

# Voices

of Children and Young People in the EU

Child Helpline Data 2018



**Special focus:**  
**Children & Young People in Migration**

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## Child Helpline Data 2018

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## Disclaimer

The data presented in this report was obtained through Child Helpline International's annual data survey, and reported as collected and submitted by our child helpline members. We received data relating to the year of 2018 from 27 child helplines in 25 countries of the European Union. Data presented and statements made do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level. The exact data can be requested from Child Helpline International.

Child Helpline International's work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children's right to privacy and protection from harm. To preserve the trust and confidence children and young people place in child helplines every day, any personal details cited in case summaries has been altered and anonymised.

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## Foreword ≡

Child Helpline International is a collective impact organisation with 173 members from helplines for children and young people in 142 countries and territories around the world. We coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our members, and from our partners and other external sources. This exceptional resource is used to help and support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally. It also helps our members to advocate for the rights of children and young people and amplify their voices.

Our members have a **unique insight into the direct experiences of children and young people on a larger scale than many other organisations**. They work with a range of national partners and referral agencies to ensure that children and young people receive the support they need to thrive. They also have oversight of where services are missing or failing children and young people. The **value of child helplines' data on contacts from children and young people cannot be overstated** in informing and guiding policy, learning and practice.

In this report we showcase the data on contacts made during the year 2018 that we have collected from our child helpline members across the European Union. Children and young people continue to contact helplines about issues ranging from abuse to bullying, with questions about sexuality and sexual awareness, and with concerns about family and peer relationships. However, the key finding of this report is that, within the EU, **more than one third** of the contacts made by children and young people relate to **psychosocial and mental health**. It is therefore essential that child helplines are supported and equipped to deal with the large number of these cases. Every child has a voice, and we must ensure that we listen to each and every one of them.



Patrick Krens  
Executive Director  
Child Helpline International



**“Child helplines have a unique insight into the direct experiences of children and young people on a larger scale than many other organisations.”**

# Introduction ≡

Every child and young person has the right to be heard, the right to protection and the right to access essential services, free from bias or other barriers. **Child helplines play a critical role in the promotion and realisation of children's rights globally**, as they provide a safe, low threshold, and an accessible platform for children and young people across the globe to receive the support they need through immediate counselling and referral services.

Through quality data and first-hand insight into the issues most affecting children's lives, child helplines have the **immense capacity to advocate for children's rights and wellbeing** in specific contexts and globally.

The fact remains that children's lives play out in a broad social context where a myriad of factors shape their lives and rights. This demands the participation and commitment of governments and other key actors in collaboration with child helplines.

We call on governments, children's rights actors, the ICT industry, child helplines and the general public to **ensure accessibility, high quality service and sustainability of child helplines everywhere**. We call on all relevant actors to build partnerships that facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange and strong networks that children and young people can access in their everyday lives and at times of crisis. We call on governments and policy makers to **listen to the views and needs of children and young people**, and to **take decisive action on the issues they raise**.



A multi-sectoral approach involving support and long-term funding of the priorities laid out in our key recommendations will contribute to the eradication of all violence against children as mandated in Sustainable Development Goal 16.2. Such an approach will strengthen children's rights as safeguarded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and strengthen the child helplines that children and young people rely upon. It will protect and more importantly **empower children and young people** across the globe to access support where and when needed, and to be agents of change in their lives and the lives of others.

Let's ensure that every child's right to be heard is realised, and that every child helpline has access to the resources and global network they need to help **make universal children's rights a reality**.

## Key recommendations

We make four key recommendations stemming from our collected data, and from our experience as a global network. These recommendations are designed to ensure that children's rights and wellbeing are protected across the world through the work of child helplines.

### **#1: Every child should have free and unrestricted access to helpline services.**

National governments and the ICT sector should support children's rights by facilitating the reach and accessibility of child helplines to all children and young people in their country. Support should be made available to raise awareness of child helplines in a child-friendly manner that ensures children and young people know how to use helpline services and what they can expect.

**#2: Enhance the quality and sustainability of child helplines, so that they can do their crucial work to ensure children's rights.** Child helplines require reliable long-term funding to sustain and improve their activities. They should receive funding and support towards the implementation of good practices such as data analysis, trainings and contingency plans.

**#3: Enhance structured partnerships, as they have a crucial role in eradicating violence against all children.** Governments, child protection agencies and thematic expert organisations should work with child helplines to build a highly integrated service network. In doing so, it is important to consider the diverse needs of children and young people. Vulnerable and under-represented groups of children and young people stand to benefit from increased coordination among child helplines and other actors.

**#4: The voices of children, gathered through child helpline data and youth participation, should inform policy and decision-making that affects children's lives.** Children's voices should not only play a role in shaping child helpline services, but should inform decision-making at the highest levels.

# Why children and young people contacted child helplines in the EU in 2018 ≡

Child helplines collect anonymous data on the contacts they receive from children, young people and concerned adults on a daily basis. This includes, for example, the reason for contact, age and gender of the child, and the method of contact (telephone, website, etc.).

**Total number of contacts** received in 2018 by child helplines in the EU who provided data to Child Helpline International.

This includes requests for information, missed calls, silent calls, prank calls and abusive calls.

**2 121 853**

**Total number of counselling contacts** received in 2018 by child helplines in the EU who provided data to Child Helpline International.

This represents 58.9% of the total contacts.

**1 268 995**

**“...Most children who contacted child helplines in the EU in 2018 expressed concerns related to psychosocial and mental health...”**

## Gender analysis

Our data suggest that girls are more likely to contact child helplines in the EU than boys – 55% of contacts were made by girls, compared to 32.5% by boys. The gender of 11.8% of the callers was not identified.

It is interesting to note that boys seem slightly more likely than girls to make contact to discuss concerns related to sexuality and sexual awareness. Furthermore, it is in this particular category that we also observe the highest number of contacts from children and young people whose gender identification is non-binary. This is three to four times higher than in the other categories.

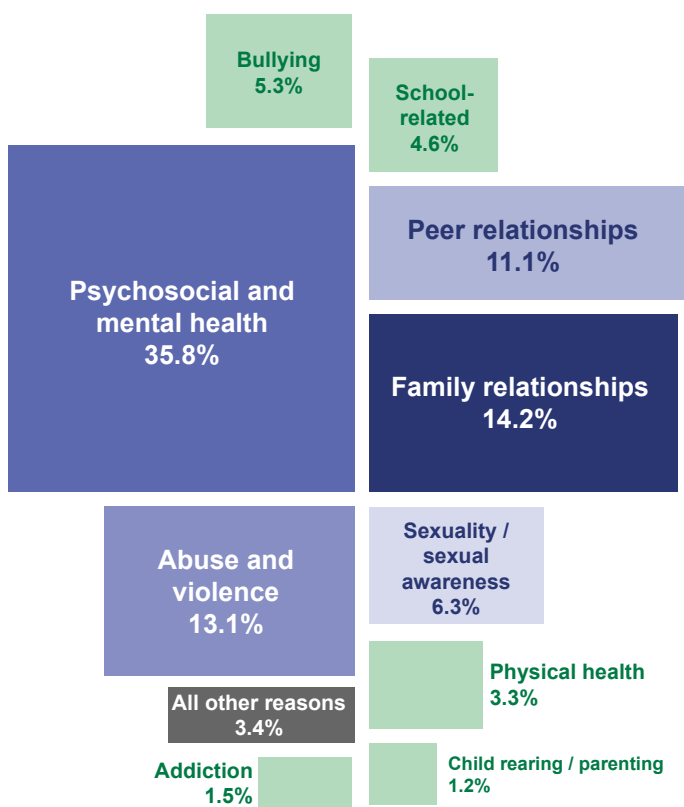
## European Union Child Helpline Data 2018

We survey our child helpline members every year to get a comprehensive regional and global picture of issues facing children and young people. We received data from 28 child helplines in 26 European Union Member States in the year 2018, when our members provided **counselling services** to **1 268 995 contacts**.

The table below shows the numbers of *all* contacts received in each Member State, and the percentage of the EU as a whole that this number represents.

Child helplines	(No.)	Total contacts	%
Spain	1	444 393	21.0
United Kingdom	2	265 718	12.5
Poland	1	238 823	11.3
Lithuania	1	161 336	7.6
France	1	102 611	4.8
Germany	1	102 521	4.8
Romania	1	101 340	4.8
Netherlands	1	91 653	4.3
Denmark	1	80 032	3.8
Belgium	1	75 342	3.6
Slovakia	1	67 685	3.2
Ireland	1	61 926	2.9
Greece	2	59 887	2.8
Sweden	1	56 853	2.7
Austria	1	56 793	2.7
Hungary	1	35 183	1.7
Italy	1	30 261	1.4
Latvia	1	27 474	1.3
Finland	1	21 680	1.0
Slovenia	1	20 847	1.0
Iceland	1	6 235	0.3
Malta	1	6 165	0.3
Croatia	1	3 975	0.2
Portugal	1	2 112	0.1
Luxembourg	1	987	0.05
Cyprus	1	21	0.001
		2 121 853	

### Reasons for contact



*Expressed as a percentage of total counselling contacts.*

Most children (or concerned adults or peers) who contacted child helplines in the EU in 2018 expressed concerns related to **psychosocial and mental health**. The child helplines recorded more than twice as many contacts related to mental health compared to **family relationships**, the second largest reason for making contact. Issues of **abuse and violence** were also important reasons why children and concerned adults contacted child helplines in the EU in 2018. Other main reasons for contact included questions about **peer relationships** and **sexuality and/or sexual awareness**.



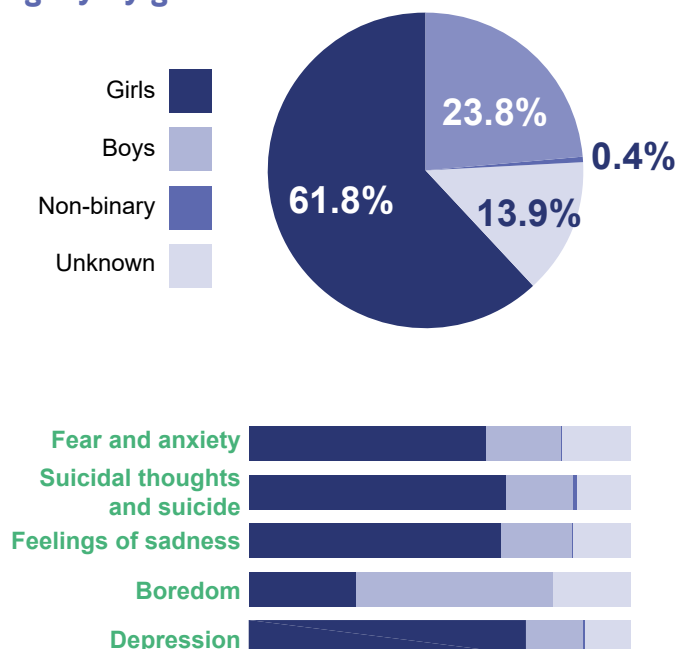
## Psychosocial and mental health

Our child helpline members in the EU responded to **454 317 contacts** on issues regarding **psychosocial and mental health**. This represents 35.8% of all of the contacts in the EU who received counselling.

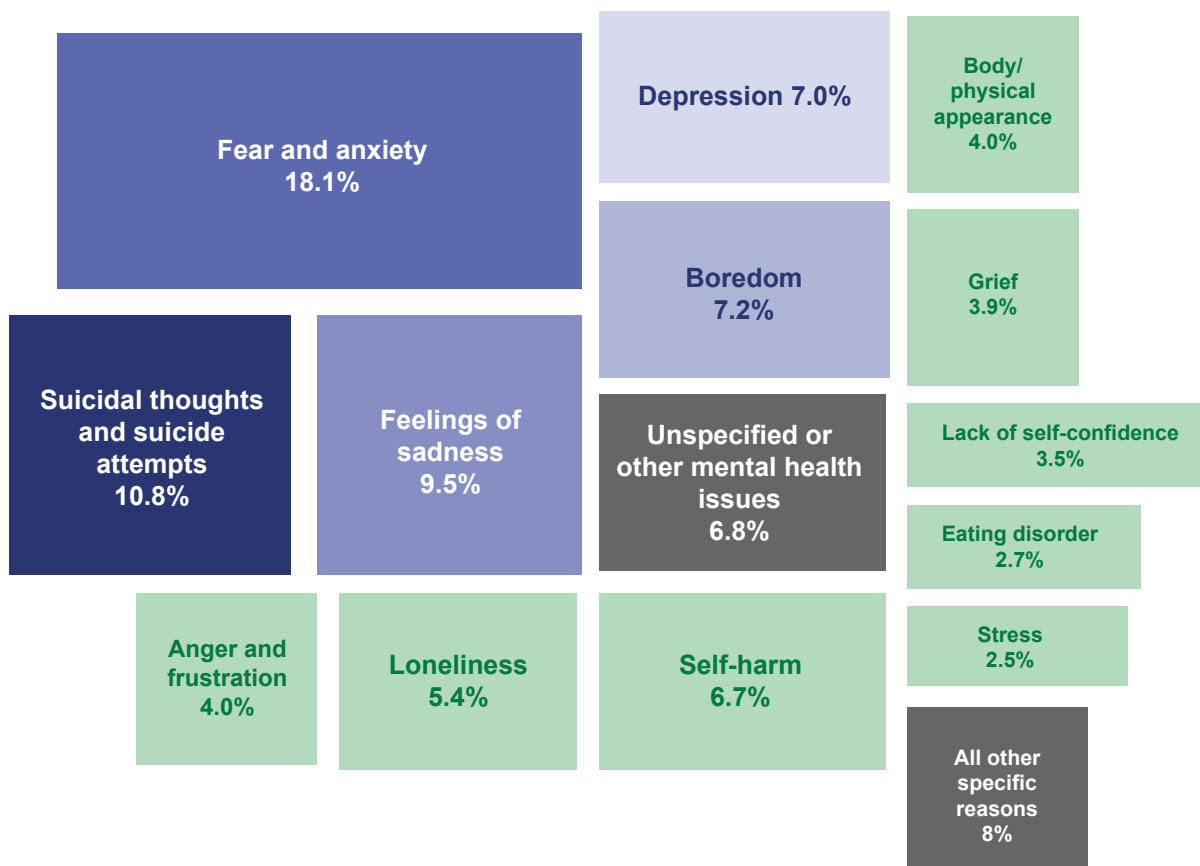
Most of the contacts related to psychosocial and mental health concerned **fear and anxiety** with 18.1% of the contacts, followed by **suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** with 10.8% of contacts. Forms of emotional distress, such as **feelings of sadness, boredom** and **depression**, were among the other main reasons why children and young people dealing with psychosocial and mental health issues contacted the child helplines.

When a contact concerned anxiety or mood problems, it was more likely that the child or young person was a girl rather than a boy. However, when the contact was about boredom, it was more likely that the child or young person was a boy.

### Category by gender



### Psychosocial and mental health: Reasons for making contact



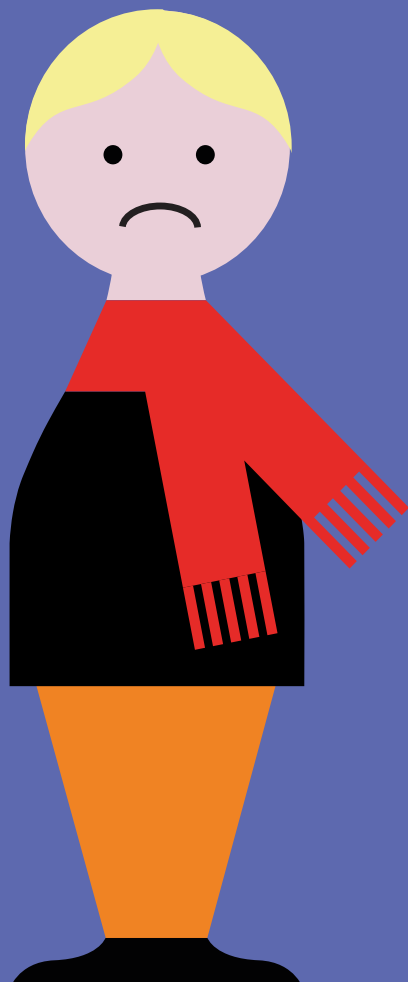


## Case studies: Psychosocial and mental health

### "Smoking leaves no scar, so nobody sees when I'm not doing okay..."

A 13-year-old girl's father had physically and verbally abused his family for years. Her parents divorced, but the girl's relationship with her mother was so bad she decided to go back and live with her father. He continued to be physically abusive. The girl was receiving psychiatric treatment because of self-harming and several suicide attempts. She felt guilty about the self-harming, and because it drew attention to her plight she had started to smoke instead.

The counsellor created an understanding and empathic environment during the call, and encouraged the girl to keep trusting the professional support she was already receiving. Because the girl was so overwhelmed, the counsellor asked for her personal details so that law enforcement and child protection services could get in touch and follow-up on her precarious situation. The counsellor reassured her that the child helpline was always there for her when she wanted to talk to someone.



### "I get so angry when I lose a game, I break things..."

A 12-year-old boy called the child helpline because he had a problem controlling his temper. He loved playing the video game 'Fortnite' but got very annoyed whenever he lost a game. He had recently broken some of his belongings in a rage, and his parents had been very upset with him. They threatened to take his game away, and the boy felt his parents didn't understand how important it was to him. He told the child helpline counsellor that he wanted to find ways of managing to control his emotions better.

The counsellor gave the boy the opportunity to talk about his experiences and how he was feeling, and together they discussed different strategies he could try in order to cope with those situations when he started to feel angry. The counsellor encouraged the boy to talk more with his parents, explaining to them why the game was important to him, and what it was that was upsetting him. The counsellor suggested that he asked his parents to help him find ways of coping with his emotions, and not simply take the game away from him.

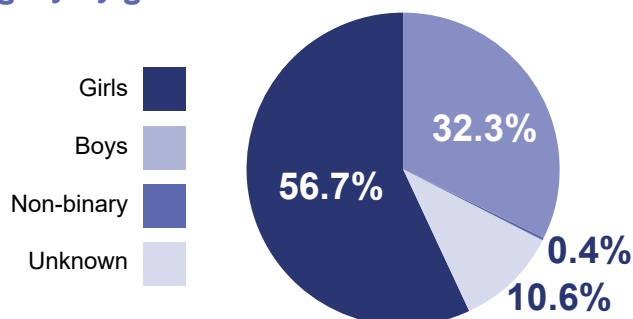
## Family relationships

Our child helpline members in the EU responded to **180 107 contacts** relating to **family relationships**. This represents 14.2% of all of the contacts in the EU who received counselling.

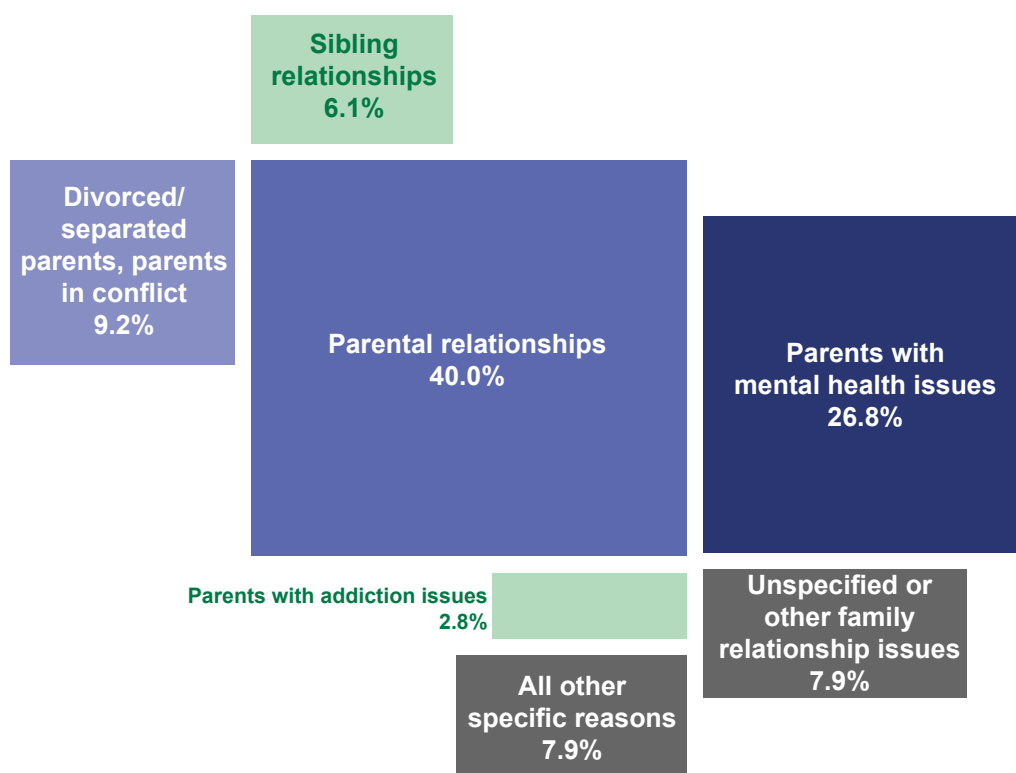
The three main subjects for children and young people when they called the child helplines in the EU to talk about family relationships were **issues concerning their relationship with a parent or parents**, **parents dealing with their own mental health issues**, **divorced or separated parents**, or **parents in conflict**.

By far the largest group of family-related issues concerned parental relationships, accounting for 40% of contacts. It is interesting to note that issues concerning parents' psychosocial and mental health were the reasons for more than a quarter of the calls coming under this category, given that their own mental health was the main reason for children and young people calling child helplines (see previous page).

### Category by gender



### Family relationships: Reasons for making contact



## Case studies: Family relationships

### "My mum doesn't want me to visit my father..."

The girl was upset because she had just argued with her mother again. The girl's parents were divorced and the girl lived with her mother. However, she wanted to spend her holidays with her father, and her mother wasn't happy about it. Her mother had told her it wasn't going to happen, and now the girl felt sad and hopeless.

The child helpline counsellor asked her about her thoughts and feelings. The girl wanted to see her father very much, but didn't want to upset her mother. She talked about her dilemma with the counsellor, and helped her determine her next course of action. At the end of their conversation, the girl felt able to talk to her mother once more and explain why visiting her father was so important to her. She was also now considering talking to her grandmother, who might be able to support her and help her to change her mother's mind.



### "How can I tell my parents I'm sorry?"

A 14-year-old girl made contact with the child helpline through chat. She told them that she used to listen to her parents and do what they asked, but now she has changed and wants to be more independent. She explained that she's stubborn, she doesn't listen to her parents anymore, and she has lots of fights with them – in fact, she was fighting with her mother right now, but her mother was ignoring her because she was fed up with all the disagreements. The girl was feeling guilty about everything, and wanted to say sorry to her parents, but felt embarrassed.

The child helpline counsellor reassured her that she wasn't alone in this problem, and that many other children experienced these feelings. The counsellor explained that her behaviour was connected with puberty, and with her wanting to feel more independent. The counsellor advised the girl to write down the things she wanted to say to her parents, so that she could prepare herself for a proper conversation with them about how she might be more independent in future.

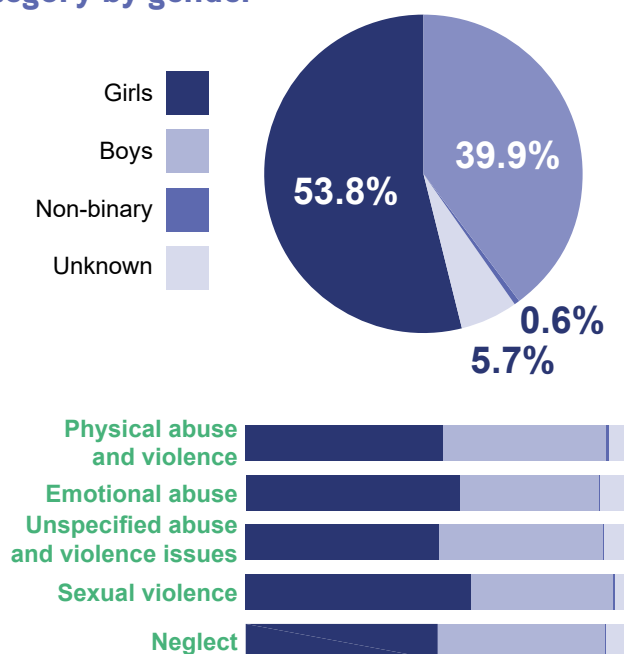
## Abuse and violence

Our child helpline members in the EU responded to **166 533 contacts** relating to **abuse and violence**. This represents 13.1% of all of the contacts in the EU who received counselling.

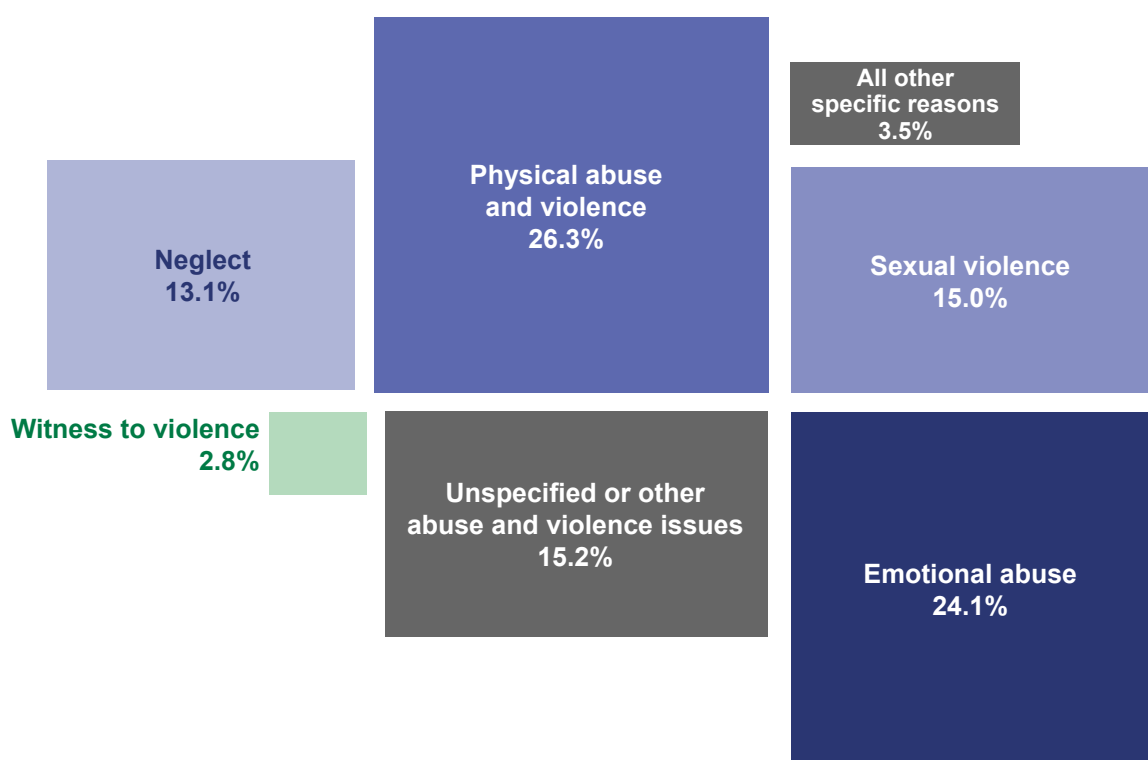
Over a quarter of the children and young people who contacted the child helplines in the EU about abuse and violence wanted to discuss **physical abuse and violence** (27% of the calls in this category). **Emotional abuse**, at 24%, was another main reason.

**Sexual violence** and **neglect** were also concerns for a high number of children and young people, accounting for 15% and 13% of the calls respectively.

### Category by gender



### Abuse and violence: Reasons for making contact



## Case studies: Abuse and violence

### "He yells at me when he's angry, and starts to break things..."

A 13-year-old girl called the child helpline, very frightened due to an incident involving her father that had recently taken place. She described her father as aggressive, and told the child helpline counsellor that he often yelled at her when he was angry, and started to break things in the house. She'd never told anybody about this before. The counsellor asked the girl whether she was safe at that moment, and she confirmed that she was home alone.

The counsellor asked her how her mother reacted to her father's behaviour, and the girl replied that her mother was afraid, and stayed quiet. The counsellor congratulated the girl for her bravery in making the call, and explained to her what would happen next to make sure that she was safe. The case was reported to social services, and the child helpline referred the girl to a school counsellor, so that she could get further support.

### "My nephew is being beaten by his parents just because he is gay..."

A woman called the child helpline to express her concerns about her 17-year-old nephew. She told the counsellor that a couple of days ago the boy's father had beaten him and broken his nose, and that his parents had taken all his personal documents, bank cards and cell phone away from him. They had forbidden him to communicate with anyone, and escorted him to and from his workplace. According to the woman, this was because the boy was gay. His older brother, now living abroad, had also experienced the same abuse from the parents because he was gay, and he had been threatened with death if he tried to protect his younger brother. The woman had helped and supported her older nephew for many years – she had been warned by the father not to interfere any more, but although she was afraid she could not stand by and let the younger boy suffer such abuse.

It turned out that the father had also threatened the boy's partner, who had been able to make a recording of the conversation. The child helpline informed the police, making sure that the woman's identity was protected in accordance with the child helpline's confidentiality procedures.

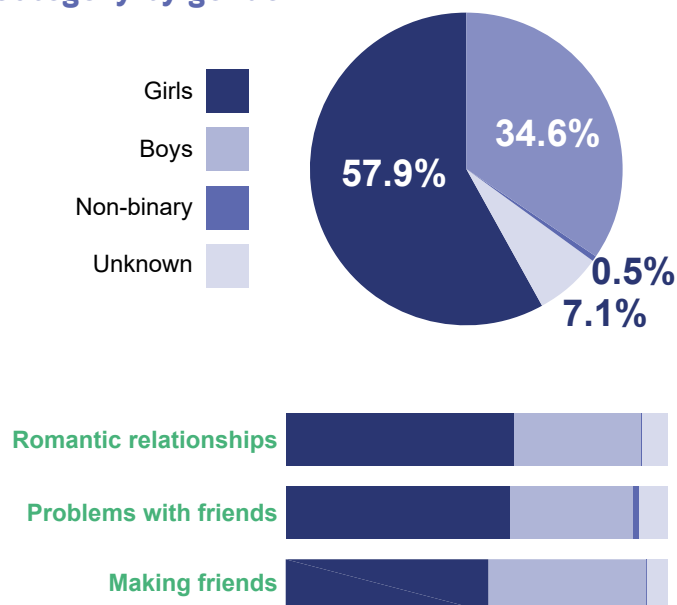


## Peer relationships

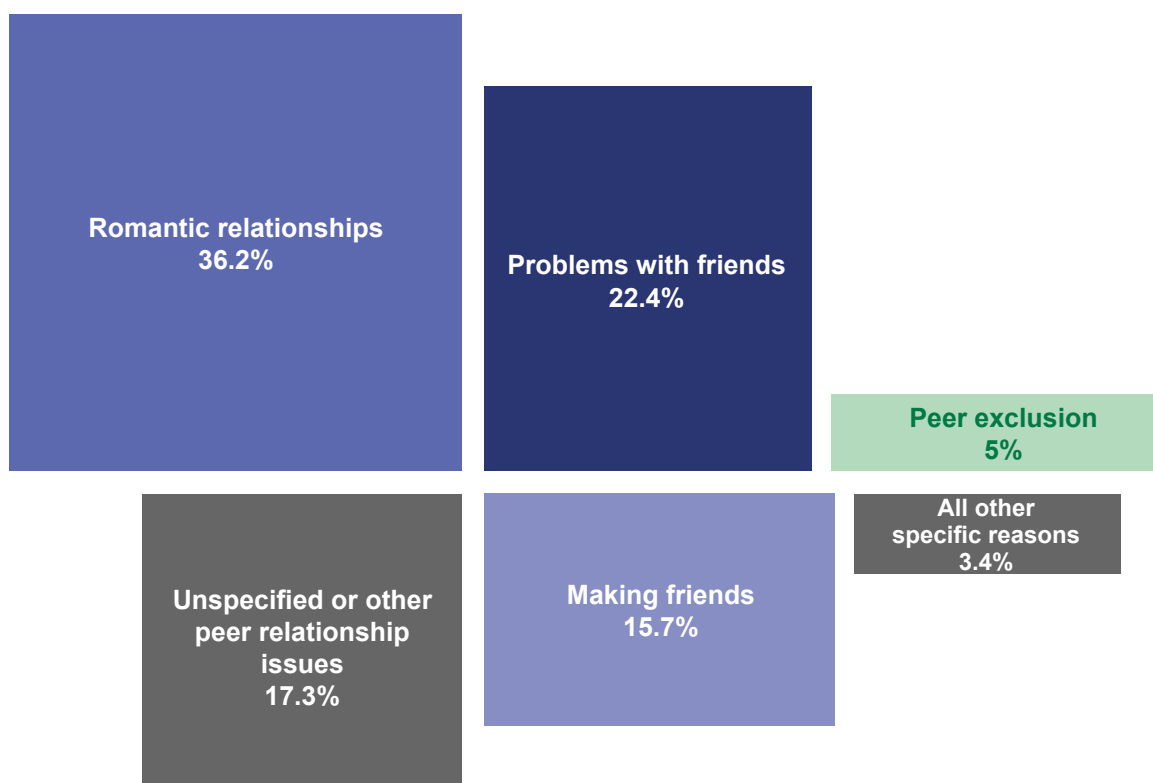
Our child helpline members in the EU responded to **140 246 contacts** relating to **peer relationships**. This represents 11.1% of all of the contacts in the EU who received counselling.

Peer relationships were another important concern for children in the EU. The data in this category illustrates the concerns children have about their present or desired relationships with friends and/or partners. The three main specified reasons for making contact with a child helpline in this category were **romantic relationships**, **problems with friends** and questions about **making friends**. A further 4.9% of the contacts made related to **peer exclusion**. 17.3% of the contacts made were unspecific or otherwise related to issues of peer relationships.

### Category by gender



### Peer relationships: Reasons for making contact



## Case studies: Peer relationships



**"I'm about to meet my gaming friend for the first time, and I don't know what to do..."**

A young boy contacted the child helpline to talk about his friend. He explained that he had never actually met this friend in person, but they had been gaming together for quite some time. They had talked with each other on Discord, a communications platform especially designed for video gaming communities, and their parents had also spoken with each other.

They are going to meet face-to-face for the first time soon, and the caller is anxious about the meeting. He wants some advice about what he should say, and what they should do together. The child helpline counsellor helped the boy make a plan about how to handle the meeting, and the things they could do and talk about when not video gaming together. The boy felt much more confident after the conversation, and was now looking forward to the meeting with his friend.

**"I like him a lot more than I thought, but I don't want to spoil our friendship..."**

A 15-year-old girl called the child helpline to talk about the problems she was having with a friend. She met him at a party a few months ago, and they had started to chat, but then she had developed romantic feelings towards him. He'd given no indication, so far, of feeling the same way, and because she was afraid of spoiling what friendship they already had, she had simply started to ignore him. Now, he kept trying to contact her, but she didn't know what to say to him anymore, despite really missing him. She was confused, anxious and having lots of negative thoughts.

The counsellor explored the girl's previous experiences with friends, to try to work out why her first reaction to liking somebody was to cut them out of her life. They also talked about her emotions were influencing her thoughts and behaviour, causing her to become worried and negative. The counsellor encouraged her to think more about the ways in which she could actually talk about her feelings with the boy. At the end of the call, the girl felt less anxious and more confident, and determined to do something positive about her situation.



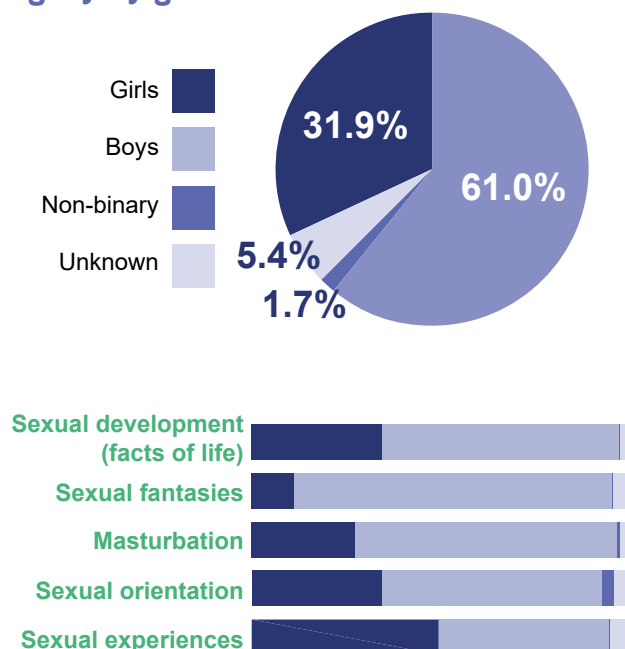
## Sexuality and sexual awareness

Our child helpline members in the EU responded to **79 999 contacts** seeking information about a diverse range of topics connected with **sexuality and sexual awareness**. This represents 6.3% of all of the contacts in the EU who received counselling.

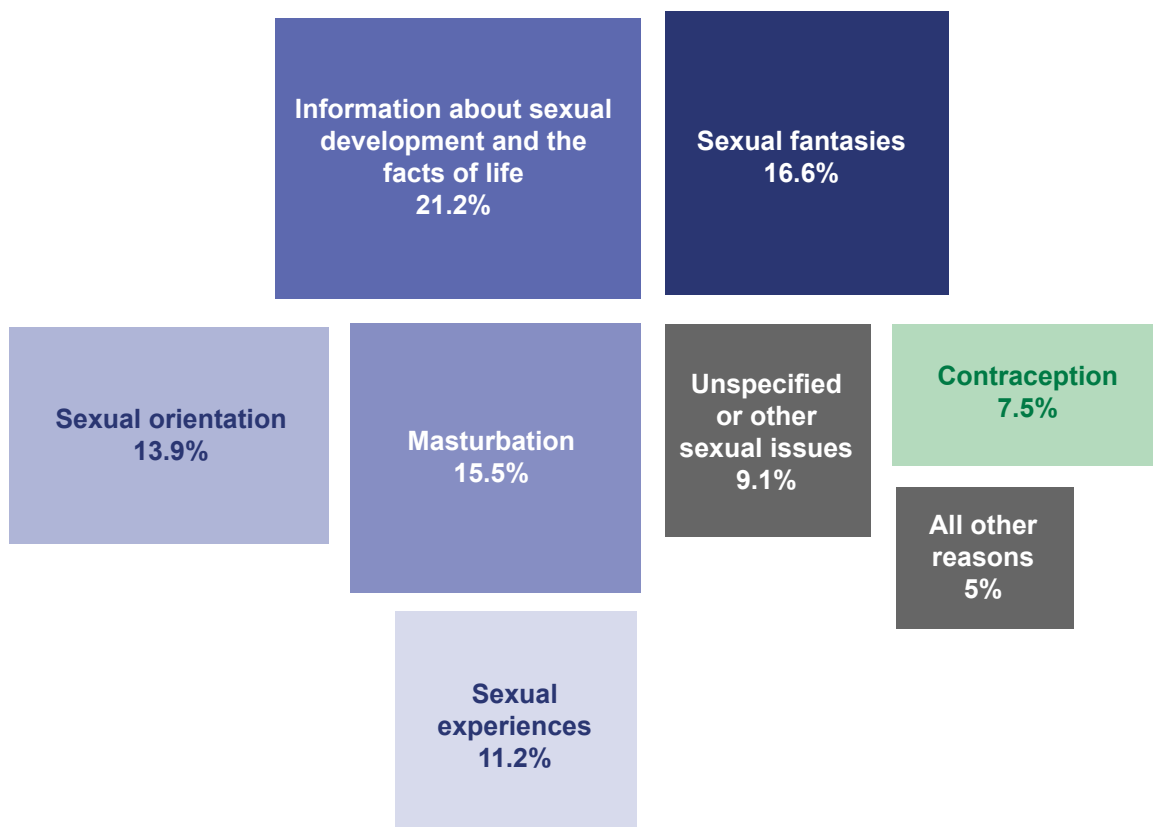
The top five specified reasons for contact were information on **sexual development (facts of life)**, **sexual fantasy**, **masturbation**, **sexual orientation** and to talk about **sexual experiences**.

It is interesting to note that boys were much more likely to contact child helplines about issues concerning sex and sexuality than girls. For those child helplines who also recorded the non-binary gender identification of callers, we noted a comparatively higher number of calls relating to sexual orientation being made by this group of callers.

### Category by gender



### Sexuality and sexual awareness: Reasons for making contact



## Case studies: Sexuality and sexual awareness

### "Why can't we just love who we want to love?"

A young person contacted the child helpline to talk about sexuality. The young person was concerned that nobody would ever love them in return, or understand their feelings. They weren't sure if they found girls or boys more attractive, and found it difficult to work out who they were supposed to like most. Ultimately, the young person wanted to know why everything had to be pinned down to specific genders: "Why can't we just love who we want to love, and have sex with who we want to have sex with?"

The counsellor talked with the young person about these feelings, and together they decided that it might be good for the young person to talk to a friend. And especially to the friend who the young person was finding particularly attractive.



### "I feel as though I can talk to you about anything..."

A 16-year-old boy is calling the child helpline on a regular basis. He has told the counsellor previously that he is gay, but that he has not yet come out to anyone. His family is very religious, and he feels they will reject him once they know about his sexuality. He has a lot of good friends, but he is worried about telling any of them – he lives in a small rural town, and he is afraid that if he tells anyone, the story will get back to his family. He also tells the child helpline counsellor about a boy at school who he fancies. He thinks this boy might also be gay.

The counsellor and the boy talk about his hopes and dreams for the future. He wants to go to college in a big city, where he can be free to be himself. The counsellor encourages the boy to get in touch with a LGBT helpline. The boy has tried this, and found it a useful experience, but he still prefers to keep in touch with the child helpline, where he can talk about anything and not just his sexuality...

## Special focus: Children and young people in migration

As part of a Framework Partnership Agreement under the **European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)** we are working to further improve accessibility to child helplines through **promoting inclusive practices**. In 2019 we looked at how child helplines can best support children and young people in migration.

Child helplines can be a **valuable resource for children and young people in migration**. Their accessibility and their oversight of national support services can be directly benefit the children and young people making contact with them. In addition, child helplines may already have, or can form, **strategic partnerships** that can benefit their contacts even further, particularly when such partnerships have the potential for **cross-border collaboration**.

However, there is an unfortunate **lack of available quantitative child helpline data** on children and young people in migration. This may be for a number of reasons.

One possibility is that children and young people in migration don't contact child helplines because they have a limited knowledge about their availability, how to contact them and the types of services they can offer. It may also be the case that children and young people in migration have different communication and support needs compared to the general population. Child helplines may not have the resources necessary to adapt to these specific needs, making them less accessible for this group.

Another reason for the lack of available data might be a **data categorisation issue**, meaning that a child helpline does not record whether a particular contact is a child or young person in migration, or doesn't know that this is the case. As a consequence, the actual number of contacts being made by this group is not reflected in our collected data.

In 2019, Child Helpline International convened a multi-disciplinary **Community of Practice** to exchange knowledge and good practices on how child helplines can **best support children and young people in migration**. The Community of Practice brought together representatives from child helplines and organisations working in the field of children and youth in migration in the European Union, namely Hope for Children (Cyprus), Smile of the Child (Greece), Brave Phone (Croatia), Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children Spain, Radboud University, Missing Children Europe, Child Helpline International #Youth, staff, interns and volunteers.

Discussions among the participants indicated that, while there were several possible reasons why children and young people in migration might appear to be less likely to contact child helplines, it was not an issue of the child helplines themselves not having the requisite skills or knowledge to be able to provide high quality support to this group of contacts but more a question of the resources.

Although data relating specifically to children and young people in migration was relatively sparse in our 2018 data collection, discussion during the Community of Practice also provided some qualitative data that sheds more light on the reasons this group makes contact, and the issues they face.

**Legal Issues:** Questions relating to the asylum process are common. This includes how to apply for asylum, facts and information about the process, a need for legal services, and information about legal rights depending on the child or young person's status.

**Mental health issues:** Some children and young people who have migrated from outside of the EU, and have now reached their destination country, contact child helplines because of their stress and anxiety relating to whether or not they will be able to stay. Mental health issues can also extend to suicidal thoughts and suicide. For those children and young people who migrate within the EU, mental health issues may, for example, be associated with having to adjusting to a new environment.

**Family relationships:** This category can include contacts relating to family reunion or family separation, but also conflicts in the family. Child helplines also receive calls from children and young people asking for advice on behalf of parents who are fearful of talking with the authorities. An issue related to both mental health and family relationships concerns the pressure to find work in the destination country in order to be able to send money back to their family in their country of origin.

**Basic needs:** Contacts about where to access food and shelter, and basic services such as health care.

## Beyond the Community of Practice

In 2020, Child Helpline International will launch learning resources that will convey the outcomes of the Community of Practice to all of our child helpline members. These will include practical learning on how to build trusting partnerships, how to improve data collection on children and youth in migration, communication skills for child helpline counsellors, and how to raise awareness of child helpline services for children and youth in migration.

We will continue to post information about this, and all our other Communities of Practice, on our website: [www.childhelplineinternational.org](http://www.childhelplineinternational.org).



## Case studies: Children and young people in migration

**A mother contacted a child helpline regarding her 8-year-old son who had just started primary school. They had only recently moved to the country.**

On his first week at his new school, another boy made fun of her son and kept chanting offensive songs at him. A couple of older children from the school physically attacked him. They threw him on the ground and kicked him, and told him they would throw him into garbage. The mother told the child helpline that her son felt sad and lonely, and didn't want to go to school anymore.

She wanted some advice as to how she could help her son so that he felt safe and well in school. She also wanted to be able to make the other children at the school understand that what they had done was not right and unacceptable.

The child helpline provided support, and gave her ideas as to how she might approach her son and give him the support he needed. They informed her about the duties of school staff as far as bullying is concerned. They also encouraged her to get help for her son in order to prevent social or emotional issues, since he was going through a very stressful period of his life – moving between countries, starting school, and finding himself dealing with a similar but nevertheless different language.

**A 15-year-old girl contacted a child helpline regarding her problem with self-harm. She said that she was not even sure why she was actually hurting herself.**

She told the child helpline that she had experienced bullying and inappropriate behaviour by a teacher. Now that she had moved to a different country, she felt a little better but was still self-harming. She had panic attacks which caused her to sweat and left her feeling that she couldn't breathe. She was getting poor grades at school and was worried about passing her exams. She had only one friend and didn't want to tell this friend that she was hurting herself for fear that they would stop hanging out with her. She talked about her difficulties fitting in, and how she felt lonely. She had visited a psychologist and been diagnosed with depressive-anxiety disorder and social anxiety. She said she thought that her parents regretted having her and that they were ashamed about her diagnosis.

The child helpline provided her with information about psychiatric disorders, and helped to normalise her situation. They informed her about the consequences of self-harming and offered her some coping techniques. They also encouraged her to seek professional help and to talk with her parents about her feelings.



**A young refugee had tried her best to integrate in her new country of residence. She had contacted a child helpline, however, because her mother simply wouldn't accept her daughter's new lifestyle .**

The young woman had arrived in the country four years earlier. All on her own, she had quickly learned how to look after herself, and how to make her own decisions. She had done her best to adapt to her circumstances, and the society she now found herself in. Her mother had recently also arrived in the country, and was refusing to accept her daughter's new lifestyle. She was angry that the young woman no longer wore traditional clothing, and she was unhappy that she now had a boyfriend. The mother wanted her daughter to make friends only from within her religious community, and not to have a boyfriend at all.

The young woman was finding it very difficult to balance her newfound independence and the demands of her mother, and needed somebody to talk to about her situation.

**A boy contacted the child helpline because he was afraid that he and his mother would not be allowed to stay in the country.**

The boy explained that his father had an addiction to drugs, and that his mother desperately wanted a divorce so that she could make a new life for herself and her son. However, they had not yet been granted asylum, and the boy was concerned that a divorce would lead to them both being deported.

The boy was trying to please his father as much as possible, and to do everything that was asked of him, even though his family situation was unpleasant. He was trying to keep his father's addiction a secret, because he was afraid that the family would be reported to the authorities if anyone found out about it. Because of the child helpline's confidentiality policy, he had finally found somebody he could talk to about his circumstances, and he was able to look for reassurance and information about his rights, his mother's rights, and who he could contact for further assistance.



## Case studies: Children and young people in migration

**Child helpline staff were informed that a man had been arrested at the airport, suspected of trafficking due to his inability to provide valid documentation for the young girl travelling with him.**

The man claimed he was her uncle and that he was accompanying her in order to reunite her with her parents. However, he was unable to provide papers for the girl at passport control, and had no documentation supporting his claimed relationship with her.

The order had been given for the girl to be taken to a pediatric hospital. The child helpline was asked if one of their staff could accompany her. The child remained at the hospital until the authorities' research into her background was completed. The helpline's trained volunteers stayed with the child during her time in hospital. The child helpline supported the girl with accommodation until she could be reunited with her family.

**A NGO child protection officer contacted a missing children's hotline to inform them about six missing children, aged between 14 and 17, who were at risk of being trafficked.**

The officer suspected that the children were probably already no longer in the country. The hotline's case manager encouraged the officer to report her concerns to the police, but her complaint could not be made official due to a lack of information. The case manager subsequently contacted the competent law enforcement agency directly, to follow-up on the case and stay in contact.

Unfortunately, there is no further information as to how or whether this case was resolved. The NGO which reported the case has been forced to close down due to a lack of funding.





## Preventing the trafficking of children in migration



Last year, Missing Children Europe and its partners searched for “Abena”, a 14-year-old girl who arrived in Europe alone, fleeing child marriage in Eritrea, and “Qiro”, a 15-year-old Iraqi Kurdish boy who was forced to flee his country when the bombing in his town intensified rapidly. Since their arrival in Europe, they have been missing from care repeatedly. Out of sight of their social workers and carers, they were abused, exploited and had no access to healthcare and shelter when they needed it the most.

Although the search for Abena and Qiro was part of a simulation exercise organised within the framework of the **Interact project**, their situation reflects that of at least 30,000 children who have gone missing as they travelled through Europe between 2014 and 2017. Often, these cases are not followed up or are given low priority due to the lack of available information, lack of resources and authorities’ lack of appropriate training on how to deal with these specific cases. In 2018, only 25% of young newcomers reported to the 116 000 hotline for missing children were traced by authorities. The fate of the other 75% remains unknown.

Missing Children Europe and its partners want to radically improve the ways that professionals cooperate across borders in their response to missing and trafficked children in migration. With systematic and improved cooperation between professionals, Abena and Qiro’s stories could have turned out differently. We could have prevented them and the tens of thousands of other children, from going missing.

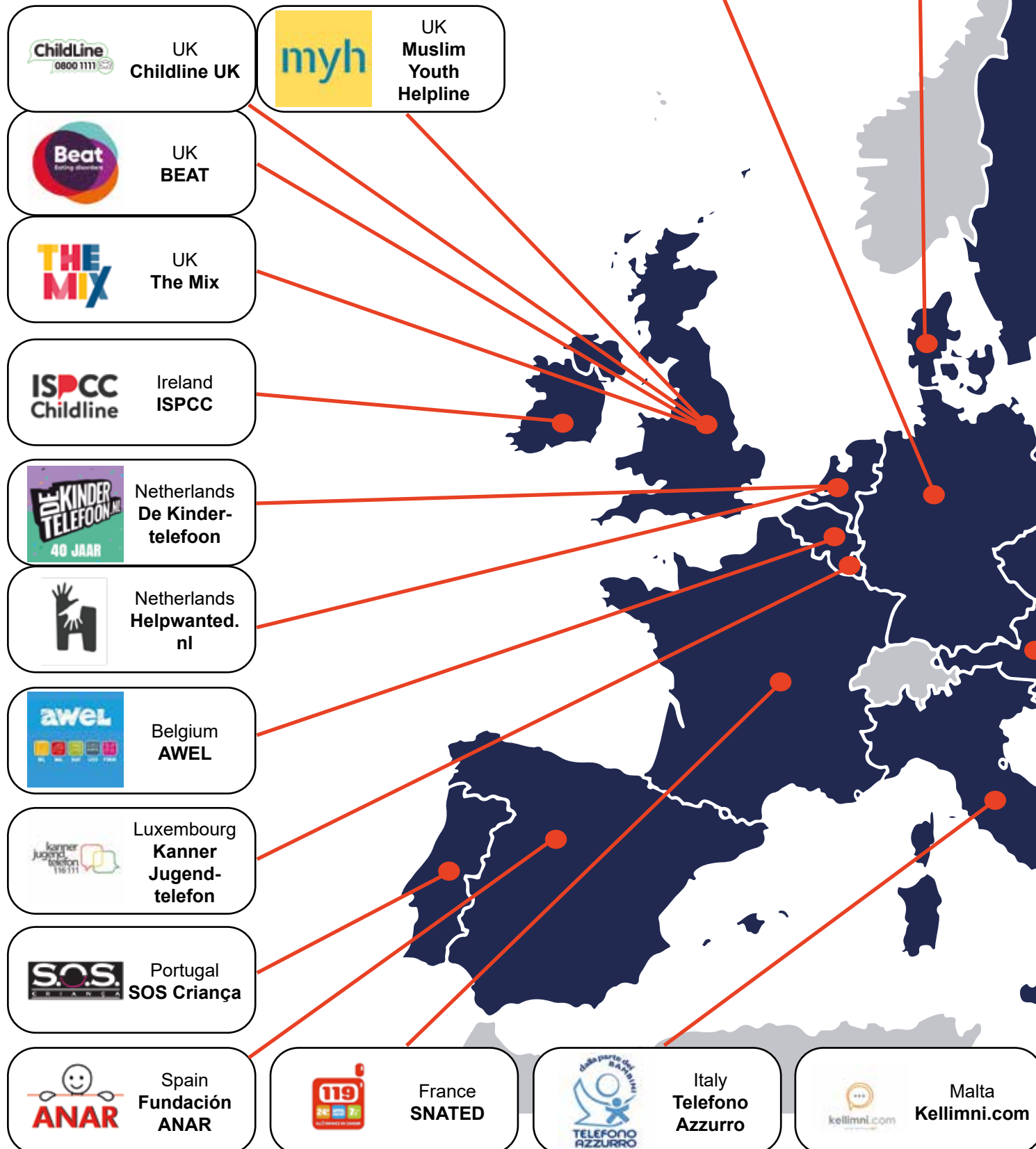
The newly launched **Interact report** and **practical guidance** identify key challenges encountered in the participating countries of Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, the UK and Sweden. The guidance includes effective mechanisms, procedures, tools and good practices for national and cross-border cooperation in cases of missing unaccompanied children at risk of (re)trafficking.

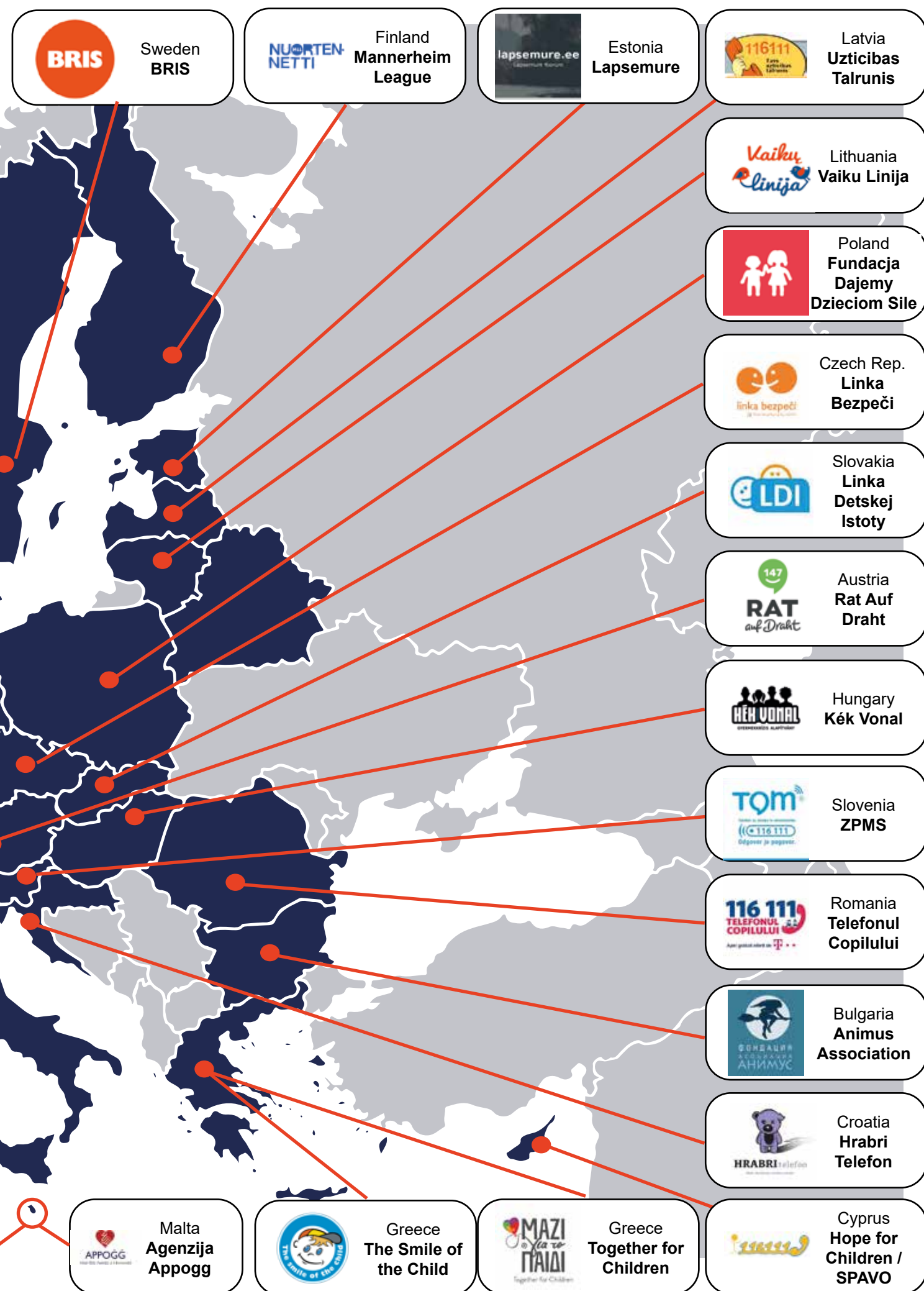
**Child Helpline International** would like to thank **Missing Children Europe** for its participation in our Community of Practice on Children and Young People in Migration, and for its contribution to this report.



## Our Members in the EU ≡

Child Helpline International has 55 child helpline members in Europe, with 32 members in the 28 Member States of the European Union.





## **Austria**

### **Rat Auf Draht**

☎ 147

<http://www.rataufdraht.at>

## **Belgium**

### **Jongerenlijn AWEL**

☎ 102

<http://www.awel.be>

## **Bulgaria**

### **Bulgarian National Helpline for Children**

☎ 116 111

<http://animusassociation.org/programi-uslugi/nacionalna-telefonna-linia-deca/>

## **Croatia**

### **Hrabritelefon**

☎ 0800 0800 / 116 111

<http://www.hrabritelefon.hr>

## **Cyprus**

### **Call 116 111 Cyprus**

☎ 116111

[http://www.call116\\_111.com](http://www.call116_111.com)

## **Czech Republic**

### **Linka Bezpečí**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.linkabezpeci.cz>

## **Denmark**

### **BørneTelefonen**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.bornsvilkar.dk/det-goer-vi/boernetelefonen/>

## **Estonia**

### **Lapsemure**

<http://www.lapsemure.ee>

## **Finland**

### **MLL Nuortennetti**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.nuortennetti.fi>

## **France**

### **Allô Enfance en Danger**

☎ 119

<http://www.all119.gouv.fr>

## **Germany**

### **Kinder- und Jugendtelefon**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.nummergegenkummer.de/kinder-und-jugendtelefon.html>

## **Greece**

### **The Smile of the Child**

☎ 1056 / 116 111

<http://www.hamogelo.gr>

### **Together for Children**

☎ 11525

<http://www.mazigiatiopaidi.gr>

## **Hungary**

### **Lelkiségy-vonal**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.kek-vonal.hu>

## **Ireland**

### **ISPCC Childline**

☎ 1800 66 66 66 / 116 111

<http://www.childline.ie>

## **Italy**

### **Hello Telefono Azzurro**

☎ 19696

<http://www.azzurro.it>

## **Latvia**

### **Uzticības Tālrunis**

☎ 8006006 / 116 111

<http://www.bti.gov.lv>

## **Lithuania**

### **Vaiku Linija**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.vaikulinija.lt>

## **Luxembourg**

### **Kanner Jugendtelefon**

☎ 116 111

<http://www.kjt.lu>

## **Malta**

### **Kellimni.com**

### **Support Line 179**

☎ 179 / 116 111

<http://www.fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/support-line-179.aspx>

## **Netherlands**

### **De Kindertelefoon**

☎ 0800 0432 / 116 111

<http://www.kindertelefoon.nl>

### **Helpwanted.nl**

## Poland

### Telefon Zaufania

☎ 116 111  
<http://116111.pl>

## Portugal

### SOS Criança

☎ 116 111  
<http://www.iacrianca.pt>

## Romania

### Telefonul Copilului

☎ 116 111  
<http://www.telefonulcopilului.ro>

## Slovakia

### Linka Detskej Istoty

☎ 116 111  
<http://www.ldi.sk>

## Slovenia

### TOM

☎ 116 111  
<http://www.e-tom.si>

## Spain

### Teléfono ANAR de Ayuda a Niños y Adolescentes

☎ 900 202010 / 116 111  
<http://www.anar.org/necesitas-ayuda-telefono-ninos-adolescentes/>

## Sweden

### BRIS

☎ 116 111  
<http://www.bris.se>

## United Kingdom

### NSPCC - Childline UK

☎ 0800 1111 / 116 111  
<http://www.childline.org.uk>

### BEAT

☎ 0808 801 0677  
<http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>

### The Mix

☎ 0808 808 4994  
<http://www.themix.org.uk>

### Muslim Youth Helpline

☎ 0808 808 2008  
<http://www.myh.org.uk/helpline>

# 116 111

## Six Digits to Remember

**116 111** is the number reserved for child helplines in the EU. This number is currently operational in 24 out of 28 Member States. The EU Commission has identified child helplines as a service of social value, and the harmonised 116 111 number is an important part of a reporting system to **tackle abuse and exploitation of children and young people**. The Council of Europe has included child helplines in integrated national strategies to protect children from violence. For children and young people, having a short, easy-to-remember number is very important to make child helplines accessible.

In 2017, the University of Suffolk and Child Helpline International conducted a study on the awareness of child helplines and the 116 111 number. The study concluded that between 25% and 50% of children were aware of child helplines and/or the 116 111 number.

It is of the utmost importance that children and young people are aware of the existence of the 116 111 number. Child Helpline International currently hosts the 116111.eu – a website with contact information for all child helplines in the EU. In 2018, visits to this page doubled compared to those made in the previous year.

**Further awareness raising is crucial. Governments, children's rights partner organisations, telecoms and industry partners should use their platforms to promote awareness of the 116 111 number to make sure that every child is heard.**



**Every child has a voice.**

**No child should be left unheard.**

**We are the international network of child helplines, a global collective impact organisation with 173 members in 142 countries and territories around the world (as of December 2019).**

Every year, child helplines around the world field millions of individual cries for help. Until the founding of Child Helpline International in 2003, these organisations did their great work in isolation, and with no access to one another.

Now, we are working together every day to bring children's voices to policy makers and influencers. We make sure the world listens to these voices. And we listen to the listeners – our members – helping them to support one another.

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