**Notes: survey of coverage of child sexual abuse in digitised British newspapers 1918-1990**

Summary:

This dataset contains references to newspaper articles relating to what is now described as child sexual abuse 1918-1970 that have been collected through keywords searches of British newspapers that are available in digitised form.

The dataset was created as part of the ESRC-funded project ES/M009750/1 ‘Historicising “historical child sexual abuse” cases: social, political and criminal justice contexts’. The purpose of this specific element of the project was to identify pattern sin newspaper coverage across time.

Originating sources:

British Newspaper Archive, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Daily Mail Historical Archive Gale), <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/daily-mail-historical-archive.aspx>

Guardian/Observer Historical Archive (Proquest), <http://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/index>

The Times Digital Archive (Gale), <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/times.aspx/>

UKPressOnline, <http://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/index>

Accessed November 2015 – March 2015.

Method:

The search strategy that was used involved the identification of combinations of keywords as the research progressed through a snowballing effect, with new keywords identified from the press and also from other archival collections used for the project. ‘Child sexual abuse’ did not begin to appear in the newspaper press until the 1980s. Whilst this term was use to locate articles form this later period, flexible keyword combinations were used for to identify relevant material across the period 1918-90. Search terms relating to behaviours, offences, or euphemisms (‘indecent assault’, ‘indecency’, ‘serious offence’, ‘grave offence’, ‘outrage’, ‘molest’, ‘interfere’) were used with other keyword combinations relating to age (including ‘child’, ‘girl’, ‘boy’, ‘under 16’, ‘youth’ or ‘young’) within the same article. Generated text was then checked for relevance. Where individuals were named (for example in court cases) these names were also used to search for other related material. The term ‘paedophile’ began to appear in coverage from the 1970s and was also added to the search terms.

It should be noted that the current spreadsheet, which is a list of 754 article identified during the research period is not assumed to be comprehensive. It is impossible to capture all cases of child sexual abuse reported in newspapers (even assuming the digitisation of all newspaper titles) given the lack of a singular or constant reference point. Nevertheless, keyword searches of the press provide strong indicators of the types of cases covered in reportage (including those that were most likely to attract media interest), the tropes and discourses through which cases were represented, changes in broader cultural attitudes towards what we now call ‘child sexual abuse’.

Spreadsheet categories:

A: title of newspaper

B: date (yr, month, date) eg. 231029 would signify: 1923, October, 29th

C: page number

D: Headline used for article

E: type of article (court report; crime report; opinion piece; news report; TV review