



Impact

Report

2020-21





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Letter From The CEO



2020-2021 BROUGHT NEW CHALLENGES THAT NO ONE HAD EVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. THE PANDEMIC CHANGED OUR WORLD AND THE FUTURE. THIS IS A FUTURE THAT WE CONTINUE TO KEEP UNRAVELLING AND UNDERSTANDING. NOT ONLY DID WE HAVE TO ADAPT TO NEW WAYS OF WORKING, BUT WE ALSO HAD TO IDENTIFY AND WORK WITH THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC UPON EXPLOITATION.

LINK TO CHANGE SAW A RAPID INCREASE IN REFERRALS, ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO ONLINE EXPLOITATION, INCREASED SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, THE NEED TO INCREASE LEVELS OF SUPPORT AND NAVIGATE CHANGES IN EXPLOITATION. WE SAW MORE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNKNOWN TO ANY SERVICES FALLING VICTIM TO EXPLOITATION, FURTHER DISTANCES BEING TRAVELLED FOR TRAFFICKING, INCREASES IN MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS, INCREASES IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RESIDING WITH PERPETRATORS DURING LOCKDOWN. THESE CONTINUE TO BE CHALLENGES THAT WE ARE TACKLING STILL TODAY.

AS A CHARITY THAT IS SOLELY FUNDED BY GRANTS, TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND FUNDRAISING EFFORTS OF THE COMMUNITY,

WE CONTINUE TO EXTEND OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED AND PROVIDED US WITH FUNDING TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER OUR HIGHLY REGARDED AND HIGHLY DEMANDED SERVICES TO OUR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

I WOULD ADDITIONALLY LIKE TO EXTEND OUR THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES (PAST AND PRESENT), KEY PARTNERS AND PATRONS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL EMPLOYEES OF LINK TO CHANGE. WITHOUT THEIR DEDICATION, EXPERTISE, ADAPTABILITY AND PATIENCE WE WOULD HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR SERVICES AND MAINTAIN OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THOSE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THAT WERE AND CONTINUE TO BE MOST IN NEED. I BEAM WITH PRIDE ON THEIR PASSION TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hayley Brown', written over a horizontal line.

HAYLEY BROWN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Emerging Issues -

The Impact Of

COVID-19

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2020, MUCH LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD, WE WERE THROWN INTO A SCARY AND CONFUSING TIME. THE MAJORITY OF OUR WORK WAS FACE TO FACE SO WE HAD TO ADAPT TO ENSURE WE COULD STILL OFFER SUPPORT TO OUR CLIENTS.



All 1-2-1 sessions were virtual and our workshops were adapted to be online. All networking and support meetings were changed to virtual.

80%

OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WERE ENGAGING WITH US VIRTUALLY DURING THE PANDEMIC.

Emerging Issues -

The Impact Of

COVID-19

THE SERVICE DELIVERY THAT TOOK THE BIGGEST HIT DURING THE PANDEMIC IS OUR WORKSHOPS AND TARGETED GROUP WORK. PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC WE COULD GO INTO SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY SETTINGS AND OUR OUTREACH WORK TO HOLD INFORMATION AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOPS, TARGETED GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES AND DROP-IN SESSIONS. THESE STOPPED COMPLETELY AS THE PANDEMIC FORCED SCHOOLS TO SHUT, AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WERE MADE TO ATTEND LESSONS VIRTUALLY AT HOME. THIS MEANT WE HAD REDUCED ACCESS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE ON THE CUSP OF EXPLOITATION.

WE SUPPORTED

600

LESS YOUNG PEOPLE THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR DUE TO THE CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.



Emerging Issues -

The Impact Of

COVID-19

THE PANDEMIC DIDN'T JUST PROVIDE US WITH OBSTACLES TO OUR SERVICE DELIVERY, IT ALSO POSED MULTIPLE THREATS TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. THE RESULT OF THIS IMPACT WAS INCREASED RISKS OF EXPLOITATION - MEANING THERE WAS A GREATER NEED FOR OUR SUPPORT.

DURING THE PANDEMIC THERE WAS AN;

INCREASE IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RESIDING WITH PERPETRATORS

INCREASING/ EMERGING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONCERNS

INCREASE IN ONLINE EXPLOITATION

INCREASE IN SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

INCREASE IN CUCKOOING

HOWEVER, DUE TO SEEING CLIENTS ONLINE INSTEAD OF FACE-TO-FACE, OUR PRACTITIONERS HAD REDUCED TRAVEL TIMES SO WE WERE TEMPORARILY ABLE TO INCREASE OUR CASELOADS AS THERE WAS MORE CAPACITY.

94%

retention rate of engagement with our children and young people



Our Work

CHOICE, CHALLENGE AND CHANGE ARE THE EMPOWERING VALUES UNDERPINNING ALL WE DO

OUR SERVICE DELIVERY INCLUDES:

1-2-1 SOLUTIONS FOCUSED SUPPORT

1-2-1 LONG-TERM HOLISTIC SUPPORT

TARGETED GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES

INFORMATION AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOPS

DROP-IN SESSIONS

YOUTH CLUB INFORMATION & DROP-IN SESSIONS

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES & LIFE SKILLS

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Choice

(PREVENTATIVE)

Providing educational and critical thinking skills to enable the children and young people to make an informed decision

247

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED OVERALL

3 INFORMATION AWARENESS RAISING SESSIONS TO OVER 200

7 TARGETED GROUPWORK PROGRAMMES TO 47

35 WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH 1-2-1 SESSIONS

18 DROP IN SESSIONS FOR 46 YP

23 OUTREACH SESSIONS AS PART OF TREE PROJECT

OVER 50 PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS ATTENDED

46 PARENTS/CARERS ATTENDED INFORMATION AWARENESS RAISING SESSIONS

Challenge

(CYCLE OF EXPLOITATION)

Providing wellbeing and resilience support to children and young people in changing the cycle of exploitation.

1,133

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED OVERALL

78 WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH 1-2-1 SESSIONS

49 WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH TARGETED GROUP WORK SESSIONS

406 WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOPS

600

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED THROUGH AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NCS

Change

(PARTICIPATION)

Providing empowerment and participation to young people after a life of exploitation

OVERALL WE SUPPORTED 15 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH YOUTH PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES. SADLY, DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS THE PARTICIPATION GROUP HAS NOT UNDERTAKEN AS MANY KEY ACTIVITIES AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED. HOWEVER, THEY WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN BOTH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNIFE CRIME CAMPAIGN AND OUR HIDDEN CAMPAIGN.

LINK TO CHANGE HIDDEN

CHRIS, 15

Chris was introduced to his perpetrators when he was 15 years old. Chris was sexually exploited and groomed to exploit his peers. Chris felt like he had nowhere to turn and blamed himself until he met his Link to Change worker.

Text LTC SUPPORT and your donation amount to 70085

Charity No. 1096832 Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England No. 4749700

#KnifeFree

Bin The Blade.

Link to Change
choice challenge change

#KNIFE FREE

41% OF KNIFE CRIME OFFENDERS ARE AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 19 WHILE ANOTHER 5% ARE YOUNGER STILL, RANGING IN AGE FROM 10 TO 14.

KNIFE OR LIFE?

KNIFE CRIME IS ON THE RISE. THE NUMBER OF OFFENCES INVOLVING KNIVES OR SHARP INSTRUMENTS HAS INCREASED BY 50% SINCE MARCH 2016.

Link to Change PCC

LINK TO CHANGE HIDDEN

BACKGROUND

All children and young people are at risk no matter what their background.

Children and young people of any race, religion, gender, family and community are at risk.

WWW.LINKTOCHANGE.ORG.UK
INFO@LINKTOCHANGE.ORG.UK

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LINK TO CHANGE HIDDEN

CHILDREN AS YOUNG AS 7 YEARS OLD ARE CURRENTLY BEING EXPLOITED

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Project

Spotlight

THE CSE LANDSCAPE APPEARS TO BE GETTING WORSE. ONE THIRD OF COUNTY LINES CASES ARE LINKED TO CSE. GIRLS IN GANGS ARE AFFILIATED THROUGH SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND USED TO RECRUIT YOUNGER GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN. LONDON GANGS ARE ALSO MOVING INTO BEDFORDSHIRE, ESPECIALLY LUTON, AND EXPLOITING CHILDREN.

IN RESPONSE TO THIS WE APPLIED FOR AND WERE GRANTED FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND FOR OUR PAN-BEDFORDSHIRE CHILD EXPLOITATION SERVICES PROJECT. THIS WAS A THREE YEAR PROJECT RUNNING FROM OCTOBER 2019 TO OCTOBER 2021, WITH THE AIM OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING EXPLOITED. THE AIM WAS TO INCREASE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD EXPLOITATION, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND THE ABILITY TO BREAK FREE.



Project

Spotlight



THROUGH THIS PROJECT WE WERE ABLE TO:

Hire

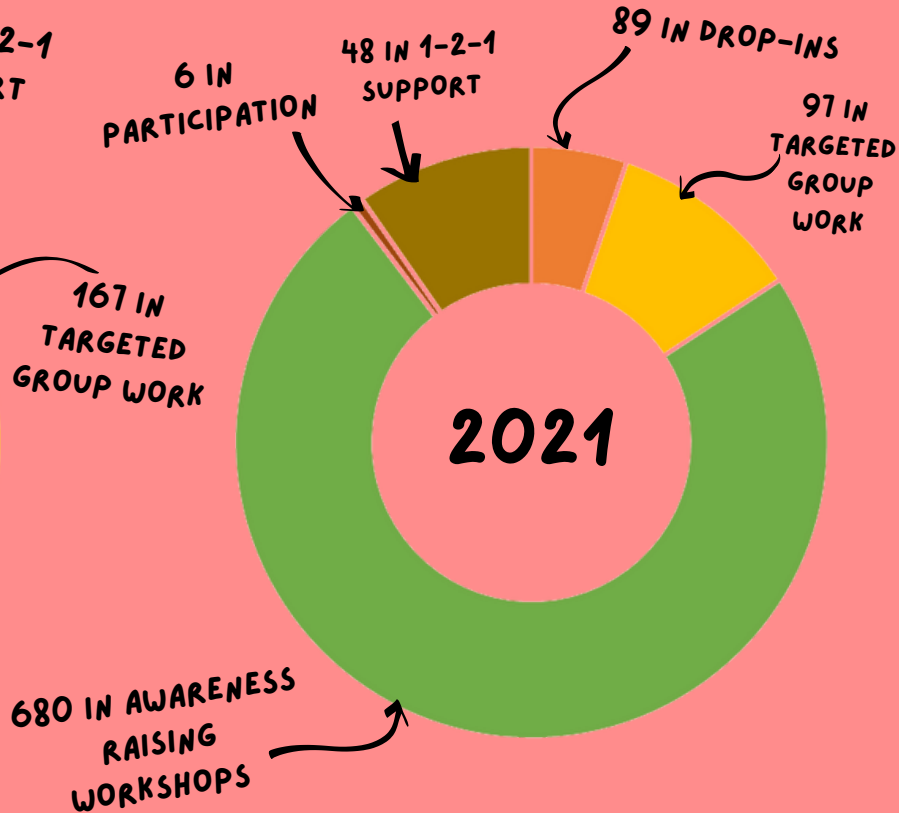
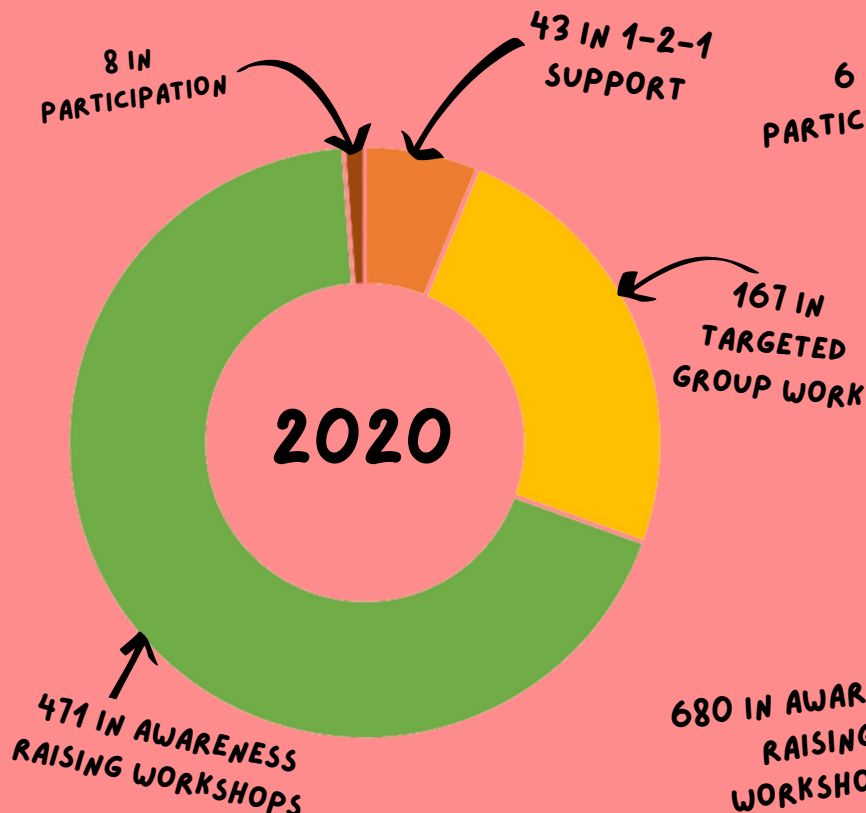
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Dedicated Specialist

Exploitation Practitioners

AT THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR (OCTOBER 2020) 689 YOUNG PEOPLE WERE SUPPORTED IN TOTAL

AT THE END OF THE THIRD YEAR (OCTOBER 2021) 920 YOUNG PEOPLE WERE SUPPORTED IN TOTAL





BILLY BEGAN TO WORK WITH HIS LINK TO CHANGE PRACTITIONER DURING THE FIRST COVID-19 LOCKDOWN. HE WAS REFERRED TO THE SERVICE DUE TO BEING AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION FROM A FAMILY MEMBER AND PEER GROUP.

COMMUNICATION AT FIRST WAS VERY DIFFICULT AS BILLY DID NOT LIKE PHONE CONTACT AND WAS VERY GUARDED. HE ENGAGED IN LIMITED CONVERSATION. THE WORKER PERSISTED TO CALL AND WHEN POSSIBLE MEET WITH BILLY, FOCUSING ON GETTING TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND HIM. BILLY'S COMMUNICATION WITH THE PRACTITIONER IMPROVED AS THEY STRENGTHEN THEIR RELATIONSHIP OVER A HOBBY. HE STARTED TO MAKE SMALL DISCLOSURES WHICH LED TO DISCUSSIONS AROUND PEER RELATIONSHIPS, EMOTIONS, SELF-ESTEEM, MONEY, AND CRIMINALITY.

BILLY STARTED TO RECOGNISE THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE HE WAS ASSOCIATING WITH WEREN'T 'TRUE FRIENDS' AND WOULD QUESTION WHY CERTAIN THINGS WOULD HAPPEN TO HIM. BILLY SHOWED AN AMAZING ABILITY TO SELF-REFLECT AND WOULD SOMETIMES ASK BIG MORAL QUESTIONS KNOWING THAT HE WAS IN A SAFE AND NON-JUDGMENTAL SPACE TO DO SO, AS RESULT BILLY HAD TOLD THE PRACTITIONER THAT HE'D NEVER TAKEN TIME TO THINK ABOUT CONSEQUENCES BEFORE. HE BEGAN TO REQUEST TO SEE THE WORKER AND WOULD SOMETIMES CALL TO ASK WHEN THE PRACTITIONER WAS COMING THAT WEEK WHEN HE HAD CREDIT.

BILLY MADE A SERIES OF LARGE DISCLOSURES TO THE PRACTITIONER WHICH RESULTED IN INTELLIGENCE REFERRALS AND MULTI-AGENCY MEETINGS TO SHARE RELEVANT INFORMATION WITH MORE DETAILS COMING TO LIGHT ABOUT THE NATURE OF EXPLOITATION AND OTHER FACTORS USEFUL FOR PRACTITIONERS TO SAFEGUARD THIS YOUNG PERSON. OVERALL BILLY HAD GONE FROM NOT WANTING TO ENGAGE AND FEELING CONFUSED ABOUT HIS PEERS TO HAVING MORE AWARENESS AND WANTING TO SEE THE WORKER EACH WEEK.

Our Outcomes

WHEN COLLECTING OUR OUTCOMES FOR THE END OF THE YEAR, WE SURVEY ALL CURRENT AND PAST CLIENTS WHO WERE ON OUR DATABASE FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD. WE ALSO USE SERVEYS GIVEN TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WE HAVE REACHED THROUGH OTHER ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TARGETED GROUP WORK.

100% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE STATED THAT THE SUPPORT MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THEIR LIFE

92% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN A REDUCTION IN CONCERNING BEHAVIOURS

96.5% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SHOWED AN IMPROVEMENT IN MAKING POSITIVE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE BY ENDING CONTACT WITH PERPETRATORS

93% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE DEMONSTRATED INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF SAFE RELATIONSHIPS

96% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SHOWED A REDUCTION IN THEIR PERIODS OF MISSING

OVER 2020-2021 WE WERE STRIVING TO ENSURE THAT WE WERE PROVIDING THE BEST QUALITY SUPPORT TO AS MANY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, AND ARE PLEASED WITH THE REPORTED NUMBER OF NEW REFERRALS WE HAVE ACCEPTED AND ALLOCATED.

28

NEW REFERRALS
IN 2020

101

NEW REFERRALS
IN 2021

Office Relocation

AFTER NEARLY 20 YEARS OF BEING BASED IN ST NEOTS WE MADE THE MOVE IN SEPTEMBER 2021 TO BE NEAR THE TOWN CENTRE IN BEDFORD. AS OUR CHARITY HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS AND WE HAVE ADJUSTED OUR VALUES TO FOLLOW THE GROWING NEED FOR OUR SERVICES, WE HAVE MOVED MOST OF OUR SUPPORT TO PAN-BEDFORDSHIRE. THERE WAS A NATURAL NEED TO MOVE OUR PREMISES TO BE CLOSER TO OUR CLIENTS. OUR TEAM HAS GROWN IN SIZE AND A LARGER SPACE WAS NEEDED FOR OFFICE SPACE.

WITH THE SIZE OF OUR NEW OFFICE BEING CONSIDERABLY LARGER THAN OUR PREVIOUS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OFFER A SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. THANKS TO THE SCREWFIX FOUNDATION, BL ROBINSON TRUST, JOHN APTHORP AND PERCY BILTON FUNDING, WE WERE ABLE TO DO SO. DESIGNED BY HAYLEY, OUR CEO, AND ALICE, OUR EARLY-INTERVENTION EXPLOITATION SPECIALIST, OUR NEW OFFICE HAS BEEN ABLE TO BECOME A SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHERE THEY CAN HAVE FUN, LEARN NEW SKILLS AND HAVE A SAFE SPACE TO CONTINUE THEIR WORK WITH OUR TEAM.

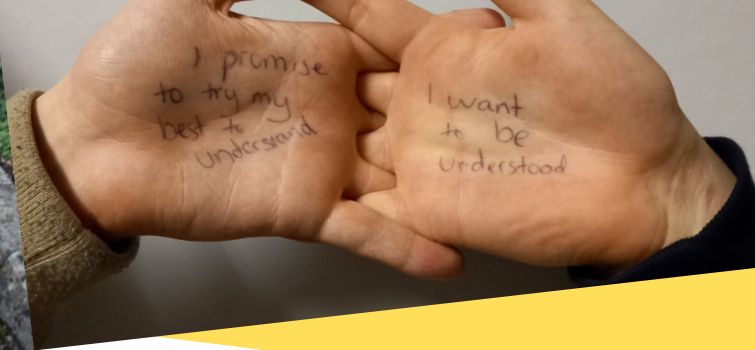


Our Supporters

LINK TO CHANGE IS FUNDED PURELY THROUGH GRANTS, TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS AND RECEIVE NO STATUTORY FUNDING.

OUR SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:





Thank

You!

"THE SUPPORT HAS HELPED ME BY FEELING LIKE I CAN EXPRESS MY FEELINGS AND GET THINGS OUT"

DESPITE THE ADVERSE PROBLEMS WE HAVE BEEN THROWN AT DURING 2020-21, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GROW AND DEVELOP OUR SERVICES TO PROVIDE EVEN MORE SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE!

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