



****Embargoed until 00.01 GMT, 20 January 2017****

Over 400 people from North-East England seek charity's help to stop online viewing of sexual images of children

404 people from North-East England visited the Stop it Now! Get Help website in the last 12 months to access online help to stop either their own viewing of online sexual images of children, or that of a loved one.

In addition, **a further 24 men from the North-East (1)** (*Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and County Durham*) **called the confidential Stop it Now! helpline (2)** over the same period to get help to stop viewing sexual images of children online. The helpline offers anonymous, effective support for those worried about their own online sexual behaviour, or someone else's.

The Get Help website (www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk) is operated by Stop it Now! , a sexual abuse prevention campaign run by child protection charity, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. The website offers self-help tools and resources to help users address their behaviour and stop looking at online sexual images of children. It also provides information and support to partners and friends of people arrested for, or suspected of, accessing online child abuse images.

Assistant Chief Constable for County Durham, Dave Orford, said:

“Protecting the vulnerable in society is often a hidden part of policing as the crimes are often hidden. Stopping this requires the help and support of many agencies coming together. The police are working tirelessly, supporting survivors and targeting offenders to reduce these appalling offences. There are now specialist units and officers across the North East focusing on this area, and the work of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has been key in helping make our communities safer.”

Regional and National Trends

The 24 calls to the Stop it Now! Helpline from North-East England in 2016 make up 1.6% of the 1,504 calls received from across the UK in 2016. And these 24 calls represent an increase of 9% over the 22 calls received from the North-East in 2015.

In addition to the 24 men who rang the Stop it Now! Helpline, a further 8 adults from North-East England rang over the same period to express their concerns about the online behaviour of another adult. These calls are typically from wives or parents.

The figures for people 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 were involved in downloading or sharing sexual images of children (3). 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.

Tom Squire is the Clinical Manager at The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, and is also responsible for overseeing the work of the Stop it Now Helpline. Commenting on the figures from North-East England, he said:

“Stop it Now! has worked with thousands of men arrested for viewing sexual images of children. For many, being arrested was a real wake-up call. Many knew what they were doing was wrong, but struggled to change their behaviour on their own. That’s where our work comes in. We make sure these men understand the harm they have caused the children in these images, and also the serious consequences for them and their families if they don’t get to grips with their online behaviour. Once they understand this, they become far less likely to reoffend.

But there are still tens of thousands of men out there viewing sexual images of under 18s. We need to get to them too, to help them understand what they are doing is illegal and incredibly harmful to the children and young people in the images – and to stop. We can give them help to stop via our Stop it Now! Helpline, or online – all support given is completely confidential. So if you are struggling with your online behaviour, or if you know someone who is, please get in touch.”

Stop it Now’s current UK-wide campaign to tackle the viewing of sexual images of children online

People from North-East England accessing help to stop looking at indecent images of children are part of an overall figure of over 16,000 people from across the UK who have taken similar action to stop their offending behaviour since October 2015. Many of these people are seeking help thanks to a Stop it Now! public awareness campaign. The campaign has gained significant attention by releasing a series of innovative films, viewed over 3 million times since the campaign launched in October 2015. The films (4) aim to deter those who are already offending by making clear that:

- There are no grey areas – viewing or sharing a sexual image of someone under 18 is illegal.
- This isn’t a victimless crime – the experience is extremely harmful to the children involved.
- The consequences can be devastating to the family, partners and friends of people who access sexual images of children, and may include: arrest, loss of job, prosecution and becoming a registered sex offender.
- There is confidential help to stop.

The films can be watched on the Stop it Now! Youtube channel [here](#).

The success of the Stop it Now! campaign in encouraging people to get help to stop looking at illegal images has won praise from the police. The NPCC’s Lead on child protection, Simon Bailey, said: **“there are many people who offend or who are yet to offend and want help to stop their behaviour; the work of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation is vitally important in supporting these people and giving them access to appropriate services. “**

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

-Ends-

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

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Notes to Editor:

(1)

Table showing regional breakdown of caller totals from North-East England for 2016 and 2015

01 January 2016 – 31 December 2016 (12 months)		
	Total adult callers concerned about their own online behaviour	Total adult callers concerned about the online behaviour of another adult
County Durham	7	3
Northumberland	3	2
Tyne and Wear	14	3
TOTAL	24	8
01 January 2015 – 31 December 2015 (12 months)		
County Durham	5	4
Northumberland	5	3
Tyne and Wear	12	4
TOTAL	22	11

- 2) Stop it Now! is a public education campaign run by The Lucy Faithfull Foundation - the only UK-wide charity focused solely on reducing the risk of children being sexually abused. It runs a confidential helpline – **0808 1000 900**. Since 2002 the Helpline has provided advice and support to 31,500 callers and emailers, who together, made 60,000 contacts. 55% of contacts were from people concerned about their own behaviour.
- 3) 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>

- 4) 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 their 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 31,500 callers and emailers, who together, made 60,000 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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