

Anonymity for Victims of Image-Based Sexual Abuse (including ‘Revenge Porn’)

Strengthen, Secure, Support

A campaign to strengthen existing legislation, secure justice and support victim-survivors of image-based sexual abuse.

Complainant anonymity for all sexual offences including image-based sexual abuse

Anonymity for all complainants of **image-based sexual abuse** is urgently needed if we are to encourage people to come forward and report these devastating crimes. Anonymity will also reassure victim-survivors that having reported this devastating crime to the police, further disclosure of their private, sexual images will be minimised.

Currently, there is no automatic anonymity for complainants, unlike for all other sexual offences. Many victim-survivors are reluctant to report this crime because of fear of further shame, harassment and abuse, and the police are finding that victim-survivors are **withdrawing from prosecutions**, because of fear of further publicity.

“One year on, we can see the limits to the law on ‘revenge porn’. Let’s act now to focus more on the harms to victims, than on the motives of perpetrators. This will lead to more prosecutions and help to generate cultural change.”

Professor Clare McGlynn, GEM Co-founder

Pornographic photoshopping

Pornographic photoshopping is where an ordinary photo is made sexual and explicit by superimposing pornographic body/acts. Creating and sharing such images without consent is not currently covered by English law.

This loophole means that perpetrators are able to cause similar levels of harm and distress, without committing an offence - seen in the recent case in **Sussex** where a caution was issued in response to the uploading of sexually explicit pictures, including of a 15 year old girl.

Scotland has addressed this loophole—showing that we can take action to prevent this form of harassment and abuse.

Recklessly causing harm

Currently the law requires an offender to have intended to cause distress to the person in the sexual image. But images are shared for all sorts of reasons, including financial gain, for a ‘laugh’ or from hacked or stolen computers/phones.

This seriously limits the scope of the law.

The harm caused to victim-survivors is not lessened because of the intent of the offender. We recommend the law is changed, as in Scotland, to include reckless intention to cause distress.

Specialist support

These 3 changes will enable more victim-survivors to come forward. Therefore, we also seek a commitment to fund specialist services providing support and guidance independent of the criminal justice system.

“A change in the law to guarantee anonymity to victims of image-based sexual abuse (‘revenge porn’) is vital to protect those brave enough to come forward, and encourage others.”

Dr. Fiona Vera-Gray, GEM Co-founder



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