



# Northumberland County Council

## **Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 7 January 2021**

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### **Tootoot Briefing January 2021**

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Children's Service, Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Guy Renner Thompsom

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#### **Purpose of report.**

To inform the committee about Tootoot, a safeguarding app for use in educational settings

#### **Recommendations**

##### **It is recommended that:**

- 1) The committee consider the strengths and weaknesses of the app
- 2) The committee reviews the use and impact of the app by the Skills team
- 3) The committee gives consideration to any future use of the app in Northumberland schools

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to all the Living and Learning priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

#### **Key Issues**

- 1) Safeguarding is a key concern for all educational establishments and all settings have to adhere to national guidance and regulations as well as the local procedures.
- 2) Seeking and hearing the pupil voice is a key element of education leaders work and is an area considered by Ofsted in the inspection framework.
- 3) Some young people struggle to speak out when they have concerns and issues and there is regular consideration of how to improve this.

## **1. Background**

From a young age co-founder of Tootoot Michael Brennan was a victim of verbal and physical bullying, and whilst support systems such as Childline helped, they couldn't feed back to his school. As a result, his problems were never fully solved. As a result of his experiences, he devoted his time to supporting other victims.

In 2008 he became Head Boy of Berwick Academy and won a National Young Persons Rotarian Award for Services to Anti-Bullying. During this time he quickly realised there was no digital solution or app that allowed children and young people to confidentially and discreetly report their concerns, yet every child and young person had access to a mobile device.

During university he started developing the idea of Tootoot and in 2009 he enlisted cofounder and technical genius Kieran Innes to lead the development of the first Tootoot Platform.

Tootoot makes it simple for pupils to report anything from bullying to a mental health concern. The simple-to-use app makes it easier for young people to speak up and gives them confidence that their concerns are being taken seriously. Staff can respond to and manage concerns effectively using a case-management feature, building up a chronology from start to finish.

## **2. The Position in Northumberland**

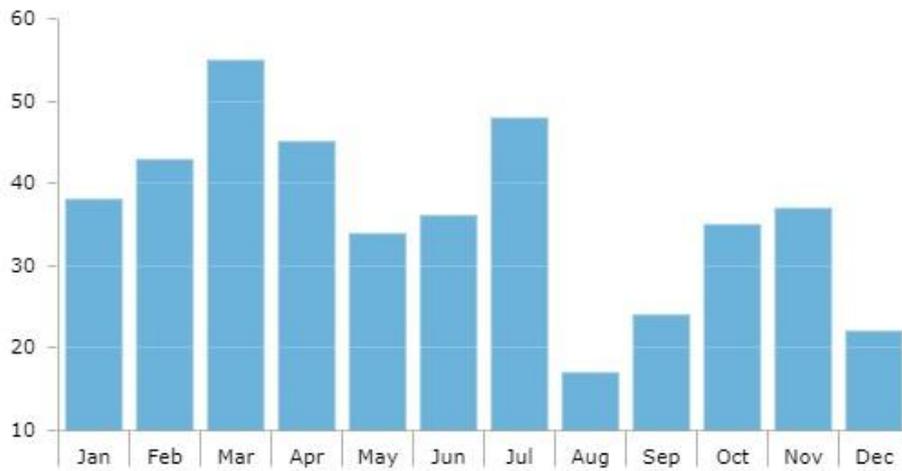
A small number of schools in Northumberland have used Tootoot in the past. In 2018 Tootoot made a series of presentations at the LA headteachers termly briefings. There was widespread interest, however challenging budgets meant very few schools went on to trial and purchase the product. Although the cost of circa £800 per school was probably reasonable, the schools saw the product more as supplementary to their other school safeguarding systems (eg Cpoms) rather than as an essential central aspect.

Currently the only users in Northumberland are the Skills Service. They are charged £1566 per year over 3 years with a 4<sup>th</sup> year then free. Their usage over the last 12 months is described below-

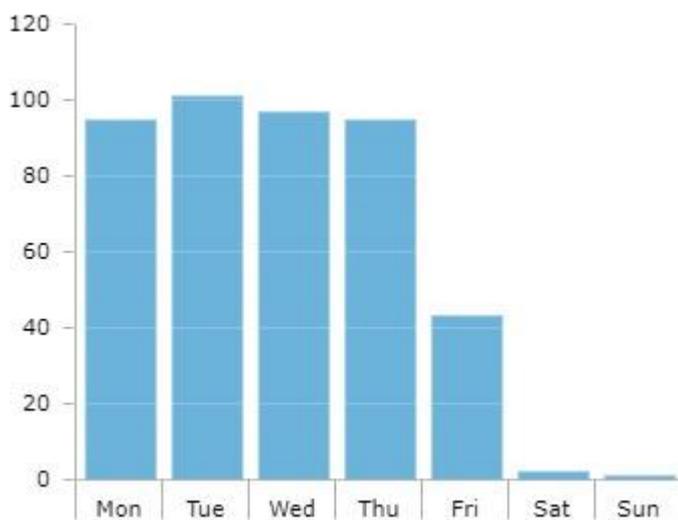
We have 224 mentors and around 6200 learners.

We have dealt with 410 incidents and we are currently managing 9 which are open. 7 of those have been referred to the MASH. We have had police involvement with at least 4 of these.

### Incidents by month total



### Incidents by day



Alnwick centre is the busiest centre with 55 referrals. Wednesday is the busiest day with Monday a close second. Friday is our least busy day.

Mental Health issues increased by 10% in Covid months from young people at home.



### 3) Additional information-

[Tootoot presentation](#)

## IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

<b>Policy:</b>	The recommendations of this report support the education priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.
<b>Finance and value for money:</b>	Should a directive be given to explore the app further appropriate procurement procedures should be followed
<b>Legal:</b>	No implications
<b>Procurement:</b>	No implications
<b>Human Resources:</b>	No implications
<b>Property:</b>	No implications
<b>Equalities:</b>  <b>N/A</b>	Should a directive be given to expand the use of foot, as set out in the recommendations of this report, an EIA assessment would need to be carried in conjunction with this strategy in the light of its potential impact on protected groups.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	Should a Northumberland or North of Tyne Pupil Premium Strategy be approved to be developed at some point in the future, a risk assessment would be undertaken prior to the implementation of the strategy.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder:</b>	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
<b>Customer Considerations:</b>	The recommendations in this report are based upon a desire to support improved outcomes for the specific group of children and young people living in Northumberland who attract pupil premium funding.
<b>Carbon Reduction:</b>	It is not envisaged that the recommendations set out in this report would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction
<b>Wards:</b>	All wards

## CONSULTATION

This report has been considered by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Chief Legal Officer.

### Background Papers

None

### Report sign off

Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Executive Director of Finance & Section S151 Officer	CH
Relevant Executive Director	CMcC
Chief Executive	DL
Portfolio Holder(s)	GRT

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