

NSPCC

NSPCC

How to refer

To refer a child or young person to Letting the Future In, or to find out more about the programme, contact:

Need advice?

If you're worried about a child, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline 24/7 for help, advice and support.

Call **0808 800 5000**, text **88858**,
email **help@nspcc.org.uk** or
visit **nspcc.org.uk/helpline**



Letting the Future In

A guide for professionals

Letting the Future In is a therapeutic service for children and young people aged 4-17 who have been sexually abused.

Children and young people who have been abused can feel confused and upset about what's happened to them but having the chance to explore their thoughts and feelings can be really helpful.

Who's it for?

The service is for children and young people aged 4-17 years who have been impacted by sexual abuse and are happy to be referred to the programme. Referrals can also be made for children and young people with mild or moderate learning disabilities up until the age of 19. Referrals are usually accepted for children and young people after an investigation into the allegations of sexual abuse has taken place.

The child or young person should be living in a stable environment with a parent or carer, and not with the alleged perpetrator. The parent or carer will be involved in the programme and offered individual support and joint sessions with their child. Siblings who require support may also be provided with a service. For most families, this lasts between six and ten months.

What happens during the sessions?

During the first few sessions the practitioner will talk to the child or young person to get to know them and understand what help they need. They'll also meet the parents or carers separately to understand their needs and answer any questions they might have. The practitioner will invite the child or young person into a safe therapeutic space and engage with them through activities like messy play, writing, storytelling and art.

These activities aim to help them explore their experiences and express feelings without reliving the trauma. Some children and young people may be able to talk about the impact of abuse and work with the practitioner to resolve any ongoing issues.

Over time, children and young people feel less afraid, more able to cope, and hopeful for the future.

After three to six sessions the Letting the Future In practitioner will meet with the parent or carer and the child or young person. They'll decide if the child or young person needs continued support and what they should focus on during future sessions.

What are the aims of the programme?

For every child or young person, the aim is to:

- provide a child-centred service which helps the child or young person to explore the impact of the abuse and resolve or cope better with any ongoing issues
- strengthen their relationships with their siblings and parents or carers ensuring they are supported as they recover from the abuse
- help parents and carers understand the impact of sexual abuse on their child or young so that they are better able to respond to their needs.



How this service can help

Between 2011 and 2016, Letting the Future In was evaluated in the largest randomised control trial of its kind. This evaluation showed that the service can significantly reduce the highest levels of trauma experienced by children aged eight and over who have been sexually abused and demonstrated promising findings for younger children. Letting the Future In has been recommended in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guideline on child abuse and neglect.

