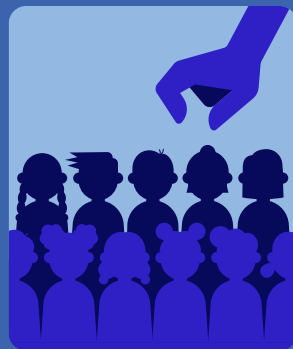
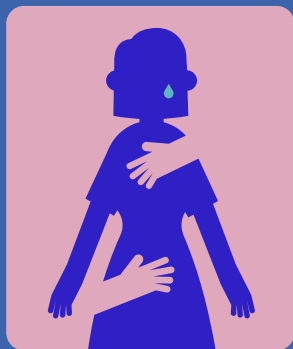


# OVERVIEW OF TERMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# TERMS/PHRASES TO AVOID

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**Child prostitution** ❌

✓ **Exploitation of children in/for prostitution**

## WHY?

Despite being used in legal contexts, the term "child prostitution" can imply that the exploitation of a child represents a legitimate form of sex work or that the child has given their consent. This term does not emphasise the exploitation the child has been subjected to.

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**Child prostitute AND Child sex worker** ❌

✓ **Children sexually exploited in/for prostitution**

## WHY?

These terms somehow imply that the child has consented to engage in prostitution or open up an assumption of (co)responsibility of the child in their own exploitation. These terms should never be used as they may harm children and/or risk shifting the blame onto them.

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**Children/adolescents/young people selling sex** ❌

✓ **Children sexually exploited in/for prostitution**

## WHY?

These terms do not make clear the fact that children are being sexually exploited and may harm children and/or risk shifting the blame on them.

## Voluntary/self-engaged prostitution

*(when referring to children)*



Children sexually exploited in/for prostitution *(when referring to the children involved)*

Exploitation of children in/for prostitution *(when referring to the act)*

### WHY?

Regarding children involved in prostitution, the terms "voluntary" and "self-engaged" should be avoided. Children who are "involved" in prostitution should always be seen and addressed as being subjected to sexual exploitation.

## Transactional sex

*(when referring to children)*



Children sexually exploited in/for prostitution *(when referring to the children involved)*

Exploitation of children in/for prostitution *(when referring to the act)*

### WHY?

Within the field of protection of children from sexual exploitation, this terminology is not the most appropriate, as it would risk (inadvertently or not) legitimising certain forms of child sexual exploitation.

## Child pornography



Child sexual abuse material

Child sexual exploitation material

### WHY?

Pornography is a term primarily used for adults engaging in consensual sexual acts distributed (often legally) to the general public for their sexual pleasure. Sexualised material that depicts or otherwise represents children is a representation, and a form, of child sexual abuse, and should not be described as "pornography".

Colloquial terms to refer to "child pornography" (e.g. "child porn", "kiddy porn", or "paedo-porn") should also be avoided altogether.

**Child erotica**



**Sexualised images of children**

**Child sexual exploitation material**

## WHY?

"Erotica" is a term associated with entertainment and art, often linked to pornography and relating to consenting adults. The term "erotica" is inappropriate in association with children.

**Webcam child sex tourism**



**Live online child sexual abuse**

**Live streaming of child sexual abuse**

## WHY?

The term introduces one more term to define an issue that already has a number of different names or labels and risks adding to an already existing confusion. In addition it contains the expression "child sex tourism" which is not considered appropriate.

**Sextortion**



**Sexual extortion**

## WHY?

This colloquial term should be avoided, as it does not show clearly that it is a matter of sexual exploitation against a child and risks trivialising a practice that can produce extremely serious consequences.



## Child sex tourism



Sexual exploitation of children in *(the context of)* travel and tourism

### WHY?

This term may give the idea that this is a legitimate form of tourism and completely omits the fact that it refers to serious criminal conduct. The potential "normalisation" of the practice using the term "child sex tourism" risks being harmful to children.

## Self-victimisation AND Children putting themselves at risk AND Children with risky/ risk-taking behaviours



Children who have been subjected to sexual exploitation and/or abuse *(when referring to the children involved)*

Child sexual abuse/sexual abuse of children OR Child sexual exploitation/sexual exploitation of children *(when referring to the act)*

### WHY?

Children cannot consent to their own exploitation or abuse. So using the term "self-victimisation" in the field of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, could infer that the child is responsible or to blame for the crime they have suffered.

Similar terms used like "children putting themselves at risk" or "children with risky/risk-taking behaviours", may also contribute to shifting the blame onto the child, and failing to recognise when a child has been sexually exploited or sexually abused.

## Child sex offender

*(when referring to a child)*



Children in conflict with the law

Children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour

### WHY?

The term labels and equates children with an act they have committed.

Importantly, children who have not reached the age of criminal responsibility should not be referred to as offenders at all, and terminology should be nuanced to reflect not the illegal character of their behaviour but rather the fact that they have displayed or engaged in harmful (sexual) behaviour.

**Child sex tourist  
AND Sexpat**



Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children

Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child

Perpetrator of child sexual offences

Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse

## WHY?

These terms undermine the gravity of the offences committed and trivialise the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

**Customer AND Client  
AND John AND Jane**



Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children

Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child

Perpetrator of child sexual offences

Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse

## WHY?

These terms completely omit the fact that child sexual exploitation and abuse are criminal acts and serious violations of children rights.

**Lover boy or similar slang**

*(when referring to sexual offences against children)*



Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children

Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child

Perpetrator of child sexual offences

Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse

## WHY?

These terms undermine the gravity of the offences committed and trivialise the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

# TERMS/PHRASES TO USE WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION

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Age of majority



## WHY?

As an age marker, this term can be misunderstood or confused with other age markers like age of sexual consent.

Thus, term is best used in a legal context, but is less relevant with regard to child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse as protection is to be afforded based on the definition of a child as any person below 18 years of age.

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Age of sexual consent



## WHY?

Although children at or above the age of sexual consent can engage in consensual sexual activities, children can never consent to their own exploitation or abuse.

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Minor



Person under the age of 18  
Child

## WHY?

Because its meaning can vary greatly depending on national legislation and sometimes has a negative connotation (for example of children being "less" than an adult), the term "minor" should be used sparingly in the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and be reserved for legal issues.

**Juvenile**



**Children in contact with the law  
(if referring to the justice system)**

**Child**

## WHY?

This term has increasingly come to be associated with young persons behaving "badly" and the negative connotations of illegal or criminal behaviour have led to the term being felt as labelling and stigmatising.

**Adolescent**



## WHY?

When this term is used in the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, it is important to distinguish between adolescents up to age 18 (who legally are children) and adolescents aged 18 and above, and to ensure adolescents under the age of 18 are granted the rights and protection accorded to all children.

**Teenager**



## WHY?

When this term is used in the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, it is important to distinguish between teenagers up to age 18 (who legally are children) and adolescents aged 18 and above, and to ensure teenagers under the age of 18 are granted the rights and protection accorded to all children.

**Young person  
AND Young people  
AND Youth**



## WHY?

When using these terms in the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, it should be clarified whether they do or do not include persons aged 18 or older. Moreover, special care should be taken to guarantee the legal rights of persons under the age of 18 years.



## Child in the digital environment

### WHY?

A child is any person under the age of 18, whether in the digital environment or elsewhere. Protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse must never be lessened by the fact that an act is committed in the digital environment.

## Commercial sexual exploitation of children



Child sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children

### WHY?

Commercial sexual exploitation of children could be used as a subset of "sexual exploitation of children", when the focus is specifically on monetary benefit, often relating to organised criminality where the primary driver is economic gain.

## Children in (a situation of) prostitution



Children sexually exploited in/for prostitution

### WHY?

While this term expresses a reality in a neutral fashion, without necessarily stigmatising or shifting the blame onto the child, it also omits completely the element of exploitation and of responsibility of those behind it.

Moreover, this term can refer also to children living in an environment of prostitution without being sexually exploited themselves.



**Use of children for pornographic performances**



**Use of children for sexual performances**

**Exploiting children through sexual performances**

## WHY?

The notion of "using a child" for sexual purposes (whether performances or other) has the benefit of placing the accent on the fact that the child is subjected to a crime and does not bear the responsibility for what happens. However, the term "pornographic" in relation to children is inappropriate.

**Digitally generated child sexual abuse material**



## WHY?

This term encompasses all forms of material representing children involved in sexual activities and/or in a sexualised manner, with the particularity that the production of the material does not involve actual contact abuse of real children but is artificially created to appear as if real children were depicted. Although most artificially created child sexual abuse material is computer-generated, it is important not to exclude the possibility that such material can be, for instance, drawn by hand.

**Sexualised images of children**



## WHY?

The term "sexualised images of children" still involves a level of uncertainty in terms of the legality of such imagery.

While the determination of a certain image as child sexual abuse material does not depend on a subjective element, the publication or distribution of an image can be done with or without the purpose of sexual gratification and, consequently, be illegal or legal.

**Self-generated/produced sexual content involving children AND First-person generated/produced sexual content involving children**



## WHY?

Special attention is needed when using these terms to avoid shifting blame onto the child. It is important to contextualise the content, giving due consideration to potential coercion of any kind, the fact that the "self-produced" nature of the content is often nothing more than a perception, and that in some contexts is irrelevant by whom the material was produced.

**Sexting**



## WHY?

"Sexting" can be a consensual activity between peers. When sexting leads to abuse or exploitation, it is crucial that the fact that the material is self-generated does not result in blaming children for what happens or in holding them criminally liable for the production of child sexual abuse material.

**(Exposure to) harmful content**



## WHY?

Harmful content should not be used as a synonym for "child sexual abuse material" or "child pornography", as it is a much broader concept and can refer to content other than sexualised material, for instance violent video games or websites that encourage hate speech. Moreover, "harmful content" does not necessarily refer only to illegal material but can also include material that is legal but still harmful to a person considering their age, level of maturity, contextual factors etc.

**Corruption of children for sexual purposes**



## WHY?

Considering the general definition of "corruption", this term may be stigmatising or misleading as it places the emphasis on the immorality of the act instead of the abuse committed against a child.



**Forcing/causing a child to witness sexual abuse or sexual activities**

## Child sexual abuse online



### WHY?

The term "child sexual abuse online" has become a widely used term to refer both to the sexual abuse of children that is facilitated by technology (e.g. online grooming) and to sexual abuse of children that is committed elsewhere and then repeated by sharing it online through, for instance, images and videos. The preferred term in the case of the former is "technology-facilitated child sexual abuse".

## Voluntourism



### WHY?

Voluntourism is a term encompassing a variety of activities ranging from short to longer-term visits in the context of travel and tourism, whether international or domestic. When including contact with children, unregulated voluntourism by unskilled persons may negatively affect the wellbeing of children, with certain forms of voluntourism posing additional risks by providing avenues and spaces for perpetrators to sexually exploit and abuse children. The term should be used with caution and clearly distinguished from regulated and professional volunteering.

## Sale of children



### WHY?

"Sale of children" is not necessarily related to sexual abuse and sexual or other forms of exploitation but can also occur, for instance, for purposes of illegal adoption, child marriage and labour. Sale of children is thus a broader concept, within which elements of sexual abuse or sexual or other forms of exploitation can (and often do) exist/occur.

## Trafficking of children



### WHY?

While sexual exploitation of children can (and often does) amount to trafficking for sexual purposes, it must be recalled that adults can also be victims of trafficking. Moreover, although the sexual exploitation of children through prostitution is often related to trafficking, it is important to note that there are many other forms of child sexual exploitation that occur without the child having been trafficked.

**Child/early marriage**



### WHY?

The terms "child marriage" and "early marriage" are often used interchangeably. Nevertheless, the latter can take on a somewhat broader definition, since it can also include persons above 18 years but who, for other reasons, may be unable to give their free, full, and informed consent to marry.

**Forced marriage**



### WHY?

Forced marriage can refer to child and early marriage, but it also affects adults.

**Teenage marriage**



### WHY?

Since it can include persons who are not children (persons up to 19 years of age) this term cannot be considered a synonym for child marriage.

**Temporary marriage**



### WHY?

The term "temporary marriage" refers to short-term contract marriages that often serve as an excuse to cover up or condone sexual exploitation or abuse.



**Sexual exploitation of children**  
*(when referring to children)*

**Harmful practices**



### WHY?

In the context of sexual exploitation or abuse of children, it is more appropriate to use the term "harmful practices" instead of "traditional harmful practices", since it refers to the more neutral principle of harm and avoids cultural and other relative or more subjective factors. Harmful practices are harmful irrespective of their alleged origin or attempted justification. Not all harmful practices constitute sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that the above-mentioned forms of harmful practices can seriously affect the sexuality of the victim, and the victim may experience them as a form of sexual abuse.

**Contemporary forms  
of slavery/child slavery**



## WHY?

While a broad range of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse have been labelled "slavery" and constitute a violation of the international legal framework on slavery, the notion of slavery is much wider and encompasses human rights violations against both children and adults. Furthermore, slavery is far from limited to sexual violence and can include forced labour and trafficking for other than sexual purposes.

**Survivor**



## WHY?

The term "survivor" is increasingly used in the child protection sector, either interchangeably or in combination with the term "victim", to refer to persons who have suffered harm and victimisation.

Just as people (including children) may reject the term "victim" and see it as a label they do not identify with, the same could happen with the term "survivor". It is highly advisable to always check with the persons concerned how they want to be referred to.

**Children experiencing/having  
experienced sexual exploitation**



**Children subjected to sexual  
exploitation and/or abuse**

## WHY?

In the effort to find a term that does not attribute a "label" to the child, these terms sometimes risk inadvertently shifting the blame onto the child and fail to adequately reflect both the responsibility of the State to protect children from human rights violations and the fact that the child has been the subject of a crime. Describing the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of a child as an "experience" may also inadvertently trivialise the crime.



**Children with lived experiences/histories of child sexual abuse** ❌

✓ **Children subjected to sexual exploitation and/or abuse**

## WHY?

In the effort to find a term that does not attribute a "label" to the child, these terms sometimes risk inadvertently shifting the blame onto the child and fail to adequately reflect both the responsibility of the State to protect children from human rights violations and the fact that the child has been the subject of a crime. Describing the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of a child as an "experience" may also inadvertently trivialise the crime.

**Re-victimisation AND Secondary victimisation** ❌

## WHY?

The terms "re-victimisation" and "secondary victimisation" are sometimes also used interchangeably. However, these two concepts have different definitions and should be distinguished from one another.

**Sex offender** ❌

*(when in the context of child sexual exploitation and abuse)*

✓ **Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children**

Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child

Perpetrator of child sexual offences

Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse

## WHY?

The term "sex offender" includes offences against both children and adults. In addition, in order to avoid labelling or stigmatising the person who commits the offence, the use of "person first" language is preferable, in particular when used outside the legal or criminal justice context.

## Child sex offender

*(when referring to an adult)*



Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children

Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child

Perpetrator of child sexual offences

Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse

## WHY?

While the term has its place within law enforcement and the criminal justice system, it may prove unhelpful or even inappropriate in other settings, such as in clinical work with persons who have committed sexual offences against children, or when addressing the general public.

## Persons who commit sexual offences against children



## WHY?

Perpetrators of sexual offences against children, whether such offences are committed online or in-person, may have a variety of harmful or abusive sexual interests and be motivated by a variety of factors.

## Paedophile AND Person with paedophilic disorder



## WHY?

While some perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse suffer from the clinical condition of paedophilic disorder, many more perpetrators of sexual offences against children are not diagnosed with paedophilic disorder. It is therefore important that a clear distinction be made between the act of sexual abuse/exploitation and the clinical condition of paedophilic disorder, which may or may not involve conduct amounting to child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.



**Hebephile OR Ephebophile**



## WHY?

See "Paedophile".

**Transnational child sex offender**



**Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children**

**Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child**

**Perpetrator of child sexual offences**

**Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse**

## WHY?

Because it only includes persons who cross a national border to commit sexual offences against children, this term does not take into account those travelling within a country or region to commit such offences.

**Travelling child sex offender**



**Perpetrator of sexual crimes against children**

**Person who has committed (or convicted of) a sexual offence against a child**

**Perpetrator of child sexual offences**

**Perpetrator of child sexual exploitation and/or abuse**

## WHY?

The main point in adding the qualifier "transnational" or "travelling" is to denote that such offenders are sometimes acting with impunity because they operate outside of their national jurisdiction.

**Juvenile sex offender**



**Children in conflict with the law**

**Children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour**

## WHY?

While still frequently used as a legal term in many criminal justice systems, the term can stigmatise the child who has offended by labelling them and equating them with the offence they have committed.

**Facilitator of sexual offences against children**



**Person facilitating the sexual abuse and/or exploitation of children**

## WHY?

From the point of view of the child, the facilitator could harm the child as much or more than the person sexually abusing them, by putting them in that situation.

The gravity of the harm caused by the facilitator of sexual offences against children must not be underestimated.

**Non-offending partner**



## WHY?

The term non-offending partner should be used only to refer to partners of a person who has (allegedly) committed sexual offences against children, and never to refer to an accomplice or co-offender.



# TERMS/PHRASES THAT HAVE A GENERALLY AGREED MEANING AND/OR CAN BE USED WITHOUT STIGMATISING AND/OR OTHERWISE HARMING THE CHILD

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- ✓ CHILD
- ✓ SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
- ✓ SEXUAL ASSAULT AGAINST A CHILD
- ✓ CHILDHOOD SEXUAL VIOLENCE/ABUSE/EXPLOITATION
- ✓ CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE/SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD
- ✓ INCEST
- ✓ RAPE OF A CHILD
- ✓ SEXUAL MOLESTATION OF A CHILD
- ✓ SEXUAL TOUCHING OF CHILDREN
- ✓ SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF A CHILD
- ✓ CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION/SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN
- ✓ EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN/FOR PROSTITUTION
- ✓ CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL/CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION MATERIAL

- ✓ **TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL ABUSE**
- ✓ **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ONLINE**
- ✓ **LIVE ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**
- ✓ **LIVE STREAMING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**
- ✓ **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TO ORDER**
- ✓ **SOLICITATION OF CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES**
- ✓ **GROOMING OF CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES**
- ✓ **(SEXUAL) ENTICEMENT OF CHILDREN ONLINE**
- ✓ **SEXUAL EXTORTION OF CHILDREN**
- ✓ **SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN *(THE CONTEXT OF)* TRAVEL AND TOURISM**
- ✓ **WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR**
- ✓ **CHILD VICTIM OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND/OR ABUSE**
- ✓ **VICTIM IDENTIFICATION *(IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL)***
- ✓ **CHILDREN SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND/OR SEXUAL ABUSE**
- ✓ **VICTIMISATION**
- ✓ **PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL CRIMES/OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN**
- ✓ **OFFENDER COMMUNITIES/NETWORKS**