

## **CSE Principles Project (Comic) Tender**

### **1. Introduction**

The International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire (IC) is an award winning, applied research centre which is committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation (CSE), violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts. One of our core principles is to ensure the meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people in research on sexual exploitation and violence, and the IC has produced a range of work over the last ten years that aims to create space for the voices and participation of children and young people.

A set of consistent messages has emerged about the experiences and concerns of children and young people across a range of projects. Young people affected by sexual exploitation/violence have had traumatic experiences, and unfortunately some services make this worse through disempowering victims, judging them or not respecting their right to have a say in what is going to happen to them. Young people have provided key messages about what good or effective support looks and feels like from their perspective, as well as what poor support is like. Staff within the IC are currently reviewing this evidence base to create a set of 8-10 principles that summarise effective support. They may look similar to this list, produced by Camille Warrington for Community Care.

1. Pay attention: notice me and ask me questions
2. Go at my pace: don't pressure or push, but stick with me
3. Don't judge or blame me
4. Let me know you genuinely care
5. Focus on my strengths and opportunities as well as risks
6. Manage my personal information with care and be honest
7. Work with me, not 'for' me
8. Help me make sense of what's happened
9. Find ways to offer me consistent support
10. Think about the 'whole me': my other needs and my family and carers

### **2. Brief**

As part of the 'CSE Principles Project' we will commission a comic artist to create an illustrated version of these principles. The artist will be given the written document and further source material, and will work with IC staff and young advisors to develop story-lines and drafts of each principle.

The aim of this project is to produce a set of comic strips and/or single images that illustrate and bring to life the academic summary document 'Principles of effective support for children and young people at risk or victims of CSE'. Young people describe their experiences vividly and creatively – often drawing on visual imagery or metaphors to make their point more powerfully or providing detailed descriptions of a specific interaction – demonstrating how a 'principle' applied to them in direct practice. The qualities of these accounts then tend to get lost in the process of academics abstracting their meaning, synthesising quotes and summarising complex narratives.

The purpose of the comics is to get away from lists of bullet points and to breathe life back into the principles, by re-connecting them to the experiences and emotions of the young people who first inspired them. We hope that through visual story-telling, the audience will a) understand what each principle really means b) experience more direct empathy for children and young people c) connect these to their own experiences. We want to bridge the gap between 'knowing' these principles in theory and 'getting it', so that more adults are sensitised to the impact of their attitudes and actions toward young people affected by sexual exploitation and violence.

### 3. Audience

There are two intended audiences for these comics

- **Practitioners working with children and young people.** This includes social workers, police officers, school nurses and other health professionals, teachers, youth workers, youth projects, drug and alcohol workers, youth offending teams, foster carers and others. An occupational hazard of working with children and young people is that it is easy to become overly familiar with language of 'good' 'effective' or even 'best practice'. One consequence is that professionals are unlikely to be surprised, challenged or inspired by the list of principles generated by the academic review. We want the comics to cut through professional language and bring home the importance of treating young people thoughtfully.
- **Young people.** We want these comics to be made available to children and young people (aged 11+) both online and in print. We anticipate them being used by children and young people to reflect on their own experiences, to advocate for better care for themselves and others, and to raise awareness with others about what good support actually looks and feels like.

### 4. Style, format and length

We are open to a range of different illustrative styles, but want the comic to be accessible to adults and children/young people (aged 11+), credible, and respectful of young people's experiences and emotions. It is likely this would tend more toward realism than cartoon, but not necessarily. Young people affected by sexual violence have often had traumatic experiences, but don't want to be defined by their victimhood. We want the comic to be inclusive, represent young people from different backgrounds and with different identities (including for example both young men and women; BME young people; physically and learning disabled young people and those from different family circumstances) and focus on what professionals can do to help them, rather than solely on

what has happened to them. The material for the comics (including the language) will be produced by staff in the IC, in consultation with our Young Researchers' Advisory Panel (see below).

The final format of the comics can be agreed after initial consultation with the artist, but at this stage we are thinking about 3-4 illustrations of each principle (e.g. two comic strips telling a story, and two individual illustrations). Ideally, these can be pulled together in one poster per principle.

The illustrations will draw on various stories, scenarios and quotes from young people that, together, provide a rich and powerful picture of what it really means to listen, for example. We expect a mixture of literal story-telling (frame-by-frame) and using metaphors to bring to life young people's descriptions of how they feel in different situations. This is likely to include encounters between professionals and young people ('practice moments'), as well as representations of young people's thoughts and inner life.

This product is not, therefore, a comic that needs to be read from start to finish. Instead it should be possible for someone to look at 1-2 pages at a time. We envisage that individual illustrations or comic strips could be used within training to communicate about each principle individually, or that a single illustration could be embedded in a twitter feed, for example.

The comics can be in colour or in black and white, and will need to be used online as well as in print format.

[This blog post](#) includes a range of examples of comics on mental health that achieve a similar outcome to what we are looking for on this project.

## **5. Consultation with young people**

The International Centre has a Young Researchers' Advisory Panel (YRAP), comprising young people who can offer expert advice on the issues researched, drawing on their own knowledge base and experience of working on previous research projects with the IC. The YRAP have reviewed this brief, and have agreed to support the project in two ways.

1. Review a short-list of scenarios/quotes/accounts and agree together on a final set to be illustrated.
2. Meet with the artist on September 7<sup>th</sup> to review and discuss work to date. This session will also include time to prepare for and plan dissemination and media activities.

## **6. Time-line**

- July 21<sup>st</sup> – Deadline for expressions of interest/bids
- w/c 24<sup>th</sup> July – Telephone conversation with artists and decision on provider
- Early August – Project meeting with IC staff to go through the material
- September 7<sup>th</sup> Meet with YRAP and IC staff to review progress/draft
- **October 20<sup>th</sup> – Final deadline for completed work**
- November 8<sup>th</sup> – Distribution of comics to social workers as part of the Economic and Social Sciences Festival of Social Science.

## 7. Tender

We are seeking quotes for the work from comic artists with an empathetic attitude toward children and young people affected by sexual exploitation and the need to represent their experiences thoughtfully. Experience illustrating issues of relevance to children and young people is valuable but not essential.

Please send a quote, your CV, and some samples of your work to [lucie.shuker@beds.ac.uk](mailto:lucie.shuker@beds.ac.uk) by 18<sup>th</sup> July, and feel free to get in touch with any questions.

Your quote should be for the production of 24 illustrations: 8 comic strips (three frames), and 16 individual illustrations. This would give us a set of three illustrations for each of the eight principles. Please break your final quote down by number of days to produce the work and your day rate. Please include 1 day for communication/meetings with the IC team.

The tender will be awarded based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Assessed by
40% budget	Quote
40 % artistic merit	Examples of work
20% experience of representing social issues/working with young people	Examples of work / CV

The artist needs to be available for a phone call w/c 24<sup>th</sup> July, a meeting in the first week of August and be able to produce the bulk of the work over August/September 2017.

## 8. Contract terms

Payment will be at the end of month following month of invoice. All invoices must quote a University of Bedfordshire purchase order number. It is anticipated that the contract will end at the end of November 2017

The contracted vendor will have to comply with the University of Bedfordshire's standard terms and conditions as outlined in the contract template attached.