

EXPOSED TOO YOUNG

Think Your Kids Aren't Seeing Porn? Think Again.

54% have seen pornography by just 13 years old.

73% have seen pornography by age 17.

52% have seen violent or non-consensual porn.

96% of young people use the internet every single day.

95% of teens (13–17) now own a smartphone.

31% of 8-year-olds have smartphone.



LETS TAKE A LOOK AT:

How Pornography is Fueling Youth Sexual Offences – and Why So Many Are Being Rejected From Garda Diversion Programmes.

THE RISING CONCERN

92% of 12 to 18-year-olds accused of committing sexual crimes have been rejected from the **Garda Youth Diversion Programme**, an alternative to prosecution. The increase in rejections to this programme has raised concerns. What's causing more young people to commit **sexual offences** and why are so many of these offenders being rejected from the Garda Youth Diversion Programme?

Judges and sexual abuse support services have identified that one common factor is early and **frequent exposure to pornography**. The exposure to explicit content at a young age is not only influencing behaviour but changing the trajectory of young people's lives altogether.

UNDERSTANDING THE LAW IN IRELAND

The Children Act 2001 was implemented to deal with young offenders accused of various crimes, including sexual offences.

The Act ensures that all young people who commit offences must be considered for the **Garda Youth Diversion Programme** before facing prosecution. However, sexual offences are often too serious and go beyond the eligibility criteria for the diversion program.



THE GARDA YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAMME

Between 2010 and 2024, over **5100 sexual offence cases** committed by young people were referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme. However, **almost 70%** of these cases were **rejected**, resulting in the young offender facing **prosecution**. If the offence is considered to be too serious, as is often the case with sexual offences, the young person won't be eligible for the programme.

THE DIVERSION APPROACH



The **Garda Youth Diversion Programme** is designed to help young offenders who get in trouble with the law. The aim is to prevent further offending by the young person and deter them from entering the adult Criminal Justice System. Instead, they are enrolled into these programmes to help get their lives on track. **Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers** administer this programme and are specifically trained in dealing with young people and crime prevention. Diversion Programmes offer young people a second chance.

THE GARDA YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAMME PROCESS

01.

The young person is given a **caution** by the Gardaí – this alerts them that their actions were **against the law** or considered as **anti-social behaviour**.



02.

The young offender is supervised by a **Juvenile Liaison Officer**, who supports them.

03.

A meeting is arranged with the young person, parent, Juvenile liaison Officer and the victim, depending on the crime. This meeting allows open discussions and **mediation**, helping the young offender understand the impact of their behaviour and allowing the victim to be heard.

04.

A **tailored action plan** is then put in place to help the young person make positive changes.



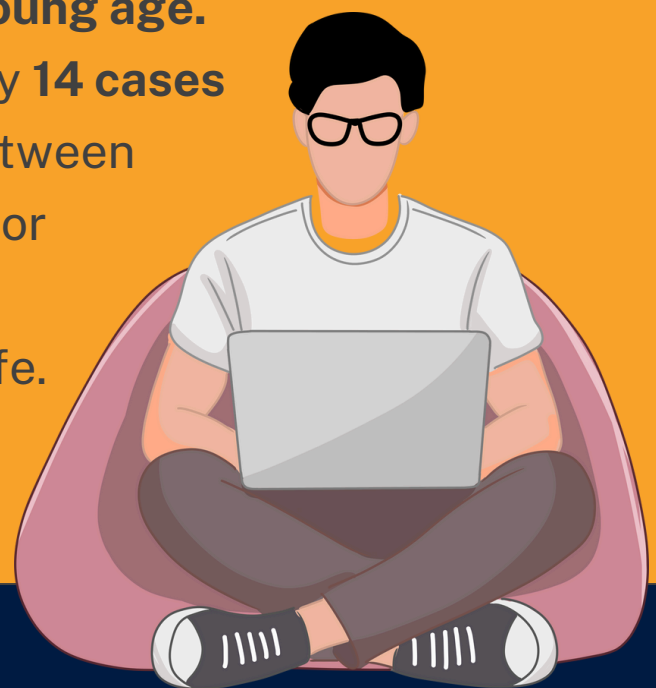
HOW PORNOGRAPHY IS AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLES BEHAVIOUR

The urgent question is why are we seeing an increase in sexual offences committed by young people?

Experts have identified that **pornography is too easily accessible** for young people and is contributing to the rise in criminal behaviour amongst the youth of today. The early exposure to online pornography is **negatively influencing** how young people **behave sexually**. The access to explicit material at such a young age is shaping how our youths think about sex.

A common link among younger sex offenders, is **frequent exposure to pornography from a young age**.

For example in 2024, approximately **14 cases** involving sexual offenders aged between **14 and 16** all shared a common factor of being regularly exposed to **pornographic content** early on in life.



A TRAGIC EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PORNOGRAPHY SHAPES BEHAVIOUR

The **high-profile case** of Ana Kriégel's murder by Boy A and Boy B, showcased the damaging effects that **early exposure** to **explicit content** such as **violent pornography** can have on young minds.

Following the trial, it emerged that one of the boys had thousands of **pornographic images** on his phone, many of which showing violent sexual content. Although this evidence was not used in court, it raised serious concerns about the **negative impacts** this content can have on young people.

THE PROBLEM WITH PORNOGRAPHY



Experts have warned that pornography is shaping how the youth think about sex and consent. This case sent shockwaves through Ireland and highlighted the need for action against early exposure to pornography, especially as many young sex offenders are being rejected from diversion programmes due to the seriousness of their actions.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Ireland has established some online safety measures for video-sharing platforms, including age verification and parental controls. However, these measures are limited and do not protect children from accessing online pornography. Stricter protective measures are needed to prevent young people from pornographic content that could be damaging to their ideas around sex and consent.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Dublin Rape Crisis 24-hour national helpline: 1800 77 8888

The Samaritans: 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.ie

One in Four: 01 662 4070

Cari (Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm): 0818 924 567

