

New laws to crackdown on harmful pornography

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Possessing or publishing pornography depicting incest or adults pretending to be children to be criminalised and tech execs could be held liable.

- Possessing or publishing pornography depicting incest or adults pretending to be children to be criminalised.
- Tech execs could also be held liable to imprisonment or fines if their platforms fail to remove people's nonconsensual intimate images.
- Part of this government's commitment to tackle abusive online content and halve violence against women and girls.

The public will be better protected from vile online pornography under new Government amendments tabled to the Crime and Policing Bill today (Friday, April 10).

Building on the Government's work to tackle violence against women and girls, pornography depicting illegal sexual conduct between family members and adults roleplaying as children will be criminalised.

The first of these vital measures will ban anyone from possessing or publishing harmful pornography that shows incest between family members, and sex between step or foster relations where one person is pretending to be under 18.

A further amendment will criminalise the publication and possession of pornography where an adult is roleplaying as a child.

Delivered with the support of many brave campaigners and advocates for change, both amendments recognise that this revolting online content risks normalising child sexual abuse. Each new offence comes with a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment for publication.

These crucial changes are the latest measures from the Government to halve violence against women and girls in a decade and protect children from scourge of sexual abuse.

Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Girls Alex Davies-Jones said:

I've sadly heard far too many devastating stories from victims and I know we need change now. Tackling violence against women and girls within a decade will take every single one of us.

We have been clear that vile online pornography has real-life consequences for all of us and I'd like to thank every brave campaigner who has worked with us to deliver this vital step. Today we are sending a powerful message: we will stamp out misogynistic and harmful content online and create a safer world.

Today, the Government also tabled an amendment meaning tech execs could be held personally liable if platforms fail to comply with Ofcom's enforcement decisions to remove people's intimate

images that have been shared without consent.

This would mean senior execs who commit the offence without a reasonable excuse could be liable to imprisonment or a fine, or both.

Online Safety Minister Kanishka Narayan said:

Too many women have endured the distress of having intimate images shared online without their consent.

Today we are tabling measures to hold tech bosses responsible for preventing this abuse. If they fail to remove these images they could face jail or substantial fines. This is not an optional requirement, it's a duty that every tech leader must take seriously.

Baroness Bertin, Lead reviewer of the Independent Pornography Review, said:

"I greatly welcome the Government's plans to fully address harmful pornographic content such as incest, step-incest and the mimicking of child sexual abuse. This content that is freely and widely available online is deeply harmful, normalising child sexual abuse and abusive relationships within families.

My review on pornography is clear that the production and dissemination of this content should be made illegal, which is why I laid amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill to criminalise this type of content.

My review is also clear that the people who appear in pornography are at a high risk of exploitation, coercion and violence, which is why the onus should be on pornography platforms to ensure that everyone who appears in pornographic content is over the age of 18 and has given their consent, and that they have the right to withdraw that consent.

Given the ongoing impact of pornography on violence against women and children, I and others across the political divide have worked hard to ensure that this issue has remained in the spotlight.

Today the Government has answered our calls for change, and I am delighted that once again the UK is leading the way on regulating this high harm industry. I commend the Government for their work in this area and look forward to continuing to work with them as we make the online and offline world safer for everyone.

Today's amendment follows the Government's ban on depictions of strangulation in pornography and its ban on harmful and degrading nudification apps.

The move follows a series of key changes designed to protect both child and adult victims from violence and abuse.

- Repealing the presumption of parental involvement
- Restricting parental responsibility from people who have been convicted of a serious sexual offence against any child and where a child is born of rape.
- Launching a new and improved Victims Code, which will include the very first child-friendly.
- Investing over £1 billion as part of its mission to fight violence against women and girls, with

£550 million for victims' services.

Further information:

- Further details on the amendments will be set out in due course.
- Publication of pornography depicting adults roleplaying as children or depicting incest will carry a maximum sentence of five years.
- Possession of pornography depicting adults roleplaying as children will carry a maximum sentence of three years. Possession of pornography depicting incest will carry a maximum sentence of two years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-crackdown-on-harmful-pornography>