



Barnardo's ReachOut

Final Evaluation Report

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## Contents

Executive summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	7
2. About ReachOut.....	7
2.1. The ReachOut team.....	7
2.2. The ReachOut board.....	8
2.3. Theory of Change.....	8
2.4. ReachOut’s model of work.....	9
2.5. About the evaluation.....	11
3. Partnership working.....	12
3.1. Examples of partnerships and feedback from partner agencies.....	13
3.2. Learning from ReachOut’s experience of partnership working.....	16
4. Outreach work.....	17
4.1. The range of outreach delivery.....	17
4.2. Outreach in Eastwood.....	20
4.3. Reaching Rotherham’s Black and Minority Ethnic communities.....	22
4.4. Learning from ReachOut’s experience of outreach work.....	24
5. Work in schools.....	26
5.1. Delivery of healthy relationship education.....	26
5.2. Feedback from students.....	27
5.3. Feedback from school staff.....	30
5.4. Building capacity for school staff.....	31
5.5. Other support to schools.....	33
5.6. Learning from ReachOut’s experience of work in schools.....	35
6. Direct support work with individual children, young people and families.....	36
6.1. Profile of referrals.....	36
6.2. Length of intervention.....	38
6.3. Reasons for referral.....	39
6.4. Underlying issues.....	40
6.5. Direct work undertaken.....	41
6.6. The boys supported by ReachOut.....	42
6.7. Effectiveness of direct work.....	44
6.8. Outcomes recorded.....	45
6.9 Learning from ReachOut’s direct support work.....	49
7. Young people’s and parent’s views.....	50
8. Conclusion.....	54

## Executive summary

ReachOut is a preventative child sexual exploitation (CSE) project established in 2016 under a partnership funding agreement between Barnardo's, the KPMG Foundation, Department for Education, Communities and Local Government and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC). An independent evaluation was commissioned from the University of Bedfordshire with DMSS Research both to evaluate the impact of the project and to provide ongoing learning and feedback.

A diverse staff team was recruited from a range of professional backgrounds including criminal justice, social work and youth work.

There have been three main strands of work undertaken by ReachOut in order to achieve its aims:

- Outreach work to raise awareness and provide support to children and young people in their communities
- Healthy relationship education in schools and other settings
- Direct support for children and young people identified as at risk of CSE

These have operated at three levels of prevention: universal, including outreach at community events across Rotherham, helping to convey the message that CSE is relevant to everyone; primary prevention, including education work in schools reaching over 2000 children and young people; targeted prevention with groups and communities identified as potentially more vulnerable to CSE as well as direct work with around 300 individual children and young people.

Over the course of the three years, evaluators have carried out interviews with ReachOut staff and managers and representatives from external agencies; observed sessions of delivery; interviewed samples of young people and parents; analysed feedback questionnaires from school students and staff; reviewed project monitoring and samples of case records.

## Summary of findings

### Partnership working

In order to contribute to the core aim of building a culture of trust across agencies in Rotherham, ReachOut has placed great emphasis on partnership working. Good relationships with both statutory and voluntary sector partners established in year 1 were sustained and strengthened. Highlights of successful partnerships include extensive joint working with Early Help and the Evolve team, the collaboration with the Clifton Learning Partnership and other agencies in Eastwood and the successful development of the Voice and Influence Partnership. Evaluation interviews with partner agencies have consistently elicited positive feedback.

Good partnership working is widely recognised as a vital component of effective development and delivery of services to children and families. When the ReachOut project started in 2016, the CSE inquiries and media coverage had taken its toll on inter-agency relationships. While many organisations and individuals have played an important role in building better partnership working, ReachOut, as a new preventative project established with an explicit commitment to collaboration appears to have contributed to creating a more positive multi-agency culture.

### **Outreach**

ReachOut has reached over 10,000 people across Rotherham with information about CSE prevention. As part of its universal outreach, the project has been involved in numerous community events. More targeted outreach has included work alongside the police and Early Help and training for adults who may have a preventive role such as taxi drivers and the Fire Service. One of ReachOut's most sustained outreach initiatives has been with the Roma community which has successfully demonstrated the benefits of long term, community-based work and the relationships which ensue.

### **Work in schools**

Every secondary school in Rotherham has had some engagement with ReachOut, with some being very active partners. Around half of all primary schools have also received input. ReachOut started its programme of healthy relationship education in schools in 2016 using the Barnardo's resource 'Real Love Rocks'. In years 2 and 3 there has been a stronger emphasis on capacity building for school staff via a train the trainer programme and bespoke support based on schools' identified needs.

Feedback collected from over 1000 students and 50 school staff clearly indicate that the Real Love Rocks programme achieves its learning outcomes for a high proportion of participants. School staff were in 100% agreement that:

- sessions were well planned and organised
- materials were appropriate for the children's age and stage
- workers interacted well with the children
- Real Love Rocks was relevant to all children involved in the sessions

In year 2, a 'training the trainer' programme was introduced to help embed the delivery of RLR by schools themselves. Participant feedback on the courses has been very positive and a follow up e-survey of participants provided early indications that this may be an effective approach to spreading and embedding healthy relationship education into Rotherham schools.

### **Direct work with children and young people**

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 ReachOut received a total of 336 referrals of individual children and young people. 49% of referrals came from Social Care, with a further 16% from Early Help and 19% from Education. Referrals have been received of children and young people attending every secondary education provision in Rotherham, an indication of good cross-borough reach.

90% of those referred were girls and young women. Ages ranged from 8 to 20 years with the majority (77%) being aged between 12 and 15 years.

49 (14%) of those referred were recorded as having a disability. In nine cases this was a physical disability; 23 young people were recorded as having a learning disability and 12 an autistic spectrum disorder.

Referrals were frequently triggered by concerns over young people's safety on-line. However, the vast majority of ReachOut's young peoples have had a range underlying issues that might heighten their potential vulnerability to CSE, including family difficulties, mental health issues, prior abuse and problematic peer relationships.

Worker assessments suggest that the project has successfully increased young people's ability to recognise exploitative behaviour – particularly when this occurs on the internet and reduced their level of risk of exploitation. Specific outcomes recorded at case closure indicated positive changes that had been facilitated by the intervention. These included:

- Improved self-esteem
- Better relationship with parent
- Adopted appropriate privacy settings
- Improved behaviour at school
- Started a new, age appropriate, relationship
- Facebook/internet use dramatically reduced
- Having a new peer group
- Understanding own emotions better

Feedback from young people and parents/carers has been extremely positive about the quality of relationships with ReachOut staff and the support they have received. All the young people we interviewed were able to give clear and specific accounts of the CSE related knowledge and understanding they had gained.

For most young people it was the relationship with a specific worker and the practical, reliable, holistic support they had received that had made the greatest impression on them.

Parents and foster carers we interviewed had also valued their own relationships with ReachOut workers and felt that the support they had received for themselves had been crucial in changing young people's trajectories.

### What has been achieved?

Over the past three years ReachOut has worked with a wide range of partners across Rotherham's statutory and voluntary sectors. Alongside the efforts of many other agencies in Rotherham, its collaborative approach has been identified as making a valuable contribution to re-building a culture of trust.

ReachOut has reached thousands of children and young people through its outreach and preventative education activities – raising awareness of CSE and promoting healthy relationships based on equality and choice. These activities have been positively received by

young people and there is evidence that their knowledge and understanding has been increased. Most Rotherham schools have welcomed the input, and many have embraced the idea that healthy relationship education is part of their 'core business'.

Over 300 vulnerable children and young people have been provided with direct support by the project. There is good evidence that this support has successfully raised their awareness, confidence and self-esteem. Given the immediate risk that had prompted some referrals, it is likely that sexual abuse and exploitation may well have been the outcome without ReachOut's intervention.

### **What has been learned?**

ReachOut has developed a model of CSE preventative work that operates at all three levels of prevention and takes a 'whole city' approach. The three stranded approach of community outreach, school-based preventative education and direct support to children and young people has been confirmed to be a generally effective strategy. It has been important to keep the balance of these strands under review to maximise the best use of resources, but there is wide agreement among stakeholders that all three elements have been important.

ReachOut offers important lessons about the detail of what works: how to take account of what matters to community groups, schools and families to maximise their engagement. ReachOut has demonstrated that effective intervention with vulnerable young people depends primarily on building warm, respectful relationships based on listening, understanding, appreciating and believing in them. They have 'modelled' such relationships in their outreach, education and direct support work across the city, and teachers, parents, foster carers, social workers and young people themselves have recognised the significance of these relationships in boosting young people's confidence and aspirations.

### **Implications for future developments**

The ReachOut model provides a robust framework for a preventative CSE strategy, which along with careful consideration of any contextual differences, could be applied elsewhere.

ReachOut has been effective with CSE prevention for several reasons: the skills of its staff, the quality of its resources, the efficacy of its partnerships and the 'fit' between what it can offer and what young people vulnerable to CSE need. Their three stranded approach to prevention could be applied to other concerns, such as criminal exploitation, where work with communities, schools, families and young people will be equally important. However, whilst vulnerability to sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation often have common roots, they are not the same, and successful extension of ReachOut's model into other areas of concern will need some careful attention to detail about who is affected and how, and an ongoing process of learning about what works best with different groups of children and young people.

## 1. Introduction

Barnardo's ReachOut project was established in Rotherham in 2016. It was set up under a partnership agreement between Barnardo's, the KPMG Foundation, Department for Education, Communities and Local Government and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and was officially launched in February 2016.

ReachOut was intended to be a flexible preventative service, part of Rotherham's overall strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people in the aftermath of high-profile concerns about child sexual exploitation (CSE). As there was no other service in the UK exclusively focused on CSE prevention there was no blueprint for the project, and little evidence from elsewhere to draw upon. As such, Barnardo's and Rotherham were breaking new ground, and it was recognised from the start that evaluation was critical, not only to gather evidence of outcomes but also to capture the learning from the project's development and progress. KPMG and RMBC therefore provided additional funding to support an independent evaluation of ReachOut and the contract was awarded to the University of Bedfordshire, with responsibility for evaluation activities sub-contracted to DMSS Research.

Since 2016, the evaluation team has worked with ReachOut to achieve two main aims: a) to provide evidence of the impact of the project, and b) to offer the project and its partners, ongoing learning and feedback. As well as evidence reviews and specialist training, the evaluators have produced evaluation reports and updates at regular intervals<sup>1</sup>. This final report considers the progress and achievements of the project over the full three years of project funding and summarises the key lessons learned.

The report starts with a short description of ReachOut including its team and partnership board, the project's theory of change and model of working. It then summarises our approach to the evaluation before presenting a synthesis of findings in relation to ReachOut's approach to partnership working and the three core strands of ReachOut's activities: preventative education in schools, outreach in communities and direct support to individual children and young people. We conclude with a summary of the key achievements of the project, the lessons learned from the experience of ReachOut in Rotherham and a discussion of the implications for future developments.

## 2. About ReachOut

### 2.1. The ReachOut team

The original staff team was recruited in December 2015, prior to the project launch in early February 2016. The team consisted of a children's service manager, two team leaders, 13 project workers and administrative staff. The recruitment strategy successfully created a diverse staff team with a range of professional backgrounds including criminal justice, social

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<sup>1</sup> Interim evaluation reports and updates were produced in August 2016, March 2017, August 2017 and March 2018.

work, teaching and youth work. The team remained largely stable over the first year. Years 2 and 3 saw some staff changes with some workers and managers moving on to other posts, and the arrival of new staff. A major change at the start of year 3 was the retirement of the children's services manager who had been instrumental in setting up the project, although disruption was minimised by the appointment of another ReachOut manager into that post. The overall complement of project workers gradually reduced to 5 full-time and 3 part-time posts by the end of year 3. However, the team has maintained a high level of stability: around two thirds of the current staff team have been with ReachOut from the beginning.

## 2.2. The ReachOut board

Multi-agency working is central to ReachOut and is reflected in the way it was developed. A key component was the establishment of a project board comprising representatives of all key agencies (including those on the Local Safeguarding Children Board) which has been an integral part of the project's partnership ethos. The board has been an important means of setting and reviewing the overall direction of the project, including annual meetings with the evaluation team to review ReachOut's theory of change.

## 2.3. Theory of Change

The overall approach taken to the evaluation has been based on understanding and 'testing' the project's theory of change. The initial theory was developed with staff and board members in April 2016. It was reviewed annually at workshops with both staff and board members in 2017 and 2018 (see Appendix I for the full theory of change framework).

### **ReachOut's Theory of change**

The ultimate goal the ReachOut project shares with its partners is for Rotherham to be a safe and supportive place for children of all communities to grow up - a place where families and communities have the information and support to confidently safeguard their children, and where young people are less vulnerable, make positive choices and enjoy healthy relationships.

In order to achieve this goal, ReachOut believes that all children and young people need healthy relationship education – while more vulnerable young people need targeted support to raise their awareness, aspirations and self-esteem and to access help before problems escalate and thereby reduce the need for statutory interventions.

ReachOut aims to contribute to the further development of a culture of trust between agencies and between agencies and communities. It seeks to build the capability of professionals and develop sustainable support to effectively combat CSE.



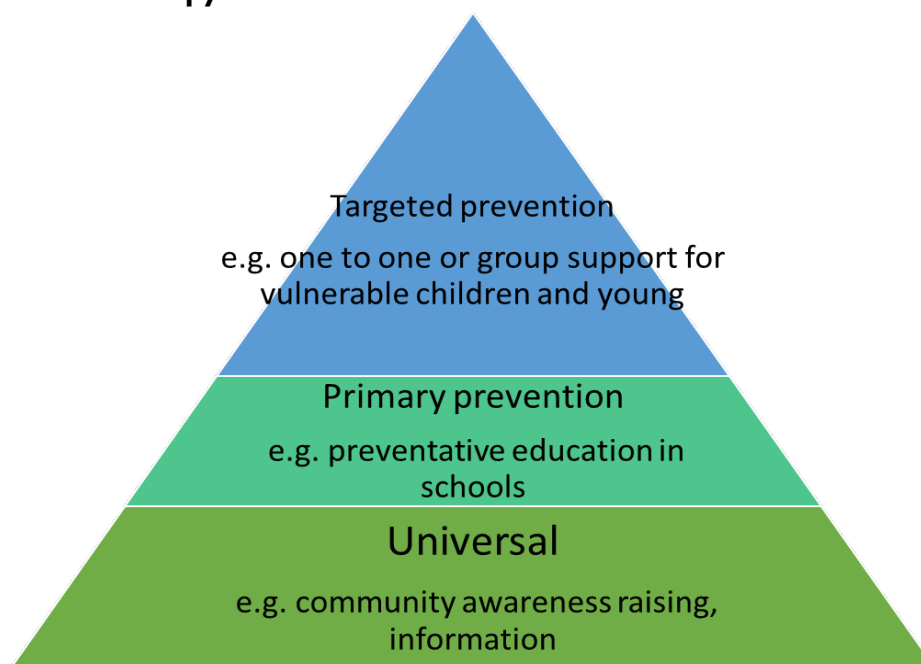
## 2.4. ReachOut's model of work

In order to deliver on its theory of change, ReachOut developed a model of work underpinned by an ethos of partnership working and consisting of three main strands of activity:

- Outreach work to raise community awareness and reach out to children and young people in their communities
- Healthy relationship education in schools and other settings
- One to one support for children and young people identified as particularly vulnerable to CSE

These strands operate at three widely recognised levels of prevention as illustrated by the diagram below:

**Figure 1: Prevention pyramid**



At the level of **'universal prevention'** ReachOut raises awareness of CSE through its presence at community events and venues. The ReachOut bus has helped to raise the project's profile whilst ReachOut's contribution to events such as Rotherham Pride, helps to convey the message that CSE is an issue of concern to the whole community.

At the **'primary prevention'** level ReachOut has undertaken and supported education work in schools reaching large numbers of children and young people. This activity enables ReachOut to influence teachers and, to a lesser extent, parents and to offer extra support to those schools where children may be more vulnerable, such as schools in particularly disadvantaged communities or for children with learning disabilities. Another example of

work at this level is ReachOut's training for specific groups of adults who may have a role in safeguarding children such as the Fire Service and taxi drivers.

**'Targeted prevention'** by ReachOut includes outreach with groups and communities identified as potentially at greater risk of CSE, such as young people in the Eastwood and Ferham areas of Rotherham. It also includes one to one work with children and young people identified as potentially more vulnerable to exploitation.

The 2017 Guidance from the Department for Education includes a section on what preventative strategies for CSE should include.

**A primary preventative strategy should:**

- Educate all children and young people about the nature and risks of grooming, child sexual exploitation and other forms of related harm (both online and offline) and how to access support.
- Recognise that children/young people can be both victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.
- Promote the resilience of children/young people and their families and strengthen the protective factors around them.
- Identify and support those settings, such as schools and colleges, in which young people can form healthy and safe relationships.
- Supplement universal initiatives with targeted work with groups of particularly vulnerable children and young people, such as those in care, whilst being careful not to stigmatise specific groups.
- Provide complementary messages to parents and carers about risks to their children (online and offline) and how to access support if they have concerns.
- Consider the levels of knowledge and understanding of the wider workforce, so that everyone working with children and young people can play their role in prevention.
- Educate the wider community so they can identify concerns and seek support.

Although messages and methods of delivery will vary according to the nature and needs of the audience, all education and awareness-raising initiatives should:

- Be grounded in an evidence-based understanding of child sexual exploitation (both online and offline).
- Challenge myths and misconceptions about who is perpetrating and experiencing this form of abuse.
- Send a clear message that all forms of child sexual exploitation are abuse.
- Recognise the potential overlap between victims and perpetrators.
- Challenge any victim-blaming and promote the rights of all victims to protection and support.
- Provide information on where and how to report concerns and access support.
- Be inclusive and accessible to the intended audience, in terms of language and delivery methods and ensure information is tailored and relevant to diverse groups such as those identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ), Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and/or deaf or disabled children and young people.

From: Department for Education's 'Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation', 2017 (extended text)<sup>2</sup>

Although there has been a growing interest in preventative approaches to CSE, the concept of prevention in relation to sexual exploitation is not straightforward or uncontentious. Most 'preventative' activities are focused either on children or those responsible for safeguarding them (ranging from parents to workers in the night-time economy) – none of whom are directly able to stop CSE from occurring so long as determined perpetrators are intent on abuse. Commentators have criticised some approaches, highlighting two main risks: first, that preventative approaches can be 'victim-blaming' in implying that responsibility for preventing abuse lies with potential victims and their carers rather than with abusers; second, that some materials and training styles can re-traumatise children and young people who have experienced abuse. ReachOut (and Barnardo's as a whole) have been clear about the importance of taking care to ensure that messages about prevention clearly hold perpetrators responsible for CSE and actively challenge any form of victim or carer blaming. At the same time, the project is clear that children and young people have the right to the best available information and support to understand what constitutes healthy and abusive behaviours through high quality relationship education.

## 2.5. About the evaluation

As well as being the independent evaluators of ReachOut, the University of Bedfordshire and DMSS team have also acted as a 'learning partner' to the project. In year 1, the team produced a series of brief evidence reviews in order to provide the project with summaries of the available evidence on the core strands of ReachOut's work: preventative education, outreach and direct support. These are available on Barnardo's website. In year 2, Professor Jenny Pearce and Dr Silvie Bovarnick from the University of Bedfordshire provided a five-day course for ReachOut staff on Understanding the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People. This included the opportunity for participants to submit an assessed assignment to obtain masters degree level credits. In year 3, the evaluation team produced a draft 'What Works in supporting sexually exploited children and young people' due to be published by Barnardo's in 2019.

The evaluation itself was based on a plan derived from the theory of change framework developed for the ReachOut project. The methodology was approved by both Barnardo's and University of Bedfordshire ethics committees.

A theory of change approach is particularly useful for the evaluation of complex, multi-stranded initiatives. It is essentially a collaborative approach to evaluation and starts by gaining an understanding of the context in which the project is working and the priorities of stakeholders in terms of long-term goals. It then works backwards from those long-term goals to agree medium and short-term outcomes that need to be achieved if the initiative is to stay on track, and the activities that the project needs to deliver to achieve them. A

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<sup>2</sup> Child sexual exploitation Definition & Guide for Professionals: Extended text, Beckett, H. Holmes, D. and Walker, J. February 2017, University of Bedfordshire International Centre and research in practice, p22

regular process of review is built into the approach so that the project and its stakeholders can take stock of the evidence of progress and, if necessary, adjust aspects of their theory. The two main roles of evaluators in a theory of change approach are: to facilitate the generation and regular review of the theory and to collect and share the evidence for progress achieved and what is being learned about what is (and is not) working.

There have been five main phases of data collection over the three years of the evaluation carried out at approximately 6 monthly intervals. These have involved:

- **Interviews with ReachOut staff and managers.** All staff and managers have been interviewed at least once each year whilst in post. These have been a combination of individual, group and paired interviews.
- **Interviews with representatives from partner agencies (n= 32)** Some partners have been interviewed on more than one occasion, particularly those involved with the project throughout the whole three years. These have been carried out either face to face or by telephone.
- **Interviews with children and young people (n=25)** who have received one to one support from ReachOut (representing around 1 in 10 young people supported). These have all been face to face interviews usually carried out after the support work was completed and the case closed or about to close.
- **Interviews with parents and/or foster carers** of the above young people where they gave consent for us to do so (n=16). These have usually been carried out face to face on the same occasion as the young person interview. In some cases, young people chose to be interviewed together with their parent/carer, in others we interviewed them separately. A few parents opted to be interviewed by phone.
- **Analysis of feedback questionnaires from students (n= 1134) and school staff (n=50)** regarding the 'Real Love Rocks' healthy relationship education in schools and feedback from staff attending 'Real Love Rocks' training for trainers sessions (n=67)
- **Observations of outreach and groupwork delivery**
- **Analysis of monitoring information** collected by the project on their activities and referrals.
- **Analysis of case records (n= 71)** from closed cases of children and young people with whom direct work has taken place. This was a randomly selected sample representing just over a quarter (27%) of all closed cases.

In the following sections we summarise our evaluation findings on the three core strands of ReachOut's work. However, as ReachOut's model of working has been underpinned by an ethos of partnership working, we start with an overview of the project's approach to this with examples and feedback from partner agencies.

### 3. Partnership working

***‘I feel that the partnerships that have developed around ReachOut have been great – it would be a pity if we didn’t continue to build on that.’*** Partner agency interview

Core aims articulated in ReachOut’s theory of change were to contribute to the further development of a culture of trust between agencies and between agencies and communities, to build the capability of professionals and develop sustainable support to effectively combat CSE. From the beginning, the project set out to develop strong working relationships with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. As one interviewee from the project put it: *‘ReachOut is better together, that’s what ReachOut is, we can’t do it on our own’*.

Over the past three years, ReachOut has been actively involved in partnership working at both strategic and operational levels. The project has been represented on strategic groups including the CSE sub group of the LSCB and the MASH. ReachOut has worked closely with Children’s Services, particularly Early Help and the specialist CSE team, Evolve. They have developed good working relationships with other statutory agencies including the police and, as described in more detail in section 5, have established a strong presence in schools across Rotherham. They have also worked closely with voluntary and community organisations with most of their outreach and youthwork being developed and delivered alongside other agencies, such as Clifton Learning Partnership (as described in section 4).

Over the course of the evaluation, we asked interviewees from ReachOut’s partner agencies about their experience of working with the project. Feedback has been consistently positive, and we have accumulated several examples of partnership working in practice and the difference it has made.

### **3.1. Examples of partnerships and feedback from partner agencies**

ReachOut’s positive relationship with Children’s Services is evidenced by the proportion of referrals received from that source – as set out in section 6, half of all referrals for ReachOut’s direct work have come from children’s social care with a further 16% from Early Help. ReachOut have also collaborated closely with Early Help in a wide range of community-based support including outreach work in Ferham, ongoing youthwork in Eastwood, lunch time sessions with Maltby Linx and a range of shorter-term pieces of work as needs have arisen. ReachOut’s ability and willingness to be flexible and responsive to needs has been greatly appreciated. For example, one interviewee described an occasion when concerns were raised about a group of year 8 girls attending a ‘party’ with some older people. ReachOut responded quickly to provide some girls’ groupwork sessions. This interviewee went on to say: *‘I haven’t got a negative word to say about them – they’re always willing to do things and maintained that flexibility and responsiveness throughout... They have some great skills and resources which they’re always willing to share – our staff have done training with them on social media and the internet. They’ve really maintained the quality of their work.’*

Reachout have also adapted their approach in response to changes in the organisation of partner agencies, developing new collaborations as staffing and systems have evolved. This has not been without its challenges for partners – maintaining good communication and collaboration during periods of change can be difficult. An example of this emerged during

our final set of interviews when an interviewee expressed some disappointment at the low number of Early Help Assessments completed by ReachOut. ReachOut themselves reported that these assessments are routinely offered to all the families they work with and are carried out with all those who consent, but most do not want to take them up. This illustrates the importance of maintaining regular communication about such issues and keeping collaborative processes under review.

Another important example of partnership working with Children's Services is ReachOut's work with the Evolve team. Whilst ReachOut is explicitly a preventative project, Barnardo's 'Satellite team' has CSE specialist staff working in multi-agency teams in Barnsley, Doncaster, and Rotherham. There are two workers attached to the Rotherham Evolve team funded and managed by ReachOut and working alongside Evolve social workers as well as staff from health and the police:

### **ReachOut's partnership with Evolve**

Barnardo's Satellite staff carry out a wide range of work including liaison with schools and families, but the core part of their work is direct support to young people referred to Evolve because of concerns about child sexual exploitation. Originally, the Barnardo's workers provided the bulk of this direct work while the other social workers in the Evolve team held the statutory case management role. More recently, changes to the way the team works has meant that the statutory role rests with locality social work teams and Evolve social workers specialise in direct work with children and young people. This enables workers to develop different sorts of relationships with young people: *'Evolve can now focus on establishing relationships – young people will now return to us and we've had increased disclosures which is a real sign of trust.'*

Given their experience of one to one work, Barnardo's staff played a valuable role in this transition: *'The workers provided Evolve colleagues with a range of materials on direct work with young people. They put on a workshop and produced a folder of resources which went down very well'*.

The work with young people is described as challenging but rewarding: *'The one to one work can be very intensive, but it needs to be if we're to break down the young person's relationship with the perpetrator. We have to be as persistent as they are and show that we really care.'*

A satellite worker described how this relationship is developed: *'We work with them as a whole. with whatever their needs are e.g. around benefits, housing, education, emotional support, the court process, compensation. It's very varied. We meet them anywhere and everywhere and we continue the support even if that means visiting them in another part of the country.'*

This process takes time. We were given an example of a young woman who a Satellite worker supported for over three years before she obtained disclosures: *'It takes a long time for young people to feel able to share that information.'*

Measuring success when working with these young people means looking for small signs of progress. *'It's about little differences, if you are just waiting for big wins you are never going to achieve anything'*.

The integration of the Satellite workers with Evolve is a clear example of partnership working. Effective processes for joint management, case allocation and communication are vital and are viewed as working well: *'We have a risk assessment process involving managers from both and make allocation decisions on a case by case basis. As managers we meet every week and communication is excellent. We've built really positive relationships.'*

The value of having workers from the voluntary sector with some separation from social care, is recognised: *'Barnardo's can bring a different culture in how we work with children, including an approach involving a gradual build-up of trust. It can influence people to think a bit differently. It's also important to have someone to act as advocates and sometimes challengers. Being independent is important.'*

Having Barnardo's input to Evolve alongside the preventative approach of ReachOut is also valued: *'It seems to work really well. There is very little escalation of cases from ReachOut to Evolve which suggests the risk assessment is working and the prevention work is getting to the right young people. It's great having a service which is so focused on young people – it would leave a huge gap if we didn't have it.'*

Strong collaborations have also been developed with other voluntary sector agencies such as the Clifton Learning Partnership (see section 4.2). ReachOut's collaborative and inclusive style of working has been particularly valued by voluntary sector interviewees. For example, at the end of year 1 an interviewee told us: *'[The project manager] has to take an awful lot of credit for how she manages relationships with smaller organisations. [She's] been very proactive and sensitive about the impact on smaller organisations so they don't feel overwhelmed or overtaken.'*

During its second year, ReachOut made a significant contribution to the development of the voice and influence partnership and the 'different but equal' board which in turn have helped to embed the voice of children and young people across Rotherham. This whole initiative has been a very positive example of partnership working, not only across agencies but with young people too:

### **The voice and influence partnership**

There is a shared commitment across Rotherham to ensure that children and young people have a voice. Listening to children and young people is fundamental to improved services, stronger communities and, of course, better safeguarding.

The Voice and Influence partnership involves a wide range of agencies across Rotherham. ReachOut helped to fund developmental work by the Children, Young People and Families Consortium to create the Different but Equal Board, made up of young people from different communities, backgrounds and interests to represent the voice of Rotherham young people. In 2017 an event was planned and organised by the Different but Equal Board and attended by 150 young people. This was followed by a launch of a film of the event and a host of new approaches to involving young people in influencing policies and strategies, recruiting staff and developing more meaningful processes for consultation using a good practice template.

These developments demonstrate what is possible when young peoples' involvement is taken seriously. The experience of involvement was described as having made a huge difference to individuals, growth of confidence, friendships and skills: but of equal importance, it set the tone for young people's participation in Rotherham.

Partnership has been the key word for these developments with ReachOut playing a valued role. As one interviewee told us, *'None of this would have happened without the ReachOut funding, but more importantly they helped to create a safe space to allow it to happen. Barnardo's helped to provide the belief that it could happen...Working with Barnardo's has been a true example of partnership and co-production.'*

### 3.2. Learning from ReachOut's experience of partnership working

Feedback from interviewees suggests that there are several important attributes of ReachOut that have made them a valued partner in Rotherham. These have been:

- Being reliable and consistent, for example, one interviewee commented: *'Barnardo's are at every meeting and almost always have a good contribution to make because they know what's going on in communities and with young people'*
- Being flexible and responsive to requests from partner agencies
- Being willing to share resources, including staff time and skills, facilities and funding
- Being respectful of the knowledge and skills of others e.g. working alongside agencies who are embedded in communities and not just 'parachuting in' from outside.
- Understanding the pressures and constraints of both statutory and voluntary sector partners
- Having an open style of communication including honestly challenging partners over issues on occasions
- Being independent with several interviewees commenting on the value of ReachOut being a Barnardo's project. Barnardo's was seen as a *'safe pair of hands'* - trusted and respected by both statutory and voluntary agency partners.

Good partnership working is widely recognised as a vital component of effective development and delivery of services to children and families. Successive child abuse inquiry reports from across the UK have highlighted the importance of multi-agency working - and what can happen when partnership working breaks down. However, multi-agency partnerships are not easy to sustain. Differences in organisational cultures, priorities, language and channels of communication are all common barriers, and this is true in Rotherham as anywhere else. When the ReachOut project started in 2016, the CSE inquiries and media coverage had taken its toll on inter-agency relationships. This was recognised by ReachOut's partnership board and reflected in one of their desired outcomes. Their hope was that by working together to create a preventative approach to CSE, ReachOut would contribute to a more positive culture of trust between organisations. Our recent interviews with stakeholders from a range of agencies suggest that this has happened. Most commented on the growth of more trusting relationships between agencies. For



example: *'I feel around the Jay report people were falling out and there was a bit of a blame culture. Relationships have now developed so that there is a lot more trust.'*

Many organisations and individuals have played an important role in this, and the improved partnership working can by no means all be attributed to ReachOut. However, alongside other changes in Rotherham, having ReachOut as a new preventative project established with an explicit commitment to partnership working does appear to have contributed to creating a more positive multi-agency culture. As one interviewee put it: *'The relationship with ReachOut and Barnardo's has been critical. It was right that Rotherham had a bespoke CSE offer. There had been a loss of trust and ReachOut was seen as independent and has acted as a vital conduit and link between statutory agencies and other support services'*

## 4. Outreach work

***'We wanted an easily accessible service to sit alongside statutory services which could reach needs that we can't. ReachOut has done a brilliant job in going out to communities...the key thing is that they've been able to respond dynamically to need – nothing has been set in stone.'*** Partner agency interview

### 4.1. The range of outreach delivery

ReachOut's outreach work has operated at all levels of the prevention pyramid in figure 1. At the **universal** level, workers have used the ReachOut bus on a regular basis to access young people in their local communities. Other uses of the bus include visits to schools e.g. lunchtime sessions to get to know young people. They have also visited venues such as libraries, leisure centres, shopping centres and supermarkets, changing the times and days to access different groups of people, often setting up a stall to try to engage people in discussions about CSE prevention.

Another universal approach to outreach has involved ReachOut's involvement in major community events such as Pride, Armed Forces Day, Rotherham Show and Carnival, having a presence at smaller events in local communities (e.g. the Dalton Fun day, Eastwood's Funfest) and organising activities linked to themes or dates in the calendar (e.g. Black History month, bonfire night) or in local parks (e.g. Coronation park). Many of these have been carried out in partnership with other agencies. For example, the project has been involved in co-delivering a variety of holiday activities. At community events, ReachOut has often contributed by providing young people-friendly spaces and activities to encourage dialogue. An example of this has been Rotherham Pride:

#### **Rotherham Pride**

ReachOut have played a role in supporting Rotherham Pride for the past three years. From the beginning there have been team members leading on LGBTQ work in ReachOut and ensuring that the project is fully inclusive in its approach. A ReachOut worker was allocated the time to sit on the Pride committee which meets at ReachOut each month to plan the Pride event in July and other activities (e.g. there is a public quiz night in December and a Trans day of remembrance, with other events in-between). ReachOut's continuing support

is valued for many reasons, not least because sustaining a committee of volunteers is a challenge, with people's lives changing and moving on *'The committee really grew last year but has shrunk again. People don't last.'* Despite this challenge, Rotherham Pride has grown to be an important community event which aims to be a family fun day of live entertainment and fun activities whilst also promoting the LGBT community and raising awareness of their issues. Over the past year, a worker from ReachOut has been on the committee as Children, Young People & Family Engagement Coordinator and has successfully recruited and supported young people to get involved with Pride as young volunteers. At the Pride event, ReachOut provided a young people's space – an area where young people could hang out, pick up information and talk to ReachOut staff.

Other outreach activities may be viewed as **primary prevention** which tends to involve more structured and planned activities e.g. going to a particular group with a set of materials/messages or raising awareness among groups of adults who may have contact with vulnerable children and young people and who might spot the signs of CSE. ReachOut has delivered outreach in areas where there may be particularly vulnerable children and young people. For example, ReachOut joined up with Early Help and Police Community Safety Officers to make contact with young people in Ferham, an area where there is little youth provision. This initiative was described by interviewees in year 2 as very positive: *'We often engage up to 30 young people during one of these sessions - more in the summer when the children are playing out. For us it's an opportunity to get to know young people and gather intelligence on an informal basis. For Barnardo's it helps them raise awareness among young people of what they do... It's been a good initiative – we keep each other in touch and ReachOut staff have gone down well – they're really friendly and enthusiastic.'*

A very different example of primary prevention was ReachOut's contribution to the training of taxi drivers. Taxi drivers are a group who because of the nature of their work and the times that they are out and about, may be in a position to spot situations where vulnerable young people and adults may be at risk:

### **Taxi Driver Training**

ReachOut's involvement in the training of taxi drivers initially came about via contact with the licensing officer in the local authority as part of a regular information sharing session run by the police. There had been concerns about potential links between the taxi trade and CSE and a decision was made to train all existing drivers and implement a process of training for all new applicants for a license. ReachOut and the licensing department worked together to develop a package based on the national working group template and co-delivered it to all new applicants. Anyone applying for a taxi license has to do the training which is delivered monthly. In 2017, the course was revised and increased to 2 hours with the inclusion of a short test at the end to assess the extent to which drivers were absorbing the messages. Our interviewee from the licensing department described the approach as having gone down well: *'The emphasis is on safeguarding generally, including adult safeguarding, and any*

*initial reluctance on the part of drivers was overcome when they saw the benefits to themselves – they now see it as part of what protects them from possible complaints etc’.*

The value of the partnership with ReachOut included the ability to work flexibly and to make use of ReachOut’s specialist knowledge: *‘They are able to use examples and bring it life for people, and because they’re independent people seem more able to ask questions.’*

Although the impact of this training is hard to assess, our interviewee highlighted some positive indications: *‘We’re starting to see drivers raising concerns – not just about children but about adults such as confused elderly. I feel drivers are more clued up about safety generally and starting to see themselves as having a role in safeguarding’.*

More **targeted** outreach involves ReachOut working specifically with groups of children and young people who are identified as more vulnerable to CSE. Targeted outreach tends to differ from primary preventive outreach in that it more often involves regular engagement with the same group of children and young people. Building up relationships of trust is a core element of the work. Targeted outreach is almost always done in partnership with other agencies, usually those with an existing relationship with the young people and or community. Examples have included regular drop in sessions at Rush House, a supported accommodation project for young people, regular attendance at sessions run by Maltby Linx and the JADE project; 6 weekly sessions with the young carers project, a boys’ group at Winterhill and sessions for careleavers at Hollowgate.

### **Rush House**

Rush House provides accommodation and support services, including advice and independent living skills training, to young people aged 16-25. Accommodation is provided in four separate but integrated schemes, each offering different levels of independence. Over the past three years ReachOut has worked closely with Rush House and with Action Housing offering drop-ins, groupwork sessions and individual support.

The young people supported by Rush House often come from very difficult home backgrounds and many have been in care. As one interviewee from Rush House explained, many of the young people *‘do not know what a normal relationship is, and as a result, they form intense relationships with each other, and others very quickly, making them vulnerable to CSE’.* Due to their personal histories, CSE is a difficult issue for many young people in Rush House. This makes it important to handle the issues sensitively, but it also makes it a priority to address their future safety, especially how to keep safe when they get their own tenancy.

Support from ReachOut evolved in partnership with Rush House staff and was shaped by the young people themselves. For example, the young people wanted the same workers, so ReachOut provided consistency of staff to run the sessions. Our interviews with staff and managers at Rush House at the end of year one indicated that they valued the support offered by ReachOut who they saw as providing unique expertise on grooming and CSE. They appreciated ReachOut’s flexibility and reaching out to young people in their own space was greatly valued: *‘The fact that that ReachOut come to Rush House is vital. It would not work otherwise, as young people would not go to ReachOut offices or anywhere else for this support.’*

In year 2, Rush House underwent some organisational change and ReachOut's work went on hold. Support resumed in year three but the break in continuity means that relationships are just slowly building up again. *'We're going in fortnightly and trying different times, now in the evening. We're just developing relationships through cooking together so that we can start to introduce issue-based work.'*

## 4.2. Outreach in Eastwood

Whilst much of the outreach work undertaken by ReachOut has been short-term or time-limited, some has continued over the whole three years. An important example is their work in Eastwood, an area identified by partner agencies as a priority for ReachOut support. Eastwood has a substantial Roma population and partnership working has been vital to gain the trust of the community. The work has involved a close partnership with Clifton Learning Partnership whose Eastwood Village Base acts as a community outreach facility for both adults and young people in the area: *'We're here to serve the community. There are lots of Roma residents but we're here to support everyone and to build cohesion and develop skills in people of all ages.'* Other partners have included Early Help, MyPlace, Lifewise and Know the Score. Each partner is able to contribute specialist expertise (e.g. in substance misuse) as well as a shared commitment to supporting young people.

The partnership with ReachOut was described by interviewees as working partly because of a shared ethos and partly because of a complementary range of skills: *'Like us, Barnardo's is practical, hands-on and realistic. They felt like a natural choice of partner not only because they have the same outlook and priorities but because they have brought their extra skills. They've a broad skill set with different groups of young people, so it's enabled us to do more.'*

Although the work is part of ReachOut's outreach programme, in many ways it is similar to centre-based youth work, in that most of the delivery is from CLP's community base and the sessions are provided on a regular weekly basis, delivered by the same core group of staff. Work has included a girls' group on Monday evenings (see boxed example below) and open access youth groups every Tuesday. For the first two years, the Tuesday sessions were run over two time slots – an early session for 10 to 14 year olds followed by a later slot for older teenagers. Latterly, the sessions for older young people have stopped with an alternative offer provided by MyPlace. In addition to these regular weekly sessions, ReachOut have supported a range of time-limited initiatives, such as a photography project and holiday activities as well as being involved in community events such as the Eastwood Funfest.

The work in Eastwood has evolved over the course of three years. In the beginning it was important to build trust, not only with children and young people but with the wider community. The Tuesday youth group has offered activities which provide fun as well as getting some messages across about keeping safe. Work has been tailored to the interests and needs of the young people: *'We have a 12month curriculum which we devise at quarterly planning meetings. We have looked at healthy relationships, CSE, keeping safe, stranger danger,*

*road safety and helping them cross the road - which was a real problem'. During our interviews, staff have reflected on how best to pursue ReachOut's primary aim of CSE prevention in a context where families have a lack of trust in agencies and have a wide range of other issues to contend with. As one worker put it: 'You cannot just spend 6 weeks building relationships and then deliver a 'message'. CSE prevention is especially difficult. If you go in with a CSE tag the barriers go up.'* Instead, long term commitment has been required with staff gradually creating an environment where discussing subjects such as CSE or drugs with young people becomes the norm. *'If I notice changes in a young person's behaviours, dress, drug use etc, I can have conversations with them and challenge behaviours.'* As relationships have developed more structured sessions have been possible, but arguably it is still the informal chats that workers have with young people, talking about their day to day issues and concerns, that have the greatest benefit.

One of the key learning points from the work in Eastwood is that persistence pays off. ReachOut staff and partners cited examples of the gradual engagement of young people eventually leading to some positive changes in their lives. A clear example of this has been the evolution of the girls' group:

#### **Eastwood Girls Group**

The girls group started in 2016 because of concerns about some girls in the community being at high risk of CSE. It started slowly with just a small group of girls coming along, not all on a regular basis. Over the course of the first year the group developed into a well-attended weekly session, but this took considerable persistence and patience by workers who also needed to engage with the girls around their own issues and interests, as workers from ReachOut and Clifton Learning Partnership explained at the end of year one: *'There's now a core group who attend every week but that's taken 8 months to build. They come under their own steam now – we don't have to collect them – and they talk about stuff – consent, internet etc... Consistent staff is crucial. They've got to know us, and we have fun. Craft and nails are the big draws –we always do stuff at the same time as we have conversations. These girls are not aware of their rights always and can't name them in English. We notice that the talk between the teenagers is very sexualised and substance use is very high. The community have no trust of police or authorities in general.'*

*'It's been a success, but things take time. The girls attend the group because workers were proactive and went out 'pulling' them in, they slowly built the group up through building relationships and doing activities, eventually they did do more CSE work, but they had to develop relationships first. The girls now know who they are and what they do in terms of CSE prevention'*

Over the course of year 2, the girl's group went from strength to strength attracting a regular and committed group of attendees. As the girls got older, the relationships that were built up enabled ReachOut to intervene when they sensed that some girls may be facing greater risk. By the end of year 3, some of the original members of the girls group have 'graduated' and are now volunteering to support younger group members. *'This is a big thing for us. It's been fairly unusual for people we've supported to move on into a place where they*

*can volunteer and support others so seeing some of the girls group do that is amazing. It feels more settled and established – and that seems true of the wider community too.'*

From the point of view of partner agencies, the ReachOut staff are valued for their skills and commitment, but also for their positive attitude and enthusiasm: *'Nothing is a hardship or a grump – ever. For example, at our Funfest the heavens opened but the ReachOut staff just got on with it and stayed to take down wet, soggy gazebos.'*

ReachOut's specialist focus on children and young people has also been greatly appreciated: *'They play and engage with the children properly but also with the deep thought that's seeing the bigger picture. They're terrific at it... Often they're the voice that brings us back to the kids.'*

The work in Eastwood has been a strong example of partnership working. One of our recent interviewees commented: *'We've seen [ReachOut staff] as walking with us and alongside us. They enhance what we do. We're quite generalist so they've offered us some specialist input for young people with particular vulnerabilities. They've really added something. They've mucked in as well which has been really important!'*

Eastwood itself is changing. Our interviewees observed that on the one hand it is becoming a more settled community with some families who originated in Eastern Europe now being long-term residents. This is helping to create some stability in the community. On the other hand, Eastwood is still getting new arrivals and its residents continue to face a host of challenges associated including poverty, overcrowding and discrimination. This is the context in which exploitation of all kinds occurs. As an interviewee put it: *'Whatever comes up in the community we try to respond, whether its CSE or drugs or another issue. Young people in the Eastwood are still very vulnerable to exploitation and there is still a need for continued resilience building'*.

### 4.3. Reaching Rotherham's Black and Minority Ethnic communities

As summarised in the box below, Rotherham's BME population is small but growing. In addition, the age profile of BME groups is young which means that young people in Rotherham are much more ethnically diverse than older residents. However, there are some important differences between BME groups of young people. For example, young people of Pakistani origin are part of a well-established community in Rotherham and are likely to have been born here rather than be recent migrants. Young people of Eastern European origin on the other hand are more likely to have been born outside the UK and be part of a more recently settled community. Hence whilst they may share some common challenges, including discrimination, they also face some different issues.

#### **Rotherham's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population<sup>3</sup>**

Rotherham's BME population has grown over the past decade but is still relatively small. At the last Census (2011), just over 8% of Rotherham's population belonged to ethnic groups other than White British, well below the English average of 20%.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Demographic Profile of Rotherham 2016/17 - Rotherham Council  
[www.rotherham.gov.uk/jsna/.../id/.../rotherham\\_demographic\\_profile\\_2016-17.pdf](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/jsna/.../id/.../rotherham_demographic_profile_2016-17.pdf)

The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani which together with Kashmiri equate to over a third of the BME population in Rotherham. The Kashmiri and Pakistani community is well established in Rotherham following initial migration from Mirpur in the late 1960s and 1970s. Rotherham also has much smaller established communities such as Chinese, Indian and Irish.

16.4% of Rotherham's BME population were from the 'White Other' ethnic group in 2011 which includes migrants from other European countries such as Poland and Slovakia. Further migration from European countries, notably Romania in recent years, have resulted in continued growth since 2011. The Slovak and Czech Roma community is estimated at around 4,100 people (many were missed in the 2011 Census).

The fastest growing groups have been Black African communities and Eastern Europeans.

Most minority ethnic groups have young populations, including Pakistani/Kashmiri (33% under 16), Black African (31% under 16) and Eastern European (24% under 16). The mixed or multiple heritage population is growing rapidly and 50% are aged under 16.

ReachOut's preventative work aims to be inclusive of all children and young people in Rotherham. Their reach into the Roma community has been successful as demonstrated by the take up of outreach support in Eastwood and the one to one support provided to Roma young people (see section 6). All groups of young people have been reached through the project's preventative education in schools. However, previous evaluation reports have noted a relatively low level of referrals for one to one support for Black and Asian young people. In year 3, ReachOut appointed a worker specifically to develop approaches to CSE prevention which would meet the needs of the largely Muslim Asian population of Rotherham:

### **Discovering the needs of Muslim families**

Research nationally has highlighted some common barriers to the identification and support of BME children and young people at risk of CSE.<sup>4</sup> These include a lack of awareness and the provision of culturally appropriate support by services and a reluctance on the part of young people and families to take up support. CSE is commonly met with a culture of denial in all communities: in Muslim communities this is exacerbated by fear, shame and the experience of racism, making it even less likely that a young person or parent would seek support with a concern about CSE. In the context of Rotherham, where many of the convicted offenders have been Asian, it is not difficult to see why the Muslim community might be distrustful of any organisation seeking to have a dialogue with them about CSE prevention. However, this does not mean that parents are not concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their children.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, the Children's Society, Victim Support & the National Police Chiefs Council (2018) Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic children and young people experiencing CSE, guidance for professionals ([https://www.csepoliceandprevention.org.uk/sites/default/files/cse\\_guidance\\_bame.pdf](https://www.csepoliceandprevention.org.uk/sites/default/files/cse_guidance_bame.pdf)) and Gohir, S (2013) Gohir, S (2013) Unheard Voices: The Sexual Exploitation of Asian Young women and girls. Muslim Women's Network UK

With additional funding from Barnardo's, a ReachOut worker has embarked on a 'discovery' phase of work to analyse the needs and issues concerning CSE prevention among Muslim families and to learn from practice elsewhere. In line with ReachOut's partnership approach, the worker is from the community herself and has good connections with relevant community-based organisations. It is early days, but positive communication is already happening, particularly with women in the community. As the work progresses, ReachOut plans to develop approaches/resources to help make their preventative support more appropriate to Muslim families.

#### 4.4. Learning from ReachOut's experience of outreach work

Outreach work is, by its very nature, extremely difficult to evaluate. It is usually informal, often spontaneous and responsive, generally takes place in young people's spaces and the emphasis is less on direct work with individuals and more on engaging them in groups. These features make it hard to evaluate in any systematic way and the impact of universal outreach is, particularly hard to assess, where the worker is in effect making 'cold contacts', trying to engage with people they don't know. In such circumstances, how can one know what a parent does with a leaflet picked up at a supermarket or how a conversation with a ReachOut worker affects how a child thinks about keeping safe?

Despite this paucity of 'hard' evidence, there are some findings from research<sup>5</sup> which indicate that outreach can be effective in:

- reaching vulnerable young people who are 'missed' by mainstream services
- helping identify needs that are currently unmet
- establishing contact with 'hard-to-reach' populations and motivating them to use existing services
- raising awareness of the availability of such services
- building the trusting relationships that allow other work to take place

There are also lessons from the literature of relevance to developing outreach work in the context of CSE, including:

- The importance of understanding the needs and issues of the target areas or population you want to reach
- Considering the different strategies that are likely to be effective with different groups and being prepared to adapt approaches according to the local context and experience of what works
- The value of working in partnership with those who have 'inside' knowledge or existing relationships with your target groups

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<sup>5</sup> Silvie Bovarnick, Di McNeish and Jenny Pearce (2016) Outreach work: child sexual exploitation, a rapid evidence assessment. Available on Barnardo's website



- Balancing the informality and flexibility of outreach with clarity about its overall purpose

The experience of ReachOut over the past three years appears to reflect the above. In addition, the project has accumulated a wealth of experience of delivering outreach in a range of ways and a variety of settings. For each outreach activity, the project has recorded its estimates of the number of people they have engaged, and notes what has worked more, or less well. For example, for Rotherham Pride, they noted:

*We had a very successful stall and youth zone at the event, engaging with a wide variety of individuals in Rotherham's community. The event generated publicity for the project and resulted in positive engagement with young people.*

Whilst for the Flanderwell fete, they noted:

*Didn't really engage with any young people due to the age range of the people there (mostly under 8). Local RMBC staff aware of our service more and want to work more with us.'*

Over time, ReachOut has refined its approach to outreach. In the early days it was important to raise awareness of the project's existence and being around Rotherham with the bus, pens and leaflets was a valuable profile raiser. Later as the project became established (and resources more stretched), the project became more selective about its outreach activities and prioritised areas and communities which are less well-reached. They have prioritised initiatives that could be developed in partnership with other agencies, including those where ReachOut could add value to existing developments. They have also capitalised on the experience and connections of staff (e.g. prior experience of working with sexual health clinics) and partnerships that were already working well (e.g. working with Early Help in Ferham).

In interviews, staff have shared with evaluators some of the lessons they thought they had learned about what makes outreach successful. These included:

**Using outreach to build profile and trust:** In year 1, staff carried out a lot of universal outreach activities, taking the bus to parks, shopping centres etc. On the one hand, this did not always feel like a good use of time. *'It has its moments but who you get to speak to can be a bit random.'* On the other hand, staff felt that these universal outreach activities helped to build visibility and familiarity. *'We've taken the bus to schools and just been there to get young people familiar with it so can go out into areas... It's about building relationships with young people who have had their town splashed all over the media and don't trust anyone'.*

The question of how to use precious staff time and what kinds of outreach offer best value has remained a dilemma for ReachOut. As the project became better known, outreach work has gradually become more focused but maintaining a level of flexible universal outreach is still viewed as having value in helping to forge relationships.

**Choosing appropriate venues and activities:** Staff have found that some kinds of universal outreach are easier than others for getting engagement. At supermarkets, for

example, people may think you're trying to raise money and can be reluctant to stop and talk, whereas at community events, people expect there to be stalls and ReachOut can draw young people in by providing activities and materials which are attractive to young people (e.g. games or a 'safe selfie' booth).

Workers have also noted that engaging young people involves doing activities which they want to do rather than imposing preventative education work. This often means 'weaving in' conversations about safety whilst doing crafts or playing games. Going in to young peoples' spaces with very structured sessions was observed to be generally unsuccessful. *'We're being creative about how we deliver the messages. We do stuff on relationships but there is a danger of losing them.... They're interested but you have to do it in the right way.'*

**Building relationships and trust with young people and communities.** It was noted that this takes time and persistence. Workers need to establish a reliable presence before they can start raising issues of CSE. This can mean continuing to turn up to group or drop in sessions even when attendance from young people is erratic: *'We did a drop in that went fab, then next week there was no-one there!'*

**Developing effective partnerships:** The most successful outreach work has been done in partnership. For example, workers noted that when the project experimented with evening activities in Eastwood without the support of Clifton Learning Partnership, the sessions were harder to control and to sustain. Almost all outreach activities are now collaborative ventures.

## 5. Work in schools

*'I can't praise them enough, I am a bit biased towards them because they have done a lot in school and they are very receptive and very good with our young people, and that's the main thing.'*

The second core strand of ReachOut's model of work is their preventative work in schools. This was a substantial element of their work in year 1, starting with their support to schools during the tour of 'Chelsea's Choice' and continuing with the delivery of Barnardo's healthy relationship resource 'Real Love Rocks'. Work in schools has continued throughout years 2 and 3, but with a greater emphasis on: building the capacity of schools to deliver their own healthy relationship education; reaching schools which had not engaged previously; and delivering more bespoke support to schools based on their priority needs.

Overall, the engagement of schools with ReachOut has been impressive. Every secondary school in Rotherham has had some level of engagement, with some being very active partners of ReachOut. Around half of all primary schools have also received input from ReachOut.

### 5.1. Delivery of healthy relationship education

The main resource used by ReachOut in schools has been the 'Real Love Rocks' (RLR) programme developed by Barnardo's as age appropriate resources for both Primary and Secondary Schools. In most instances, the work has involved a series of four sessions by

ReachOut staff to year 6 children in primary and year 8 in secondary schools. Sessions cover consent, grooming, safety on-line/in the community and where to go for help and, for secondary students, more explicit input on sexual exploitation and pornography. Project monitoring records indicate that over 2000 students have received RLR since the programme began in February 2016.

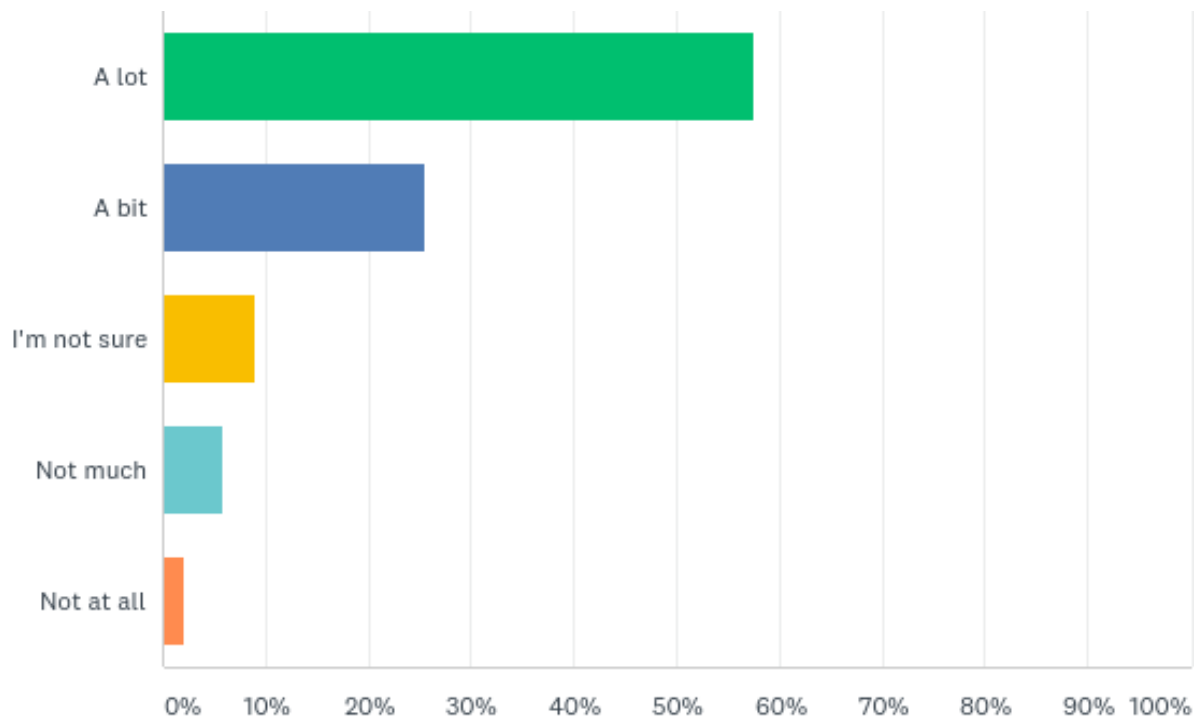
To be effective, such initiatives need to appeal to children and young people and be delivered in ways that maximise the chances of them absorbing the key messages. We therefore designed feedback questionnaires for completion by students and teachers which sought to measure the acceptability of Real Love Rocks and what students thought they had learned. The completion of these questionnaires since February 2016 has enabled us to build a database of feedback from over 1100 students and 50 staff, summarised below.

## 5.2. Feedback from students

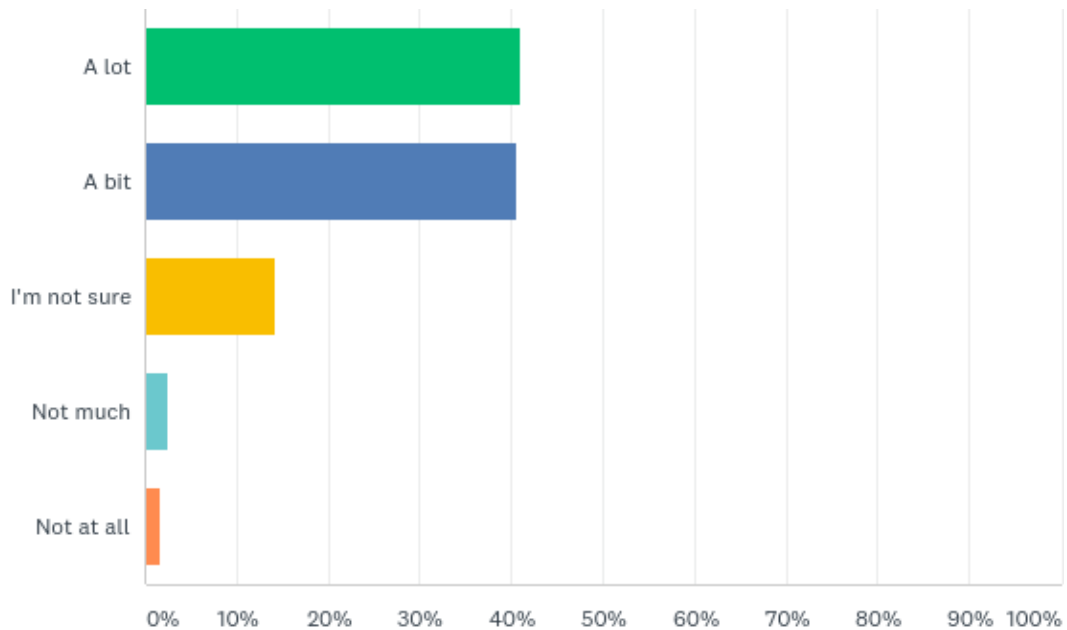
Since February 2016, questionnaires have been completed by 560 secondary school students (the majority in year 8) and 574 primary school pupils (mostly in year 6).

Responses show that most children and young people enjoy the sessions. 57% of primary pupils enjoyed RLR sessions 'a lot' (25% 'a bit' and just 2% 'not at all'). 41% of secondary students enjoyed them 'a lot' (40% 'a bit' and just under 2% 'not at all')

**Chart 1: Did you enjoy the Real Love rocks sessions? (Primary n = 574)**



**Chart 2: Did you enjoy the Real Love rocks sessions? (Secondary n = 560)**



In addition:

- 90% of primary students and 92% of secondary students felt able to join in or ask questions if they wanted to.
- 87% of primary and 94% of secondary students felt that the workers answered their questions.
- 94% of primary and 95% of secondary students thought children/young people their age should have information about these things.

Students were asked whether they had learned anything new in relation to the RLR learning outcomes. 61% of primary children felt they had learned a lot in relation to all the learning outcomes. The concept of 'grooming' was new to many of them and they had therefore learned the most about this. 58% of secondary students felt they had learned a lot in relation to all the learning outcomes. This was particularly so for grooming and sexual exploitation and where to go for help.

**Table 1: Did you learn anything new about any of these things? (Primary) N=548**

	LEARNED A LOT	LEARNED A BIT	NOT SURE	DIDN'T LEARN MUCH	DIDN'T LEARN ANYTHING	TOTAL
What is a healthy relationship	61.36% 324	30.11% 159	4.55% 24	3.60% 19	0.38% 2	528
What is grooming	75.05% 400	16.14% 86	4.88% 26	2.44% 13	1.50% 8	533
How to keep safe when you're out	63.35% 337	25.00% 133	4.32% 23	4.70% 25	2.63% 14	532
How to keep safe on-line	68.89% 372	20.74% 112	3.89% 21	4.81% 26	1.67% 9	540
Where to go for help	64.96% 343	23.48% 124	5.11% 27	3.98% 21	2.46% 13	528

**Table 2: Did you learn anything new about any of these things? (Secondary)**

	LEARNED A LOT	LEARNED A BIT	NOT SURE	DIDN'T LEARN MUCH	DIDN'T LEARN ANYTHING	TOTAL
What is a healthy relationship	57.84% 295	32.55% 166	4.31% 22	3.14% 16	2.16% 11	510
What is sexual exploitation and grooming	70.90% 385	22.84% 124	3.31% 18	1.47% 8	1.47% 8	543
How to keep safe when you're out	61.42% 312	26.77% 136	4.13% 21	5.12% 26	2.56% 13	508
How to keep safe on-line	59.96% 325	28.23% 153	4.43% 24	5.17% 28	2.21% 12	542
The impact of pornography and sexting	61.89% 255	29.37% 121	5.83% 24	1.94% 8	0.97% 4	412
Where to go for help	67.53% 366	23.43% 127	3.87% 21	3.14% 17	2.03% 11	542

Large numbers of primary and secondary students had discussed ReachOut sessions outside the classroom. This is a good indication of awareness, engagement and relevance. Many primary and secondary students had talked to friends and around a quarter of secondary and over a third of primary children had talked to their parents/carers about RLR.

**Table 3: Primary students: I've talked about Real Love Rocks with:**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
My friends	42.22%	228
My parents/carers	36.67%	198
My brother/sister	15.56%	84
My teacher	12.59%	68
Nobody	26.67%	144
Total Respondents: 540		

**Table 4: Secondary students: I've talked about ReachOut sessions with:**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
My friends	39.80%	203
My parents/carers	23.53%	120
My brother/sister	4.51%	23
My teacher	8.04%	41
My social worker/youth worker	1.96%	10
Nobody	42.16%	215
Total Respondents: 510		

### 5.3. Feedback from school staff

Since February 2016, feedback questionnaires have been completed by 50 school staff (27 primary and 23 secondary). Responses indicate that teachers think that the quality and effectiveness of the sessions is very good.

All 50 agreed or agreed strongly that:

- The sessions were well planned and organised
- The materials were appropriate for the children's age and stage
- The workers interacted well with the children
- Real Love Rocks was relevant to all children involved in the sessions

45 of 50 staff agreed or agreed strongly that they had received sufficient information in advance of sessions.

All but one (who was not sure) agreed that the children were engaged in the sessions.

Many school staff added positive comments about the sessions:

*Perfectly timed and materials so important/relevant to our class. Sessions tackled challenging subjects through the activities and children really looked forward to them.*

*Fantastic delivery of the sessions. They were engaging and the presenters showed enthusiasm and vibrant personalities which enthused the students and engaged them in discussions.*

*The BU crew were very popular with the children as they were able to relate to the diverse characters. We liked this.*

*I was really proud of our young people's engagement and learning*

*I was surprised to find out how little some of the children know about these different topics.*

*Children really enjoyed all the sessions and showed a lot of interest in the subjects.*

Teachers also provided some helpful suggestions for how sessions might be improved. These included the timing of RLR sessions, priority topics and approaches to make the sessions more engaging/participatory:

*The children have commented that internet safety/puberty etc is all coming at the end of year 6 and they felt it should have come at the beginning.*

*More active sessions would improve engagement.*

*The 'online' issues covered really could do with more time. Problems have occurred in the past with 'sexting' etc so feel this really needs drilling home.*

*More opportunity built in for pupils to discuss videos/issues in pairs/groups. Follow up/gap tasks left in between sessions for teachers to complete with class.*

School staff were overwhelmingly supportive of children and young people receiving education such as RLR and many were clear that they thought it should continue: *'It's important to not stop teaching/delivering content on this subject and/or to think its job done- a box ticked. The implications and effects of what happened in Rotherham are still being felt today by many and the movement should keep going.'*

#### **5.4. Building capacity for school staff**

By the end of year 1 it was clear that the work undertaken by ReachOut in schools was being very well received by both young people and staff and was achieving its immediate learning outcomes for a high proportion of participants. Other benefits of ReachOut's work in schools included raised awareness of the project, relationship building with schools and young people and establishing referral routes. However, the work in schools was absorbing a considerable amount of the team's resource and there was also concern that to be sustainable, healthy relationship education needed to be embedded in schools with the capacity to deliver RLR themselves. As one partner agency interviewee put it: *'[From what I've] seen and heard Real Love Rocks is good quality but I'm asking what can be done to upskill staff to deliver themselves in the longer term'*

In response, ReachOut began a 'train the trainer' programme. Following some pilot sessions, ReachOut have delivered a series of training courses with separate sessions for primary and secondary staff.

So far, feedback questionnaires have been completed by 67 participants of the training, 33 who attended the primary sessions and 35 the secondary sessions. Responses were very positive with all respondents either agreeing or strongly that the course met its objectives of providing:

- Increased knowledge of issues re child sexual exploitation
- Understanding of underlying vulnerability/risk factors and increased knowledge of how to support
- knowledge to deliver RLR

Everyone also agreed that the course met their expectations, that they felt able to apply their learning and would recommend the course to others. Overall, 82% of participants rated the training as 'excellent' and the remaining 18% 'good'.

Additional comments reinforced these positive findings. For example:

*Really well presented, lots of time for discussion. Good resources, it taught me lots of good ways to add to my lessons in PHSE. I'm looking forward to using this programme*

*Very good delivery, well-paced and interesting/informative content*

*Lovely approachable and friendly staff. Learned loads and enjoyed it*

*The course and toolkit have given me all the resources I need to ensure the children receive comprehensive coverage at an age-appropriate level*

When they attended the course, most participants stated that they intended to plan and deliver RLR sessions in their own schools. We subsequently sent a follow up e-survey to all those who had agreed we could contact them in this way. We received 17 responses. These gave some promising indications that RLR sessions are being planned and delivered by those attending train the trainer courses. Seven respondents said they had run sessions in their school. For example, one deputy head reported that: *'The programme has been delivered between a team of staff to approximately 200 year 8 students and small groups / individual students as deemed necessary in other year groups. The sessions went really well and promoted a lot of interaction and discussion with students'*

An Academy Pastoral Manager told us that: *'We have delivered all 4 sessions of RLR here at [name of school] to 90 Y6 children. Over the next 4 weeks we will be going into [names of 2 other schools], our academy partner schools and delivering to their Y6's - 58 children in total. The children were really interested and from week to week they remembered the important messages. I would*



*say it was a very valuable piece of work and the children took a lot from it. We will be doing the same next year for our Y6's across the academy'.*

Two other respondents had delivered sessions in Special school settings and reported positively that: *'The group comprise pupils with MLD/ASD and/or complex needs, they were very open to discussion and raised interesting points being very comfortable now with the sex ed/ relationship topic.'*

Of the 10 respondents who had not yet delivered RLR, most had plans to do so. For example: *'We plan to deliver Real Love Rocks to our current Y6 in the summer term after SATS. We deliver all the sessions across a week, spending an afternoon on each session. We have found that this way, the previous session's learning is fresh in their minds. At the end of the week, we let the children take their photocopied booklet home. Prior to us running the sessions, we invite parents to come and in and share with them the outline of each session and show them the animations. We have 3 Y6 classes - children are taught in their classes and the training is delivered by their class teacher with a TA present to support.'*

These responses suggest that for some schools, in-house delivery of RLR can be implemented without too many difficulties. The only barrier to delivery cited by a few respondents was staff time and timetabling. Whilst a few schools had received support from ReachOut to deliver their sessions, most had used the resources themselves. ReachOut staff expressed some surprise at this: *'We offered post-course co-delivery option to everyone but surprisingly no-one has taken us up on that. One school expressed interest but in the end, they got us to train 3 more teachers there instead.'*

A couple of participants on the train the trainer course commented that they thought it important that schools delivered these sessions themselves. For example, one person noted that: *'We are planning on delivering RLR this year as we feel the sessions are valuable for our young people and speaking from a safeguarding point of view, the sessions will allow me to have a better understanding of our children and their understanding of keeping themselves safe. I believe that the sessions are best delivered by school staff as they know the children and are able to learn a lot more about individual children through the activities in order to provide continued support if necessary'.*

## 5.5. Other support to schools

In year 3, alongside the increased focus on building the capacity of schools via the train the trainer programme, bespoke support to schools has continued according to identified needs. Examples are wide ranging from one off or time-limited sessions on specific topics such as social media, short-term support to individuals or groups of young people considered at risk, through to information sessions to whole year groups. School-based interviewees were appreciative of this flexibility as well as the child-focused quality of work undertaken: *'They've provided bespoke sessions, been non-judgemental and tailored the work to the individual needs of the young people - building up relationships and trust, which is a very big thing for our students as a lot of them have been let down... they've got parents on board, students*

*enjoy the time they spend with them, there are no disadvantages and...I have asked all the student managers and I haven't had anything...no negative feedback from young people, all enjoyed what they have done'.*

One of ReachOut's new initiatives in year 2 which continued into year 3 has been the development of groupwork in one Rotherham secondary school with the aim of building resilience and wellbeing among young people identified as experiencing difficulties.

### **Emotional wellbeing groupwork**

In year 2, an 8-week group was facilitated by two ReachOut workers for girls identified as vulnerable and in need of extra support at a Rotherham secondary school. The group was developed as a pilot and initially followed a manualised programme entitled 'Living life to the full'(LLTTF) a 5 to 8-week emotional well-being course for young people developed and marketed by Dr Chris Williams (emeritus professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow). The course aims to provide an easily understood and applied range of life skills based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. It encourages people to think about the impact on symptoms (such as anxiety and depression) of their thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms, and behaviour/activity levels.

*In practice the workers had to amend the programme considerably as the style and content did not fit easily with the young women they were working with: 'The materials contain a lot of scripted stuff that was just not appropriate in language or style... The young people had such varied and terrible needs and experiences (one girl had witnessed her mother being raped) so there was a huge gap between where they were at and the content. And they so badly needed attention to the immediate stuff going on in their lives – so we gave them that, and it meant we didn't complete the materials. I'd say we got through half of them'.*

The practitioners spent half a day on planning each week in order to get their own heads round the LLTTF materials and re-work them so they'd be accessible and appropriate to the group, and to think through the issues the girls were bringing with them and how they could best address these in a group setting. The investment of time paid off and the group was considered successful by the participants, the practitioners and the school. *'They were all girls and we kept all but one for the whole 8 weeks and the feedback was off the scale. And some of them made friendships with each other – and are looking out for each other in school - so that's a great result for ones that were so isolated before.'*

Building on this experience the workers have subsequently run some shorter groupwork programmes for young people identified by the school. They have drawn on a wider range of materials from other programmes, although a main challenge has been the number of sessions ReachOut can realistically offer to each group.

## 5.6. Learning from ReachOut's experience of work in schools

School staff and young people interviewed for the evaluation highlighted several key factors which they felt made ReachOut's work in schools effective:

**Materials:** The materials used by ReachOut (particularly Real Love Rocks) were highly rated and identified as being age appropriate, direct without over-simplifying, visually appealing and well-designed. The videos came in for particular praise from teachers and were the first thing that young people recalled when asked what they remembered about the sessions they had attended: *'Thought the sessions were brill. Loved the videos. Felt very relevant to them. Very interactive. Children engaged all the time – never bored'*. Primary teacher

**Facilitation skills:** ReachOut facilitators were described as approachable, enthusiastic, warm and child-friendly– all qualities which teachers felt had helped engage young people in the sessions. The skills of the facilitators were considered to be crucial in the success of RLR and there was considerable praise from teachers who had observed sessions being delivered.

**Outside expertise:** Some school staff felt that young people were more receptive to ReachOut workers because they came in from outside the school. *'The advantage is they're flamboyant, different... and not a teacher'*. Both teachers and young people appreciated the role of outsiders in delivering sessions on 'sensitive' topics. The young people commented on them being 'experts' and *'knowing what they are talking about'*. Teachers suggested that the novelty of outsiders made the content more impactful: *'They like having outside input... children take it more seriously with new faces. It makes it more memorable.'*

However, teachers were aware that inviting outsiders in – especially in relation to sensitive topics – was a 'leap of faith' that they know what they're doing, and it will be high quality. Teachers know the needs of individuals and groups and how to manage them, and as one teacher pointed out *'[Teachers] spend a lot of time differentiating input for individuals and you tend to lose that when you have external input.'*

**Integration with school and curriculum:** Teachers valued the fact that ReachOut staff had been interested in the needs of schools and did not assumed a 'one size fits all' stance. Coming into school in advance and looking at what had already been covered was highly valued. It was felt important to avoid repetition which can run the risk of *'some groups becoming bored and a little tired of the subject ....'*

Schools also valued ReachOut's approach of working holistically with schools – and not just providing a pre-packaged intervention: *'We liked their flexibility in coming to parent's drop-ins and answering their questions. At the parent's request they did a workshop for year 5s.'* Another interviewee commented: *'They have been really supportive and responsive – coming in to do an assembly when a particular issue arose'*.

**Access to further advice, support and training:** School staff, particularly Pastoral Managers and Safeguarding Leads appreciated being able to make a direct link into

Barnardo's for advice, resources and referrals. The familiarity with, and confidence in, a known service or individual workers was particularly valued.

It is still too soon to say whether healthy relationship education will become embedded in schools without some continued input and it is likely that schools will need some 'top-up' support. However, there are some early indications that combining bespoke ReachOut support to schools with the capacity building provided by the train the trainer courses may be a successful formula.

## 6. Direct support work with individual children, young people and families

*[The best thing about ReachOut has been] It has changed me. In a good way, definitely. I am more confident, and it's changed me as a person'. Young person*

### 6.1. Profile of referrals

Over the past three years (from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018) ReachOut has received a total of 336 referrals of individual children and young people.

**Table 5: Number of referrals and cases closed by year**

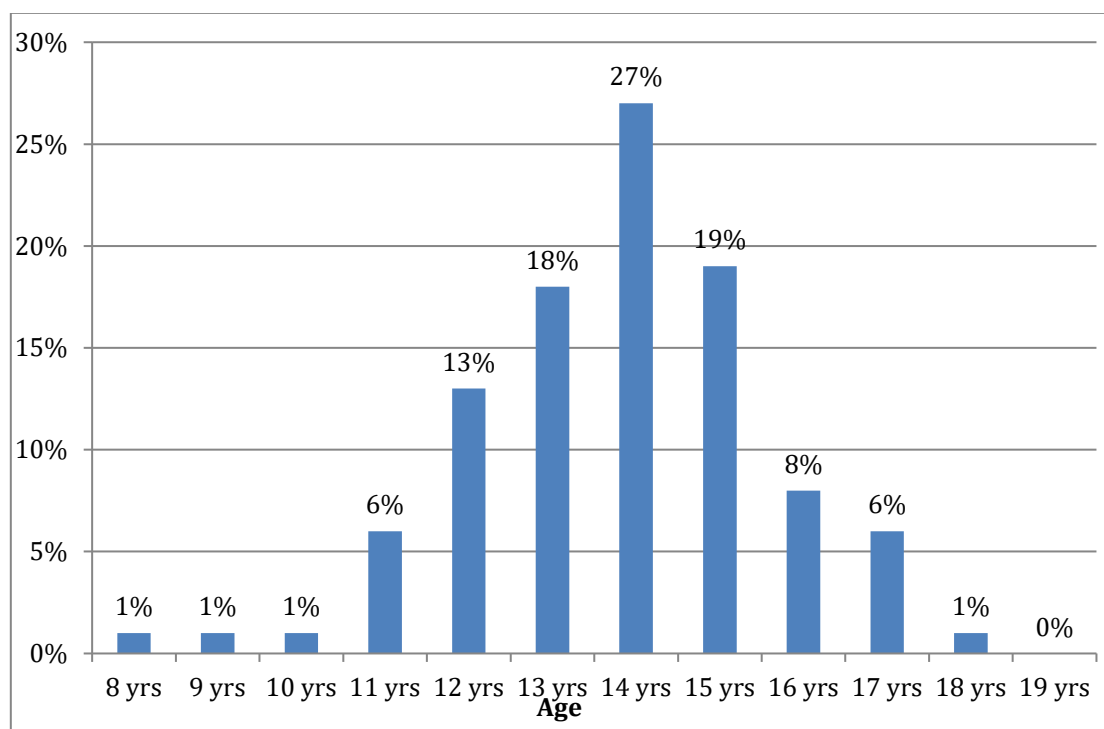
2016	2017	2018	Total across 3 years
Number of referrals received by year			
155	101	80	336
Number of cases closed by year			
60	120	84	264

### Gender and age

302 of those referred were girls and young women (90%), 32 (10%) were boys and young men. One young person identified as both female and gender fluid and gender was not recorded in relation to two early referrals.

Ages of young people referred ranged from 8 to 20 years with the majority being aged 12 to 15. Age was not recorded in 15 cases of young people referred in year one when recording systems were still being established.

**Chart 3: Age at referral 2016-2018 (n=336)**



**Source of referrals**

Across the three years almost half (49%, n=165) of all referrals to ReachOut have come from Children’s Social Care, a further 16% (n=55) through the Early Help Triage and 19% (n=63) from Education. Various voluntary organisations have referred 9 young people. Health and Police referred two young people each.

Although ReachOut has made considerable efforts to raise its profile amongst the general public and has undertaken a wide range of outreach activities targeting young people who may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, this has not resulted in many referrals from non-professional sources. Over the three years 10 young people have been referred by family members and 4 young people have referred themselves to the project.

**Cross-city reach**

Referrals have been received for children and young people attending every secondary education provision in Rotherham including 248 students from the city’s 16 secondary schools, with four schools having over 20 children referred over the last three years.

**Table 6: Number of students by secondary schools referred to ReachOut 2016-2018**

No of students referred	8-10	11-15	16-19	20+
No of schools	4	5	3	4

It should be noted that most of these young people were referred to ReachOut by social care or Early Help rather than by their school. However, 11 secondary schools did refer their students directly and in a couple of cases schools made a significant proportion of direct referrals. Maltby Academy and Wath comprehensive were directly responsible for half of their referrals, and St Pius students were almost all directly referred by their school.

Primary age children referred to ReachOut attended one of 10 primary schools in Rotherham. No more than one child came from any one primary school. Only 3 primary schools made a direct referral of a child to ReachOut.

In addition, up to 3 young people attending each of Rotherham's colleges, special schools and PRUs had been referred. Other young people were recorded as working, NEET, 'not in school', home-schooled or were attending schools outside the city boundary.

### **Ethnicity and language**

Ethnicity was recorded in 333 of 336 cases. 301 (90%) young people were recorded as White British. Thirteen young people were recorded as Black, Asian or Black/Asian/White mixed heritage; and a further 19 (5%) as other – almost all as Slovak or Roma young people.

### **Disability**

49 (14%) of those referred were recorded as having a disability. In nine cases this was a physical disability; 23 young people were recorded as having a learning disability and 12 an autistic spectrum disorder.

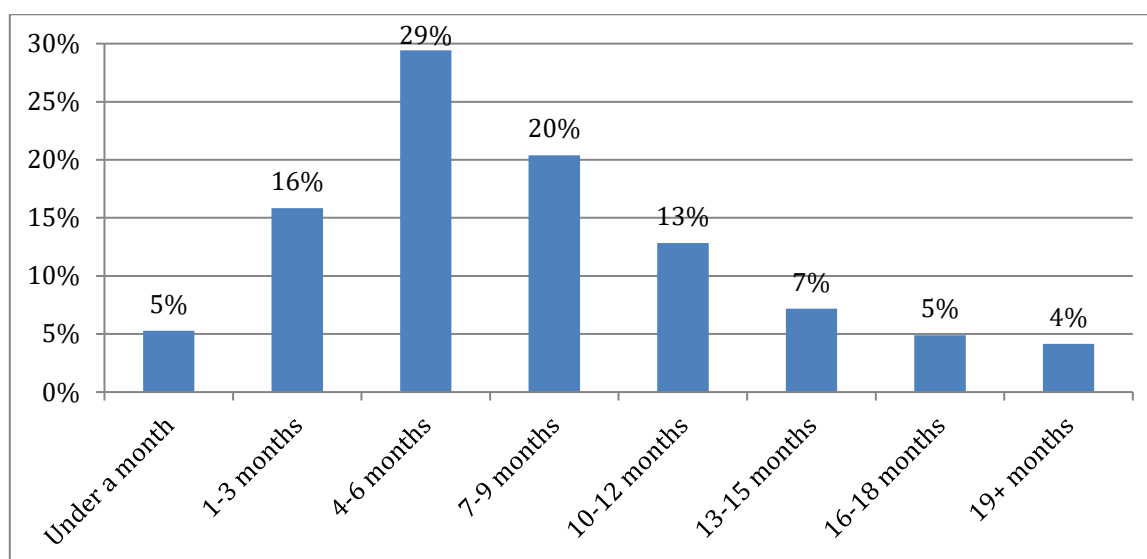
### **Sexual orientation**

193 young people were recorded as heterosexual and 18 as gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning. Sexual orientation was not recorded for 124 young people. This low level of recording was raised by the evaluation team in our year one report as it seemed unlikely that sexual orientation was not relevant, or not discussed, in a project concerned with sexual exploitation. We explored the issue with project staff who explained that, unlike ethnicity or disability, a young person's sexual orientation was often not known at the outset but only emerged during the course of the work. The issue was therefore one of recording practice – as staff had to revisit the referrals database to enter this information. A prompt in supervision led to improvement, from sexual orientation being recorded in only 40% of cases in year one to it being recorded in 53% of cases overall. In six cases where it was not recorded it had been noted that the young person 'preferred not to say'.

## **6.2. Length of intervention**

At the end of December 2018, the dates of both referral and closure had been recorded for 265 cases. Almost one-third of interventions were of 4 to 6 months duration while a further third were between 7 and 12 months. A minority of cases (16%) had remained open for over a year.

**Chart 4: Length of intervention 2016-2018 (n=265)**



In order to achieve a more in-depth picture of ReachOut’s direct support work we analysed the case records from 71 closed cases across the three years<sup>6</sup>. This represents over a quarter of all closed cases (27%). The purpose of this analysis was to identify the reasons for referral, the issues involved in each case, the work undertaken with young people and what workers believed had been achieved.

### 6.3. Reasons for referral

Referral details recorded in case records suggest that referrals have been most frequently triggered by concerns over young people’s internet safety. The most common cause for concern has been young people having inappropriate contact with adults on line or sharing photographs of themselves with strangers. In a few cases ‘obsessive’ internet use, accessing pornography, sexting or cyber-bullying within a peer group had triggered the referral.

In some cases, young people have been referred who had previously experienced sexual assault or exploitation or who were thought to be at risk either in a current relationship or because of what had been deemed their ‘risky’ behaviours (e.g. attending a party where sex and drug use were occurring or getting into cars with men met via social media).

Occasionally, non-attendance at school or concern over the ability of parents to protect a young person led directly to the referral.

However, the ‘trigger’ issue or event has often been only one aspect of why a referral occurred. Referrals have commonly included contextual information that has informed the decision to refer such as previous abuse, the prior sexual exploitation of a sibling,

<sup>6</sup> The sample consisted of every second case closed in year one (35 cases) and every fifth case closed in year 2 (20 cases) and year 3 (16 case).

disengagement from school or, most commonly, problematic relationships with parents (often due to mental health, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, neglect, divorce etc).

In interviews, staff have suggested that there are a range of reasons why young people had been referred to ReachOut which sometimes ‘sat behind’ the ‘official’ or presenting reason: *‘A lot of referrals come due to various issues at home and that means some work is done that is not really about CSE. Prevention can be anything...it is really broad.’*

#### 6.4. Underlying issues

A small minority of those young people referred to ReachOut over the past three years have been described as generally confident and well supported. In these cases, no underlying vulnerabilities were identified by referrers or during the work undertaken by ReachOut workers. For these young people the risky concerns or exploitative experience that triggered their referral was quite likely to be a ‘one-off’. They stand in marked contrast to the majority of ReachOut’s young people who have had a range underlying issues that might heighten their potential vulnerability to CSE.

The issues identified in case records fell into the following categories:

<b>Emotional vulnerability</b>	Very poor self-esteem Easily manipulated Needy/Hungry for attention
<b>Learning difficulties</b>	Special educational needs Asperger’s Autism Communication difficulties Learning disability
<b>Mental health</b>	Depression Self-harm
<b>Family issues</b>	Problematic relationship with parent(s) /step-parent Rejection by/absence of parent Parental mental health Parental alcohol use Young carer Domestic violence Lack of boundaries Adoption breakdown Death of family member
<b>Peer relationships</b>	Isolation from peers Bullying Out of school Desperate to have a boyfriend/to be liked/accepted by peers
<b>Prior abuse</b>	Sexual abuse in childhood Previously sexually exploited Sexual assault/rape Abusive ex-boyfriend



The underlying issues we identified in the case records have been very consistent across the three years that ReachOut has been operational. In most instances the young people – mostly girls and young women - have been drawn into on-line or real-world risky situations because they were unhappy, lonely and hungry for attention. In several cases, bullying at school and volatile relationships with peers had made them vulnerable to the attention offered by strangers on line or by more risky alternative peer groups. In other cases, unhappiness and instability at home, arising from divorce or parental health issues, left some young people ‘free-floating, needy and easy prey’. There were also a few instances where parent-teenager relationships had previously been OK, but had rapidly deteriorated when secrecy, suspicion, loss of trust and parental panic kicked in.

The referral picture has sometimes involved a range of complex safeguarding issues e.g. a father in prison for a sexual offence; a young woman hanging out with adult men known to be drug involved and living with a grandmother who is ill and is unable to set any boundaries around their behaviour.

### 6.5. Direct work undertaken

From case records and interviews with staff and young people it is clear that direct work almost always addresses a set of core issues: healthy and unhealthy relationships, consent, CSE and grooming, on-line safety, sexual health; and often provides a personalised version of the ‘curriculum’ of Real Love Rocks. What has also been evident throughout is the care and skill of workers in personalising their approach for each young person in order to ensure issues were dealt with in ways that were appropriate to the maturity, attention spans and learning styles of individuals and took into account their specific prior experiences and current issues: *‘One case involved a young woman who was sending images to a man on-line. I did an assessment with her, the girl had good support networks, but there were concerns about her understanding on a few issues. We did sessions on what CSE is, why someone could be vulnerable, we looked at consent, the impact of sharing images, digital dirt-consequences long term, did quiz’s, collages. I used a lot of different tools to aid her understanding including using RLR material. I am about to close this case, the young person understands that the man she was sending images to was exploitative and she was really angry with him. Her parents called ReachOut and told me that she now feels much better about the situation and they can see she has a better understanding.’* ReachOut worker.

ReachOut workers have an extensive set of resources on which to draw and have appreciated the quality and variety of these tools. However, they also use their own judgement and creativity, and the interests of the young people, to find ways of communicating key messages. For example, both football and favourite ‘soaps’ had both been used as vehicles for increasing understanding of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ relationships.

It was evident that doing things together with a worker was particularly appreciated by young people. In some cases, this shared activity was as simple as watching a CEOP video together; in others it involved ‘hands-on’ activities such as designing fake and real social

media profiles, developing Facebook pages with appropriate privacy settings, making an e-safety book for a younger sibling or doing a 'condom-teach'.

In interview, young people described how the relationship with their ReachOut worker was the most significant factor in the work being effective: *'The main reasons she came for – to talk about CSE and that – were dealt with in the first few weeks but she didn't just bugger off then; she stayed to support me with other stuff over my parents. ...R didn't butt in and talk over me. She didn't say 'you can't' all the time. I've been told by social workers: 'Because of the childhood you've had you're going to turn out like this unless you do this'. R didn't do that, she didn't say I was going to become something or other because of what had happened to me.'*

ReachOut workers understand how their relationships with young people and the manner and content of their conversations can improve well-being and reduce vulnerability as the case vignette below shows.

### **Case vignette- 'Marguerite'**

*Marguerite is 16. Her sister was known to have been sexually exploited She had previously sent a naked image of herself to a stranger met on-line.*

On referral M presented as happy and confident. However, some earlier self-harm and a referral to CAMHS suggested that this was unlikely to be the whole truth.

M gets on with her parents – who know she is sexually active – but does not talk to them about her relationships or worries. She uses contraception but in other regards does not always take her welfare or her sexual health very seriously.

M has made excellent use of having a ReachOut worker who she sees as 'like an older friend'. She has taken the opportunity to talk about sex and the difference between wanting/choosing/enjoying sex and 'just consenting to it happening'. She has also discussed her parent's relationship which is sometimes abusive and her feelings about her sister being raped. All of this seems to have helped her work out what kind of a life and relationships she'd like for herself.

When we first started working together M was 'seeing' someone but ended the relationship because he was not behaving the way she would like him to. M is starting to be able to assert what she wants and how she wants to be treated in a relationship.

## **6.6. The boys supported by ReachOut**

32 of the 336 young people referred to ReachOut have been boys and young men. We decided to look separately at the case records of all these young people to explore whether there were any issues particular to boys and young men in terms of referral patterns or underlying issues.

Five had been referred because of something visual they had posted on line (e.g. of their penis/masturbating) or inappropriate images shared by mobile (e.g. of an ex-girlfriend). In

two of these instances they had been coerced by peers. In each case they had expressed considerable regret and shame. All five were described as being well-supported by their parents and at very low risk of being sexually exploited.

In four cases a sister of the boy had previously been sexually exploited. Two were considered well supported and very low risk, the other two had difficult family relationships, few parental boundaries and social care involvement but their vulnerabilities were not considered to be to sexual exploitation.

In three cases a young man had himself reported being approached/having contact with an older man on-line and a police investigation or court case was in progress.

In two cases boys had (briefly) been involved with 'a bad crowd' and involved with drugs. Both had moved on and now had settled lives and aspirations for their futures.

It is striking that in ten of the 16 cases young men's relationships with parents – or in one case foster carers – were described as 'positive' or 'very supportive'. In two such cases the referral to ReachOut had come from the boys' mothers. One was concerned that her son's understanding of relationships might have been damaged by witnessing the domestic violence she had experienced.

In terms of the direct work undertaken it tended to follow the same awareness raising Real Love Rocks curriculum as did work with young women – again adjusted for age and learning style – and engagement with the work was generally good.

In addition, one young man with a learning disability had received some appropriate sex education: *'We have done a lot of work around why people have sex and how a healthy sexual relationship should work, as before he only really thought about sex as a means for making babies (and getting married and having a family is L's greatest ambition in life). Now he has learnt that people have sex for pleasure and to express their love for each other, and I believe he now has more realistic expectations of sexual relationships.'*

Another had clearly increased his understanding of gender inequalities: *'Z has said he is going to take his new relationship slow and he is not going to drink when they are out together to make sure he has clear thinking when it comes to giving and receiving consent from his partner. He understands the 'mistakes' he has made in his relationships in the past and now understands the differences between genders when it comes to reputations with peers and society in general.'*

There is no common gender specific profile across these 36 young men. The behaviours which had led to referral were varied – some involved actually or potentially harmful sexual behaviours others involved risks to themselves - although in only a few cases was the risk thought to be potential sexual abuse. However, where that was the case – as in the vignette of 'Martin' below - their needs were very much the same as those of young women with similar experiences.

#### **Case vignette – 'Martin'**

*14 year old boy who had shared inappropriate images on-line.*

Martin has special educational needs and has been overly trusting of others and therefore vulnerable to coercion. Martin's confidence had been badly knocked by his on-line experience and his previous assumptions about the meaning of people's behaviours towards him had been challenged. He needed to understand that he had been manipulated into sharing images, increase his awareness of his own rights and gain confidence in asserting them, or in seeking adult help where necessary.

There are good protective factors in Martin's life including positive family and school relationships. He was able to use these as the basis for developing a more general understanding of what constitutes healthy relationships. He made good progress in understanding peer pressure and techniques to manage it. He has developed appropriate knowledge of online safety.

Martin says he found the sessions difficult at times but that ultimately they helped him. He says he is moving on from the images he shared and thinks much less about them. He feels better about himself and more positive.

### 6.7. Effectiveness of direct work

In the first year of ReachOut the evaluation team undertook a series of rapid evidence reviews to inform project development. One of these related to the evidence on direct work with CSE-affected young people. The box below summarises the available evidence we identified on what makes such work effective:

#### **Features of Effective Direct Work With CSE-Affected Young People**

- Relationships are key to engagement - engagement and trust-building are the foundation of direct work. Involving young people in setting the agenda and pace of direct work can facilitate engagement and 'buy in'.
- Interventions should be centred around the child. Consulting young people can enhance risk assessments. It can help to develop appropriate risk reduction strategies and care plans that are tailored to the needs of the child.
- CSE is complex. Direct work should be holistic and should address the multiple vulnerabilities many CSE-affected young people present with.
- Direct work needs to be underpinned by understanding of diversity and of the impacts of inequalities.
- Young people need stability, continuity and persistence. Frequent changes in social workers are unsettling. Young people prefer having one key worker who cares and does not give up on them when they disengage or act up.
- Support needs to be flexible and high intensity. Young people as well as their families value having access to 'on-call' support when they most need it.
- Strength-based approaches focus on young people's assets and build on these. Work should focus on building resilience alongside reducing risk.

Source: Silvie Bovarnick, Sara Scott and Jenny Pearce (2017) Direct Work with Sexually Exploited or At Risk Children and Young People, A Rapid Evidence Assessment

It is clear from our analysis of case records that the direct work undertaken by ReachOut workers over three years has been in line with the relevant evidence of effectiveness in the field. Specifically, direct work has:

- Been undertaken by a single key worker who has developed a relationship of trust
- Involved young people in assessing their own levels of risk and in setting the agenda and pace of work
- Taken a ‘whole child’ approach and addressed underlying vulnerabilities as well as CSE related experiences
- Aimed to build resilience by increasing young people’s knowledge, confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Case vignette ‘Alice’**

Alice (14) was referred to ReachOut after a ‘grooming’ incident involving an adult male she’d met on line but believed to be a teenage girl. She’d told a teacher and it was part of an ongoing police investigation.

Although happy at home she was struggling to fit in at school and also grieving the recent death of a favourite Aunt. She said she felt like she didn’t belong anywhere and had recently self-harmed.

At ReachOut she had the space to talk about her grief – something she didn’t feel able to do at home. She also admitted to being terrified of the possibility of having to give evidence in court. Her worker was able to make contact with the police on her behalf and alleviate some of her anxiety about the likely outcome of the investigation.

Six months consistent support, by a worker who genuinely liked her, boosted her confidence and self-esteem. She started a relationship with a girl from another school who she had met at Rotherham Pride and said she felt *‘as happy as I’ve ever done in my life’*.

#### **6.8. Outcomes recorded**

Barnardo’s CSE services collect data on certain outcomes using a standard outcomes framework. There are 6 core outcomes (in shaded section of table below) in relation to which recording is mandatory, and a further 10 ‘optional’ outcomes which workers record where they are deemed relevant to the case and the work being undertaken. Levels of concern/risk are assessed by a young person’s key worker on a 5-point scale at initial assessment and reviewed at approximately 3-month intervals.

The outcomes recorded for closed cases at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 are shown in the table below. Each of these cases had reached a second or third review at the point they were closed.

**Table 7: Outcomes recorded January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018**

<b>Barnardo's outcomes</b>	<b>No of cases where outcome recorded</b>	<b>No with concern/risk levels 3-5 at assessment</b>	<b>Score improved at final review</b>	<b>Score deteriorated at final review</b>	<b>No change at final review</b>
<b>Improved mental health &amp; well-being</b>	224	133	114	4	56
<b>Knowledge of sexual health strategies</b>	223	135	115	3	56
<b>Able to identify abusive/exploitative behaviour</b>	225	169	146	2	41
<b>Able to recognise exploitative behaviour/grooming on the internet</b>	225	173	150	2	41
<b>Episodes of missing from home/care reduced</b>	220	34	26	3	25
<b>Reduction in level of risk/harm</b>	224	155	133	5	45
<b>Enhanced parent/carer/adult - child relationships</b>	91	23			
<b>Reduced/safer consumption of controlled substances</b>	57	9			
<b>Recovery from sexual abuse/exploitation</b>	52	31			
<b>Reduced association with risky peers/adults</b>	39	25			
<b>Remains in regular contact with the service</b>	29	3			
<b>Stable and secure accommodation</b>	35	3			
<b>Satisfactory school/college attendance</b>	43	7			
<b>Improved carer capacity to prevent abusive/harmful behaviours</b>	32	14			

It is clear from this data that there is a good fit between most of the core outcomes which are routinely recorded by Barnardo's CSE services and some of the issues of concern at assessment in the ReachOut service. For example, in approximately two-thirds of closed cases initial assessments had suggested that the young person's ability to recognise abusive/exploitative behaviour was a cause for concern.

The exception is 'missing episodes' which was an issue of concern (i.e. scored at level 3 or above) in only 34 of the 220 cases assessed. The fact that there were so few cases in which 'missing' was a concern is a good indicator that ReachOut has been working with young people at a relatively low level of risk and for whom a preventative intervention would be appropriate. However, in interview staff pointed out that low risk of CSE does not necessarily mean that a young person does not have other, sometimes serious and multiple vulnerabilities: *'High risk doesn't always mean high need cos [in high risk cases] the right people are often involved and there's a structured approach. It's the ones just below thresholds for Child Protection or mental health that are often the most complex. Low risk doesn't always mean low need.'*

Recording of optional outcomes has been low and we have therefore not included the score changes for these in the outcomes table above. However, recording practice does not reflect the frequency with which some of these outcomes were considered relevant and were addressed by workers. The three optional outcomes where higher levels of concern were most frequently recorded were also those which our qualitative interviews suggest were often central to the work undertaken. These were 'association with risky adults/peers', 'recovery from sexual abuse/exploitation', and 'relationship with parent/carer'.

Workers expressed considerable confidence that knowledge pertaining to sexual health and/or the ability to identify exploitative behaviour had been increased by their interventions with young people. However, the most common concern expressed by workers at case closure was whether this improved understanding and increased awareness was something some young people would be able to apply to themselves 'in the real world'. Such concerns were strongest in cases where a young person's self-esteem remained low and they were deemed particularly emotionally 'needy' or 'attention hungry'. In some instances, a worker suspected there were issues in a young person's life that had not been disclosed or where they had merely 'scratched the surface'.

#### **Case vignette- 'Estelle'**

*A 15 year old girl who had sent an inappropriate image of herself to a man met on-line.*

Estelle is a young carer. Her family relationships are caring and supportive but are complicated by poor parental mental and physical health. Estelle is very unsure of herself and craves friends and acceptance by her peers. More than anything she wants a boyfriend.

Over the course of 8 month's work with ReachOut Estelle's risk of getting involved in unhealthy/exploitative relationships fluctuated. Overall, protective factors increased – in particular her communication with her mother improved. There was no repeat of the

inappropriate behaviour on line and she broke up with a boyfriend who she felt was treating her poorly. Her knowledge of CSE increased and she was able to verbalise many of the ways in which she can keep herself safe. However, there continued to be a question about her ability to put this knowledge into practice – particularly if it put a relationship Estelle considered desirable in jeopardy.

Case closure summaries in our sample of case records often included more specific outcomes than those in the Barnardo's framework. Workers believed these were often important indicators of positive change for a young person and that they had been directly facilitated by the intervention provided. These included:

- Improved self-esteem
- Better relationship with parent
- Adopted appropriate privacy settings
- Improved behaviour at school
- Started a new, age appropriate, relationship
- Facebook/internet use dramatically reduced
- Having a new peer group
- Understanding own emotions better

In some instances, case closure summaries captured the numerous changes that had occurred in some young people's lives:

*'M is completely different from the person I met a year ago. M is now;*

- *Living independently*
- *Is financially independent*
- *Is in employment and college*
- *Settled in a positive relationship of a similar age*
- *Showing resilience when coming across setbacks or disappointments*
- *Seeking help when needed and accessing services*
- *Improved relations with family*
- *Can reflect on her decisions and uses techniques to solve issues and positive thinking*
- *Presents as confident and doesn't mind people seeing her without her make up on (positive self-image)*
- *Uses her improved communication to have a voice'*

Many of the young people with whom ReachOut have undertaken direct work were referred by Children's Social Care or Early Help. In some cases, they were looked after, designated as children in need or had child protection plans in place (most commonly for neglect). They were referred to ReachOut because of a specific concern around possible vulnerability to CSE and relevant work was undertaken. In most of these cases ReachOut intervention lasted a few months and cases were closed in the knowledge that the family were still receiving support from Early Help or that social care involvement was ongoing. In our sample of case records, concerns about the potential for CSE had all reduced at case closure and several case closure summaries reported that cases were being stepped down



(from social care to early help) or that a young person was to be taken off the child protection register:

*'R has engaged well and positive outcomes have been achieved. R has a positive relationship with mum who is able to protect. Social Care are in the process of stepping down the family to Early Help which shows good progress.'*

*'Social Care are hoping that B will come off a child protection plan at the next conference as there have been no further incidents and she is also not spending time with other young people that are a concern.'*

The most positive case closure summaries almost always included reference to improved relationships with parents/carers – mostly with mothers. The following were typical:

*'Has moved in with Aunty, is happy there, follows the family rules and is re-building her relationship with Mum. Sees it as a fresh start'*

*'Improved relationship with Mum and her new partner who provide clear boundaries including about what she does on-line.'*

*'New foster carers and is positive about the placement but stays with parents regularly.'*

ReachOut has not had a remit for working directly with parents or undertaking dyadic work, but in many instances such work has been undertaken. In interview staff frequently reflected on the importance of parents and carers and on what had been achieved by their having built relationships with a parent/carer as well as with the young person themselves: *'One parent refused consent for the work [at first] Mum had referred her in because of seeing an image she'd shared. She'd had a bad experience with social services and the police so by the time I got there she was not happy. She sat in on the first few sessions and answered for her daughter. Eventually mum agreed for me to see her in another room. It got to the stage where I was having 50 mins with the young person and 10 mins at the end with mum. It was a positive ending – it felt good and mum was really responsive.'*

## 6.9 Learning from ReachOut's direct support work

Unlike most specialist CSE services ReachOut is a preventative service. It has therefore provided a unique opportunity for learning about early intervention with young people where there is a potential risk of exploitation. Referrals show that such a risk is much more frequently identified for girls than boys and in the 12-15 age range. Work undertaken has usually taken less than 12 months and in almost half of all cases less than 6 months.

Although referrals were triggered by on-line behaviours the majority of ReachOut's young people have had a range underlying family, peer and mental health/emotional issues that might heighten their potential vulnerability to CSE. While boys and girls shared some of the same background issues in their lives the risk of what these might make boys vulnerable to was seen as more varied rather than CSE specific. However, a sample of only 36 boys means any generalisations should be regarded with caution.

Direct support at the preventative level needs to be based on many of the same ways of working that have been identified for CSE work more generally: providing a reliable, holistic,

relationship-based intervention that focusses on building confidence and resilience alongside reducing risk.

Relationships with parents and carers are hugely significant and improvements in these is a major factor in promoting positive outcomes.

## 7. Young people's and parent's views

*'[The relationship with ReachOut] has been everything because I used to be very closed off but now I feel comfortable speaking to people, asking for their help when I need it, the way that I feel, like what to do in different situations rather than just go back to different habits. Things have improved...I have got a lot more hope since, now that I have got everything off my chest.'* Young person

Over the three years we have conducted evaluation interviews with 25 young people whose cases had recently been closed by the project. These usually took place around a month after their final session with ReachOut. In 16 cases we also interviewed a young person's parent or foster carers (13 mothers and 4 foster carers).

### 7.1. Knowledge and understanding gained by young people

The young people we interviewed were able to give clear and specific accounts of the knowledge and understanding they had gained from their involvement with ReachOut. They described how their understanding of themselves and other people had grown and how this had caused them to alter their behaviour and think about their own well-being:

*'The most useful thing has been what I've learnt about online grooming, knowing the signs and knowing that anyone can try and groom you, it is not just older people...I know A is about to close my case. It will be weird not seeing her, but when I think how much I've learnt I think I know all I need. When I look back 6 months ago, I feel like I was a different person. If someone I didn't know had messaged me back then I'd have messaged them back. Now I block them straightaway...I've learnt loads of self-respect since working with ReachOut. I cared about others more than about myself, now I have learnt to put myself before other people.'* Young person

The increased understanding described by young people was frequently confirmed in the observations made by mothers and foster carers we interviewed. They spoke of their children showing increased maturity, more considered responses and being able and willing to talk about their lives and how they felt. One mother described the very real impact of the educational work her daughter had done with ReachOut and the importance of the advice and information she had herself received:

#### **Case vignette: A mother's view**

*'H saw P [her ReachOut worker] every week at school and did Real Love Rocks with her. P tailored the support to respond to H's learning difficulties, she gave her booklets and taught*

*her about safe relationships. P always told me what work she had done with H so that I could do it with her too.*

*I'm a technophobe so P visited on a number of occasions to show me how to safely use the internet. That was a lifesaver. Also, she did a session with H and her younger sister together about internet safety, which was a fun activity and has helped them both.*

*P was everything rolled into one, out of all of them, social care, police, it were her who were more useful, she went out of her way to find any information we needed. Without her, I don't know how we would have got through it.*

*All the work P did with H has sunk in, she is keeping safe. The message must have stuck with her cos she has kept safe... To be honest I can't think of anything Reach Out could have done better.'*

## 7.2. Confidence and self esteem

Work that has addressed confidence and self-esteem has clearly been very important for some of the young people we have interviewed. One young woman who a year previously had hated school and had not been attending was now talking about staying on at 6<sup>th</sup> Form. She told us:

*'L has done loads of things with me mainly about confidence. We have visualised and written things down. That was important. I didn't realise how many people there were to support me. I was self-harming when I met L and I'm not now. She has helped a lot. ... Before I met L I didn't think I would come this far. I think a year ago I never thought I would be in this position [being able to sit here and talk to a strange researcher].*

### **Case Vignette: A young carer and her Mum**

*Mum: T was in a bad place [last year] and her school work was really suffering, but since her involvement with Reach Out it has gone back to being above average. Meeting with other people from Reach Out has been positive for T as well. She is in the taskforce and has made some friends. This is good because she doesn't get to go out much as she cares for me. She has a lot to deal with and that was one of the reasons why groomers got to her, she was quite vulnerable. But now her confidence has grown and she can cope with it better. She is strong now and able to cope with life.*

*T: [At Reach Out I got choices about what I wanted to learn about] I wanted to know more about substance abuse, so we did 4 weeks on drugs and 4 weeks on alcohol. When I look back to last year, I didn't know much, now I knows a lot more than I did then. [We also did work on what I think about me] I've put quotes on the bedroom wall that make me feel good about myself.*

*I have a good relationship with E, she's really hyper- which is a good thing! I can talk with her outside sessions if I needs her ... Reach Out is good - if you ever want to know anything they can always tell you what you want to know.*

### 7.3. The importance of relationship

It was the relationship with a specific worker and the practical, reliable, holistic support they had received that had made the greatest impression on the young people we interviewed. They spoke with great warmth and enthusiasm about their ReachOut workers, describing how they had 'just clicked' or the relief they experienced at being understood: 'she just got me straight off'. One young woman who had attempted suicide after exiting an exploitative relationship told us:

*'I liked her from the start. She helped me get back into college, took me and arranged appointments. I seen her every week, usually at home, but it's hard to speak at home, so she takes me out for food or drink. ...M is really nice. I like that she is there to speak to, cos I don't have many people to talk to, and don't get on with some family members.*

Isolation from peers and family often goes hand in hand with exploitation, which is one of the reasons the relationship with a trusted worker is so central:

*'I weren't really close to anyone, so she was the person I ranted to, so 90% of the time I ranted, but we also did a lot of work on grooming and relationships. I think if she hadn't been there I would still have tried to turn things around, but I don't think I would have understood everything I was doing the way I do now...When your parents say things it's the same old same old, you don't want to hear, but going through it with J not lecturing but talking to me it just kind of made sense... There was nothing I couldn't tell her, I felt so comfortable around her, I knew when I got in her car it was all out, all of it. If ever I felt I was going through a rocky stage and needed someone I have her number. She would be there for me.'*

In several cases young people were able to describe how their relationship with their worker had also impacted on their ability and willingness to relate to other people in their lives:

*'[The relationship with ReachOut]has been everything because I used to be very closed off but now I feel comfortable speaking to people, asking for their help when I need it, the way that I feel, like what to do in different situations rather than just go back to different habits. Things have improved...I have got a lot more hope since, now that I have got everything off my chest.'*

Not all the young people we spoke to had instantly 'clicked' with a worker or been readily able to accept the help on offer. Some had previous negative experiences of professional involvement in their lives and they did not trust that the latest worker arriving on their doorstep was going to be any different. In some instances, establishing any kind of relationship with a young person involved dogged persistence on the part of the worker:

*'I hated her at first. I had that much stuff in my life I thought she was going to sabotage it even more. Everyone that came I hated them. I would just say 'F off' – I said it for weeks and weeks. But she kept coming back and I gave her a chance and she is amazing...I told her I didn't want to work with her...I made it known I hated her and she kept coming back. That's helped me. I had given up on everyone. [Other professionals] weren't there to see how I was, they were just there to know what was happening in my life, they didn't care...She's shown me that people aren't all just there to judge – it's changed my mindset a lot.'*

Direct work with parents and carers is not part of the core work of ReachOut but in many cases it has been undertaken by workers. This has most often been the case with the parents of younger teenagers, carers of looked after young people or where a young person has had a learning difficulty or disability. Being 'kept informed', 'working in tandem' or being given good information and advice have been greatly appreciated by parents and carers.

Two foster carers we interviewed reflected on the satisfaction they felt in working with a ReachOut worker so as to form a real 'team around the young person':

*'E came to see C shortly after she was placed with us. He already knew her, she liked him and he is a safe adult who was most welcome in our home. We felt that E fought C's corner in a unique way, compared to other professionals. P did not like anyone else supporting her but E offered continuity, consistency and support. She had known E longer than us as well, which was helpful, E was the most welcomed professional.'*

*Her self-esteem has sky-rocketed since being with us and E is part of that. We have worked as a team. E recently did the 'helping hand tool' with her on a visit here and she wrote down about 30 things/ideas for the future when before she would have struggled to write down 3 or 4. This looked like real evidence of change and it's all been a joint process between us.'* Foster Carer

Parents and foster carers we interviewed had also valued their own relationships with ReachOut workers and felt that the support they had received for themselves had been crucial in changing young people's trajectories:

*'Working with N has helped us communicate where we just used to argue. Now if we have a row we know how to handle it... It's changed the way we see each other, we have become friends. I know when to be there for her and when to leave things...I've learnt strategies...We needed someone neutral and from outside...it has made family life so much easier'. Parent*

Another parent told us:

*'The ReachOut worker has been really helpful to us as a whole family – she always kept me informed and I liked that she was so straightforward. Towards the end she witnessed an argument between me and my daughter. She took me to one side and talked to me about how I had dealt with it. I was OK with this. I had come to trust her and I could see what she meant...The best thing for [my daughter] is that she has gained confidence and seems much happier. She is predicted to get better GCSE results. This time last year she was looking at getting 'D's. Now she is looking at two grades higher'. Parent*

The only dissatisfaction - expressed by a couple of parents - was where they felt they had not been sufficiently informed about the work that was taking place:

*'I was fine as long as T got the help she needed, and she did get the help she needed. I met F [the worker] and she came to the house a few times but mostly she did one-to-one work with T at school. She gave me advice if I needed it [but] I think it would have been better if we had been involved re the work she was doing with T, we never got to find out how her progress was, that would have been better. I just think it would have been better if we'd got feedback.'*

About half the young people we interviewed also completed a Have your say! Feedback questionnaire as part of the interview. This ensured that less confident or talkative young people had an alternative means of providing input to the evaluation. It also provided confirmation of what young people most valued about the support they had received. This additional data clearly confirmed that from the young people's perspective 'being listened to' and 'feeling heard' was the most important aspect of ReachOut support. They described some immediate consequences of this as 'feeling more comfortable with my emotions', 'coming out of my shell' and being 'confident enough to speak out' rather than 'bottling everything up'. They wrote of 'no longer walking out of class', 'being better able to concentrate', 'understanding relationships better' and 'thinking more'. This had brought a number of young people closer to other people in their lives, helped them deal with their anger and enabled them to ask for help when they needed it. The two outcomes that young people most frequently wrote were important to them were improved family relationships – especially with parents - and the confidence they had found to do new things, join groups, be creative, go to new places and help others.

## 8. Conclusion

**'Given our history we needed the extra input especially at the preventive level. The local authority has boosted the early help response too, but it's been helpful to have the expertise of Barnardo's in CSE. ReachOut has become part of an emerging success story in Rotherham.'** Stakeholder interview

When we were commissioned as evaluators of ReachOut in 2016 we were given two main tasks: to assess the achievements of ReachOut and the difference it was making, and to share the learning derived from ReachOut's experience of developing and delivering a preventative CSE service. In this final section we summarise our conclusions in relation to these two questions.

### 8.1. What has been achieved?

Over the past three years ReachOut has worked with a wide range of partners across Rotherham's statutory and voluntary sectors. Alongside the efforts of many other agencies in Rotherham, its collaborative approach has been identified as making a valuable contribution to re-building a culture of trust in a city where child sexual exploitation, and

the failure of agencies to respond effectively, had severely eroded public and professional confidence.

ReachOut has reached thousands of children and young people through its outreach and preventative education activities – raising awareness of CSE and promoting healthy relationships based on equality and choice. These activities have been positively received by young people and there is evidence that their knowledge and understanding has been increased. The majority of Rotherham schools have welcomed the input, and many have embraced the idea that healthy relationship education is part of the ‘core business’ of educators – as evidenced by their willingness to free up teachers to train as Real Love Rocks facilitators and scheduling delivery as part of the curriculum.

Over 300 vulnerable young people have been provided with direct support by the project. There is good evidence from case records and young people themselves that this support has successfully raised their awareness, confidence and self-esteem. Of course, it is impossible to know what exactly has been prevented from occurring by ReachOut’s interventions but, given the immediately risky situations that had prompted some referrals, it is likely that sexual abuse and exploitation may well have been the outcome without it. There have been very few cases in which concerns have escalated during ReachOut’s involvement with a young person. Where statutory services have been involved at the point of referral, concerns around CSE have usually been reduced following ReachOut’s work, and in some instances, cases have been stepped down or closed.

## 8.2. What has been learned?

There was no ‘blueprint’ for ReachOut’s preventative approach but over the past three years, they have developed a model of CSE preventative work that operates at all three levels of prevention and takes a ‘whole city’ approach. The three stranded approach of community outreach, school-based preventative education and direct support to children and young people has been confirmed to be a generally effective strategy. It has been important to keep the balance of these strands under review to try to maximise the best use of resources, but there is wide agreement among stakeholders that all three elements have been important.

Within each strand of work there have been important lessons about the detail of what works: how to take account of what matters to community groups, schools and families to maximise their engagement. At the heart of this has been the importance of relationships. This has included partnerships with other agencies based on mutual respect and trust.

ReachOut has demonstrated that effective intervention with vulnerable young people depends primarily on building warm, respectful relationships based on listening, understanding, appreciating and believing in them. They have ‘modelled’ such relationships in their outreach, education and direct support work across the city, and teachers, parents, foster carers, social workers and young people themselves have recognised the significance of these relationships in boosting young people’s confidence and aspirations.

### 8.3. Implications for future developments

ReachOut have developed and tested a model of preventative work which we believe has applicability both to other local authority areas and to other issues. Although it still does not constitute a 'blueprint', the ReachOut model provides a robust framework for a preventative CSE strategy, which along with careful consideration of any contextual differences, could be applied elsewhere.

ReachOut has been effective with CSE prevention for several reasons: the skills of its staff, the quality of its resources, the efficacy of its partnerships and the 'fit' between what it can offer and what young people vulnerable to CSE need. Within Rotherham, during our last round of interviews there appeared to be a growing consensus among stakeholders that while it remained important to keep a focus on CSE, it was also time to consider other forms of exploitation to which children and young people are vulnerable. We believe the three stranded approach to prevention could be applied to other concerns, such as criminal exploitation, where work with communities, schools, families and young people will be equally important. However, whilst vulnerability to sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation often have common roots, they are not the same, and successful extension of ReachOut's model into other areas of concern will need some careful attention to detail about who is affected and how and an ongoing process of learning about what works best with different groups of children and young people.



## Appendix I: Theory of Change

The ultimate goal the ReachOut project shares with its partners is for Rotherham to be a safe and supportive place for children of all communities to grow up - a place where families and communities have the information and support they need to confidently safeguard their children, and where young people are less vulnerable, make positive choices and enjoy healthy relationships.

In order to achieve this goal ReachOut believes that all children and young people need healthy relationship education – while more vulnerable young people need targeted support to raise their awareness, aspirations and self-esteem and to access help before problems escalate and thereby reduce the need for statutory interventions

ReachOut aims to contribute to the further development of a culture of trust between agencies and between agencies and communities. It seeks to build the capability of professionals, develop sustainable support to effectively to combat CSE.

### **What we intend to do to achieve change**

Deliver train the trainer and offer ongoing support for RLR in schools.

Provide more targeted work in PRUs, behaviour support units etc where young people may be at increased risk

Deliver 'intelligence-led' outreach work in partnership with other agencies

Build relationships with diverse communities

Work in partnership to understand diverse community needs, avoid duplication and fill gaps in provision

Offer training, information and support to professionals, carers and parents

Provide direct support to children, young people and families at risk

Develop creative methods of involving young people

Develop a pilot model of work with children with multiple vulnerabilities

### **Outcomes (April 2017)**

Parents and professionals know the signs of CSE, are more confident in discussing it with young people and where to go for help

CSE prevention is embedded in schools

Children and young people have greater awareness of risk and what constitutes healthy relationships and where to go if they need support

Children and young people are seeking support at an earlier stage

Children, young people and families from all communities have better access to information and support to help prevent CSE

Children and young people individually supported by the project have fewer risk factors and more protective factors in their lives including raised aspirations and self esteem

Pilot service model instituted and described

### **Outcomes April 2018**

As for April 2017 plus the following:

More young people self refer

Schools are confidently delivering RLR

The project has extended its reach across diverse communities in Rotherham

The project has developed and piloted an evidence based model to improve the emotional wellbeing of children with multiple vulnerabilities

There are increased referrals from health and police

Children and young people have a stronger voice

Professionals have increased capabilities to combat CSE

### **Longer term outcomes**

Children and young people in Rotherham are less vulnerable to CSE

Young people are able to make positive choices and enjoy healthy relationships

Families and communities are better able to safeguard children and young people

There is a reduced need for statutory intervention

There is improved interagency working and trust between organisations & communities

There is a replicable blueprint for preventive work in a local authority.

### **Ultimate goal**

For Rotherham to be a safer and more supportive place for children and young people to live and grow up

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outcomes April 2019</b>	<b>How we will know 2019 outcomes are achieved</b>	<b>How the evidence will be collected</b>	<b>What we will aim to learn</b>
Deliver train the trainer and offer ongoing support for RLR in schools.	Schools are confidently delivering RLR	Most schools in Rotherham will have accessed training the trainer courses. Teachers will be delivering and accessing support from ReachOut as needed.	Monitoring of take up and delivery of train the trainer sessions Interviews with school leaders and staff.	What factors encourage or impede the take up of healthy relationship education by schools? How can schools be supported to take ownership of this agenda? Are trainers confident in delivering?
Targeted work in settings where there may be more 'at risk' young people e.g. PRUs, behaviour support units	Young people have greater awareness of risks and what constitutes healthy relationships. They know where to go if they need support	Young people in targeted settings will report greater awareness. Settings will be more aware of signs of unhealthy relationships (e.g. incidence of sexting, sexual harassment) and have more confidence in dealing with them.	Pre and post feedback from young people. Interviews with informants from relevant settings.	What are the biggest concerns of young people themselves? What factors encourage or impede their awareness? Are some young people 'harder to reach' with healthy relationship messages? What works best in overcoming these barriers?
Deliver 'intelligence-led' outreach work in partnership with other agencies	The project has extended its reach across diverse communities in Rotherham; there are more self-referrals	There will be an increase in self-referrals, referrals from families and early referrals from other partner agencies	Monitoring of referral patterns. Interviews with sample of those referred and referring agencies.	What approaches to outreach are most effective in reaching young people? Are some young people more or less likely to access support? What effect do factors such as gender and ethnicity have on the nature of effective outreach? What issues do young people most want support with?

Build relationships with diverse communities and work in partnership with other agencies to understand diverse community needs and fill gaps with specific communities	Children, young people and families from all communities have better access to information and support	The project will have forged working relationships with more community groups and agencies working with diverse communities. These communities will have accessed information and support. Referrals/take up of project support will reflect the diversity of the population of Rotherham.	Monitoring of work carried out with communities. Monitoring of referrals and take up of services. Interviews with informants from community groups and relevant agencies	What are effective ways of engaging with diverse communities? What factors encourage or impede their engagement? What are the priority issues and concerns of different communities? What are the best ways of responding to these?
Training, information and support to professionals on CSE and related issues	Professionals from across agencies know the signs of CSE, are more confident in discussing it with young people and know where to go for help	A range of professionals will have accessed training and support. They will report more awareness and confidence	Pre and post feedback from professionals. Monitoring of training sessions provided and take up. Interviews/ follow up survey with sample of participants	What factors encourage or impede take up of training & support? What are the priority issues and concerns for professionals? Do some approaches to supporting professionals work better than others?
Training, information and support to parents, carers and communities	Parents and carers from all communities know the signs of CSE, are more confident in discussing it with young people and know where to go for help	A range of parents and carers will have accessed training and support. They will report more awareness and confidence	Pre and post feedback from parents & carers Monitoring of training sessions provided and take up. Interviews with sample of participants	What factors encourage or impede take up of training & support? What are the priority issues and concerns for parents & carers? Do some approaches to supporting parents work better than others?
Direct support to children, young people and families at risk of CSE	Children, young people directly supported by the project have fewer risk factors and more protective factors in their lives	Reduced risk will be evident from both projects' assessment and feedback from young people and others involved with them	Analysis of Barnardo's outcomes monitoring data Interviews with sample of young people, families and referring agencies where relevant	What are the main presenting needs and issues of young people? What other issues emerge during the course of support? Are there common themes that can be identified? What is effective in supporting

				<p>young people?  How can young people be supported alongside their families – what challenges are there in doing this and how might these be overcome?</p>
Develop creative methods of involving young people	Children and young people have a stronger voice	Young people will be actively involved in influencing the project and speaking out more widely in Rotherham	Monitoring of young people's activities; interviews with young people	<p>What is effective in engaging young people? What do they get out of it? What difference does it make to the project and to policy and practice more widely?</p>
Develop a pilot model of work with children with multiple vulnerabilities	The project has developed and piloted an evidence based model to improve the emotional wellbeing of children with multiple vulnerabilities	A description of the model will be in place	Review of model description	<p>Is there a clear model that is being developed and described?  To what extent is the model specific to the context of Rotherham?  How might it be adapted to be replicable elsewhere?</p>
	Increased referrals from health and police		Monitoring of referral data	

## Appendix 2: Referral information from random sample of open cases

No	Age	Referral information
1	12	Mixing with peers involved with adult men. Poor school attendance. Facebook concerns. Sharing images. Expressing suicidal thoughts. Concern for Dad's mental health and ability to care.
2	16	In touch with adult men being investigated by police. Potentially at risk of CSE.
3	14	Associating with older peers and posted sexual comments on social media. Mum's poor mental and physical health.
4	15	Going missing. Gone from being model student to being excluded for behaviour. Difficult family relationships.
5	15	Arranged to meet older male she'd met on line.
6	16	Sending images of self. Found by police in older man's house.
7	15	Concern over ability to understand risks. Previous CSA
8	12	Concern re her interest in older boys. Vulnerable due to limited understanding of relationships
9	15	Friends with high risk girls. Historic concerns re family. Low self-esteem. Poor school attendance.
10	16	Concern re current relationship. Complicated home life. Social isolation.
11	13	Images of self sent online to unknown man. Prior abuse/neglect. Recent placement breakdown due to attack on carer and pets.
12	13	Meeting people she's met on Facebook and had sex with one of them. Difficult relationship with mum. Puts herself at risk.
13	20	Learning disability. Vulnerable through lack of understanding of risks.
14	17	Unhappy at home and with friends. Associating with older people. Parents recently split up. Has difficulty managing her feelings.
15	16	Learning disability. Received inappropriate texts from boy at school. Would struggle to understand risky behaviour.
16	16	Concerns re meeting up with boys, truancy and constant use of phone. Recent death of father. CiN.
17	15	Involved with 20 year old man. Police involved. Posted stuff on Snapchat.
18	16	Sending indecent images of self. Concern she's meeting older men. Mum refusing help from social care.
19	10	Dad arrested for downloading indecent images of children – no charges and returning to family home. Request from social care for input re stranger danger and healthy relationships.
20	16	Concern re contact with older men online. Recent disclosure of previous abuse.

