

Be It, Make It... Stop It, Change It.

Facts, resources and advice on peer-on-peer abuse among young people.



solacewomensaid.org

Solace Women's Aid is a charity registered in England & Wales.
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solace

This guide was created by Solace's Children and Young People Team.

For 50 years, Solace have supported women and children in London to be free from violence and abuse. We provide services for rape crisis, young people, refuge, advocacy, therapy and professional training.

Our Children and Young People's Service delivers a wide range of provisions, both group and 1:1, from prevention to critical intervention, including advocacy, counselling and education.

This guide contains facts, resources and advice on various forms of abuse that affect young people.

The guidance is for anyone, including young people, parents, and professionals, to learn more about these topics and feel more prepared to face challenges.

Alongside this guidance, a series of short films was made by some of Solace's Young Changemakers. [You can watch them here.](#)

If you are a young person

Building on your knowledge of what is ok and not ok can help keep you and others safe. If something makes you feel uncomfortable or you are worried about yourself or a friend, there are many resources and people ready to support you.

If you are a parent or carer

There are many new risks and challenges facing young people today. Learning about these issues, modelling healthy relationship behaviours, and keeping an open and non-judgemental approach will help your child feel safe to come to you for support.

If you are a professional

It's important to make sure you are familiar with potential risks to young people, as well as with legislation and policies. This will help you feel more confident when identifying red flags or responding to a disclosure. We know how crucial it is to respond to a first disclosure with an open and non-judgemental approach and to ensure the young person feels safe and believed.

Explicit Content	Page 3
Inappropriate/Unwanted Touching	Page 5
Online Abuse	Page 7
Peer-on-peer abuse	Page 9
Sexual Assault	Page 11
Sexual Harassment	Page 13

If you need support with any of the issues mentioned in this guide, Solace is here to help.

Get in touch:

solacewomensaid.org | 0808 802 5565 | advice@solacewomensaid.org

[Find out more about our Children and Young People's Services here.](#)



Definition

Distribution of sexually explicit images of a person posted online.

90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys said they had been sent unwanted explicit content.

(Ofsted).

The Law

It's a crime to show intimate images or videos, send them to another person, upload them to a website, or threaten to do this, without your consent (Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015). It is an offence to make, distribute, possess or show any indecent images of anyone aged under 18, even if the content was created with the consent of that young person (Protection of Children Act 1978). Act 1997. The act is considered a criminal offence in cases of revenge porn or sending unsolicited photographs as a form of harassment.

Sending inappropriate pictures to a minor is illegal under all circumstances. It is illegal for a minor to send inappropriate pictures to another child even if these photographs are taken of themselves and the recipient is consenting to receive the images. Sending explicit or nude images may, depending on the circumstances, be an offence under the Communications Act 2003 or the Malicious Communications Act 1988. Behaviour of this kind, if repeated, may also amount to an offence of harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Resources

- [Receiving unwanted sexual content - CEOP Education at the National Crime Agency](#)
- [Image-based sexual abuse - Victim Support](#)

What to do

Speak to a trusted adult.

Call 101 (police non-emergency number) to understand your options and situation.

Report it: especially if the content is of a person under 18 and/or was sent without your or the person's consent.

If you're under 18, you can also report image-based sexual abuse to the police on the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) website.

Report the perpetrator to the websites/social media platforms and ask them to remove the content. Block the person sending you content.

Tips

- Even if you're in a relationship, think carefully before you share any sexual images with anyone, regardless of whether this is online, in person or via text message.
- Check your privacy settings on social media regularly to keep them up to date.
- Don't share personal information or contact details online. Turn your webcam off when you're not using it.

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- NSPCC Childline: 0800 800 5000, [website](#).
- FreeVictim [Supportline](#) on [08 08 16 89 111](#)
- [Revenge Porn Helpline](#) on [0345 6000 459](#).
- Crimestoppers [0800 555 111](#) or [report online](#) to report anonymously
- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\) website](#)
- [Report Harmful Content](#)

Definition

Any touching, particularly of a sexual nature, that is done intentionally and without consent.

Almost a third (29%) of 16–18-year-old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school

(Parliament.UK)

The Law

Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 3: makes it an offence for a person (A) intentionally to touch sexually another person (B) without that person's consent, if A does not reasonably believe that B consents.



Resources

- [How to report rape, sexual assault or other sexual offences - UK Police](#)
- [Enough - UK Government campaign](#)

What to do

Get to a safe place.

Speak to a trusted adult and support organisations to get help and advice.

Call 999 in an emergency or 101 (police non-emergency number) to understand your options and situation.

Tip

- Remember that help is always out there: you are not alone, and you will be believed.

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- Solace Advice Line
 - Call 0808 802 5565
 - Email advice@solacewomensaid.org
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24/7) [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)
- NSPCC Childline: 0808 800 5000, [website](#).
- FreeVictim [Supportline](#) on [08 08 16 89 111](tel:08081689111)
- Crimestoppers [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111) or [report online](#) to report anonymously

Definition

Any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web and it can happen anywhere online (NSPCC).

847,000 children aged 10 to 15 years (19.1%) experienced an online bullying behaviour in the year ending March 2023. Approximately one in five people 16+ experienced online harassment (21%).

(ONS)

The Law

Online harms can be illegal, or they can be harmful but legal. New online safety legislation is coming which will aim to reduce online harms. Currently, online harms can often be reported under harassment, child sexual exploitation, or hate speech.

([Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

Resources

- [NSPCC PANTS resources for schools and teachers](#)
- [Safe Touch – a set of PSHE lesson plans for Key stage 2 \(Waltham Forest\)](#)
- [NSPCC: Keeping children safe online](#)



What to do

Speak to a trusted adult.

Call 101 (police non-emergency number) to understand your options and situation.

Report it. If you're under 18, you can also report online sexual abuse to the police on the Child Exploitation and Online

Protection (CEOP) website. Report the perpetrator to the websites/social media platforms and ask them to remove the content.

Block the person sending you content.

Tips

- Even if you're in a relationship, think carefully before you share any sexual images or any other private information with anyone.
- Check your privacy settings on social media regularly to keep them up to date.
- Don't share personal information or contact details online.
- Turn your webcam off when you're not using it.
- Find someone to support you so you're not dealing with it alone.

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- National Bullying Helpline: 0300 323 0169, [website](#).
- Free Victim [Supportline](#) on [0808 16 89 111](#)
- [Revenge Porn Helpline](#) on [0345 6000 459](#).
- NSPCC Childline: 0808 800 5000, [website](#).
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust: National Stalking Helpline [0808 802 0300](#)
www.suzylamplugh.org
- Crimestoppers [0800 555 111](#) or [report online](#) to report anonymously
- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\) website](#)
- [Report Harmful Content](#)

Definition

A term used to describe children and young people abusing other children and young people. Can include: bullying, abuse by a partner, upskirting, grooming, and physical, sexual, emotional abuse and harassment (Metropolitan Police)

Around a third of sexual abuse of children and young people is committed by peers.

(NSPCC)

The Law

Any form of sexual violence/abuse is illegal regardless of whether it is perpetrated by an adult or a minor. More information on this can be found in safeguarding policies and DfE statutory guidance (Keeping children safe in education, 2018). While there is a gap in legislation specific to peer-on-peer abuse (particularly among minors), abuse perpetrated by a peer will mostly falls under other criminal categories (for example, harassment, sexual violence, child sexual exploitation, revenge porn, child pornography). These acts are crimes, regardless of whether the person perpetrating it is a minor or an adult.

Resources

- [How to report rape, sexual assault or other sexual offences - UK Police](#)
- [Resources on harmful sexual behaviour in schools including peer-on-peer sexual abuse and healthy relationships - NSPCC](#)



What to do

Get to a safe place.

Speak to a trusted adult and support organisations to get help and advice.

Call 999 in an emergency or 101 (police non-emergency number) to understand your options and situation.

Tip

- Remember that help is always out there: You are not alone, and you will be believed.

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- 24/7 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line [0808 500 2222](tel:08085002222)
- Solace Advice Line
 - Call 0808 802 5565
 - Email advice@solacewomensaid.org
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24/7) [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)
- Free Victim [Supportline](tel:08081689111) on [0808 16 89 111](tel:08081689111)
- NSPCC Childline: 0808 800 5000, [website](https://www.nspcc.org.uk).
- Crimestoppers [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111) or [report online](https://www.crimestoppers.co.uk). To report anonymously
- Catch 22 Tel: 020 7336 4800 [Contact | Catch22 \(catch-22.org.uk\)](https://www.catch22.org.uk)
- Runaway Helpline Call 116 00 1-2-1 chat [About us - Runaway Helpline](https://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk)
- Safer London Tel: 020 7021 0301 [Young Londoners - Safer London](https://www.saferlondon.org.uk)

Definition

An act of physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent.

1 in 6 children have been sexually abused

(Rape Crisis England and Wales).

The Law

The Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 3: makes it an offence for a person (A) intentionally to touch sexually another person (B) without that person's consent, if A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Under the Sexual Offences Act, a person can legally consent to sexual activity only if they are aged 16 years or over.

Resources

- [How to report rape, sexual assault or other sexual offences - UK Police](#)
- [Help if you're not sure whether to report rape or sexual assault - UK Police](#)
- [Brook Traffic Light Tool course](#)
- [Recognising and reporting online abuse - Wales Government](#)



What to do

Get to a safe place.

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Call 999 in an emergency or 101 (police non-emergency number) to understand your options and situation.

Tip

- Remember that help is always out there: You are not alone, and you will be believed.
- It is never your fault

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- 24/7 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line [0808 500 2222](tel:08085002222)
- Solace Advice Line
 - Call 0808 802 5565
 - Email advice@solacewomensaid.org
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24/7) [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)
- Free Victim [Supportline](tel:08081689111) on [0808 16 89 111](tel:08081689111)
- NSPCC Childline: 0808 800 5000, [website](https://www.nspcc.org.uk).
- Crimestoppers [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111) or [report online](https://www.crimestoppers.co.uk). To report anonymously
- Catch 22 for training: catch22.org.uk
- Runaway Helpline: call 116 00 1-2-1, chat at [About us - Runaway Helpline](https://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk)
- Safer London Tel: 020 7021 0301, [saferlondon.org.uk/young-londoners](https://www.saferlondon.org.uk/young-londoners)

Definition

Sexual harassment occurs when an individual engages in unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. It has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual concerned (UK Govt).

A survey found that 67% of girls aged 13-18 have experienced sexual harassment at school from another student. 29% first experienced sexual harassment when they were just 11-13 years old.

(Girlguiding, 2021)

The Law

An offence of harassment exists under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (the 1997 Act). A person who pursues a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another person, and which they know or ought to know amounts to harassment, can face up to six months in prison or an unlimited fine.

The 1997 Act states that harassing a person includes alarming them or causing them distress. It also states that a course of conduct is either doing something more than once towards one other person or doing something at least once towards more than one other person.

Resources

- [How to report rape, sexual assault or other sexual offences - UK Police](#)
- [Help if you're not sure whether to report rape or sexual assault - UK Police](#)
- [What is Sexual Harassment? - Rape Crisis](#)
- [Public sexual harassment consultation - UK Gov](#)
- [Equality Advisory Service](#)
- [NABS: Specialist support if you have experienced sexual harassment](#)
- [Childnet Step Up Speak Up lesson plans](#)
- [NSPCC: Keeping children safe online](#)

What to do

Get to a safe place.

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Tip

- Remember that help is always out there: You are not alone, and you will be believed.

Contacts

- Police:
 - Call 999 in an emergency
 - Call 101 for non-emergency
- Equality Advisory Support Service 0808 800 0082
- Solace Advice Line
 - Call 0808 802 5565
 - Email advice@solacewomensaid.org
- ACAS: 0300 123 1100
- Free Victim Supportline on 0808 16 89 111
- NSPCC Childline: 0808 800 5000, website.
- Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 or report online to report anonymously



Violence against women and girls ends here.

Solace Women's Aid

Advice line freephone | 0808 802 5565

Email | advice@solacewomensaid.org

Website | solacewomensaid.org

Social media | @SolaceWomensAid

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