

An Evaluation of SafetyWorks!

Grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation

Awareness Programmes

January 2017



Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all the children and young people who gave their time and shared their experiences, opinions and views. Many of your suggestions for further development of the CSE awareness programme have been incorporated into this report.

Thank you to school staff and parents for your helpful cooperation, helping facilitate access to all the children and young people and assisting with suitable arrangements for the online surveys to be completed.

Sincere thanks to Nicola Bone and Claire Jones for your support in initial communication with schools and providing me with ongoing information and support. Thank you to Superintendent Brian Walker and Chief Inspector Stephen Hails for enabling this piece of work to be undertaken.

I am also particularly grateful to Dr Myfanwy Franks for her specialist consultancy in relation to research design and thematic analysis of data.

Background to evaluator and author

Nola Ellen is an independent youth practitioner, educator, trainer and consultant. She specialises in children's rights, empowerment and child wellbeing. She has worked as a specialist child protection practitioner designing and delivering child sexual exploitation prevention programmes and supporting children and young people who have been involved with grooming and CSE as both victim and perpetrator. She has delivered specialist youth programmes with local, national and global children's charities. She writes and facilitates CSE awareness training for professionals and delivers a range of bespoke consultancy services that promote safe, effective, high quality and child-led practice.

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Summary

In 2016 SafetyWorks! delivered their Child Sexual Exploitation prevention programme to 377 children and young people in schools Tyne and Wear. This report has been written to disseminate the findings of an evaluation that was carried out with a sample of 93 of those children and young people between November and December 2016.

Using qualitative research methods, the primary aim of the evaluation was to establish whether any changes in young peoples' behaviour had taken place following their participation in these grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) awareness programmes. It also aimed to find out the nature of any changes in behaviour that had taken place.

This illustrative study concludes that the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme did enable children and young people to recognise potentially harmful situations and take positive steps to reduce risks associated with grooming and child sexual exploitation.

The study found that, through developing specific knowledge, understanding and skills there were indeed positive changes in your people's behaviour that had taken place which suggests that effective risk reduction is an outcome of the CSE awareness programme.

Background

Safety Works

'SafetyWorks!' is a multi-agency interactive safety centre serving the community of Tyne and Wear (operated and managed by Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service). It provides an innovative learning experience enabling visitors to safely participate in realistic situations illustrating everyday hazards and how to prevent them. It acts as the focal point for fire safety, community safety and crime prevention education in Tyne & Wear.

The Programme

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) awareness programme is delivered by two specialist staff based at SafetyWorks! It is funded by the Police Innovation Fund (2015-2017). The programme aims to reduce the risk of young people being involved in CSE. It does this by developing young people's knowledge of how grooming and CSE happen and by helping children and young people to understand its effects as well as teaching them the steps they can take to increase their own safety. The sessions aim to equip children and young people with information and skills, to reduce risk of harm, and enable them to feel confident about where to go for information and support.

Facilitators

The CSE prevention programmes at SafetyWorks! are facilitated by Nicola Bone and Claire Jones. They cover different themes such as grooming and CSE awareness, relationships (healthy, unhealthy and abusive), sex, consent and the law, e-safety, sexting and the law. On average the sessions last for two hours each and they are delivered to small groups of around 10 participants. Schools select young people to attend the programmes based on a range of criteria such as age, vulnerability and risk factors, previous concerns and experiences associated with grooming and exploitation.

Claire and Nicola are specialists in the field of CSE education. They draw on interactive facilitation styles and they use a range of tools, activities and resources to build a safe space and stimulate and inspire learning. Content is tailored and adapted according to age, gender and other relevant needs of the group and school.

Methodology

This report draws upon the analysis of the data collected between 11th November and 12th December 2016. The study used qualitative methods including focus groups and an on-line survey completed by 93 of the young participants involved in the CSE prevention programme in 2016. Those who participated in the study were aged 12-16 years.

This study used an opportunity sample of participants. All schools that had participated in sessions run by SafetyWorks! in 2016 were invited to take part in the research. Information sheets were provided for teachers and pupils. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Parent and carer consent was obtained for all those who took part. Schools were invited to participate in both the online surveys and focus groups. To maximise reach, the children and young people participated in *either* a focus group or a survey.

The online survey consisted of 10 questions, most of which were closed ended questions and included a selection of multiple choice answers. The focus group questions were modelled on those asked in the online survey. They were framed differently (open ended) to allow deeper exploration. At times, the focus group discussions were participant-led to allow some of the themes to be explored in a natural and relaxed way.

Participant Sample

93 children and young people participated in the research from five secondary schools.

48 children and young people completed the online survey from three secondary schools.

45 children and young people participated in one of eight focus groups held across three secondary schools.

All the quotes in this report are from participants who took part in the focus group discussions.

Of the 93 children and young people who participated, 65 were female, 27 were male, and one young person identified as transgender. This gender proportion of uptake reflects the monitoring data that more females than males were engaged in the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme in 2016.

Ethics

All children and young people were briefed in full before completing the online survey and participating in the focus groups for this evaluation. Their participation was voluntary. Parent / carer consent was obtained for each participant.

Children and young people who participated in the focus groups were informed that all answers would remain anonymous in the report. Participants were informed about the limits of confidentiality should there be any concerns regarding risk of harm to them or another person. Participants were informed that the evaluator works as a practitioner in CSE prevention and has worked in the past delivering supporting to those who have experienced grooming and CSE. Participants were reminded that they would not be put on the spot or asked any personal information relating to their own experiences of grooming or exploitation.

Findings

What the children and young people remember learning

The study found that most participants who took part in the survey and focus groups were able to recall what the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme was about. A number of participants in the focus groups gave detailed responses, for example describing the story lines and characters of the films they watched during the session. This indicates that the programme is memorable for participants which would seem to provide a positive indicator for longer term risk reduction.

From the 48 young people who completed the online survey;

38 remembered learning information about keeping safe online and social media.

"I remember they showed us this example of someone's profile which showed where he lived; they showed us how easily it was to find him. After the session I checked and changed my privacy sessions."

33 remembered learning about grooming.

"The session helped me to understand how grooming works."

Well over half of the participants surveyed remembered learning information about child sexual exploitation and healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships. Just under half of those who completed the survey remember learning where to go for information, help and support.

During the focus group discussions, a number of young people recalled watching the films based on grooming and child sexual exploitation.

"It was good watching the video, it made us understand a lot."

"I remember the film, the one when he was chatting online and then he went to the house and he ended up being a male."

"I remember one about playing football and then he takes loads of drugs and then he needs to pay so he ends up getting watched."

A number of young people recalled learning about substances and activities such as wearing the beer goggles.

"I remember the goggles...it made you feel like you'd had loads to drink and you were really drunk. It was set out like an actual place, there's a Metro station and stuff and it makes you experience what it would be like."

A number of young people who participated in the focus groups said they had learnt new information in the session.

"I learnt that if you send your pictures in Snapchat, your pictures save. If you take a picture and you go to send it to someone, other people can see it as well. There's this thing people can download and then they can see your Snapchat pictures."

"I learnt when you go to your settings you can see who has logged into your account...someone had tried to log in to mine from Malta! I changed my password."

The participants' responses in both the online surveys and focus groups highlight that the SafetyWorks! programme was memorable. This could be attributed to the active participation of young people in the session (for example trying on the beer goggles and reporting back to the group), the variety of teaching methods used and, the experience, knowledge and skills of the facilitators, which made the session engaging.

Changes in behaviour in social media usage and online communication

From the 48 children and young people who completed the online survey, a significant number had taken steps to increase their own online privacy and safety following the session with SafetyWorks! It is important to note that there were a small proportion of children and young people to whom these questions did not apply, for example, those who do not use Facebook.

As a response to the programme over half of the respondents surveyed checked if they knew everyone on their friends list on Facebook.

"I've had Facebook for four years so I decided to check after the session 'cause obviously when I first got it when I was a lot younger and back then I was quite careless, like 'oh friends'. I deleted quite a few."

More than half checked their privacy settings on Facebook and just under half had changed their privacy settings since the session.

"After the session I checked my (Facebook) privacy settings, it was really just to check because I hadn't checked my settings since I first got it which was the start of the year. It wasn't until then I actually checked."

"I checked and most of my stuff was on public so I change it all so it was just friends."

"I checked (Facebook) and it was okay I knew everyone."

Whilst the online survey focused on Facebook, children and young people in the focus groups said they checked the privacy settings on other types of social media.

"I checked my Snapchat settings."

"I checked my Instagram."

Just under half of the participants surveyed deleted at least one person from Facebook following the session.

"She went round and said who's got 100 friends, 200 friends, 300 friends? After the session I went down my friends' list and I deleted most. I'd rather have about 70 people I know well."

Nearly half of the participants surveyed blocked at least one person from Facebook following the session.

In the focus group discussions, participants were asked what they do differently now as a result of the session SafetyWorks!

"I checked (Facebook) and I took my phone number off."

"If I get a friend request now then I always check if we have anyone mutual friends. I don't accept unless I know them and we have mutual friends."

"I knew about the report abuse button anyway but now I always look out for it."

"I now only add people if I know for a fact they know me, for example on Snapchat, if they have added me through my email or username I don't add them. If they add me through my number I know it's safer as I only give my number to my friends but I always check I know them before I accept."

"I've stopped talking to certain people on Facebook."

"I report a lot of people on Facebook, people harassing us, I screen shot it and show my teachers. When my Facebook got hacked someone had an inappropriate conversation with someone pretending to me. The session at (SafetyWorks!) helped me feel more confident about this."

"Since the session I'm more careful about what I share, I mean even with people I know."

"Since the session I've stopped talking to people who I don't know anymore. I had a friend in Sweden, and it turns out they were not much of a friend."

"After the session I always think before I post something, and check that it wouldn't upset or offend someone."

"If someone sends me a friend request, I send them a few messages now and check out who they are, if I don't know them I tell them to jog on."

“We were talking about two teenage lads, all the lasses fancied them, they got loads of inappropriate pictures of girls, they basically said to girls if you send us a picture I’ll consider going out with you, they then put all the pictures on a Facebook page. I think this made us a lot more careful.”

Just under 60% of young people surveyed said that they are more careful about who they spend time communicating with online.

“Yes I used to talk to people who I don’t know, like lads and lasses but since the session I’ve stopped that now.”

A number of young people were able to recall what to do if they felt at risk of harm.

“I now know the places you can report abuse like CEOP.”

“I know to screen shot the conversation and show it to the teachers.”

Participants in the focus group shared that they had increased awareness about the way grooming can work.

“I didn’t realise how easily they (perpetrators) could find you.”

“I learnt there’s a setting where people can’t see your friends list, this is good so that groomers can’t add your friends and trick you to think you know them.”

To summarise, the findings indicate that the programme has led to young people reconsidering how they use social media based on the new information they acquired about how online grooming happens. It made participants more aware of the associated risks of having profiles set to ‘public’, connecting with people they don’t know and, importantly, what steps they could take if they felt there were at risk from people they do or don’t know.

Participants were given the choice whether or not to apply what they had learnt in their day- to-day use of social media. The positive behaviour changes reported allow us to conclude that most participants engaged well with the safety messages and felt motivated and empowered to take action to increase their privacy and safety online. It was also found that most participants reported a positive behaviour change relating to who they connect and communicate with online. This may reduce the potential risks associated with online grooming and other forms of cyber abuse by opportunistic and unknown perpetrators.

By equipping young people with the knowledge of the different ways grooming works, how to spot when a situation is unsafe online and what to do if you feel at risk, the SafetyWorks! Programme reduces the potential risks associated with online grooming and cyber abuse by perpetrators who are already known or unknown to the child.

The positive changes in behaviour changes reported by participants indicate that the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme has the potential for crime reduction (online

grooming and child abuse). By empowering children and young people to use social media safely it is hoped that online grooming and child abuse becomes more difficult for certain types of perpetrators, for example those who are opportunistic and react to situational triggers as a means of gaining access to children and young people. This is an area for further research.

Increased awareness, changes in attitudes and behaviours relating to personal safety and relationships

The data evidenced some clear examples of positive changes in behaviour, children's and young people's thinking and actions relating to personal safety. Through greater awareness of the potential risks, young people are empowered to make safer choices relating to teenage relationships. From the 48 young participants who completed the online survey;

Over 80% said that they behave differently in relation to their own personal safety after the session.

"I'm more careful now not to do certain things like drinking in parks."

"After the session I've stopped going to certain places."

"I've stopped being friends with people who take do risks and take advantage. I don't want to be with people who try to use you, guys and girls."

Over 75% said they are more aware of grooming and child sexual exploitation.

"At this kind of age we don't really listen to anyone, we think ah we'll be alright, activities help to get it into our heads like how traumatic it (exploitation) could be."

Over 60% of those who completed the survey said that they would think differently about who they would get into a relationship with.

Young people in the focus groups shared how the session had changed their way of thinking about their own relationships.

"Now I know what a healthy and an unhealthy relationship is, I know the signs and I know when to come out of a relationship"

"It makes us think about past experiences, like would that be counted as unhealthy or would that be counted as exploitation, so now I know what's right and what's not which will help in future relationships."

"If I didn't have this session I wouldn't care as much about who I have a relationship with but I do now."

Over 50 % said they are more careful about who they spend time with offline.

1 in 5 young people said they accessed help, information and support following the session.

“Me and me mam looked at the websites together.”

Young people in the focus groups shared how the sessions made them think differently about substances.

“Aye you need to make sure you can handle yourself, make sure you know what you’re taking and make sure no one forces you to take anything.”

“In the video, there was a boy and a girl, he takes loads of the drugs and then he has to pay for it. This made me think you never know what you can do when you’re on substances.”

“It (Ryan’s Story) made me have doubts about taking drugs.”

“When you drink alcohol, you do different stuff. You wouldn’t do the same stuff when you are sober as when you are drunk. It’s easier for people to take advantage of you when you’re drunk.”

“Wearing those goggles made you think twice about drinking alcohol.”

“I knew the consequences of alcohol but the videos made me think carefully about drugs.”

“The film made me think differently about drugs.”

“Yeah I learnt a lot about legal highs in the session. It made me think differently about them. I wouldn’t take them now.”

Some participants reported a positive behaviour change in relation to drinking alcohol.

“I tried the goggles and so now if I drink, I don’t drink as much.”

“I don’t drink often but now I’m very careful how much I have and who I’m with.”

It’s important to recognise that grooming and sexual exploitation is never a child or young person’s fault and that effective prevention requires increased awareness and change at all levels of society. CSE prevention education is an effective and essential way of increasing young people’s awareness, of shifting their attitudes and perception of risk and of empowering them to take actions to reduce potential risks associated with grooming and CSE. It achieves this by increasing their personal safety, resilience and protective factors. The data from this study confirms that there was a positive shift in children’s and young people’s attitudes and behaviours following their participation in the CSE awareness

programme indicating that SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme can effectively reduce risk.

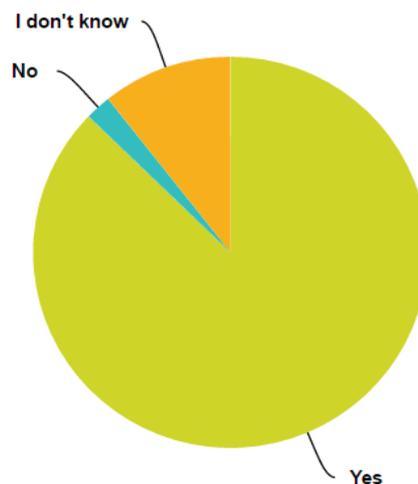
Using the information to spread awareness and help keep others safe

From the data collected for this evaluation it was found that participants of the programme were not the only beneficiaries of the positive safety messages. Young people said they would use what they had learnt to help keep others safe.

41 of 47 young people who took part in the survey said they would use the information from the session to help a friend who was at risk.

If your friend was in an unhealthy relationship, being groomed or exploited, would you use the information from the session to help or advise them?

Answered: 47 Skipped: 1



Children and young people's Responses:

"Safety works has given me extra confidence to know what to do if I was worried about someone being groomed."

"Aye the session has made me think different about what you could do to help a friend solve a problem if there were not in a good relationship. Like it they were being groomed, you would report it, but the session helped me know the different ways grooming can happen, like the stages."

"If I was worried about a friend I would send them the links to the websites SafetyWorks! told me."

"I'd feel more confident to take the thing into my own hands, I'd tell someone at school and make sure they got help...yes the session helped me feel more confident to do this."

"Before safety works I wouldn't want to go to the teachers 'cause I'd be scared of being seen as a grass or whatever but I wouldn't be bothered now I would tell them if I was worried."

A significant number of participants in the focus groups said that they had shared what they learnt with others which indicates that there are indirect beneficiaries of the sessions in addition to the number of children and young people who participate in the programmes.

"I told my boyfriend about the sessions. I told him it was about grooming...he turned around and said well it's not going to happen, you've got me...I think he was scared though, he thought about it and said what if it did actually happen? He was 'skizzy' for us."

"I told my friends about the video in the park."

"I spoke to the other people in the group about what I'd learnt."

Some participant's comments suggest a dissemination of the learning by sharing it among family members including siblings and carers and across generations.

"Yeah, I spoke about the session with my mam so she could pass it on to me little lass sisters. They have started to go online now so I told me mam and she spoke to then about what I'd learnt."

"I spoke to my foster carer about the session, she gets briefed on this stuff anyway but I gave her all the details. I told her about Ryan's story. It will help because when I leave her she can pass this onto the other foster kids that she has."

"I told my boyfriend's grandma about the session, she said people our age need to learn this stuff."

Some young people reported taking steps with the aim of increasing other children and young people's safety.

"You know after the internet one? I went straight to are lass (girlfriend) and I checked her privacy settings, she said she didn't know how to do it, I helped her to change them all to private."

"After the session I now go through my little brothers Instergram, Facebook and Snapchat cause I want to protect them...He lets me look and then I tell me mam what's going on."

“I told my cousin (12) ‘cause he’s started using Snapchat. Now he’s a lot more careful with who he has on his social media, who he chats to and what he puts online.”

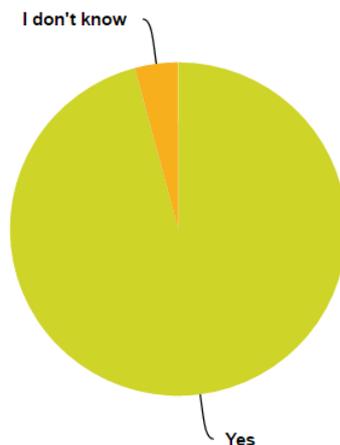
This data highlights that young participants feel empowered, equipped and confident to share safety messages with others. It also suggests that participants feel positively about the safety messages and they recognise the importance of sharing the learning with others in the hope it will help to keep people safe.

Other views on the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme

A positive indicator of how participants felt about the programme is that 46 out of 48 young people who took part in the survey would recommend the SafetyWorks CSE prevention sessions to other young people. All of the participants who took part in the focus groups said they would recommend the programme to others.

Would you recommend the Safety Works Keeping Safe session to other young people?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



Who is best to facilitate these programmes, where should they take place and who should take part?

In the focus groups everyone felt that CSE awareness sessions should be made available to all children and young people. Some felt the sessions should start in primary school providing the content was changed and was age appropriate.

“Young people should learn about this earlier.”

“I think the videos are only appropriate for teenagers.”

Of the young people who took part in the focus groups, all preferred the sessions to be run by specialist external facilitators rather than school teachers. All of the participants said they

would prefer to go out of school for the sessions. Young people also expressed views about the size of the classes and who should be in the class.

"We do internet safety in school each year but they sugar coat it, we didn't think it was that bad and then when you go to Safetyworks! you realise how serious it is."

"It's easier because Claire didn't know us, teachers know you do they act differently."

"She added stories and it made it more memorable, teachers don't have the stories to tell you they just show you videos and by the time you're in year 11 you know them word for word."

"Teachers don't have a Scooby do, it's better for others to teach this subject."

"I liked the fact that she wasn't talking to us like we were little kids, the fact that she was being really honest with us, she showed us these videos and the pictures, she wasn't putting it...or nicely, she was straight with us and treated us equally."

"Going to a special centre is more helpful. School don't know as much as the specialists. Schools sugar coats it too much and they talk more about the internet. Specialists are more graphic and know more."

"It's better to have at least one friend in the group."

"Single gender groups are best."

"I would recommend the groups stay small, like 8 or 9 so that everyone can do some stuff inside the classroom and out of the classroom too."

"Smaller groups are good so you feel more comfortable talking about the stuff."

It's clear that SafetyWorks! staff build a good rapport with participants and this helped young people's engagement in the programme.

"Claire was cool, she was cool as owt, when we first arrived she said she'd have us for breakfast!"

Young people highlighted the importance of having local and experienced facilitators who could draw on real and current examples of local cases in the sessions.

"They were telling us about these two cases, one was from Durham. She was being bullied. It was good to have a local example."

"Videos need to be local cause when you watch a film you may think oh yeah but that's not happening here. It was good when she gave us local examples of Newcastle."

“I thought the stories were helpful and that it was people our age...it wasn't stuff that happened ages ago it was recent and stuff that happened to people our age.”

The data shows that many factors contribute to the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programmes being impactful, engaging, child and young person-centred and safe. This is important when commissioning new prevention services. It would seem the SafetyWorks! model of using specialist and experienced facilitators who are able to draw on current and local practice examples works well.

Recommendations, informed by young participant's views

Most children and young people found the session helpful and informative. Most young people liked the programme the way it was and didn't feel it needed to be changed.

A number of recommendations emerge from this evaluation, very much through the level of engagement and prompting of the young participants who have made many practical and insightful suggestions of how this important work should move forward.

1) Comfort breaks and more active participation

Due to the sensitive subject nature, it's felt that a comfort break part way through the session, as well as offering a variety of activities which involves active participation and some movement inside or outside the classroom, would help keep young people focused and engaged.

"I think it was a little bit too long to sit in one place (two hours)."

"Shorter sessions would be good. Maybe come for two one hour sessions on different days or if it's on the same day then a break in between the session."

"We watched two or three 20 minute videos in one session which was a bit too much in one go, it's a long time to sit and listen and a lot to take in. A break would have helped."

"Acting (role play) would have been good."

"Everyone should try the goggles, this is a good experience. Everyone should try that out! It would be helpful for life."

2) More guidance relating to new social media apps, led by young people.

Due to the constant changes and developments in social media, young people felt they would like more information about some of the other popular apps and more discussion generally relating to online safety. One participant suggested more time could be spent discussing the pressures young people face to be seen as popular and how this can lead to increased risks online when young people open up their profiles to 'public' so they can get more likes and followers. Another participant talked about a 'dating app' for teens and how easy it is to access these apps at any age.

"I think they should make a bigger thing of it (online safety), like we should be careful who we add, like they did talk about it but they didn't say too much. Like Snapchat, everyone thinks it's private when it isn't; it's like a misconception you can get an app to save stuff without the other person noticing. Someone could you be stalking you"

without you knowing. There's a new function in Snapchat which lets you share other people's stories. Snapchat is fun but Facebook is safer."

"I think we need more information on the safer apps and websites and those that are not safe like Snapchat."

"I think most people in our year have randomer's¹ so they can get more likes on their Facebook. I think they should talk about that more in the session, how popularity isn't everything and its more about being safe and it about knows who can see everything you put up."

"Have you seen that new app? Yellow, it's like a new young people's Tinder², it's an app, you put your picture on and you swipe left or right. I think the lowest age is 13 but you can just lie about what age you are. I know people who have been on Facebook when they are 9, they have just changed their birth date. People can do this on yellow too. We should talk about this stuff"

The group discussions relating to the 'E-safety and Keeping Safe on Social Media' part of the programme could be young person led. SafetyWorks! could allow for some greater flexibility and participation in their session planning and delivery to have discussions based on the things that young people raise in the sessions relating to new or commonly used apps, reinforcing the same safety messages but making this relevant to new and varied ways young people are engaging with social media.

If participants are not forthcoming with the ways they are using social media, ice breaker games could help identify what apps are commonly used or new on the market, the associated risks and strategies for keeping safe.

3) Resources that feature peoples lived experience

Some of the young people said they would like to hear from someone with lived experience.

"Having a victim or someone who has been through it speak."

"Someone who had been through it would be able to point out the signs and we would then know if it's happening to us."

"I think having victims talking in the sessions would make it good."

There are clear ethical and resource issues when involving people with lived experience in a safe and meaningful way in the direct delivery of CSE awareness sessions. However it may be possible to use existing or develop new digital resources, case studies, poetry, audio

¹ A 'randomer' is a term used to describe a stranger / unknown person. It is sometimes used to describe a friend of a friend.

² Tinder is an adult online dating app.

resources that feature first hand testimonials by people with lived experience of grooming and CSE.

4) Adequate resources to ensure a high quality, child centred and sustainable service

It is clear from this evaluation study that there are many factors that make the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness model work so well. The experience, knowledge, skills, and approach that Claire and Nicola hold make the programme both engaging and impactful. The study highlights that learning environments, content, individual facilitators all count. To ensure that the programme can continue to be delivered in a safe and meaningful way and effectively reduce the risks associated with grooming and CSE, it is crucial that the service is adequately resourced. This involves prioritising quality over quantity. Class sizes need to be kept at a minimum. Enough time needs to be allocated in the week for planning, reflective practice, communicating effectively with schools and other agencies, building collaborative partnerships with other agencies, sharing information, following up effectively with safeguarding concerns. There needs to be adequate resources to allow for a variety of training and professional development opportunities, specialist consultancy and mentoring along with self-guided learning to keep abreast of the changing trends, practice, policy and legislation in this field.

Adequate resources are required for specialist consultation with children and young people who have participated in the programme and those with lived experience who can steer and guide the future direction of the work and feed into resource development.

5) Gender engagement

Male participants in this study highlighted the importance of CSE awareness for boys and young men. All male participants in the focus groups said they preferred to take part in a 'single sex' group. It is recommended that SafetyWorks! positively encourage schools to identify and engage equal amounts of males and females for the programme.

Young people who identify as Trans need to be given the opportunity to choose which group they feel the most comfortable being part of for the programme.

6) Further consultation, evaluation and research.

This study highlights the importance of practitioner lead consulting with children and young people as an important component of a multi-pronged approach to further improve CSE prevention programmes. This alongside establishing changing patterns of need and monitoring changes in CSE ensure that CSE prevention programmes continue to an effective

part of risk reduction. Please see specific recommendations for further research and consultation in the appendix section of this report.

Recommendation's relating to Safeguarding

The SafetyWorks! CSE prevention sessions aim to tackle complex issues in a sensitive, safe and age appropriate way. Facilitators are usually not told any individual background information about the children and young people in the session. We know from statistics on the prevalence of child sexual abuse and the targeted nature of these programmes, some participants will have personal experiences of grooming and abuse. It is important that steps are taken to adequately safeguard children and young people who participate in the programme and that this is embedded into every session and the follow up support.

One participant talked about feeling vulnerable during the session when she watched the film. When asked if there was anything that could have helped, she replied;

“You should be warned about the videos before they are put on. I would have rather had a warning about upsetting content and permission to leave.”

7) Young people to feel well informed

All children and young people need to be briefed about the programme and the content in advance. Careful consideration should be given about the appropriateness of young people participating in group work programmes if they are known to be currently involved in grooming and child sexual exploitation. Referrals to specialist child sexual exploitation projects for 1:1 support are recommended.

Facilitators need to keep participants informed throughout the session, and the group should be reminded of their right for time out and to talk to a trusted adult if they feel unsettled, worried, concerned about anything. Facilitators need to be aware of any young people showing signs of distress and appropriate support to be offered.

8) One-to-one follow up with each participant after the programme

During the focus groups several safeguarding disclosures were made at two out of three participating schools. The evaluator followed up on a one to one basis following the focus group and all concerns were shared with the school safeguarding lead following the one to one meeting with the participant.

It would seem that by creating a safe space in the focus groups and talking about the issues relating to grooming and CSE, young people felt comfortable to share personal information relating to their own experiences so that they could get the relevant information, help and support. It is important for all young people get the appropriate follow up support that they need and that it be made available in any CSE awareness training. Any intelligence relating to abuse to be shared with the appropriate agencies for monitoring and investigation.

It is therefore recommended that a staff member from the school (for example a pastoral lead or safeguarding lead) who has had the appropriate CSE awareness training for professionals, actively follows up with every participant after the session. It is recommended that this takes place in a quiet and confidential space on a one-to-one basis. The purpose of the 1:1 follow up would be to explore how the young person found the session, whether there was anything they wanted to ask that they hadn't felt comfortable asking in the group, whether they needed any further information or support relating to what they had covered in the session. This will help to safeguard those who have had a lived experience of abuse and those at risk. It would be a safe space for young people to ask about anything they were unsure of in the session.

During the focus groups, some of the participants indicated they were still unsure how to do a few of the things mentioned in the programme.

"I don't know how you check if you have mutual friends or not."

"I want to change my settings but I don't know how to do it."

It is therefore recommended that One-to-one follow ups could be used as an opportunity to ensure young people have all the relevant information to increase their safety and to check back some of the key learning with all young people, and especially those with different learning needs, for example English as an Additional Language or learning disabilities. One-to-one follow ups could also provide an opportunity to meaningfully evaluate the CSE awareness session.

The evaluation findings could be then shared with SafetyWorks! for monitoring purposes and to shape and inform future programme development.

9) A hand out with contacts for help and support

Participants did recall being told about places they could go for further information, support and help as part of the presentation. A number of participants expressed how they would have liked a handout with the details of where they could go for further information and support. An important recommendation from this study is to ensure that in future programmes, every participant leaves the session with a handout of all the relevant services

and organisations for information and support. This is especially important for safeguarding young people who have had a lived or direct experience of grooming or abuse.

“A hand out with the websites would have been good.”

“I didn’t look at the websites yet. Having them on a piece of paper would have been good.”

“If I had a hand out then I would have looked at the websites by now.”

10) Ensuring a joined up approach to CSE prevention and support

While specialist programmes aimed at raising awareness and building protective behaviours amongst children and young people are crucial and an effective strand of prevention work, this is one of a number of necessary components for eradicating grooming and child sexual exploitation in the longer term.

To ensure the effective safeguarding of children and young people at risk, it is good practice for local child protection agencies and specialist CSE support services to be alerted to the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programmes so that they can plan a response to disclosures. It is also extremely important for effective prevention and support that school staff have attended up to date CSE awareness training for professionals which includes spotting indicators of abuse, assessing risk associated with grooming and CSE, responding to disclosers and where to refer children and young people for specialist support.

Meaningful prevention, support for victims, crime reduction and prosecutions rely on collaborations and joint up initiatives that promote child safety. All key stakeholders need to be involved, this includes professionals from a wide range of organisations, parents and carers, faith, community and political leaders and the general public. This is to reinforce positive safety messages, tackle the systemic and underlying causes of abuse and firmly embed a culture of zero tolerance for any form of child sexual abuse.

CSE awareness programmes for young people also need to coexist alongside specialist programmes that target adult perpetrators of sexual abuse and specialist programmes that work with children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour.

Conclusion

Children and young people who participated in the study found the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme memorable and engaging. A number of factors contributed to the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness model enabling risk reduction. The data suggests this was a combination of: the content and resources used; the skilful and engaging delivery; the experience and knowledge of the facilitators; reference to local and recent practice examples; the facilitators being specialists in their field and external to school, travelling to the SafetyWorks! Centre; and the single sex classes with small numbers of participants.

This illustrative study aimed to evaluate whether there were any changes in young people's behaviour that had taken place following their participation in the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme. To conclude, the data suggests that there are many examples of positive behaviour changes which imply that the programme does reduce the risks associated with grooming and CSE. Examples include; changing settings on social media to increase privacy, deleting unknown people from social media networks, the cessation of talking to unknown people on social media, taking actions to keep younger siblings safe online, reducing the amount of alcohol consumed and a wariness of substance use, the sharing of safety messages with peers and family members and, checking websites for further information about keeping safe.

91 out of 93 participants would recommend the SafetyWorks! CSE awareness programme to others suggesting that young people value the programme and feel positively that others should have the opportunity to participate in similar programmes in order to promote safety and reduce the risks of grooming and child sexual exploitation.

Opportunities for further consultation and research

Opportunities for further research as part of this programme could include;

- What makes CSE awareness programmes memorable and engaging? Exploring the relationship between when young person participate in the programme, what they remember and the extent to which their behaviour has changed.
- It would be valuable to know more about the behavioural changes and identify the reasons for little or no change in behaviour; whether this relates to the programme content, the delivery, the individual young person or their environment? Due to the limits and scope of this study, we did not explore whether there were any variables relating to young people from particular backgrounds, for example learning disabilities or those with English as an additional language.
- Longitudinal studies could allow exploration of the link between increased knowledge and awareness, a change in attitudes, intention for behaviour change and actual behaviour change and factors that enable this change.
- To what extent do CSE awareness programmes contribute towards effective crime reduction? (For example: internet safety and online grooming.)
- Do CSE awareness programmes enable young people to disclose abuse and if so, what follow-up support has been put in place for individuals?
- How can we meaningfully impact 'indirect beneficiaries' of CSE awareness programmes, for example siblings, parents and carers and peers.
- How do we ensure CSE awareness sessions are accessible, inclusive, safe and meaningful for all children and young people?
- What would follow up programmes include? Consultation with participants about content.
- What other awareness raising activity is happening in this region? (for example for professionals or parents / carers) How can we ensure we work collaboratively, identify the gaps and ensure these gaps are filled with the right service?
- What do CSE awareness programmes for young people cost and what's the social return on investment? (How prevention is more cost effective than cure).
- Which activities and resources have the most impact in changes attitudes and behaviours linked to keeping safe?