

# Evaluating the response to online safety cases

*CAMHS Local Transformation Project (Dudley*

*Executive Summary and Recommendations*



safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

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Youthworks

We care about young people

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## Executive summary

Youthworks was commissioned to

- Conduct a needs assessment in order to establish a clear picture of the extent to which online safety<sup>1</sup> issues impact on the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people within the borough.
- Make commissioning recommendations in respect of programmes and interventions, to ensure the online safety of children, young people and families across the borough.

### Dudley's children and young people – online experiences

- The Cybersurvey, last run in Dudley in 2014, was repeated in Autumn 2016 as the part of this assessment with an in-depth look at young people's responses.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Phase 1 involved a consultation with local stakeholders. Twenty one people were approached and fifteen local stakeholders were interviewed from:

- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- local authority children's services, including the Respect and teenage pregnancy team
- the school nursing service
- the police
- the education inspection team
- integrated youth services
- the local safeguarding board
- a private sector company providing online counselling
- a local charity offering advice, support and outreach services for young people

### The aim of the stakeholder interviews was to explore and establish:

- The extent to which children and young people referred into CAMHS state online safety issues as a key factor in their emotional wellbeing.
- The extent to which children and young people referred into the local authority Children's Service Single Point of Access state online safety issues as a key factor in respect of a safeguarding concern.
- The extent to which children and young people accessing the counselling provided via Kooth.com (Xenzone) state online safety issues as a key factor.
- The extent to which, children and young people who are victims or perpetrators of crime, state online safety issues as a key factor.

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<sup>1</sup> (NB: Ofsted has switched to using the phrase Online Safety in place of e-safety to indicate a wider remit, we are using this phrase here.)

- What, if any, questions agencies ask children and young people in respect of the impact of cyber-bullying/online risk on their emotional health and wellbeing.
- Local trends and issues in relation to online safety (identified by the above local services).

## Themes from the interviews

### Are there more cases?

Most stakeholders suggested they were seeing more cases with an online component. There was concern about the types of cases seen and young people's lack of boundaries and ideas about relationships. Young people were unprepared for the consequences of their actions.

### The data gap

Data on cases with a digital component is not routinely collected via referrals, assessments or collated case notes. This leaves a data gap with implications for practice, training and strategic planning. West Midlands Police provided data re: online offences involving young people. The Respect and Teenage pregnancy team had figures on cases of inappropriate use of social media, but data on other high risk online scenarios was not available.

### No dedicated assessment tools pick up online risk

Assessment tools are often generic, focused understandably on CSE, or emotional health, but with little focus on obtaining a picture of the online life of the client or their exposure to high risk, which might be extremely relevant to treatment or case management. *(Recent analysis of assessment tools used in the UK found that many are not evaluated or reliable.)*<sup>2</sup>

### Relationships between agencies are good

There is co-operation between agencies and good relationships are evident. Communication was thought to have improved markedly in the last eighteen months.

### Lack of a structured programme of training

Interviewees showed a lack of knowledge about the DSCB specific online safety training on offer: They stated that much of the training offered to or taken up by them is not specifically on how to identify and prevent online risk and understand and deal with young people's digital life experiences. It was mentioned that specific training in online safety is not mandatory, and often updated only on a three yearly basis. Most training focuses on Child Protection or Child Sexual Exploitation. Interviewees have the impression that there are now fewer training places for Dudley services since the Black Country Training offer was implemented.

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<sup>2</sup> Brown, S. Brady, Franklin, A., Bradley, L. and Kerrigan, N. (2016) Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Understanding Vulnerability. Coventry University and The Early Intervention Foundation for the Home Office, reviewed ten assessment tools in use in the UK.

## Stakeholder suggestions

### Young people and parents

A need to educate young people and parents on safe and healthy relationships, online risk and the long term consequences of certain behaviours was expressed.

A need to do more work with parents was raised, including those seeking support and advice re children's e-safety issues, where a "fragmented response" was noted by interviewees in this review. Prevention messaging via Public Health on CSE was suggested. The school nurse service noted that parent/carer sessions are delivered by DGfL and a young person's officer within the police, but other services were not aware of this.

### Learning from others

Suggestions were made on how Dudley might learn from other nearby services.

### Capacity and referrals

Under strain with large numbers of cases, it was suggested that appropriate cases to be referred to the police, while certain cases might be better served via the Vulnerable Children's Strategic Group (this group no longer exists) rather than too many cases routinely referred to the police when they need not be. *As strategic groups do not take on casework, a frontline team would need to be considered for this important task.*

### Online safety training

Although E-safety multi-agency training is available as part of the Black Country Training offer (previously run specifically through DSCB) interviewees had not largely undertaken this and were not aware of it. Interviewees would welcome more online safety training for services; some also thought this should be mandatory as part of safeguarding. Challenges to developing a trained workforce were mentioned, including staff turnover and the need for constant updating in this fast changing field. (Fewer training places are available this year in comparison to earlier years: 92 places to March 2017 in contrast to 120 in 2014-5 and 153 in 2015-16 and there are generally only 8 places per course offered to Dudley).

### Information and updates for practitioners and professionals

Practitioners and professionals want better information about local services able to offer expert advice on tackling online safety risks and help with keeping up to date.

### Service or organisation procedures and protocols

Dudley Early Help Strategy Review: Consider the opportunity to embed learning and new assessment processes re: e-safety across new services.

Develop skills and approaches for working with younger children as the lower age range of referrals appears to be dropping.

Improve links between social services, schools and the Respect Teenage Pregnancy team and develop local practice about online safety to include grooming, CSE and young people's online relationships.

## Recommendations from the assessment

- **1.** Designate a Safeguarding in Education Lead who will: steer strategy and highlight online safety as part of monitoring arrangements for safeguarding.
- **2.** Draft a borough-wide e-safety strategy with an outline plan of action to include universal delivery of online safety education and targeted and intensive work for vulnerable children and young people, those not in school and those with communication difficulties. Build on the existing work plan.
- **3.** Heads of Safeguarding and Commissioning investigate the potential for highlighting the link between wellbeing and online experiences and encounters, within the universal needs assessment of children and young people, to make assessments more thorough.
- **4.** Use improved data to evaluate and improve practice. It should enable stakeholders and training planners to be responsive to rapidly evolving threats.
- **5.** Agree a timetable for data sharing between safeguarding board partners.
- **6.** Review and plan online-safety training rather than being reactive. Complement sub-regional training offers with local ones and make services aware of this. Individual agencies should ensure staff are appropriately trained, either via bespoke in-service training or by sub-regional or local training offers. The majority of those interviewed report little or no specific online safety training although there is some offered.
- **7.** Online safety training should be updated regularly to take account of the fast changing environment and the programme should address and support the needs and interests of those working with different age groups and abilities.
- **8.** Issue a Professional Code of Conduct with the forthcoming e-safety procedures, with information on where to turn for professional support regarding online safety incidents.
- **9.** Agree a menu of additional support for educational settings incorporating all existing work being done and collaborating with the West Midlands Police in Schools Panels and Restorative Justice work. In addition supplement universal delivery with targeted work for those most at risk; those with SEN, mental health difficulties, young carers or looked after children.
- **10.** Implement a programme targeting parents and the public with updates, information on parental controls and relevant alerts such as the Twitter feed of [Derby's Digital PCSO](#). It might be possible to forge links and use this feed in Dudley.



1. What would improve information flow in your service?
  
2. How could staff training be upgraded?
  
3. Are there pressing aspects the draft audit tool has not touched upon?
  
4. What difficulties do you see in implementing these ideas?
  
5. What help would your service require to implement these ideas?
  
6. How could we improve the audit tool/guide?

Let us know: Contact [akatz@youthworksconsulting.co.uk](mailto:akatz@youthworksconsulting.co.uk)

**This is the Executive Summary and Recommendations. If you wish to read the full report, it can be found at:**

**<http://youthworksconsulting.co.uk/uploads/1255135218EVAL>**