

# Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in schools

## Who are we?

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is the only UK-wide charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse. We work with individuals, families and professionals so that everyone knows what they need to do to keep children safe.

Find out more about us on [our website](#), where you can find information about our projects, services and our [annual report](#).

## What are we doing?

We are working with schools to help guide and develop their response to harmful sexual behaviour – sexual actions that are outside what is safe for a young person's stage of development.

We are offering consultancy advice to support decision making amongst school leaders; training and consultation for staff; direct support and educational input for pupils and parents; and engagement with local safeguarding partners and networks.

## How can we support your school?

We are fully funded by the KPMG Foundation to work with ten schools per year for three years, across the Midlands region offering **free**, specialist support to respond to and prevent harmful sexual behaviour. To register your interest, please contact Laura Nott, our Schools Project Manager on 07706 347981 or via [email](#).

## The context

Harmful sexual behaviour includes actions that can harm either the young person themselves or another person. Harmful sexual behaviour exists on a spectrum from inappropriate through to problematic, abusive and violent. Research indicates that under-18s are responsible for at least one third of recorded sexual offences against children and young people in the UK.

Since March 2021, the [Everyone's Invited website](#) has provided a platform for young people to anonymously share their experiences of abuse. This, alongside other factors, has opened the eyes of caregivers and prompted a cross-government response including a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges conducted by Ofsted.

Recently, we have had an increase in enquiries from schools, either seeking support in response to specific incidents or for help to equip their staff to deal with unhelpful attitudes and behaviours amongst students.

Common questions from parents, carers, and education sector professionals now include:

- Why are children and young people experiencing harassment and abuse in school?
- What can be done to put things right?
- How can we prevent more children experiencing sexual abuse in school?

## Overview of our project

In response, over the next three years we will work with up to 30 schools, guiding and developing their response to harmful sexual behaviour issues or incidents. We will collaborate with school leaders to identify changes and activities that would help prevent future harmful sexual behaviours in their school communities. We will be working with a research fellow to evaluate the project and analyse any common themes that emerge.

What we learn from the project will help increase the knowledge, resources, and tools available to schools, promoting a preventative approach to stop abuse before it happens.

We will share the findings and resources developed with local and national school networks, providing practical support to schools beyond those directly involved in the project. The project will effectively influence both local and national policy, with the learning being shared with key stakeholders in the field of education, helping to shape key guidance documents and making schools safer places for children and young people.

## Project aims and outcomes

We have three main aims for the project:



To make schools safer places for children and young people by preventing harmful sexual behaviour.



For project evidence and insights to influence government and education strategy.



For schools to respond well when a harmful sexual behaviour incident occurs.

To meet these aims, we will work towards these four outcomes:



When a harmful sexual behaviour incident occurs, all those involved are supported well – pupils, parents and carers, and staff.



Schools benefit from the experience of others and have access to resources to support their responses to harmful sexual behaviour when they arise.



Statutory agencies understand key issues schools face on the ground and provide better support to schools with regard to preventing and tackling harmful sexual behaviour.



Develop resources and findings to contribute to the body of knowledge around tackling and responding to harmful sexual behaviour in schools.

## Our approach

Throughout this three-year project we will respond to concerns in a number of schools and learn from these engagements to help us prevent harmful sexual behaviours in schools.

### Respond



- Support pupils, staff and parents in 30 schools to manage incidents or issues.
- Help staff provide a welfare-centred response to any issues and restore a sense of safety.
- Provide ongoing consultation as they review school policy, protocols, procedures, and physical environments.
- Provide training and workshops as needed in each school.

### Learn



- Write up all findings and cases studies from every school, especially taking early learnings to support the project progression.
- Create reports every year and a final report at the end of the project and share with government and school stakeholders (Ofsted, DfE, Home Office, Education Scotland, NAHT).
- Gather evidence and data to contribute to the ongoing development for the RHSE curriculum, for example, about sexual harassment and violence, cyber resilience and pornography and consent.

### Prevent



- Publish a final report to include recommendations for government to help address the prevalence of sexual harm in schools.
- Share what we have learnt and what preventative measures schools can implement to be safer.
- Develop resources for schools to use and shared widely with support from partners (DfE, Ofsted, Home Office).

## Evaluation

Dr Emily Setty, research fellow at the University of Surrey, will be instrumental in delivering our aims, outcomes and evaluation process. Dr Setty's PhD project, 'Sexting ethics in youth digital culture: Risk, shame and the negotiation of privacy and consent', explored young people's experiences of risk and harm in their digital cultures. Dr Setty's area of specialism includes sexual culture in young people, and she excels in qualitative approaches to research.

We will take an action research approach to evaluation. This means that we will identify emerging findings and implement what we learn as the project progresses, meaning that early lessons will benefit that school and others.

A brief report will be prepared following each school engagement, providing a summary for the school leaders and contribute to findings for the project. We will share an annual interim report with key stakeholders within education and policy, summarising emerging findings. Throughout the year, we will use this learning to develop resources which can be shared with schools. We will publish a final report upon the project conclusion, which will include recommendations to make schools a safer place for pupils.

## Get in touch

We are looking for schools who need our help to respond to incidents or concerns related to harmful sexual behaviours amongst pupils. This provides a unique opportunity to access our consultancy and proactive support, whilst contributing to an increase in knowledge and understanding, influencing the development of guidance and resources to make schools safer across the country. It also ensures an excellent response to an area of concern recognised in recent Ofsted advice.

If you are interested in supporting and benefiting from this project, please contact Laura Nott, our Schools Project Manager on 07706 347981 or via [email](#).