

Support and Further Information

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Helps people under 18 in the UK to confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet.

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

What is it?

The definition of youth produced sexual imagery refers to under 18's taking indecent images of themselves or their peers, willingly or under duress, and sharing these (with or without consent). This is more commonly referred to as 'sexting'.

'Indecent images' include the taking, possession and distribution of indecent pictures or videos, even if it is of themselves and has been shared with consent.

Whether an image is shared consensually or not, children have no control over how other people might use or share it.

Background

The exchange of sexualised imagery has become normalised through increased use of apps and platforms that facilitate, and in some cases promote, this type of behaviour.

The dating rituals of adults in which swapping 'nudes' is now commonplace attests to this shift. Children and young people often make impulsive decisions, driven by approval-seeking. Some form of pressure or coercion typically underlies this behaviour.

Impact

A 2023 review by the NSPCC refers to the impact of image sharing, which includes feelings of fear, distress and helplessness. There may also be concerns linked to self-blame or shame, and there may even be exclusion from peers.

The impact upon mental health is also well documented due to perceived 'reputational damage'. In some cases this has resulted in self harm and, even more tragically, suicide.

Associated Issues

Revenge pornography is non-consensual sharing with the punitive intention to shame and humiliate, typically by a former intimate partner.

Sextortion refers to the practice of extorting money or sexual favours from someone by threatening to reveal sexually compromising information about them.

Deepfakes refer to images, videos or audio that has been digitally manipulated to misrepresent real people. These are often extremely convincing.

What Can Be Done?

Criminalising children and young people is not the intention; educating them about these issues and the legalities surrounding them to keep all safe is.

Adults simply directing children not to engage in this behaviour will not be effective in most cases. This stance may also act as a barrier to them seeking help, should they find themselves in a related predicament.

Responses should be non-judgemental, supportive and take into account the needs of the individuals involved.

Remember

Staff must not view any material, even if told that these may be on a device, as an adult viewing an indecent image of a child is a criminal offence. The device should be confiscated, and your concerns discussed with your DSL, who will support with next steps.

Please note that the production, possession and distribution of sexual imagery of children **by adults** is a form of child sexual abuse. This should always be treated as such by informing Police.

