

Protecting children from sexual abuse

Preventing child sexual abuse

FREEPHONE HELPLINE 0808 1000 900

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

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

What is Stop it Now?

Child sexual abuse is a serious problem affecting large numbers of our children and young people. With help, abused children can overcome their experiences, but many remain profoundly affected for the rest of their lives. But the harm caused is preventable - adults who care for children, and even those who harm them, can act now to stop sexual abuse.

Abuse thrives in an atmosphere of secrecy and taboo. Stop it Now! UK and Ireland is a major national/regional campaign and Helpline. It aims to stop child sexual abuse by encouraging abusers and potential abusers to seek help and by giving adults the information they need to protect children effectively.

Stop it Now! believes that child sexual abuse is a preventable public health problem and challenges adults to create a society that no longer tolerates such abuse.

“Adults who care for children, and even those who harm them, can act now to stop abuse”

“Only a quarter of children who are sexually abused tell anyone about it at the time”

Why do we need Stop it Now?

In spite of increased awareness, child sexual abuse remains a serious public health issue. Research suggests that 1 in 6 children are sexually abused before they reach the age of 16. The costs are enormous, both to individuals who suffer the trauma of abuse and to their families and communities.

Contrary to popular belief, research shows that children are far more likely to be abused by someone they know than by a stranger. The most common abuser is a member of the child's family or a friend or neighbour. In this situation, children are particularly powerless to protect themselves. Few people realise that many children are abused by older children or adolescents; some of these young people have themselves been abused.



Three quarters of children who are abused do not tell anyone about it at the time and many keep their secret all their lives. Stop it Now! aims to break the walls of silence and give adults the confidence to take action to protect children.

Stop it Now! believes that all adults must take responsibility for protecting children as early as possible - preferably before abuse happens. In order to do this they need to be able to recognise the signs of abuse and understand how abusers behave.

Sex offenders are not monsters, however abhorrent their behaviour, and few are the predatory violent offenders commonly portrayed in the media. Adults who abuse children are responsible for their behaviour and can choose to stop.

Stop it Now! advocates a positive approach to this problem. It promotes understanding and responsible action and challenges abusers or those thinking about abusing a child to seek help now, before a child is harmed.

The Stop it Now! campaign

As well as raising general awareness about sexual abuse, Stop it Now! UK & Ireland is aimed at these key groups:

- ➔ Parents, carers and other protective adults: to give them information and support that helps them protect children and young people from sexual abuse
- ➔ Those who work with children and families in a professional or voluntary capacity: to help them respond to sexual abuse issues and concerns and embed preventative strategies into their work
- ➔ Politicians and key decision makers: to put preventing child sexual abuse on the political agenda and ensure policies are put in place that are best placed to protect children.

What does Stop it Now! do?

The Stop it Now! UK and Ireland campaign works with communities and the agencies that work to protect children including police, probation, children's social services, health, housing, voluntary agencies and the courts.

The services delivered in each nation are tailored to local needs and include these key elements:

- ➔ Media campaigns to raise awareness of child sexual abuse and how communities and families can protect children
- ➔ Information materials explaining how child sexual abuse happens, what the warning signs are and how to seek help
- ➔ Public meetings, seminars and workshops promote discussion about the role of individuals and the community in keeping children safe
- ➔ Engaging with children and young people about respectful relationships and about keeping safe online and offline
- ➔ Training and awareness raising with those who work with children and families
- ➔ Online resources such as Parents Protect! **www.parentsprotect.co.uk**
- ➔ Collaborative working with and lobbying of government officials to promote a wider understanding of child sexual abuse as a preventable public health issue.

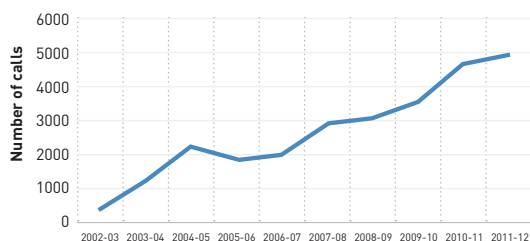
The Stop it Now! confidential, freephone Helpline

A UK and Ireland telephone Helpline supports this work and offers confidential advice, support and information to these three key 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

Due to caller demand, other groups include:

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



Stop it Now! calls on anyone who has sexually abused a child, or who is thinking about doing so to contact our Helpline as a first step to finding help.

Despite having no advertising budget, calls to the Helpline increase year on year. Our experienced operators help hundreds of people take action to protect a child every month.

Does Stop it Now! work?

Our projects in the UK and Ireland are demonstrating the effectiveness of the Stop it Now! approach. Thousands of our leaflets are being requested and distributed. Positive media relationships have been developed. We work with thousands of professionals, parents and carers each year. Evaluations of this work have been overwhelmingly positive with participants stating they have a greater ability to implement protective measures in their work and their homes.

People are contacting our Helpline for information and advice in ever increasing numbers. Over three quarters of callers are from our target groups. 38% of callers are adults who are worried about their own behaviour and want help to change, with a further 29% of callers from adults concerned about a family member or someone they know well.

What can you do to help?

Local projects

Stop it Now! UK & Ireland is keen to develop a network of local projects. If you are interested in contributing to the development of a project in your area, please contact the Administrator at the address overleaf.

Fundraising

We need money to help us continue with our work to protect children. If you would like to make a donation or to set up a fundraising event please contact us.

Get involved

There are many other ways you can support Stop it Now! from connecting to us online, putting up a poster or donating money when you shop online. Visit www.stopitnow.org.uk and have a look at the 'Get Involved' section.

If you suspect that someone you know is sexually abusing a child or if you are worried about your own thoughts or behaviour towards children, please call:

Stop it Now! Freephone Helpline 0808 1000 900

Resources available from Stop it Now! UK & Ireland



Preventing child sexual abuse

This booklet introduces the Stop it Now! campaign and describes what Stop it Now! is doing to prevent child sexual abuse.

(Ref Stop 01)



What we all need to know to protect our children

This booklet provides the information we all need in order to recognise the warning signs of abuse in adults we know and to build the confidence to do something about it. (Ref Stop 02)



Child's play? Preventing abuse among children and young people

This booklet provides the information we all need in order to recognise the warning signs of harmful sexual behaviour in children and to build the confidence to do something about it. (Ref Stop 03)



The Internet and children – What's the problem?

This booklet provides essential information for parents, carers and professionals in all matters relating to internet safety and how to recognise the danger signs in adult online activity. (Ref Stop 04)



SMART Rules for Adults to Share with Children

To help a child learn any set of rules it is important to go through them and explain why you want the child to remember them. This useful card details some SMART rules for parents and carers to share with children.



SMART Rules for Parents and Carers

The best way of protecting children from sexual abuse is for adults to openly talk about prevention. This useful card details some SMART rules for parents and carers to share with each other.



Parents Protect!

This leaflet details some of the key points made on the Parents Protect! website. It gives advice around what we should all be thinking about and encourages people to find out more. You can also use the front page as a poster - at your workplace, community venue or school.



The Stop it Now! UK & Ireland Helpline Reports

These reports detail Helpline activity, statistics and call examples.

- ➔ 2005-2009 Helpline Report
- ➔ 2005-2009 Helpline Report Executive Summary
- ➔ 2002-2005 Helpline Report

To request copies of these publications, contact the Stop it Now! Administrator:
 Telephone: 01527 598 184 Email: office@stopitnow.org.uk
www.stopitnow.org.uk www.parentstoprotect.co.uk



Working to Protect Children

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