



BBC: Adhere to responsible reporting guidelines on violence against women and girls

We fully support this petition created by Mel Jeffs demanding that the BBC follow guidelines written by the [National Union of Journalists](#) when writing about violence against women and girls. Far too often, the BBC publishes articles online with inappropriate headlines which minimise the sexual violence and fatal violence against women and girls. Earlier in the year, a member of our team started [a petition demanding that the BBC not publish stories involving sexual violence under the heading of "Entertainment"](#) when the perpetrator has worked in the media. The BBC is the largest news organisation in the UK. We need to hold it accountable for minimising, erasing and excusing violence against women and girls.

[PETITION](#)

The media affects the way we view the world around us. Therefore it's crucial that journalists report issues responsibly. Particularly journalists at the BBC, paid for by us the licence fee payer.

Yesterday (31st Oct) I was dismayed to see the BBC had published a news story with the headline 'Care girl had sex with member of staff'. This puts the responsibility on the 16 year old girl, looked after by the state, rather than on the worker who abused their position of authority. This also means it was abuse, rather than sex.

The next day (1st Nov) I woke up to the headline 'Man dies after woman stabbed to death'. I wanted to cry. A woman was violently murdered but framed in the headline as an afterthought. After all, a MAN had died. Actually, 2 women die each week from violence perpetrated by a man known to them. I know this because I counted all of these murders in one year.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is endemic across society. It is vital that the BBC and other journalists report on issues relating to VAWG in a way that draws attention to the seriousness of the issue and highlights clear who is the perpetrator and who is the victim/survivor. Language matters. It is such an important issue that the National Union of Journalists saw fit to issue [it's own guidelines](#) relating to reporting, including points such as:

- Name violence against women as violence against women (e.g. domestic violence is not a "volatile relationship"). Do not use the word sex when you mean rape. "Honour" crime should appear in quotes or with "so-called" before it. "Crimes of passion" is not an appropriate way to describe murder.
- Take care not to imply that a survivor of gender-based violence might be somehow, even partially, to blame for the violence she has experienced, nor assume or imply that any of her behaviour might have triggered the abuse or that "she asked for it".
- Avoid treating homicides resulting from domestic violence as inexplicable or unpredictable



tragedies simply because the factors which led to the homicide are unknown.

Despite these very clear guidelines, the BBC continues to publish news headlines and articles which go against these core messages and contribute to victim-blaming attitudes and the erasure of women's experiences.

I'm calling on the BBC to properly adhere to the guidelines and to properly engage with organisations like Ending Victimisation and Blame (<http://everydayvictimblaming.com/>) to develop a better understanding of these issues. Women deserve better from our public service broadcaster.

PETITION