

Case Study: Stop It Now! UK and Ireland helpline



Stop It Now!

UK & IRELAND

Helping prevent
child sexual abuse

Stop It Now! helpline

Our Stop It Now! helpline is a unique service available for anyone with a concern about child sexual abuse. It is confidential, meaning people can openly talk through their worries and remain anonymous.

Callers range from those concerned about their own sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children to those concerned about the sexual behaviour of another adult, child or young person; from professionals seeking case advice to adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

The helpline provides far more than simply a listening service. We provide callers with information relevant to their circumstances and advise them about actions to consider, agreeing one or more protective steps they will take.

The helpline and all LFF have been incredibly supportive always, thank you. Before I called I felt trapped, now I feel I can work through this and not offend again.

A man arrested for online offending who sought help to change his behaviour



Case Study

Jack's story

Jack is a 19-year-old university student who has previously been under investigation for viewing sexual images of children. On that occasion, no further action was taken by the police. He contacted us on our live chat service following a "jokey" exchange online with a 14-year-old boy. He realises there are risks attached to such exchanges and is keen to avoid any behaviours that could cause harm or get him into trouble. That said, he enjoys speaking to younger teenagers online.

He lives at home with his parents and younger brother but only his mum is aware of his struggles with his online life and she is supporting him as best she can. Jack disclosed that he has struggled in the past with coming to terms with his sexuality. As a younger teenager, he would often engage in sexual conversations online with adult men to explore his sexuality. He did not realise at the time that this behaviour was inappropriate and that some or many of the adults he spoke to online were exploiting him. Jack was feeling very low when he first contacted us and was very worried and anxious.

First call discussion and advice

- We encouraged Jack to continue to engage with advisors on our live chat and helpline for ongoing support to help him understand his risky behaviours and to help him stay safe online.
- We discussed the importance of him looking after his mental wellbeing, including confiding in his mum for continued support. We encouraged Jack to pass the helpline details on to his mum so she could call for support.
- We discussed with him the importance of addressing and understanding his online behaviour to ensure that he does not engage in these types of risky behaviours again in the future. He was directed to our online self-directed intervention for people concerned about their online sexual behaviour toward children - 'Stop It Now! Get Help' - to use the self-help modules that would help him explore his behaviour, particularly the modules on sexual communication with children online and building a good life. He was encouraged to keep updating us with his progress as he worked through the modules.
- We encouraged him to use the internet purposefully and to consider limiting the time he spends on social media, including removing contacts from his accounts that he did not know personally in his offline life.
- We advised him to stop having any further online chats with children or individuals he did not know.
- We encouraged him to structure his days and to think about starting a hobby to keep himself occupied.
- As he described his mood as generally anxious and worried, we encouraged him to seek support for his mental wellbeing from his GP but also via the NHS Moodzone website.
- Jack was encouraged to contact One in Four or Survivors UK for support in exploring the exploitation and abuse that he experienced online when he was a child.

Jack's story: follow-up

Jack continues to use the helpline and live chat service for ongoing support to help him further understand his risky online behaviour. He has worked through the modules on Stop It Now! Get Help, which he found useful. Following this, he had a call-back with a practitioner from our young people's team and agreed that attending Inform Young People could help him consolidate the changes he had recently made. His mum also agreed to be included at the beginning of each session to provide support within but also outside the programme.

Since completing the programme, he has limited the amount of time he spends using social media and has placed parental controls on his devices so he cannot access pornography. He has been spending his time doing more planned and positive activities, including spending more time with his family, going for walks, completing his university assignments, listening to music and podcasts and reading and preparing himself for returning to university, instead of his previous habit of spending long, often rather aimless periods of time online.

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

Stop It Now! Wales

stopitnow.org.uk/wales

For prevention information visit:

parentsprotect.co.uk



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Names of case studies have been changed to protect anonymity.

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FOUNDATION**

Working to protect children