

The Lilith Project Women's Weekly News 202

8 – 14 March 2008

Violence against women in London

Assault on teenage girl at exclusive boys school

A gang of pupils calling themselves 'The Posse' have been suspended from Eton College amidst allegations of attacking a 13 year old girl on the school's land.

The girl, who lives near the public school in Windsor, reported that a group of pupils stole her handbag and attacked her, leaving her with at least one broken rib. It is also thought that one of the boys, aged between 13 and 14, dropped his trousers and forced her to perform a sex act on him. Four boys have since been suspended.

The attack, which the school is treating as a "disciplinary matter" has so far not been reported to the police. During an online conversation with one of the suspects a friend described the attack as "basically a normal Saturday night in Windsor."

Source: The Times 14 March 2008

International Women's Day: Rally to end violence against women blighted by violence

The polarised views on prostitution came to a head at the Million Women Rise march to celebrate International Women's Day. The rally, organised to highlight violence perpetrated against women was disrupted by members and supporters of the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) and the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW). A row of stewards stopped them from climbing onto the stage, where a speech was being given. One member of ECP physically assaulted a steward, forcing police and paramedics to intervene and take the victim away in an ambulance. Attempts were made to apprehend the perpetrator, but she ran off.

Supporters attending the rally remarked on how disappointing it was that at an event organised to protest against male violence to women, a group of women acted violently, undermining the hard work of so many women's groups in getting violence against women recognised as a gender issue.

The event, aimed at highlighting the discrimination and abuse still faced by millions of women in the UK and worldwide every year, attracted thousands of supporters, showing their solidarity on International Women's Day. Congregating on Trafalgar Square after marching through London, the crowd listened to passionate speeches from women addressing issues facing all women as well as highlighting particularly pernicious forms of abuse and discrimination including female genital mutilation and the lack of funding for services supporting women experiencing violence.

Police were forced to cordon off members and supporters of the ECP and IUSW for the rest of the event.

For pictures of Million Women Rise and other events from International Women's Day go to the [F Word's flickr site](#).

Source: [The Guardian](#) 10 March 2008, [The F Word](#) 9 March 2008

Prosecution in murder case reinforces harmful 'rape myths'

The prosecution in a murder case, involving four men on trial for killing a man accused of raping their friend, implied in court this week that the woman had made up the allegation.

Marvin Hussein, Michael Peters, Sebastian Baptiste-Gomez and Dean Clement have all pleaded not guilty to the murder of Warren Gray, 24, who was shot in the chest in Catford in May 2007. The court heard that the men believed Gray had raped a friend of theirs in July 2006.

The woman reported the rape to police in December 2006, and denies a charge of perverting the course of justice. Prosecutor Aftab Jafferjee inferred at the Old Bailey this week that, based on the woman's delay in reporting the attack, she had made the allegation up. He said: "Her own account of the circumstances of how she came to be in Warren Gray's room may itself raise significant question marks as to whether this allegation is true, quite apart from the significant delay in making the allegation."

Research has consistently found that harmful stereotyping in the courts and media of what constitutes 'real rape' and over-reporting of 'false rape allegations' are having a profoundly damaging effect on rape conviction and reporting rates, how victims of rape are treated, and on public attitudes. Delays in reporting and inconsistencies in victim's accounts of rape are usually a sign of trauma, with many women fearful of reporting a rape if they feel it does not conform to a traditional stereotype.

Earlier this month the Metropolitan Police Service's assistant Commissioner John Yates admitted that "police are contributing to the appalling conviction rate in rape cases because officers too often fail to take alleged victims seriously enough."

Source: [BBC Online](#) 13 March 2008, [The Guardian](#) 12 March 2008, *Just Representation? Press reporting and the reality of rape*, The Lilith Project, 2008

Violence against women in the UK

Police and CPS sign protocol on treatment of rape cases

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) this week signed a model protocol in an effort to improve the reporting and conviction rates of rape, as well as the treatment of victims during each stage of the judicial process.

Mike Kennedy of the CPS said the protocol was designed to improve police and CPS performance and increase public confidence in the way rape complaints are handled. Chief Police Officers and Chief Crown Prosecutors will be encouraged to adopt the protocol, which includes taking on the recommendations made by *Without Consent*, a 2007 joint review of the investigation and prosecution of rape.

The recommendations include that the police service specifically audit rape 'no crimes' to ensure that such verdicts are sustainable and compliant with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR), and that they issue guidance to first response officers on procedures when attending a report of a rape, in line with the ACPO *Guidance on Investigating Serious Sexual Offences*. The report also recommends that the CPS set a standard for the role of rape specialist lawyer and deliver appropriate training to achieve this; and ensure that one specialist prosecutor is involved in a rape prosecution from beginning to end, and if a case is to be dropped, consultation with a second specialist should take place and the consultation should be recorded and the second specialist identified.

Joint workshops will be held for Police Rape Champions and CPS Area Rape Co-ordinators to advise on how to introduce the protocol, with Independent Sexual Violence Advisors explaining the local support services available to victims of rape.

Source: [Police Oracle](#) 10 March 2008, [Without Consent](#), HM Crown Prosecution Inspectorate 2007

Domestic violence figures tripled while conviction rate remains same

Home Office figures revealed this week that reports of domestic abuse in the UK almost tripled between 2006 and 2007.

In 2007, 658,736 incidents of domestic violence were reported to police, an increase of approximately 280% on 2006, when 241,027 incidents were reported. Despite this, the conviction rate has remained the same, at just under 17%.

Labour MP Margaret Moran called for longer sentences for abusive men, acknowledging that on average victims suffer 35 attacks before reporting.

1 in 4 women in the UK will experience domestic violence in her lifetime, with 2 women a week being killed at the hands of a violent partner.

Source: [The Mirror](#) 14 March 2008, [Channel 4 News](#) 13 March 2008

Brighton: Appeal for information

Police are appealing for information on a man who attempted to rape a woman in Brighton last weekend.

The young woman was waiting at a taxi rank in the early hours of Sunday outside the Old Ship Hotel on Kings Road, when she was approached by a man. After declining a lift home from him, he dragged her into the alley between Black Lion Street and Bartholomew Square where he attempted to rape her.

The man is described as white with spiky, blonde-tipped hair, around 5'9 tall, of large build and around 36 years old. He was wearing a pink shirt.

If anyone has any information regarding the attack they are asked to contact Brighton CID on 0845 6070 999, or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Source: [Banbury Guardian](#) 12 March 2008

International violence against women

Spain: Surge in calls to domestic violence helpline

The number of calls made to a domestic violence helpline increased by 500% last week, following wide media coverage the previous week of four women who were killed by their partners in one day.

The day following the murders, Spain's domestic violence helpline 016 received 3,600 calls compared to the daily average of 700. Three days later, on Saturday, the helpline again received 3,500 in one day.

The 016 helpline was only established six months ago, in which time they have received more than 85,000 calls; 80% of which come from people suffering domestic abuse.

Source: [TypicallySpanish.com](#) News 4 March 2008

South Africa: Rape game in school playgrounds

A report from South Africa's Human Rights Commission published this week has found that sexual violence is now so common in South African communities, children as young as seven play 'rape games' in the playground, and a quarter of secondary school children do not think that forced sexual intercourse amounts to rape.

The report, investigating school violence in the country, found that 20% of sexual assaults on young people occur at school, often by teachers, and highlighted one instance when a teacher who had been accused of sexual assault by a pupil carried on teaching the pupil while disciplinary measures were taken.

In direct response to the violence they witness every day, seven year old children now pretend to rape each other in the playground, in a game they call "Rape me, Rape me". "Corrective rape" was also identified by the report as a growing problem, with boys raping lesbians in order to make them heterosexual.

High levels of domestic violence, and exposure to gangs and drugs were identified as the main problems influencing children's behaviour and performance at school.

Source: [The Australian](#) 14 March 2008

Texas: Mother and son kidnap, assault and sell girl for sex

A mother and son have been arrested in Texas for raping and sexually exploiting a young girl.

Gregoria Salgada Vazquez and her son David Salazar were charged this week with aggravated kidnapping and aggravated sexual assault of a child. News reports state that the pair brought the girl to Houston, Texas from Mexico on 1st January this year, where she was kept locked in a room and raped by Salazar. Police also told reporters that the girl was taken to a nightclub in the city owned by the family, where she was sold to men who also raped her.

The girl escaped when she managed to call police from a mobile phone.

Source: [Fox News](#) 13 March 2008

Vacancies, Training and Events

*****Old mobile to spare?*****

The Amina Scheme desperately needs 6-10 working mobile phones with chargers for volunteers to use in their work supporting women who have experienced sexual violence.

If you have a mobile and charger you no longer need please send it into Eaves marked for the attention of Cat Whitehouse, or call 020 7840 7959 to arrange collection.

Please help Eaves to help women.

Violence Against Women: Histories, Methodologies, Activism and Research. A One-Day Conference in Honour of Jalna Hanmer

The Centre for Women's Studies will host a one-day conference on Violence against Women in honour of Jalna Hanmer, as part of the Centre's inauguration of a new MA in Women, Violence and Conflict, starting in October 2008.

Confirmed speakers include Prof Liz Kelly, Prof Jeff Hearn, Prof Marianne

Hester, Prof Catherine Donovan, Prof Jill Radford, Julie Bindel (journalist and activist) amongst others. The topics to be addressed will include issues in domestic violence; rape in war and war crimes; men and violence; violence and representation; and histories of activism and research in violence against women.

Date: Friday 30 May 2008, 10.30am-6.15pm

Venue: Women's Studies Centre, Langwith College, Room L/N/002, University of York

Cost: £23.50 (including morning/afternoon tea and coffee, and lunch)

For more details or to register visit www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws

Rights of Women – training

Contact between children and violent fathers: in whose “best interests”?

Ten years after the publication of Rights of Women’s groundbreaking report on domestic violence and the Children Act 1989, this interesting and accessible course provides a comprehensive overview of the law on child contact with a particular emphasis on the needs of women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

Date: 19 March 2008, 9.30am – 1pm

Venue: NCVO, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL

Asylum and immigration law: protecting women from violence and securing their position in the UK

This course will provide a practical overview of asylum and immigration law with particular emphasis on the needs of women with experience of gender based violence.

Date: 23 April 2008, 9.30am – 4.30pm

Venue: NCVO, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL

For more detailed information and/or booking form, please contact the Training Officer at Rights of Women: training@row.org.uk; tel: 0207 251 6575/6; or visit website www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

Introduction to Islam and Muslim Culture – one-day introductory course

With the introduction of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Religious Discrimination Regulation, there has been an increase in demand from public sector organisations for greater access to courses and information regarding people from the various cultures and religions which make up their communities.

This introductory course offers:

- A better understanding of the background of Muslims in Britain
- An insight into basic beliefs and practices
- A visit to a Mosque
- Public Sector Development issues for Muslim communities

Anyone wishing to increase their knowledge of Islam should attend, particularly non-Muslim public sector professionals working with Muslims in the community, including:

- Surestart workers, carers and teachers
- Healthcare workers, social workers and community workers
- Police, Fire and Ambulance services
- Senior managers and policy makers
- Those responsible for developing community cohesion strategies

Date: Wednesday 19 March/Thursday 17 July 2008, 9.30 – 4.00

Venue: North London Central Mosque, Finsbury Park, London N4 2QH

Cost: £135 +VAT per person

For more information or to book a place visit www.educationislam.org

Petition to end the postcode lottery for access to specialist support services

Each year, 3million women across the UK experience rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, trafficking or other forms of gender-based violence and there are many, many more who have suffered violence in the past. They deserve specialist support services, such as refuges and Rape Crisis Centres, yet the report *Map of Gaps*, published by the End Violence Against Women Campaign and the Equality and Human Rights Commission, graphically shows the postcode lottery in these essential services:

- One-third of local authorities across the UK have no specialist services at all
- Only one in ten local authorities have services for ethnic minority women
- Most women in the UK don't have access to a Rape Crisis Centre

Ask Gordon Brown to take urgent action to end the postcode lottery by taking a minute to sign our Downing Street e-petition at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/violenceservices>

Please pass this on to your networks and link the petition to your websites and blogs.

To download Map of Gaps visit www.endviolenceagainstwomen

New Statesman's campaign for proper funding of Rape Crisis Centres

The New Statesman is conducting a month-long campaign calling for proper, sustainable funding by the government for Rape Crisis Centres. To find out more go to www.newstatesman.com/subjects/sexual-violence-and-rape-crisis

Every day of the campaign it is publishing articles by Rape Crisis, Survivors of sexual violence End Violence Against Women Chair, Prof Liz Kelly, Theresa May MP, Beatrix Campbell and many others on why this is such a critical issue.

Please also sign the petition calling for action and funding <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/RapeCrisis>