WHAT'S AFFECTING CHILDREN IN 2013

CAN I TELL YOU SOMETHING?

ChildLine review of 2012/13

ChildLine 0800 1111

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FOREWORDS

ChildLine helped support thousands of young people last year, sometimes quite literally saving lives and I am very proud of the work our staff and volunteers have done to listen, empower, support and help children.

But this report isn't about ChildLine. This report is about the thousands of children who contacted us to tell us about their experience of life in the UK. This report isn't what I think, or what colleagues at ChildLine think, but instead it is the real words of some of the most isolated and vulnerable children and young people. They spoke to us about difficult, challenging and concerning experiences, feelings and situations. And we listened. Our confidentiality policy gave these young people the confidence to talk to us about how they feel, what life is really like for them, and I believe we have a responsibility to share our knowledge and insight with professionals, influencers, the government and the public.

As you read the report you will see there have been some concerning changes since 2011/12. We've seen a 41 per cent increase in the number of counselling sessions where a young person talked about self-harm and a 33 per cent increase where suicidal thoughts and feelings were mentioned. We have also seen a 69 per cent rise in counselling with young people who have experienced racist bullying. These statistics are alarming and while it is good that young people are seeking our help rather than suffering in silence, I believe together we must do more.



My hope is that this report, reflecting the voices of children, contributes to the dialogue about how together, we can better support vulnerable young people. We hope that by listening to young people directly we can all learn from their experiences and help them shape a better future.

FOREWORDS



I am often asked if, when ChildLine launched in October 1986, I ever dreamed that we would have by now have helped 3.2 million children, and be able to answer more than a million contacts from children and young people a year. The obvious answer is no, I had no idea the demand would be so huge. In our earliest days they had to run to the nearest phone box. Now, of course, the mobile phone has been a liberation, allowing young people to talk to ChildLine confidentially anywhere, anytime, even – as happened in one case – from the back of a classroom, where a child who had taken an overdose rang us and whose life we were able to save.



The internet has also been a liberation. Many harsh things are rightly said about the dangers of sexting, grooming and entrapping that exist online, and you will find those reflected in this report. But the fact is that it has also liberated children and young people who would not dare to speak on the phone about their suffering, but feel able to contact ChildLine online. And this year, for the first time, counselling online has outnumbered counselling by telephone.

This report clearly shows the deep unhappiness of thousands of young people. The biggest single problem is depression and unhappiness affecting nearly 36,000 children. 4,500 children between the ages of 12 and 15 rang because they needed to talk about suicide, and that is an increase of 43 per cent over the previous year. Why are so many young children in such despair that they want to die? Children like the girl who told ChildLine, *"I'm terrified of what I might do. I want to be gone and I've never felt this bad."*

Searching for reasons, I found clues throughout this disturbing report. Some of the unhappiness is caused by their relationships with other young people. Bullying plays an even greater part this

year in creating misery, with online bullying up by 87 per cent. Comparing themselves detrimentally with their friends, more than 13,250 young people talked about their low self esteem, confidence issues or were unhappy with the way they looked, to the point that some shun the company of others, and hide alone in their bedrooms: *"I feel so sad. I am really ugly and feel like nobody wants to talk to me. I have really awful skin and have tried everything to make it go away but nothing works… I can't think of anything I like about myself."* Have we created a society in which you have to look perfect to have the right to friendship and happiness?



ChildLine is still one of the few places where children dare to report abuse, both physical and sexual, by their parents. This year, nearly 33,000 young people described the deliberate cruelty of abuse inflicted on them. There was a huge increase this year (122 per cent) in the number of young people (3,153) who contacted ChildLine because they were so deeply distressed by their parents' divorce. And parental addiction hurts, not only the addicts themselves, but also their children. Nearly 4,000 children contacted ChildLine to say that they are frightened and worried by their parents' drinking.



All this unhappiness may find expression not only in suicidal feelings, but in self-harm and eating disorders. Overall there were 22,532 contacts about self-harm, with a further 1,515 contacts from children concerned about another child self-harming and wanting to try and help. And the problem seems to be involving younger and younger children; this year for the first time it was in the top five concerns for 13 year olds, and ChildLine also received 50 per cent more contacts about self-harm this year from 12 year olds. Why are so many thousands of our children driven to

hurt themselves? Is it an expression of self-loathing or, as the children themselves say, to numb or distract themselves from other pain, *"I am getting bullied at school…I feel so scared and have been self-harming because I need a release. I'm a pathetic failure…I don't want the scars but I need to cut and I need to suffer."*

So has ChildLine been able to intervene and alleviate this suffering? Among the 289,847 children and young people we helped this year, there has been heartening evidence of the difference our counsellors have made. Our Manchester base heard from one child: *"Without ChildLine I wouldn't be here now. I've told my family about my self-harming. They're really supporting me with it. Thank you for giving me the courage to talk about it."* Our Northern Ireland Foyle base talked to a child who said *"The advice I got from ChildLine was amazing. I'd never used it before so I just want to say thank you for all your help, you're a great organisation."* And a child told one of our volunteer counsellors in Glasgow, *"I want to thank ChildLine for saving my life. If you hadn't have called me an ambulance I don't know what would have happened. I'm out of hospital now and feeling fine."*

So I must thank all the staff and volunteers whose crucial work for children has made this report possible. We need to listen to these young voices. They have an important message for us all. Unhappy children are a reflection on the whole nation. But together we can help to make their lives far happier, if we listen to them, reassure them that they are precious, that we care, and if we put children where they should always be: first.



Esther Rantzen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past 12 months, we've seen many changes in young people's needs and concerns.



A RISE IN SELF-HARM

One huge increase is the number of young people contacting ChildLine about self-harm – up by 41 per cent from 2011/12. Girls were 15 times more likely than boys to contact ChildLine about self-harm.

CHILDLINE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As the internet increasingly becomes a part of children's everyday lives, the incidences of young people contacting ChildLine about online bullying have risen by 87 per cent in the past year.

Thankfully, as technology has changed, so has ChildLine. Now when young people contact the service about self-harm, suicidal issues, or mental health issues – the vast majority (78 per cent) do so online, via email or 1-2-1 online chat.

However, when young people talk to ChildLine about abuse, most (58 per cent) still prefer to contact us by phone.

We also saw that overall, boys prefer to be counselled by phone, whereas girls prefer to be counselled online.

41

per cent increase in the number of young people contacting ChildLine about self-harm



INCREASING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

2012/13 saw a 33 per cent rise in the number of children contacting us about suicidal thoughts and feelings, compared to the previous year. More than 4,500 children aged between 12-15 needed to talk to ChildLine about suicide. While it was the third most common reason to contact ChildLine among 16-18 year olds.

Often, the suicidal thoughts are at such an advanced stage that the ChildLine counsellor judges the child to be in a life threatening situation.

When this happens, ChildLine makes referrals to external agencies such as the police, ambulance or social services. Last year, 60 per cent of the referrals ChildLine made related to a young person being actively suicidal. This is a 14 per cent increase from 2011/12.

FAMILY

This year has also seen an increase in the number of children contacting ChildLine about problems relating to their family situation. We have experienced a 122 per cent rise in children contacting us about their parents' separation or divorce. As well as this, 3,930 children contacted ChildLine concerned about their parents' drinking, twice as many as in 2011/12.

These are just a few examples of the many reasons why ChildLine needs to exist and be there 24 hours a day, ready to listen and help in any situation. Millions of children have been helped over the past 27 years and in 2013/14 we will continue to be there for more children and young people.



KEY STATS

- ChildLine has helped over 3.2 million children and young people since its launch in October 1986.
- During 2012/13, ChildLine counselled 278,886 children and young people while also dealing with a further 10,961 contacts from young people who had concerns about another child.
- For the first time ever, more counselling took place online (59 per cent) than by telephone (41 per cent).
- Once again, self-harm saw another significant increase – 41 per cent. There was also a 50 per cent rise in contacts about self-harm from 12 year olds.
- There was a 33 per cent increase in suicidal counselling overall, with a 43 per cent increase among 12-15 year olds.
- 60 per cent of referrals were on behalf of young people who were actively suicidal – a 14 per cent increase from 2011/12.
- Concerns about online bullying rose by 87 per cent from the previous year.
- Counselling about racist bullying rose by 69 per cent with over 1,400 counselling sessions taking place in 2012/13.
- Over 35,900 young people came to us struggling with depression and unhappiness – the top reason why young people contacted ChildLine in 2012/13.
- We provided 40 per cent more counselling with young people about money problems than the previous year.
- The ChildLine website has proved very successful, receiving 2.4 million visits – a 28 per cent increase since 2011/12.

REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE CONTACT CHILDLINE



TOP TEN REASONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO CONTACT CHILDLINE

Rank	Main concern	Definition	Girls	Boys	Unknown	Total	Percentage total counselling
1	Depression and unhappiness	Feeling sad, low mood, lonely, has low self-esteem, confidence or body image issues.	19,054	5,208	11,679	35,941	13%
2	Family relationships	Conflict/arguments with family members. Parents' divorce/ separation.	18,537	5,556	11,061	35,154	13%
3	Bullying/online bullying	Peer-to-peer bullying, either face-to-face or online.	14,653	6,724	9,010	30,387	11%
4	Self-harm	Self-injury that is intentional.	12,643	856	9,033	22,532	8%
5	Suicidal issues	Suicidal feelings, ideation or actively suicidal.	8,461	1,579	4,823	14,863	5%
6	Problems with friends	Falling out with friends, difficulty making friends.	8,321	1,896	4,068	14,285	5%

Rank	Main concern	Definition	Girls	Boys	Unknown	Total	Percentage total counselling
7	Physical abuse	Young person has been physically abused by adult/older person – includes where they have felt at risk or have been threatened with violence.	6,318	4,066	3,496	13,880	5%
8	Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	Young person has been persuaded/forced by an adult/older person to take part in sexual activities, or encouraged to behave in a sexually inappropriate way. Includes online sexual abuse such as exposure to sexually explicit images, grooming, sexting etc.	6,894	3,324	2,213	12,431	4%
9	Puberty and sexual health	Young person has concerns or wants information/advice about sexual development, body changes, STIs, contraception etc.	5,889	3,164	2,209	11,262	4%
10	Mental health issues	Mental health conditions such as bi-polar or severe depression which is significantly interfering with the young person being able to lead a normal life and is prolonged or re-occurring.	5,452	928	3,094	9,474	3%

WHO CONTACTED CHILDLINE IN 2012/13?

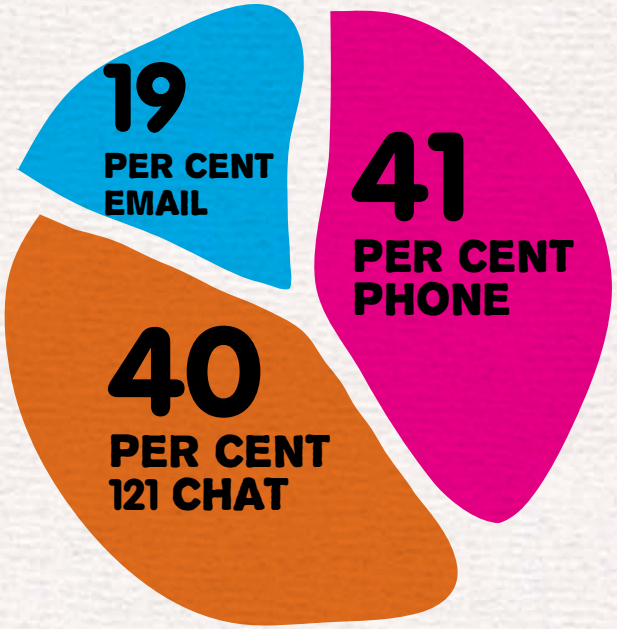


THE WAYS YOUNG PEOPLE CONTACTED CHILDLINE

The number of online counselling sessions increased by 13 per cent from 2011/12. This meant that, for the first time ever, more children and young people were counselled online – either via 1-2-1 chats or email – than by phone.

The increase in the use of online channels correlates with the channel preference of the top age group who contact ChildLine – 12-15 year olds.

The majority of 11 and unders and 16-18 year olds choose to be counselled by phone.





For the first time ever, more young people were counselled online (via 1-2-1 chats or email), at 59 per cent compared to 41 per cent by phone

AGE GROUP	TELEPHONE	ONLINE
11 and under	66%	34%
12-15	42%	58%
16-18	58%	42%

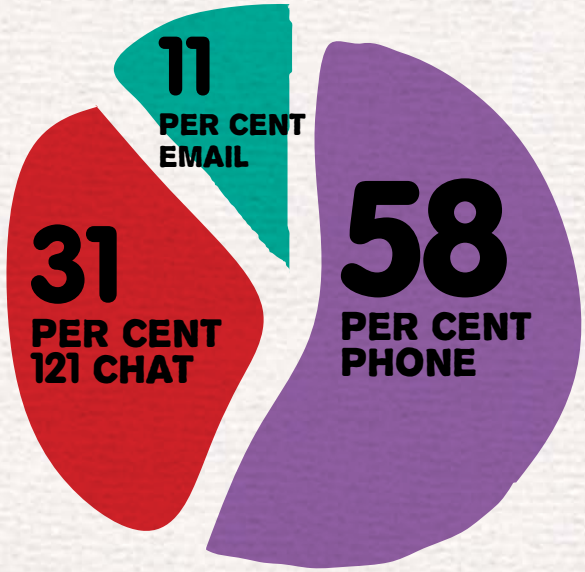
The preference for online contact was seen most starkly when young people spoke to us about self-harm, suicide or mental health issues. In these cases, 78 per cent of counselling took place online.

Contact by phone was still the preferred choice when young people needed help with issues relating to abuse. 58 per cent of counselling for abuse took place over the phone.

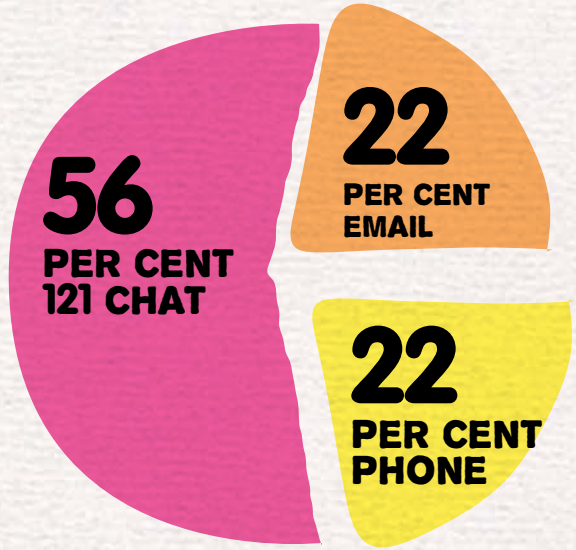
One theory for this is that self-harm, suicidal issues and mental health concerns are often viewed as taboo subjects by young people. As a result, young people might find it harder to talk about their feelings on these subjects. Contacting ChildLine online rather than by phone creates a 'safe' distance for the young person to share their feelings and explore the issues they're experiencing.



HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ABUSE CONCERNS CONTACTED CHILDLINE



HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MENTAL WELLBEING CONCERNS CONTACTED CHILDLINE

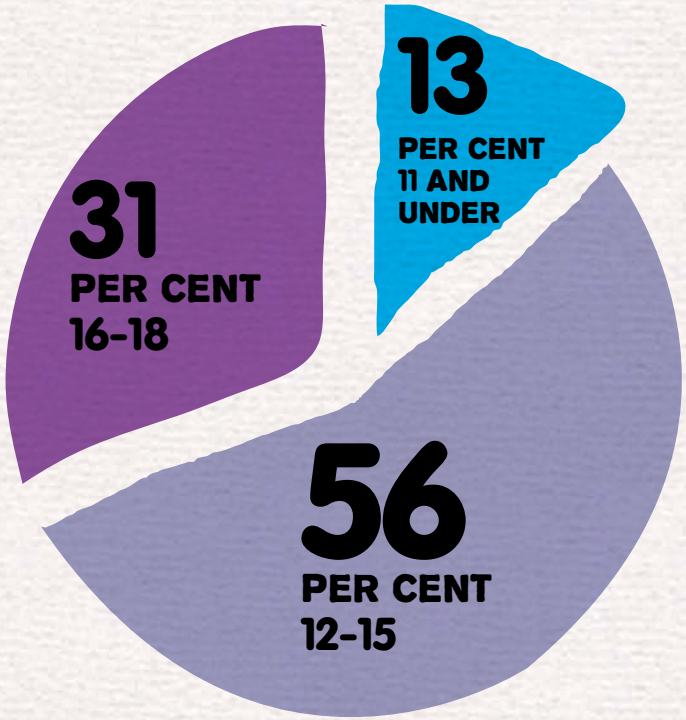


AGE OVERVIEW

Children and young people don't have to tell ChildLine their age when they contact us. However, in 63 per cent of counselling sessions, the young person told ChildLine their age.

Where age was known, the majority of counselling was with 12-15 year olds with the majority aged 15.

A BREAKDOWN OF AGE GROUPS







TOP TEN CONCERNS BY AGE GROUP

CHILDREN AGED 11 AND UNDER



There were 22,733 counselling sessions with this age group. 86 per cent of young people within this age group were aged between 9-11. The youngest recorded age was five, for which there were 319 counselling sessions.

Nearly one in four (24 per cent) children aged 11 and under who contacted ChildLine during 2012/13 were concerned about bullying.

Counselling about physical abuse was proportionately higher (9 per cent) for this age group, compared with 12-15 year olds (6 per cent) and 16-18 year olds (3 per cent).

There was also a 19 per cent growth in counselling about school and education problems among this age group.

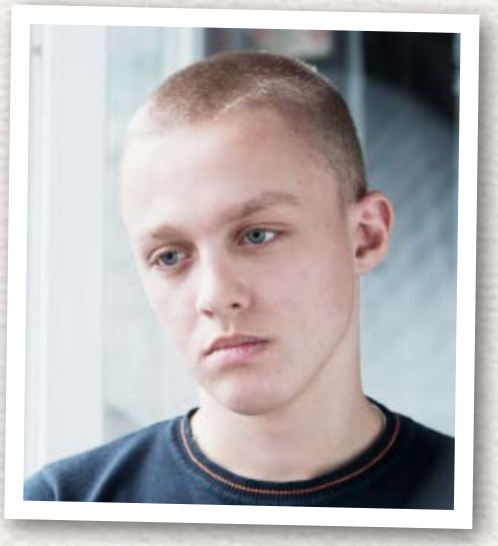
A third (33 per cent) of neglect counselling was with children aged 11 and under.

When a child describes their life to ChildLine they rarely recognise that what they are experiencing is neglect. ChildLine counsellors who are trained to identify this type of abuse often determine when a child is being neglected.

TOP TEN CONCERNS OF CHILDREN AGED 11 AND UNDER

Main concern	Number counselled	Percentage of total counselling
Bullying/online bullying	5,449	24%
Family relationships	3,579	16%
Depression and unhappiness	2,482	11%
Physical abuse	2,092	9%
Puberty and sexual health	1,143	5%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	1,020	4%
Physical health and illness	983	4%
School or education problems	940	4%
Problems with friends	867	4%
Loss and bereavement	542	2%





ARE YOU TALKING PANTS?

Last summer, the NSPCC launched the Underwear Rule campaign to help parents and carers talk to their children, aged 11 and under, about staying safe from sexual abuse.

We know that simple conversations can make a big difference, and that's what the Underwear Rule is all about. But we recognise that finding the right words can sometimes be tricky.

We developed PANTS as an easy way for parents to teach children the Underwear Rule:

Privates are private
Always remember your body belongs to you
No means no
Talk about secrets that upset you
Speak up, someone can help

Teaching children the Underwear Rule is a really effective way to prevent abuse.

For more information about the Underwear Rule campaign visit **www.nspcc.org.uk/underwearrule**





12-15 YEAR OLDS

56 per cent of ChildLine counselling was with 12-15 year olds (97,685 calls, emails and 1-2-1 chats). In 2011/12 this age group received 53 per cent of the counselling ChildLine provided.

14 per cent of counselling for this age group was about family relationships, making it the most common issue affecting 12-15 year olds.

Bullying/online bullying was the second most common concern, with two thirds of these contacts specifically talking about online bullying.

The number of 12-15 year olds counselled about self-harm has increased by 52 per cent, with the majority of young people affected in this group aged 15.

However, while 15 year olds were most commonly affected by self-harm, contacts from contacts from 12 years increased by nearly 50% (700 counselling sessions) from the previous year. This is the highest increase of any age for this issue. Self-harm represented 5 per cent of all counselling with 12 year olds.

Suicidal feelings did not feature in the top 10 concerns for 12-15 year olds in 2011/12, but this year ranked ninth because of a disturbing 43 per cent increase (4,504 counselling sessions).



43

per cent increase in suicidal concerns from 12-15 year olds

52

per cent increase in the number of 12-15 year olds counselled about self-harm



TOP TEN CONCERNS 12-15 YEAR OLDS

Main concern	Number counselled	Percentage of total counselling
Family relationships	13,458	14%
Bullying/online bullying	11,690	12%
Depression and unhappiness	10,876	11%
Self-harm	8,174	8%
Physical abuse	5,829	6%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	5,086	5%
Problems with friends	4,672	5%
Puberty and sexual health	4,599	5%
Suicidal issues	4,504	5%
School or education problem	3,711	4%



50 per cent rise in contacts about self-harm with 12 year olds

16-18 YEAR OLDS

ChildLine dealt with 54,003 contacts from young people aged 16-18, representing nearly a third of all contacts (31 per cent) received in 2012/13.

Suicidal thoughts and feelings featured as the third most common reason for 16-18 year olds to contact ChildLine this year. It represented 7 per cent of all the counselling provided to this age group (3,575 counselling sessions). The majority of these sessions (1,420) were with 17 year olds.

Counselling about mental health issues was also among the top 10 concerns for this age group, representing 6 per cent of all counselling.

Sexual abuse also accounts for 6 per cent of all the counselling that took place with 16-18 year olds in 2012/13. This means that sexual abuse is a greater concern for 16-18 year olds who contact ChildLine than it is for any other age group.

Pregnancy and parenting is an issue that only features in the top 10 concerns of this age group. During 2012/13, almost half of all counselling about this issue was with 16-18 year olds (2,278 sessions).



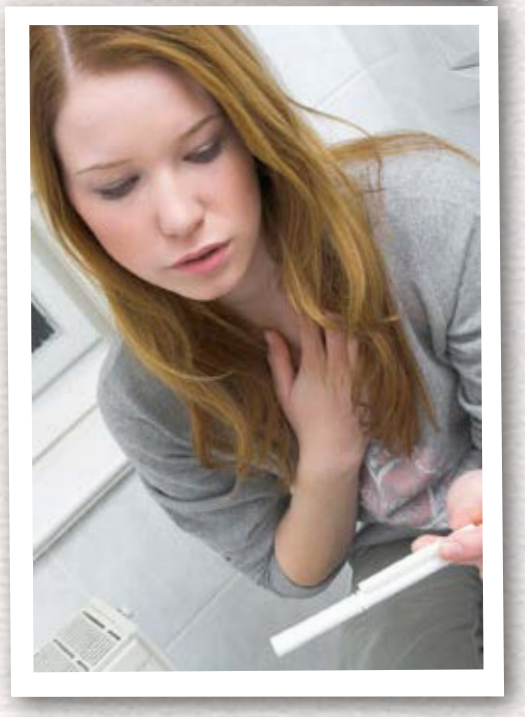
SEXUAL ABUSE IS A GREATER CONCERN FOR 16-18 YEAR OLDS THAN FOR ANY OTHER AGE GROUP



TOP TEN CONCERNS 16-18 YEAR OLDS

Main concern	Number counselled	Percentage of total counselling
Depression and unhappiness	7,243	13%
Family relationships	6,925	13%
Suicidal issues	3,575	7%
Self-harm	3,337	6%
Problems with friends	3,191	6%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	3,073	6%
Mental health issues	3,043	6%
Puberty and sexual health	2,842	5%
Pregnancy and parenting	2,278	4%
Bullying/online bullying	2,151	4%

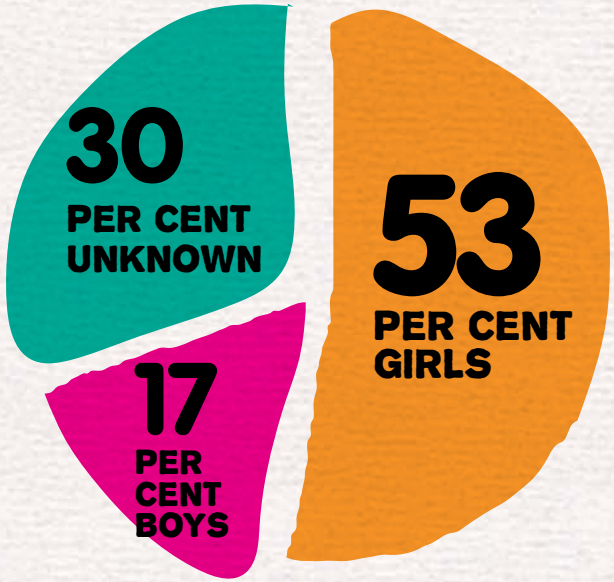




GENDER

In 2012/13 ChildLine counselled 147,302 girls and 48,351 boys (53 per cent, and 17 per cent of all sessions respectively). In 83,233 sessions (30 per cent) the gender of the young person was not disclosed.

This 3:1 girl to boy ratio is consistent with 2011/12.







GIRLS

- Girls contact ChildLine about self-harm much more than boys. It's the fourth most common reason for girls to seek support, yet the issue doesn't appear at all in the top 10 concerns for boys. The gap appears to be widening. The ratio of girls to boys concerned about self-harm is 15:1 in 2012/13. In 2011/12 the ratio was lower at 12:1.
- Among girls, suicidal thoughts and feelings also appear to be on the rise. It was a top 10 concern in 2011/12, rising to a top five concern in 2012/13.
- Mental health issues are a top 10 concern for girls, but does not feature in the top 10 for boys.
- There has been a 95 per cent increase in the number of girls talking about feeling excluded or isolated as a result of being bullied, however counselling about bullying with girls is proportionately lower than with boys.



BOYS



- Consistent with 2011/12, bullying is still the leading concern for boys.
- Being bullied about their appearance or being 'different' was the main reason given for bullying, and represented a quarter of all bullying counselling with boys. Also, one in four boys who contacted ChildLine about bullying told the counsellor that they had experienced violent bullying.
- Nearly half of all abuse counselling with boys was about physical abuse (48 per cent).
- Rape was mentioned in over a quarter of sexual abuse counselling with boys.
- Sexual and gender identity, and concerns about the young person's own behaviour, appear in the top 10 main concerns for boys, but do not appear in the top 10 for girls or counselling overall.
- Due to a 4 per cent increase, suicidal issues replaced mental health issues, and became the tenth most common reason for counselling in boys.

TOP TEN CONCERNS FOR GIRLS

Main concern	Number counselled	Percentage of total counselling
Depression and unhappiness	19,054	13%
Family relationships	18,537	13%
Bullying/online bullying	14,653	10%
Self-harm	12,643	9%
Suicidal issues	8,461	6%
Problems with friends	8,321	6%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	6,894	5%
Physical abuse	6,318	4%
Puberty and sexual health	5,889	4%
Mental health issues	5,452	4%



95 per cent increase in girls talking about feeling excluded or isolated as a result of bullying

TOP TEN MAIN CONCERNS FOR BOYS

Main concern	Number counselled	Percentage of total counselling
Bullying/online bullying	6,724	14%
Family relationships	5,556	11%
Depression and unhappiness	5,208	11%
Physical abuse	4,066	8%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	3,324	7%
Puberty and sexual health	3,164	7%
Sexual and gender identity	1,992	4%
Problems with friends	1,896	4%
Young person's own behaviour (abuser)	1,740	4%
Suicidal issues	1,579	3%

48

per cent of all abuse counselling with boys was about physical abuse



REFERRALS



58 per cent of referrals were for children and young people aged between 12-15

In 2012/13, ChildLine made 1,882 direct referrals to external agencies – such as the police or children's services – on behalf of 1,836 children and young people (some individual children can be referred to multiple agencies).

Referrals are made when the ChildLine supervisor judges the child to be in a life threatening situation, facing significant harm, or where the child themselves has requested direct help.

71 per cent of these referrals were made directly to the police (an 11 per cent increase on 2011/12), while 12 per cent were made to children's services. A further 17 per cent involved other agencies – such as the ambulance service.

Where the child's age was known, 58 per cent of referrals were for children and young people aged between 12-15. 36 per cent were aged between 16-18, and 6 per cent were for children aged 11 or under.

It remains a significant concern that 60 per cent of all referrals were about young people who were actively suicidal – this is a 14 per cent increase on the previous year.

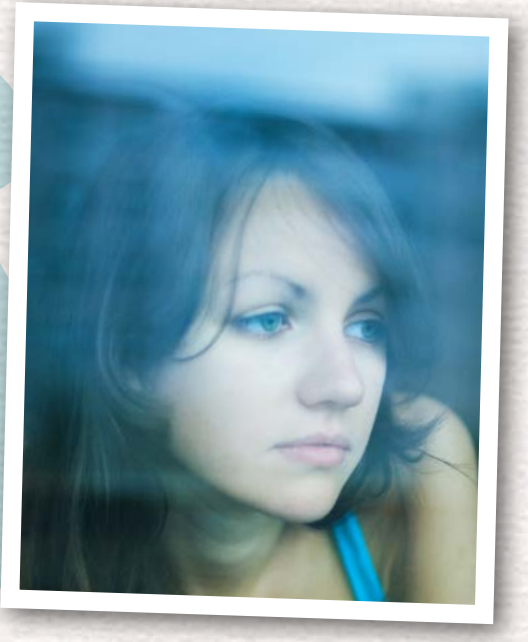
Though statistically small – at 82 referrals – it is interesting to note that referrals where the young person talked about being an abuser saw the greatest increase from 2011/12, a rise of 37 per cent. It is encouraging to see that young people are recognising their own abusive behaviour and turning to ChildLine for help on this issue.

Nearly three quarters of these referrals involved boys. Mainly these cases were where the young person had a serious intent or had already sexually or physically abused another child. Sometimes, they were threatening to seriously hurt (or even kill) family members, or another person.

Where appropriate, ChildLine makes every effort to get consent from the child or young person before sharing information with external agencies. However, in those cases where there is immediate danger either to the young person themselves, or to another child, this is not always possible. In 2012/13 confidentiality was breached in 70 per cent of referrals.

32

per cent increase in referrals where the young person talked about being the abuser



CHILDLINE WILL BREACH CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- where we assess the child or young person to be in a life-threatening situation
- the child or young person has alleged abuse by a person in a position of authority
- the child or young person is abusing others
- the age or capacity of the child indicates they do not have the ability to make appropriate decisions to promote their immediate safety.

60 **per cent of referrals were about young people who were actively suicidal**

TOP TEN REASONS FOR REFERRAL

Main concern	Number referred	Percentage of total referrals
Suicidal issues	1,095	60%
Physical abuse	180	10%
Runaway/thrown out/homeless	127	7%
Sexual abuse and online sexual abuse	83	5%
Abuser	82	4%
Self-harm	48	3%
Depression and mental health	38	2%
Family relationships	33	2%
Neglect	32	2%
Looked after child	25	1%

SELF-HARM



A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE FOR THE SECOND YEAR RUNNING

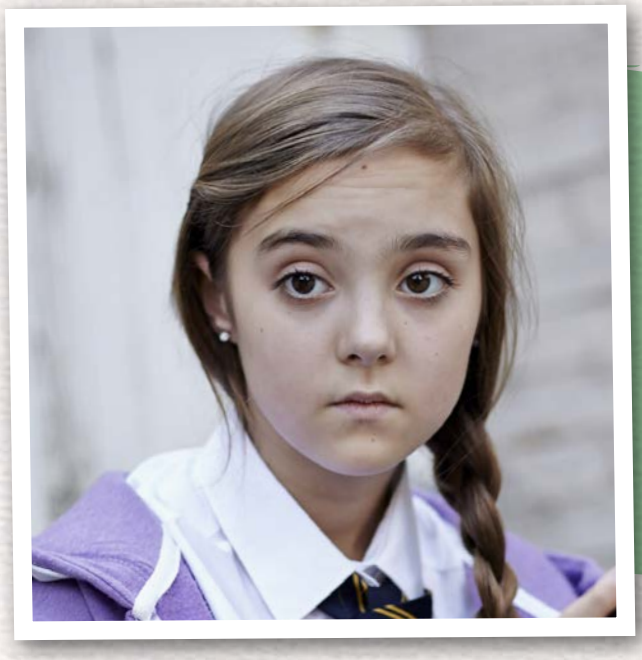
In 2012/13 we counselled 22,532 young people whose main concern was self-harm. This represented 8 per cent of all the counselling that took place this year, compared with 5 per cent the previous year.

During a further 24,186 counselling sessions, self-harm was mentioned as an additional concern. This means self-harm was mentioned in almost 47,000 counselling sessions – a huge 41 per cent year-on-year increase.

Where age was known, 70 per cent of the contacts we received about self-harm came from young people aged between 12-15.

In 2011/12 self-harm was a top five concern for 14 year olds. This year, it featured as a top five concern for 13 year olds for the first time. There was also nearly a 50 per cent rise in contacts with 12 year olds about self-harm – the highest increase of any age.

Over the past year it has become clear there is an enormous divide in the genders when it comes to self-harm – with girls outnumbering boys by 15:1. There was a 37 per cent increase in self-harm counselling with girls, compared with just 10 per cent with boys.



41

per cent increase in self-harm counselling

"I am getting bullied at school. They are saying really nasty things and telling me it would be better if I wasn't here. I feel so scared and have been self-harming because I need a release. I'm a pathetic failure and a nobody. Every time I look in the mirror I feel disgusted. I don't know what to do anymore. I don't want the scars, but I need to cut and I need to suffer." – Girl aged 14

ONLINE COUNSELLING

85 per cent of all self harm counselling was carried out online which makes it the second most common reason why young people contact ChildLine via 1-2-1 chat.

The self-harm page on the ChildLine website was the third most visited page during 2012/13, receiving 115,144 page views. ChildLine's self-harm awareness raising video – Will's Story – received 25,688 views. The online resources available on the ChildLine website also include peer-to-peer support message boards, and in 2012/13 there were 122,388 page views of the self-harm message board alone.

LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

Almost one third of young people told ChildLine that they were actively self-harming – meaning they had very recently self-harmed. Where this was the case, they frequently admitted that it was not the first time they had self-harmed and that it was something they felt would be very difficult to stop. They often explained that it had become a habit, and they felt reliant on the sense of relief brought about by the pain.

When young people told ChildLine how long they had been self-harming, 42 per cent said "years", and it was "ongoing".

Cutting was talked about by one in three young people, and has increased by 20 per cent since 2011/12. Methods of self-harming differed between boys and girls. Suffocation, asphyxiation and hitting were more common in boys – whereas girls tended to cut, scratch or pick their skin, and burn themselves.

ChildLine also received over 1,500 contacts where the person had concerns for another child or young person who was self-harming. These young people were seeking advice and information on how they could help them to stop.



Self harm is one of the most significant gender disproportions – with girls outnumbering boys by 15:1

SELF-HARM AND FEELING SUICIDAL

There is usually a distinct difference between self-harming and suicide. Young people who self-harm hurt themselves as a way of coping with life, not necessarily with a view to ending it.

However ChildLine has seen a correlation between self-harming behaviours and young people feeling suicidal.

During 2012/13, where suicide was the main reason for young people contacting ChildLine, 34 per cent (4,993) also mentioned self-harm. This shows that for some young people, there is a link between using self-harm to block out their mental anguish and feeling so overwhelmed that they consider or attempt to end their own lives.

"I have been self-harming for a few years now. I do it so I can deal with the pain of what he does to me. I haven't told anyone about what's happening – not even my family. I want to stop hurting myself in this way but I can't stop myself. I am in a routine of doing it now and when the pain of everything gets too much it helps to take it away." – Girl aged 16

In one third of suicidal counselling the young person also talked about self-harm



"I hurt myself today. I kept smashing my head against the wall because I felt so angry with everything. I don't feel like anyone cares about me and my family hate me. I just had to vent everything. I think I might need some help."
– Boy aged 15

SUICIDAL ISSUES



A 33 PER CENT INCREASE

Counselling with young people who were feeling suicidal rose for the third year running in 2012/13. ChildLine counselled 14,863 young people whose main concern was suicidal issues – representing 5 per cent of all counselling.

Then, during a further 14,300 counselling sessions, suicidal thoughts or feelings were mentioned as an additional concern. This means young people mentioned feeling suicidal in over 29,000 counselling sessions – a 33 per cent increase on the previous year.

Self-harm was the main concern in nearly a quarter of counselling sessions where the young person also talked about feeling suicidal. 57 per cent of suicidal counselling was with girls, compared with 11 per cent with boys and 32 per cent where gender was not disclosed. 70 per cent of these sessions took place online.

"I'm having a bad day. I have all these voices in my head telling me to hurt myself. I can't ignore them and i get such strong urges to end it all. I have tried to kill myself before and I ended up in hospital and now everyone thinks I am some kind of freak. I don't feel like I have any support at home and find it really hard to talk to anyone about."
– Girl aged 15

AS YOUNG AS 12

Suicidal issues start to become more prevalent as children get older. It first features as a top 10 concern for children as young as 12, and then it becomes a more common concern as age increases – appearing in the top three concerns for 16-18 year olds.

While 17 year olds are the age group most commonly affected by issues relating to suicide, the biggest increase year-on-year has been among 12-15 year olds. 43 per cent more children of this age contacted ChildLine about suicidal thoughts or feelings in 2012/13 compared to the previous year.

20 per cent of young people talked about their suicidal ideation (where they had either thought about suicide, or had a plan in place). On top of this, 8 per cent of young people told the counsellor that they were actively suicidal – meaning they had already taken steps to end their own life.

Over one in seven (15 per cent) talked about overdosing. The proportion of girls who talked about overdosing was higher than many other types of suicide.

"NO OTHER WAY OUT"

Many of the young people who spoke to ChildLine about suicide were often in desperate situations where they felt like there was no other way out. They talked about subjects including previous or ongoing abuse, family relationship breakdown, bullying, mental health issues, school pressures and fear of failure.

They often talked about feeling depressed, having low self-esteem and being overwhelmed with what was happening in their lives. For some, suicide was an impulsive reaction which they felt would be the only solution to a problem they were experiencing at the time.

Young people can find it very difficult to communicate their suicidal feelings and often suffer in silence. Of the young people who mentioned whether or not they had spoken to somebody regarding their suicidal feelings, 18 per cent reported that they had not told anyone else. Many children who had spoken to somebody felt they had not received the support they required and they therefore contacted Childine. Disclosing their feelings did not always result in help and young people often felt a lack of understanding from adults.

They frequently mentioned the stress of going through psychiatric assessments and how they struggled to verbalise their feelings face-to-face with strangers.

In 2012/13, ChildLine dealt with 9,474 counselling sessions where the main concern was mental health issues. In 19 per cent of these sessions, the young person also discussed feeling suicidal – illustrating the close relationship between these two issues.



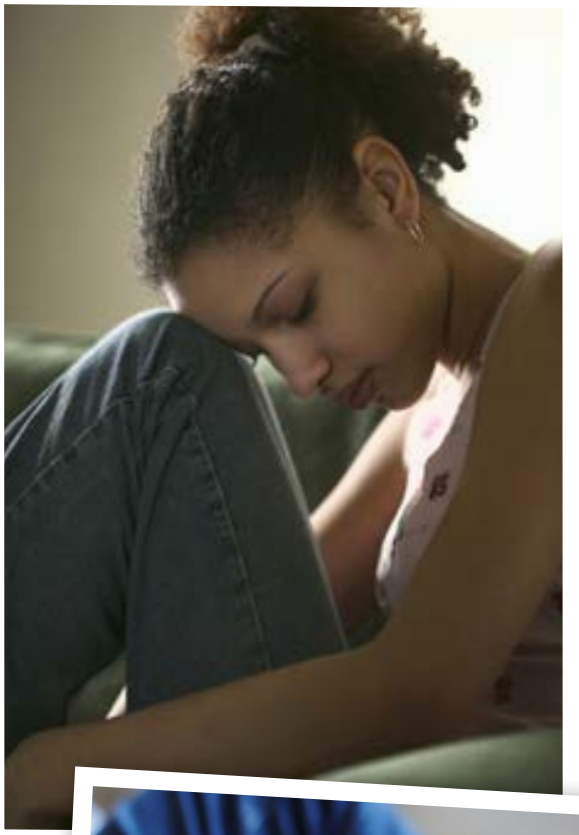
Young people expressed feeling suicidal in over 29,000 counselling sessions – a 33 per cent increase

Bullying and school/educational problems were talked about as issues that related directly to suicidal thoughts by one in five young people. Where young people were experiencing bullying, they described suicidal feelings in relation to being unable to cope, and believed that the bullying could not be stopped. The pressure and stress of exams and not being able to deal with failure was another reason young people wanted to escape, seeing suicide as their only option.

Top 3 **Suicidal issues is a top three concern for 16-18 year olds**

"I don't know why I am like this but one minute I feel like I want to die and the next minute I don't. I have my exams coming up soon and I'm really stressed and down. I feel like I am going to fail and people will be disappointed in me. I have been self-harming because I'm so angry and it helps me release everything. I'm scared I'm going to do something stupid." – Girl aged 16

"I've been depressed for a few years and can't cope. Things have gotten gradually worse and I feel so overwhelmed. I have spoken to my GP before and met with a psychologist but I just feel like it's a constant battle. I don't trust them and feel like they are trying to control me. They just tell me what to do and if I don't agree then they just do it anyway. I feel like killing myself is the only option to get away from how I'm feeling and be in control." – Girl aged 17





BULLYING



AN 87 PER CENT INCREASE IN ONLINE BULLYING

Bullying has always been a top concern for young people contacting ChildLine – and this was no different in 2012/13. During this period, 30,387 young people who were counselled cited bullying as their main concern. A further 14,379 mentioned bullying as an additional concern.

Therefore bullying was mentioned in 44,766 counselling sessions – an 8 per cent increase on 2011/12.

However, there was an 87 per cent increase for counselling about online bullying. 4,500 young people contacted ChildLine for support and advice on how to deal with being bullied via social networking sites, chat rooms, online gaming sites, or via their mobile phones.

Online bullying affects a slightly older age group when compared with other types of bullying. It is more widespread for 12-18 year olds, with 84 per cent of all contacts about online bullying being from this age group (16 per cent of contacts from children aged 11 and under).



69

per cent increase in young people experiencing racist bullying

66

per cent of bullying involved the young person being bullied about their appearance or 'being different'



AGE GROUP	ALL BULLYING	ONLINE BULLYING
12-18 years	72%	84%
11 and under	28%	16%

From December 2012, ChildLine began to monitor instances when young people specifically mentioned bullying that related to social networking sites, chat rooms or gaming sites. From December 2012 to March 2013, ChildLine heard from 1,098 young people who mentioned these platforms, a third of whom were aged 13 or 14.

As with previous years, ChildLine still finds that most bullying occurs in school, with 19,795 young people mentioning that the bullying happened there. 11 per cent of young people told ChildLine that they had felt too scared to tell anyone about the bullying, believing that speaking out would make things worse.

Nearly 8,500 young people said they'd actively sought help from a teacher at school. However, in too many cases, those same children told ChildLine they had been left feeling that little or nothing had been done to stop the bullying.

Of those young people who mentioned how long the bullying had been going on, nearly half said it was less than a year and that it was ongoing.

66 per cent of young people said they were being bullied about their physical appearance or for being different. This left young people feeling ashamed and too embarrassed to tell anyone about it.

Over 1,400 young people told ChildLine that they were experiencing racist bullying – a 69 per cent increase. A common theme was for young people to be called a "terrorist" or a "bomber", and to "go back to where they came from". These constant insults left many young people feeling upset, insecure and frustrated.

"My school is rubbish – I don't like going. I'm being bullied by a group of boys and I don't know why. I've tried my best to avoid them but they always come and find me to push and kick me around. I've spoken to my parents who came in and talked to my teacher but it was a waste of time. My teacher hasn't done anything to help, they've just told me to try and avoid them." – Boy aged 11

In nearly 20,000 counselling sessions the young person said the bullying happened in school.



"I used to be proud of my roots until I started getting bullied at school because I look different to everyone else in my year. They tell me to go back to where I came from and that I'm ugly or horrible to look at. I know they're trying to make me feel bad about myself and it's starting to work. I used to be confident but now I'm shy. My friends tell me to ignore it but it's really difficult not to care. I feel so down."
– Girl aged 13





"I feel really depressed and like I want to fade away. I have no one to talk to and no one understands what I'm going through. This girl has been sending me really horrible messages on the internet, telling me I should kill myself and that I am fat and ugly. Everyone tells me to ignore it, but it really upsets me that someone would say such awful things. I don't know what to do?" – Anon

ABUSE



In 2012/13, ChildLine was contacted nearly 32,890 times by children and young people who had experienced some form of abuse (be it physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or unspecified). 51 per cent of these contacts came from girls, 26 per cent boys and 23 per cent were contacts where the gender was unknown.

Abuse was also mentioned in a further 29,408 counselling sessions as an additional concern. This means that abuse was mentioned in a total of 62,296 counselling sessions.

"I am not happy at home. My brother is physically abusing me and my mum. I don't want to tell the police because my brother will lose his job. I don't care about myself but I am worried about mum. I don't think anything will sort out his behaviour."
– Boy aged 15



90

per cent of physical abuse involved a perpetrator who was a family member

PHYSICAL ABUSE – THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF ABUSE TALKED ABOUT BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Physical abuse represented 42 per cent of all abuse-related concerns. It was also the most common type of abuse talked about by boys, whereas for girls it was sexual abuse.

In almost half of physical abuse contacts, the young person also talked about their problems with family members. In 96 per cent of counselling session, the young person told ChildLine who was physically abusing them. Of these, 90 per cent said it was a family member.

Where the perpetrator was known, the young persons' father, mother or both parents were mentioned in 80 per cent of counselling.

6 per cent of young people told ChildLine they had sustained a serious injury and 18 per cent said the physical abuse had left a mark – a 5 per cent increase since 2011/12.

Physical abuse was proportionately more of an issue for children aged 11 and under, representing 9 per cent of contacts within this age group – compared to 6 per cent with 12-15 years olds, and 3 per cent with 16-18 year olds.

After self-harm, physical abuse was the main reason that young people contacted ChildLine with concerns for another child (1,496).

"I am really worried for my friend. My friend is being physically abused by her mum on a regular basis. She is not coping well and thinking of running away. I know she used to self-harm and has had suicidal thoughts. I don't know how to help her." – Girl, age unknown



"My mum and dad are hitting me – it's happening quite often and is really painful. I cry all the time. Maybe it's my fault they hit me" – Girl aged 10



SEXUAL ABUSE



Sexual abuse represented 38 per cent of all abuse-related counselling at ChildLine.

During 2012/13, ChildLine counselled 12,431 young people whose main reason for contacting ChildLine was sexual abuse. In a further 6,206 counselling sessions, sexual abuse was talked about as an issue related to another concern. This means that last year over 18,600 young people were counselled about this issue.

Girls were more likely to talk to us about sexual abuse and outnumbered boys by 2:1. Sexual abuse was the most common form of abuse for girls to speak to us about representing 41 per cent of total female abuse counselling, whereas for boys, physical abuse was the dominant abuse concern.

1,061
young people spoke of being sexually abused online





28
per cent increase in sexting

With the internet and smartphones becoming more ingrained in the lives of young people – it's not surprising that we've seen an increase in online abuse. In 2012/13, 1,061 young people specifically talked about online sexual abuse, with girls and 15 year olds being the most affected.

Often young people talked to ChildLine about being made to post sexually provocative images online, or share them via a mobile phone at the request of someone they had met online (often referred to as sexting).

This issue was talked about by 351 young people – an increase of 28 per cent from 2011/12. In the sexting category girls outnumbered boys by 9:1 and 75 per cent of young people discussing this matter were aged 12-15.

Grooming was another form of online sexual abuse talked about by 327 young people, with one in four telling ChildLine that they had been groomed online.

475 young people told ChildLine that they had been exposed to sexually explicit images or internet porn. Young people described how guilty and disgusted they felt about what they had seen and how they were extremely worried about getting into trouble for accessing these sites.

But although there are growing concerns about online sexual abuse – abuse within the family is still far more common.

Where the young person told ChildLine who the abuser was, nearly half (49 per cent) said the perpetrator was a family member. In over 4,650 contacts (46 per cent) young people said the abuser was an acquaintance and in only 660 (6 per cent) young people told us they were a stranger. Fathers represented the majority (21 per cent) of sexual abusers in the family, followed by mothers (5 per cent) and then uncles (4 per cent).

Over a quarter of young people (over 3,400 counselling sessions) who talked to us about sexual abuse described rape or penetrative sex.

Often, young people described this using terms such as 'touching' or 'being made to do things' rather than specifically referring to rape, particularly in the cases with younger children where the abuse was intrafamilial.

A third of all young people contacting ChildLine about sexual abuse had not told anyone about it – showing how difficult it is for children and young people to talk about sexual abuse and that far too many continue to suffer in silence.



49

per cent of sexual abuse contacts said the perpetrator was a family member

"I'm 17 and I recently sent pictures of me in my underwear and topless to someone I thought was a girl. It turns out it was actually a guy and he threatened to upload all my photos and show the photos to my family and friends unless I showed myself to him via live video messaging. I am so scared right now, I don't know what to do – is what he is doing illegal?" – Boy aged 17

"I'm having counselling at the moment to help me get over being sexually abused by my uncle. So far it's not helping. I'm regretting telling anyone because it's made things really tense at home. I just feel so down that I've considered ending my life." – Girl aged 16

"I really struggle to talk to anyone about being sexually abused. It happened for a few years so I feel like it took my childhood away. I feel really ashamed that it happened to me – I'm unable to cope. I want some support but I don't know what kind of support I need or what will even help. I just can't carry on like this." – Boy aged 17



ZIPIT
CHILDLINE'S FIRST PHONE APP

In October 2013, ChildLine launched its first app – Zipit. Developed with young people in response to NSPCC research, Zipit is designed to help them deal with the peer pressure to share explicit images.

The app features funny images to use in response to requests for naked pictures, advice for safe chat and a way to call ChildLine straight from the app. A landmark for ChildLine, Zipit has been warmly received by young people as of December we've had over 20,000 downloads.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE CONTACT CHILDLINE

Family relationship problems have consistently been one of the main reasons young people contact ChildLine – and it was no different in 2012/13. Family relationship problems can include issues such as parents' divorce and separation, arguments and conflict with family members, sibling rivalry and being a young carer.

During 2012/13 there were 35,154 young people counselled about family relationship problems as a main concern – and 50,936 more where these issues were mentioned as an additional concern. This means family relationship problems were mentioned in 86,090 counselling sessions.

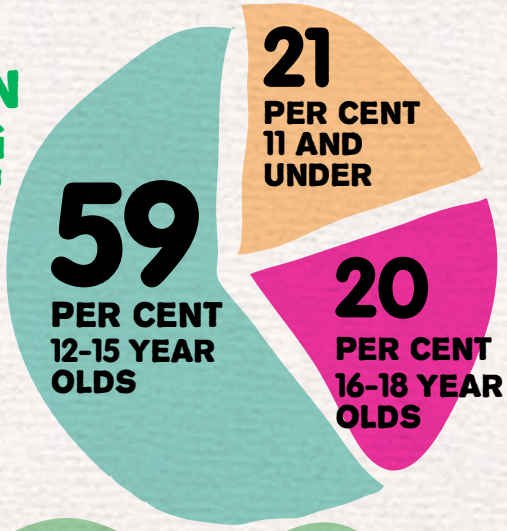
Of these, nearly 9 per cent of young people whose main concern was family relationships talked about emotional abuse and neglect.

What's more, 1,200 young people said they wanted to leave the family home or wanted to go into care.

One of the main related issues that saw the biggest increase was **parents' divorce and separation** - a 122 per cent increase (3,153).



AGE BREAKDOWN OF COUNSELLING ABOUT PARENTS' DIVORCE AND SEPARATION



122 per cent increase in contacts about parents' divorce or separation (3,153 contacts)

Depending on which stage of their parents' break up they were going through, young people experienced noticeably different emotions and issues.

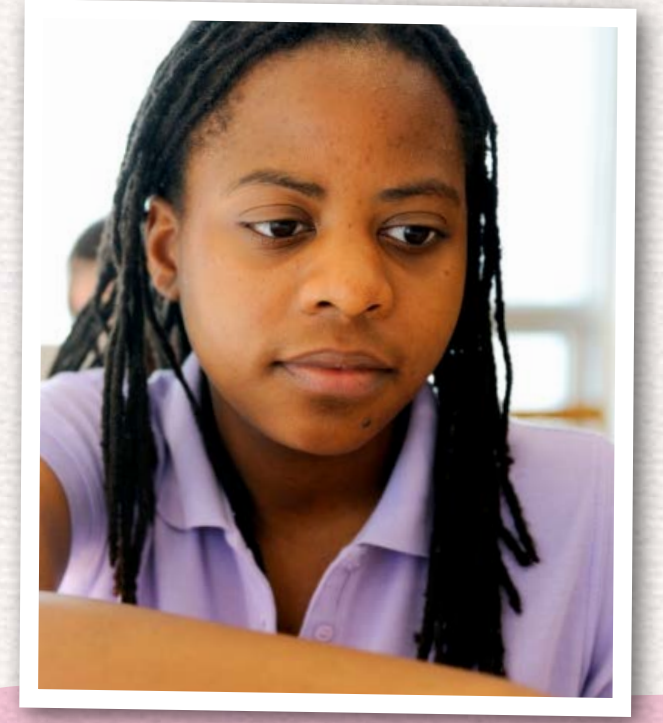
BEFORE THE BREAK-UP

Young people turned to ChildLine because they were scared about their parents breaking up. Many found it too difficult to communicate these concerns to their parents in case they made the situation worse. Often, their fears stemmed from overhearing parents constantly arguing and many young people were worried they might be to blame for their parents' arguments, thinking they had put stress on their parents' relationship.

DURING THE BREAK-UP

When they discovered their parents were splitting up, young people told ChildLine they felt shocked, worried and insecure about what was going on. Many described their anxieties about what they felt would happen to them – worrying about where they would live and how the breakup of their family unit would affect them and their siblings.

Many didn't want to 'take sides' and have to choose who to live with. Others felt very upset at the thought of having to leave their family home or neighbourhood and move away from their school and friends.



"I am really scared my parents are going to split up. They argue all the time over the smallest little things. When they argue I just go up to my room and sit on my own. Sometimes I just cry because I am so upset to hear them shouting at each other. I don't think they understand how they are affecting me when they argue." – Girl aged 12

Where young people were involved in custody battles, many were unsure of their legal rights and wanted to know whether they could influence decision-making.

Some talked about the stress of court proceedings going on for months and expressed how they felt they did not have a voice in the decisions that were being made about their lives.

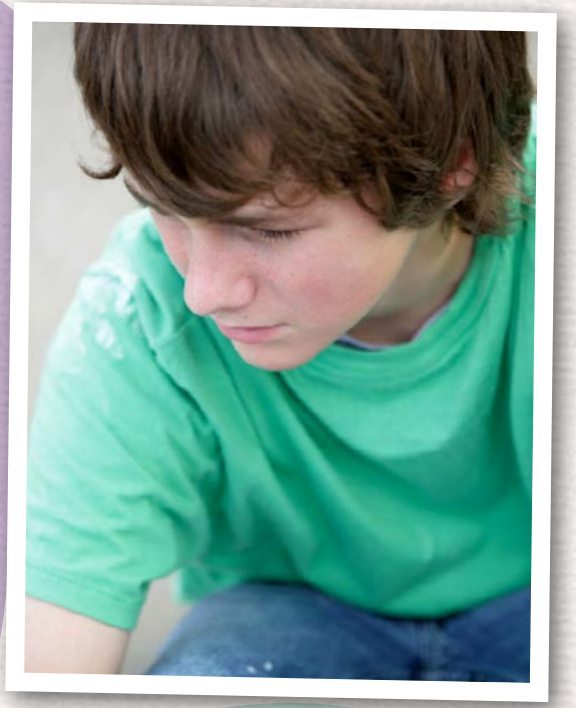
AFTER THE BREAK-UP

The emotional distress children and young people experience doesn't always end when their parents' divorce or separation is finalised.

Often, many struggle to cope with their feelings for years afterwards. In some cases, young people are concerned about the amount their parents are drinking after a break-up, and the effect this has on their lives. In 2012/13, ChildLine dealt with 3,930 contacts from young people who were concerned about their parents' drinking. This was almost twice as many as in 2011/12.



"My mum and dad are going through a divorce at the moment. Dad's already left and I haven't seen him for a while, which makes me feel sad. My mum told me we are going to have to move and I feel really weird about it because I have lived here all my life. I know we have to move but I am finding it really hard and keep getting upset." – Boy aged 11



"I can't do anything right. I found out about something my mum was doing and I told my dad about it. I feel like I wrecked the family because they split up after this. Dad drinks a lot now and leaves me on my own. I feel like he's not coping and doesn't take any interest in me anymore. I have started to self-harm because I feel like I deserve to be punished." – Girl aged 15

Another key theme, both during and after separation, was young people feeling torn between their parents. They commonly mentioned the pressure they felt to treat both parents equally, and they felt guilty if they were spending more time with one rather than the other. This was particularly stressful in cases where the family breakdown was not amicable.

When this happened, young people felt particularly upset and angry that they were continuing to be caught in the middle of their parents' conflicts.

Some talked about feeling neglected by one of their parents in the aftermath of divorce. Often the child felt abandoned, feeling that their parent was making no effort to maintain any kind of relationship with them.

In cases where their parent had moved in with a new partner, young people often struggled to adjust to this new set-up – particularly if this partner had children of their own. They often felt unable to cope with the idea of their parent being with someone else, and seeing this new family as a barrier to having a good relationship with their parent.



"I was eight when my parents divorced so I wasn't given a choice as to who I could live with, I live at my mum's. I feel so sorry for my dad – I watched my mum chuck him out of the house and he left without a proper goodbye. I didn't see him for months – not even over Christmas. I hated my mum for chucking him out at the time and now all mum and I do is argue." – Girl aged 13

DEPRESSION AND UNHAPPINESS



THE TOP MAIN CONCERN IN 2012/13

In 2012, ChildLine introduced a new concern category – depression and unhappiness – in order to better represent young people who'd contacted ChildLine for support with how they were feeling. This category includes feeling sad, low mood, lonely, low self-esteem, confidence or body image issues.

These are issues that have not yet become so severe that they can be classified as severe depression or a mental health issue, but research shows that poor emotional wellbeing in childhood can result in more serious mental health problems developing later on in life.

Therefore it is crucial that we help young people identify the underlying issues before they escalate into something much more serious.

In 2012/13, this new category was the top concern overall with 35,941 counselling sessions about this issue as a main concern, and a further 51,918 where it was mentioned as an additional concern – a total of 87,859 counselling sessions.

This was also the top concern for girls, and for young people aged 16-18 (where age was known).

There are clear connections between young people's wellbeing and other issues in their lives – such as family relationship issues, money problems, school pressures and bullying.

Young people also talked about self-harming and feeling suicidal – both of which feature in the top five additional concerns where depression and unhappiness was the main concern.

TOP FIVE ADDITIONAL CONCERNS	PERCENTAGE OF DEPRESSION AND UNHAPPINESS AS MAIN CONCERN
Family relationships	17%
Self-harm	10%
School or education problems	10%
Bullying/ online-bullying	6%
Suicidal issues	5%

87,859

counselling sessions were about depression and unhappiness

FEELINGS

ChildLine records the feelings expressed by young people during their counselling sessions. In 2012/13, the most common feeling expressed by young people was upset or the young person was tearful during the call. This was followed by feeling worried, scared, angry and then sad.

STRESS AND ANXIETY

ChildLine heard from 20,753 young people who were struggling with feelings of stress and anxiety. School and exam pressures were one of the biggest causes. This was mirrored by the fact that in 2012/13, ChildLine carried out 30,429 counselling sessions with young people who mentioned school and education problems, a 17 per cent increase from 2011/12.

"It has taken me weeks to build up the courage to talk to ChildLine. I suffer from really bad anxiety because of things that happened to me in the past. I was abused when I was younger and never got any support. I want to be able to move on with my life and understand what I want to do in the future but it's so hard." – Girl aged 17

FEELINGS	TOTAL FEMALE	TOTAL MALE	TOTAL UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Upset/tearful	18,207	3,901	7,521	29,629
Worried	14,795	3,412	7,396	25,603
Scared	15,112	2,781	6,823	24,716
Angry	9,084	3,071	4,835	16,990
Sad	6,939	1,640	4,094	12,673



SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND BODY IMAGE ISSUES

13,257 contacts came from young people looking for support with their low self-esteem, confidence and body image issues. Young people found it hard to find anything positive to say about their skills, achievements or how they looked, comparing themselves unfavourably to their peers.

Those with low self-esteem expressed how hard they found it to cope with pressures from school, peers and society. This led to many young people needlessly hiding themselves away from society – rarely leaving their bedrooms, going out or socialising.

"I feel so sad. I am really ugly and feel like nobody wants to talk to me. I have really awful skin and have tried everything to make it go away but nothing works. My friends are all perfect and I wish I was like them. I can't think of anything I like about myself." – Girl aged 16

"I am so stressed out. I have run into loads of debt and I don't know what to do now. I owe the bank loads of money and have massive bills to pay. I took out a loan to pay some of this back but I have been unable to keep up with the payments. I don't know what's going to happen." – Boy aged 18

MONEY PROBLEMS

Young people mentioned money problems in 3,000 contacts (a 40 per cent increase over 2011/12). 69 per cent of these came from young people aged 16-18, with the most represented age being 18.

One in three talked about how their financial difficulties were adversely affecting their emotional wellbeing or mental health. What's more, research by another young people's charity – Youth Net – supports this, suggesting that a quarter of 16-24 year olds have suffered mental health issues because of their finances.

Young people talked about how they were struggling to find work, meet their financial responsibilities or afford to buy food and pay bills. Many on benefits found the amount they received noticeably less than what they needed to live on.

Often this led to young people getting themselves into debt and taking out loans as a temporary solution – sometimes leading to their debt problems escalating further.

COMPLIMENTS PAGE

ChildLine could not exist without the generosity and dedication of our wonderful volunteers. The following quotes from young people illustrate the impact this invaluable support has made to their young lives.

"I just wanted to say thank you for all your help ChildLine. Whenever I call you make me feel special because you always listen to me. I feel much more able to cope with things now but I know I can contact you whenever I need to."

"I've been really stressed with my exams so I called ChildLine. The tips given to me were great and have helped so much. Thank you for listening to me, I'm really grateful and feel so much better now. Thank you!"

"I have used ChildLine a lot, so I just wanted to say thank you. I'm much happier and more confident now. I finally feel like I'm making the most out of my life."

"After speaking to a ChildLine counsellor I feel so much better. I followed the advice I was given and it's helped improve things. Thank you for doing such a great job."

"The advice I got from ChildLine was amazing. I'd never used it before so I just want to say thank you for all your help, you're a great organisation."

"ChildLine has helped me through loads for a long time now. It's such an amazing service. Thank you."

"Thank you for the helpful chats ChildLine. You always say such great things, and it's true that there's always someone there to listen – you're always there when I need you, and I feel better knowing that."

"Without ChildLine I wouldn't be here now. I've told my family about my self-harming. They're really supporting me with it. Thank you for giving me the courage to talk about it."

"Well done for being so helpful ChildLine, I really appreciate everything you have helped me with."

"Thank you ChildLine. I'm not used to people being nice to me, but with ChildLine I know that someone will listen to me, so maybe someone does care."

"I feel less alone knowing ChildLine is there. Whenever I contact, I always get the encouragement and support that I need. I feel like I've gained so much from the advice you give me. Thank you."

"I want to thank ChildLine for saving my life. If you hadn't have called me an ambulance I don't know what would have happened. I'm out of hospital now and feeling fine."

"Thank you ChildLine, I'm feeling much better after calling you. The suggestions you gave me to help deal with being bullied were great. I've now spoken about it to other people and it's really helped."

"I always feel better about myself after I've talked to ChildLine. It's like one big family where I can speak my mind knowing I won't be judged."

"Thank you for the support you've given me ChildLine. I finally feel confident enough to get help from people around me - they're all being great."

"Thank you for giving me some really good resources to help with my issues ChildLine. I feel like everyone's leaving me so I'm running out of people I can turn to for support, but I always know you're there."

"Before contacting ChildLine I felt really nervous about speaking to a counsellor, but I'm so glad I called. I feel so much better now I've talked to someone about my problems. Thank you."

"I just wanted to say thank you for the help I received from ChildLine last week. I followed the advice of the counsellor and spoke to someone about the problems I was having. Everything has been sorted out now so thank you."

"I really appreciate all the support ChildLine has given me. I've finally gained the confidence to confide in my parents who are really helping me cope with all my problems. I don't feel as depressed now."

"I think ChildLine's really useful. I know whenever I'm ready to talk about my problems you'll be there."

"Whenever I feel like I'm running out of options I speak to ChildLine - They understand so it makes me feel much happier. Thank you."

"I just wanted to say thank you for the support you gave me yesterday. I wasn't in a good way but you gave me the courage to speak to my family which has helped me deal with it all. I'm in a much better place now so thank you. Carry on doing a great job of helping those who need it."

During the course of the year, ChildLine will produce a number of reports looking in more depth at what children and young people are telling us about their experiences. These will aim to highlight trends in areas of concern for children and young people today.

Wherever we have used quotes from young people, names and potentially identifying details have been changed to protect their identity.

ChildLine is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline and online service for children. Trained volunteer counsellors comfort, advise and protect children and young people. Calls to ChildLine are confidential, but if a child is in immediate danger the counsellor will let the caller know if they have to break confidentiality and contact the emergency services to save the child's life.

Children and young people can contact ChildLine 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year on 0800 1111 and at www.childline.org.uk

For any enquiries please contact us at childlinebusinesssupportteam@nspcc.org.uk

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ChildLine 0800 1111