

Your first steps to getting the
right support and advice

If you are being investigated for internet sexual offences

**CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE
HELPLINE 0808 1000 900**



A close-up, high-angle photograph of a man's face. The focus is on his right eye, which is looking slightly downwards and to the left. His expression is one of concern or worry. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of his skin and the intensity of his gaze. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the lower part of his face, containing white text.

**“I don’t know what to do...
I am so worried”**

For confidential advice, information and support...

First reactions...

You have probably just been visited by the police or arrested for possible internet offences. Perhaps you thought this day might come and are faced with what is going to happen now that your behaviour is out in the open. If you have been troubled by your behaviour, maybe you feel a sense of relief that it is no longer a secret. It is likely that you feel confused, scared or numb. You probably have questions about how this will affect your family and friends; the legal process and how long it might take; what might happen if there are media reports; or what other people will think if or when they find out; or what will happen next.

You can talk to someone

The Stop It Now! helpline is run by The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, a leading charity working to prevent the sexual abuse of children.

If you call the helpline, trained and experienced staff will offer you confidential and impartial advice. This anonymous service is available to anyone, including people under investigation or convicted for accessing indecent images of children or for child grooming offences.

The helpline can also offer help to your partner, friends or family members.

This might be the right time for you to call the helpline and start to talk about what help you need.

If you are being investigated for internet offences, particularly if you have been accessing indecent images of children or talking sexually to children online, you probably feel there is no one you can talk to about it... **but you can pick up the phone and call us.**

Call the Stop It Now! helpline on 0808 1000 900

What will happen now?

The police will have received information that has led to the investigation. As part of the investigation they will have visited your address. It is likely that they have removed your computer, mobile devices and other material.

This might take some time to deal with. The police will do whatever is required to investigate any offences you may have committed, including examining what is held on your devices. The length of time this takes will vary depending on a range of things, including where you live and how busy the police are.

Your equipment will be examined by the police. Once the results of this are known, a decision will be made about what happens next. If there is evidence that you have committed a criminal offence it is likely at that stage that you will be charged. The police will advise you of your rights if and when this happens.

The period of investigation can sometimes take years. Be prepared for some frustration, uncertainty and worry during this period. But it is important that your life continues in as normal a way as possible, so there is no need for you to abandon any plans you might have made (such as going on holiday etc.) It is important that you keep your investigating officer informed of any plans and of your whereabouts in case you need to be contacted for any reason. It is also important to comply with any bail conditions you might have.

The police may be concerned about you following your initial arrest and will want you to get the help you need.

You may be advised to contact your GP. This booklet can help you think about what help you need and to take steps to contact relevant services, including the helpline.

It is possible that you may start to have all sorts of thoughts or feel depressed or hopeless. Sometimes you may experience feelings of panic or even think about harming yourself or committing suicide. Such feelings are quite common. It is very important that you find some help and support with these thoughts and feelings and begin the changes that will lead to a positive future, free from offending.

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Your opportunity to get help now

This can be a stressful time for you and for your family as everyone struggles to cope with their worries.

You may want to start understanding why and how you came to behave in this way.

For example this behaviour might stem from a range of factors in your life including regular use of adult pornography. It could be linked to what may have happened to you when you were growing up. This can be difficult to talk about. It may be a result of regular sexual thoughts or feelings about children. For some people the reasons aren't clear. Changing for the better starts with understanding your illegal behaviour.

You might be worried about your children and the involvement of child protection services.

It is possible that children with whom you have regular contact will be interviewed. Consideration is given to any possible past or future risk to these children so that the right decisions can be made. This may mean restrictions will be placed on your contact with your children or any children you work with.

You may have concerns about the impact of your behaviour and arrest on those close to you including partners and family members.

There is little doubt that this will be a shock for people close to you. It is also clear that life will never be the same for them. But it does not mean that they will reject you or that your family will fall apart. But they, too, will need help and support and the helpline can offer this, too.

Your behaviour may be more complex.

Your sexual behaviour on the internet might not necessarily be all related to children. Some people develop other sexual behaviour problems, such as accessing extreme adult pornography. This is also illegal. Some people feel they are addicted to pornography they access online. They need appropriate support if they are to take control of their online behaviour and stop any illegal activity.

What should I do now?

The first thing you should do is to call the Stop It Now! helpline.

After being arrested or visited by the police, you may be feeling shocked, bewildered or even numb. The important thing to remember is that you do not have to deal with this alone.

Our highly experienced helpline operators will give you practical advice and talk you through the complicated and difficult issues you are now facing. They will also try to answer the questions you may have about your online behaviour and about what this means for your partner, family and friends.

Our helpline operators will also be able to give you the advice and support you need regarding the criminal justice process and the involvement of children's services if you have children.

Calling the helpline is free and confidential. When you call, you will not have to give any identifying information such as your family name, address or telephone number.

If you'd rather not call, you can contact us through our confidential messaging service – details can be found on our website: stopitnow.org.uk.

Your email address will not be displayed when you email, making the service confidential. Due to high demand, we can't offer an immediate response by email. If your enquiry is more urgent, please call the helpline.

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VISIT stopitnow.org.uk**

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