



FEBRUARY 2025

Vicky Young, Head of Stop It Now
& Sarah Wefers, Practitioner-Researcher

Responding to new trends in online offending



Agenda

- We will introduce the Stop It Now helpline.
- Use our learning from the helpline to explore new trends in online offending.
 - Increase in sexual communication with children.
 - Use of AI generated sexual images of children.
 - Increase in young people who have got in trouble online
- Practical tips on how to address this behaviour and support people who have offended.
- Examples of what is being done to deter offending.

How it all started

Baroness Lucy Faithfull

The Foundation was the inspiration of Baroness Lucy Faithfull, who dedicated her life to protecting children from harm.

In 1992 she founded The Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

Without her determination and vision our Foundation simply would not have become the force it is in protecting children from sexual abuse.



Stop It Now

Founded in the US by Fran Henry in the early 1990s. She was a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

Campaign raising awareness and actions people can take to prevent child sexual abuse, including changing their own behavior

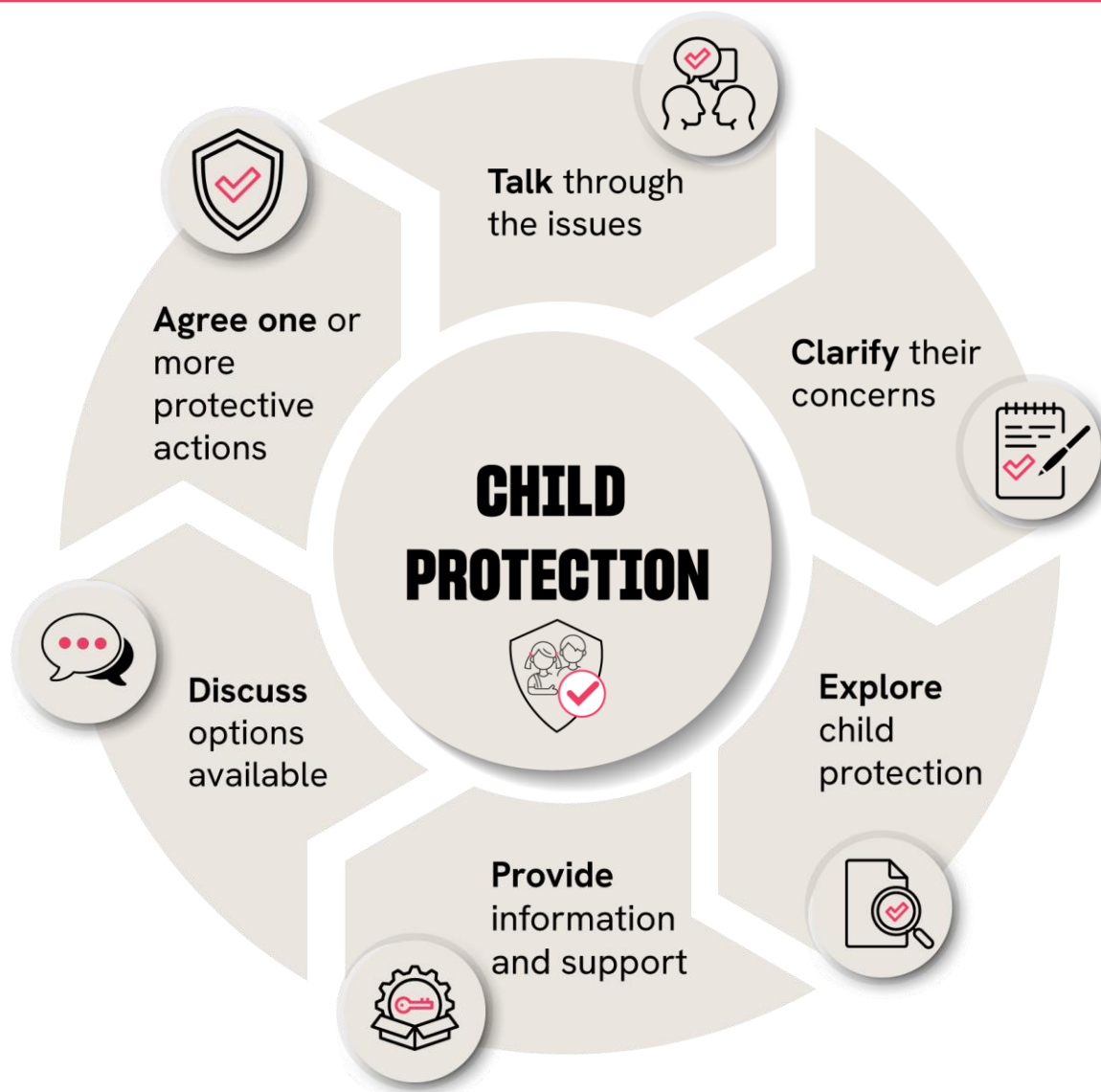
Since then, several other Stop It Now and other similar prevention programmes have launched internationally



Stop It Now

Available for anyone with concerns about child sexual abuse.

Callers do not need to give identifying information, so can remain anonymous.



97%

of callers agreed one or more actions to protect a child - reducing the likelihood of offending or reoffending.

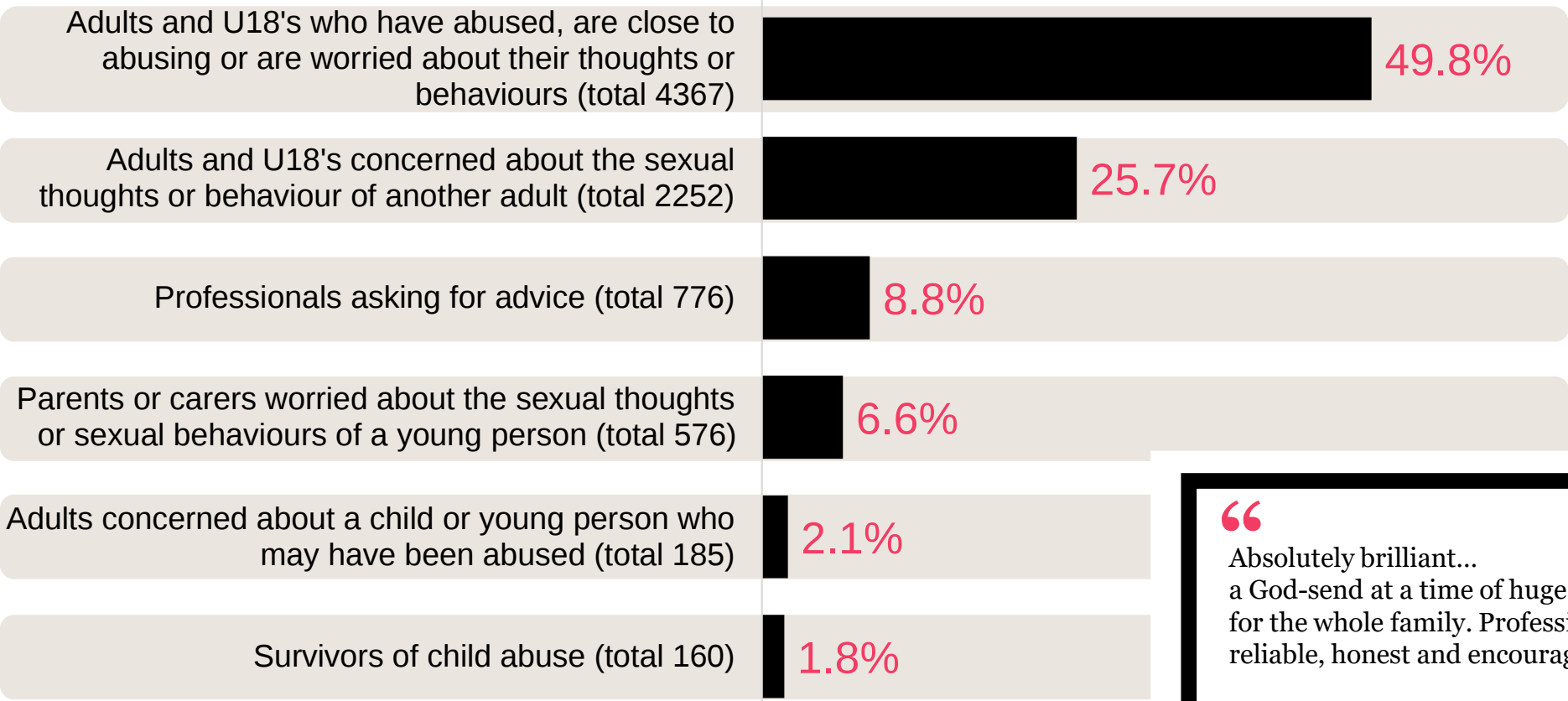
94%

of repeat callers tell us they had taken the actions they had previously agreed.

Clients falling within the target groups

(Financial year 2023/2024)

Stop it now



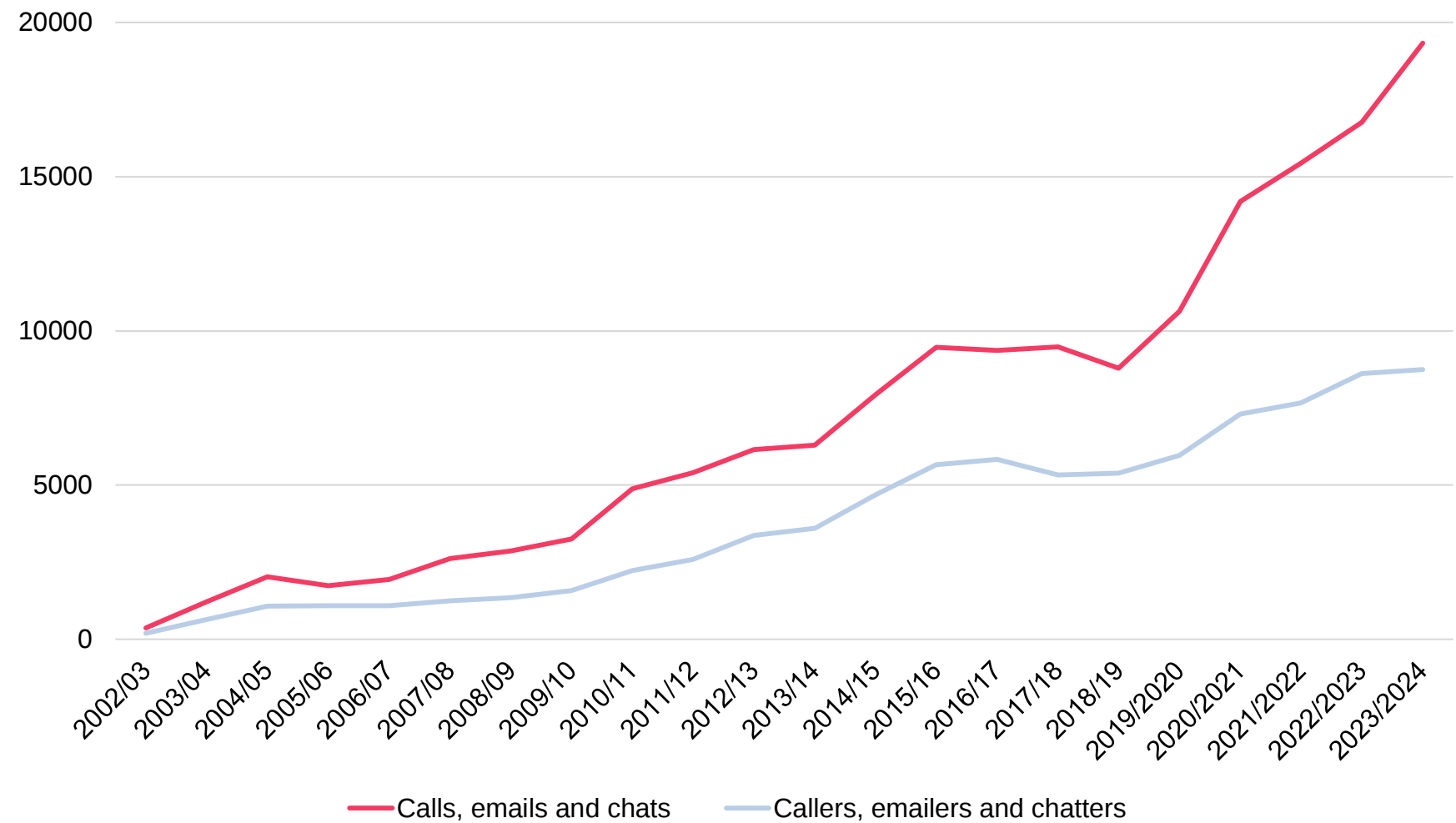
“ Thanks to your amazing team. I am so grateful for the help I have received to date and the more I can become educated the better version of myself I can become. Your time, information and resources are priceless.

” *Adult who had looked at indecent images of children*

“ Absolutely brilliant... a God-send at a time of huge trauma for the whole family. Professional, reliable, honest and encouraging.

” *Parent of a young person who had got into trouble online*

Total calls/emails/ chats and total callers/emailers/chatters



159,403

calls, emails and chats to
the Stop It Now helpline

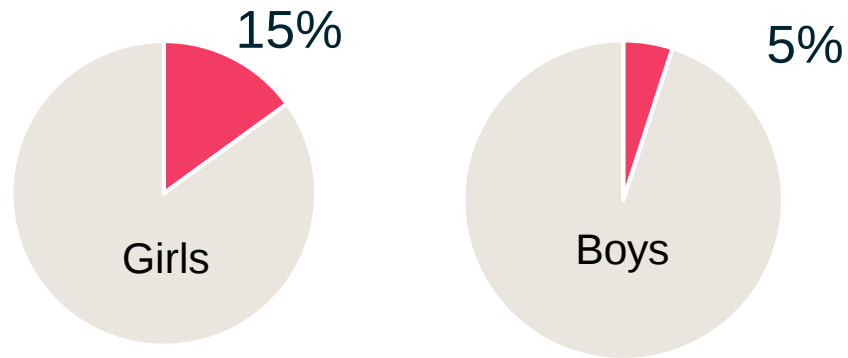
from

79,311

individual people

The scale of the problem

Official numbers are 'the tip of the iceberg'
(Beier et al., 2009)



experience sexual abuse before age 16
(CSA Centre, 2024)

1 in 8 victims (12.5%) come to the attention of
authorities at time of offending (CSA Centre,
2024)



The scale of the problem

107,000 CSAE offences were recorded across England and Wales in 2022.

This is a 7.6% increase from 2021. (NPCC, 2023)

Online offending is increasing (International Justice Mission, 2020)

Detected grooming offences have increased by 70% from 2017/18 to 2020/21 (NSPCC, 2021)

Met Police recorded an increase of 288% of IIOC reports between 2014/15 and 2018/19

500,000 men in the UK are estimated to have viewed IIOC (see Key et al., 2017)

Increasing volumes of online CSA material

100% increase of reports to NCMEC from 2019-2020

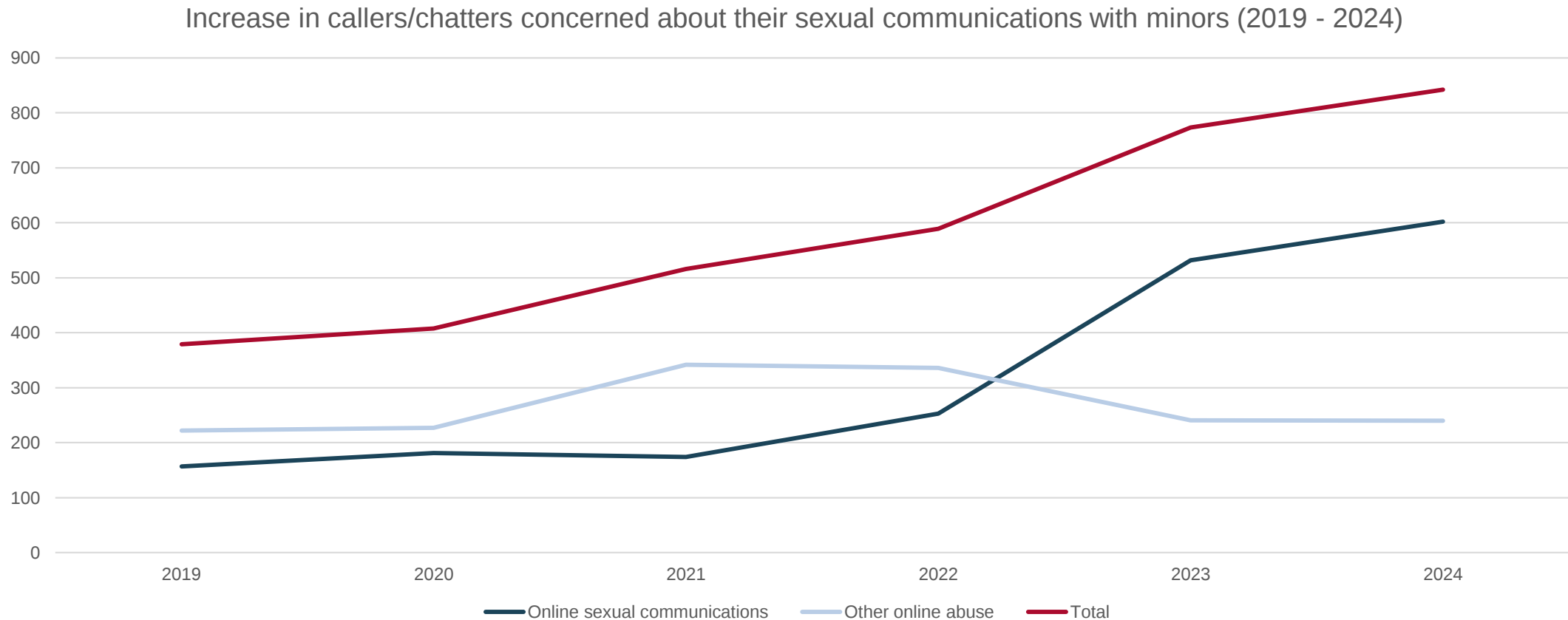
7/10 reports to the IWF involve 'self-generated' material (IWF, 2021) – 168% increase from 2020 to 2021

Changes in technology used

Dark web, gaming, live streaming, artificial intelligence...

Sexual communication

- a [Freedom of Information](#) request with police forces found an 82% increase of grooming crimes over five years (2017/18 - 2022/23).
- Increase in calls related to sexual communication on the helpline over recent years



Sexual communication (Wefers et al., 2024)



Sample:

- 14 male LFF clients
- Mean age = 46 years (30-62)
- 0-3 previous convictions

At time of interview:

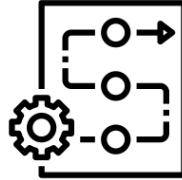
71% in relationship

43% had children

57% employed

57% under investigation;

36% convicted, **7%** charged



Procedure:

Recruited through helpline,
Inform Plus/Engage Plus
programmes

Informed consent

Semi-structured interviews via
Zoom



Analysis:

Thematic Analysis with 'codebook
approach' (Braun & Clarke, 2006;
2020)

Sexual Offending
Theory, Research, and Prevention

PsychOpen^{GOLD}

Research Article

Check for updates

Understanding and Deterring Online Child Grooming: A Qualitative Study

Sarah Wefers¹, Therese Dieseth^{1,2}, Emily George¹, Ida Øverland¹, Jayeta Jolapara¹,
Ciara McAree¹, Donald Findlater¹

[1] The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Epsom, United Kingdom. [2] Policing Institute for the Eastern Region (PIER), Anglia
Ruskin University, Cambridge, United Kingdom.



Sexual communication

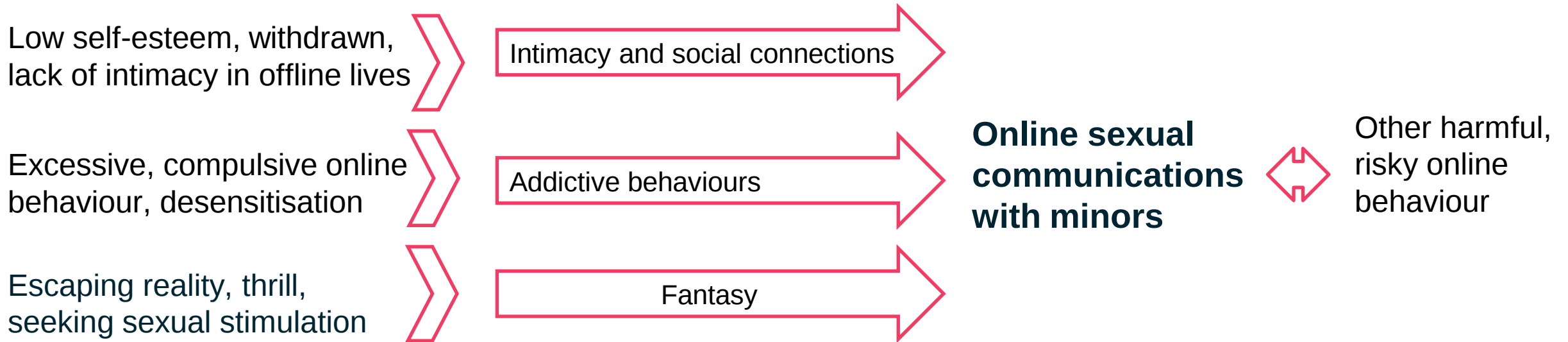
	Social Aspects	Mental health/ Psychological aspects	Justification for offending	Secrecy	Technology
Risk factors	- Relationship and intimacy problems - Risky social interactions	- Negative experiences - Negative self-appraisal - Stressors - Unhealthy coping - Out of control behaviour - Motivations	- Disregarding consequences - Appraisal of behaviour - Disconnection from reality	- Own secrecy - Chat partner's secrecy/identity	- Legal behaviour - Illegal behaviour
Protective factors	- Positive relationships - Social deterrents	- Taking actions for recovery - External support	- Reality as deterrent - Barriers for offending	Reducing anonymity/ secrecy	Avoiding risky online behaviour

Sexual communication

Examined pathways into offending, grooming offending behaviour and approaches to prevent and disrupt online grooming

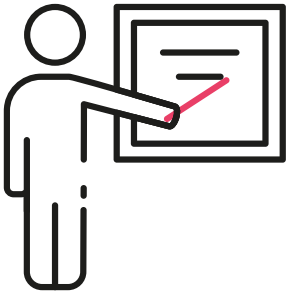
Identified 5 themes related to onset, facilitation and maintenance (risk factors), and deterrence, disruption and prevention (protective factors)

Three possible pathways:

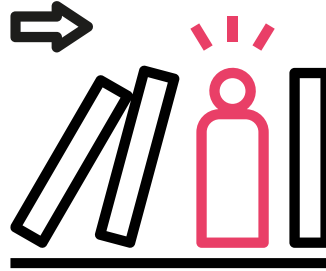


Sexual communication

Prevention, disruption and encouraging desistance through:



Education and raising
of awareness



Situational prevention
and intervention

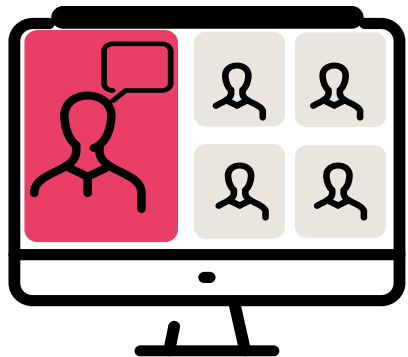


Awareness of
consequences and
moving towards more
positive lifestyle

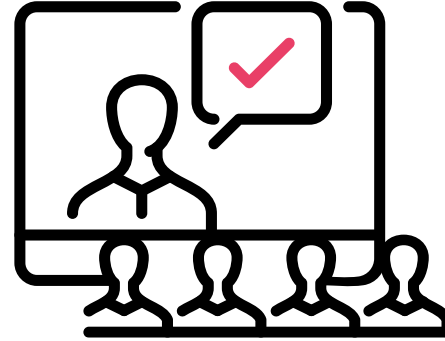
Our response



Spotlight film

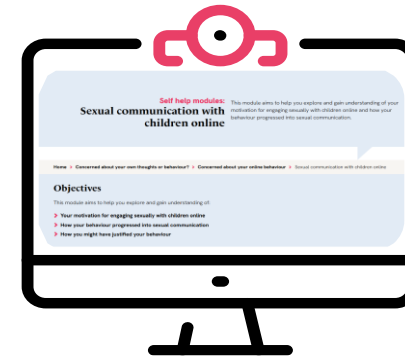


Engage Plus



Training courses for professionals:

- Understanding and preventing online CSA
- Understanding men who sexually abuse children
- Preventing Sexual Harm: assessing risk and decision making in family contexts



Online module

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

“

AI is a programme that has been trained on a set of data to recognise certain patterns or make certain decisions without further human intervention. AI models apply different algorithms to relevant data inputs to achieve the tasks, or output, they have been programmed for.

IBM (2004)

”

Figure 3
A comparison of versions of Midjourney using images generated using the same prompt

Source: Reddit (r/midjourney) / Youtube (Curtis Pyke)



AI-generated images

In 2023, NCMEC's CyberTipline received 4,700 reports related to AI-generated CSAM.

AI-generated naked child images shock Spanish town of Almendralejo

24 September 2023



Maria Blanco Rayo's daughter was one of the girls affected

“

If you have a son you worry he might have done something like this; if you have a daughter, you're even more worried, because it's an act of violence.”

Gemma Lorenzo
Almendralejo resident

Paedophiles create nude AI images of children to extort from them, says charity

Internet Watch Foundation has found a manual on dark web encouraging criminals to use software tools that remove clothing



According to the IWF, criminals are advising each other on how to use artificial intelligence to create images that can be used to extort pictures from children. Photograph: Elise Amendola/AP

Paedophiles are being urged to use artificial intelligence to create nude images of children to extort more extreme material from them, according to a child abuse charity.

The **Internet** Watch Foundation (IWF) said a manual found on the dark web contained a section encouraging criminals to use “nudifying” tools to remove clothing from underwear shots sent by a child. The manipulated image could then be used against the child to blackmail them into sending more graphic content, the IWF said.

AI-generated images



October 2023

How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse imagery

Prompt: from fantasy to photo-realistic reality

PUBLIC VERSION

AI models that are trained to create realistic AI images of CSA are used and updated on dark web forums.

Users of such models use images of famous children or children they know as enough images are available to train the AI model.

The 'best' AI images look like real CSAM.

Snapshot investigation of one dark web forum over a one month period (September 2023)

- 20,254 AI-generated images posted during that month
- 11,108 selected for analysis as most likely containing criminal content
- 27% of those (2,978 images) were assessed as illegal material
 - 56% were Category C
 - 54% showed children age 7-10
 - 99.6% showed girls

What does the law say?

Pseudo-photographs, defined in Section 7(7) of the Protection of Children Act 1978

“Pseudo-photograph” means an image, whether made by computer-graphics or otherwise howsoever, which appears to be a photograph.

(8) If the impression conveyed by a pseudo-photograph is that the person shown is a child



V5.1
Released
May 2023

What are the risks?

The Virtual Global Taskforce recognises that the 'technological tipping point' has been reached in the fight against CSA.

E2EE and AI make law enforcement response increasingly complex.

The use of AI-generated CSAM harms real children as its existence puts strain on law enforcement resources and impedes on identification of real child victims (NCMEC, 2024).

<https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/technological-tipping-point-reached-in-fight-against-child-sexual-abuse>

<https://www.missingkids.org/blog/2024/generative-ai-csam-is-csam>



Numbers from our helpline

November 2023-November 2024 (1 year of data collection):

6,230 overall contacts (callers and chatters)

82 (1.3%) reported use of
AI-generated images

Of those, the largest group
(n=40; 48.8%) were
adults who were concerned about
their use of indecent images of
children

**For 25 of the 82
(30.5%)** contacts who
mentioned AI images, the
offending behaviour was not
known to authorities.

Case study

Peter, 27

Unemployed and living with parents. Arrested and charged for pseudo-images of children and sexual communication with a minor.

Has been struggling with depression for over 10 years. Has a poor relationship with dad. Mum suffers from serious health problems; Peter is her carer.

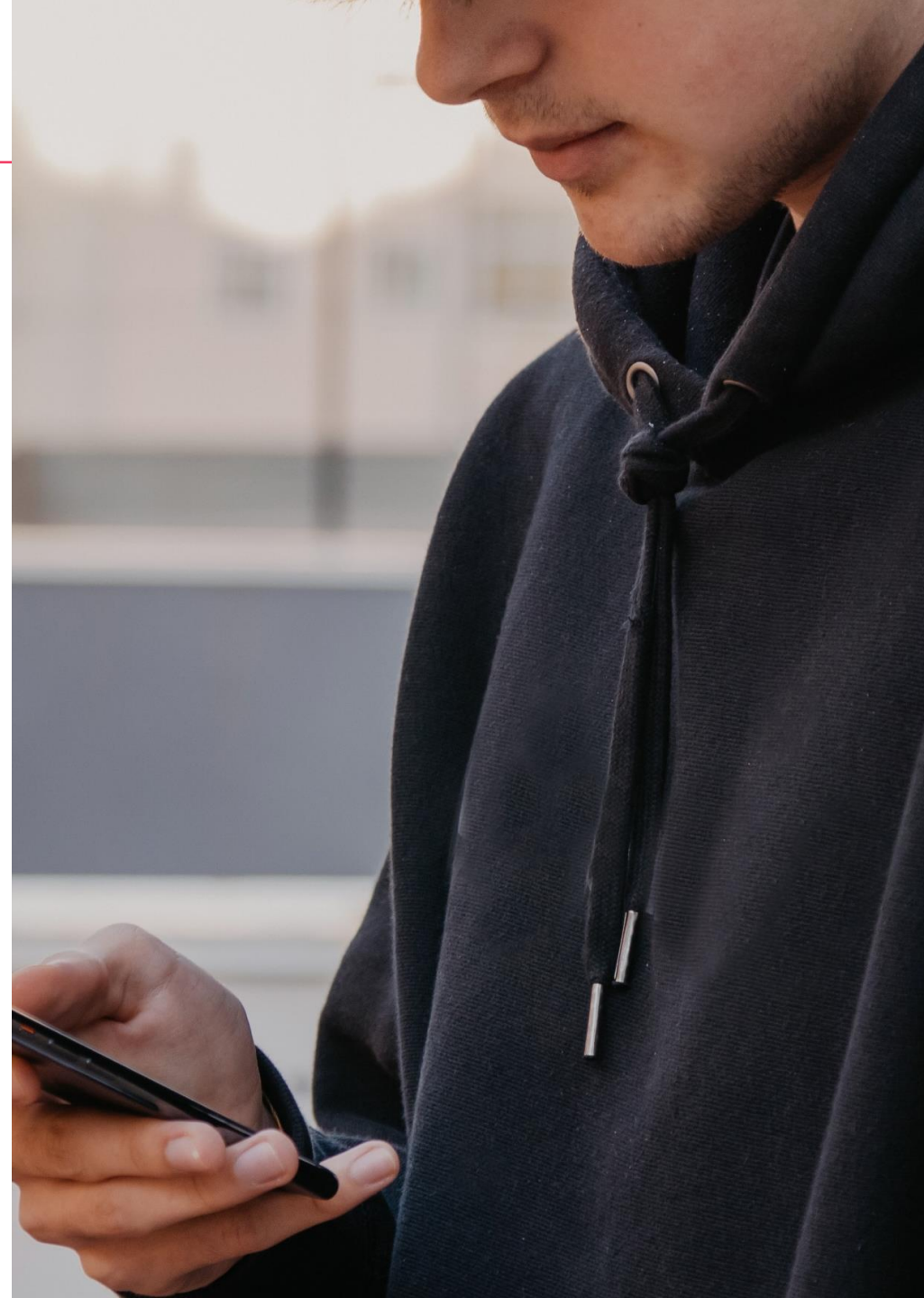
His own pornography use escalated over several years, fuelled by use of marijuana and his 'addictive personality'.

Created 3D images. Was paid for some images. He offered his 'services' on a website. Some but not all images were based on pictures of real children. He said there was 'no limit' to what he

created with some images being 'extreme', including bestiality. He spoke to people who he thinks seriously considered harming children and that him creating the images fuelled their urges.

Played videogames and shared images via Discord. Created and shared images to help cope with loneliness; enjoyed the attention he received. Found the images he created sexually arousing first but over time this decreased and eventually couldn't get erection.

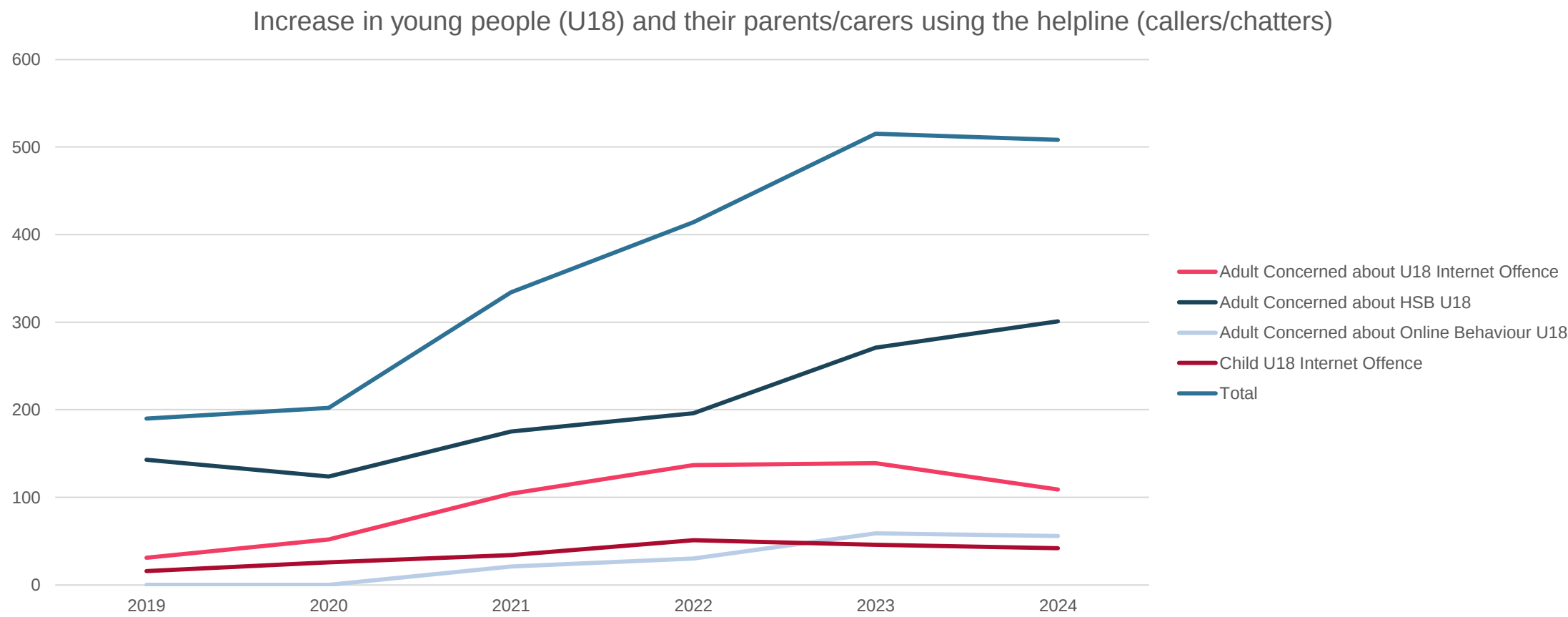
Considered images 'art' but Get Help modules helped him understand that they were 'crossing a line'.



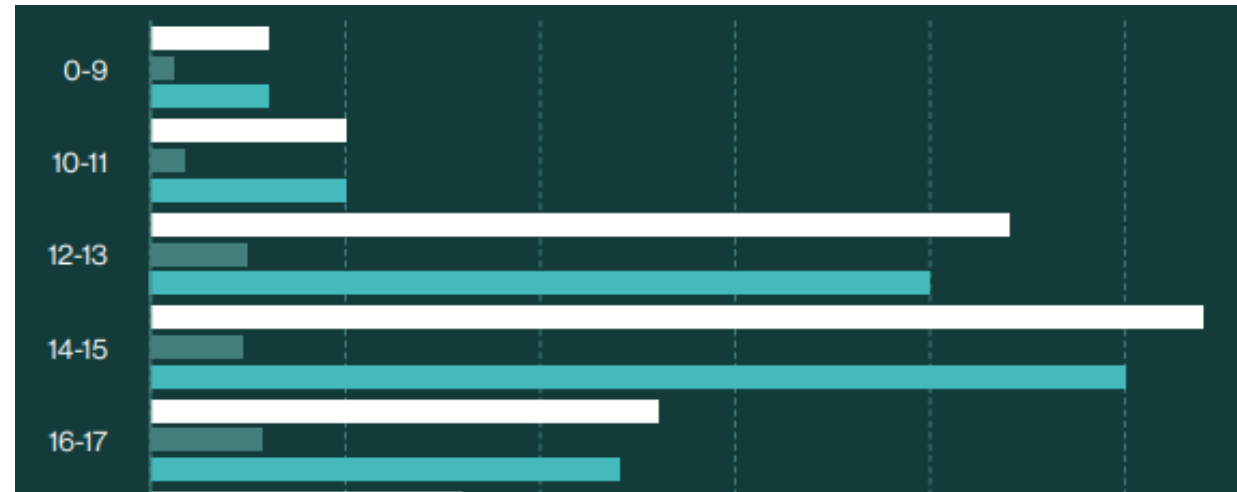
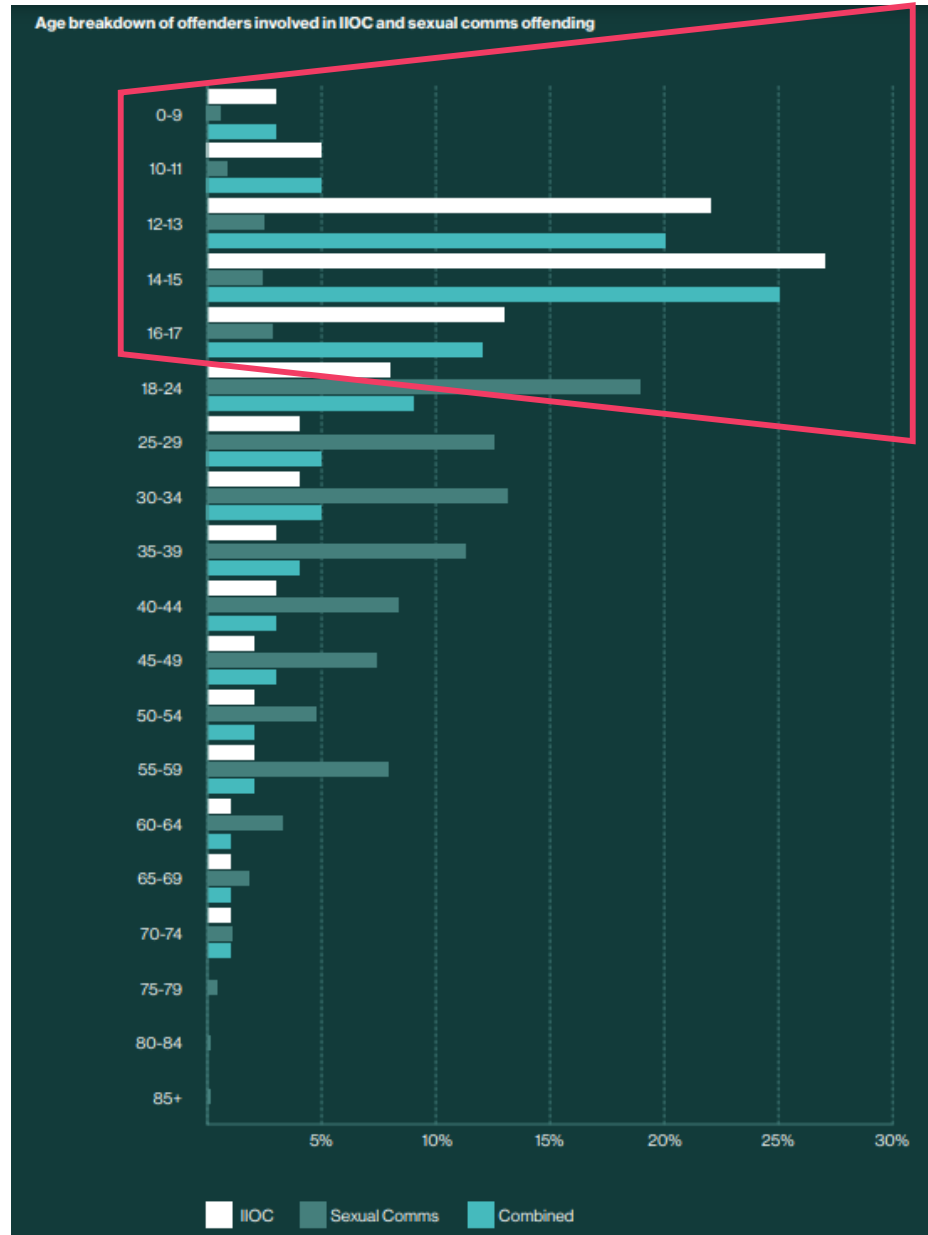
Young people getting into trouble

Helpline numbers

Over the past 10 years we have seen an increase of 24% in parents calling us concerned that a child is displaying harmful sexual behaviour.



Young people getting into trouble



National Analysis of police recorded CSAE offences in England and Wales in 2022 (National Police Chiefs' Council):

Young people up to the **age of 17** account for **64%** of recorded online CSAE offences.

The most common age of those who came to the attention of authorities for online CSAE was **14**.

Case study

George

A teacher working at a Special Educational Needs school, contacted with concerns about a student.

Student age 17 has learning difficulties and diagnosed autism.

Student took photo of another child in changing room during swimming lessons and shared the image. He exposed himself via Facetime to another student and sent indecent images of himself.

Student also photographed teachers and used an AI generator to manipulate the images to become sexually explicit.

Police has been involved and decided to take NFA. School has put measures in place (1:1 support with teaching assistant).

Advice:

Create a school safety plan* and call with the schools project manager

Educative work with George.

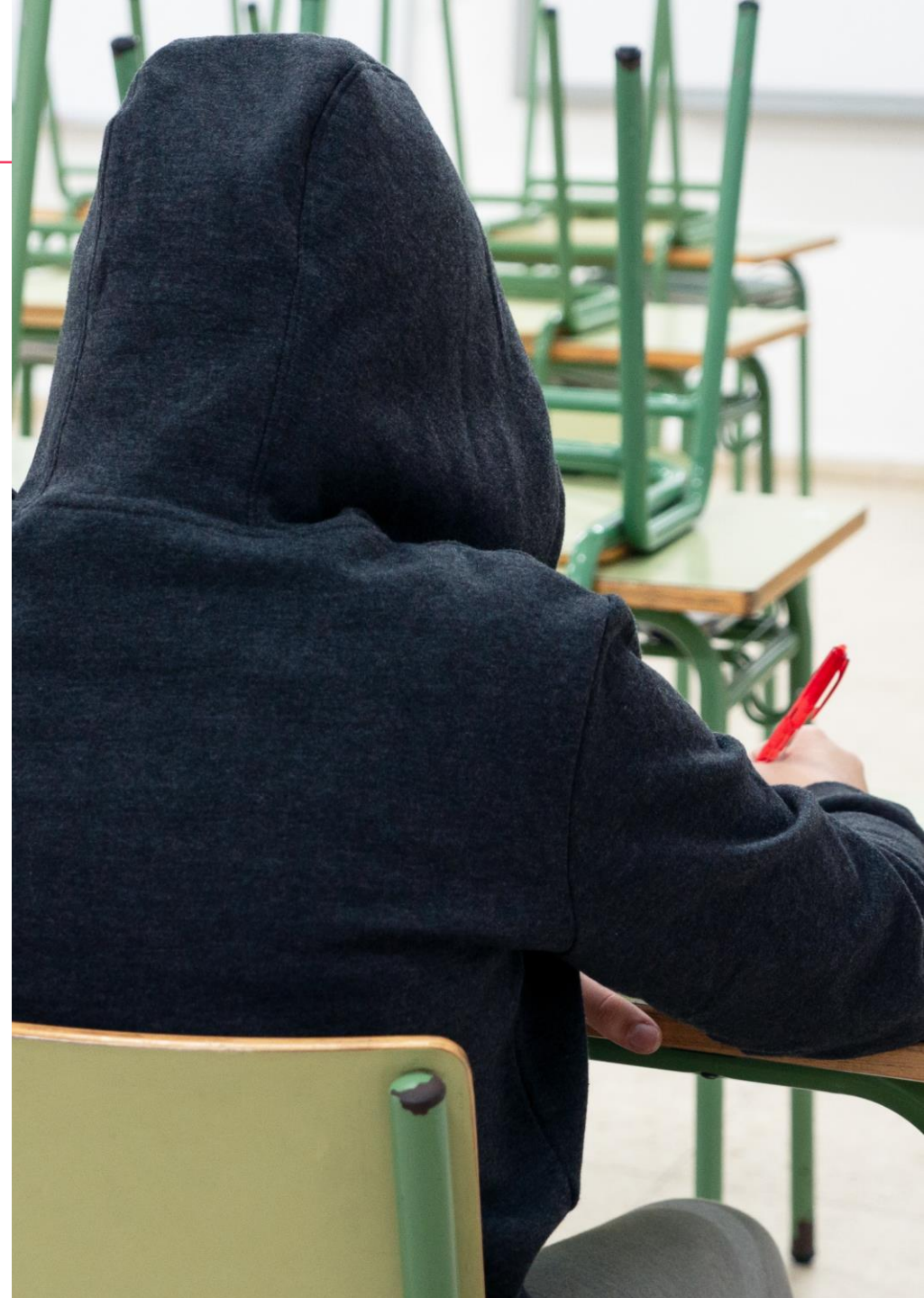
Shore for George and The Mix for all students.

Feedback:

George said the initial signposting was excellent and the school and student have sufficient support now.

*

<https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/advice/creating-safer-places/help-for-schools/>





www.shorespace.org.uk

A safe space for teenagers worried about sexual behaviours

Between July 2023 and July 2024:

- 122,274 global views of the site
- 35,125 individual users
- 337 contacts
- 173 individuals

*210 through the chat service and 127 through the email service

Where known,
72% had not told a
professional about
the behaviour they
were concerned
about

Deterrence Campaign



October 2015 – April 2016

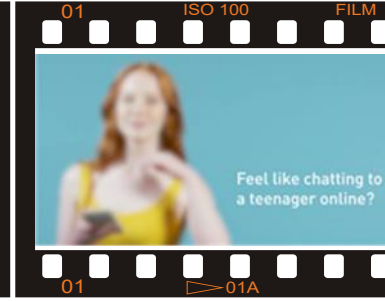
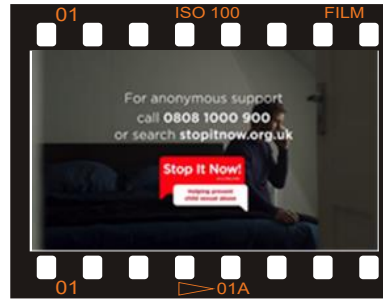
Short films developed and viewed

2.3+ million times

92 media articles.

8,800 people visited the website
in 6 months

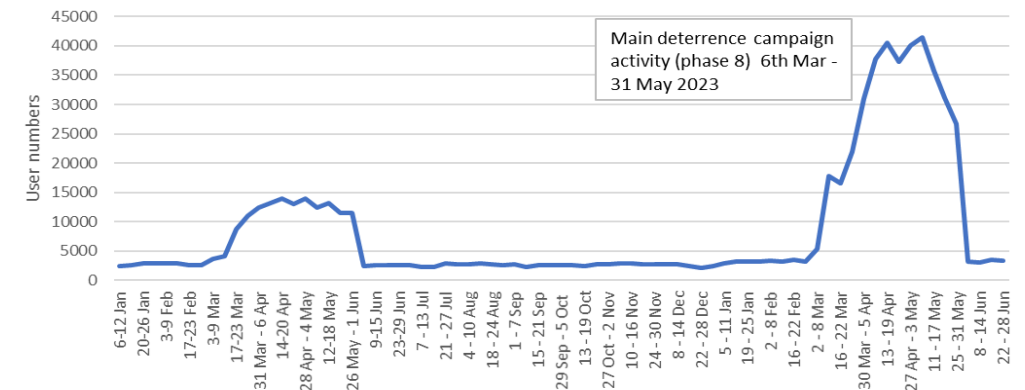
Calls **increased by 25%.**



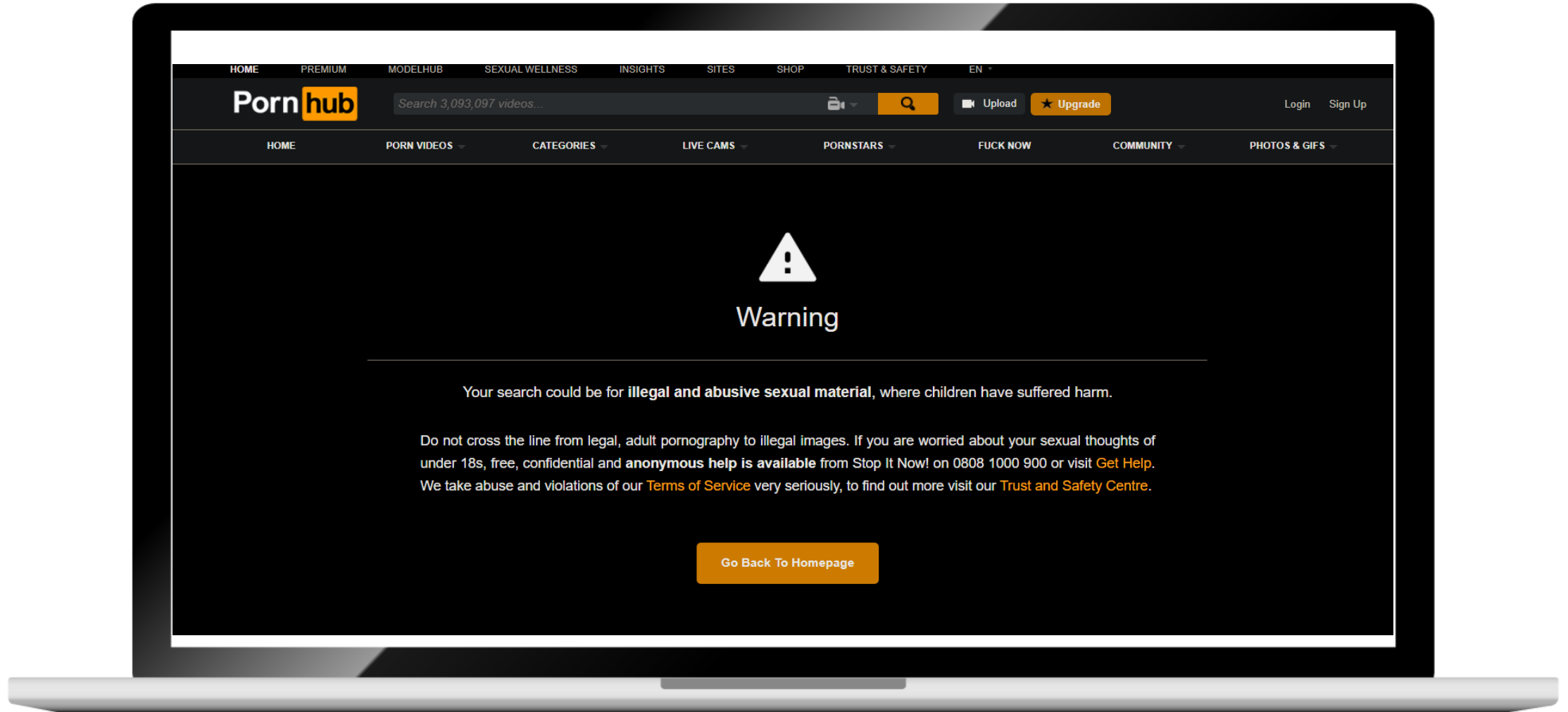
- At least one positive change in their attitudes or behaviour
- Increased awareness of the personal and legal consequences.
- More helpline callers reported ceasing IIOC completely.
- Online only respondents reduced IIOC use

*In addition to high levels of reported behaviour change, half of the IIOC offenders felt they still had more to do.

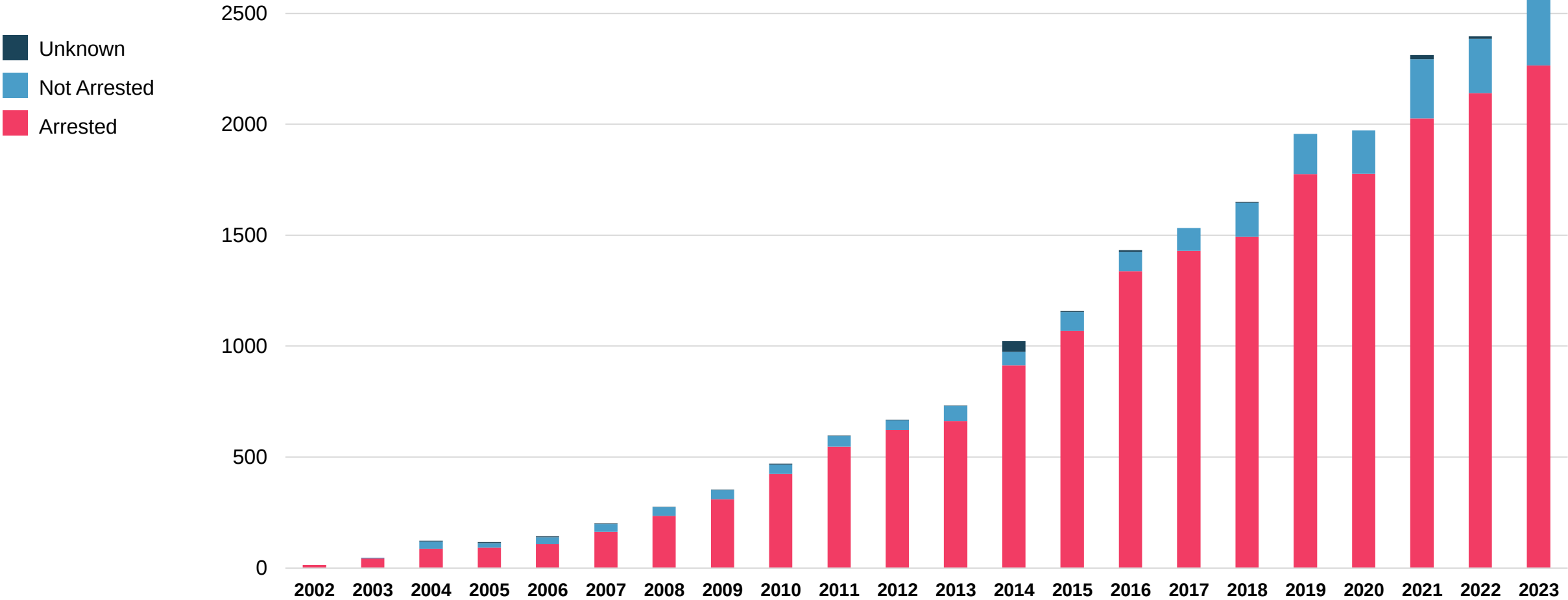
Graph 16: UK Get Help users 2022/23



Aylo warning page



Callers/chatters from individuals concerned about their online behaviour



Online information and support

stopitnow.org.uk

The site for our helpline, live chat and online self-help resources

Self-help

- **Get Help**

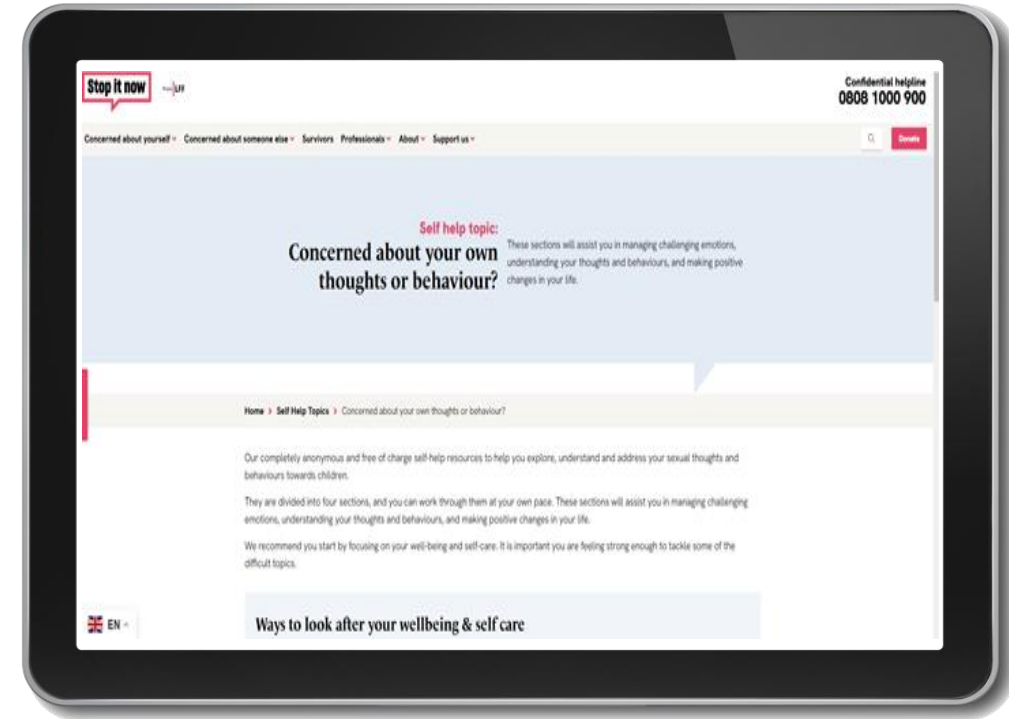
Self-help for people worried about their own online sexual behaviour towards children.

- **Get Support**

Self-help for people worried about their own sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children.

Family and friends section

Including information, support and advice;
Family and Friends Forum: Peer support for people affected by a loved one's online sexual offending against children.



Online information and support

Stop it now

From LFF

Confidential helpline
0808 1000 900

Concerned about yourself ▼ Concerned about someone else ▼ Survivors Professionals ▼ About ▼ Support us ▼

Q

Donate

Self help topic:

Concerned about your own thoughts or behaviour?

These sections will assist you in managing challenging emotions, understanding your thoughts and behaviours, and making positive changes in your life.

Ways to look after your wellbeing & self care

Self-help, information and support to help you look after yourself, motivate and manage change as well as help you have a better understanding of you feelings and emotions and how to deal with them.

Read more

Choose one of the modules below based on your circumstances. Get help is specific to online behaviour whereas Get support is specific to thoughts and behaviour. These can be difficult to work though and we advise that you go back to the section relating to wellbeing at any point.

Are you worried about your online behaviour?

Self-help, information and support to stop the viewing sexual images of children or having sexual conversations with children online.

Get help

Are you worried about inappropriate thoughts or behaviour?

Self-help, information and support for people troubled by their sexual thoughts about children and young people. Help to cope with unwanted feelings and manage problematic behaviour.

Get support

Information and support to encourage you to move forward positively

Self-help, information and support to help you continue moving forward, disclose your offending and build a fulfilling and positive life.

Read more

The picture can't be displayed.

Get Help modules

Self help modules:
Sexual communication with children online

This module aims to help you explore and gain understanding of your motivation for engaging sexually with children online and how your behaviour progressed into sexual communication.

[Home](#) > [Concerned about your own thoughts or behaviour?](#) > [Concerned about your online behaviour](#) > [Sexual communication with children online](#)

Module chapters

Sexual communication with children online Sexual communication with a child is often referred to as online grooming.	☒
The different groups Some people tell us that their interaction with children was not only motivated by sex.	☐
Different stages In order to understand more about how to avoid situations which may lead to you communicating sexually with a child in the future	☐
The cycle of online grooming Some people find it more helpful to think of their behaviour as following a repeated pattern rather than, for example, the stages set out above	☐
The child's perspective Many people do not believe they are harming children when they communicate with them sexually on the internet.	☐
Reflection: sexual communication with children online Understanding more about your behaviour online can help you to consider what changes you need to make to stop the behaviour and move forward positively	☐

Get Help callbacks

Interviews with users of Get Help and Get Help callbacks (N=8)

Provided feedback on the self-help programme and accompanying calls

Difficult feelings working through some modules (Images are Children); some difficulties navigating the website; but high perceived effectiveness in stopping/continuing desistance; callbacks provided accountability

Access the article by scanning the QR code
<https://doi.org/10.5964/sotrap.11159>



Acceptability of a Self-Help Programme to Address the Use of Indecent Images of Children

Sarah Wefers^{1,2}, Alexandra Bailey^{1,3}, Nadia Rasooli¹, Donald Findlater¹, Lucy Allen¹

[1] Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Epsom, United Kingdom. [2] College of Biomedical and Life Sciences, School of Medicine, Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom. [3] School of Psychology, University of Roehampton, London, United Kingdom.

Sexual Offending: Theory, Research, and Prevention, 2024, Vol. 19, Article e11159,
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Corresponding Author: Sarah Wefers, Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Nightingale House, 46-48 East Street, Epsom, KT17 1HQ, United Kingdom. E-mail: swefers@lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Abstract

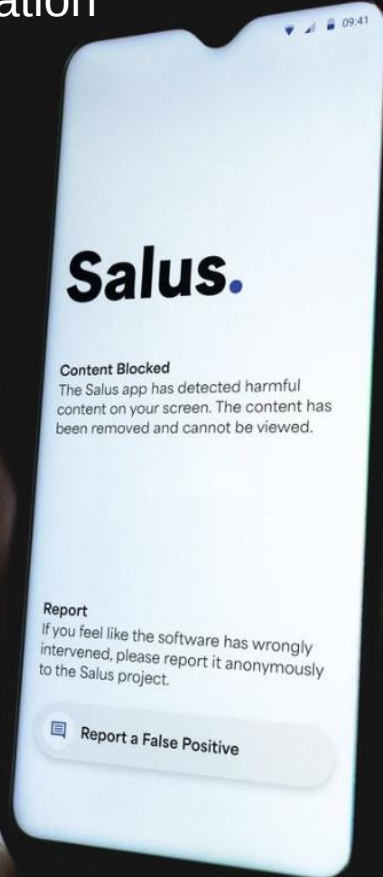
The use of indecent images of children (IIOC) is of continued concern and growing prevalence. A multi-agency approach to this online crime is necessary, as it cannot be eradicated by law enforcement alone. Previous research has examined the pathways to offending for this population, and prevention strategies that could be used to deter offending in the first instance, or to stop behaviour once it has begun. The current qualitative study aimed to explore acceptability of a prevention initiative; a self-help focussed service (a website and calls with a professional). Semi-structured interviews with eight individuals who had accessed IIOC and engaged in this self-help focussed service were conducted. Transcripts were analysed using qualitative framework approach, using the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (TFA) domains as deductive codes. All seven domains of the TFA were identified in the transcripts, indicating the applicability of the framework. Overall, participants reported mixed acceptability of and satisfaction with the self-help programme and calls with practitioners, but high perceived effectiveness in the service supporting them stop their illegal behaviours. The implications of the study are considered in line with improvements that could be made to this existing self-help prevention initiative.

Keywords

prevention, self-help, indecent images of children, child sexual abuse material, evaluation, acceptability

Security features:

- No location tracing
- Data encryption
- No sharing of data
- Secure server location



32 Active app users in 3 countries

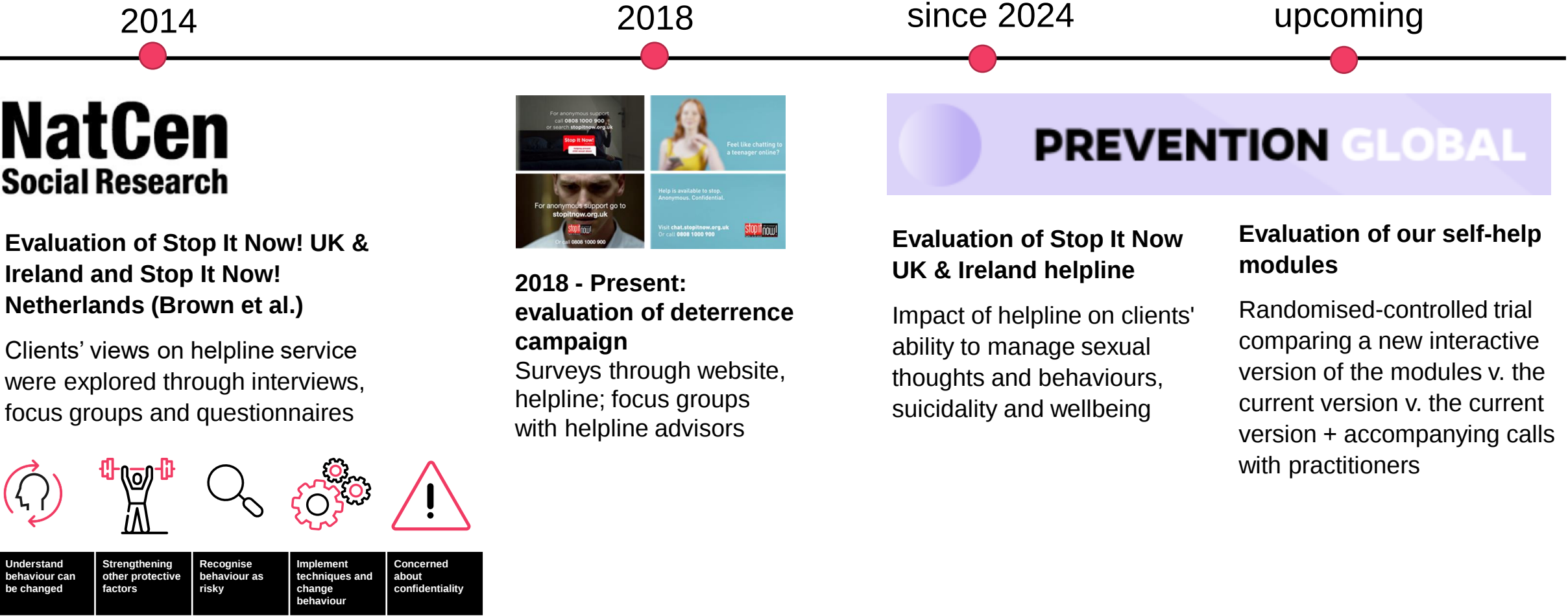
Salus.

- Voluntarily installed on device.
- Monitors internet-based traffic in real-time.
- If content (CSAM and pornography) is detected, delivers a 'block' screen within the individual's browser.



Funded by
the European Union

Evaluation of the helpline



Faithfull Papers

Our Faithfull Papers are a series of reports showcasing our understanding of what works to protect children to the widest possible audience. By sharing insights and opportunities, we can achieve the best possible outcomes for children.

<https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/research/>

**LUCY
FAITHFULL
FOUNDATION**

The Faithfull Papers

**Trends and insights from a
unique helpline preventing
child sexual abuse**

To keep updated, sign up for the newsletter:

<https://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/sign-up/>

Questions?

Anonymous and confidential support
to stop child sexual abuse

0808 1000 900

www.stopitnow.org.uk

vyoung@lucyfaithfull.org.uk

swefers@lucyfaithfull.org.uk



From **LFF**

Online training events 2025

***What's Porn Got To Do With It?**

Webinar, 4 March

***Safer Recruitment in Education**

19/20 March, via Teams

***Preventing Sexual Harm: assessing risk and decision-making in family contexts**

15/18 April, 10am-1pm, via Teams

***Understanding Men who Sexually Abuse Children**

6/7 May, 10am – 1pm via Teams

***Working with children who display harmful sexual behaviour (12 years and under)**

7/8 May, 7/8 August, 10am – 1pm via Teams

***Understanding and assessing the protective carer in the context of child sexual abuse**

21/22 May, 12/13 November, 10am – 1pm via Teams

***Child Sexual Abuse Awareness**

29/30 May, 10am-1pm, via Teams

***Understanding and Preventing Online Child Sexual Abuse**

4/5 June, 10am – 1pm via Teams

***Promoting positive pathways for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour (13 years+)**

17/18 June, 10am – 1pm via Teams

***Promoting positive pathways for autistic children who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour**

17/18 June, 10am – 1pm via Teams

Cost:

£190.00 plus VAT
per Person

To request a booking form and secure your place, please email

training@lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Or call 01527 406170