

TACKLING ORGANISED

EXPLOITATION

PROGRAMME

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Organised Sexual Exploitation**

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Strategic Update

I am pleased to be writing this update on my first official day as TOEX Programme Director. I would like to begin by thanking Kate Thacker for her outstanding leadership and the strong foundation she has established. The thorough handover she provided, alongside the continued dedication of the team, has made for a seamless transition, one I am extremely grateful for. I have also received a warm welcome from across the TOEX network, reflecting the strength of this community.

Even before formally taking up the role, I had the opportunity to join partnership meetings and attend ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions where colleagues share innovative practice across regions. It is already clear that TOEX is built on a culture of openness, collaboration, and continuous improvement, and it is fair to say I am hitting the ground running.

TOEX has a clear mission: to enhance the response to the exploitation of vulnerable people through the effective use of technology, supported by expert staff embedded across ROCUs and working alongside the wider law enforcement community on investigations and intelligence development. What stands out is how this is delivered through genuinely joined up working across regions, agencies, and partners.

In preparing for this role, I reviewed the 2025–26 End of Year Report. Among many achievements, one figure stood out: operations supported by TOEX are reaching disruption activity 20% faster. This demonstrates that the model is working. Speed matters - it has a direct impact on outcomes for victims and enables investigators to progress cases more effectively.

The TOEX Capabilities Environment continues to grow, with new users joining each week. Tools built by TOEX, for TOEX and the wider law enforcement community, are directly accelerating investigations. With further developments planned this year, there is significant opportunity to build on this momentum.



Many of you will have seen TOEX's contribution to Operation Beaconport, the national policing response to group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse. The technical team's work to design and deliver a single national application for forces to submit material demonstrates both pace and quality. Ongoing work on data visualisation and analytical support will continue to strengthen this response, and the effort behind this delivery deserves recognition.

Partnership working is fundamental to TOEX. Strong relationships already exist with Government, industry partners, and the wider law enforcement community. Looking ahead, I am keen to build on this by strengthening collaboration, ensuring we remain aligned, avoid duplication, and maximise collective impact. This includes embracing opportunities through initiatives such as Police AI and the National Data Integration and Exploitation Service.

Embedding staff within each ROCU is a key strength, providing local insight alongside national consistency. At the same time, it is vital that every voice is heard. Recent wellbeing training has provided valuable feedback on what is working well and where we can improve. These insights will help shape how we evolve as a programme.

As I take on this role, my priority is to build on the strong platform already in place, supporting our people, strengthening partnerships, and driving innovation that delivers tangible results. No single organisation can address the complexity of exploitation alone, but through collaboration and joined-up working, we can make a real difference.

I am proud to be part of TOEX and look forward to working with you all in the months ahead.

T/Detective Chief Superintendent Doug Blackwood
TOEX Programme Director

Case Study: Disrupting Organised Sexual Exploitation

TOEX were tasked to support an Avon and Somerset investigation involving serious sexual exploitation offences – resulting in the conviction of a dangerous offender.

The investigation originated during the analysis of communications linked to a known brothel owner. Officers identified a message exchange between the brothel owner and a sex worker, referencing a male individual, known only by an alias, who appeared to be facilitating the movement of women between brothel locations.

Recognising the potential significance of this individual, the force requested support from TOEX and its specialist resources to trace and identify the suspect.

The TOEX Response

Enquiries confirmed the offender to be a managed Registered Sex Offender (RSO) living in the community, so working collaboratively with the offender manager, TOEX progressed detailed intelligence development. This included the acquisition and analysis of phone data and financial records, which revealed a clear pattern of nationwide travel to known brothels and key transport hubs, including Bristol Airport.

Further analysis linked the suspect to the online advertisement of sex workers, strengthening the intelligence picture of his role in supporting the movement and organisation of individuals involved in sex work.

One key journey identified by TOEX proved pivotal. CCTV captured the suspect collecting a female, later confirmed to be a sex worker. Financial enquiries provided additional insight, showing that despite claiming benefits and having no declared employment, the suspect was receiving regular payments for what he described as “transportation services.”

TOEX's proactive scanning work identified a further critical line of enquiry involving an Airbnb property suspected to be operating as a brothel. When uniformed officers attended the location, the suspect was found parked nearby.

In addition, TOEX coordinated the comprehensive review of body-worn video (BWV), CCTV footage, and neighbouring doorbell cameras. This work secured compelling evidence placing the suspect directly at the scene and ensured that timely, actionable intelligence was provided to the Officer in the Case (OIC).

A coordinated day of action was subsequently planned and executed with TOEX providing on-the-ground support during the arrest, search, and seizure phase, attending the suspect's address alongside officers. At the property, officers discovered the suspect was actively running a brothel from his flat, with two sex workers present.

TOEX's involvement continued beyond the arrest. The team supported the suspect's interview strategy, preparation of the remand file, and the forensic examination

of seized devices. While the case progressed toward court, TOEX analysts and the Intelligence Development Officer (IDO) strengthened the prosecution case further by:

- Producing evidential statements
- Completing sensitive disclosure schedules
- Advising on securing both a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO/STPO) and POCA proceedings relating to seized cash.

In April 2026, the defendant pleaded guilty to arranging or facilitating travel of another person with a view to exploitation and keeping a brothel. On 11 June, 62-year-old Joseph Pike, of York Road in Bedminster, was given a 49-month prison sentence, as well as a seven-year Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order.

This case highlights the critical role TOEX plays in tackling organised sexual exploitation. By combining intelligence development, analytical expertise, and operational support, TOEX provided a comprehensive package that enabled investigators to build a strong evidential case.

The operation demonstrates how effective partnership working and specialist capability can disrupt those who exploit vulnerable individuals and ensure they are brought before the courts.



Operation Beaconport Update

Following the National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which was completed by Baroness Casey, the NCA, supported by the NPCC, TOEX and the CSE Taskforce commenced Operation Beaconport.

Operation Beaconport will review cases where police forces (across England and Wales) and/or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) made the decision to take no further action (NFA) against suspects between 1 January 2010 and 31 March 2025, and will run alongside the national public inquiry, announced by the Government following Baroness Casey's audit.

Between October 2025 and January 2026, the TOEX Programme worked with NCA colleagues and a handful of trial forces to define the data requirements to enable the review process.

This challenge included identifying the right cases from across the country, including those in both current and legacy crime recording systems, and even sometimes those recorded and stored solely in paper records.

The challenge also sought to capture investigative tactics applied to group-based offending, the ethnicities, vulnerabilities and care status of those noted in each investigation, and the rationale surrounding the NFA decisions.

These data points will provide Operation Beaconport with the ability to not only focus on the right cases to review but will also open previously untapped opportunities to analyse and understand national, regional and local trends in this type of investigation.

Between mid-January 2026 and 4 March 2026 a dedicated application was delivered at pace by the TOEX Technical Team to allow the capture of this data. This has enabled every police force to submit relevant data to Op Beaconport.

As the deadline for the data capture has now been reached, work is finalising on the next part of the Op Beaconport application. An extension to the application will allow dedicated Op Beaconport reviewers the ability to select submitted cases on a risk basis and, where necessary, automate a request to the relevant force asking for case papers to facilitate a review. The application will then enable the review teams to consider the case content and will facilitate the tracking of decision making as to review outcomes.

Looking forward, work is underway to provide advanced analytics on the Beaconport data set to identify previously hidden networks of both threat and vulnerability, with operational staff being recruited into the TOEX Programme to develop these insights into real world interventions.

Tech Futures

2025

FUTURE
2026

The achievements of the TOEX Technical Team between January 2024 to March 2026 have been impressive and have broken new ground in delivering operational capabilities at pace into frontline policing workplaces.

In the two years since the Capabilities Environment was turned on, the team have:

- Secured over 6,000 registrations from all police forces in England and Wales.
- Delivered 11 secure operational applications, which have been accessed over 54,600 times against operational need.
- Delivered over £63 million in savings opportunities and over 55,000 hours of time saved.

What has become clear during this delivery is that the staffing model which existed throughout this period needed updating. Aligned with this update was an ambition to tackle the well documented recruitment and retention problems that policing faces across the technical landscape.

To ensure the programme's technical provision remains capable and enthused about the mission to deliver agile solutions to policing problems, a refreshed vision of the technical team has been approved and is now in the process of HR validation before starting recruitment. The model enables career graded practitioners to operate in job "families" to develop specialisms. Supervisory positions are layered on top of these practitioner roles allowing career progression for those interested.

The delivery of a refreshed staffing model does not change the aspirations to deliver new capabilities to policing. To that end, a work plan for the period April '26 to March '27 has been agreed which will see:

- Ongoing delivery against the national policing operation Op Beaconport.
- The delivery of a dedicated accessibility application to assist colleagues with neuro-diverse requirements.
- An application allowing an automated wash of investigative data against defined threat thematic known datasets.
- A lightweight ability to quickly network chart investigative or intelligence data.
- A full refactor of the Companies House application to include new search functions and improved outputs.
- Improvements to the Translation, Transcription, Wing It and Client Eye apps, with new functionality added to all of them.
- The delivery of a document parsing application which will convert difficult to read content (for example structured PDFs) into content that can be easily used in both TOEX and other tools.

The delivery of these tools and the refreshed staffing model follow reviews by the SOC and NDAO portfolios, demonstrating that in an ever-evolving technical landscape, the programme and other portfolios are keen to ensure that there is a minimal amount of duplication of effort and maximal return to frontline colleagues.

TOEX Spotlight – EMSOU

Operation Stonebarrow

EMSOU TOEX supported Operation Stonebarrow - a Derbyshire Police investigation involving child sexual exploitation that began in 2024 following the arrest of an offender on suspicion of engaging in sexual communication with a child and possessing indecent images of a child (IIOC).

Following a review of digital devices seized from the offender, it was established they were involved in many WhatsApp group chats, with the total combined membership across these groups being more than 23,500 users. Chats involved the sharing of IIOC and arranging to meet children for sexual activity.

To inform a true understanding of the threat, TOEX work focused on the attribution and identification of the chat group users and potential victims within the

UK. As such, the team set out to identify approximately 100 individuals within the UK, including telephone numbers and other identifying entities. The team faced multiple challenges, the main due to a time lapse between offending periods and the present day, and limited development opportunities against any identified entities.

Alongside the tactical workstreams, TOEX assisted in presenting Operation Stonebarrow at the National CSA Intelligence and Investigation Group meeting, which promoted liaison between EMSOU TOEX, Derbyshire Police, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Hydrant Programme for peer/operational reviews. Following the meeting and operational briefing, the NCA agreed to support with the aim of establishing upstream international and online work, and the identification of any CSA-OCG networks.



Some members of the EMSOU TOEX team attended the national CSAE Conference

East Midlands Special Operations Unit



As a result, TOEX work identified two further potential victims of the subject, one of which followed excellent work by the TOEX Intelligence Development Officer, who spent three days trying to identify and locate the victim with only elements of a school uniform as a starting point.

In total, 11 further crimes were recorded and transferred to the relevant forces across the UK, resulting in seven individuals being arrested. The offender was the first within the UK to be charged with participating in the criminal activities of an OCG relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation offending and was sentenced and jailed in March 2026 for 10 years. Additionally, the offender received a lifetime Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

The collaborative theme continued throughout the afternoon with interactive carousel style roundtable sessions. Facilitated by ROCU colleagues, representatives from eight different EMSOU units rotated between tables to deliver informal 'get to know you' discussions focused on their respective capabilities, including TOEX, RPIU, GAIN.

This format created a relaxed environment that encouraged questions, shared learning and open conversations that may not have taken place in a more traditional setting.

SharePoint Best Practice

Since October 2025, EMSOU TOEX has used SharePoint to store operational data, improving collaboration and efficiency.

Although initially unfamiliar, consistent use of metadata and training made it more effective than traditional folders. SharePoint enables simultaneous editing, enhanced search within documents, and centralised storage, supporting RRD processes.

A limitation is that Chorus CIS still requires networked folders for uploads, though files can be deleted once stored in portals.

Best practices include major/minor version control, highlighting disseminated documents to preserve records, and consistent naming conventions, enabling easy organisation, clear identification, and quick access to relevant operational information.

Showcasing Capabilities

EMSOU's capabilities were showcased at a successful regional Lead Responsible Officer (LRO) training day which brought colleagues from five forces together.

The unit delivered a CPD event on Monday 20 April at Leicestershire Police HQ, with about 70 delegates from Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire attending.

Coordinated by TOEX's DI Emma Rowntree, alongside DSU Lee McBride, and Business Staff Officer Charlotte Hannibal, the event was designed to promote engagement, collaboration and understanding of regional capabilities.

Day in the Life – Senior Intelligence Analyst

This feature piece has been written by Senior Intelligence Analyst, Lee Allen, from our Tarian team, following questions posed by the TOEX network.

It will be a regular article in the e-magazine exploring the range of roles TOEX staff do across the network.

What do you think about the development pathways for analysts, particularly for those that want to remain technical with limited people management?

This question brought to mind a couple of outstanding analysts who tried management but found it wasn't for them. They remain hugely valuable and have taught me tons. People like this are essential for continuity, mentoring, innovation, and retaining knowledge. Ideally, we would have two clear pathways: one into leadership and another into technical specialism.

That structure doesn't exist in UK policing, but with the changes expected through Police Reform and the formation of the NPS, there is opportunity to take a national approach for analyst development. Strong teams need both capable leaders and technical specialists and keeping that depth of expertise makes us more effective.

For analysts who want to remain technical, I'd encourage seeking out project work, secondments, and opportunities to lead on innovation. For senior analysts, it's equally important to recognise and support these people, ensuring they feel valued without needing to take on management responsibilities.

Where do you hope policing evolves in the next 10 years?

The vision of the Police Reform White Paper is promising. Our current structure in the UK is fragmented, and while we do a lot well, those structures hold us back. Reform will take time and there will be challenges, but in the long term I am confident it will make us stronger.

I hope the changes enable us to become more proactive. With centralised systems and more connected data, we should be able to understand threat, risk, and harm more effectively. There is already a lot of intelligence available that is not fully utilised, and our work in TOEX shows what is possible when things are joined up.

This will bring challenges in terms of prioritisation and unmet demand. However, we can only tackle threats effectively if we understand their true scale. Crime will never be eliminated, but with the right structure, tools, and investment, we can be in a much better position to act earlier and keep people safe.

What do you think the role of a Senior Analyst looks like and what do you think a good senior analyst should do well for the team?

They should advocate for their team (be the #1 fan), provide clear direction, maintain high standards, and support



delivery through guidance and leadership. The role sits between analysts and decision makers, ensuring work is relevant and meaningful while managing expectations.

A good senior analyst should be approachable, communicate clearly, prioritise effectively, and create an environment where analysts feel supported and confident. It is important that the team knows you have their back.

What would be expected of a senior analyst in terms of involvement within the jobs?

This varies depending on experience and demand. My approach is to maintain awareness of all operations, but the analysts are in charge and will know their work better than me. I expect them to come to me regarding support, ideas, or blockers.

I avoid micromanaging and give them my trust. We have regular team meetings and one-to-ones. For newer staff, I provide more guidance and help them think through gaps and opportunities.

Do you do your own QA for the team, or do you rely on peer QA?

Quality assurance is a shared responsibility. Analysts take ownership of their work, supported by strong peer input. I review

products before they are shared, and depending on the work, others may also provide input. For researcher tasks, I rely on analysts to spot check and highlight inconsistencies.

What does a typical day look like as a senior analyst?

There is no typical day, but tasks include managing priorities, providing guidance, scoping support, and engaging internally and externally. Much of the role is problem solving and ensuring the team is supporting the right work.

Should a senior analyst be able to carry out the tasks expected of the analysts?

100%. It maintains credibility and allows you to support the team when needed. Guidance will not land if the team doesn't trust your expertise. However, this must be balanced with delivering projects, representing the team, and managing workloads.

How do you manage job allocation?

I try to balance workload while considering strengths and development. This can be challenging due to when operations land, so flexibility is key. My priority is ensuring delivery while creating opportunities where possible.





How do you manage team welfare?

Everyone is different, so understanding how people respond to stress is important. The work can expose staff to difficult material, so regular check ins and support are important.

Outside of work, people have their own pressures. The key is ensuring people feel valued, supported, and able to speak openly.

How did you become a Senior Intelligence Analyst?

I graduated from Swansea Uni with a Business degree before moving to London. This was during the financial crisis and I struggled for months to find work. Through persistence and luck, I secured an admin role with the Canadian High Commission. I quickly realised that public service was the career for me.

I went on to work at the US Embassy and then the Australian High Commission, where I spent over six years across a few roles including analysis. On returning to Wales, I joined South Wales Police as an Intelligence Analyst, working across major and organised crime. I later became a Team Leader before progressing into a Senior Intelligence Analyst role. I wanted to move into a senior role to influence, support development, and improve how analysis is used within policing.

Lee, you seem to focus on the technical side - why?

I am a nerd and enjoy the technical side, but the key for me is how tools are applied operationally. Tools need to be practical,

accessible, and embedded in everyday work. that's when it adds value. TOEX has trailblazed in this approach. It is part of why I love working for the Programme.

Where do you see your development?

Opportunities beyond Senior Analyst are limited, but there is still a lot to achieve in my current role. I plan to continue building technical, leadership, and project management skills, while looking for ways to innovate and contribute nationally.

Lucy Rogers, our Intelligence and Analytics Lead has been a real influence on me. It was hearing Lucy speak at a meeting that made me apply for the role. Locally Mike Parry MBE has provided long-term support and guidance.

What has been the most challenging aspect of your role?

One challenge is ensuring intelligence is acted upon. This highlights the importance of networking and building relationships. Understanding who to engage with and when is critical to ensuring opportunities are not missed.

Have you got any advice for anyone wanting to progress to senior analyst?

Review the role requirements, identify gaps, and seek opportunities to develop to fill them. If these are not available locally, look across the wider TOEX network.

Find mentors and observe how they make decisions. Understand how they consider different perspectives and priorities.

Interesting Reads and Useful Links



The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner has published a new report looking at the risks that could shape the prevalence and nature of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) through to 2036: [New Report: Anticipating Exploitation: A Futures Analysis | Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner](#)



The Home Office has announced £100 million to fight child sex offences and protect victims and survivors, including £38 million for Operation Beaconport: [Record funding to tackle grooming gangs and child sex abuse - GOV.UK](#)



The NPCC and NCA are calling for restrictions on under-16s' access to online platforms whose design features enable criminals to harm children: [Under-16s' access to social media - NPCC and NCA's position](#)



Ofcom announced it is strengthening its Illegal Content Codes by introducing a new recommendation that tech firms use automated detection technology to reduce the spread of illegal intimate images online: [Platforms should use detection technology to stop spread of illegal intimate images online, under strengthened Ofcom Codes](#)



The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) has published its new Sharing information to tackle child sexual abuse guide: [Sharing information - our new guide for professionals | CSA Centre](#)



Internet Matters is running a new campaign, Every Child Safe Online, encouraging parents of children with additional needs to access tailored resources and advice to support their child's online experiences: [Supporting children with additional needs online | Internet Matters](#)

Upcoming Partnership Events



The Blue Light Show – 1 July:
[What Else Events - The Blue Light Show, July 2026](#)



Police Superintendents' Association Conference – 14 September:
[Annual Conference | Police Superintendents' Association](#)



Emergency Services Show – 16 September:
[Welcome to The Emergency Services Show](#)



Tackling Domestic Abuse Digital Conference – 23 September:
[Tackling Domestic Abuse Conference - Westminster Insight](#)



Agentic AI in the Public Sector Conference – 24 September:
[Agentic Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector Conference - Westminster Insight](#)



Notes

More Information



Website www.toexprogramme.co.uk



LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/tackling-organised-exploitation-programme



YouTube [TOEX Programme](#)

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