

PEN PICTURE: Speak out Stay Safe: NSPCC Schools Service

Our experience in delivering ChildLine shows us that most children who contact the helpline for advice and support are over the age of 11. For many of these children, who talk about the abuse and harm they have suffered, their experiences started at a much earlier age, but many of them did not know who to turn to, nor had the confidence and understanding of how to get help.

Sadly, that pattern and presentation of contact has not changed significantly over the last 30 years. With this first-hand experience of dealing with the impact of abuse on children and young people, NSPCC Schools Service seeks to reach out to younger children in order to make sure they have this understanding at an earlier age and that they get advice and support when they need it.

With the help of our mascot Buddy, the programme provides child-friendly, interactive assemblies and workshops to help children understand abuse in all its forms, recognise the signs of abuse, know how to protect themselves from all forms of abuse and crucially know how to get help, and the sources of help available to them, including ChildLine. These messages are delivered through an assembly for all children from P1, with additional workshops for P6 and P7 classes.

The *Speak Out Stay Safe* programme is delivered at no cost to the school although some schools then decide to fundraise to support the work of the NSPCC. *Speak Out Stay Safe* can help schools fulfil several of the requirements of the Rights Respecting Schools Award, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. Working alongside the four capacities in the Curriculum for Excellence, particularly as part of health and wellbeing programmes.

An important part of *Speak Out Stay Safe* is that NSPCC staff are supported in the delivery by over 100 committed local volunteers working throughout Scotland. Volunteers are trained and supported to offer a high standard of delivery.

Moira is one of our volunteers. This is what she says about being part of our team.

"My favourite part of volunteering is working with the children. I really enjoy interacting with them and seeing how they engage and enjoy the deliveries, whilst learning about an extremely important issue. They never fail to surprise me with their answers and their maturity in discussing difficult issues. I still get nervous before a delivery, particularly with an assembly, however, I have found my confidence has improved with experience and a better knowledge of the materials. I look forward to volunteering for the NSPCC School Service for many years to come"

More about *Speak Out Stay Safe*: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/working-with-schools/speak-out-stay-safe-service/>