

## NSPCC launches nationwide campaign to help children exposed to harm under the lockdown

- £1.6m from the Government enables the charity to expand and raise awareness of its helpline service to protect more young people
- Latest figures from the NSPCC reveal week of April 13-19 saw the highest number of contacts to its helpline this year

With growing concern for the safety of some children during the coronavirus crisis the NSPCC wants more people to know how to get advice and support and where to raise concerns about a child's wellbeing.

The charity is launching a new [TV and advertising](#) campaign today (May 4) across the UK to promote its free and confidential helpline for adults.

The film, which will run on national television and across social media, depicts a helpline expert taking a call from someone concerned for the wellbeing of a neighbour's child.

The Government has provided £1.6m in funding so that the NSPCC can expand its helpline by employing more staff across two sites and raise public awareness of it.

The work comes as the charity publishes the latest data from its helpline which shows that the crisis has exacerbated existing risks for children and created new ones.

- In the month since lockdown there have been a total of 5,237 contacts to the helpline from across the UK from adults concerned about the wellbeing and safety of a child
- Of these, 817 contacts were from adults with worries about parents and carers misusing alcohol and other substances, a 22% increase on the four weeks prior to March 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Other issues where there has been a double-digit percentage increase in contacts include domestic abuse (10%) and emotional abuse (50%)
- From April 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> the NSPCC helpline received 1580 contacts, the highest number in a single week in 2020.

One adult who contacted the helpline in the last month said:

*"I am concerned about the children who live next door. Just now I heard the mother screaming and shouting at the child and I heard her say "Shut the \*\*\*\* up!" and there were threats of violence too. There is an ongoing situation where the mother invites adults to the family home and there is a lingering of cannabis in the air whilst the children are present." (Neighbour)*



While schools and social workers remain at the forefront of work to protect vulnerable children, including by supporting them to attend school, expanding the NSPCC helpline and raising its profile will mean more adults know where to go with concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any children.

NSPCC CEO, Peter Wanless, said: “Coronavirus is presenting us with a number of huge challenges, one of which is how we keep children safe when so much of everyday life is going on behind closed doors.

“It is crucial that all of us in society recognise we have a role to play in looking out for those young people for whom home may not always be the safest place.

“Thanks to the funding from the Government the NSPCC will be able to reach many more adults across the UK with the message that our helpline is here to provide confidential support and advice if they have any worries about the wellbeing of a child.”

The Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, said: “Our priority is to keep vulnerable children safe, which is why we are backing the NSPCC helpline to be the first port of a call for anyone concerned about a child’s welfare.

“We all have a role to play in protecting vulnerable children, particularly now many are staying at home and may face greater risks.

“Whether you are a neighbour or member of the community, we must all be the eyes and ears on the ground for these children, and support our brilliant social workers in keeping children safe.”

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child’s life include:

- aggressive or repeated shouting
- hearing hitting or things being broken
- children crying for long periods of time
- very young children left alone or are outdoors by themselves
- children looking dirty or not changing their clothes
- children being withdrawn or anxious.

Last year the NSPCC helpline, which has around 100 staff, received 73,000 contacts from people with concerns about a child’s welfare.

It can be reached 24 hours a day by email – [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) - or through its online reporting form. Its team of experts can also be called Monday to Friday 8am-10pm or 9am-6pm at the weekends on 0808 8005000.

## **ENDS**

For more information please contact the NSPCC press office on 020 3772 9722 or at [media@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:media@nspcc.org.uk)

## **Notes to editors:**

Data from the helpline before and after the lockdown:

**EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR**

## All contacts to the helpline

4 weeks before and after lockdown	TOTAL	Advice		Referrals + updates	
24 Feb – 1 March	1,371	918	67%	453	33%
2 – 8 March	1,299	839	65%	460	35%
9 – 15 March	1,329	826	62%	503	38%
16 – 22 March	1,104	686	62%	418	38%
23 - 29 March	1,061	657	62%	404	38%
30 March – 5 April	1,250	760	61%	490	39%
6 - 12 April	1,346	761	57%	585	43%
13 - 19 April	1,580	934	59%	646	41%

## Contacts from people worried about parent/adult health/behaviour

4 weeks before and since lockdown	Domestic abuse	Parent/Adult Alcohol/Substance Misuse
24 Feb – 1 March	152	172
2 – 8 March	157	153
9 – 15 March	161	181
16 – 22 March	133	162
23 - 29 March	146	162
30 March – 5 April	159	206
6 - 12 April	168	214
13 - 19 April	190	235

## Contacts from people worried about abuse

4 weeks before and since lockdown	Neglect	Physical abuse	Emotional abuse
24 Feb – 1 March	177	155	127
2 – 8 March	172	169	114
9 – 15 March	189	183	152
16 – 22 March	151	142	136
23 - 29 March	127	101	158
30 March – 5 April	170	149	174
6 - 12 April	194	197	219
13 - 19 April	225	261	241

## About the NSPCC

The NSPCC is the leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands. Using voluntary donations, which make up around 90 per cent of our funding, we help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives, we protect children at risk, and we find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening. So when a child needs a helping hand, we'll be there. When parents are finding it tough, we'll help. When laws need to change, or governments need to do more, we won't give up until things improve.



Our Childline service provides a safe, confidential place for children with no one else to turn to, whatever their worry, whenever they need help.

Our free NSPCC helpline provides adults with a place they can get advice and support, share their concerns about a child or get general information about child protection. Adults can contact the helpline 365 days a year.

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