

Sexual offences

Chapter summary

The law bestows lifelong anonymity on the victims and alleged victims of the majority of sexual offences, including rape, as regards any media report about or referring to such crime. The anonymity is provided by **automatic** reporting restrictions which make it illegal to publish any detail likely to identify someone as being such a victim/alleged victim. In recent years several newspapers have been fined and ordered to pay compensation for inadvertently publishing matter which breached this anonymity, thereby causing distress to people who should have been shielded from such publicity. This chapter explains these restrictions and how the anonymity can be lifted in certain circumstances. Even when the law permits the media to identify such a person, a journalist should consider whether this would be ethical, particularly in respect of a sexually abused child. The range of sexual offences involved has been extended by recent law. It includes the trafficking of women (and men) for prostitution, so such people are entitled to anonymity in media reports of alleged trafficking. The anonymity also applies to people allegedly secretly filmed by voyeurs, and to children alleged to have been the target of internet 'grooming' by paedophiles. Chapter 11 explains anonymity provision in family law cases, some of which concern children allegedly sexually abused.

→ glossary

Automatic anonymity for complainants of sexual offences

In respect of the vast majority of sexual offences, when an allegation is made that such a crime has been committed, the person said to be the victim has

by law lifetime anonymity as regards any media report of that allegation or which refers to it in any way. The anonymity is automatic and unconditional, in that it applies:

- immediately, from the time the allegation is made, whether made by the alleged victim or anyone else;
- whether or not the allegation is subsequently withdrawn;
- whether or not anyone has told the police about it;
- whether or not the alleged perpetrator is prosecuted for it;
- whether, if there is a prosecution, there is a conviction or an acquittal.

The anonymity also applies to anyone who allegedly was intended to be such a victim, e.g. the target of a conspiracy to commit a sex offence or of an incitement to commit one.

So, for example, the anonymity applies in respect of any initial report in the media that a rape may have or has occurred (e.g. 'Police in Southampton are investigating a rape') and to a report of any subsequent rape trial.

As regards those unable to state that they are the victim of a sex offence, e.g. a baby or young child, or someone with a mental incapacity, the anonymity applies as soon as someone else makes the allegation in respect of them, e.g. when a parent or doctor tells police, or a journalist, of suspicion that a child is a sex offence victim.

This anonymity for rape victims dates from statute passed in 1976. Parliament decided that the violation of rape, and the potential for victims to suffer embarrassment and further trauma when testifying in court, justified them being given such anonymity. It has since been extended to the victims/alleged victims of other sexual offences, and is currently defined by the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, as amended by the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The anonymity applies to reports of civil law matters, as well as to crime stories and reports of criminal trials and of courts martial. Hence, if a woman who alleges she was raped sues in the civil courts the alleged perpetrator, the woman by law must be anonymous in media reports of that case, irrespective of whether she wins damages.

Similarly, if someone making a claim at an employment tribunal alleges he/she was the victim of a sexual offence, that person should have anonymity in reports of the tribunal case.

The anonymity also applies in contexts other than contemporaneous reporting of crimes or court cases. For example, if a journalist is interviewing someone for a biographical feature, and that person says that as a child

he/she was sexually molested, then the anonymity applies, making it illegal for the feature to identify that person as such a victim/alleged victim – unless the person gives valid, written consent to such identification, as explained below. The lifetime anonymity also ceases to apply in other, rare, circumstances, e.g. if a court lifts it.

- The anonymity does not apply to dead people. So, it will not apply to someone who is raped and murdered.

→ see below, p. 121–124, for details of when the anonymity ceases to apply

The scope of the anonymity restriction

Section 1 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 states that after an allegation of a sex offence is made, it is illegal to include in any publication:

- any matter which is likely to lead members of the public to identify the person during his/her lifetime as the victim/alleged victim of that offence, including in particular:
 - his/her name,
 - his/her address,
 - the identity of any school or other educational establishment attended by him/her,
 - the identity of his/her place of work,
 - any still or moving picture of him/her.

Publication includes any speech, writing, relevant programme, or other communication in whatever form addressed to the public at large or to any section of the public. A picture means ‘a likeness however produced’. The section prohibits publication of matter when it is ‘likely to lead’ to such identification. A media report referring to someone’s school or workplace, particularly if their age is published, could prompt speculation likely to lead to identification. But in some instances naming a large educational establishment, e.g. a university, when stating that the victim/alleged victim is a student there, will not in itself be likely to identify him/her. However, inclusion of further detail could breach his/her anonymity. A report which describes a woman victim of rape as aged 25 and as studying music at a particular university could well identify her. The then Solicitor General said in 1983 that a report of a rape case could be illegal if no names or specific addresses were published but nevertheless the detail included was sufficient to identify the victim/alleged victim in the minds of some people even though not in the minds of the community generally.

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see ch. 7,
on sec-
tion 39

When the victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence is aged under 18, courts sometimes impose an order under section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 to protect his/her identity. This is unnecessary because of the automatic effect of the 1992 Act. However, a section 39 order usually includes a blanket prohibition as regards identifying the juvenile's school, i.e. irrespective of whether naming the school is 'likely' to breach anonymity.

Jigsaw identification

For a definition of jigsaw identification, see ch. 7, p. 105. Jigsaw identification could occur – for example – if in reports of a rape trial a town's newspaper describes the alleged victim as 'a mother of three' who lives and works locally, a TV station states that she is 'a nurse', and a radio station says she is 'a woman in her thirties' and also reports that the alleged rape occurred when she was working at night. A member of the public could then know she is a local nurse in her thirties, who has three children and has worked locally at night, detail which could identify her to colleagues and acquaintances.

When a court case involves sexual abuse of a child or children within a family, all media organisations covering it should agree whether their reports (a) name the adult defendant, but omit any detail of his/her relationship to the children, or (b) do not identify the adult defendant, and can therefore reveal that the alleged abuse was of children in the same household. See also ch. 7, p. 106 and below, p. 125 as regards the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice and the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

Invalid orders purporting to give an adult defendant anonymity

As indicated above, the media may decide, when covering a court case involving alleged sexual abuse within a family, that the only possible approach to preserve anonymity for the alleged victim(s) is not to publish anything to identify the adult defendant. But occasionally a magistrates court or a Crown court judge has sought to make that choice for the media by passing an order, purportedly under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, stating that the adult defendant should not be identified. The reason usually stated for such a prohibition is that it is an extra measure to protect the anonymity of the alleged victim(s). But the Act gives no power to courts to impose such an order. And there is no power in section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 to specify that an adult should have such anonymity, though courts sometimes claim there is. Either such order can be challenged as invalid. See ch. 13, pp. 222, and 236–237.

D Sexual offences for which alleged victims have anonymity

The anonymity for victims/alleged victims applies for almost all offences with any kind of sexual element. The most serious sexual offences are **indictable-only** with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. These include (and definitions here are simplified):

→ glossary

- rape, defined as penetration of vagina, anus, or mouth without consent, by penis. If the victim is aged under 13, any such conduct is defined as rape, even if the victim says there was no compulsion, because a victim so young cannot be deemed in any circumstance to have given consent. Males and females can be victims of rape, but only males can be rapists; females can be guilty of rape-related crime, e. g. inciting rape.
- assault by penetration of vagina or anus, without consent and otherwise than by penis, e.g. by finger or object. See also ‘indecent assault’, below;
- causing or inciting a child under 13 or a person who has ‘a mental disorder impeding choice’ to engage in sexual activity in which the activity caused or incited involves penetration by penis or otherwise;
- an attempt, conspiracy, or incitement to commit any of the above offences;
- aiding, abetting, counselling, or procuring the commission of any of the above offences, or of an attempt to commit one.

It apparently follows, from the fact that no girl aged under 13 can give legal consent to sexual intercourse, that for the media to identify any such girl as having been made pregnant is to identify her, in breach of her anonymity, as a victim of rape, even though if she has given birth and kept the baby her parenthood will in most cases be obvious in her local community. (Any such girl may be subject to ongoing proceedings involving social workers, and so may have related anonymity too under the Children Act 1989 – see ch. 11, pp. 174–175.)

Some sexual crimes which are **either-way charges** can incur severe punishment for the worst offenders, e.g. maximum sentences of 10 or 14 years. These either-way charges include (again, definitions are simplified):

→ glossary

- sexual assault, i.e. intentional sexual touching, without consent. See also ‘indecent assault’, below;
- causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent;

- administering a substance (e.g. spiking someone's drink with a drug) with intent to stupefy or overpower him/her to enable the perpetrator to engage him/her in sexual activity;
- trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence (a replacement for the offence of burglary with intent to rape);
- sexual intercourse with a girl who has reached the age of 13 but who is under 16 – this offending is not classed as rape if there is no compulsion, though it could well be regarded as a very serious, exploitative offence if the perpetrator is a much older adult;
- abuse of a position of trust, through sexual activity with someone aged under 18 – so, for example, if a male teacher has consensual sex with a 17-year-old girl, this would – because she is over 16, the age of sexual consent – not be a crime unless she was a pupil at the school where he works, in which case by having sex with her he has criminally abused his position of trust as a teacher;
- sexual activity by a care worker, e.g. in a hospital, if it involved such activity with a person in his/her care who has a mental disorder;
- engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child, or causing a child to watch a sexual act, for the perpetrator's sexual gratification;
- arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence, anywhere in the world;
- meeting or intending to meet a child following sexual grooming;
- sexual activity by an adult with a child family member;
- abduction of a woman with the intention that she shall marry or have unlawful sexual intercourse;
- indecent conduct towards a child;
- taking an indecent photograph of a child;
- causing or inciting child prostitution;
- procurement of a woman by threats or false pretences;
- causing or inciting an adult to be a prostitute, or controlling such a prostitute, for gain;
- trafficking a person into or within the UK for sexual exploitation, e.g. prostitution;
- exposure (colloquially called 'flashing') of genitals, intending to thereby cause someone alarm or distress;

- voyeurism, i.e. observing for sexual gratification someone else or people doing something private (e.g. taking a shower, or having sex), when knowing the person/people did not consent to be observed.

Again, it can be seen from this list that, because anonymity applies to victims/alleged victims of all these offences, it does not depend on the accusation being that there was a physical, sexual assault. A child allegedly being groomed for sex by a man chatting to him/her on the Internet, but who never met him, has lifetime anonymity in respect of any media report of that allegation. A victim of a man who exposes himself in a park cannot be identified in a media report of the case. Someone who has actually or allegedly been secretly filmed in their bathroom by a voyeur has such lifetime anonymity too, and so does someone who has been, or is intended to be, involved in prostitution as a result of a crime under the Act, e.g. trafficking.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force on 1 May 2004, introducing new sexual offences, some listed above, and changing the definitions of others. Some journalists may not be familiar with all of these new offences, but need to realise the anonymity provision applies in respect of both new and older offences. A sexual offence which allegedly occurred before 1 May 2004 will be charged according to the older definition. For example, one such older offence is ‘indecent assault’, which covers a range of conduct, the most serious of which would, if the offence occurred after that date, meet the definition of assault by penetration, while less serious sexual touching would, if it occurred after that date, be charged as sexual assault.

If two adults are both charged with a consensual, illegal sexual activity with the other, i.e. sex between adult relatives (which could be charged as ‘incest’ under the older law) or sexual activity in a public lavatory, the anonymity does not apply to either of them. But if only one of them is charged, the other retains anonymity. Buggery is no longer illegal between consenting adults, but is an offence if perpetrated on someone aged under 16 – a victim who should therefore have anonymity.

Liability for breach of the anonymity provision

The Attorney General must approve any prosecution for breach of the anonymity of a victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence. Those who can be prosecuted are any proprietor, any editor, and any publisher of the relevant newspaper or periodical; or, as regards a broadcast programme, any body corporate providing the programme service and any person whose functions in relation to the programme correspond to those of an editor of a newspaper; or as regards any other form of publication, any person publishing

it. When such a breach is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect on the part of, a director, manager, secretary, or other similar officer of a body corporate, or any person purporting to act in such capacity, he/she too shall be guilty of the offence.

It is a defence if the person accused of such a breach can prove that he/she was not aware, and neither suspected nor had reason to suspect, that the matter published would be likely to identify the victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence. The maximum fine for a breach is £5,000.

Examples of recent breaches of the anonymity

In 2007 the *Lancashire Evening Post's* parent company was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £4,000 compensation to two women victims of trafficking, whose anonymity was breached in a report. Editorial director Simon Reynolds denied responsibility for the breach. The case against him was withdrawn (*Media Lawyer*, 14 December 2007). In 2007 MEN Media, owner of the *Macclesfield Express*, was fined £1,500 after the paper accidentally named a sexual assault victim. Its editor David Lafferty denied responsibility, and was acquitted.

In 2006 the *Sunderland Echo's* parent company was fined £2,500, and ordered to pay £2,500 in compensation, after the paper mistakenly published matter identifying a rape victim. In the same year the *Daily Telegraph* was fined £2,000, and ordered to pay £5,000 compensation and the *Daily Express* was fined £2,700 and ordered to pay £10,000 compensation for publishing photographs of a servicewoman who was a complainant at a court martial at which a serviceman was cleared of a serious sexual assault. The photos pictured her from behind, so her face was not shown. After being prosecuted, the newspapers admitted the photos identified her, but said at the time they were published it had been genuinely believed her anonymity was preserved. The *Daily Mail*, which had also used a similar photo of the woman but had changed the colour of her hair, was not prosecuted.

The compensation paid to those whose anonymity was breached was awarded under the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, at the request of the Crown Prosecution Service.

In 2005 Marie O'Riordan, as editor of *Marie Claire* magazine, was fined £2,500 after it mistakenly published matter identifying a 12-year-old girl who had been sexually assaulted by a 30-year-old man who befriended her over the Internet. The hunt for the girl, after she disappeared with him, had been a national story, in which she was initially named and pictured. But after she returned home she told police he had sexually touched her. This

meant she could no longer be identified in reports alluding to the case, in which he was subsequently convicted. But *Marie Claire*, when it re-aired the disappearance story in an ‘end-of-year’ review, named her from the earlier reports. At the High Court, Lord Justice Rose, dismissing an appeal by Ms O’Riordan, said: ‘It seems to me very little to ask of the media that they take precautions to prevent publications which might affect a 12-year-old victim in circumstances such as these.’

See also Ethical considerations, below, p. 125.

■ When does the anonymity cease to apply?

The requirement for media reports not to identify a victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence lapses on the person’s death. During their lifetime the anonymity will cease to apply if any of the following four circumstances occurs.

By court order, at the request of a defendant

- A court due to try someone for a sexual offence can make a direction (an order), if that defendant or a co-defendant applies for it, to remove the anonymity for the alleged victim if the court is satisfied that:
 - this direction is required to induce people likely to be needed as witnesses to come forward, and that
 - otherwise the conduct of the applicant’s defence at the trial is likely to be substantially prejudiced.

For example, a defendant may argue that he needs witnesses to come forward to support an **alibi**, if his defence is that he could not have raped the alleged victim because he was not in the same location as her when the alleged rape occurred. If the media are permitted to identify the alleged victim when reporting the alibi defence, relevant members of the public can remember where and when they saw her, and who, if anyone, was with her at the time of the alleged offence.

A court due to consider an appeal against a conviction for a sexual offence can make the same order, if satisfied that the alleged victim’s anonymity should be waived to help obtain evidence for the appeal, and that otherwise the appellants is likely to suffer substantial injustice.

By court order, to lift ‘a substantial and unreasonable’ restriction on reporting

- At a trial of a sexual offence, the court can order that the alleged victim’s anonymity should be waived if it is satisfied that:
 - otherwise the anonymity would impose a substantial and unreasonable restriction on the reporting of the trial, and that
 - it is in the public interest to remove or relax that restriction.

For example, this happened in the case of *R v Arthur Hutchinson* (1985) 129 SJ 700; (1985) 82 CrApp 51. He had been hunted by police after three members of the same family were murdered in Sheffield after a wedding party at their home. To get information to help trace Hutchinson, police had publicly named him as the suspect. The media had by then also published the names of those murdered. Some time after being charged with the murders, Hutchinson was also charged with raping a teenage girl from the same family as those murdered, in the same terrible attack. The media had not previously been told of the rape allegation. At Hutchinson’s trial he faced the murder and rape charges. There lawyers acting for newspapers argued that it would be impossible for them to report it at all if they could not identify the family involved, including the girl as the alleged rape victim. It was pointed out that publishing Hutchinson’s name or that he was charged with three murders would in itself be enough for the Sheffield public to remember who the victim family was, and that the evidence concerning the rape and murders was inextricably linked. The judge agreed that the media could identify the girl, and thereby the family, because anonymity would otherwise impose a substantial and unreasonable restriction on the reporting of the trial, and that it was in the public interest for the trial to be fully reported. Hutchinson was convicted of the rape and murders.

In a circumstance such as this, the court can decide the extent of the identifying detail permitted to be published, e.g. it could permit the name of an alleged victim to be published, but – to retain some privacy for him/her – not his/her photograph.

Points for consideration

Neither of the two circumstances cited above occur with any frequency. If the alleged offence is indictable-only, e.g. rape or assault by penetration, a Crown court has power to waive the anonymity in these circumstances, but a magistrates court – i.e. in a **preliminary hearing** there – does not.

Thus the law ensures that only a judge with considerable legal experience will decide, in these most serious of cases, whether it is necessary, for the reasons set out above, for the alleged victim to be exposed to the trauma of being publicly identified.

In 2006 the then Attorney General told the House of Lords that the 1992 Act gave no power to the Court of Appeal to allow the media to identify ‘in the public interest’ a woman who was revealed to have made serial, false accusations of rape. The power to lift ‘in the public interest’ the anonymity of an alleged rape victim lies only with the trial judge [to enable unrestricted reporting of the trial], not in an appeal, he said.

If the victim/alleged victim gives written consent

The media can identify someone as being the victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence if he/she agrees to this. But the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 specifies that to be valid the agreement must be:

- written consent, not merely a verbal agreement, and
- the person thus waiving his/her anonymity must be aged 16 or over.
- Also, the consent will not be valid if it is proved that anyone ‘interfered unreasonably with the peace and comfort’ of that person, with intent to obtain the consent.

No permission is needed from a court for a person to give consent. But, as can be seen above, the law guards against someone being pressurised by a journalist into giving consent, and makes clear that any child under 16 is regarded as too immature to understand the consequences of being publicly identified in this context.

Instances occur fairly regularly of victims/alleged victims of sexual offences giving written consent to be identified by the media, particularly after a perpetrator is jailed. For example, a woman who has suffered rape may feel that, by permitting the media to identify her, she is sending a powerful signal to other rape victims that they can find the courage to seek justice, and that there is no stigma in being a victim. Other victims may feel they need the anonymity to last for life.

If someone is prosecuted for making a false allegation

As stated above, anonymity for anyone alleged to be the victim of a sexual offence continues to apply in respect of media reports even if no

one is prosecuted or convicted for that offence, and even if the allegation is withdrawn. However, occasionally someone believed to have falsely accused another of a sexual offence is prosecuted in respect of that alleged falsity. So, for example, a woman who has told police she was raped may, if evidence emerges that she knows her allegation is false, be prosecuted for wasting police time or for perjury or for perverting the course of justice – the charge she faces depends on the circumstances of her alleged lying.

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see ch.
3, p. 40
on these
offences

- When such a person appears in court facing such a charge, e.g. proceedings for alleged wasting of police time or alleged perjury, he/she can be identified in a report of those proceedings as someone who was alleged to be the victim of a sexual offence.

It is legal to identify such a person in such a court report because the 1992 Act states that matter identifying an alleged victim of a sexual offence can be published if it consists ‘only of a report of criminal proceedings other than’ proceedings for the alleged sexual offence. This wording in the Act would also permit, for example, the identification in a court report of a burglary trial of a witness who states in it that he/she was sexually assaulted by the alleged burglar, if that defendant is not charged in that trial of that alleged sexual offence and if no reporting restriction applies under other law.

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see ch. 9,
for other
restric-
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■ Sexual offences prevention orders

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, courts can make a sexual offences prevention order (SOPO), under civil law, placing restrictions on the behaviour and actions of a sexual offender – whether an adult or a juvenile – to protect the public from the risk of ‘serious sexual harm’. For example, an offender can be banned from loitering around schools or inviting children back to his house, or from making unsolicited approaches to women. The court can make a SOPO when sentencing for a sexual offence. Also, police can apply to magistrates for such an order at a later stage if an offender’s behaviour causes concern – for example, after he or she has been released from jail for the offence. Breach of such an order is a criminal offence. An interim order can be made before a full hearing

into such a police application. The minimum term of a finalised order is five years.

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see also
ch. 13,
p. 219 on
SOPOs

D Ethical considerations

The code of practice used by the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) to adjudicate on complaints made against newspapers, magazines, and their websites has two clauses specifically about sex offences. These make clear that, even if the law permits a victim/alleged victim of a sex offence to be identified in a media report, there is an ethical decision to be made on whether this should be done.

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see ch.
1, pp.
16–17 on
PCC and
Ofcom

- Clause 11, headed ‘Victims of sexual assault’, states: ‘The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.’

The term ‘sexual assault’ here includes all sexual attacks, e.g. rape.

- Clause 7, headed ‘Children in sex cases’, states: ‘The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.’ It adds that:
- In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child:
 - The child must not be identified;
 - The adult may be identified;
 - The word ‘incest’ must not be used where a child victim might be identified;
 - Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

Clause 7 is subject to the Code’s public interest exceptions, but Clause 11 is not, though the term ‘adequate justification’ arguably embraces the idea of the public interest. As regards Clause 7 the Code notes that there would have to be ‘exceptional public interest’ to override the normally paramount interests of a child under 16.

Ofcom’s Broadcasting Code warns against jigsaw identification and inadvertent use of the term ‘incest’.

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see
Useful
websites
below

The PCC has in several adjudications condemned newspapers for unintentionally publishing matter likely to identify a sexual offence victim. In 2007, the PCC, referring to a newspaper report of a man being convicted for sexual offences against under-age girls, said that a reference in it to an injury previously suffered by one of the girls was in itself ‘sufficient to identify her, or confirm the suspicions of those who already knew something about the case’. The PCC guidance says that in such cases ‘editors should err on the side of caution’ on what detail is published.

In guidance on reporting cases involving paedophiles, the PCC has drawn attention to the rights of relatives and friends of people who have been accused of sex crimes: ‘Not only do they also have a right to respect for their private lives under Clause 3, but the Code also makes clear under Clause 10 that the “press must avoid identifying [them] without their consent” – or unless there is a public interest in doing so.’

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see
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below

■ ■ ■ Recap of major points

- People who are victims or alleged victims of sexual offences must not be identified in media reports about or alluding to those offences.
- The offences involved include rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, indecent assault, sexual activity with children, and what may be charged under older law as incest.
- The victims/alleged victims of voyeurs and ‘flashing’ also have such anonymity, as do people allegedly or actually trafficked to be prostitutes.
- The anonymity can be waived by a court if a defendant requests this, and the court is satisfied that the identity of an alleged victim should be published to induce witnesses to come forward for a trial, and that otherwise the defence is likely to be substantially prejudiced.
- There is a danger of ‘jigsaw identification’, particularly when several media organisations are covering a case of alleged sex abuse within a family, if newsdesks fail to agree a common policy on what details are published.
- At a trial of a sexual offence, the court can waive the anonymity of the alleged victim to remove a substantial and unreasonable restriction on the reporting of the trial, if it is satisfied it is in the public interest to do this.
- A victim/alleged victim can waive the anonymity, by giving a media organisation written consent to identify him/her, if aged 16 or over. But if it is proved the person has been pressurised to do this, the consent will not be legally valid.

- If someone is charged with making a false claim that he/she is the victim of a sexual offence, that person can be identified in a report of criminal court proceedings arising from the charge that the claim was false.
- The Press Complaints Commission code of practice warns that even when the law permits a media report to identify the victim/alleged victim of a sexual offence, journalists should still consider whether there is adequate, ethical justification to do this.
- Ofcom's Broadcasting Code gives similar guidance.



Useful Websites

www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/sexual_offences_act/

Crown Prosecution Service guidance on the Sexual Offences Act 2003

www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode/

Ofcom Broadcasting Code

www.pcc.org.uk/news/index.html?article=OTQ/

Press Complaints Commission guidance to editors on the reporting of cases involving paedophiles