

CHILD EXPLOITATION AND ONLINE PROTECTION CENTRE (CEOP)

THE WAY FORWARD



Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

The Way Forward

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of Her Majesty

January 2010

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Foreword by the Home Secretary

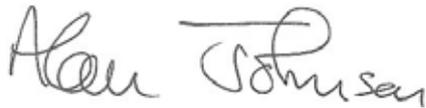
When we created the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre over three years ago, we recognised the need to develop a national law enforcement capability that would act as a focus for fighting the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Since its inception, CEOP has been a remarkable success. It has rescued over 500 children, and has led to the arrest of over 800 people seeking to harm children. It has developed the leading UK child internet safety website “ThinkUKnow”, backed up by a comprehensive schools programme with award winning materials, and has achieved significant success through its ‘Most Wanted’ website, which targets missing sexual offenders who offend against children.

CEOP has achieved this by looking at the problem holistically and through an integrated partnership approach, working with a wide range of stakeholders, including local and international law enforcement, industry and charities.

CEOP has been affiliated with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), but we now believe that the time is right to give CEOP a legal identity of its own. We believe that there is a long-term need to provide protection for children, and that we should create CEOP as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). This will allow CEOP to respond quickly and effectively to emerging threats, and to take on additional related work, including missing and / or abducted children, enhancing the protection of children at a national level.

I would like to thank CEOP and their partners for the work that they have done over the past three years to protect children, and to SOCA for their support for the Centre, and I look forward to CEOP continuing to ensure the safety of children both in the online and offline environments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'A'.

Alan Johnson

1. Nature of child protection and the online dimension

Traditional child protection work

Twenty years ago the problem of child sexual abuse and exploitation would have been described as a local problem. The consensus would have been that most abuse occurred within the immediate family or extended family. The notion of strangers meeting a child, engaging with and subsequently abusing them was reserved for the very worst of every parent's nightmares but only perceived to happen very infrequently. In terms of offenders – access to children for abuse, material to fantasise with and meeting with like-minded individuals – these were all activities that were at high risk of detection and largely restricted by geography. There were networks of offenders but again these were localised and generally confined to the area that those individuals lived or worked in. Trafficking of children for exploitation into and out of the UK was largely unheard of. Estimates of unique hard copy images of child abuse stood at around 7,000.

The response from Government, social services and law enforcement was built around this problem, essentially at a local level and often not coordinated with their counterparts in other areas of the country. The management of offenders followed the same principle.

Technical and societal change

The growth of the internet and the use of mobile communications have changed the way that children communicate, and by extension, how children and young people can be communicated with. The proportion of households with broadband access has risen from a low base in 2001 to 70% in 2009. Mobile phones with internet access are widely available, and young people use these and other devices, such as gaming consoles, to play games and communicate.

Children and young people across the developed and the developing world, including the UK, inhabit the online environment in ever-increasing numbers. For a young person not to be on instant messaging or have a social networking profile is an increasing rarity. According to OFCOM, 99% of children and young people aged between eight and seventeen use the internet. In 2005 the average UK child spent 7.1 hours online each week; by 2007 this had risen to 13.8 hours and almost half (49 %) had set up their own profile on a social networking site¹. Over the past five years how children and young people physically access the internet has changed beyond recognition. The computer is no longer a feature of the living room connected by a fixed line to the outside world but more and more children have their own laptop or gaming console, which through wireless they can use almost anywhere away from parental supervision and guidance. The advent of internet access through mobile phones has transformed the threat into a 24/7 issue that requires a 24/7 response.

There has also been the significant downward change in the cost of international travel, which has created the opportunity for mass long-haul tourism, as well as facilitating migration across the world.

These two major changes in the way we live have brought commensurate changes in the threat to young people.

¹ OFCOM 2008.

Effect on the protection of children

These changes, while very positive in many ways, have also opened up opportunities for those who would seek to harm children. The technology can remove some of the protective barriers around children, allowing them to meet people not previously known to them, without the knowledge of parents or guardians. Ease of travel means that offenders – and sometimes their victims – can move or be moved around the globe.

This poses a challenge for the traditional structure of child protection. Those who seek to harm children do not need to be based in the same geographical area as the children they are targeting, and can communicate with children through means that are beyond parental control. They can also pretend to be of a different age or gender to gain the confidence of the children they are communicating with. Within those online environments children and young people meet many people that they have never met in the physical world. As adults we would call them “strangers”, but this is not a term that children and young people would readily understand in the context of their online lives; in fact on many of these sites, these strangers become ‘friends’. This brings huge benefits to the child and society in all sorts of ways but a proportion of those “strangers” will be intent on causing harm, including sexual abuse and exploitation.

While easy access to technology and global travel has brought benefits for society, it has also offered new opportunities for criminal activities such as travelling to abuse children or for the trafficking and exploitation of children. As the public’s use of the internet has adapted to change, particularly the younger age group, so too have offenders taken full advantage of what this can offer. There are fewer instances of commercial websites² offering child abuse material, and more investigations into online networks of paedophiles using technology to access and abuse children, record that abuse and share it with others. To that effect there have been fewer Operation Ore³ style cases but more similar to Operation Chandler⁴. The volumes associated with Ore are commonplace and indeed some dwarf those. A current example is looking at tens of thousands of individuals worldwide. There are 850,000 unique child abuse images on the UK’s Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP’s) database and last year the Centre processed 2,544,666 images and analysed 2,240 hours of video material. Add to this the databases held across the UK and in other jurisdictions by law enforcement agencies and the picture is one of sizeable volume.

² IWF estimate there were 1,536 commercial and non-commercial child abuse image websites worldwide (IWF Annual Report 2008).

³ Operation Ore was the UK arm of Landslide, a US investigation into a pay per view website.

⁴ Operation Chandler was a CEOP-led Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) investigation into an online paedophile network that led to over 31 children in the UK safeguarded and 700 suspects identified in 35 different countries.

2. Government Strategy and CEOP's Role

Government Strategy

In 2006 the Government recognised that the protection of children required a multi-organisational approach with local, national and international cross-sector co-operation in order to limit offender opportunities and protect the community, in particular children and young people.

As a consequence, the Government created CEOP, strongly supported by the police, the internet industry and by the third sector, both of whom recognised the need for a new coordinated and holistic approach to the issue of child protection in a digital age – including developing and implementing a 'one stop shop' for internet-related issues that had an impact on the safety and security of children and young people online. Such an approach took account of the lessons learnt from child protection reviews and inquiries, such as that into the death of Victoria Climbié, where multi-agency and partnership working were seen as crucial to preventing harm and delivering better outcomes for young people. CEOP was designed to deliver a new much-needed response where the problem was not simply investigated, but it was analysed and understood so that measures could be developed to prevent it happening again or reduce the likelihood of that occurrence.

At a local level, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) are in place to ensure the effective management of offenders once a sentence is complete. This includes a UK-wide sex offenders' register and specific criteria for each offender to fulfil post-sentencing and linked to both the severity of the original crime(s) and continuing risk to children upon release. Police, local child protection teams, social services and other specialists all make up local MAPPA management responses, and CEOP was designed to work alongside these structures.

CEOP's Organisation

CEOP has a simple three-faculty approach – intelligence, specialist operational support and harm reduction, supported by a range of partnerships with different sectors. It is intelligence-led, based on the information it receives from the public, in particular children and young people, industry and law enforcement, both in the UK and abroad. As well as acting as a coordination and dissemination point for that intelligence, it analyses it to help drive its operational response and that of the wider law enforcement and child protection community, as well as informing the development of harm reduction measures. CEOP is about working together to deliver a better response to the problem, utilising skills from across all the stakeholder groups. As you walk through CEOP you will see police officers working alongside child protection specialists, working alongside people from industry, working alongside those from education and government – all with a common purpose, but bringing their particular skills, perspective and experience to the problem at hand.

CEOP has led the engagement with children and young people, primarily through its 80-strong UK-wide Youth Advisory Panel, but also via its "Thinkuknow" education and awareness programme delivered to 5m children over the past three years. This takes CEOP's ideas and tests them against the reality of children's experiences online and their thoughts on how to deliver a safer online experience. Consultation forums with stakeholders run deep through the Centre, from the informal to the formal and it currently has a number of advisory groups, including education and awareness, as well as a Survivors Panel. It is an Executive Board member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) and it is represented on all its working groups.

Scale of the problem

Giving an overall estimate of the nature and scale of the problem is difficult, as with any crime. In the case of the sexual abuse of children it is even more difficult because of the complex impact such abuse and exploitation has on its victims; it is a hidden crime. Many never report, others do not report until much later on in life. What makes it even more complicated today is that it is now a global crime with differing responses across the world; not all countries have the same laws or take the same approach as the UK; for example, in some countries possession of child abuse images is not a criminal offence.

However, from CEOP's work as the national and international co-ordinator for child protection we now have much better intelligence and understanding than was previously available. From April 2006 to March 2009 CEOP received 14,070 reports from the public, industry, non-governmental organisations and other law enforcement agencies. Some of these reports were about one individual and others were about many thousands of individuals. In the same period CEOP disseminated over 10,000 separate intelligence packages to UK and foreign police forces and helped dismantle and disrupt 166 high-risk sex offender networks⁵.

Last year 81 UK nationals sought consular advice abroad, following their arrest for alleged sexual offences involving children. There are bespoke online fora which allow offenders to communicate with each other to identify the best places in the world to travel to in order to abuse children with the lowest risk of being caught or facing a severe punishment for such crimes.

CEOP's 2009 Strategic Threat Assessment⁶ on the problem of child trafficking identified 325 children that were the potential victims of trafficking and exploitation. These children were brought into the UK from all parts of the world, some clandestinely, others using false documentation and some simply because they have freedom of travel within the EU. The problem of UK children being sexually exploited by adults, normally members of criminal gangs, was also explored. Many of these children are young girls groomed and coerced into sex with their "older boyfriends" and other males; often these girls have gone missing from home or care.

CEOP's Successes

CEOP's work on supporting public protection efforts in managing high-risk child sexual offenders reveals the lengths that registered offenders will go to in order to evade the tough monitoring regime in the UK. Since its launch, CEOP has helped track down 79 high-risk missing child sex offenders; some of these were found in places as far afield as South America and South East Asia.

During their first three and a half years (up until September 2009), working in partnership with the wider policing, child protection and associated sectors, CEOP's work has led to 515 children being safeguarded, 821 suspected offenders arrested, and 205 high risk sex offender networks being disrupted and dismantled. 9,242 professionals have attended their bespoke specialist training.

⁵ CEOP Annual Review 2008/09 (see www.ceop.police.uk/publications).

⁶ www.ceop.police.uk/publications.

In April 2006, 27-year-old Timothy David Martyn Cox started the chatroom 'Kids The Light Of Our Lives'. From the large farmhouse in Buxhall, Suffolk which he shared with his parents and sister, Cox spent hours each day in his bedroom orchestrating the site. This allowed like-minded paedophiles to share images and videos of child sex abuse and plans for abusing victims ranging from the age of babies to young teens. Soon the site had attracted more than 700 users from all over the world, 200 of them in the UK. Cox used the name "I_Do_It" when trading images, some of which were shocking pictures of children being subjected to sadistic abuse. In August 2006, Canadian members of the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) passed intelligence about Cox's network to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, who carried out a period of covert surveillance. Police arrested Cox on 28th September 2006, allowing them to spend 10 days posing as him online in order to gather further information about the site's users and the children they were abusing. Meanwhile, they found 75,960 indecent images of children on Cox's computer, and evidence he had supplied 11,491 images to other site users. Following Cox's removal as host and the closure of the site, 33-year-old Gordon Mackintosh from Hertfordshire, who went by the usernames "silentblackheart" and "lust4skoolgurls", tried to have the room reinstated and was arrested on 9th January 2007. On his PC were 5,167 indecent images of children and 392 indecent movie files. Worldwide, the investigation into the users of "Kids The Light Of Our Lives" has led to the safeguarding of more than 40 children from abuse or positions of harm. Cox admitted 9 charges relating to the possession and distribution of indecent images of children and has been handed an indeterminate sentence, meaning he will not be released if he is judged to be a danger to the public and could potentially spend the rest of his life behind bars. Gordon Mackintosh pleaded guilty to 27 charges relating to making, possessing and distributing indecent images and also received an indeterminate sentence.

Part-funded through the European Commission's Safer Internet Plus programme, over 5 million children have attended CEOP's specialist ThinkuKnow education programme that has been delivered in classrooms and other venues by around 33,000 volunteers ranging across social workers, teachers, police officers and other key players. This outreach programme is supported by an online 'one stop shop' for children, their parents/carers and children's workforce, where a range of advice and help can be accessed on a range of internet issues, such as cyberbullying, hacking and viruses. In addition CEOP's Report mechanism can be accessed to allow the public to report suspicions of inappropriate sexual contact with a child online. To achieve this comprehensive advice and help portal, CEOP works with and signposts to a range of stakeholders who have specialist expertise in a particular field, such as the NSPCC's Childline and Beatbullying.

In November 2008, 14 year old Laura started chatting to a boy on a popular gaming site and added him to her instant messenger contacts. After chatting in a seemingly innocuous fashion for a period of time, he appeared to become obsessed with her, declaring his love and persistently attempting to arrange to meet her in the real world. She became worried and attempted to block him. He continued to attempt to contact her using new email addresses and screen names, which she continued to block. Laura's younger sister began using instant messenger and the suspect noted her email address and added her as a friend also online, which she accepted. He promised to send her a Christmas present if she gave him her postal address which she did. He then repeatedly threatened to come to the Laura's house and kill her. Laura recalled the 'ThinkuKnow' training she had received at school and made a report to CEOP. The Referrals Team then referred the matter to local police who immediately visited Laura to check on her safety and talk to her family, and issued a harassment order against the suspect. Within Laura's report, she stated, 'I was looking to see if I could report stuff on the internet, and I remembered a site from school. Teachers showed us the ThinkuKnow website. And I went on it.' CEOP liaised with the parents and the police on this matter, and ensured Laura felt safe. All involved are happy that no further communication has been attempted by the suspect and that the sisters will not accept unknown people as online contacts again.*

**the names of individuals, locations and case details have been changed*

The problem of child abuse and exploitation is no longer just a local problem, but one that is national and international, transcending geography and traditional understanding of child protection issues.

A Northamptonshire couple who abused a four month old baby girl and shared footage of the abuse on the internet were jailed on Friday 9 May 2008, following a joint operation between CEOP, Northamptonshire Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the USA. Kate Scott and Christopher Oxtoby were arrested after CEOP received intelligence and child abuse images from the USA. CEOP officers then worked to identify and locate the two UK perpetrators and supported Northamptonshire Police and local social services to secure their arrest. Pearl Willis, prosecuting, said Scott abused the child, while Oxtoby filmed the assault. Oxtoby and Scott both pleaded guilty to sexual assault of a child. Oxtoby also admitted taking indecent photographs of a child, five offences of making indecent photographs of children and one of possessing indecent photographs of children. Oxtoby also pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting a girl aged under 11, between 1994 and 1996. Judge Thomas Corrie jailed Scott for four-and-a-half years. Oxtoby was given an indeterminate sentence for public protection.

It is still true to say that most sexual abuse occurs within the family, extended family or those with easy access to children, but increasingly this abuse is being shared with like-minded individuals outside this, primarily through peer-to-peer networks or by images and films posted on the internet in specific forums or websites. The term "stranger" can no longer be used within the context of the child's online environment in the way that we have traditionally used it in the physical world. But the parent's nightmare of strangers abusing their children, although still relatively rare, is occurring with greater frequency as offenders now have access to the profiles of thousands, if not millions, of children throughout the world. Offenders have adapted to this new world and there is not the

same distinction between on and offline offending as there was even three years ago. As children and young people move effortlessly and seamlessly between their differing social environments, so do offenders. The use of webcams means that offenders no longer have to physically meet a child to abuse them but can groom or coerce them to perform sexual acts online which they can capture to elicit further abuse or share. Child sex offenders now have easier access to children and are unrestricted by geography.

In January 2009 'ThinkuKnow' training was delivered by CEOP to teachers in a number of schools in a particular area within the UK that had not previously had any internet awareness safety education. In one school after the training session was delivered, 20 children separately approached the trainer and disclosed that a young boy named 'Charlie' had contacted them online, befriended them and asked them to strip via webcam. They believed this person to be 14 years old. The Thinkuknow trainer immediately reported the allegations to local police who undertook an investigation and examined the chat logs held on the children's computers. As the investigation progressed, a total of 100 children from 8 schools in the local area disclosed that this "Charlie" had been contacting them, sexualising conversations quickly and encouraging children to perform sexual acts on webcam. It appeared that these children had not recognised the risks involved in this contact and that the 'Thinkuknow' presentation had encouraged them to disclose their story. Common themes arose from the children's disclosures, that "Charlie" had hacked into some of their online accounts and pretended to be them in order to convince their friends to strip online for "Charlie," stating that he was really "cool." Police discovered that "Charlie" was in fact an adult male who worked as a youth club leader. The suspect has been arrested and remanded in custody and faces a number of charges relating to grooming and inciting a child to perform a sexual act. Some believed that they were in close relationships with "Charlie" and cannot comprehend that this was an adult male. These children are now being provided with specialist therapeutic support from local agencies. As a consequence of this investigation, other children spoke of another four suspects who they had had sexualised contact with online, identifying another 30 victims. Some of these victims had also met these suspects offline.*

**the names of individuals, location and case details have been changed*

In 2007 CEOP surveyed over 6,000 children and young people and, of those, 25% stated that they had met someone in the physical world whom they had first met online and – of this 25% – 83% had taken along another child to that meeting. Some 31% of 9-19 year olds who go online, at least weekly, report having received unwanted sexual comments via email, chat, instant messaging or text.⁷ In her report *Safer Children in a Digital World* Dr Tanya Byron stated "It would be naïve to deny that the internet has provided predators with new opportunities for contact with children; these risks have increased with the advent of mobile platforms". She went on to say that "Adults masquerading as younger people is one of the biggest issues parents say that they are most concerned about with the internet".

⁷Livingstone and Bober, 2005.

Last year CEOP received 1,373 reports from children and young people about inappropriate sexual behaviour or contact, of which 89% concerned sexual grooming⁸. In the past few months alone there have been two high-profile cases in the media, which have involved the grooming of a child over the internet, an offline meeting between the victim and the offender and subsequent sexual abuse. This highlights the links between online grooming and a child going missing or being abducted. With some offenders, travel is no object and there have been many instances where an offender in one country has been prepared to travel great distances to abuse a child in another country whom they first groomed online.

**In March 2009 thirteen year old Rachel* made a report to CEOP using the online reporting form. She had been contacted by an 18 year old man who called himself 'John' on a popular social networking site . He seemed very nice and over time they became friendly and soon she added him to her instant messenger contact list so they could email each other in real time. Over the next few weeks they talked online daily, and 'John' encouraged her to use a webcam to show her face. He flattered and complimented her, and Rachel looked forward to chatting to him online each day. He listened to her problems and Rachel believed she was in a relationship with 'John'. He introduced sexual content into the conversations and persuaded her to remove her clothes on the webcam, which he then recorded without her knowledge. Rachel began to feel uncomfortable with what he wanted her to do and suggested that they slow things down. 'John' showed her the recordings he had taken of her and threatened to spread the videos around over the internet and to her school and family if she did not perform sexual acts for him daily. He then blackmailed her into promising to travel to London and meet him at the railway station to stay with him. Rachel agreed, thinking she had a better chance of reasoning with him face to face and being able to persuade him to delete the files. She received a Thinkuknow presentation at school the day before she had promised to meet him, realised the danger involved and reported the man to CEOP. Its referrals desk received the report during school hours and so utilised its child protection advisor to locate the school Rachel attends, and made contact with the Head Teacher to ensure Rachel was safeguarded until police and parents arrived to collect her. A crime report was disseminated urgently to local police in her force area and officers soon arrived at the school to check on Rachel's welfare. She was very distressed but relieved to have the situation taken in-hand by adults, and her parents were informed and advised by the school, police and social workers on how to handle the situation. The police began an ongoing investigation to trace the offender using details present on the victim's computer and Rachel was given safety advice and support. 'My school told us about Thinkuknow otherwise I wouldnt have known what to do'*

**the names, location and case details have been changed*

Why is CEOP different?

The problems posed by the growth in the use of the internet are outside the traditional boundaries of child protection. They require a national and international response, and the need to work with stakeholders, such as technology companies, that are outside the traditional child protection world.

⁸CEOP Strategic Overview 2008/09.

CEOP is now recognised as the national centre and represents the UK's strategic lead in building up intelligence and delivering services both to domestic front line practitioners as well as in partnership across international jurisdictions. It has built up relationships with all sectors to deliver this new approach, as well as the flexibility to evolve to meet new challenges. It has successfully bridged the gap between the local and the transnational, delivering a single point of contact for the UK in terms of reporting, investigation, analysis and expertise. It has recognised the huge potential of technology, not just for the public good generally, but specifically how it can be harnessed to protect children and young people and to hold offenders to account. Through the innovative use of the internet, using initiatives such as its Most Wanted website, CEOP has improved the rate of locating missing high risk sex offenders from just over 7% in 2005 to 77% last year. In the same way that offenders have used the internet to access children from outside their immediate physical geography CEOP, through its work with other law enforcement agencies across the world, particularly through the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), has stretched the long arm of the law to meet that challenge.

The model CEOP has adopted has allowed it to keep pace with the ever-evolving threat to children and young people from the continually changing nature of the converged environment they operate in. CEOP continually learns from what it does, and what others do, to deliver a better-informed array of tactical and operational responses to properly inform the public debate and the shape of policy at national and international levels; and, most importantly, to deliver measures to reduce harm in the future through training, education and awareness programmes and by safer by design initiatives, such as the CEOP Report mechanism.

CEOP has taken an intelligent approach to the problem of child sexual abuse and exploitation, with a recognition that successfully tackling the problem is about changing and challenging behaviour, not simply the context or environment in which abuse occurs. CEOP is not solely an online safety centre, but the leader of an inclusive and holistic partnership approach to protect children.

3. Proposal for CEOP in the future

What is best for the protection of children online?

CEOP was launched in April 2006 with a clear remit to tackle the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people. At that point it was not clear what the challenges in providing online protection would be, and how these issues would be addressed by law enforcement.

The internet and other communication technologies are now a major part of our society. What CEOP has shown is that a specific response is needed to tackle child protection on the internet, which is outside the standard provision of support for children provided by police forces. To provide this support for children, there is a need to engage with a complex world involving multi-stakeholder relationships with charities, industry and international partners. As those who seek to harm children can operate globally, there is a need to coordinate activity across national and international law enforcement agencies. This is difficult for each police force to achieve, and has to be done centrally.

Internet use has grown, and is becoming ubiquitous. Children and young people are using the internet and associated technologies in ever more inventive ways, and there is a constant need to address the challenges set for law enforcement in keeping up with the changes in technology and behaviour. This requires a national response that can deal with the problems quickly and react swiftly to change, and can act as a focal point for collection and provision of intelligence nationally and internationally. As the technical complexity grows there will be a need to be able to bring in specialist technical or child protection services to deal with such issues.

CEOP was set up as an affiliate of SOCA, with a separate Board and Chief Executive. From CEOP's inception it was always the Government's intention to allow it to prove itself as a concept and then to review the Centre's governance arrangements after a suitable period. This period of development has contributed to allowing CEOP to become the success that it is. Having considered the success that the Centre has become, and the need to provide protection for children on the internet on a long-term basis, the Government believes that the CEOP Centre should become a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB).

The Government's vision is that CEOP will continue to be the UK's national centre leading on national and international efforts to tackle the abuse and exploitation of children. Much of its work will continue to focus on supporting frontline child protection practitioners, whether they are local police teams, social workers or teachers. Using its specialist expertise and understanding of the threat it will continue to deliver programmes to allow local engagement with parents or children on how they could better protect themselves or where to turn to for help when they encounter a problem. In this way CEOP will help deliver greater public confidence in local protective services, as well as deliver greater confidence in those public spaces, such as the internet, as a safer place for children and young people to inhabit. It will continue to evolve and innovate to meet the challenge that ever-changing technology and behaviour presents and will continue to build on its strong multi-agency and partnership ethos to help achieve the aims and objectives set by Government. Other areas of child protection, such as missing children, will be integrated into CEOP's remit to utilise its role and holistic approach to deliver better outcomes for this particularly vulnerable group of children. Other areas of synergy in offender management will also be explored, including disclosure and polygraph pilots.

Ensuring that CEOP has the flexibility and future-proofing to meet the ever-changing nature of the threats faced by children is crucial. We need to ensure that it is well placed to meet those threats by: delivering a better educated and informed workforce; allowing government and law enforcement to take advantage of the specialist expertise, understanding of behaviour and technology to develop policy and measures aimed at reducing harm; delivering national initiatives that could provide value for money in terms of economies of scale; and the benefits of coordination that a national centre like CEOP can bring when protecting children and dealing with offenders across a wide-ranging geography.

This approach fits with recommendations from the recent review of UK child protection arrangements by Lord Laming⁹, the Government's Every Child Matters agenda, the Public Service Agreements on making communities safer and child safety, the principles of the Byron Review, the government's Tackling Violence Action Plan and other integrated public sector programmes that put children first. In her report Dr Tanya Byron stated that "... this work should continue to lie at the heart of the Government's safeguarding strategy when it comes to very serious and proven harm to children and young people online".

CEOP as an NDPB

The 'arm's length' distance from Ministers that NDPB status conveys meets CEOP's need to remain firmly within the law enforcement family and thus demonstrably independent. It will be positioned as a national police resource – providing specialist expertise much more efficiently than local forces would be able to, but in a supportive and facilitative manner – ensuring that delivery remains in local hands.

The establishment of a stand-alone body will enable its design to capitalise on the strengths already demonstrated by CEOP: partnership with industry, broader law enforcement (in UK and abroad) and the third sector, synergies, flexibility, and the co-ordination of effort across a broad spectrum.

In his review Lord Laming stated that there needed to be a step change in arrangements to protect children from harm. He also stated that it needed a multi-agency approach throughout every layer of the child protection sector from Government through to local delivery. We believe that CEOP provides a good example of such a model and moving the organisation to NDPB status will allow the necessary governance and accountability arrangements that will underpin that step-change for the national centre.

An independent board would be able to draw these strengths together and continue CEOP's imaginative and flexible development, with proper input from interested parties.

An NDPB would deliver:

- Better public confidence by governance arrangements that were founded on child protection
- Strengthened accountability arrangements not only in terms of public resources allocated, but more importantly around the risks that CEOP manages on behalf of children
- Economies of scale by harnessing specialist resources, knowledge, skills and expertise in one place

⁹The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report.

- Facilitation of multi-agency working and stakeholder engagement
- The ability to draw in additional resources over and above its public funding
- Flexibility to evolve, adapt to future change and continue to innovate to meet new challenges.

Remit

CEOP will keep the existing remit of its work, as set out below.

- Central point for national and international intelligence for child protection
- Central reporting and single point of contact for Internet and Communications Service Providers
- National online reporting centre for the public concerning online threats or risks to the safety of children and young people from abuse, harm or crime
- 24/7 coordination for child protection incidents and reports, including those that require a national and international response
- National Offender Management Resource and Support Centre
- Responsibility for developing and disseminating tactical and strategic intelligence
- Specialist Operational Support for law enforcement agencies for child protection investigations, including the national and international coordination of Covert Internet Investigation, tactical operational support, financial investigation, victim identification and forensic behavioural analysis
- Supporting Government in the development of national and international policy and strategy on child protection
- Establishing and setting the standards for training for Child Protection professionals and others
- Delivery of training programmes
- Provision of education and public awareness programmes and resources aimed at reducing or preventing harm to children and young people from the range of risks associated with internet and associated technologies
- Working with stakeholders to provide a safer online environment
- Providing bespoke child protection legal advice and support to the police, local authorities and others working in this field.
- Capacity building in source countries

In the course of the move to NDPB status we will consider particular areas where CEOP could bring added value beyond the good work already taking place. This will take into account where a wholly child or child sex offender focus is needed, where there are initiatives that could reap additional benefits by coordination through a single body and where economies of scale could be achieved by centralising assets under such a body. In addition, there may be other areas of crime that affect children and young people where CEOP's existing presence within online spaces and their reporting and referral mechanisms could be utilised to provide services for government departments, such as the Home Office. We will be consulting with those bodies and organisations that either currently deliver or manage some of those services, along with stakeholder groups that have an interest in those activities.

Polygraph Testing

The Government recognises the potential of polygraph testing in assisting in the safer management of sex offenders. A Ministry of Justice pilot project of polygraph testing for sex offenders is being carried out in the East and West Midlands until 2012, following which there will be an evaluation of the usefulness of such technology. This may be completed in 2012. Following this we will consider what role CEOP might play with regard to polygraph testing in this context.

Disclosure Pilots

The Child Sex Offender Register (CSOR) Disclosure Pilots concluded in September 2009 after a 12 month period. The evaluation is due to be published early in the New Year. We will consider options for CEOP's role in any future national disclosure process based on recommendations from the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) Lead for Managing Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders who will in turn be advised by the CSOR Disclosure Pilots Project Board.

Missing Children

CEOP will assume the national lead for missing children which additionally includes runaways and abducted children. Building on the synergies accrued by consolidating a range of related child protection and safeguarding services it will support and develop programmes that educate, inform and empower young people – providing early intervention and prevention, and reducing the instances of them being exploited, made vulnerable or going missing.

CEOP will capitalise on its 'on and offline', local, national and trans-national networks to re-engage those who are missing, and develop and support initiatives that recover them into safeguarded environments. It will build knowledge and an enhanced understanding in this area and use it to support local police and other services, with 24/7 capability.

In doing so it will work closely with the National Missing Persons Database team at the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), the wider police service, government departments and the third sector.

This move responds to the Laming principle that children and young people require particular support and service. It recognises that they are not little adults and builds on the holistic child-centred approach which has been the hallmark of CEOP's early success.

In terms of a new approach to missing and abducted UK children CEOP plans to deliver an enhanced service designed to support parents, children, law enforcement agencies and others by working with relevant stakeholders. In the same way that it has successfully achieved within its existing remit, it will deliver a holistic approach to this issue. This would build on its proven strengths and dovetail with the development of its existing 24/7 approach to child protection issues. Specifically it would provide for:

- A hotline for professionals to access real-time tactical advice
- An emergency response team for instances of abducted children, where national or international coordination is required – and where expertise has to be delivered quickly to a specific geography
- Support the Child Rescue Alert system and the creation of a European Taskforce
- Strengthen its use of its partnership approach to make better use of public and private information networks – e.g. motorway signage, texting, information at transport hubs and sites

- Use of the online environment to explore new ways of allowing missing children to contact family, friends and to access specialist help, advice and support – particularly how it can enhance the Government’s Young Runaways Action Plan
- Providing for a fully integrated and comprehensive approach to support foreign law enforcement and the families of victims in the rare cases of UK children who go missing or are suspected to have been abducted while abroad

It would be modelled on its existing principles for service delivery:

- Economies of scale
- Offering specialist and tactical expertise from a national centre
- Analysis of the tactical intelligence to produce strategic information to enhance existing responses – both policy and operational – at the international, the national and the local level
- Consistent approach to the issue across the UK, precluding the perception of ‘postcode lottery’ situations
- A focus on local delivery and thereby improve confidence in local protective services
- Working with partners internationally to address the problem
- Leveraging partnership support and activity to go beyond the traditional response
- The ability to draw on a global network, to put resource in quickly when needed, and to lead operations which do not have an obvious geographic ‘home’

Specifically, this new function would benefit from CEOP’s broad-based approach to child protection by:

- Using its technical expertise and knowledge of the online environment allowing it to adopt innovative tactics such as IP address resolution, placing contact points for children on social networking sites and other online platforms, for example.
- Broaden its education and public awareness programmes to teach children and those who care for them about the risks and the support available.
- Expand its training programmes to teach professionals how to better respond to incidents of missing and abducted children, as well as how to tackle those who exploit children and young people to run away from how or who physically abduct them.
- Build on its established intelligence function to deliver a strategic picture and develop tactical intelligence – feeding back into improved harm reduction and operational capacity – both with CEOP and within the wider child protective services community.
- Develop its behavioural analysis approach to include expertise on criminal and children’s behaviour in the context of missing children and abducted children

CEOP will deliver this activity across its current and future remit by building on the approach it has already adopted, ensuring that it remains holistic, multi-agency and underpinned by partnerships at all levels. It will ensure that it works within and fully contributes to the “Every Child Matters” agenda and pays full regard to guidance issued under “Working Together”.

Conclusion

CEOP's business model is a proven success, which over the past few years has delivered real outcomes in terms of children safeguarded and offenders apprehended. It has been able to mature under the aegis of SOCA, but it is now clear that the demands of child protection require a stand-alone organisation focusing only on that issue. In this way UK policing will be able to deliver services locally, supported by a world class specialist organisation. In turn, CEOP will be able to strengthen its partnerships with industry and the third sector to ensure that it remains just that. Finally, this change will enable the Government to integrate and enhance protective service provision in this area by bringing related services under one roof.



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