



WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US

Some children and young people we spoke to described positive experiences of the police when they responded to worries about their safety. Others told us about less positive experiences and things that need to be improved. The next few pages share important messages from the children and young people we met.

Do children and young people go to the police if they feel unsafe and need help?

Some children and young people told us they would go to the police if they needed help and that the police can stop the harm from happening.

But more than half of the children and young people we spoke to told us that going to the police can be difficult and they would prefer to speak to someone they already know – a friend, family member, youth worker or teacher.

Things that children and young people said were difficult about going to the police were that they were scared of the police, they were worried about what would happen if they went to the police, they were worried about what their friends and family would think, they were worried about what the police would do to them, they were worried about what the police would say to them, they were worried about what the police would do to their friends and family, they were worried about what the police would do to their school, they were worried about what the police would do to their community, they were worried about what the police would do to their country.

“The police are here to help people... to keep us safe.”

(12 years old)

“I don't feel like I can trust the police and I know quite a lot of people don't trust them so we just try and avoid them as much as possible”

(11 years old)

“There was a lot of things which I did want to go to the police for, but I was just too scared”

(10 years old)

“some care a lot, some don't, all different”

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“Ask young people their opinions of what they think should happen and take opinions into account”

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What is important to children and young people when they are involved with the police?

Children and young people told us about good, bad and mixed experiences of the police. Often the way children and young people felt about their experience was directly linked to the officer they had seen.

To make sure children and young people feel positive about their involvement with every police officer, every time they said that the police should:

- Be understanding and caring
- Respect and not judge them
- Listen carefully to them and do something to help
- Keep in regular contact about their case
- Keep their information private
- Try to arrange for them to see the same police officer each time to help build trust
- Help them get additional support
- Give them a say in decisions made about them and help them feel in control

“If it’s the same one, then they can get to know them more and then they feel comfortable talking to them about things that are going on”

Taking statements and video recorded interviews

When children and young people have been hurt by people they

Helping children and young people complain when they aren't happy with how they have been treated

We asked children and young people whether they would complain if they weren't happy with how the police had dealt with them. Lots told us they wouldn't make a complaint against the police. They said this was either because they didn't know how to, or they didn't think it would make a difference.

“Because of our age it is highly unlikely that an adult police officer will listen to what we have to say

They said that if police told them how to make a complaint and promised to look into what's gone wrong, they would be more likely to complain.

Want to know more?

If you would like more information on what happens if concerns about a child or young person's safety are reported to the police, please have a look at the Victim Support You & Co website, especially designed for young people: www.youandco.org.uk

If you have been affected by anything in this report and want to speak to someone you can call ChildLine for free on 0800 1111.

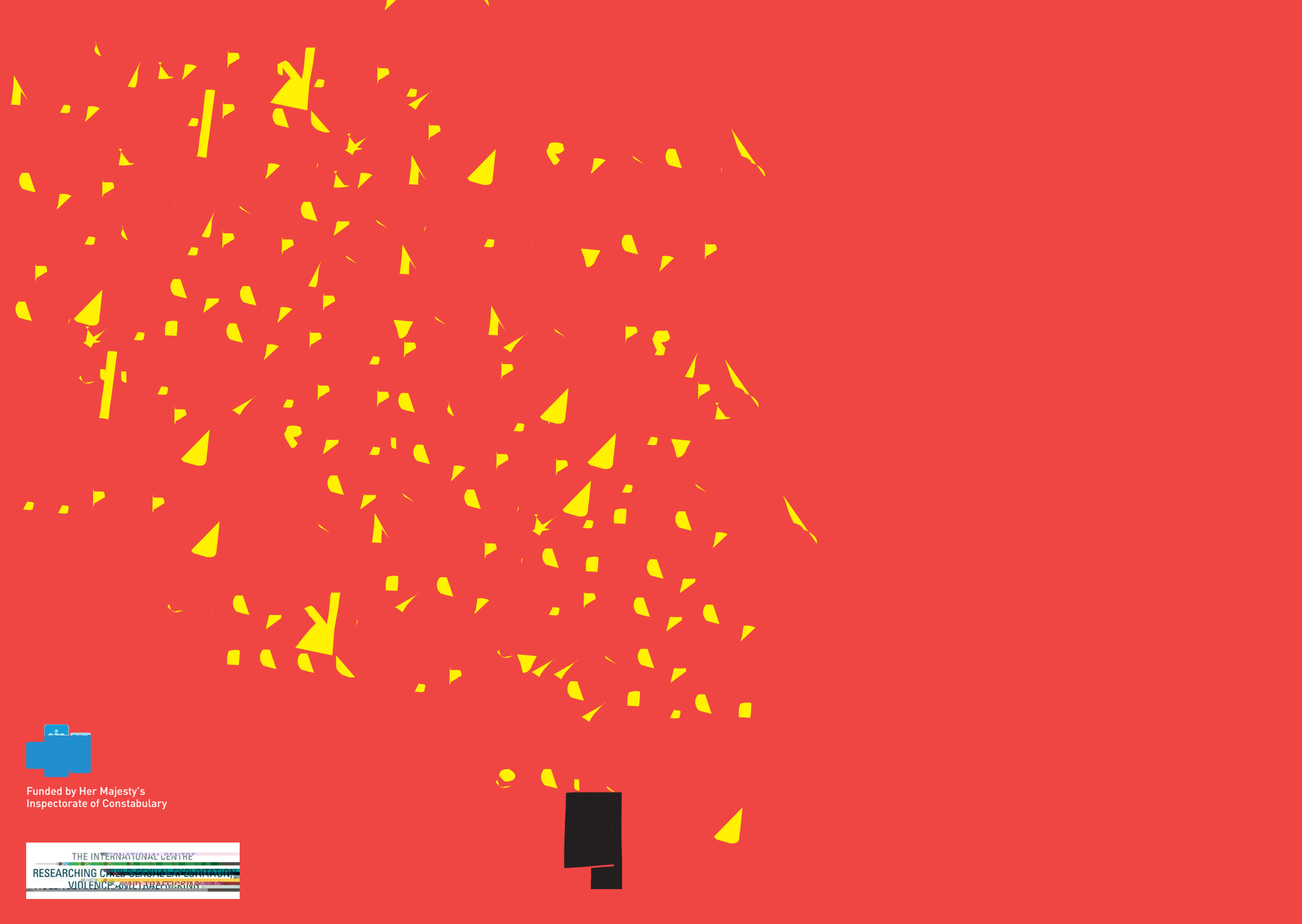
Acknowledgements

We are hugely thankful to all the children and young people who took part in this project; we hope the findings will help the police to get it right every time.

To help us with this project we worked with five young people as project advisors. They helped design our interviews and survey and gave feedback on the findings. We are very grateful to them and to Street Safe Lancashire, The Children's Society for supporting their involvement.

This is a statement from the project advisors:





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