

Your first steps to getting the
right support and advice

If your child
is being
investigated
for getting into
trouble online

We can
support
you

Get anonymous help
0808 1000 900
stopitnow.org.uk/helpline

Stop It Now!

UK & IRELAND

Helping prevent
child sexual abuse

First reactions

You will have been given this leaflet because your child is being investigated for engaging in harmful sexual behaviour online. For most parents and carers, this is a confusing time as they might feel angry and upset but will also love their child and want to support them, and be worried about their child's welfare and be confused about what to do.

How we can support you

We are a leading UK charity that offers support and guidance to anyone concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children. Our anonymous Stop It Now! helpline supports thousands of people each year and we can give you non-judgemental advice and information to make sense of what's going on.

We can help you talk through your worries, explore your situation and support you and your family through this difficult time. The experienced advisors on our helpline have a range of backgrounds including social and health care, counselling and psychology and they can give you confidential and non-judgemental advice and support.

You do not have to give any identifying information such as your real name, address or telephone number. If you're not ready to speak to someone just yet, you can use our confidential live chat or send us a secure email.

Our website also has advice and support and information. Visit stopitnow.org.uk/helpYP for more information or to get in touch.

“ A massive thank you to all on the helpline. You are such an amazing support and have been a lifeline for me during such a tough time. ”

It is really important that you take care of your own physical and mental health. It is normal to experience low mood at this time, feel alone or overwhelmed. It's important that you don't deal with this alone and that you reach out to friends and family. Everyone's situation is different, but our helpline can give you an opportunity to talk through your thoughts and feelings. Talking to someone can help you to make calm and considered decisions, whatever they are.

You can also speak to your GP for support. There are tips on looking after yourself on the NHS website and links to support: nhs.uk/mental-health

How we can help your child

An investigation into a young person's sexual behaviour can be incredibly embarrassing and distressing for them. The police and children's services might set conditions that limit attending school, seeing friends and taking part in hobbies. It can make them feel very isolated. It is important that they know you are there to support them and that there is a positive future for them.

Our helpline can put you and your child in touch with our dedicated team for young people. They will give you information, advice and support to deal with the immediate situation, aimed at reducing distress and anxiety. They can also give practical advice on how to use technology safely, information about the law and help you find ways to speak to your child about what's going on.

Young people in this situation have a higher risk of self-harm and suicide. If your child is anxious, distressed or suicidal as the result of the investigation please get support from your GP or from ChildLine, Kooth, or Papyrus. If your child is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E.

Our Inform Young People programme

Inform Young People is a voluntary course for young people who have got into trouble for harmful or illegal sexual behaviour online. The course helps to:

- develop responsible behaviour
- understand what has happened and why
- improve safety and prevent more harm
- get information about what might happen next and give hope for the future

It can also support family members find the best way to support your child at this distressing time.

“ It is life changing. I never thought that there was any point or reason for my life, the young person's program helped me realise my potential and understand myself a lot, meaning I could become a better person. ”

Call our helpline or visit our website to find out more.

What happens next?

The police might have taken away all of the internet enabled devices in your household. They will investigate these devices to decide if any offences have been committed.

The length of time this takes will vary depending on a range of things, including where you live and how busy the police are, and can sometimes take many months. Be prepared for some uncertainty and worry during this time, but try to continue your life in as normal a way as possible. After the investigation of the devices has been completed, a decision will be made about what happens next. If there is evidence that an offence has been committed the child or young person responsible may be charged. The police will advise them of their rights if this happens.

Should you tell other people?

You might be worried about other people finding out about what has happened. We suggest that you only tell people you can trust and who need to know, like close friends, family members or your children's school. They should be people who can give you and your family support and help.

Get in touch with us now

Talking to one of our advisors will help you get expert advice and support for your individual situation. At times the helpline can be very busy, but please keep trying.

If you're not ready to speak to someone, you can get in touch through our secure email or live chat, or find support and information on our website: stopitnow.org.uk/helpline

Our helpline, live chat and websites are available in other languages.

However you choose to contact us, we can help you cope with this very difficult situation.