

# Stop! Press

Issue 14 - December 2010

Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

The quarterly Stop it Now! UK and Ireland activity update

## MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER CALLING THE STOP IT NOW! HELPLINE

The recently published Stop it Now! Helpline Report 2005-2009 shows that more people than ever are calling the freephone confidential child protection helpline. Calls have increased by 74% over the last four years. (1834 calls in 2005 compared to 3182 in 2009).

During the period of the report, the Helpline received 11,975 calls from 5,634 callers who were looking for information, advice and support in connection with child sexual abuse issues.

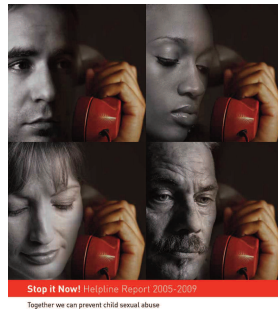
Over 50% of calls were made by adults concerned about their own thoughts or behaviour towards children, 25% were made by adults concerned about another adult and 4% were made by adults concerned about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person. Other calls were from professionals (8%) and survivors of child sexual abuse (4%).

### Little authority contact

In many cases the caller had not had any contact with any child protection agency at the time of calling but wanted to take action to protect a child. The Helpline operator listens, encourages, supports and agrees one or more actions for the caller to take immediately. In some cases this leads 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 sexual abuse.

Director of Stop it Now! Donald Findlater said: "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 and helplines for concerned adults are a powerful means of protection and prevention.

"Many people who contact the Stop it Now! Helpline are not in contact with agencies or the authorities but want to protect children. To do this they need advice, support and information.



"Current public feeling about child sexual abuse, child abusers and the continuous headlines in the media do little to make children safe. They imply that child sexual abuse is inevitable and that the only response to the problem is to identify abusers after they have offended and punish them. But child sexual abuse is not inevitable, it is preventable. We need all adults to develop the skills and knowledge they need to play their part in keeping children safe."

### A broader vision

"It's easy to talk tough about known offenders," Donald said. "But talking tough is not solving the problem. At best, the authorities deal with only 25% of abuse. Responding to offenders after the abuse has taken place does not impact on those not reported or convicted. We need better solutions and a broader vision in order to tackle this problem.

"One of the most challenging findings from our report is that only 4% of calls came from adults (mostly parents and carers) concerned about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person. Given that research tells us one third of all sexual offences are committed by those under the age of 18, it is vital that parents and workers with children learn to recognise concerning sexual attitudes and behaviour in children and take action. It does those children and young people, and those they may harm, no favours if we ignore such behaviour and fail to intervene."

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Stop it Now! Helpline Report 2005-2009

While the reports on pages 1 and 2 speak for themselves in relation to the success of the Helpline over the last four years, what they don't speak to is the fantastic team effort that went into crafting the report itself. This team effort is characteristic of our work and I take this opportunity to thank all of those involved.

We held a very successful launch event in London on December 2 (see page 2) and despite the onslaught of snow people travelled from far and wide to join us in marking this milestone.

On that same morning, we featured on Radio 4's Today Programme and discussed some of the issues faced by callers to the Helpline from one of our key target groups - adults concerned about a child or young person's sexual behaviour (for those who missed it, it can be heard here:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_9249000/9249820.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9249000/9249820.stm)). The opportunity to discuss this issue on a national platform was extremely welcome. The resulting and immediate increase in calls and emails to our Helpline from parents and carers in this position demonstrates the clear need for this issue to be talked about more often.

### 2011

While funding for Stop it Now! UK and Ireland remains somewhat uncertain, our resolve to ensure more and more adults are equipped to protect children is not. It is heartening that our staff are investing in others to make sure that positive preventative messages are spread, that educational work continues and that parents are supported locally. As you will see on page 4, this work helped one woman gain the knowledge she needed to keep at least one child safe.

### Our Supporters

Huge thanks to Christine Platt who recently climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of three charities - one of these being the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Stop it Now! UK and Ireland. By all accounts it was a real challenge and we are extremely grateful for her tremendous efforts (see page 4).

### New Year Resolutions

Finally, Season's Greetings to all our readers. Every caller to the Helpline is asked to take one action (or more) to protect a child - and here's your chance to do the same. As 2011 gets under way, you can make a resolution to help prevent child sexual abuse from taking place - see page 3 for details of our Resolution for Prevention! campaign and sign up online.

### Best wishes,

Donald Findlater

Director, Stop it Now! UK and Ireland

### KEY FINDINGS ON PAGE TWO

Download the report at: [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)  
or call the Stop it Now! Office on 01527 598184

**stop it** UK & Ireland  
**now!**  
Together we can prevent child sexual abuse

# Helpline Report Findings

## Adults concerned about their own behaviour – Summary

•Year-on-year the number of callers from this group increased substantially and almost doubled over the period of the report (304 in 2005 and 584 in 2009). 98% (1921) of these callers were men who made 5925 calls to the helpline. 2% were women who made 111 calls to the Helpline.

•The most notable increase was from people who had offended on the Internet. In 2009 the Helpline received 1259 calls from Internet offenders, compared to 267 in 2005.

## Adults concerned about their own behaviour – offline

•804 callers were abusers or potential abusers, with behaviour or concerns unrelated to the Internet. They made 1916 calls to the Helpline.

•436 of these had previously abused one or more children and wanted help to manage their behaviour. 368 had not yet abused a child but were troubled by their sexual thoughts and wanted help to manage their behaviour.

•81% of these callers had not been arrested and were not in contact with the authorities prior to calling the Helpline.

## Adults concerned about their own behaviour – online

•1156 people had concerns about their behaviour on the Internet. They made 4071 calls to the Helpline.

•This group of callers increased four fold over the period of the report. (In 2009 the Helpline received 1259 calls from adults concerned about their own behaviour on the Internet compared to 267 in 2005).

•1080 callers had already committed offences on the Internet. 162 (15%) of these callers were not in contact with the police but wanted advice about ways of combating their illegal behaviour.

## Family and friends concerned about another adult's behaviour

•1497 people contacted the Helpline because they were worried about another adult's behaviour. They made 3013 calls.

•The volume of calls from this group has steadily increased with 846 calls received in 2009 compared to 506 in 2005.

•80% of callers were women.

•89% stated their relationship to the person of concern. Close family made the greatest number of calls - partners (35%), parents (18%) ex-partners (9%), son or daughter (8%).

## Parents and carers concerned about a child or young person's sexual behaviour

•311 people contact the Helpline because they were worried about the sexual behaviour of a child or young person. They made 533 calls.

•The majority of callers were parents concerned about their child. Other callers included carers, teachers, and child minders.

•79% of these callers were women.

•In 2009, 76% (74) callers were **not** in contact with any child protection agency, statutory or voluntary at the time of calling.

## Adults concerned about a child or young person who may have been abused.

•332 people called the Helpline because they were worried a child may have been abused. They made 550 calls.

•52% called with concerns that the child was being sexually abused by another child.

## Professionals

•862 professionals called the Helpline. They made 974 calls.

•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 or alcohol issues. Many called because the people they were working with had disclosed that they had committed a sexual offence or were concerned about their thoughts or behaviour towards children.

## Adult survivors

•316 survivors called the Helpline. They called 406 times.

•63% were women whilst 37% were men.

•This group included 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.

•5% (16) of callers had suffered abusive experiences in their past and were now struggling with inappropriate thoughts towards children.

## Findings 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 Launch Event in pictures



Top Row L-R: Baroness Valerie Howarth; Director of Stop it Now! UK and Ireland, Donald Findlater and Claire Wiggins, Ministry of Justice; guests

Bottom Row L-R: Lucy Faithfull Foundation Chief Executive, Hilary Eldridge; Conservative MEP for London, Marina Yannakoudakis

# Parents get child sexual abuse prevention information on the web

Over 2700 people have visited the new child sexual abuse prevention online resource; [www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk) since its launch on October 4, 2010. The site's launch coincided with more police forces going live with the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme.

By March 2011, all 43 police forces in England and Wales will be operating the Home Office scheme which allows members of the public to ask the police to check whether an individual who has contact with their children poses a risk. If the individual has a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or poses a risk of causing serious harm to the child or children concerned, then the police can disclose information to the person best placed to protect the child.

In response to the Home Office Child Sex Offender Review, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Stop it Now! UK and Ireland trialled two public education programmes in Surrey and Birmingham. Due to their success this work is now being implemented nationally, and police forces will be carrying out their own public education seminars on the prevention of child sexual abuse with our support.

[www.parentsprotect.co.uk](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk) supports these face-to-face public education seminars and aims to equip parents and carers with sound information to help protect their children while dispelling some of the common myths around abuse.

**Parents Protect!** Together we can prevent child sexual abuse  
0808 1000 900

Home Learn Get Help Take Action Resources Useful Links About Us

### LEARNING PROGRAMME

**Quick Navigation**

- What is child sexual abuse?
- Quick Facts
- Warning signs - what to look for in children and adults
- Creating a family safety plan
- Police disclosure scheme
- What to do if a child talks about abuse
- Get help
- Child sexual abuse support services
- NSPCC

**Contact Us**

If you want to ask a question or talk through any issues or concerns, call the Stop it Now! confidential, telephone helpline on 0808 1000 900.

The helpline is available from 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-5pm Fridays. Trained staff can also provide help by email on [info@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:info@stopitnow.org.uk), with a response in 48 hours.

Please read the Stop it Now! confidentiality statement.

### The Parents Protect Learning Programme

Our Online Learning Programme enables you to work through a number of topics at your own pace. The Programme aims to:

- Give you the information you need about child sexual abuse
- Show you how to create a family safety plan
- Tell you who you can talk to if you are worried

This video is just over 26 minutes long and will give you a good understanding of some of the key issues around child sexual abuse - what it is, why it happens and crucially, how it can be prevented.

You can contact the Stop it Now! helpline or e-mail service if you have any questions at any point, as you work through the Programme.

The website holds a 30-minute learning programme which allows users to work through the topics at their own pace. Issues covered include: what sexual abuse is; who abuses children; why people abuse children; a model of offending behaviour; signs to look out for in children and adults; how to put in place a family safety plan and where to go for help and advice.

Home Secretary Theresa May said: "I urge anyone who has concerns to contact their local police force immediately. But it's also incredibly important that parents and carers use tools like this website to gain awareness and understanding of the issues, and learn about the steps they can take to protect their children."

## Training opportunities

Having already delivered 5 successful practitioner training events during 2010, the England Stop! campaign is not letting the snow settle for too long, as it heads into a New Year!

Two full-day training events are planned which are aimed at multi-agency practitioners:

### January 27th, Thames Valley

In association with the Thames Valley Partnership, Stop! England is holding an event at the Lane End Conference Centre, Bucks. For further details, please contact Bron Jones on Tel: 01844 202001 or E-mail: [bron@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk](mailto:bron@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk)

### February 17th, Leeds

In association with Leeds City Council/LSCB, we will be delivering a training event specifically for practitioners involved in working with Children's Centres. If you currently work at, or with, a Children's Centre in the Leeds area, and would like to attend, please speak to the Centre Manager who will have been sent details of the event already, or email [ey.beacon@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:ey.beacon@leeds.gov.uk)

To find out how you can organise a Stop it Now! training event in your area, contact England National Manager, Liz Maslen on 01527 406915 or Email: [lmassen@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:lmassen@stopitnow.org.uk)

## Resolution for Prevention!

For 2011 as part of our New Year *Resolution for Prevention!* we are asking all adults in communities and families across the UK to undertake just one positive preventative action to stop child sexual abuse now.

Making just one positive resolution can make a real difference and it could be anything from putting up a Stop it Now! poster to writing to your local political leaders asking them to make preventing child sexual abuse a priority.

Please make one of your New Year Resolutions for 2011 a promise to do just one thing to prevent the sexual abuse of children in the United Kingdom.

Visit [www.surveymonkey.com/resolutionforprevention2011](http://www.surveymonkey.com/resolutionforprevention2011) to tell us what you will do and we will share your ideas, anonymously, on our website and Facebook page to encourage others to do the same.

## Commit to Prevent!

Over 1500 signatures have been collected in support of the Welsh *Commit to Prevent!* Campaign.

Commit to Prevent! launched in July and is designed to put the prevention of child sexual abuse on the political agenda ahead of the Assembly government election in 2011.

Sign the petition:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stopitnowwales>

Find out more and get involved: [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

or call Rebecca Wasinski on 07989 378220

## Working with Internet abuse in Scotland

Stop it Now! Scotland is set to pilot two programmes for Internet offenders and their families in the New Year. *Inform Plus* is an educational course designed for those who have committed offences on the Internet. *Inform* is a programme for members of the family to help them address the questions and issues the behaviour their loved one has raised. The courses will be trialled in Central Scotland in January 2011 with a view to broader roll-out later in the year.

*Inform* and *Inform Plus* were developed by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation in response to the level of Internet related concerns being identified on the Stop it Now! Helpline and have been very well received by participants. There are very few services for these groups, whose numbers are growing. Prison and Probation programmes exist for some convicted male offenders; but many individuals who are arrested on suspicion of downloading child abuse images experience lengthy periods on bail and may ultimately receive a caution or court sentence that holds no prospect of any intervention programme.

Stop it Now! Scotland is not aware of any other services available to partners, friends or family of this type of offender, who often feel bewildered and distraught about what has happened and don't know what action to take. Stop it Now! Scotland believes that the provision of services such as *Inform* and *Inform Plus* are vital to effective child protection and abuse prevention.

Stop it Now! welcomes Fiona MacKay the Programme Coordinator of *Inform* and *Inform Plus*. Fiona can be contacted on [fionamackay@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:fionamackay@stopitnow.org.uk).

More information on *Inform* and *Inform Plus*: <http://www.lucyfaithfull.org/working-with-internet-abuse/inform—inform-plus.aspx>

## More on board to spread prevention messages in Wales

Two project workers at Plant Dewi who manage the 'Families Together' groups are undergoing training so they can deliver *Parents Protect Plus* courses to parents and carers.

The facilitator training course involves the pair completing two days training before co-delivering the course with Stop it Now! Wales Campaign Manager, Rebecca Wasinski. Rebecca will then shadow the first and last sessions of the following courses before accrediting them to go on to deliver on their own.

*Parents Protect Plus* is a child sexual abuse prevention programme spanning five weeks (two hours a week for five weeks) for parents, carers, guardians and other adults. Course content includes:

- discussion and information around abuser behaviour including why and how people sexually abuse children
- the behaviours and indicators of sexual abuse
- the barriers to identifying and preventing abuse and how to overcome them
- sexual development in children and young people
- sexually harmful behaviour in children and young people
- Internet safety
- the positive actions adults can take to prevent child sexual abuse

Plant Dewi Project worker Samantha Duggan said: "Sexual abuse is happening and we all have a responsibility to protect and care for the well-being of each and every child. As an organisation we believe that raising awareness on such a sensitive issue is vital. Greater awareness means greater protection."

### How the courses help - words from a parent

"It became apparent to me that a teenage family member was spending a great deal of time on the Internet. Having participated on the Stop it Now! course, I had put in place measures to safeguard all family members e.g. passwords, computer in a public room. This enabled me to keep a close eye on the family.

"However, it was soon discovered that a person, who was in his thirties, was grooming the teenager. The police were contacted immediately and the appropriate action was taken. Without having done the course and followed the correct instructions the outcome could have been very different."

More information on *Parents Protect Plus*:

<http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/what-we-do/wales/wales/parents-protect-plus.aspx>

or call Rebecca Wasinski on 07989 378220

For more information on Plant Dewi, Families Together Groups:  
<http://www.plantdewi.org.uk/html/carmarthen.html>.

## Climbing mountains for charity!

In September, Christine Platt, a mental health practitioner from Blackburn, Lancashire, climbed the tallest free standing mountain in the world in aid of the charities she supports.

Christine went through months of training to prepare for the challenge of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, which she says was well worth every minute:

"The first few days were quite pleasant and the training seemed to pay off - but I don't think anything could have prepared me for the summit night! It was without doubt the hardest, most painful, frightening, unpleasant night of my life - but worth it all when the sun came up!"

Christine was lucky enough not to suffer from altitude sickness on the way up, but got quite sick soon after reaching summit and an experienced guide helped her back down 1000m: "I can't remember a lot about it to be honest but recovered quite quickly - what I do remember is the most excruciating headache I've ever had and being very confused," she said

Christine raised £1500 for her three charities; the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Stop it Now!, The Anthony Nolan Trust, and Papyrus. Well done Christine and big thanks from Stop it Now! and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation!



Christine Platt

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