

Letting the Future In

A guide for professionals



Developed and tested by

NSPCC

Delivered by

Letting the Future In (LTFI) 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. Having the chance to explore their thoughts and feelings can be really helpful.

Who is LTFI for?

The recovery service is for children and young people aged 4–17 years who have experienced sexual abuse, including abuse that happened online. Children and young people with mild or moderate learning disabilities can also access the service up to the age of 19. A referral must be made with the consent of the child or young person. Referrals are usually accepted 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 adult perpetrator. If you are unsure, please speak to one of our practitioners using the contact details above. The parent or carer will be involved and offered individual support and joint sessions with their child.

Siblings who require support may also be provided with a service. For most families, LTFI lasts between six and ten months.



What happens in 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.

After around three or four sessions, the LTFI practitioner will meet with both the parent or carer and the child or young person. Together, they'll decide if the child or young person needs continued support and what this support could look like.

The Letting the Future In activities aim to help the child or young person 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.

What are the aims of the programme?

- Provide a child-centred service, helping the child or young person explore the impact of the abuse and resolve or cope better with any ongoing issues.
- Strengthen the child or young person's relationships with their parents or carers, and their siblings, making sure they are supported as they recover from the abuse.
- Help parents and carers understand the impact of sexual abuse on their child or young person so that they are better able to respond to their needs.

How can this service help?

Between 2011 and 2016, LTFI 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 eight-and-over who have been sexually abused. The evaluation also demonstrated promising findings for younger children. LTFI has been recommended in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guideline on child abuse and neglect.



How to refer

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

Need advice?

If you're worried about a child, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline between 10am–4pm Monday to Friday for help, advice and support.

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

This service was originally developed and tested by the NSPCC— the UK's leading children's charity — who are now helping other organisations to deliver it. This is just one of the ways that they're working together with others to help support families and keep children safe.

To find out more, visit **nspcc.org.uk**

