

# Online harms training: Social Switch evaluation

## Research

Young woman looking at laptop screen.

## Key information

Publication type: General

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## The programme

The Social Switch Project aims to switch the narrative on how social media's relationship to youth violence is understood, tackled and solved. The programme has two strands:

1. Training for frontline practitioners to enable them to challenge negative online behaviour.
2. Support for young people into sustainable digital careers.

## Evaluation summary and methodology

Catch 22, the delivery provider, commissioned NPC to evaluate the Social Switch Project exploring process and outcomes.

The evaluation is based on quantitative and qualitative feedback collected from participants through surveys and interviews.

While limited survey responses and interviews and lack of baseline survey means robust conclusions on impact not possible, the evaluation presents some positive indications on outcomes across strands.

## Key findings

### **Strand 1: training for professionals** (Survey n=64, interview n=9)

- The main benefit of the training was felt to have been gaining up-to-date knowledge about specific social media platforms young people are using and how.
- Practitioners increased their confidence in being able to talk to young people about their online presence and activities, felt most confident about maintaining professional boundaries while working with young people and responding appropriately to safeguarding risks.

### **Strand 2: support for young people into sustainable digital careers** (Surveys n=34, interviews n=7)

- The majority (67 per cent) of young people had gone on to full or part-time employment since their participation. Of those in employment, 36% were working in social media or digital marketing roles.
- All aspects of the Social Switch Project training were rated positively by young people overall. Most of the young people (74%) felt that the Social Switch Project training had been extremely or very helpful in helping them to get to where they are now in their lives.

## **Emerging best practice**

### **Strand 1: training for professionals**

- Some interviewees also mentioned that they benefitted from the training being group based, as this meant they got to hear the experiences of other people from different sectors.

### **Strand 2: support for young people into sustainable digital careers**

- Support with CVs and job search process were particularly valued by the young people who struggled with the job search process.
- The 1-to-1 career coaching offered by the programme was seen as something unique especially compared to mentoring the young people might have received in school.
- The caring and person-centred approach of staff on the training was also highlighted.

## **Challenges and lessons learned**

### **Strand 1: training for professionals**

- The changing nature of social media usage makes training delivery challenging. Participants suggested that a refresher training, email updates with information on new technology/ trends could be beneficial to maintaining practitioners' confidence going forwards.

### **Strand 2: support for young people into sustainable digital careers**

- Feedback from those who had struggled to gain entry to employment indicated that additional support in finding appropriate apprenticeships / entry-level employment opportunities would be beneficial.

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