**What research tells us about risk factors**

**Gender, age, ethnicity and missing children**

In 2011, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) published a thematic assessment analysing 2,083 victims of child sexual exploitation ([CEOP, 2013](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/who-is-affected/#pageref2394)). The study found that:

* **the majority of victims were girls**However in 31% of cases, gender was unknown. It is likely that male victims are under-represented due to difficulties in identifying sexual exploitation in boys and young men.
* **14 and 15 year olds are most likely to be noticed by authorities**Some victims of sexual exploitation were as young as 9 or 10 years old, however young people most commonly came to the attention of statutory and non-statutory authorities aged 14 or 15.
* **the majority of victims were white**61% of the victims were white, 3% were Asian and 1% were black. Ethnicity was unknown in 33% of cases. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to be under-represented in statistics face because of barriers to reporting and accessing services.
* **children who go missing are risk of sexual exploitation.**Information about whether children went missing was incomplete but 842 children were reported as missing on at least one occasion. We don't know whether these children were sexually exploited before, during or after they went missing.