



Working to Protect Children



Over 3,600 people from South West seek charity's help in six months to stop viewing of sexual images of children online

- **National helpline and self-help website Stop It Now! reports a doubling in contacts from people in the South West during the first half of 2019 compared with the same time last year.**
- **The helpline – run by the charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – aims to help people address their online behaviour and stop viewing sexual images of children**
- **Latest independent evaluation highlights positive changes to reduce offending behaviour**

Stop It Now!, the UK's first national anonymous helpline that supports people to stop viewing sexual images of under 18s online, has reported a 106 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of people using the specialist helpline (0808 1000 900) and self-help website during the first half of this year.

Between January and June this year, a total of 3,693 callers and web users from the region contacted the anonymous [Stop It Now! UK and Ireland helpline](#) and [self-help website](#). This number compares with 1,793 callers and web users from January to June 2018.

The anonymous helpline is run by [The Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#), the only UK-wide child protection charity dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse (1) both offline and online.

Through the Stop It Now! confidential helpline and website, people can understand what triggers their illegal behaviour and get support to stop for good.

Callers agree actions they can take to manage their short- and long-term online behaviour. Helpline operators also discuss the possibility of any direct risks to children, including in their own family, to ensure these children are protected. Calls remain confidential and anonymous, unless identifying details are known and a child is deemed to be at risk of harm.

The helpline also supports adult family members and friends of those offending online, as well as anyone worried about the sexual behaviour of others. The biggest risk of child sexual abuse is within the family home, which is where parents and carers need to ensure the most protection.

Independent evaluation reveals that after receiving advice from Stop It Now! those offending take steps to control their behaviour. For some this means completely stopping using the internet or pornography, installing controls and filters on devices and informing partners or family members of their illegal behaviour.

Viewing and sharing indecent images of children online is a serious and growing problem. In 2018 the National Crime Agency estimated that 80,000 people in the UK pose a sexual threat to children online (2). Police forces around the country are making around 450 arrests each month relating to such behaviour and many of these people go on to contact Stop It Now! and The Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

The Stop It Now! campaign has won praise from National Police Chiefs' Council, whose lead for child protection, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, said: "The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has a pivotal role in helping to ensure offenders and those who are yet to offend have access to the appropriate services to support them in preventing behaviour that causes harm to children. I am glad to see that more people than ever are coming forward to seek help for their behaviour."

Donald Findlater, director of the Stop It Now! helpline, said:

"The growing numbers of people contacting us for help to stop viewing sexual images of under 18s sheds light on the scale of the problem, but also shows that many users of material they call "child pornography" are worried about their behaviour and want help to change.

"And they do need to change. Viewing and sharing these illegal images has enormous consequences for them in the form of possible arrest, imprisonment, being on the sex offenders register, and losing friends and family. There are also enormous consequences for the people around them, family members in particular. And more important still are the children in the sexual images who are harmed when they are first made and when they are viewed or shared again.

"These consequences and harms can be prevented by getting in touch with the confidential and anonymous Stop It Now! helpline or through our self-help website. If you're worried about yourself or anyone around you, help is available. We have already helped tens of thousands address their concerns and behaviour. Our message is simple, get help before it's too late."

Richard Turner, Detective Chief Inspector for Avon and Somerset Constabulary, commented:

"Avon and Somerset Police work extensively to detect and prosecute people who have been downloading and sharing sexual images of children online. The number of cases that we have handled has increased in recent years, with referrals from other organisations increasing by 100%, in part due to better collaborations and improved reporting from social networking giants.

"This abhorrent crime involves the extortion of some of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities and we are committed to protecting these children from harm and continuing to work tirelessly to seek out and convict those who offend. Anyone who is viewing indecent images or videos is committing an offence and is continuing the suffering of those children. We support the work of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and encourage anyone who recognises that they have a problem to contact them. They aim to educate people who are offending or are about to offend and prevent the abuse in the first place."

Detective Inspector Sue Fereday, Gloucestershire Constabulary lead for child sexual exploitation and indecent images of children, said:

“These are complex problems that can’t be solved by one agency alone and working together effectively is key. Police and law enforcement will continue to do all we can to find offenders and bring them to justice, but other organisations such as Stop It Now! are invaluable in preventing offending from happening in the first place and so protect children from harm.

“Last month we hosted a conference on combating child sexual abuse and exploitation and supporting victims. These are major priorities for us and we’re committed to doing all we can.”

Detective Superintendent Deb Smith, Head of Public Protection at Wiltshire Police, said:

“Viewing and sharing these images is a serious problem that isn’t going away. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation provide invaluable support and guidance to help people change their own online behaviour or to get a loved one to stop their illegal online behaviour.

“At Wiltshire Police, we take all reports of this nature very seriously and we work closely with our partners to do all we can to bring offenders to justice and provide support to victims and their families. We also have a dedicated Child Internet Exploitation Team that deals with offenders engaging in viewing and sharing indecent images of children online.

“I would urge anyone with concerns around child sexual exploitation to call us on 101 or, in an emergency, via 999. No matter how insignificant you may think it is, it could be the vital piece of information that we need to protect a child from serious harm”.

-Ends-

For further information, and to discuss interview opportunities with a spokesperson from The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, please contact:

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More information about the campaign can be found [here](#), including [videos](#) and [posters](#).

Statistics:

	Jan 1 - Jun 30 2018			Jan 1 - Jun 30 2019			Change (%)
	Helpline callers	Website users	Total	Helpline callers	Website users	Total	
Avon and Somerset*	22	270	292	26	519	545	86.6
Bristol*	20	359	379	18	1082	1100	190.2
Cornwall	7	97	104	11	257	268	157.7
Devon	26	293	319	28	633	661	107.2
Dorset	15	258	273	13	360	373	36.6
Gloucs	8	274	282	13	540	553	96.1
Wiltshire	20	124	144	9	184	193	34.0
TOTAL	118	1675	1793	107	3575	3693	106.0

Key to data:

*Part of the same force area

**website value is the number of users for the Stop It Now! Get Help website, as returned by Google Analytics.

***Helpline value is the number of people who called the Stop It Now! helpline with either concerns about their own online behaviour, or that of a loved one.

More information on the Stop It Now! campaign to deter people from viewing indecent images of children online, including campaign films that have been viewed over 23 million times, is available [here](#).

(1) The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's staff includes former probation officers, social workers, psychologists and ex-police officers. They help prevent children from being sexually abused by working with victims, families and sex offenders themselves. The charity also runs [Stop It Now!](#) – a public project that enables adults to play their part in preventing the sexual abuse of children through education, training, online resources and a confidential helpline.

2) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-online>

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; front-line workers and professionals. It also runs the Stop it Now! campaign and helpline (0808 1000 900).

lucyfaithfull.org.uk

stopitnow.org.uk

parentsprotect.co.uk

About Stop It Now! UK and Ireland

Stop It Now! UK and Ireland is a national campaign, confidential helpline and website run by child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation. 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 46,000 callers and emailers, who together, make up 86,000 contacts. 55% of contacts were from people concerned about their own behaviour.

stopitnow.org.uk and get-help.stopitnow.org.uk

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