

[News story: New alliance to boost confidence in reporting child abuse](#)

A new phase in a campaign to tackle child abuse and neglect has been launched today (Thursday 15 March), as new research reveals the extent of public confidence in reporting child abuse or neglect.

According to [new analysis](#) from YouGov, more than a quarter (26 per cent) of adults surveyed said they had worried about the welfare, neglect or abuse of a child, of which over two-fifths (42 per cent) did not report their suspicions to someone with child protection responsibilities.

Minister for Children and Families Nadhim Zahawi said:

Keeping children safe from harm is everyone's responsibility. It is important people voice their concerns, no matter how small they think they are.

I hope that through the launch of this campaign, we improve people's confidence in spotting the signs of abuse or neglect, so that they feel empowered to report them. Any information passed on to professionals could be the difference between a child living a happy life, or facing the trauma of abuse or neglect.

The campaign is being delivered with the support of the Local Government Association and many participating local councils, as well as police forces, community organisations and the voluntary sector across the country.

Among parents of under 16s questioned by YouGov, almost a third (31 per cent) had worried about a child's welfare, or about abuse or neglect of a child in their local area, but just over half (57 per cent) went on to take any action to raise their concerns.

Overall, 24 per cent of those parents who had concerns and took action had tackled the situation directly, 69 per cent had sought advice and 16 per cent had reported their concerns to a professional, suggesting there is more to be done to help build public confidence in knowing when and how to report a case of suspected abuse.

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker, said:

The public may be nervous about reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, but people don't have to be absolutely certain about whether a child is being abused. If you have a feeling that something's not right, talk to the local children's social care team who will look into it.

Information is usually gathered from many sources, and any individual's report would form one part of a bigger picture – but the public, especially parents, can provide vital information we can act on.

The launch of the campaign is being supported by LBC radio, through a series of daily broadcasts featuring different voices discussing child protection. On Friday 16 March, Minister Zahawi will round up the week of interviews by discussing the campaign and its aims.

- Inform the public about the different types of child abuse and neglect;
- Educate people on how to spot the signs; and
- Reassure people on how the reporting process works as well as supporting them through it.

In 2016/17, more than [400,000 children](#) in England were supported because someone noticed they needed help – and in around half of these cases related specifically to abuse and neglect.

If members of the public are worried about a child they can visit a new dedicated campaign page: [tacklechildabuse](#) to get the contact number for their local council, the NSPCC Helpline number 0808 800 5000 or the Police.

Barnardo's Chief Executive Javed Khan said:

Keeping children safe from harm is at the heart of Barnardo's work – last year alone, our child sexual exploitation services saw a 38 per cent increase in referrals for support. But actually it's everybody's business which is why the Department for Education's 'Together we can tackle child abuse' campaign is so important in raising awareness.

Children may not disclose their own abuse so it's vital that adults – including parents, family members, carers and teachers – are vigilant and take action if they suspect a child may be being harmed.

Our UK-wide specialist workers see first-hand how sexual abuse damages young lives. The charity's Be Safe guide is a useful tool to help spot the signs of grooming and sexual exploitation but you don't have to be certain to report any concerns. Don't worry about being wrong; if you think a child might be in danger, please tell someone.

Matthew Reed, Chief Executive at The Children's Society, said:

No child, whether they are in their teenage years or of pre-school

age should have to suffer the pain of abuse or neglect.

The Children's Society's research has found that young people experiencing neglect are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives, pessimistic about their futures and lacking in confidence in their abilities.

Spotting the signs that something is wrong isn't just a matter for professionals who work with the children, it's everyone's responsibility. It is better for anyone to report concerns that eventually prove to be unfounded than to fail to speak out when a child may be at risk.

David Derbyshire, Director of Safeguarding at Action for Children, said:

The safeguarding of children is really everyone's business; the challenge for all communities is to have the courage to speak up and speak out whenever we are worried a child might be abused or neglected.

Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said:

Child abuse is an appalling crime, and helping to protect vulnerable children is one of the most important challenges that councils tackle every day.

We will always encourage people to refer any concerns about children to their local authority as soon as possible, so that the situation can be investigated, and support or immediate protection put in place where necessary.

Councils have a child referred to them every 49 seconds on a daily basis, but councils too often only hear about problems once they've become serious. We would urge people to pick up the phone whenever they suspect a child may need support or protection, so that councils can help that child or family access the support they need as soon as possible.