

Cyber blue line - community engagement vehicle

Cyber blue line (CBL) is a digitally equipped vehicle, designed to improve engagement and awareness of cyber security within communities.

First published

2 May 2025

Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Diversion Prevention
Topic	Community engagement Crime prevention Cybercrime including fraud Digital Diversity and inclusion Violence against women and girls
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Region	North East
Partners	Police Education
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.

Key details

Start date	October 2023
Scale of initiative	Regional
Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities Disability Families General public LGBT+ Offenders Race/ethnicity Victims Women Workforce

Aim

Cyber blue line (CBL) aims to:

- raise awareness of cyber security and fraud prevention
- deviate and deter people away from committing cybercrimes (Computer Misuse Act 1990 offending)
- prevent and protect citizens and businesses from becoming victims of cybercrime and fraud
- promote positive online behaviours

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes include:

- improving engagement with a wide range of audiences around cyber security
- improving citizens and business cyber security hygiene

- increasing awareness and knowledge of cybersecurity
- reducing potential of the public becoming cybercrime victims
- increasing trust and confidence in policing

Description

Background

Yorkshire and Humber regional cyber crime unit (YHROCU) recognised that for several years there had been little innovation in the delivery of cybercrime prevention and protection education. This indicated there was a lack of community engagement and knowledge around types of cybercrimes. To tackle this issue, the ROCU team conducted research into new, creative ways to deliver these messages and to reach a wide range of communities.

Development of CBL

The ROCU team visited various gaming festivals and spoke with young people in attendance to understand how to engage them and encourage learning in a more effective way during the research process. The conversations inspired the concept of a gaming bus and the idea of creating a CBL, an interactive police vehicle which included popular games such as FIFA, but also cyber-education games.

The concept of CBL was then pitched to the National Police Chief's Council's (NPCC) cybercrime programme team, who provided funding to pilot the CBL. The initial set up cost for CBL was £40,000. This included:

- purchasing and furnishing a large van
- a branded exterior
- padded branded seating
- immersive lighting
- four wall mounted monitors with connected laptops

The annual running cost of CBL is £5,000 which is funded by the Home Office and City of London Police. Cyber blue line technical specification can be provided upon request.

CBL sessions

CBL adapts to the requirements of the audience and communities officers interact with. For example, when working with younger people the material focuses on prevention, whereas with businesses it focuses on protection. The target audience of CBL is young people on the cusp of criminality aiming to educate them on the consequences of certain behaviours. There is no charge to use the CBL. The CBL vehicle has attended schools, colleges, businesses and other community focused events across the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Nationally approved programmes (developed by the National Cybersecurity Centre) are utilised to deliver cyber security educational messages and activities in an immersive and engaging manner. Kahoot quizzes have also been developed to allow participants to test their knowledge of cybercrime to further increase engagement. ROCU has also partnered with York St John University to produce new teaching programmes to be utilised within CBL.

Session lengths can be adjusted depending on audience size and age-range. CBL sessions can range from 30-60 minutes.

Humberside Police, West Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Police can deliver events collaboratively to ensure the required members of staff attend each event. For each event there will be a minimum of two cyber prevent and protect officers in attendance, with a maximum of four for larger events. This ensures that resources are used correctly and effectively.

Evaluation

An official evaluation of CBL has not yet taken place as it has only been in operation for 12 months. An evaluation is being planned led by the business development team within ROCU.

The evaluation will consist of three methods:

Customer satisfaction surveys

These surveys are distributed after each CBL session, and they can also be emailed to the main point of contact for the event to be completed later. The survey consists of a Likert scale, hosted on Microsoft survey, and will consist of several questions such as:

- Did you enjoy cyber blue line?
- Did you find the games interactive and engaging?

- Did you find the content relevant?

Pre/post event knowledge checks

Kahoot quizzes are used as pre and post knowledge checks. Merchandise incentives such as cups and pens are distributed to encourage audiences to participate and engage with the content.

Practitioners focus groups

Monthly meetings are held with the ROCU team to discuss feedback surrounding CBL and how improvements can be made based upon this feedback.

Overall impact

Between November 2023 and November 2024, 86 events were attended by CBL, with an overall audience reach of 8,757 people.

Learning

- The method and approach used in delivering cyber security messaging within communities was a key learning point. Activities must be inclusive and interactive to increase engagement. Having the ability to move around regions daily, has greatly increased community engagement.
- Cyber security material was limited, with many products lacking interaction with older populations. Therefore, the collaboration between CBL and York St John University may help to bridge this gap in the future.
- Opportunities are currently being explored with large technology companies to sponsor CBL. This would help to improve the material used with CBL increasing its effectiveness.
- Fidget spinners and ear defenders have been implemented within CBL to allow neurodiverse children to enjoy and engage with the activities. A step for the side entrance has also been added, as well as plans for a wheelchair ramp. CBL is in collaboration with a company who specialises in adaptations and provisions, to ensure CBL is as inclusive as possible.

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