



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

**HUMAN
DIGNITY
FOUNDATION**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE	3
FINANCIAL	4

INTRODUCTION



When Childlight launched little more than a year ago, we promised to keep shining a light on child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) until we knew the world had become a much safer place for children.

Our vision was to establish a world-leading, independent data institute, gathering and visualising data on the prevalence and nature of this global public health emergency in order to inform policy and drive sustainable, coordinated action. In other words, we illuminate to eliminate.

The scale of the challenge remains enormous, with efforts severely hampered by a lack of data, measurement, transparency and coordination. However, Childlight with our global partners are already making a difference with the release of [Into The Light](#), the world's first global estimate of the scale of online CSEA – and by acting as a catalyst for enduring change across the child protection system.

Our estimate of more than 300 million children being affected annually caught the attention of the world's media as well as policy makers, global institutions and NGOs. Our data is being cited by law enforcement, politicians and regulators to help drive evidence-based action to protect children.

Whilst many data gaps and inconsistencies remain, this prevalence baseline, by which we can measure the sector's progress, is crucial to understanding and tackling a pandemic that has remained hidden in the shadows for too long. We are determined to build on this pioneering work – independently audited by senior statistician Sir Bernard Silverman – to provide more reliable, country-by-country estimates and expand into other areas of child sexual exploitation and abuse, both online and offline.

This drive for data, shared with all who can use it to protect children, complements our first [Searchlight](#) flagship report, a compendium of research shining a light on the nature of CSEA. That report highlighted CSEA as it affects children in their early years and young people with disabilities, in addition to emerging threats, including in virtual environments and with AI-generated material.

In this endeavour we are indebted to the Human Dignity Foundation in establishing Childlight at The University of Edinburgh and recently signing a ten-year funding agreement. This has allowed us to move at pace and benefit from the support of world-leading researchers and experts across the field to undertake this complex challenge.

As well as collecting and translating data to understand the scale and drivers of CSEA, we help turn data into action through our Childlight Technical Advisory Programme [C-TAP] because children can't wait. This support helps frontline responders around the world to better connect to and act upon data, including tens of millions of pieces of intelligence on child exploitation and abuse, to apprehend perpetrators and safeguard children. It is also another pathway to obtaining further data to better understand and combat CSEA globally.

Our efforts are augmented by our hubs in Edinburgh and Sydney, covering the European and East Asia & Pacific regions, to enhance our networks, our knowledge and to catalyse change as we work with many others to access and share invaluable data.

Meanwhile, our Global Data Fellows programme harnesses the skills and commitment of some of the brightest minds in the world tackling the horror of CSEA. While a new Masters degree course we will host at The University of Edinburgh will help equip others to be agents of change.

No child should have to live in the darkness of sexual exploitation and abuse – and our light is growing brighter.

Paul Stanfield
Chief Executive Officer

STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

The Childlight team has grown over the last year. We now have 25 people working with us across our different activities, augmented by our 13 Global Data Fellows, and more details can be found on our [website](#). We have specific governance forums for both Childlight as an organisation, as well as dedicated governance and review for our research and data activity, as shown below.

Childlight's steering board meets three times a year. It has representation from key industry partners and provides strategic advice and guidance to ensure that Childlight meets its intended expenditure, quality and impact.

Steering board



Sir Peter Mathieson
Principal, University of Edinburgh



Sean Litton
Executive Director, Tech Coalition



Sophie Otiende
Chief Executive Officer, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (2022–2024)



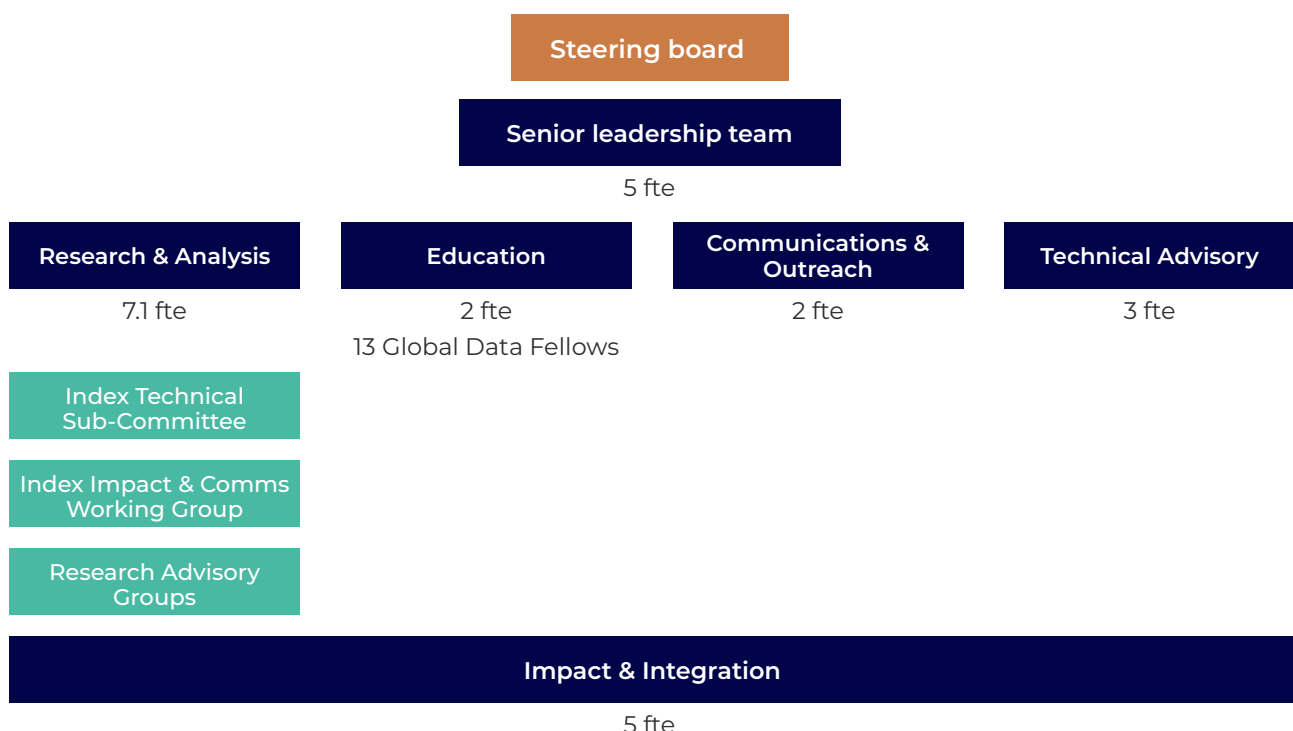
Dr John Climax
Founding member and chair of the Human Dignity Foundation



Stephen Kavanagh
Executive Director of Policing Services, INTERPOL



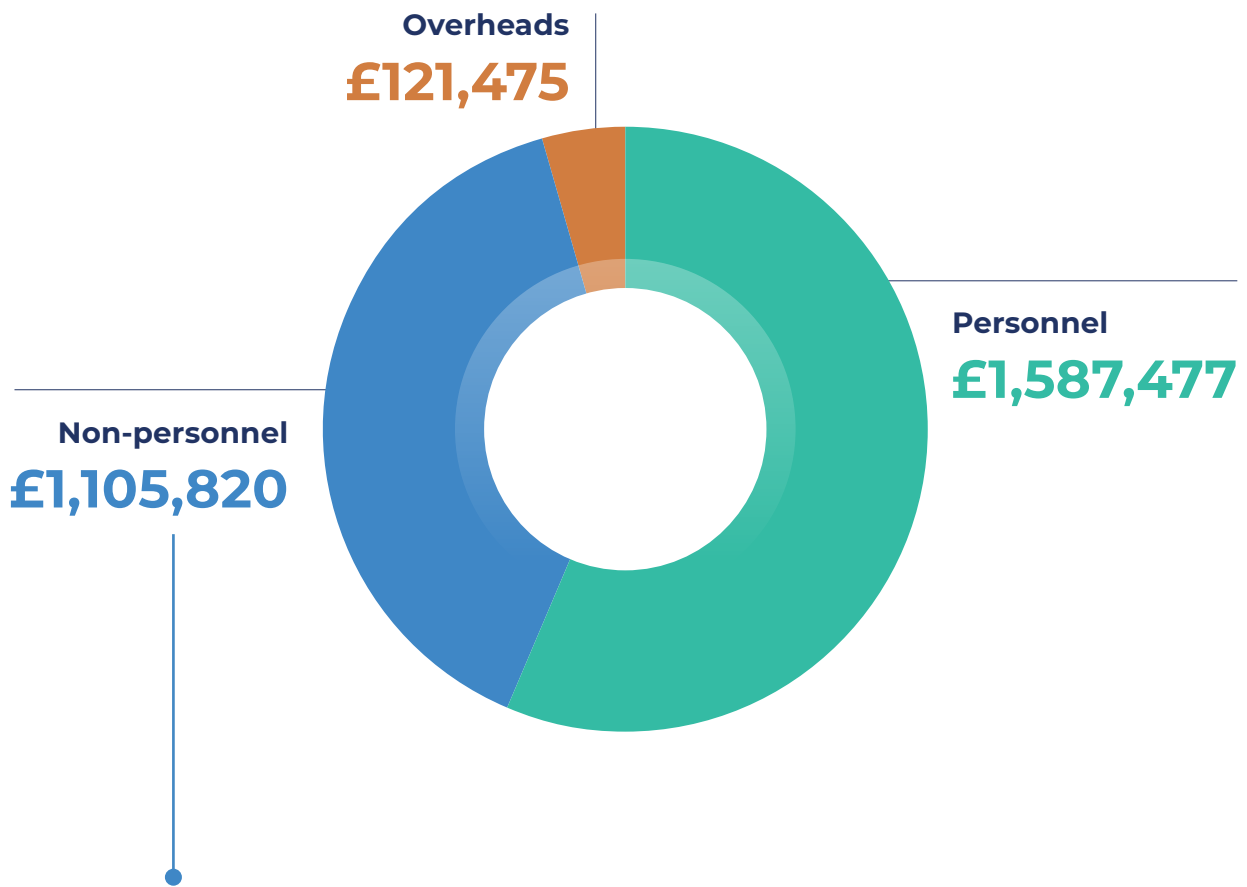
Sir Bernard Silverman
Chairs the Childlight Technical Sub-Committee and independently audited the global index



FINANCIAL

Childlight is thankful to those who fund us in our vision to take data-driven action to prevent CSEA. Through 2023/24 we are predominantly funded through two main partners: Human Dignity Foundation and the University of Edinburgh. We are also delighted to have secured additional funding from Human Dignity Foundation that allows Childlight to expand our activity and impact, worth £20.2m over the next 9 years.

Our 2023/24 spend was £2,814,772 which we spent across the following areas:



Non-personnel expenditure

Partners	£ 467,646
Travel, Accommodation & Hospitality	£ 99,284
Communications & Publications	£ 205,286
GDF Programme	£ 42,327
Strategic Opportunities Fund	£ 79,648
Data Safe Haven	£ 197,854
Equipment and Supplies	£ 13,775



CONTACT US

childlight@ed.ac.uk

Follow Us



[@ChildLight_](#)



[Childlight – Global Child Safety Institute](#)



[Find out more](#)