

## **Digitally Empowering Young People: The Podcast S1 E4 – Positive Policing with the National Policing Vulnerable Knowledge and Practice Programme**

*Caroline Adams a Senior Project Manager from the National Policing Vulnerable Knowledge and Practice Programme will speak from the perspective of law enforcement agencies.*

BR

### **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

Welcome back to a new podcast series that aims to draw awareness to the issue of self-generated child sexual abuse imagery. My name is Doctor Roxanne Bibizadeh I'm joined here today with Caroline Adams, a senior project manager for the Vulnerable Knowledge and Practice Programme. Prior to this, Caroline was a police officer for 35 years. During this time, she worked with neighbourhood policing, child protection, youth offending and was the head of schools policing. Caroline is also worked with the National Police Chiefs Council lead for policing of children and young people, where she instigated a child centred policing approach that has been adopted by all forces. We hope this episode of the podcast series will be particularly useful for law enforcement agencies. And we also imagine that it will contribute to educational professionals, parents and carers, victims and survivors, social workers, and policymakers. Now, before we begin our discussion, listeners should be aware that this episode of the podcast series is not suitable for children or young people to hear, and we will be covering serious and distressing content which may be triggering. So if you have experiences relating to this topic, you may wish to consider whether you want to listen to this episode. The final episode in the series will be designed for children and young people and will feature contributions from all our special guests. So thank you so much for joining us, Caroline, to start us off. Could you tell us a little bit about the Vulnerable Knowledge and Practice Programme and your professional journey to the role of senior project manager?

AC

### **ADAMS, Caroline**

Thanks very much.

Yeah, it's lovely to be here.

And yes, so we call it the VKPP because as you realize, that's quite a long title to keep calling it the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme.

So VKPP for short and the vision of the VKPP is to coordinate and improve the policing's response to vulnerability.

And we do that by building and utilizing evidence and practice knowledge with the idea behind improving outcomes and particularly for those who are vulnerable, who are you know, subject to abuse, neglect and exploitation and we provide that kind of

multidiscipline support for forces from a research analysis and analytical capability and peer review in order to improve policy and practice across policing.

So that's where I'm working now.

I've been there for around two years and prior to that, as you say, I was a police officer and I think my kind of policing career headed towards working with children and young people fairly early on, I think and realizing that actually there was a kind of a sadly predictable pattern around a lot of young people's contact with the police, which was around being vulnerable and then actually getting involved in crime and getting involved in the police.

And that seemed to be a quite a depressing cycle of offending and exploitation.

And I really felt early on, surely we should be able to do something different about this.

So surely we should stop this rather than just, it felt a bit of a conveyor belt, so that was that was my thinking and that then led me to kind of working around, you know, the edge with children and young people from as you say, child protection, neighbourhood policing, working in schools, lots of different aspects in order to try to prevent young people from becoming victims or offenders of crime.

And I guess when I retired, I felt that the job wasn't done.

There was more to do, so that's then led me to kind of still working within the national policing arena and still trying to improve the outcomes for those who are vulnerable from a policing perspective.

**BR** **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

And you have such wide ranging experience working to protect children.

I think it would be wonderful to hear how if you could share what you've learned through these experiences in relation to the challenges children and young people face online.

**AC** **ADAMS, Caroline**

Yes, certainly.

I mean, I think I'm pretty old and therefore I was around prior Internet days and as the kind of you know Internet came in and evolved, I don't think any of us really understood the impact it was gonna have on our lives, you know, for good and for more challenging in many ways.

And I think that we were maybe a little bit slow to keep up with the threat that that was gonna actually pose to young people.

But I kind of, you know, learnt early on that actually young people are vulnerable.

So if they're vulnerable in the physical space, they're gonna be vulnerable online,

and therefore we actually really need to think about how we support and protect those young people who are vulnerable anyway, whether that's, you know, and the online world just adds a further complexity to their lives because you know that there isn't an online offline world, there is just their lives and they lead their lives, some parts of it online parts of it offline.

And I think in the early days we very much had that, you know, you are online presence was very different and separate from your offline world, but now it's all merged into a life.

So it's about helping them to be resilient, helping them to manage themselves and their life in all aspects of their life, and not just in the online world that tends to just be part of their lives, I think.

**BR Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I think you're certainly correct that there is this impossibility of distinguishing between the online and offline world now in particular, I agree with you it's important to recognize that a vulnerability in, should we say real life, often translates into vulnerability online, but that we can't just suggest that actually the problem is all being brought about by the Internet.

This is a problem that exists offline, so to speak, and that the Internet perhaps is just magnifying that issue. I am particularly interested to understand how you've witnessed this change from, you know, the Internet being, you know, brought in during your time within the police and how this is changed young people's experiences. I'd like us to think about how you've now seen it's been reported this dramatic increase in self-generated child sexual abuse material, which was reported in particular during the pandemic. And since the pandemic, I wondered if you could tell us a bit about from a policing perspective, how did this inform the action taken to protect children and young people?

**AC ADAMS, Caroline**

One of the challenges for policing was that the law, you know, wasn't built thinking about young people taking creating their own images.

You know, it was very much, a paedophile kind of perspective to use that word and therefore it's a piece of legislation that was sitting there that then young people are committing that offence and so I think in the early days there was a lot of activity within policing of criminalizing young people for that behaviour because the offence was there and they were committing the offence.

And so we've had to work really hard on helping officers to think about not unnecessarily criminalizing young people.

And yes, they are breaking the law because the offence is there.

But is that the most important element of this?

I don't believe it is and therefore that took a lot of kind of effort and briefing and you know quite a quite a long journey for policing to understand that actually it's about not unnecessarily criminalizing young people, but also thinking about their own safeguarding as the most important factor, and whether there's any coercion or exploitation taking place as being the priority as opposed to the offense that they may have committed, that's been quite a shift. I mean, as I say it, it sounds so obvious and so simple. Yet actually that's been a real shift through the culture of the organization to kind of adapt itself to thinking about it from a different perspective and one of the factors that was really prevalent in that is, is the idea that actually if it's a sexual offence and they commit that, that would then stay on the record of that young person for the rest of their lives.

And that actually is not gonna be helpful and the other side of that though is how then do we have the nuance to be able to recognize those young people that may be predatory young people that may be beginning to experience, you know, exhibit harmful behaviour and how do we identify them in the midst of quite a block of offending of which the majority of it, isn't that.

So that's been really quite challenging for policing to get its head round and it's fairly unprecedented in other areas and so it's been really quite tricky.

BR

### **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I'm very happy to be able to share that there is a new report coming out the National Analysis of Police-Recorded CSAE Crimes which details that after a recent total data sweep it's been reported that there is at least 42% of child abuse material is child on child. What does this tell us, and what can we do about it?

AC

### **ADAMS, Caroline**

Yeah. And just to add another statistic into that from the report that's due to come out it shows a 400% increase in child abuse crimes over the last 10 years.

So that's massive, that is huge.

I think we've got to get better at understanding what actually is happening here and the biggest increase is child on child offending in that space.

And actually is more being reported to us is more happening.

Is it more serious or are we just capturing more than we were before?

And I think there's a general thinking that it is more prevalent and more serious and maybe that's because more people are coming forward and reporting and have more confidence in the system to actually say that, you know, that actually this is not OK

and therefore I'm going to report it, which would be a positive thing.

If I'm honest, I don't think we fully understand the picture.

I think there's lots that we can do about it.

I'm a great believer in education, so I think, helping young people to understand what behaviour is acceptable and what isn't as a starting point is really important.

My concern and my worry is that image sharing in particular has kind of been normalized, what we're seeing here is a snapshot of that, which is a kind of a changing behaviour pattern.

Or are we seeing something which is really concerning and worrying and I don't think we know the full extent of that. This new report is really helpful in understanding the data because that's your starting point of thinking.

Actually, this highlights there is an increase in this area.

So what does it actually mean?

And then I think the next port of call is gonna be further research and really understanding it.

And then you know, looking at getting upstream and having that conversation with young people about how to keep themselves safe and what that would look like and how to get the adults around them to challenge behaviour which is inappropriate at the earliest opportunity.

BR

### **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I know having worked in schools, the messaging that was many years ago, but the kind of messaging that was given to young people about the criminalization of producing what is deemed to be pornographic imagery and therefore you are personally responsible for actually committing a crime.

So I wondered how you distinguish between a someone who is consensually taking an image and how do the police then distinguish there's some coercion and exploitation going on.

It is there anything you can tell us about how the police go about identifying, you know, sort of vulnerabilities in circumstances like this?

AC

### **ADAMS, Caroline**

Yes, certainly.

And so we kind of, we followed this sort of guidance which is really looking actually if we're talking about relationship sharing within a consensual relationship image sharing I should have said within a consensual relationship.

I guess the question is, how does it come to our attention in the first place because the guidance that we've created along with partners to support schools in the

decision making around this because it generally speaking it sort of comes to light in schools where often you know a relationship is broken down and then one party has shared images beyond that that personal relationship and that's where it all starts to kind of go wrong often.

And it's down to the school at that point really if it comes to their attention, to actually look at you know is this was this just consensual between two individuals, and therefore really there's no need to involve the police or actually was there aggravating factors which have meant that either this image has been shared widely or that there was some coercion and control that something about the context and the set of circumstances around it that worries them, that makes them think that maybe there's more to this, in which case it should come to the police's attention. I suppose what I'm saying there is that we probably wouldn't know and probably shouldn't know about contextual and consensual image sharing.

We only really find out about it generally when something has gone wrong and it has been shared far more widely.

So that's the kind of the advice and guidance that we've been giving to schools and colleges and school leaders in that decision making, but appreciate, actually, they don't always necessarily understand have all the information to make that decision. So we are there to support them with that decision making if that's helpful for them. But it is a difficult situation and one that's often at that point, you know, carries a lot of embarrassment and difficulty for the young people involved, that I know having spoken to young people in that position, it feels horrendous at that point, and so it's really hard.

It's a really difficult area to navigate through with getting the best outcome to protect those young people that are involved in the best way forward and that's really hard to write all of that down in such a way with all the nuance around it that makes it really clear in clear guidance.

So that you know the best we've managed really is that it's about, you know, those aggravating factors about asking, questions and doing a bit of digging around what actually happened in order to lead to this scenario happening.

BR

### **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

A natural question that flows from this is very much linked to a question that has been discussed quite a lot in this podcast, that there is a real problem with the terminology used.

In terms of using the word self generated and it's associations with shame and blame, and we know that many of our contributors have discussed the desire to find alternatives to this terminology and I wondered whether this was something that

you felt existed or exists within police communication the use of terminology which can be associated with shame and blame and if you feel there is a need to change the language and discussion surrounding this material because as you say, it is so nuanced and complicated to try to pick apart and clarify exactly how you define it exactly.

Do you have any thoughts on a better use of language or if there is a need for such a change in terminology?

**AC** **ADAMS, Caroline**

I mean it's really interesting, isn't it?

Because I think when we first set off using that terminology, I think we thought we were doing quite well because we felt that changing the context of where the legislation had been designed for into self generated implied that this is young people creating their own images and therefore that's better than somebody creating images of, you know, children.

So I think we were quite pleased with that terminology when we first started and as all of these things you start with something and then realize well actually that hasn't quite achieved what we were hoping it was gonna achieve by actually helping to define what it was we were talking about.

And actually what it's led to is sort of unintended consequence of a different set of problems with the language than the ones that we were moving away from.

So it's not catching when you talk to young people.

They in my experience, it's probably moved on since the last conversation I had with young people, you know, they would just refer to it as nudes, you know, explains what it does on the tin.

And I've never understood why we couldn't just use that because it kind of explains what it is in a simple way.

But again, people don't like that either, so I have no words of wisdom to impart on this really.

But what I do know is words are very important.

Language is very important and if we if somebody comes up with a better way of describing it, then we would definitely be up for that.

**BR** **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I'm thinking about because you've been at the heart of creating a child centred approach to policing and you instigated it and I wanted to learn a bit more about this.

What does it mean?

How has this been implemented and what are the kind of challenges that police face in trying to be child centered, particularly thinking about instances like this?

Because this is a very difficult area for police to intervene in, what can you tell me about this approach?

**AC ADAMS, Caroline**

We started because we used to have, we wrote the first national strategy for the policing of children and young people and not surprisingly it was quite complicated. It wasn't very catchy people didn't really get what it was, and it was just a kind of a light bulb moment one day I was just thinking about we actually we need a new title because that just wasn't working. And what is it we're trying to do?

And it was really just thinking about actually putting the child at the centre and played around with some kind of language around that.

And then literally came to well, it's a child centred policing approach.

That's what it is.

So if you think about the fact that you're putting, you have a child in front of you and then you put the child at the focus of your decision making, it does make a difference.

So to just kind of give some example to that really that often in policing we focus on the offense because the process of policing often happens where somebody reports an offence, there's some criminal damage, there's antisocial behaviour, so we go along looking for antisocial behaviour, criminal damage, whatever it is that it's been reported as.

That's the way we start the approach and actually often forget that this is a child at the center of this and then that then leads to a whole conversation about what's the context for the child.

Why are we coming across the child there?

My argument would be that every child that policing comes across will be vulnerable by the very nature of the fact that policing come across them in whatever context.

And therefore we need to really understand that vulnerability and think about it wider than just focusing on the offence that's being committed, and that kind of goes back to the sort of youth produced images to use that language.

It's the same thing actually?

What's going on for that young person?

You know what's the context and context is everything.

So that's kind of where we started the journey and that, you know, gains quite a lot of traction in policing because actually it's simple and it's common sense in many ways.



And most people recognise that children are vulnerable and I think what it does is it draws the attention to look behind the behaviour because some young people can be quite challenging to policing, a lot of young people don't really like police officers and they don't trust police officers.

So they won't necessarily present as a child or as somebody who's vulnerable, they'll present to somebody who's really quite challenging and actually it's about helping officers to remember that this is still a child and therefore we need to think about how we don't unnecessarily criminalize them, how we think about their welfare, how we make decisions in their best interest.

And so we then did some work with the officer of the Children's Commissioner to really think about what would a children's rights approach to policing look like and so we did we went and asked children basically their experience of policing and what rights they thought would be most important and what would be a real focus for policing, the majority of children that we spoke to said I just want you to listen. I've been trying to explain things and these were all children that had experience of policing from various different perspectives. There was a commonality of what they said in that I often didn't feel I was being listened to and that I just want you to talk to me and explain what's happening to me.

And that, trust that I can take on board the information or that what you're saying, you know?

Tell me.

Talk to me and officers often said they felt they wanted to try and protect children from some difficult situations or some difficult bits of information.

But actually children wanted to know, you know, they actually wanted to explain things, to be explain to them in a child centered way and appropriate language.

Absolutely.

But they didn't want to be left in the dark.

And they wanted to know what was happening.

So that was kind of where we set about and I suppose some of the challenges around that too to policing would be probably the behaviour of some young people in the situations that officers come across them and can be very, very challenging.

And therefore, if you're trying to be child centered, that then feels very difficult.

If you actually have to, you know, restrain a child or, you know, use any kind of physical restraint against a child that feels quite difficult.

But there are circumstances where that will happen.

So it's the complexity of policing is quite challenging but I think if you hold that concept of a child centred approach and keep it as simple as that, at the heart of everything you do then you make different decisions.

**BR****Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I really like the idea of listening, you know, just listening to and thinking about what's behind that behaviour and keeping that the heart of you're thinking when you're dealing with the challenging behaviour from a young person or a child.

**AC****ADAMS, Caroline**

Yeah, I love the phrase be curious, not furious.

And it is that whole kind of actually think about and that's not my phrase.

And I've read a book by Kit Messenger.

Who is an ex head teacher who does quite a lot of work in that space and it's the title of her book, but I find it really helpful to actually what's happening here.

You know, because actually there will be a set of circumstances that have led to the behaviour that we are often at the end of, it's really helpful to be able to understand and to be able to explain.

**BR****Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I'd like to turn to talk a bit about new threats. There is a disturbing new threat posed by AI generated child sexual abuse material, and I think from discussions we've had with other contributors, there is a general sort of feeling of this is incredibly difficult to actually grapple with and I'd like you can share what law enforcement do in circumstances where, for example, a child is identified in AI generated CSAM, how is it managed from a policing and safeguarding perspective from a child centred approach?

I know that the discussions I've had thus far have been one of we're still learning. We're still trying to even figure out how to deal with this because it's so huge.

**AC****ADAMS, Caroline**

The creating of images, the capturing of images, sharing of images, which I suppose fits the more traditional profile of somebody online who has child abuse images, selling them, sharing them on forums that do that there's quite a within the National Crime Agency that's where a lot of that work is led because it's international it's not contained within this country and so there are various undercover officers and tactics that they would use to work try and find and identify people who are sharing and selling those kind of images and we've also got, a database where images are recorded. So that if they appear anywhere else then you know they can, be identified from that perspective. So once a child has been identified. Some of the new areas of, you know, creating images. You know the kind of the fake, loosely

termed fake images of putting you know different people's heads on different bodies etcetera, etcetera.

And again, that's an area that we're only just beginning to really understand the extent of, and then you move into the whole kind of virtual reality element that again we're only just beginning to realize this is gonna be an issue where and I think I just recently there's somebody talking about their avatar being you know sexually assaulted within a game and being surrounded and because you know virtual reality games is so immersive they felt that it was them that was receiving that and yes you can take your headset off but it's really shocking and had quite an impact so there's I think we're only just beginning to understand the full extent of the potential here maybe of what actually is happening and I think that it needs a bigger investment I think we are really hopeful that the Online Harms Bill will put more responsibility on the tech companies to be responsible for the tech that they've created and the mechanisms to share that. I am probably not the best person to speak to around you know the dark web and the stuff that you know happens there because that's a whole new world and that is in effect outside the law, and operating outside the law, so the normal parameters of behaviour are not present. So I think I would say that yes, I think we're just learning.

I think we need to learn more.

What we are learning is that there's a lot that needs to be done in that space and that there are a shocking amount of images that are being sold and shared through various different groups that I think is really quite disturbing.

**BR Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I mean you mentioned an example of someone playing a virtual reality game and their avatar was sexually assaulted, how is something like that dealt with if that's reported?

**AC ADAMS, Caroline**

Well, I think that there's a bit of a discussion at the moment because I think most people believe that the sex offences act would cover the offences, but it wouldn't need to test case to find out, I think.

So we will wait and see for the first case, to see what happens.

But certainly the people that I've only read some articles.

I haven't spoken to anybody personally that that's happened to they've been really very disturbed by the experience and so on that basis then you're innocently playing a game.

You should be able to do that, and the fact that you know they've been abused in that way there must be some protection within that.

BR

**Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

When a child is identified and perhaps they're unaware and the family are unaware and it's an image taken from a Facebook page or and it's, you know obviously the face is used for example, and there someone is able to identify and then I would assume the police would inform the family how is that managed?

What is the sort of child centered approach to something like that?

How do you ensure that the child and the family are safeguarded?

AC

**ADAMS, Caroline**

And supported.

Yeah, very much about supporting them.

And obviously that's really shocking information and we would put them in touch with support services in their area to be able to provide you know support for them and again I think everybody you know no two victims of a crime ever respond in the same way and therefore the support needs to be quite bespoke really for individuals needs and I think that's one of our challenges often is that we only have one set of responses or one you know it does depend on the family, it does often also depend on where those images have gone and what they look like and you know that kind of stuff it's difficult and it's very difficult for that family who had no idea to be told that so I think support I'm being a bit vague because I just think support is really tricky because not everybody needs the same support or the same level of support and I would say that there's probably not as much support there as there should be for those circumstances and I think it's an area where there we'll need to be more support because sadly there is more than there has ever been so yeah it will need to be looked at.

BR

**Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

And turning to think about education having worked as head of schools policing, can you share some of your professional experiences supporting police officers working within schools where teachers have become aware of self generated child sexual abuse? In a previous podcast, we talked about how, when images or teachers are becoming aware of image sharing the young person's response sometimes is to even use AI and say it was not me, it's generated by AI. I was wondering if you could share some of your experiences working within that education sector and trying to support how police support young people and teachers in circumstances like this.

**AC ADAMS, Caroline**

As I kind of alluded to before that it often only comes to the police's attention when it's kind of gone wrong and images have been shared further than the individuals involved. It's really tricky, there are often times where a young person just has really struggled to return to that educational setting because of the embarrassment and the shame that they feel, that's really understandable.

So I guess for me it almost goes back a bit further than that and I think our education, PSHE education, our sex and relationships education needs to be robust enough to help young people understand what consent and trust means.

And to actually think really carefully before they share images or before you know, a lot of the young people that I spoke to felt that they had to share an image, they felt that it was kind of almost a bit of currency in a relationship and that actually the relationship wouldn't potentially progress any further without sharing an image.

And there's this kind of contractual element to it that seems to prove to be quite tricky and it almost feels like we need to go back and have conversations with young people about what that is about and what that looks like and that actually you always have choice.

And choice is really important and young people don't feel like they don't have choices because you always do and that actually, what do we mean by a positive relationship built on trust that actually if you say no, no is no and that that feels like that's a really important message and we need to have that discussion with them I think so.

I think that there's that element. There's the kind of curriculum element and I'm a real advocate of supporting schools in doing the best that they can within the curriculum, but when it does go wrong and then it's about, you know, supporting the school in how they manage it and that actually what we then don't do is kind of go in and do an assembly.

Don't do this because this has gone horribly wrong and draw attention to it, but actually think about how we can contain and manage it in the best way possible in order to support the young people involved so that they can managed to stay within school.

Because I think that's really important and finding a way to do that is kind of essential and making sure that the blame doesn't become disproportionate onto the girl, which is often does feel like that, and so there's something in that about how it does seem to affect girls in a more prevalent way than it does boys and that you know I think we need to really think about and work through and I appreciate schools are in a really difficult position I mean it is you know it's a really hard to deal

with when you have one of these incidents explode and to actually manage it effectively is really quite hard.

BR

**Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

And I guess that's where the police involvement comes in, because that's what I'm keen to understand. I know that sometimes schools opt to have a police man or woman come in and deliver a one-off assembly in circumstances like this.

I know that is perhaps not being done as much as it might be once was.

And I know that obviously you mentioned quite rightly the importance of sex and relationship education, PSHE education helping young people understand what a healthy relationship looks like and that is going to be crucial in keeping them safe in their interactions with one another.

What role do you think the police should play in the classroom when addressing these issues?

Is it just that they are coming in to deal with when things go wrong?

Or should they have a greater role?

And what would that look like?

AC

**ADAMS, Caroline**

It's an interesting in my previous role we did a piece of research around police in the classroom to actually look to see whether there was any evidence to show whether having officers in the classroom would build trust and confidence between young people and the police. Because if you come from a kind of a procedural justice theory perspective, having trust and confidence in the police and therefore being able to report when something happens, it's got to be good for society and it's quite concerning that we've got to a place where a lot of young people don't have trust and confidence in the police. So we looked at actually would the classroom be a good place to build trust and confidence in a non-confrontational way, because actually most young people don't have any contact with the police. They don't. They only see what they see through social media or on the telly, so that was a something that we set out to do. So we did quite a big study, a randomized control trial led by LSE with over 200 schools involved, to actually think about that.

And unfortunately, the end of it hit COVID so that you know with the report was published and probably didn't get as much publicity from it as it could have.

Because actually what it showed that if you have the right officers using the right material delivered in the right way, you actually do build trust and confidence.

And it was quite significant.

And actually, young people do learn something as well.

The lesson that we did for that was a drugs and the law lesson and it fitted as part of a series within a PSHE curriculum delivered by teachers either side to support that good practice and we've recently embarked on some further research to see whether if we change the topic of the lesson but still the right people trained in the right way with the right material that's been developed for us by the PSHE association do we get the same results so at the moment we're embarking on a sex and the law lesson to see whether we'd get the results are the same so that's quite long winded but I guess the point I'm getting to there is that I totally believe that the police have a role to play within the classroom and supporting the PSHE curriculum but it has to be the right people delivering the right material in the right way and it has to be engaging and the young people it has to be something that we're listening to them and engaging with them not going in and just doing a lecture on what they should or shouldn't be doing and I think as we alluded to earlier in the conversation the whole youth produced imagery element is quite a tricky one because the law says that if the officer is talking about the law then you can lead to young people feeling as though they don't want to report anything because they're concerned that their phone would be seized that they'd be in trouble that they've committed an offence all of those negative factors that are less likely to mean that a young person would come forward.

So the question in that is, is this an area where the police have a role or is the police role more to do with consent and an understanding of consent and what consent means, rather than this specific piece of legislation, so that's a, I mean there's a bit of a healthy debate around that really.

But do I think the police have a role in the classroom?

Yes, I do.

Is it specifically for this particular self-generated content role?

Maybe not so much.

Is it around understanding the law and consent and helping young people to realise what consent means and that they always have a choice?

Is I think, a role that we do have there.

And so yeah, it's a bit of a mixed answer really.

BR

### **Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I think we can tell quite clearly that you have been instrumental in trying to change the way children and young people perceive the police.

I'd like to know a bit more about this.

So you mentioned that the importance of instilling a sense of trust and confidence in the police, and obviously that would have a ripple effect in a young person would

feel perhaps more comfortable going to the police when an incident does occur.

What are the police doing to engage with young people?

So you've mentioned obviously going into schools.

How might this help to educate, draw awareness prevent the creation and distribution of self-generated content.

So you mentioned the importance of young people understanding what consent looks like?



**ADAMS, Caroline**

I think that's really important and I think when you're a young you don't think about consequences, do you?

And that seems like such an old fashioned word as well the word consequences.

But I think it's important that young people understand the context of what they put online, whatever that is, and the fact that actually that's there and you know that's gonna give an impression about them to a future employer, there's so many reasons why being careful about what you put online is important.

And I think that's part of that, I always used to think that as an officer way back in the day going into schools and going into the classroom I've got some experience as a police officer that means that I could help to keep you safe. I could prevent you if you trusted me and you listen to me, I could help prevent you from making mistakes that could lead to some horrible consequences for you.

But in order to do that I have to be credible and you have to trust me.

I can't just go in and tell you what to do because actually, that's not gonna have any value whatsoever.

So it's about how do we build a relationship with young people so that they do trust us.

That's what's really important.

And before we did the evaluation of the role of policing in the classroom, we asked young people, we did a big survey across the country and over 5000 young people responded when we asked them how do we build trust and confidence between young people and the police, what do you think would be an effective way to do that?

And the majority of young people said, well, you need to come into our schools and colleges because you need to be in our space and our space is schools and colleges. That's where we are.

So that's where you need to be, but don't come and lecture us or shout at us or, you know, tell us what to do or show a boring PowerPoint.

Come and talk to us and engage with us and the other thing that they said was



actually why aren't you in social media because that's where we are.

Our lives are in social media, so we managed to get some funding and we set about creating a kind of a social media presence for policing.

So we started with Instagram because that was, you know our target audience was kind of 13 to 16 year olds and that's very much where they were when we started, which was five years ago.

And we created 'yourpolice.uk' as an Instagram channel where we produced content, put out content that we felt would engage with young people, which would help to educate and also but also engaged with them.

So we could ask them and you know what they were interested in, what they wanted to talk to us about, and also humanized policing so that they could see that actually we wanted to be there to help them.

And so as I say, that was five years ago and the channel is growing from strength to strength and young people do find us and they do want to report things to us and they ask, and quite often, we'll often have young people come on the channel.

For example, fairly recently we did some posts about up-skirting and we had several girls come on the channel and say, actually, I didn't realize this was an offense.

I didn't realize this is wrong.

This has happened to me.

What can I do about it? And actually that often happens.

We often start a conversation with young people because it's not just about broadcasting content.

It's about engaging with them on the back of it, so we answer every comment and every direct message and we provide that kind of presence and support to young people.

So I think that's a really good initiative as to how we can, you know, we need to be in young people's space because they're not gonna come and find us.

And you know, that became really evident in the survey that we did when we asked young people how you'd go about contacting the police and they haven't got a clue.

I mean

How would you know?

Why would you know?

Everybody knows if it's an emergency and something really, seriously, dial 999.

Everyone knows that, and young people told us that.

But actually, how do I report something?

How do I tell?

Why would I do that?

Was actually really difficult.

So we need to be in their space in order to be able to engage with young people and build trust and confidence to talk about the things that matter to them of which this is one.

**BR Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

And I think it's useful to also think to also talk a bit about another element of this, which is when a young person or family member does disclose to the police an incident of technology assisted child sexual abuse, what response and support should they expect from the police.

**AC ADAMS, Caroline**

I think the first thing is that they need to be believed.

I think the first you know really basic thing is belief in them and support and compassion and you know being listened to.

So that kind of belief listened to compassion in order to take them seriously and then to actually talk to them about what their expectations are, you know, quite often with policing we're all about trying to find the offender and you know, get an outcome at court.

That's kind of what we're about, but sometimes that's not what somebody might want, but actually how are we supporting them in that and making sure that they feel supported because you know everybody who comes to policing as a victim is in front of us as a victim.

But our job, I believe, is to help them become a survivor of that, you know, and that's really important in the way that policing provides that support and engagement.

**BR Bibizadeh, Roxanne**

I really like that idea that the police can play a role in supporting that transition from being a victim to becoming a survivor.

I think that's a fantastic closing response to our questions.

So thank you so much to our special guest for your contribution today and thank you to all our listeners for engaging with our podcast.