



Yorkshire & The Humber  
**REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT**

# Nimos Safeguarding Evaluation

October 2017

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Document Owner:	T/DCI Jonathan Best
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Author(s):	T/DCI Jonathan Best, CSE Coordinator, Yath ROCU Damian Curtis, CSE Intelligence Analyst, Yath ROCU Emma Greenwood, CSE Prevent Officer, Victim Support
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## Introduction & Aims

The Nimos Safeguarding application was developed as a response to the issues surrounding “soft intelligence” which is understood to be held by partner agencies but is not always disseminated to Police or effectively recorded on Police systems. The Nimos application was developed to facilitate the submission of soft intelligence and was initially piloted in the Rotherham area of South Yorkshire. This report seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of progress to date in respect of the implementation of the project.

In order to achieve these objectives this report aims to examine the following:

- The experiences of Nimos application stakeholders including users, board members, other key leaders or influencers and the end users of any intelligence gathered
- The impact of organisational strategic objectives on the project (both now and in the future)
- The qualitative outcomes of submissions
- The projected outcomes (both positive and negative) of the project in its current form
- The barriers to effective delivery of the project
- The effectiveness of the approach to training taken by the board

## Government Protective Marking

This document is protectively marked **NOT PROTECTED** under the government protective marking scheme. This evaluation was commissioned by the Nimos Safeguarding application project board to be conducted independently by the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit. This report is being produced on the proviso that Yorkshire and the Humber ROCU are able to disseminate it to the Child Protection and Abuse Investigation (CPAI) national network of CSE Coordinators and Analysts. The approval of the board is required for any further dissemination.

## Executive Summary

In order to evaluate the pilot, a wide range of project stakeholders have been engaged and interviewed including 3rd sector organisations, statutory partnerships and Police colleagues. Those who have participated, range from front line workers, passionate about keeping people they work with safe; to senior executives, strategically leading the combat against the abhorrence that is child abuse. *Everyone* who has been engaged has praised the concept of Nimos, *everyone* recognises the need this project is trying to address and *everyone* believes Nimos Safeguarding can facilitate a significant improvement in delivering safeguarding in Rotherham.

The very nature of a pilot is to experiment, to examine different methodologies and test innovation. In doing so practical issues have been experienced which this evaluation seeks to draw upon, collate and discuss in order to allow future process improvement.

The volume of submissions received during the pilot period could be seen as disappointing and a barrier to future investment. However, when viewed against a suppressed roll out program to a small subset of users the potential is clear. Future success is reliant upon a structured, comprehensive roll out programme, which delivers Nimos Safeguarding to all 'Trusted Professionals' who may come into possession of crucial information.

The main obstacle is the way in which the information received is processed. Understandable concern has been raised in relation to accepting risk into an inappropriate location. This arises because there is no single organisation correctly configured to deal with both safeguarding concerns and intelligence evaluation and development. In order for this project to be fully successful, it is critical for an agreement to be reached as to how this risk is managed.

The commercial partners, Risual, have delivered absolutely to specification. This evaluation found no criticism in the delivery of the technological solution or management of the information thereafter. Risual have been consistently praised by professionals who have either encountered them in training sessions or those who have sought support in regards to obtaining and utilising Nimos Safeguarding.

## Aims & Objectives

Research commissioned by the Department for Education, found that a third of people who suspect child abuse do not report it. They are mainly deterred by the fear of having misread a situation or of wrongly accusing someone. This information then slips through the net and the opportunity to prevent harm at that point is lost. In addition, numerous enquiries<sup>1</sup> and serious case reviews have commented that professionals all possess different pieces of a jigsaw in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, but rarely is this put together effectively to keep children safe.

The aim of this project is to tackle underreporting of information known by 'Trusted Professionals' through delivering the simplest, most robust method of sharing information. The development of the Nimos Safeguarding application is the project's solution to this.

The project was not intended to replace existing processes for sharing information through, for example, safeguarding or information sharing forms but instead complements these methods to deliver the missing pieces of the jigsaw. A more comprehensive intelligence rich picture will allow for better strategic decisions relating to resourcing and services conditioning, as well the tactical delivery of safeguarding of vulnerable children.

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<sup>1</sup> An independent review of South Yorkshire Police's handling of child sexual exploitation 1997–2016 by Professor John Drew CBE 23/03/16 Weakness: Intelligence gathering – Page 75.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013 by Alexis Jay OBE Appendix 4 point 44 page 138, appendix 5 point 48 page 153, Inspections and External Reviews points 3.10 page 18 and 3.42 page 25.

## Methodology

In order to meet the aims and objectives of this report, the following methodology was undertaken:

- The journey and outcome of intelligence submitted via Nimos Safeguarding was tracked and reported on accordingly in respect of the following:
  - The effectiveness of the Nimos application in facilitating the submission
  - Whether the submission would have been made in the absence of the Nimos application
  - How beneficial the submission was in supporting and understanding the scale and nature of CSE in Rotherham particularly in respect of bringing potential perpetrators to justice and keeping people safe.
- Face to face interviews to gauge the experiences of the below key stakeholders of the project and/or Nimos Safeguarding:
  - Users of the Nimos application
  - Board members,
  - Key leaders or influencers,
  - The recipients of any intelligence gathered.
- In cases where face to face interviews were not possible, written submissions were obtained.

Recommendation raised through the evaluation are highlighted throughout document.

## The Intelligence Journey

Submissions made using Nimos Safeguarding were reviewed to assess how they were handled. The information submitted has been heavily redacted for the purposes of this evaluation.

All submissions were assessed and researched on the day they were submitted, unless this was out of office hours, or on a weekend in which case they were picked up on the next working day. Actionable intelligence was tasked as soon as the research was complete, and if it was assessed as high risk, it was raised at the weekly Joint CSE Tasking meeting. A summary of the review is included on the following pages.

**GPMS: NOT PROTECTED**

<b>Summary</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Review</b>
<p>Vulnerable adult was picked up on 2 occasions by a vehicle. Partial VRM, make, model, colour and first name of the driver provided.</p>	<p>Research was conducted using PNC, Partial Registration Search, and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). The vehicle was not identified. No details as to why the concern was reported, or details of the vulnerable adult, decision made not to record intelligence.</p>	<p>Research was conducted in the Regional Intelligence Unit and a potential vehicle was quickly identified. This highlights that there needs to be appropriate investment in research, to ensure that soft information is converted into useful intelligence. The source could have been approached with further questions to satisfy there being no intelligence value.</p>
<p>Submission 1. Named 17 year old boy disclosed he has been befriended by a 27 year old named adult, who bought him clothes, gave him money and took him to London for the day. Submission 2. The adult requested indecent images from the boy and is trying to pursue contact with him. Victim feels suspect has hacked his emails.</p>	<p>Intelligence was recorded on each occasion and a request for a MARF to be completed was made after each submission due to the safeguarding concerns. This was later checked and found not to have been completed. SYP Intel Submitted a Child Protection (CP) Referral which was actioned. A safeguarding visit to the victim was conducted. The perpetrator was identified, served with a course of conduct warning, risk assessed and flagged as a CSE Perpetrator.</p>	<p>The length of delay in a safeguarding response being initiated was unacceptable. The original referrer should have submitted a MARF when requested and SYP should not have waited for them to submit having received the information (inappropriately or not). The outcome proves the value of Nimos Safeguarding. Information which previously would not have been submitted, or would have got lost in referral pathways, has led to a safeguarding response and subsequently an intervention with a child, then, the disruption and flagging of a CSE perpetrator.</p>
<p>Named child disclosed to his mother that he had attended a party at another child's (First name provided) grandfather's house. It was believed that alcohol and drugs were present. Source details concerns in relation to grandfather allowing young people in his house so often. No details of address or last name known.</p>	<p>Intelligence recorded. Referred to Social Worker to identify address or details of grandfather. Potential name of child suggested and MARF requested – refused due to lack of certainty around the name.</p>	<p>Enquiries were undertaken to identify the grandfather, however these proved negative. Intelligence was recorded and has the potential to be linked to future investigations.</p>
<p>Named tenant of a specified address hasn't been seen for 2 months. On a specified date an Asian male arrived with a young white girl, aged about 20, Arrived at 0900, left at 1700. Full VRM given.</p>	<p>VRM is no trace on systems. The tenant is not linked to CSE. No intelligence recorded as VRM incorrect therefore no intelligence value. No concerns reported other than a sighting of an 'Asian male' with a female who is 'said to be about 20' and is therefore an adult.</p>	<p>Had the registration been correct it could have enabled further research.</p>

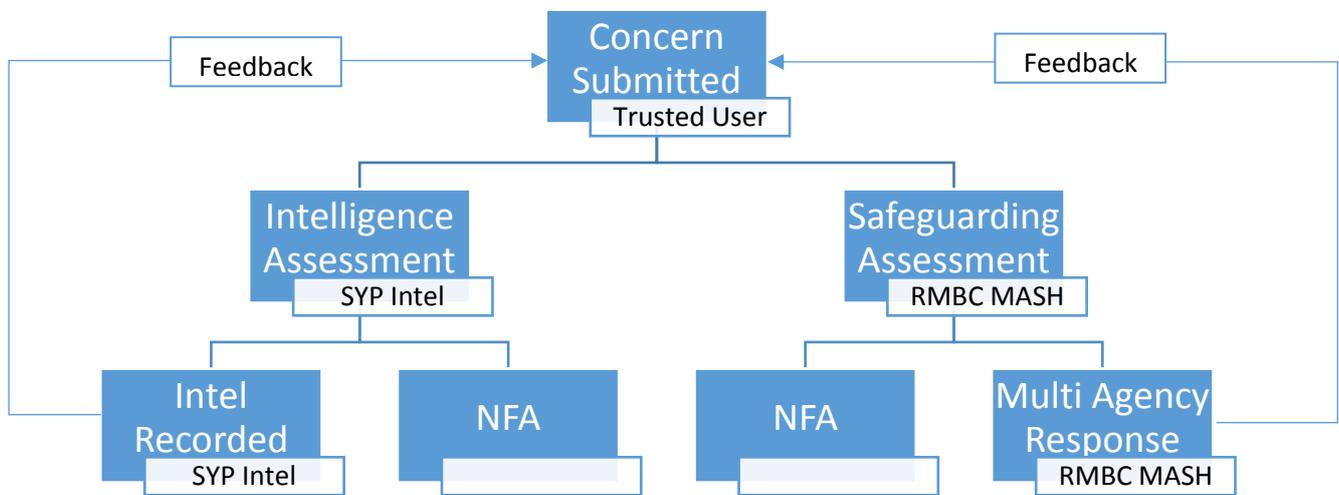
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Summary	Outcome	Review
<p>A family member of a named child at risk of CSE has disclosed involvement in drugs and also an association with a takeaway delivery driver on their route.</p>	<p>MARF requested. Intelligence was recorded and tasked to officers to identify delivery driver. The victim was visited and the driver was identified and visited.</p>	<p>There was confusion as to how SYP ended up visiting the victim, when the submitting user marked the submission as the source not wanting to speak to the police. The source of the intelligence was not the child, and due to a number of people having knowledge of the contents of the intelligence, it was decided a visit would not compromise the source. This could have been handled with more awareness of the relationship between the source and the submitting user but was not in contravention of the source's request.</p>
<p>Information received relating to young boys and girls entering and leaving a house on a named street. The residents are all males.</p>	<p>The address was identified as asylum property and was visited but new occupants had taken residency. The neighbours were spoken to and confirmed that children were no longer coming and going. Enquiries into the previous occupants were completed and shared with the Home Office. Intelligence was recorded.</p>	<p>An excellent demonstration of Nimos Safeguarding's potential. Had the occupants not moved on, the opportunity to safeguard would have been undertaken. This was an example of good information sharing that may prevent future risk.</p>
<p>Named children aged 9/10 were seen smoking in the locality and a car pulled up next to them. No further details were known. When the children were questioned they refused to go into more detail. The information has been shared with a Social Worker.</p>	<p>The intelligence was recorded and discussed at the CSE Joint Tasking meeting. MARF advised. When it was submitted it was rejected as the case is open to Social Care and a Social Worker is already aware.</p>	<p>Appropriate use of the application to build the picture of CSE in a high risk area. However there was a really confused use of the referrals process following the submission.</p>
<p>Information relating to named 17 year old males known to be CSE perpetrators getting younger girls to go into cars. Details of addresses and specific children provided.</p>	<p>This report was sent back with a request it to submit on a MARF. Due to the immediate safeguarding concerns for the children identified in the report the Police submitted a CP referral. The intelligence was recorded and was managed through the Joint CSE Weekly meeting.</p>	<p>A lot of information was provided in this submission and there was clear confusion as to what should be sent via Nimos Safeguarding and what should be on a MARF. A delay between this being received and the request for action was only minimised due to the diligence of the Intelligence Officer.</p>

Overall, the quality of the submissions received through Nimos Safeguarding was excellent. It is clearly evident that the concerns have been raised with trusted partners, allowing intelligence to be recorded in 78% of cases. The response from South Yorkshire Police (SYP) in researching and developing the intelligence is commendable.

Of concern however, is that in 66% of the cases, specific safeguarding concerns were raised which led to SYP Intelligence requesting a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) also be submitted. In order to minimise risk, the current practice often requires SYP Intelligence to submit a CP referral when the risk is identified. This creates unwanted and unnecessary demand for SYP. The process should be that the Trusted User or Professional should identify that this information is not appropriate for submission using Nimos Safeguarding and should submit the MARF themselves.

The route of the information was discussed at the project board on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and more training for users was suggested as an option to counter this issue. This evaluation has found, however, that some users would not have submitted the information despite having been trained. It was recommended that consideration be given to “twin tracking” information submitted via Nimos Safeguarding:



The overwhelming benefit of this approach would be an improved user experience; it would offer a simple, efficient way of getting information to the correct place. Care would need to be taken to ensure that this does not replace the existing referral processes through continued feedback to end users, highlighting when the information should have been submitted via a MARF. In the interim, the reduction in information being in limbo between partners outweighs this risk and ensures children are safeguarded at the earliest opportunity.

There is also inefficiency in having two agencies performing a gatekeeping function. If it could be agreed for a single point to perform this role and then to break out intelligence appropriately, as well as refer safeguarding concerns accurately, then this would eliminate some duplication. However, for this to work, specialist knowledge of both intelligence, and safeguarding functions would be required.

**Recommendation:**

- Review the pathway taken by information received via Nimos to minimise delays and to ensure appropriate responses.
- Ensure the receiver of the information is sufficiently skilled to develop it into intelligence.

# Stakeholder Experiences

## Experiences of Users

Trusted Professionals who had used Nimos Safeguarding to submit information were interviewed in relation to their experiences of the training and use of the application.

### **Before Nimos Safeguarding**

All users were aware of processes to enable sharing of information and all of them, apart from one, had shared information with the Police in the past. The experiences of these methods were varied, however examples of being on hold for in excess of 40 minutes to 101 were given and, on one occasion, the user gave up and did not share information. The most prolific user of the application stated that previously they would submit intelligence approximately 2 to 3 times a year.

Many of the information sharing routes discussed, relied upon individual contacts made: professionals would wait until they saw a Police Officer that came into their work place, or they would “scatter gun” emails to contacts they had made as a result of their role. This method of sharing information is dangerous, it certainly introduces a delay in the information being assessed and recorded, and often results in it never being recorded at all. The users stated they had never received any feedback from anyone when they have submitted information, and were unsure whether it has been received or acted upon.

### **Training**

Users were asked to rate the training they were provided from 1 *Very Useful* to 5 *Not Useful At All*. The average rating given was 2.5. The training was described as informative, being the right length, and the delivery method of face to face was generally praised, generating lots of questions and discussion which would not have happened with other training methods. Users felt that the training could have been improved through use of a training version of a device to have during the training, and working through a live submission so they knew what questions Nimos Safeguarding would ask.

### **The Nimos Safeguarding application**

All users praised the concept of Nimos Safeguarding, liking its innovative design and ease of use. A 3rd sector worker summed this up, “I feel there is a lot of ‘should we, shouldn’t we’, when it comes to sending things in, the application really helps with that” stating that **If they hadn’t had the app they probably would not have submitted the information as it was a bit tenuous.**

Users were asked to rate the experience of using Nimos Safeguarding from 1. *Very Easy* to 5. *Very difficult*. The average rating given was 2, with praise going to Paul Donnelly from Risual in providing technical support whenever users had experienced issues.

Users were very welcoming of the response via Nimos Safeguarding, which confirms that the information has been received and reassures them the information has been actioned in some way. A number of users were contacted by phone as a follow up to the information – this reinforced the fact that positive action was being taken upon receipt; however some felt dejected when they were told that their information was not intelligence and therefore had been rejected.

#### **Recommendation:**

- **Improve feedback to users upon the receipt of submissions, to include explanation of decisions in a manner that encourages future engagement.**

One submission was made by a user via a colleague's phone; they stated that they needed no guidance, and that Nimos Safeguarding was intuitive and simple. They said that it was not possible to have Nimos Safeguarding installed on their work phone, and while they would consider using their own phone, they did not see why they should have to.

Users were asked about their knowledge of a desktop version of Nimos Safeguarding – none were aware of its existence, but overwhelmingly they all said they would find it useful. The ability to copy and paste from internal reports and provide detailed information was perceived as a key benefit.

**Recommendation:**

- **Develop a browser based version of Nimos Safeguarding to allow users to submit on multi-platform desktop computers.**

None of the people interviewed stated that they had received any encouragement or pressure from management in their use of Nimos Safeguarding, it was not discussed in the 1:1 sessions and they did not feel accountable around its use.

**Recommendation:**

- **Awareness raising of Nimos Safeguarding be delivered to managers of users to ensure they are aware of the benefits and will therefore encourage its use.**

None of the users raised any concerns in relation to data security using Nimos Safeguarding and they felt reassured during the training that the information they provided would be handled sensitively, in line with any request they might make.

Users of Nimos Safeguarding were also asked what they understood by the term “concern” in the context of the application and overwhelmingly the response was that it referred to something they were worried about that they would need to pass onto someone else.

### **Non Submitting Users**

Questionnaires were sent to Trusted Professionals who had been trained on Nimos Safeguarding but never submitted any intelligence. All users who returned their questionnaires stated that they had successfully installed the Nimos Safeguarding application on their phone but that they had not come across any information specific to CSE that they could have submitted via the application, though many had submitted information to Police in relation to other issues through meetings, 101 and email.

The average experience of the training given by non submitting users (from 1 *Very Useful* to 5 *Not Useful At All*) was 1.3, significantly better than the group that had used Nimos Safeguarding to submit information. 80% of the users in this group were aware of the desktop version, and those that were aware, said it would be a more useful way of submitting information.

### **Experiences of Board Members**

Several board members took advantage of the opportunity to provide feedback regarding their experiences with both the Nimos application and the pilot project as a whole. The feedback was given via interview or via questionnaire and was resoundingly positive. Respondents praised the concept of the Nimos application and the friendly intuitive way in which it allowed users to instantly submit information, including photographs, in a less bureaucratic fashion. Board members stated that it was a good way to submit intelligence to the Police, it was another way to understand and mitigate risk, and that it was a step forward following on from the “See Something Say Something” campaign. They also highlighted the fact that it avoids some of the issues that are encountered by professionals when reporting concerns via the 101 non-emergency phone line.

With respect to the pilot project itself, the feedback was more mixed. One respondent stated that the programme was established professionally, had progressively ambitious aims and that initially the board was directed well. However, there were some concerns raised around the projects effectiveness of the delivery/rollout, management of information received, and training of users.

Project Board Chair Gary Ridgeway commented “Police commitment has been good generally, although unfortunately changes in personnel in the intelligence world have led to inconsistent attendance at board level, contributing to some delays and an erosion of confidence on the part of the commercial partner. Initially police representation was from PVP arena, with a good understanding of the recommendations from both Jay and Drew. However later, this moved into the intelligence world who, whilst cognisant of Jay and Drew, were concerned with potential for increased demand, and the impact on their capacity to respond.”

### Project Delivery

Several responses identified potential improvements in how the project could be delivered, with a general agreement that the key to success would be strategic buy in from senior management from relevant partners, with a commitment to adopting it as core practice. One respondent suggested that the lack of a formal or official sign off prior to the start of the project, was possibly responsible for some of the issues. Additionally, they mentioned that the User Working Group may have benefited from a tighter terms of reference or project plan, but it was acknowledged that they served a purpose. Further to the above, the question of funding was raised going forward, along with how Nimos Safeguarding could be rolled out nationwide.

#### Recommendation:

- **Involve the Home Office in facilitating a corporate delivery of the product on a national scale. This could potentially comprise of a centralised funding model and may help to ensure that partners have appropriate technology.**

### Rollout

Several of the board members commented on the slow pace at which the Nimos application was deployed and the table below confirms this lack of momentum, showing the total number of users to be 76 which falls short of the figure of 200 that was proposed in the first board meeting on 17th November 2016. Concerns around potential increases in submission volumes and issues with training and IT were all cited as factors that possibly impeded the rollout. Further questions were raised concerning whether or not the training (and, by extension, the rollout) had been targeted at the right audience<sup>2</sup>. This was perceived to be ideally front line staff who would be likely to come across CSE issues and would be able to identify them as such. Members suggested opening up the Nimos application to other threat areas or, deploying it to other types of professionals.



<sup>2</sup> 55% of the users of the application represent the RMBC Housing and Neighbourhood Services yet only 20% of the total submissions came from this group.

**Recommendations:**

- Open up the Nimos application to wider strategic threat areas.
- Roll out the Nimos application for use by other types of professionals such as school safeguarding officers, GPs and children's home staff.<sup>3</sup>

**Information Management**

Sharing of so called "soft intelligence" has been identified as one of the main issues when it comes to CSE, with reports by Professor Alexis Jay and Professor John Drew both highlighting the problem<sup>4</sup>. Despite these observations one board member suggested that an air of complacency exists in Rotherham around current intelligence sharing methods, which are seen to be sufficient. Another respondent stated that agencies need to "dare to share to get there" and said that building relationships and enabling gateways of communication was needed, either via information sharing agreements or by bodies being required to share information.

Concerns were also voiced around the guidance for data usage and ownership, triaging and the pathway of the intelligence itself. Another board member commented that the terms of reference for the project should have detailed a clear pathway for the intelligence, from the time it was submitted though to the expected outcome from those receiving and acting on it. However Rebecca Chapman of South Yorkshire Police did state that the Intelligence Single Point of Entry (SPOE) was the correct entry point for the information being submitted.

At this point it is important to note that there have been no reports of information breaches or people misusing Nimos Safeguarding. Although some users have left the organisations that they worked for during the pilot, this was identified and their access to the application was revoked accordingly.

**Recommendations:**

- Perform a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to negate concerns around collecting and sharing data. This would take the risk and fear out of the information sharing process and would give users confidence.<sup>5</sup>
- Review the pathway taken by information received via the Nimos application to minimise delays and to ensure appropriate responses.

**Training**

The training package, although fulfilling a purpose, was described as being built by committee. Issues surrounding the management of attendees<sup>6</sup> exist as does the question of whether the training programme, as it was, hampered the deployment of Nimos Safeguarding. In respect of the submissions themselves respondents noted that some submissions had been returned for referral which may have had a negative effect on the confidence of those submitting information. It was confirmed that intelligence training was provided, however there was concern that it may need refreshing.

<sup>3</sup> From a health perspective the Clinical Commissioning Group could potentially assist with the roll-out to other health sectors.

<sup>4</sup> An independent review of South Yorkshire Police's handling of child sexual exploitation 1997–2016 by Professor John Drew CBE 23/03/16 Weakness: Intelligence gathering – Page 75.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013 by Alexis Jay OBE Appendix 4 point 44 page 138, appendix 5 point 48 page 153, Inspections and External Reviews points 3.10 page 18 and 3.42 page 25.

<sup>5</sup> The Data Protection Act due is to be replaced by General Data Protection Regulation in 2018 which will require all projects like this to have a PIA. A retrospective PIA will not be mandatory however the Inter-agency Information Sharing Agreement (which is subscribed to by several organisations including the Yath forces and Sheffield and Barnsley Council) suggests the use of PIAs as best practice.

<sup>6</sup> The minutes for the board meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017 show training was provided to some secondary schools and one primary school, however none of those trained signed up to use the application.

**Recommendations:**

- Utilise a training coordinator to manage a developed package to include application training, intelligence submission and CSE awareness.
- Develop a distance learning facility to support a champion based roll out of Nimos Safeguarding that doesn't require face to face training, is accessible to all and is less likely to hinder the ongoing rollout of the Nimos application.<sup>7</sup>
- Ensure that those who are trained to use Nimos subsequently download and register the application.

**Other Issues**

In addition to the above there were also some IT problems mentioned by two of the respondents, however they were both keen to emphasise how helpful Risual were in resolving these issues, with one person praising the company's absolute commitment.

Experiences of Managers

The views of the managers of application users were sought to evaluate the impact and opportunities for them. Engagement with the evaluation was limited with only a third of managers approached responding.

One manager felt that before Nimos Safeguarding the pathway for submitting intelligence was not always clear and that staff sometimes sent scatter emails to a number of different people to share information. Concerns were also raised that 'lower level' intelligence was often not shared through fear of it being rejected.

The managers' views of Nimos Safeguarding were positive, *"it's great to have simple to use, efficient and quick information sharing routes that can be used live time"*. Managers would welcome the opportunity to receive performance reports specific to their teams.

Issues were raised in relation to the number of users trained, while they understand Nimos Safeguarding is in pilot, they would have found it more practical to assess the impact it has on their teams if the training had been rolled out to a large proportion of their team. They did not raise concerns in relation to abstraction and delivery method of the training.

**Recommendations:**

- Roll out Nimos Safeguarding for use by other types of professionals working with CSE such as school safeguarding officers, GPs and children's home staff.
- Provide performance reports to all team managers that have staff who are using Nimos Safeguarding.

**Conclusion**

The project has delivered a more efficient way of sharing information, known to professionals, with partners allowing them the opportunity to join pieces together and safeguard children. The technological solution delivered has withstood the scrutiny of this evaluation, and appears scalable and manageable.

Issues identified relating to routing and ownership of information need rectifying, with commitment needed to any agreed process by all partners. Once achieved investment into structured, widespread roll out will significantly improve the opportunity for this project to meet its objectives.

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<sup>7</sup> A video has already been produced in respect of the application itself, however at this time it is not widely available and it does not encompass intelligence submission training.