

# An Exploration of Knowledge about Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

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## What is this research about?

This groundbreaking new research investigates current knowledge and raises awareness of child abuse linked to faith or belief. Internationally, cases of child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) continue to cause concern (Bartholomew, 2015; Hansen & Ruggiero, 2013). In the United Kingdom (UK) high profile cases such as Victoria Climbié and Kristy Bamu have raised awareness of the need to develop child protection in this area (DfE, 2012). However, there are relatively small numbers of recorded cases (Stobart, 2006; Gilligan, 2009; Stobart, 2009; La Fontaine, 2012) though this data may be open to question due to underreporting and lack of recognition (La Fontaine, 2012). Therefore, this research is timely and important in providing a foundation on which to build more effective identification of cases, policy and intervention.

An online survey was developed and an invitation to participate, was distributed across the internet via professionals' websites, social networking sites, church organisations etc. This was in order to gather as wide a range of different professionals' views as possible. The necessity to first 'understand the area' and ascertain the knowledge, skill base and needs of those encountering CALFB motivated the survey questions. The research gained ethical approval from Manchester Metropolitan University.

## Who is conducting this research?

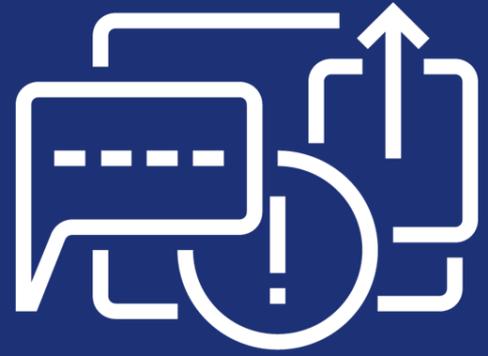
This research was commissioned by the National Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief and uses a multi-partner collaborative approach. It is led by Manchester Metropolitan University academics Dr Lisa Oakley and Dr Kathryn Kinmond in partnership with Mor Dioum, Director of the Victoria Climbié Foundation (VCF) and Justin Humphreys, Joint Chief Executive of Thirtyone: eight.

## Who has completed the survey?

In total 1,361 people have completed the on-line survey. The results show that they had backgrounds in social work (n=91), teaching (n=156), counselling (n=79), police (n=318), medicine (n=60), faith organisations (n=771), community organisations (n=143) with 219 people listing 'other' as their professional background.



The research found a wide variety of definitions and understandings of the term **child abuse linked to faith or belief.**



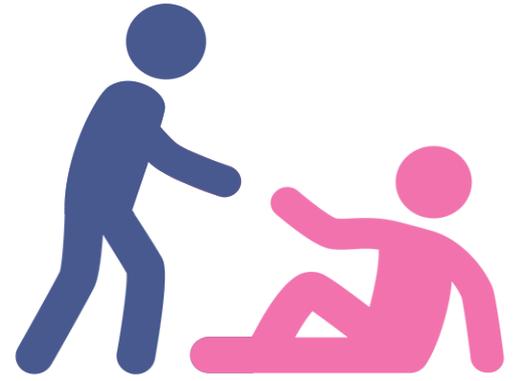
**61%**

of respondents in the study were confident they understood the term.

Although nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  respondents were confident they could define it only  $\frac{1}{3}$  were confident they could **identify indicators** of this form of abuse.



**52%** of respondents were confident they would know how to respond professionally



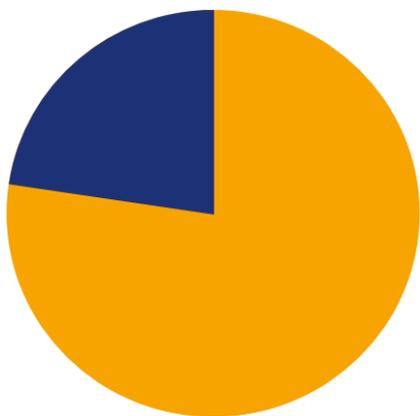
however the research results suggest limited experience of working with child abuse linked to faith or belief.

Only **25%** had received training on this issue.



The research showed a clear need for **specialised training** on this type of abuse.

The study results emphasise the necessity of statutory agencies and faith communities to **engage in partnership** to address this form of abuse. It also shows the importance of recognising and working with faith or belief in child protection.



**77%** of respondents didn't know if their LSCB includes policy and procedure on this form of abuse.

The research showed a need to **understand religious beliefs** and communities to address the issues.



For more information on this research go to: [thirtyoneeight.org/research](https://thirtyoneeight.org/research)