

Advice and support if you are a victim of a Sextortion incident

Please be assured that Police Scotland will take your case extremely seriously and deal with it in complete confidence. You have already taken the first step by recognising you are a victim and contacting the police. You may require support to help you through this which can be found below.

What is Sextortion?

Sextortion can refer to a variety of offences committed online. It is most often used to describe online blackmail, where criminals threaten to release sexual or indecent images of you, unless you pay money or carry out their demands. Sextortion may include:

- Financial blackmail using sexual or indecent images that have been sent to somebody you've had contact with online
- Financial blackmail using images that have been stolen from you, taken through hacking, or have been faked using AI generators or other image altering technology
- Blackmail using sexual or indecent images that have been sent to somebody, but with a demand for something other than money. This might be a demand for you to do something you don't want to, like give them use of your bank account or provide more images.

As a victim of Sextortion, you may feel distressed or blame yourself. **It is not your fault** and you are the victim of a crime. It does not matter if an image was initially shared with your consent or through threats or manipulation - the misuse of your image is an offence **and is never OK**.

What do I do if I am the victim of a Sextortion?

Our advice is to:

- Stop all communication with the offender immediately.
- Don't be tempted to pay as there is no guarantee that this will stop the threats. The offender's motive is to get money, once you have shown you can pay, they may ask for more and the blackmail could continue
- Preserve evidence, if possible. Take screenshots of the offender's profile information if you feel comfortable to do so. Save messages and images and make a note of usernames, email addresses, phone numbers or bank account numbers
- If images have been shared online, collect URLs and links if you can. Please see support below for potential removal of images
- Do not delete any correspondence
- Review all the accounts which you might have linked in case the offenders try to contact you using one of those
- Review your privacy settings across your profiles and limit them so that you cannot be contacted by people you don't know and make friend lists/followers private so offenders cannot identify them
- Change your passwords. Create a strong password using three random words – this makes it harder to guess. Do not use personal information such as your pets name, year of birth etc.
- Set up Two Step Verification on your accounts for extra security
- Consider using a password manager to help you to remember different passwords.

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More information and advice can be found on the Police Scotland website:

www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/internet-safety/sextortion



Further help and support is also available at:

CEOP Safety Centre - information about keeping yourself or a child you know safer from online child sexual abuse: www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/

Stop NCII Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse – Free tool to help detect and remove images from being shared online: www.stopncii.org

Revenge Porn Helpline - UK helpline supporting adults (aged 18+) who are experiencing intimate image abuse, also known as, revenge porn: www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Childline – Report Remove– Report Remove Online image removal tool for under 18 years of age: www.childline.org.uk/report-remove/

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) - works to keep children safe from sexual abuse and grooming online: www.ceopeducation.co.uk

Internet Watch Foundation – Help and support for victims of Sextortion provided by internet watch foundation: www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sextortion

National Cyber Security Centre - Advice in response to the increase in sextortion scams: www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/sextortion-scams-how-to-protect-yourself

Get Safe Online - The UK's leading online safety advice resource: www.getsafeonline.org

PAPYRUS - provides confidential advice and support and works to prevent young suicide in the UK: www.papyrus-uk.org

Samaritans - to talk any time you like in your own way and off the record: www.samaritans.org

NHS 24 – call 111, or your local GP surgery: www.nhs24.scot

Kooth - your online mental wellbeing community. Access free, safe and anonymous: www.kooth.com

Togetherall - Share experiences in a safe, anonymous space. Benefit from practical wellbeing tools and resources. Gain access in minutes, available all day, every day: www.togetherall.com

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) – provides help and support to victims of crime. Call 0800 160 1985 or: www.victimsupport.scot/self-referral

If you are in severe distress and thinking about harming yourself, please call 999 immediately.

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