

FOLLOW UP REVIEW CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

AN INSPECTION OF THE CRIMINAL
JUSTICE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all

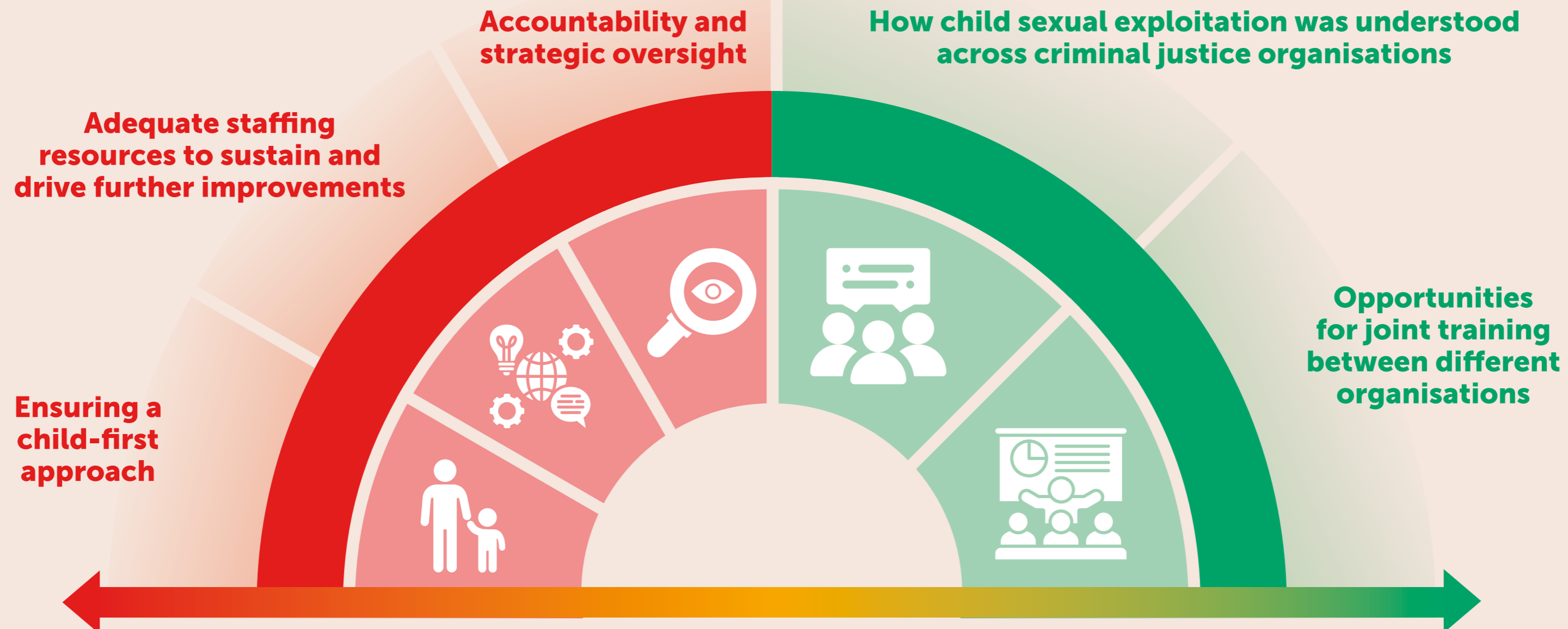


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SINCE THE 2020 FULL INSPECTION

What needs further improvement?

What has improved?



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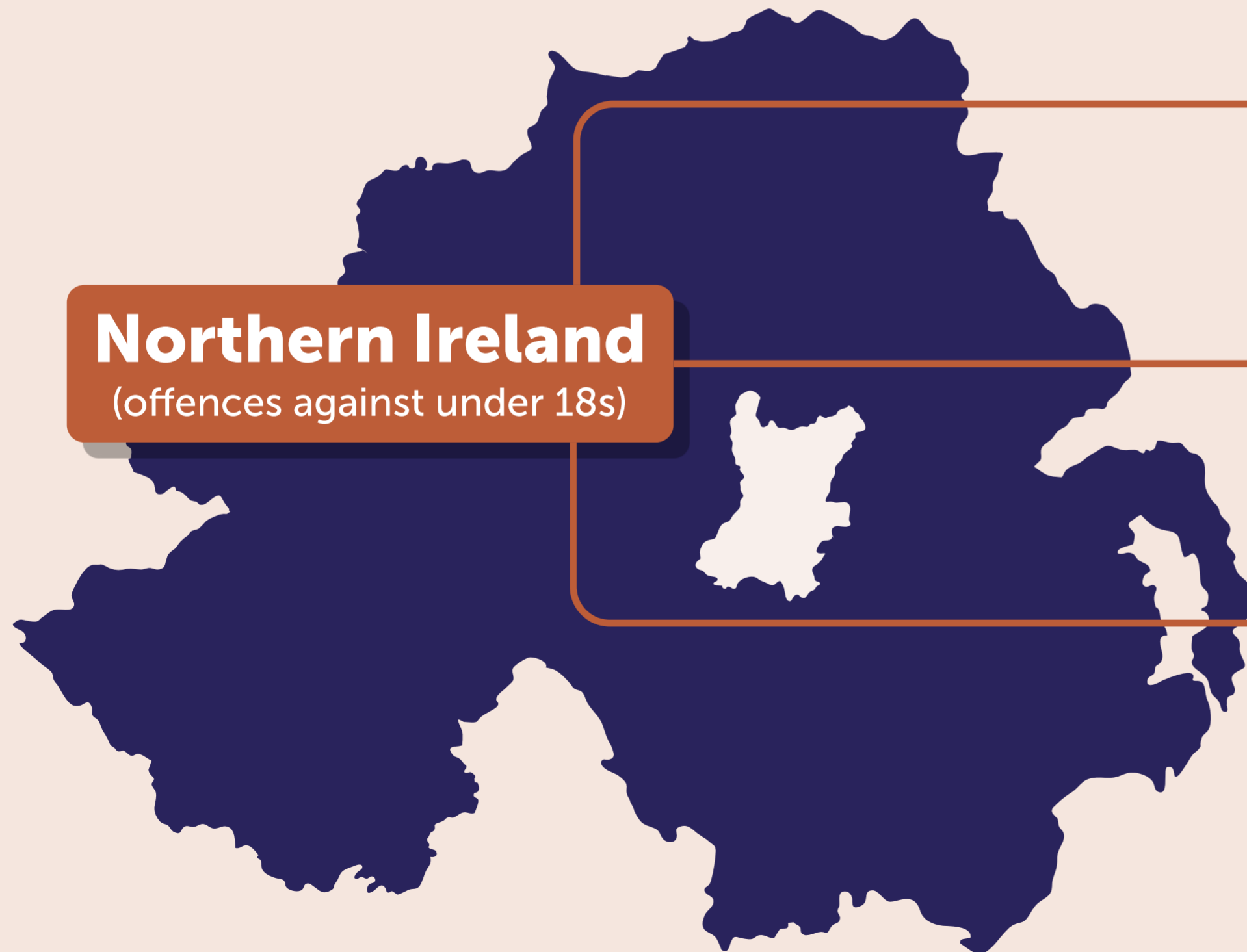
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POLICE RECORDED SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN 2023-24 (FROM NSPCC STATISTICS BRIEFING: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE¹)




 Rate of sexual offences per 10,000 children (2023-24) is **51.3%**

Scotland 19% **England 25.5%** **Wales 30.8%**

 Proportion of all sexual offences that are against children (2023-24) is **55%**

Scotland 25% **England 32%** **Wales 37%**

 Number of sexual offences against children (2023-24) is **2,242**

Scotland 3,570 **England 56,674** **Wales 3,523**

Sources: Home Office, 2024;¹ PSNI, 2024;² Scottish Government, 2024

Note: Offence figures for Scotland, England and Wales are against children aged under 16.

¹ *NSPCC, Child Sexual Abuse: Statistics briefing, January 2025 available at: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/statistics-briefings/child-sexual-abuse#tooltip_content39655
² Home Office, Police recorded crime and outcomes data tables, 2024 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>
³ PSNI, Annual trends in police recorded crime 1998-99 to 2023-24 available at <https://www.psni.police.uk/about-us/our-publications-and-reports/official-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics>.

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PSNI RECORDED CRIME TRENDS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The PSNI data
on recorded
crime trends in
Northern Ireland¹
showed that:



**Increase in
the number
of sexual
offences**

The number of sexual offences recorded where the victim was under 18 years of age at the time the offence was committed **more than doubled** between 2007-08 and 2023-24, from **934 to 2,242**.



**Introduction
of sexual
offence
legislation**

Offences relating to sexual activity where the victim was under 16 years of age **trebled** between the introduction of new sexual offence legislation in February 2009 and the peak of **618 offences recorded** in 2016-17; 2023-24 recorded the **second highest** level of such offences at **599**.



**Age of the
victim when
offence was
recorded**

Close to **a third of the sexual offences recorded** during 2023-24 were reported to police when the victim was an adult (aged 18 and over) but occurred when the victim was a child (aged under 18).

¹ PSNI, Trends in police recorded crime in Northern Ireland 1998-99 to 2023-24 available at <https://www.psni.police.uk/system/files/2025-01/371647988/Police%20Recorded%20Crime%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%201998-99%20to%202023-220revised.pdf>

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PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS

2 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND 7 OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



Achieved

1 Operational Recommendation



Partially achieved

2 Strategic Recommendations

4 Operational Recommendations



Not achieved

2 Operational Recommendations