



## Together To Reduce Exploitation (TTRE)

*International consortium to support and prevent victims of Child Exploitation*  
are pleased to present a one-day remote conference via ZOOM:



# Current advancements and considerations when working with victims of child exploitation Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

(9am to 4.15pm, UK time)

### Topics include:

- Lived experience of survival
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Importance of Structured Professional Judgement tools (SPJ)
- Psychological vulnerability to Child Criminal Exploitation
- A Psychiatrists contribution to reducing child exploitation
- Challenging the system's failure to keep exploited children safe
- Understanding Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation within the context of Organised Criminal Networks

This is a **free conference**, and as such, places are limited. To book a place, please email Dr. Carol A. Ireland on:

[caireland@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:caireland@uclan.ac.uk)

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# Current advancements and considerations when working with victims of child exploitation

Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## Schedule of Events

- 9am:** Opening and welcome to the conference
- 9.15am:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Rachel Wilkinson**  
(<https://www.livinglegacylearning.co.uk/>)  
**Topic: Lived experience of survival**
- 10am:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Dr. Kimberley McNeill**  
**Topic: Trauma Informed Practice: Application with individuals who have been exposed to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
- 10.35am:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Dr. Carol A. Ireland**  
**Topic: Importance of structured professional judgement tools (SPJ) in assessing a child's vulnerability risk to exploitation**
- 11.10am:** Comfort break
- 11.25am:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Daniel Kilgallon**  
**Topic: Psychological Vulnerability to Child Criminal Exploitation: Results from an ongoing PhD thesis**
- 12 noon:** Lunch break
- 1pm:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Dr. Heidi Hales**  
**Topic: What can a psychiatrist contribute to reducing child exploitation?**
- 1.35pm:** Presentation:  
Speaker: **Donna McEwan**  
**Topic: Unworthy of Protection? Challenging the System's Failure to Keep Exploited Children Safe**
- 2.10pm:** Presentation  
Speaker: **Sam Charman**  
**Topic: Understanding Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation within the Context of Organised Criminal Networks: Attending to the Motivations and Modus Operandi of Perpetrators**
- 2.45pm:** **Conference closing speech** and introduction to the TTRE Consortium Meeting ([all welcome](#))
- 2.55pm:** Comfort break
- 3.10pm:** Panel discussion from the conference, followed by TTRE Consortium Meeting ([all welcome](#))
- 4.15pm:** Close

## Presentations

Presentation

**Speaker: Rachel Wilkinson**

**Topic: Lived experience of survival**

### Abstract

My vision is to create a united community, where empathy, confidence and support are the pillars of strength that values, acknowledges and believes survivors of childhood sexual exploitation.

I shall be sharing my powerful and insightful lived experience of survival with an informed and measured disclosure, moving into lived experience in the workplace. General awareness of barriers to life as “children in care become adults” The heart of the survivor. Finishing with questions.

### Biography



Living Legacy Learning

#### Empowering Voices: Encouraging vigilance

Rachel Wilkinson is the Director and Founder of Living Legacy Learning. Delivering bespoke training, consultancy, seminars and inspirational speaking, with the purpose of creating an immersive and impactful encounter, that will leave long lasting positive change. Designed from 30 years of professional experience within the care sector. Drawing from working therapeutically with children and young people, as a Residential Social Worker and Foster Carer. Pastoral support within Independent and Local Authority Schools and a Psychodynamic Animal Assisted Therapist. Rachel is an Expert by Experience and fuses together her professional expertise, along with her own experiences of surviving childhood sexual abuse and childhood sexual exploitation along with her escape into the care system, experiencing living in fostercare and children’s homes, homelessness and alcoholism. Rachel, survived the insurmountable and continues to put her pain to purpose.



This beautiful dog that's with Rachel is Honey. She is her Emotional Support Assistance Dog, needed due to the wide range of mental health responses that come as a result of Rachels traumatic past. Honey is also the Co- Founder and has an integral part to play. She has 5 years experience of supporting children, young people and care experienced adults with their mental health.

#### Contact details:

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[78a833265/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad\\_flagship3\\_feed%3BCM62hqzSSG2sOkgs7LJvuw%3D%3D](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachel-w-78a833265/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_feed%3BCM62hqzSSG2sOkgs7LJvuw%3D%3D)

(LinkedIn Rachel W)

Presentation

**Speaker: Dr. Kimberley McNeill**

**Topic: Trauma Informed Practice: Application with individuals who have been exposed to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

### **Abstract**

CSE profoundly impacts survivors, requiring practitioners to adopt trauma-informed approaches to effectively support recovery and resilience. This presentation explores the principles and practical application of trauma-informed practice when working with individuals who have experienced CSE. This will be based on the 6 key principles of trauma-informed practice outlined by the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (GOV.UK): *safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration*. This also reflects the original internationally recognised definition developed by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Drawing on evidence-based frameworks, the presentation will explore how trauma affects cognitive, emotional, and social development, with a focus on recognising and addressing the unique challenges faced by survivors of CSE. Strategies for fostering trust, promoting stability, and supporting recovery will be discussed, alongside practical approaches for mitigating re-traumatisation in service delivery. Key themes will include the integration of survivor voices into care planning, culturally sensitive approaches, and the importance of multi-agency collaboration in creating a holistic support network. The presentation will also highlight self-care strategies for practitioners to maintain resilience while working in this complex field.

### **Biography**

Dr Kimberley McNeill (MSc, CPsychol) is a Consultant Forensic Psychologist. She is a Registered Practitioner with the Health Care and Professions Council and is a Chartered Member of the British Psychological Society, where she is a full member of the Division of Forensic Psychology. She is currently the lead of psychological services at Newton House, Blackpool, MHC-UK. She is directly involved in the assessment and treatment of clients across the lifespan with a range forensic and mental health needs. She has worked across secure psychiatric services, the community, and secure residential settings. She is trained to deliver Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy to adults and adolescents who present with trauma and other forms of distress. She is also trained in several other treatment modalities, including DBT, ACT, TF-CBT and ERT. She is also a trained Critical Incident and Hostage Negotiator. In addition to her clinical work, Dr McNeill also holds a position as a Lecturer on the MSc in Forensic Psychology at the University of Central Lancashire and she holds an honorary research contract with the Ashworth Research Centre (ARC), Mersey Care NHS Trust, High Secure Services. She is research active, with interests in engagement in critical incidents, forensic mental health and psychological trauma.

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Presentation

**Speaker: Dr. Carol A. Ireland**

**Topic: Importance of structured professional judgement tools (SPJ) in assessing a child's vulnerability risk to exploitation**

### **Abstract**

This presentation will introduce the importance of structured professional judgement tools (SPJ) when assessing concerns around child exploitation. Key components of these tools will be noted, alongside some of the challenges in the child exploitation area in the successful development and implementation of such tools. As part of this, the CASEE (Child Sexual Exploitation Evaluation, Ireland et al 2023) tool will be introduced. This is a new tool that assesses the vulnerability and protective factors to be considered when working with young people who have been exposed to child sexual exploitation (CSE), including suspected of or at risk of CSE. The CASEE is a product of a number of research studies, grounded in the empirical literature and theoretically driven models, such as the Protect and Vulnerability Model against CSE (Alderson, K., Ireland, C.A., Khan, R., Ireland, J.L. & Lewis, M, 2022). It further follows the expectation of SPJ tools. The initial validation of this tool will further be presented.

### **Biography**

Dr. Carol A. Ireland is a Chartered Psychologist, Consultant Forensic Psychologist, Chartered Scientist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She is also a registered practitioner with the Health and Care Professions Council. Dr. Ireland works at CCATS, where she leads on assessment, intervention, research and consultancy. She has worked with individuals across the life span, addressing a wide range of forensic issues and trauma for over 25 years, and is both an Accredited EMDR Therapist and an EMDR Consultant. Her clinical practice has included both the assessment of and intervention with a range of clients, including individual and group therapies. She is also Senior Research Lead at the Ashworth Research Centre, Ashworth Hospital, as well as working at the University of Central Lancashire, where she is an Associate Professor (Reader in Aggression), and where she supervises various PhD Doctoral students. Dr. Ireland has published extensively in the area of forensic psychology, and has over 90 publications, including journal articles and book chapters. Dr. Ireland was past Chair and past Vice-Chair of the British Psychological Societies Division of Forensic Psychology.

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Presentation

**Speaker: Daniel Kilgallon**

**Topic: Psychological Vulnerability to Child Criminal Exploitation: Results from an ongoing PhD thesis**

**Abstract**

CCE overlaps with various harms including CSE. However, there is insufficient research investigating CCE specifically due to its hidden nature and limited qualitative samples. The need for an evidence-based framework for identifying vulnerable children is understood, but no such empirically validated model exists. This presentation explores the findings of three pieces of research contributing to a PhD thesis investigating the prevalence, pathways into, and factors influencing children's vulnerability to CCE. Drawing on neo-ecological theory this presentation focusses on psychological vulnerabilities to CCE identified across a Rapid Evidence Assessment, Delphi, and retrospective questionnaire-based study. A unique contribution of this research is the focus on protective factors alongside those increasing vulnerability.

**Biography**

Mr Daniel Kilgallon (MSc, Forensic Psychology) is a doctoral teaching associate at the University of Central Lancashire, where he completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees in forensic psychology. He is currently on the editorial team for the Journal of Forensic Practice. He is currently working with a pilot service evaluation of a brief psychological therapy for self-harm in Lancashire. Daniel's PhD thesis is focussed on investigating the vulnerability and protective factors associated with influencing the likelihood of child criminal exploitation, particularly within the context of County Lines, modern-day slavery, and coerced criminal activity. He is also trained in several risk assessment tools, including the J-SOAP II, SAVRY, SVR-20 and HCR-20.

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Presentation

**Speaker: Dr. Heidi Hales**

**Topic: What can a psychiatrist contribute to reducing child exploitation?**

### **Abstract**

This presentation will discuss that there is no one factor making children vulnerable to child exploitation; there are many factors which interact differently for each individual child. These factors sit across all areas of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework. Thus, preventing and mitigating vulnerability to child exploitation is 'everyone's business'. So what can a child psychiatrist offer? In this presentation I will explore possible roles of children's mental health services and child psychiatry working with young people and services supporting young people who are vulnerable to child exploitation. I will consider specific mental health diagnoses and needs that may place a child at particular vulnerability and suggest possible interventions and support. I will also consider the role of mental health services and psychiatrists in supporting the wider agencies working with young people in the community and using our national bodies to campaign for reducing societal risk factors.

### **Biography**

Heidi Hales has dual training in child and adolescent psychiatry and forensic psychiatry. Much of her work has focused on adolescent forensic mental health but she has also worked in adult forensic psychiatry services and Child and Adolescent mental health services. Having worked as a consultant psychiatrist in HMYOI Feltham and HMYOI Cookham Wood, secure wards for adolescents at St Andrews Healthcare and West London NHS Trust, the West London Community Forensic CAMHS team, HMP Holloway and West London adult community forensic service, she is now working in CAMHS and research focussed in North Wales. She has completed a PhD investigating the effects of contact with suicide-related behaviour on young people in YOIs and in 2016 she was part of a team funded by NHSE to complete a service evaluation and census of all young people from England in secure care. Her main research interest is how to evaluate and improve treatment and care for young people who are in contact with the youth justice services due to emotional, mental health or neurodevelopmental needs and how we can learn from care systems in different jurisdictions through an international research collaboration.

Presentation

**Speaker: Donna McEwan**

**Topic: Unworthy of Protection? Challenging the System's Failure to Keep Exploited Children Safe**

**Abstract**

This presentation aims to provoke critical thinking about why child protection processes often struggle to keep criminally exploited children safe. It will question the systemic contradictions that label these children as victims who cannot consent to their exploitation, yet still criminalise them for actions resulting from it. Why do we create different responses and processes for different types of harm, and why does exploitation seem to fall through the gaps? The talk will explore how gender biases, adultification, and the framing of exploitation as "life choices" rather than abuse exacerbate these challenges, prompting a deeper discussion about how we can ensure our child protection systems are truly equipped to respond to this complex and urgent issue.

**Biography**

Donna has been a qualified social worker since December 2006, with experience spanning children and families, justice in prison and community settings, and systemic reform. Since joining the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) in May 2016, her work has focused on areas such as bail and remand, the Whole System Approach, early and effective intervention, and reducing the risk of serious harm. Recently, Donna has been working on innovative projects including the *Reimagining Justice* initiative to design rights-based services for children in conflict with the law, the *Reimagining Secure Care* project to better meet the needs of children in Scotland, and a collaboration with Action for Children to develop a framework addressing the criminal exploitation of children.



Presentation

**Speaker: Sam Charman**

**Topic: Understanding Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation within the Context of Organised Criminal Networks: Attending to the Motivations and Modus Operandi of Perpetrators**

### **Abstract**

Child exploitation, both sexual and criminal, is an escalating concern, with a significant rise in investigations across the UK. This presentation provides an overview of ongoing research into the motivations and modus operandi of perpetrators operating within organised criminal networks. A Delphi study involving 31 experts identified 25 themes across five key categories: Modus Operandi, Motivations, Offender and Organised Crime Group Characteristics, Risk and Protective Factors, and Operational Policing Challenges. Findings indicate that financial motivations often outweigh individual drivers, such as sexual attraction or control. Exploitation networks frequently operate through flexible, convenience-based connections, leveraging specific skillsets rather than displaying the cohesion typically associated with traditional organised crime groups. Preliminary findings from ongoing analysis of law enforcement data reveal that financial motives and cell-based operational structures, similar to those observed in terrorist organisations, are prevalent. The role of female offenders in finance-focused tasks also mirrors patterns found in extremist groups. This presentation will discuss these insights, along with practical implications for disrupting exploitation networks and fostering protective factors, such as emotional regulation and positive role models, to prevent harm.

### **Biography**

Samuel Charman is a PhD candidate in forensic psychology at the University of Central Lancashire. His research interests include organised criminal networks, child exploitation, offender motivations, and group dynamics within complex criminal behaviour. His work focuses on understanding the mechanisms of exploitation and developing evidence-based strategies for intervention and prevention. With prior experience as a behavioural scientist and in law enforcement, Samuel has contributed to understanding offender behaviour in criminal cases. As a Research Assistant at the University of Huddersfield, he supported research for EHRC to investigate the long-term impact of the Grenfell Tower disaster on victims and their families, using innovative data science techniques and methodologies. Samuel has also worked as a Consultant for Kenyon International Emergency Services, responding to mass disasters including natural and mechanical events and terrorism. Combining his professional experience with academic expertise, Samuel is dedicated to advancing knowledge in forensic psychology and applying research insights to real-world challenges.