

TACKLING ORGANISED

# EXPLOITATION

PROGRAMME

Issue 2 | July – September 2022

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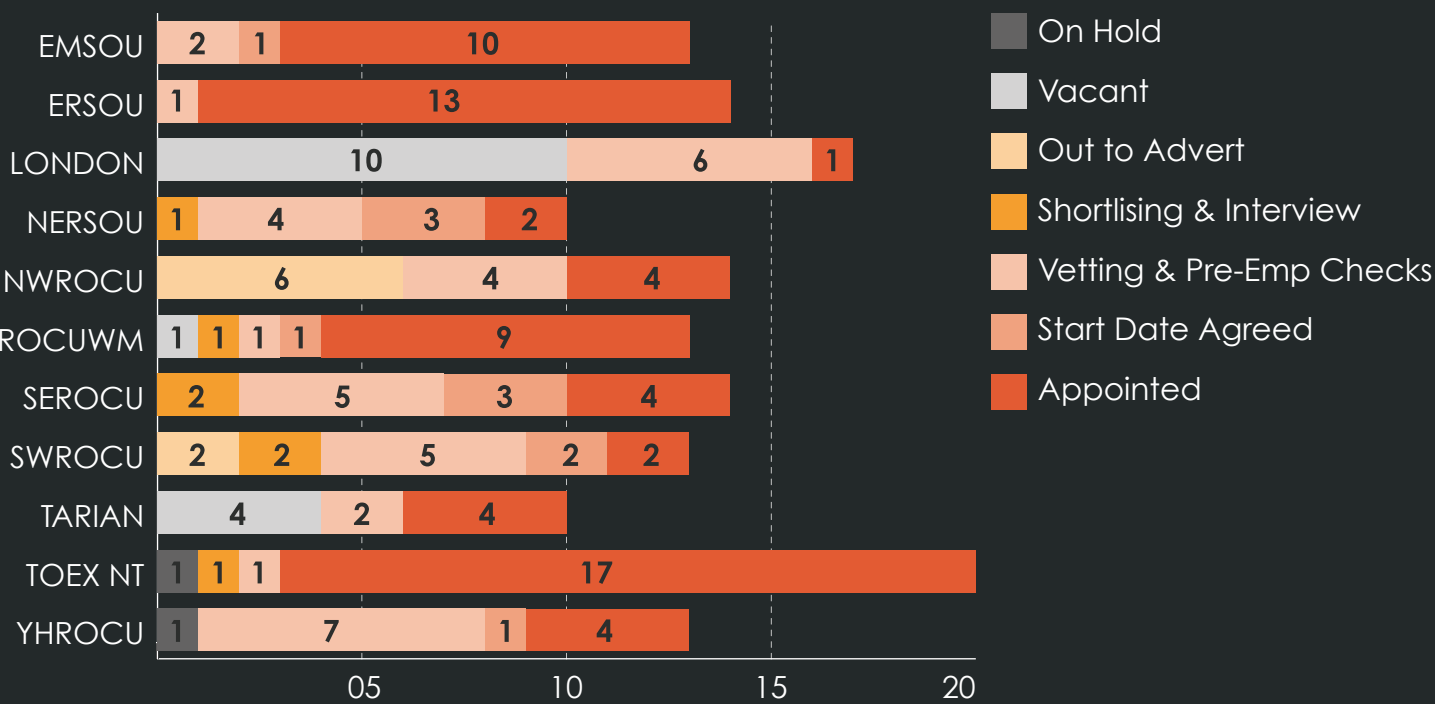
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# Strategic update

Welcome to the second edition of the TOEX E-Magazine, which will update you with progress regarding our operational activity, effective partnership collaborations and technical achievements in the last quarter, as well as looking forward to upcoming events this autumn.

Our national and regional teams have been working hard to select, onboard and train operational staff within every region, with great care given to cast the net widely for valuable intelligence and analytical resources. Despite the inevitable challenges of onboarding nearly 200 TOEX colleagues across the UK, this uplift is anticipated to be completed this quarter.

Those who have already started are being supported via in-house mentoring, high-quality bespoke training, and the provision of the best technical tools available.



Accurate as of 21.09.22

TOEX National Strategic Coordinator T/DCS Kate Thacker said:

"Operational performance is going from strength to strength, with well over 100 investigations supported across the ROCUs to date. The value of the investment in resources dedicated to the threat of organised exploitation is evident, with many of those serious and complex investigations resulting in significant disruptions, safeguarding opportunities and arrests.

"I have been particularly impressed with the support from our national and international colleagues, to name the NCA and Europol amongst them, who have embraced the TOEX operating model with enthusiasm and continue to work with us and European investigators on tackling the upstream criminality, which has so often before evaded our reach.

"As we build a nationwide network of expertise and opportunity, I would recommend force safeguarding and investigations leads reach out to their regional TOEX team to ensure local officers have a good understanding of the capacity and capabilities available in the ROCU to support their investigations."

In the next edition, we will focus on the technical enablers being developed and operationalised by the TOEX Programme, including an update on; the capabilities environment; the deployment of app-based tools to support operational demand; and how these will be made available to investigators for the effective, timely management of heavy workloads.



# How TOEX is contributing to policing's response to VAWG

The focus on violence against women and girls (VAWG), both within policing and also in the public domain, continues to be a priority. Over the last few months, there have been painful reminders of just how important the work to tackle VAWG is, both internally and externally. The murders of Hina Bashir and Zara Aleena sparked shock in the local communities and the ensuing high profile misconduct outcomes from forces across the country continue to make headlines, and have a significant impact on the many officers, staff, and volunteers working hard every day to serve the public.

In August, TOEX held a dedicated workshop, which was attended by the national policing lead for VAWG, Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth, and Assistant Chief Constable Iain Raphael, the Director of Operational Standards at the College of Policing, as well as colleagues from the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) and Simpson Associates, an industry technical partner working with TOEX.

The aim of the workshop was to showcase what TOEX is doing to tackle VAWG, through its operational delivery and technical work streams, focusing on the scale of

VAWG within high harm offending and organised criminality at a national level, as well as discussing opportunities for further collaboration and solutions moving forward. An important part of VAWG communications is to recognise where policing needs to learn lessons – but also where policing is delivering some fantastic outcomes across the 4Ps (prepare, prevent, protect, and pursue). TOEX has evidenced outcomes in all of these areas.

Speaking after the workshop, DCC Blyth said,

**"Today has been really encouraging, hearing how TOEX is targeting high-harm offences that blight our communities and the link between serious organised criminality and the prevalence of VAWG. I think what TOEX is doing in this space is really important."**

"As the national coordinator, driving the policing response to VAWG, I really welcome the opportunity for collaboration with TOEX as a capability that will help police forces tackle this epidemic of violence."



Throughout the day, DCC Blyth heard a number of workstream updates, including operational delivery, the technical enablers, recruitment and retention strategies, and the communications and stakeholder engagement work streams.

In addition, the team highlighted the work being undertaken by the dedicated analytical and intelligence teams throughout the regions, focusing on a number of case studies through the VAWG lens, which reinforced that these investigations are hugely complex, transient in terms of force borders and epitomise poly-criminality.

TOEX remains at the cutting edge of technical innovation and the workshop provided an opportunity to spotlight the programme's technical enablers, including: plans to uplift the TOEX data platform to a national host; and to create a capabilities environment, offering the ability to securely develop, test and share data tools and capabilities utilising policing data more effectively to tackle SOC at a local, regional, and national level.

DCC Blyth welcomed investment in innovation and enhanced technology saying, "We live in a digital world and we know that the digital crime footprint is huge, even more so since the pandemic. It is vital that we know what is promising practice and I think we need to invest more in national coordination around a digital response to crime."

Over the next few months, the VAWG portfolio has a number of crucial key milestones, including the publication of the response to the HMICFRS report, showcasing what has been delivered in the 12-months since DCC Blyth came into post, as well as the launch of national communications campaigns.

Rebuilding trust and confidence, which is so strongly linked to VAWG, is a priority that runs throughout all the work being done in this area.

Speaking about the importance of effective communications and stakeholder engagement, DCC Blyth said,

**"Our number one priority is trust and confidence from women and girls across our different communities across the country. We want women and girls to feel confident to report crime to the police, feel confident that we will respond to it, and we will take it seriously."**

"We also want to talk about the positive work that policing is already doing in tackling VAWG and the relentless pursuit of offenders who commit these offences. It's important we showcase this through our campaigns and comms work."



# Home Office – ‘Enough’ campaign

In March this year, the Government launched, ‘Enough’, a new multi-year behaviour change campaign designed to help tackle violence against women and girls.

You can see the campaign video [here](#).

The campaign includes television adverts, billboards, social media and radio advertising. It highlights different forms of abuse and the simple acts that anyone can take to safely challenge perpetrators. Forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) represented include street harassment, coercive control, unwanted touching, workplace harassment, revenge-porn and cyber-flashing.

The campaign was informed by the unprecedented 180,000 responses to a Call for Evidence held last year to inform the Government’s Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. This multi-year campaign will also include communications to educate young people about healthy relationships and ensure victims can recognise abuse and seek support.

‘Enough’ was designed in close collaboration with the VAWG sector and academics. Several police forces, local authorities and commercial partners including Tesco, Uber and Fitness First supported activity and used their engagement with customers, the public and staff to publicise the campaign message.

Plans are now underway for the next phase of Enough. If you are interested in supporting the campaign and would like more information, please contact [enough@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:enough@homeoffice.gov.uk)

A campaign resources page is also available, which includes assets that can be personalised.



# TOEX Team Receive Partnership Award

The TOEX team from the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) were recognised for the difference they made to a trafficking investigation at the annual Norfolk Constabulary Awards.

TOEX were one of a number of units who received the Teamwork Award for their partnership working.

They were recognised for their collective response to target organised criminality involving vulnerable victims being trafficked from abroad for the purpose of sexual and financial exploitation.

Working together, targeted visits were conducted resulting in intelligence, evidence and safeguarding of women hidden from view.

Seven offenders in total were charged with human trafficking offences.

Detective Inspector Gary Pemberton, who leads the TOEX team in ERSOU, said: “We’re really pleased that the efforts of TOEX has been recognised alongside a number of other units at the Norfolk Awards.

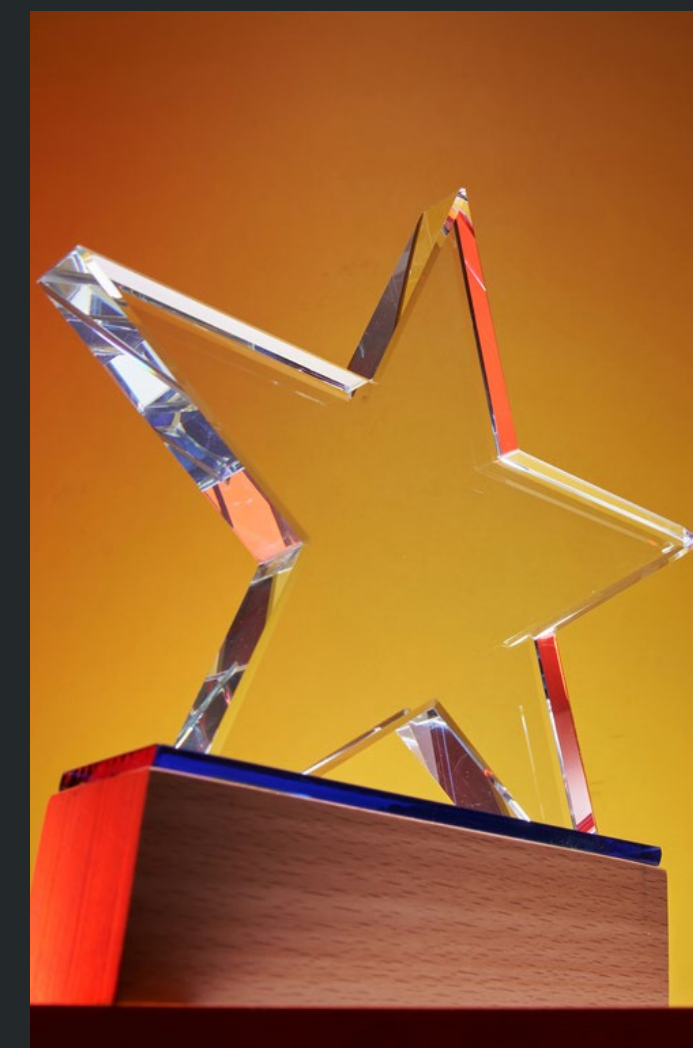
“Such operations are great examples of the different partnership working can make to complex investigation and vulnerable victims.

“The key to the success in this operation from our perspective were how inclusive and supportive Norfolk were in relation to TOEX’s involvement.

“This was the first large scale trafficking

operation in the region that our TOEX team had worked on which resulted in enforcement, so it was great to be able to see victims safeguarded and people charged.

“We are committed to continuing our work alongside forces to ensure the ongoing disruption and prosecution of such gangs and the vital safeguarding of vulnerable people.”





# Operation Headdress

More than 70% of investigations that TOEX are supporting relate to VAWG offences and 83.9% of these have a primary threat of child sexual abuse or modern slavery and human trafficking.

Operation Headdress is one of these investigations.

During August 2021, a referral was received by the TOEX team in the West Midlands following information provided by a third sector partner indicating there was a network of brothels operating in Birmingham and surrounding areas.

Initial development was undertaken by the team, with assistance from forces, which identified an organised crime group (OCG) recruiting vulnerable young females in Hungary, usually via a family member or friend already in the UK.

The victims left their homes, some leaving children, with the offer of work in hospitality or agriculture, before finding out the offer had fallen through once they had arrived in the UK.

## One victim was exchanged for the price of a mobile telephone.

Once in the country, the group, using debt bondage, advertised the women online and forced them to engage in sex work, paying controllers a proportion of the money made. Their names and identities were also used to open bank accounts and pay for utilities such as gas/electric and council tax.

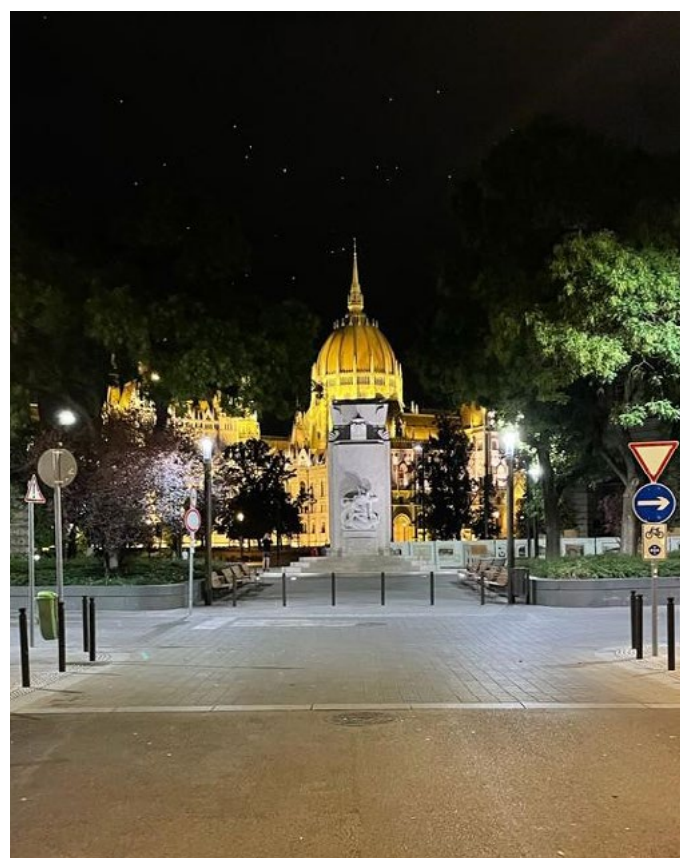
Enforcement activity was carried out in late 2021, with a number of nominals in the UK being arrested and charged with conspiracy to arrange or facilitate the travel of another person with a view to exploitation and conspiracy to control prostitution for gain.

T/Detective Chief Inspector Dave Rawlings, the Operation Headdress Silver Chair, said,

**“Operation Headdress sits within the top 10 Serious and Organised Crime Threat List with many high harm indicators including allegations of rape and false imprisonment, grooming of young children, and drug use/dependency.”**

“Despite the initial arrests, witness testimonies and intelligence indicated that the upstream nominals of this organised crime group were in Hungary and their ongoing business model was well organised and sophisticated.

“Therefore, to truly disrupt and dismantle the network, we needed to work in unison with our Hungarian counterparts, supported by Europol.”



One year later and following extensive work, members of the TOEX team and ROCUs, supported by National Crime Agency colleagues, travelled to Budapest for an operational meeting to discuss next steps.

The key aims of the meeting were:

- Work collaboratively to enrich law enforcements knowledge of the OCG's business model and structure.
- Develop a joint safeguarding strategy, to ensure those at risk are protected from harm.
- Consider a joint Investigation between Hungary and the UK with a clear focus on the controllers and top-level nominals.

The intelligence-led strategic meeting, a UK Policing and Europol first, was very successful, and resulted in a number of recommendations being made for UK and Hungarian law enforcement to progress the investigation and ultimately disrupt the OCG and safeguard further victims.

T/Detective Chief Inspector Rawlings continued, “This was a hugely productive meeting, which recognised the hard work going on in the UK from the TOEX teams, ROCUs and forces.

**“I look forward to working with our Hungarian colleagues in future.”**



# Safeguarding girls and women in football

By Sue Ravenlaw, FA Head of Safeguarding.

As a former footballer for club and country, I, like millions of others, was totally captivated and inspired by the Lionesses' journey through the women's European Championships this summer – culminating with them being crowned champions. A momentous and hugely significant achievement.

Anyone fortunate enough to be at a Euros' match, could not fail to notice the high-pitched tone of the fans, reflecting the huge volume of excited girls and boys in the crowd. Planning for the legacy of this home tournament has long been in the making. The aim has always been to ensure that there are ample opportunities to meet the anticipated demand for girls and women to play football, at every age group.

So, what's in place to keep these girls and women safe in the game?

**At the Euros:** 101 risk assessments and safeguarding plans were delivered across all Euros' activity – i.e. the national events, fan parties, community projects and at the 10 host stadiums. The mostly low-level concerns that arose in relation to children and adults resulted, where appropriate, in referrals to the relevant statutory agencies.

A team of Child Matchday Support Officers were deployed for all fixtures, supporting the child mascots, ball children and flag bearers. At Wembley, as with all our large-scale events, we deployed an Event Safeguarding Advisor to work with the stadium safety and security team to support any safeguarding incidents with children and or adults at risk.



**Across the game:** Our codes of conduct, disciplinary and safeguarding regulations mean that where concerns about adult-on-adult misconduct or safeguarding incidents are reported, there is a clear and consistent framework for managing them through the disciplinary, integrity or safeguarding teams. Our complete set of safeguarding guidance notes can be found [here](#).

Earlier this year we were pleased to see the changes to the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 in relation to Positions of Trust. While it's been a regulatory offence in football for some time, for coaches to have a relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old, the strengthening of this legislation sends a clear message to all in positions of trust in sport. We've updated our guidance and safeguarding courses in line with this.

**Within England representative teams:** You may have seen that over the past 12 months or so, there have been reports of child abuse, breaches of positions of trust and sexual misconduct in sport and football around the globe. In response to this, we promptly engaged all staff and players across the England camps – from under-15s to Sarina Wiegman's senior squad – in briefings to listen to any concerns and remind them of how to raise concerns. We also requested all women's professional clubs to do the same. There's undoubtedly more to do to ensure that players are confident to speak up about any concerns that they have.

**Safeguarding officers' network:** Over the past 22 years we've built a network of 8,500 paid or voluntary designated safeguarding officers across the game, who must maintain in-date DBS checks and safeguarding training. They work to a

joined-up set of policies and procedures, linking grassroots clubs into the County FAs, professional clubs to their respective leagues and everything to the national FA and statutory agencies.

**The FA's own safeguarding team:** My team drives preventative measures via policy, standards, education, campaigns, culture and the sharing of safer working practice. In parallel, another team manages referrals and reported concerns. This team, led by Sarah Walker, works closely with the 43 police forces on investigations, to whether individuals pose, or may pose, a risk of harm. Where necessary, safeguarding measures are implemented such as suspensions from football.

**Building an ever-safer culture:** Following the non-recent disclosures from late 2016 onwards, when hundreds of victims and survivors came forwards to report the CSA they had suffered in football, and the subsequent publication of The FA-commissioned Sheldon Review in March 2021, we consulted widely with our stakeholders and published a new Safeguarding Strategy 'Building an Ever-Safer Culture', which you can read [here](#).

The strategy covers workstreams designed to continuously develop and improve football's framework and approach to prevent abuse in all its forms, as well as to manage concerns robustly.

Progress is covered in our Year 1 review of the strategy. You can read the review [here](#).

**Two key current projects:**

**Play Safe campaign:** Led by The FA, the Play Safe campaign is endorsed by the NSPCC and supported across the professional, semi-professional and grassroots game.

Play Safe runs throughout the year, but comes to the fore over an annual National Football Safeguarding Weekend on 1 – 2 October, and is designed to help clubs and leagues raise and maintain awareness of their safeguarding policies and practice. You can find out more [here](#).



**Free online safeguarding course for parents/carers:** There have been over one million attendances on FA safeguarding courses over the past 22 years. To build on this, we've developed another bespoke course for parents/carers. The short, free course highlights the vital role parents/carers play in safeguarding. It was developed with the input of The FA's Survivor Group and also addresses grooming and exploitation. The course can be accessed [here](#).

Finally, we must remain ever-vigilant and continue our collaboration with the statutory sector to maintain and build strong partnerships. Sport plays a huge role in millions of people's lives and our mutual aim has to be to provide safe, positive and enjoyable environments in which to play our national game. Ultimately, although The FA will rightly take a lead role within football, safeguarding is – and will always be – everyone's responsibility.



# All change for Operation Hydrant

Every force in the UK has engaged with Operation Hydrant, the national policing response to non-recent child sexual abuse, since it's set up in 2014 and following the death of Jimmy Savile; however, the work Hydrant carries out has evolved and adapted over the last eight years.

The team now provide coordination for policing across a range of matters relating to child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and the spectrum of wider children's vulnerability. They also currently act as the interface between the work of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and policing, but this will cease in late 2022 as the Inquiry concludes and delivers its final report.

To reflect these changes, from 1 August, Operation Hydrant has restructured and rebranded, becoming the Hydrant Programme, and will continue delivering the following to national policing:

- An enhanced peer review, peer support and learning function working across all elements of child abuse and child protection, which forces can access at no cost.
- An analysis and research team that will work in collaboration with the VKPP and NCA to enhance our understanding of the prevalence of child sexual abuse and exploitation and the risk and harm it presents. This will help to address a number of gaps in national capability highlighted by the IICSA and others.
- A partnership hub that will continue to support key stakeholders and organisations with operational child protection and safeguarding issues.

- The ability to coordinate issues of national operational criticality within the vulnerability portfolio when this is appropriate (for example policing's response to incidents like the Everyone's Invited movement and the football abuse scandal).

The Hydrant Programme has also announced that their HOLMES database will no longer be maintained for the purpose of operational coordination and deconfliction and its supporting functions. This database is currently one of many national datasets that is accessible via the TOEX Data Platform, which will be made available to all forces in due course. Despite the database no longer being maintained, the information will remain available within our Data Platform and those using it.

The TOEX Programme has and will continue to work closely with the Hydrant Programme across a number of work streams. Notably, TOEX has provided extensive support to forces following Hydrant Peer Reviews of CSAE investigations, delivering dedicated intelligence and analytical expertise, which has led to the successful disruption of offenders and the further safeguarding of victims.

To get in touch with the Hydrant Programme, please email: [OperationHydrant@southyorks.pnn.police.uk](mailto:OperationHydrant@southyorks.pnn.police.uk)



# Interesting Reads and Useful Links



The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has published a review into child sexual exploitation, commissioned by Oldham council



The Police Foundation has published a report looking at what more can be done to prevent online child sexual abuse



New sentencing powers related to child abuse have come into effect



The Ministry of Justice has announced that television cameras can broadcast from the Crown Court for the first time, saying it'll make the justice system more transparent



The Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation published its final report in July



Merseyside Police has been rated "outstanding" at disrupting serious organised crime



Every Child Protected Against Trafficking UK (ECPAT UK) has released a report regarding children who have experienced modern slavery



IICSA has announced that it will publish its final Report on Thursday 20 October 2022



The Home Office has published a policy paper setting out its response to recommendations made in a report by IICSA: Child sexual exploitation by organised networks report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)



The Home Office has published statistics breaking down the number of individuals referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in the second quarter of 2022 after potentially been trafficked



The Marie Collins Foundation (MCF) has released resources on supporting individuals who have experienced child sexual abuse (CSA) and are prepared to share their experiences publicly

# Upcoming Partnership Events



**SOCEX Strategic Conference - October 4-5th**



**APCC & NPCC Partnership Summit - November 9-10th**



**Excellence in Policing Conference - October 6-7th**



**NPCC, CoP, & APCC Diversity Equality & Inclusion Conference - November 17-18th**

# Contact Us



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