

21083 Sarah Everard: Give boys lessons on how to respect women and girls, says minister

Matt Dathan and Fiona Hamilton, *The Times*, March 17th 2021

Sarah Everard was kidnapped and killed in March 2021. Her death sparked conversations about misogyny and violence against women in the U.K.

Boys should be taught how to respect women and girls in the streets as part of their sex and relationship education at school, the policing minister has said. Kit Malthouse made the suggestion in response to public clamour for action after the murder of Sarah Everard, who was kidnapped and killed last month. He said that all adults had a duty to “pay attention to the way we bring up our kids” by being role models and helping boys to understand relationships with women.

However, in an interview with *The Times*, Malthouse also suggested that teachers could play a role in changing attitudes towards the way in which women are treated in public, including the subject as part of relationships and sex education. Asked whether more must be done to change boys’ attitudes, Malthouse said: “I think we always have to pay attention to the way we bring up our kids. This has been a constant theme throughout my life.”

Malthouse’s comments echoed those of former Prime Minister Theresa May, who called on Monday for more to be done in schools. She said: “If we are going to eradicate violence against women and girls, we need a change of attitudes and that is about dealing with perpetrators, changing their behaviour, but also teaching young men and boys about respect for women and about what is or is not acceptable in a relationship.”

Yesterday ministers were pressed again to introduce new laws that would make public sexual harassment and misogyny specific crimes that would force police to tackle perpetrators.

Katy Bourne, the Conservative police and crime commissioner for Sussex, said that misogyny should be a hate crime. “I’d like to go further,” she added. “I think we should have public place harassment as a crime.” Malthouse said the government would consider calls to make misogyny a hate crime and public harassment an offence as part of its strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, due to be published this year.

Yesterday MPs criticised the immediate steps announced by the government to improve women’s safety, including £45 million for street lighting and CCTV, and undercover police officers in and around nightclubs. Stella Creasy, Labour MP, said the plan exposed a lack of understanding. She told *Today* on BBC Radio 4: “Sarah Everard was not on a night out... Ask a woman who has gone for a run in broad daylight in their parks about their experiences and you will realise some of the scale of the challenge.”

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