



## **OUTREACH WORK: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

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### **A RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

This briefing is based on a rapid review of the available literature on outreach work with children and young people. It is intended to provide the ReachOut project with an overview of different approaches to outreach; what it generally aims to achieve; what distinguishes it from centre-based work and how it is applicable to children and young people involved in, or at risk of, child sexual exploitation. We highlight what is known about 'detached' and other approaches that aim to reach vulnerable populations who are not accessing mainstream services. We hope it will be useful in informing ReachOut's thinking about the role and value of its own outreach activities.

## WHAT IS OUTREACH?

There isn't a single definition of 'outreach'. The term is used to describe a range of activities relating to community development, social inclusion, or engagement with local people (McGivney 2000a). It can operate in a variety of settings and with a range of target populations such as sex workers, drug users, and young people involved in crime or gangs (Rhodes 1996). In the context of youth work, outreach is typically aimed at particularly vulnerable and/or marginalised individuals or groups that, for a variety of reasons, are not effectively reached by mainstream services (Hardy et al 2010; Rhodes 1996). Outreach may also include work with parents, carers and the wider community.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DETACHED YOUTH WORK, STREET-WORK AND OUTREACH

The fundamental similarity between outreach and detached youth work or street work is that they all take place where young people 'are at' geographically and developmentally. Detached youth work and street-work tend to both assess *and* address young people's needs by delivering activities in their spaces and places. Although outreach can also deliver services in community settings (Dewson *et al* 2006), it is more often an extension of centre or project-based work (Kaufman 2001; CWVY 2014), used to 'advertise' existing services and encourage young people to use them. Because outreach shares many methods and principles with other types of detached youth work, this review draws on relevant examples from the range of approaches.

## THE PURPOSE OF OUTREACH

The primary purpose of outreach is to raise awareness of existing services and encourage their take-up. Outreach often targets individuals or groups that may be suspicious of, or intimidated by, mainstream services in order to increase their confidence and draw them into centre-based provision (Dewson *et al* 2006). However, in some instances, outreach can be used to deliver services in the local community, especially in communities where there is poor service provision and where people have difficulties in accessing advice and support e.g. in rural areas. Such outreach services

may involve locating staff for some of their time in organisations which are located within target communities.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUTREACH AND CENTRE-BASED SERVICES

The main differences between outreach and centre based working are illustrated in the following table. These features tend to vary according to context and in practice, most centre and outreach models fall somewhere between these poles e.g. centre based work can be more or less structured and outreach can be more or less planned. But in general the particular value of outreach is that its activities are more informal and spontaneous and that they take place in young people's own spaces.

Centre-based	Outreach
More structured	Usually very informal
Activities usually planned	Generally spontaneous and responsive to the situation
Adults' space - usually Centres are also adult workplaces	Young people's space – outreach generally takes place where young people are
Doing direct (often one to one) work	Less direct work – more emphasis on encouraging young people to take up the service – often in groups
Work undertaken by referral where worker has some prior information about the young person	Cold contact/identification – worker often engaging with young people they don't know.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF DETACHED AND OUTREACH YOUTH WORK IN THE UK<sup>1</sup>

Detached and outreach youth work have their roots in faith-based organisations that worked in UK cities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kaufmann, 2001). Some were part of a history of 'child rescue' led by individuals such as Thomas Barnardo whose crusade to 'rescue children from the streets' included rescuing girls from so-called 'prostitution' (Smith 2002; Stacey 2009).

The majority of early youth work took the form of providing gender specific clubs<sup>2</sup> (Smith 1996, 2005) and both boys' workers (e.g. Charles Russell in Manchester, Working Lads Clubs – 1908) and girls' workers (e.g. Lily Montagu, My Club and I – 1954) made contact with young people on the streets of their neighbourhoods in order to encourage them to join clubs or institutes.<sup>3</sup> (Smith 1996, 2005).

<sup>1</sup> A timeline of the historical development of outreach and detached youth work in the UK can be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the best known example of this was the development of scouting following the publication of 'Scouting for Boys' in 1908 (Smith 1996, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> An example of this is Maud Stanley's work around the Five Dials in London in 1878 that spearheaded the development of girls 'clubs in the UK (Smith 1996, 2005).

Young people came to prominence as a potential social problem after the Second World War, during a period in which young men, in particular, were gaining cultural and economic independence from their families (Skelton and Valentine 1998, p. 10). Emerging forms of youth work grappled with how to 'reach' young people who were not affiliated to organised clubs and, in particular, the most disaffected and challenging 'rebels' or 'hooligans'. In England and Wales, the policy response to these concerns was to appoint a committee in 1958, chaired by Lady Albemarle, to review the contribution that the Youth Service could make in 'assisting young people to play their part in the life of the community'. The resulting 'Albermarle Report' (1960) promised to substantially increase funding to youth services. While most of these resources were attached to club and centre-based provision, some attention was paid to alternative and experimental forms of youth work. Paragraph 187 of the report states:

'Some are too wary or too deeply estranged to accept, at any rate initially, even the slight commitment required by club membership. We should like to see more experiments made to cater for their social needs in the unconstrained way which they appear to seek. We have in mind the coffee bar sited strategically at the sort of place where they tend to congregate, the 'drop-in' club... the experimental youth centre or workshop... We would go even further and suggest there is also a need for experiment with peripatetic youth workers, not attached directly to any organisation or premises, who would work with existing groups or gangs of young people.'

(The Youth Service in England and Wales 1960, paragraph 187)

Detached and outreach work evolved further in recognition that the creation of a universal, 'social educational' service (Davies and Gibson 1967; Jeffs 1979; Crimmens *et al* 2004) would require 'experimental and pioneering' approaches to reach the 'unattached' (Morse 1965; Smith *et al* 1972; Pitts 1996; Pitts *et al* 2002). In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was interest in US-based work with teenage street gangs (Crawford, P, Malamud, D and Dumpson, J 1950) and some UK projects included innovative ways of contacting and working with young people: for example, the Teen Canteen at Elephant and Castle that operated between 1955 and 1962 (Smith *et al* 1972: 6). A number of experimental projects were funded through the 1960s – perhaps the highest profile being the three-year National Association of Youth Clubs project documented in the report 'The Unattached' (Morse 1965). A significant factor in the development of the work was the movement of workers between projects and the networks established. Notable initiatives included a YWCA Project (Goetschius and Tash 1969) and 'Avenues Unlimited' in Tower Hamlets (Cox 1970). Derek Cox's reflections on the work of Avenues Unlimited was pivotal in setting the work in a community development context (Cox 2006). Reaching out to gang affected neighbourhoods also included pioneering outreach to girls as documented by Campbell (1984) in her ethnographic study of 'Girls in the Gang'.

In 1974, 43 out of 86 Local Authorities were undertaking detached work, and by 1998 all but one Local Authority were using it. In the early 1990s, the DfEE funded 28 local authorities in England to

establish 60 youth crime reduction projects; many of which employed outreach and detached work methods in high crime neighbourhoods (Crimmens *et al* 2004). While many of these projects successfully targeted young people at serious risk of offending who were not involved with criminal justice or welfare agencies, the evaluation of this work was obstructed by tensions between the target-led goals of the projects and the user-led ethos of detached and outreach work (France and Wiles 1996). This tension between a user-led ethos and a growing imperative to be target-driven has continued to be an issue for outreach work. From the 1990's onwards, both outreach and detached work have moved towards time-limited, targeted and problem-oriented interventions focusing on achieving specified outcomes (Crimmens *et al* 2004). They now often adopt a case-work, rather than group-work approach and has generally moved away from the tradition of user-led, educational approaches (Jeffs and Smith 2002; Firmstone, 1998).

Relatively little substantial literature was published on either outreach or detached youthwork between the early 1980s and the present day (the exceptions being Green *et al* 2001, Smith 1994, Dadzie 1997 and Kaufman 2001). Most of this published work examines detached youth work as an aspect of broader provision. There is little in-depth exploration or rigorous evaluation of these projects.

#### **HOW HAS OUTREACH BEEN USED TO ADDRESS CSE?**

For many years, outreach has been a method of identifying and providing support for adults involved in prostitution who are traditionally street-based and excluded from mainstream services. From the early 1990's, as services began to be developed for sexually exploited children and young people outreach was widely used to access young people 'abused through prostitution'<sup>4</sup>. Such young people were rarely receiving support from mainstream services, were frequently wary of professionals and often did not perceive themselves as requiring protection. Therefore, early CSE services usually involved some type of outreach activity in order to identify and engage young people, alongside centre-based services, for example 'Streets and Lanes' (1994), 'Sexual Exploitation of Children On the Streets' (SECOS 1998) and 'Street Matters' (2001).

As awareness of CSE has grown so has its recognition as a priority safeguarding issue. This gradually led to CSE services to rely less on outreach as a means of identifying and reaching young people as more referrals were received via other professionals. However, there are still young people, such as those aged 16-21 'selling sex' who are not accessing support and are not readily identified as vulnerable young people (Pearce 2009). Outreach therefore has continued to be an element of many CSE services in order to support individuals who are outside mainstream services and to identify vulnerable children on the streets.

Over the past decade a much broader set of contexts for CSE has been identified (e.g. online, peer-on-peer, gangs and groups) and CSE services have responded by undertaking more diverse forms of

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<sup>4</sup> The language associated with CSE has evolved from the 1990's when it was still common for young people to be referred to as 'child prostitutes', then 'children abused through prostitution'.

outreach with parents and professionals, as well as children. Although not much has yet been written about these, examples of work with parents, families and communities include 'Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation and Families', 'Communities Against Child Sexual Exploitation' (D'Arcy *et al* 2015) and the 'Say Something if you See Something' campaign (NWG Network). Community outreach has also involved targeted prevention work with businesses, e.g. Night Watch, and the development of forms of professional outreach and co-location, e.g. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs, the 'Hub and Spoke' project (Alexi.org.uk).

Outreach with children and young people may now include sessions in schools with groups or individuals. It can also include specific initiatives to reach young people who are least likely to be identified as victims - either by CSE or statutory services. This includes those from Asian Muslim backgrounds (Gohir 2013), those with learning disabilities (Franklin *et al.* 2015), boys and young men (McNaughton-Nicholls *et al* 2014; Leon and Raws 2016), and LGBTQ children and young people (Fox 2015).

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF OUTREACH WORK

Outreach work is underpinned by the principle that it is necessary to reach some young people 'where they are at' - in their own '**places and spaces**'.

In addition, it emphasizes the importance of three further principles:

- '**Trust**': establishing trusting relationships with young people
- '**Choice**': young people engage voluntarily
- '**Control**': Young people co-produce activities and interventions

## PLACE AND SPACE

*'It is no use asking girls, to whom one is unknown; they will not come; they are distrustful of such invitations, and shyness will also prevent them from entering a strange place.'* (Stanley 1890, p. 56 in Batsleer and Davies (eds) 2010)

One of the main decisions that outreach workers need to make is where are the best places and spaces to reach young people. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the majority of ethnographic studies on 'youth' suggested that the space of 'the street' was the only autonomous space that young people were able to carve out for themselves and that 'larking about' on the streets, in parks and in shopping centres was a form of youth resistance to adult power (Skelton and Valentine 1998). Outreach street work therefore became a popular approach – with the term 'street' describing a variety of public indoor and outdoor places that are traditionally 'owned' primarily by adolescents



(as opposed to adults), such as street corners, cafes, public transport hubs, parks, cinemas, shopping malls, spaces in and around schools like school gates, toilets, bike sheds, stairwells and playing fields.

For early CSE projects outreach on the streets was important to engage with children and young people involved in on-street 'prostitution'. There has been a growing awareness of the vulnerability of young people to 'on-street grooming' CEOP (2011).<sup>5</sup> The literature suggests that 'on-street grooming' follows a similar pattern to other forms of grooming, whereby offenders target children on the street and invite or coerce them to go to flats or parties, where other perpetrators are based, or may traffic them for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Kosaraju 2008).

Street-based outreach can be particularly effective in reaching young people at times and in places that are particularly risky:

#### Example 1

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who want to serve their community. They patrol in teams of men and women, usually from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on a Friday and Saturday night, to help people who are out on the streets. Street pastors seek to engage with people wherever they hang out. They typically work in a team and in collaboration with other agencies and projects, both statutory and voluntary. Street pastors offer reassurance, safety and support through listening, caring and helping people involved in the night-time economy. They also patrol popular areas where students go out on Friday or Saturday night, making sure that young people get home safely, ensuring they that have enough money for a taxi or giving them a ride home. These simple steps can dramatically reduce a young person's risk CSE and other abuse.

Outreach with children and young people on the street can also be important in reaching those who go missing. The link between running away, youth homelessness and CSE has been recognised by policy and research since the 1990s (Smeaton 2013).<sup>6</sup> Going missing from home and care has been identified both as a possible indicator and a risk factor for CSE. Street-based outreach work can specifically target young people who work, hang out or live on the streets and offer advice, support or basic provision, such as food, drinks or condoms (Melrose and Barrett 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Norfolk's search for examples of sexual exploitation looked very specifically at cases where two or more men were convicted of offences against girls aged 12 to 16 and where the first meeting had been a street corner, shopping mall, bus stop or train station - or some other similar context.

<sup>6</sup> Estimates suggests that at least 77,000 young people under the age of 16 run away for the first time each year. While there is no national prevalence data on young people experiencing CSE, a 2011 study reported that services across nine areas of England worked with 1,065 sexually exploited young people on one day (Smeaton 2013). In 2011-2012, Barnardo's experienced a 19% increase of young people accessing CSE services on previous years.



### Example 2

'Safe in the City' was set up by the Children's Society in 1990 to offer information, support, advice and advocacy services to children and young people under 18 who live or spend much of their lives on the streets of Manchester because they have run away, or are at risk of, running away from home or care. Many of these young people are involved in CSE.

The project works with young people who are detached from appropriate support services. Street work is mainly undertaken in Manchester city centre and areas where young people gather, including bus and rail stations, amusement arcades, parks and the red-light area.

'Safe in the City' offers a confidential service allowing children and young people to talk about their experiences and enable them to make safer choices and decisions. Project workers go out in pairs, usually on a three-hour street work session. The project operates 'core times' when workers will be at particular locations so that young people can turn up and know that they will be able to speak to a worker. The core times are advertised on contact cards which workers hand out to young people.

(Hayes and Trafford 1997, p. 68)

As these examples illustrate, outreach on the street can be an effective way of reaching vulnerable young people. The 'places and spaces' which are most relevant to young people may be different for diverse groups of young people and may change over time. Street work is likely to be less effective as a means of reaching young people with physical disabilities or young people (particularly girls) from certain faith or ethnic minority backgrounds. Some studies of female and male youth (sub)-cultures and spaces suggested that, while boys' youth culture was mainly street-based, girls' youth culture was bedroom-based with much of girls' leisure time being spent in their own or their friends' homes (McRobbie and Garber 1991; Mitchell and Reid-Walsh 2002; Skelton and Valentine 1998). Important work has been undertaken to look at how to access and engage with girls and young women in more 'private' spaces, focusing specifically on the impact of 'popular' culture on ways that many girls and young women understand their worlds (McRobbie 1994). Today, these considerations may be particularly relevant to the on-line places and spaces occupied by girls and young women (as well as by boys and young men) as discussed below.

### Space and Place in the digital age

The digital age has transformed where and how young people spend time, socialise and communicate, and therefore how workers need to engage and work with them. It is possible that new 'virtual' avenues for grooming have led to the victimisation of young people with a different profile to that of the classic 'victim' of street exploitation. With the proliferation of smartphone usage, many young people now occupy online and physical locations simultaneously. As young

people's virtual and physical realities often overlap, risks can be more difficult for adults to detect and control.

Information technology now forms a core part of formal education in many countries, ensuring that each new generation of children are adept at navigating the virtual world (Davidson *et al* 2011). A survey of child online abuse in Europe revealed substantial changes in children's online behaviours even in the three years between 2005 and 2008.<sup>7</sup> By 2008, children were using the Internet at a younger age and increasingly from home, rather than at school<sup>8</sup> (Livingstone and Haddon 2009, p. 6). The survey found that 39% of 9-10 year olds had internet access in their own bedrooms, increasing to 67% for all 15-16 year olds. In addition, 53% of those who had more private access were from higher economic status households compared to 38% from lower economic status households. Children and young people were spending an average of 86 minutes per day online (Davidson *et al* 2011). All these figures are likely to have increased further in the past few years with survey data struggling to keep up with the pace of change. Some young people now meet many of their needs for interaction with their peers, friendship and fun on-line (Palmer 2015).

The proliferation of young people's online activity suggests that outreach can, and perhaps should, also extend into young people's virtual spaces. Some projects have developed ways in which workers can reach into virtual spaces to engage with young people, for instance, through placing advertisements of services like Childline strategically on websites and chatrooms. Many organisations, such as Relate, Kooth.com, CyberMentors, The Site, txtm8 and Clued Up from Living Well or the Samaritans, offer free and confidential online counselling. Some organisations have developed innovative and interactive methods of engaging with young people in the virtual space:

### Example 3

Self-harm.org is offering an online course called 'Alumina Live' for young people between the ages of 14-18 who turn to self-harm as a way of coping and who would like to find other ways of dealing with the ups and downs of life. The course is offered through a safe platform (using Adobe Connect) and is facilitated by at least two trained and experienced volunteers. It includes therapeutic elements and explores with young people the causes and issues around self-harm, either in a virtual group-environment, or in the privacy of separate chatrooms.

The course is broken up into 6 sessions, which take place online at the same time every week, with the same group of people and same facilitators. The live program delivers

<sup>7</sup> While 70% of 6-17 year olds in the European Union (EU) used the Internet in 2005, this rose to 75% on average by 2008 (Davidson *et al* 2011). The most striking rise has been among younger children – by 2008, 60% of 6-10 year olds were online.

<sup>8</sup> 'By 2008, 6-17 year olds in all EC countries were much more likely to use the Internet at home (65%) than school (57%), and 34% are now going online using their own computer' (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009:6). A 2010 survey of internet use, sampling 1000 9–16 year olds in all EU member states, found a sharp increase of online use with 85% overall using the Internet at home and just under half of all those children having internet access in their bedrooms.

support and encouragement using fully interactive and innovative activities, which have been designed to help a young person take the next step towards recovery.

For young people who are intimidated by group settings and feel more comfortable discovering why they self-harm in a more private setting, there is a separate service called 'Alumina On Demand'. This allows young people to watch pre-recorded sessions and to explore on their own, at their own pace, their experience of self-harm and what it means to them. 'Alumina On Demand' can give some young people the confidence to go onto group sessions, or the tools to access local support.

(Selfharm.org)

#### Example 4

'Girls Effect' is an international initiative that seeks to empower girls around the world by using global online platforms and other models of virtual communication. Deeply rooted in a theory of change, Girls Effect's approach to social norm change uses the latest ideas in media, technology and girl-centred community engagement to challenge discriminatory gender norms and start conversations about how girls are viewed in society. By connecting with girls in their communities and building confidence in their own potential, Girls Effect is seeking to change the way millions of people think, feel and act towards girls.

This is done by:

- Locally rooted girl-powered culture brands that inspire girls and inform those around them through drama, journalism and music. For example, the Ethiopian music, drama and talk show 'Yegna' challenges the way people think about girls – and how girls think of themselves, through storylines that confront real-life issues including early marriage, violence and barriers to education. Since launching in 2013, Yegna has reached millions of people and is provoking conversations about the positive role girls can play in Ethiopian society.
- Interactive technology and real-world safe spaces that connect girls to knowledge and networks that open their world, e.g. through 'Girl Networks', which are online and real world youth clubs that harness the power of fun, inspiring and informative branded content. It includes 'Girls Connect', a free helpline currently being piloted in Nigeria, that gives girls access to on-demand content and conversations, and one-to-one mentorship

Ground-breaking peer-to-peer mobile research technologies that capture a deeper understanding of girls' realities in real-time. 'TEGA' (Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors) is a girl-operated mobile research tool that delivers real, rapid insights into girl's lives. It uses certified data-collection techniques and mobile technology to teach girls aged 18-24 how to collect meaningful, honest data about their world in real time. TEGA's bespoke research

qualification equips girls with employable skills for the future, and generates authentic peer-to-peer insights to inform Girl Effect's work. TEGA is operational in Northern Nigeria - one of the most difficult places in the world for adolescent girls - and is launching into Rwanda, Ethiopia, India and Indonesia in the next 12 months.

(Girl Effect.org)

## Trust

Outreach and detached types of youth work are fundamentally based on a trusting relationship between the worker and the young person. Building and maintaining this trust has implications for outreach and can present some dilemmas. Outreach workers may need to distinguish themselves from mainstream services, and particularly statutory professionals like police, teachers, health workers and youth justice workers, at the same time as working in partnership with them. Young people may want assurances of confidentiality which seem at odds with multiagency information sharing and safeguarding commitments. It is important to maintain the boundaries of confidentiality and safeguarding in an outreach context with clear policies and referral pathways should there be a safeguarding concern. Outreach workers may need a variety of ways of communicating this clearly to young people, appropriate to the specific outreach activity, for instance, verbally, in form of a leaflet or as an online poster.

Successive evaluations of CSE interventions highlight that building relationships based on trust is a first essential step towards a young person's engagement with a service (Scott and Skidmore 2006; Smeaton 2016; Stacey 2009).

### Example 5

Barnardo's SECOS (Sexual Exploitation Children's Outreach Service) in Middlesborough uses an 'assertive outreach' model to engage with young people on their own '*terms and turf*'. It is part of Barnardo's 'four A model' that underpins its work with children and young people affected by, or at risk of CSE (Scott and Skidmore 2006). The four 'As' are:

- Access
- Attention
- Assertive outreach
- Advocacy for young people in need

In the SECOS context 'assertive outreach' involves staff going out on the streets and touring the areas that young people frequent. Workers use a range of techniques, such as frequent text messaging, mobile calls or home visits to establish and maintain contact to the young person identified to be at risk. The persistence of staff in following up on young people, including those that show little interest, is eventually understood and accepted as a genuine

sign of concern for their well-being. The evaluation of SECOS in Middlesbrough found that once trust is established young people are more likely to accept support

(Smeaton 2016; Stacey 2009)

An important element of building trust is the ability of workers to understand CSE and the different ways in which perpetrators exploit children and young people's vulnerabilities alongside an awareness of young people having multiple aspects to their identity (Fox 2015). A young person affected by CSE may be male and have a disability. They may be gay and come from a faith group that does not accept homosexuality. A young person's vulnerability to sexual exploitation is very individual and all aspects of their identity needs to be considered. This has implications for the skill set and characteristics of staff recruited for outreach work (Crimmens *et al* 2004). For example, Safe in the City places workers on the street that are either mixed gender pairs or two women, recognising that young women, particularly those working in a 'red-light' area, may feel intimidated by two approaching male workers (Hayes and Trafford 1997). Some young people may feel more at ease speaking to workers who identify as LGBT. However, the project highlights the importance of not making assumptions about young people's sexuality, particularly boys and young men involved in CSE. Based on their experience of undertaking outreach work in Manchester's 'Gay Village' and red-light district, workers found it harder to gain the trust of boys and young men who were selling sex and who were not 'out'. It was more difficult to engage them in conversations around sexual health and safety.

Trust between outreach workers and some young people can be enhanced by working with and through groups and organisations who are already trusted. Working in partnership with other agencies or individuals with expert or 'inside' knowledge and access to specific groups, e.g. particular faith or ethnic communities, can be particularly effective. Engaging relevant stakeholders can help to identify needs, build trust and draw on established relationships and networks in order to raise awareness of services amongst populations that are marginalised from mainstream society (Barnes *et al* 2005; Barnard and Pettigrew 2003; VAC n.d.). For example, there is a range of specialist agencies that are well-placed to offer outreach activities specifically aimed at young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Linking up with such specialist agencies can assist in mapping needs and in gaining a better understanding of the issues faced by young people in their specific contexts. This is crucial in order to develop appropriate outreach responses. In turn, specialist CSE services can support the outreach work of specialist agencies or local community organisations by ensuring that outreach workers have appropriate levels of awareness and training on CSE to be able to identify risks and to provide adequate responses to children and young people experiencing, or at risk of, CSE.

## Choice and control

Outreach and detached youth workers generally have no physical building or specific activity over which they have power or control and the relationship between a young person and a youth worker is entirely voluntary and constantly up for negotiation (CWVY 2014). Without the formal structure of a service-based intervention, outreach work depends on the young person's willingness to engage with the worker.

Giving a young person a choice to engage with an outreach service, and letting the young person lead on how they want to engage, builds trust. 'Trust', 'Choice' and 'Control' therefore can be seen as interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

### Example 6

MAC-UK is a small grass-roots charity in North London delivering mental health interventions to young people involved in antisocial/gang-related activity. It emerged out a vision to use a Youth-led approach to make mental health support accessible to excluded young people within their own community.

The project has developed a model called 'Integrate'© that aims to reach out to these excluded young people. The approach takes evidence-based approaches to mental health and applies them in new ways in efforts to reduce serious youth violence and re-offending, to engage young people in training, education and employment, and to bring them into existing services.

The Integrate Model emerged out of MAC UK's founding project 'Music and Change' based in Camden. It started with MAC UK's founder hanging out in a local fish and chip shop for six months until members of a local gang asked her what she was doing. She introduced herself and explained she needed their help. What emerged was a model that put mental health workers at the heart of activities which were led by the young people themselves. Music and Change has now evolved into the Integrate Development Project, that is currently focussed on disseminating learning and strategic development of the next steps for the Integrate model. The Integrate Model works intensively for 2 to 4 years with young people who are among the 5% that commit 50% of youth crime and have a history of non-engagement with existing services. It engages young people by giving them the opportunity to create and own a project they find interesting, whether that might be setting up a boxing club or DJ-ing. The approach allows for therapeutic conversations to happen in an informal way. Young people engage in 'streetherapy©' at times and in places they feel comfortable. This can be anywhere, for example on a bus, in a stairwell, or whilst waiting at court. Integrate is being delivered by multi-agency teams on four sites across London and is currently being evaluated by The Centre for Mental Health (CMH). Findings from the evaluation are not



available yet. The 'Music and Change Project', however, was evaluated by CMH over the course of 2010 and 2012. The evaluation found that the project reached and engaged young people who were offending or at the risk of offending, and were not in contact with mainstream services. It showed that it was effective supporting young people's wellbeing and providing mental health interventions.<sup>9</sup>

(CMH; MAC UK; MAC UK 2012)

Giving young people greater control over the work you do with them requires a non-judgemental attitude by workers and the ability to constantly (re)negotiate the working agreement with young people. The key feature is that the way of working is determined by the young person, rather than following an established protocol or programme of work that is promoted by the worker or service.

In terms of both choice and control, outreach offers opportunities to address some of the issues that alienate some young people from accessing mainstream services. Choices relating to staff and location of outreach can be tailored specifically to the target group.

## MODELS OF OUTREACH

The literature discusses different outreach models, each of which present both opportunities and challenges:

Model	Opportunities (+) and Challenges (-)	Example
Home-based <sup>10</sup>	+ Reaches children and young people (cyp) who are home-bound and may not have access to services/information - May compromise anonymity/confidentiality if others are present in the home	Going into young people's homes, for instance, to reach young people with disabilities who are home-bound.
Street-based <sup>11</sup>	+ Reaches those that are not already using services and arguably the most vulnerable populations <sup>12</sup> - Work may be disrupted or discontinued due to the informal	Going out to contact young people in young people's spaces in and around the 'street', targeting individuals.

<sup>9</sup> These included 30% young people for low mood; 27% for anger management; 27% for substance abuse; 23% for relationship issues; 13% for stress management; 10% for trauma; 7% for psychosis and 3% for suicidal ideation (MAC UK 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Referred to as 'domiciliary outreach' in Rhodes (1996)

<sup>11</sup> Referred to as 'detached outreach' in Rhodes (1996)

<sup>12</sup> Children and young people involved in, or at risk of, CSE. Street outreach can work with young people in a holistic way, addressing multiple needs and risk factors.



	nature of working and the transient nature of street life	
Travelling/mobile <sup>13</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Reaches broader populations</li> <li>+ Draws on partner organisation's expert knowledge of the context and target group</li> <li>+ Co-location with partner organisations can facilitate cross-referrals</li> <li>- May create confusion around objectives of outreach</li> <li>- May create conflict (of interest, or fears around 'poaching clients')</li> <li>- May create logistical problems (arranging sessions, etc.)</li> </ul>	Working with other agencies or organisations that have access to, and inside knowledge of, target populations, such as particular BME or other communities.
Satellite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ One-stop shop can create effective outreach and services</li> <li>+ Can deliver training and services to communities that have no access to facilities</li> <li>+ Can be effective for 'hard-to-reach' populations, e.g. refugees and asylum-seekers</li> <li>- Resource-intensive; requires tools and adequate staffing levels</li> <li>- Can be logistically challenging</li> </ul>	Making a service more accessible by sending a worker from one centre into a satellite location (e.g. Hub and Spoke project or the 'BIG Bus Project').
Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Comprehensive and tailored response to cyp's needs and contexts</li> <li>- Resource-intensive</li> <li>- Requires stakeholder commitment</li> </ul>	Mapping the locations, in which young people are at risk, and using outreach as one strategy to intervene in those spaces.
Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Actively engages and trains cyp in awareness-raising and promoting services</li> <li>+ Adds authenticity</li> <li>-Resource-intensive as cyp need training and support</li> </ul>	Training young people to deliver outreach services to peers (e.g. Barnardo's SECOS).

<sup>13</sup> Referred to as 'peripatetic outreach' in Rhodes (1996)

	- May not be appropriate for all outreach activities and cyp	
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## THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF OUTREACH

Fritz *et al* (2016) suggest that outreach provides the following benefits:

- Enhancing worker's ability to understand young people's perspectives.
- Addressing need and risk in the context of young people's lived realities.
- Trust between outreach workers and young people facilitates access to and engagement with highly vulnerable individuals and groups.

Outreach and detached youth work offers unique opportunities to engage with young people in their own social environments. It enables workers to develop a greater understanding of young people's perspectives and lived experiences (Whelan 2010). By entering young people's spaces, practitioners can develop relationships that enable them to better assess and improve a young person's safety within the contexts that put young people at risk (Fritz *et al* 2016). Within these contexts, workers can create safe spaces, in which young people can review their views and behaviours and consider healthier alternatives. In some circumstances, workers may be able to transform risky environments by addressing what created risk in the first place.

However, a central dilemma of outreach work in the present day is that its core principles of reaching out to young people on their own terms and giving them the choice and control over the work that is undertaken, frequently runs counter to policy and funding requirements. As the context in which projects work has become increasingly target driven there has been more and more pressure on projects to focus on specific outcomes for target populations. Workers delivering outreach therefore frequently encounter the following challenges:

- Policy agendas can restrict workers' freedom to work as they see fit.
- Funding pressures emphasise individualised outcomes on specific issues.
- Lack of long-term funding commitment undermines workers' ability to establish trust and relationships with young people, which takes time, and to offer young people continuity (JRF 2004).

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTREACH?

*'It is very difficult to measure what you have prevented.'*

(Interviewee in Crimmens *et al* 2004, p. 59)

Outreach work is rarely evaluated rigorously. Evaluation has been limited by a lack of time and resources and it is intrinsically difficult to assess the impact of outreach: changes for young people over time are difficult to measure and cannot be attributed to the intervention of an outreach worker alone.

There is however some evidence that outreach can act as a catalyst for positive change in young people's lives. A study of street-based youth work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2004) showed that contact with street workers appeared to have helped young people in many areas of their lives. Of 76 randomly selected young people in touch with projects:

- Almost 29% were unemployed or not in education or training when the research team first visited the project. This fell to 21% at the second visit 3-6 months later.
- Those with no income and not in receipt of benefits fell from 24% to 20% between visits.
- Those deemed to be a core member of a group associated with 'anti-social' activity declined from 18% to 4%.
- Regular attendance and active participation in youth activities rose from 26% to 37%; the proportion banned from youth provision dropped from 3% to 0.
- The numbers known to be offending diminished by almost a third.
- The proportion in adequate accommodation rose from 62% to 68% and the numbers sleeping rough fell from 7% to 1.5%.
- The number of young people maintaining contact with statutory welfare agencies over the period increased from 4% to 15%.

There is also some research which helps to identify the elements of effective outreach:

### Scoping needs and resources

The starting point of an effective outreach strategy should be a scoping stage to fully identify the needs and issues of the target area and/or group, assess the range of approaches that are most likely to work and match these needs and planned activities against the available skills and resources. Scoping may involve speaking to relevant stakeholders, getting a 'feel' for the local area by hanging out in different locations at different times, mapping existing services, identifying local issues and locating spaces and places where vulnerable children may be (Smeaton 2014). This can build a more accurate picture of the local context and a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the target group.

Scoping should include considerations around diversity and inform thinking around how to make outreach accessible to all vulnerable young people. It can inform strategic decisions relating to the outreach team's own capacity to reach diverse target groups and to set realistic boundaries around goals and expectations of what the planned outreach activity is likely to achieve. It may highlight the need to link up with specialist agencies or to delegate/outsource outreach services to organisations that are better suited to reach and deliver services to particular groups or in specific communities.

### **Understanding and responding to context**

Firmin (2015a) has developed a contextual safeguarding approach, which recognises and responds to the social spaces in which peer on peer sexual exploitation occurs. This approach recognises that young people's behaviours, vulnerabilities and resilience are all informed by the public / social contexts in which young people spend their time. Within young people's social environments, contextual safeguarding explores how abusive behaviours can be disrupted and how these spaces can be made safer:

#### **Example 7**

Contextual safeguarding involves mapping the spaces and locations, in which young people are at risk, using outreach as one strategy to intervene in those spaces. It may entail making those spaces safer, for instance, through a safe adult being present with a group or on the street, or, by installing better lighting in parks or bike sheds.

It typically includes elements of detached work, either in groups or on an individual basis, encouraging young people to think about their own safety in different environments. Workers may engage a young person within their peer groups and neighbourhoods and focus on the individual's resilience to risk. In practice, this might involve a conversation between a worker and a young person during which they agree upon measures for staying safe in different situations. Other times, workers might talk about safety during planned activities. Planned activities can attract young people to sessions, during which workers can address some of the issues that put young people at risk (Fritz *et al* 2016).

### **Using a range of approaches flexibly**

In general, the more types of outreach strategies employed in a local area the greater the chance of engaging target populations (Rhodes 1996). This may involve a combination of methods that complement each other, selecting those that are most likely to work with particular groups and being prepared to change tactics if the chosen approach stops being effective. An evaluation of Checkpoint's Sexual Exploitation Live Freely Project, for instance, suggested that drop-in facilities provided by specialist CSE services were underused by young people (Smeaton 2014). Instead, it was proposed that workers' time may be more effectively spent delivering outreach in schools to

children and young people affected by CSE not known to services or addressing community involvement and building relationships with local businesses.

### **Building organisational and staff capacity**

The Checkpoint evaluation (Smeaton 2014) also suggested that the following factors can support outreach work:

- The project delivering outreach work being well-established in the local area adds credibility and facilitates cross-referrals of children and young people identified through outreach to other agencies.
- Outreach needs to be supported by a good understanding across the organisation of why the work is important, an appreciation of what outreach entails and how it should be supported.
- Outreach being carried out by voluntary sector agencies which generally have more freedom to deliver work in creative ways than most statutory agencies.
- Recruiting practitioners who are knowledgeable about both outreach work and CSE.
- Building relationships with children and young people based upon trust and giving priority and time to the relational aspects of the work
- Having outreach workers with the ability to effectively engage and communicate with children and young people.
- Making the links between outreach and specialist services so that children and young people can be referred to specialist support to address CSE.

Outreach workers need a range of personal and technical skills to effectively engage with the target population. These include listening and counselling skills, negotiation skills, diplomacy, honesty, building rapport, developing a trusting relationship; and training on using different outreach tools, e.g. conversation; discussion; debate; materials and games adapted for street settings (Kaufman 2001; Trafford and Hayes 1997). More detailed information on outreach skills and training can be found in the list of handbooks and guidance.

Teamwork, based on clear roles, boundaries and understanding of individual workers' style and approach, is central to outreach work. Outreach should be framed by clear policies and guidelines to support teams and individual members of staff (Trafford and Hayes 1997). These should include regular supervision, peer support, staff meetings and access to counselling.

It can be helpful to agree aims and outcomes for both workers and young people to give some structure and direction to an otherwise fairly informal piece of work. While it might be challenging to measure these outcomes, it may still be helpful to set goals, like increased confidence, assertiveness, level of awareness around 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. As mentioned previously, 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. Risks to staff can be minimised by procedures which include street-based outreach workers going out in pairs, which, in addition to ensuring staff safety, can also help with building rapport with young people. 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 can highlight potential safety hazards and other risk factors that should then be evaluated and addressed appropriately.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUTREACH WORK

In summary:

There is little evidence on the effectiveness of outreach because very little has been robustly evaluated. However, evaluation 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 motivate them to use existing services.
- Raising awareness and advertise 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:

- 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 LGBTQ 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
- 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.

## HANDBOOKS AND GUIDANCE ON OUTREACH

Barnardo's (2014) *Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation A Practitioners' Resource Pack*;  
<http://www.cnesiar.gov.uk/childprotectioncommittee/documents/guidance%20on%20child%20sexual%20exploitation.pdf>

Barrett, D (ed) (1997) *Child Prostitution in Britain: Dilemmas and practical responses*. London: The Children's Society.

CWVY (2014) *Detached and Outreach Youth Work Method and Resource Handbook for Youth Work Practitioners in Wales*; <http://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HB-Detached-and-Outreach-Youth-Work.pdf>

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