



## Stop it Now! Helpline Report 2005-2009

Together we can prevent child sexual abuse



working to protect children





# 50%

of our calls come from those who are worried about their own thoughts and behaviours, with a further 30% coming from family members and friends of those whose behaviour is giving cause for concern...

## Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to write the Foreword to this Report, which represents a further four years of pioneering work by the Stop it Now! Helpline in protecting children from sexual abuse. The Helpline is at the forefront of child sexual abuse prevention, dedicated to protecting children by making it possible for all adults to obtain support, sound information and a place to speak about their concerns, in confidence, to trained Helpline staff. Our experience shows that abusers and potential abusers will come forward for help: 35% of callers (50% of our calls) are those who are worried about their own thoughts and behaviours. A further 32% of callers (30% of calls) are family members and friends of adults and young people whose behaviour is giving cause for concern. In a climate in which it is still very difficult to talk about child sexual abuse in such personal circumstances, it is gratifying to see that many people have sought support and advice through the Stop it Now! Helpline.

Callers demonstrate that they value the service by their continuing use of it to help address on-going issues. Adults concerned about their own behaviour call on average three times each; those concerned about another adult or young person call on average twice. In addition, many decide to give up their anonymity and come forward for face-to-face help.

I would like to thank all our funders. Special thanks go to the Taylor Family Foundation, to the Henry Smith Charity, The Oak Foundation, City Bridge Trust, The Schroder Foundation and to individual donors, who have been most generous in their support. We are particularly indebted to the Public Protection and Mental Health Group of the National Offender Management Service, in the Ministry of Justice, for their ongoing financial and moral backing for the Helpline. I would also like to thank the Department for Education (previously DCSF) for their support for the Stop it Now! campaign in England, the Home Office for sponsoring the associated Parents Protect website and to the governments of Scotland and Wales for supporting the campaign in their countries.

The success of the Helpline is grounded in the team effort that is characteristic of our work. Inspirational leadership is provided by Donald Findlater, Director of Research and Development for The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Director of the Stop it Now! UK and Ireland child sexual abuse prevention campaign. The multi-disciplinary Helpline team is managed by our Practice Manager and Helpline Co-ordinator who ensure that all aspects of the Helpline run smoothly, that calls are audited and callers receive the highest quality of service. The team includes psychologists and criminal justice and child protection professionals with extensive experience in working with sex offenders and their families, supported by sessional operators from a wide range of backgrounds and by dedicated administrators. Staff training and case supervision are vital in ensuring the best possible outcome in the interests of protecting children from sexual abuse.

Teamwork also extends to the production of this report. I would like to thank the Report's authors, in particular Jacky Findlater, Stephanie Hunter, Hannah Del-Manso, and Hilary Eldridge, Chief Executive of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

### **Baroness Valerie Howarth of Breckland, OBE**

President of Stop it Now! UK & Ireland  
Vice Chair of Trustees. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation

**People can and do take action to prevent child sexual abuse and its potentially devastating consequences when they have a 'safe' place in which they can speak honestly.**



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# 1

## The case for Stop it Now!

“The innovative approach of the Stop it Now! Helpline allows people who are concerned about any aspect of child sexual abuse to talk about it in confidence. For families and friends, people working in the field of child sexual abuse and offenders, this is an invaluable resource.”

**Martin Narey, Chief Executive  
Barnardos**

# The Stop it Now! UK & Ireland public education campaign recognises child sexual abuse as a preventable public health problem.

## Origins

Fran Henry, a survivor of child sexual abuse in her family in the USA, recognised how vital it was for the problem of child sexual abuse not to remain hidden, nor to be seen as something only professionals could do anything about. Fran founded Stop It Now! (USA) with the aim of giving all adults access to a safe and confidential place in which to discuss their concerns and receive the advice and support needed to keep children safe. They established a Helpline to provide such a place for adults, including for those who had abused or were at risk of abusing.

Since 2002, led by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Stop it Now! UK & Ireland has built on this visionary concept. By December 2009 our Helpline had provided information, support and advice to nearly 8,000 callers. We continue to work with Stop It Now! (USA) as well as with other children's charities, survivor organisations, statutory agencies and Government Departments across the UK and Ireland. These alliances are crucial not only to the credibility and effectiveness of the Helpline, but to the underpinning campaigning work of Stop it Now! at local, regional and national levels (*see p44 for further information*).

Since the first Stop it Now! Helpline Report was published in 2006 the need for this unique resource has been confirmed, both by an increase in calls and emails and by how callers value the service it provides, often at a time when they feel there is nowhere to turn and no one to talk to. This Report demonstrates that people can and do take action to prevent child sexual abuse when they have a safe place in which they can speak honestly and access sound and practical information and advice.

## Protecting children by working together

Stop it Now! believes and acts on the principle that all adults are responsible for protecting the most vulnerable in society. Children can be protected from sexual abuse if adults are aware of how abusers operate, including those who abuse via the Internet. Adults also need to feel confident about what to do if they are worried that abuse might be occurring.

In recent times we have come to understand that children are more likely to be sexually abused by people they know. These are not the 'monsters' often portrayed by the media, but familiar and trusted adults, which can make disclosure far more difficult. For some children, whilst they want the abuse to stop, they also want the abuser to get help. All children must be able to tell, to be heard and be protected.

For the families of abusers or those close to them, understanding what has happened and dealing with the consequences of a loved one's actions is a lengthy and difficult process. Some abusers and potential abusers feel guilty and distressed about their thoughts and actions, but struggle to manage their behaviour.

For these reasons it is critical that everyone affected by child sexual abuse has a place, first, to talk about it. For abusers, this includes learning how to address and manage their behaviour. For families and friends, it includes accessing information and advice about recognising and managing risk.

The aim of the Stop it Now! UK and Ireland campaign, including the Helpline, is to equip adults to protect children from sexual abuse. If as a society we share this aim, we must begin to talk about the issues. With the right tools, everyone can make a real difference to the safety of children.

# 2

## The Helpline

“ChildLine offers a confidential service for children and young people, but not for adults, including adult abusers who may contact us. Our counsellors find the Stop it Now! Helpline service incredibly valuable as there is very little other help available for adults worrying about their behaviour and feelings towards children.”

**Joelle Leader, Assistant Director  
ChildLine**

“We are so encouraged to see how Stop it Now! UK & Ireland has successfully developed the Stop It Now! Helpline model. This is a truly unique service in the world. It keeps children safe from sexual harm and offers help and accountability for people at risk to abuse, thereby promoting healthy families and community safety.”

Deborah Donovan Rice, Executive Director, Stop It Now! (USA)

## How it works

Telephone helplines for children are a key part of child protection services. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of adults to protect children from abuse. Helplines for concerned adults are a powerful means of protection and prevention.

### Our principal target groups:

**Adult abusers and those at risk of abusing:** to encourage them to recognise their behaviour as abusive or potentially abusive and to seek help to change.

**Family and friends concerned about an adult displaying worrying sexual thoughts or behaviour towards a child:** to encourage them to recognise the signs of abusive behaviour in those close to them and to seek advice about what action to take.

**Parents and carers concerned about a child or young person with worrying sexual behaviour:** to encourage them to recognise the signs of concerning or abusive behaviour and to seek advice about what positive action they can take.

### Additional groups included due to caller demand:

- **Adults concerned about a child or young person who may have been abused**
- **Professionals calling for case advice**
- **Adult survivors of child sexual abuse**

### The Helpline's main objectives are to:

- **Assist** callers to identify the nature and seriousness of their concerns
- **Provide** information and support to callers to help them clarify their thinking
- **Explore** options available, including referral to our own follow-up service or to another agency
- **Advise** callers about further actions to consider
- **Agree** one or more protective actions the caller will take

## The Helpline Protocol

The sound child protection principles on which the Helpline Protocol was originally formulated remain pivotal to Stop it Now! and inform the work of all Helpline staff<sup>1</sup>. The safety of children lies at the heart of the work of the Helpline. Our confidentiality policy is explained to callers at the beginning of their call. For those who prefer to email, details of the policy are clearly displayed on our website and in our literature. Callers are told:

**“The Helpline is confidential. We will not ask you for your name or any other details, but if you do give us any information that identifies a child who has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, we will pass this on to the appropriate agencies. We will also pass on details of any criminal offence that has been committed.”**

The Helpline Guidelines<sup>2</sup> continue to be revised and developed for the use of Helpline operators, in line with sound child protection principles and good practice. If possible, we put callers in touch with relevant local agencies and sources of help and support that they can access, and provide them with web-based resources where appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> Stop it Now! UK and Ireland Helpline Protocols, August 2007    <sup>2</sup> Stop it Now! Helpline, Guidance for Individual Calls, 2009

## Helpline management and operation

The Director of Stop it Now! UK & Ireland directs the work of both the Stop it Now! campaign and the Helpline. Day-to-day running of the Helpline is overseen by the Helpline Coordinator, under the guidance and supervision of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation Practice Manager.

The Helpline operates from an office of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF), in order to have access to LFF practitioners. These staff, with professional backgrounds in working with child sexual abuse in statutory agencies, undertake shifts on the Helpline and provide peer support to other colleagues. They also provide a call-back and face-to-face service to callers who need ongoing advice or support in particular circumstances.

As well as utilising LFF permanent staff, the Helpline is supported by a number of sessional staff from backgrounds that include teaching, working with children with disabilities and working on other telephone Helplines (ChildLine and Samaritans). For such sessional staff, initial training is followed by a period of observation before they undertake Helpline shifts with an experienced 'mentor'.

The training for all Helpline staff is provided by the Practice Manager, Helpline Co-ordinator and other LFF staff. Sessions include: adult male and female sex offending – assessment, intervention and management; sexually harmful behaviour in children and young people; the criminal justice and family court systems; work with victims, survivors and families; call handling and record keeping. External agencies provide additional content, including local trainers from the Safeguarding Children Board and Police.

The initial training, supported by regular team meetings, supervision and ongoing professional development, ensures the Helpline provides the best possible advice, information and support to those who call.

## The [help@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:help@stopitnow.org.uk) confidential email service

Some people find it easier to contact Stop it Now! by email, rather than by phone. [help@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:help@stopitnow.org.uk) offers a confidential email correspondence service. Not infrequently, the emailer will go on to speak to an operator, but has the option of continuing to email. The Helpline undertakes to reply to each email within 48 hours of receiving it.

## Helpline hours

In 2002 the Helpline operated a single telephone line, with one operator taking calls. As demand for the service increased, our funders provided additional money for a second line and we were able to extend our opening hours to:

*9.00 a.m. – 9.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday 9.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m. Friday*

Since 2008, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has funded the provision of a dedicated third line. Callers can, by appointment, speak to a specialist practitioner in more depth about their concerns and agree a schedule of ongoing protective work.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Clear and accurate record keeping is essential to the management and evaluation of the Helpline service. Each call or email that the Helpline receives is logged under a first name or pseudonym, with subsequent contact being recorded on 'follow-on' Log Sheets for clarity and continuity. 10% of all calls are audited on a monthly basis, to inform staff supervision, to ensure the quality of our service and to meet criteria agreed with the Ministry of Justice. An electronic database enables us to analyse call trends. Our recording and auditing systems are subject to regular review, to ensure accurate recording and good quality of service to our callers.



# 3

## Stop it Now! Helpline Activity

“The Helpline provides a valuable opportunity for people to talk openly about risky sexual behaviour. It makes an important contribution to the protection of children and to sexual abuse prevention.”

**Jon Brown, Head of Strategy & Development (Sexual Abuse)**  
NSPCC

Across five years, we have received an increasing number of calls from all our target groups.

## Stop it Now! Helpline Activity, June 2005-Dec 2009

The Stop it Now! Helpline began operation in June 2002, prior to its official launch in September of the same year. Table 1 represents the total number of calls and new callers to the Helpline from June 2002 – December 2009.

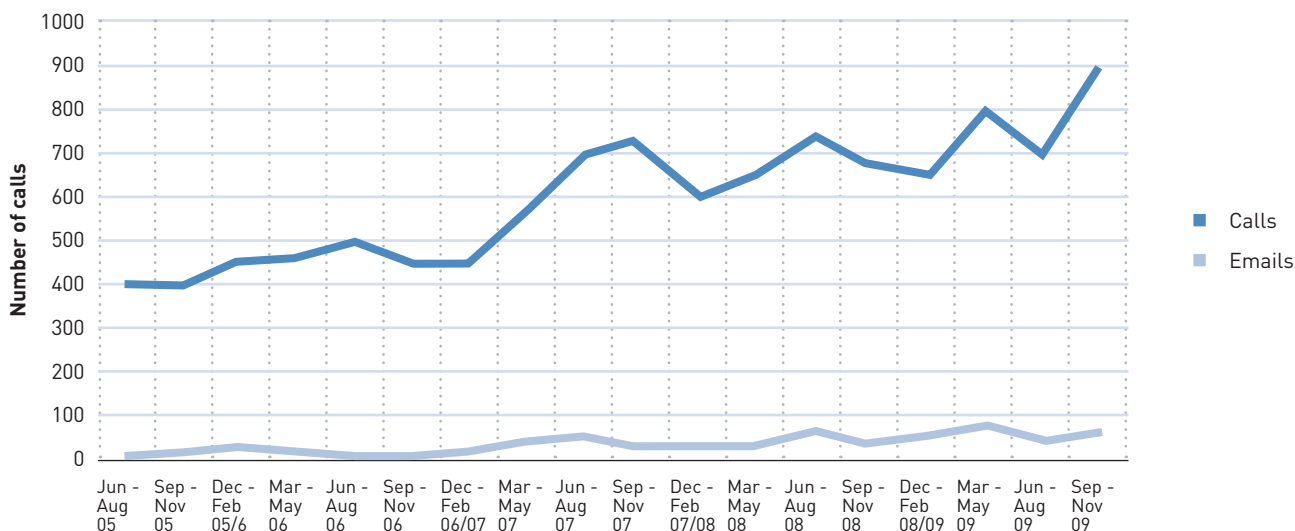
**All Calls and Callers to Helpline June 2002 – December 2009** Table 1

	Calls		New Callers	
	Number	%	Number	%
Male	9598	59%	4021	51%
Female	6642	41%	3865	49%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16240</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7886</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data is inclusive of emails.

This Helpline Report provides an update of the call data since our last Report was published in 2006. In the following pages we refer to 'callers' and 'calls'. An individual caller may, of course, make more than one call. Some callers contact the Helpline on a number of occasions over an extended period. This is more likely if, for example, the caller is someone who is struggling with inappropriate thoughts and feelings towards children, or is someone concerned about the behaviour of a partner, than if the caller is a professional wanting case advice.

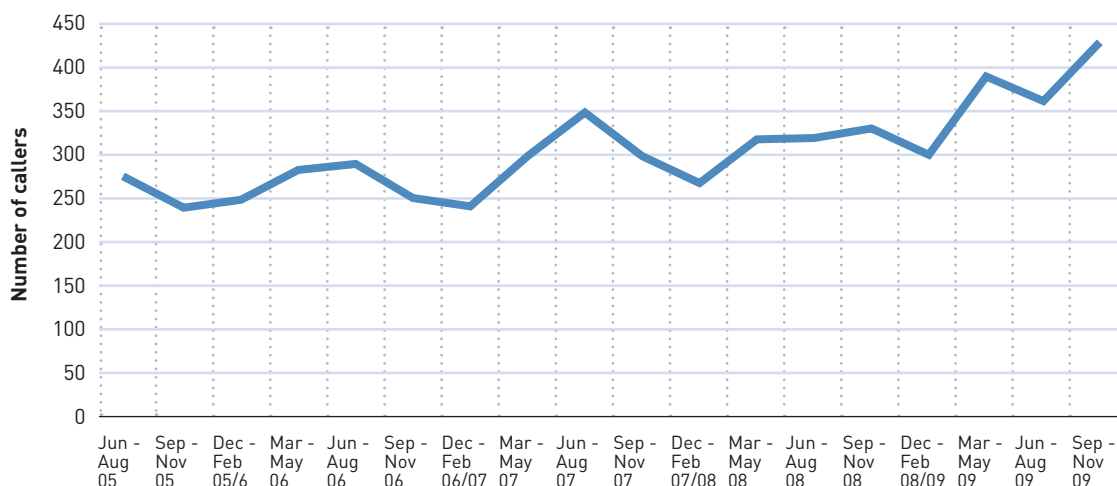
**All Contact with Stop it Now! Helpline 2005 - 2009** Graph 1



The overall trend represents a steady increase over the period of this report, with emails representing a small but sustained proportion of Helpline activity from March 2007.

Throughout the remainder of the report, emails have been incorporated into the data.

## All New Callers to the Stop it Now! Helpline 2005 - 2009 *Graph 2*



Across five years, we have received an increasing number of calls from all our target groups. It is encouraging to see that 50% of calls are made by adults concerned about their own behaviour. Between 2005 and 2009, callers in this group almost doubled (*see page 16, graph 3*) due in part to an increase in calls from individuals concerned about their behaviour on the Internet.

25% of calls were made by those concerned about the thoughts or actions of a member of their own family, a friend or someone else they knew. Across the period of the Report, this represents an increase of some two-thirds.

4% of calls were made by adults in relation to sexually concerning behaviour displayed by children or young people. There has been little fluctuation in call numbers from this target group over the past five years which perhaps indicates how difficult it is for people to discuss concerns of this nature.

8% of calls were made by professionals from a variety of fields, often for specific advice about working with people perpetrating or affected by child sexual abuse.

## All Calls and Callers to Helpline June 2005 – December 2009 *Table 2*

Principal Target Groups	No. of calls	% of all calls	No. of callers	% of all callers
Adults concerned about their own behaviour	6043	50.5%	1960	34.8%
Family, friends and adults concerned about the behaviour of another adult	3013	25.2%	1497	26.6%
Parents and carers concerned about a child or young person's sexual behaviour	533	4.4%	311	5.5%
Additional Groups	No. of calls	% of all calls	No. of callers	% of all callers
Adults concerned about children who may have been abused	550	4.6%	332	5.9%
Professionals	974	8.1%	862	15.3%
Survivors of child sexual abuse	406	3.4%	316	5.6%
Other callers <sup>3</sup>	456	3.8%	356	6.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11975</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5634</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>3</sup> Callers outside target groups include those with general Internet concerns, requests for general information and calls from children.

For those with concerns about themselves or someone close to them, contact with a child protection agency may not feel like an option at the time of calling. The Helpline operator listens, encourages, supports and agrees one or more actions for the caller to take immediately.

Regardless of which target group callers fall into, they have a real chance to make a difference to the safety of children. For those with concerns about themselves or someone close to them, contact with a child protection agency may not feel like an option at the time of calling. The Helpline operator listens, encourages, supports and agrees one or more actions for the caller to take immediately. In some cases this has led to contact with statutory agencies, such as the Police or Children's Services. In all cases the agreed actions look to ensure that one or more children are kept safe from abuse.

### We can demonstrate that:

- Some individuals who have sexually abused a child want help in managing their behaviour.
- Some people recognise their thoughts about and behaviour towards children as potentially harmful and will seek help to manage them.
- Some adults are able to recognise inappropriate sexual behaviours and attitudes in those close to them and will seek help and support in protecting children and holding other adults accountable for their behaviour.
- With accurate information and support, adults can be effective agents of prevention within their family and wider community.
- Some adults are able to recognise inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour in children and young people and they will seek help to address this.
- The Internet has become a major vehicle for harmful behaviour by adults, but it is also a place where some offenders and those close to them will seek help to ensure responsible online behaviour in the future.
- Where a sexual offence may have been committed or a child may be at risk, anxiety about repercussions, for themselves and loved ones, causes many people not to report concerns or seek help from relevant agencies.

*The remainder of this report focuses on the calls and emails received by the Helpline between June 2005 and December 2009, except in cases where graphs illustrate yearly comparisons. Whilst it is important to consider the number of calls and emails we have received during this time, what is really important is that each contact is unique. Often highly complex, the calls reflect circumstances that are frequently very painful for the caller. We have included call examples to illustrate the kinds of issues calls to the Helpline feature, how we approached them and (if known) the outcome. All of the examples draw on features from a number of calls; identifying details have been changed to preserve confidentiality.*

# 4

## Caller Groups

“One of the Police service’s most fundamental roles is to do whatever we can to protect people from harm. However, preventing and combating child sexual abuse is not just the responsibility of the Police service, it is everyone’s responsibility.

The more that adults can learn in order to raise awareness and understanding of the steps that can be taken to prevent child sexual abuse, the more children will be freed up to enjoy happy and fulfilling childhoods.”

**Chief Constable Paul West**  
**ACPO Lead on the Management of**  
**Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders**  
(Association of Chief Police Officers)

In 2009 we received 1259 calls from adults concerned about their own behaviour on the Internet compared to 267 in 2005.

## 4.1 Group 1: Adults concerned about their own behaviour

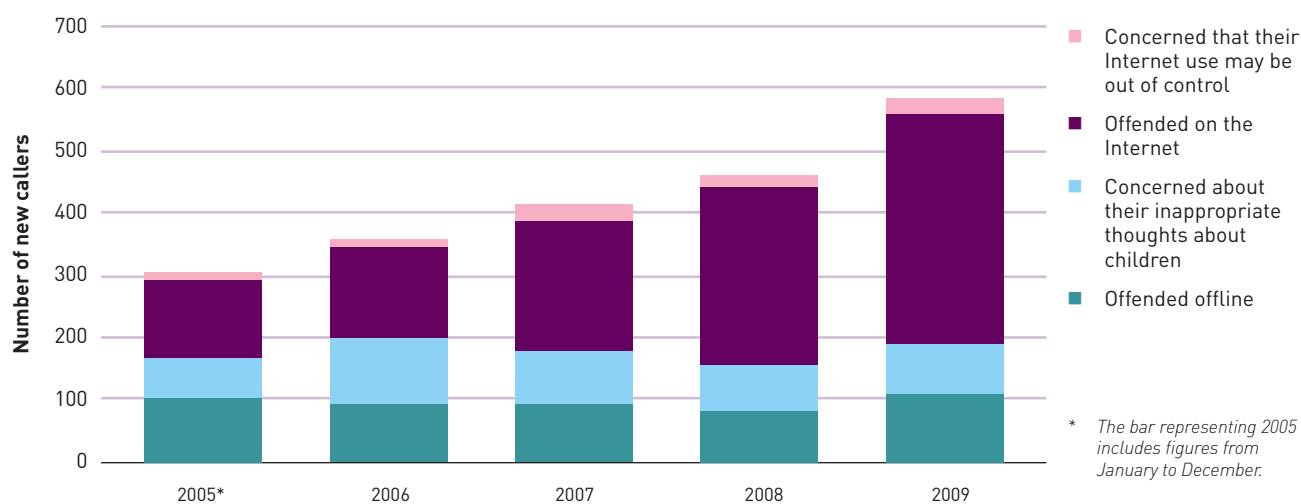
Group 1 includes adults who have sexually abused or may sexually abuse children. It includes those who commit sexual offences in the home or the community (offline) and those who commit sexual offences using the Internet (online abuse).

One of the most striking findings from our analysis of Helpline activity is that the largest number of calls (50%) continue to come from adults concerned about their own sexual thoughts, feelings or behaviours towards children.

The basis of all advice given to these callers is that children at risk must be protected from abuse. Each caller is encouraged through agreed actions to manage his or her behaviour and to develop a life in which their human needs are met positively and children are not sexually abused<sup>4</sup>. Each set of circumstances is unique and advice is tailored to meet the individual's situation. Our aim is always to work with the caller to enable them to act responsibly and appropriately if a child is at risk.

The number of calls in this group received from women continues to constitute a small proportion of the total (2%). However, these calls reinforce the evidence that the sexual abuse of children is not just a male activity.

**Adults concerned about their own behaviour** *Graph 3*



Year-on-year the number of calls from this group increased substantially over the period of this Report; the most notable increase being from people who had offended on the Internet. In 2009, we received 1259 calls from this group, compared to 267 in 2005. This is due to our improved profile with agencies such as Police and Probation who often pass our number on to arrested offenders. We have received a small but increasing number of calls from people who feel that their Internet use is out of control, or are concerned that they will be tempted to access sexual images of children online.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, T. and Brown, M. *The Good Lives Model and Conceptual Issues in Offender Rehabilitation. Psychology, Crime & Law, 14:77-2744, Volume 10, Issue 3, 2004: pp 243-257.*

Call volume often increases following news headlines or TV programmes depicting or exploring issues concerning child sexual abuse. We operate extra phone lines at these times to meet the increased demand.

Callers in this group most commonly found out about the Helpline from the Stop it Now! website, or from the Police.

## Who were the callers?

Over the period June 2005 to December 2009, the Helpline received 6043 calls from 1960 new callers who had concerns about their own sexual thoughts or behaviours towards children; they called, on average, three times each for ongoing advice. These figures represent 50% of all calls and 35% of all callers to the Helpline.

- ➔ **98% (1921) of the callers were men, who made 5925 calls to the Helpline: many of these callers had offended on the Internet (1074).**
- ➔ **2% (39) of the callers were women, who made 111 calls to the Helpline: the majority (23) had not yet abused but were concerned about their sexual thoughts towards a child, at home or in the wider community. 13 were calling because they had already abused and wanted help to avoid repeating this behaviour. 3 were calling with concerns related to their Internet use.**

Group 1 callers will now be analysed separately, based on whether their behaviour or risk was online or offline.

### 4.1.1 Abusers and Potential Abusers: offline

Over the period of this report, 41% (804) of callers in Group 1 were abusers or potential abusers, with behaviour or concerns unrelated to the Internet. These callers account for 16% of all calls to the Helpline.

Of these callers:

- ➔ **436 (54%) had previously abused one or more children and wanted help to manage their behaviour.**
  - ➔ 409 of these callers (abusers) identified their relationship to the victim. 244 (56%) stated that the victim was a family member and 90 (21%) stated that the victim was a friend, acquaintance or neighbour. 75 (17%) said that the victim was unknown, with their most common offence having been indecent exposure.
- ➔ **368 (46%) had not yet abused a child but were troubled by their sexual thoughts and wanted help to manage their behaviour.**
  - ➔ 112 (30%) of these callers were troubled by thoughts involving a family member; 54 (15%) involved a friend, acquaintance or neighbour; 157 (43%) were troubled by thoughts about children in general.

Information about caller involvement with the authorities, including the Police, was available in 698 cases. At the time of the call:

- ➔ **249 (57%) abusers had not been arrested and were not in contact with the authorities.**
- ➔ **313 (85%) potential abusers had not been arrested and were not in contact with the authorities.**

Despite a lack of engagement with the Police or other statutory agency, this clearly demonstrates that many callers are concerned about their behaviour and will take steps to better manage their risk.

# 81%

(562) of offline abusers or potential abusers had not been arrested and were not in contact with the authorities prior to calling the Helpline.

*Arrest and authority contact data unavailable in an additional 106 cases*

## Why did they use the Helpline?

The following table shows why people in this group called for advice and help, with numbers provided for the latest twelve-month period, 1st January – 31st December 2009, (an average of 16 callers per month).

Table 3

	Number of callers in 2009
Had sexual thoughts and feelings towards children. Concerned that they might go on to sexually abuse a child – wanted help to stop themselves from taking this step.	81
Had already committed a sexual offence against a child, had not been arrested for it, but wanted help in preventing themselves from committing further offences.	61
Had already committed a sexual offence against a child, had been arrested for it and wanted help in preventing themselves from committing further offences.	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>193</b>

The call examples on the following pages are from people who are worried about their thoughts and feelings towards children. The first is from someone who has not yet offended, the second from someone who has already been convicted for a sexual offence against a child.

## Call Example 1

CALLER: **TONY**  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **RICK**  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **BBC ACTION LINE**

### Call Details:

Tony, a middle aged man, contacted the Helpline with concerns about his feelings towards his friend's teenage daughter, Sarah. During the past few years, Tony had developed a close friendship with Sarah's mother who had been through a difficult divorce. He described his relationship with Sarah's mother as platonic; neither were interested in a sexual relationship.

He thought Sarah saw him as a father figure, but he had begun to develop sexual feelings towards her. He was appalled by his thoughts and had never acted on them.

Tony recently started seeing a therapist but had not spoken about his feelings for Sarah because he feared repercussions. He used the sessions to help manage his feelings of depression which he believed related partly to his current situation.

Tony did not have any children of his own and did not come into contact with any during his working hours as an office manager. He wanted help to manage his inappropriate thoughts.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We said that Tony had taken proactive steps by contacting the Helpline and by referring himself to a therapist. We encouraged him to continue seeing the therapist to discuss his mental health and general sexual concerns, and that he be as honest as possible with the Helpline about his attraction to Sarah.
- ▶ We discussed the importance of Tony never being alone with Sarah or putting himself in situations that were risky. Was it possible to meet her mother by herself, or outside of the home; or to consider ending the relationship altogether?
- ▶ We discussed the importance of Tony not reinforcing his inappropriate thoughts with masturbation. We explored a number of techniques that Tony might try to manage his fantasies such as removing himself from the risky environment and distracting himself with tasks which were mentally absorbing. We discussed the negative consequences for Sarah should he act on his thoughts and suggested Tony reflect on these.
- ▶ Tony was close to his sister, so we suggested he consider telling her about the situation.



### Actions agreed with Tony:

- ▶ To implement immediate child protection measures by never allowing himself to be alone with Sarah.
- ▶ To focus on managing his fantasies using the techniques discussed.
- ▶ To continue to use the Helpline.
- ▶ To consider disclosing to his sister and to pass the Helpline number on to her if he does this.
- ▶ To continue accessing help from the therapist.

### Outcome

Tony called the Helpline five times over a four month period. He began to spend less time with Sarah's mother and saw Sarah less often. In order to occupy his mind he started an adult education class through which he met some new friends. He found this helped to increase his self-esteem and in the management of his fantasies. He continued to use his therapist for support. He also disclosed to his sister. Although initially shocked, she was able to offer support.

## Call Example 2

CALLER: **JEFF**  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **CLARE**  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **PROBATION OFFENDER MANAGER**

### Call Details:

Jeff (24) called the Helpline at the suggestion of his Probation Officer, because he was concerned about his feelings towards teenage girls. When he was 22 years old, he had a sexual relationship with a 14 year old girl. He described this relationship as consensual, and said that they were in love. The girl's family found out about the relationship and reported him to the Police. Jeff served half of a 2 year custodial sentence during which he completed a treatment programme. However, he said it was unhelpful to him as he felt different from the other offenders on the course. He saw his relationship with the girl as loving and mutual, and struggled to think of it as abusive.

Although Jeff had moved to an area away from where his victim lived, he said that he was tempted to get in contact, as he still had strong feelings for her. However, during the call Jeff acknowledged a wider attraction to girls of around 14 or 15 years old. He was aware of the illegality of any sexual contact with females under the age of 16 and felt that he needed help to address this attraction. He said he was getting on well with Probation but wanted specific help with managing (and hopefully changing) his sexual feelings towards adolescent girls.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We told Jeff not to make any attempt to contact his victim.
- ▶ We encouraged Jeff to consider the reasons why the relationship had been inappropriate and potentially harmful to the 14 year old; we discussed the fact that there was a significant age gap between them and therefore a considerable differential in knowledge, maturity, experience and power.
- ▶ We explained to Jeff how he may have fuelled his inappropriate attraction through fantasy and masturbation.
- ▶ We discussed the potential benefits to Jeff of confiding in a trusted friend to whom he could turn at times when he was struggling with his feelings, or in need of support.
- ▶ We encouraged Jeff to continue to work with his Probation Officer on managing his risk and to consider making an appointment to speak to a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner on our call-back line for more support and advice in managing his sexual thoughts and fantasies.

### Actions agreed with Jeff:

- ▶ Arrange a call-back with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner who could also liaise as appropriate with his Probation Offender Manager.
- ▶ Identify a trusted adult in whom to confide.
- ▶ Use a range of suggested activities to distract him when struggling with inappropriate thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ Think about the kinds of hobbies/activities he would like to pursue that would enable him to meet with people of his own age and to develop appropriate and satisfying social relationships.

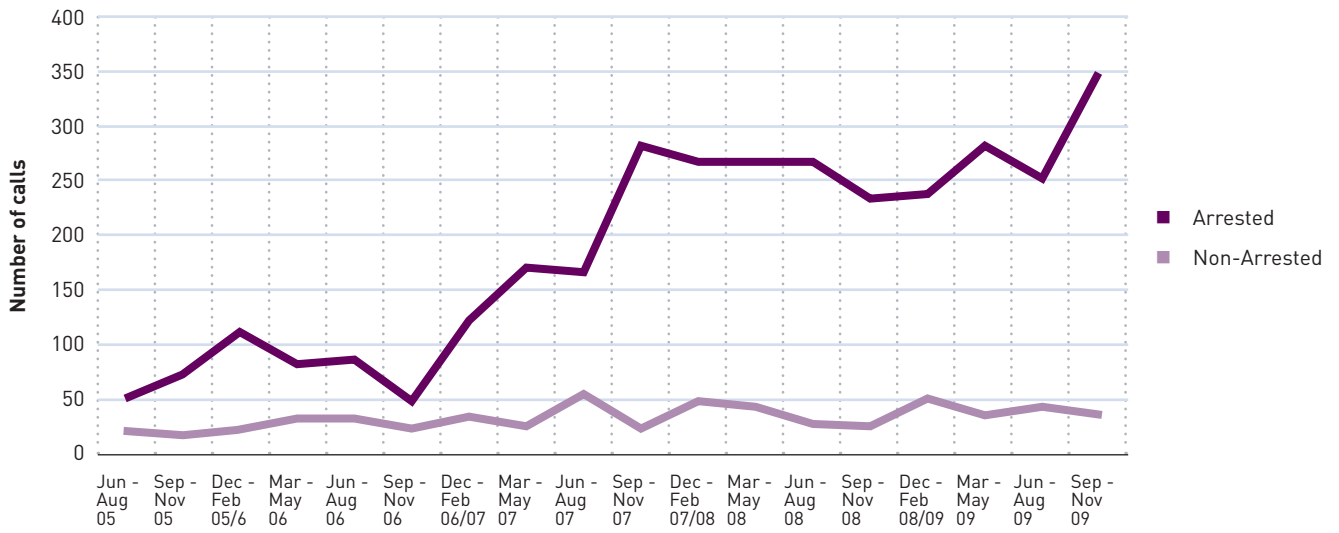


## 4.1.2 Abusers and potential abusers: online

59% (1156) of callers from Group 1 had concerns about their behaviour on the Internet. This group included people who had viewed, downloaded or distributed indecent images of children and those who groomed children for inappropriate sexual contact. It also included individuals who felt their Internet use was out of control and those who recognised an escalation in the time spent online and in the content of the legal pornography they were accessing.

Over the period June 2005 to December 2009, these callers account for 34% of all calls to the Helpline.

**Calls to Helpline by Arrested and Non-Arrested Internet/Potential Internet Offenders** *Graph 4*



Calls to the Helpline from those concerned about their behaviour on the Internet have increased dramatically over the past four and a half years, displaying a four-fold increase since mid-2005.

The Helpline was contacted by 1080 people who had committed offences on the Internet. Information regarding whether the caller had been arrested or not was available in 1046 cases. 15% of these callers (162) contacted the Helpline in the absence of any contact with the Police, wanting support and advice about ways of combating their illegal behaviour. 85% (884) were calling following their arrest, for advice about their current situation and in order to access intervention. The high number of calls made by those who had offended on the Internet demonstrates the value of the Helpline for this group.

# 15%

(162) of online abusers contacted the Helpline in the absence of any contact with the Police, wanting support and advice about ways of combating their illegal behaviour.

*Authority contact data unavailable in an additional 34 cases*

## Why did they use the Helpline service?

The following table indicates the principal reasons why people in this group called for advice, with numbers given for the latest twelve-month period, 1st January - 31st December 2009, (an average of 33 per month).

Table 4

	Number of callers in 2009
Had already committed an Internet sexual offence including downloading, distributing and/or taking indecent images of children, had not been arrested and wanted help to avoid committing further offences, advice about disclosure and/or access to treatment.	43
Had been arrested for committing an Internet sexual offence and wanted advice about their situation, access to intervention and/or help to avoid committing further offences.	329
Were worried that their behaviour on the Internet was getting out of control. Whilst they had not committed any offence they were concerned that their behaviour might escalate and sought help to self-manage.	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>392</b>

The following examples are from callers who have been accessing illegal images of children on the Internet. In the first example the caller has not yet had contact with the Police. In the second, the caller has been arrested and referred to the Helpline by his arresting police officer.

## Call Example 3

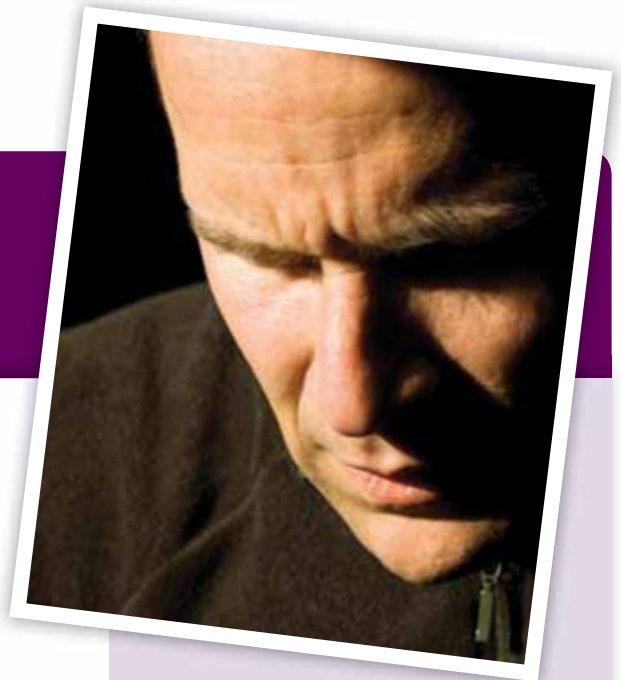
CALLER: **LAWRENCE**  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **PETE**  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **ARTICLE IN THE METRO**

### Call Details:

Lawrence contacted the Helpline as he was concerned about his online behaviour. He stated that, over a period of 10 years, he had developed an 'addiction' to viewing online pornography including indecent images of girls aged between 10 and 13 years of age. He had a 12 year old step-daughter from his previous relationship, which broke up about a year ago. He said he had never abused his step-daughter but his ex-partner ended the relationship when she became aware of his illegal online behaviour. Lawrence had a successful career in education and coached a local youth cricket team at the weekends. He felt his primary access to the world was via the Internet. He lived alone and reported repeated bouts of depression. He knew he needed help to address his illegal and inappropriate behaviour.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We acknowledged that Lawrence had taken a positive step in contacting the Helpline.
- ▶ We discussed the harm that offending of this nature causes to the victims depicted in the images and the wider harm to relationships with partners, family and friends.
- ▶ We discussed the implications of Internet offences: including, in Lawrence's case, the very serious implications for his career in education and his work with the cricket team.
- ▶ We discussed strategies to help him manage his behaviour, including computer software such as 'Covenant Eyes', which allows an agreed sponsor to oversee a person's online activity.
- ▶ We suggested that Lawrence have a call-back with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner to learn strategies designed to manage his illegal fantasy life and how to begin to replace these with legal, appropriate fantasies.
- ▶ We also discussed 'Securus', a piece of computer software that monitors computer activity. However, Lawrence would be unable to access this without surrendering his anonymity.
- ▶ We suggested that Lawrence join a club or organisation that would enable him to meet with adults of his own age and would not provide access to young girls.



### Actions agreed with Lawrence:

- ▶ To put in place parameters around his use of the Internet. Modify his behaviour so that he is not placing himself in any risky situations.
- ▶ To get a copy of 'Cybersex Unhooked', a workbook for exploring compulsive online sexual behaviour, or visit [www.croga.org](http://www.croga.org) – an online self-help tool for Internet (child pornography) offenders.
- ▶ To consider seeing his GP about his depression.
- ▶ To make an appointment with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner.

### Outcome

Lawrence kept in contact with the Helpline and spoke to a specialist practitioner about managing his behaviour. A close friend agreed to be his 'Covenant Eyes' sponsor. Thus far Lawrence said he has refrained from looking at illegal images. He joined a Rambling Club, which enabled him to meet and socialise with other adults. He stated that the youngest member was over 50. He had not visited his GP as he now felt better about himself and the future.

## Call Example 4

CALLER: **NEIL**  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **HANNAH**  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **ARRESTING POLICE OFFICER**

### Call Details:

Neil, 36, called the Helpline after being arrested the previous day for accessing indecent images of children.

Neil was a self-employed plasterer but was not working due to depression. He had a long-term partner and a baby on the way. His partner was in shock and had gone to stay with her mother.

Neil said he had been accessing indecent images of children for around 4 years. He was adamant that he had never committed a contact offence against a child and had never been tempted to do so. He expressed the view that his use of adult Internet pornography was not harming anyone. He said that his interest in child pornography developed when he was feeling bored and responded to a child-related pop-up he saw on an adult pornography site. We asked why he continually chose to go back to viewing child pornography, but Neil was unable to explain at this point why he did so.

Neil cried during the call and found it difficult to deal with his feelings. He said he had been suffering suicidal thoughts. He did not think, at this point, that he would act upon these.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We explored Neil's current situation, including child protection issues regarding his contact with children. We explained that Children's Services would become involved once they knew that a baby was expected.
- ▶ We talked about the legal process and what would happen next.
- ▶ We discussed his suicidal thoughts and whether they were accompanied by any suicidal planning. We encouraged him to confide in his GP about his mental state.
- ▶ We provided information on some of the services available for both Internet offenders and their families, including a face-to-face meeting with one of our specialist practitioners and, if appropriate, specific courses such as Inform (for partners and relatives) and Inform Plus (for offenders), developed and provided by The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (*page 39*).
- ▶ We discussed Neil's social support network.

### Actions agreed with Neil:

- ▶ Identify a source of support that he could trust and encourage that person to call the Helpline for advice on how best to support him.
- ▶ Visit his GP regarding his suicidal thoughts and consider calling the Samaritans during times of crisis.
- ▶ Take up the offer of an arranged Helpline call-back with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner in order to discuss coping strategies (particularly regarding use of the Internet).
- ▶ Pass on the Stop it Now! Helpline number to his partner and members of his family.
- ▶ Call the Helpline for ongoing support.

### Outcome

Neil had a call-back with a practitioner as arranged. As a result he and his partner attended a face-to-face meeting where they were given information about Inform and Inform Plus, which both subsequently attended.

Neil later wrote:

"Thank you for being there. I think I would have ended my life without this support... I would like to contribute back to the course to help others."

His partner said:

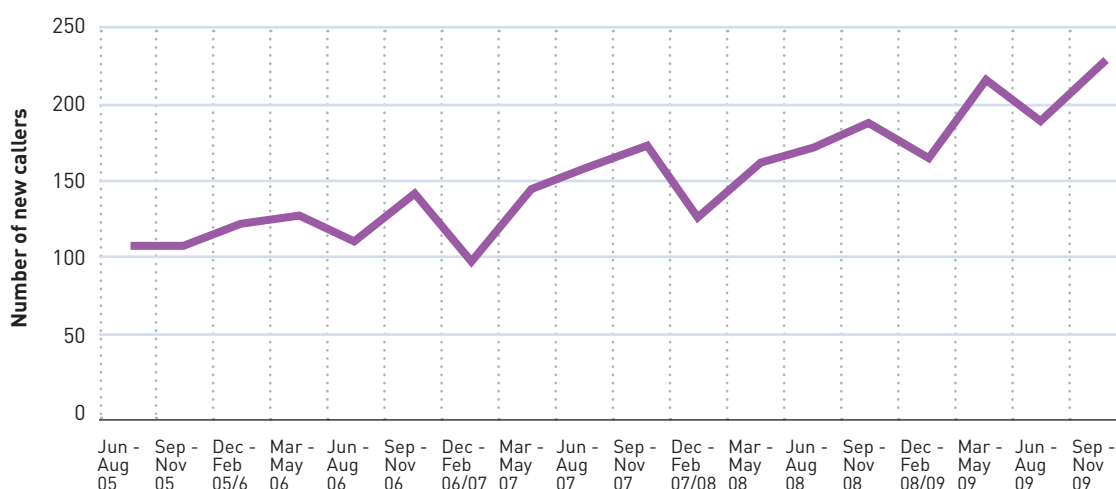
"The course has made me understand more about the 'ifs' and 'buts' and 'whys'... it was so good to be able to talk and share."

## 4.2 Group 2: Family and friends concerned about another adult's behaviour

When someone has been arrested for the sexual abuse of a child, it is not unusual for those close to them to say that they had noticed attitudes or behaviours that worried them. However, they had not acted on these 'gut feelings' for fear that they might be wrong or because it was inconceivable that someone they love could abuse a child in this way. They often felt unable to discuss their concerns with anyone - family member, friend or professional - for fear of the potential repercussions of doing so. This was the case whether their concerns related to someone who had offended online or offline. In some cases, they were simply unsure about how they could protect children who were or might be vulnerable, particularly if they were in a situation in which the abuser had taken steps to make disclosure difficult.

The Stop it Now! Helpline provides information and advice - for example, how to recognise the signs of abuse, or of illegal Internet use - within a confidential environment, so that callers feel supported and empowered to take action.

**Calls to the Helpline by Family Members and Friends** *Graph 5*



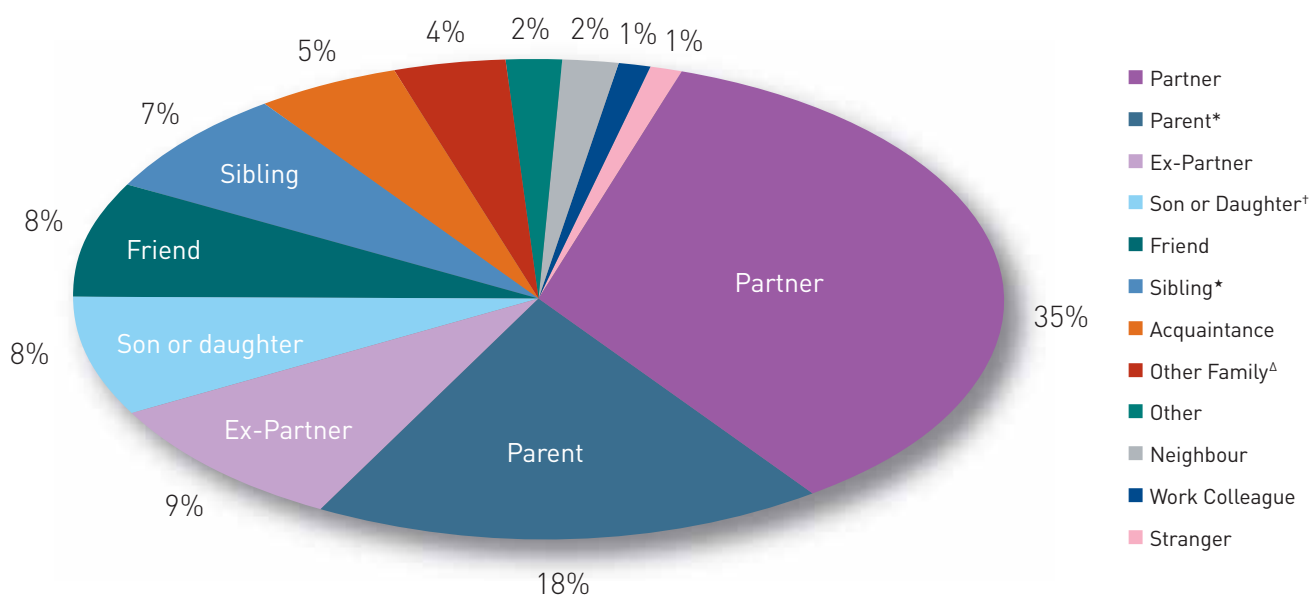
The volume of calls by family and friends has steadily increased over the period of the report with 846 calls received in 2009 compared to 506 in 2005. Callers most often heard about the Helpline via the website, or from family members who were involved in the same situation and who had already contacted the Helpline.

When someone has been arrested for the sexual abuse of a child, it is not unusual for those close to them to say that they had noticed attitudes or behaviours that worried them.

## Who were the callers?

Between June 2005 and December 2009, the Stop it Now! Helpline received 3013 calls from 1497 new callers in Group 2, which represents 25% of all calls during this period. Unlike Group 1, 80% of these callers were women. In all cases, callers were asked to identify their relationship to the person whose behaviour they were worried about.

**Relationship of Caller to Person Who is Causing Concern** *Graph 6*



\* Parent includes natural and step

† Son/Daughter includes natural and step

★ Sibling includes natural, step and in-law

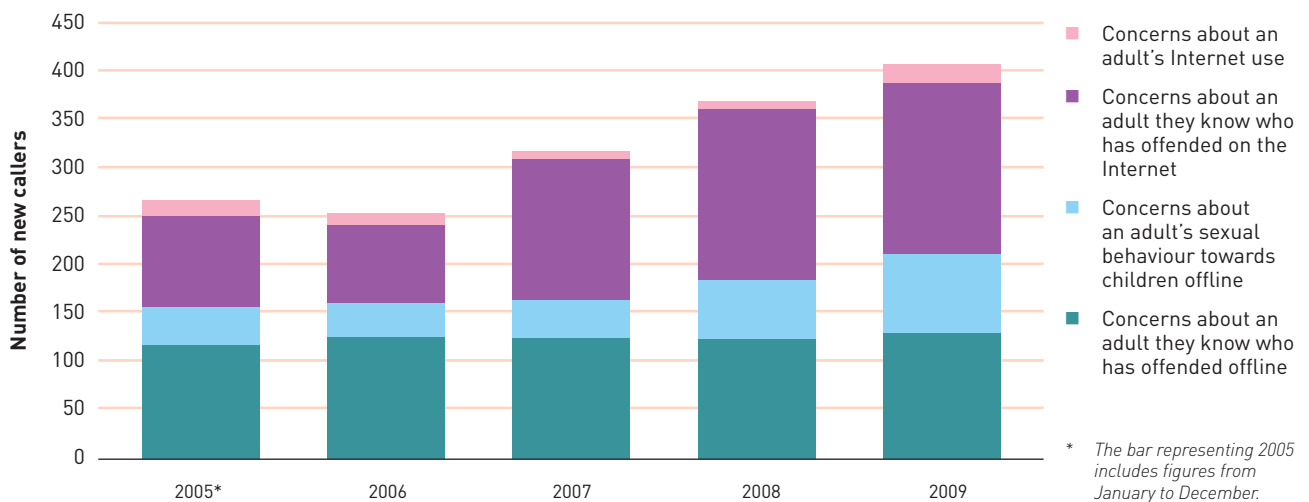
Δ Other family includes natural, step and in-law grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins

Of these callers 1332 (89%) stated their relationship to the person they were worried about. Partners and parents made the highest number of calls in this group. 'Parents' include natural, step and in-laws. This is encouraging as it shows that family members can and do notice worrying behaviour in those close to them and will seek help in order to protect children when they know where they can turn.

## Why did they use the Helpline service?

The graph below illustrates the types of concerning behaviour that family and friends were calling about:

**Types of Concerning Behaviour Reported by Family Members and Friends** *Graph 7*



Over the period of this report, the number of callers contacting the Helpline concerned about another adult's behaviour increased by 62%. Callers were most likely to phone with concerns about the problematic Internet use of a family member or friend, or about someone they know who has offended offline.

They rang with a variety of scenarios; e.g. a loved one had disclosed sexually abusing a child or accessing illegal images online; the caller had discovered illegal images on the family computer and not known what to do; or someone close to them had been arrested for sexual offences. Concerns included unease around how a particular adult interacted with a child, or someone close disclosing that they were sexually attracted to children and needed help in managing their thoughts. An increasing number of callers were concerned that somebody they knew was becoming 'addicted to the Internet' and might be attempting to access illegal images. For example, they might have noticed that the person was spending more and more time on the computer, or being secretive about what they were doing online.

The following example illustrates the type of call the Helpline receives from those who have concerns about the behaviour of someone close to them, whether at home, in the wider family or community, or online.

The number of callers contacting the Helpline concerned about another adult's behaviour has increased by

62%

## Call Example 5

CALLER: **ANNETTE**  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **STEPH**  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **NSPCC HELPLINE**



### Call Details:

Annette was extremely distressed when she called. She explained that after her husband Gareth had gone to work that morning, she had logged on to the computer to find a photograph she needed for the family Christmas card. In searching for this, she found a folder full of indecent images of children. She had not spoken to Gareth since that morning. She felt disgusted and frightened and did not know what to do. Annette had a five year old daughter, Lily, from a previous relationship, and was terrified that her husband had abused or photographed her.

Annette wanted to speak to someone in confidence; should she go to the Police, and if she did, what would happen to Gareth?

She also wanted to know what to do if Lily had been photographed or abused; whether to ask her if this had happened and what to tell her if Gareth was arrested.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We thanked Annette for calling the Helpline and acknowledged her distress. We discussed with her the implications of reporting what she had found to the Police; we confirmed that from her description a crime had been committed and that Gareth may face criminal charges; we explored with her what might happen if she did not report at this stage and the implications of this for herself and for Lily, particularly if Gareth's offending were to come to light later on.
- ▶ We discussed her concern about risk to Lily. If Annette notified the Police, they would be able to confirm whether there were any concerning photographs of Lily on the computer.
- ▶ We gave Annette information about the police investigation process.
- ▶ We explained that the Police would make a routine referral to Children's Services who would want to talk to her and possibly to Lily too.
- ▶ We asked Annette whether she had noticed any changes in Lily's behaviour and other potential signs of sexual abuse, including Gareth's behaviour towards Lily. We recommended that she look at the Stop it Now! website for further information about these issues.

### Actions agreed with Annette:

- ▶ Annette said she wanted to report the images found on Gareth's computer; she was offered help with this if she did not feel she could do it alone.
- ▶ Identify a close family member or friend in whom to confide, for support.
- ▶ Consider an arranged Helpline call-back with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner to learn more about this type of offending and to discuss any concerns about Lily.
- ▶ Follow up recommended sources of information (books, websites etc.) for parents and carers of young children about how to introduce 'keep safe' routines into family life.

### Outcome

Annette reported Gareth to the Police; he was arrested and asked to move out of the family home. She continued to call the Helpline and had a face-to-face meeting with a specialist practitioner to discuss our Inform course (*page 39*) which she later attended.

"I found it extremely valuable to meet other people in similar situations.

For the first time since this has all happened, I could actually talk freely and have begun to feel normal again."

# 76%

of parents and carers concerned about a child or young person's sexual behaviour were not in touch with any child protection agency, statutory or voluntary, at the point of calling the Helpline in 2009.

### 4.3 Group 3: Parents and carers concerned about a child or young person's sexual behaviour

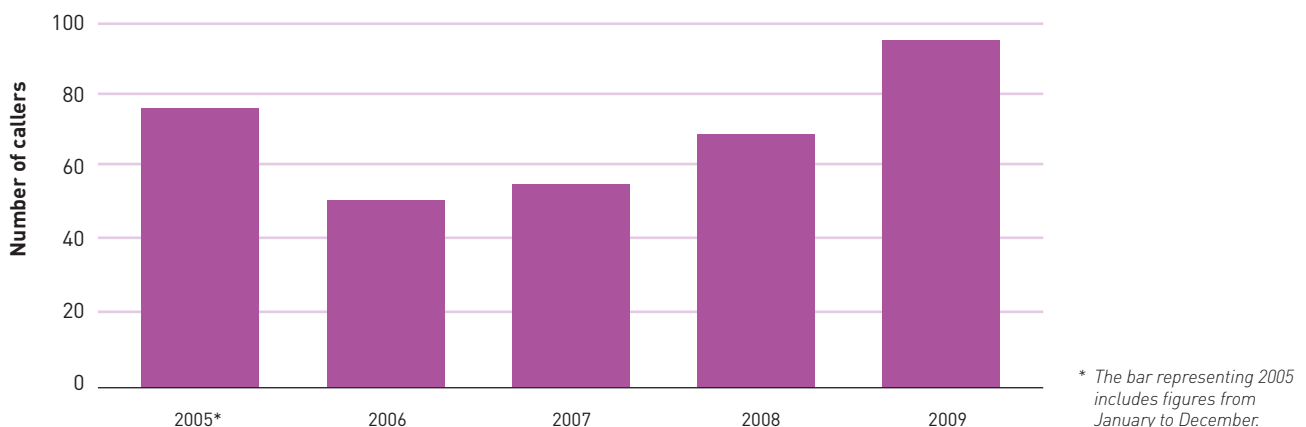
Our third target group comprises parents, carers and other adults who have concerns about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person.

About one-third of all sexual offences are committed by people under the age of eighteen<sup>5</sup>, most of whom stop offending as they grow older. Some need education about relationships and sexuality, whilst others have more deep-seated problems and need more extensive intervention. All need to be made aware of the inappropriate nature of their behaviour. Adult offenders who have committed multiple offences often describe having sexually abusive thoughts when they were teenagers.

4% of calls to the Helpline were from parents and carers concerned about the sexual behaviour of their children. This may reflect, amongst other things, how difficult it can be for adults to distinguish behaviours that are harmful and abusive from those that are normal and age appropriate. These callers had concerns about a child or young person who they believed had behaved abusively or was displaying behaviour that was inappropriate for their age. For example, the child might have used language or acted in a sexual manner which made the caller feel uncomfortable. Most callers heard of Stop it Now! from the NSPCC Helpline or from searching the web.

The fear of potential repercussions may prevent people from taking action - fear that reporting will lead to the young person being labelled for life as a 'sex offender', or fear that they will be judged by others to be bad parents. The Stop it Now! Helpline provides a confidential place for these callers to talk about their concerns and to identify and explore what they can do next.

#### Parents, Carers and Other Adults Concerned About the Sexual Behaviour of a Child or Young Person, by Year *Graph 8*



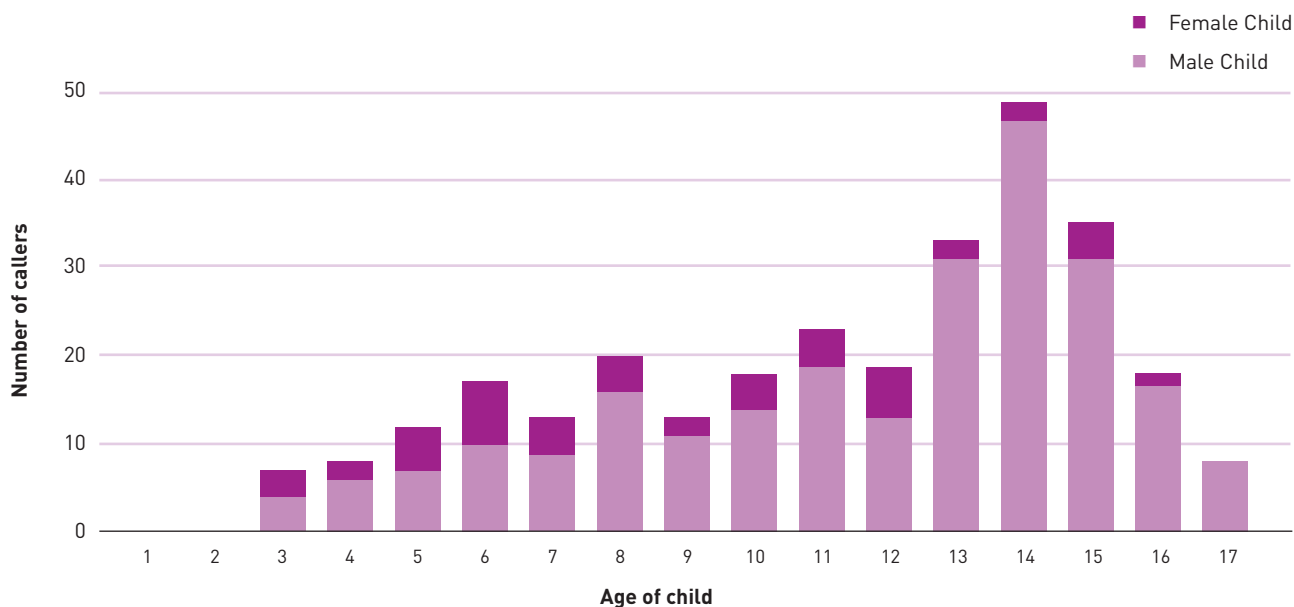
In 2009, 76% (74) of the callers were not in touch with any child protection agency, statutory or voluntary, at the point of calling the Helpline.

<sup>5</sup> Lovell E, 2002, *Children and Young People who Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour*, NSPCC.

## Who were the callers?

Between June 2005 and December 2009, the Stop it Now! Helpline received 533 calls from 311 callers who fell into Group 3, representing 4% of calls and 6% of all callers. The majority of callers were parents. Other callers included carers or close family members, teachers, neighbours and child minders. 79% (246) of these callers were women.

**Age of Child or Young Person with Concerning Sexual Behaviour** *Graph 9*



Callers concerned about children displaying potentially harmful sexual behaviour identified children between 3 and 17 years old. The highest number of calls was received about male children aged between 13 and 15.

The call example on the next page illustrates some of the complexities that may arise in calls from people who are worried about the sexual behaviour of a young person, in which the potential or actual sexual harm to another young person is the central issue.

## Call Example 6:

CALLER: JULIA  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: LIZ  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: STOP IT NOW! WEBSITE



### Call Details:

Julia contacted the Helpline because her 15 year old son, Jonathan, had recently been accused of inappropriately touching his 10 year old female cousin. This was alleged to have happened on three separate occasions, when Julia and Jonathan were staying at his cousin's house.

Jonathan's cousin told her mother, Julia's sister. Julia's sister did not want to involve the Police as she was concerned that Jonathan would be branded a child abuser. However, she was keen that Julia took immediate action to ensure that nothing like this happened again. Julia was herself keen to address the situation and so called the Helpline.

Jonathan admitted what had happened and was sorry and upset. He said he didn't know why he had acted in this way. Julia tried to explain why his behaviour was unacceptable and how it might affect both his cousin and himself. She described her shock at what Jonathan had done; she said he was well-adjusted, with close friends of his own age. She was unsure how best to proceed.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We reassured Julia that the Helpline offers support, advice and information in situations such as hers.
- ▶ Jonathan's father left when he was ten. We discussed the potential impact this may have had on Jonathan.
- ▶ Julia had recently found some pornography websites on the home computer's history, but had felt unable to discuss these with Jonathan. We discussed the importance of good communication between them, and the importance of Jonathan knowing how to behave safely on the Internet.
- ▶ It was important that Jonathan should be supervised when with other children, so that he was not vulnerable to repeating his inappropriate behaviour.
- ▶ Julia was keen to have some written information to help her to understand what had happened (*see panel, right*).
- ▶ She wanted Jonathan and his cousin to receive appropriate help, but was concerned about the need to involve Children's Services. We discussed the process of doing this and the kinds of services that might be available.
- ▶ Pass on the Helpline number to her sister.

### Actions agreed with Julia:

- ▶ Supervise Jonathan's contact with other children and monitor Internet use.
- ▶ Continue to talk with Jonathan about the reasons for his actions and about responsible behaviour. Spend time together so that he feels comfortable and supported in talking with Julia.
- ▶ Consider reporting to Children's Services and the potential outcomes for both children of doing this.
- ▶ Obtain a copy of 'Facing the Future', by Simon Hackett<sup>6</sup>.
- ▶ Phone the Helpline at any time and suggest to her sister that this might also be of help to her.

### Outcome

Julia called the Helpline several times, as she decided what to do next. She and her sister decided to tell Children's Services about what had happened. In view of the circumstances, including the family's wishes, the Police decided not to pursue a criminal investigation. Jonathan was assigned a social worker and joined a programme for young people who have behaved in sexually inappropriate ways. His cousin was offered counselling through her school. Julia told us:

"Having spoken to you, today is the first time I feel like a whole person again."

<sup>6</sup> Hackett, S. (2001) *Facing the Future, A guide for parents of young people who have sexually abused*, Russell House Publishing

## 4.4 Group 4: Adults concerned about a child or young person who may have been abused

We receive a number of calls from adults concerned that a child has been abused, either by an adult or by another child. These calls can be particularly complex if the alleged abuser is another child or young person who may also be in need of protection.

### Who were the callers?

Over the period of this Report, the Helpline received 550 calls from 332 callers who had concerns that a child they knew was being sexually abused. This represents 5% of all calls and 6% of all callers to the Helpline. Of the 332 callers, we estimate that over half called with concerns that the child was being sexually abused by another child<sup>7</sup>.

Discussions are likely to focus on the safety and wellbeing not only of the victim, but also of the child who is behaving inappropriately. They are likely to include how to approach and reassure children in this situation, without frightening them or asking leading questions. Information can be provided about appropriate agencies working within the caller's local area, such as Children's Services, Barnardo's, the NSPCC and Action for Children.

The following call example includes some of the issues that may arise for these callers when the alleged perpetrator is also a child.

# 52%

of callers from this group called with concerns that the child was being sexually abused by another child<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> 52% (173) based on a 15% sample of callers in this category

## Call Example 7

CALLER: RICHARD  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: RON  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: LEAFLET IN COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Call details:

Richard called the Helpline because he was concerned about the behaviour of his daughter, Clare, aged six. Several times, Richard had found Clare touching her vagina and on one occasion attempting to insert a pencil into it. Richard had tried to speak gently to Clare about this, and asked whether anyone else had ever touched her in this way before. Clare said that her cousin, Paul, who was nine, had done so.

Richard had felt uncomfortable about Paul's behaviour for some time, as he spent so much time with younger children and seemed overly affectionate with them. The touching had taken place at Paul's house when the family was visiting. Richard had spoken to his wife about what had happened and had also spoken to Denise, Paul's mother. When Denise asked Paul about what Clare had said, he became very upset and denied that anything had ever happened. There were several other children in the large extended family and Richard was concerned about them, as well as the effect of Paul's alleged behaviour on Clare.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We commended Richard for calling the Helpline and not hoping that the issues would just 'go away'. We discussed with him the importance of agreeing and implementing with Denise immediate child protection measures in order to protect all of the children. He should involve as many adult members of the wider family as necessary in order to do this.
- ▶ Clare should be reassured that she had done nothing wrong and that he was pleased that she had told him what had happened.
- ▶ Be aware that Paul is a child himself. Speaking to him in a firm but kind manner would be very important in order to find out why he had behaved in this way, especially as he might be experiencing inappropriate behaviour from another source. Suggest that his mother call the Helpline for advice and support.
- ▶ Further options were discussed with Richard, including going to his GP and Children's Services.

### Actions agreed with Richard:

- ▶ Discuss with Denise how to implement immediate child protection measures. Paul should not be alone with the younger children, for his own sake as well as theirs.
- ▶ Discuss options, including talking to Children's Services with the rest of the family.
- ▶ Give the Helpline number to Paul's parents and any other family members who might benefit from talking to Stop it Now! Richard gave permission for the content of his calls to be shared with Denise.
- ▶ Call the Helpline next week to review progress and to discuss next steps.

### Outcome

Richard called back as arranged, as did Paul's mother, Denise, and we were able to provide ongoing Helpline support and advice to both, via our child specialist practitioners. This included information about child protection, age-appropriate sexual behaviour in children and how to give consistent messages about things like 'good touch, bad touch'. When Richard last called, the family were divided as to whether to involve Children's Services, wondering if it would do more harm than good.

## 4.5 Group 5: Professionals

From the earliest days of Helpline operation we became aware that professionals, including those working in both the voluntary and statutory sectors, valued access to the expertise available at Stop it Now!

The graph below demonstrates that professionals from many fields called the Helpline. Their reasons for doing so included:

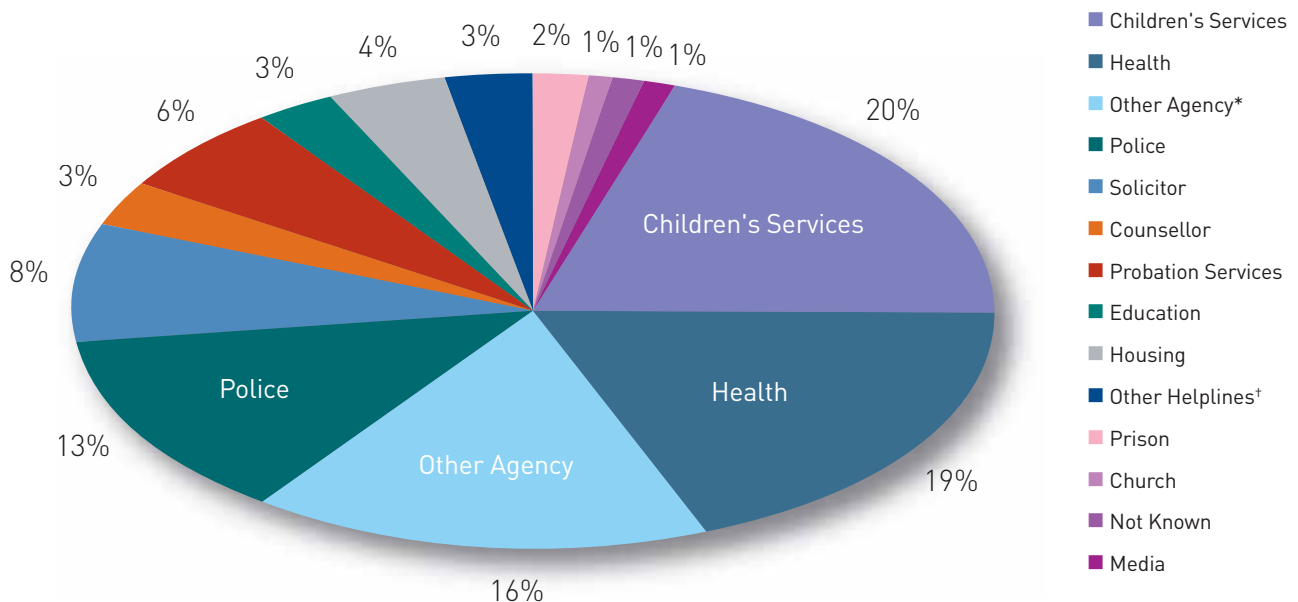
- ➔ How to work most effectively with offenders, their families and others affected by child sexual abuse.
- ➔ Whether someone they were working with might benefit from contacting the Helpline.
- ➔ Advice and assistance in accessing suitable services for those they were working with, including potential offenders, survivors and the families of offenders and victims.
- ➔ Literature to share with colleagues or those they were working with.

Most callers were from Children's Services or Health. Social workers were seeking advice when working with families who had been affected by child sexual abuse. Callers from the Health Service included GPs, mental health workers, psychotherapists and those providing services to people with drug and alcohol issues. Many called because the people they were working with had disclosed that they had committed a sexual offence or had admitted that they were concerned about their thoughts or behaviour towards children.

### Who were the callers?

974 calls were made to the Helpline by 862 callers; this represents 15% of all callers to the Helpline and 8% of all calls.

**Agencies represented by Professional Callers to the Helpline** *Graph 10*



\* Other Agency includes NSPCC, Relate, Victim Support, Local Authorities, Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Centres, Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centres, Sports Clubs.

† Other Helplines includes NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood), Action for Prisoners' Families and the Samaritans.

The following call example is from a professional, in this case an outreach worker, attached to a Community Mental Health Team.

## Call Example 8

CALLER: DIANA  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: CHRIS  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: GOOGLE SEARCH

### Call Details:

Diana, an outreach worker attached to a community mental health team, was supporting Jim, a man in his early 30's. Recently discharged from hospital following a drugs overdose, Jim had suffered with anxiety and depression since his teens. He had a conviction for indecent assault on his nephew committed 10 years ago, and a more recent conviction for accessing indecent images of children on the Internet.

Jim was no longer subject to any form of statutory supervision and Diana suspected that his overdose might be, at least partially, a reaction to this. Jim said that he continued to struggle periodically with sexual fantasies about children. Diana said that these periods seemed to coincide with a wider deterioration in his mental health.

Jim had told her he felt anxious about his deviant sexual fantasies 'coming back'. He was trying to confine himself to a very narrow daily routine, in an effort not to trigger these. The mental health professionals involved with Jim were aware of this, but he had not been offered any specific help to address the problem. Diana needed advice about how to respond when Jim talked to her about his worries concerning his sexual thoughts and feelings about children.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We asked whether Jim seemed to be getting gratification from talking to Diana about his fantasies. He showed no inclination to discuss the content and, on this basis, we said that this suggested a genuine motivation to manage his behaviour rather than allowing the problem to escalate.
- ▶ We suggested that Jim be supported to plan his daily activities to minimise his unstructured time.
- ▶ We encouraged Diana to look for unexpected or unexplained changes in Jim's mood or life-style which might signal an elevation of risk and would need to be addressed directly.
- ▶ We asked her to encourage Jim to call the Helpline.
- ▶ We advised her to ensure that her senior colleagues were kept informed of any developments.
- ▶ We suggested some organisations that could provide training and support for mental health workers in this area.

### Actions and Outcome

After talking with Diana, Jim called the Helpline. He agreed to waive his anonymity in order to get the help he needed and because he wanted to be monitored. Following a face-to-face meeting with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner he was given the following advice and agreed actions:

- ▶ Jim was assisted to work out how and why his sexual fantasies about children had become part of his arousal pattern. He agreed to put into practice techniques he was given to manage these.
- ▶ He identified some individuals to form a support network, including an old friend and Diana. These individuals would call the Helpline for guidance.
- ▶ Jim agreed to a 'personal safety plan' with his support network, included in which was that they would act on any child protection concerns that may arise.

Diana called the Helpline following Jim's face-to-face meeting with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner to discuss and agree the role of the support network. They would continue to utilise the Helpline should the need arise.

## 4.6 Group 6: Adult survivors

Calls from survivors of child sexual abuse represented 3% of total calls and 6% of all callers to the Helpline over the period of this Report. This small but important group of callers include those who needed to talk about their own experiences of being abused and to gain access to survivor services. Others were concerned that the person who abused them might still pose a risk to children. Some callers wanted to talk about sexual offending more generally in order to understand why they were abused and how they might begin to move forward from these experiences.

5% (16) of callers in this group had suffered abusive experiences in their past and were now struggling with inappropriate thoughts towards children. They questioned whether their past experiences were partly responsible for their current thinking and wanted to discuss ways of managing intrusive thoughts.

Whilst the Helpline's specialist practitioners can provide information, advice and support on issues such as this, our working relationship with dedicated Survivors' organisations such as NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood), Survivors UK and Mosac (Supporting non-abusing parents and carers of sexually abused children) is vital in enabling callers in this group to access further specialist advice and support to help to address the wider issues they face as a result of their earlier experiences.

### Who were the callers?

The Helpline received 406 calls from 316 survivors of child sexual abuse, 63% (197) of whom were women whilst 37% (116) were men.

“Our work with survivors of abuse sometimes means we are contacted by people who sadly have become, or fear they may become, perpetrators. We are therefore extremely glad that the Stop it Now! campaign and Helpline exist and are very pleased to work alongside them. Both are vital resources in the fight to end childhood abuse.”

**Peter Saunders FRSA, Chief Executive, National Association for People Abused in Childhood**

The call example on the following page illustrates a particular complexity which can arise from being a survivor of child sexual abuse.

## 4.7 Callers requiring general information

399 calls were made to the Helpline by 315 callers with requests for general information. These ranged from requests for leaflets, information about Stop it Now! Projects and general enquiries such as information about the laws that govern sex offenders in the UK.

## Call Example 9

CALLER: ABIGAIL  
HELPLINE OPERATOR: SUE  
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: TELEVISION PROGRAMME

### Call Details:

Abigail called the Helpline in some distress after watching a daytime television programme that examined the issue of sexually harmful behaviour by children and young people. Stop it Now! information was given at the end of the programme.

Now aged 21, Abigail explained that from age 6 to 11 she had been bullied and abused by a girl 4 or 5 years older than herself. Her mother encouraged her to “go out and play”, and during these times, especially in school holidays, they did “exciting, scary things”, including climbing on roofs, trespassing on local farms and shoplifting. The older girl also got her to perform sexual acts, which distressed her to talk about. She said they made her feel dirty and guilty; and she felt all the more guilty because she didn’t stop them happening and she remembered that sometimes she enjoyed what they did.

This behaviour didn’t just remain between the two of them. The older girl started to bring her neighbour, who was 2 years younger than Abigail. When the older girl moved away, Abigail said she continued to meet up with this younger girl at weekends and holidays and “I continued to abuse her”. This ended 6 or 7 years ago.

Abigail said she is now completing her University studies and has not repeated this behaviour since. She has not spoken to anyone about what happened and is now anxious about any kind of physical intimacy. Having heard about other victims on the television programme, Abigail said she wanted to see “my victim” and apologise for what she did. But she was also worried that this would “rake it all up”, and didn’t want to be seen as a “woman paedophile, like that nursery worker from Plymouth” as she was hoping to follow a career in teaching.

### Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We commended Abigail for her courage in calling and expressed sadness for the unhappy experiences she had whilst growing up and for the distress that she continued to feel.
- ▶ We acknowledged the dilemma she now faced about her past behaviour affecting her future career; but also about the events in her childhood potentially casting a shadow over the rest of her life.
- ▶ We discussed the nature of the girls’ relationships with each other. They had had “a good time”, a lot of the time, but Abigail remembered being very uncomfortable with the sexual behaviour. She hadn’t felt able to say anything – either to the older girl or her parents. She didn’t remember the younger girl seeming unhappy or reluctant at what they were doing, but wondered now how she would have known.
- ▶ We discussed what was normal sexual behaviour in children and young people. We also looked at how issues of power, control, age difference and lack of consent, if exploited, can result in the more vulnerable (usually younger) child suffering sexual and psychological harm.

### Actions and Outcome

- ▶ Given Abigail’s description of the effects on her of her childhood sexual experiences, we suggested that she seek appropriate counselling to work through the confusion she was experiencing, which was affecting her ability to form healthy, intimate relationships.
- ▶ We advised her to be clear from the outset about the counsellor’s confidentiality policy, since he/she may feel obliged to report Abigail’s disclosures about the younger girl to the Police or Children’s Services on child protection grounds.
- ▶ We urged Abigail to pause before making any approach to the younger girl. We advised that she should first be clear about what she hoped to achieve and why.
- ▶ We suggested she might benefit from a further discussion with a Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioner to explore the issues for victims and for children who engage in sexually harmful behaviour. This would allow her to reflect further on her own behaviour and consider the range of possible repercussions of making an approach to her ‘victim’.

# 5

## 3

### Face-to-face clinical work

“The service the Helpline provides is invaluable and offers alternative support and assistance to adults who offend. Its unique and non-punitive approach enables adults to engage with the process and to put into place safeguarding measures.”

**Julie Shepherd**  
Area Head of Children, Schools and Families Directorate in Surrey

Where funding has allowed, we have increased the provision of this service in response to a clear need expressed by callers.

## Further work with those who contact the Helpline

Lucy Faithfull Foundation practitioners come from a range of professional backgrounds – probation, social work, psychology, Police – and have extensive experience of working with adult male and female offenders, young people with harmful sexual behaviour, victims of abuse, and their respective family members.

As some of our call examples illustrate, we are able to provide a unique face-to-face service for those who might benefit from working with one of these practitioners, even though they understand that they will have to lose their anonymity in order to do so. Over the period of this Report, where funding has allowed, we have increased the provision of this service in response to a clear need expressed by callers. This work is of particular benefit to those wishing to change their own behaviour and to family members who are faced with complex issues and decisions following a loved one's offending. Great benefit can be derived by meeting with a practitioner, who can provide information and support regarding the management of abusive behaviours as well as about wider child protection issues.

Between June 2005 and December 2009 we provided 651 days of face-to-face clinical work with individuals who fell into our three principal target groups. We have only a finite amount of funding for this service and demand greatly outstrips supply.

Whilst the majority of people who attended a face-to-face meeting were adults concerned about their own behaviour, a significant number were friends and family concerned about the behaviour of another adult. A small number were parents and carers who were concerned about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person.

This work is funded by the Public Protection and Mental Health Group (PPMHG) of the Ministry of Justice, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and donations.

## *Inform and Inform Plus*

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, together with donations and participant contributions, funds two educational groupwork programmes. *Inform* and *Inform+* have been developed in response to a clear need identified by callers to the Helpline. Family members are deeply impacted when someone close to them is arrested for accessing illegal images of children. *Inform* provides them with sound information and with the chance to discuss the effects of this behaviour on them and their children in a safe, supportive environment. *Inform+* is an educational programme for those arrested, cautioned or convicted for accessing illegal images. Critically, people are able to access ongoing support as they begin to rebuild their lives. For more information visit [www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk).

“NOMS Public Protection and Mental Health Group (PPMHG) has supported Stop it Now! since 2002. PPMHG's support recognises the contribution made by the Helpline in protecting the public by offering a service that is easily accessible by any member of the public who needs advice and support, whether they are a potential offender or someone who is worried about the behaviour of a relative or acquaintance.”

**Public Protection & Mental Health Group**



# 6

## **Publicising the Stop it Now! Helpline**

“Making communities safer can be done in a variety of ways. The sensitive and highly effective work of the Stop it Now! Helpline is constantly proving itself to be an indispensable means for reducing child sexual abuse.”

**Stephen Hanvey, Chief Executive  
Circles UK**

## Making people aware

We publicise the Helpline number in a variety of ways, chief among which is our website, [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk). We also distribute leaflets and posters to statutory agencies including the Police and Children's Services, and also by request to those working in the voluntary sector, churches, community centres and GP's surgeries. During the period covered by this Report, nearly 512,000 Stop it Now! leaflets were distributed (including 8,400 in the Welsh language). A further 238,500 posters, postcards and Helpline cards were distributed (including 7,500 in Welsh).

Our campaigning and promotional activities are restricted by available funding. Given greater visibility through advertising, Helpline use would increase substantially.

At an appropriate point during a call to the Helpline, the caller is asked how he or she obtained the Stop it Now! Helpline number and from which geographical area they are calling. This is to enable us to assess the effectiveness of our marketing and to inform decisions about future promotional work.

### 6.1 Webstats

Statistics are available from January 1st 2007. Over the following three years to December 31st 2009 47,942 unique users visited [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk) 58,541 times.

Top traffic sources include:-

- ➔ Search engines - 29,973 referrals, using search terms such as 'child sexual abuse' and 'sex offenders'
- ➔ Direct 'landings' on the home page - 11,948 people typed the site name into the address bar
- ➔ The Lucy Faithfull Foundation website - 1,840 referrals
- ➔ [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) - 1,622 referrals

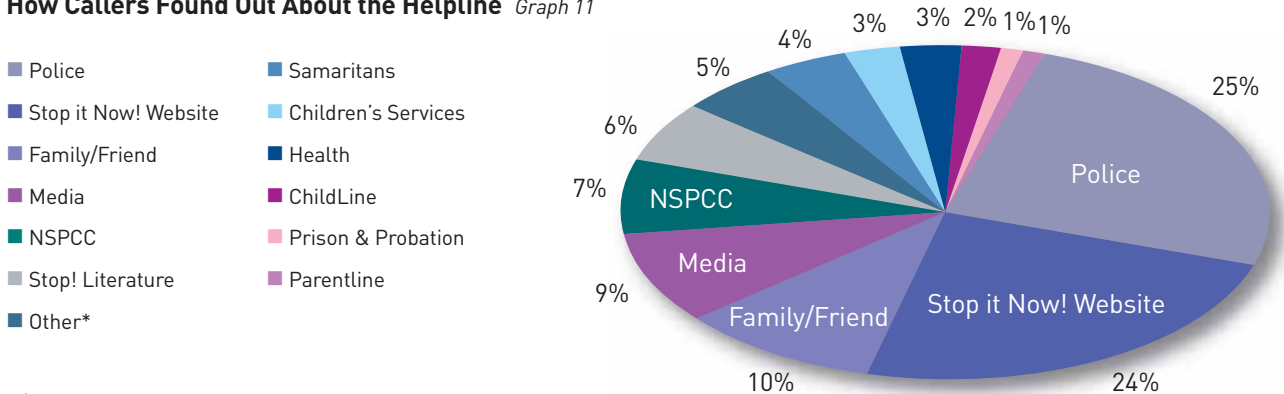
During the period of this report the website received an average of 43 unique visitors per day. However, there are clear peaks in visitor numbers, some of which can be attributed to media engagements and public awareness-raising activities. For example, in January 2008 visits rose to an average of 104 over a 3-day period. This coincided with Helpline details being included on:

- ➔ The television channel More4
- ➔ An interview carried out on Radio 4's Women's Hour in relation to wives of Internet offenders
- ➔ A statement issued by Stop it Now! following BBC 1's Panorama and ITV's Tonight with Trevor McDonald, both of which highlighted Internet abuse

We recognise the importance of engaging in such media activity and continue to look for opportunities to increase our visibility by this means.

Information regarding how callers found out about the Helpline was available for 71% of cases.

**How Callers Found Out About the Helpline** *Graph 11*



\* 'Other' includes for example the church, solicitors, education, Relate and the National Association of People Abused in Childhood.

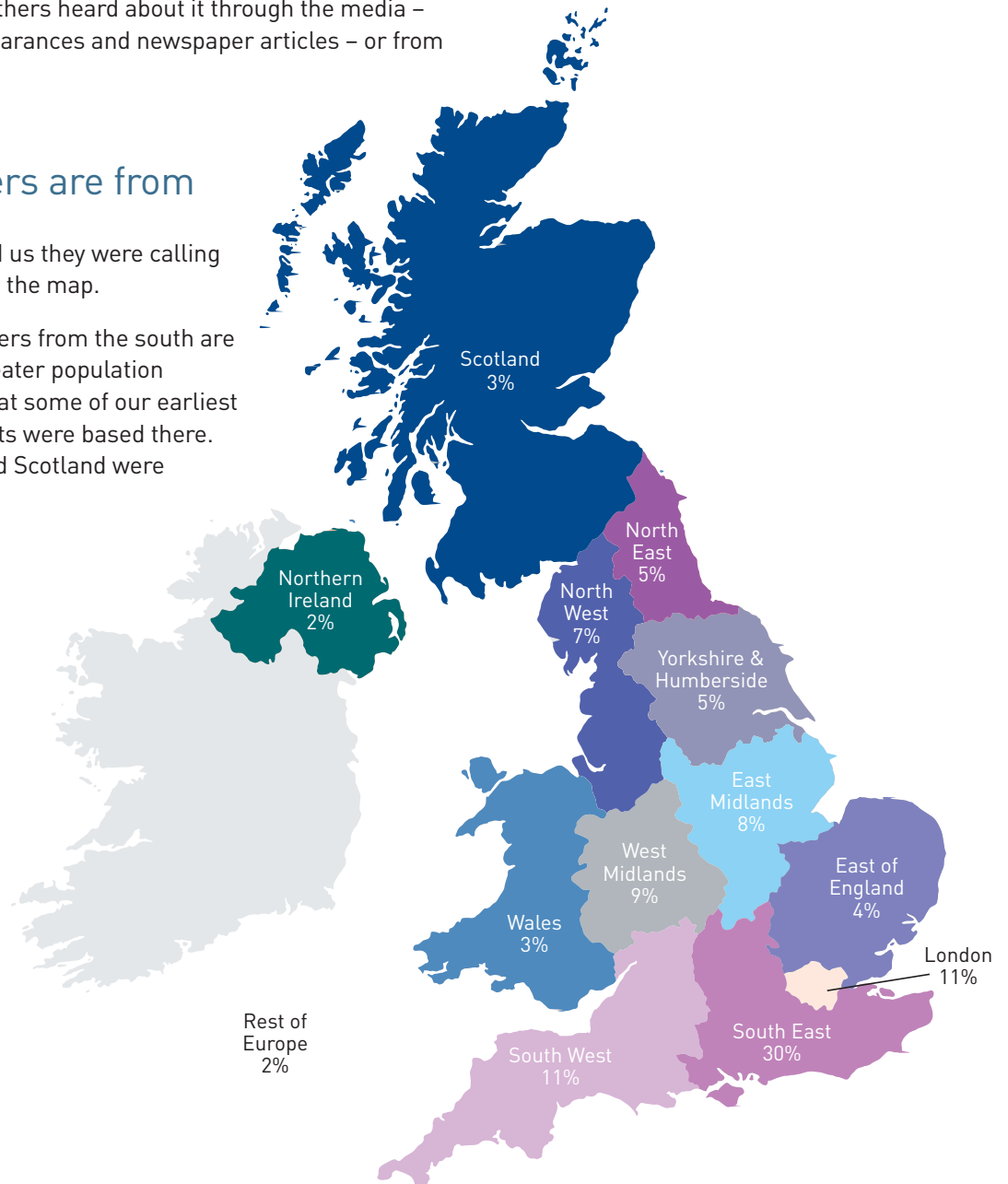
A substantial proportion of those who contact Stop it Now! do so after visiting our website (24%) or following contact with the Police (25%). Other agencies, including the NSPCC and the Samaritans, are significant points of reference for callers seeking help and advice about their own or someone else's behaviour.

Family and friends also refer people to the Helpline after finding it beneficial themselves. Others heard about it through the media – television and radio appearances and newspaper articles – or from Stop it Now! literature.

**6.2 Where callers are from**

4554 (81%) of callers told us they were calling from the areas shown on the map.

The large number of callers from the south are attributed partially to greater population density and to the fact that some of our earliest regional and local projects were based there. Our projects in Wales and Scotland were launched in 2009.





## The Future

“Sexual abuse is all too often shrouded in secrecy. The important work undertaken by Stop it Now! UK and Ireland and its Helpline service make very significant contributions to the range of interventions needed to prevent abuse and protect children and young people.”

**Jonathan Picken**  
**BASPCAN**

The British Association for the Study & Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect

“Having a safe place for people to turn to for information and guidance is critical for any effective public campaign to educate and empower the public to take action to prevent the sexual abuse of children. We look forward to our second decade of collaboration as we share lessons and deepen our working relationship to help advance this invaluable program – and our common goal to ‘stop it now!’”

**Deborah Donovan Rice , Executive Director, Stop It Now! (USA)**

## The Stop it Now! campaign – continuing to build

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland remains at the forefront of activity to prevent child sexual abuse. Campaigning and awareness-raising are essential tasks for local, regional and national projects in order to empower and enable adults to address personal, family and community concerns. Key to our work is building community strength and helping families to know the steps to keep their children safe, including how to implement family safety plans.

Across England, Scotland and Wales our regional and national campaign managers provide activities which respond to local need. In the absence of funding campaign activity is limited in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

- ➔ Activity in The Black Country and Birmingham has a dual focus on training and engagement with voluntary and statutory agency partners, and community engagement work with parents in schools and Children’s Centres concerning Internet and community safety. (This project is supported and managed by Barnardos.)
- ➔ In London, the development of a prevention toolkit with the Black and Minority Ethnic Community takes place alongside work with Children’s Centres on family vulnerability at times of transition.
- ➔ The Stop it Now! Manager for Wales delivers a ‘Parents Protect Plus’ course to parents attending Children’s Centres and through Parent Networks, and engages with politicians, professionals and members of the public in a nationwide survey of strengths and gaps in services to prevent child sexual abuse.
- ➔ With the support of the Police, the Stop it Now! Scotland Manager is developing services to better respond to the challenge of sex offending and the Internet whilst also working to develop improved services for sexual abuse survivors who are also serving prison sentences.
- ➔ With the support of the Home Office, we have created the Parents Protect website ([www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk)) and associated learning resources that accompany the roll-out of the Police Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme across England and Wales.

We assume that only a minority of adults who hear about Stop it Now! will need to contact the Helpline. For the rest, our developing range of resources aims to give them the information they need to combat child sexual abuse.

That said, calls to the Helpline have increased consistently since its launch in 2002. This trend is likely to continue. With increased visibility there will be a corresponding increase in calls, and as a consequence, safer children.

Over the past eight years we have learned that, given reassurance about confidentiality, people will call the Helpline in circumstances where they can prevent the sexual abuse of children. Since 2002, nearly 8,000 individuals have done just this. Most callers were not involved with child protection or criminal justice agencies at the time of their call, mostly for fear of repercussions for themselves or others.

Yet in almost all circumstances there were actions the caller could take immediately that made a child safer. Whilst we do not always know what happened next, it is encouraging that many called back to confirm the actions they took and what happened as a result, and then to discuss the next steps they might take.

## Internet-related concerns

Our previous Helpline Report (2006) demonstrated that the Internet was emerging as a source of concern for a growing number of our callers. Development of our awareness-raising materials and the use of these by Police, in particular, have prompted a massive rise in Internet-related calls.

We have learned that appropriate educational courses can be of great benefit to Internet offenders and to their families. The wish of offenders and their families to demonstrate that they can use the Internet safely has led to a collaboration with Surrey Police and Securus Software Ltd ([www.securus-software.com](http://www.securus-software.com)) in the development of an online monitoring service. The CROGA website, ([www.croga.org](http://www.croga.org)), an online self-help programme for Internet offenders, developed jointly with the University of Cork with funding provided by the European Community, has proved a valuable resource for a large number of callers.

### We are planning:

- ➔ A new awareness-raising campaign using social networking sites including Facebook.
- ➔ An expansion of Inform, Inform+ and Securus monitoring services across England, Scotland and Wales.
- ➔ Revision of the CROGA website, to include the creation of materials for families and friends of Internet offenders and for professionals supervising them.

## Calls from family and friends

The vast majority of family and friends who call the Helpline have no current involvement with child protection agencies, but in almost all circumstances they are right to be concerned about either worrying or illegal behaviours in an adult or young person. Callers often comment that they had wrestled with the problem for some time and struggled to find any agency or organisation that could assist them. Whilst calls from this group are increasing, this rise is far smaller than in calls from offenders and potential offenders. We believe this is because people are unaware of Stop it Now! and the services it offers – it does not reflect a lack of need. However, adults in this group are perhaps the most motivated and able to ensure the safety of children at risk, including by influencing the behaviour of the person who represents this risk.

### We are planning:

- ➔ Delivery of public education seminars to parents and carers across England and Wales, in partnership with the Police.
- ➔ Further development and promotion of Internet-based education materials aimed at preventing child sexual abuse - for example, [www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk).

## Known offenders

Some Police Forces and Probation Areas provide details of the Helpline to known sex offenders. That said, the majority of offenders who call have found our details independently and many do not wish Police or Probation to know that they are calling. They are typically seeking support in managing intrusive sexual thoughts, with some making regular calls to Helpline staff as they work towards leading a 'good life'<sup>8</sup>. However good their relationship with Police or Probation, many say that access to a confidential Helpline, whose staff are able to assist in helping them deal with lapses in their thoughts and behaviour, is both reassuring and of great practical assistance. They are safer as a result.

### We are planning:

- ➔ Information about the Helpline service to be available to all registered sex offenders, via Police, Prison and Probation services (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements - MAPPA).
- ➔ Information about the Helpline service to be made available to prisoners without current sexual convictions.

<sup>8</sup> Ward, T. and Brown, M. *The Good Lives Model and Conceptual Issues in Offender Rehabilitation. Psychology, Crime & Law*, 1477-2744, Volume 10, Issue 3, 2004: pp 243-257.

## Professionals

From our earliest days of operation it became apparent that the expertise available on the Helpline could benefit workers from all parts of the statutory and voluntary sectors. Whilst this may in part compensate for a lack of adequate training for some workers, it is also because many – especially those outside principal child protection agencies – are not expected to have sexual-offence specific expertise and may have little access to such knowledge within their organisation.

The opportunity to discuss the specifics of a case with an informed Helpline operator, with access to Stop it Now! materials online, proves sufficient to meet most needs. It is also a valuable way of fostering important links between Stop it Now! and organisations, voluntary and statutory, who are working with adults and children at a local level.

In Spring 2010 Stop it Now! England ran four regional training days across the country in partnership with Police Forces. These attracted over 350 representatives from the many organisations that have contact with children and families or deal with child protection issues. The training days were a great success and more are planned in 2011.

Comments included:

**"This has been an excellent information packed day; high quality presentations and challenging thinking."**

**"An invaluable conference that should be compulsory for all those working with children."**

### We are planning:

- ➔ **Further regional training days across England and Wales to provide sound information about child sexual abuse and its prevention to a broad spectrum of people who work with children and families.**

## A comprehensive approach to child sexual abuse prevention

This Report demonstrates that people can and do take action to prevent child sexual abuse when they have a safe and informed place in which to discuss their concerns.

A comprehensive approach to preventing child sexual abuse lies at the heart of Stop it Now!'s key objectives and messages. We aim to help build community strength and resilience, not only by spreading clear and accessible child protection messages, but by providing the 'safe space' needed to reinforce them and to enable all adults to address their concerns at the point of need.

Uniquely the Helpline has, since 2002, provided information, support and advice to those who are worried about their own thoughts and behaviours, to those who are concerned about the behaviour of an adult or young person close to them and to those who are worried that a child they know might be at risk. Our involvement may continue over weeks or months, the aim always being to enable people to take the steps needed to rebuild their lives and to keep children safe. It will sometimes extend to the involvement of other agencies in order to ensure the best outcome, whether for an offender, a family, or a victim of child sexual abuse.

We hope above all that the people we have helped continue to play their part in keeping children safe and that Stop it Now! is able to expand and build upon its work, fuelled by our conviction that child sexual abuse is preventable, not inevitable.

**"If we are to fully address sexual abuse of children, we must be able to intervene early to prevent abuse. The Stop it Now! Helpline is an essential contribution to preventative services."**

**Shaun Kelly, Head of Safeguarding, Action for Children**

“What is our light of hope? What could we imagine together if we lived in a culture free of the cancerous sore of sexual abuse, one of sexual integrity? Children would develop affirming their bodies and explore sexuality in age-appropriate ways. Adolescents would not get their sexual expression from the media but from within themselves and their peers, drawing upon their healthy childhood experiences. They would not grow up sexually ignorant, or be afraid to talk to their parents. Adults would find vibrant sexual expression in all aspects of their lives and at all ages, for sexual energy is life energy. People would find a natural balance about sexuality, just as people find a balance with eating, sleeping, working and playing. Doctors would practice, fully able to discuss sexual issues with their patients, no matter the illness. I want to live in this world, don't you?”

Fran Henry, Founder, Stop It Now! USA, 2001

Together we can prevent child sexual abuse



[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

freephone 0808 1000 900

