# Crossing the Line: Rethinking the ‘Alpha Victim’

## Webinar Feedback and Impact Summary




careKNOWLEDGE Live

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# Webinar Overview

> *"The whole thing was really powerful and it really highlighted how different services view what is happening for Alfie, it really made me think about my practises."*

This webinar explored how children and young people experiencing exploitation can be misunderstood within professional systems, particularly when their behaviour challenges conventional ideas about vulnerability and victimhood.

Through a short film depicting a multi-agency meeting, followed by discussion with those involved in its development, participants were invited to consider how professional language, assumptions and established processes influence the way children are understood and supported.

This report presents the headline responses before exploring several themes that emerged particularly clearly from participants' written reflections: the relevance of the learning across professional settings, the influence of language on professional judgement, the importance of keeping the child's voice central, and participants' intentions to share the learning with colleagues.

The verbatim quotations included throughout this summary have been selected to illustrate these themes. The final pages consider how the On Demand recording could support individual, team and organisational learning. The feedback provides evidence of immediate learning, reflection and intended action, alongside some early examples of participants sharing the learning.

# Key Indicators of Learning

The following figures are based on responses to the post-webinar feedback survey*.

**We asked:** *How would you rate the webinar overall?*
**Response**: Average **4.8 out of 5,** and **98.1%** rated the webinar **4 or 5 out of 5**

**We asked:** *Did you find the speaker engaging?*
**Response: 100%** said yes

**We asked:** *Did the session provide a meaningful learning experience?*
**Response: 98.1%** said yes

**What we asked:** *Did the session prompt you to reflect on your own practice, or practice you are responsible for?*
**Response: 98.1%** said yes,

**We asked:** *How likely is it that you'll recommend the Crossing the Line short film to friends and/or colleagues?*
**Response: 9.6 out of 10**

**We asked:** *Do you intend to add your attendance at this webinar to your CPD log?*
**Response: 80.4%** said yes. **15.9%** were unsure.

These responses provide strong evidence that survey respondents experienced the webinar as meaningful, engaging and relevant to their practice. The high proportion reporting reflection is particularly encouraging. While these responses do not establish changes in practice, the written feedback provides further insight into what participants were reconsidering and how they intended to use the learning.

*Data taken from 107 post-webinar feedback survey responses. Note: Percentages refer to survey respondents.

# Relevance Across Practice Settings

> "The subject matter is very relevant and it make us as professionals question our practice (and attitudes) no matter what role we play in supporting children and young people on this matter."

The issues explored in *Crossing the Line* have relevance across children's social care, youth justice, policing, education, health and other services supporting children and young people who may be experiencing, or who are at risk of experiencing, exploitation.

Participants connected the film and discussion with their own professional experiences, recognising familiar challenges in multi-agency working, safeguarding responses and the interpretation of children's behaviour.

The feedback suggests that participants were able to relate the discussion to different professional responsibilities and practice settings. Some recognised situations resembling their own experiences, while others described gaining a better understanding of the perspectives and responses of different agencies.

This breadth matters because children experiencing exploitation often come into contact with multiple services. The way professionals interpret their circumstances, communicate with one another and exercise judgement can influence the support they receive.

The recording therefore offers opportunities for both profession-specific reflection and shared multi-agency learning.

> "It was genuinely thought provoking. I am currently working on a CSE case where a female has been groomed and, in turn, is now grooming younger girls (CSE rather than county lines) and it's presenting all sorts of issues so the timing was perfect."

Participants connected the webinar with real cases, local practice challenges, school exclusion, modern slavery, adultification, county lines, family support and the difficulty of sustaining child-centred practice within stretched systems.

# A Key Theme: Language, Vulnerability and Professional Judgement

One of the clearest themes in the feedback was the influence of professional language on how children and young people are understood.

Participants reflected on how descriptions of behaviour, vulnerability and risk can shape professional conversations and potentially influence decisions. The film prompted some to reconsider language they recognised from their own practice.

*The video was powerful and conversation that followed really made me think about my own practice and use of words*

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*Thank you. It was really thought provoking and eye-opening. It most definitely challenges the language that we can often use, without considering the negative impact of using such terms*

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*Thank you for a fabulous presnetation and very engaging film. It promted me to talk to my team about what is means to a YP to be referred to as a 'Complex Case' and how that YP might interpret that as "you can't help me!"*

These responses suggest that participants were considering the relationship between the words professionals use, the assumptions those words may carry, and the way children experience professional intervention.

The reflections also raise questions about how children who are being exploited can be perceived as responsible for their circumstances, particularly when their behaviour is ‘difficult’ or harmful.

This is an important early learning signal. Participants were not simply recognising the importance of careful language, but questioning their own contribution to how children and young people are understood.

# What Participants Valued

Participants particularly valued the combination of the short film and the reflective discussion that followed. Many described the film as powerful, realistic and thought provoking, recognising situations and professional interactions that resonated with their own experiences.

*Having the film as the centre piece for critical discussion.*

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*The video was really interesting and thought provoking, which enabled great curiosity and discussion.*

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*The film was great. Really good approach to this topic. It gave an accurate sense of what those meetings are really like.*

The feedback suggests that the film provided a shared experience through which participants could examine professional assumptions, recognise familiar practice and consider alternative perspectives.

The discussion was also valued for the opportunity it provided to explore the issues in greater depth, rather than simply presenting the film as a finished account of professional practice.

Not everyone agreed with the film's portrayal of professionals. One respondent questioned its realism while still describing the subsequent discussion as useful and engaging. This distinction is worth recognising: the value of reflective learning does not necessarily depend on participants agreeing with everything presented.

Taken together, the responses suggest that the combination of a recognisable scenario, critical discussion and different professional perspectives created opportunities for meaningful reflection on complex safeguarding practice.

# Participants' Intentions to Share and Discuss the Learning

Several participants described intentions to share the film and its learning with colleagues, including through safeguarding teams, professional education and reflective discussions. Some responses went further, describing actions already taken following the webinar.

*Huge thanks for the powerful film, very thought provoking. I have already sent it to my safeguarding team to watch and then discuss next week's meeting.*

---

*A valuable session - the video resource is great and will be a valuable addition to my teaching session. I also enjoyed hearing your reflections and the wider discussion - such relevant issues that I intend to explore further with my social work students.*

---

*The video is so powerful and really hoping the link gets sent so as can be shared to support reflective discussions with social workers.*

These responses provide early evidence of the potential for learning to extend beyond individual attendance.

The specificity of some intentions is particularly encouraging. Participants identified the colleagues they wanted to involve, the settings in which they might use the film and the issues they hoped to explore.

One respondent reported already sharing the film with a safeguarding team. Others described plans to use it in teaching or professional discussion.

These responses suggest that the recording could support wider learning when organisations create opportunities for colleagues to reflect together.
The potential value lies not simply in more people watching the film, but in the conversations it may generate about language, assumptions, professional responsibility and the experiences of children and young people.

# Why engage with the On Demand recording?

This webinar offers valuable learning for professionals working with children and young people, particularly those involved in safeguarding, exploitation, youth justice and multi-agency decision-making.

Participants' feedback suggests that the recording may be particularly useful for professionals who want to:

- Explore how children experiencing exploitation can be misunderstood when their behaviour challenges conventional ideas about victimhood.
- Reflect on how professional language and assumptions influence the way children and young people are perceived.
- Consider how children's voices and experiences are represented in multi-agency discussions.
- Question whether professional meetings and processes are achieving their intended safeguarding purpose.
- Strengthen reflective practice, professional curiosity and shared learning across agencies.

Engaging with the On Demand recording provides an opportunity to consider how professional judgements are formed and how they might be influenced by established assumptions, organisational cultures and the language used in practice.

The film offers a particularly useful starting point for discussion because it presents a recognisable professional situation without prescribing a single response.

The recording can be used for individual CPD or as a stimulus for supervision, a practice meeting or a facilitated team-learning session, and CareKnowledge's accompanying resources can help teams move from watching the recording to discussing what the issues mean for their own work.

**The webinar’s combination of film and reflective discussion makes this a valuable resource for examining how professional thinking, language and multi-agency practice influence the experiences of children and young people.**

# Why This Learning Matters for Your Organisation Now

> *"It was real and relevant, creating reflection and dialogue for change."*

This learning has particular relevance for organisations responsible for safeguarding children and young people, where effective multi-agency working depends not only on procedures and information sharing, but also on the quality of professional interpretation and judgement. The webinar raises questions about how organisations recognise vulnerability, represent children's experiences and create the conditions for professionals to challenge assumptions.

**Recognising vulnerability and exploitation**
Children experiencing exploitation may also display behaviour that professionals find challenging or harmful. Understanding their circumstances requires careful consideration of context, relationships, coercion and the possibility that a child may be both experiencing harm and causing harm.

The webinar provides an opportunity to examine how professional assumptions about behaviour and responsibility might influence safeguarding responses.

**Child-centred and multi-agency working**
*Working Together to Safeguard Children* establishes expectations for child-centred safeguarding and effective collaboration between agencies. The *Crossing the Line* film raises important questions about how these expectations are realised in practice. In particular, it invites consideration of whether children's voices are meaningfully represented in professional discussions and whether meetings lead to decisions that improve their safety.

**Professional judgement, reflection and challenge**
The *Children's Social Care National Framework* and the *Families First Partnership* programme place importance on effective multi-agency practice, professional relationships and the development of a skilled workforce.

The webinar provides a useful stimulus for examining how professional language, organisational assumptions and established ways of working can influence decisions. Using it to create opportunities for peer reflection may help organisations strengthen professional curiosity, constructive challenge and the quality of their collective judgement.

Policy context: England. The wider practice questions may also be relevant in other jurisdictions.

# Using the Learning in Your Organisation

This webinar gave participants an opportunity to consider how professional language, assumptions and multi-agency processes influence the way children experiencing exploitation are understood and supported.

The strongest early learning signals were:

1. Reflection on how professional language can influence perceptions of vulnerability and responsibility.
2. Greater awareness of how a child's voice and experiences can become lost within multi-agency processes.
3. Recognition of the need to question established assumptions about children whose behaviour is challenging or harmful.
4. Intentions to share the film and use it to support reflective discussions, professional education and team learning.

Questions for teams

- How do we describe children and young people whose behaviour concerns us, and what assumptions might those descriptions carry?
- How do we ensure that children's voices and experiences meaningfully influence our assessments and decisions?
- When a child is both experiencing harm and displaying harmful behaviour, how do we understand and respond to their vulnerability?
- What helps us challenge assumptions and different professional perspectives constructively in multi-agency meetings?
- How do we know whether our meetings and interventions are making a meaningful difference to a child's safety?
- What opportunities do supervision and team discussions provide for examining these questions?

The replay of **Crossing the Line** is available On Demand for CareKnowledge members **here**.

Not yet a member? Visit CareKnowledge at www.careknowledge.com or drop as an email at info@careknowledge.com to find out how a subscription could benefit your organisation.

# About CareKnowledge

CareKnowledge strengthens reflective and ethically confident practice across care, safeguarding and support systems.

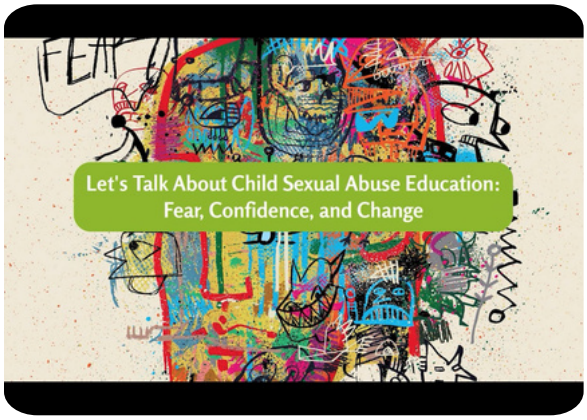
We create learning spaces and resources that help practitioners engage seriously with evidence, ideas and lived experience, and consider what these mean for their relationships, decisions and practice.

# Also available now On Demand

CareKnowledge On Demand brings together recordings from CareKnowledge Live webinars with resources designed to support individual reflection, supervision and facilitated team learning. Depending on the subject, these may include reading lists, reflective questions, seminar materials and guidance for running an in-house seminar or peer reflection circle.

A growing collection of On Demand replays of previous CareKnowledge Live webinars are available exclusively to members.










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