

‘CHELSEA’S CHOICE’ TESTIMONIALS

"Chelsea's Choice is an innovative and powerful production highlighting the very serious and emotional issue of child sexual exploitation. The production shows how young people, boys and girls, are groomed by adults for the purposes of sexual exploitation using various methods, ensnaring young people and eventually taking complete control and dominating their whole lives. The audience will gain a better understanding of the devastating impact that sexual exploitation has on a young person's life. This is a very useful and innovative way of raising awareness of the issues relating to sexual exploitation and reaching young people, giving them some skills and knowledge to be able to protect themselves

from this form of abuse"

– **Sheila Taylor, National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People**

“Raising young peoples’ awareness of child sexual exploitation is key in helping to prevent them from becoming victims of this crime. AlterEgo’s safeguarding drama, ‘Chelsea’s Choice’, does this by creatively tackling the issue of child sexual exploitation, exploring the different ways that young people can be drawn into abusive relationships and illustrating some of the consequences.”

– **Nathalie Walters, Chief Executive, Safe and Sound Derby**

“The ‘Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation’ action plan recognised the crucial role of raising awareness amongst children, parents and professionals in preventing exploitation taking place. The action plan also recognised that identifying the tell-tale signs of grooming and exploitation can play an important role in raising awareness of the issue. The Government believes that initiatives like ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ have a key role to play in preventing grooming and exploitation and in helping keep children safe from this heinous crime.”

– **Rohini Krishnamurthy, Child Safeguarding Division, Department for Education**

“Chelsea’s Choice toured in Staffordshire for 8 weeks, providing a variety of events to multi-agency workers, independent children homes, district councils and their partners, foster carers and to all schools - local authority, Academies, Independent and short stay. The drama was a massive success with schools providing very positive feedback.

Following the events we were made aware of 17 disclosures which ranged from concerns about messages on Facebook that had become threatening, allegations of indecent assault (waiting for CPS decision), concerns raised about photos that they (or their friends) had distributed, concerns about strangers messaging them online and concerns about people they had met online and then met in the real world. Some disclosures were from young people who had already been exploited and were now happy to seek counselling as a result of seeing the play.

The play clearly gave young people the mechanism to speak out and to raise issues with staff and parents that they perhaps were uncomfortable with raising in the past. A great success, we will be having the drama again”

– **Jane Rowbottom, Staffordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board**

“We have just had AlterEgo deliver ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ to 180 Year 8 students. It was without doubt the most powerful presentation I have seen in 33 years of teaching. The actors were highly professional and skilled in delivering a very difficult message. Students that have spoken to me since were unanimous in their appreciation of the piece and the messages it gave, as for the staff who had the privilege to watch they have had nothing but praise for the content and delivery.
 – **Tim Mottram, Assistant Headteacher, Blythe Bridge School, Staffordshire**

“I think the drama was a huge success and hope we can deliver it again here in Northants. I think the actors were excellent, their characters were believable and the audience could relate to them. The key messages about grooming and abusive relationships were explored well and the young people were given an opportunity to discuss Chelsea’s choices in more detail after the performance - which again was a really good way to interact with the audience. Whilst the topic can be hard to discuss the drama enabled us to empower the audience by giving them clear messages and a deeper understanding about the issues and where they can get help etc.”
 – **Ali Mills, Service Manager, CAN Youth Team, Northampton**

“As one of the parents involved with Safe & Sound Derby at yesterday’s forum for Surrey Police in Guildford, I would like to thank you for such a fantastic performance. This is the second time I have seen ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ and both times it reduced me to tears, as it is a powerful and thought provoking piece of drama. I believe that this should be rolled out nationally and delivered in all secondary schools, to raise awareness for both children and parents.”
 – **Parent of sexually exploited young girl**

“I just wanted to let you know how pleased we were with our decision to show yr 8 the ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ presentation. I was slightly concerned that some of the students might not have been mature enough but I was proved wrong - it appeared to hit exactly the right note and both students and staff were impressed by the drama. I would not hesitate to recommend this to anyone considering whether to run it or not - in my book it's a definite must!”
 – **Christine Freeman, Dene Magna School, Gloucestershire**

“The Chelsea’s Choice production was outstanding. The message that was given to the students was concise and informative. It was performed in such a way that students were completely engaged in what the play was about. It was hard hitting and created such an atmosphere in the hall where the students were on the edge of their seats. The great part was the Q&A sessions afterwards, this provided the students time to ask questions, which demonstrated how much they had learnt and how much they were listening as the questions went on for ever and were so detailed. The de-brief that the actors gave was amazing as it broke down the story line into easy to understand parts and discussed certain aspects of the play in a lot more detail and provided students with a variety of information on how to keep themselves safe. Both staff and students that watched it thought it was excellent.”
 – **Liam Edwards, Cleeve School, Gloucestershire**

“Gloucestershire schools have had nothing but praise for Chelsea’s Choice. The children themselves have been engaged and forthcoming with their views and questions about what has happened to Chelsea and it has been an excellent way of encouraging them to understand how best to keep themselves safe. Through working in this way we have also been able to signpost children and young people to local services should they want to talk to someone. School staff have also fed back that they are better able to understand what is meant by Child Sexual Exploitation, to recognise the signs and to act on them.

Because the play can be adapted to any setting, we have also been able to engage with children and young people who have learning difficulties as well as those with severe behavioural difficulties who attend some of our special schools. A number of Pupil Referral Units and young people from our alternative educational settings have also been able to view the play and access the learning.

Most schools have targeted Chelsea’s Choice at Year 8 pupils as a preventative measure and those who were initially sceptical about their Year 8s being able to understand the messages and take them seriously have fed back that they were extremely pleased with the reactions and feel this was the right age group to target. Other schools who chose to show Chelsea’s Choice to Year 9s were equally as impressed and are now asking whether their next year’s Year 8s can access the play.”

– **Jane Bee, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board**

“As the Head of Public Protection for Surrey Police I would recommend that those of us involved in the criminal justice system and charged with the responsibility of protecting children should take the opportunity to have our eyes opened to the issues of exploitation by Chelsea’s Choice. The impact of this awareness raising is significant and the feedback I have received from colleagues and partners who recently saw the show has been full of praise and shown how thought provoking the content is in terms of changing attitude and perception.”

– **Detective Superintendent Jon Savell, Head of Public Protection, Surrey Police**

“On behalf of The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board I would like to express our thanks and gratitude to your theatre company for the hard work & dedication in creating and performing Chelsea’s Choice.

Feedback from Schools and professionals has been incredibly positive. When one of our representatives attended a performance within a School, he reported that it was very pleasing to see young people engaging with you and your fellow performers; discussing what is a very sensitive issue. The performance deals with sensitive and potentially frightening issues for young people, also giving School staff the opportunity for further discussion with pupils after the show.

We felt and still feel that the Chelsea’s Choice production is one of the best ways to raise awareness around an issue that can have a damaging effect on young people without them seeing themselves as victims. We feel now that more young people after seeing the production would have the confidence to speak out if they felt that they or their friends were being sexually exploited.”

– **Paula Whitehead, Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board**

“Just a short message to thank you on behalf of Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board for the work you and the team undertook in the county during the month of November 2012.

I saw Chelsea's Choice at Beaufort School on 29th October and again at the Sexual Exploitation Conference on 29th November. I was blown away on both occasions. The content of the script and the powerful delivery combine to make this a particularly successful medium to deliver a critically important message.

I am more than content that we have spent money wisely and am confident that close on 6000 young people in Gloucestershire are now better equipped to keep themselves safer.

I will have no hesitation in recommending you to other Safeguarding Boards across the country - in fact I've already started!”

– Roger Clayton, Chair, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

“I just wanted to say a huge thank you to yourself and to your Chelsea’s Choice actors for an amazing tour of Stoke on Trent Schools. I am still having people contact me to ask if there are any more performances.

I attended as many of the shows as I could and got a real feel of the impact the production had on both young people and staff. The actors were true professionals. They dealt with a couple of quite difficult audiences and were able to challenge young people so as not to lose the importance of the messages contained within the production. Their performances were powerful, believable, engaging and thought provoking.

I would definitely recommend you to others, and we have discussed the possibility of bringing you back again next year.... I sincerely hope to be in touch!

Thank you once again - on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Board, Stoke on Trent Schools and Academies, but most importantly, thank you from young people in Stoke on Trent. Many young people (and professionals) will never forget Chelsea’s Choice.”

– Dawn Casewell, Safeguarding Education Officer, Children & Young People Services, Stoke-on-Trent