HOUSE OF COMMONS

Women and Equalities Committee

Oral evidence: Women's everyday experience of sexism and sexual harassment, HC 592

Wednesday 6 December 2017

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 6 December 2017

Watch the meeting

Members present: Mrs Maria Miller (Chair); Tonia Antoniazzi; Angela Crawley; Philip Davies; Rosie Duffield; Kirstene Hair; Eddie Hughes; Jess Phillips; Mr Gavin Shuker; Tulip Siddiq.

Questions 1–46

Witnesses

I: Professor Clare McGlynn, Professor of Law, Durham University; Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton, Hate Crime Lead, National Police Chiefs' Council; Scarlet Harris, Senior Strategy and Development Officer, Trades Union Congress; Michael Conroy, Development Co-ordinator, A Call to Men UK.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Professor Clare McGlynn, Mark Hamilton, Scarlet Harris and Michael Conroy.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to our panel for this one-off session on women's experiences of everyday sexism and sexual harassment. This is an issue the Committee looked at before in our 2016 inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. We uncovered what we felt was a very concerning picture of sexual harassment and abuse of girls being accepted as part of daily life, with teachers accepting sexual harassment just as banter. In this session today we will look at the wider picture in the workplace and other public spaces. This may be an issue that the Committee will decide to look at more closely and in more detail, and this incredibly useful session today will help inform the inquiry as we take it forward.

I thank our witnesses today on behalf of the whole Committee for taking time out of what I know are incredibly busy diaries to be here. I know the preparation required to be here is significant, so thank you. The usual practice is that we have questions from Committee members. We have a lot of ground to cover, so I might use my chair's ability to move things on if need be.

Before we start with the first set of questions, please say your name and the organisation you represent, starting with Clare.

Professor McGlynn: I am Clare McGlynn. I am a professor of law at Durham University.

Scarlet Harris: I am Scarlet Harris from the TUC.

Mark Hamilton: I am Mark Hamilton. I am the Hate Crime Lead for the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Michael Conroy: I am Michael Conroy. I am representing A Call to Men UK.

Chair: Brilliant. Our first questions are from Eddie.

Q2 **Eddie Hughes:** Good morning. When she visited the UK in 2014, the UN special rapporteur on violence against women said that the UK had a boys' club sexist culture. Can that statement be justified?

Michael Conroy: I would suggest that walking into this room past about 200 years of unbroken patriarchal domination suggests that that is based on something. I am a man; I can speak from my own personal experience, but obviously women have a much greater insight into that. Everything about our culture is founded on male dominance. We need to address that, identify it and unpick it for cultural health. I would agree,

but I am sure that my colleagues will be able to offer much greater insight into it.

Q3 **Eddie Hughes:** Before we move on, Michael, how do you think the impact of that is different for men and women, boys and girls?

Michael Conroy: Do you mean the impact of living in a patriarchal culture?

Eddie Hughes: Yes.

Michael Conroy: I would say that women are at risk of sexual harassment, which is obviously the theme of today's session. The rates of rape, domestic abuse and street harassment are absolutely appalling and unacceptable. There are corollary impacts for boys, which are unusually high rates of depression, suicide, substance abuse, risky behaviour and male-to-male violence. They can all be traced to a kind of performance of a very rigid interpretation of what it means to be a man and a masculinity that is toxic for us internally as men and also for the women and girls in our lives. I would say that is my basic premise, but others can certainly add to it.

Mark Hamilton: From a police perspective, commenting on the culture of the UK is tricky, because we tend to base our evidence on our understanding of crime or even non-crime—unreported crime.

Q4 **Eddie Hughes:** When you are giving your answer, you will also have a perspective effectively as somebody who works for an organisation. It is not just how the police interact with society. What is society like in the police? I imagine there might possibly be some sexism internally there as well.

Mark Hamilton: The police service has historically been predominantly male. It has associated with it a view that it is a macho culture. Personally, from my own experience of policing, I would agree with that. From my own experience of policing, whilst a lot of progress has been made in gender balance, we still have a long way to go. All those things permeate across so many strata of society.

From a policing perspective, maybe 20 or 30 years ago policing started to more robustly address how women are treated in terms of sexual violence and how women are treated in terms of domestic violence. The debate in policing now is moving very firmly towards how women are treated generally as victims within the system, be it street harassment, verbal abuse or the attitude that is shown to them in casual encounters in the street, and the impact that has upon them not just as individuals but as a group in society.

We are talking in the hate crime portfolio specifically about the issue of misogyny, but it has never been more present as a debate than now. For us in policing, how we should address it is a significant issue of consideration. The debate, therefore, would not be happening if there

was not a necessity to have it—if women were not experiencing things in our community that should not be happening and if there was not a gender basis for that occurring.

Professor McGlynn: I agree. The existence of this Committee is testament to the continued sexism and sex discrimination in our society in a whole range of sectors, whether it is the workplace, education or violence against women, as has been mentioned. The UN rapporteur was absolutely right in that regard.

Scarlet Harris: I would agree. I do not know whether we are more of a boys' club than other countries, because presumably she was looking at other countries too. Patriarchy, oppression and sexism against women are fairly commonplace across lots of countries.

To pick up on what others have said, Michael and Mark spoke a lot about violence against women and sexual harassment, but that boys' club culture and that sexism extends beyond that. Lots of things that this Committee has looked at over recent years—pregnancy discrimination, the sexism faced by girls in schools, occupational segregation and the gender pay gap—are all possibly linked and/or paint a picture of a society that is not very fair and equitable for women.

Q5 **Eddie Hughes:** Let's stick with that theme. Do you think there is consensus with regard to a definition for sexism and sexual harassment, both in policy terms and the view that society takes generally?

Scarlet Harris: Sexual harassment is clearly defined in the law. Whether the general public's understanding of that tallies with what the law says is a different question. I know there was polling in the light of various allegations from Hollywood and lots of media attention on the issue of sexual harassment. I recall seeing polling about public perceptions of what sexual harassment was, and it was not in line at all with what the law says sexual harassment is and it unearthed some quite worrying findings about perceptions. Lots of things that I would consider to be very serious crimes, and I am sure Mark would consider to be serious crimes, were not perceived by everybody to be sexual harassment or to be crimes and were just seen as part of everyday life. There is a mismatch between what the law says, what the EHRC says and what lots of clear guidance from people like the TUC and Acas says about what sexual harassment is—how it is defined in law—and how people generally on the street might understand sexual harassment.

Q6 **Eddie Hughes:** Is there that ambiguity, Mark?

Mark Hamilton: Yes. There is no law that I am aware of that fully defines everyone's behaviour. We continually try to codify to deal with emerging themes but it never always works. Progress has been made in dealing with areas of serious crime and naming them and labelling them and responding to them in the way we should. Issues such as on-street behaviour that people feel should be accepted as part of the interaction of

daily life have a clearly detrimental and damaging impact. Sexual harassment of a woman or a girl at a bus stop by a male might be something that some women feel they just have to accept—nobody is going to do anything about it.

As I referenced before, the debate in policing now is moving much more to identifying those issues in the same way as we would other types of incident: establishing if a crime has been committed or not. Even if a crime has not been committed, the debate now is similar to hate crime incidents: should we be taking action of some variety to address the behaviour before it escalates into a crime and also, most importantly, to try to restore some confidence to the victim and allow them to feel that what has happened to them is being addressed somewhere by the structures of society?

Q7 **Eddie Hughes:** What evidence is there that sexism or gender stereotyping are linked to sexual harassment and violence against women?

Professor McGlynn: There are a number of attitudinal studies that would suggest that, where individuals display sexist attitudes, they are perhaps more likely to also accord with certain rape myths, which might be indicative of a broader understanding of a rape culture or a sexist culture. Some of those studies are experimental in terms of psychologically profiling individuals, but there is some evidence about an association. Equally, there is evidence about an association between, for example, young people's view of porn and their then displaying sexist attitudes and certain assumptions and rape myths. There are not correlations but associations. We can look around us and suggest that, in a sexual culture and sexualised sexism, there are links between that and then the discrimination that is predominantly experienced by women in society.

Michael Conroy: There is a really interesting study that I would recommend to anybody: *The Man Box*. It is by Promundo, which is a UN-backed organisation, sponsored, interestingly, by Unilever and Axe, the deodorant company. It is a really interesting read. It is a study of 3,000 young men aged between 18 and 30 in the UK, US and Mexico between 2015 and 2017. It asks them in a series of focus groups 13 different questions about how they view women, themselves, homophobia and a range of issues to which I would do a disservice to try to remember, but I can urge you to read the programme. It is a free PDF called *The Man Box*.

The ones who score the highest in the internal scoring system of this research are most profoundly in this box in that they articulated the most rigid form of masculinity, have the strictest views about gender roles, are most homophobic and are most inclined to acts of physical aggression towards other men and women. This is by self-assertion; this is by admission. In the case of the UK and the US, the young men at the most masculine—if we can say that—end of the spectrum are six or seven

times more likely to admit to sexual harassment or sexual assault. They are also six times more likely to be violent to other males.

There is clearly a decent body of recent evidence in three different cultures that you might say are fairly similar in political terms but by no means identical. It draws out really common themes that young men who feel that they have to appear invulnerable, self-sufficient, physically tough and that they have to get the last word etc. are much more likely to offend in terms of sexual harassment, sexual assault and physical violence. Coincidentally, they are also much more likely to admit to suicidal ideation, take risky behaviour on a regular basis and indulge in alcohol and substance abuse on a regular basis. It is a whole toxic package. That is a good, recent, reasonably accessible layperson's study that I would recommend.

Q8 **Eddie Hughes:** I am not familiar with that piece.

Michael Conroy: It is Promundo. It is an international organisation. It is based in the US. It does a lot of work with the UN and it is about reducing what it refers to as gender inequality and gender-based violence worldwide. It commissioned a study in the UK and I think the partner was the Open University. They did in-depth focus groups in Leeds.

Chair: We will take a look at the detail of that.

Q9 **Eddie Hughes:** Assuming that to be the case and that work to be valid, is the extension that, if we address gender stereotyping, we have a knock-on effect and we reduce harassment, assaults against women and so on?

Michael Conroy: I believe that is a reasonable inference.

Q10 **Eddie Hughes:** What do other members of the panel think with regard to whether those two things would be linked that way? Would we be addressing a significant part of the root cause of the problem if we addressed gender stereotyping?

Scarlet Harris: You need to do both. It is not an either/or. It is not that you address gender stereotyping in schools and magically we will have solved this problem: there will be no more sexual harassment and these boys will go on to have much more respectful attitudes towards women. It is part of a picture. It is part of a series of actions that you might want to look at in addressing different aspects of sexism in society from a young age through to the workplace and adulthood. There are interesting correlations in, for instance, very male-dominated workplaces. We are making a slightly false distinction between sexism and sexual harassment, because some of this stuff really overlaps. For instance, the display of pornography might be construed as sexual harassment in the workplace and would sit in the Equality Act in that sense, as would making jokes of a sexual nature. One person might say, "Oh, I just think that person is a bit sexist". For someone else that might constitute sexual harassment.

There is a link there, and we are hopefully going to come to more questions about sexual harassment in the workplace. We know that this is an issue across all workplaces and is a very widespread issue, but it can be particularly problematic for women working in very male-dominated workplaces, particularly where they are the only woman or one of very few women in quite a masculine setting where there are a lot of men.

Q11 **Eddie Hughes:** I am not sure how arbitrary the scale might be then. How would you determine what consensus there is within society as to what should be prohibited? You were saying that in one environment this would be acceptable or a person might think this is acceptable; others might not and would be offended. In society generally, how do we determine what consensus there is as to what should be prohibited?

Scarlet Harris: It is for the law to decide. The Equality Act frames it quite clearly, and guidance from the EHRC and the statutory code for employers gives further guidance about what might be acceptable in different situations.

Q12 **Eddie Hughes:** Is society running behind the statutory view on that?

Scarlet Harris: I referred earlier to some polling that was done fairly recently that would indicate that, yes, a lot of people do not have a good understanding of what the law says in relation to sexual harassment. There is—and Clare would probably be able to expand more—an element of how behaviour is received and interpreted by an individual as well as the intention of the perpetrator, as it were. It may well be that one person may not consider something to be sexual harassment whereas someone else would, and how that action or comment is received is, in my understanding, very important in a court of law or a tribunal.

Chair: As these are civil issues, it would be interesting to hear Clare's view on that, but obviously Mark has some thoughts.

Mark Hamilton: The basic word for me is "unwanted". Harassment is any conduct that is unwanted, and therefore there is an onus on the person who is committing it to understand that their behaviour is either wanted or not. We are then trying to create an environment where people who receive unwanted behaviour have the strength and support to come forward and report it. We are seeing more and more of that, but basically it is unwanted behaviour. One person might accept something because the behaviour or the comment might be wanted. For example, no touching of any variety is lawful if it is not wanted and it is not consented to. There are no parameters under which you should sexually touch another person unless that is wanted conduct. There are no ifs, buts or maybes around that.

It probably gets a bit vaguer for people whenever it comes into the arena of perhaps speech, sexual speech and so forth, and that is where maybe some people feel that the parameters are different. Equally, particularly

in a workplace, any unwanted conduct is beyond the pale. The Equality Act legislates for that type of behaviour; whether it is understood or not is different.

To take you back to the point about whether addressing sexism in society will deal with all this, my portfolio is hate, not primarily sexual harassment. My portfolio is hate, and we talk a lot about prejudice and what causes prejudice. If you define sexism or misogyny as a form of prejudice, there are a number of activities we feel are important in addressing that and reducing it in our society. One is highlighting the issue and encouraging people to talk about it and report it, so it gets out in the open and is exposed to a conversation and challenge. Another is addressing it at its source, be it the education system or the work system, and educating people about their behaviour and challenging them about why the prejudice exists and why they might think a certain way about it. Then there is enforcement—actually addressing it—and there is the balance then between enforcement for the most serious and enforcement for the less serious and how you do that, and how that can either alienate or support the process. Leading by example is also a major issue for public life and also then into the media. What we say and how we behave, particularly those of us who have a role in public service, goes a long way to setting standards that people will abide by. Your own leadership in your workplace is hugely important.

We have also had, and continue to have, a huge discussion in the hate crime field generally about how the media report it, and there needs to be open debate about these issues. There should not be any fear of the debate, but in the debate we are appealing for people to show respect for each other, understand that there are competing perspectives and then try to reach consensus and agree on the way forward. In the debate this is not an attack upon one community or gender by another. It is about trying to identify unwanted prejudice or behaviour in our society and deal with it. It is not about trying to isolate anybody else, except we are trying to isolate criminal offending.

It is quite a lengthy continuum. It will never stop it all, but with a number of actions we can reduce the incidence of it and, very importantly, increase people's capacity to challenge it.

Professor McGlynn: There is, as we have said, a very clear definition of what constitutes sexual harassment in the Equality Act, obviously applying to services, the workplace etc., and a range of criminal laws overlap that. In relation to the criminal law, it is very ad hoc. It is piecemeal, and people do not always know what actions are a breach of the criminal law. On the converse, in recent discussions about sexual harassment, including upskirting, polling shows people think that should be against the criminal law. Most people are surprised it is not, but it is not in fact covered.

What is common across civil and criminal law is a minimising and often a trivialising of sexual harassment and sexual violence. That is common across the board and can be addressed by broader prevention strategies around attitudes towards sexism, sexualised sexism and gender stereotyping on that broad continuum. There is also a need to update some of our laws in this regard, which might then send a clearer message and might help to bring people together to a common understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and why it is harmful.

Q13 **Jess Phillips:** Thank you very much—it is fascinating. Do you see any evidence that the Government are currently doing enough to tackle sexual harassment?

Professor McGlynn: There have been some important steps taken recently. If I think about the law—my particular area of expertise—we have had measures recently, in the last few years, around what I would call image-based sexual abuse, often called revenge pornography. There has been a good start but we need to go further. Regarding online abuse, there are quite a number of gaps in that area and we could be taking more action in that regard.

More generally, there is a lot of work to be done around prevention. We have had an announcement about compulsory sex and relationships education, but, if I were to wave my magic wand, it would be about resourcing that and making it more compulsory to ensure that the issues we are talking about here today are taught in those schools and are taught by experts. The geography teacher coming in, as anyone with teenagers probably knows, does not do the same job as an expert. There are steps being taken but there is an awful lot more that could be done.

Scarlet Harris: I would agree. Some of the work, for instance by this Committee, like the work on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, and the moves around SRE are really good steps in the right direction. One area where the Government could make a huge difference is in gathering data. I have been really struck since this has become a huge media issue in recent months that the TUC research is being referred to a lot on this because it was the only relevant piece of research at the time. We had undertaken that research because there was a huge gap in the data. We undertook private polling with YouGov, which is good and it is very robust data, but it seems odd that that is the only source of data when the Government are so good at measuring other things. I know in Australia, for instance, the Government fund their human rights and equality body to do a five-yearly data-gathering exercise to understand the scope and nature of sexual harassment in Australia. They consider that to be really important in having a baseline and a way of benchmarking and measuring whether there are changes in behaviour over time. That is something I would really like to see.

There has since been a flurry of privately commissioned polls, and that is good. They are all coming up with fairly similar types of statistics, but it would be good to have robust government data that we could refer to

and that could give us a better picture of what is going on in different sectors, different areas and different age groups.

Mark Hamilton: Focusing on it as a potential conversation for a hate offence, in May 2014 the Law Commission were commissioned to review the effectiveness of the law on hate crimes and whether there should be an expansion of the aggravated and incitement offences. The Commission made a number of recommendations; one of those, as I understand it, was to review the scope of the five categories of hate crimes and whether that should be extended. That review has not come forward.

Q14 **Jess Phillips:** When was that then?

Mark Hamilton: That was 2014, which is not a criticism, but there is an option there to consider reviewing the five nationally reported strands of hate crime.

Q15 **Jess Phillips:** Would you suggest that needs to be done?

Mark Hamilton: I will come back to that. The five reported strands all have statutory provision around sentence uplift—enhanced sentencing under the Criminal Justice Act. What we would describe as a misogyny type of offence, and I will come back to how we are thinking about dealing with it in a minute, does not exist as a statutory provision. If we were going to make it all congruent, if the police were to take certain action, we would be looking for there to be statutory provisions around sentencing that were similar to other areas of hate, if we accept that misogyny should be an additionally reported strand of hate crime. First, there is review of the strands and then, secondly, upon review of the strands, the consideration of statutory provisions so that all the strands have equal status.

Coming back to your question of whether we should be doing it, there is a really good debate going on among policing staff at the minute, led very bravely by Sue Fish, the former Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire, who has done some fantastic work on misogyny-based hate crime. Where we are with that now is Sue is presenting her evidence to us and we are planning to put papers through our EDHR Committee and then on to Chiefs' Council about the consideration of misogyny as a sixth strand of hate crime, or, if it is not a sixth strand of hate crime, what we are going to do about it. Another six chief constables are also reporting on it at the minute and others are waiting to see how it works out.

My slight concern would be that the police move on their own. Even if we decided that we were going to report on this nationally for 12 months and work out a system to do that, there are complications about trying to fit either misogyny-based or gender-based hate crime in with the other five. There is structural stuff that we are going to have to work on because it does not fit entirely neatly at the minute. The question then would be: so what? To report on it is one thing, but it is whether or not the criminal justice system end to end then wants to respond to it. That is a bigger

debate than me, but the police at the minute, through my portfolio, are going to try to take this forward from our perspective.

Q16 **Jess Phillips:** In all that has been said about whether the Government are taking it seriously or not, when you say that people should come forward and report it—and you have spoken very encouragingly about people coming forward and reporting it—do you think there is a resolution for somebody who reports it?

Mark Hamilton: Like a lot of things in this country, it will depend on the response you get from various services. For example, if you report it in Nottinghamshire, the response might be different from that in a different county.

Q17 **Jess Phillips:** What would be the sanction?

Mark Hamilton: Let's say that the index offence was an offence of assault, for example. If that assault was aggravated and motivated by hostility based on one of the five grounds, when it went to court there could be an uplift in sentencing because it was motivated by those factors. A standard assault on a female could be a sexual assault or a common assault, but any perception by the victim or others that that was motivated by their gender or because they were female would not attract a sentence uplift with a prosecution at present.

Jess Phillips: I understand that.

Michael Conroy: I would echo everything my colleagues have said. The work I do tends to be with boys and young men aged 11 to 18, so my interest is in the training capacities of teachers and supporting staff in schools. PSHE needs to be taught by experts and properly resourced, and perhaps needs more time and to be in more depth. I come from a family of teachers. I work with teachers every day; I have done for 13 years, and I know how extremely busy and hardworking they are. Perhaps the best way to do that, rather than trying to keep adding to the desperately heavy workload of teachers, is to build that into a requirement of teacher training, so you are looking upstream all the time rather than trying to add to things that are already overstretched and overburdened. I would like to see the Government make really concrete resources available to the expert teaching of PSHE and SRE—or RSE now.

Q18 **Jess Phillips:** Do you worry about the message it might send in schools to boys that they are baddies and the girls are goodies? I am paraphrasing the argument in the simplest possible terms.

Michael Conroy: That is a common misconception. I absolutely understand why you asked that question.

Jess Phillips: It is not my view.

Michael Conroy: No—I know that. If you can help young men make healthy, rational choices about how they interact with other young men,

women and girls throughout their lives—professionally, as dads, as brothers, as uncles, as neighbours or as whoever they are—you are doing them a real service. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that those kinds of conversations are felt to be lacking by boys and young men, anecdotally and qualitatively, across different nations and across many years of research and discussion. I would say that it is a bonus and a boon and a help rather than any form of accusation. Anything can be presented badly though, and that is about how it is done on the ground.

Q19 **Jess Phillips:** Just as a very quick yes or no from each of you, under what exists at the moment in terms of past and present government strategies and current laws, if you are a victim of sexism at work or sexual harassment in the street etc. do you think that, if you reported it, you would get a reasonable resolution?

Professor McGlynn: That obviously depends on what a reasonable resolution is. When you speak to complainers or survivors of this range of activities, the picture is very patchy.

Scarlet Harris: I am going to say patchy too. I would not want to put anyone off reporting, but our analysis showed that only one in five women reported and, of those, 75% said they saw no positive outcome from reporting it.

Chair: It is very patchy.

Mark Hamilton: It is inconsistent.

Q20 **Chair:** What is the inconsistency driven by in your service?

Mark Hamilton: It is probably driven by the understanding of the offence: how it is categorised and the motivation for it.

Q21 **Chair:** Is it about training?

Mark Hamilton: Yes, and the conversation we are having is cutting across various parts of law from just standard—with respect—sexual harassment into sexually motivated or gender-motivated hostility. There is a varying response.

Chair: There is a varying response.

Michael Conroy: Colleagues obviously have greater insight, working in the law and in the workplace, but I would say you should always report. We then need to deal culturally with any shortfalls in how those reports are dealt with.

Chair: We need to deal with the cultural shortfalls.

Michael Conroy: Yes, that is the task in hand.

Q22 **Angela Crawley:** I wanted to tease this out a bit further, because, as you have said, perception is subjective in the first instance. My question

is specifically to Professor McGlynn or Mark: do you think that the law in its current form is sufficiently clear and, if not, what changes would you recommend? Secondly, do you think civic society knows their rights, responsibilities and protections in law? We have covered that briefly. Lastly, are there sufficient and consistent legal protections across the four nations of the UK and can you give any examples of best practice?

Chair: Is there a need for a change in the law, Clare?

Professor McGlynn: Yes, there is. It needs to change a lot. There are discussions about whether we should have an overall offence of sexual harassment: a particular criminal offence of sexual harassment. There are other European countries that have such an offence. It is one avenue we could go down. My fear with going down that particular avenue is that we would all get distracted about focusing on a criminal offence of sexual harassment. What is more appropriate is to tackle specific areas, for example around online abuse, and to tackle some of the inconsistencies and piecemeal actions around that at the moment. That would be quite straightforward if there was just enough time. There is quite a lot of consensus about what needs to be done in that area, but we definitely need to be doing it.

Are there sufficient legal protections at the moment? No. We need the change. I am not convinced, though, that a criminal law on sexual harassment is necessarily what we need, because there is a range of other laws. We have talked about "ordinary" sexual harassment at the moment and sexual assault. Sexual assault of young women over 13 is one of the highest increasing areas of sexual violence. Groping, for example, is trivialised, but it is one of the areas in which we are seeing more and more reports. It is not always taken seriously and it is not always treated appropriately, but that is on the statute books, so it is implementation as much as new laws that we need.

Mark Hamilton: I would echo much of that. There are sexual offences, there are harassment offences, there are assault offences, there are miscommunication offences; there is a range of offences that were designed at moments in time for certain things. What we sometimes try to do is then try to get overarching offences to grab them all together. Sometimes that is appropriate; sometimes it is not. I could not give you the definitive answer at the minute.

Q23 **Angela Crawley:** My question, though, is: does civic society know of these protections? That is the point. You can evolve the law, but if people do not know how to enforce their rights, how can they possibly protect themselves?

Mark Hamilton: We could potentially argue that around a whole range of criminal law and whether civic society knows. I would argue there are basic norms in society about what is and is not appropriate behaviour. How you are taught or learn that is not just about coming from the criminal justice system. There is a whole range of ways of understanding

that it is inappropriate or illegal to behave in certain ways. I do not know if civic society is well enough informed. From my specific portfolio of hate, I accept that there is a large amount of confusion from people around understanding what hate crime is and how it happens.

You mentioned perception. The fundamental tenet of hate crime reporting is the perception test. It underpins everything that fell out of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. That is not the same as the evidential test, but the test is: does the victim or some other person perceive that they were a victim of the crime because of their perceived gender or their perceived race, religion, transgender identity, disability or sexual orientation? If that was, therefore, extended to include gender or to just include one gender, we would be including the perception of any person reasonably as being the indicator and flag that has occurred. Whether or not it gets prosecuted through the system is different, but in terms of returning respect to the victim and taking them seriously it is important that it is flagged for what it is. In our view, in the hate portfolio, that is a fundamental tenet of hate crime reporting.

Professor McGlynn: Can I briefly follow up on this perception point? For many of these criminal offences we have talked about, one overarching issue that needs to be addressed is that we need to focus more on the harms to the victims than the motives of the perpetrators. For example, if you think about sexual harassment and you think about Harvey Weinstein and his allegedly exposing himself, there is a criminal offence of exposure, but it is only if you can demonstrate that the perpetrator was intending to cause distress. If the perpetrator was intending to get sexual gratification, it is not a criminal offence. If someone has a spy camera in the toilet, they might be committing the offence of voyeurism. It is, however, only an offence if they are perpetrating it for sexual gratification and not if they are doing it to get paid £100. The law is too focused on some of those motivations and it needs to focus on the harm to the victims.

Q24 **Chair:** That is a really important point. Can I draw out the four nations part of Angela's question? Is there anything different to note about the four nations?

Professor McGlynn: That is a very good point. In Scotland, for example, obviously there is a different criminal law, and in some areas around online abuse and domestic abuse, it has what I would say are stronger provisions that certainly England and Wales could be learning from. That goes both ways, because there is a lot of practice in some areas of sexual offences that Scotland could learn from. Obviously Welsh law is much the same, and the law of Northern Ireland tends to reflect English and Welsh criminal law in that regard.

Q25 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** We touched on this earlier, but what evidence is there that representations of women and men in the media or pornography are linked to sexual harassment or other violence against women?

Chair: We had a bit of that before, but do you want to add anything?

Mark Hamilton: I cannot offer you an evidence base today specific to this issue. My experience generally is across the hate crime portfolio and the relationship between what we say in the public space and then how that is necessarily interpreted by people who want to commit offences. Taking it out of the gender area for the minute, the one that is questioned most often is the hate crime spike following the referendum period and the issues that fell out of that. The way we described that was that we felt that some people wrongly felt that period allowed them a licence to behave towards people in an entirely unacceptable way.

I cannot give you the evidence base specifically in respect of sexual violence and how women or men are portrayed in the media, but there is a general debate about how the messages we have in society impact on how some offenders feel they can behave.

Professor McGlynn: Perhaps I can give two examples. You are probably aware the Advertising Standards Authority did a review around gender stereotyping recently, and so it looked right across the evidence base there. On that basis, it decided that it needed to introduce stronger rules regarding gender stereotyping etc. in advertising because of the links to sexism and such like.

In the area around pornography, studies and qualitative studies that have been done, particularly with young people, have suggested links between certain boys' use of pornography and coercive attitudes around sexual violence and displaying other risky behaviours and such like. There again you have a link. It is not that people are viewing pornography and then going on to commit acts of sexual violence, but it is part of a broader culture that is not necessarily understanding the values and the importance of consent. Those are just two areas in which there is quite clear evidence of the links that provide the culture for sexual violence.

Michael Conroy: My work is largely qualitative, so I can speak from conversations over many hours and over several years with boys and young men, generally aged between 14 and 19. We can talk through the processes and thoughts that are articulated in advertising, objectification, pornography, and we can talk through that in a dialogue and really ask each other, "What is happening in these scenes? What is suggested by the absence of the woman's head or face in this advert for a burger when she has barely any clothes on? What is happening in that?" That opens up a channel for them to explain the influence of our culture on their developing minds. If we do not believe that people do not respond to, or are shaped or influenced by, external stimuli, we may as well really abandon the education system full stop. We may as well not put up signs saying, "No smoking". We may as well not put any kind of visual indicators or cues anywhere in the public space.

We all know that we are shaped by symbols and messages and words and connotations. We need, therefore, to really spend time looking at

that impact and how that can connect with incidents of sexual harassment. Is it based on a feeling of entitlement and, if it is, where does that feeling of entitlement come from? Is it that we, as men, are positioned in some ways, at least in the representational sphere, as being of higher value, of being in control? Is our point of view the point of view through which women are seen? Any cursory glance at pornography or most advertising will say, "Yes, ours are the eyes through which women are seen; therefore, we have an implicit higher degree of power". Power is open to abuse; therefore there is a reasonable intellectual argument to look at the incidence of sexual harassment, sexual assault and the huge spectrum that includes and say, "Is it connected to the stimuli and the visual or verbal textual input that young men are subjected to?" I would say they are bombarded by it as soon as they can occupy public space, see an advert, watch a film, listen to a song or go online.

Q26 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** I have 20 years of experience in education and I completely agree there are associations. With a 13 year-old son, you see how they behave and how they talk to each other, and I find it quite disturbing. What role does media regulation play in tackling a sexist culture, and what are the limits of media regulation on this in relation to free speech, for example?

Professor McGlynn: Free speech is a very important point because obviously it is a value that we need to hold dear. I would also add, though, that we need to remember that many forms of media regulation and other forms of regulation, such as regulating our pornography laws, are about enhancing the freedom of speech of those who are often discriminated against and oppressed. What I mean is, for example, online abuse. Some people might defend their right to disseminate online abuse on the grounds of free speech, but what that online abuse does is inhibit the free speech of those who are adversely affected by that. They might feel the need to come offline and stop using social media. Women talk about a fear of not being able to enjoy public spaces.

Free speech is a really important value to discuss, but we need to remember that regulation can be human rights enhancing in that regard. That is a view and perspective that your own Joint Committee on Human Rights has endorsed in relation to pornography laws and pornography regulation. I would say the same in relation to media regulation as well.

Mark Hamilton: On the media point from a police point of view, media is a global issue now and regulation has only a local impact. Online abuse will very often originate from other jurisdictions into which we have limited input. As a general comment—again, I keep referring back to the hate crime work that I do and the discussions about it—one of the things that I would be averse to would be a closing down of the need to discuss the issues. That alienates people. It pushes people away from the debate and, in some respects, it allows people to take more trenchant views. It is about trying to have a respectful debate about these issues and then some sort of settled consensus about it.

Q27 **Kirstene Hair:** Community responses are internationally recognised as a key part of the response to sexual harassment and its underpinning culture. Is there any work that cannot be done by Government or public bodies and can only be done in communities, by civil society organisations or by the private sector? Secondly, how can Government support that work?

Chair: Is there anything that needs to be done outside of Government but that Government can support?

Mark Hamilton: Again, very quickly, going back to the other five strands we work on, there is a massive role for the community sector. Probably the one that jumps to mind is third-party reporting: the ability for people to get messages to the police through a third party, particularly if they are concerned about talking to police officers. That is almost exclusively community run, and we endorse and support it. We also do information sharing with community groups and other third-party sectors to try to assist them. We also find that generally intervention work, victim support work and even offender work is quite often better delivered through community-based programmes than through Government programmes.

The big issue in the private sector space, as was raised by the Home Affairs Select Committee with us, is the role of the internet providers and their social and corporate responsibility in assisting both the prevention of offences online and then the detection of them. Given the huge costs, every additional support by the private sector in trying to make that space as safe as possible for people can only be welcomed.

Q28 **Kirstene Hair:** Do you think the Government should be doing more to support that work within, for example, the private sector?

Mark Hamilton: I am personally very loath to comment on Government policy. The Government have made a lot of commentary about the response of particularly the online space. Governments have historically put a lot of money towards third-party reporting and community groups. Obviously that has been affected by the austerity issues that we have all faced over the last number of years, but I know the community groups would welcome more support.

Professor McGlynn: Community groups have a vital role to play in terms of specialist support services. In the area of violence against women, I would think about Women's Aid, Refuge, Rape Crisis and the Revenge Porn Helpline. All these sorts of organisations have a vital role to play, but the Government also have a vital role to play in that regard, and I am largely talking about resourcing. If we are talking about problems of online abuse, for example, or we are talking about problems of sexual violence, it is incumbent upon Government to then fund resources that support the victims of that.

We have then also talked about whether they would feel confident in coming forward. Many victims will feel comfortable in coming forward to

report forms of violence and abuse, and it will be the same in the workplace, if they have got support—if you have someone to support you. In order to have a support service that is effective and that is knowledgeable, they need to be trained and that needs to be funded. The two need to work together with the resourcing effectively coming from Government.

Scarlet Harris: I wanted to support what both Clare and Mark have said. There has been a real shrinking of the violence against women sector and also the information and advice sector, so open-door centres and Citizens Advice bureaux. It is the same very specifically for specialist services in the violence against women sector, so not the bigger Women's Aid-type services but the smaller services run by, for instance, a particular community group for that community, whether a black women's community group or a Muslim women's community group. There is lots of evidence that shows that women really value those services and would often choose to go to those services rather than someone else. They may not always feel confident going to the police or going to their employer.

We talked earlier about how we can improve the general public's understanding of what the law says, and that is a missing part of the puzzle. People do not necessarily go to a lawyer to get the answers to those questions. They would go to a community service where there are people they trust, who perhaps speak the same language as them, and where they feel that they could get that kind of advice and also support and advocacy. That is really crucial.

There is more that employers can do—and lots of employers are doing. It is not just about what Government do. There is obviously a role for trade unions in that as well, and lots that unions are doing already and can do more of in terms of ensuring that everyone in the workplace understands what sexual harassment is, what they can do to prevent it and how to report it. Employers can ensure that those policies and procedures are fit for purpose and robust and that everyone understands where to find them and how to use them.

Q29 **Tulip Siddiq:** My question was going to be about women being deterred from reporting crime, which you have covered. Do you think there are best practices in other countries, or laws or policies, that tackle hate crime or misogyny and we could replicate here?

Mark Hamilton: Generally on hate crime we are regarded as having most of the best practices in terms of reporting levels and so forth. Misogyny as defined as a hate crime is a fairly emergent area. We work across the EU and the United States and have various groups, so we are always ready to pick that up. I am not aware—and if I am wrong on this I will come back to you—of any other jurisdictions getting involved in this debate around misogyny as a hate crime. We are possibly one of the first.

Professor McGlynn: One simple measure that might increase reporting, particularly regarding some forms of online abuse, would be to grant anonymity to those coming forward and reporting image-based sexual abuse in the same way as for sexual offences. That might make a big difference, and that is quite a simple and straightforward measure that could be easily adopted.

Q30 **Rosie Duffield:** There has been a lot of work done recently to tackle sexual harassment and other violence at universities. Why do you think focusing on this age group or stage of life is really important? I am interested in what Michael has to say on that, given he works with younger people.

Michael Conroy: It is absolutely fundamentally a human rights question, because the people who are in universities are human beings and deserve absolutely the best that we can offer them as a society and as people capable of creating conditions for them to flourish. Wherever it is—workplace, school, Parliament, universities—everybody deserves the absolute best that we can give them by working together. That age group are probably on the cusp of going into the workplace as well. I would like to see supportive, constructive and respectful work done in dialogues in universities, sixth form colleges, in high schools and primary schools, as part of a logically linked continuum of respect supporting rights and supporting work. We are obviously a long way from that but we are here to talk about precisely this.

I guess there are about 1 million or 2 million people in universities in the UK. That is a huge number of influential people as well. First they matter as humans, then they have relationships. They are going into the workplace. They will have an impact on those places, and they deserve to be safe but they also deserve to have views developed that will help others be safe wherever they go in life beyond that.

Professor McGlynn: We know that it is younger women who are most at risk of forms of rape and other forms of sexual assault. Over 50% of students at universities are women, so it is a particular problem. We know from various studies of women's and men's experiences at university that sexual harassment and sexual violence is a particular problem. Universities are beginning to take action in this regard, but there is an awful lot more to be done, particularly more recently around staff-to-student sexual harassment and sexual violence, on which universities are not yet taking sufficient action. There is a survey being done at the moment that might show the prevalence of that particular form of sexual harassment and sexual violence. I hope universities will be distributing and sharing the information about that survey among their students so that we get a good picture of what is going on. That will be really important.

Scarlet Harris: The University and College Union have done a lot of work recently on sexual harassment as a university-wide issue, looking at students and what is happening to teaching staff. Whilst recognising that

there is probably a huge amount of sexual harassment and sexual violence of which students are the victims, a survey found an awful lot of their members reported that they had been victims of sexual harassment from students. These students may be in their late teens or 20s and the teachers themselves are often in quite a vulnerable position as well.

Q31 **Rosie Duffield:** Clare, is there an obvious connection between women's experience of sexism and sexual harassment at university and elsewhere?

Professor McGlynn: Universities are part of a broader society, so the problems of sexism and sexual harassment etc. we see across society are very much in place in universities. My own view is that universities also have a social responsibility, because of the population that they are dealing with and because of their educative role, to take action in this regard. That means acknowledging that it is a problem, which is a challenge because universities are fearful, understandably in some ways, of saying, "We recognise that this is an issue and we recognise that this is a problem". We also know that where you have an increase of reporting of incidents of sexual violence or sexual misconduct, that does not mean to say that the institution has a particular problem. It could just be that it now has the procedures in place that make it a more acceptable or understandable place to report.

Q32 **Rosie Duffield:** Is enough being done by Universities UK and the Government generally?

Professor McGlynn: Universities UK has done some great work in this regard, but it now needs to follow up on that. We need guidance from Universities UK on staff-to-student sexual harassment. We also need some national guidance on gathering statistics, so that all universities know exactly the data they need to gather on student-to-student and staff-to-student sexual violence, so that it is across the board and so that governing bodies can be informed of what is happening and can report on that. The Government have obviously played an important role in setting up the Universities UK Taskforce, but that pressure needs to continue and not get dissipated.

Q33 **Mr Shuker:** I wanted to talk about two separate areas of lived experience that I appreciate are a continuum but it would be helpful for the purposes of our evidence to treat them as more or less separate. One is the workplace and one is public space, public transport and so on. What do we know—what do we have as a shared, agreed, robust evidence base—about sexual harassment in the workplace?

Scarlet Harris: As I mentioned earlier, there was a real gap in the data that we had about harassment in the workplace and much of it was anecdotal. We undertook a YouGov survey early last year to try to gather some data. We asked very clear questions: not just, "Have you been sexually harassed?" recognising that people have different perceptions of what that is, but, "Did you experience any of these behaviours? What was

the impact? Did you report it? Why not?" We gathered some really good data.

The top findings—the ones worth drawing to your attention—are that over half of the women polled had experienced some form of sexual harassment in their working lives. That figure went up for younger women. For the 18 to 24 year-olds group, two-thirds of women had experienced some form of sexual harassment. This was all different types of sexual harassment: some of those were more serious assaults; some of them were to do with jokes and unwanted comments in the workplace, which is also serious but different.

I mentioned earlier that very few women reported the sexual harassment to anyone at all. We asked whether they had reported it to a manager, to a colleague, to a trade union rep, to the police, to anyone, and very few women—one in five—had reported it to anyone at all. Quite worryingly, of those who had reported it, three-quarters said that nothing changed and nothing improved. A significant minority said things had got worse, which indicated a level of victimisation—that they were then treated unfairly because they had drawn this to the attention of their manager.

As I said, we also asked the question about impact and found a range of different impacts, which are really worth bearing in mind when we talk about this because people often do not focus on the impact. Clare referred to this earlier. There were impacts on mental health. A significant minority of women said they wanted to leave their job but could not for financial reasons. A small minority did leave their jobs. There were lots of everyday things that do not sound that significant but in the overall scheme of things can become significant, such as avoiding certain work situations or not going for a promotion because you do not want to work in the same team as someone.

Those things can have a huge impact on someone's career over time, so the impact question is very important for us, as well as trying to get to the bottom of why women do not report. We had some interesting findings when we asked about the reasons they did not report, which were to do with stigma, shame or feelings of humiliation, which is completely understandable when you see how the definition of sexual harassment is framed in the Equality Act. The intention is to humiliate and degrade, so women feel humiliated and degraded. There is a stigma attached to it. They are ashamed. They do not want to talk about it to anyone. Lots of women also said that they did not report it because they feared the impact it would have on their careers.

Q34 **Mr Shuker:** Was the cohort that you looked at men and women or was it just women?

Scarlet Harris: The YouGov polling was women. We also did a survey of union members, which was men and women. There have been subsequent surveys that have looked at men and women that have come

up with the same figure for women who have experienced sexual harassment and a slightly lower figure for men.

Q35 **Mr Shuker:** To clarify why you commissioned that, it seemed to be that you felt there was a lack of available data. Would that be a good summary?

Scarlet Harris: There was a lack of data. You alluded to it in the question, but it is important to recognise the overlap between public space and work space, and lots of the things that we talk about as public space are also someone's working space. We talk about sexual harassment of women on public transport; there are women working in the transport industry who are subject to huge amounts of violence and harassment, and that is equally an issue for them.

Professor McGlynn: On the prevalence, Scarlet has set it out and is the expert on the detail there. One interesting and possibly relevant point to bring up is the Equality and Human Rights Commission has just recently issued some guidance on sexual harassment in the workplace and is taking an initiative to gather evidence about that. I have some concerns about that guidance, particularly regarding the overlap with criminal offences. For example, it suggests that if an employer thinks there is a criminal offence, they should advise the employee to report to the police. That is completely misguided, and I know from the university sector that we have had to work very hard to think clearly about the differences between civil and criminal offences. An employer investigating sexual harassment is not investigating a criminal offence, so there are issues around that guidance that need to be looked at again.

Q36 **Angela Crawley:** On Scarlet's point about the survey the TUC conducted, did it go into the detail of the perception or the exercise of power and seniority? Was that a reason for a failure to report or take action?

Scarlet Harris: We asked a question about who the perpetrator was. In the majority of cases it was a colleague, which implied—and we did not get into details because it was a large-scale survey—that it was somebody on roughly the same level. The next biggest group in terms of the perpetrator was managers or someone with seniority. There has been other research that has found that as well, but there is a strong correlation because it is a power dynamic and seniority is often, but not always, at play.

Q37 **Mr Shuker:** What do we know at the same evidential standard about sexual harassment in public spaces and public transport? There has been a lot of focus on sexual harassment in the workplace in recent months, which is hugely welcome but does not appear to be matched in the same way. What do we know about it?

Mark Hamilton: We have some evidence here. ActionAid carried out a survey in 2016 of on-street harassment in a number of countries, and they found that 79% of women in India, 86% in Thailand, 89% in Brazil

and 75% in London had been subject to harassment or violence in public. The End Violence Against Women campaign commissioned YouGov to conduct a national poll on street harassment in 2016; 64% of all women of all ages have experienced unwanted sexual harassment in public places; 63% of women generally feel unsafe in public spaces; almost half do conscious safe planning when they go out in the evenings. Additionally, 35% had experienced unwanted sexual touching; 85% of women aged 18 to 24 had faced sexual harassment in public spaces and 45% had experienced unwanted sexual touching.

Nottingham University provided very compelling evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on the work done in Nottingham around gender-based hate crime and the experience of women. Nottingham Citizens, a branch of Citizens UK, carried out a survey in Nottingham: 38% of women reporting hate crime felt that their gender was a significant element but it was not reflected in the statutes; 28% of those surveyed would report any crime to the police, but there is an underreporting then of those issues. There is a swelling evidence base for how women in our society are treated in the public space.

Again, I keep coming back to the hate crime issue and how it is defined as opposed to distinctly sexual harassment. Anecdotally, police services around the country are picking up more and more evidence of how women feel they are treated in public spaces. Even if you go back into the hate crime space around anti-Muslim hate crime, the TellMAMA survey from last year points very clearly to misogynistic behaviour towards Muslim women as a key element of hate crime. It also points very clearly to the minoritisation of women and the exclusion of women from public spaces: the inability to access to public transport, the unwillingness to go out and the associated faith element. I do not know if there is a single piece of evidence, but there are a number of pieces of evidence pointing to this issue as it crosses over a number or crime types and other types of behaviour.

Q38 **Mr Shuker:** Let me drill down into that for a second before I bring anyone else in. I am going to take it as a given that the majority of women have experienced sexual harassment in public, based on the numbers that you are saying there. I am guessing, however, that the majority of women have not reported sexual harassment to the police.

Mark Hamilton: I would assume that is the case, yes.

Q39 **Mr Shuker:** Why is that?

Mark Hamilton: The underreporting of crime is a factor across the UK. If you look at hate crime, the last England and Wales survey two and half years ago said that hate crime was at 220,000 for England and Wales and the police-reported crime at that stage was 62,000, so there was a massive disparity. We also know there is significant underreporting of sexual crime and domestic violence. There are a number of reasons for that: first, confidence in the criminal justice system and whether people

feel they are going to get an adequate response; and secondly, accessibility and understanding the criminal justice system. In some societies, reporting to the police is not acceptable. There are people who come to the UK who have not lived here their whole lives who do not think that you should be contacting the police or are not allowed to. There is fear of the consequences to them as individuals, be it domestic violence or sexual violence; fear of consequences from the perpetrator; fear of having to give evidence in court. Then there is the humiliation of it. A colleague of mine who did a lot of work in sexual violence used to take conferences. She used to say to people, "Think about the last sexual experience you had and now turn to the person next to you and tell them about it". It can be as difficult as that to talk to a police officer about something as extremely unpleasant that has happened to you and the trauma you are going through.

There are a whole lot of levels in the criminological process that are barriers and a whole lot of steps that are being taken. The first thing for most people is the recognition that something has happened to them and the understanding that they will be taken seriously.

Q40 **Mr Shuker:** Without misogyny as a hate crime on the table, what are the other offences that might reach evidential standards in the case of sexual harassment?

Mark Hamilton: Hate crime itself is treated as an aggravating factor other than for some offences under the Crime and Disorder Act in relation to race and religion. Misogyny as a hate crime would be an aggravating factor to what we would describe as an index offence, so it would be any crime. If it then became reported as a hate crime, it would attract enhanced sentencing. You would take any offence that the person reported, and if it reached the evidential standard and had been reported as a hate crime, it would attract an enhanced sentence. It is not about a new crime of hate. It is about adding another category to the enhanced process—the layers incurred on top of an offence.

Q41 **Mr Shuker:** Do you think it would have an impact on reporting, though, if misogyny were treated as a hate crime?

Mark Hamilton: Be it a hate crime or not, whatever way it is dealt with, indicating to society in our bit of the piece that the law will take this offending more seriously than a crime that is not motivated by these reasons hopefully is an indicator to victims that there is more reason to come forward and more reason to believe that the criminal justice system will take them and the perpetrator seriously.

Q42 **Mr Shuker:** Obviously there is an understandable focus on those that are on the receiving end of unwanted sexual attention and harassment, but what do we know about the perpetrators, particularly in public spaces? That is probably something for which it would be helpful to draw on the other people on the panel.

Chair: Clare, did you want to respond to the previous bit?

Professor McGlynn: Yes, if I may. Regarding the prevalence of street harassment and to add to the surveys that have already been mentioned, one done by Drinkaware among students showed over 50% of women and 15% of men were experiencing forms of sexual harassment on nights out. I wanted to emphasise that, because whilst some of the surveys are just of women, that was across the board and it shows a differential impact.

In regard to the question about perpetrators, by and large they are men. That is one of the most common points. The vast majority of perpetrators of both street harassment and sexual offending are men, so then you have got a different picture of the differential impact and the differential perpetrators.

Michael Conroy: We need to ask why it happens. Are there patterns in the beliefs of the people who perpetrate? I do not work with perpetrators. As I said, I work with boys between 13 and 19. We can see emerging attitudes and emerging beliefs that are corroborated by wider society and that link in with victim blaming very particularly, for example, "What did she expect? Look at what she was wearing. She is semi naked or she is wearing tight clothes", or whatever it might be. The focus of a lot of really urgent work that we need to do with young men is that that is not okay, that is not true and you are accountable for your own behaviour: you need to own what you do. It is fundamentally describing an imbalance of power.

With victim blaming, it is really key that we start to grasp that nettle with young men and look hard at where that is corroborated across wider society. Part of our holistic response to incidents of sexual harassment, street calling or whatever it may be—particularly in the public space, as you are focusing on at the moment—is that sense of entitlement: you do what you think is okay and appropriate for you, because that is what you have been conditioned to believe is the case. It is either that, which has got a strong evidence base and seems reasonable and fairly robust as a theory, or you think that every incident is an individual, moral aberration that is disconnected from all others. If you believe that, you can never really address any issue.

We need to focus on themes that reoccur, messages that are widely available and the many gaps in places where we can engage young men in meaningful and respectful conversations about being able to navigate that minefield of fairly toxic messages.

Q43 **Mr Shuker:** Are there any specific legal or policy measures that you think might more effectively tackle sexual harassment in public spaces or on public transport?

Professor McGlynn: Yes: we could introduce a law immediately to clearly cover upskirting, a prevalent practice that is not clearly covered by the law at the moment. It is in Scotland and it needs to be. That is one. I could go on but I will just leave it at that one.

Mr Shuker: That is helpful.

Chair: Is there anything else that people wanted to add on that point?

Mark Hamilton: Without rehearsing the point over and over again, we need a review of hate crime categories and the consideration of whether gender or a single gender—female—should be a category of hate crime. Start the national reporting on that, and then any statutory instruments around it are all connected considerations, and the time is right to consider it.

Q44 **Tulip Siddiq:** Michael, this is not my area of expertise, but is there any link between the attitudes of the men you work with and what school they go to in terms of whether it is a single-sex school or a mixed school?

Michael Conroy: The work I do is mainly all in mixed-sex schools. I have done some shorter span work, presentation and workshop work, in single-sex schools. The basic questions elicit the same responses. We say, "Okay, lads, what is the basic list of ingredients that you have soaked up from all your life of books, TV, pictures or whatever it might be—how would you describe it?" One day I did it in a PRU—a pupil referral unit—and the day after I did it in a fee-paying school. They had utterly different socioeconomic and ethnic mixes, and the answers were identical. The first eight answers were identical. We are talking about commonly understood themes that you can point at. People know what they are, and that is a really good sign that it is not necessarily socioeconomic or ethnic or anything. These are common to young males' experiences. There are differences, and there is of course some intersectionality in terms of emphasis, but common themes reoccur.

Q45 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Turning to sexism and sexual harassment online again, where does the primary responsibility lie for tackling this?

Professor McGlynn: We need to tackle it across the board. I would not isolate one individual. We need up-to-date laws that tackle it, and we need to review what we are doing in the online area. The laws are too outdated. We need other action from social media companies. They are taking some action, but it is still not good enough, particularly in view of the large resources of those organisations. Other institutions also need to take responsibility, not least schools, universities and employers. It is a package across the board. The Government have responsibility to lead. In regard to online abuse for example, in Denmark they have just introduced a cross-departmental government strategy that covers education and prevention, support for victims in services, as well as enforcement and consequences. It all marries up and you have everyone working together, but that does need the Government level of initiation to take that forward.

Mark Hamilton: The whole area of cybercrime, cyberspace and so forth needs a continuum of robust action. As I said, policing services and other communities are still trying to catch up with the speed at which this

occurs and the scale of it. For instance, when we announced an online hate crime hub, within 24 hours we had 4,000 hate attacks on our own website and it was generated by robots somewhere in Europe.

There is also then this issue that no matter how much you regulate within the United Kingdom, you are at the vagaries of the world around the online space. That is extremely difficult. It effectively pushes more responsibility in that sense towards the companies and the service providers who host stuff for global responses to this. There is then, as you correctly pointed out, a number of areas to address in terms of how we can respond locally: is our criminal justice system adept enough and do we have the right crimes on the statute books? How are we educating people for appropriate and safe online behaviour?

Q46 **Chair:** I feel that we could have had an entire session on that last section. If anybody has got anything they wanted to say that they have not said, would you write to us? Is that okay? We have demonstrated the enormous breadth of this problem in what we have talked about today. Finally, in helping us try to frame what I think will be a future inquiry—it will be very difficult for us not to do some work in this area in the near future—is there any advice you would want to proffer very briefly on what we should focus on? There is a lot around culture and there is a lot around place. Is there anything we might best or most importantly focus on first? Does that make sense? I want a short sentence of advice to the Committee: what should we do first?

Professor McGlynn: Yes, more action could be taken in this area, and I would welcome that. Your framing of sexism, for want of a better phrase, or sexualised sexism would be a good start, because you need to encompass the online and offline world. You need to encompass civil law and criminal law right across the board. That makes it very unwieldy. I obviously have a particular need to review the laws in this area, and the Sexual Offences Act is nearly 15 years old and it is in need of review to cover lots of this area. Sexism or sexualised sexism would be good start for framing.

Scarlet Harris: You will know better than I will how logistically it is best to parcel this up, because there is a potential for it to be huge and join the dots between lots of things. Some things you have done already, like the sexual harassment and violence in schools. We have talked about how the workplace overlaps with public spaces. It overlaps with the online stuff and the media. It all links together, and I honestly do not know, for you logistically, whether it is better to take it all as one big issue or to split them into smaller, more manageable chunks and then try to join them up.

Mark Hamilton: Firstly, earlier on I think I used the expression "normal sexual harassment". That was a clumsy term to use.

Chair: We know what you mean, Mark—do not worry. We have been impressed by your input today, so we know what you mean.

Mark Hamilton: I just wanted to clarify and apologise for that.

The approach should be victim centred, so it is based upon the experiences of women in our society. I would find it very helpful as well if we start to agree a common vocabulary as a basis for this. Today's discussion has been about sexism. My discussion in policing has been about misogyny. Outside of these rooms, that will create confusion, so we need to form a basis upon which we are having the conversation with which to go forward and a common understanding of what we are trying to deal with.

That basis then has to have some sort of notion of what the structural response in our society will be. That is absent. It is in different pieces and in different parts of conversation. I would encourage the Committee to try to understand how you can get an agreed definition. In hate crime we work in definitions. We started with the Macpherson inquiry and worked up a definition, and from that then flowed lots of activities. That is probably a good enough comparator. We need an agreed understanding of what we are talking about, and then an agreed basis upon which the criminal pieces would work and the societal pieces would work, based upon the victim's experience. That is a bit long-winded, Chair.

Chair: No—that is really helpful.

Michael Conroy: Building on from that structural response that Mark indicated, a holistic and effective structural response needs to give equal weight to preventative work. We need to look upstream at the ages at which beliefs about the world, morality, interaction and the relative value of people are formed. That is genuinely before adulthood, so we need to include primary and secondary schools as part of a virtuous continuum.

Chair: Perfect—that is great. We could have literally gone on all day. I cannot thank you enough for bringing your expertise to this very initial scoping session. It has been invaluable and, on behalf of the whole Committee, thank you for the time you have given us today.