

Childline continued

Kelly age 13

Kelly lives in a very rural area. She contacted ChildLine online as a result of being bullied on the school bus by a gang of girls from another village. She dreaded the journey to and from school and had persuaded mum she was too ill to go on a few occasions.

It sounded quite nasty, Kelly had money taken from her, was constantly ridiculed and had been kicked and punched. On one occasion her mum had met her at the bus stop with her dog and the girls had said they were going to get the older brother of one of them to kill the dog.

What stood out was Kelly's isolation and vulnerability. She didn't have a mobile phone as there was no signal and the home phone only took incoming calls because there had been a problem

paying the bill. Kelly used a computer at school to contact ChildLine.

Kelly talked to a counsellor about ideas as to how to make the journey safer. She decided she would sit near the driver whenever possible. Maybe if the girls knew someone was looking out for Kelly they would pick on her less.

Kelly decided to tell a teacher at school what was happening. This took a lot of courage as Kelly was afraid the bullying would get worse. The name calling continued but she was no longer attacked by the girls. Kelly and the counsellor found a way forward that she felt OK about and she knew she could contact ChildLine again if she needed to.

This sample case draws on what children tell ChildLine but, to protect confidentiality for young callers, it does not describe a specific case.