Child sexual abuse is preventable.

There are steps we can all take to keep children as safe as possible. This means making sure the places they spend time are safe, giving adults the knowledge and understanding to take action and helping children speak out about sexual abuse.

Together we can break the silence around sexual abuse and stop it before it happens.
Creating safer environments

We can all help to ensure that children are as safe as possible wherever they spend their time.

Taking a place-based approach to preventing child sexual abuse encourages us to think about the places where abuse might happen and think through the potential risks in different locations.

Online
We know that children can be vulnerable to sexual abuse and inappropriate content in the online world. There are tools we can use to keep online spaces safe for children. For parents and carers there are parental controls and for schools and organisations filtering software.

Physical environments
Adults can make sure children are kept safe by checking on areas that are infrequently used or left unsupervised such as quiet corridors or outdoor spaces. We can also make sure everywhere is well lit.

Supervised locations
We must ensure we only allow suitable people to work with children.

At home this could mean ensuring the babysitter has trusted references. Parents and carers can also ask to see a club’s safeguarding policy and procedures.

Schools and other organisations should follow safer recruitment practices and ensure everyone working or volunteering with children has regular child protection training so they know the signs of sexual abuse.
Unsupervised locations
We should also think about the wider context of abuse.

Young people are likely to spend time in environments with little or no adult supervision. They may also be in situations where unhealthy behaviours are seen as the norm.

By promoting healthy relationships we can create positive social norms and challenge unhealthy behaviours. We can also support young people to develop the skills and confidence to identify abusive and controlling relationships and to speak out.

Online safety
We’ve teamed up with O2 to help you keep children safe when they’re using the internet, social networks, apps, games and more.

Online safety advice
Help children speak out

Children need to know what sexual abuse is, that it's never okay, and that it's never their fault.

Our Speak out Stay safe programme visits primary schools to teach children what kinds of behaviour are not okay and who to turn to if they are ever worried. Through sex and relationships education, schools can teach children about healthy relationships and sexual consent. And Childline gives children a confidential place to turn if they are worried that something isn't right.

Adults should know the indicators of abuse and help children to understand that they deserve respect, they can speak out and they will be kept safe.

Let's talk PANTS

Talking PANTS is a simple way that parents can help keep children safe from abuse. Join Pantosaurus and get the conversation started.

Signs, indicators and effects

Find out more about the signs, indicators and effects of child sexual abuse.

Identifying the signs of sexual abuse

Childline
We understand how difficult it is for children to talk about sexual abuse. Whatever their worries are, Childline can be contacted 24/7.

Calls to **0800 1111** are free and confidential. Children can also contact Childline [online](https://www.childline.org.uk).

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**Books on how to keep safe**

Reading a story can help you talk to children and young people about sensitive subjects such as what to do if someone touches you inappropriately or tries to pressure you into something.

It's a good idea to read the book on your own first and come up with some questions about the experiences of the characters and what you would do in the same situation:

- “What did… do to stay safe?”
- “Could… have done anything else?”
- “If this happened to you, who could you tell?”
- “What could you do to keep yourself safe?”

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**Under 5s**

Some parts are not for sharing.

By Julie Le Frederico
Friendly fish and underwater scenes are used to give a simple message about private body parts and safe touch. Encourages children to tell an adult if someone asks or tries to touch them in a "private area".

'I said no!': a kid-to-kid guide to keeping private parts private.
By Zach King and Kimberly King
Explains what private body parts are, good and bad touching, scenarios of what someone may say, what to do if you feel uncomfortable, who trusted adults are and what to do if no one listens or believes you. Includes advice on reading the book with children.

No means no: teaching children about personal boundaries, respect and consent; empowering kids by respecting their choices and their right to say, 'no'.
By Jayneen Sanders
Illustrated storybook for children aged 3-9 years to teach them about personal boundaries and their right to autonomy over their body. Designed to be read by an adult to a child, the book includes ideas for discussion questions related to each scenario described. Aims to empower children to have the confidence to speak up if they are unhappy or feel uncomfortable in any situation.

My body: what I say goes: a book to empower and teach children about personal body safety, feelings, safe and unsafe touch, private parts, secrets and surprises, consent, and respectful relationships.
By Jayneen Sanders
Illustrated children's book to help children learn about personal body safety, private parts, secrets and surprises and the importance of having a safety network. A discussion questions section is included for parents, caregivers and teachers to assist in further conversation. Aimed at 4 to 8 year olds.

This is my body and it belongs to me: an introduction to sexual abuse prevention and response for children ages 3 and up.
By Alisha Hawthorne-Martinez
Helps parents, carers, teachers and practitioners talk to young children about sexual abuse: how to recognise it, how to respond and how to prevent it from happening.

For more books, search our library catalogue.
5-11 year olds

No trespassing: this is my body.
By Pattie Fitzgerald
Older sister Katie and younger brother Kyle learn about personal safety, private parts, and good and bad touches. Includes a guide for parents with prevention tips for recognising possible signs of child abuse.

An exceptional children's guide to touch: teaching social and physical boundaries to kids.
By Hunter Manasco and Katharine Manasco
Illustrated booklet aimed at children with special needs. Six stories explain: friendly touch; accidental touch; hurtful touch; self-touching; what to do if touch feels inappropriate; and, issues surrounding the use of cameras and recording devices. Includes information for adults on keeping children with special needs safe.

It's my body: a book to teach young children how to resist uncomfortable touch
By Lory Freeman
Gives examples of different types of touches to help children to recognise and resist uncomfortable touch. Covers touches that are: nice, acceptable but unwelcome, unpleasant but necessary (for example from doctors) and unacceptable. Stresses a child's right to protect their body.

For more books, search our library catalogue.

12-16 year olds

Child abuse (Issues Today Series, Vol. 28)
By Christina Hughes (ed.)
This textbook-style booklet provides an introduction to the topic.
of child abuse. It discusses what child abuse is, UK statistics, stranger danger, child marriage, peer-to-peer abuse, sexual abuse, internet safety and the child protection system. Includes case studies and a selection of assignments to aid exploration of the ideas, facts and opinions presented in the resource. Quotes information sources including newspaper articles, magazines, government reports and statistics and surveys.

**Banish your self-esteem thief: a cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on building self-esteem for young people**
By Kate Collins-Donnelly
Workbook for children, 10-years and older, to use on their own or with a parent, carer or practitioner. Uses cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness techniques to help children and young people to understand the causes and impact of low self-esteem and to build positive self-esteem.
Includes activities, real-life stories, a self-esteem quiz and information for parents and professionals on how to support children and young people using the book.

**Zipit.**
By Childline
Mobile phone app to help teenagers deal with the pressures of sexting. Includes advice, tips for safe chat and funny images that young people can use to divert sexual conversations that are making them uncomfortable.

**Safe hands: keeping safe: ages 12-16**
By Moira Anderson Foundation and Sandra Brown
Booklet on the importance of being aware of online and mobile phone abuse, of identifying five people they would feel able to talk to about any problem and of thinking about what they would do if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation.

For more books, search our library catalogue.

**Parents and carers**

**Body safety education: a parents' guide to protecting kids from sexual abuse.**
By Jayneen Sanders
Guide for parents and carers on how to protect children from sexual abuse through personal body safety education. Covers: body safety skills; grooming; normal sexual behaviour; signs of...
sexual abuse; responding to disclosures; the effects of online pornography; educating the community; statistics and common questions and concerns. Signposts other resources for keeping children safe from sexual abuse.

This is my body and it belongs to me: an introduction to sexual abuse prevention and response for children ages 3 and up.
By Alisha Hawthorne-Martinez
Helps parents, carers, teachers and practitioners talk to young children about sexual abuse: how to recognise it, how to respond and how to prevent it from happening.

Reena's Bollywood dream: a story about sexual abuse.
By Jewel Kats
Illustrated children's book aiming to help children learn how to say 'no' and protect themselves from sexual abuse. Provides a message to children and their families about setting healthy boundaries in relation to their bodies. The story follows Reena an 8-year-old girl with dreams of becoming a Bollywood star, which makes her vulnerable to the inappropriate attentions of a family member. Shows how Reena protects herself and how her family believe and support her. Fosters awareness for children and families regarding sexual abuse in families within the South Asian community. Suitable for primary school children.

For more books, search our library catalogue.
with difficult emotions. The activities can be adapted to be used with a variety of age groups. Includes photocopiable appendicies.

**Stay OK.**
By Barnardo's
A short animated film on DVD aimed at pre-school and primary school children to raise awareness and develop safety strategies to help children keep their bodies safe and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. The film was developed and produced with the help of children at Barnardo's Polepark Family Service in Dundee, some who themselves have survived sexual abuse.

**Developing personal safety skills in children with disabilities.**
By Freda Briggs
A guide for teaching safety skills to children with disabilities. Presents 6 modules with exercises for developing safety skills, covering: self-esteem and assertiveness skills; coping with hazards; touch; and emotions. Includes suggestions for developing a personal safety curriculum for children with disabilities.

**Autism and appropriate touch: a photocopiable resource for helping children and teens on the autism spectrum understand the complexities of physical interaction.**
By Abigail Werner James
Practical resource to help professionals and parents teach children and young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) about the social rules of touch and personal space. Explores different types of touch and what is appropriate in different settings. Uses photocopiable worksheets and activities to help teach young people with ASD about keeping safe and to help them understand the social rules around physical contact.

For more books, search our library catalogue.

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**How services are working to prevent sexual abuse**

It’s essential that we understand what works to help prevent child sexual abuse.

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To make sure the services we offer are effective and cost-efficient, we've developed them based on evidence and research. We're committed to evaluating and improving our services and we share what we've learnt through our impact and evidence hub.

**Services for children and families**

**Women as Protectors** is a support service we run to help mothers who are in contact with a man who poses a risk of sexual harm to children keep their children safe.

We're evaluating our service and aim to develop a best-practice guide based on the provision of information, advice and support for professionals to use in assessment and intervention work.

**Protect and Respect** supports children and young people who have been, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited.

Through our evaluation of the service we will have evidence about how to develop an effective response to protect young people.

Other partnerships and organisations are working to build the evidence base to prevent child sexual abuse.

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**Helter Skelter Project**

**Helter Skelter Project** is an outreach service in Cambridgeshire which aims to help young people leave or avoid sexually exploitative relationships.

Findings from an internal evaluation of the project were published in *Children and Young People Now* (Rogers, 2015).

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**Pace Parent Support Workers**

**Pace** Parent Support Workers work with families where children and young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (Pace) published an evaluation of the role and contribution of the Pace Parent Support Worker in four multi-agency child sexual exploitation (CSE) teams in Lancashire (Palmer and Jenkins, 2014).
Parents Protect - Across Communities (PPAC)

Parents Protect - Across Communities (PPAC) is a pilot project to develop child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention strategies within Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) communities.

PPAC was delivered over a 3-year period within a Somali community in London by Stop It Now! UK and Ireland, Praxis Community Projects and the NSPCC (Saint and Almond, 2015).

Overcoming harmful sexual behaviour

Our Turn the Page service helps children and young people overcome feelings that have made them harm another child sexually. We've evaluated Turn the Page, and are drawing on what we've learned to develop practice guidance and training for the professionals delivering the service.

Our National Clinical Assessment and Treatment Service (NCATS) works with young people who have developed harmful sexual behaviour. We run NCATS in partnership with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.

Working with adults who pose a risk to children

One vital area where focus is needed is support to people at risk of committing sexual abuse and people at risk of re-offending to stop them making the decision to offend.

Assessing the Risk, Protecting the Child

Assessing the Risk, Protecting the Child helps courts and children’s services departments make the right decision about who children can live with. Our service helps assess risks to a child from men in their lives where there may have been concerns or past convictions for sexual abuse.

The assessment uses a guide developed by the NSPCC and the Sexual Behaviour
Unit in Newcastle.

We have published 3 reports summarising findings from interviews with service users, the professionals making the referrals, and the NSPCC practitioners delivering the service. Find out more about the evidence, impact and evaluation of Assessing the Risk, Protecting the Child.

Circles of Support and Accountability (Circles)

Circles are where professionally supported volunteers meet with a person who has sexually offended to help them reintegrate into the community.

Circles UK is funded by the Ministry of Justice. There are community projects across England and Wales. Circles UK provide a list of UK research on Circles.

A 3 year research study of Circles by the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University looked at the experience of being involved in a Circle Project. It found volunteers and stakeholders found it a worthwhile exercise. Core Members (people convicted of sexual offences who partake in the Circles) “found it overwhelmingly useful and helpful” (Thomas, Thompson and Karstedt, 2014).

Research is needed to see if Circles reduces reoffending.

Inform Plus

Inform Plus is a treatment programme developed by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation for men convicted of internet-related sexual offences.

An evaluation found Inform Plus was effective in helping participants face the reality of their arrest or conviction and enabling them to develop a more robust understanding of their offending behaviour (Gillespie, Derley, and Squire, 2015).

Stop it Now!

Stop it Now! is a 24-hour helpline providing free information, guidance and support to:
- adults concerned about their own sexual thoughts or feelings towards children
- adults concerned about the behaviour of another adult or child
- families and friends of offenders
- professionals.

It was set up in 2002 by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation.

A research project by NatCen Social Research in 2013 assessed the operation of the Stop it Now! UK and Ireland helpline (Brown, 2014).

Stop it Now! Scotland have developed a Community Engagement and Prevention Toolkit as part of the Upstream Project. The project aims to provide practical information to people and agencies working with groups or individual adults in the community (Manson, 2015).
Child grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Find out more

Work or volunteer with children and families?

Visit NSPCC Learning for information, resources and training to help you safeguard and protect children and young people across the UK.

Go to NSPCC Learning
References


EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR