

TACKLING ORGANISED

# EXPLOITATION

PROGRAMME

Issue 4 | January - March 2023

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**TOEX saves Millions in the response to Serious and Organised Crime**

**Operation Derail**

**VAWG Force Profiles**

**Beyond the Streets**



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## VAWG Force Profiles

The TOEX Programme has developed innovative force profiles for violence against women and girls (VAWG) in collaboration with local, regional and national subject matter experts. These not only provide investigators with a strategic understanding of the threat of VAWG in their force area, but crucially evidence-based subject profiles in support of effective tactical interventions.

The profiles are now 'live' in all of the nine counties that submit data to the TOEX Data Platform (Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Kent, West Mercia, and Warwickshire) and give a unique opportunity to model policing data across multiple counties, conflating it against additional datasets of interest. This enables investigators to identify high risk suspects and victims of VAWG based on the recency, gravity, and/or frequency of the offences. In turn this supports effective interventions for victims and perpetrators alike.

TOEX highlighted a juvenile male as the highest risk VAWG offender for Essex Police. The youth was suspected of several offences, including serious sexual offences; however, these were being investigated by multiple teams from different areas across the county. Using the TOEX offender profile as a basis, the force's CSE Proactive Investigation Team used the information to prepare an interim Sexual Risk Order (SRO), secured via an emergency youth court.

Ch/Supt Andy Waldie, Essex Police said:

"I am confident the oversight and focus TOEX brings led to this individual being adopted by this specialist team and the much-needed coordination and innovative approach. I am convinced TOEX works and is the way forward."

Specialist officers trained in the management of sexual or violent offenders

(MOSOVO) were tasked with proactively policing the conditions of the SRO for this offender, with an unprecedented level of control around a dangerous sexual perpetrator, who has since been charged and remanded for offences.

T/Detective Chief Superintendent, Kate Thacker, TOEX Programme Lead said:

"I am so pleased that we were able to support Essex colleagues in recognising and developing the intelligence relating to VAWG in their area.

**"Their proactive approach to the management of this dangerous individual is impressive and shows the value of a coordinated, holistic approach to these threats."**

TOEX is committed to supporting forces in leveraging and enhancing their data to generate evidence-based operational outcomes and are keen to work with investigators on the continual refinement of this powerful strategic and tactical tool with Force Profiles for Missing Persons and ViSOR now coming online.



# Strategic update



TOEX continues to deliver against governmental and policing priorities in support of the investigation and disruption of high-harm threats. This is evidenced by the focus of the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) published in February this year, which sets out the need to plan, prepare and respond to criminals exploiting the vulnerable.

**It specifically notes the prioritisation of disruptions against human trafficking, organised immigration crime, county lines drugs supply, child sexual abuse, and violence against women and girls – all of which fall within the objectives of our programme and are included in tactical activity across the TOEX network.**

The programme continues to be well supported by the Home Office, NPCC threat leads and across wider UK law enforcement – with funds secured until 2025 to deliver operational outcomes and technical enablers. This edition provides some great examples of work that has resulted in enforcement activity, and with TOEX teams now in every region, including London, this service will continue to grow and deliver high quality intelligence and analytical outcomes for investigators.

To date, TOEX colleagues have supported

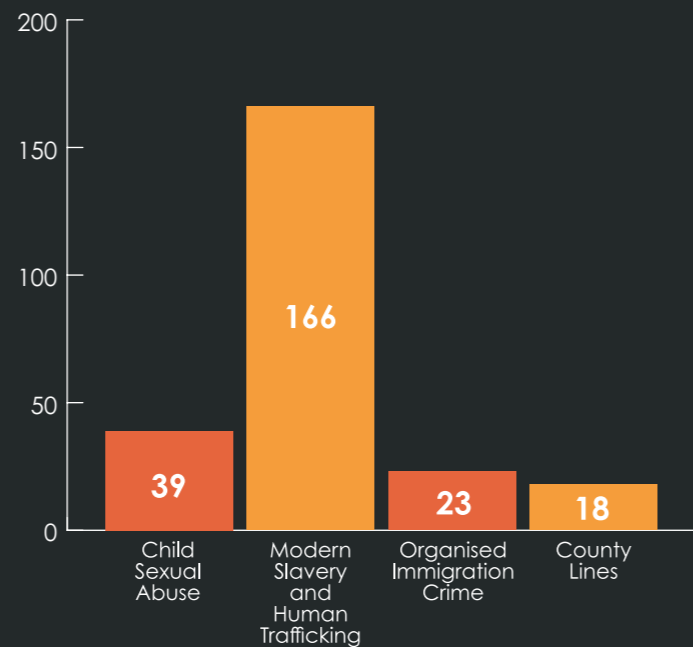
**174 separate operations, across 51 forces/organisations, with disruptions already evidenced in 40%.**

Crucially,

**18 separate organised crime groups have been identified**

and adopted that had not been recognised elsewhere in law enforcement, generating a unique opportunity to investigate and disrupt this criminality.

Whilst the majority of that effort to date has centred on modern slavery and human trafficking threats, emerging trends in child sexual abuse and exploitation, plus organised immigration crime have secured dedicated TOEX assets to enhance the tactical response in several investigations.



In order to support the understanding of investigators, we will be launching a series of animations that describe what TOEX offers and provides examples of the work undertaken. We are hoping this will give those investigating serious, complex exploitation cases the confidence to reach out – especially when those investigations reach beyond the borders and potentially

the capacity of a single force to manage. The animations will be ready in early April and circulated widely, so... watch this space and think TOEX.

## Technical innovations

It has been an exciting few months for the technical team, as we continue to build on the effective collaboration between TOEX, our technical partners Simpsons Associates, and the Police Digital Service (PDS).

**We remain on track to have a TOEX Capabilities Environment built in the national PDS cloud by the end of March, intending to use it from April onwards to host, test and refine a number of data tools and apps.**

This is a milestone moment and marks the first 'PDS shared service for policing', with TOEX proud to lead the way for business users.

TOEX is developing intelligence and analytics capabilities to support forces and

regions in tackling complex investigations and serious and organised crime and will soon have the means to develop and distribute these via the PDS national cloud-based host environment. 'TOEX Translate', which uses the Microsoft Cognitive Services suite to translate mobile phone CSV files, will be accessed from that national host by the TOEX Data Insight Analysts. They will use and evaluate the tool on operational demand in the regions, with wider roll-out at the appropriate time thereafter.

As we approach the second year of national uplift, the operational delivery goes from strength to strength, and we are on the cusp of delivering exciting technical innovation across the network. As ever, this has been achieved with a huge amount of support and collaboration, for which we are most grateful.

Programme Director  
**T/Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker**



# TOEX saves Millions in the response to Serious and Organised Crime



A new report by Crest Advisory, who were commissioned as independent evaluators for the programme and are specialists within the field of crime and criminal justice, has analysed the economic and social value of the TOEX model to date and concluded that the resulting TOEX response has significantly reduced the time taken to identify, prioritise, and disrupt high-harm threats.

Based on the programme pilot, and national implementation thereafter, Crest calculated that the TOEX approach in tackling organised exploitation, particularly the identification and scoring of threats faster generates an

**annual resource saving of £585,444, saving a total of £1.27 million per year**

(the equivalent of £43,938 per threat), compared to what would have been required to identify the same threats without TOEX.

**It also found that TOEX-supported investigations are:**

Crest analysts reached these findings by building on previous Home Office costing and modelling methods, which estimate the annual cost to the UK of organised exploitation to be £2.63 billion. They concluded that the TOEX has directly identified £156.3 million worth of annual social and economic costs to the UK from organised exploitation, of which

**£30.8 million is cashable.**

This contribution to improved identification of threats, prioritisation of law enforcement resources, and the significant disruption of organised exploitation equates to a

**cashable saving of £1.4 million per threat.**

A detailed breakdown of one specific operation, Op Volvox, has been used to demonstrate the TOEX impact on investigations.

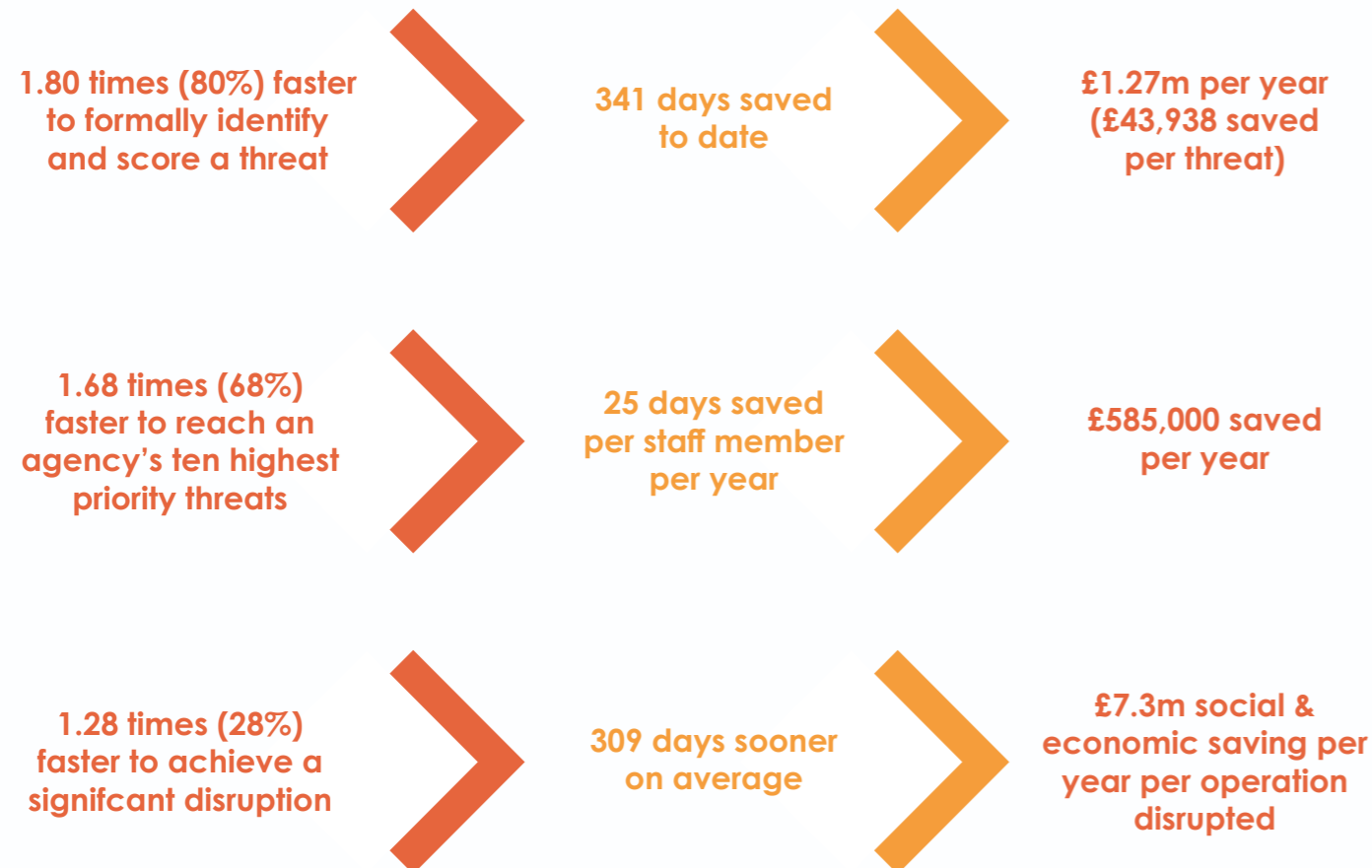
Since 2018, a Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) had been aware of an Eastern European individual involved in drug and firearms offences. They were suspected of modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) offences as well - involving the

exploitation of vulnerable Eastern European nationals who were being coerced to work on building sites in the UK.

Crest found that without TOEX involvement there would have been insufficient capacity or capability to investigate or manage the exploitation aspect of this organised crime group (OCG).

As a result of TOEX support to Op Volvox, two individuals were arrested and identified as potential victims, with 10 victims of labour exploitation identified in total. Using the Crest economic evaluation, Volvox realised:

- The identification of an additional £52 million in estimated social and economic cost from an OCG that would otherwise remain hidden.
- A saving of £4,043.66 related to personnel cost efficiency needed to identify, prioritise, and disrupt the threat relative to a non-TOEX team progressing the investigation.
- And a saving of £4,358.10 per day with the exploitation being reduced for the 10 individuals of labour exploitation identified.



# Operation Derail

An investigation led by the Norfolk Police Serious Crime Disruption Team (SCDT), with support from TOEX, has seen a group of men and women, who were involved in an international human trafficking ring, jailed for a total of more than 10 years.

The three women and two men appeared at Norwich Crown Court in February where they were sentenced after pleading guilty to offences relating to the trafficking and exploitation of women from Hungary.

Attila Lakatos, 44, and Katalin Bogdan, 33, both of Salhouse Road, pleaded guilty to arranging or facilitating the travel of an individual for exploitation under Section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act.

Meanwhile, Peter Laszlo, 35, and Livia Rezmuves, 25, both of Vera Road, and

Csilla Varga, 35, also of Salhouse Road, all admitted the offence of participating in the activities of an organised crime group.

It follows a police investigation, codenamed Operation Derail, that was launched in September 2021 after safeguarding visits were made by the Norfolk Missing, Adult Sex-working, Slavery and Trafficking (MAST) team, along with support workers, to several addresses in Norwich with the aim of protecting vulnerable sex workers identified in online adverts.

Working alongside the SCDT, members of the TOEX team supported officers in developing an intelligence package using telecoms and network analysis as well as financial data, which uncovered

contact between the suspects and victims, a pattern of flights between the UK and Hungary, and the posting of adverts to a website online offering sexual services at addresses.

The SCDT raided a home on Salhouse Road in December 2021 where Lakatos, Bogdan and Varga were all arrested. The following day, a second raid took place at house in Vera Road where Laszlo and Rezmuves were arrested.

As a result of the raids, several devices were seized along with handwritten notes, which were like the type of material being posted in online ads for sexual services. Examination of these devices revealed images, which matched with photos used on the adult sex website adverts and analysts were able to match the picture backgrounds to rooms within key addresses linked to the offenders. TOEX assisted this process by supplying extra resources and reviewing some of the product.

In addition, Lakatos and Bogdan's mobile phone and bank accounts, showed they'd paid for flights and online adverts while Lakatos had received payments of more than £6,800.

Furthermore, enquiries revealed that Varga, Laszlo, and Rezmuves had also been involved in booking flights and adverts.

Detective Sergeant Carl Carter, of the Serious Crime Disruption Team, said: "We're pleased this case has come to a successful conclusion and that prison sentences have been delivered.

"TOEX managed the liaison with Europol, via their ROCU liaison officer, into the Hungarian National Trafficking Human Beings team, which led to a very successful and joint investigation regarding the outstanding footprint in that country of those who benefit from this criminality.

"My thanks for the support from the TOEX team, who were integral to providing

dedicated intelligence and analytical expertise – from assisting with the intel build to getting access to Digital Media Investigators on the day of enforcement at short notice, to interrogate and extract key information from devices at the scene. Without TOEX, this wouldn't have happened."

The defendants received the following sentences:

- Katalin Bogdan, sentenced to three years and four months
- Attila Lakatos, sentenced to three years and four months
- Livia Rezmuves, sentenced to 15 months
- Peter Laszlo, sentenced to 15 months
- Csilla Varga, sentenced to 20 months

Members of the investigative team, including those from TOEX, were commended by the judge for their meticulous work to secure the convictions. His Honour Judge Bate said: "This was a complex enquiry with an international dimension. Its victims were young and vulnerable to exploitation.

**"I commend to the Chief Constable the diligent investigative, preparatory, and presentational work of the team led by Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) Detective Inspector Paul Morton and his deputy Detective Sergeant Carl Carter, particularly the OIC, Detective Constable Martyn Laycock, and police analyst Lyndsey Hoy.**

"I similarly commend to the Chief Crown Prosecutor Mr Robert Warner and Miss Justine Kerry, the CPS reviewing lawyer and caseworker for their efficient conduct of the file, which in due course enabled a resolution without troubling a Norfolk jury."

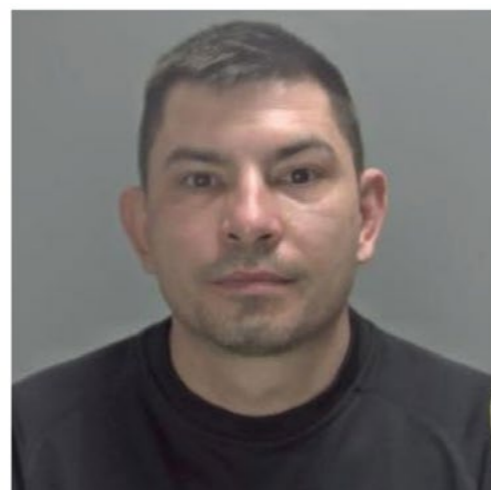
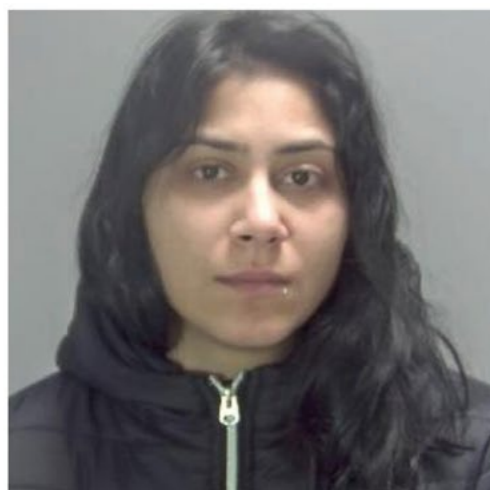
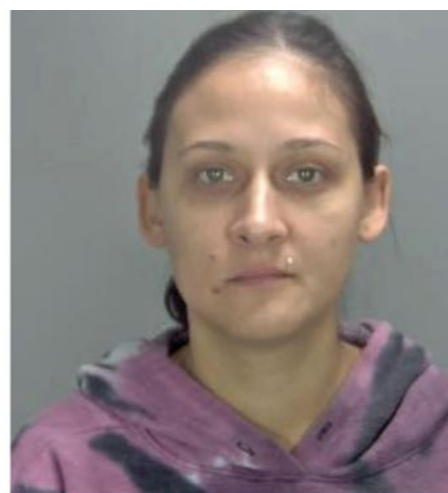
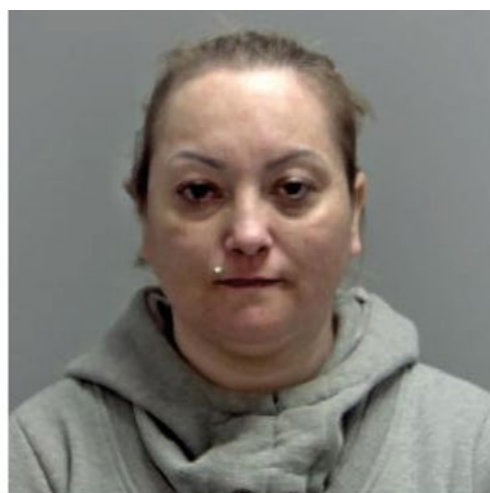
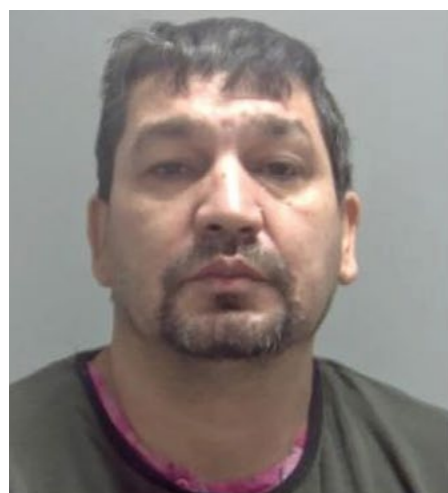


Image courtesy of Norfolk Police

# Beyond the Streets: Supporting women involved in the UK sex industry



Beyond the Streets exists because we want to see a world free from sexual exploitation. We're a trauma-informed organisation partnering with women involved in the UK sex industry to ensure women are not compelled to sell sex and to create routes out. For over two decades we've listened to women and learnt from their experiences. Through a combination of research, training, and direct support, we focus on creating space for women's voices to be heard.

## Beyond Support

Beyond Support is our free and confidential national call-back service offering long-term support to women in the UK sex industry. Support is provided over the phone and via email and text. We offer a safe space to talk, process trauma, explore options for change, and provide and maintain access to services to meet their needs. We don't have a set blueprint for support, being led by each woman's desired change. We work with those who are currently selling sex, contemplating selling sex, or have stopped selling sex and are looking for further support. Each woman's journey towards change, what that looks like, and the time it takes, is as individual as the women themselves. The women we work with are selling

sex off street, online or from their home, often without friends or family knowing. The reasons they have come to sell sex are varied and the complexity of their lives can't be underestimated. Our own research has identified 18 separate support need themes through our initial assessment calls. All women raised multiple support needs; the average being eight per woman. These include support with mental health (including adverse childhood experiences); lack of a support network; abuse and trauma; violence, harassment, and safety concerns; coercion and exploitation.

Initially we focus on grounding and self-care techniques, safety planning and goal setting. We've found that until a woman is feeling safe, she is unable to process trauma and take bigger steps away from exploitation. One strength of our Beyond Support service is its anonymity; women can be nervous of attending face to face support because of previous bad experiences or fear of being recognised. In many areas there may not be any specialist support for women selling sex available and we can continue to support her alongside accessing support for housing, health, or the legal system as part of a holistic approach.

## Working with others

Effective multi-agency working is fundamental to our work. Our recent research into Domestic Homicide Reviews highlights the harm that can result from a lack of professional curiosity in understanding an individual's involvement

in the sex industry, in assessing their vulnerability, and in understanding how involvement intersects with other elements of individuals' lives, such as domestic abuse.

Our training and partnership work seeks to address this failing, equipping professionals to understand the sex industry, particularly survival sex, and supporting them to engage with women selling sex in a trauma-informed way. Opportunities to share our learning and shape responses within policing through conversations with TOEX and through the NPCC Working Group on Sex Work are crucial. When multi-agency working goes well, women increase their trust in services, feel heard and believed, and get the right specialist support to meet their needs. If it doesn't go well, it makes it harder for them to engage with any professionals and creates

a barrier to leaving exploitative or coercive situations.

The impact of a good professional cannot be understated and can be truly transformative for a woman.

If you would like to know more about the training and support we can offer professionals, please contact [training@beyondthestreets.org.uk](mailto:training@beyondthestreets.org.uk) or visit [Events - Beyond The Streets](#).



## SWROCU Team Launches

The South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SWROCU) officially launched its TOEX team on 1 February 2023.

The team can advise and assist with investigations undertaken by its five regional forces: Avon and Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire; and is successfully working with other capabilities within SWROCU to improve its response

to the exploitation of vulnerable people.

SWROCU Head of Unit, Det Supt Tina Robinson said:

**"We are committed to identifying and dismantling organised crime groups exploiting the vulnerable and we are already seeing the benefits of the work of our TOEX team."**

DI Jamie Halford said: "The team is fully up and running and supporting some fantastic work within our region and with law-enforcement partners such as the NCA. Significant work is underway to tackle organised exploitation and we hope to share our outcomes and successes in the very near future."



# Operation Mosaic

The East Midlands TOEX team has celebrated another success in the form of a Lincolnshire Chief Constable's Commendation.

DI Dan Smith and Senior Analyst Zoyla Fell attended an event to receive the award on behalf of the team for their work on Operation Mosaic – the investigation into a human trafficking network within the county.

In May 2021, an investigation was launched after four Bulgarian victims reported a number of men had bought them over to the UK on the promise of employment which never materialised.

The victims were charged £500 each to obtain their ID documents, on top of the £300 paid to enter the UK. They were told to sleep on the floor, were given little to no food and had no money.

One of the victims had also been unlawfully tattooed with the name of one of her traffickers, to show ownership.

When a fifth victim reported a series of rapes, TOEX were able to uncover adverts on adult sex websites for this victim, which

strengthened the case against her traffickers that they had exploited her for sex work.

The team also helped locate an unidentified suspect, who was also wanted on a European Arrest Warrant for crimes in Romania, where he was later extradited back to. On conclusion of the investigation, all victims were safeguarded and moved back to Bulgaria, and the TOEX team received high praise for their work.

DI Dan Smith said: "This was actually the first operation we were tasked to work on back in 2021. Since then, I can honestly say that our capabilities have come on in leaps and bounds, and the confidence of the team has grown too.

**"We are always extremely proud and grateful to receive awards like this, and I'd like to thank the whole team for the work they do every day to identify and safeguard vulnerable victims of the most serious crimes in our region."**



# Interesting Reads and Useful Links



NSPCC's Chief Executive Peter Wanless, alongside other leaders from child protection, victim and survivor organisations, have written a letter calling for the Prime Minister to take action to ensure the recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) are properly implemented



ONS has released its latest report - Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2022



A quarterly update has been provided on progress with the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales



The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has published a research report based on its Truth Project which heard from people who had experienced child sexual abuse in England and Wales



The Government has announced a crackdown against organised criminal gangs



The BBC has written a news story looking into county lines operations across the UK



DCC Ian Critchley responds to findings of Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) report, which states that imagery of primary school aged children sexually abusing themselves on camera has soared by more than 1,000 percent since 2019



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has announced its collaboration with cyber safety technology company White Bullet to identify and minimise digital advertising appearing on pages which promote or contain child sexual abuse images and videos



All police officers and staff in England and Wales will be checked against the Police National Database (PND) to identify any intelligence or allegations that need further investigation

# Upcoming Partnership Events



**National Analyst's Annual Conference - 17-18 May 2023**



**Policing Institute for the Eastern Region (PIER) 2023 Conference – 'Tackling online harms' - 23-24 May**

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