

# Flourish Fostering Case Study



# Background

Specialising in providing bespoke therapeutic care to children, Flourish Fostering leverages Cornerstone VR to train foster parents on topics such as childhood trauma, sexual and criminal exploitation, providing a realistic perspective of fostering that facilitates deep understanding and empathy for each child's lived experience.

**In a survey\* of foster parents and social workers we learned that over half of respondents (60%) had never used virtual reality before.**





# The Mission

Flourish Fostering used Cornerstone VR to create an immersive training programme aimed at upskilling foster parents by providing a realistic perspective of a child's world and the challenges that bring them into care.

The goal was to enhance the training and preparedness of foster parents, helping them gain deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives of children entering foster care.

During the training course attendees were shown a range of profoundly impactful films, which allowed the foster parents to be immersed in 360-degree experiences of a traumatic event, such as domestic violence, all virtually 'viewed' through the child's eyes.



This course was great, it really shows the child's perspective. I feel it could also help new foster parents understand the things that could either help or hinder in certain situations.

**Foster Parent**  
Flourish Fostering



# The Solution

The first training developed by Flourish Fostering that use Cornerstone VR was called 'PARCEL It Up' - standing for having a 'Playful, Accepting, Responsive, Curious, Empathic, Loving' attitude towards a fostered child who has experienced trauma.

The PARCEL training course offers foster parents a virtual experience of being a traumatised child, along with strategies to support the healing of children affected by childhood trauma.

The training included powerful 360-degree films that immersed foster parents in a child's perspective of traumatic events, like domestic violence.

Foster parents were shown various scenarios in VR where they observed, from a child's perspective, how past trauma can trigger behaviours that might seem unacceptable to others, thereby increasing empathy and insight.



## Virtual reality provides an **immersive world** for learning about child exploitation.

Foster parents were able to gain unique insights by becoming a ‘fly on the wall’, observing situations commonly faced by children in care—whether at school, in the community, or at home—where memories of early traumatic experiences may lead them to act in ways that are, to the untrained eye, seen as unacceptable.

Flourish Fostering has also developed a new course addressing the heightened vulnerability of young people in care. The course explores how children can be targeted and manipulated by others in their community, often under the guise of friendship, for purposes of sexual or criminal exploitation.



# The Outcome

Cornerstone VR enabled staff and foster parents to experience life from a child's perspective, deepening their understanding of the underlying causes of challenging behaviours. This enhanced empathy and insight, allowing them to adjust their responses to better manage and de-escalate situations.



Increased awareness and understanding of prevalent topics, such as child sexual exploitation and grooming.




Staff gained deeper insight into the child's perspective through the use of engaging and effective VR tools.



The training equips staff and foster parents with the skills to take forward in how they handle situations with children with adverse childhood experiences.





The ability to enable foster parents to virtually ‘stand in the shoes’ of a traumatised child is invaluable in promoting empathy and understanding of the meaning behind the behaviour of their foster child. During our recent Ofsted inspection, the VR was also used by the three visiting inspectors, who were all very impressed by its capabilities.

**Managing Director**

Flourish Fostering





# What's next?

Following the training, positive feedback from respondents have stated that they would recommend the training in the future due to its **“powerful and detailed portrayal of the situations”**.

Looking ahead to the future, Flourish Fostering are keen to continue working with Cornerstone VR to include the VR in developing more courses, specifically around gangs, county lines and youth crime.



After using VR **100%** of the respondents said they had a deeper understanding of the child's perspective and felt equipped to use the knowledge to make an impact.





# About Cornerstone VR



Cornerstone VR is a multi award-winning, trauma-informed virtual reality programme used by professionals and caregivers who work with vulnerable children and their families.

Our 360-degree immersive films allow users to 'walk in the shoes' of children, bringing the challenges of trauma, neglect, and societal pressures to life.

Spanning critical stages of child development from pre-birth to adolescence, this approach helps professionals, educators and caregivers have a deeper understanding of the child's perspective - building empathy, improving decision-making, and raising the standard of care.

Our programme is used across almost 50% of local authorities, as well as independent fostering and adoption agencies, children's residential homes, schools, virtual schools, universities, NHS trusts, ambulance services, the police and other providers.

Our VR experiences cover key topics across our sectors, including:

- Abuse, Neglect & Trauma
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness
- The Digital World - Social Media and Digital Platforms
- Youth Violence and Knife crime



# Contact us

For more information about our services, please get in touch.

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