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Rehabilitation Programmes for people who view sexual images of children

This week has seen a public debate on responses to those who view sexual images of children online, and the value of rehabilitation programmes for offenders. In light of this debate, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, wants to make available the following information about its programmes.

Established in 1992, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (1) is a child protection charity specialising in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Staff of the Foundation comprise professionals with significant past experience in dealing with child sexual abuse and abusers. This includes ex-child protection police officers, probation officers, psychologists, social workers and health workers. These staff work with those who abuse, their victims and their families as well as with the other professionals involved in responding to abuse.

We provide interventions to deal with the trauma of past abuse and treatment programmes to reduce the risk of future offending. Between 1995 and 2002, with financial support from the Home Office, we ran the Wolvercote Clinic – this country's only residential assessment and treatment centre for men with allegations of or convictions for child sexual abuse. Research by Birmingham University (2) found Wolvercote Clinic to be the most effective treatment programme for high risk, high deviance sex offenders available at the time.

Since 2002 the Foundation has been focusing more of its efforts on the prevention of child sexual abuse before it happens. This includes setting up, in collaboration with NSPCC, Barnardos, Home Office and others, the Parents Protect website (www.parentsprotect.co.uk) which arms parents and carers with the information they need to help keep their children safe from sexual abuse. This website is visited by just over 200,000 people from the UK each year. In addition, we deliver online safety training to children in primary and secondary schools, as well as to their parents and teachers. We worked with the Department of Education and the National Association of Headteachers and others to create the Safer Recruitment Training course for Heads and Governors of schools following the murder of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by Ian Huntley.

In 2002, with a Steering Group involving NSPCC, Barnardos, Action for Children, The National Association for People Abused in Childhood, the Internet Watch Foundation and others concerned to keep children safe from sexual abuse, we set up the child sexual abuse prevention campaign, Stop it Now! UK & Ireland (www.stopitnow.org.uk). Based on a programme from the USA set up by survivor of child sexual abuse, Fran Henry, Stop it Now! challenges adults to play their part in preventing child sexual abuse. Since 2002, the Stop it Now! confidential helpline has dealt with over 60,000 calls. 36% of calls are from adults worried about the sexual behaviour of someone known to them, including partners, parents and children with worrying sexual behaviour. 12% of calls are from professionals – health workers, police, social workers, probation officers, teachers – looking for advice and support with specific cases. 4% of calls are from adult survivors of child sexual abuse, typically looking for an explanation as to why someone that they thought loved them could harm them in such a way. But over 40% of calls are from adults, mostly men, troubled about their own

sexual behaviour, whether online or offline. As a child protection charity, our role is to understand the circumstances and concerns of all callers in order to help them make responsible decisions and take practical steps to prevent future harm to children.

Since 2005, Police across the UK have been supplying those arrested for accessing sexual images of children and young people (ie all under 18 years old) with contact details for Stop it Now! – partly as a suicide prevention strategy but also partly as a risk management strategy.

In October 2015 the Foundation launched a campaign to tackle the proliferation of people viewing online sexual images of children. Alongside conventional media and social media, the campaign used four short films to get messages to the public, especially men, about: the criminal law relating to viewing online sexual images of children; the harm done to children in the creation and viewing of sexual images of under 18s online; the consequences of getting arrested for such illegal behaviour; the necessity of not starting such viewing, or of stopping if already started; and of the help available to stop and to stay stopped. As a consequence of this campaign, the films have been viewed over 9 million times; calls to the Stop it Now! helpline have increased; and our online self-help resources (www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk) have been accessed by over 29,000 individuals from the UK since October 2015.

In 2016, over 1500 individuals contacted the Stop it Now! helpline concerned about their illegal online behaviour, including many who had been arrested for this behaviour. As well as supporting them and their families to manage any immediate risk – including through offenders being asked to move out of the family home or having monitoring software installed on their computers to prevent future illegal use – helpline staff have directed them to published and online resources to ensure they begin to address their behaviour. In addition, some 300 men have attended the Inform Plus psycho-educational programme in 2016, designed specifically for those who have accessed sexual images of children online. This 10 session groupwork or individual programme explores the different routes into offending; educates those attending about the harmful effects on the victims of both making and viewing these images – this is not a victim-less crime; considers the harm done to family, friends and the offender himself through his offending behaviour; considers the risk of possible future offending and the steps needed to avoid this. The Programme also helps each participant to develop a realistic plan for leading a future responsible, law abiding life. Where individuals have additional needs they are directed to other services and resources.

Since 2005 over 1,900 men have participated in the [Inform Plus programme](#) and the Foundation now operates Inform Plus from 6 sites across the country.

Independent evaluations (4) of the Stop it Now! Helpline and Inform Plus programme found each to respond effectively to factors associated with re-offending, including poor empathy, low self-esteem, poor problem-solving skills and emotional loneliness in offenders.

Ends

Further Information:

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Notes:

(1)

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

(2) The Birmingham University research is available [here](#).

(3) Further information on the categories of callers to the Stop it Now! Helpline is available via the [Stop it Now! Helpline Summary Report](#).

(4) [NatCen Social Research \(2014\)](#); Gillespie et al (2016); Dervley et al (2017).