

issues relating to CSE and staying safe, in order to guide and track the progress being made during an outreach intervention.

**Ensuring safety:** There are a number of issues to be considered relating to both the safety of the young people engaging in outreach activities and the welfare of workers delivering outreach. Safeguarding concerns regarding a young person must be managed carefully and safeguarding responsibilities must be communicated clearly to the young person engaged in outreach. The same boundaries around confidentiality and safeguarding that apply in centre-based provisions also apply in outreach settings.

Outreach can also potentially bring risks to a worker's personal safety. Undertaking risk assessments and providing training on personal safety, first aid and safeguarding can help to ensure staff welfare. In recognition of the impact of delivering CSE outreach upon practitioners, training should also promote self-care.

Risks to staff can also be minimised by procedures which include street-based outreach workers going out in pairs or trios. Outreach projects often have systems in place, whereby workers always carry mobile phones, emergency numbers and inform colleagues or managers of their whereabouts; checking in before, during and after an outreach session.

Undertaking a 'risk mapping' of areas targeted for outreach also increase the safety of outreach staff. It can highlight potential safety hazards and other risk factors that should then be evaluated and addressed appropriately.

Establishing a close working relationship with the police, and linking up with other professional partners, can help to obtain relevant information of any areas where there may be safety issues.

## **Key messages for developing outreach work on CSE**

There is little evidence on the effectiveness of outreach because very little has been robustly evaluated. However, evidence does show that outreach can be effective in:

- Reaching vulnerable young people that are 'missed' by mainstream provisions.
- Helping identify needs that are currently unmet.
- Establishing contact with 'hard-to-reach' populations and motivating them to use existing services.

## What works in responding to child sexual exploitation

- Raising awareness and advertising centre-based provisions.
- Building the trusting relationships with vulnerable people that allow other work to take place.

There are a number of lessons from the literature of relevance to developing outreach work in the context of CSE:

- It is helpful to build in an initial scoping stage to explore the needs and issues of the target areas or population, assess likely effective strategies, consider who might be best placed to deliver the work and who the partner agencies might be. It is important to allow sufficient time for this scoping.
- Different outreach strategies need to be developed for different populations according to the places and spaces they tend to inhabit. This is true for reaching boys and girls.
- The increasing significance of the virtual world in where many young people spend their time and develop relationships cannot be overestimated – outreach needs to meet them ‘where they are at’.
- Working with specialist agencies or individuals that have ‘inside’ knowledge of particular groups (BME, faith groups, disabilities or lesbian, gay or trans young people) can help with scoping as well as with designing and/or delivering outreach activities to specific target populations.
- It may be important to use different and complementary models of outreach depending on the local context and be prepared to change tactics if one approach works more or less well than others.
- A key feature of outreach is its informality and flexibility, but balancing this with clarity about the overall aims of the work can help to maintain focus on a shared purpose.
- Workers need to be skilled in bringing together young people’s own goals, needs and choices with the programme aims.
- As with all work, ensuring the safety and welfare of the young people and staff involved is paramount. Outreach work brings some additional challenges which can be addressed through some systems and processes that everyone uses.