

# Do you know who you are chatting to online?



**Don't be exposed**

[southyorkshire.police.uk](https://southyorkshire.police.uk)

## Online grooming

Online grooming is when an adult gains a child's trust so they can later sexually abuse them.

The offender might persuade the child to swap sexually explicit messages, photos and/or videos with them, and may try to win them over by sending presents or money.

Grooming can happen on the internet through social media, online gaming, direct messages or email. The criminals often pretend to be children themselves to trick the young victim.

Offenders will usually try to contact dozens of young people, they'll quickly make things sexually explicit and they will seize upon any replies they receive.

A recent report from the College of Policing showed that one fifth of girls aged 11-16, and one third aged 17-21, have received unwanted sexual images online.

The online grooming process can take a matter of hours or years. Any child can be a victim of online grooming and exploitation but **you are never, ever to blame - it is always the offender's fault.**

## What happens

**When sexual exploitation happens online, you may be persuaded, or forced, to:**

- send or post sexually explicit pics of yourself
- take part in sexual activities via a webcam or phone
- have sexual conversations by text or online
- abusers may threaten to send images, videos or screenshots of conversations to your friends and family unless you do other things
- Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped



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## Advice and help

If you are worried that you or someone you know is being groomed, tell someone you trust. **You can also contact us on 101 or 999 in an emergency.**

We know not everyone feels able to report directly to the police, so you can report 100% anonymously to CrimeStoppers online or by phone and pass on what you know – **crimestoppers-uk.org** or **0800 555 111**.

## For more advice and to report any concerns:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: **ceopeducation.co.uk**
- NSPCC: **nspcc.org.uk**
- Say Something and runaway 24-hour helpline: **116 000**
- Report remove: **childline.org.uk/report-remove**
- Local authority social care services

**Help is available**



## The legal bit

Under the Online Safety Act 2023 and Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a crime to:

- share intimate images or film online with somebody who hasn't asked for it - this is known as 'cyberflashing'
- share or threaten to share intimate images or film of another person online without their consent - this is known as 'revenge porn'

**These offences carry a sentence of up to two years in prison.**

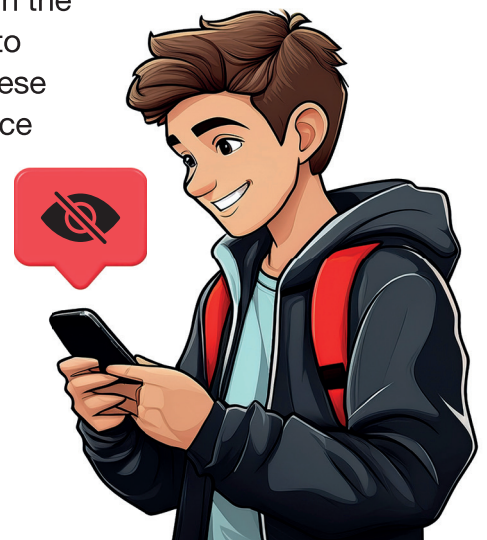
Under the Criminal Justice Act 1998 and Protection of Children Act 1978, having an indecent image of a child, and taking, making, or sharing an indecent image of a child under 18, are offences that carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

## Sexting

It's **illegal** for anyone to have, share or make sexual images or videos of other people under 18.

This is still the case even if you're under 18, and you're 'sexting' **your boyfriend or girlfriend** who is also under 18.

It's not always in the public interest to prosecute in these cases. The police will decide whether to take action depending on things like evidence of exploitation or grooming.



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