TACKLING ORGANISED
EXXPLOITATION
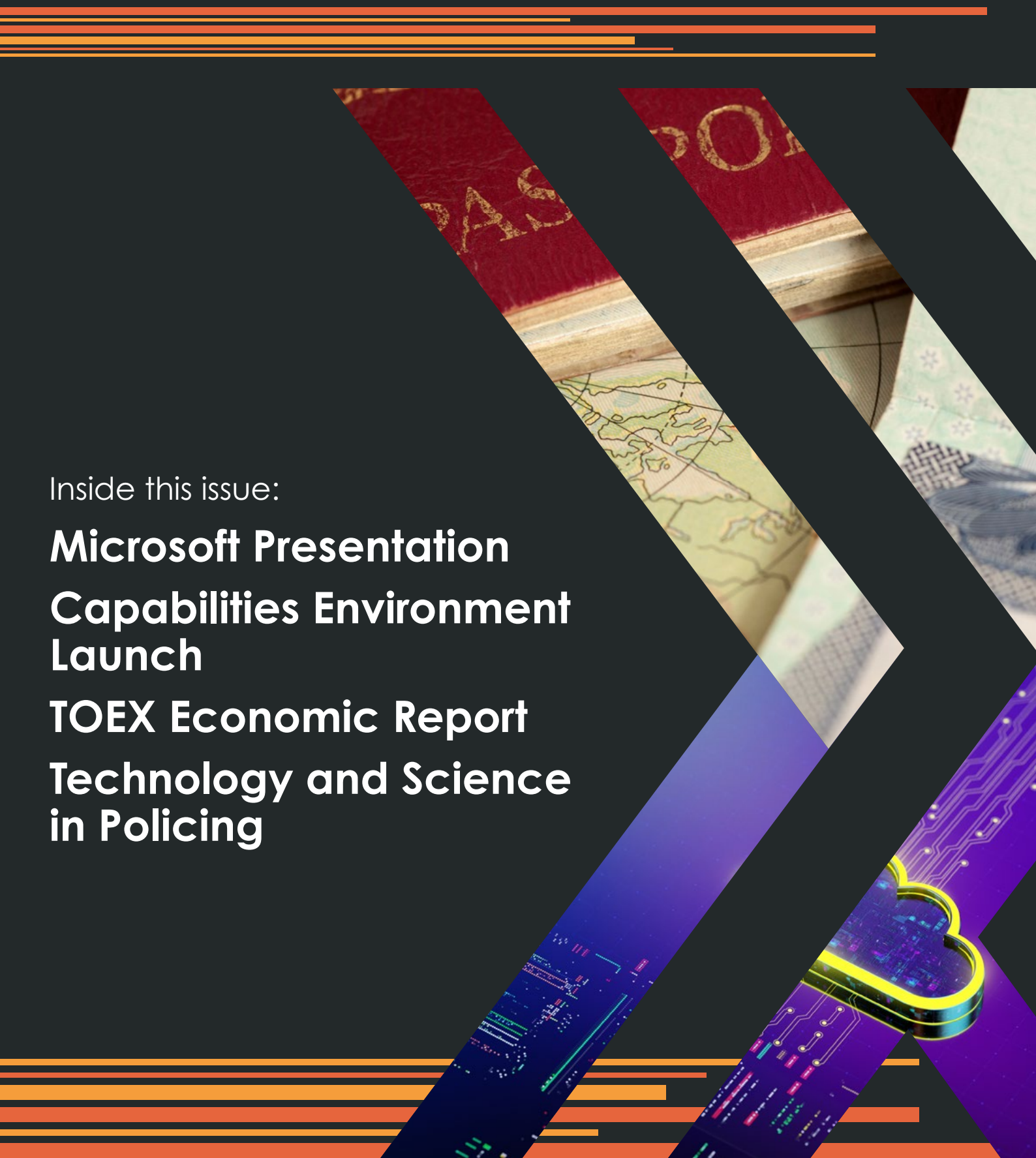PROGRAMME

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Strategic Update

As we approach the New Year, I am very excited for arrival of new colleagues and capabilities across our national network. Both the operating model and technical enablers have progressed well during 2023, with **new members of the TOEX leadership team** being welcomed in Tarian and London in January, to complete our Detective Inspector cohort.

We have now supported **over 400 investigations**, including jobs in all 43 forces, and the 'customer' feedback submitted by force investigators is both recognising the value added, but also helping us to refine the response to ensure it contributes effectively to managing and mitigating force demand.

In December, **Chief's Council** has been discussing the next steps for the TOEX Programme, in advance of our current funding agreement cessation at the end of March 2025. This will ensure there is ample time to plan the programme's long-term future and make sure there is no break in service delivery. All of us appreciate these are very challenging financial times and TOEX is one of several regional capabilities that are feeling that pinch, however, the over-whelming support from NPCC Chiefs Council leadership has supported a project team to develop options for future funding,

governance and hosting that will bring clarity to that long-term delivery.

You will see an updated **economic review** in this edition that, alongside operational evidence, demonstrates the financial viability of the model. TOEX continues to identify and prioritise SOC organised exploitation threats more quickly, and support disruption activity that sees in increased drop in risk score as a result. The staff days saved are then being repurposed against other demand and the increased timeliness is making significant savings against each threat tracked.

Finally, the long awaited **TOEX Capabilities Environment** will be launched for all eleven teams in January 2024. More information is shared later in this issue, but this development is breaking new ground and we are extremely proud of our technical team and key industry partners. The work is being recognised at a national level and we continue to strive to share the progress and tools with wider law enforcement.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. Think TOEX!

Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker

TOEX Programme Director

TOEX Microsoft Presentation

Policing is facing one of its most challenging times and it needs to leverage technology to support efficiency and disrupt organised exploitative criminality.

On Thursday 19 October, the TOEX Director, Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker, and the programme's technical partner, Simpson Associates, presented to Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella, and Corporate Vice President of Microsoft UK, Clare Barclay, to show how their technology is helping to protect more victims and pursue the criminals who would exploit them.

The event gave the opportunity to highlight how far TOEX has come in the last four years – working in collaboration with partners across policing and wider UK law enforcement to develop and assess new technical capabilities/tools.

The presentation also detailed how TOEX has been working with national policing partners with a desire to share as many of these tools and applications with wider law enforcement as possible, following the principle of 'build once, many uses'.

In addition, Kate and Dave Kerby, Data and AI Solution Lead at Simpson Associates, had the privilege to spend some time with Sir Matthew Rycroft, the Home Office Permanent Under Secretary, to explain how the programme operates, assisting local, regional, and national law enforcement with these complex investigations.

Natalie Farr, Public Safety & Justice Manager, Microsoft UK, said: "Envision is our UK flagship event bringing together customers, partners and technology. We were thrilled to host Kate Thacker from the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme (TOEX) team and Dave Kerby from Simpsons as part of a private Public Sector Innovation session with our Global

CEO Satya Nadella and our UK CEO Clare Barclay.

"Kate and Dave demonstrated the incredible work TOEX delivers to keep our communities safer. The team's passion and energy for the project shone through and the impact that TOEX is having shone through. A private meeting showcasing the platform with PUS Sir Matthew Rycroft rounded the day off perfectly.

"A huge thank you to the whole TOEX team, for the dedication, passion and effort. I couldn't think of a more worthy and deserving showcase. We look forward to continuing to support you and the incredible work you deliver every day."

Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker said: "I was incredibly proud to attend and represent TOEX at this event.

> **"It is a very exciting time in policing and effective technical partnerships are leading the way to an enhanced service and supporting our dedicated, hard-working teams."**

Dave Kerby said: "I'm so proud of what the team at the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme and Simpson Associates have achieved in such a short space of time. It demonstrates the pure effectiveness and collaboration between public and private sector."

Operation B

In Spring 2023, police were called to an incident where a number of people had been found in the rear of a lorry that had travelled to the UK. They told officers they had suffered a terrible ordeal on their journey, and all were given medical attention.

The lorry driver, a foreign national who was

suspected of involvement in the arranging or facilitating illegal entry into the UK, was arrested along with a number of the people rescued, on suspicion of entering the UK illegally.

Following the arrests, the local force began an investigation with the driver being the focus of their enquiries.

The TOEX Response

Due to the suspicion around the involvement of the lorry driver, a telephone was seized and examined; however, the content was not in English. This provided some challenges for the force, and so TOEX were asked to assist.

The TOEX team developed a package for the force's investigation, using the Translate app, utilising Microsoft Cognitive Services, to translate more than 550,000 characters in text messages sent to and from the lorry driver, in order to identify and link them to the victims.

As a result of interrogating the phone messages, at a cost of £4.48, the TOEX

team were able to establish that the driver had nothing to do with the criminality involved in this investigation and was immediately eliminated from the inquiry.

The pace and cost-effectiveness at which the app was able to translate the messages allowed the team to focus on other important elements of the investigation and progress with their enquiries.

Now, the TOEX team continue to work closely with local, regional, national, and international organisations in order to develop robust partnerships to tackle organised exploitation.

Capabilities Environment Launch

We're excited to announce that the ongoing effective collaboration with our industry partners will see the TOEX Programme launch a number of innovative technical solutions throughout 2024, which will save investigations significant time and money, ultimately helping to **protect more victims** and **pursue the criminals who would exploit them**.

Articles in this, and previous editions of the TOEX E-mag, have highlighted the complexities which accompany investigations that involve organised exploitation. These complexities can be caused by a multitude of factors including, high volumes of data or information, language barriers encountered in tackling cross-border criminality, or in the number of resource hours spent manually processing intelligence and evidence.
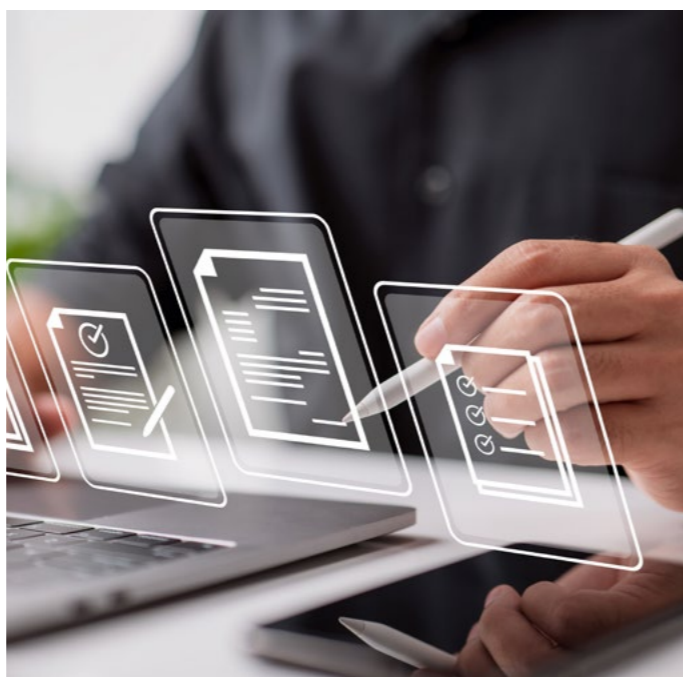
The launch of these tools, which will be made accessible to the TOEX network through the deployment of a secure, assured and UK hosted cloud platform, will help our teams manage these complex investigations in a more effective and efficient way. The **TOEX Capabilities Environment** will act as an 'app store' for the developed tools and, following completion of mandatory training, will be available to TOEX resources to leverage against organised exploitation demand investigated at a force, regional and national level.

The technical development of each tool has been guided by the principle of 'operational business need directing innovation'. They have been specifically designed to tackle an identified policing problem, albeit many of them are suitable for deployment against a wide variety

of policing threats. Some have been developed in-house by the TOEX regional Data Insight Analysts who sit side-by-side with operational intelligence and analytical staff. This blending of business requirements, industry expertise, and addressing operational problems through technical enablers, has resulted in the development of tools capable of generating substantial efficiencies in time and resourcing, thus allowing TOEX resources to focus on high-harm offenders and victims.

"The **TOEX Translation** application will be the first tool to be hosted in the TOEX Capabilities Environment" explains TOEX Lead Developer, Jack Lambourne. "It utilises the AI translation capabilities provided by Microsoft Cognitive Services (MCS) to bulk translate text files."

This tool has already been incredibly powerful in advancing several serious and complex investigations - include the translation of mobile device extractions and social media archives. By November 2023, the TOEX Translation application

TOEX CAPABILITIES ENVIRONMENT

Featuring TOEX
Transcribe & Translate

had been used more than 200 times and successfully translated more than 233 million characters for the total cost of £1,890.

You can read more about how TOEX Translate is being used in this edition's case study.

Improvements to the tool are already being developed; these include entity extraction and the ability to upload a keyword dictionary at the point of translation, further enhancing analytical opportunities and saving investigator time.

In November '23, the programme also began the operational testing of the **TOEX Transcription** application. This tool has the ability to upload audio and video files such as victim and suspect interviews, body-worn video or control room calls, with the AI powered Microsoft Cognitive Services Video Indexer platform performing a transcription within minutes.

Other operational demand led applications are being developed by TOEX in collaboration with our industry partners, and the programme will continually evaluate these technical enablers to support policing's business need.

These are helping to scan, map and visualise data held by the operational teams as well as that available via open source, to reveal networks of criminality and focus intelligence assets on high harm.

Detective Inspector Patrick Thompson, TOEX Technical Lead, said: "The launch of these tools for the TOEX Programme is indicative of an exciting time for innovation across policing, and TOEX will continue to work with national policing partners with a desire to share as many of these tools and applications with wider UK law enforcement as possible ensuring a positive difference to operational policing delivery."

TOEX Economic Report

The TOEX Programme prides itself on recognising the importance of an evidence-led approach.

Crest Advisory (2021/2)

Over a two-year period, the programme commissioned Crest Advisory, who are specialists within the field of crime and criminal justice, to undertake an independent evaluation to assess the pilot year and first year of TOEX national implementation.

That report, which focused on activity between 2021 and 2022, was published earlier this year and concluded that TOEX was providing "vital capacity to the SOC system, supporting a growing number of investigations and ensuring they are moved forward and then closed down when appropriate" and the programme "continues to identify hidden harm through proactive investigation of OE". In addition, "national stakeholders are confident that TOEX is having a positive impact on the SOC system through its whole-system approach and nationally coordinated, regionally delivered model".

Crest also evaluated the technical innovation across the network, finding that "the technical capabilities developed by TOEX are innovative and possess significant potential for the programme, wider law enforcement, and the state of police technology" and the "tools already developed for use within the capabilities environment have demonstrated significant value and efficiency".
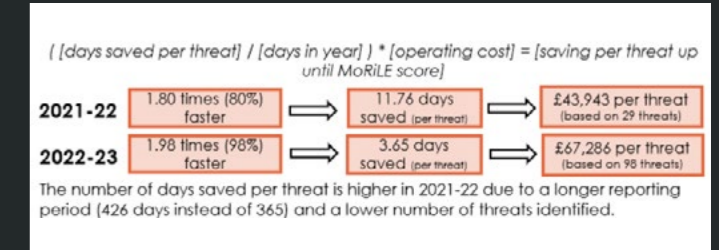
Economic update (2022/3)

We're now pleased to share an updated economic report, which has found that TOEX is delivering **additional capacity, novel capabilities**, and continues to make **significant savings to law enforcement year on year.**

The TOEX approach in tackling organised exploitation, particularly the identification and scoring of threats faster, has saved a total of **£6.59 million per year** in resources, compared to what would have been required to identify the same threats without TOEX.

The 2022 – 2023 report also finds that TOEX-supported investigations have further improved the time and cost efficiencies of each investigation by supporting the early identification (and subsequent disruption) of threats.

Identification
The following comparison uses Crest Advisory's efficiency saving calculations for 2021-22 from their Economic Evaluation (2022) combined **retrospectively with 2022-23's operating cost** to offer a comparison between 2021-22 and 2022-23.

[[days saved] / [days in year] * [operating cost]] = [total cost saving]

2021-22	1.80 times (80%) faster	⇨	340.8 days saved	⇨	£6,282,457 saved
2022-23	1.98 times (98%) faster	⇨	357.7 days saved	⇨	£6,593,999 saved

In 2021-22, Crest Advisory calculated that TOEX saved £1.27m - the equivalent of £43,943 per threat. **In 2022-23, this rose to the equivalent of £67,286 per threat.** Assuming that each threat has equal resourcing assigned to it, **TOEX has saved 358 days of resourcing** that would otherwise have been needed to identify them. The resourcing 'days' is based on the allocation of an Intelligence Development Officer (IDO)/Analyst and Researcher on each case.

Crest Advisory calculated a saving of £151,542 for 2021-22 based on the 10% median and estimated that, based on 2022/23 resourcing expectations, this would amount to an annual saving of £585,444 through the use of the TOEX model to provide focussed resourcing against the organised exploitation threat.

The full national resourcing cost for 2022/23 has resulted in a **higher than estimated annual saving of £747,619** based on a 10% median saving (Deloitte, 2010)
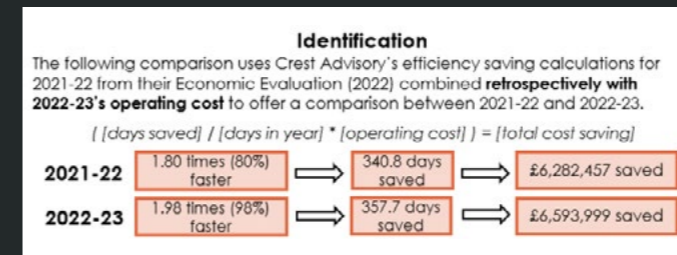

([days saved] / [days in year]] * [operating cost] = [saving per threat up until MoRiLE score]

2021-22	1.80 times (80%) faster	⇨	11.76 days saved (per threat)	⇨	£43,943 per threat (based on 29 threats)
2022-23	1.98 times (98%) faster	⇨	3.65 days saved (per threat)	⇨	£67,286 per threat (based on 98 threats)

The number of days saved per threat is higher in 2021-22 due to a longer reporting period (426 days instead of 365) and a lower number of threats identified.

TOEX Intelligence and Analytics Lead, Lucy Rogers, said: "TOEX recognises the importance of developing and dynamically maintaining an evidence base, which demonstrates programme outcomes; capturing learning as well as what works well. Therefore, we are committed to an ongoing cycle of continuous review.

> **"I am extremely proud of what the team has achieved to date, both operationally and technically, and I also offer my thanks to the numerous partner organisations and individuals who have supported and collaborated with us along the way.**

"The TOEX model continues to respond to threats that may otherwise fall through the gaps in law enforcement, supporting organised exploitation investigations across all tiers of policing and making a fundamental difference to the way policing understands and ultimately disrupts these SOC threats.

> **"Not only is the intelligence and analytical service TOEX provides being very well received by investigators, it is scalable and represents a potential blue-print for whole-systems policing."**

Technology and Science in Policing

Our Director, Detective Chief Superintendent Kate Thacker, recently did an interview with the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser talking all things TOEX.

In the interview, Kate highlights the progress made by the programme and its partners using a proactive and intelligence-led approach to policing, offering resources and expertise to help tackle cases involving organised exploitation.

Kate said: "I'm grateful for the support of policing stakeholders and industry innovators. Policing is facing one of its most challenging times and it needs to leverage

technology to support efficiency and high-quality service. If you have a complex case of organised exploitation, think TOEX and get in touch with your local ROCU team."

Click here to view and/or read the full interview: **The TOEX Programme - Bringing Criminals to Justice (science.police.uk)**

Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference 2024

The national Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference will be held on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 March.

The event is being hosted by TOEX, the Hydrant Programme, and the Vulnerability, Knowledge, and Practice Programme (VKPP), and focuses on protecting children and adults affected by vulnerability related risk and harm, by looking at cross-cutting issues across the programmes, the Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce and the wider vulnerability and exploitation landscape.

This continues to be a very challenging area facing policing and partners, with increasing levels of demand, complexity, and scrutiny, and this conference will aim to provide policing colleagues and key partners an opportunity to come together to explore the latest knowledge, research and innovation across the vulnerability and exploitation space.

The conference will benefit investigator practitioners and those who are involved

in developing, shaping, and leading safeguarding and public protection responses. The conference will also benefit those in the research community who are leading, commissioning, and undertaking research in this area.

Delegates are encouraged to attend the conference either in-person for free (accommodation is not included), at the College of Policing in Ryton, or join virtually.

We already have an exciting range of inputs from victims and survivors, as well as key-note speakers, both internal and external to policing and we'll be announcing more details on this very soon.

As in-person delegate places are limited, we encourage anyone who is interested to register as soon as possible via this link: **Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference 2024 (swoogo.com)**

If you have any problems with registration or appear to be blocked from the platform, please contact: **register@cjsevents.co.uk**

Interesting Reads and Useful Links

The UK Government has announced that the Online Safety Act has now received Royal Assent putting rules to make the internet safer in the UK into law: UK children and adults to be safer online as world-leading bill becomes law - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Northamptonshire Police have created a short film for parents to raise awareness of child exploitation: Film launched to tackle child exploitation | Northamptonshire Police (northants.police.uk)

Eleanor Lyons, the current Deputy Children's Commissioner, has been selected to take up the role of Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner: Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner - Home Secretary announces new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (antislaverycommissioner.co.uk)

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has published a report on artificial intelligence (AI) generated child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online: iwf-ai-csam-report_public-oct23v1.pdf

The Home Office has launched a new public consultation on the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in England: Child sexual abuse: mandatory reporting - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The HMICFRS has published a report on the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales: An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales (justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

Upcoming Partnership Events

Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference
Thursday 7 and Friday 8 March 2024: Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference 2024 (swoogo.com)

The Safeguarding Children 2024 National Conference
Thursday, 28 March 2024: Safeguarding Children | Open Forum Events

Notes

Notes

Contact Us

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