

# Spotlight on: Our Prevention Programme

## The service:

Our **Prevention Programme** is funded by the Home Office through the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Our work aims to enable local areas to better tackle and prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking on a regional basis across England and Wales.

## Our work:

Our network of 10 specialist prevention officers – each covering a designated policing region across England and Wales – works alongside a management team that supports tasking and leads national partnership and strategic work. The programme delivers ‘tasks’ based on intelligence and insight about needs in the local areas. Each task aims to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children and young people, and relates specifically to the objectives for the programme. Tasks are delivered in partnership with, and to, a range of partners across regions and in some cases nationally. They are based on intelligence and insight about needs in the local areas, and how to effectively respond to these.



**Staff are definitely more aware of the signs of exploitation and how to identify a child at risk. They also have a much better understanding of the stages of grooming and the important role of the National Referral Mechanism.**

## National Government Stakeholder

Throughout the last year of delivery, the programme has:

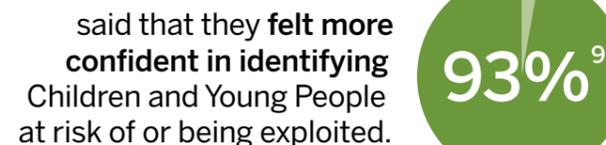
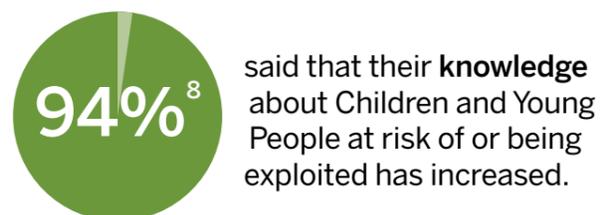
- Reached approximately 13,363 professionals, and 1,183 young people across England and Wales.
- Completed 371 tasks to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, modern day slavery, human trafficking and criminal exploitation.

## Our impact:

**Professionals within systems feel more confident in identifying and supporting young people at risk of abuse and exploitation.**

The programme has increased professionals’ awareness and knowledge of abuse and exploitation, and equipped them with the skills to respond to it.

## Of external stakeholders surveyed:



**The more awareness that can be raised, the more we are likely to be able to safeguard young people. If we hadn’t had this [support] from The Children’s Society then it wouldn’t be as clear in terms of spotting signs and how to get help. It’s been really positive and helped my confidence in an area that is hugely important.**

**Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation Stakeholder in Wales**

<sup>8</sup> 46 out of 49 respondents

<sup>9</sup> 43 out of 46

<sup>10</sup> 37 out of 40

# Case Study: #LookCloser

Evidence and intelligence gathered by the programme shows that public transport such as trams, coaches, trains and buses are used to facilitate the movement of young people being exploited. We also learned that exploiters use fast food outlets and roadside services for amenities and food, and hotels as places for exploitation 'behind closed doors'. However, members of staff working in these sectors may be unaware of the signs of abuse or exploitation – so our **#LookCloser partnership campaign** aimed to increase awareness to better protect young people:

## #LookCloser

The Prevention Programme co-ordinated and developed the #LookCloser campaign in the East Midlands region with East Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the British Transport Police, and local forces. The campaign focused on how public spaces like bus and train stations, fast food outlets, shopping centres, roadside services and hotels may be places where young victims of exploitation are visible.

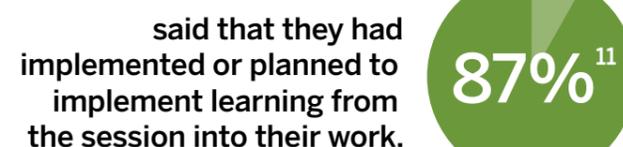
During the week 9-13 March 2020, the partnership ran a week of awareness-raising activities targeting train stations throughout the East Midlands and delivering training to Coach Station managers at the National Express (Leicester) and hotel staff (Northamptonshire). The Prevention team also developed police briefings for their intranet, which focused on how to engage young people and identify victims of exploitation alongside best practice

in effective use of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Modern Slavery Act.

Officers from the British Transport Police (BTP) and all of the East Midlands forces were also out in communities, engaging with everyone from daily commuters, café workers, coach drivers and hotel receptionists. On the launch day, The Children's Society and BTP engaged with railway staff at one station who shared their concerns about two young people they see regularly. Those young people passed through the station later that day and railway staff alerted BTP. It is believed that these were two young people possibly being exploited, and safeguarding measures were subsequently put in place.

Professionals have changed how they respond to young people at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Of those who said that they had attended a training session, presentation, or workshop:



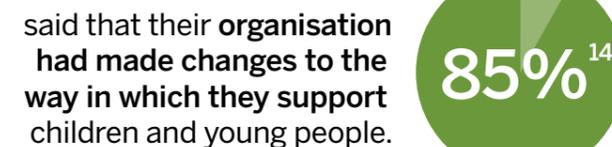
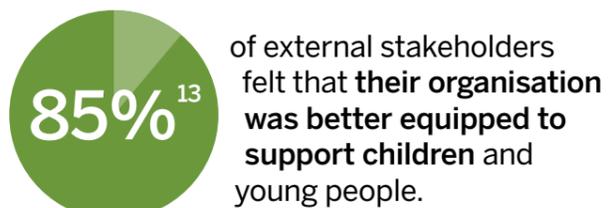
<sup>11</sup> 27 out of 31 respondents  
<sup>12</sup> 31 out of 37

“

Knowing about the National Referral Mechanism and using it if appropriate. Knowing what questions to ask a young person about their experience, being able to piece together what stage of the grooming process they are in from these responses, looking out for vital evidence such as train tickets and being able to skill up parents and carers in what to look out for and to keep a record of.

Local Government Stakeholder in Yorkshire and Humberside

Systems are improving their ability to identify and better respond to young people at risk of abuse and exploitation.



<sup>13</sup> 34 out of 40 respondents  
<sup>14</sup> 34 out of 40  
<sup>15</sup> 36 out of 40

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The expertise and resources have been fundamental to improving the local authority approach to dealing with exploitation of children, as well as allowing me to signpost/reference relevant material and guidance to support this.

Local Government Stakeholder in the East of England

# Case Study: British Transport Police

## The programme worked with British Transport Police (BTP) to improve practice in responding to exploitation concerns across their national workforce.

We delivered eight 'vulnerability roadshows' in Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham and London during February and March 2020. The Programme delivered these workshops to a total of 200 BTP staff from across England, including representatives from response, intelligence, CID and vulnerability teams within BTP. A key focus of these events was to transform BTP staff's perspective on child victimhood and their use of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Although the British Transport Police stand as a first responder, many officers limited knowledge of the NRM or did not know how to use it effectively. Officers who attended the roadshows felt their knowledge in this area had improved significantly.

Alongside the roadshows, the Prevention programme also trained the new BTP county lines workforce, providing support to around 30 officers responsible for leading the BTP's response to county lines. Providing input during the initial months of this team's induction, the programme worked to ensure that BTP officers take a victim-informed approach. Our team also delivered learning around effective use of the Modern Slavery Act and other disruption powers to target higher-level perpetrators, rather than those exploited at the bottom.

BTP had prioritised improving their interventions with young people at the point of arrest, and within custody settings, so they invited our Prevention team to support the BTP custody suite in London. Through shadowing, feedback and tailored training, we helped BTP identify several areas for systemic change. These included reviewing the risk assessment used when children and young people enter and leave custody, and reviewing processes for custody officers to record and share vulnerability concerns.

Initial feedback suggests that the areas of systemic change the Prevention team proposed were also identified by an inspection by of BTP by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services as areas for improvement. With our support, BTP were able to demonstrate that they were already working to improve these areas, establishing that our programme's input was in line with national policy and good practice guidance.

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I think we have seen an increase in NRM referrals, and [I] would attribute some of this to the work. **[This] has a positive result or conclusion for children and young people. [They will be] accepted into the system, and will hopefully get support they need.**

BTP representative

As a result of these changes, we hope that children and young people may:

Be identified sooner if at risk of abuse or exploitation;

Referred to appropriate support;

Have their voices heard and experiences understood;

Have access to and receive better support; and

Ultimately be protected and safer.

82%<sup>16</sup>

of external stakeholders felt that children and young people had better access to services as a result of the programme.