



Suspects being investigated for rape and other forms of sexual violence do not require anonymity

Each year in England and Wales 85 000 women and 12 000 men are raped.[\[1\]](#) We know that only 10 -15 % of victims report to the police due to “shame, prejudicial media reporting and mistrust in the criminal justice process”.[\[2\]](#) We also know that rape trials have the lowest conviction rate of any crime because of systemic and institutional disbelief of victims. Our adversarial legal system is predicated on the belief that women and children routinely lie about sexual violence – despite false reports of rape being no higher than any other crime; despite the fact that many ‘false reports’[\[3\]](#) are due to misogyny within the police who routinely ‘no-crime’ rape without investigating.[\[4\]](#)

We are extremely worried to see the Home Affairs Select Committee suggest that suspects being investigated for rape and other forms of sexual violence require anonymity until charged or police 'needed' to name them because of the potential damage to their 'reputation'. Why is justice now about the reputation of the accused rather than upholding the law?

Would Jimmy Savile's name been released as a serial sexual predator as he was never formally charged? Would we have seen the numerous inquiries held into the failures of police and the establishment to take child sexual abuse and exploitation seriously following the allegations about Savile? Would David Lee Travis, Rolf Harris, Max Clifford and Chris Denning have been investigated without the media reporting the sheer scale of the rape and sexual abuse committed by Jimmy Savile? Would John Worboys have been investigated and convicted without being named in the media following serious failures by the Sapphire Unit to believe a large number of women who reported him?[\[5\]](#)

The End Violence Against Women umbrella organization response to the Home Affairs Select Committee’s recommendation makes it clear that rape is

.....a known repeat offence, and the police may need the discretion to name a suspect for investigative purposes. Decision-making on this should of course be clear and transparent.

And that it is

“... notable that this short report by the Home Affairs Select Committee makes little reference to the specific justice issues around sexual offences before making this serious recommendation on anonymity. These include very low reporting to the police rates, vulnerable witnesses, and the fact that rape is a known repeat offence.

“The report is also alarmingly incorrect about false allegations – recommending that those accused and not convicted should receive “acknowledgement that they were falsely accused” when such cases are not necessarily based on a false allegation.”

Sexual violence is the only crime where sympathy is with the perpetrator rather than the victim. It is the only crime where decisions and recommendations about the criminal justice response is



based entirely on fallacious assumptions, myths and victim blaming.

We call on the Home Affairs Select Committee to review their recommendation using evidence-based research on anonymity for perpetrators and not assumptions about ‘perpetrators feelings’. We call on all political parties and Members of Parliament to show their support for all victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence by insisting that suspects in cases of sexual violence are treated no differently than suspects in other crimes.

Anonymity for suspects in cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence is a dangerous precedent that puts women, children and men at risk.

[PETITION](#)

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/an-overview-of-sexual-offending-in-england-and-wales>

[2] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10765589/Nigel-Evans-is-categorically-wrong-about-rape-defendants-needing-anonymity.html>

[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/03/13/false-rape-allegations-ra_n_2865823.html

[4] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-31027753>

[5] http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/investigation_commissioner_reports/worboys_commissioners_report.pdf