

Child sexual assault – a video of the victim’s journey

A video detailing the experiences of a fourteen year old schoolgirl who was sexually assaulted at school by a teacher, to educate police officers about a child’s journey as a victim and encourage victims of sexual assault to report the crime to the police.

First published

26 November 2024

Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Child sexual exploitation and abuse
Organisation	North Yorkshire Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of North Yorkshire Police
Contact	Tracey Williams
Email address	tracey.williams@northyorkshire.police.uk
Region	North East
Partners	Police Local authority

Key details

Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people Families General public Victims Workforce

Aim

The video aims to encourage victims of sexual assault to report the crime to the police.

The video also aims to:

- give a voice to a child who has been a victim
- educate police officers about a child’s journey as a victim
- encourage children to come forward and report
- show children they will be believed if they report

Intended outcome

The video intends to achieve the following:

- Other children and young people are inspired to come forward and report crime.
- Other victims of sexual assault are inspired to come forward and report the crime.

- The video has been shared with police forces for officer education and awareness about a child's journey as a victim.
- The video is used by non-policing agencies such as Local Authorities (LAs) for education and awareness about a child's journey as a victim.
- The content of the video inspires more police officers to become detectives.

Description

In 2021, a 14-year-old schoolgirl was subjected to a serious sexual assault by a teacher at her school. The crime was reported to North Yorkshire Police. Following the police investigation, the suspect was found guilty and sentenced to ten years in prison.

The schoolgirl wrote a poem about her journey as a victim of child sexual assault. The poem gave the schoolgirl the opportunity to express how the experience affected her – from the traumatic event itself through to speaking up and reporting the crime to the police. Through a detective constable who had worked on her case, the schoolgirl approached North Yorkshire Police about using her poem to help support and empower other victims.

Following sign off from a safeguarding detective superintendent, a child protection inspection coordinator worked alongside the force corporate communications team to source approximately £5,000 worth of internal funding. This funding enabled the force to commission a media company to create a video based on the schoolgirl's poem.

The video covers the experience the schoolgirl went through, the impact this had on her, how she found the courage to report the crime and how she was believed by the police. The media company produced an animation to bring the poem to life as an animated video. The animation runs alongside a narration of the poem which is read by a volunteer. The schoolgirl wanted to keep her real name in the video and was supported in her decision.

The video was initially shown to commanders at North Yorkshire Police to drive internal promotion across the force. It has since been shared across police forces and other safeguarding organisations such as Children's Social Care to reach other victims. It is hoped that the video will help victims feel less alone and support them with building the confidence to report sexual assaults.

The child protection inspection coordinator now includes the video at inputs for officers during detective and child abuse investigation courses. The video is played with the intention of inspiring

officers to become detectives when they see a real-life example of the difference they can make in this role.

In terms of public access, the video is now available on YouTube. It can also be viewed on the North Yorkshire Police website alongside information about agencies who can help victims of sexual assault and how to report these crimes to the police.

Overall impact

As of September 2024, the video on YouTube has over 1,900 views. The video on the North Yorkshire Police force intranet has over 750 views.

The video has also been engaged with on the following platforms:

'Your Police' (national Instagram channel for young people run by the Metropolitan Police):

- Opportunity to view: 25,500 followers
- 208 likes
- 7 shares
- 12 comments

North Yorkshire Police Facebook page:

- Opportunity to view: 200,000 followers
- 31,546 impressions
- 6,700 views
- 128 interactions
- 14 comments

North Yorkshire Police Instagram:

- Opportunity to view: 35,000 followers
- 299 likes
- 18 shares
- 7 comments

North Yorkshire Police X (formally known as Twitter):

- Opportunity to view: 119,000 followers
- 5,500 views
- 23 likes
- 8 shares
- 4 comments

The video has also received media coverage on BBC Look North, BBC Online Yorkshire, The Northern Echo and the Yorkshire Post.

Learning

North Yorkshire Police has taken into consideration that making and publishing a video with distressing, real-life content could have a traumatic impact on the author. In particular, the force has considered the potential for re-traumatisation through the schoolgirl re-living the experience to create and publish the video. North Yorkshire Police have addressed this through making sure offers of referrals have been made to any agencies who can provide ongoing support.

North Yorkshire Police has ensured that both the schoolgirl and her parents have been fully involved throughout the process of developing and publishing the video. Having the parents involved has given reassurance to the force that any potential for negative impact on the schoolgirl will be monitored on an ongoing basis and quickly identified.

North Yorkshire Police do not have animation skills in-house, so sourced a professional production company using a three-quote procurement exercise. This process ensured a professional and impactful product was made. The force found it imperative to work closely with the animators and the schoolgirl to ensure the final product protected the schoolgirl’s legal right to life-long anonymity.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.