



## **Blame lies with the perpetrator and not the victim**

**Revenge Porn Helpline urges victims of Intimate Image Abuse in Scotland to seek support**

- **SWGfL and the Revenge Porn Helpline launches campaign in Scotland to raise awareness about the harmful impact of intimate image abuse**
- **Cases of intimate image abuse have led to the removal of over 260,000 intimate images by the Revenge Porn Helpline**
  - **Alarming societal belief that blame lies with the victim and not the perpetrator**

The Revenge Porn Helpline, a service operated by the Scottish registered charity SWGfL and funded by the Delivering Equally Safe Fund, has shown an alarming rise in intimate image abuse cases, highlighting the essential need for support.

The service, available throughout the UK, has seen cases rise by over 40% from 2020 to 2021 with Sextortion being the most reported issue. As part of a new campaign, the Revenge Porn Helpline urges any adult (18+) in Scotland to seek non-judgemental support if they are concerned about intimate image abuse.

The [Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) states that an offence has been committed if someone discloses, or threatens to disclose, an image which shows, or appears to show, another person in an intimate situation.

Intimate image abuse, also referred to as 'revenge porn', is the act of sharing or threatening to share intimate images of someone, without their consent. Issues such as Sextortion and Voyeurism would also fall under the broader term 'intimate image abuse' and are also supported by the Revenge Porn Helpline.

### **A Concerning Landscape**

Data gathered from the Revenge Porn Helpline since its creation in 2015 has shown that cases are rapidly increasing year-by-year with the team removing over 260,000 intimate images in the process. Findings have highlighted that:

- Intimate content being shared continues to be a gendered issue
- Female clients throughout 2021 reported 75% of cases.
- Sextortion cases are on the rise (accounting for a quarter of reports in 2021)
- 90% of content reported has been successfully removed by the Revenge Porn Helpline

### **Blame Lies With the Perpetrator**

The Revenge Porn Helpline urges any adult who has experienced intimate image abuse to understand that they are not at fault. Cases have illustrated a general societal attitude towards victim blaming with the idea that the person affected has brought some of the issue on themselves by 'taking intimate images in the first place'. This can be reflected in support services and law enforcement and then be reinforced by the victims own feelings of self-blame.

Taking intimate images is not the problem. Anyone who shares or threatens to share intimate images without consent is breaking the law. This new campaign is there to spread essential awareness around blame lying with the perpetrator and not the victim.

Sophie Mortimer (Revenge Porn Helpline Manager at SWGfL) said:

*“The alarming rise in intimate image abuse highlights the essential need for support now. We remind those who are affected in Scotland that there is legislation in place and support available when you need it most. Intimate image abuse is not ok and blame should never lie with the victim. Perpetrators prey on fear and the work of the Revenge Porn Helpline aims to take that control away. A call or an email to the team is all it takes to get reassured and supported.”*

Open from **10am to 4pm: Monday to Friday**. You can contact the Revenge Porn Helpline in the following ways.

Visit the Revenge Porn Helpline at [revengepornhelpline.org.uk](https://revengepornhelpline.org.uk), call them on: **0354 6000 459** or alternatively send an email via [help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk](mailto:help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk).

Further information and contact point:

Email: [press.office@swgfl.org.uk](mailto:press.office@swgfl.org.uk)

### **About SWGfL**

SWGfL ([www.swgfl.org.uk](https://www.swgfl.org.uk)) is a charitable trust, with an international reputation working to ensure that everyone can benefit from technology, free from harm. Over 21 years old, the charity is responsible for award winning services, resources and campaigns as well as operating four Helplines that each support victims of differing online harms. It works with various Government Departments both at home and abroad and has addressed conferences across Europe, America and Africa.

SWGfL, alongside partners Childnet and Internet Watch Foundation, lead the UK Safer Internet Centre. The Centre is the national awareness centre and is responsible for raising the nation's attention to online safety issues as well as managing online criminal content and supporting professionals via its unique helpline.