

54 St James Street
Liverpool L1 0AB

91 Princess Street
Manchester M1 4HT

The Women's Organisation

(reply to)

(reply to)

T (0)151 706 8111
F (0)151 706 8112

T (0)161 327 0967

E info@thewo.org.uk
www.thewomensorganisation.org.uk

FAO Prime Minister, Local Government Leaders, Police and Crime Commissioners, Health and Education Sector, Media Leaders and Sporting Bodies.

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you to voice our shock and outrage at the ongoing and systemic failure to protect women and girls from violence and abuse. We are calling for a collective and joined-up effort to demonstrate clear leadership and immediate and direct action.

The deaths of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa have raised public consciousness around violence against women and girls (VAWG). But these were not rare events. Women meet violent deaths across the UK on a weekly basis, indeed 3 women are murdered every week in this country.

However, the lack of any meaningful response or even statement from Government, local authorities and the Police defies belief.

Since Sarah Everard was murdered in March this year at the hands of a serving police officer, it has been reported that 81 other UK women have been murdered in similar circumstances and where the perpetrator is a man.

Enough platitudes. It is time for real reform. Root and branch action is required at multiple levels, along with genuine and intensive investment in wholesale culture change, education, housing refuge and VAWG services.

It is both tragic and terrifying that young women such as Sarah and Sabina have become symbols for a very present, prominent and dangerous issue. We cannot let this continue to be the case. Let us not need to resort to using another face, another rape or another death of a woman or girl to talk about and take action around prevention.

In July, the Government published the third national strategy to tackle violence against women – but it does not name men as the perpetrators in the title. Key to developing a successful strategy to tackling any problem is to legitimise the issue – this systematically fails to do so.

We now know that Sarah Everard was the 16th woman to be killed by a serving or former police officer since 2009. Just this month, reports have emerged that nearly 2,000 police officers have been accused of sexual misconduct in the last four years.

That is 16 deaths at the hands of those that represent a system that serves to protect. This has resulted in a grave and growing sense of betrayal, neglect, mistrust and moral disorientation amongst women in our society.

Furthermore, 2020 showed the lowest number of rape convictions ever recorded – only 3% of the 56,224 cases reported ended in a conviction.

Over the past decade we have finally started to see the global issue of the abuse of women come to the fore through the #metoo movement.

We have had enough of highlighting and raising consciousness. Now we want action.

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But the onus should not be on women to use their experiences to raise the issue. And we simply cannot continue to focus on women's behaviour instead of the perpetrators. And helping women to become more "streetwise" or "learn a bit more about the legal process" is certainly not the solution.

It is a deep-rooted societal issue and in real terms, what we require is a culture change. An awful lot of work must be done to fundamentally change misogynistic attitudes, improve education around healthy relationships and sexual consent, and de-glamourise sexual exploitation of women in the media.

Government must take the lead. We know it can do this. We have seen in just 12 months how an unprecedented collective effort brought us the COVID-19 vaccine which is saving lives on a daily basis.

COVID was a threat to life, health and wellbeing. And so is VAWG. Women are dying and we have the ingenuity and resources to stop it happening. What we need right now is political will and a determination to transform our society into a safe space for women.

Our recommendations include:

- Government needs to deliver a continuous and measurable national campaign to stop violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- All public officials who have an allegation of VAWG should be suspended pending a rapid and full investigation.
- All employers should adopt a safer women charter and undertake mandatory training as part of health and safety legislation.
- All sporting bodies, organisations and associations should impose a ban on anyone convicted of VAWG from participation, membership, attendance at events.
- All sporting bodies, particularly those with a demonstrable social media presence, should invest in event-wide campaigns against VAWG.
- All public health and local CCGs should acknowledge VAWG as a public health crisis and invest in the roll out of awareness campaigns and local domestic abuse support.
- All public housing and social housing providers should have sanction options for offenders of VAWG.
- Every educational institution should be required to deliver mandatory training programmes to tackle the root causes of VAWG, such as misogyny and sexual consent.
- A firm commitment to invest in victim support and VAWG services – currently support is disproportionately provided to the abuser rather than the abused.
- A public inquiry into men's violence against women and girls – we feel strongly this would expose institutional misogyny and failings across all statutory institutions.



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We, the undersigned, demand swift and appropriate action and await your statement of response.

Most respectfully,

Pat Shea Halson	Chair of The Women's Organisation
Maggie O'Carroll	CEO The Women's Organisation
Paula Nolan	CEO Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service
Angela Murphy	Tomorrow's Women
Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson	UK Women's Budget Group
Dr Sara Reis	UK Women's Budget Group
Katie Makin	Clockwise
Gloria Hyatt MBE	Director, Teach Consultancy
Debbie Nolan	
Alice Bondi	Labour Women's Declaration working group
Elizabeth Frankland	Frankland Associates
Jo Scott	Wilson Scott
Diane Holyoak	
Rebecca Keegan	Morecrofts
Alison Lobb	Morecrofts
Kerri McKenna	Clockwise
Helen Kinsella	Clockwise
Georgia Williams	Clockwise
Jeanette Copperman	
Mandy Vere	News from Nowhere
Laura Sercombe	Girls Friendly Society
Shanice Cameron	Clockwise
Mary Kate Burgoyne	Clockwise
Julie Ann Gillespie	HSBC
Jennifer Spencer-Welsh	
Ceri Williams	Former National Coordinator, Women's Aid Federation
Christina Goddard	HM Inspector of Health and Safety - retired
Pamela S Ball	Equalities Activist
Sue Oshikanlu	Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service
Katie Ellis Carrigg	Liverpool Football Club
Lynn Taylor	Liverpool Football Club
Emma Packrin	Deputy nurse manager
Gemma Smith	LFC Foundation
Sasha Deepwell	Irwell Valley Homes
Ruth Hartnoll	Matchstick Creative
Rachel Daley	The Positivtree

