

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline - Analysis of Contacts 2019/20

The whistleblowing advice line was established in February 2016 to give advice and support to people with concerns that an organisation might be putting children at risk.

In 2019/20 the whistleblowing helpline responded to 390 contacts. 311 of these were classed as child welfare contacts and went on to receive a response from a helpline practitioner. 79 contacts were handled by the Helpline Adviser team and classified as enquiries.

Outcome of Contact	Total
Advice	244
Referral	58
Referral Update	9
Enquiry	79
Total Enquiry and Child Welfare Contacts	390

Of the 311 contacts handled directly by the Helpline service 22% (58) resulted in a referral being made to an external agency these ranged from national agencies such as OFSTED, local authority Children's Services teams, LADOs' or the police. The biggest proportion of contacts (63%) received advice from the service.

Child Welfare Contacts Main Concerns

The table below shows the main child welfare concerns discussed by contacts to the whistleblowing helpline and the outcome of the contact during 2019/20.

Main Concern	Advice	Referral	Referral Update	Total
School/Education problems	53	5	1	59
Services/Support/Legal	41	10	1	52
Sexual Abuse NOT ONLINE	25	9	1	35
Code Does Not Exist	27			27
Physical Abuse	17	9		26
Neglect	15	9	1	25
Parent/Adult Health/Behaviour	14	7	3	24
Emotional Abuse	9	5	2	16
Bullying NOT ONLINE	15			15
Young Persons Behaviour	12	2		14
Family Relationships	5			5
Self Harm	4			4
Living in Care/LAC Issue	3			3
Homeless/Housing	2			2
Sexual Abuse ONLINE	1	1		2
Eating/Body Image Disorders	1			1
Young Persons Alcohol/Drugs/Substance Misuse		1		1
Total	244	58	9	311

The highest proportion of overall contacts related to school/educational problems at 19% of the total, followed by Services/Support/Legal at 17%. Sexual Abuse (not online) was third most prevalent accounting for 11% of contacts. Where a referral was made Services/Support/Legal was the highest recorded concern.

Geographical Data

The table below shows the region of the person contacting the whistleblowing helpline and the outcome of the contact during 2019/20. In 41% of contacts we had no information about the location of the referrer.

Region	Advice	Referral/Referral Update	Total CW Contacts	%
Unknown	99	28	127	41%
South East	27	9	36	12%
North London	24	5	29	9%
North West	20	5	25	8%
West Midlands	19	4	23	7%
Eastern	15	5	20	6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	16	2	18	6%
South West	9	6	15	5%
East Midlands	7	0	7	2%
International	0	2	2	1%
North East and Cumbria	3	0	3	1%
Scotland	1	1	2	1%
South London	3	0	3	1%
Wales	1	0	1	0%
Total	244	67	311	100%

Referrals by the region of the agency referred to

Where a referral is made we can identify the location of the referred to agency as follows;

Please note that one contact can result in multiple referrals to different agencies based in different areas. Therefore, the total number of referrals by area is higher than the total number of contacts that resulted in a referral being made.

Agency Region	Total Referrals Sent to Agencies	%
Nationwide	14	20%
Eastern	9	13%
North West	8	11%
Unknown	8	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	11%
South West	7	10%
West Midlands	5	7%
North London	4	6%
South East	4	6%
East Midlands	1	1%

South London	1	1%
Wales	1	1%
Total	70	100%

20% of cases were referred to a nationwide agency such as OFSTED or CEOP.

Referrals by the type of agency referred to

Please note that one contact can result in multiple referrals to different agencies based in different areas. Therefore, the total number of referrals by agency is higher than the total number of contacts that resulted in a referral being made.

Agency Type	Total Referrals Sent to Agencies	%
Children's Services	43	61%
Police	16	23%
Education	11	16%
Total	70	100%

The greatest proportion of referrals were sent to Children's Services at 61%.

Themes

The relationship of the contact to the child included:

- Teachers/Education professionals/School Staff (including ex-employees)
- Other professionals – Residential workers, Nursery Staff etc
- Parents
- Parents of children who attend the same school as another child who they have concerns about
- Members of the public

Below are some of the key issues discussed in contacts to the whistleblowing helpline.

- Schools not following or implementing adequate safeguarding procedures.
- Concerns about staff/pupil ratios.
- Inappropriate conduct by teachers towards pupils.
- Dishonesty when presenting school to OFSTED inspectors.
- Concerns about schools not investigating safeguarding concerns adequately.
- Schools not implementing recommended actions from safeguarding investigations.
- Staff working directly with children not trained in safeguarding procedures.
- Contacts who are unhappy with the response they received when raising safeguarding concerns.
- Contacts who had been made to feel uncomfortable in their organisation after raising safeguarding concerns.
- Staff feeling unable to report their concerns directly to the organisation as they believed they would not be listened to or would experience repercussions for speaking up.