



Annual Review

2021-22

Purpose, overview & operating model

Circles UK's vision is of **'no more victims'**. Its mission is to enhance public safety by working with individuals who have sexually abused others, and are at risk of doing so again, to self-manage inappropriate thoughts and behaviours, reintegrate safely into society and lead responsible lives.

Circles UK was established in 2008 to oversee the provision of Circles of Support and Accountability ('Circles') in England and Wales and owns the Circles brand and Intellectual Property Rights. Organisations which provide Circles must become members of Circles UK and operate within the requirements of a Code of Practice. These Circles 'Providers', as they are known, are subject to biennial audits by Circles UK to ensure that quality and safety standards are maintained.

A Circle is a group of Volunteers from a local community which form a Circle around a person with a conviction for a sexual offence or who has engaged in harmful sexual behaviour. This person is referred to as the 'Core Member'. Each Circle consists of four to six Volunteers and a Core Member. The Circle aims to provide a supportive social network that also requires the Core Member to take responsibility (be 'accountable') for his/her ongoing risk management. The Circle can also provide support and practical guidance in such things as developing their social skills, finding suitable accommodation, or helping the Core Member to find appropriate hobbies and interests. While helping the Core Member to settle into the community, the Volunteers also assist them in recognising patterns of thought and behaviour that could lead to their reoffending. Within it, the Core Member can grow

in self-esteem and develop healthy adult relationships, maximising his or her chances of successfully reintegrating into the community and live a positive offence free life.

Volunteers are closely managed and supervised by professional Coordinators who are employed by Circles Providers. The Core Member is involved from the beginning, is included in all decision making and, like all other members of the Circle, signs an agreement committing him or herself to the Circle and its aims. Each Circle is unique because it is individually designed around the needs of the Core Member. Should the Core Member show signs that they may be at risk of reoffending, the 'inner circle' of Volunteers will work with Police, Probation Service and other statutory services who provide the 'outer circle', who may take action to protect the public.

The Circle seeks to prevent further sexual abuse by reducing stigma and social isolation; factors known to be strongly associated with sexual offending recidivism. The Circle focuses on a person's 'positives' and 'strengths' and seeks to support him/her to access safe social outlets and opportunities, avoid dangerous and enabling situations and behaviours and manage day to day challenges.

Our Values



Safety

We work towards the objective of 'no more victims'.



Responsibility

Holding individuals and organisations to account for their actions.



Inclusiveness

Managing risk through inclusion not exclusion.



Community Involvement

Recognising the importance of community involvement.



Growth & Learning

Recognising that with necessary support and challenge, people have the ability to grow, learn and change their behaviour.



Individuality & Respect

Treating people with humanity and respect.

Circles help to support...

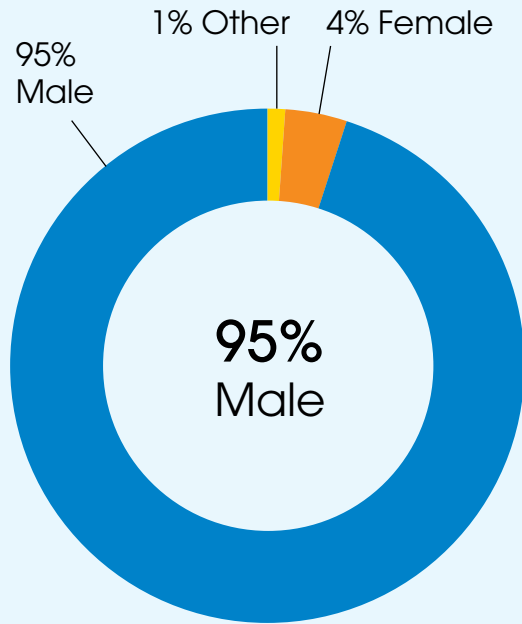


Since 2008 close to 1,200 Circles have been successfully completed. Evaluation studies have consistently shown that Circles play a crucial role in supporting the risk management of individuals convicted of sexual offences, increases the emotional wellbeing of Core Members, assists them in forming appropriate relationships, helps them engage in meaningful activities and supports them to find and retain suitable accommodation, all factors that are known to reduce reoffending. Circles make a significant contribution in helping to reduce sexual abuse.

As an organisation, Circles UK advocates and raises awareness of the importance of providing support to perpetrators of sexual abuse to address the root causes and prevent further victims. As a recognised authority in this area of work, over the past fourteen years, we have also trained and helped set up Circles programmes in Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Latvia, the Netherlands, Scotland, Catalonia and Spain. The Circles UK CEO currently chairs the CirclesEurope Association Board.

Profile of Core Members

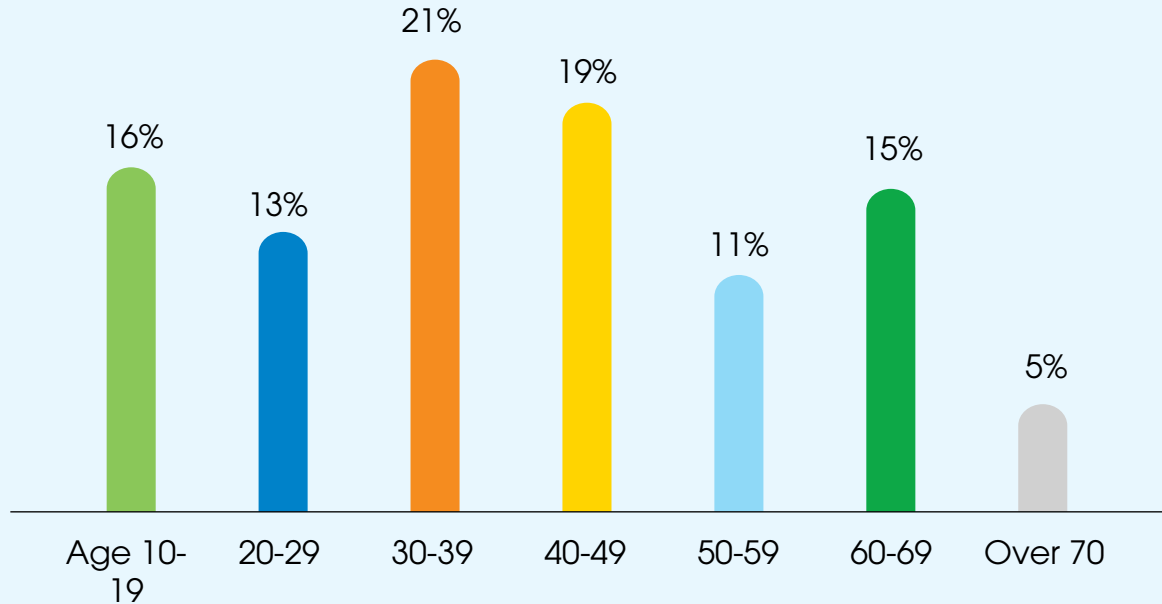
Gender of Core Member



- Female
- Male
- Other

Profile of Core Members

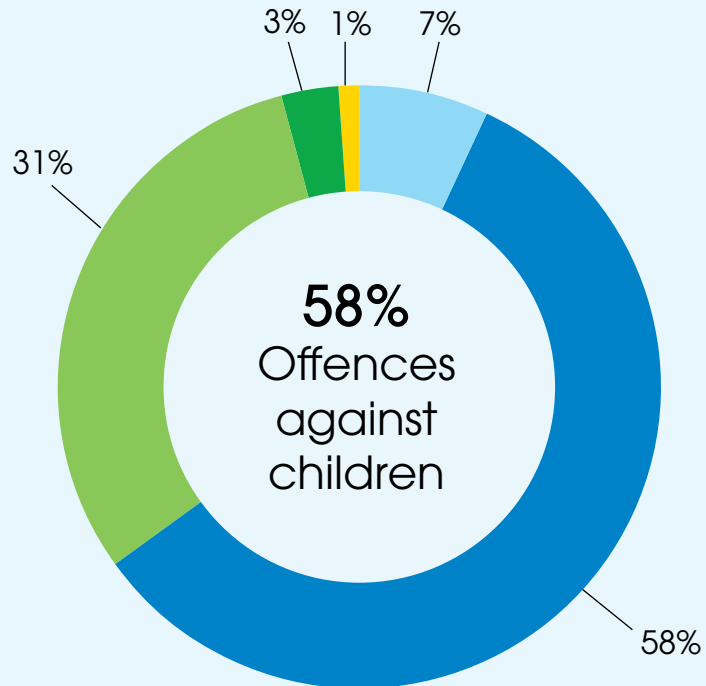
Age at Acceptance for Circle



It is interesting that 50% of Core Members were over the age of 40, which is different from the age profile of other types of offences, where younger age groups tend to dominate.

Profile of Core Members

Index Offences

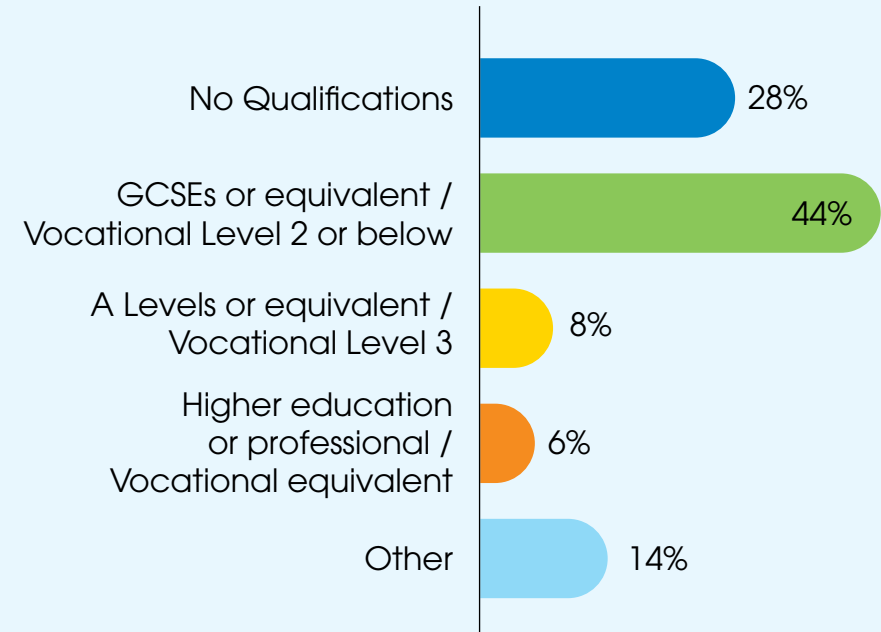


This chart clearly shows that offences against children and viewing images of child sexual exploitation material make up the vast majority of offences that are committed by Core Members who have accessed a Circle.

- Offences against adults
- Offences against children
- Viewing images of child sexual abuse / child sexual exploitation material
- Indecent Exposure
- Voyeurism

Profile of Core Members

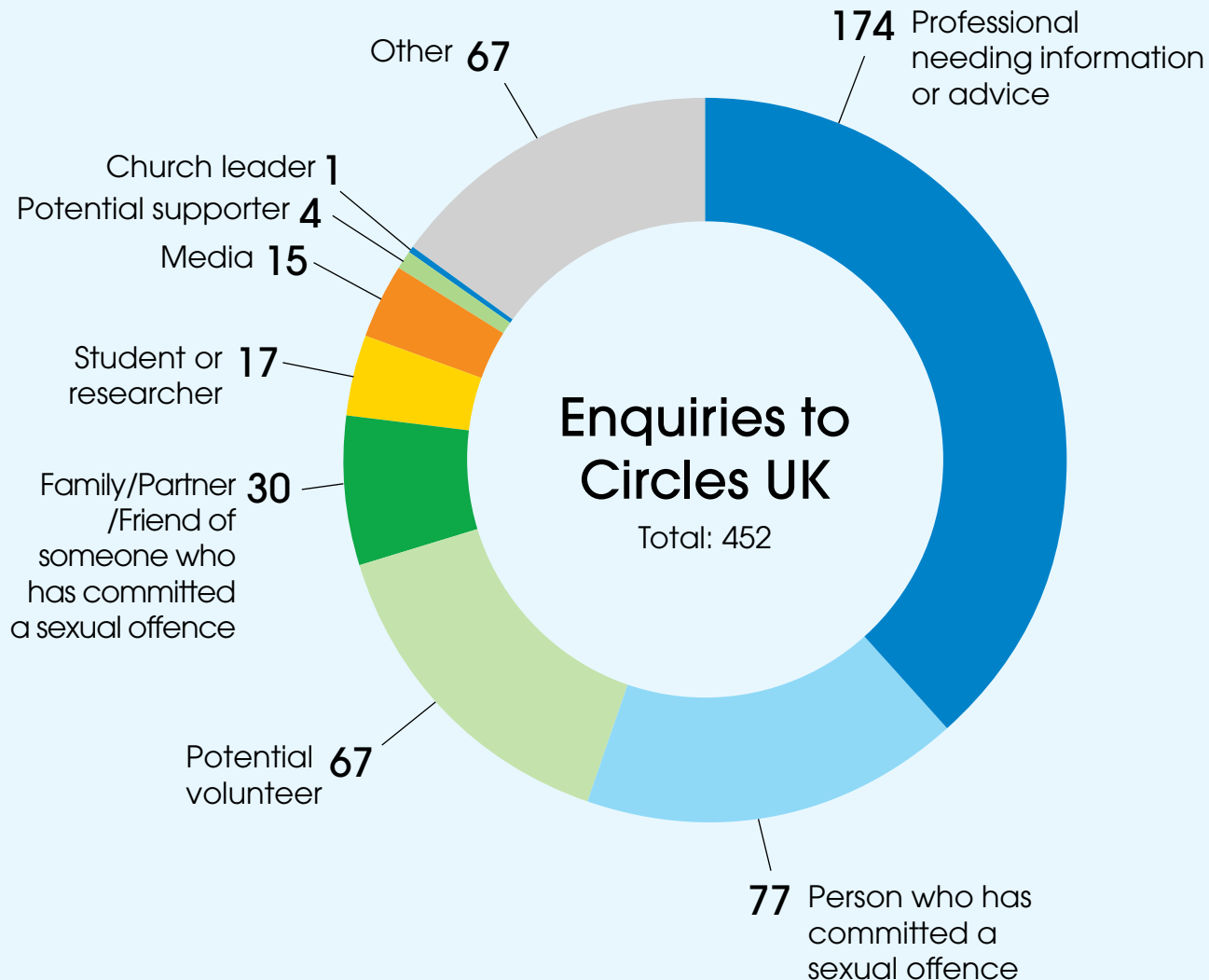
Qualification level of Core Member



This graph highlights that a high percentage of Core Members who accessed a Circle had no educational qualifications (28%), with 44% having GCSEs or equivalent and below.

Enquiries

Breakdown of categories of contacts to Circles UK



Enquiries

One area of our work that is not widely known is the high number of enquiries we receive from a range of people, including survivors/victims, perpetrators, professionals needing advice, families, friends and loved ones of perpetrators of sexual abuse and those with an attraction to children who have not engaged in any criminal activity. We also, on occasion, receive calls from highly distressed individuals who are thinking of taking their own lives, when their abuse is discovered. Where we are not able to assist, we tend to signpost the person to where they can receive the help and support they need. As a result of an increase in distress calls, Circles UK has invested in additional training for staff.

In the last year we received a total of 452 enquiries which took up roughly 10 full days of Circles UK staff time. Most of the enquiries were made via telephone (212) or via the Circles UK website (182).

Close to a quarter of the enquiries are from people who have either committed a sexual offence or a family member, partner or friend of someone who has committed such an offence.

New Circles Programmes

The alarming increase in online abuse and accessing of Child Sexual Exploitation Material that was reported during the first COVID-19 'lockdown', continued in the last financial year and is of major concern to criminal justice agencies who are struggling to cope with the increasing demand on their services. The [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) reported that in 2021 they saw sexual abuse imagery of girls being shared more widely than in any previous year. Girls were seen in 97% of the imagery that they helped to remove. Almost 7 in 10 instances of child sexual abuse involved 11–13year olds. 'Self-generated' child sexual abuse, where children are coerced to film themselves, is now the predominant type of child sexual abuse imagery the IWF is finding online.

Circles ReBoot, a new Circles programme, directed at people who view illegal images of children is therefore a welcome and much needed development. After significant delays due to the pandemic, the first of the 12 pilot Circles ReBoot, commenced in November 2021 and Circles UK is pleased to be working in partnership with Professor Derek Perkins and Dr Hannah Merdian from

OnlinePROTECT on the pilot evaluation. The pilot is expected to be completed in October 2022 after which the evaluation results will be launched at an international online event, due to the significant interest in this innovative approach. The emerging findings are interesting and have shown no undue concern about the methodology and implementation of the programme.

Supporting Circles Providers

The annual residential event for Coordinators was facilitated by Circles UK at the Quaker Study Centre near Birmingham. Dr Nadia Wager provided the keynote address with the theme of Desistance. Other areas of focus for the event included in-depth sessions on Risk and Safeguarding and a Trauma Informed approach to delivering Circles, facilitated by Circles Provider, Respond.

The Induction Handbook for new Coordinators has been completely rewritten and re-issued. There was a two-day face to face training event for all new Coordinators which took place in September 2021 attended by ten Coordinators from five different Providers. This training has also been refreshed and updated.



CirclesEurope

In the last year we also worked with our European partners to continue to develop the CirclesEurope Association. The Circles UK CEO continued to chair the Board and membership of the Association grew. At the end of March 2022, eight European countries and ten Circle Provider organisations were full members of the Association.

Quality assurance

Two Provider Compliance Reviews took place in 2021-22 and both Providers achieved excellent results. The following comments of the Circles UK reviewers reflect the positive findings of the reviews:

All three Circles (under review) had been impacted with, for example, delays to the start, temporary moves onto Zoom contact, reduced activities for the Young Person, but all three had retained the engagement and commitment of the Core Members and Volunteers. Perhaps the most powerful commendation...was from the interviews with the three Core Members. For vulnerable individuals, their Circles appear to have been a crucial lifeline and has offered them support and engagement with others during a prolonged period of anxiety and isolation. Where two Core Members' Circles had moved temporarily onto Zoom delivery, they stated they were very grateful when face to face contact resumed; it was not through lack of Volunteer effort on Zoom, but they clearly found face to face contact invaluable. The Trustees, Staff and Volunteers deserve to be very proud of the service delivered in such a difficult and uncertain time.

Circles South West Review

Support for staff and Volunteers included online coffee mornings and regular newsletters including a focus on well-being. Reviewers especially liked the very detailed practical guidance about video conferencing and remote contact by phone. It was apparent that delivering services during the pandemic has been demanding in both time and imagination. It was very clear from all the work achieved that the Board, Senior Managers, staff and Volunteers swiftly embraced the challenges presented by COVID-19 and worked together to ensure very isolated service users received contact and support during such an extraordinarily difficult period.

Circles South East Review

A successful Consolidation review of one new Provider also took place. A Consolidation review is required within one year of a new Provider becoming a member of Circles UK to confirm that the new Provider is delivering Circles in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Circles Code of Practice. The following comment from the Circles UK reviewer reflects the positive outcomes for a Core Member:


At the time of the review, (the Core Member) was moving into independent accommodation and voluntary employment. In our interview he said he had been surprised how well the

Circle has gone, especially his own level of engagement. He described the organisation as very supportive, helpful and encouraging. They "treat me as a normal person." He spoke well of the Coordinator and his skills in putting people at ease. He would recommend Circles to another person. "If someone is thinking of having a Circle, I would say yes, but they need to be a willing participant".

Humbercare Consolidation Review

Promoting our work

Circles UK was honoured to be approached by Lady Edwina Grosvenor to record a Podcast interview about Circles. Lady Grosvenor is a prison philanthropist who has founded the charity One Small Thing. The interview formed part of her criminal justice podcast series of podcasts which shine a light on unusual and innovative approaches in the criminal justice system. The podcast was launched in March 2022 and can be accessed here:

 [In Conversation with... Riana Taylor | JUSTICE with prison philanthropist Edwina Grosvenor on Acast](#)

Finances

Year to 31 March	2022						2021					
	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total		Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	
Income												
Grant funding	349.9	95.5%			349.9	95.5%	221.8	94.0%	100	100%	321.8	95.8%
Voluntary Income	8.1	2.2%			8.1	2.2%	10.4	4.4%			10.4	3.1%
Income from Services	8	2.2%			8	2.2%	3.1	1.3%			3.1	0.9%
Investment & Other	0.3	0.1%			0.3	0.1%	0.7	0.3%			0.7	0.2%
Total Income	366.3		0		366.3		236		100		336	

Year to 31 March	2022						2021					
	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total		Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	
Expenditure												
Provider Development	44.6	19.4%	77.9	100%	122.5	39.8%	64.8	22.9%	0	100%	64.8	22.9%
Provider Training & Support	48.7	21.2%			48.7	15.8%	68.3	24.2%			68.3	24.2%
Evaluation & Research	66.3	28.8%			66.3	21.5%	70.2	24.9%			70.2	24.9%
Information & Support Line	32.4	14.1%			32.4	10.5%	34.4	12.2%			34.4	12.2%
Fundraising	18.5	8.0%			18.5	6.0%	24.8	8.8%			24.8	8.8%
Governance	19.4	8.4%			19.4	6.3%	19.9	7.0%			19.9	7.0%
Total Expenditure	229.9		77.9		307.8		282.4		0		282.4	

Year to 31 March	2022			2021		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Balance Sheet						
Fixed Assets	2.2		2.2	3		3
Current Assets	441.7	22.1	463.8	365.8	100	465.8
Short Term Creditors (Amounts falling due within 1 year)	-83.8		-83.8	-145		-145
Long Term Creditors (Amounts falling due after 1 year)						
Total Net Assets	360.1	22.1	382.2	223.8	100	323.8

NB: Figures in £000s unless otherwise stated.



Circles UK is the trading name of Circles of Support and Accountability UK, a company registered in England and Wales with number 6457347 and is a registered charity with number 1122641

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