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Reform of the criminal law to address misogyny briefing

What does Zero Tolerance Do?

Zero Tolerance works to end men's violence against women and girls (VAWG) by tackling its root cause: gender inequality. Women's inequality provides a conducive environment for misogyny and male violence.

Misogyny & Harassment of Women & Girls

Misogyny and harassment of women and girls is part of a continuum of violence against women, which includes stalking, domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, femicide, and so-called 'honour-based' violence. A common cause links all forms of VAWG – women's social, economic, and political inequality.

Misogynistic harassment has a significant impact on women and girls' quality of life. 55% of women report experiencing anxiety, stress or panic attacks because of harassment (Amnesty International 2017). It has a detrimental impact on girls' confidence and self-worth, with girls learning to 'take up less space' and missing out on positive recognition of their achievements (UK Feminista 2017).

Zero Tolerance supports reform to:

- Address harassment in both physical and online spaces.
- Be grounded in a clear understanding of misogynistic harassment as an abuse of male power and privilege in an unequal social context.
- Acknowledge how misogyny interacts with and exacerbates other inequalities. Victims of racist-misogynistic harassment, for example, should not have to choose which element of the abuse to report and pursue.



Key Statistics

- Over 70% of women in the UK say they have experienced sexual harassment in public (UN Women UK 2021).
- 94% of Muslim women experienced sexual harassment with the majority occurring on the street and public transport (Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre 2015).
- One in five women suffer online abuse/harassment and almost half said the abuse/harassment they experienced was sexist or misogynistic, with 27% saying it threatened sexual or physical assault (Amnesty International 2017).
- A quarter (26%) of girls and young women aged 11 to 21 don't feel safe when they're online (Girlguiding Scotland 2018).
- More than a third of girls (36%) are put off certain jobs, like politics, because of the abuse women receive online. This is higher for disabled girls (Girlguiding Scotland 2018)



References

Amnesty International (2017) Online abuse of women Widespread in the UK. Available: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/online-abuse-women-widespread>

Girlguiding Scotland (2018) Ending Sexual Harassment in Schools. Available: <https://www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk/girls-taking-action/our-campaign-work/ending-sexual-harassment-in-schools/>

UK Feminista (2017) It's Just Everywhere. Available: <https://ukfeminista.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Report-Its-just-everywhere.pdf>

UN Women UK (2021) Prevalence and Reporting of Sexual Harassment in UK Public Spaces. Available: https://www.unwomenuk.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/APPG-UN-Women-Sexual-Harassment-Report_Updated.pdf

More information is available at zerotolerance.org.uk/what-is-primary-prevention/

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