

TACKLING ORGANISED

EXPLOITATION

PROGRAMME

Issue 6 | July - September 2023

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Hackathon**

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Strategic Update



The summer has been hotting up and so has TOEX activity, with plenty of positive engagements across law enforcement and my continued gratitude to our policing partners for their support and enthusiasm.

This quarter saw renewed visits to all regional TOEX teams, giving me the chance to update colleagues with the latest national developments, but crucially to hear of the excellent progress ROCU-based colleagues have been making. During these roadshows and the recent Inspector Away-Day in Birmingham I was impressed by the passion and commitment shown by colleagues when tackling organised exploitation, using operational tactics and technical innovation to disrupt offending. The teams are pulling together well as a national network and closing opportunities for criminal exploiters to operate in the space between forces/regions. The performance and outcomes for this effort continue to build, with ongoing evaluation and adaptations made to our response, based on the feedback of our teams, key stakeholders and 'customers' in force. If you haven't yet worked with TOEX, but are responsible for the investigation of organised exploitation, get in touch and see how your regional team can support you.

We have welcomed our new Ops and Performance Lead, Geoff Hurst, who brings a wealth of investigative experience and understanding with him and will be pivotal in joining up our response, particularly where the criminality extends across multiple policing boundaries.

I have proudly represented TOEX at a number of national accountability and

innovation boards in recent weeks; notably providing an extended input to HMICFRS Child Protection Inspectors in advance of their review of the CP assessment framework, to explain how TOEX can be used to enrich the response and improve outcomes. Also, I joined Professor Paul Taylor (NPCC Chief Scientific Advisor) and valued colleagues at the inaugural National Science and Innovation Board for Regional Innovation Coordinators. It was fascinating to hear the synergy between forces when they described their innovation priorities and very pleasing to know that we are contributing to a number of them with our data modelling programmes and capability development.

And finally, this coming quarter will see the start of a PDS delivery plan to onboard the first TOEX Capability into the Police Digital Service Platform, namely Translation, with an aspirational PDS timeline of end January 2024. TOEX are already using the tool on local infrastructure against regional organised exploitation demand and have translated over 211 million characters to date for a total cost of £1700, so we have high hopes for significant savings to policing when it is accessible more widely.

Watch this space and "Think TOEX"!

T/Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker

TOEX Programme Director

No.10 Downing Street Hackathon

TOEX Developers Patrick (Paddy) Pitcaithly and Jack Lambourne were invited by the 10 Downing Street Data Science team (10DS) to participate in their summer Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hackathon, hosted by City College London.

The event is part of the Evidence House series and community of expertise 10DS have created to enhance technical practice across the UK public sector.

This event saw practitioners split into teams to tackle allocated governmental problems, using frontier AI technologies licensed by Microsoft, Google, OpenAI and Anthropic. Problem statements included modernising the ministerial red box;

designing a next-generation procurement pilot; and evaluating public sentiment to new policy.

The AI models made available over the course of the event, were broadly focussed on text processing and natural language understanding – including the latest developments on the OpenAI GPT model. These are currently of great interest and some experimentation across the technical side of TOEX, enabling vast free texts (such as intelligence reports, or seized chat logs) to be analysed in a deep and scaled manner.

Paddy and the team achieved the incredible feat of placing third (out of 15 teams) for their excellent work prototyping a “ChatGProcurement” solution and will be invited to 10 Downing Street in celebration!

Lead Developer Jack Lambourne said: “AI technology is advancing dramatically in both capability and availability to the non-data-scientist user; and things impossible five months ago are now very do-able.

“Being involved at the cutting-edge with both government and industry partners helps us keep informed of latest developments and understand best practice for applying these powerful new tools.

Developer Paddy Pitcaithly said: “The learning opportunities and network development that the hackathon provided in such a short time have had a significant impact on my development plans for TOEX projects and on my confidence in the team’s ability to deliver ground-breaking, responsible AI capabilities to assist in intelligence analysis.”



Meet our new Operations and Performance Co-ordinator - Geoff Hurst



I joined Lancashire Constabulary in 1990 and started work in a response team in Skelmersdale. Thereafter I was part of both proactive and reactive Detective investigation teams, before being promoted through the ranks to Detective Inspector with responsibility for the Intelligence Unit based in Preston. This was my first real exposure to the nuances of the intel world, and I found a new passion.

Leadership roles within the Lancashire Force Major Investigation Team (FMIT), Staff Officer to the ACC for Crime and Specialist Operations, Neighbourhood Policing, Partnerships, Response and Public Protection followed. I also represented Lancashire as thematic lead for Corporate Manslaughter and Family Liaison, the latter of which became a real passion for me as I always had a strong desire to support those significantly impacted by crime.

My final move as a DCI was as one of Lancashire’s SIO’s on the Force Major Investigation Team maintaining my PIP Level 4 to assist me in the operational and strategic management of major crime. During my time as SIO, I considered it a huge privilege to represent the families of the victims and lead teams of dedicated investigators, whilst always focusing on finding the evidence to assist a jury in arriving at a safe conclusion.

I retired in 2020 after 30 years in policing to become a lecturer at the University of Lancashire; however, after only a

few weeks, Covid-19 struck. Once the lockdowns were lifted, I returned to Lancashire Constabulary where I delivered the National SIO training programme as well as the Combined Supervisor Management programme (DI/DS). I did this for just short of two and a half years, but still hankered for some involvement in operational policing.

That was when I became aware of TOEX. I wanted to be a part of something new, something that was challenging and exciting and something that I could belong to. So, when I applied and got the job, I was delighted!

I haven’t been in post for long, but I have already experienced the energy within the teams and the commitment, to protect those being exploited, shines through everyone that I have met. I am really looking forward to getting to know everyone across all the regions and within the national team and to being part of that desire to disrupt those who exploit vulnerability in whatever guise that may be.

When I think about what I’ll be doing as part of law enforcement - protecting the vulnerable and being the advocate for those who need help – it’s the reason I get up in the morning.

If anyone has any questions for Geoff, in his new role as Operational and Performance Co-ordinator, please email: Geoffrey.HURST@norfolk.police.uk

Operation Siren

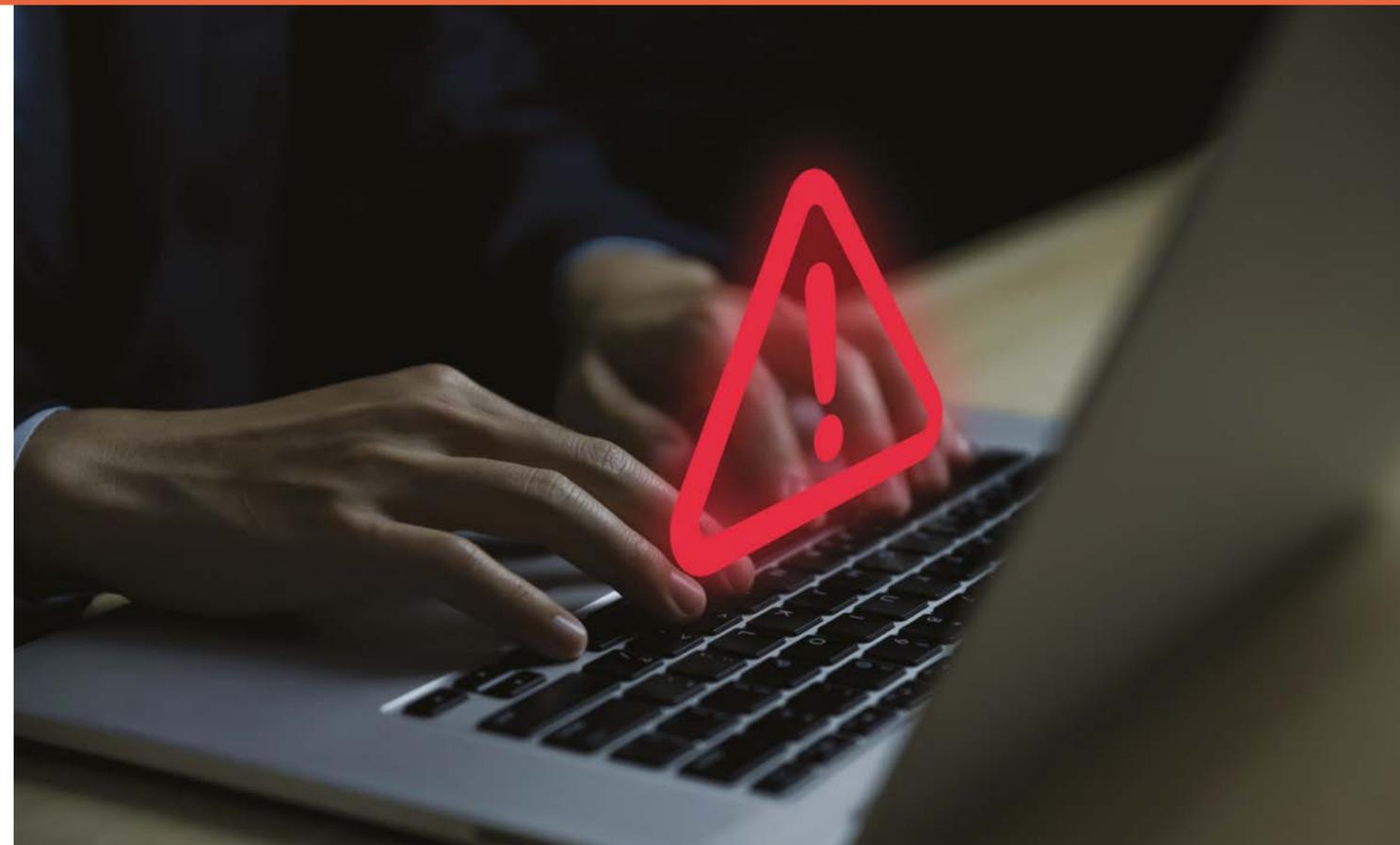
An individual, who was targeting vulnerable victims with fraudulent mortgages totalling around £30m, has been the subject of an investigation by West Midlands Police, with support from the ROCUWM TOEX team.

Following a referral from HSBC, Operation Siren looked to investigate a sole trader and property management business, which advertised itself as offering mortgage advice.

Through a POCA search, seizure warrants and Disclosure Orders, it was ascertained that the individual had arranged a minimum of 200 fraudulent mortgages with a value of around £30m, of which the offender had charged anywhere from £2.5k

to £5k to arrange, utilising falsified bank statements and payslips.

In addition, evidence gathered, following visits, suggested the suspect owned and/or managed around 40 properties, which were rented out as houses of multiple occupation or to persons of low income/ asylum seekers and/or in poor health and were in an appalling condition. The tenants were either paying cash direct to the property management business, which was not banked or were having their housing benefit paid direct into the offender's accounts – this totalled as much as £17k every month. None of this income had been declared to HMRC.



The TOEX Response

The TOEX team developed a package, using two datasets, one showing the housing benefits payments the city council provided to the suspect, and another, which was made up of nearly 200 ledgers related to payments made to the estate agency for individual properties. These datasets were then combined in order to identify and link the income the offender was receiving, which had not been declared.

As a result, the team were then able to create charts and tables, which broke down the income related to properties that were associated to the individual in question, which the investigation team used to further support their evidence and has been provided to CPS as an exhibit.

In April 2021, the suspect was arrested in connection with the fraudulent mortgage offences in addition to money laundering and criminal tax evasion. Following

questioning, he was released pending further investigation, by the force and HMRC.

Detective Constable Alistair Gadd, of ROCUWM, said:

“The work of the TOEX team was fantastic – they were able to use the datasets we gave them as well as their own systems to bring pieces of the jigsaw together, linking the suspect to the properties and the criminality taking place.

“Without assistance from the TOEX team, the investigation would not have progressed as quickly as it has done and there was a real risk of further vulnerable people being exploited by this individual.”



Evaluation Highlight Report and Feedback Survey Results

The TOEX Programme works from a firm evidence-based approach.

Throughout the pilot year and the first year of full national implementation, Crest Advisory were commissioned to deliver an independent review of the programme, gathering quantitative and qualitative information, to inform the monthly highlight reports as well as their final report, which was published in May 2023.

We are pleased to share with you our new Evaluation Highlight Report, which has been developed and produced by our in-house Performance Analyst, Sophie Cofie-Agyeman, with the findings being published on a quarterly basis.

The report demonstrates how the programme is achieving a number of key performance indicators, including:

- **What is the impact of the TOEX Programme on the identification, prioritisation and disruption of organised exploitation offenders and protection of those they would exploit?**
- **How effective is the centrally coordinated, regionally delivered TOEX model?**
- **What is the ongoing financial efficacy of the regional TOEX ops model, in terms of costs incurred and savings made?**

Of note, TOEX has identified:

Number of Safeguarding Referrals	316	Number of OCGs Identified	18
Number of Priority Individuals Identified	15	Number of Vulnerabilities Identified	10
Identifications in Q1 2023 -24			
Number of New Safeguarding Referrals	42	Number of New OCGs Identified	0
Number of New Priority Individuals Identified	2	Number of New Vulnerabilities Identified	2

Regarding the technical enablers, the report finds that TOEX tools/apps are providing invaluable time-saving aids for policing investigations, building efficiencies, and facilitating the discovery of previously unknown insight.

A Constabulary quoted £2,000 for manual translation of 6,000 lines of Iraqi text and a timeframe of two weeks. TOEX completed the task in under five minutes for £0.83 pence.

You can read the latest Evaluation Highlight Report by clicking [here](#).

In addition to the Evaluation Highlight Report, we are also publishing feedback reports using information from surveys sent to forces following TOEX support.

These reports will be published on a monthly basis to highlight the value added from the TOEX approach and where there are opportunities for learning.

Among the feedback, the results included comments such as:

“The main assistance was in terms of intelligence development and analytical work. This was completely managed by TOEX taking the demand off my team and allowing them to focus on other actions. The staff from TOEX were always helpful and professional. The products supplied to us as an investigation team were excellent and provided key lines of enquiries.”

“We received a platinum service from the TOEX team.”

You can read the latest feedback survey results [here](#).



Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP) Campaign Launch

Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel



“I contacted the panel immediately and got a response really quickly. It was such a relief to feel that someone was listening and taking my enquiry seriously.”

Victims and survivors of child sexual abuse are being urged to contact a scheme which helps to achieve the justice they deserve.

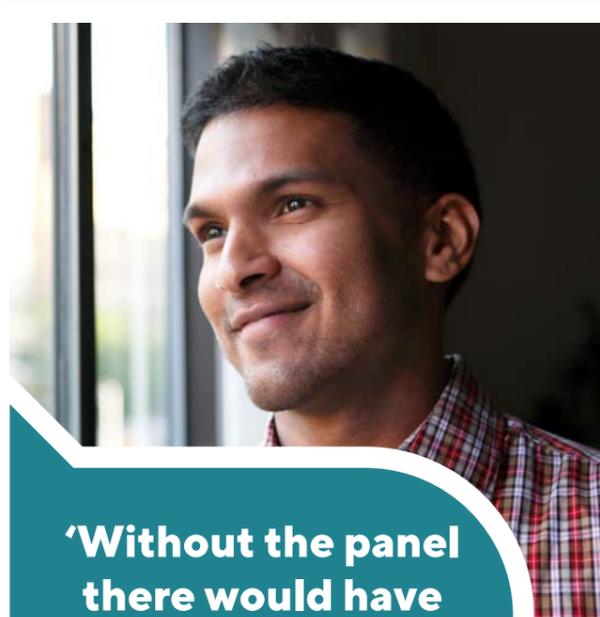
The Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP), which is a joint enterprise between the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), looks again at cases where a victim or survivor feel the decision to take no further action (NFA) in an investigation was unjust and would like the result to be reconsidered.

The Panel consider whether the approach taken by the police or CPS was wrong and advises whether the allegations should be reinvestigated and/ or reviewed.

'J' is a survivor of child sexual abuse - she has shared her story to give victims the confidence to come forward and refer their case to the Panel.

She said: “The man who abused me hasn't shown any sign of taking responsibility for what he did, but in 2021 he was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison for the abuse he inflicted on me and two other vulnerable girls. This case wouldn't have reached court without the support I received from the Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP), and I am so grateful I made contact and succeeded in bringing this man to justice.”

You can read more of J's story [here](#).



‘Without the panel there would have been no second look at my case’



Interesting Reads and Useful Links



The 'Trafficking in Persons 2023 Report: United Kingdom' has been published



The NSPCC have published their 'Child sexual exploitation: learning from case reviews' report



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has released a new podcast episode on messaging apps and child sexual abuse:



The Manchester Metropolitan University has partnered with the Commission on Young Lives to gather further evidence and analysis to explore how girls and young women are becoming at risk of violence and harm



Barnardo's has published a briefing on child criminal and sexual exploitation in the UK and how to safeguard and support child victims and those at risk of abuse and exploitation



The NCA has published 'The National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2023'



The Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit provides a repository of disruptive powers, tools, and tactics for police and other frontline statutory agencies

Upcoming Partnership Events



Westminster Insight 'Transforming Services for Victims' Digital Conference - 17 October 2023: Transforming Services for Victims Conference - Westminster Insight



APCC and NPCC Partnership Summit 2023 - 15 - 16 November: APCC & NPCC Partnership Summit 2023 (npcc-apcc.com)

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