

Charter 8.5 - Reducing Digital Offending

Improvement Project Title – Preventing under 18s offending across digital platforms			
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Aim statement – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Increase the number of awareness-raising events by 20% relating to ‘digital’ offending by 2021, and ii) Reduce the number of ‘digital’ offences by 10% from 2021-26 <p>The LOIP aim had no specific numerical target and having reviewed baseline data, the project will look to develop new methods for awareness raising events and a 20% increase will be challenging but achievable.</p> <p>The digital offending data revealed only 56 offences in the last recorded year. It is reasonably anticipated an unintended consequence of the project will be to unearth under-reporting. In the absence of this and in light of the relatively low number of crimes, a 10% decrease appears a reasonable target, accepting this type of offending will require a medium to long-term approach to change culture.</p>			
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan			
Stretch Outcome 8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026 <i>(Baseline data: 965 young people charged in 2015-16; 827 in 2016-17; 698 in 2017/18. A 25% reduction is 175 young people)</i>	Key Drivers 8.1 Young people receive the right help at the right time through provision of a strong universal offer alongside availability of multi-disciplinary targeted interventions (using a trauma-informed approach) to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System	Improvement Project Aim j) Increase the number of awareness-raising events relating to ‘digital’ offending by 2021, and then ii) reduce the number of ‘digital’ offences from 2021 – 2026.	Key Improvement Measures No. of awareness-raising events regarding ‘digital’ offending e.g. sexting <i>(Baseline data: 16/17 – 105; 17/18 - 128)</i> No. of ‘digital’ offences committed by under 18s <i>(Baseline data: 16/17 – 40; 17/18 – 65)</i>
Why this is important			
Overview Unwanted distribution of digital sexual material by young people is a major concern for parents, teachers and professionals.			
The Police Scotland Aberdeen City Annual Report on juvenile offenders showed during 2018/19, 672 young people (under 18) were charged with offences in Aberdeen,			

recording a total of 1481 offences, with anti-social behaviour, assaults and acquisitive crime accounting for a significant proportion.

In terms of sexually orientated crimes, only 69 were recorded.

This 'digital' offending number within these sexually motivated crimes, ranging from sending indecent or intimate images, sharing or showing pictures and sexually inappropriate messaging, sits at **56**, representing 3.8% of the total offence figure for overall youth offending in Aberdeen City. All incidents are robustly reviewed and the crimes recorded meet the threshold for 'criminality' under the Scottish Crime Recording Standards. Incidents falling short of the threshold remain as 'incidents' and are disposed of out with the youth justice system, whether by schools, parents/guardians or informal advice. There is no available date to capture these incidents,

The break-down of the 56 offences details 69% in the 8-15 age bracket and 31% aged 16-17.

Crime Type	2018/19	
	8 - 15 Yrs	16 - 17 Yrs
Coercing a person into being present/ looking at sexual activity	11	5
Communicating indecently	6	0
Cause to be Present Sex Act/To Look at Sex Image - (< 13)	8	2
Communicate Indecently/Cause see/hear Indecent <u>Comm</u> - (< 13)	0	1
Cause to be Present Sex Act/Look at Sex Image-M&F(13-15)(Consensual)	1	4
Communicate Indecently/Cause see/hear Indecent <u>Comms</u> -(13-15) (Consensual)	1	1
Threatening to disclose an intimate image	2	0
Disclosure of an intimate image	6	2
Communications Act 2003 (sexual)	3	3
Division Total	38	18

All statistics are provisional and should be treated as management information. All data have been extracted from Police Scotland internal systems and are correct as at 08/01/2020.

Work is ongoing to extract the 2019-20 data which is expected to provide similar volume.

On dip sampling the crime reports, the narrative around the offending profile indicates a gap in understanding of the legality of the action, peer pressure and lack of appreciation of impact and risk around this behaviour.

National research was commissioned by the NSPCC to explore the feelings and experiences of young people aged 11-16 relating to online pornography. Some of the notable findings relating to this charter;

- Young people's definition of 'sexting' is textual not visual
- The vast majority of young people had not taken naked 'selfies', but 36% of children who had taken nude or semi-naked self-photographs reported that they had been asked to show these images to someone online

- Boys actively searched for sexual images online (59%) more than girls (25%) of those who answered the question
- A significant gender difference was demonstrated in why sexual orientated images were shared. 59% of girls reported sharing images after being asked to, whereas 70% boys reported sharing images without being asked
- Young people had limited knowledge of how to remove online images of themselves

Boys and young men generally view pornography more positively and state that they view it primarily out of curiosity while girls and young women generally report that it is unwelcome and socially distasteful.

Traditionally interventions have been targeted at victims through 'online safety' awareness. Whilst this 'target hardening' approach has a role to play, efforts to address perpetrator behaviour and understand the motives of those who share sexual material without consent should be enhanced.

Recent research found sex and relationship education around youth 'sexting' needs updating and requires to extend to raise awareness amongst young people of their responsibility to their peers as bystanders and how they might unwittingly promote harmful sexting practices.

The broader youth cultural context surrounding sexting acknowledges that in their attitudes towards peers involved with sexting, young people form judgments based on age-old gender stereotypes and assumptions. In general young boys are encouraged to participate actively or passively, while young women who share images with partners who then betray their trust are generally shamed.

Education into digital offending should be a platform for critical learning about relationships, sex, rights, responsibilities, ethics and justice.

Initial local research reveals there are already numerous good quality information sources for those looking to be informed including;

Scottish Government - Key Messages for Young People on Healthy Relationships and Consent

<file:///C:/Users/1372234/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/OUKCS62Y/key-messages-young-people-healthy-relationships-consent.pdf>

Childline <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/>

Aberdeen H&SCP - Sexual Health & Relationship Education

Disrespect NoBody campaign <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/>

Relationships Sexual Health & Parenthood <https://rshp.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Part-3.-Sending-and-Sharing-Images-Activity-plan.pdf>

Police Scotland Youth Hub <https://www.scotland.police.uk/youth-hub/>

Crimestoppers <http://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/cyber-crime>

It appears there is no issue about the availability of information or guidance.

Existing projects are ongoing through Aberdeen Law Project, CyberSafe Scotland through the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee Action Plan and traditional Police inputs through School Liaison Officers continue to be delivered. This project will not duplicate any existing work.

Raising awareness is clearly key to enhancing knowledge and understanding of actions. Understanding youth culture around use of digital devices from a parental and professionals perspective is an issue to be addressed and education around the thresholds of criminality.

The relatively low numbers of reported digital offences suggest there is 'under-reporting' in this area and the project will look to identify the reasons for this and through positive engagement, encourage and build resilience and confidence for young people, teachers and parents to report. The likely consequence is an increase in recorded offending.

Lack of proactivity in finding out whether something is illegal could be considered one of the issues that requires to be addressed, and clearly raising awareness is key to reducing offences, however as previously alluded to there may an unintended consequence of increased knowledge and confidence to report seeing a rise in figures.

The change ideas are primarily around the content of learning and awareness raising material being delivered, the target audience, the timing and method of communication.

The project team will assess the effectiveness of the current provision and consider whether to introduce new methods through change ideas or alternatively up-scale existing work. Further preparatory work is required to extract local data to identify any gender/age group/trends and/or seasonal spikes to target and shape awareness raising sessions/intervention more analytically.

Measures

- **Outcome measures**

- Number of awareness raising events relating to digital offending
- Number of under 18s charged with digital offences

- **Process measures**

- Number of S1 pupils receiving awareness raising sessions or receiving digital awareness in induction packs
- Number of 'hits' on digital offending app

- Number of viewings of video and assessment of 'before and after' surveys
- Number of new ideas generated from the 'young person group'
- Number of parent/guardian survey participants and sessions delivered
- **Balancing measures**
 - The unintended consequences of increased awareness may be an increased confidence in reporting and a resultant increase in recorded offending levels

Change Ideas

- Deliver awareness inputs around legalities of digital offending starting with an S1 year group in a single school based on analysis
- Develop digital marketing techniques to capture the target audience by the creation or enhancement of inter-active mobile phone app
- Raise 'bystander' awareness starting with a S1 year group in a single school by production of video and related knowledge check surveys pre and post viewing
- Develop a 'young person' group to understand the culture and inform method and content of delivering digital offending material
- Identify level of knowledge of parents/guardians through survey and develop bespoke training sessions

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

- Limited time and large amount of information already passed at induction times, danger of getting lost.
Mitigate by making the information easily accessible
- Under-reporting of incidents which are unearthed and increase number of offences
Mitigate by regular monitoring and investigate spikes to establish if trends are directly linked to charter interventions
- Whilst exploring existing inputs/training already being delivered across the city to identify gaps, duplication of effort and potential mixed messages may be encountered.
Mitigate through project group forming a cohesive delivery plan
- COVID restrictions minimise delivery of face-to-face interactive sessions
Mitigate by identifying alternative virtual means to deliver sessions

Project Team (Provisional)

David Paterson – Police Scotland – Project Lead

Hannah Beagrie – Lead Guidance Teacher

Hannah Bennett – ACC Child Protection Development Officer

Rachel Thompson – Aberdeen H&SCP (C&YP Health Improvement Project)

Annabel Turner – CyberSafe Scotland

Helena Siebenrock – Aberdeen Law Project

Julia Milne – RAFT Team, Barnardos

Lesley Clark – Police Scotland, Child Protection Committee CSE & Online Safety Group

Kim Wood – Police Scotland, Safer Communities

Outline Project Plan

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form team and hold workshop to analyse existing local data, identify change ideas and agree outcomes. Gather baseline data for project measures and put systems in place for any data not currently gathered 	By November 2020
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan for 'test of change' ideas to be delivered in single school/year group Design and test digital techniques 	By April 2021 By June 2021
Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main streaming and embedding of processes. Data gathering & refining to be continued 	By October 2021
Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	Possible funding, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend learning and processes to schools, adapting to specific demographics Consider requirement to deliver to out-of school/community and/or sports groups Possibility of funding to upscale project 	By December 2021