

The Law Around Revenge Porn

People who maliciously share sexually explicit pictures of former partners will face prosecution under new laws.

Revenge porn – the distribution of a private sexual image of someone without their consent and with the intention of causing them distress – will be made a specific offence in the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

Justice Secretary Chris Grayling said:

“The fact that there are individuals who are cruelly distributing intimate pictures of their former partners without their consent is almost beyond belief.

“We want those who fall victim to this type of disgusting behaviour to know that we are on their side and will do everything we can to bring offenders to justice.

“That is why we will change the law and make it absolutely clear to those who act in this way that they could face prison.”

Minister for Women and Equalities Nicky Morgan said:

“Circulating intimate photos of an individual without their consent is never acceptable. People are entitled to expect a reasonable level of respect and privacy.

“It is right that those who do circulate these images are held to account, and that we educate young people to the hurt that can be caused by breaking this trust.”

The change will cover the sharing of images both online and offline. It will mean that images posted to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter will be caught by the offence, as well as those that are shared via text message. Images shared via email, on a website or the distribution of physical copies will also be caught. Those convicted will face a maximum sentence of 2 years in prison.

The offence will cover photographs or films which show people engaged in sexual activity or depicted in a sexual way or with their genitals exposed, where what is shown would not usually be seen in public. Victims and others will be able to report offences to the police to investigate. Officers will work with the Crown Prosecution Service to take forward cases for prosecution.

Those found to have committed a sexual offence can continue to be prosecuted under existing legislation, which can lead to sentences of up to 14 years in prison.

The change in the law will be made via an amendment to the Criminal Justice & Courts Bill, which includes a number of measures to toughen up sentencing.

These include ending automatic half-way point release for criminals convicted of rape or attempted rape of a child, or serious terrorism offences, and ensuring that all offenders who receive the tough

Extended Determinate Sentence (EDS) are no longer automatically released two-thirds of the way through their custodial term.