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UK data reforms and intimate-image offences commence

February brings further implementation of the Data (Use and Access) Act, on separate dates and for different purposes.

5 February 2026 / United Kingdom

Most Part 5 privacy changes begin

The government's implementation plan records commencement of most Part 5 data-protection and privacy provisions on 5 February. "Most" matters: the Act did not enter into force in one undifferentiated step.

COMMENCEMENT

6 February 2026 / United Kingdom

Creating or requesting intimate images is addressed

Section 138 commenced on 6 February, introducing offences concerning creation or requested creation of purported intimate images of adults without consent. The statutory definitions and territorial application determine the exact scope.

CRIMINAL PROVISIONS COMMENCE

THE MALAYSIAN LENS

Our Malaysian interpretation is comparative: an AI image workflow raises questions about consent and personal harm as well as ownership. Companies dealing with UK users should examine the relevant territorial rules. These UK developments do not establish that the same offence wording applies in Malaysia.

QUESTION TO ASK

Can the service prevent abusive requests, preserve relevant evidence and provide a clear reporting route?

WATCH / NEXT STEP

Separate ordinary data-processing review from abuse-response procedures. Read the enacted provisions before asserting that a particular image or request falls within a criminal offence.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

[UK Government · Data Act commencement plan ↗](#)

Reconstructed and published 20 September 2026. Selected developments, not an exhaustive digest. Facts relate to the coverage period; maintained sources may contain later updates. The Malaysian lens is MAATIN editorial analysis.

General information, not legal advice. Verify current law and obtain qualified advice for a specific matter. Illustrative AI-generated masthead image.
