

News story: Boost for vulnerable children through trusted relationships

Some £13 million of Home Office funding has been awarded to projects which support vulnerable children, by ensuring they have positive adult role models in their lives such as youth workers, police officers, nurses and other professionals.

Eleven local authorities have been allocated a share of the Trusted Relationship Fund – a scheme that attempts to intervene early if a child is at risk of abusive predators or being drawn into criminality, such as county lines, by helping foster close relationships with trusted adults in the community.

It comes after a Home Office-commissioned review by the Early Intervention Foundation found that a trusted relationship with an adult is an important part of programmes to support vulnerable children, and that the lack of trusted relationships is consistently cited as a contributing factor in cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, said:

It is awful to think so many children have to tackle life without a strong adult figure they can confide in and that this may leave them vulnerable to predatory criminals and violence as well as exploitation and abuse.

The government is absolutely determined to help, which is why the Trusted Relationships Fund will support at-risk children through projects across the country.

Early intervention is so important to give vulnerable young people the best chance in life and we will make sure that those most at risk will have a positive adult in their lives.

Yesterday (Tuesday 21 August) the Minister visited one of the successful projects in Rotherham. The project, commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan District Council and delivered by Barnardo's, sees young people who may be at risk of exploitation and abuse, work with a trusted adult in order to raise their self-esteem and boost their resilience against people wanting to exploit them.

Barnardo's Chief Executive, Javed Khan, said:

This new government funding for vital early intervention preventative work will allow us to continue to build on what we have already achieved and, working closely alongside our partners,

support more children and young people to escape sexual exploitation.

It will also give us the opportunity to support and protect vulnerable children who are being exposed to other forms of exploitation, such as criminal exploitation by gangs and peer relationship abuse. Barnardo's is committed to breaking the damaging cycle of exploitation and violence that young people can get caught in.

Other successful projects, in areas including London, the Midlands and Greater Manchester, demonstrated that they will help young people in ways such as:

- delivering youth work on the streets to draw children away from threats such as child sexual exploitation or county lines
- working with expelled youngsters to divert them from harm and criminality back towards education
- providing specialist support to children with special educational needs, disabilities and others at risk of being drawn into sexual exploitation
- working with parents and foster carers to improve family relationships and build trust with young people experiencing abusive relationships

As well as Rotherham Council, other successful local authorities include Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Hounslow Council, North Yorkshire County Council & York Council, Ealing Council and North East Lincolnshire Council.

Bradford Council, Hackney Council, North Somerset District Council, Barnet Council and Northampton Borough Council will also benefit from the funding.

Read [information about each project](#).