



Pelastakaa Lapset

# CHILD PROTECTION AND FINNISH HOTLINE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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## Child Protection and Finnish Hotline turned 20 years old

The aim of the Child Protection and Finnish Hotline, a function run by Save the Children Finland, is to prevent and combat child sexual abuse. A child's right to be protected from all forms of abuse lies at the heart of the work. The Finnish Hotline has been operating for 20 years now.

- 2002** : Finnish Hotline starts operations and joins the INHOPE Network.
- : During the first year, the team had two full-time and two part-time employees.
- : Participated in Finland's Safer Internet activities.
- :
- 2012** : The current FISIC members received EU funding.
- :
- 2016** : Began receiving reports about the grooming of children online.
- : Joined ECPAT.
- :
- 2022** : Their own report form was made for young people.
- : Centre for Digital Childhood Kidital was formed.
- : In February 2023, Finnish Hotline has 5 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees.

Nettivistä on osa toimintaa Suomessa toimivasta Safer Internet Centrestä (FISIC), joka pyrkii varmistamaan paremman ja turvallisemman digitaalisen ympäristön lapsille. FISICin toiminta toteutetaan yhteistyössä Kansainvälisen audiovisuaalisen instituutin (KAVI) ja Mannerheimin liigan kanssa. Save the Children Finland on myös kansallinen edustaja ECPAT-verkossa Suomessa ja maailmanlaajuisessa INHOPE-hotline-verkossa.



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## Projects

### FISIC

FISIC, i.e. the Finnish Safer Internet Centre, is a project whose goal is to promote the media literacy, inclusion, well-being and safety online of children and young people. FISIC activities include three organisations: Save the Children Finland, The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) and the National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI). KAVI coordinates the project, Save the Children Finland maintains the hotline, and MLL, on the other hand, the support and counselling service. In addition, all organisations strive to increase awareness of safer internet use.

### **Project Arachnid**

Project Arachnid is an AI-powered tool run by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P). The aim of the tool is to remove child sexual abuse material from the internet. Finnish Hotline's advisors provide their expertise in analysing material. C3P trains every analyst who uses the tool. The cooperation between Save the Children Finland and C3P has continued since 2018. **The Finnish Hotline analysed 164,098 images in Project Arachnid in 2022.**

### **Understandably about sexuality**

The project, funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education, develops the skills of teaching and guidance staff to strengthen safety-promoting thinking and safety skills training, especially in relation to sexuality and considering the needs of special groups. The training is in two parts and was organised for the first time in autumn 2022. The second implementation is set for the spring of 2023. The topics of the first training day are the basics of safety skills education and discussing sexuality, on the second day online safety skills and grooming are delved into. The project is coordinated by the Live Foundation, and in addition to Save the Children, Autism Foundation, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Terapiaperhonen are also involved in its implementation.

### **Special assistance from the Ministry of Justice for the implementation of the program to combat violence against women**

In the project, together with young people and a production company, six animations are developed, which deal with different forms of child sexual abuse, reporting it and receiving help. The goal is to increase the awareness of young people between the ages of 11 and 17 about sexual harassment and sexual abuse on the internet and social media channels. By increasing awareness, young people are assisted in protecting themselves and their own boundaries and in telling an adult about their experiences of abuse. The animations will be released in spring 2023.

# THE FINNISH HOTLINE

Finnish Hotline is a reporting service to which anyone can report if they suspect they have encountered material or activity related to child sexual abuse online. With the help of the low-threshold reporting service, it is possible to also bring to the attention of the authorities cases that, for some reason, people do not want to report directly to the police. The purpose is to get increasingly more sexual offenses against children solved and child sexual abuse material more effectively removed from the internet. A large proportion of sexual offenses against children are not brought to the attention of the authorities, for example, because of the high threshold involved in notifying the authorities of a suspected offense or illegal material. The Finnish Hotline cooperates closely with the National Bureau of Investigation.

The Finnish Hotline is part of the international [INHOPE network](#) of hotlines. The goal of the network is to speed up the removal of illegal material from the internet. INHOPE maintains [the ICCAM system](#), which enables information about illegal material to be quickly transmitted to authorities and service providers, regardless of the country in which the illegal material is located. Through ICCAM, the information is also transmitted to the [ICSE database](#) (International Child Sexual Exploitation database) of the international police organization Interpol. The Finnish Hotline analysed 18,070 images and videos in the ICCAM system used by the INHOPE network of hotlines in 2022.

## The Finnish Hotline takes reports on:

1. Child sexual abuse material, CSAM (including anonymously)
2. Grooming of a child for sexual purposes online
3. A nude image or video of a child which has spread online
4. Child trafficking for sexual purposes
5. Sexual harassment of a child online

In 2022, reports also began to be received on a separate form aimed at young people (available in [Finnish](#) and [Swedish](#)). The form uses clearer language and asks the young person for more detailed information about what has taken place. The purpose is to immediately collect the most important information from the young person in terms of the investigation, and, thus, speed up the police investigation. The form encourages the young person to report on behalf of a friend as well, because, according to the report *Grooming in the eyes of a child*, a child is most likely to tell a friend about the grooming they have experienced. The form has the following reporting options:

- I have received messages, links or requests with sexual content on social media or online from a person who is clearly older than me. You can also use this form to report messages received by your friend.
- My illegal or intimate image/video is being spread or threatened to be spread on social media or online. You can also use this form to report on behalf of your friend.

The Finnish Hotline privacy statement is available at: <https://www.pelastakalapset.fi/en/our-work-in-finland/child-protection-and-finnish-hotline/report-illegal-content/privacy-statement-nettivistijje/>



**Image:** Processing of a report concerning child sexual abuse material.

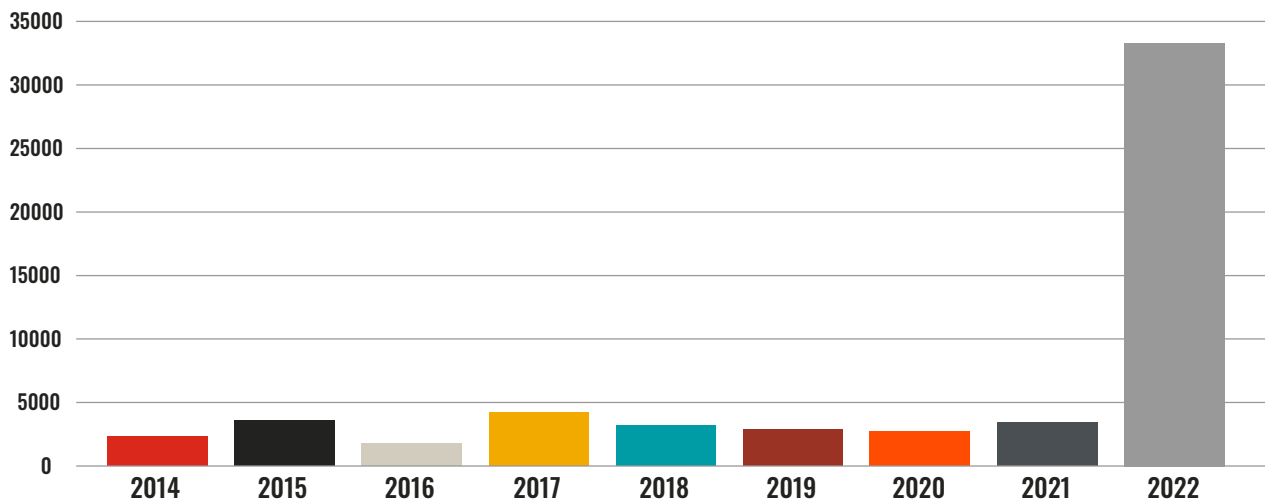
The processing of reports received by the Finnish Hotline follows the Finnish law, the practices agreed with the National Bureau of Investigation and the code of practice of the INHOPE network of hotlines.

[Read more about the processing of reports.](#)

# INFORMATION ABOUT REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE FINNISH HOTLINE IN 2022

Regarding the number of reports, 2022 was exceptional for the Finnish Hotline. The Finnish Hotline received a total of 33,296 reports in 2022, which is about ten times the number when compared to previous years. For example, in 2021 the Finnish Hotline received 3,439 tips. One report refers to one web address (URL) or one description of activity suspected to be illegal. Each URL can contain a single image or video, or even hundreds of images or videos.

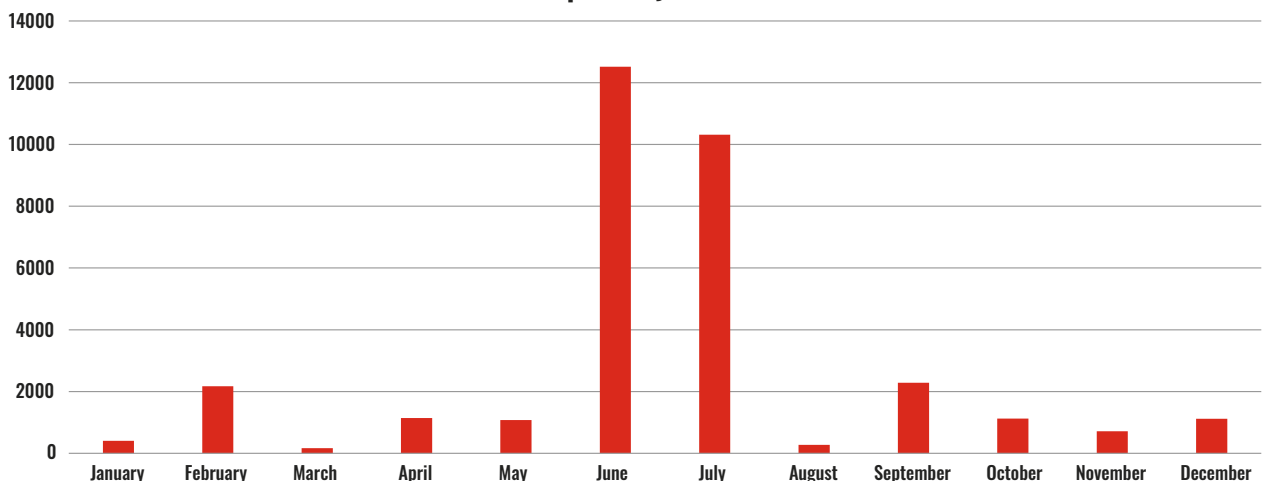
## Reports in 2014–2022



*Image:* Number of reports 2014–2022.

The monthly variation in the number of reports was great: especially in June and July, the number of reports increased significantly. During the aforementioned months, a total of almost 23,000 reports were received.

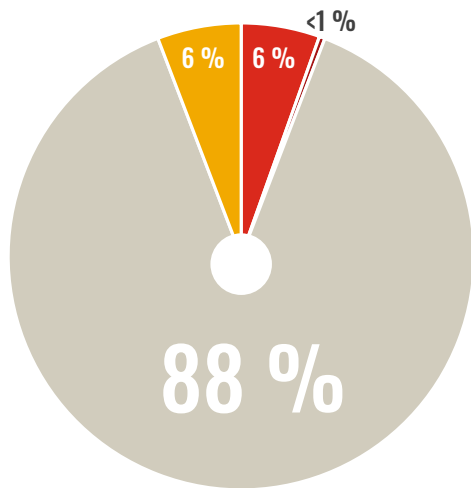
## Reports by month



*Image 3:* Number of reports in 2022 per month.

88% of the reports received in 2022 were websites where, for example, the material had been removed or the Finnish Hotline was not able to access the material. The number of reports belonging to this category was already increasing the previous year, but this year the number increased more than twenty times. Almost all these reports contained material to which the Finnish Hotline did not have access for technical or legal reasons. Inspecting the material would have required, for example, downloading or it was password protected.

Of the reports received, 6% contained child sexual abuse material or activities related to sexual abuse, such as the grooming of a child for sexual purposes. The number increased by 50% when compared to the previous year. 6% of the reports received were classified as other material. Other material could have been, for example, additional information related to the report, spam, or material where it was impossible to make a reliable age assessment. The amount of material classified as other tripled when compared to the previous year. In addition, some of the reports contained material that sexualises a child, some of which is illegal in Finland, but when compared to the rest of the reports, the number of such reports was less than 1%. Fewer reports were received regarding material that sexualises a child than the previous year.



## Content of reports (N=33,296)

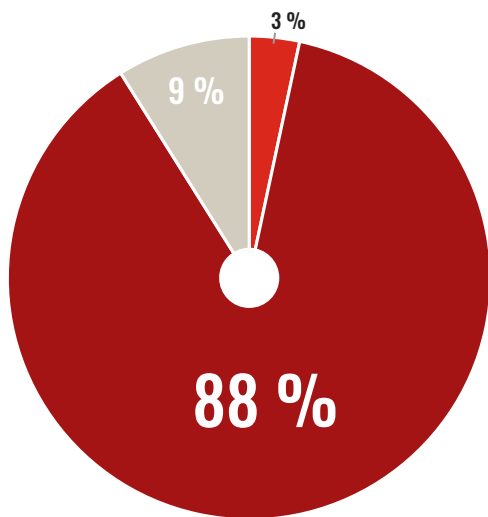
- Child sexual abuse material or activity related to child sexual abuse
- Material that sexualises child
- Material removed or inaccessible
- Other material (e.g. not under 18 years old according to age assessment)

Image: Content of reports in 2022.

## Material that requires downloading

Based on the law, it is not possible for the Finnish Hotline to download child sexual abuse material (CSAM). For this reason, the Finnish Hotline cannot check reports that lead, for example, to cloud services where files can be stored and shared. In these services, the files can either be freely downloadable, or downloading also requires logging into the service and, possibly, paying some kind of monthly fee. The Finnish Hotline cannot say for sure that these files contain illegal material, but the site may have very clear indications of it. For example, the file names may contain descriptions of the material, or the site leading to the downloadable material may have so-called preview material, which is, however, not illegal. If the preview material on the page is illegal, the report is processed like other reports assessed to be illegal.

In 2022, the majority (88%) of reports containing CSAM had material in which the child victim was assessed to be 3–13 years old. This share has remained the same since the previous year. In three percent of cases, the sexual abuse was against a very young child, under the age of three. The share of children in this age group has decreased from the previous year. Quantitatively, very small children were seen in images and videos slightly more than the previous year. Nine percent of the reports showed the sexual abuse of 14–17-year-olds. In this age group, the number of reports almost tripled when compared to the previous year. The percentage increase was three percent. Due to challenges related to age assessments, the proportion of children aged 14–17 may, in fact, be higher than the statistics presented in this report. The age assessment is made based on physical development.

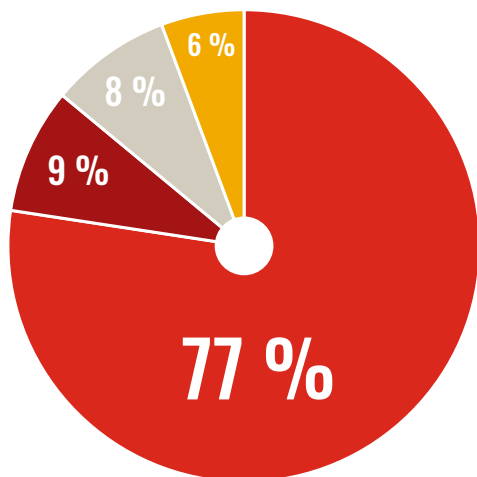


### Child sexual abuse material by age (N=1680, n=1670)<sup>1</sup>

- 0-2 year-old
- 3-13 year-old
- 14-17 year-old

Image: Child sexual abuse material by age group in 2022.

In 2022, there were more girl than boy victims in the CSAM analysed. 85% of the material contained sexual abuse against girls, and 77% had only girls as victims. In the previous year, 92% of the material contained sexual abuse against girls, and 74% had only girls as victims. 17% of the material contained sexual abuse against boys, and nine percent had only boys as victims. The year before, 24% of the material contained sexual abuse against boys, and six percent contained only sexual abuse against boys. The percentage of boys has decreased over the past two years. In addition, the sex of the child could not be determined in six percent of the cases. The sex is defined based on the child's physical features (genitals and breasts).



### Child sexual abuse material by sex (N=1,680, n=1,673)

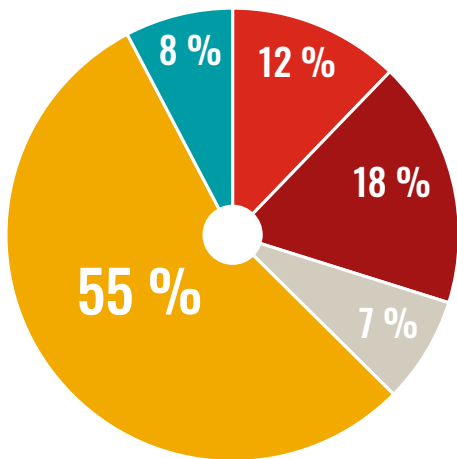
- Girl
- Boy
- Both
- Not Determined

Image: Child sexual abuse material by sex in 2022.

In 2022, about half of all CSAM contained penetrative acts. In 12% of the material, the focus was on the child's genital area. 18% percent of the material contained sexual activity without an adult and seven percent with an adult. Eight percent contained sadism or other forms of cruelty. The percentage of material containing sexual activity without an adult doubled from the previous year, correspondingly there was less sexual activity with an adult. The percentage of material containing sadism and other cruelty was halved from the previous year. Changes in the forms of sexual abuse are presumably related to the increase in the amount of self-generated CSAM.

<sup>1</sup>N-number refers to all the reports in that category, while again the n-number contains the reports from which the information in the chart has been compiled. A small part of the information is, therefore, missing or has been marked incorrectly. Statistics are carried out manually. This applies to all charts in the report.





## Child sexual abuse material according to the form of sexual abuse

(N=1680, n=1662)

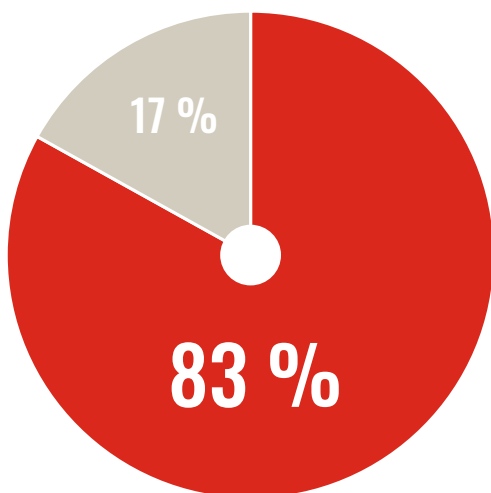
- Focus on genital or anal area
- Sexual activity without an adult
- Sexual activity with an adult
- Penetration
- Sadism or other cruelty

*Image:* Child sexual abuse material classified according to the form of sexual abuse in 2022.

## Self-generated child sexual abuse material

The Finnish Hotline increasingly sees child sexual abuse material (CSAM), where the child is alone and films themselves with a phone or other digital device. Sometimes there are several children in the images and videos. In these images and videos, the child may be naked or perform sexual acts according to instructions received through the device. This material is called self-generated CSAM. The increase in the material has been noticed internationally (e.g. IWF 2022). The amount of self-generated CSAM in the reports received by the Finnish Hotline has increased more than 20-fold since 2021.

In 2022, the Finnish Hotline received 372 reports that contained self-generated CSAM. In addition, 164 web addresses containing such material were found through the proactive work done by the Finnish Hotline (read more on page 12). In the self-generated CSAM assessed by the Finnish Hotline (N=536), the majority of the children were under 14 years old (83%). In 17% of the images or videos, the child was over 14 years old. The proportion of 14–17-year-olds is higher than in all CSAM analysed by the Finnish Hotline. There were no children under the age of three in these reports. This is understandable, because the child should be able to use the digital device themselves and either send images or videos or be in a video connection with another person in order for the material to be self-generated CSAM.

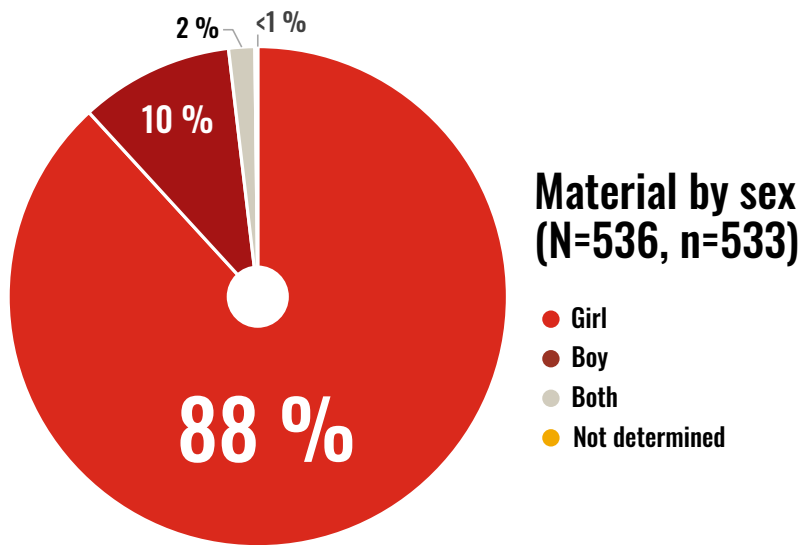


## Child sexual abuse material by age (N=1680, n=1670)

- 3–13 year-old
- 14–17 year-old

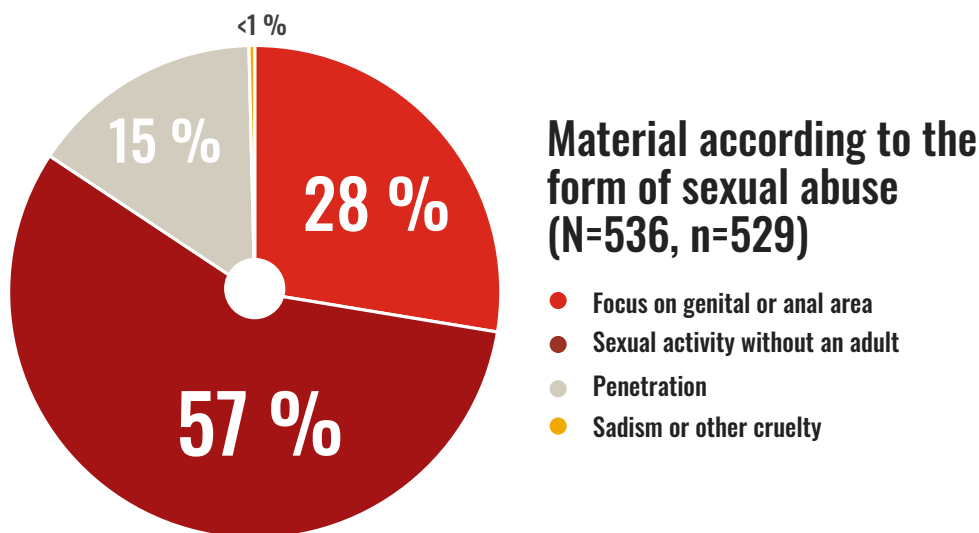
*Image:* Self-generated child sexual abuse material by age-group.

There were girls in nine out of ten evaluated images and videos. 10% of the images and videos had a boy and a small number had both girls and boys. There were almost equal proportions of girls and boys when compared to all the CSAM analysed by the Finnish Hotline. The difference is a smaller share of images and videos with both a girl and a boy, and a very small share of images and videos where the sex of the child could not be determined.



*Image: Self-generated child sexual abuse material by age-group.*

Often, the Finnish Hotline sees this material on sites that only contain self-generated CSAM. In the images and videos, the child is usually in a homelike environment, such as in their own room or bathroom. If it is a series of images or a video, the child often comes closer to the device and then acts according to instructions they received. In the material analysed by the Finnish Hotline, the child most often performs sexual acts, including penetrative acts. In less than a third of the images and videos, the child shows the camera their (at least partially) naked body, and the focus of the image or video is on the child's genital area.



*Image: Self-generated CSAM by sex.*

It is known that sexual abuse can be disguised as a game or a challenge for a child and the child can be manipulated, pressured or blackmailed into sending images or videos of themselves. The child may also be offered a reward in return for images and videos. Sometimes a child believes they are sending images or having a confidential video call with just one person, but the material can be secretly recorded and shared.

Sometimes the material is produced in a consensual relationship between young people, in which case the original situation does not involve sexual abuse. A young person may share sexual images or videos of themselves with their peer, if both parties consent to it. When these images or videos are shared to third parties or online, a crime is committed, and the images or videos become illegal and part of child sexual abuse. A minor can also commit a crime if they possess a nude image of another child without their consent or if they share it.

Sexual education, through which a child receives information about online sexual abuse, is an important way to protect the child. In addition, it is important to ask the child about their experiences and thoughts related to the Internet and social media as part of everyday conversations. It is also good to ask if anything that felt bad or confusing has happened. When an adult shows interest and asks questions, it becomes easier to raise concerns.

### Read more about the topic:

- INHOPE: ["What is self-generated CSAM?"](#)
- Internet Watch Foundation 2022: ["The Annual Report 2021"](#)
- Ecpat Sweden 2021: ["Everything that is not a yes is a no"](#)



## Proactive hotline work

In the summer of 2022, the Finnish Hotline began proactive, i.e. investigative, work as part of the hotline work. This means that when the Finnish Hotline receives a web address, through the report form, which it assesses to contain illegal material, the address in question can be stored for further processing. The sites may contain, for example, dozens of links to other similar sites or contain hundreds of pages with illegal material. The Finnish Hotline can continue analysing the site until all the material on the site or linked to it has been forwarded to the necessary actors. The goal is to promote the rapid removal of a larger amount of material from the Internet.

In the first year, the Finnish Hotline found 369 reports, i.e. web addresses, through its proactive work. Proactive work is done when there are no new reports waiting to be processed for the first time. A large number of received reports, therefore, affects the amount of proactive work. In proactive work, only illegal or potentially illegal web addresses are taken into consideration and appear in the statistics.

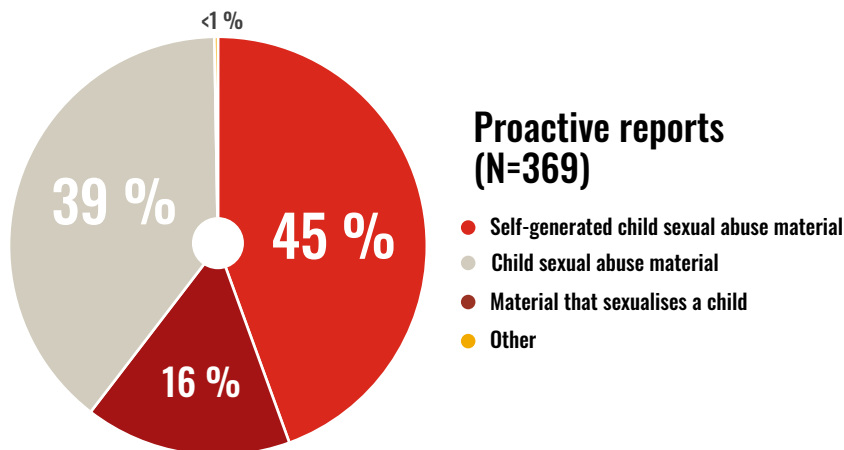


Image: Proactive reports classified.

A large part of the reports concerned so-called self-generated child sexual abuse material (45%). Almost as many (39%) concerned potentially illegal material that sexualises children. Almost all the children were girls (99%) and most of them were 3–13 years old. In contrast to other reports handled by the Finnish Hotline, there was a clearly smaller proportion of boys in the proactive reports and a larger proportion of older children (14–17 years old). In addition, a difference lies in the most common form of sexual abuse: in other reports, the form of sexual abuse is most commonly penetration, while in proactive reports, the sexual abuse is most often a focus on the child's genital or anal area (44%) or sexual activity without an adult (41%).

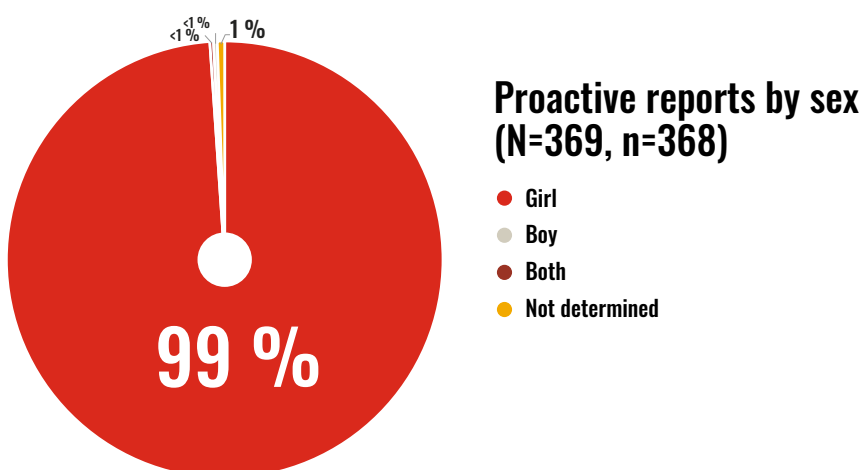
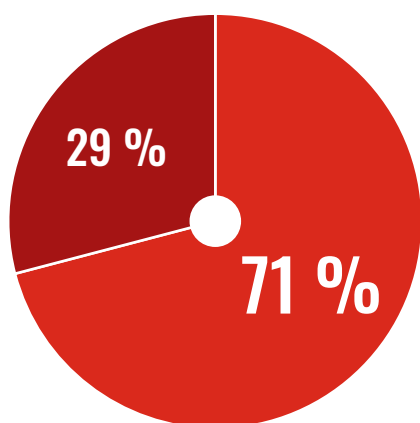


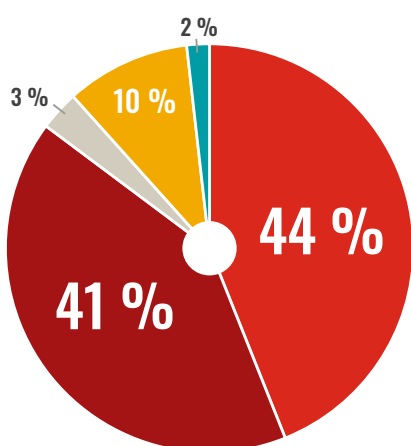
Image: Proactive reports by sex.



**Proactive reports by age (N=369, n=368)**

- 3-13 year-old
- 14-17 year-old

*Image: Proactive reports by age group.*



**Child sexual abuse material according to the form of sexual abuse (N=223)**

- Focus on genital or anal area
- Sexual activity without an adult
- Sexual activity with an adult
- Penetration
- Sadism or other cruelty

*Image: Proactive reports assessed to be illegal, classified according to the form of sexual abuse.*



# INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The Finnish Hotline prevents child sexual abuse by producing information and training professionals, in particular, who work with children. Providing information to children and parents strengthens the understanding of children's rights and gives children and their loved ones guidelines for safer internet use. Increasing knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse also helps to promote quick intervention in crimes.

## In 2022, the Finnish Hotline

- trained 1117 professionals and future professionals
- met 466 parents in three parents' evenings
- tweeted 903 times
- gave 11 interviews
- organised the "Suojele, älä sivuuta - Protect, don't ignore" seminar, which was attended by approx. 550 professionals, authorities and decision-makers.

## In 2022, three new materials and new language versions were released:

- [Turvaa ja tue -opas vanhemmille](#) (available also in [Swedish](#))
- [Preventin child sexual abuse – support for adolescents sexually attracted to children. An introductory guide-book](#) (available also in [Finnish](#))
- [Mun keho mun rajat – opas nuorille in easy Finnish.](#)
- Ota grooming puheeksi -kortit ammattilaiselle (the Finnish material includes cards for [adults](#) and [children](#) and a [guide](#))



Image: A picture used in social media by the Finnish Hotline

All produced materials are available in the [Finnish Hotline's resource bank](#).

In 2022, the Finnish Hotline continued its awareness-raising work on the Ylilauta website. The Finnish Hotline's advisors answer questions in the hotline's own thread and share information about the Finnish Hotline's work and the fight against and prevention of child sexual abuse. By the end of 2022, there had been 857 responses from 523 users to the thread. 31,451 users had opened and read the thread. In addition, 18 users had marked the thread as followed, which means they received a notification for every new message that appeared in the thread.

The Finnish Hotline opened a TikTok account in 2022. It published nine videos that received approximately 4,700 views. The Finnish Hotline also began working on animations together with young people and a communications agency. The goal is to publish the animated videos on TikTok in 2023.

The Finnish Hotline received a great deal of media coverage on television, radio, and print and digital media in 2022. A total of 271 media hits were accumulated throughout the year. The media paid special attention to the Finnish Hotline's announcement that dealt with the increased number of reports. In addition, the reform of the criminal code in relation to sexual offences and a few sexual offence investigations that received media attention increased interest in the work of the Finnish Hotline.

## Kidital

In 2022, the Save the Children Finland's Centre for Digital Childhood Kidital was founded. The Finnish Hotline's advisors are part of the Centre. Kidital promotes the safety, well-being and inclusion of children in digital environments. It brings together Save the Children Finland's expertise and materials related to digital childhood. In the first year, Kidital's opening webinar, open to everyone, and an online parents' evening were organised. Kidital's work will continue to be developed in 2023. The [website](#) is currently only available in Finnish.

# ADVOCACY WORK

The Finnish Hotline carries out long-term advocacy work both at home and internationally to promote children's right to be protected from sexual abuse. The Finnish Hotline made, among others, the following statements/comments on strategies and reforms in 2022:

- [Save the Children Finland's statement on the Government's proposal HE 13/2022 to the Parliament for sexual crimes legislation](#) (in Finnish)
- [Save the Children Finland's statement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs EN; Lanzarote Committee; About the preparation of Finland's country profile](#) (in Finnish)
- [Save the Children Finland's statement: The broader criminalization of material that proves abuse against children needs to be evaluated](#) (in Finnish)
- Save the Children Finland's statement of support for Sexpo's Serie project regarding the continuation of the Serie project and its permanent funding
- Save the Children Finland's statement regarding the European Commission's proposal for new legislation to prevent and combat sexual violence against children in online environments

In 2022, the Parliament approved a new criminal code in relation to sexual offences, which entered into force at the beginning of 2023. Before the law was approved, the Finnish Hotline was heard in the legal committee. The Finnish Hotline published a press release and an opinion piece related to the topic, which was published in the Helsingin Sanomat newspaper. The Finnish Hotline was also involved in drawing up the national implementation plan for the Lanzarote convention.

The Finnish Hotline closely followed the change in European Union legislation, especially regarding the responsibilities of service providers to eradicate child sexual abuse. An advisor from the Finnish Hotline also went to Brussels to meet Finnish representatives of the European Parliament regarding changes in EU legislation, and the hotline wrote a statement on the matter, which was sent to decision-makers and officials. A lot of advocacy was carried out as part of the international [ECPAT network](#) and its Project Beacon.

In 2022, the Nordic hotlines started a stronger cooperation in terms of advocacy, research planning and implementation, as well as technology opportunities. The Finnish Hotline is responsible for the coordination of the Nordic cooperation in the advocacy work.

In addition, the Finnish Hotline participated in the activities of several networks and working groups in 2022. The Finnish Hotline represented Save the Children Finland e.g. in the following working groups and networks: The organisation working group under the Committee for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (NAPE), a steering group for the prevention of violence against children (Väkivallaton lapsuus-Non-violent childhood), the anti-trafficking platform (IKV), the SeriE network, a cooperation network of organizations in sports, and an information base working group for violence against children. The Finnish Hotline was strongly involved in the activities of the international ECPAT network.

## In collaboration with:



KANSALLINEN AUDIOVISUAALINEN INSTITUUTTI  
NATIONELLA AUDIOVISUELLA INSTITUTET  
NATIONAL AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE





## **Pelastakaa Lapset**

Save the Children Finland is a politically and religiously independent non-governmental organization founded in 1922, which fights for children's rights in order to immediately and permanently improve children's lives in Finland and all over the world.

**[savethechildren.fi](http://savethechildren.fi)**