



£600,000 funding boost to West Midlands-based child sexual abuse prevention charity

- *Funding follows a 29% increase in contact to Stop It Now! from people in the West Midlands concerned about online sexual abuse*

A child sexual abuse prevention charity based in Bromsgrove has received a £600,000 funding boost from the government. The Stop It Now! UK and Ireland helpline, run by The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, will now be able to give around double the number of callers the advice and support they need to protect children from sexual abuse.

The anonymous helpline deals with all aspects of child sexual abuse prevention, including direct contact abuse, child grooming, and harmful sexual behaviour of a child or young person.

Since 2015 the charity has been running a nationwide campaign to deter people from looking at sexual images of children online, and urging anyone already doing it to seek help to stop.

New figures show that, since then, there has been a 29% increase in contact to Stop It Now! from people in the West Midlands for support to stop either their own viewing of online sexual images of children, or that of a loved one.

That includes calls to the helpline from 169 people in the West Midlands in 2018, and more than 2,900 users to the specialist self-help website.

Since the start of the Stop It Now! deterrence campaign, 5,114 people from across the UK have called the helpline seeking anonymous advice and support to stop viewing online sexual images of children.

A further 2,418 people called for support regarding concerns about someone else's online viewing behaviour.

The Stop It Now! Get Help website, which offers anonymous self-help resources to people wanting to change their online behaviour, also had over 40,900 users in 2018 compared to around 23,000 in 2016.

While the helpline offered advice and information to more than 5,300 people in 2017/18, 2,746 others called but never got through to an operator because the line was busy.

The 18 months additional funding from the Home Office will mean that the number of operator hours on the helpline each week will be more than doubled to meet current demand.

Home Secretary and Bromsgrove MP, Sajid Javid, said:

“Child sexual abuse is a truly sickening crime and I’m committed to doing everything in my power to eradicate it from society.

“It’s vital we take action on a number of fronts. That’s why we have given police and prosecutors the tools they need to bring offenders to justice, are educating young people on how they can protect themselves and will be legislating to ensure tech giants are fulfilling their responsibilities to protect our children.

“But it is also important to focus on preventative measures that stop potential abusers from committing crimes in the first place. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation plays a key role in this work and has my full support.”

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

“People viewing sexual images of children online need to know this is not a victimless crime - children are harmed when these images are first made, and afterwards when they are viewed or shared again. There are serious consequences for anyone arrested for such behaviour, possibly including imprisonment, losing their job, friendships and relationships, losing contact with their own children as well as ending up on the sex offenders register.

“Confidential help is available to stop viewing these images and to stay stopped. Over these last three years thousands of people, mostly men, have come to us for help to get their lives back on track. This additional funding will ensure thousands more get through to stop their illegal behaviour and stay stopped.”

Callers agree actions they can take to manage their behaviour and protect children as well as explore other services and agencies available. Calls remain confidential and anonymous, unless identifying details are known and a child is deemed to be at risk of harm.

Independent evaluation shows that, as a result of the advice, people take steps to control their behaviour, including stopping all internet or pornography use, installing controls and filters on devices and informing partners or family members.

The National Crime Agency estimates that around 80,000 people in the UK are regularly viewing images of child sexual abuse online.

The helpline is operated by child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation. Its staff, with backgrounds as police officers, social workers, probation officers, psychologists and teachers, have been operating the Stop It Now! helpline since July 2002.

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Notes to Editor:

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)

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.

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