

Inspirations Leicestershire Case Study



Background

Inspirations Leicestershire provide 24 hour care to children aged 6-18 who have experienced early childhood trauma that makes it impractical for them to live at home, or who expressly prefer not to be placed with foster carers. They provide a nurturing, safe and developmental environment for children and have a therapeutic approach to build trusting relationships with the children.

The partnership between Cornerstone VR and Inspirations Children's Homes, Leicestershire exemplifies outstanding multi-agency collaboration, harnessing immersive virtual reality (VR) content to transform staff recruitment, staff training and traditional interventions with young people.



Cornerstone VR was used across the service to support staff retention and relationships between staff and the children they support, with **three core uses:**

- ★ Recruitment
- ★ Staff training and development
- ★ Direct work with young people and parents



Direct work with Young People.

This project addressed exploitation and digital safety - key themes highlighted in the Online Safety Act - and sought to test a new VR film series surrounding evolving risks to young people, such as child criminal/sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, the digital world, gangs and knife crime.

As a part of this project the clinical psychologist team and VR trained staff were enabled to integrate immersive VR experiences into learning sessions with young people, covering themes such as brain development, child criminal and sexual exploitation, gaming and social media.

The VR interventions sought to engage young people, supporting their critical thinking and decision-making skills by providing them with a “safe space” to consider new and emerging contextual risks.



The Solution



Certifying professionals: delivering a skills development programme to ensure professionals could deliver VR sessions independently and ethically.



Implementing VR sessions: certified professionals thereafter conducted immersive VR sessions with young people, focusing on online and community risk factors.




Enhancing skills: the sessions aimed to improve young people's critical thinking, risk identification, digital literacy and decision-making.



Strengthening relationships: VR facilitated 'perspective-taking', fostering increased understanding and empathy from staff towards the young people in their care, in order to build more positive relationships.





The VR sessions that the children have taken part in have provided ‘Outstanding’ practise for our recent OFSTED inspection. They were very impressed with the films and how this has supported our children's understanding on different topics to support them, their knowledge and wellbeing.

Deputy Manager
Inspirations Leicestershire



The Evaluation



The project aligned with Ofcom’s focus on “safe risks”, empowering young people to make more informed decisions when navigating digital environments. One care worker noted, “These videos have been a great way to have conversations in a way that’s engaging and shows that we understand”.




There is an aggregate effect on staff, by enhancing their understanding of contextual risks, fostering deeper connection and empathy. One participant stated, “For [the staff] to actually see what our young people are exposed to every day has been really beneficial.”



The partnership has driven positive outcomes, including behavioural shifts and improved relationships. Following an Outstanding Ofsted inspection, a Deputy Manager emphasised the impact of VR sessions on enhancing children’s understanding, knowledge and wellbeing across the homes.





It's such a great way of getting them to engage...some of the sessions I've had have been up to two hours long...and these are kids that wouldn't normally reflect. I wouldn't normally talk about these topics. So it's been amazing.

Feedback from staff



Direct work with **young people** outcomes

- **Increased engagement:** Children now look forward to keywork sessions, which were previously short or non-existent. One session lasted two hours.
- **Encouraging safe risks:** VR supports Ofcom's emphasis of safe risks, helping children navigate social media safely. An employee noted that VR facilitated important conversations about online safety. Overall, there are more talks occurring about challenging subjects, and young people feel more able to make informed decisions.
- **Educating staff:** VR helps staff understand the digital environments children interact with. For instance, staff unfamiliar with platforms like TikTok gained insights into the children's experiences.
- **Creating a positive shift:** VR empowers young people to understand themselves and the world better, enabling them to make more informed decisions with the support of their carers.

One notable case involved a child who changed friend groups and stabilised behaviourally, not going missing for over six months. Responses from the children suggest they are able to be more open and honest with the staff looking after them.



Staff **recruitment** outcomes

89%

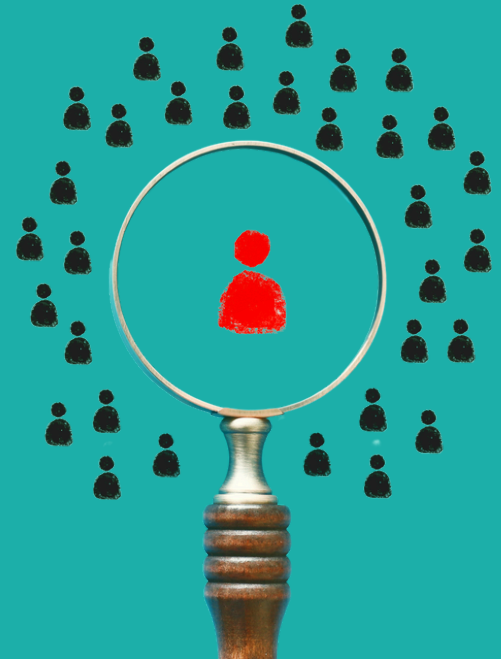
of candidates agreed that the VR experiences gave them a deeper understanding of what residential care is.


78%

of candidates agreed that the VR experience gave them a deeper understanding of what the advertised job role would consist of.

32%

of candidates agreed that the VR experience made them reconsider whether the job role was for them, promoting a stronger workforce and lowering attrition.





We will use it for staff training (e.g. autism, trauma-informed practice and therapeutic parenting). We will also be using it during our recruitment process, when interviewing, to provide a greater understanding of the children we care for.

Inspirations Leicestershire



Staff training and development outcomes

Overwhelmingly positive feedback was collected from all Inspirations Leicestershire professionals who attended VR training.

A teal-colored semi-circular progress indicator showing 98% completion. The percentage '98%' is displayed in white text inside the teal shape.

98%

98% of professionals agreed the VR training had given them a deeper understanding of the child's perspective.

A dark blue semi-circular progress indicator showing 100% completion. The percentage '100%' is displayed in white text inside the dark blue shape.

100%

100% of professionals agreed that they felt confident to deliver VR training sessions to others; staff, children and parents.



Reflecting on the use of the VR, one parent said:

The VR experience today was very emotive and gave me a good insight into my child's early experiences and how it felt for her. It was far more effective than the in-house training I have completed previously.



Our work with Inspirations Leicestershire has seen award shortlistings and recognition.





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

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