

Motions

The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Sarah Dyke:

Emergency Motion: End Misogyny and Male Violence against Women and Girls

The Council notes:

- Across the UK misogyny, harassment and violence towards women and girls is endemic.
- That like women and girls across the country our residents suffer harassment and abuse every single day. A 2021 YouGov national survey on behalf of UN Women UK <https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/864gu4fbok/YG-Archive-170321-UNWomenUK.pdf> found that among women aged 18-24:
 - 97% said they had been sexually harassed
 - 80% of women of all ages said they had experienced sexual harassment in public spaces
 - 90% of these women not reporting it as they don't believe it will make a difference
 - One in two women are sexually harassed in the workplace
 - One in three women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime
 - One in five women will be raped in their lifetime
 - Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner (this rose to three a week during lockdown)
 - Three women a week take their own lives following domestic abuse
- Studies have shown that the intersectional nature of discrimination means that women with additional protected characteristics, such as those who are Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority communities, deaf and disabled or LGBT+, are even more likely to experience harassment, discrimination and abuse. Women from diverse backgrounds experience abuse differently and male power is used against them differently.
- The ONS reported <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesvictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/march2020> that last year alone 618,000 women were victims of a sexual assault or an attempted sexual assault by a man.
- In the year to March 2020, just 1.4% of rape cases recorded by police resulted in a suspect being charged (or receiving a summons).
- That the Law Commission is currently reviewing all current hate crime legislation to consider whether any additional characteristics, including misogyny, should be granted legal protection, and is due to report back to Parliament in late 2021.
- The Government announced in March that from Autumn Police Forces will record misogyny as a hate crime on an "experimental basis", following years of campaigning from Women's Groups and campaigners.

The Council believes:

- That male violence against women and girls is part of a broader culture of misogyny in society.
- Perpetrators of serious violence usually have a history of inflicting abuse and harassment against other women and girls. Tackling violence against women and girls means dismantling this culture.
- The seeds of violent behaviour are often sown at a young age and if the right interventions are not made in time then the problem continues to perpetuate.
- It also means tackling other forms of discrimination and the economic system that further enables abuse against women and girls.
- That a justice system that allows one of the most heinous crimes to be effectively decriminalised is not fit for purpose. Sustained cuts to all elements of the justice system, as well as institutional misogyny, mean that crimes against women and girls that are reported are not effectively investigated by the police. The decision to fail to resource this work is a political choice.

The Council resolves:

- To ensure that SSDC continues to do everything in its power to build a district free from misogyny and violence against women and girls. This includes continuing to invest in vital services, listening and responding to women and girls about the action needed, and calling out misogyny and sexism wherever we see or hear it.
- That it is vital that women's and girl's voices are heard; and that the Council will bring forward a process that proactively encourages and listens to women's voices across the district. This task force will seek to involve all women Councillors.
- To promote the Our Streets Now campaign to make street harassment a crime, and encourage all elected members, and residents to sign their petition.
- Call on the government to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combatting Violence Against Women and Girls, to ratify the International Labour Organisation's No.190, recognising the right of everyone to work free from gender based violence and harassment and to make street harassment a criminal offence.
- To call on the Government to provide the resource and funding for police forces across the UK to effectively tackle harassment, misogyny and domestic abuse.
- To call on Avon and Somerset Police to record harassment of women and girls as a hate crime as soon as possible, not wait until they are required to do so.
- To call on Avon and Somerset Police to prioritise investigating crimes against women and girls and ask them to ensure that women and girls are treated with the required sensitivity.



South Somerset District Council

- To work with Avon and Somerset Police on improving women's safety in South Somerset.
 - To continue to work with local and national networks working to end violence against women and girls
 - To call on the County Council to work with schools and families to tackle toxic masculinity culture, and to educate men through campaigns and bringing in male "allies".
 - To become a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation.
<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/organisations>
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