



HELPLINEREPORT



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'Together we can prevent child sexual abuse'

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2002 - 2005

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Working to protect children



Working to protect children



Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

FOREWORD

“The scale of the problem of sexual abuse of children is such that a major rethink of policy is needed – with much greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.”

Joseph Rowntree Foundation - 2004

I am delighted to write the foreword to this report. It represents three years of groundbreaking work in offering new ways of protecting children from sexual abuse. Baroness Lucy Faithfull, the founder of our organisation, firmly believed that one of the best ways of protecting children was helping offenders to change. The work of our Stop it Now! campaign and its Helpline attempts to do just that. This is the first Helpline established to help those people who are concerned about their own thoughts and behaviours. Over 30% of our callers have come from that group. The Helpline is also designed for people worried about the behaviour of close friends and family: they are our second largest group of callers. Given the media image of sex offenders, it is extremely difficult for people to recognise that their own behaviour or that of someone very close to them may be sexually abusive. It is a mark of true success that so many people have felt able to seek and receive advice through the Stop it Now! Helpline.

I would like to thank everyone who has funded Stop it Now! over the last 3 years. Special thanks go to DFES and the Henry Smith Charity for their support for the overall campaign. However, we are particularly indebted to the Home Office. The Public Protection Unit of the National Probation Directorate has provided both moral and financial backing to the Helpline from its inception.

The success of the Helpline is due to a team effort by our staff. Donald Findlater, Deputy Director of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, has provided inspirational leadership in managing the Helpline. Teresa Hughes, the Helpline Co-ordinator, has shown determination and dedication in ensuring that it runs smoothly. Suzanne Fuller has done an excellent job in running the database we need to demonstrate that we are achieving and beating our targets. The Helpline staff have shown a very high level of commitment to a job which is rewarding but also very challenging. We are grateful to Hereward Harrison, previously of ChildLine, for the Helpline training he provides. Case supervision from Alice Newman, Simon Sauzé and Teresa Hughes has been vital, especially in helping staff to encourage callers to keep in touch and in some cases to receive face to face therapeutic work. John Brownlow, the original Stop it Now! UK & Ireland Central Co-ordinator, worked closely with the team in developing the Helpline Protocol and preparing the leaflets that publicise the Helpline number. Teamwork has continued into the production of this report. I would like to thank everyone involved, including Suzanne Fuller; Judith Bentley, our Central Administrator; Jacky Findlater, Helpline Operator; Tink Palmer who directs the Stop it Now! campaign across the UK & Ireland, and Hilary Eldridge, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Director.

Baroness Valerie Howarth of Breckland, OBE

Vice Chair, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Chair, Stop it Now! UK & Ireland Advisory Council

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1 SUMMARY

This report explores three years' activity of the Stop it Now! UK & Ireland Helpline from its beginnings in June 2002 until May 2005. It demonstrates the effectiveness of this unique and innovative approach. Child sexual abuse is difficult to talk about and consequently under-reporting is a major problem. Abusers are usually related or well known to their victims. The criminal justice system does not deal easily with this type of offence and very few allegations lead to a criminal conviction.

Those of us who work to protect children from sexual abuse believe in the importance of preventative measures. To be successful, these measures must reach all adults, including abusers and potential abusers, encouraging them to change their behaviour. This is a real challenge as it involves providing the means for people to come forward and ask for help.

1.1 How we started

The Stop it Now! concept originated in the United States. Founded by Fran Henry, a survivor of childhood abuse in her family, Stop it Now! US raised awareness of sexual abuse and asked abusers and potential abusers and their close family and friends to telephone a Helpline for advice. Given their success, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) decided to explore whether the Stop it Now! approach could work in the UK & Ireland. Our joint conference, held in 1999, brought together colleagues concerned about all aspects of child sexual abuse with the originators of Stop it Now! US. The enthusiasm that followed this event provided the impetus to create Stop it Now! UK & Ireland.

Alliances have been fundamental to the success of the campaign to date; alliances that include the main children's charities, survivor and faith groups, statutory and government agencies, as well as representation from local projects. The continuing development of Stop it Now! UK & Ireland has been facilitated by the consistent financial support given by the National Probation Directorate of the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills. We are also indebted to Stop it Now! US for their help and support.

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The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, a charity whose aim is to protect children from sexual abuse, agreed to lead and manage the campaign and to develop a Helpline. In 2001, the Home Office funded a Central Co-ordinator post to develop the campaign and the Department of Health paid the necessary support costs. The campaign holds the protection of children from child sexual abuse at its very heart.

Its three pronged approach encourages:

- The setting up of locally managed awareness raising projects
- Production and dissemination of accurate information and awareness raising materials
- Provision of a Freephone Helpline

In June 2002 we began operating our Helpline with a formal launch by Home Office Minister, Hilary Benn, in September. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation staff, including therapists experienced in work with sexual offenders and their families, supported the Helpline. It was the first of its kind in this country, aimed directly at the following groups:

- Men and women worried about their own sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviours relating to children
- People worried about the behaviour of someone close to them
- Parents, carers and other adults worried about the behaviour of a child or young person

We devised a protocol for calls that provides confidential advice on an anonymous basis. However, if the identity of the caller or child becomes known and an offence has taken place or a child is at risk, this information is passed to the relevant child protection agency.

This report contains examples of calls to the Helpline to show the kinds of requests we receive and our responses to them. Each example represents the key elements of calls or emails from different individuals.

1.2 Effectiveness of the Helpline

On launching the Stop it Now! Helpline we did not know how successful we would be in reaching our target groups. Given public attitudes to people who sexually abuse children, there was every reason why people would not want to see themselves or those close to them as abusers in the first place. So why would they consider ringing a Helpline? Awareness raising using the media, leaflets and campaign materials was extremely important in encouraging people to phone. The support of our colleagues in voluntary and statutory agencies, including the Police, was vital to our success.

In 2003/04 we agreed with our funder, the National Probation Directorate, a target of 90 calls per month. We achieved an average of 117 per month. In 2004/05 we raised the target to 120 per month. We achieved this target and raised it further to 150 calls per month for 2005/06. What is particularly exciting about the calls is that over 80% are from our target groups, with 45% coming from people worried about their own thoughts or behaviour.

We are achieving what we had set out to do: reach abusers, potential abusers and their families. Some want advice but choose to remain anonymous. However, after repeat calls, others come forward for face to face contact and work with us and other child protection agencies towards a safer future for themselves and for children around them.

Whilst we are delighted that we are reaching our target audiences, the Helpline is proving to be of value to others, for example young people worried about their own thoughts and behaviour. There has been an increasing number of calls from professionals, including Police, children's services, schools and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as Relate and Samaritans, who are using us as an expert advice line to help them with sexual abuse related issues.

By May 2005 we had taken over 4000 calls and helped more than 2000 individual callers. We had also helped 250 individuals via email. We look forward to further expansion and development thanks to the continuing support of the National Probation Directorate. The funding provided in year four enables us to undertake more face to face support for callers who would like to receive that service.

In the three years since its introduction to the UK and Ireland, Stop it Now! has tackled child sexual abuse using innovative and effective approaches to prevention. Stop it Now!'s freephone Helpline has been an integral part of these efforts, providing information and advice to adults concerned about child sexual abuse, whether those concerns relate to themselves or to others. This report is a review of the activities, progress and impact of the Helpline and its associated email service. The full range of Stop it Now! activity in the UK & Ireland is covered in our Annual Report.

1.3 Implications for the future

This Helpline report demonstrates that people within our target groups will seek help from a confidential advice line. The majority of callers are those who are abusing, or worried they might abuse, and their close family members. Some will agree to go to the Police or other agency if they believe this will lead to face to face help. Our concern is that the existing child protection system does not encourage people to come forward. Fear of the consequences, including loss of family and a 'monster' label, keeps child sexual abuse a secret. There are insufficient facilities for intervention for those who do come forward, be they adult abusers, young people who display sexually harmful behaviour, family members or victims of abuse.

We need national strategies to ensure that professionals intervene with families in consistent ways. Young people whose sexual behaviour is concerning need to be assessed as children in need and receive services appropriate to their needs and to the problems they may present.

Stop it Now! UK & Ireland looks to collaborate with colleagues from government and from statutory and voluntary agencies to develop more effective systems. We have already begun this discussion in our Advisory Council. Funding permitting, we plan to run a series of seminars throughout the UK & Ireland. These will be followed by a report proposing how we need to review and change some of our current policies. It will also outline what initiatives may replace them and how these might be implemented. An example of key preventative work is the setting up of increasing numbers of locally or regionally managed Stop it Now! projects, providing public education and relevant information to local communities. To ensure their long term future these projects should be embedded in the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

2 THE CASE FOR STOP IT NOW!

Research estimates that 1 in 6 children in the UK experiences sexual abuse before the age of 18 (NSPCC, 2000¹); most of these children know their abuser and the abuse is likely to be perpetrated by a parent, sibling or other close family member. However, in reality only a very small number of victims report their abuse during childhood. Consequently, only a small minority of children who are sexually abused come to the attention of child protection agencies. Even when they have come to attention, very few complaints to the authorities about child sexual abuse result in a criminal conviction (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004²).

In recent years the media has shown increasing interest in child sexual abuse cases, highlighting to some extent the existence and scale of the problem. Although coverage of such stories is likely to reinforce inaccurate stereotypes, the publicity attracted by them has prompted professionals to consider how the prevention of such abuse may be approached in a more creative and proactive manner. Until relatively recently, public policy responses to child sexual abuse have typically focused upon the treatment of offenders already known to the criminal justice system and protection of children already deemed to be at risk, rather than intervening to prevent abuse at the earliest possible stage.

Based on a concept developed in the USA by Fran Henry, herself a survivor of child sexual abuse, Stop it Now! UK & Ireland believes that it is the responsibility of adults rather than children to prevent and report child sexual abuse. For a host of reasons, it is difficult for anyone to report the suspected sexual abuse of a child. The Helpline offers people the opportunity to talk about their concerns in a safe environment to staff who have expertise in this area. The approach to prevention is unique and innovative in that it aims to reach abusers and potential abusers as well as their families and other members of the public.

¹ Cawson.P., Wattam.C., Brooker.S. and Kelly.G. (2000).

Child Maltreatment in the United Kingdom: A Study of the Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect. NSPCC.

² Stuart.M. and Baines.C. (2004).

Safeguards for Vulnerable Children: Three studies on abusers, disabled children and children in prison. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Stop it Now!'s core values are:

Protection of children

We believe that it is the responsibility of all adults to make sure that children are protected from sexual abuse. However, adults cannot be expected to protect children if they do not have the tools to carry out the task.

We give people information about the nature and extent of child sexual abuse and about the ways abusers manipulate children and other adults, whilst often deluding themselves that they are doing little or no harm. With this information, people are encouraged and enabled to take action to protect children.

Balancing understanding with accountability

Contrary to popular belief, most people who sexually abuse children are known to them. They may be carers, relatives, friends and other adults with whom they come in contact during their daily lives. They are frequently people of emotional significance to their victims and are certainly not seen by those close to them as the monsters portrayed by the media.

Many children who come to attention because they have been sexually abused say that they want the abuse to stop, but they also want their abuser to get help. Some want to be able to maintain a relationship with this person, especially if he or she is a close family member.

Stop it Now! recognises that many sexual abusers are uncomfortable, guilty, even distressed about their thoughts and behaviour, and that some are desperate to find help to stop. We also know that, through undertaking intervention programmes, sexual abusers can learn to control their abusive thoughts, feelings and behaviours and become safer members of our communities.

Working together

Stop it Now! believes that it is only by working together that we can tackle the problem of child sexual abuse within our communities. We build strong alliances with voluntary and statutory agencies in child welfare, criminal justice, health and education and make vital links with communities and the general public.

Child sexual abuse is a far bigger issue for society than is readily acknowledged. The cases we hear about are the tip of the iceberg. Through research and from personal testimony we have learnt from adult survivors that very few ever told anyone about the sexual abuse they experienced as children. Stop it Now! believes that we need a large scale, systematic approach to prevention. We base our model on campaigns used to tackle smoking, drink driving and domestic violence which have proved to be challenging and effective. Through links that we have developed with communities and the public in our local project areas, Stop it Now! is able to demonstrate that people are able to take on our messages and change the way they think and feel about child sexual abuse.

3 THE HELPLINE

3.1 The Helpline: how it works

Telephone helplines for children are a key part of child protection services (ChildLine UK, 2001³). A helpline for adults concerned about their own sexual behaviour towards children or the sexual behaviour of someone they know is another powerful way of protecting children.

The findings in this report illustrate how adults are able to talk about fears, anxiety and shame with the aid of a confidential helpline service. They speak about the “unspeakable” within a confidential and anonymous framework and are empowered to take responsible action in a context that leaves them with some control. Through the Helpline we are able to gain access to adults who have concerns that they would rarely dare to mention to anyone, and we have demonstrated that it is possible to influence callers so that children at risk may be protected more effectively.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation receives a grant to run the Stop it Now! Helpline from the Home Office. The Helpline has been operational from June 2002 after the first programme of the BBC series “The Hunt for Britain’s Paedophiles”. The lack of appropriate follow-up resources to deal with people for whom the programme may have raised issues, prompted us to start the Helpline before the official launch in September 2002.

The Helpline is advertised via our educational materials distributed throughout the UK and Ireland. There are numerous links from other websites to that of Stop it Now! and relevant information regarding the Helpline is also included in such documents as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) leaflets, published by the Home Office in 2005.

The Helpline is for all adults, but it is aimed particularly at three principal target groups:

Target groups

Adult abusers and those at risk of abusing: to encourage them to recognise their behaviour as abusive or potentially abusive and to seek help to change. This includes adults using child pornography online or elsewhere and/or adults who have used the Internet to commit other sexual offences.

Family and friends concerned about adults displaying worrying sexual thoughts or behaviour towards a child: to encourage them to recognise the signs of abusive behaviour in those close to them and to seek advice about what action to take.

Parents, carers and other adults concerned about young people with worrying sexual behaviours: to encourage them to recognise the signs of concerning or abusive behaviour and seek advice about what positive action they can take.

In addition, The Helpline raises public and professional awareness of the need to develop new approaches to prevent and manage child sexual abuse and acts as an advice and information point for professionals.

³Harrison.H., Irgens.P. and Williams.S. (2001). European Telephone Helplines for Children and Young People - Guidelines for Good Practice. ChildLine UK.

The Helpline’s main objectives are to:

- **Assist** callers in identifying the nature and seriousness of their concerns
- **Provide** information and support to callers to help them clarify their thinking
- **Advise** callers about further action to consider
- **Explore** options available, including referral to our own follow-up service or to another agency
- **Agree** one or more actions the caller will take

3.1.1 The Helpline Protocol

The Helpline protocol is based on sound child protection principles. Originally written by the Helpline team together with the Central Co-ordinator of Stop it Now! UK & Ireland; it draws from the experience of the Stop it Now! US Helpline and that of other helplines in the UK. It is revised regularly to ensure that the most up to date good practice guidance is embedded in our Helpline activities. The safety of children is uppermost in the minds of Helpline staff.

Callers need to be able to contact us in the knowledge that the call is confidential unless they provide identifying information. When they telephone, they are told about our confidentiality policy. It is made clear that if they give their names, addresses or any other identifying information, we will contact the relevant authorities if we are concerned about the welfare of a child or believe a crime may have been committed.

Helpline staff are instructed that:

“If at any point in the call, details are given which identify a child at risk or an adult or young person who admits or is alleged to have committed a criminal offence against a child, remind the caller that you are required to report this to the Police and/or Social Services in accordance with Lucy Faithfull Foundation child protection procedures.”

We will pass on information to the relevant authorities if:

- The caller can be identified and a child is believed to be at risk from abuse
- The caller can be identified and we have cause to believe s/he is a risk to children
- The caller can be identified and gives details of any criminal offence committed; for example, the possession of indecent images of children
- The caller identifies another person who s/he believes is abusing or at risk of abusing a child
- The caller identifies a particular child who is being abused or is at risk of being abused
- The caller has given informed consent for information to be passed on
- A court order requires the information to be disclosed
- The caller threatens the life of another person
- Information about acts of terrorism or bomb threats are disclosed

3.1.2 Helpline Hours and Email Service

When the Stop it Now! Helpline was launched in September 2002, it provided a single telephone line, with one operator taking calls. As the demand for the service increased, our funders provided additional money to extend the opening hours to 9am-9pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9am-7pm on Fridays and the provision of a second phone line. We were also able to provide advice by e-mail for people choosing to contact us in that way.

3.1.3 Helpline Management and Operation

The Helpline is managed by the Deputy Director of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and the day to day running is overseen by the Helpline Co-Ordinator. The Helpline staff are subject to careful selection procedures and trained to work on and/or support the Helpline. Following their initial training, they spend a period of time “shadowing” a designated “mentor”, who will guide them through their first few weeks as Helpline operators.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation’s experienced therapists support the Helpline. Their expertise includes the assessment and treatment of:

- adult male and female abusers and their families
- young people who engage in inappropriate sexual behaviours
- victims and survivors of sexual abuse

An experienced supervisor offers consultation, support and debriefing and leads regular team meetings. The practice of debriefing and using work colleagues to reflect upon call content, outcomes and advice given, is actively encouraged among Helpline staff. Such practice promotes a supportive and secure working environment and ensures that new learning is incorporated into future work.

3.1.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Record keeping is essential to informed monitoring and evaluation of the Helpline service. Detailed notes of each call are logged by Helpline staff and are filed by the name given by the caller. Callers are routinely asked how they heard about the Helpline and where, in broad geographical terms, they are living. Our record keeping and auditing systems were revised following advice from the De Montfort University team who evaluated Stop it Now! in 2004. New elements have been added to our log sheets and database as a result of close monitoring of Helpline activity; evaluation of our monitoring systems is ongoing.



3.2 Stop it Now! Helpline activity June 2002 – May 2005

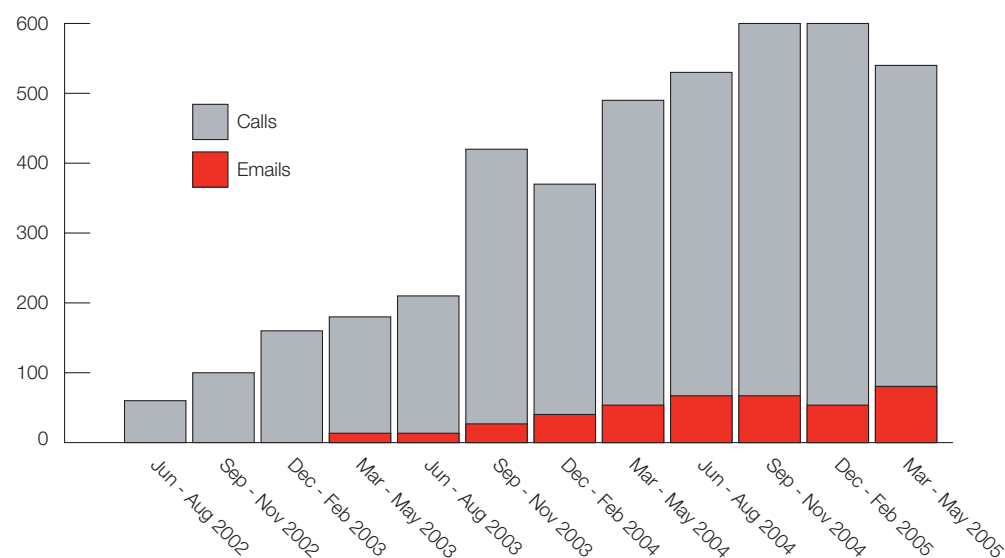
The Stop it Now! Helpline began operation in June 2002, prior to its official launch in September of the same year. Since that time, call volume has grown, and continues to grow, beyond initial expectations.

All Calls and Callers to Helpline June 2002 - May 2005

	Calls		Callers	
	Number	%	Number	%
Male	2276	57.6	1040	50
Female	1737	43.4	1036	50
Total	4013		2076	

Callers make, on average, 2 calls to the Helpline, each lasting around 22 minutes. Those who fall within the three principal target groups tend to make more and longer calls.

All contact with Stop it Now! Helpline June 2002 - May 2005



The overall number of calls has steadily increased over the past years, subject to some monthly fluctuation. As numbers of calls have grown, so have the number of emails to 'help@stopitnow.org.uk'. Typically, people who use the email service have similar concerns to those who telephone.

3.3 Callers to the Helpline

Callers can be placed into seven categories.

Principal target groups

- Adult abusers and potential abusers
- Family, friends and adults concerned about another adult's behaviour
- Parents, carers and other adults concerned about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person

Other types of caller

- Children and young people concerned about their own or another's behaviour
- Survivors and victims of child sexual abuse
- Professionals
- Members of the public with general enquiries

Annual Targets

Annual targets are agreed with our funders, the National Probation Directorate. These include an agreed average number of callers and calls across the year. Up to March 2005 the target percentage of calls falling into our three principal target groups was 75%. We report our progress on a quarterly basis and provide an annual return. From April 2005, the funding agreement will allow scope for additional face to face follow up work.

Number of calls in key target groups

	Group 1 Abusers and Potential Abusers concerned about themselves		Group 2 Friends, Family & Adults concerned about another adult		Group 3 Parents, Carers & Adults concerned about a young person		Total Number in Target Groups	
	Number	% of all calls	Number	% of all calls	Number	% of all calls	Number	% of all calls
2002 - 2003	246	48	171	34	14	3	431	85
2003 - 2004	672	48	377	27	75	5	1124	80
2004 - 2005	883	42	642	31	115	5	1640	78
Total	1804	45	1190	30	204	5	3198	80

Largely our callers fall into one of the three target groups. It is encouraging to see that 45% of calls are made by people wanting help because they have committed an offence, or they are worried that they might, or they are distressed by their thoughts. A further 30% are made by callers concerned about the thoughts or actions of a member of their own family, a friend, or someone else they know. 5% of calls are made in relation to the sexually worrying behaviour displayed by children or young people.

The overall number of calls taken each year has increased over the three year period and the percentage falling within the target groups has been met. However, the Helpline is used by others too: for example, survivors of sexual abuse, young people worried about their own behaviour and professionals working with adults or children.

Police, children's services, schools and NGOs use us as an advice line to help them with sexual abuse related issues. Many are telephoning about people who fall into our target groups. Others want to know how they can introduce Stop it Now! into their communities or our materials to the people they work with. This helps us consider how we work with partner agencies, focusing our thinking on maximising the potential that this offers.

However, most callers have no involvement with police or probation officers, social workers or other agencies. Regardless of whether they are a potential offender, a parent, a partner, a friend or a neighbour, they have a real chance to make a difference to the life and safety of children. For most of them, contact with a child protection agency is unthinkable at the time of calling. The Helpline operator listens, encourages, supports and critically, agrees one or more actions for the caller to take immediately that will make a difference. In some cases this may lead to contact with a statutory agency.

The remainder of this report focuses on the calls to the Helpline over the past three years. Whilst it is important to consider the number of calls that we have received, it is critical to acknowledge that although calls often share similar features, each person who contacts the Stop it Now! Helpline does so under a different set of circumstances, often very painful for the caller and in some cases highly complex. For that reason, in examining each of the caller categories, we have included a 'call log' showing examples of the kinds of calls we receive, how we dealt with them and (if known) the outcome. None of these examples is of a real call, but each includes features from a number of calls, to preserve the confidentiality of our callers.



3.3.1 Abusers and potential abusers

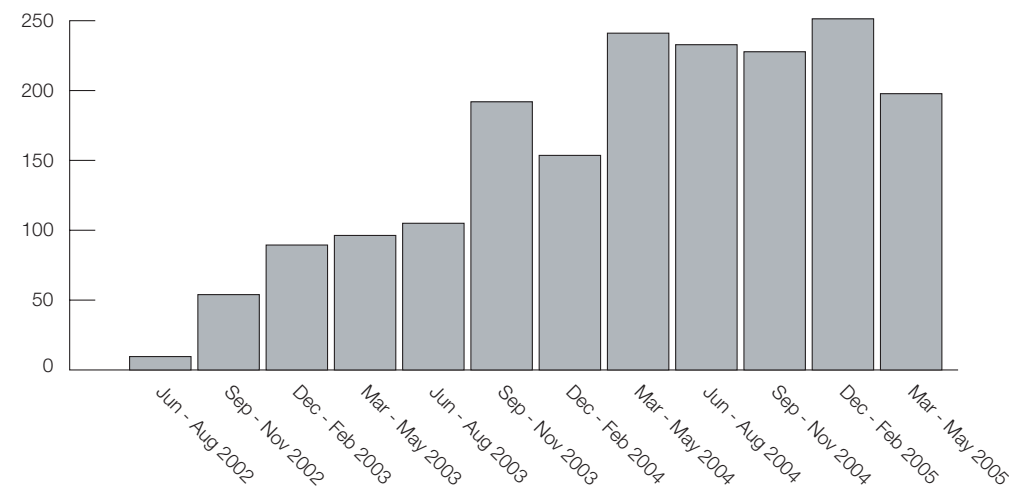
One of the most striking findings from our analysis of Helpline activity is that the largest number of calls come from adults concerned about their own sexual thoughts, feelings and/or behaviours towards children.

Whatever the reason for the call, our aim is to offer the caller ways to behave responsibly in the future and act appropriately if a child is at risk. Because each caller presents a unique set of circumstances the advice is given to meet the particular person's situation. The basis of all advice given is that children at risk must be protected and that the caller is able to develop a "good life", one that does not involve the sexual abuse of children.

It is not only men who phone us with their concerns, women have also phoned the Helpline because of worries about their own sexual thoughts and behaviours towards children. Although this group of women is a small proportion of all callers in this category, they reinforce the evidence that the sexual abuse of children is not just a male activity.

Generally, the number of calls from abusers and potential abusers has risen, with some fluctuations over the three years of operation. Why this happens is open to conjecture, though obvious factors include a higher media profile and an increase in policing activity raising the demand for help from callers. To understand the reasons for such fluctuations we are implementing an events log to record major relevant activities in the external environment and analyse the relationship between such activities and calls to the Helpline.

Calls to Helpline by Abusers and Potential Abusers



Helpline Example

Caller Name: Arnold **Operator Name:** Suzanne
Source of Helpline No: GP

Call Details:

Arnold is 32 and is a gardener by profession. He lives on his own and doesn't have much of a personal or social life. He is also estranged from his family. He enjoys playing golf on a Sunday.

Arnold phoned just before the school summer holidays because he is increasingly aware of the presence of lots of children wearing lighter (or less) clothing - he finds this unsettling. He finds it hard not to think (sexually) about some of the teenage girls he sees sunbathing in their gardens when he is at work.

Arnold is frightened that he may be becoming "one of those paedophiles" that he has read about in the papers.

He has no concerns about confidentiality and has already phoned police and probation. They have told him they only deal with people who have offended. He says that his doctor told him it was "pretty normal" for men to fantasise about teenagers, but gave him the Stop it Now! Helpline number.

Advice/Information given:

- I commended Arnold for taking his worries about his fantasies seriously and for looking for help.
- I explored the extent and nature of his fantasies about adults and children and the circumstances in which they arise - he was adamant that he had never acted on his fantasies involving children.
- We discussed the harm caused to children by sexual abuse.
- We discussed/explored his ability to manage his fantasies as well as his actions. I gave him some practical suggestions on fantasy management.

Actions:

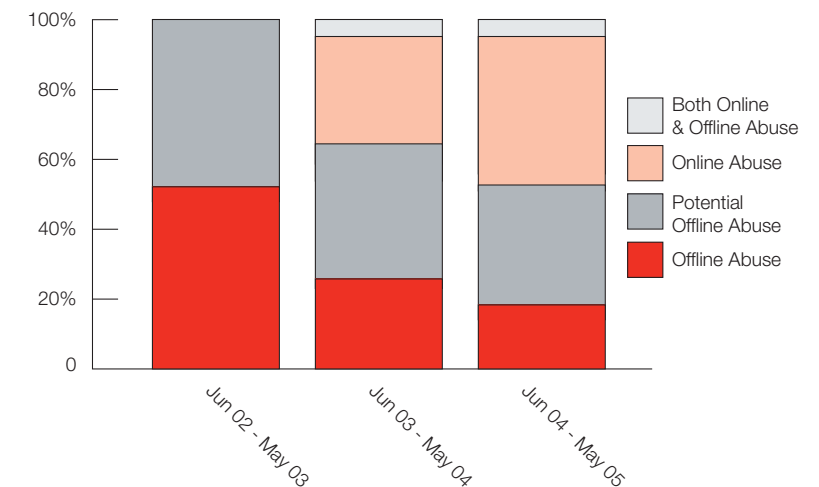
- I suggested that Arnold change his work habits to be less around children in their gardens, at least over the summer.
- Arnold to use fantasy management techniques as suggested.
- As Arnold's problem is long-standing, requiring ongoing support and counselling, I gave him the contact details for 2 counsellors in his area with relevant expertise.
- Arnold agreed that we could pass on details of this call and our advice to his chosen counsellor.
- Arnold to use this Helpline in future to assist/support his responsible living.

Who were the abusers and potential abusers?

Over the period June 2002 to May 2005, excluding emails, the Helpline received 1804 calls from 674 different callers who identified themselves as abusers or potential abusers. These figures represent 45% of all calls and 32% of all callers to the Helpline. We received 1739 calls from 659 men and 65 from 15 women. Most of the women made one or two calls, one woman made multiple calls.

254 of the callers who stated that they had sexually abused a child or were having sexual thoughts about a specific child, identified their relationship to the victim or potential victim. 176 identified a family member whilst 78 stated that it was a friend or acquaintance of the family.

Abusers and Potential Abuser by Type by Year



As the chart above shows, the percentage of different types of abusers/potential abusers has changed over the three year period. The notable increase in calls from people concerned about their online behaviour (i.e. none recorded in 2002 - 2003, and 186 the year 2003 - 2004) reflects the growing policing activity and media exposure regarding this type of crime which accelerated in the wake of Operation Ore, the large scale police investigation into child pornography offending.

Why did they use the Helpline service?

Abuser's and Potential Abuser's Nature of Concern

People in this group called for advice because they were in one of the following situations:

	Number of callers	% of callers
Having sexual thoughts and feelings towards children, and in some cases concern that they might go on to sexually abuse a child - wanting help to stop themselves from taking this step.	247	37
Had already committed a sexual offence against a child and wanted help in preventing themselves from committing further offences. Some of these callers wanted access to intervention services.	184	27
Arrested for committing a sexual offence on or offline against a child and wanted advice about their situation. Some of these callers wanted access to intervention services.	192	29
Had a previous conviction for a sexual offence and wanted advice to prevent themselves from committing further offences. Some of these callers wanted access to intervention services.	42	6
Had a previous conviction for a sexual offence, had been re-arrested for further sexual offences and wanted advice to prevent themselves from committing further offences.	9	1
Total	674	100

3.3.1.1 Internet Abusers and Potential Internet Abusers

Over the last 3 years, we have noted an increasing number of callers concerned about their own behaviour online.

Who were the callers?

Whereas 58% (390) of callers were calling exclusively about their concerns regarding their sexually abusive activity offline, 39% (261) were calling because of concerns about their behaviour on the Internet. The remaining 3% (23) of abusers or potential abusers were calling in relation to concerns about sexual abuse both on and offline. Therefore 42% of callers, (284) were calling about an Internet-related concern. These callers made 672 separate calls.

This group included people who had viewed, downloaded or uploaded child pornography, those who had distributed indecent and abusive images of children and those who groomed children for inappropriate sexual contact.

A large proportion of people who phoned regarding their sexually abusive behaviour via the Internet chose to make the initial contact via email. We respond, via email, to the initial request for information and help, often encouraging further contact with the Helpline by telephone.

Helpline Example

Caller Name: Ricky **Operator Name:** Bridget
Source of Helpline No: Stop it Now! Website

Call Details:

About four years ago whilst at University, Ricky had accessed child pornography as well as a range of adult pornography, via his computer. Whilst he still looks at adult pornography occasionally, he "came to his senses" about indecent images of children within about six months.

He is in a settled relationship and his partner is expecting their first child. Because of the media coverage, Ricky has become anxious about his viewing of child pornography and why he would have done it. He says he has no contact with children and is not sexually attracted to them at all. He has discussed all his past with his partner. Initially she was shocked, but is keen that he get himself "checked out" to make sure there is no lingering problem.

Advice/Information given:

- Acknowledge that calling was positive, however, Ricky has committed a crime which the Helpline or other professionals would be obliged to report if his identity were known. Receiving professional help without the involvement of the Police was therefore impossible.
- He could hand himself in to the Police – he was terrified at the thought of this and of the consequences for him, his partner and child, and his employment.
- Discussed harm caused to children through child abuse.
- Discussed the range of concerns about child pornography offenders, with some continuing to view such images, and others progressing to the sexual abuse of children. He insists he is neither of these.

Actions:

- Ricky advised to discuss this Helpline call with his partner and have her call for information in her own right.
- Ricky to visit the CROGA website, an Internet-based self-help programme for those who have viewed child pornography. He can keep in touch with the Helpline about his progress on this site.

Why did they use the Helpline service?

People in this group called for advice because they found themselves in one of the following situations:

Internet Abusers' and Potential Internet Abusers' Nature of Concern

	Number of callers	% of callers
Had already committed an Internet sexual offence including downloading, distributing and/or taking indecent images of children and were wanting help in preventing committing further offences, advice about disclosure and/or access to treatment.	47	17
Were thinking about committing an Internet sexual offence against a child and wanting help to prevent themselves from doing so.	23	8
Had been arrested for committing an Internet sexual offence and were wanting advice about their situation and/or wanting access to intervention.	203	71
Had a previous conviction for an Internet sexual offence and wanted advice and help to prevent themselves from committing further offences.	11	4
Total	284	100

The majority of people calling about their own online behaviour had already been arrested; one explanation for this is that Police often give the Stop it Now! Helpline number to people whom they arrest. The high number of calls made by Internet abusers and potential Internet abusers has demonstrated the value of the Helpline for this group. We plan to develop materials specifically for this group and for those concerned about the online behaviour of those close to them.

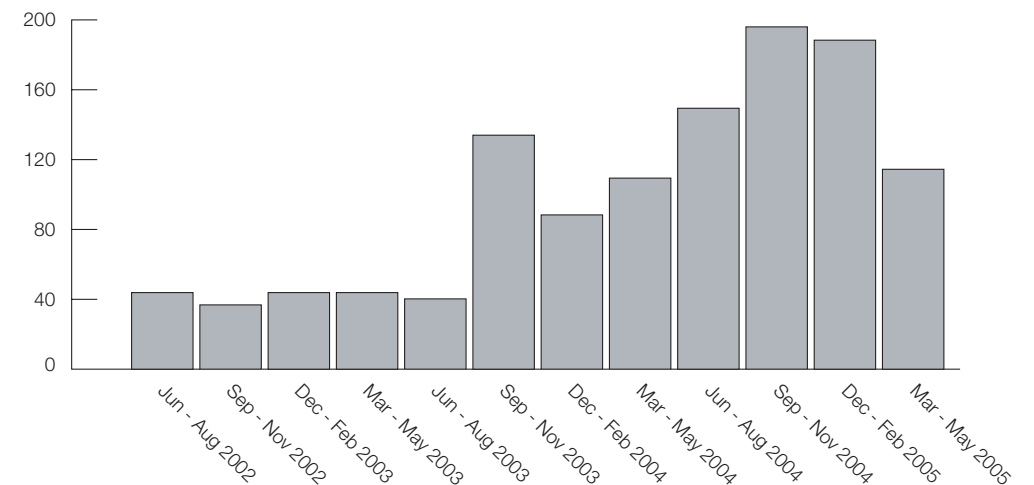


3.3.2 Family, friends and adults concerned about another adult's behaviour

When someone has been arrested for sexually abusing a child, it is common for those close to them to say that they had noticed behaviours or attitudes that worried them. Usually, they hadn't said anything in case they had "got it wrong" or because they did not want to think that someone they knew so well might be sexually harmful to a child, or they were too afraid of the repercussions if they were to talk about their worries. Others say that at the time they had no idea what was going on. But when they learn about the ways abusers gain access to children and prevent disclosure, they reflect back and recall occasions when, if they had had more knowledge, they would have been concerned and may have acted differently.

Given how very painful or embarrassing it can be for someone to seek help regarding the sexual attitudes and behaviour of a close friend or relative, the Stop it Now! Helpline provides information and advice within a confidential environment. We encourage the caller to recognise the signs of abusive behaviour and give information and advice on action to take. We urge them to recognise their responsibility for protecting children and preventing abuse and provide them with support in taking the appropriate next steps.

Calls to the Helpline by Friends & Family Members



Helpline Example

Caller Name: Barbara **Operator Name:** Jacky
Source of Helpline No: Church notice board

Call Details:

Barbara called with concerns about her husband. Her mother was present during the call, and asked questions of her own. Barbara and her husband Ray have been married for thirteen years and have two daughters, aged seven and eleven. As far as she is concerned they are a happy family, and Ray is a good father. But she now has some worries.

As the children grew up, Barbara expected that they would want and need more privacy and space. However, her husband continues to be involved with the girls at bath time, and the children seem OK with this. Barbara feels her husband and elder daughter are a little too affectionate – for example, she still sits on his lap watching TV in the evening, and they stroke each other in a rather sensuous way.

Barbara has felt uneasy about this for a while, and discussed her concerns with her mother. Today, she was going through some recent holiday photos that Ray had taken and noted that quite a few were of young teenage girls, in swimwear, on the beach. These girls were neither friends, nor relatives of the family. Barbara had not seen the photos before and thinks her husband must have hidden them from her.

Should she be worried about her husband's safety with their daughters?

Advice/Information given:

- I agreed that Ray's behaviour, particularly with the elder daughter, seems inappropriate and perhaps unhealthy. The photos and the secrecy surrounding them elevate concerns.
- It is good that Barbara has shared her concerns with her mother.
- I asked whether Barbara has any other concerns about Ray's behaviour – nothing immediately comes to mind, but she will think about this.
- Apart from at home and with extended family, Ray has no dealings with children – at work, or in any other social context.
- We discussed the need for adults to be clear about sexual boundaries, especially around children.
- We discussed Barbara's "worst fears", including how sex offenders operate within families and how they groom children and other adults who might protect: and how they convince themselves that inappropriate behaviour is harmless, or wanted.

Actions:

- Barbara will discuss with Ray her concerns about his behaviour around the girls (particularly around their elder daughter) with her mother present to support her.
- They will agree and put in place measures to ensure privacy for their girls, including around bathtime and bedtime. For the time being, she and her mother will ensure that Ray is not alone with the girls.
- She will also ask him about the photos she found among their holiday snaps and ask him to explain why he took them.
- Barbara will call the Helpline again during the next few days to discuss developments and to explore how to talk to the girls about "good touch, bad touch".
- She will give the Helpline number to Ray and ask him to call.

Who were the callers?

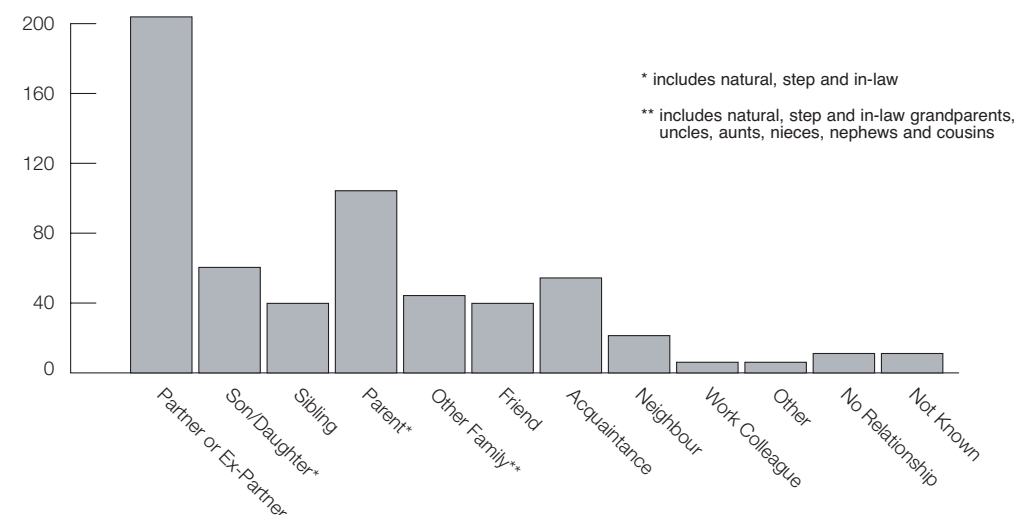
Between June 2002 and May 2005, The Stop it Now! Helpline received 1190 calls from 605 different callers in this group, averaging 2 calls per caller; this represents 30% of all calls during that time.

Unlike the Abuser/Potential Abuser group, these callers were mostly women (77%) who made on average 2.1 calls each. The remaining 23% were men who called on average 1.6 times each.

The volume of calls by friends/family, whilst generally increasing during the three years of operation, is the most susceptible of all groups to fluctuation. Although broadly following a similar trend to other caller groups, friends and family of abusers/potential abusers seem the most sensitive to influence by media stories and Stop it Now! publicity nationally and locally (see p35).

Callers are asked to identify their relationship to the person whose behaviour they are worried about.

Relationship of Caller to subject of concern



Partners and parents make the highest number of calls in this group. This is encouraging as it shows that those closest to someone who is, or may be abusing, try to seek help for themselves and for the people they are worried about.

Helpline Example

Caller Name: Marjorie **Operator Name:** Pete
Source of Helpline No: BBC Action Line

Call Details:

Marjorie is concerned about her neighbour, Reg, a man in his sixties who lives alone in the adjacent maisonette. Reg tends to keep himself to himself, but they pass pleasantries most days.

The younger children in the block of maisonettes play together in the communal gardens. Last week Marjorie overheard Reg talking to the children – boys and girls between the ages of three and nine years – from his kitchen window, inviting them in to see his kitten. As far as she knows, he doesn't have one.

Marjorie watched a television programme last night about sex offenders, and can't get it out of her head that maybe Reg is "up to no good". She has mentioned her worries to a couple of local mums but is worried she's being a "silly old woman" and letting her imagination run away with her.

Advice/Information given:

- We thanked Marjorie for her call, agreeing that Reg's behaviour, on the face of it, raised concerns. She is not being silly, although there could be a number of explanations.
- We discussed options for a way forward. Marjorie was not comfortable talking to Reg directly about her concerns and thought the Police would feel she was wasting their time. We confirmed that this would not be the case.

Actions:

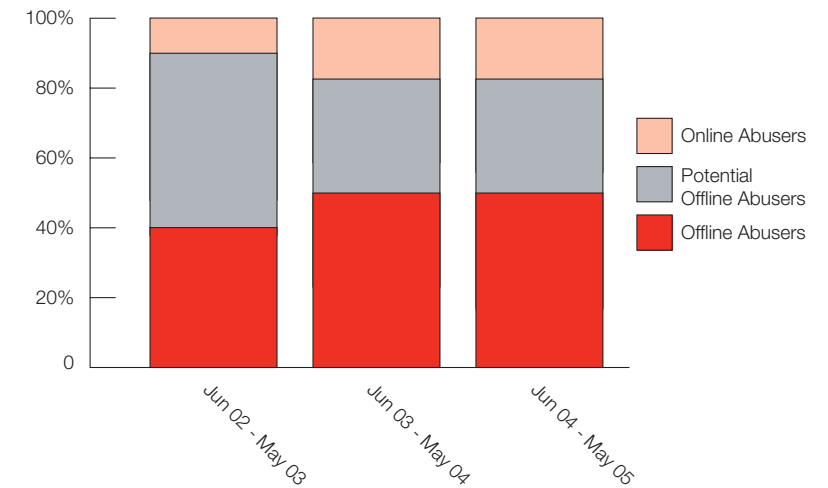
- With Marjorie's agreement we contacted the local Police station and explained the situation. We arranged that Marjorie would be visited over the next two days.
- We called Marjorie back and confirmed that the Police would be visiting her shortly. She said that we had taken a weight off her mind.

Note: Marjorie called back four days later to confirm that she had had a visit from the Police, who listened to her concerns and who then paid a visit to Reg. She and the mums she had spoken to have agreed to 'keep an eye out for the kids'.

Why did they use the helpline service?

The graph below illustrates what types of sexually abusive behaviour friends and family were calling about:

Types of abusive behaviour reported by Friends and Family Members



As the number of abusers and potential abusers calling about Internet-related behaviour has increased over the 3 year period, so has the number of callers concerned about the problematic Internet use of a family member or friend.



Helpline Example

Caller Name: Rebecca **Operator Name:** Simon
Source of Helpline No: Police

Call Details:

Rebecca's husband was arrested earlier today for child pornography offences. She and her two young children were at home when the Police visited, and she could not send them to school as they were too upset – their father has been told he should live away from home. Rebecca said her world has fallen apart – she does not know what to believe and what to do. Her husband, Bill has told her that a couple of years ago he had looked at some 'barely legal' pornography and had not thought anything about it since. He said he couldn't remember any details as it hadn't been important.

Rebecca had lots of questions: "What will happen if the Police find anything illegal? What sentence will her husband get? Does it mean he's sick? What can be done? Who can she talk to about it? Her elderly parents are too frail and she's worried that her children's friends might find out. Should they move home and why does Bill have to live away?"

Advice/Information given:

- We acknowledged the distress the arrest and news of Rebecca's husband's possible interest in child pornography must have caused.
- It is very early days yet, and Rebecca will have lots more questions over the coming weeks and months; she will need to be patient, as the answers to some of these would take some time to work out, and the Police analysis of the computer would take some months.
- Stop it Now! is in contact with other women in similar circumstances and are here to support and help her over the months ahead, should she wish.
- As Rebecca adjusts to her circumstances, it is important that she provide support and explanations to her children.
- We confirmed that child pornography offences were very serious and that some offenders are directly dangerous to children.
- Rebecca is not sure what she should do about her marriage – what did she need to know about child pornography offenders to help her decide?
- What she can do to support her husband, whom she still loves.

Actions:

- We urged Rebecca to identify a close family member or friend to confide in, so that she has some support over the coming days and weeks.
- Rebecca to contact her local Social Services department to discuss her husband's contact with their children.
- Rebecca was sent information about 'INFORM', an education programme for the family members of Internet (child pornography) offenders, run by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

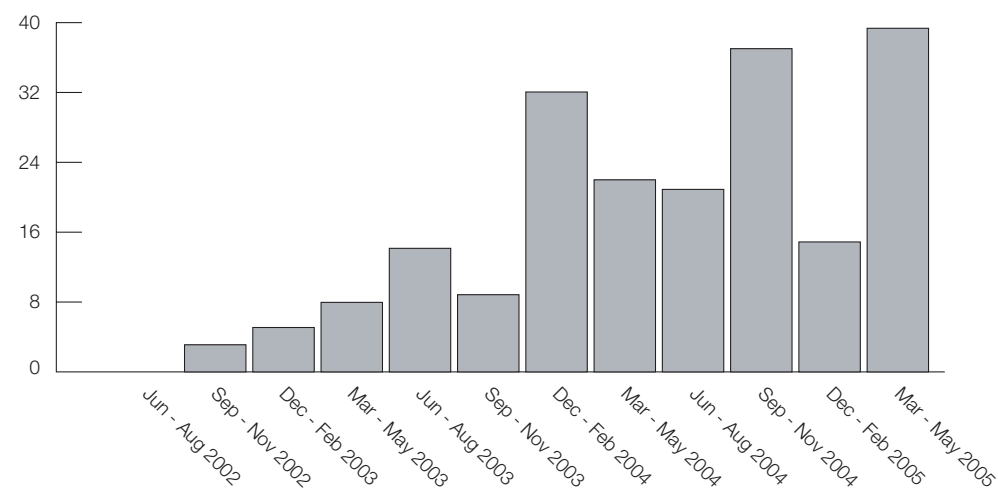
Note: Rebecca called on three subsequent occasions for further information and support. She subsequently attended the 'INFORM' group programme.

3.3.3 Parents, carers and other adults concerned about a child or young person's behaviour

The third main group we try to reach are parents, carers and other adults who have concerns about a child or young person's sexually inappropriate or harmful behaviours. About one third of all sexual offences per year are committed by children and young people below the age of eighteen. Many stop offending as they grow older; some need education about relationships and sexuality; others have more deep seated problems and need more extensive intervention. All need to be made aware of the inappropriateness of their behaviour. Research shows that repeat adult offenders often describe the onset of sexually abusive thoughts and behaviours in their teens.

The relatively small percentage of calls to the Helpline from parents and carers concerned about the sexual behaviour of their children may well reflect how difficult it is for adults to recognise abusive sexual behaviours in young people, especially their own children. Concerning behaviours are often viewed as "just mucking about", "young people experimenting", "just lads being lads" or "something girls don't do". Fear of the repercussions of seeking advice often prevents people from taking action. Inconsistency in responses leads people to fear that reporting a young person will lead to them being labelled for life as a 'sex offender'. Even calling a confidential helpline is a huge step.

Calls to Helpline about Children and Young People displaying sexually worrying behaviour, by Parents, Carers and other Adults



Helpline Example

Caller Name: Marion **Operator Name:** Marisa
Source of Helpline No: NSPCC Call 1 of 2

Call Details:

Marion phoned following a "horrible weekend". On Friday she had found her 12 year old son (Robin) licking the vagina of the eight year old girl from next door. She returned the child to her mother, with whom she discussed what she had seen; she had discussed the episode as calmly as she could with Robin, and told him why such behaviour was not alright; she and her husband had chaperoned Robin at a family event over the weekend, to ensure he was not alone with other children.

Marion and her husband want to know if such behaviour is "normal" and how should they deal with Robin from now on? They are terrified of involving Police or Social Services and fear being accused of being bad parents.

Advice/Information given:

- Affirmed the way Marion and her husband handled the situation over the weekend, including ensuring no opportunities for Robin to repeat the behaviour.
- Discussed similar risk management activity over days and weeks ahead.
- Discussed normal sexual behaviour in young people including issues of coercion, consent etc.
- Explored any previous concerns, including where Robin may have learned/seen such behaviour.
- Discussed the likelihood of repetition of similar behaviour from experience of working with young people with sexually worrying behaviour.

Actions:

- Marion to download 'Child's Play?' leaflet from the Stop it Now! website, to learn about normal and concerning sexual behaviour in young people.
- She may wish to consider purchase of 'Facing the Future' by Simon Hackett, designed for parents of young people with sexually problematic behaviour.
- Implement 'risk management' plans in the immediate future.
- Discuss concerns with Robin's school.
- Marion and husband to discuss pros and cons of involving Police or Social Services.

Helpline Example

Caller Name: Marion **Operator Name:** Teresa
Source of Helpline No: NSPCC Call 2 of 2

Call Details:

Marion said that the situation was stable and being managed since last week. Marion and her husband were grateful for our help so far.

They had read the literature that we had recommended and would not forgive themselves if Robin repeated the behaviour later in life, and they could have prevented it. They are keen to get professional help for Robin and want Stop it Now!'s help in making the referral.

Advice/Information given:

- Provided details of local Social Services team.

Actions:

- Stop it Now! to attend an initial meeting between Marion, her husband, Social Services and Police.

Note: We later learned that the eight year old child would make no comment about her experience with Robin; but Robin admitted his behaviour and was given a formal Police Caution. His parents were distressed by this, and its implications. Robin was referred to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Who were the callers?

The majority of callers in this category were parents or carers of children and young people displaying sexually worrying behaviour. The rest were made up of other relatives, teachers and acquaintances.

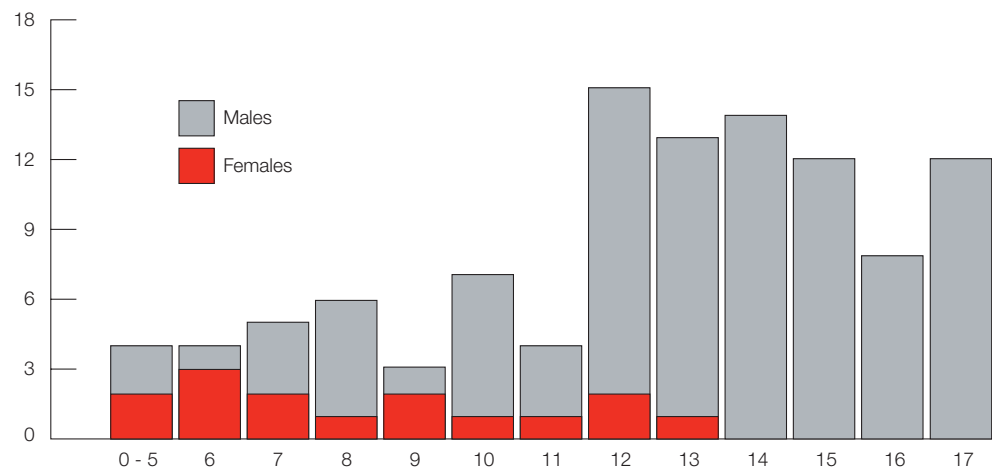
Between June 2002 and May 2005, The Stop it Now! Helpline received 204 calls from 124 different callers in this group. This represents 5% of all calls during that time. 81% of these callers were women. The women made on average 1.6 calls each. The men who phoned (19%) made on average 1.8 calls each.

Why did they use the Helpline service?

Parents' and Carers' Nature of Concern

	Number of callers	% of callers
A parent/carer has witnessed potentially inappropriate sexual behaviour by a child or young person who they know.	49	39
A child or young person who they know is believed or alleged to have committed a sexual offence against another child or young person.	59	48
A child or young person they know has admitted committing a sexual offence against another child or young person.	6	5
A parent or carer suspects that a child or young person who they know has downloaded indecent images of children from the Internet.	10	8
Total	124	100

Age of child or young person who is the subject of concern



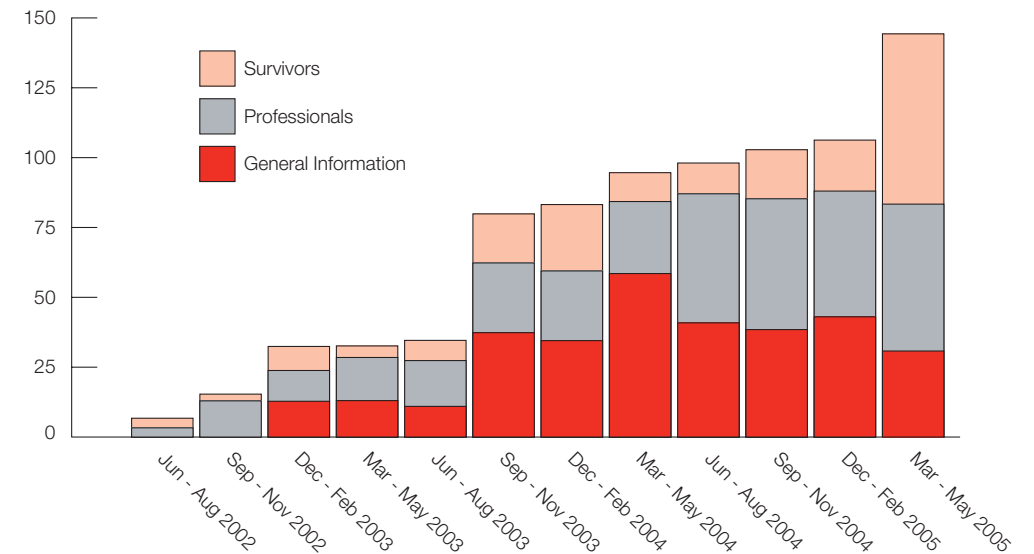
There is little clarity amongst the population, both lay and professional, regarding age appropriate sexual behaviour and what constitutes worrying sexual behaviour. By phoning the Helpline, callers can begin to talk through their concerns and receive advice regarding positive action to take if any is needed.

3.3.4 Callers outside target groups

The Helpline received 815 calls from 673 different callers representing 20% of calls to the Helpline and 32% of callers; 283 calls from 227 men and 532 from 446 women.

These calls may be further broken down into those made by professionals, survivor related calls, and "other" calls (including requests for information about Stop it Now! and calls that were not about child sexual abuse - for example, someone calling due to concerns over child neglect).

Calls outside the Target Groups



Survivors

The Helpline received 201 calls from 156 survivors of child sexual abuse, 50 male and 106 female. This represents 5% of calls to the Helpline. These callers typically called to talk about their own experiences of being abused and/or to gain access to survivor services.

General information

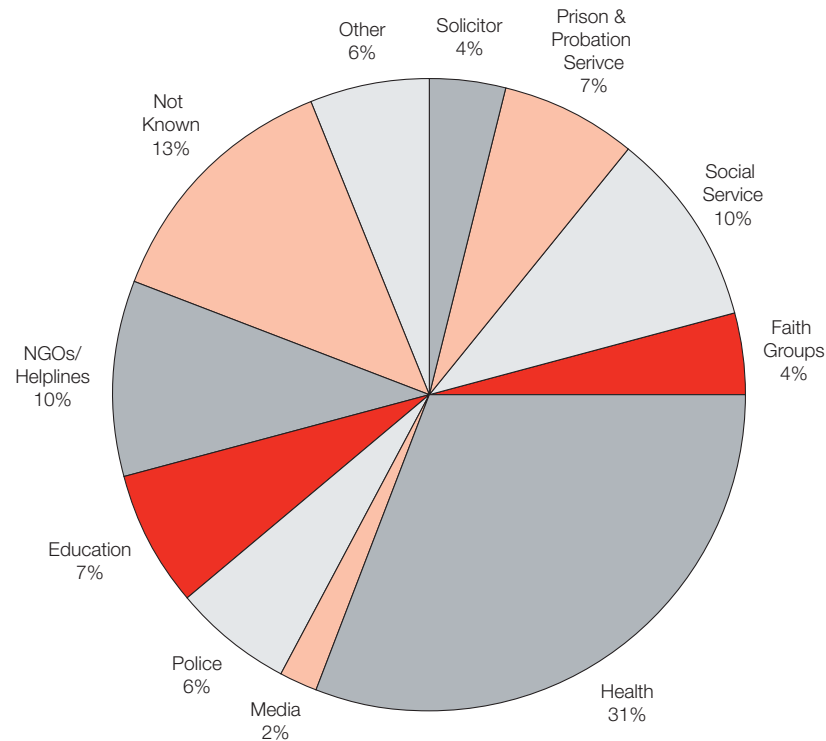
334 callers to the Stop it Now! Helpline were calling for general information about the project. Some called with concerns that were not related to child sexual abuse. In such cases the Helpline operators re-directed the callers to a more appropriate agency.

Professionals

280 calls were made to the Helpline by 254 callers; this represents 12% of all callers to the Helpline and 7% of all calls.

These professional callers used the Stop it Now! Helpline as an expert advice line. 138 people called regarding a particular individual; the remaining 116 called to find out more about the project or to request Stop it Now! literature for their organisation.

Agencies of Professional Callers to the Helpline



By far the largest group were calling from a health context, including GPs, health visitors, psychiatrists, counsellors and others. The majority called because their clients or patients had disclosed that they had committed a sexual offence or admitted that they were concerned about their own thoughts or behaviour towards children. The number of callers from the different voluntary and statutory agencies suggests that the Helpline is a useful resource for professionals, just as these professionals can be useful to the Helpline in advertising its existence.

Helpline Example

Caller Name:	David	Operator Name:	Kate
Source of Helpline No:	Conference		

Call Details:

Professional call from David, a prison Probation Officer, who phoned to check what the Helpline could offer for men who had been convicted of sexual offences but were now back in the community. He was particularly concerned about those released from prison with little or no Probation Service supervision, and felt that the men he worked with would be unlikely to tell their Probation Officer if they were struggling with sexual fantasies, for fear of legal repercussions.

Advice/Information given:

- During operating hours the Helpline is available to such offenders, to assist them in managing their risk.
- Subject to the Helpline's child protection policy and protocols, their calls would be confidential unless the caller agreed otherwise.

Actions:

- David asked for a stock of Stop it Now! leaflets and wallet cards, to provide to inmates on release, and to give to colleagues in the Probation Service. We dispatched these today.

3.3.5 Calls from children and young people

The Helpline has received 151 calls from 38 children and young people under the age of 18. Their concerns included their own abusive actions, both inside and outside the family, as well as illegal use of the Internet.

Child or Young Person's Nature of Concern

	Male callers	Female callers	Total callers
Worried about their own behaviour	21	1	22
Worried about a family member or friend's behaviour	5	4	9
General Information	6	1	7
Total callers	32	6	38

21 young men and 1 young women were worried about their own sexual behaviour towards other children, with some reporting that they had committed sexually abusive acts. A further 9 were calling about the worrying sexual behaviour of a family member or friend. Although relatively small in number, the fact that they chose to phone for help raises issues for future possible service development, such as a special helpline for children and young people who are thinking about or actually sexually abusing children.

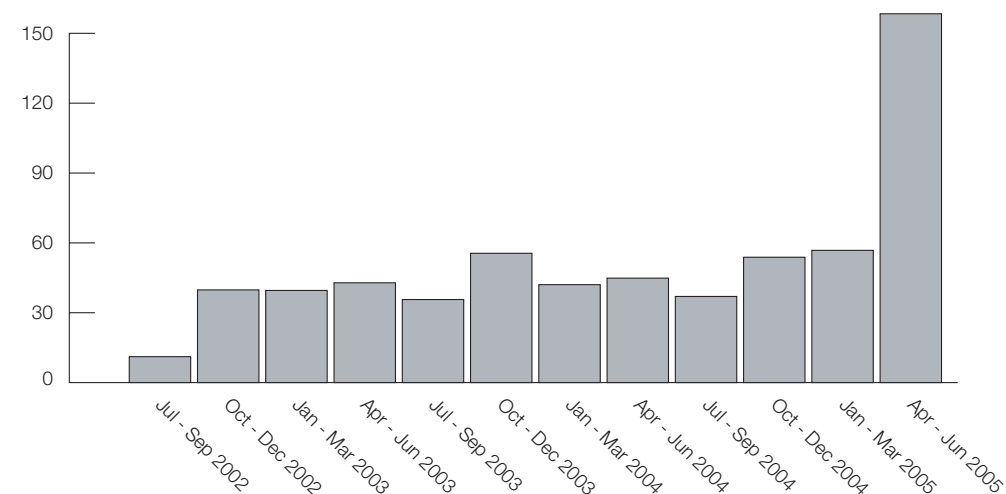


3.4. Face to face clinical follow up work

All callers are told about the limits of confidentiality, namely that if they provide identifying details we will share this with other agencies if concerned that a child is at risk or an offence had been committed. However, some callers ask for face to face contact with a therapist, even though they know that they will have to give up their anonymity.

Between July 2002 and June 2005 we have provided a total of 617 hours work with 56 separate individuals. 41 of these were abusers or potential abusers, including online abuse. 12 individuals were the friends or family of someone who had abused. The remainder were parents or carers of children who had displayed sexually worrying behaviour or who had experienced abusive behaviours themselves.

Face to face time (hours) July 2002 - Jun 2005



Helpline Example

Caller Name: Clive **Operator Name:** Patrick
Source of Helpline No: Police

Call Details:

Clive was arrested yesterday morning by local police, who were investigating allegations of child pornography offences. They have taken his computer and he knows they will find what they are looking for. He says his life has "fallen apart". Computers at his place of work have been seized and he is not sure he will have a job anymore. Clive's wife is in a state of shock and his children are really angry with him. The Police gave him details of Stop it Now!

Clive found it difficult talking about the situation without breaking down. He had lots of questions, said he felt "utterly ashamed of himself", and was not sure how he could ever face the world again. He doubted his wife and children would ever forgive him. Clive became tearful about his use of child pornography. He had been told by the police that it would be a number of months before his computer would be analysed.

Advice/Information given:

- It is very early days and Clive should expect his family to be shocked, angry and confused at the current circumstances.
- Over the next few days and weeks he and his family would have many questions that would need answers. Given the secrecy of his Internet behaviour and the difficulty of talking openly about it, it was important for all to develop patience, but for Clive in particular to be honest, despite the likely difficulties this would cause.
- Whilst children attend the church where he is a member, he has no significant contact with them in this or any other context. His own children are over 18 years old.
- He was extremely anxious about what to do, who to tell and how to conduct himself. Keen to "go into counselling" or anything that the Helpline could suggest. Clive acknowledged his wife was in need of opportunities to talk and receive information too. Nothing he told the Helpline was confidential from her.

Actions:

- As well as maintaining discussions with his wife and, hopefully, his children, it would be useful if Clive could identify someone outside his immediate family to confide in, for example at church, or other friends or family.
- Avoid involvement with the Internet until he has taken stock with others and then consider all possible risks before going online.
- Consult his GP if he felt medical support would assist, perhaps to do with help in sleeping.
- The Helpline arranged for Clive and his wife to have a series of meetings with a therapist from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation to provide information and support and help them to plan for and deal with the next three to six months.

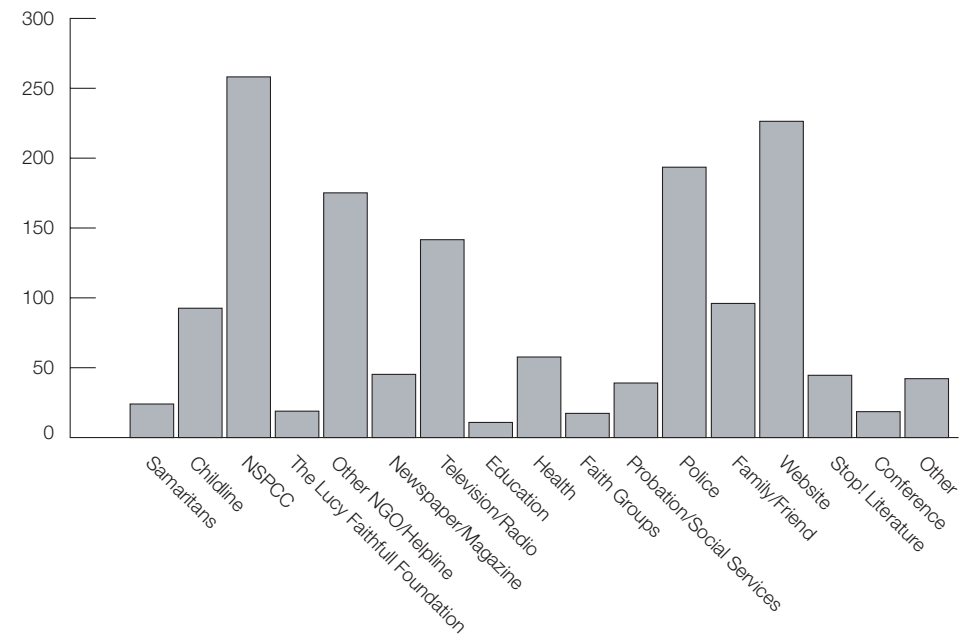
3.5 How callers found out about the Stop it Now! Helpline

We publicise the Helpline number in a variety of ways. One of the main approaches is via our Stop it Now! posters and leaflets. From June 2002 to May 2005 427,000 leaflets were sent out from the Stop it Now! UK & Ireland central office. Of these, 290,000 were sent to local project groups for distribution to their local agencies and to the general public in their areas.

Obviously, the first consideration of a Helpline operator is to engage with the caller, so care has to be taken not to ask questions that might deter someone from continuing the call. However, callers are asked how they got the Stop it Now! Helpline number and where in the country they are calling from. This helps us to establish which mediums are most successful in promoting Stop it Now! and its Helpline.

71% of callers shared their source of information with Helpline operators. The table below identifies how callers heard about the Helpline and shows that a wide range of organisations are aware of Stop it Now! and are able to advise callers to make use of our service.

How callers found out about the helpline



Police, NSPCC, other NGOs, Stop it Now! website, TV programmes and family/friend categories are significant points of reference for callers seeking help and advice about their own or someone else's behaviour. Since the Helpline opened there has been useful communication with the co-ordinators and staff of other helplines. This has led to referral from ChildLine and the NSPCC Helpline to Stop it Now! and vice versa, as appropriate and to the development of positive relationships with other voluntary sector agencies.

The large proportion of callers hearing about our service from police sources is due to police encouraging people they arrest or investigate for sexual offences to phone the Stop it Now! Helpline. Some forces routinely give out our Helpline Card. Following Operation Ore, this practice has increased further.

The number of hits on the Stop it Now! website is increasing. The highest number are via the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) website. The IWF receives referrals from members of the public concerned about abusive images online. The linkage between our two websites ensures that those in need of help are able to reach us.

It is encouraging to see family and friends featuring relatively highly as a source of information about the Helpline. It is likely that these people originally heard about the Helpline from one of the other sources listed above.

A large proportion of callers heard of the Helpline from other voluntary sector organisations. In analysing calls from within local project areas, sources of the Helpline number include libraries, GPs' surgeries, local media, local voluntary organisations and local public awareness raising activity. These sources reflect the ways in which local projects have promoted Stop it Now, thereby making a useful contribution to the promotion of the Helpline and generating calls.

The large number of callers from the south, in part, simply reflects the uneven distribution of population across the UK and Ireland. However, local projects have also had some impact on call levels, through their leaflet and poster distribution and local media exposure.



Where callers were calling from



4 WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED, AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What we have learned

We have learned that, given reassurance about confidentiality, people will call the Stop it Now! UK & Ireland Helpline in circumstances where they can prevent the sexual abuse of a child. Most of our callers are not currently involved with child protection agencies at the time of calling, for fear of repercussions for themselves or others. Yet in almost all circumstances there are actions the caller can take that will make a child safer. Although we do not always hear what the caller did next, it is encouraging that many do call again to tell us about their actions, any developments that have taken place, and to discuss the next steps they might take.

After three years' experience of operating the confidential Helpline we can demonstrate that:

- Some people who are sexually abusing children want to stop their abusive behaviour
- Some individuals who have offended in the past want help to prevent repetition of this behaviour
- Some people who are thinking of sexually abusing a child are able to recognise their thoughts and feelings and ask for help before committing an offence
- Some people are troubled by intrusive sexual thoughts involving children and, whilst they do not believe they will act on them, want help to rid themselves of these thoughts
- Adults are able to recognise inappropriate sexual attitudes and behaviours in those close or known to them and can be motivated to seek help in order to protect children
- Protective adults may act as effective agents of control within their family or the wider community
- Some adults are able to recognise sexually inappropriate or harmful behaviour in children and young people
- Some young people are able to recognise their behaviours as unacceptable and seek help

Abuse using the Internet and other new technologies

When establishing the Helpline we did not anticipate the high percentage of calls we would get relating to the misuse of the Internet and other new technologies. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's clinical work keeps Helpline operators and managers abreast of developments in this area, and ensures that appropriate responses are given to callers. Evidence that Internet (child pornography) offenders and their close family and friends are often desperate for information and advice, has prompted the Lucy Faithfull Foundation to support the development of new services, among them the 'INFORM' and 'INFORM+' education programmes for family members and for offenders, and the CROGA self-help website for child pornography offenders.

We are planning:

- new awareness raising materials about Internet abuse
- further development of the new services described above

Young people worried about their own behaviour

The fact that young people call the Helpline when concerned about their own behaviour came as something of a surprise, but perhaps reflects the scarcity and lack of visibility of services for this group. It is important that such individuals receive an appropriate response, and we are collaborating with organisations and helplines for children to this end.

We are planning:

- To continue in dialogue with other organisations to ensure that young people know of a place to turn to when concerned about their own sexual behaviour on or offline

Known offenders

Increasingly, professionals who supervise and manage known offenders have been giving out cards advertising the Helpline; they view this as one strategy to prevent reoffending. The Stop it Now! Advisory Council considered the use of the Helpline to provide such a service and accepted that the Helpline should serve all adults who were concerned about their own thoughts or behaviour towards children, convicted or not.

We are planning:

- To continue liaising with the National Offender Management Service and Multi Agency Public Protection Panels regarding access to the Helpline by registered and supervised sex offenders.

Preventing abuse and early intervention

Because of the confidential nature of the Helpline, people who would not have felt able to ask for help can do so without the fear of the “fall out” that might occur should they approach professionals or others within their communities. They are encouraged to take actions that will make them, or someone they are concerned about, safer and thus more protective to any children that may be involved. Such motivation to seek help leads us to question the current approach to the management of child sexual abuse.

A challenge to our existing child protection systems

Professionals are still working in an environment which maintains silence and disables members of the community from seeking help. To date, our child protection systems have not been particularly effective in developing policies and practices that make it easier for:

- adults in the community to recognise behaviours and attitudes in others that are sexually abusive and to do something about them
- adults who have sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards children to seek help
- children and young people to feel they can talk about their experiences

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s report, ‘Progress on safeguards for children living away from home – A review of action since the People Like Us Report’, comes to the challenging conclusion that “The scale of the problem of sexual abuse of children is such that a major rethink of policy is needed – with much greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention”.

A greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention needs to involve the whole community, providing them with good information and support to go with it. It needs to be accompanied by new policies and procedures that enable people to come forward and seek help at an early stage, ideally before an offence has been committed. Such a change in stance needs to be accompanied by a cultural change which, whilst maintaining the expectation that people should be responsible for their abusive activities, offers them a way of controlling and managing their behaviours to make them safer and to better protect children. In addition, services to provide the help required to these individuals, their families and close friends will need to be developed.

The prevention and management of child sexual abuse is a health, child protection and criminal justice problem. We reflect this in the composition of our Advisory Council which represents an alliance of the relevant government departments, major children’s charities, NOTA, survivor and faith groups.

We are planning:

- To run seminars throughout the UK & Ireland, funding permitting, to identify how some of our current policies are failing children, what initiatives may replace them and how these might be implemented.

The future of the Helpline

Awareness raising strategy

Thus far, Stop it Now! UK and Ireland has not had sufficient funding for a large scale awareness raising strategy, but we have seized opportunities for media exposure, engaged with interested individuals and agencies and targeted awareness raising activities through our local projects. This includes working with communities and with other agencies and helplines to find the most effective ways of engaging with people from different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and religions, and whose gender, sexual orientation and ability differ.

This report demonstrates that even modest awareness raising has led the Helpline to surpass the targets set by our funders. A more comprehensive publicity strategy would certainly prompt far more calls. The capacity of the Helpline would need to be expanded if the call rate increased significantly.

Funding the Helpline

The demands for our Helpline service is likely to continue increasing and we will require ongoing funding in the years to come. We would like to be able to offer increased Helpline hours and more opportunity for face to face work with callers and their families. This important work can only take place if secure, long term funding is there to support it.

On-going evaluation

This report is the first in-depth analysis of the Helpline and its activity. In compiling it, we have asked ourselves many questions; for example, how has media exposure and our other awareness raising activities impacted on call volume? Where should we focus our energy in the future? Our data collection processes will be constantly reviewed to allow all such information to be routinely collected and analysed to maximise the ‘reach’ of our campaign, and to ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively.

Alongside this, our good practice guidelines will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changing national policy frameworks, as well as developments in our understanding about the populations the Helpline seeks to engage with.

Clearly it will be important to continue to measure the relative proportions of callers within our different target groups to ensure we sustain a relevant service and to inform our awareness raising and marketing strategy. It remains imperative that we reach diverse populations, especially those people not engaged with any statutory agency, so that everyone who needs it has access to Stop it Now!’s information and resources.

We need to communicate the evidence of this report as widely as possible, to the general public and to professionals, so that all may see how they can contribute more effectively to the prevention of child sexual abuse, which, we believe, is everyone’s business.

Funding our work

Stop it Now! UK & Ireland and its Helpline is dependant upon grants and donations. If you would like to support us, please contact our central office:

Stop it Now! UK & Ireland. PO BOX 9841, Birmingham, B48 7WB. Tel: 01527 598 184

To request additional copies of this report or to order Stop it Now! materials, contact the Stop it Now! Central Administrator: **Tel: 01527 598 184 Email: office@stopitnow.org.uk**

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Stop it Now! UK & Ireland is run independently of STOP IT NOW! USA. However, we would like to formally acknowledge that we have based our aims and approach on those originally developed by STOP IT NOW! USA. We appreciate the generous support given by our American colleagues to encourage us to set up this initiative.

“This is a tremendous service, a brave one.”

“I really appreciated the supportive but realistic approach.”

“If I hadn't spoken to you... God knows where I would have gone to.”

“Helpline staff are to be commended for their professional balanced approach.”

FREEPHONE
0800 1000 900

stop it now! HELPLINE REPORT
Together we can prevent