Co-designing Community Resilience to Online Child Sexual Victimisation

Project developing a quality standards tool with the local community to address and prevent online child sexual victimisation in Blackpool.

Key details

Lead institution	Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre
Principal researcher(s)	Professor Corinne May-Chahal c.may-chahal@lancaster.ac.uk
Police region	North West
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	May 2022
Date due for completion	October 2024

Research context

Online child sexual victimisation (OCSV) presents a significant challenge for policing, particularly considering the increasing number of young children being involved and the lack of knowledge around what OCSV might entail and how it might manifest. 'Online child sexual victimisation' is a phrase that encompasses a broad range of activities, the most of prominent of which include sharing and engaging with digital forms of child sexual abuse or exploitation, online grooming practices and self-generated material by children.

Responses to different forms of OCSV are fragmented and rarely target specific kinds of offences. Prevention work tends to focus on detecting child sexual abuse after images or footage have appeared online. There is far less activity targeted at stopping children becoming victims (primary

intervention) and immediate responses after a child has been abused to prevent it happening again (secondary prevention).

More needs to be done to increase awareness of OCSV in communities, health settings, schools and domestic environments and provide more resilient and effective mechanisms by which this issue may be identified and prevented by police and practitioners.

This project, focusing on Blackpool, aims to:

- understand how the police, charities, voluntary groups and the public – particularly parents and children – identify and address OCSV and the links with vulnerability
- identify how the police can best work with others, including international partners, to anticipate, respond to and prevent OCSV and the harms and vulnerability associated with it
- co-produce a locality-based online child sexual victimisation quality standards framework that can be applied nationally with scope to develop in an international context

Research methodology

This 30-month project consists of three phases:

Phase 1 (months 1-12)

The researchers will conduct a rapid evidence review and map services across Blackpool, particularly in areas where certain forms of OCSV are more prominent.

The team will work with key services in Blackpool (such as police, local government, social work, charities and voluntary bodies), as well as community members (including children, young people and parents) to facilitate this. This work will be complemented by a case file analysis of online child sexual abuse cases recorded by Lancashire police over a 12-month period to better understand the distribution, concentration and nature of OCSV in Blackpool.

Phase 2 (months 12–24)

The team will conduct a series of workshops with victims of OCSV, service providers (such as police, health, social care and charities and voluntary bodies), and the wider community (such as parents and young people).

Following preparatory workshops, groups will then be brought together to develop an innovative online child sexual abuse quality standard tool.

Phase 3 (months 24–30)

The tool will be piloted among community services in two police force areas with an evaluation at the end of year 3.

A group of children and young people will be recruited to design and deliver the evaluation with the research team.

Additional Resources

[Co-designing Community Resilience to Online Child Sexual Victimisation](#) - Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre

Tags

- [Child sexual exploitation](#)