



New push to prevent child sexual abuse in the South West

(Thursday, July 7, 2011) A new push to protect children in the South West from sexual abuse will be kick started next week with a specialist training day for those who work with children and families.

The one-day event, which aims to equip those who work on the frontline with vital knowledge and understanding of sexual abuse and abusers, marks the start of renewed efforts to ensure that professionals, volunteers, parents and carers across the South West are as best placed as they can be to prevent child sexual abuse from happening.

Taking place at Police Headquarters in Exeter, the event is being organised by Stop it Now! UK and Ireland and Devon and Cornwall Police. It brings together Police and Probation Officers, social workers, NHS staff and faith, sporting and volunteer groups to better coordinate and deliver their preventative efforts.

Called 'Preventing Child Sexual Abuse – Making it Everybody's Business', it will explore some of today's key issues surrounding child sexual abuse, featuring workshops conducted by specialist staff from child protection charity, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. Workshops include:- female sexual abusers; sex offending and the Internet; children who display worrying sexual behaviour; and how agencies and workers roles fit in developing and delivering a comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention strategy.

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland works with statutory, private and voluntary sector workers as well as with parents, carers and other members of the public to protect children from harm. Following the Exeter event, the Parents Protect! public education programme (www.parentsprotect.co.uk) will get underway. Stop it Now! is already working with children's centres, schools, faith and community groups in London, Birmingham and Thames Valley to deliver Parents Protect! sessions to their parents and carers and is looking to do the same in the South West over the next nine months.

Director of Stop it Now!, Donald Findlater said: "It is not good enough to only respond to abuse after it has happened. *Preventing* child sexual abuse doesn't get too many headlines, but it does mean that children and families don't have to suffer the anguish that our headlines too often speak of after a child has been harmed.

"Preventing abuse from happening in the first place involves equipping all adults - professionals, parents and carers - with sound information that will help them protect children. We all need to know how abusers and potential abusers operate, the warning signs to look out for and where we can go for help and advice so we can do the best we can to protect children. We cannot leave tackling this issue to any one agency or organisation – we all have a role to play."

Detective Sergeant 3333 Jill Snell of the Devon and Cornwall Police Public Protection Unit added: "We, at Devon and Cornwall Police, are very much looking forward to participating in this event. We have been signposting Stop it Now! services for a number of years and are extremely grateful for the services provided by them. They are an invaluable asset to those working within Safeguarding Children roles."

The Stop it Now! campaign operates a free phone confidential helpline – 0808 1000 900 – which people can call for advice and support in relation to child sexual abuse issues.

Anyone interested in attending the training event should visit www.stopitnow.org.uk for more information and booking details.

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Notes to Editors

For further information and interview opportunities please contact Deborah Denis on 01372 847160, 07540 690 315 or ddenis@lucyfaithfull.org.uk.

1. Named after its founder, Baroness Lucy Faithfull of Wolvercote, the Foundation is a child protection charity operating UK-wide and specialising in safeguarding children from sexual abuse. The Foundation's policy is to collaborate with individuals and agencies internationally to develop a more child sensitive and offender aware culture in our societies. The Foundation contributes to legislation and to policy and procedure reviews concerned with safeguarding children in faith communities, in schools, in leisure facilities, on the Internet and living away from home.

www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

2. Stop it Now! UK and Ireland aims to prevent child sexual abuse by increasing public awareness and empowering people to act responsibly to protect children. Stop it Now! believes that it is the responsibility of all adults to take positive action to prevent the sexual abuse of children. Stop it Now! is an alliance of leading children's charities, working with the government and child protection agencies, to promote public education and prevent child sexual abuse. The Stop it Now! helpline has been operating since 2002 and aims to prevent child abuse by encouraging abusers and potential abusers to seek help and by giving adults the information they need to protect children safely. The helpline is funded by the Ministry of Justice and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. The England campaign is supported by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The Stop it Now! campaigns in Wales and Scotland are supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government respectively. www.stopitnow.org.uk.