

Welfare Awareness Topic: Cyber Flashing

Overview – *The Cyber flashing involves an indecent image or video being airdropped on to some one else's phone without their consent or request. This can occur perhaps on public transport or other crowded areas where people are in close proximity with each other. Cyber-flashing has been a criminal offence for more than a decade in Scotland, but is not yet one in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

The person airdropping the images will be scanning the crowd and looking for some one's reaction to what they have sent. This will not be targeted at individuals necessarily but at a number of people. The thrill for the sender is watching people's horrified reactions to what they have seen. The receiver is unlikely to know or recognise the sender.

Although this is not a stand-alone offence at the moment there are still offences of sending an indecent image here. The person may well be able to be traced as the airdrop should show a number. It is important that anyone who has been the subject of such a situation contacts the police and retains any numbers and images to show the police however horrible that may be. This should be reported to the police using the 101 number.

At the time of this Welfare Awareness Topic (Dec 2021) this is being debated in parliament, with a view to making it an offence in its own right as part of a larger Cyber Crime Bill.

However, Sending unsolicited sexual images is classed as "obscene and offensive behaviour", which is against railway bylaws. **The British Transport Police (BTP) are actively encouraging women to report anything that happens on railways nationwide.** If you do receive an unwanted sexual image while on a railway, British Transport Police advice is to screenshot the photo and then contact them on 101, or via text on 61016.

The simplest way to protect yourself from receiving an unwanted image from a stranger is to change the **AirDrop or Bluetooth settings on your phone.**

On the iPhone, go to Settings, and then select the General option from this menu, where you will find AirDrop. You can then change this to the 'Receiving Off' option, meaning that nobody can send you anything via this method. Alternatively, you can select the 'Contacts Only' option so that only people known to you can send you images.

There are different ways of turning off Bluetooth on an Android phone, depending on your device – but this can normally be found under the Settings menu also.

Article/Source

- Both the [Metro](#) and the [BBC](#) have articles with more information about what cyber flashing is.
- Huffington post have information on [what to do if you are Cyber Flashed on Public Transport](#), and also have a [useful video here](#) outlining more info, and details on the MPs who are trying to change the law.
- The feminist law society has more [info on what cyber flashing is](#).

Support

If you would like to talk to the safeguarding team about anything you have just read, we will listen without judgement and signpost you to support. If you would like to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Team then please get in touch: safeguarding@bpp.com