



Home Office



Ministry  
of Justice

Sarah Owen MP  
Chair  
Women and Equalities Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Jess Phillips MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding and**  
**Violence Against Women and Girls**

2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

**Alex Davies Jones MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of**  
**State for Victims and Violence**  
**Against Women and Girls**

102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

25 February 2025

Dear Sarah,

## **INTRODUCTION OF CRIME AND POLICING BILL**

We are writing to confirm that today the Government has introduced the Crime and Policing Bill to Parliament. This letter briefly explains the purpose of this Bill and sets out the key measures within it.

Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a top priority for the Government, and it is being treated as a national emergency. Our mission is to halve levels of these crimes in a decade, using every lever available. This includes legislating where necessary, which is why we are introducing measures through the Crime and Policing Bill that are intended to help tackle it.

We have also set out missions to make our streets safer and build back the public's trust in the Criminal Justice System. Delivering on these commitments will ensure that the law is as robust as possible to tackle crime, protect victims and, ensure that there are the tools available to address the root causes of abuse and violence.

### Stalking

We are committed to ensuring victims of stalking have the strongest protections so they can go about their day-to-day lives in safety. That is why in the Crime and Policing Bill we are:

1. Legislating to provide for the courts to make a Stalking Protection Order (SPO) on conviction or acquittal of their own volition. This measure will enable courts to make an SPO at the conclusion of criminal proceedings without the police having to make an application. Currently, restraining orders are used in these circumstances, but they were not specifically designed to tackle stalking behaviour and do not allow the imposition of positive requirements.
2. Introducing a new power for the Secretary of State to issue multi-agency statutory guidance on stalking. This guidance will be for professionals such as the police, teachers and healthcare professionals and they will have to have due regard to it. The guidance will support those professionals in identifying stalking behaviour, managing perpetrators and supporting victims. It will also set out a framework for how agencies can work together.

3. Introducing a new power for the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance for the police setting out the process they should follow when considering whether to release identifying information to victims about stalkers. The police will be required to have regard to this guidance.

### Registered Sex Offenders

Ensuring that the system for risk managing sex offenders and those who pose a risk of sexual harm is a crucial part of delivering our commitment on VAWG. We recognise the importance of ensuring that the public is protected. That means ensuring offenders who are managed in the community are able to be properly monitored, with the ability for robust enforcement action to be taken where necessary. In the Crime and Policing Bill we are:

4. Introducing a new duty on individuals serving a sentence in the community and who are supervised by probation or a youth offending team (YOT) to inform their responsible officer if they change their name, use a different name (e.g. an alias) or change their contact information. The name change could be for any reason. This requirement already applies to offenders released from custody and we want to make sure that this change will apply the same requirement to those serving sentences in the community.
5. Strengthening the notification requirements for registered sex offenders by giving the police a power to prohibit them from changing their names on official documents and introducing a new power for the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance for the police to follow when disclosing information about sex offenders to prevent sexual harm.

### Spiking

As has already been announced, the Bill, creates a new offence of administering etc. harmful substances (including by **spiking**) the aim of which is to help the police better respond to this crime. To do so, we are repealing sections 22, 23 and 25 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and replacing section 24 with a single administering a harmful substance offence that will have a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment.

### Intimate Image Abuse

It is already an offence to share, or threaten to share an intimate image without consent, but it is only an offence to take an image without consent in certain circumstances, such as upskirting. That is why, through this Bill, we are repealing the current offences of "voyeurism" and "upskirting" (sections 67(3) and 67A(2) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) and replacing them with **three new offences of 'taking' an intimate image without consent** that will cover a broader range of behaviours than current offences:

1. A "base" offence of intentionally taking an intimate image without consent and without reasonable belief in consent.
2. An offence of intentionally taking an intimate image without consent and with the intention of causing the victim humiliation, alarm or distress.
3. An offence of intentionally taking an intimate image without consent and without reasonable belief in consent, for the purpose of the perpetrator or another person obtaining sexual gratification.

We are also introducing new offences of installing, adapting, preparing or maintaining equipment with the intention of enabling the commission of one of these offences.

## Exposure

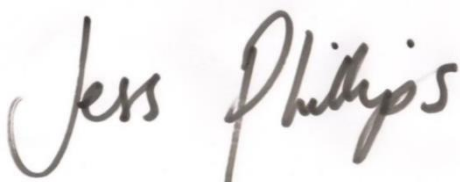
We are **expanding the scope of the existing offence of exposure** (which is committed if the perpetrator intends to alarm or distress), to include exposure with intent to cause humiliation, and exposure for the purpose of sexual gratification (where this is done with recklessness as to whether someone who sees them will be caused alarm, distress or humiliation). This will ensure there is parity between this offence (committed offline) and the offence of sending a film or photograph of genitals (commonly referred to as the “cyberflashing” offence at section 66A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003).

## Grooming

In its Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks Investigation Report published in February 2022, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse recommended *“the strengthening of the response of the criminal justice system by the Government amending the Sentencing Act 2020 to provide a mandatory aggravating factor in sentencing those convicted of offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children”*. We want to ensure that the sentencing framework reflects the seriousness of this behaviour and will therefore legislate to make grooming a statutory aggravating factor. Where a sentencing court concludes that a child sex offence involved or was facilitated by grooming behaviour, it will be obliged to treat this as an aggravating factor so that a more substantial penalty may be justified.

These measures represent a key next step in our work to tackle VAWG, and we hope you welcome their introduction. We will continue engaging with you as this Bill progresses.

Yours sincerely,



**JESS PHILLIPS MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding and Violence**  
**Against Women and Girls**



**ALEX DAVIES-JONES MP**  
**Minister for Victims and Violence**  
**Against Women and Girls**