



Stop to Listen in North Ayrshire

Stop To Listen is a national multi-agency collaboration which aims to improve child centred responses to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

North Ayrshire is one of four areas participating in a Stop to Listen pathfinder throughout 2017.

We have been planning our pathfinder over the last months of 2016 and this document will give you some information about Stop to Listen in North Ayrshire.

What do we know?

1. Professionals will come into contact with children who have been sexually abused.
2. These children are unlikely to disclose this abuse, but may display indicators of concern in relation to their emotional or physical well-being, which could be used as an opportunity for professionals to consider whether sexual abuse may be a possible underlying factor in the child's presentation.
3. Professionals who come into contact with children need to feel confident in taking a more proactive approach to considering the possibility of sexual abuse and in responding to such concerns.
4. If children do disclose abuse to a professional, this is more likely to be someone they have an ongoing relationship with such as a teacher, support worker or a youth worker.
5. We should seek to develop a culture, particularly within Children's Services, which better supports both enabling and handling disclosures of child sexual abuse.
6. In handling disclosures of sexual abuse, we need to keep the child at the centre of planning and decision-making, with a full awareness of the huge challenges for them in initially making the disclosure and the subsequent sense of lack of control that is experienced by some children in the child protection system.

What will we do?

We will provide focused training and support for specific staff in order to:

- (a) raise confidence and competence of staff in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse; and
- (b) cultivate professional relationships with children which convey a willingness and readiness to listen to disclosures of child sexual abuse.

What are our hopes?

We hope that more children and young people who experience sexual abuse feel better supported by the services they receive and that staff feel more confident in providing this support.

Who is involved?

Stop to Listen in North Ayrshire will involve some staff and services from the 3 towns area. Because this is a pathfinder, it is important to keep the project fairly small and manageable. We hope to use what we learn here and from the other pathfinders, to involve more staff and services in the future in Stop to Listen in North Ayrshire.

Where can I find out more?

Visit www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info and visit the professionals page. We will publish information about Stop to Listen under the "sexual abuse" tab.