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Child protection charity holds conference at police HQ

A one-day conference being organised by the child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and the Stop it Now! campaign, is being held at West Mercia Police headquarters at Hindlip in Worcester on Monday 15 March.

The charity, based in Alvechurch in North Worcestershire, works to reduce the risk of children being sexually abused and at the regional conference, aims to explore some of the key issues surrounding child sexual abuse and to highlight how everyone has a role to play in preventing it.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (1.) works with child protection and public protection professionals as well as perpetrators of child sexual abuse and their families. With West Mercia's Chief Constable Paul West being the ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) lead on the Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders, the force has a close relationship with the charity, and is pleased to be able to offer use of their facilities for this regional conference.

The conference is open to those in child protection and public protection roles as well as police officers, children's service providers, foster care workers, youth workers, child care staff, psychologists and a host of others who work with children and families. Those attending will hear an opening address by Detective Superintendent Martin Lakeman, Head of Public Protection at West Mercia Police, followed by a presentation by Donald Findlater, Director of Stop it Now!, UK and Ireland (2.)

Delegates will attend a series of specialist workshops to consider female sexual abusers, Internet offending and children and young people who display worrying sexual behaviour. The day will end with examples from Stop it Now! projects across the UK.

Detective Superintendent Martin Lakeman said: "The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Stop it Now! UK and Ireland play an important role in child protection and we are pleased to offer our support by providing them with a venue for today's conference.

"Increased awareness of child sexual abuse is vital and the force currently works extremely closely with these charities in raising awareness, particularly around using the internet safely, through the four Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

"We hope that the information shared at the conference will help all those attending gain a greater insight into key issues and how their particular role/agency can play a part in preventing further abuse."

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Donald Findlater added: "The conference is called 'Preventing Child Sexual Abuse – Making it Everybody's Business' and that says it all. We cannot expect or allow one agency alone to tackle the problem of child sexual abuse. Everyone who has contact with children, including their families, and indeed the wider general public, has a role to play in preventing abuse taking place. We hope the conference will go some way to help delegates see prevention as a real possibility and will challenge them to engage with others to meet this goal."

Ends

NOTES

(1.) Named after its founder, Baroness Lucy Faithfull of Wolvercote, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is a child protection charity operating UK-wide and specialising in safeguarding children from sexual abuse. The Foundation's policy is to collaborate with individuals and agencies internationally to develop a more child sensitive and offender aware culture in our societies. The Foundation contributes to legislation and to policy and procedure reviews concerned with safeguarding children in faith communities, in schools, in leisure facilities, on the Internet and living away from home. www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

(2.) Stop it Now! UK and Ireland 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! is an alliance of leading children's charities, working 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. The helpline is funded by the Ministry of Justice and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. The England campaign is supported by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The Stop it Now! campaigns in Wales and Scotland are supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government respectively. www.stopitnow.org.uk.