

Cross party calls for misogyny to be a hate crime



Green Party

6 February 2018

*** Green Party's Amelia Womack leads letter signed by Helen Pankhurst, Caroline Lucas, Harriet Harman, Jo Swinson, Sam Smethers and more**

*** Womack said: "Whether it's being harassed on the tube or groped in a bar, misogyny is everywhere. It's time these acts were recorded for what they really are – hate crime."**

Politicians from across the political divide have come together to call on the Home Secretary to empower women to take action against abuse by making misogyny a hate crime.

Green, Labour and Lib Dem politicians, along with leading women's right campaigners, from the Centenary Action Group have written an open letter to Amber Rudd [1] on the 100th anniversary of women securing the vote.

The letter calls for the law to treat misogyny in the same way as prejudice towards disability, race, religion, trans identity or sexual orientation, and comes just days after Amber Rudd ruled out the move during an interview on The Andrew Marr Show [2].

The letter has been led by Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, who launched a campaign to make misogyny a hate crime in October last year [3] after speaking out about her own experiences of being in an abusive relationship.

The campaign has gathered support since, and on International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls (November 25) last year, Womack delivered a petition signed by 5,000 members and supporters to the Home Secretary.

A report [4] by the Fawcett Society in January this year made a formal recommendation for misogyny to be made a hate crime.

The open letter cites the success of a scheme by Nottingham Police to record misogyny as a hate crime [5], where:

- * 94% of respondents felt reassured after dealing with the police
- * 94% of respondents felt the police took the matter seriously
- * 82% of respondents were satisfied by actions taken by the police

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, said:

“Every day women are victims of crime because they are women. Whether it’s being harassed on the tube or groped in a bar, misogyny is everywhere. It’s time these acts were recorded for what they really are – hate crime.

“The Home Secretary has the chance to make it clear misogyny will not be tolerated, and empower women to speak out about abuse. In Nottingham where police have already started recording misogyny as a hate crime women already feel more confident their reports have been taken seriously. I urge Amber Rudd to do the right thing and make misogyny a hate crime immediately.”

Helen Pankhurst, advisor with CARE International and great-granddaughter to Emmeline Pankhurst, said:

“Making misogyny a hate crime gives women the language they need to report crime in a way which will be taken seriously. The success of the scheme in Nottingham has shown the difference this simple step can make to both the reporting and investigating of sexual harassment and abuse.”

Notes:

1. Dear Amber Rudd MP

On behalf of women across the country, we write in the hope that you will empower all of us to take action against abuse.

Over the last several months, we’ve seen the damage of misogyny dragged out into the open like never before. More and more women are coming forward to share their experiences, name their abusers, and seek justice.

We believe it’s time to empower women by making misogyny a hate crime.

As you will know, crimes motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone’s disability, race, religion, trans identity or sexual orientation are treated as hate crimes. This has empowered thousands of people to report incidents to the police, often leading to prosecutions. This is something to be proud of. Now it is time to go further.

From unwanted sexual advances to verbal and physical assault, acts of misogyny are part of everyday life for women in the UK. A poll by End Violence Against Women found that 85% of women between 18 – 24 had experienced unwanted sexual attention, while campaign group Hollaback! found that 90% of women experienced street harassment by the age of 17. This demands urgent action.

Making misogyny a hate crime would send two clear messages to the public. It

would give women the confidence to speak out against aggressors and abusers, and it would make clear to men that misogynistic behaviour will no longer be tolerated.

You may know [about the case study in Nottinghamshire](#), in which the local police authority allowed women to report such incidents as hate crimes with the support of Nottingham Women's Centre. In the first two months, an incident was reported to police every three days. Of women surveyed by Nottingham Police:

- 94% of respondents felt reassured after dealing with the police
- 94% of respondents felt the police took the matter seriously
- 82% of respondents were satisfied by actions taken by the police

Recognising the clear impact it makes on women's lives, more and more Police Authorities are making misogyny a hate crime. This is welcome news, but it's essential that we apply this consistently across the whole country, with comprehensive training for the police and a full communications strategy for the public.

Today, we are asking you to consider making misogyny a hate crime in the UK. Will you meet with us to discuss this important issue? We truly believe it will make our country a safer and fairer place for women.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader

Helen Pankhurst, advisor, CARE International

Sophie Walker, Women's Equality Party leader

Frances Scott, 50:50 Parliament

Sam Smethers, chief executive, Fawcett Society

Sarah Childs, professor of Politics and Gender, Birkbeck University of London

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader and MP for Brighton Pavilion

Jo Swinson MP, Liberal Democrats deputy leader and MP for East Dunbartonshire

Harriet Harman MP, Labour MP for Camberwell and Peckham

Jess Phillips MP, Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley

2. At 57

mins: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b09rf5rr/the-andrew-marr-show-04022018>

3. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/10/10/greens-call-for-violence-against-women-motivated-by-their-gender-to-be-a-hate-crime/>

4. <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/blog/start-calling-out-misogyny-hate-crime>
5. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-36775398>

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