

Parent guide

Sextortion of boys and young men

What is sextortion?

'Sextortion' is a form of blackmail. It involves threatening to publish sexual information, photos, or videos about someone. This may be to extort money or to force the victim to do something against their will.

The sextortion of boys and young men is increasingly being reported.

Criminals often target children and young people through dating apps, social media, gaming, or pornography sites. They may use a fake identity to befriend a child or young person online and then threaten to send images to their family and friends.

Sextortion can be committed by individuals, but organised crime gangs are usually behind it.

It is important to note that sometimes children and young people do not understand what happened to them as being wrong, sometimes they do not realise what has happened at all. However, that young person has been exploited, and as such, realisation after-the-fact can be very painful and distressing.

What to do if your child is a victim

- Don't panic; help and support is available.
- Don't pay.
- Save the evidence: Take screenshots. Save messages and images. Collect URL links to where the information is being shared online.
- Report it to social media companies if communication happened on these channels. For example, Facebook or Instagram.
- Block all communication with the person targeting them.
- Most social media sites have rules against sharing intimate content without consent. You should be able to get the material removed.



How to report

Sussex Police

We understand that it can be difficult to report this type of crime to the police. Their officers are well trained and are there to listen and to support your child in any way they can.

You can report intimate image abuse to Sussex Police:

- Through the [Sussex Police website](#).
- By calling 101.
- If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use the textphone service on 18001 101.

Victims under the age of 18 should also report this through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection website (CEOP).



Where to find support?

The best way to support children and young people is by being aware of what they are doing online, the associated risks, how you can support them and most importantly having regular open conversations about their online lives.

The websites below will help you to do this and can help you to report any concerns of sextortion:

- [CEOP](#)
- [Know about CSE](#)
- [Barnardo's](#)
- [Netaware](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Pace UK](#)
- [ThinkUKnow](#)
- [Parent Zone](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)



Case study

When Vinnie was 14, he went online to look for a girlfriend. He ended up chatting to 14-year-old Gabby.

Vinnie and Gabby spent a few hours chatting online which eventually led to Gabby suggesting that Vinnie strips and gets naked on webcam.

Vinnie felt like he knew Gabby really well even though they had only been chatting online for a couple of hours.

Vinnie had no problem stripping on webcam because Gabby had promised to strip once he did, and Vinnie trusted her. Vinnie stripped on the webcam and when he asked Gabby to return the favour, Gabby replied by revealing that she was in fact a middle-aged man who had been pretending to be a 14-year-old girl.

The man said he recorded Vinnie and that if he didn't keep stripping, he would put the footage online.

(Source: The BLAST Project)

For more information, visit [Staying Safe Online](#).