

Your first steps to getting the  
right support and advice

If someone you  
know is being  
investigated for  
online sexual  
offences

We can  
support  
you

Get anonymous help  
0808 1000 900  
[stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp](https://stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp)

**Stop It Now!**

UK & IRELAND

Helping prevent  
child sexual abuse

## First reactions

**You will have been given this leaflet because someone close to you is being investigated for online sexual offences involving children.** This may be the first time you have had contact with the police or you have come across this type of behaviour.

“**Thank you so much for the support you’ve given me through a very difficult time. The help you gave was a lifeline for me and my family.**”

## We can support you and your loved one

**We are a leading UK charity that offers support and guidance to anyone concerned about their own or someone else’s sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children.** We help thousands of people each year and we can offer you non-judgemental advice and help you to make sense of what’s going on.

Our anonymous Stop It Now! helpline, live chat and secure email are available to anyone, including the family and friends of people under investigation for, or convicted of, viewing sexual images of children or having sexual conversations with children online (grooming).

You do not have to give any identifying information like your family name, address or telephone number. If you’re not ready to speak to someone just yet you can use our confidential live chat or send us a secure email.

We can help you talk through your worries, explore your situation and support you and your family through this challenging time. The experienced advisors on our helpline have a range of backgrounds including social and health care, counselling and psychology. They can give you confidential support and won’t judge.

Visit [stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp](https://stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp) for more information or to get in touch.

## Taking care of yourself

**It is really important that whilst you are dealing with this situation that you take care of your own physical and mental health. It is normal to experience a low mood at this time, and feel alone or overwhelmed.** It’s important that you don’t deal with this alone and that you reach out to friends and family.

**Call the Stop It Now! helpline on 0808 1000 900 or visit [stopitnow](https://stopitnow.org.uk)**

Everyone's situation is different, but the Stop It Now! helpline can offer you an opportunity to talk through your thoughts and feelings. Talking to someone can help you to take calm and considered decisions, whatever they are.

As well as contacting Stop It Now! speak with your GP for support. There are tips on looking after yourself on the NHS website and links to accessing support: [nhs.uk/mental-health](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health)

## How we can help you

**Through our helpline, live chat and secure email, our experienced advisors can support you and talk you through:**

- your mental health, self-care and support
- what might happen with your family life
- the role of children's services, if relevant
- how to tell others, when you feel ready
- why people offend online.

## What happens next?

**The police might have taken away all of the internet enabled devices in your household. They will investigate these devices to decide if any offences have been committed.**

The length of time this takes will vary depending on a range of things, including where you live and how busy the police are. This can sometimes take many months. After the investigation has been completed, a decision will be made about what happens next. If there is evidence that the person under investigation has committed a criminal offence it is likely they will be charged. The police will advise them of their rights if this happens.

Be prepared for some uncertainty and worry during this time, but try to continue your life in as normal a way as possible. The person under investigation will need to comply with any restrictions imposed by the police or children's services. The Stop It Now! helpline is there for confidential support, advice and information and can help you navigate the coming months.

## What about your relationship and family life?

**This is a challenging time and any decision about your relationship with the person who is being investigated should not be rushed, especially if children are involved.** You need time to reflect and perhaps speak with someone who understands the issues you are facing. Relationships can and do survive the arrest and possible conviction of a person close to you, if that is what you want.

If you have children living at home this situation will affect them too. In many circumstances, the person under investigation won't be allowed to live with children until children's services have completed an assessment. Their first concern is the welfare and safety of children in the family. They will want to discuss practical steps with you to ensure that the children are safe. Sometimes social workers or the police might want to talk directly with your children.

Understandably children will have questions or worries that need to be addressed and it is important to think carefully about what to say to them and how to do this, in order to minimise their anxiety and distress. We have advice on our website on how to talk to children about a loved one's online offending.

## Should you tell other people?

**We understand that you may be worried about others finding out about what has happened. We suggest that you only tell people you can trust and who need to know, like close friends, family members or your children's school.** They should be people who can offer you support and help, as well as additional protection for your children.

## Get in touch with us now

**Talking to one of our advisors will help you get expert advice and support for your individual situation. At times the helpline can be very busy, but please keep trying.**

If you're not ready to speak to someone, you can get in touch through our secure email or live chat: [stopitnow.org.uk/helpline](https://stopitnow.org.uk/helpline)

Our helpline, live chat and websites are available in other languages.

Whether you're ready to contact the helpline or not, you can get information, advice and support on our website: [stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp](https://stopitnow.org.uk/findhelp)