



## Over 7,900 people from London seek charity’s help to stop viewing sexual images of children online

7,927 people from London have contacted a child protection charity in just 12 months (1 March 2017 – 28 February 2018) seeking help to stop either their own viewing of sexual images of children, or that of a loved one.

Almost all those from London seeking help (7,699) visited [Get Help](#), a website hosting self-help tools and resources. The website is operated by [Stop it Now!](#), a sexual abuse prevention campaign run by child protection charity, [the Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#).

The site helps users to 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.

Over the same period, a further 228 people from London called [the confidential Stop it Now! Helpline](#) to discuss concerns relating to either their own viewing of sexually explicit images of children online, or that of someone they knew.

The 7,699 people from London who visited the Stop it Now! Get Help website represents almost one quarter (24%) of the total number of people from across the UK (32,484) who visited the site in the same 12 month period.

**Table showing year on year breakdown of people from London contacting Stop it Now! to get help to stop either their own viewing of sexual images of children, or that of someone they know.**

	Calls to Stop it Now Helpline 2016-17	Visits to Stop it Now Get Help website 2016-17	<b>Total 2016-17</b>	Calls to Stop it Now Helpline 2017-18	Visits to Stop it Now Get Help website 2017-18	<b>Total 2017-18</b>	<b>Year on Year increase</b>
London	182	7,199	7,381	228	7,699	7,927	7.4%

The UK city with the next highest total of visitors to the Stop it Now! Get Help website in the same 12 month period was Manchester. 1,037 people from the city visited the Get Help website between March 2017 and February 2018.

### National offending rates

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 (1 – see Notes to Editor below for further detail) were involved in downloading or sharing sexual images of children. 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.

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

Many of those seeking help from London 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 (2 – please see Notes to Editor for further detail), viewed over 20 million times online since the campaign launched in October 2015. The films 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.”**

Reflecting on the work of Stop it Now! to tackle the viewing of sexual images of children online, 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.”**

### Testimony from a man who sought help from Stop it Now!

One person who called the Stop it Now! Helpline and who has used the website's self-help resources said:

**“I had no real idea of what to expect [when I called the Helpline] but that anxiety was quickly put to rest. The woman I spoke to recommended I access some of the modules on the Stop it Now! website. These helped me understand my behaviour better. I found out what triggers I have to offending, and what sort of things might be missing in my life that could be pushing me to do**

**things I wouldn't normally want to do.....Understanding that path is very important to choosing the right measures to put in place to never go there again."**

The same person agreed to speak about his experience in a video recorded by Stop it Now! He spoke under condition of anonymity and his words have been re-voiced by an actor. You can watch [a clip from the video here](#).

Images (stills) taken from the films are available on request.

**-Ends-**

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### **Notes to Editor:**

(1) 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>

(2) 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](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk), [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk) and [www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://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](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk) and [www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk)

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