

The Metropolitan Police Case Study



Background

Cornerstone VR approached the Metropolitan Police (MET) about the possibility of training officers, using virtual reality (VR) technology which simulates real-life situations, thereby raising awareness, increasing empathy and challenging behavioural norms.

After being shown programme content, the VR was presented to those in the East Met division and the training was approved as a pilot scheme with the aim of introducing it more widely to the MET.

The VR training aimed to raise awareness of domestic abuse (DA), seeing the incident through the eyes of the child and addressing staff mindset in their response to such incidents.



The delivery was structured in a pilot that focused on VR as a learning and intervention tool.

The training used a sequence of immersive VR films to follow the lives of three characters from pre-birth to adolescence.

The training with East Met was conducted virtually for 48 police officers across four individual training sessions, with around 12 officers on each. Organisers wanted to grasp their understanding of domestic abuse (DA) and the expectations on them as first responders, while establishing the challenges they face and how they currently overcome them.

Prior to the start of the training, senior officers identified the purpose for which they intended to use the VR programme, the main priorities being to see and hear the child at incidents of domestic abuse.



In the first instance, **two case studies were shared with the officers** before they watched the VR films, addressing the issues tackled in the films - a call-out involving a pregnant woman, and a DA call where they are met by a young man insisting 'everything is fine' - in order to determine how they would respond in the first instance and discuss the wording used in the follow-up reports.




Throughout the project, **VR was used to place the officers at the heart of incidents**; the first experience replicated the point of view of an unborn child in the womb, following which the officers were asked to consider what they would do differently empathising with the impact on the unborn child.

The second experience, Carnaby Street, aimed to highlight manipulation of police officers by the DA perpetrator, minimising the impact of the abuse and its impact on the child.

Once more, officers were asked to think about how they would tackle the situation differently, and crucially, how they would react to the child in that situation.





Powerful as ever. I think some will find the Aisha footage quite disturbing, especially in VR, but it's the brutal reality of what we're dealing with at times.

Chief Superintendent

MET Police



The aims focused on a better understanding and response to domestic abuse incidents.

- ✓ Assisting officers to see incidents through the eyes of a child - to take into account the 'unspoken voice' of the child.
- ✓ To increase understanding of DA incidents among frontline responders.
- ✓ To increase officers' empathy when dealing with DA incidents.
- ✓ To examine officers' behaviours when dealing with DA and change the way in which officers respond.
- ✓ To enable officers to take positive action and ensure they understand the importance of taking decisive action at the first incident to reduce repeat incidents.
- ✓ To enable officers to reflect on making sure space is secured for the survivor/victim in the moment so that they can be protected and enabled to make different decisions.





I will definitely change my approach to dealing with Domestic Incidents involving unborn children.

Training Attendee



The Outcomes

- ✓ The training was more engaging as opposed to other types of learning / training on the subject of domestic abuse.
- ✓ Officers would consider alternative ways to approach their work.
- ✓ Increased understanding of the impacts of domestic abuse.
- ✓ Different view of how much behaviour/responses /decisions affect children.
- ✓ A deeper understanding of the child's perspective.



Officers were more aware the impact on children and their approach on traumatic events.

50% said it had made them more aware of the impact on children and so to change their approach accordingly.

31% said they would now try to better understand other perspectives of abuse and be more aware of their attitude and behaviour towards victims, as well as spending more time with them following a call out to an incident.

A number of respondents also said the training had prompted them to improve their level of assessment and communication; to make sure they are correctly documenting information to **provide a “good picture of the environment”** and to utilise sensational wording to better highlight the risk factors affecting vulnerable parties for other agencies to see.



Feedback from attendees

During the training, attendees were asked questions in relation to their thoughts on using virtual reality as a learning tool, and what they would do differently in the environments they work within.



69%

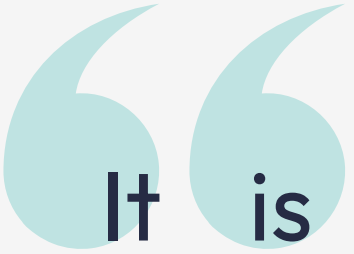
69% of attendees agreed the VR experiences gave them a deeper understanding of the child's perspective.



79%

79% of attendees agreed that the training was more engaging as opposed to other types of learning on domestic abuse.





It is a unique tool that allows the perpetrators to get inside the eyes and mind of a small child and really see things from their perspective. It conveys a message to them that a thousand words simply cannot, and it is, without doubt, an extremely powerful and successful tool.

Training Attendee





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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