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More than 2,200 people from Yorkshire seek charity's help to stop viewing sexual images of children online

2,226 people from across Yorkshire visited the Stop it Now! Get Help website in the last 12 months (1 October 2016 – 30 September 2017) to access online help to stop either their own viewing of online sexual images of children, or that of a loved one. (1 - Please see Notes to Editor for a more detailed regional breakdown of the figures.)

The 2,226 visitors to the site from Yorkshire in 2016-17 represents an increase of 76% over the 1,268 people from Yorkshire who visited the same site in the previous 12 month period.

A further 72 men from Yorkshire (2) (West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, East Riding of Yorkshire) called the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline over the same period to get help to stop viewing sexual images of children online. And in addition to the 72 men who called to get help for their own online behaviour, a further 35 adults from Yorkshire called the Helpline to express concerns over the online behaviour of another adult. 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.

Regional and National Trends

The 2,226 people from Yorkshire who visited the Get Help website in the 12 months between October 2016 and September 2017 make up 6.4% of the 34,518 people from across the UK who visited the self-help website during the same period.

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 (3) were involved in downloading or sharing sexual images of children (4). 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.

Detective Superintendent Darren Minton of West Yorkshire Police Central Safeguarding Governance Unit said:

“Protecting vulnerable people continues to be the top priority for West Yorkshire Police and we have dedicated Online Investigations Teams across the Force dedicated to detecting to these crimes.

“Nationally and in conjunction with the National Crime Agency police are arresting over 400 offenders and safeguarding 500 children a month in relation to the viewing of child abuse imagery. The police service is dealing with an unprecedented volume of child sexual abuse, including non-recent abuse, ongoing abuse, online abuse and peer-to-peer abuse. These numbers are continuing to rise.

“It is positive that offenders are recognising their behaviour and seeking support to get help, however we know that many more are not, and are systematically complicit in the abuse of adults and children by viewing this material. Many offenders think that these offences are victimless, as they are not physically abusing the person or child in the images themselves. However in every image is a vulnerable individual who has been exploited and abused for the gratification of others. These crimes do not go un-noticed. Our teams are dedicated to finding those who view, share and produce this content and take positive action to bring them to justice.”

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

“Stop it Now! has worked with hundreds 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 had little idea about how to stop. That’s where our work comes in. The first thing we do is to 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 thousands of men out there viewing sexual images of under 18s. So we need to get to them too, to help them understand what they are doing is illegal and incredibly harmful – and to get them to stop. People can get that help far more easily than they probably imagine – either by contacting our helpline, or by visiting the Stop it Now! website. Both helpline and website can provide support and information on how to stop. They are both confidential and can be used anonymously. So if you are struggling with your online behaviour, or if you know someone who is, please take that all important first step and get in touch.”

And commenting on behalf of the Ripon-based Marie Collins Foundation, Professor Tink Palmer said:

“As a charity that works directly with victims and their families we know the extent and the depth of harm caused by online sexual imagery. These are not victimless crimes and the untold damage they cause can last a lifetime.

“The Stop It Now! statistics are only the tip of the iceberg, and they represent only those men who are proactively seeking help. The market for these images continues to grow and we must all continue to work together to educate people regarding the harm caused and to rid the internet of this material.”

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

Many of those seeking help from Yorkshire are doing so thanks to a Stop it Now! public awareness campaign. The campaign has gained significant attention by releasing a series of innovative films (4),

viewed over 15 million times since the campaign launched in October 2015. The films (5) 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 National Police Chiefs Council'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 breakdown by county and town of web traffic to the Stop it Now! Get Help website

Visitor totals to Stop it Now! Get Help website 01 October 2016 – 30 September 2017 (12 months)	
West Yorkshire	
Leeds	528
Bradford	137
Huddersfield	112
Halifax	66
Wakefield	44
Pontefract	39

Castleford	17
Batley	16
Others	66
Total	1025
North Yorkshire	
York	131
Middlesborough	73
Scarborough	69
Malton	62
Stockton-on-Tees	39
Harrogate	39
Other	80
Total	493
South Yorkshire	
Sheffield	386
Barnsley	80
Doncaster	65
Rotherham	24
Other	22
Total	577
Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire	
Hull	98
Other	33
Total	131
Total for Yorkshire	2,226

(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 35,000 callers and emailers, who together, made 65,000 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 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

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