

# Sextortion & Catfishing

## What you need to know

Stay Smart. Stay Safe. You're Not Alone.

### What Is Sextortion?

**Sextortion** is when someone tricks you into sending private or sexual images, then threatens to share them unless you send more, pay money, or do what they say.

They may say things like:

*"If you don't send more,  
I'll post this everywhere."*

*"If you tell anyone, I'll ruin  
your life."*

*"If you pay me, I'll delete  
it."*

**Catfishing** is when someone pretends to be someone they're not online - using fake names, photos, or ages. They do this to make you trust them or fall for them.

**Need help? Visit our resource hub or  
speak to a trusted adult**



Childline – Call 0800 1111 or go to [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)  
The Mix – Support for under-25s: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)  
Family Lives – [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)  
NSPCC Helpline for young people and parents –  
0808 800 5000

## The facts

- **Teen boys** aged 13–17 are currently the **main target** of sextortion scams.
- Offenders often **pretend to be someone attractive**, close in age or someone with similar interests to you “just like you.”
- **LGBTQ+ teens** are more at risk—especially if they feel they have to keep secrets.
- **Scammers ask for money, credit card information, they make threats**, ask for your social media account information and put lots of pressure on you.
- The UK National Crime Agency reports a **400% increase** in sextortion targeting young people between 2022 and 2023.
- Scammers often strike **within minutes** of getting a photo or message.

## How it starts

1. You meet someone on Snapchat, Instagram, Discord, or a game
2. They compliment you, flirt, or say they're into you
3. They quickly ask to move to private chat or video
4. They suggest swapping pics or say, “I’ll send one if you do”
5. Then they start threatening you

You're not alone.  
You're not to blame.  
This is not your fault.  
What's happening is  
a crime, and there is  
help for you.

## What To Do If This Happens to You

- ➔ **Don't send more.** It makes things worse
- ➔ **Don't pay.** Most people who do still get blackmailed again
- ➔ **Block them** right away
- ➔ **Tell someone you trust.** A parent, teacher, school nurse, youth worker
- ➔ **Save the chats.** Take screenshots and write down usernames
- ➔ **Deactivate (don't delete)** your account - this helps police track them
- ➔ **You have done nothing wrong.** You've been targeted by a criminal

## Where to get help

Emergency? Call 999 if you feel at risk or unsafe.

### Need to report it?

**CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command)**  
[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) – Safe, confidential, and built for young

### To help remove shared images:

**Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)**  
[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)