

Case Study: Engage Plus Tackling online child sexual abuse



Stop It Now!

UK & IRELAND

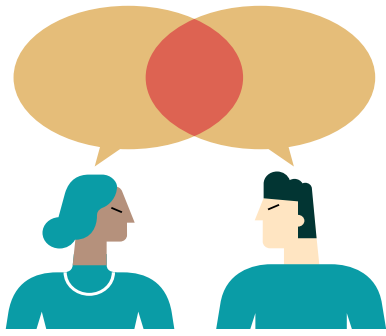
Helping prevent
child sexual abuse

Engage Plus

This programme is for men who have had sexual conversations with children online, solicited sexual images from young people online or attempt to meet with a young person after communicating online, with the intention of committing a sexual offence. The programme is delivered on a one-to-one basis.

I just want to thank [Practitioner] for her patience and engagement with me. The programme helped me gain insight which I really needed as a starting place for moving forward.

Engage Plus participant



Case Study

Peter's story

Peter, 40, is an academic and now lives alone. He has no children nor does he have direct contact with any. He was arrested for engaging in sexual communication with a child online, including sending explicit images of himself and requesting self-generated sexual images from a child. Following his arrest, the police provided him with our Stop It Now! helpline details and he has had regular contact with the helpline over several months.

During his calls, Peter told us about his poor mental health over a number of years, including anxiety, depression and self-harm. He explained that he had begun viewing legal adult pornography online about 10 years ago, and that this behaviour had escalated quickly to sexual chat with adults and then sexual communication with children of varying ages, mostly pubescent girls.

Peter disclosed that he had been engaging in such conversations with children for the last five years and that the severity and frequency of his online behaviour had escalated during lockdown. He believes this was, at least in part, due to him being inactive and feeling isolated.

Peter had a long-term partner at the time of his arrest, but the relationship deteriorated due to his arrest and they have since separated.

Helpline advice and Engage Plus

Ahead of having a face-to-face meeting with a practitioner, Peter worked his way through all 18 modules on our online self-directed intervention 'Stop It Now! Get Help'. Over a number of calls with the helpline, he told us how these had aided him in understanding the deterioration in his online behaviour, how he had persisted in his illegal activity before his arrest, and how - as well as why - he was determined he was determined to manage this in the future.

During his initial face-to-face meeting, Peter told us that he was coming to recognise the harm he caused through his online offending, and that he was now struggling with managing his feelings of guilt, self-loathing and anxiety.

Upon completion of Engage Plus, Peter stated that he had found the sessions really helpful and productive, especially those that helped him explore his pathway into offending and his offence cycle. He had completed his relapse prevention plan, detailing warning signs for himself and his family (primarily his siblings) to recognise; the importance of healthy as opposed to inappropriate sexual fantasies; and the child protection measures he will implement into the future where there are opportunities for contact with children - including that any future contact he has with children will be supervised by someone who is aware of his previous offending behaviour. Peter said that he felt he was coping better, is managing his negative feelings and is starting to feel more positive about his future.

Since Peter's engagement with our programme he has remained in occasional contact with the helpline for additional support and to update us on his progress.

Find out more about our work to protect children at:
lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Visit our Stop It Now! campaign and helpline at:
stopitnow.org.uk

Stop It Now! Scotland:
stopitnow.org.uk/scotland

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stopitnow.org.uk/wales

For prevention information visit:
parentsprotect.co.uk

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Confidential freephone helpline: **0808 1000 900**

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Names of case studies have been changed to protect anonymity.

**THE
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FOUNDATION**

Working to protect children