



# Law & Sexual Crimes against Children

*Made simple*



In 2010 government began to use a new law, **the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act**, to help and protect adults and children who are victims of sexual crimes.

Sometimes being the victim of a sexual crime is very hard to share because sex is something that many people find difficult to talk about. Sometimes victims of sexual crimes feel ashamed and dirty.

This new law explains what sexual crimes are and how the police, the courts, health and welfare workers should respond to them. The law also recognises that sexual crime may have a big impact on a person's life and that they may need special help from health and welfare professionals.

This is why children and adults who are victims of sexual crime need to report them – so that they can get this help and also so that the person committing the crime can be held responsible for what they have done.



**Laws that are written down are called “Acts”.**

## **Some examples of what this law says:**

- Rape is when someone uses their body part (for example their penis, finger, tongue) to penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person and that person is a child, or has not consented (agreed) to this sexual act. Both sexes can therefore commit rape or be the victim of rape.

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Childline

☎ 08000 55 555

- It is also a crime to touch someone on their private parts or breasts without their consent, to show children pornography (pictures that show naked people or people doing sexual things), to have sex in front of children, to try to persuade children to have sex, to use children for sex work or prostitution.
- This law also protects people who are seriously mentally disabled from being victims of sexual crimes.
- People who know about sexual crimes against children must report them to the police – if you do not then that is a crime if you are an adult.
- The law also says that children must wait until the age of 16 years before they participate in sexual behaviour.



This law also helps children who are victims of sexual crimes when they have to go and give evidence (talk about what has happened) in a Court.

Sometimes children can give evidence in a separate room with a helper who is called an intermediary.

