

# How big is the problem?

**THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM IS HUGE**

**An estimated 100,000 people in the UK are routinely downloading sexual images of under 18s**

According to Chief Constable Simon Bailey, Child Protection Lead for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

## OK, so what do we all need to know?

**What we need to know depends on who we are and what we're worried about. But we all need to be clear that sexual images of anyone under 18 are illegal.**

So, whatever the situation, call the Stop it Now! Helpline for advice, information and support. Staffed by experienced and trained operators, the helpline offers a confidential service to people with concerns about sexual images and possible child sexual abuse.

**Contact details for the Helpline and other useful resources are listed on the back.**

**For anonymous advice and support visit**  
**[www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk)**

or FREEPHONE the Stop it Now! Helpline on  
**0808 1000 900**

**Calls to our experienced advisers are confidential - you don't need to give your name or contact details to access help and support.**

# What we all need to know about sexual images of under 18s

## Helpful Resources

**[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)**

An internet portal which aims to direct parents and carers to credible information on how to keep children safe online.

**[www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers)**

The UK Safer Internet Centre's tools to help parents keep their children safe online. These include: advice on how to talk about online safety with children, safety tools on social media and other online platforms and a parents' guide to technology.

**NSPCC Video**

A short NSPCC video for children on how they can stay safe online – "I saw your willy": Search for 'NSPCC I saw your willy'.

This leaflet has been produced by child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group. The Foundation runs the Stop it Now! campaign and Helpline.

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## What parents need to know

**It may come as a shock to realise that many of those who view sexual images of children are children and young people themselves.**

This is mostly done through youth produced sexual imagery – also known as “sexting” - using mobile technology and devices to share sexual images or videos. While today’s online “share all” culture has some benefits, it can also create a risky environment in which teenagers and young people make decisions without thinking through the consequences. These consequences can be severe, with potentially serious implications for a child’s future that they need our help to think about.

Of course, some young people know they are behaving badly - for example, bullying others into sending sexual images of themselves. They, too, need our help to consider the consequences and behave differently.

It is also possible that your child may have been pressured or coerced into doing what they did. If this is the case they’ll need help in learning how to respond to peer pressure - or if the other party was an older person, safeguarding measures may need to be taken. You can contact us to talk through the situation.

## What family and friends need to know

**Are you concerned that someone close to you – a partner, friend or family member – might be looking at sexual images of under 18s online?**

Whatever your situation, you need to know that the behaviour of the person you love or care about is illegal. It also creates victims – real children are harmed to produce these images.

There are a number of reasons why people choose to view sexual images of children. Some have a pornography habit that has got out of control. Others have an established sexual interest in children. Whatever the reason, those who commit these offences need help to address their behaviour and to stop. And if you are close to such a person, you may also need help, practical advice and support to deal with serious questions like what this means for your relationship with them.

## What those who engage in this behaviour need to know

**Are you someone who has found yourself looking at online sexual images of under 18s?**

If so, you may be struggling to understand why and how you came to behave this way. It may be a result of occasional or even regular sexual thoughts or feelings about children. It may be because of other factors in your life – perhaps something that happened when you were growing up? Many who view such material are struggling with depression and may need medical help. Whatever the reason, it is something that’s extremely difficult to talk about. But such illegal, destructive behaviour needs to stop. And talking about it really helps. It’s what we’re here for. We can help you begin to understand your behaviour and make changes for the better.

## What should I do now?

**If you are affected by any of the issues outlined in this leaflet, the first thing you should do is to call the Stop it Now! Helpline on 0808 1000 900**

**Visit our Get Help website**

**[www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.get-help.stopitnow.org.uk)** It holds a wide range of information and advice for those viewing illegal images online as well as for their family and friends. If you have concerns about your online behaviour, there are exercises and resources to help you understand your behaviour and what triggers it. There is also advice on how to manage your behaviour and keep your viewing legal in the future.

**You can also call our Helpline** **Regardless of whether it’s you, a child you know or someone else who has been looking at online sexual images of under 18s**, it’s likely that you will have a lot of questions. Getting answers to those questions is crucial to making necessary changes. You may feel there is no one you can talk to about such difficult things. But that’s what we’re here for. You can pick up the phone and call the Stop it Now! Helpline to get the non-judgmental advice and support you need. Calling the helpline is free and confidential. You will not have to give any identifying information such as family name or address.

**If you are a parent you can visit our Parents Protect website to download resources.** These contain practical advice on easy steps you can take to keep your child safe, both online and offline. [www.parentsprotect.co.uk/resources](http://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/resources). It also contains “*What’s the problem?*”, a booklet designed specifically for parents whose children have got into trouble online.

**Contact details for the Helpline and other useful resources are listed on the back.**

