

****Embargoed until 00.01 BST 26 June 2018****

Greater Manchester Police joins child protection charity in campaign to tackle indecent images of children

Greater Manchester Police has joined forces with child protection charity The Lucy Faithfull Foundation for a week long campaign to get people who look at sexual images of children seek help to stop.

Launched today, the campaign aims to deter offenders in Greater Manchester from continuing to download illegal and harmful images of children and encourage them to access support via a confidential and anonymous helpline that is operated by Stop it Now! – a child sexual abuse prevention campaign run by the Foundation.

Within the last 12 months, Stop it Now! has already seen over 1,900 people from Greater Manchester access help and support through the website and helpline, 52 per cent more than the previous year.*

The campaign makes it clear that downloading sexually explicit images of anyone under 18 is illegal, is the cause of great harm to the children in the images and highlights the severe consequences for those who continue to offend.

Just as important, information will be sent to people across Greater Manchester who routinely look at indecent images of children, signposting them to a range of online self-help resources and information that can help them understand their behaviour, what triggers it and how they can stop.

This online help is available via a dedicated website: www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk and through the confidential and anonymous Stop it Now! helpline: 0808 1000 900.

Detective Chief Inspector Debbie Oakes from Greater Manchester Police said: “We remain committed to protecting children from online sexual abuse and continue to work to bring offenders of this abhorrent crime to justice.

“We want offenders to consider the devastating impact that this crime has on victims as well as the consequences for themselves and their families when they are caught.

“Our partnership with The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is crucial in raising awareness of child protection as well as giving offenders the opportunity to seek help.”

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.

“We know from many years of experience that 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. There will be many people across Greater Manchester right now who are very worried about what they are looking at online but have no idea how to get help to stop. Our message to them is simple, get in touch and we can help you start making positive

changes. You can reach us either via the Stop it Now! Get Help website, or via our confidential Helpline on 0808 1000 900.”

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Bev Hughes said: “It’s very easy for predators to groom children and access sexual material online, whilst never having to face the devastating consequences for children and their families’.

“Educating people about the damage they can have on somebody’s life is an important part of preventing sexual abuse – and obviously a key part of what the Lucy Faithfull Foundation do.

“Preventing online child sexual exploitation continues to be a key priority for me and all partners across Greater Manchester, and we are working hard to ensure we prevent it from happening.”

Greater Manchester Police will host a live web chat on Wednesday 27 June 6pm - 7pm when a senior representative from Greater Manchester Police, together with a Senior Practitioner from The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, will be available to respond to any questions people may have about indecent images of children, the law surrounding such images, and the help that’s available to stop. People can join the web chat anonymously.

Ends

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

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Notes to Editor

***52% rise in number of people from Greater Manchester seeking help**

1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018 - 1,951 people from Greater Manchester visited the charity’s online self-help resources or called the confidential helpline to get help with their own viewing of sexually explicit images of children, or that of a loved one.

1,284 people sought help in the previous 12 month period – a rise of 52 per cent.

Testimony from a man who sought help from Stop it Now!

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.”

The same person agreed to speak about his experience in a video recorded by Stop it Now! 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](#).

Images (stills) taken from the films are available on request

National offending rates

The figures for people from Greater Manchester accessing help through the Stop it Now! helpline and website come at a time when the police are reporting an escalation, across the UK, in online viewing and sharing of child abuse images. In 2013 the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) estimated that as many as 50,000 individuals in the UK *(1 – see Notes to Editor below for further detail)* were involved in downloading or sharing sexual images of children. But in a BBC TV interview in October 2016, National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Lead for Child Protection, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, said that at least 100,000 people in the UK were now regularly viewing online sexual images of children.

(1) This estimate was based on file sharing activity alone, and did not include open web searches or activity in the dark net. The CEOP threat assessment is available in full [here](#). The 50,000 figure comes from the CEOP threat assessment published in 2013, shortly before CEOP became a Command of the National Crime Agency. It should be noted that this is an estimate based on available information and intelligence analysis at the time. The relevant paragraph reads: "Although it is clearly not possible to establish a precise figure, CEOP estimates that there were around 50,000 individuals in the UK involved in downloading and sharing IIOC during 2012." The 50,000 figure was a hypothecated total number based on different data sources and was not a list of individuals. The most recent NCA threat assessment covering child sexual exploitation and abuse can be found here:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/560-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2015/file>

(2) The campaign films are based on key findings from a Lucy Faithfull Foundation survey of men arrested for accessing indecent images of children. The survey identified many of the reasons people both access indecent images, and persist in downloading and sharing them. These include a failure to understand that all indecent images of children under 18 are illegal and a lack of awareness of the harm they caused to the children involved, as well as the damage to their own family and friends. Many expressed a desire to stop, but had little awareness of organisations like Stop it Now! that can help.

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!

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

@stopitnowuk

#stopitnow

<https://www.facebook.com/stopitnowukandireland>

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The public relations office is open Monday–Friday, 8am–4pm.