

NSPCC football abuse hotline receives 800 calls in one week



The NSPCC's dedicated hotline launched to offer support to victims of child sex abuse within the world of football has received more than 800 calls within one week of opening.

And in the first few days of opening, helpline staff made three times more referrals to the police and other agencies than during the first few days of the Savile scandal.

The football helpline was set up with support and funding of the Football Association after former footballer Andy Woodward revealed he had been abused as a young athlete at Crewe Alexandra Football Club, and more professional players subsequently came forward.

Within two hours of the helpline opening on Wednesday November 23, it received 50 contacts from members of the public, and in the first week 860 calls were made.

Within the first three days of lines being open, NSPCC staff made 60 referrals to police or children's services. This is more than triple the number of referrals made in the first three days of the NSPCC's Savile helpline opening in 2012.

NSPCC chief executive Peter Wanless said: "The number of high profile footballers bravely speaking out about their ordeal has rightly caught the attention of the entire country.

"We have had a staggering surge in calls to our football hotline which reveals the worrying extent of abuse that had been going on within the sport.

“Anyone who wants to contact us can do so in confidence, with the knowledge they will be listened to and supported. In future footballers – both young players and former athletes – must have the confidence to open up about sexual abuse and feel able to come forward.”

The NSPCC offers [advice](#) for parents on talking to their children about abuse and advice for parents on child safeguarding in sports clubs such as questions to ask the club about child protection measures in place.

The NSPCC’s football abuse helpline can be contacted 24 hours a day on 0800 023 2642.