Evaluation of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund (CTPF)

[October 2020]

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About This Report

This is a report on the evaluation of the Home Office Child Trafficking Protection Fund. The report offers a descriptive and thematic analysis of the monitoring and research from each of the projects supported by the fund. This analysis is largely drawn from qualitative and quantitative data provided to the Home Office by each of the projects funded and also from qualitative interviews with each of the project leads. The purpose of this report is to highlight the innovation, and specifically the processes undertaken and outcomes achieved within each of the projects and within the fund more generally and, to inform policy and practice on 'what works' in the protection, care and support of trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking.

The Child Trafficking Protection Fund

The Child Trafficking Protection Fund was part of a £40 million Government commitment to tackling child sexual abuse and trafficking announced in 2017. The fund awarded £2.2 million to seven organisations working at the frontline of child trafficking protection and prevention efforts. The emphasis of the fund has been on testing innovative ways to support and protect trafficked children in the UK and abroad, with a focus on local responses. The project was underpinned by the following two aims:

- Child support and recovery, including specialist care.

- Reducing vulnerability to exploitation and preventing children from going missing and potentially being re-trafficked.

Findings from the evaluation of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund

- The evaluation found that the Child Trafficking Protection Fund has been a valuable initiative that has successfully built on the existing expertise, practical knowledge and experience of NGO's working at the forefront of child trafficking response and prevention efforts.

- The fund has been an important step towards improving the landscape of specialist child trafficking services in England and in contributing towards the systemic improvement of local prevention and response approaches.

- The experimental approach taken by the Home Office and the seven funded organisations allowed for the flexibility of projects to respond to challenges and opportunities in agile ways and be more responsive to the contexts they were working within. Whilst this experimental approach has largely been positive it has not been without its challenges. The methodologies and approaches adopted by the

projects in their delivery and in their evaluations were varied leaving comparisons of impact challenging at times. However, overall, the innovations of the projects were similar enough in their thematic focus to begin to build a coherent enough evidence base to learn from and as such the projects were well chosen by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund.

- Projects successfully delivered direct interventions to children to support their rehabilitation after experiences of trafficking. In total there were four projects working directly with children and they engaged over **338 children**. The successes of their interventions were measured differently across the projects using various standardised as well as narrative methods to capture changes in children, and all highlighted a general pattern of positive impact in the emotional and mental health of children.

- More needed to be understood from the projects working directly with children about when their interventions were less successful in supporting the engagement and rehabilitation of children. The findings suggested that there needs to be a deeper understanding of the challenges of working with children with such complex circumstances, histories and psychological needs.

- In the projects working directly with children, emerging evidence was generated on the mutual relationship and benefits between therapeutic support and children's engagement with advocacy and their advocacy outcomes.

- The projects working directly with children all evidenced the success of children's peer group work in supporting their engagement in projects, their recovery in terms of their emotional and mental wellbeing, and the (re)emergence of safe social networks. Feelings of shame and the fear of stigma and isolation can prevent children who are / have been trafficked from disclosing trafficking experiences and engaging with services, and it was highlighted in the evidence that the peer group approaches of these projects often served to mitigate these negative fears and feelings that children were carrying. The success of peer group work occurred sometimes within a broader context of professionals being risk averse in bringing trafficked children together in one place, allied to fears of the contextual danger of children's networks in re-trafficking and other harms.

- The therapeutic interventions that were chosen to support children in their recovery were ones that are already available, evidenced, and used in the UK, but that are more culturally congruent with the different cultural backgrounds trafficked children come from, rather than delivering 'new' interventions; this approach was viewed as having the potential for offering the best benefit to trafficked children and the best culturally sensitive approach.

- Projects working directly with children highlighted the challenges as they approached adulthood given that many of the processes they are involved in that are related to their trafficking experiences, such as asylum and immigration or

criminal justice processes, endure into their adulthood. Projects highlighted the unique vulnerabilities of children as they enter into this this transition stage and identified the need for future services to be able to provide effective support and guidance for young people transitioning into adult services, rather than ending support at this crucial point in their lives.

- Projects successfully delivered positive systemic interventions and results through their capacity building and awareness raising activities, largely through multi-agency training events. In doing this, the projects reached **1802 key stakeholders** in total and evidenced significant improvements in stakeholder knowledge and awareness of child trafficking. The reported positive impact of these kinds of activities highlights the need for systemic improvement in child protection agencies and the need for more agency as well as multi-agency collaborative learning opportunities.

- Some projects adopted an action research approach to building capacity in key agencies. The evidence shows that this approach was seen as particularly impactful in changing the language and culture of understanding of child trafficking and projects working within this approach reported influencing tangible changes in policy and practice at the local and even national level.

- Knowledge and awareness raising of child trafficking was a key aspect of projects ensuring referrals into their projects. Whilst this strand of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund was successful, challenges did arise. Most notably the challenge of ensuring that training is consistent in key messages but tailored to local context. Findings suggest that this perhaps highlights a key challenge with training more generally on child trafficking and the need perhaps for closer monitoring and follow-up.

- Arguably the weakest area of the fund has been in evidencing success and impact in respect of the prevention of children going missing. This is not to suggest that there was no evidence of positive pathways towards change in this area; such examples have been given in this report. However, given the significance of the issue of missing children at both the national and local levels, the evaluation has found that more focused attention needs to be prioritised in this area moving forward.

- Whilst all projects delivered positive outcomes, the limited two-year funding stream was challenging, particularly where projects were larger in scale and took longer than planned to set-up. The challenges faced by the projects demonstrated that effective innovation, especially within such complex territories of practice, requires a commitment to longer term funding and support.

Introduction

1.1   About the Report

This is a report on the evaluation of the Home Office Child Trafficking Protection Fund. The report was conducted by Dr Helen Connolly from the University of Bedfordshire. It offers a descriptive and thematic analysis of the monitoring and research from each of the projects supported by the fund. The purpose of this report is to highlight the innovation, and specifically the processes undertaken and outcomes achieved within each of the projects and within the fund more generally and, to inform policy and practice on 'what works' in the protection, care and support of trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking and modern slavery. The report offers examples of learning from the evaluation and has been written to support and enhance innovation in the sector and the dissemination of good practice. The data used within is predominantly drawn from quarterly and final reports supplied to the Home Office by each of the funded projects, supplemented by qualitative interviews with key respondents from across each of the projects. It is worth noting that each of the funded projects in this report used different approaches to evaluation and focussed on different aspects of the trafficking and modern slavery of children.

Last year, the evaluation of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs), formerly known as the Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTAs), in early adopter sites, and the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 were published. ICTGs are an additional source of advice and support for all trafficked children, irrespective of nationality, and somebody who can advocate on their behalf. The Independent Review considered section 48 of the Act which makes provision for ICTGs, specifically how to ensure the right support for children is provided given the changing profile of child victims. There are many synergies between the findings of the ICTG evaluation, the Independent Review, and the findings of the projects funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund. These synergies make it helpful to situate this report within the broader context of the ICTG evaluation and the Independent Review.

1.2   Context of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund

In 2019, there were 4,550 potential child victims of modern slavery referred into the National Referral Mechanism. This was a 45% increase from the previous year. This increase is thought to be due, in the majority, to a continued increase in the recorded NRM referrals related to the county lines criminal business model of exploiting vulnerable individuals and other forms of criminal exploitation. The recording of exploitation types in

the NRM changed in October 2019, where criminal exploitation was separated from labour, and multiple exploitation types can be recorded per referral. In quarters 1-3 of 2019, of the 3,105 children referred to the NRM, 2,207 (71%) were referred for labour exploitation, 482 (16%) for sexual exploitation, 326 (10%) where exploitation type was unknown and 90 (3%) for domestic servitude (Home Office, 2020). In quarter 4, however, the change in recording highlighted that criminal exploitation was most common in children, accounting for 664 (46%) of the 1,445 referrals received in that quarter. The largest nationality group of children referred into the NRM were UK nationals (2,360; 52%). This was followed by Vietnamese children (427; 9%), Eritrean children (274; 6%), Albanian children (256; 6%) and Sudanese children (220; 5%).

The Child Trafficking Protection Fund was part of a £40 million Government commitment announced in 2017 to tackle child sexual abuse and trafficking. The fund awarded £2.2 million to seven organisations working at the frontline of child trafficking efforts. The fund began January 2017 and ended March 2019. The fund has been experimental and tested innovative ways to support and protect trafficked children in both the UK and abroad with an emphasis on local approaches to tackling child trafficking. The fund was established with the aims of supporting projects focusing on:

- Child support and recovery, including specialist care.

- Reducing vulnerability to exploitation and preventing children from going missing and potentially being re-trafficked.

1.3   Aims and Objectives of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund Evaluation

This evaluation is utilisation-focused. This means that the focus is directed to provide the Home Office Modern Slavery Team, its project partners of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund, and wider stakeholders, with practicable information and evidence of value to inform the development and implementation of future projects. Within this context, the aims of the evaluation are as follows:

1. To evaluate the success of the projects of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund against the aims of:

- Child support and recovery, including specialist care.

- Reducing vulnerability to exploitation and preventing children from going missing and potentially being re-trafficked.

2. To describe each of the projects, including their key characteristics, aims, background and context, methods, findings, lessons learned and which children and stakeholder groups they have worked with.

3. To evaluate the process, progress and outcomes of each of the projects funded against their individual aims and success criteria.

4. To analyse the challenges and successes of the different projects and their approaches to protection, support and prevention, with a focus on what has worked where, when and for whom.

5. To draw out broader collective themes and issues across the projects, identifying links with existing evidence and literature.

2 About the Projects Funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund

2.1 The 7 Projects Funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund

The Child Trafficking Protection Fund selected 7 child trafficking prevention, protection and support projects to fund. The projects are as follows and each are described in detail in Annex A of this report.

1. **Coram International: Casting Light In The Shadows: Combatting Child Trafficking And Slavery in Vietnam**. A project that focussed on knowledge and capacity building in Vietnam to improve child trafficking prevention and response. The project was underpinned by a victim-centred and inter-disciplinary approach.

2. **Barnardo's: Therapeutic Group Work for Trafficked Children and Young People in West Yorkshire**. A project designed to support children internally trafficked in the UK towards recovery, emotional well-being and resilience, and to improve awareness of child trafficking amongst regional key multi-agency stakeholders.

3. **AFRUCA: Culturally Tailored and Child Specific Mental and Emotional Well-Being Project.** A project designed to offer culturally tailored therapeutic and peer

oriented mental health interventions to trafficked African children with the aim of improving mental health and bolstering resilience.

4. **The Children's Society: Rise Project**. A multi-disciplinary Pan London service for boys and young men trafficked to the UK from abroad. The project offered a wraparound service delivering a mix of 1:1 and group therapeutic support. To support the aims of the project, training was delivered to statutory and third sector organisations on the best care and support for trafficked children.

5. **Unseen: Children In A Place of Safety.** A project that trialled a new model of specialist residential accommodation for trafficked children with the purpose of facilitating their safety, recovery and transition into less intensive support.

6. **International Organisation of Migration: A Pilot Project To Support Foster Carers Looking After Albanian and Vietnamese Unaccompanied Children.** A knowledge and awareness training project on child trafficking amongst foster carers in partnership with the London Borough of Croydon. The project focused on the risks, experiences and needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking Albanian and Vietnamese children with the aim of improving foster carer capacity to care and reduce risks of trafficking and children going missing.

7. **ECPAT UK: Partnership Against Child Trafficking Project (PACT)**. This project delivered practical consultancy to 4 local authority areas in England. The aim was to build operational and strategic knowledge of trafficking, slavery and missing children, and to improve identification and protection responses at the local level.

2.2 The Characteristics of the Projects Funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund

An analysis of all these projects shows that these projects were organised around the following 3 characteristics as a way of addressing the broader aims of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund – child support and recovery and reducing vulnerability to exploitation, re-trafficking and children going missing.

- The creation and exchange of new knowledge to improve prevention and protection responses to child trafficking.

- Improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness- raising amongst multi-agency stakeholders with a focus on engaging stakeholders to respond at a local level.

- Providing targeted direct assistance and support to trafficked children to reduce vulnerability, prevent re-trafficking, address mental health needs through child centred and culturally tailored approaches, and reduce isolation.

As can be seen in the diagram below, all projects worked across at least two of these characteristics. Identifying these key characteristics at this stage is about more than descriptive analysis. Fundamentally, it is about identifying and framing early in the report what these projects tell us about what can work well in responding to child trafficking, especially at the local level of response to a national challenge. The effectiveness of working across these areas to counter child trafficking and its impacts has also been evidenced in the UK by the recent evaluation of the ICTG's (Home Office, 2019).

Creation and Exchange of New Knowledge	Improving Strategic And Operational Capacity Building and Awareness Raising	Providing Direct Assistance and Support to Trafficked Children
•Coram International •Unseen •ECPAT UK	•Coram International •Barnardo's •The Children's Society •IOM •ECPAT UK	•AFRUCA •Barnardo's •The Children's Society •Unseen

Figure 1:Key Characteristics of the Projects Funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund.

2.3 The Knowledge Base, Expertise and Credibility of Organisations Funded

The rationales for each of the projects were all anchored in **evidence-based considerations**, highlighting the **extensive knowledge base, expertise and credibility of all organisations delivering the projects**. Within the interviews and project reports analysed for this evaluation, attention was drawn to the evidence based needs, circumstances and vulnerabilities of trafficked children, and the ways in which these informed the rationale of each of the projects.

"We went into this with a big light bulb moment. That there is a big need for this research…. So our objective was to strengthen child trafficking prevention and response efforts through the development of evidence to understand how it happens, how it is experienced by victims, and how prevention and response efforts are working at present and then to build activities on the back of that evidence base." (Coram International Interview)

Previous practice learning and expertise was also identified in project documents and in qualitative interviews as being critical to the development of the rationales of the projects. Related to this, some of the projects also grew from and within pre-existing provision and could therefore shape their focus and approach according to their knowledge of the local needs of trafficked and exploited children and what else was or was not available from services locally to avoid duplication of efforts. This was particularly the case in those projects offering direct support to children, such as the projects of AFRUCA, Barnardo's, The Children's Society and Unseen.

"So prior to this contract with the Home Office we were delivering a pilot of therapeutic work for children at risk of child sexual exploitation. It was a pilot project within Barnardo's which ran successfully for 2 years and then we received this funding from the Home Office to deliver for children who have been trafficked internally." (Barnardo's, Interview)

Furthermore, given the collaborative and partnership focus of the work of all of the projects, the expertise and learning of key partners and stakeholders was also integrated into the development of many of the rationales and approaches.

Although projects were not without their challenges, the evidence-based starting points of the projects, combining research, practice and wider sector experience, contributed to the development of projects that were successful towards achieving positive change either in the lives of children or within child protection and policy systems.

3 Method

3.1 The Approach of the Evaluation to The Analysis Of The Funded Projects

The analysis for the evaluation focussed thematically on 'process' related themes and issues around the design and implementation of the seven funded projects. It also focused on 'outcome' related themes and issues addressing the impacts and reach of the projects. The analysis is largely qualitative as a result of the predominantly qualitative content of the project documents supplied by the projects for analysis, combined with the qualitative nature of the interviews. This qualitative approach is helpful for capturing the experiences and observations behind the impacts that were quantified in the project documents. In this context, the thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to organise the qualitative data thematically and data was systematically analysed within this framework across projects. Analysing the data in this way was a pragmatic response to the varied nature and approaches of the data received from each of the projects. All projects had a monitoring and evaluation framework built into their design and implementation, yet engaged differently with the task of monitoring and evaluation, and with different levels of data and expertise. Furthermore, it is challenging to measure outcomes in a straightforward way within the context of direct work with trafficked children and in professional social care and child protection contexts. These contexts are often 'messy' and the qualitative thematic focus allows scope for highlighting what is 'likely' to have been effective and why (Scott et al, 2019).

4 Thematic Analysis of the Process, Design and Implementation of the Projects

In this section of the report, themes relating to the design and implementation of the seven funded projects will be identified and explored. It will explore what the thematic analysis has highlighted about the models of delivery of the projects, the ways in which they worked with and engaged with children, the nature and level of local 'buy in', and their role in relation to local systems change in the care and protection of trafficked children. These themes are process related and are drawn from both the project reports and the qualitative interviews.

4.1.1 Models of Delivery of the Projects

While a range of projects were funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund - each with their own outcomes, outputs and activities - they can be grouped into two broad and simple approaches as a way of making sense of their models of delivery.

4.1.2 Integrated Trauma Focused Model of Delivery

All of the projects offering direct support to trafficked children adopted what can be referred to for the purpose of analysis as an integrated trauma-focused model of delivery as a way of supporting the safety, emotional and mental well-being, practical and supporting children through processes such as asylum and the criminal justice system.

Within this model of delivery, services directly integrated both **trauma specific** and **trauma informed** methods of working with children to achieve not just therapeutic aims but other aims such as advocacy and physical, social and emotional well-being. Trauma specific methods refer to the clinical and therapeutic interventions offered by the projects that were designed to treat and improve the presentation and symptoms of children's trauma, such as 1:1 counselling and therapy. Trauma informed methods refer to the ways in which the delivery of these projects was underpinned by an awareness of how trauma affects children's capacity to receive support. This model of delivery has been referred to as an integrated trauma-focused model because the projects integrated both trauma specific and trauma informed methods of working with children, as well as integrating multi-faceted interventions, such as psycho-educative and socio-educative peer group work and advocacy.   As described below, psycho-educative approaches were adopted by projects working within this model of delivery as a basic intervention informing children about trauma, stress, including daily stressors and healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms. Their socio-educative approaches focused on the development of positive relationships, allied to an understanding of risk and safety and to orienting children to life in a new place and new country.

A phased and multi-therapeutic choice approach underpinned the delivery of these projects, and children were in control of the time and tempo of their engagement with therapy, as well as which mode of therapy they engaged with. In taking a phased approach to trauma, projects worked sensitively and incrementally with children, engaging them first in self-care, psycho-education, and in strengths-based and relationship-based therapeutic interventions as a way of sensitising them to their experiences, nurturing a positive identity, bolstering resilience, and even disrupting risks of exploitation. Peer group methods and activities were often used by the projects. These were evidenced as a way of preparing children to engage more intensively over time with their trafficking experiences, as a way of encouraging peer to peer connection and reducing the stigma and isolation that children so often carry after trafficking and exploitation and that can put them at risk of further harm.

"It was that sense of belonging more than anything. Realising that they are not alone in it and there are other people who are experiencing very similar things, although every case is different. But the benefit of that was that they would be together and have that shared experience and feel safe in talking about really difficult things, even stuff around sexual health which is a taboo for young people." (Barnardo's Interview).

With all the benefits of the peer group work as a method for engaging trafficked children, it was also seen by the projects as being a pathway into deeper therapeutic and individual work over time with children.

Projects adopting a trauma informed approach to their delivery highlighted that culturally sensitive approaches to their therapeutic interventions were also a key feature of their model of delivery. Their culturally sensitive interventions tended to be underpinned by an approach that was both practical and adaptive rather than focusing on any deep structural changes to the therapeutic interventions they offered children. In this sense, the therapeutic interventions that were chosen to support children in their recovery were ones that are already available, evidenced, and used in the UK, but that are more culturally congruent with the different cultural backgrounds trafficked children come from. For example, the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy by AFRUCA, which offers a flexible therapeutic approach, and the use of non-talking therapies and interventions, such as visual and somatic approaches, as adopted by Unseen and the Children's Society respectively. Whilst AFRUCA adopted an ecological framework of cultural sensitivity within their service, that placed African cultural beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, languages, communication, and staff at the heart of its therapeutic interventions and relationships, and other projects went some way towards this ecological approach, none of the projects developed new and distinct trauma treatments for each of the cultures that trafficked children come from. In many ways, this would have been impractical given the cultural diversity of the groups of children they were working with. There are also ethical and methodological questions around delivering an intervention that lacks an evidence base, validation and precedence. In this context, delivering culturally congruent trauma interventions arguably had the potential for offering the best benefit to trafficked children and the best culturally sensitive approach. Taking this practical and adaptive approach to the delivery of culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions also included the following practical steps across each of the projects; developing a therapeutic interpreter protocol to maximise the use of specialist interpreters and reduce the risk of children's experiences and feelings getting lost in translation; adopting

an incremental approach to therapeutic interventions which enabled children new to or fearful of the concept of therapy to engage with it over time; and adapting psychometric tools into specific African languages. The value of having translated psychometric assessments is summed up below by the words of a young person:

"I feel a bit free. Sometimes it is hard with an interpreter. It is better I do on my own." (Child. AFRUCA, Final Report)

All projects sought to empower children and young people through their socio-educative and psycho-educative approaches. These approaches educated children about trauma, stress, daily stressors, and healthy and unhealthy responses to stress, and were an invitation for children to become empowered to take ownership, with the support of the projects, of their own self-care. Within the context of children's past experiences, this work was seen by the projects and by young people, as being invaluable. As an example of this value, the Children's Society reported high levels of engagement by children in both these aspects of their work. The socio-educative work carried out by projects positively interacted with the psycho-educative approaches by supporting children to better understand risk, safety and relationships, and for children new to the country, this strand of work supported them to understand life in a new place and culture. Socio-educative approaches also gave children information about key laws and bureaucratic processes implied in their lives. Within the context of children's high levels of involvement with systems, such as asylum and immigration and the criminal justice system, and the ways in which these experiences can interact with past experiences and trauma, the mutuality between the socio-educative work and the psycho-educative aspect of the work was seen by the projects as adding value to the lives of children to bolster their coping.

All of the projects delivering integrated trauma focused services to children, highlighted that they also delivered advocacy either by default or design as a result of the lack of independent advocacy and guardianship services for trafficked children in their region. Given the trust that can be established when a therapeutic intervention is successful, and the evident gains to mental health, emotional well-being and resilience, projects recognised the value of trauma-informed and trauma specific work being delivered alongside advocacy as a way of maximising children's engagement with advocacy and improved advocacy outcomes. In this respect, projects very much engaged with this dual relationship between advocacy and trauma-focused work. This is an innovative practice and reflection given that where specialist therapeutic services exist, and this is uneven and sparse across the country, they

tend to exist separately and are delivered by separate services. Given that Independent Child Trafficking Guardians are an integral part of the landscape of provision for trafficked children, it is not appropriate to suggest that there be a duplication of advocacy-like provision that also offers trauma-focused services. Rather, it is worth thinking about ways to ensure that **specialist trauma focused services for trafficked children exist across all regions in England and Wales and to ensure these are appropriately established to link in with the ICTG early adopter sites as they exist now and as further sites are established**. The outcomes of this integrated advocacy approach are detailed later in this report.

4.1.3 Mobilising Systems Change Model of Delivery

For many projects, their models of delivery were built up around effecting systems change and systemic improvement at both the local and national level. This was true the following projects: ECPAT UK, Coram International, The International Organisation of Migration, The Children's Society, Barnardo's and Unseen. With these latter projects, working to deliver systems change was an essential part of offering accessible and effective interventions for children as a way of ensuring buy in and knowledge of their services.

There were a number of ways these projects sought to deliver change within systems and services. These are outlined below:

In the first instance, all of the projects that were focused on systems change provided opportunities for multi-agency collaboration, overcoming professional boundaries, and strengthening multi-agency responses to child trafficking. These multi-disciplinary opportunities happened through activities such as multi-agency training events and workshops. For example, the IOM project brought together foster carers and key expert stakeholders in a series of thematic forums. In doing this, they not only facilitated the delivery of specialist knowledge to foster carers by experts, but also gave foster carers and expert stakeholders, such as the police and the Home Office, a unique chance for mutual understanding and a deeper kind of learning. This quote by a foster carer taken from the IOM final report, reflects this.

"I thought it was a really friendly atmosphere. None of the people, the experts, were patronising. Because sometimes some of these experts can be really patronising. What came across was a real, genuine, sincere attempt to share information to make the state of migrants or refugees or children who've been trafficked, to make it better. That's what came across." (Foster carer, IOM report: PG 9)

Secondly, there was an 'action research' focus to some of the projects that were focused on systems change. This action research approach ensured that the knowledge being delivered through activities such as training or consultative workshops was in alignment with the local realities of child trafficking and responses, was relatable to stakeholders, and would result in change that was effective and sustainable. This approach to effecting systems change was to be found in the ECPAT UK, Coram International and The Children's Society projects. Coram International also used an action research approach to address the gaps in knowledge in Vietnam on the systemic factors contributing towards children's vulnerability to trafficking.

Thirdly, all projects seeking systems change also sought to influence the language and culture of understanding of trafficking. They sought to encourage multi-agency stakeholders to engage with the complexities of definitions of trafficking and to further engage with new ways of seeing and responding to trafficking that would take into account a range of child trafficking and exploitation experiences. For example, in Vietnam, Coram International, through their research and partnerships with the Vietnamese government, sought to sensitise key stakeholders to the nature and scale of trafficking in Vietnam to encourage improved policies and practices. In the UK, ECPAT UK sought to encourage child protection practitioners and other key stakeholders from problematizing certain types of trafficking over others such as child criminal exploitation and forced labour.

Focusing on system change approaches at the local level was clearly seen as a priority area by the projects as well as a principle of best practice in the delivery of effective child trafficking protection and response projects, including by those projects supporting children directly. There is learning in this approach for subsequent projects and initiatives. This supports findings from the evaluation of ICTGs in early adopter sites (Home Office, 2019). Clearly the systems change approach taken by the projects requires long-term support and investment to sustain any impact they have had at the local level (see outcomes section below). It also suggests the need for a more systematic and comprehensive approach to systems change initiatives nationally.

4.2.1 Time To Establish, Embed and Achieve Buy-In From Key Stakeholders

Whilst there were similarities and differences in the barriers and opportunities experienced by each of the projects, most projects experienced challenges operationalizing and

embedding themselves within the two year compacted timeline of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund. This was true for projects that had started from the very beginning of a project with little to no existing impetus, such as Coram International and Unseen, as well as those that were already established and extending their existing provision, such as AFRUCA, Barnardo's and The Children's Society.

"It has only been a two year pot of funding and you get to a level where you feel, yes, we are finally there, and you have to end the service and that is always going to be the difficulty of short-term funding. We were getting to a point around the end, with people going, 'yes, we could do this and we could develop the therapy this way' but the sad reality is that our funding had to come to an end and staff have successfully moved on to other services now the project is closing and so it has been really hard to keep it going." (The Children's Society, Interview)

Whilst challenging for all, the limited two year funding stream was most challenging, unsurprisingly, for those projects that were larger in scale, had multiple activities to achieve, and those that took longer to establish. In this respect, and linking with the point in the above section about sustainable systems change, **effective innovation also requires a commitment to longer term funding and support** as demonstrated in the case study below from the project by Unseen.

4.2.2 Case Study: Time Intensive Implementation and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Unseen: Children in A Place of Safety. Safe Accommodation Project

Time Intensive Implementation and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Building on their organisational approach to developing responses to child trafficking in the gaps, Unseen developed a model of safe accommodation that had never been trialled before using a mix of paid and volunteer support and specialist safety measures. This required considerable consultation with key stakeholders over time, such as with police, government, local authorities and local safeguarding boards. Specialist legal advice was also sought and as a result the project was advised by a barrister to go through the process of registering as a children's home with Ofsted instead of establishing as supported accommodation. The process of becoming Ofsted registered was very time consuming. Additionally, after being registered with Ofsted, Unseen had to invest considerable time getting on to local authority commissioning frameworks to become 'spot purchase' placements. The commissioning process is not centralised nor standardised across local authorities that the project wanted to engage. This context hindered getting referrals of children and the throughput of the project.

"It added just a whole different level of time resource trying to understand the systems. It was hurdle after hurdle." (Unseen, Interview)

Lessons Looking Forward: In hindsight, stronger relationships with Ofsted and DfE could help to ensure that the need for this population group, i.e. unaccompanied trafficked children, is fully understood and provisions within Ofsted criteria for children's homes can be tailored appropriately.

The majority of projects highlighted the challenges and opportunities they faced in relation to how their projects became visible and known to key partner agencies; considerable efforts were invested in the process of awareness-raising amongst key stakeholders about the nature of their projects. In this respect, becoming part of the local landscape of child trafficking provision and response was often incremental when it happened and it was time-consuming. The time required to do project awareness-raising was especially integral to those projects working directly with children as a key way of ensuring they received referrals into their service. This can be seen in the quote below:

"Our staff spent so much time promoting the project with very little outcome and because a lot of time was spent doing marketing and we were not getting the complementary outcome."(AFRUCA, Interview)

As an extension of this, it was further highlighted that awareness-raising on the issue of child trafficking itself was an essential part of securing referrals within projects working directly with children. This dovetails with the finding that where the training of key

stakeholders was a key activity of a project, referrals of trafficked children increased. The combination, therefore, of building in training as a key activity of provision whilst offering direct support to children, appears to be a successful strategy, especially in the context where child trafficking is not well known or is misunderstood amongst regional partner agencies. Both these points are represented below from the experiences of the Barnardo's project:

"In hindsight, the first year of the project should have been spent delivering the child trafficking training to professionals who work with children. This would have increased the number of appropriate referrals into the service, reduced the number of inappropriate referrals received into the service and increased the number of NRM referrals made; all while upskilling staff on the topic of trafficking." (Barnardo's Project Document)

Significantly, as can be seen in the quote above, there seems to be a positive relationship between the awareness raising activities of projects and an increase in National Referral Mechanism referrals for trafficked children. This finding implies that there a lack of consistent levels of knowledge and understanding of the National Referral Mechanism and its significance for trafficked children within key services at the local level.

The process of implementing and embedding the projects was much less complex where relationships with key partner agencies were already established or where relationships were established with partner agencies who could act as connectors to other key partners. For example, ECPAT UK had already scoped the idea of their project before Child Trafficking Protection Fund funding was announced and had key partner agencies already interested in being part of the pilot project. Coram International, having no existing presence in Vietnam before their project, and being mindful of the growing presence of international anti-trafficking programmes in Vietnam, partnered with UNICEF Vietnam who were a credible presence on the ground in Vietnam and had an existing work plan with the Vietnamese Government. This approach was strengthened by the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Vietnamese Government and the Home Office, which endorsed the credibility of Coram International and consolidated key partnerships with the Government. Coram International found this combined endorsement of their credibility from Vietnamese national partners, as well as from the UK Government, helpful in navigating the many challenging aspects of their methodology. For example, as international researchers they had to recruit Vietnamese researchers to do the research interviews, and they also had to depend on the involvement of Government agencies to

support the work streams in a context where NGO's were not always enthusiastic to be involved. Allied to this finding on the significance of relationships, where projects reported fewer challenges with implementation, they had either developed projects within an existing service, and the success was partly down to having networks they had already established over the years, such as The Children's Society Rise Project, or they focused in a concentrated way in one area, and with one group of stakeholders, such as the IOM project training foster carers in Croydon.

"I think it seems like a massive project but then on the other hand, it was one partner, it was concentrated, and the interesting part about it being a pilot was there was things that we couldn't know from the outset and we could change. As a project co-ordinator, it wasn't just about the size of the project but also the flexibility you needed to have." (IOM Interview)

Even within each of the projects, different levels of engagement happened across different partner agencies as a result of whether relationships with them were new or pre-existing, such as with the Barnardo's therapeutic project, where relationships and engagement with the service was stronger with some local authorities and regional stakeholders than with others.

As evidenced in the quote from IOM above, the experimental nature of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund meant that projects felt confident to respond to any challenges and opportunities in agile ways. Indeed, most projects highlighted how supported they felt by the Home Office Child Trafficking Protection Fund when making any detours from their original project designs, and when refining project plans to better suit what they were facing on the ground. In this sense, projects did not feel that any changes or hurdles were viewed as a sign of a lack of success, but rather as a source of valuable learning and collaboration with the Home Office. In this respect, **a realistic and constructive approach to the projects was in place, where it was recognised by both the Home Office and the projects that it would not always be possible to achieve some of the desired outcomes**.

4.3 Children's Entry Into and Exit From The Projects: Referral Criteria For Working With Children

All of the projects working directly with children raised issues around the criteria for children's entry into and exit from their services. This was true for projects working with internally trafficked children, such as Barnardo's, and projects working with foreign national children trafficked across borders, such as The Children's Society, AFRUCA and Unseen. All of the projects expressed concerns about the ways in which the referral pathways into their projects limited the types of children they could offer support to.

In the majority of the projects working directly with children, restrictions based on children's National Referral Mechanism status were further highlighted as being too restrictive. National Referral Mechanism restrictions were identified as excluding children who may have trafficking needs within a context where first responders, such as social workers, may not know about the National Referral Mechanism or see the value in referring children in. Where this restriction did not apply, and risk of trafficking rather than trafficking itself was one of the referral criteria, such as with the Children's Society Rise project, it was noted that projects had been able to work with high risk children over time, and once a relationship was established, disclosures of trafficking happened.

The main finding regarding project endings and the thresholds for children's exit out of their projects was that endings at 18 years of age were not needs led and were unhelpful for trafficked children and young people caught up in processes such as the asylum and immigration system and the National Referral Mechanism. These processes were reported as often extending beyond children's 18th birthdays, and their need for practical and therapeutic support continues for as long as they are involved in these processes. Moreover, given the deeply life-significant decisions of these processes that children and young people are involved in, the value of having direct support for them at the point where decisions are made, is amplified as can be seen in the quote below:

"We saw an increase in high complex mental health needs of the young people in the services. It was difficult to safely exit them within the criteria and restrictions i.e., asylum date, age, difficulties with securing interpreters, social workers not knowing and entering the young person into the National Referral Mechanism system (NRM). The young people required continued mental health support due to the uncertainty and outcome of their asylum claim, and changes in living accommodation once they turn 18. They were referred

to AFRUCA's other services to continue to access support from AFRUCA's Victim Support worker and Psychotherapy team." (AFRUCA, Final Report,)

These findings suggest that further consideration should be given **to the support and guidance available for young people transitioning into adult services**. **A blended model of both ODA and non-ODA funding would perhaps be a more inclusive model for any subsequent projects funded to support foreign national trafficked children.**

5 Findings: What Has The Child Trafficking Protection Fund Achieved? A Thematic Analysis of Project Outcomes and Impact.

As explained in section 2 of this report, when all of the projects were analysed, it was clear that they sought to achieve change, improvement and impact in the following 3 ways:

- The creation and exchange of new knowledge to improve prevention and protection responses to child trafficking.

- Improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness-raising amongst multi-agency stakeholders with a focus on engaging stakeholders to respond at a local level.

- Providing targeted direct assistance and support to trafficked children to reduce vulnerability, prevent re-trafficking, address mental health needs through child centred and culturally tailored approaches and reduce isolation.

This section of the report will therefore use these 3 thematic characteristics as a framework for exploring the outcomes and impact of all 7 projects. Whilst the analysis will draw from quantitative data collected by each of the projects, the analysis is largely qualitative as a result of the largely qualitative content of the project documents supplied by the projects for analysis and the qualitative nature of the interviews. The qualitative approach is helpful for capturing the experiences and observations behind the quantitative outcomes.

5.1   The Creation and Exchange of New Knowledge To Improve Prevention and Protection Responses To Child Trafficking

Three of the projects were concerned with the creation and exchange of new knowledge as a way of strengthening child trafficking prevention and protection responses. These three projects were Coram International, Unseen and ECPAT UK. Within the project documentation and interviews, all of these projects highlighted the significance of knowledge generation and exchange as a way of driving innovation in laws, policies and practices.

Given that the scale, nature, risks and dynamics of child trafficking are constantly evolving, these three projects sought to generate knowledge to change and widen the way key stakeholders look at trafficking and vulnerabilities to trafficking, allied to widening the way key stakeholders then look at responding to child trafficking.   **The interviews and project documentation all highlight success towards the achievement of these outcomes**.

In the first instance, all these 3 projects, as mentioned in the section on the implementation process, adopted an action research approach to the key challenges of improving understanding and responses. In this respect, all 3 projects have been working to generate and disseminate empirical evidence and in doing this, have developed and been successful with empirically ambitious and robust research methods that can reliably shape knowledge, understanding and the development of more appropriate responses to child trafficking in both Vietnam and in the UK. The research project by Coram International in Vietnam, for example, involved over **N= 4,800** research respondents, largely children and young people, but also other key stakeholders, to better understand the drivers, vulnerabilities and extent of child trafficking in Vietnam. Not only was this a large scale and comprehensive approach that accounted for regional differences across Vietnam, but it also, as noted in the Coram International project documentation, added value as a piece of research that was not driven by the perhaps cautious agendas of Vietnamese administrators, as represented in the quote below from a workshop participant in Vietnam:

 "I think it captures reality and will help us to understand the scope, the cause, the risks – the approach of the research based on the indicators is quite important because the previous research is usually based on administrative reports and sometimes the methodology is not that reliable so this research will be very useful for different agencies in Vietnam to use in their work. Your approach also helped us to widen the way we look at

trafficking and this will help us to come up with wider solutions" (Coram International, Project Documentation)

The scale of the research and the sample size, along with the development of trafficking indicators by Coram International that were sensitive to the context of children and young people's lives in Vietnam, has seen research findings that have shed new light on the actual scale of youth migration and child trafficking in Vietnam. Significantly, the Vietnamese Government appear to be interested to learn from this. Such significant impact is captured in the quote below:

" When we worked in collaboration with Vietnamese partners, the Government was co-operative and much more open to findings around trafficking. Our prevalence stats were much higher than what they had anticipated it being and they were interested in learning from it rather than to resist it or be defensive about it." (**Coram International, Interview**)

In addition to this, the project identified that given the scale of the research, a systematic understanding was achieved of the ways in which multiple inequalities and structural disadvantage connect with trafficking. This is of significant impact given that this is known to be an area of knowledge that is insufficiently understood and therefore not addressed appropriately (European Commission, 2016).

Similarly, the scale, scope and sampling of the social care research by ECPAT UK was impressive. As described in **Annex A** of this report, they analysed **N=120** case files across 4 local authority areas where there were indicators of modern slavery, undertook a policy analysis of **N=350** pages of policy documents across these 4 local authority areas, and delivered a staff survey to identify the extent of knowledge and understanding of child trafficking amongst frontline social workers. Developing research that could generate local knowledge and offer a bespoke and locally relevant approach to improving responses to children who have been trafficked and reducing their vulnerability, proved to be a successful method for impact in engaging child protection teams in the issue of child trafficking. In particular, there is evidence from ECPAT UK that local authorities were interested in learning from the findings of the policy and case file audit to create a bespoke child trafficking protocol for their areas. Furthermore, whilst research and knowledge development was included in the project to best inform social care responses at the local level, the systematic nature of the research, coupled with the breadth and depth of its enquiry and findings, are helpful more broadly for thinking about improved institutional responses within the UK child protection system to children who have been trafficked. For example, the research yielded knowledge of good practice in relation to child trafficking,

which is important for learning across local authorities, but it also identified gaps in local authority knowledge and understanding of child trafficking. For example, it identified that child sexual exploitation (CSE) is more likely to be identified than other types of exploitation. It further identified the numbers of missing children with trafficking indicators and missing procedures and highlighted that **N=76** cases out of N=120 cases, had missing episodes ranging from 2 to 66 instances. The care and parental responsibility status of children under the Children Act (1989) were also evidenced, highlighting that the majority were provided for on a Section 20 accommodation arrangement (**N=51**) or Section 17 children in need arrangement (**N=31**) and that the minority were being cared for under the more protective and encompassing arrangements of a Section 31 care order (**N=11**) or a Section 47 (**N=2**) investigation of significant harm. A significant number of children were reported to be living in family care (**N=38**). Furthermore, ECPAT UK identified that there is a lack of recording of asylum and immigration status and decisions and a need to better understand the link between asylum / immigration and trafficking within local authorities. They demonstrated that the number of NRM referrals were low even within a context where files had been identified for analysis because of trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery indictors (**N=31**), and there was a lack of evidence of cross-referencing between agencies and systems in case files and only **N=8** children out of 120 had access to some form of independent advocacy. The low numbers of children with access to independent advocacy is likely indicative of the fact that the participating local authorities were not in one of the early adopter areas for the ICTG service.

Given the relatively short-term nature of the projects and the challenges of attributing change in a linear way to the complex and multi-dimensional environment of child trafficking and associated response systems, this evaluation cannot make direct claims that each of these projects, through their knowledge generation activities, achieved the CTPF objectives of reducing children's vulnerability to exploitation and improving victim support. However, what has been possible to evidence from within the interviews and project documentation, is that clear successes have happened in relation to the outputs and outcomes of the projects. The new knowledge that has been generated has provided fresh insights and responses at local and national level as examples of positive pathways to change, with the potential for further influence and impact. Coram International, for example, have experienced success as a result of their multi-stakeholder knowledge exchange workshops. Stakeholders in attendance reportedly affirmed a commitment to prevention strategies and addressing the underlying vulnerabilities of children and young people at risk. Furthermore, as a result of their extensive research findings and knowledge

exchange activities, **Coram International, along with other key international and national stakeholders, including other UK government funded projects, have been part of the creation of a shift in the language and understanding of child trafficking in Vietnam, which has seen it come more in line with internationally recognised definitions. Coram International offered the example of the recent Judicial Resolution from the Judicial Council of the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam, No 02/2019/N-HDTP**. This widened the meaning of the 'means' requirement for the crime of human trafficking, including 'taking advantage of a victim's vulnerability', and in so doing, extended how child trafficking could be understood.

The knowledge generated by ECPAT UK that is described above, in addition to the ways in which they established the conditions for local authority engagement, networking and relationship building, offered an important pathway to change in the ways in which social care can reduce children's vulnerability to trafficking and re-trafficking, improve their responses to the care and protection of trafficked children and contribute towards the systemic improvement of local level practice.

At the time of finalising this report, Unseen had yet to publish their research finding. However, there is comprehensive evidence in their project documentation and in their project interview for this evaluation, that their research aims to influence the development of policy on the best ways to ensure trafficked children's, safety, protection and assistance in the short and medium term after identification.

What is very clear from these projects, is that research, knowledge creation and exchange, has played an important role in relation to policy and practice coherence at different levels – state and institutional. This knowledge and evidence has brought key actors together to facilitate and enhance coordination around evidence-based policies and practices on child trafficking prevention and responses.

5.2 Improving Strategic and Operational Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

5 out of the 7 projects had a direct focus on improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness-raising. These were the projects delivered by The Children's Society, ECPAT UK, IOM, Barnardo's and Coram International. Training was the key mechanism to achieve this across all of these 5 projects, in addition to knowledge exchange workshops and forums. In this sense, training has comprised a major substantive focus of the funded projects and a complimentary or secondary focus in others.

The majority of these training and knowledge exchange opportunities were 'in person' opportunities. The collective reach and achievements of these 5 projects in relation to training and knowledge exchange is impressive. In total, **N=1802** key stakeholders were involved in training and knowledge exchange opportunities across the projects. **N=1292** were 'in person' opportunities and **N=510** were online and e-learning. E-learning training and knowledge awareness opportunities worked less well than 'in person' training and the success of The Children's Society's e-learning programme for education and social care accounts for the majority of stakeholders who engaged in e-learning opportunities (**N=443**).

Beyond identifying the reach of the trainings, the impact of the trainings is a complex task to appraise, to some extent, given that not all projects included their evaluations in the project documentation to be reviewed for this report, and the training evaluations have been designed, analysed and interpreted by the projects themselves. That being said, evaluation of the training was an integral part of the projects that delivered training and the evaluations do offer some insight into their impact and value. For example, both Barnardo's and IOM sought to evaluate before and after changes in the knowledge and confidence of stakeholders. Their evaluations were positive and captured significant quantitative shifts in their training participants' knowledge and awareness of child trafficking circumstances and responses before and after the training. This is captured in the quotes below taken from the final project reports of Barnardo's and IOM:

"Evaluation from participants overwhelmingly recorded increased awareness, confidence and understanding post-training input, demonstrating that the training offers front line professionals the opportunity to learn how to effectively respond to child victims of human trafficking both internally and externally." (**Barnardo's, Final Project Report**)

"The figures show a significant increase in foster carers' understanding of their knowledge after attending the training. Overall, when looking across all areas, foster carers reported an average of 57 percent increase in knowledge on looking after Albanian and Vietnamese unaccompanied and trafficked children. Even long-standing carers who specialise in looking after unaccompanied children rated increases in their knowledge. However, these were less marked than for foster carers who had less experience caring for this group of children." (**IOM, Final Project Report)**

The capacity building that happened through training has also been captured qualitatively in project reports, such as in the ECPAT UK and Coram International project documentation. For example, on the impact of their bespoke needs-led training activities,

ECPAT UK highlighted that frontline social care practitioners had requested more training and had identified training as a key strategy in reducing the risks of child exploitation and increasing institutional capacity to respond and support children who have been trafficked. This can be seen in the quote below:

"A key success in the PACT project offer was the provision of bespoke training. Trainees attended full day training and were consistently engaged, interested and involved in a great deal of discussion throughout the sessions. Additionally, they gave very positive evaluation of the training, with the exception of the training being too short and the desire for further training. Feedback from trainees and staff surveys indicated that frontline staff felt face to face training was crucial in tackling child trafficking and needed to be carried out regularly, fully updated and rolled out more widely." (**ECPAT UK, Final Report**)

Whilst longer-term follow up and monitoring is required to demonstrate impact over time in terms of knowledge, confidence and behavioural change as a result of training, positive pathways to change have clearly been identified through the delivery and evaluation of the training as evidenced above. There has been improved understanding and awareness of the vulnerabilities that create child trafficking risks, as well as around effective laws, policies and practices. This goes some way towards increasing the capacity of key stakeholders, such as government agencies, foster carers and frontline social care staff, to act to reduce children's vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking and to respond effectively in their care and protection after trafficking. However, training, awareness raising and capacity building is a long term process and short term funding does not address the issue of sustainability, particularly within challenging practice contexts, such as have been addressed in the previous section, by each of the projects.   Whilst each of these projects built up their training and awareness raising activities around their local contexts, and considerable expertise, which was highly valued and appraised by beneficiaries, there is no evidence in the project documentation, that projects came together regularly to reflect on the content of their training and awareness raising and to perhaps co-ordinate content, as far as possible, and ensure a balance between training that is bespoke but also consistent in its message. This is perhaps more relevant for projects that were delivering in the UK. The issue of coordinating key messages and key content may speak to a broader need for the better co-ordination of training and awareness raising interventions on child trafficking in the UK.

Some of the projects, such as Coram International and ECPAT UK, adopted child centred and experiential approaches to the production of their training materials, and therefore to

their institutional capacity building. They saw it as a central consideration in ensuring their training was accessible to professionals and grounded in the first hand realities of children. They did this in different ways. Coram International focused on centralising children's realities and child respondents in the data collection process that subsequently shaped their training, and ECPAT UK involved young trainers with lived experience of trafficking in their training sessions. ECPAT UK reported the significant impact this had on frontline practitioners. IOM did not include children in the development of their training, and a request was made in the evaluation of their forums to include children who had been trafficked in knowledge exchange and learning activities. It is recommended that with all the appropriate safeguarding and ethics procedures in place, that children and young people with first hand experience of trafficking are involved in training and awareness raising activities either in the delivery or construction of materials.

Whilst the training was delivered across all these projects to key stakeholders from different sectors, ranging from government agencies, frontline social care, foster carers, police and law enforcement, youth justice, education, and the third sector, the predominant focus, certainly in the projects in the UK, appears to have been on frontline operational care professionals, such as social workers and foster carers. This upstream approach is a valuable approach given that frontline staff are those who are most likely to come into contact with children who have been trafficked, or are at risk, are first responders, and are central to the identification and support of these children. However, projects also reported buy in for their projects across all levels of staff in their respective contexts – from frontline professionals to senior strategic and operational leadership, highlighting the need for their training and awareness raising interventions. **The level of uptake and need reported across the projects for training highlights the need for a training programme to be rolled out across local authority areas, in particular for professionals on the frontline of child trafficking identification, response and prevention**

5.3.1 Providing Direct Support and Assistance to Children

4 out of the 7 funded projects offered direct support and assistance to trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking – AFRUCA, Barnardo's, Unseen and The Children's Society. Whilst the nature of these projects varied, as described in the section on 'model of delivery', all had a therapeutic / trauma specific and trauma informed central focus, either offering 1:1 therapeutic support to children, group therapeutic support or both. This therapeutic focus is evident in that 3 out of the 4 of these projects employed in-house specialist therapists as part of their model of support – AFRUCA, Unseen and the Children's Society.

The collective reach of these trauma informed and therapeutic services was impressive. Across all of the projects approximately N=338 children benefited from their projects. An approximate number has been given here as not all projects offered a total number of children they worked with in their project reports, but rather gave a disaggregate number across all of their activities with children. As can be seen in each of the project descriptions earlier in this report, the numbers of children each of the projects worked with varied in scale and also varied in terms of the extent to which they met their target numbers of children they had agreed with the Home Office to work with. The majority of projects did not meet the target number of children they had planned to work with and these issues have been elsewhere explained in this report. In summary, this was largely as a result of challenges in the implementation process, challenges with referrals in terms of the referral criteria of their projects, or of wider issues around the visibility of the project to key stakeholders and the lack of knowledge and understanding of child trafficking amongst stakeholders whom projects were reliant upon for their referrals.

Yet, within this context, the positive impacts that each of the projects achieved in the lives of the children they did work with, appear to be significant. All have recorded positive outcomes and indicators of change in children's emotional well-being, mental health and recovery. Each of the projects captured these positive changes in different ways, including through the use of validated standardised measures, and the narrative accounts of children and young people.

Across all of the projects, children's emotional well-being and mental health were reported to have improved. Following the creative group therapeutic work offered by Barnardo's, for example, they reported that all children who completed the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, self-reported improvements in their emotional well-being. These were short-term groups running over the course of a reported average of 6 weeks, and Barnardo's reported that interventions were most impactful when they extended group work interventions to 15 weeks which they trialled with some of the groups. They reported trialling the 15 week intervention with children attending 2 groups. This is summed up in the quote below:

"The below results show that **80% of children who attended two projects have significantly increased emotional wellbeing according to their SWEMWBS results**, meaning only **20%** of young people scored a decrease." (Barnardo's Final Report)

Although the focus of the work of Barnardo's was on group therapeutic interventions, advocacy and practical support emerged naturally as a feature of the service. As explained

earlier, this was either as a response to the gaps in support services for trafficked children or as a result of Barnardo's being independent from other services, such as statutory services, and children needing independent support, advice and advocacy (the project was running in an area where ICTG's were not yet in place). In this respect, it is difficult to attribute children's positive emotional well-being solely to the group work interventions. The psychological data within the project documentation don't allow for a detailed analysis on the profiles of this 20%. However, what it does show is that the decrease in the emotional well-being of 20% of the children in the project highlights the very clear challenges of working with children with such complex circumstances and psychological needs, and as such highlights the need for investment to continue working with frontline organisations such as Barnardo's to trial approaches to supporting the recovery of trafficked children.

Similarly, AFRUCA, using evidence from children's self-reporting in the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-A) and in the General Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) standardised tool, reported improvements in children's levels of depression and anxiety towards the end of their therapy. They reported a decline in children's depression with a significant number of children moving to the mild levels of depression by the end of therapy from severe and moderate to severe levels. Like the data from Barnardo's above, the statistics within the reports of the project don't allow for detailed analysis between the measurements and as such don't present a full and nuanced picture. However, what they do show is that all children entered into treatment with either severe, moderate to severe or moderate depression and that within all these categories there was a reduction in the intensity of their depression after treatment, with the biggest reduction seen in the moderate to severe category (reduction of 21% from 42% to 21%) but with other gains where children presented with severe or moderate depression. Furthermore, the project reported a similar decline in children's self-reported anxiety, with the biggest reduction being 40% of beneficiaries of therapy reporting mild anxiety by the end of counselling, compared to 10% at the beginning and decreases reported in children's severe and moderate levels of anxiety from the beginning to the end. Given that only 5% of children entered into the project with no reported anxiety, this overall picture is highly positive. Children were also offered psycho-educative group work as part of this project as a way of empowering them to understand self-care and negotiate daily and bureaucratic stressors, as well as peer group support opportunities, so again, it is difficult to attribute changes to one intervention only, highlighting perhaps the value of child trafficking support services that are more holistic and multiple in their interventions.

Indeed, The Children's Society, with their integrated and long-term trauma informed model of case-work, befriending, therapeutic and socio and psycho-educative group work and individual therapy, also recorded significant levels of improvement in children's emotional well-being. Within their final report they highlight that 96% of children and young people in the project demonstrated improvements in their mental health and emotional well-being and that 81% of the children and young people they worked with who had experienced trauma, had reported being better able to cope or developed improved self-care strategies. Whilst the majority of children and young people did not access one to one therapy, of the 21 that did, they were successfully able to address the effects of trauma, anxiety, depression and other issues. The Children's Society project had dual objectives in relation to their direct work with children. In addition to improving children's emotional and mental well-being, the project also sought to improve children's safety and reduce the risks of trafficking, re-trafficking and from going missing. Again, the project reported positive results and reported a sharp decline in children going missing during their involvement in the project, improvements in relationships between children and their carers, which is known to be a risk factor in children going missing, and improvements in children's understanding of trafficking, exploitation and safe and healthy relationships.

Furthermore, Unseen, with their intensive wraparound care, safety and advocacy project for trafficked children with the most complex needs, were able to state, albeit on the basis of 2 children out of 4 who stayed long enough to measure, that no children went missing, that children successfully transitioned into less intensive placements, that children's needs and risk had significantly reduced during their time in the home, and that there were gains in health, emotional well-being, education, risk reduction and in legal, social, cultural and religious outcomes. Whilst the small numbers of children make it challenging to make any reliable associations between the support children received and their positive outcomes, the context of the support given may be suggestive of a positive relationship between the nature of the support and children's outcomes. Positive relationships with children were established with high levels of support, staff and house parents reported high levels of personal satisfaction from their relationships with children, there was an emphasis on staff training and robust supervision and reflective practice processes in place. This positive practice was reported by the project as being highlighted by Ofsted in their inspection of the project.

As identified earlier in this report, there were at least 5 elements identified across all of these projects that offer learning moving forward on how best to achieve positive emotional well-being, mental health and recovery outcomes for trafficked children and

children at risk of being trafficked, as well as positive safety outcomes and reducing the risks of re-trafficking. These were adopting a culturally tailored approach to engaging with children, combining effective advocacy with therapeutic interventions, including the use of alternatives to traditional therapies, peer group therapeutic interventions, socio-educative and psycho-educative approaches and a phased approach to engaging children with trauma, grounded in individualised care. Little is known about the provision of psycho-social recovery services for trafficked children and how mental health and emotional well-being outcomes can be addressed. In this sense, the evidence presented on the outcomes and impacts of these projects is an important starting point for building up an evidence base in respect of good practices and challenges in this area in the UK. Yet, the evidence is just a starting point, offering a formative understanding, and more needs to be systematically evidenced and understood about each of these five aspects of therapeutic care that the projects trialled.

5.3.2 Case Study: Value of Peer Group Interventions.

The Children's Society Rise Project. Tang from Vietnam – Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the children

Tang is from Vietnam. His father disappeared when Tang was 7 years old and his mother left him in the care of his grandmother not long after.

After his grandmother passed away, Tang went to live with his uncle who began physically abusing him and further exploiting him through selling him as a labourer on construction sites. Tang was still very young and this hard physical labour was very difficult.

After experiencing these difficulties for a few years, Tang managed to run away from his uncle and became homeless. Working as a shoe shiner he was groomed by a male customer who initially bought him food and clothes before trafficking him out of Vietnam and to the UK where he was made to work in a cannabis lab.

Tang later escaped this lab and found himself homeless again, this time on the streets of London. He was 14 years old. He was eventually taken into the care by social services.

Tang had a very difficult time in foster care as he felt that the way his carer treated him was reminiscent of his uncle. He felt lonely and isolated without any Vietnamese friends and unable to speak English.

"At that time it was hard to trust anyone, even Vietnamese people. I felt very scared. I felt scared even to go to the park I stayed at home and never went outside. Saying even a few words was scary for me. When I talked to you about my problems you listened to me. I felt you cared when nobody else had done that. They were too busy and no other help was the same. They gave me things but you listened."

At first Tang found it hard to talk with anyone about his difficulties in foster care but in time and with the support of The Children's Society, he spoke up and was moved to a new supportive home where he began to thrive. The Children's Society introduced Tang to its Trafficked Boys Group where he began to build strong, healthy relationships with other trafficked boys like him. Over time Tang became one of the most active members of the group and plays a key part in welcoming and supporting new arrivals to the group.

"I have made a lot of friends now and I have learnt how to be with people and how to include people. When I came to the boys group I was scared and shy. I see others now when they first come to the group and they are just like me. I understand them. I understand what they have been through, they are me before. I feel bad for them and I want to help them. I want to encourage them to come to the group because they will feel better, then they will feel good and they will grow up there too just like me. To help others at the group, to make them comfortable, its good for them and it is also good for me. I make friends and they make friends and we care for each other."

5.4 Combining Effective Therapeutic Interventions With Effective Advocacy

Earlier in the report it was mentioned that most of the projects offering direct assistance to children also integrated advocacy either by design or by default in response to gaps in advocacy services for trafficked children and children at risk of being trafficked. In this context, the advocacy successes of the projects have been recorded in both the interviews and in the project reports. Although based on a small number of projects, it is possible that the success in both the domains of the advocacy work and in the therapeutic work within these projects are interlinked, and is something that could be explored further. Indeed, the relationship between advocacy outcomes and therapeutic outcomes was highlighted by one of the project managers and was a key consideration in her rationale for building in a therapeutic component to an existing advocacy service for trafficked boys from abroad:

"The practical work we were doing (before the project) to help young people with through our support and advocacy case work we just weren't able to achieve because there was such high levels of PTSD, and young people were really struggling to engage with a lot of different other issues which weren't addressed and it was much more difficult to do the case work." (**The Children's Society, Interview**)

It was further highlighted by another project, where children's requests for advocacy were seen as interlinked to the relationships of trust that had been established within the therapeutic support, and as a natural consequence of children disclosing circumstances of

need in the safety of therapeutic spaces that required interventions from other key stakeholders, such as social care:

"I ended up taking on a lot of one to one support, and we found from young people that were higher risk that were managed by child sexual exploitation teams and had complex needs that there were a lot of additional support needs from them and they would often make disclosures within a group and we would have to deal with that immediate safeguarding, such as referrals into children's social care, but they would almost sometimes turn up in crisis at the office and we would have to deal with that, manage that crisis and offer more one to one support as well as the group, because there wasn't a service that would offer them that in addition to the group work." (**Barnardo's Interview**)

Advocacy, whether by default or design, was often seen as a vital aspect of the work undertaken by the projects offering direct support and assistance to children. In particular, The Children's Society highlighted the need to undertake essential advocacy work around the National Referral Mechanism for children, whether as a result of further disclosures from children already referred into the National Referral Mechanism, as a result of children having not been identified as trafficked in the first instance, or not having been referred into the National Referral Mechanism by first responders even after identification of trafficking. Within the Unseen project, 2 of the trafficked children supported were having their cases investigated by the police and this was also highlighted by the Barnardo's project. The need to advocate for trafficked children who were being treated as perpetrators first rather than trafficked children within the criminal justice system was highlighted by the Children's Society project. Within this context vital specialist advocacy had happened for children, representing them as victims of trafficking requiring specialist support rather than children to be criminalised and prosecuted. Indeed, examples were given by this project of criminal cases being dropped after their successful advocacy interventions.

"We have also successfully intervened in multiple cases where children were being criminalised rather than recognised as trafficking victims. Many young people have told us that being criminalised has often been a push factor in terms of going missing so supporting young people through these processes and enabling them to feel heard, believed and to have a voice has played a key part in reducing potential missing episodes." (**The Children's Society, Final Report**)

All 3 projects working with foreign national children highlighted the need for advocacy to practically support children and young people through the uncertainty and complexity of the asylum and immigration process, particularly as it intersects with the National Referral Mechanism. They highlighted the vital need for advocacy to support children's understanding of these processes and to reduce children's sense of isolation, fear and bewilderment by being accompanied through these processes by professionals who understood and could educate them about these systems and processes.

Barnardo's highlighted the significance of the advocacy work they did in the gaps to support internally trafficked children through processes such as placement support, sexual health services, child protection processes and statutory reviews.

That being said, where advocacy was being delivered by default rather than by design, there were concerns about the capacity of the projects to do this additional work, as can be seen in the quote below:

"Having delivered the group work, it became evident that there was a need for additional one to one support for those accessing the group. The majority of children participating in group work had existing 'High Risk' CSE flags and these cases would be regularly reviewed with Risk and Vulnerability Meetings where group workers would be asked to attend to provide updates etc. Due to capacity and restricting job roles, attendance at these meetings was not always possible." (**Barnardo's, Final Report)**

The overall positive impact of delivering a combination of advocacy with specialist therapeutic work to trafficked children, should be considered in the future provision of services so that children can experience the mutual benefits of both advocacy and specialist therapeutic support. This recommendation is in part reflected in the quote below from the Barnardo's project.

" During the project, the staff visited the Independent Child Trafficking Advocate Service in Manchester where the manager fed back that an offer of the therapeutic group work service along with the ICTA service, with more of a 'wrap around' service for the children who are referred in. We would therefore recommend that TGW be offered along with an ICTA service." (**Barnardo's Final Report**)

5.5 The Impact of the Projects On Preventing Missing Children

Preventing trafficked children from going missing and potentially being re-trafficked was one of the aims of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund. As can be seen in Annex A and in various parts of this report, 4 of the funded projects were explicit about this aim in their

own project aims and objectives. These were Unseen, The Children's Society, ECPAT UK and IOM. The challenges of evidencing clear impact in this area have been elsewhere identified given that effective prevention responses are co-ordinated multi-agency responses and therefore difficult to attribute to one service intervention alone (Home Office, 2015). Within the context of this research, the challenges of identifying impact have been heightened in some ways by the methods used by projects to measure their own impact in this area and the evidence is limited on the positive impact they had on cases of children going missing. That is not to say that there was no impact. It is just that that the data in the reports is not solid enough to directly and reliably attribute impact. However, across all of these projects, there are suggestions in project reports and in the interviews that there is a positive pattern to their contributions to preventative work. For example, in the previous findings section on direct support, it has been reported that projects felt that the nature of the specialist direct and rehabilitative support they offered children, such as casework and advocacy, therapeutic interventions, the opportunity for positive relationships within formal networks of support, and opportunities for positive peer relationships, all contributed towards a reduction in the risks of children going missing. Furthermore, evidence of the systemic improvements generated by projects such as those delivered by ECPAT UK and IOM, suggest their potential as a preventative intervention. Indeed, anecdotal evidence was highlighted from within the IOM project by a strategic manager as seen in the quote below:

"I think it has had quite a big impact from what I hear and I think it has reduced missing episodes for some children, so I think it has had a big impact. Because I think foster carers feel better informed, they feel like they understand, they're thinking culturally differently about children who are placed with them and I think that's had a big impact on these children." (**Strategic Manager, from IOM Final Report**)

Given the national significance of the issue of trafficked children going missing, further support to the projects on how best to evaluate their impact in this area may have been beneficial, particularly given the methodological challenges in doing this. Learning from this moving forward, it is recommended that future research focuses on protecting trafficked (and at risk) children from going missing. A more coordinated approach could, for example, be adopted through a scoping review on local solutions to preventing and responding to trafficked children going missing. The learning from this could be used to inform a nationally coherent approach that could test subsequent initiatives, including through the continued delivery and evaluation of the 'missing focused' projects in this evaluation, and through various other strands of work such as the ICTG's and other

counter child trafficking measures. As highlighted in the findings by ECPAT UK, which we have been mentioned earlier in this report, the lack of knowledge and data within statutory services on children at risk of trafficking and going missing, suggests that within any approach to addressing the issue of missing children, a focus on scoping good data and data sharing practices would be an invaluable starting point.

6 Conclusions

This report has highlighted the collective and individual successes and challenges of the 7 projects funded by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund. In summary, it has been a valuable Government initiative that has built on the existing expertise, practical knowledge and experience of NGO's working at the frontline of child trafficking response and prevention efforts. A key component of the fund has been innovation and this has been demonstrated in various ways across each of the projects in respect of direct and targeted support for trafficked children to prevent vulnerability, improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness raising, and the creation and exchange of new knowledge to improve protection and prevention responses. The innovations of the projects were similar in their thematic focus and as such were well chosen by the Child Trafficking Protection Fund in terms of beginning to build a coherent evidence base to learn from and move forward on in improving the care, protection and prevention of trafficked children. The individual focus of each of the projects was not too diffuse so as to render comparisons tenuous, although methodologically there were challenges to comparisons given the different methods and approaches used in their data recording, evaluations.

Funding projects that focused on the direct support of children was an important contribution and commitment towards understanding and improving the landscape of specialist provision for trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking. As discussed in this report, all of the projects offering direct support to children were underpinned by trauma specific and trauma informed interventions to improve the emotional and mental well-being of children. These were valuable projects to fund and gather evidence on given the gaps in both mental health provision for trafficked children and in what is known about interventions to best support the emotional and mental health of different groups of trafficked children. Funding projects that offered therapeutic support therefore, was an important step to begin to redress these gaps. That being said, only a few projects were funded in this area. Therefore the results of the impact from the projects, whilst valuable,

can only offer a formative understanding of how best to support the emotional and mental health needs of trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking, especially in relation to the provision of culturally appropriate support, peer group interventions and alternative approaches to traditional therapeutic interventions. In this respect, the results from the projects offer a valuable starting point for further developments in this area, but also an opportunity to build on and invest in further innovation and knowledge development on how best to support the mental and emotional health of trafficked children, and children at risk of trafficking, particularly as this intersects with the need for culturally sensitive and tailored provision. Emerging evidence has also been generated on the mutual relationship between therapeutic support and children's engagement with advocacy and advocacy outcomes, which paves the way for thinking about a much more systematic approach to specialist provision for trafficked children, perhaps linking future developments in this area with the continued national roll out of ICTGs.

Projects were also coherently characterised by their objectives of improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness-raising as a way of achieving the broader aims of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund. They sought to achieve this predominantly through multi-agency collaboration and strengthening activities, allied to awareness-raising and training activities. They aimed to change the language and culture of understanding of child trafficking, and create systems change within mechanisms of state protection and in those agencies at the frontline of protecting trafficked children and children at risk of trafficking. Some projects took a distinct action research approach to achieving these objectives. The findings demonstrated evidence of the success projects had in capacity building and awareness raising, and the value of funding projects of this kind. In particular, they demonstrated the value of action research for engaging key strategic and operational stakeholders on the issue of child trafficking, for sensitising stakeholders over time to the realities of child trafficking, for delivering training that was relevant for both the local and national context and responsive to the ways in which child trafficking and the child trafficking industry evolves. The findings from project evaluations also demonstrated significant changes in the knowledge and awareness of child trafficking and child trafficking responses amongst their training participants and positive results in achieving multi-agency collaboration and prompting closer multi-agency responses to child trafficking. Whilst success through training and awareness raising activities was clearly evidenced in the projects, the impact of training is difficult to capture over time. Systems change through training is a long-term process and the relatively short-term funding of the projects does not address the issue of sustainability. Given that most projects delivered

training and awareness raising activities speaks to its importance in prevention and response approaches, but also to the importance, going forward, of achieving the right balance between training and awareness raising that is relevant for the local context, but is also consistent in content and has adequate monitoring and follow up.

The implementation process was viewed by each of the projects as being flexible and in many ways the Child Trafficking Protection Fund permitted an experimental approach within the projects. This meant that projects felt supported and viewed the Home Office as a collaborative partner in working towards their aims and objectives. This experimental and flexible approach also meant that adaptations were made that were better grown around the local landscape of need, provision and knowledge, that generated insights into gaps in knowledge, provision and understanding of need, and into new methodologies and approaches for responding to child trafficking. Whilst many adaptations and detours were made, and at times intended project outcomes could not always be met, this was to be expected within a relatively compacted time frame of 2 years, amplified by the challenging landscape of child trafficking. However, as has been demonstrated throughout this report, this did not hinder important achievements or positive pathways towards change in meeting the objectives of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund.

Arguably the weakest area of the fund has been in evidencing success and impact in respect of the prevention of children going missing. As the report highlights, this is a challenging area in which to demonstrate impact. The challenges to evidencing impact were arguably amplified by methodological approaches to the project evaluations that did not allow for this to be measured in a way that reflected the challenges or in coordinated approaches between the Home Office and the projects on how best to capture this. That is not to say that there was no evidence of positive pathways towards change in this area. Indeed, examples have been given of such in this report within the direct work with children and in the systems change and capacity building work. However, given the significance of the issue of missing children at both the national and local levels, it should be considered whether further attention in this area should be prioritised.

6.1 Consideration for Further Policy

Building on the achievements of the CTPF, and the analysis of the funded projects, a number of key research and policy issues have emerged that should be considered in the development of policies and responses to child trafficking;

1. There are challenges in evidencing impact within short time scales, and this should be considered when deciding the length of further programmes. Longer term projects are likely to better support innovation; to build the evidence base, an

understanding of the longer-term impact is required, particularly given the time many new projects take to set-up and support sustainable change.

2. Having appropriately trained staff is key to identifying and responding to child trafficking, and consideration needs to be given to ensuring the right balance between training for frontline and strategic staff. Whilst training needs to be locally grounded, it is helpful to have consistency across the country.

3. The mutual benefit between therapeutic interventions and advocacy should be considered when commissioning services, alongside the need for culturally tailored and child centered support which builds resilience.

4. The peer group work illustrated the benefits of effective safe spaces for children and young people who have experienced trafficking to come together as a way of reducing stigma and isolation, supporting their recovery, reintegration and knowledge of child trafficking.

5. As an extension of future policy consideration 4, having peer group provisions for children and young people also supported opportunities to include their first-hand experiences and voices in policy and practice development. Noting the limited number of peer groups currently in England and Wales, the project highlighted the benefit of consulting children and young people in ensuring policy and practice is coherent with their lived experiences, whilst recognising great care would have to be taken in facilitating this so that children do not stop disclosing experiences.

6. There are limits to what can be said about the impact of the projects on the issue of the prevention of missing children. It is suggested that further work to evaluate what approaches work in preventing and responding to trafficked children going missing, is considered.

7. Eligibility and exit criteria for projects offering direct support to children require careful consideration, including to the amount of flexibility that is given. In particular, with regard to exiting a project, the needs of young people at the ages where they are transitioning into adulthood must be considered.

7 Annex A

7.1 Coram International: Casting Light in the Shadows. Combating Child Trafficking and Slavery in Vietnam

This project ran from November 2016 until June 2019. The project partnered with UNICEF Vietnam and UNICEF UK. The aim was to deliver a pragmatic, grounded and victim centred project of knowledge and capacity building that would improve child trafficking prevention and response efforts across Vietnam, taking into account both the national and the regional picture. The following three streams of work have been delivered to achieve this aim:

- Socio-legal research on the prevalence, causes, patterns and trends of child trafficking, as well as systems of prevention and response. The research had a particular focus on establishing children's own experiences of protection and assistance.

- Delivery of inter-agency workshops involving government agencies and civil society in Vietnam, bringing different groups together to engage with the research evidence obtained from the above work stream. The aim was to identify and strengthen prevention and response mechanisms to child trafficking and slavery.

- The delivery of evidence-based training and capacity building for government agencies and community workers as trainers to strengthen the work of those combatting child trafficking and slavery in Vietnam.

The main activities of the first work stream were configured around **knowledge development** as follows; the development of trafficking indicators sensitive to the context of child trafficking in Vietnam; a household survey of children and young people between the ages of 10-24 to determine extent of child and youth migration and vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation (**N=3885**); a sub-sample household survey of heads of households to learn about 'absent' children and youth who may have child trafficking indicators (**N=768)**; a beneficiary survey of children and young people to capture their perceptions and experiences of support services (**N=122**), interviews with child trafficking survivors, families of survivors and Government officials (**N=80**). This research established a pragmatic and grounded approach to the training and capacity-building activities of the second and third work-streams below.

The main activities of the second work stream were configured around **improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness raising** through; the facilitation of 3 multi-agency research validation workshops across Vietnam, each engaging key stakeholders in the following; the interpretation and understanding of emerging research findings; sharing good practices in the prevention and response of child trafficking; exploring the relationship between national laws and policies and local responses; identifying the challenges across laws, systems and services; and learning from other jurisdictions, such as the Modern Slavery Act (2015) with its provisions on the protection of children, such as the provision of Independent Child Trafficking Guardians

(ICTGs) and the statutory defence against the prosecution of children who have been implied in criminal activities because of their trafficking. Key stakeholders (**N=81**) attended these workshops from national and local agencies, including MP's, law enforcement agencies, immigration, and other central Government departments.

The main activities of the third work stream were also configured around **improving strategic and operational capacity building and awareness raising** through; the development of evidence based inter-agency training materials and 3 days of training for government personnel (**N=25**) from across different agencies to deliver a comprehensive 3 days of "train the trainers" enabling delivery of a comprehensive 3 day training to others involved in handling cases of child trafficking.

The project developed a local partnership approach, primarily with Government agencies in Vietnam, to maximise success across each of the 3 work streams. These partnerships were brokered by UNICEF Vietnam who already have a credible presence in Vietnam. Partnerships were established with key Vietnamese government agencies to co-deliver on each of the strands of the work stream. The Institute of Labour, Science and Social Affairs, an arm of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, was sub-contracted to deliver on the household surveys. The Counter Trafficking Division of the police were a partner for the implementation of work stream 2, and the Division for Preventing and Combatting Human Trafficking within the Ministry of Public Security partnered to build the capacity of selected Government agencies and staff to deliver the 3 day training course of work stream 3.

> **Highlighting innovation from the Project:** Taking child-specific elements of the United Kingdom's Modern Slavery Act (2015) to key stakeholders in Vietnam to reflect on their possible translation from the UK context into Vietnam. The Independent Child Trafficking Guardians model established in Section 48 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was presented to key stakeholders along with the Statutory Defence of Section 45 of the Act, which offers a defence from prosecution for victims who have been forced to commit criminal acts as a result of their trafficking and exploitation. Based on these discussions, stakeholders in Vietnam generated concrete suggestions on improving the ways in which they can integrate the best interests of the child in case management, practices and procedures, and ways to encourage the participation of children whether in or outside the context of criminal proceedings.

7. 2   Barnardo's Therapeutic Group Work for Trafficked Children and Young People in West Yorkshire.

This project ran from April 2017 to March 2019. The project was regionally focused and delivered across West Yorkshire in the 5 local authorities of Wakefield, Kirklees, Leeds, Calderdale and Bradford. It was established to support children who had been internally

trafficked in the UK rather than foreign national children trafficked across borders. Barnardo's Turnaround Service delivered the project, which is an existing provision in West Yorkshire for supporting children who have experienced child sexual exploitation.

The aims of the project focused on the early identification of victims of child trafficking, the recovery and reduced vulnerability to continued exploitation of children after trafficking, and engaging with key stakeholders around knowledge and awareness of child trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism.

There were two work-streams related to these aims:

- Addressing the impacts of trauma on trafficked children by supporting their recovery, emotional well-being and resilience through creative and child-centred approaches to therapeutic peer focused group work.

- Delivering awareness raising training on the subject of child trafficking to multi-agency teams and communities of practice.

The main activities of the first work stream were organised around **targeted and direct support to trafficked children** in the form of creative group therapeutic opportunities for children referred into the service. The project aimed to engage with approximately 140 children across the life of the project. Instead, it engaged with **N= 63**. To be referred in, children had to; already have been identified as victims of trafficking within the National Referral Mechanism, or as potential victims of trafficking with a positive reasonable grounds decision from the National Referral Mechanism, **and** be internally trafficked within the UK. The majority of children in the service had experienced child sexual exploitation and all except one were female. The care status of children was varied, with children in need representing the largest group (**N=24**), followed by children outside of the Children Act (1989) framework (**N=15**), looked-after children (**N=12**) and children on a Section 47 Child Protection Order (**N=12**).

The use of creative therapies in supporting the recovery of trafficked and exploited children has been less evaluated than traditional talking therapies (La Valle et al 2016) and this project is situated in this gap. 15 therapeutic groups were delivered, running across mostly 6 weeks but some also ran across 15 weeks. The aim was for 70% of all children in the service to access more than one 6 week group and to experience a longer 15 week

programme of group work that could work incrementally to better support their emotional and mental health and their adaptive and social skills.

The impact on children's emotional well-being was measured using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health Well-Being Scale (2007) as well as qualitative interviews focusing on children and professionals perceptions. The groups offered were as follows:

- Equine Therapy (delivered twice) – children learning horse care skills and horse riding skills as a way of promoting confidence, care and leadership
- Fanwoods Outward Bounds (delivered three times) – high and low level group physical activities such as bush craft, caving and bouldering to promote confidence, achievement, dependence and independence.
- Mixed Martial Arts (delivered once) – Warrior women project using key martial arts activities to promote self defence techniques, build resilience, strength and self-esteem.
- Intergenerational Baking (delivered twice) – An intergenerational project bringing together a group of ladies aged 65-80 with children aged 13-17. The aim was to encourage a healthy family environment and intergenerational learning, sharing of skills and recipes.
- Self-Care (delivered twice) –A project offering children massage, meditation, lessons on skin routines and the basic principles of self care.
- Performing Arts Project (delivered once) – Drama based games to encourage emotional expression, positive peer relationships, confidence and team-building.
- WRAP (wellness, recovery, action plan) Project (delivered once) – A project designed to empower children to understand emotional well-being through art based, peer support and goal setting activities.
- Herd Farm Residential (delivered twice) –a residential offering children challenging physical and group based activities such as kayaking and water sports, zip lines and puzzles to build achievement and self-confidence.
- Reborn Project (delivered once) A project focussed on positive body image and well-being through creative art and meditation.

The activities of the second strand were organised around **operational capacity building and awareness-raising** through the delivery of multi-agency training on child trafficking. **N= 525** child-care, child protection and related professionals attended the training. This was more than the anticipated **N= 480.** The training was a key part of the project as a way of

increasing knowledge and awareness of internal and external trafficking, increasing referrals into the National Referral Mechanism and increasing referrals into the therapeutic group work.

An additional and unintended third strand of work emerged. This focused on advocacy related activities such as representing children's views before statutory agencies, acting as an appropriate adult in formal processes, advocacy during police interviews, supporting National Referral Mechanism evidence building, supporting the sexual health needs of children and responding to crisis. This ad hoc advocacy role, was not an additionally funded post but was something the therapeutic project workers engaged in additional to the contractual requirements between Barnardo's and the Home Office.

Highlighting Innovation from the Project:

Within a context of fear and caution from professionals about mixing children with differing levels of risk relating to exploitation, the Barnardo's project put children's therapeutic group work at the heart of its approach. Many professionals questioned the approach and some refused to make referrals because they feared children would be placed at an increased risk of harm from other children. In this context, the group work was innovative and it was also successful. It offered children a counterpoint to the isolation and stigma that can happen during and after exploitation, and it offered opportunities for fun, solidarity and empowerment.

"The group work has meant so much to me. It got me out of the house and the workers gave me the opportunity to meet new people. It also gave me the chance to just be myself. I've never felt like I could be myself before. I felt supported and listened to. The workers gave me the chance to share how I was feeling. I didn't want to speak to my CAMHS worker but Barnardo's were always there to support me. The groups would really benefit other young people to get out of their comfort zones and a really good opportunity to learn new skills." (**Child, Aged 16, Barnardo's Project. Quote taken from Barnardo's final report**)

7.3   AFRUCA: Culturally Tailored and Child Specific Mental and Emotional Well-Being Project

AFRUCA provided culturally tailored therapeutic and peer support interventions to trafficked African children between the ages of 12 and 17 years old. The project was intended to run between February 2017 and March 2019 but ended in October 2018 due to challenges with African ODA referrals which is elsewhere explained in this report. Its aims were to: best

support recovery from trauma for trafficked children from African ODA countries, and to improve their mental health through the use of culturally sensitive and peer oriented mental health services; and to develop a safe environment for children to engage with their experiences through peer group work and improve self-confidence and positive peer relationships. The project had three work streams as follows:

- The provision of culturally adapted individual therapy using evidence-based interventions for trauma and trauma focused cognitive behavioural therapy.

- Psycho-educational workshops for children in need of first stage mental health support to learn about how trauma can get articulated, and to empower them to develop self-care strategies for improved mental health and emotional wellbeing in the aftermath of their trafficking.

- Socio-educative peer support groups and activities to offer children the opportunity to enhance their social networks, to collectively develop new frameworks of thinking about their experiences, and to learn about systems and processes, such as asylum and immigration.

All of the activities across each of the work streams were clearly focused on the provision of **direct and targeted support** for trafficked children. In work stream one, it was anticipated that individual therapy would be given to 17 children across the life of the project. Given the complex realities of the referral process, **N=6** children received 1:1 therapy. The therapy provided was child-centred and when appropriate art therapy was used when children faced language barriers or found talking too heavy to bear. The project employed both a cognitive behavioural therapist and an art therapist. Interpreters are central to sensitive and effective trauma interventions with trafficked children, and the project built in capacity for offering interpreting and translation services to children, as well as employed a Sudanese therapist who could also work in Arabic and Sudanese. In work stream two it was anticipated that 96 children would engage in 6 x 4 week psycho-educational workshops. **N=17** children engaged with these psycho-educational workshops and **N= 7** were delivered, each addressed a range of trafficking related mental health and well-being issues such as sleep, identity, positive relationships, building self-esteem and resilience. In work stream three, 8 peer support groups were designed to run across two and a half years. **N=5** peer support groups took place covering issues such as the immigration process and dealing with uncertainty. The project facilitated a Biannual User Development Forum for children to

influence the themes and issues of the peer group activities based on what they felt was relevant to their lived experience.

In addition to the project being for trafficked children from African ODA countries, there were other eligibility criteria for referral. Children had to be between the ages of 12 and 17 ½ years inclusive; up to 12 months stay in the UK since the point of asylum application, and children already had to have been identified as victims of trafficking within the National Referral Mechanism, or as potential victims of trafficking with a positive reasonable grounds decision.

Highlighting Innovation from the Project: Within the context of a lack of culturally appropriate therapeutic service provision for trafficked children, this service identified and adapted cross-culturally validated psychometric tools for working with children to identify their mental health needs and progress over time. Tools such as the PHQ-A, widely used to measure depression in adolescents, and GAD-7, widely used to measure anxiety, were translated into specific African languages such as Yoruba, Swahili, Oromo, Arabic, French and Tangara. Children related well to these translated tools and their engagement with these tools reduced the use of an interpreter as a middle person with the potential to influence both the interpretation of the questions and answers, and children's responses.

7.4   The Children's Society Rise Project

The RISE Project is a multi-disciplinary Pan-London specialist service for boys and young men who have been trafficked to the UK from abroad.   The Rise Project delivered a mix of 1-1 and group therapeutic support, expanding the work and reach of the existing RISE project in Stratford to Hillingdon and Croydon. The project ran from January 2017 to March 2019. It has focused on delivering a holistic wraparound service for boys taking an incremental approach to working with trauma that begins with engaging them with issues of self-care and gradually preparing them for more intensive individual psychological work on their trafficking experiences. The project adopted a community peer focused model of working with the boys, with the aim of building a community amongst them to reduce barriers to engagement, enhance their social networks, improve their emotional well-being, and reduce the risks of them going missing and further exploitation. It was established within a context of gaps in therapeutic service provision for trafficked boys and children more generally, and within a framework of recognition that practical support for trafficked children is most effective when the effects of trauma do not undermine children's engagement with the practical tasks related to the sometimes complex systems in the UK that they have to navigate. The project existed within a hub model with other Children's Society Services,

such as a refugee and migrant children's team, missing services team, child sexual exploitation specialist service and a child criminal exploitation service.

There were four work streams to the project:

- Intensive one to one support addressing socio-educative issues with young people, including emotional well-being, self-care, risk and safety, all allied to protecting against children going missing, positive relationships and practical support needs.

- Socio-educative peer groups addressing themes and issues related to emotional and mental well-being, confidence and self-esteem, with the additional purpose of getting children linked in with peers with similar experiences and reducing social isolation and feelings of difference.

- Volunteer befriending for the most vulnerable and isolated boys to support the development of life-skills, hobbies and social networks and to help them settle into place in their communities.

- In-house therapy for children with a focus on integrative trauma therapy, and therapy that is cultural and gender sensitive.

All of the work stream activities related to the **direct and targeted support for trafficked children**. Within the activities of the first work stream it was anticipated that the project would work with 40 boys per year. The project more or less met its expectations and worked with **N=42 in the first year** and **N=35** by the end of the last quarter of 2018. Within the second work stream, it was anticipated that the project would engage 72 boys in its group work activities. It exceeded its targets and worked with **N=75** in the first year of the project and **N=94** in the second year. The themes and issues of these groups have been young people led, anchored in their understanding of their needs, interests and lived experience. No targets of engagement were established with the volunteer befriending scheme that was part of the project. The progress reports suggest that the uptake was relatively low. Within the 4th work stream, 1:1 therapy targets were set at 20 children across 2 years. The programme met its target and achieved **N=21** children across the lifetime of the project.

Given the lack of specialist child trafficking support, advocacy or transition services in London, an additional fifth strand of work emerged, and like the other work, it too was focused around the impact of **direct and targeted support for children**. This ad hoc work stream focused on advocacy related activities, especially around asylum, immigration, NRM and criminal justice processes. A further strand of work emerged relating to the training of child protection and child-care professionals and the need for **strategic and operational capacity building.** The project delivered in person training on best practice in supporting trafficked children to **N= 349** professionals in statutory and third sector agencies and further developed a Modern Slavery Online Training Module with the company Educare which was completed by a minimum of **N=443** professionals in education and social care.

The eligibility for the service was foreign national boys up to the age of 18 who had been trafficked, were suspected of having been trafficked across borders to the UK, or at risk of being trafficked. Children's entry into the service was not dependent upon a National Referral Mechanism decision or on their asylum, immigration or eligibility for ODA funding.

Highlighting Innovation from the Project

The project focussed exclusively on foreign national male children who had been trafficked, were suspected of having been trafficked, or were identified as at risk of being trafficked. Young male victims of trafficking are often not recognised by statutory services as being vulnerable, are often left without the safeguarding support they need, and are often criminalised. Combining long-term support through socio-educative work, practical support, and therapeutic work for young males in this situation is new ground, especially having all these services in one place rather than across a range of services, which can make access, trust and disclosures difficult for children.

7.5   Unseen: Children in a Place of Safety (CHIPS)

Unseen were funded to support some of the costs of the pilot of a new model of specialist residential accommodation for trafficked children with the dual purpose of facilitating their safety and recovery. The pilot trialled the use of voluntary 'house parents' and employed a children's case-worker, support staff and 2 x part-time clinical psychologists. All staff worked on site. It aimed to assess its impact as a suitable intervention for trafficked children from abroad who were at risk of going missing from foster care placements. The aim of the project was to secure part funding from local authorities to create a sustainable model that could be

rolled out to other parts of the UK. It covered the local authority area of Bristol and surrounding local authorities to include Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon. The project concentrated on the specific vulnerabilities of children that lead them to return to their traffickers, to experiencing multiple episodes of going missing or of going missing and never returning, and that hinder their access to statutory and non-statutory services. It ran from January 2017 to January 2019.

There were 5 work streams built up around offering medium-term placements of 3-6 months to trafficked children before transitioning to less intensive placements. These were:

- The provision of culturally-tailored, practical and advocacy support to trafficked children.
- Safety planning and keeping children physically safe and reducing missing episodes, with intensive 1:1 support in the early stages of placement, recognising that the early stages of placement pose a risk of children going missing.
- The provision of socio-educative work with children to empower them to understand risk and safety, and maintaining emotional well-being.
- To foster positive relationships with house-parents, providing a nurturing environment with positive relationships at the centre and modelling safe relationships.
- The provision of on-site psychological therapeutic support.

Across most of the work streams, the project was characterised by the provision of **direct and targeted support to children.** In work stream one, the main activities were focused on ensuring that support and assistance entitlements were being met, such as health, education, therapeutic interventions, and legal support with immigration and criminal proceedings, and that the child's cultural and faith needs were integrated into their care. In work stream 2, 24-hour security features and protocols were put in place before children received a safety plan, and good working relationships with key partners developed, such as with the police. Given that trafficked children are vulnerable to going missing within the first 72 hours of placement, a key activity within this work stream was intensive 1:1 support with children to support them in understanding the nature and reasons for their placement, to support them in understanding their safety plans and balancing their need to be safe with their need to feel safe in a new home.   This is a complicated challenge with trafficked children and was a key feature of this workstream. In work stream 3, activities were focused around life skills development and activities that promoted emotional well-being, such as

sports, music and access to leisure clubs. Work stream 4 was the under pin to all other work streams, and house parents ensured that the house was a home, and that their relationships with children were built on trust, care and fun, reduced institutionalisation, and that replicated the benefits of foster care, but with the additional safety, support and therapeutic structures in place.

Finally, in work stream 5, children had access to individual therapeutic and trauma informed support from a clinical psychologist if they wanted to and were ready to engage with the deeper level of their experiences. This was available according to children's needs and wishes and accessed within the child's own time.

The project operated within the complex context of local authority procurement frameworks and within this aimed to support up to 20 children in medium term placements across the 2 years of the project. In the end it supported **N=4 children** and offered a total of **1,416 hours of support** to children across the pilot. The majority of these hours were face to face, with 298.25 of these hours relating to engaging with professionals and travelling to meetings. **N=2** children stayed for longer than one week. As will be described in the outcomes section of this report, whilst the project supported only 2 children, the outcomes for these children were highly positive across health, safety (including no children going missing), emotional well-being, transitions into new placements, education, and social, cultural and religious outcomes.

The project employed an evaluator to monitor the impact and a steering group to support the development and implementation of the project. Both of these activities were a way of capturing learning and **knowledge development**.

Highlighting Innovation from the Project

The model developed and implemented had not been done before in a UK setting. With the support of Ofsted and the Home Office, Unseen were able to trial a response to child trafficking that was innovative. The project produced innovative evidence suggesting a need for regionally or nationally agreed approaches to using the provision, a move towards a commissioning model, increased support from Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, a commitment from LA's to use the service, centralised funding, legal and policy changes to accommodate this new provision and consideration of linking the project more closely to ICTG's with a clear pathway from high level support into lower level support via the ICTG model.

7.6 International Organisation of Migration: A Pilot Project to Support Foster Carers Looking After Albanian and Vietnamese Unaccompanied Children.

The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) piloted a knowledge and awareness-raising training project on child trafficking amongst foster carers in, and in partnership with the London Borough of Croydon. The project was developed with a particular focus on the risks, experiences and needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking Albanian and Vietnamese children, with the aim of building foster carer capacity to respond to and care for these groups of children and reduce their risks of trafficking, and going missing. The project ran from March 2017 to March 2019 and worked with foster carers from both the local authority and independent fostering agencies.

There were 4 work streams to the project:

- The development and delivery of training for foster carers to increase their knowledge and confidence in supporting children who may be trafficked or at risk, with a focus on children from Vietnam and Albania and the provision of culturally appropriate and safe care.

- The delivery of a series of support forums for foster carers to consolidate the learning from the training and to offer both peer and expert support to them.

- The creation of an online issues hub for foster carers to access with subject briefings and a handbook of cultural information.

- An information leaflet for Albanian and Vietnamese children for when they first arrive and are first placed in foster care to support their understanding of formal foster care and to reduce their vulnerability to going missing in the early stages of arrival and placement.

The main characteristic of all the work streams was on **strategic, operational and foster carer capacity** to reduce children's vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation. The main activities of the first work stream involved 7 sets of 2 half-day thematic and interactive training days. The themes related to both asylum and trafficking and covered a wide range of relevant topics. The topics were organised around key legislation and systems, and

included learning about the asylum and national referral mechanism systems, age assessments, identifying trafficking, caring for Albanian and Vietnamese children, keeping children safe, overcoming language barriers, the national transfer scheme and taking care of yourself. The training sessions intended to reach 80 foster carers over the course of the project and reached **N= 84.**

The main activities of the second work stream involved the delivery of 7 foster carer support forums – one consultative and relating to the development of the resources of the project– and 6 thematic forums. The themes covered by the forums included; understanding child trafficking, missing from care, the health needs of unaccompanied children, including mental health and emotional well-being needs, the national transfer scheme, missing children and police procedures, cultural values and cultural care and working with interpreters. The aim of this work stream was to reach 80 foster carers and it reached **N=108** foster carers.

Work stream 3 involved activities related to facilitating foster carer access to an information portal called Huddle. Various sources of information were available on the portal including schedules and training materials of the forums and trainings, children's welcome leaflets in English, Vietnamese, Albanian and a variety of other languages where there was a need for other languages for translation, a foster carer handbook and briefings on caring for Vietnamese and Albanian children. The project intended for 356 foster carers to have access to the platform and whilst the project almost achieved this in terms of giving access, the uptake was low with **N=44** foster carers in total. Limited experiences and understanding of technology, pressures on foster carer time and challenges around awareness of the platform were all factors contributing to this low uptake. Vietnamese and Albanian children were consulted on the content of some of these materials through focus groups and interviews.

Work stream 4 involved activities relating to the development and distribution of children's foster care welcome leaflets. These were designed to support children's transition into foster care in a new country and to act as points of orientation for children, identifying different professional groups and systems they would encounter. Vietnamese and Albanian children and young people were consulted on the content and cultural relevance of these leaflets. Foster carers, as well as children, were given this leaflet with the aim of further enhancing children's transition and understanding of people, systems and processes. The project anticipated that these leaflets would be distributed to 250 children

through duty social workers when children submit their asylum claim at the Home Office. **N=183** children received the leaflet. The impact of this strand is unclear, in part because the participation approach of working with children in the project was challenging, as was the ability to follow-up with children who were being cared for outside of Croydon.

The project built in a participatory consultation approach with children and young people involving **N=29** children and young people on developing the content of the welcome leaflet mentioned above. It also built in a monitoring and evaluation strand and employed a consultant to advise on this aspect. The project was supported by Barnardo's, the Shpresa programme and the Vietnamese Mental Health Service in its delivery.

> **Highlighting Innovation** The forum method of bringing foster carers together with each other as a source of mutual support and learning, as well as bringing foster carers together with professional experts was seen as invaluable by foster carers and practitioners. Learning about systems and processes from professionals that foster carers rarely have the opportunity to meet with and who seem far removed from their immediate context of a foster home, such as the police, was viewed as impactful by the foster carers and local authority professionals.

7.7 ECPAT UK: Partnership Against Child Trafficking (PACT Project)

ECPAT UK delivered a project of practical consultancy to 4 local authority areas in England. Its aim was to build operational and strategic knowledge of trafficking, slavery, exploitation and missing children and improve identification and protection responses at the local level. The project commenced in February 2017 and ended in February 2019. It worked with a number of other key partners to support its aims - Cordis Bright, Missing Persons UK, AFRUCA, Shpresa and the Vietnamese Mental Health Service.

There were 6 work streams across the project including:

- A case file audit of social work files for each local authority area where there have been concerns around child trafficking.

- A policy audit of each local authority area to identify relevant policies, protocols and procedures relating to child trafficking, slavery, exploitation and missing children.

- A staff survey to identify the knowledge and information needs of local authority strategic and operational staff on child trafficking, exploitation and slavery, to inform the development of locally grounded bespoke training.

- Youth consultation with children across each local authority eliciting trafficked and exploited children's views on their care and protection experiences.

- The delivery of bespoke training within each local authority area after the review and analysis of trafficked children's case files.

- The delivery of an online e-learning training course for social care practitioners.

 The main characteristics cutting across the work stream activities and outcomes related to **knowledge development** and **building strategic and operational capacity**.

The main activities in work stream 1 were delivered by care consultants Cordis Bright. They scrutinised case files across each of the local authorities for evidence of recording of what the project called MSTEM - modern slavery, trafficking, exploitation and missing indicators, multi-agency responses to the protection and support of the child, referrals into the national referral mechanism, asylum and immigration applications, age assessments, care status and procedures, episodes and responses to missing children, and the extent to which the files, decision-making and assessments of other agencies were recorded. **N= 30** case files were audited across each local authority area (**N=120**) and a designated area lead from within each local authority area was appointed to identify and oversee cases to audit.

Missing People delivered the main activities of the policy audit in work stream 2. A policy audit tool was developed to ensure this was systematic. The number of polices, procedures and protocols to review varied across each of the local authority areas with a total of **N=350** pages of policy analysed for content. Within work stream 3, 50 surveys were expected to be completed within each of the 4 local authorities by frontline social workers and a 'good response' rate was reported. ECPAT UK, Youth UK were engaged to support the delivery of children's participation activities in work stream 4. It was difficult to engage with children and young people across each of the local authority areas as there were no 'ready-made' participation groups for trafficked and exploited children and this was one of the most challenging work streams. The training activities within work stream 5

were in high demand and the target of reaching **N=120** practitioners through training was qualitatively reported by ECPAT UK as being "more than achieved". The e-learning opportunities within work stream 6, saw an uptake of **N=23** practitioners and a pass rate of **N=18** practitioners which is a pass rate of **N= 7%** of all the practitioners invited to take part in the course. (not of the practitioners who took the course). The final report of this project highlights the need to understand why the uptake of the e-learning opportunities was low (at less than 10%)

Highlighting Innovation As part of their specialist consultancy service to the four local authorities, this project as explained above, audited both case files and policy documents. The training delivered was grown around the distinct knowledge and emerging concerns from these audits as a way of maximising practitioner engagement and local impact in the care and protection of trafficked children. Each local authority was sent an individualised report of the findings of the audit. The value of this approach is not only demonstrated in the high attendance of the training sessions, but also in evidence of local authorities engaging with ECPAT UK to improve their policy response to modern slavery to create a bespoke child trafficking policy.

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