



Ministry
of Justice

End Violence against Women Coalition
134 Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London
SE1 7SJ

The Right Honourable
Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

MoJ ref: ADR94663

22 April 2022

Dear EVAW Coalition Members,

TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE ONLINE SAFETY BILL

Thank you for your letter to me and my ministerial colleagues in the Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport of 8 February regarding Safer Internet Day and tackling violence against women and girls in the Online Safety Bill. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

The Online Safety Bill is the responsibility of DCMS, and I know that you have already heard from Chris Philp, MP, Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, about the action this government is taking to address online harms, including violence, harassment and abuse, which are disproportionately targeted at women and girls. Under the Online Safety Bill, companies in scope will need to take swift and effective action against illegal and legal but harmful content targeted at women and girls.

Since Mr Philp wrote to you, we have confirmed that we will be creating a new “cyberflashing” offence through the Online Safety Bill. The government is well aware of concerns around this harmful behaviour and understands the serious impact it can have on victims. As you know, the Law Commission recommended the creation of a new offence in its report on modernising communications offences published last year. The government has considered this recommendation carefully and agrees that there are some circumstances where “cyberflashing” may not be captured by the existing criminal law. I have therefore decided to address this by creating a new offence.

This new criminal offence, which will apply in England and Wales, will carry a 2-year maximum prison sentence, and will criminalise intentionally sending or giving a photograph or film of any person’s genitals to another person with the intention that that person will see the genitals and be caused alarm, distress or humiliation, or for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification whilst being reckless as to whether the recipient will be caused alarm, distress or humiliation.

I would like to thank you again for writing to me and raising these important issues. I know that you work closely with my officials on several areas of shared concern and they would be happy to meet with you soon to discuss these issues, including the progress of actions arising from the Rape Review and the new cyberflashing offence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dominic Raab". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dominic" and the last name "Raab" clearly distinguishable.

RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP