Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday 2 December 2026
14th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

AI-generated image abuse and deepfakes

Background

1. At its meeting on 28 October 2026, the Committee agreed its approach to a short inquiry into AI-generated image abuse and deepfakes.

2. Police Scotland describes "deepfakes" as "fake images, videos, or audio recordings that have been digitally created or edited" that "sometimes show a real person doing or saying something that never actually happened". These are not always illegal but are when used in a number of ways, including when used as "intimate image abuse" or "revenge porn".

3. Intimate image abuse is an area that has been identified as a concern by several organisations concerned with violence against women and girls, for example: Scottish Women's Aid; Scottish Women's Rights Centre; The Young Women's Movement; and Victim Support Scotland.

Criminal Justice Committee scrutiny

4. The Committee's inquiry will focus on the rapid growth of non-consensual AI-generated intimate images and deepfake pornography, the harms arising from this activity and the effectiveness of responses to it.

5. The inquiry is not intended to be a broader examination of artificial intelligence, social media regulation or online harms more generally.

6. The Committee agreed that the inquiry should treat AI-generated intimate image abuse as a form of violence against women and girls, and consider the impact on victims, challenges for investigation and enforcement, and any legal or policy issues arising in Scotland.

Scottish Government consultation

7. The Scottish Government has recently consulted on a range of measures intended to improve protections for women and girls within the justice system, including proposals relating to online and technology-facilitated harm. These include potential new offences concerning AI-generated intimate images, requests for the creation of such images, and the production or supply of tools designed to generate such material.

8. The consultation also highlights ongoing discussion about the extent to which existing offences already apply to AI-generated intimate images and whether additional offences are required to address any remaining gaps in the legal framework.

9. The consultation provides useful context for the inquiry. However, as the Scottish Government is still considering responses and no proposals have been finalised, the Committee's scrutiny will take place alongside ongoing policy development.

Written evidence received by the Committee

10. To inform its scrutiny, the Committee invited written submissions from organisations and individuals with expertise in victim support, violence against women and girls, online safety, child protection, academia, law, policy and criminal justice. Stakeholders were invited to respond by 16 November 2026 to inform the Committee's scrutiny on 2 December. Twenty-nine responses were received and these are available on the Committee's Citizen Space webpage.

11. The Committee also launched a confidential lived-experience call for views, which remains open until 11 January 2027. Evidence received through that process will inform the Committee's later scrutiny and reporting.

Today's meeting

12. At its meeting today, the Committee will take evidence from two panels to:

- establish the scale and nature of AI-generated intimate image abuse;
- understand its impact on victims, including barriers to reporting and disclosure;
- examine the legal and policy landscape, including challenges of investigation, attribution and enforcement;
- consider devolved and reserved responsibilities;
- explore whether lessons can be drawn from approaches adopted elsewhere;
- consider prevention, education and awareness raising; and
- identify key issues for further scrutiny.

13. The first panel comprises academics and the second comprises organisations concerned with violence against women and girls.

Next steps

14. The Committee's inquiry will continue through to the end of January 2027, when the Committee will examine victim experiences, reporting pathways, operational and enforcement challenges, and the response of the criminal justice system. The Committee will also take evidence from the Scottish Government.

Clerks to the Committee
November 2026