

TACKLING ORGANISED

# EXPLOITATION

PROGRAMME

Issue 8 | January – March 2024

Inside this issue:

**The Big Data Challenge**

**Operation Make/Keepsafe**

**Vaping & Child Exploitation**

**Malta visits ERSOU**

**Vulnerability & Exploitation  
Conference 2024**



# Contents

Strategic Update	3
The Big Data Challenge	4
Operation Make/Keepsafe	7
Vaping & Child Exploitation	8
#ThankTOEX	9
Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference 2024	10
Malta visits ERSOU	11
Interesting Reads and Useful Links	12
Upcoming Partnership Events	12

## Strategic Update



As we head into the third year of full national funding for the TOEX network, I continue to be both impressed and gratified as to how the national and regional TOEX teams have embedded themselves into the law enforcement response to organised exploitation. The programme has supported almost 500 investigations to date, with every force in the UK having commissioned TOEX services. TOEX has identified and developed 28 OCGs, 24 Priority Individuals and 14 national Vulnerabilities that were not identified elsewhere in the policing response and are focussed on the most serious exploitative criminality within the SOC arena.

Following the successful launch of our cloud-hosted Capabilities Environment (App Store) and Translate tool in January, the technical team has worked hard to onboard TOEX network resources. By the end of February six of the ROCU teams had operational access, with the remaining five coming online in March. I am most grateful for the vision and support of the force ICO/ISOs to permit access by the regional teams and will soon be sharing the onboarding plan for a further seven apps in 2024.

With the capabilities work going so well, the technical team is now turning its attention to the data and analytics challenge. This E-Mag issue focusses on 'Big Data' and

demonstrates the power a common data model can have on the ability to access analytics software capable of timely, cost-effective, and detailed analysis of criminality and vulnerability.

The Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference at Ryton earlier this month was a great opportunity to share the TOEX journey to date, seek views from public protection experts and network with like-minded colleagues from across public service and the third sector. TOEX colleagues took the opportunity to showcase how analysis across nine forces is helping to safeguard missing persons and deal with the individuals who seek to exploit their vulnerability. We also talked through case studies focussed on group-based CSA and were hugely encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm of the participants at the venue and joining online.

The coming year will see the programme build resilience with its workforce, enhance technical capabilities across our network and strength collaborations across law enforcement, so thank you in anticipation of your continued support and I look forward to another stellar year!

**Detective Chief Superintendent  
Kate Thacker**

TOEX Programme Director



# The Big Data Challenge

Policing has long worked with siloed and disparate data sets.

A combination of force level commands, county force borders, regional structures, and a history of purchasing proprietary technology systems that don't "talk to each other" has defined a landscape of policing data, which is fragmented and poorly linked.

The goal of bringing together key policing data sets into a common data model that can inform both strategic and tactical decision making is one that has persisted over time but has previously never seen meaningful operational realisation.

The TOEX Programme has a unique remit within policing to provide a borderless response to tackling organised exploitation. This response covers multiple threat thematics including, but not limited to, the organised sexual exploitation of children, the trafficking of individuals into the UK, organised criminality via adult sex work advertising, and the exploitation of vulnerable people through the extended criminality associated with county lines.

Pursuant to their remit, the TOEX Programme has created a data exploitation solution whereby multiple force level data sets are conflated against national policing data sets.

In operational terms, this single data solution allows a user to see in one location high value data about an individual. An example of this is shown below.

In its basic form, this creates a powerful ability to query conflated data sets to identify all relevant policing data related to an individual and generate a holistic picture of their vulnerability and criminality.

However, an even more useful aspect of conflating multiple data sets into one unified data model comes from the ability to identify, link and map network risk via this data. Further value is added when this mapping is co-ordinated thematically.

Creating a vivid data picture of an individual allows operational decisions to be made and an effective response to any risks initiated, whilst relieving much of the research burden that would have otherwise been required to interrogate a number of different data sources. Mapping that individual to other data rich nominals allows for thematic networks to be built around people, places or offending.

The image below shows how this can be done with using business logic around child sexual abuse and exploitation, however thematic nuance around county lines or other threats has been applied with equal success.



**EXPLOITATION X MISSING PERSON CSAE NETWORK RISK** OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE  
Missing Person Records Reported in Trailing 30 Day Period

\*\*\* MISPER CHARACTERISTICS \*\*\* Ages: All Ages | Misper Risks: All | Reporting Force: All

\*\*\* LINK ENTITY CHARACTERISTICS \*\*\* Address Type: All | Associate: All | Intel Report Type: All | Intel Report Dates: All Dates | Occurrence Dates: All Dates

\*\*\* RISK SOURCE CHARACTERISTICS \*\*\* VISOR: Included | Intel Report Type: All | Intel Report Dates: All Dates | Occurrence Dates: All Dates

Misper Name Search:	Search	Missing Count	Risk Links							
Misper Full Name	Person SK	Date of Birth	Age	Last Month	Total	Direct Intel	Direct Occurrence	Indirect VISOR	Indirect Intel	Indirect Occurrence
	677		17		137	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	078		14	2	135	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	153		15		116	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
	434		15		116	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	046		17	1	112	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	871		17		100	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
	078		17		96	N	N	Y	Y	Y
	724		17		96	N	N	Y	Y	Y
	506		17		96	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	929		17		96	N	N	Y	Y	Y
	879		15	2	94	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	549		17	2	91	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	899		16	3	83	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Misper Risk Network (NB: Top 1000 Only)

The value of this single data repository has proven its worth both within TOEX and with national partners.

Within the TOEX programme, the ability to visualise multiple data sets holistically has enabled proactive intelligence builds to take place around those most vulnerable to exploitation.

In late 2023, a force began an investigation after a 14-year-old looked after child disclosed that she had been raped by multiple men.

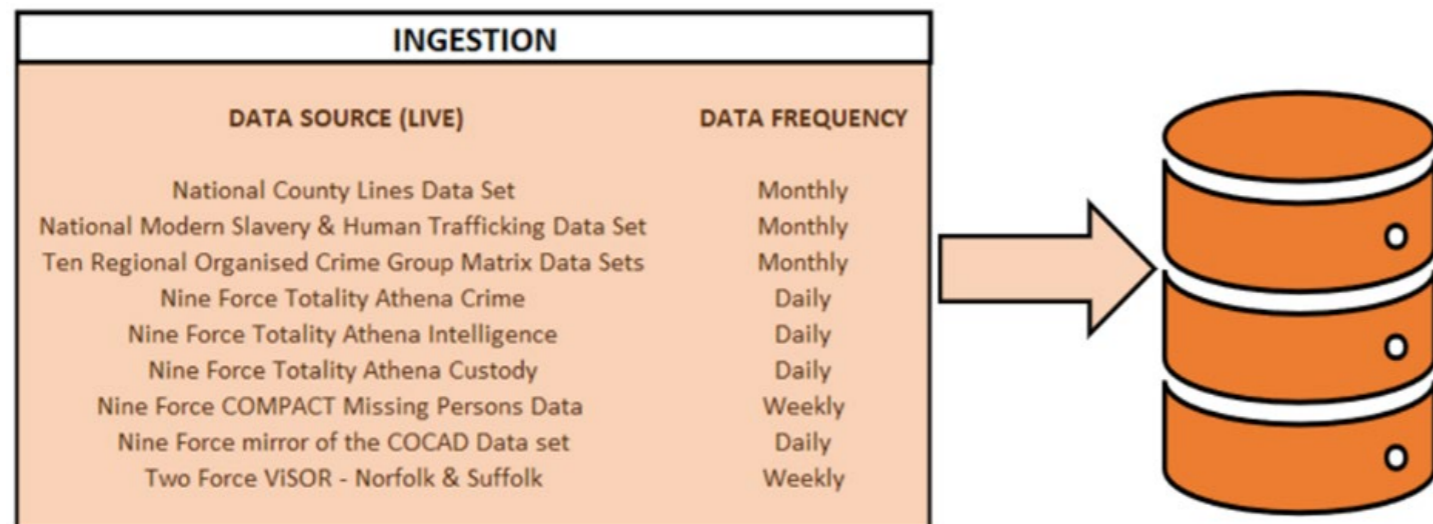
Whilst the local force progressed the enquiry, TOEX staff were able to leverage the data within their data platform and visualise, in one place, all of the victim's missing episodes, crime, and intelligence history; in addition to understanding the wider networks, which linked the victim to those with CSAE markers and those associated with County Lines.

This has enabled the proactive review of whether the victim was part of an organised CSAE network and to establish the size and scope of that network. The work on this investigation is continuing.

TOEX have also built an analytical tool that is supporting frontline 4P disruption of County Lines threats in the Eastern Region and identifying vulnerable people at risk who require priority safeguarding interventions.

**“Through the hard work of the National TOEX Team, we are now able to use data to identify children and young people at high risk of being exploited through the county lines model. The TOEX team have built a fantastic reporting dashboard that connects the data streams we already had in a new and innovative way. They have made significant efforts to work alongside our ROCTA and County Lines teams in ERSOU to understand county lines and focus on specific indicators to highlight those at most risk of being exploited. Through this partnership, we are now safeguarding young people who may not have come to notice before until it was too late. We are better able to protect and prevent high harm and exploitation on a scale we have not been able to achieve before.”**  
– Laura Chenery, ERSOU Head of Analysis





The power of a single data solution has also been used in proof-of-concept work with the National Crime Agency in seeking to provide early intelligence identification of those who share indecent images of children. Leveraging the TOEX data platform we were able to wash online identifiers associated with such offending against established policing data sets, thus providing intelligence links to forty-three nominals, some of whom were known for previous offences against children or for the sharing of indecent images.

In addition to the leveraging the TOEX Data Platform against TOEX demand, at a force level, the TOEX Programme provides a strategic intelligence pack each month to the nine Athena forces relating to both VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) and MISPER (Missing Persons).

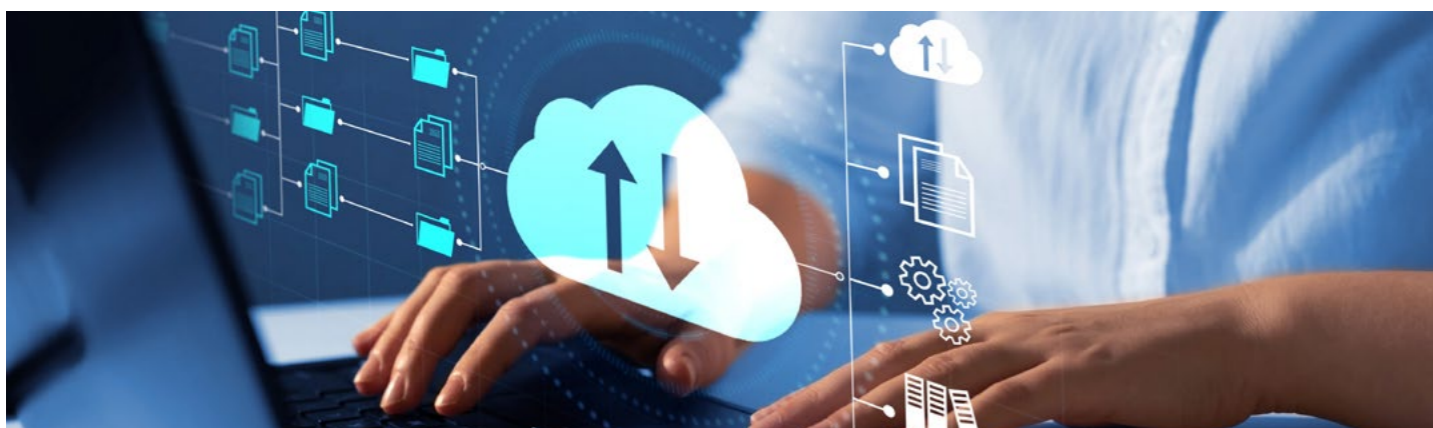
Using Power Bi (SaaS), TOEX has created unique reports for both these threat

thematic areas with the aim to provide a strategic and tactical summary oversight of nominals, locations, risk and crucially, identifying nominals who move across force boundaries in their offending or missing episodes.

TOEX runs these reports monthly to align with each force's Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (FTTCG) meetings. The dedicated recipients of these Official Sensitive products receive them one week in advance of this meeting to allow for scrutiny before being presented.

The current data sources which feed this Single Data Solution and the strategic intelligence packs are listed above.

An opportunity exists to upscale this data model to further forces to enable faster data review at force and regional levels, in addition to offering increased insight of national organised offending.



## Operation Keep/Makesafe

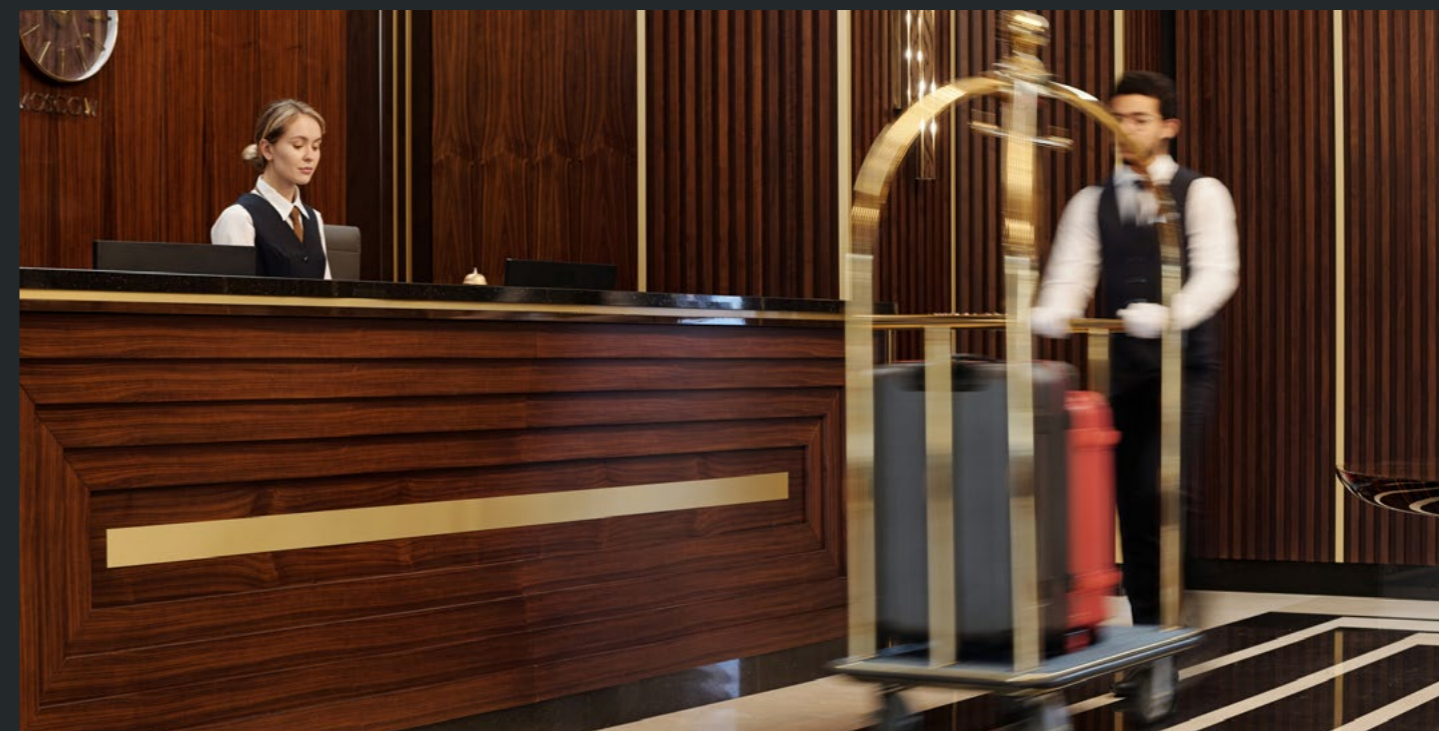
Operation Keep/Makesafe is a national project, raising awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) within the hotel and leisure industry. The initiative focuses on law enforcement engaging with staff within these sectors so they're aware of the early warning signs of child sexual exploitation and ensure businesses and organisations are empowered to tackle this offending through increased understanding and training by being able to identify potential victims of CSE, and where necessary, alert police officers to intervene to safeguard any children at risk.

The EMSOU TOEX team was asked to assist Derbyshire Police, utilising the Data Insights Analyst (DIA) to try and locate 'hotspots' of CSE offending in hotels around the county. The DIA produced a list of keywords relating to CSE and wrote a software query that searched the region's crime recording records for all occurrences that fit the keyword criteria and allowed the DIA to identify any patterns of offending.

As a result, the team were able to present the force with a list of hotels where CSE had previously been reported and enable preventative action.

Following this work, the team was asked to develop a similar package for Nottinghamshire Police. The DIA produced a presentation and a Power Bi dashboard, which visualised the results from the query into charts, maps and lists that made it easier to see a bigger picture of the offending. This was then disseminated wider across the force for intelligence purposes and intervention.

To maximise the value of this work, the national CSE Taskforce led by the Hydrant Programme, is working with TOEX and the VKPP's regional analysts to develop an intelligence product, for use by law enforcement to identify where there are concerns regarding CSE and work in partnership with the hotel and leisure industry to support staff to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation.





# Vaping & Child Exploitation

Law enforcement has recognised a new trend whereby criminal gangs are using e-cigarettes and vapes to exploit young people criminally and sexually throughout the UK.

Traditionally, gangs have used cash, trainers, and food to groom and entrap young people; however, with the rise in the number of 11–15-year-olds vaping, criminals have evolved their tactics and are now using these as a means to target young people.

Our TOEX teams are proactively supporting forces and working with local Trading Standards, Immigration and HMRC to disrupt this offending, protecting those who would have been at risk of being exploited.

The Northeast TOEX team proactively search their force intelligence systems on a monthly basis with keywords such as 'vape', 'e-cigarette', 'child', 'exploitation', and 'grooming' etc. seeking intelligence reports around incidents of that nature, comparing it against a monthly report from Trading Standards regarding which businesses in the region are engaged in this activity.

Once, the intelligence has been collated, the Data Insights Analyst (DIA) compiles a report, which is sent to force exploitation leads in support of '4P' activity.

This proactive work has resulted in joint warrants being executed by Trading Standards and forces with the prosecution of businesses and individuals involved in the illegal supply of vapes. In one case, around £15k worth of illegal vapes were seized during a warrant and suspects arrested.

This work, which highlights the pivotal role of TOEX teams in supporting local investigations has been included in a presentation to local MPs and the Prime Minister with plans to present in Parliament soon. Internally, a strategy is being developed to further educate officers around this type of exploitation, and the legislation, to enhance enforcement opportunities.

Similarly, our Tarian TOEX team have been involved in the Crimestoppers All-Wales campaign, which aims to disrupt offenders using vapes to exploit young people. The team continue to develop intelligence tools for officers using data from all four Welsh forces and Trading Standards Wales to help officers understand where the greatest risk is for schools and shops. You can find out more about the campaign here: [The use of vapes to attract, groom and exploit children | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

# #ThankTOEX



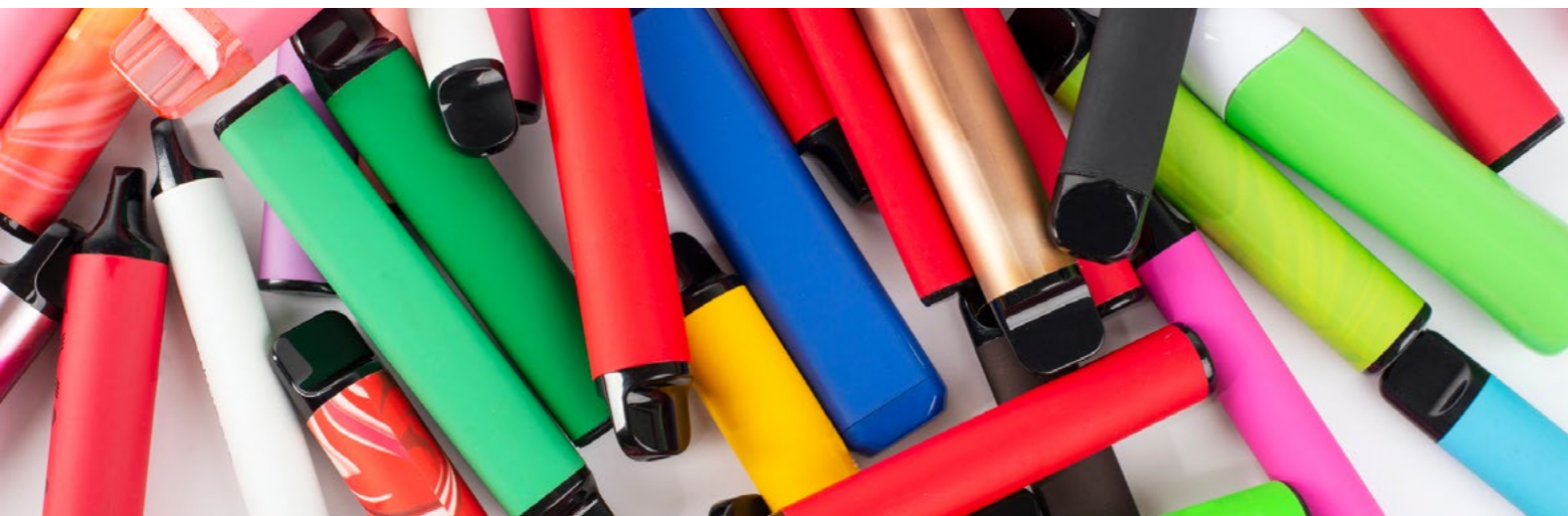
We are pleased to share that one of our TOEX regional teams has received an award for the work they're doing to support forces to tackle organised exploitation.

The SWROCU team were formally commended at the South West Police Collaboration Awards held on 31 January, for consistently demonstrating being at the forefront of innovation within policing at both a regional and national level, and accepted the award from DSU Tina Robinson.

The commendation reads:

TOEX are tasked with identifying the organised crime groups that exploit our children and vulnerable people and the Southwest TOEX have demonstrated how they have been able to utilise technology to counter these threats. TOEX have provided SIO's with competing hypothesis analysis, worked with partners abroad in debriefing

parents of high risk missing children who had entered the UK illegally and being exploited; they have utilised available apps such as Safer Car Wash app to identify and develop exploitation threats to prevent persons being exploited within industry; created a flights tool that enables Law Enforcement colleagues to search UK flight data thereby assisting the combatting of Organised Immigration Crime; assisted National UCOL with a data platform that is changing the way nationally we manage and counter group based CSE investigations; utilised a scraping tool identifying OCG's operating within Adult Service Websites exploiting the vulnerable and embedded the use of TOEX online tools such as Translation and Transcriptions tools that are assisting with quickly identifying exploitation threats. This innovative work has drawn praise and recognition nationally and I hereby commend the SWROCU TOEX team.





# Vulnerability and Exploitation Conference 2024



The conference was jointly hosted by the Hydrant Programme, Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX) Programme, and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme at the College of Policing headquarters in Ryton, and included sessions looking at what 'justice' looks like through the voices of victims and survivors as well as hearing examples of promising practice that have resulted in better and quicker identification, prioritisation and disruption of exploitation and vulnerability related harm and protection of those experiencing harm and abuse.

Delegates also heard from those with lived-experience through a number of victim and survivor testimonies, including a panel of former footballers from the Football Association, who are victims and survivors of non-recent child sexual abuse and spoke about the impact that the abuse has had on their lives and wellbeing.

Ian Critchley said:

**"This conference allowed policing and partners to consider critical issues in our developing approach to tackling vulnerability and exploitation. We have many outstanding front-line staff and leaders who dedicate themselves every day to helping others who need us most. Our job is to help ensure they have the support, training and skills to support and give confidence to victims and ultimately bring more offenders to justice. This was most powerfully informed by the courageous voice of adult survivors and young people who we were privileged to have in the room and share their deepest personal experiences with us all with a determination to help our improvements and prevent harm to others."**



## Malta Visits ERSOU

On Wednesday 7 February, the Maltese Police Commissioner, Angelo Gafa, and the International Liaison Officer, Graham Hancock, visited ERSOU.

As part of their visit, they met with all teams at ERSOU, including TOEX, to learn more about the ROCU model, intelligence functions and operations they are supporting – in particular, exploitation investigations and tools and tactics used in them.

DI Gary Pemberton gave a presentation providing an overview of how TOEX supports the ROCUs and local forces as well as highlighted a recent organised immigration crime investigation, where a number of people were found in the rear of a lorry that had travelled to the UK – you can read more about Operation 'B' here - [Operation B | TOEX \(toexprogramme.co.uk\)](https://www.toexprogramme.co.uk)

# Interesting Reads and Useful Links



The Home Affairs Committee has published a report on human trafficking which explores the trafficking of children into the UK: Human trafficking ([parliament.uk](http://parliament.uk))



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has published a news story on child sexual abuse imagery online: Under 10s groomed online 'like never before' in 2023 find IWF



The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) has published an analysis by the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) of child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) reports across England and Wales: VKPP launch National Analysis of Police-Recorded Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Crimes Report 2022 | Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme



The CSA Centre has published a report on child sexual abuse in England and Wales: [csacentre.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/02/Trends-in-Offical-Data-2022-23-FINAL.pdf](http://csacentre.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/02/Trends-in-Offical-Data-2022-23-FINAL.pdf)



The Children's Society has published two new briefings on child financial exploitation including an introduction for professionals: #LookCloser To Spot Exploitation | The Children's Society ([childrenssociety.org.uk](http://childrenssociety.org.uk))

# Notes

# Upcoming Partnership Events

✘ **National Analysts Conference on 23 and 24 April 2024: 9th National Analyst's Conference | [The Investigator \(the-investigator.co.uk\)](http://the-investigator.co.uk)**

✘ **NSPCC's child safeguarding online conference, How Safe 2024, on 26 June: [How safe are our children? 2024 safeguarding conference | NSPCC Learning](#)**

✘ **Children in Scotland's annual conference 2024 on 29 and 30 May 2024 in Edinburgh: [Children in Scotland](#)**



# Notes



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