



Tuesday 3 April, 2018

Embargoed until 00:01 GMT on Wednesday 4 April, 2018

40% increase in people seeking charity's help to stop looking at online sexual images of children

There has been a sharp rise in the year on year numbers of people in the UK seeking help from [Stop it Now!](#) to stop either their own viewing of online sexual images of children, or that of a loved one.

According to data released today, 36,443 UK people contacted Stop it Now! (*a child sexual abuse prevention campaign run by child protection charity [The Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#)*) in 2017. This represents a 40% increase on the 26,089 people who contacted Stop it Now! in the previous 12 month period.

A large majority of those contacting Stop it Now! in 2017 visited the [Stop it Now! Get Help website](#). The Get Help website hosts self-help resources, advice and support for people who want to address their online behaviour.

A further 2,251 people called the anonymous [Stop it Now! Helpline](#) in the same period with concerns either about their own online behaviour, or that of a partner or family member.

Each country in the UK saw increases in the numbers of people contacting Stop it Now!: England saw a year on year increase of 41%; Wales saw an increase of 20%; Northern Ireland saw an increase of 40%; and there was an increase of 55% in Scotland. (*For the data in full, including a breakdown by country, region and county, please see Notes to Editor below*).

Charity's online campaign helps drive increase in number of people seeking help

The rise in numbers of people contacting Stop it Now! is partly explained by a campaign to tackle online viewing of sexual images of children, launched by Stop it Now! in October 2015. The charity released [a series of films](#) that communicate key messages to those looking at indecent images of children, or those tempted to start: viewing sexual images of anyone under 18 is a crime; it does great harm to the children in the images; there are severe consequences for those who view such images; and Stop it Now! offers help to those who want to stop. A new film, [The Knock](#), has just been released. Based on insights given by previous offenders, it plays upon the constant fear of 'the knock on the door' experienced by those looking at sexual images of children. It also shows dramatically the moment when that fear of 'the knock' becomes reality as police arrive at the suburban home of an offender. **The films have now been viewed over 20 million times; and over 69,000 people from the UK have visited the Stop it Now Get Help website** since the campaign launched in October 2015.

As a result of the advice they received, callers and web visitors reported taking steps to control their behaviour, including stopping all internet or pornography use, installing controls and filters on devices and informing partners or family members.

One person who called the Stop it Now! Helpline and who has used the website's self-help resources said:

"I had no real idea of what to expect [when I called the Helpline] but that anxiety was quickly put to rest. The woman I spoke to recommended I access some of the modules on the Stop it Now! website. These helped me understand my behaviour better. I found out what triggers I have to offending, and what sort of things might be missing in my life that could be pushing me to do things I wouldn't normally want to do.....Understanding that path is very important to choosing the right measures to put in place to never go there again."

Stop it Now! spoke to a man arrested for downloading indecent images of children about the work he has done with Stop it Now! to address his online behaviour. He spoke under condition of anonymity and his words have been re-voiced by an actor. You can watch [a clip from the video here](#).

Police support for Stop it Now! work to provide help to stop looking at indecent images of children

According to the police, significant numbers of people in the UK are accessing indecent images of children. In October 2016, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Child Protection, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, said that approximately 100,000 people in the UK were viewing and sharing online sexual images of children. In light of these numbers, the police have praised the approach of Stop it Now! to tackle demand for images by helping people to stop looking at them.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Child Protection, Chief Constable Simon Bailey said:

"Police forces are arresting more offenders who view or share sexual images of children online and protecting more children than ever before. However child sexual abuse cannot be countered by enforcement alone. It requires schools and parents to educate children to ensure they stay safe, as well as for technology and social media companies to take their responsibilities seriously in protecting young people online."

"Alongside the important role for education in raising awareness and a greater role for technology companies in child protection, it is also crucial that offenders who are yet to be arrested are given the opportunity to seek help."

"The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has a vital role in helping to ensure offenders and those who are yet to offend have access to the appropriate services to support them in preventing behaviour that causes harm to children and I am glad to see that more people than ever are coming forward to seek help for their behaviour."

Tom Squire, Clinical Manager at The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, said:

"Stop it Now! is determined to protect children from abuse and the devastating impact of having their image repeatedly shared across the internet. The best way to do this is to deter people from looking at these images in the first place, and to get those who are looking to stop."

“What our recent campaign shows is that you when you make people aware that help is available to stop, people will take up that offer of help. We work with many men arrested after downloading huge numbers of abusive images of children. Nearly all of them say they wish they had known sooner about the help that’s available to stop. So I’d urge anyone out there worried about what they are looking at online to get in touch - via the Stop it Now! Get Help website, or via our confidential Helpline on 0808 1000 900.”

Professor Tink Palmer MBE, CEO of The Marie Collins Foundation, said:

"We support the work of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and would encourage anyone who feels they need help to stop their offending to contact them as soon as possible. Every survivor we have worked with has told us that the continued viewing and sharing of their image only worsens the impact upon them. These are not victimless crimes and our work includes educating people about the devastating consequences.

"Sexual images are not only indecent, they are taken by force, coercion and abuse, and from that point on the person in the images has no control over what happens to them. The scars of that run deep and the impact can last a lifetime. We all have a duty to help stop it."

Ends

For further information, and to discuss interview opportunities, please contact:

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Notes to Editor:

Data

Key to data:

***website** value is the number of people who visited the Stop it Now! Get Help website to get help to address their online behaviour, or that of a loved one.

***Helpline** value is the number of people who called the Stop it Now! Helpline with either concerns about their own online behaviour, or that of a loved one.

***Year on Year increase** – is the percentage increase in the number of people contacting the Stop it Now! Helpline and website with concerns about their online behaviour in 2017, or that of a loved one, compared to the number in 2016.

1. UK – with country by country breakdown

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL	Year on year
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			2016			2017	increase %
England	20190	2135	22,325	29091	2282	31,373	41%
Scotland	1478	136	1,614	2401	107	2508	55%
Wales	783	113	896	935	138	1073	20%
Northern Ireland	436	20	456	615	24	639	40%
Not set	798	N/A	798	1150	N/A	1150	44%
Whole of UK	23685	2404	26,089	34192	2251	36443	40%

1. England - East Midlands

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Derbyshire	219	28	247	318	25	343	39%
Lincolnshire	212	34	246	307	38	345	40%
Leicestershire	303	38	341	374	46	420	23%
Nottinghamshire	374	31	405	600	18	618	53%
Northants	324	26	350	402	46	448	28%
Rutland	92	N/A	92	126	N/A	126	37%
East Mids TOTAL	1524	157	1681	2127	173	2300	37%

2. England – Eastern England

Eastern England	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Cambs	269	33	272	444	23	467	72%
Norfolk	311	22	333	421	23	444	33%

Suffolk	176	21	197	261	35	296	50%
East Eng (general)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
East Eng TOTAL	756	76	832	1126	81	1207	45%

3. London

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
London							
London (Total)	5727	195	5916	8390	199	8589	45%

4. Southern England

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Southern England							
Hampshire (incl Isle of Wight)	683	92	775	917	94	1,011	30%
Oxfordshire	315	28	343	387	35	422	23%
Southern England TOTAL	998	120	1,118	1,304	129	1,433	28%

5. South West England

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
South West England							
Bristol	N/A	21	21	N/A	26	26	24%
Cornwall and Channel Islands	121	21	142	152	16	168	18%

East Riding of Yorkshire	120	14	134	141	10	151	13%
North Yorkshire	365	27	392	468	24	492	26%
South Yorkshire	443	25	468	557	28	585	25%
West Yorkshire	708	50	758	1019	27	1046	38%
North & North East Lincolnshire	36	x	36	54	x	54	50%
Yorkshire (general)	x	30	30	x	39	39	30%
Yorkshire and Humberside	1672	146	1818	2239	128	2367	30%
TOTAL							

8. England – North East

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	Total 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
County Durham	130	11	141	209	29	238	69%
Northumberland	13	4	17	18	8	26	53%
Tyne & Wear	307	19	326	435	13	448	37%
North East TOTAL	450	34	484	662	50	712	47%

9. England – North West

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Cheshire	282	39	321	358	48	406	26%
Cumbria	163	24	187	225	18	243	30%
Greater Manchester	929	36	965	1615	41	1656	72%

Lancashire	286	44	330	449	45	494	50%
Merseyside	468	45	513	573	44	617	20%
North West General	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
North West TOTAL	2128	188	2316	3220	196	3416	47%

10. England- West Midlands

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Herefordshire	32	16	48	56	9	65	35%
Shropshire	139	18	157	173	21	194	24%
Staffordshire	359	45	404	514	33	547	35%
Warwickshire	152	18	170	210	13	223	31%
West Midlands County	1160	80	1240	1687	95	1782	44%
West Midlands General	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Worcestershire	202	25	227	319	23	342	51%
West Midlands TOTAL	2044	202	2246	2959	194	3153	40%

11. England – Three Counties

	Website 2016	Helpline 2016	TOTAL 2016	Website 2017	Helpline 2017	TOTAL 2017	Year on year increase %
Bedfordshire	179	37	216	246	40	286	32%
Buckinghamshire	279	37	316	402	42	444	41%
Hertfordshire	373	47	420	519	55	574	37%

Three Counties TOTAL	831	121	952	1167	137	1304	37%
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CASE STUDY: An offender’s journey to Stop it Now! - ‘Sean’

‘Sean’ first heard about Stop It Now whilst watching BBC news, where he saw a film clip which depicted an offender walking blindly past a series of stop signs before falling into darkness. For years Sean had told himself that his actions were wrong, but he felt powerless to change his ways on his own.

The film prompted him to visit the Stop it Now! website and then build up courage to call the helpline. After explaining his fears, Sean was given advice about steps he could take to reduce the risk of reoffending in future, including visiting the Get Help section of the website and working through the self-help modules.

Sean called back several weeks later and said he felt much more positive about his ability to change. He had confided in his girlfriend, and now only uses the internet when she is there. He has also worked through the online Get Help modules and said he now understands that looking at indecent images of children is not a victimless crime. He says this gives him another reason not to lapse back into his old habits.

About The Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Named after its founder, Baroness Lucy Faithfull of Wolvercote, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is the only UK-wide child protection charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. It works with entire families affected by or concerned about abuse including: adult male and female sexual abusers; young people with inappropriate sexual behaviours; victims of abuse and other family members. Drawing on expert knowledge about child sexual abuse the charity offers a broad range of services for professionals and members of the public. These include: assessments, intervention and treatment of known offenders, case specific advice and support, training and development courses and workshops, educational programmes for internet offenders and their families, circles of support and accountability, internet safety seminars for schools (teachers, parents and children) and Parents Protect! training for professionals, parents, carers and other adults. It also runs the Stop it Now! Campaign and Helpline (0808 1000 900). www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk, www.stopitnow.org.uk and www.parentsprotect.co.uk

About Stop it Now! UK and Ireland

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland is a national campaign, Freephone confidential Helpline and website run by child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation. It 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! works 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. Since 2002 the Helpline has provided advice and support to 35,000 callers and emailers, who together, make up 65,000 contacts. 55% of contacts were from people concerned about their own behaviour. www.stopitnow.org.uk and www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk

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