

HATE
HOPE
HATE

**END
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**

ONLINE ALLEGATIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Credit: @cornwallresists on Instagram

A GUIDE FOR THE REFUGEE AND MIGRATION SECTOR

This guide is aimed at organisations or individuals in the refugee and migration sector who are concerned about allegations of gender-based violence being linked to anti-migrant sentiment in the community. It has been produced by HOPE not hate in collaboration with the End Violence Against Women Coalition, a coalition of women's support services, researchers, activists, survivors and NGOs campaigning to end all forms of violence against women.

Through HOPE not hate's work with community organisations, we identified a gap in the conversation on anti-migrant far-right activity. In social media groups, news media and through the local grapevine, asylum seekers staying in temporary accommodation are being accused of harassing or threatening women and children in the local area. The hatred towards asylum seekers spreads to general racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia. Organisations supporting the asylum seekers don't know how to respond, so they don't respond. They worry about seeming like they are not taking the allegations of GBV seriously on an individual or societal level if they defend asylum seekers. They don't even know if they should be defending the asylum seekers, because often they don't have a lot of information about the allegations aside from hearsay. They might choose to avoid confronting the issue entirely for fear of causing further harm.

It is important for organisations in the sector to speak out, although it requires careful thought and nuance to be done well. Cases like these are full of individual context that cannot be fully captured in a general resource. This resource is not legal guidance and does not contain comprehensive advice on support, although we signpost some organisations at the end. It is also not for the use of statutory services such as education, health and social care settings - these services should follow their organisational policy on these incidents. Our aim is to help organisations grow in confidence when it comes to responding to these complex situations, and to encourage them to avoid making some of the common harmful missteps.



Credit: @asylumlink on Twitter

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for acts of violence directed at an individual because of their gender. Acts of violence can be physical, sexual, emotional or economic, and they can take place both in public and in private. The following is important to keep in mind when reading this resource:



- Victims of GBV are **disproportionately women and girls**, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community. This resource will focus on women and girls, because they are the main focus of community conversations around migration and safety.
- Perpetrators of GBV are **disproportionately men**.
- The consequences of GBV can be devastating both for the **individual victim** and the **wider community**.
- The majority of perpetrators of GBV are known to the victim. The notion of “stranger danger” can be harmful to the fight to end GBV because it obscures the reality of GBV.
- For the sake of consistency, this resource will refer to those who have experienced GBV as **victims**. It is important to note that some people prefer to refer to themselves as **survivors**, in recognition of their recovery and resilience.

The following statistics are also worth keeping in mind, because they demonstrate why so many people are rightly angry and worried about the prevalence of GBV. A vast proportion of women and girls will have been victims of some sort of GBV, including those making or sharing allegations. It is crucial to be sensitive to those experiences.

- **97%** of women aged 18-24 have experienced some kind of harassment in public.
- Women are **27 times more likely** than men to receive online abuse or harassment.
- **25%** of women aged 18-74 had experienced some form of abuse before the age of 16.
- Almost **one in three** women aged 16-59 will experience relationship abuse.
- **63%** of victims of rape or assault by penetration reported mental or emotional problems following an attack; **21%** reported having to take time off work.

THE WEAPONISATION OF GBV

Weaponisation happens when someone uses a real phenomenon as a tool to serve their own harmful purposes. In this case, the far right are exploiting gender-based violence to serve their own anti-migrant, racist and Islamophobic narratives.

Far-right or anti-migrant actors weaponise GBV by sharing accusations made against asylum seekers to turn public opinion against them. Asylum seekers are mostly accused of physically attacking, following or using threatening language against women and children. These allegations capitalise on an existing fear of violence and crime in the wider community. Whether the fear is genuine or manipulated for political reasons, it drives violence towards asylum seekers, migrants, Muslims and people of colour. It can have profound effects on the community at large, because people are often unable or unwilling to distinguish asylum seekers from other marginalised groups. An atmosphere of mistrust and hatred can form.

Posting or sharing allegations of GBV provide an excuse for some members of the community to validate or bolster their anti-migrant views in a way that appears more socially acceptable. This group of people are unlikely to have genuine concern for victims or ending gender-based violence. Rather, they want to exploit the narrative of “protecting women and children” to mask their anti-migrant views. People who are consciously or subconsciously prejudiced against asylum seekers use allegations as a prompt to question whether asylum seekers are actually able to integrate into the local community.

Discussion around the national, cultural or religious identity of perpetrators is used to support and perpetuate racist narratives around the treatment of women and children in other cultures and the perceived criminality of minority groups.

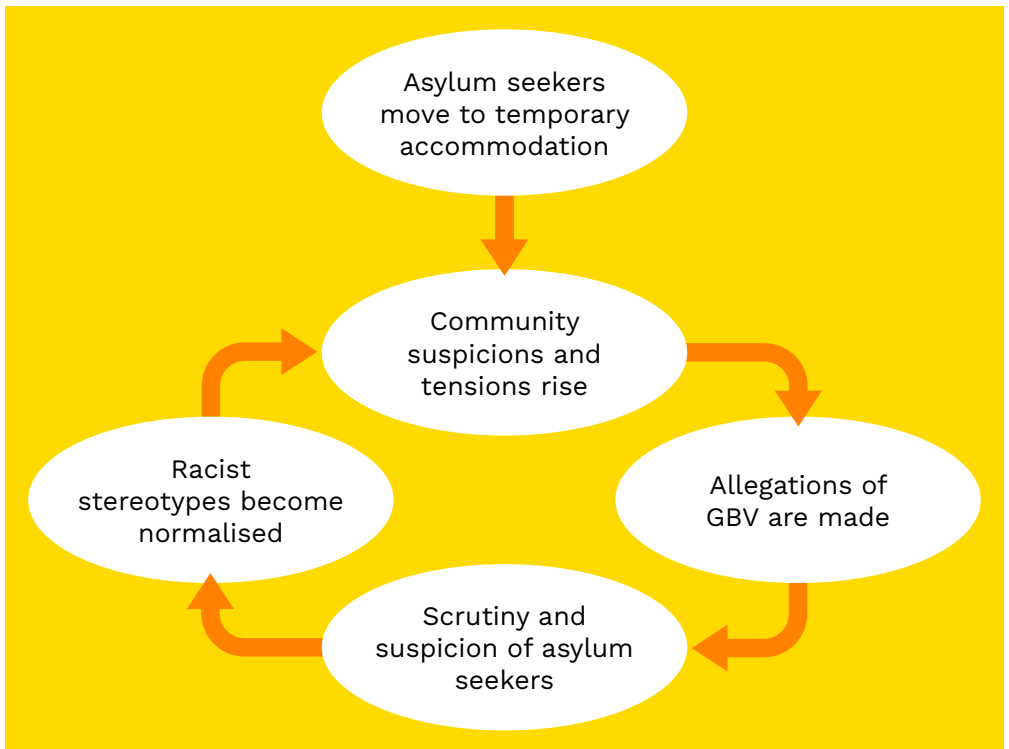


Credit: CNN

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

In the first three months of 2023, anti-migrant demonstrations in at least seven locations in the UK were prompted or agitated by allegations that an asylum seeker staying in temporary accommodation had been a perpetrator of GBV.

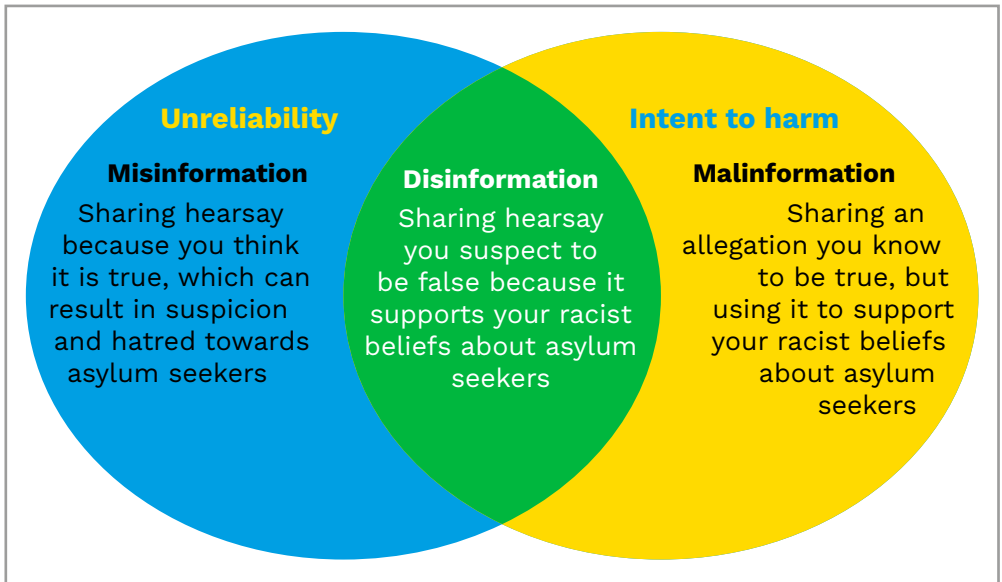
GBV being weaponised in the current context of anti-migrant far-right sentiment can often be distinguished from general community concerns about GBV because allegations will flood social media immediately or shortly after asylum seekers move into temporary accommodation in the area. These posts will also focus more on the identity and migration status of the alleged attacker than on what happened and how the victim has been affected. Many of the allegations namecheck the hotel or accommodation site, even when there is no confirmation that the alleged attacker is an asylum seeker housed there. Often, online speculation results in a vicious cycle where the actions of asylum seekers are policed following an allegation, and new allegations emerge about their behaviour, partially due to heightened sensitivity and suspicion towards this group of people.



MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION AND MALINFORMATION

Allegations can often get altered through the grapevine. Indirect allegations which don't come from the victim herself can especially take the form of rumours or hearsay, especially when shared online. Three different types of information can emerge depending on two factors:

1. The person's **belief in the reliability** of the information: are they sharing because they believe it to be true, or do they believe it is false but are sharing anyway?
2. The **intentions** of the person sharing the information: are they trying to be useful or to cause harm?



Both misinformation and disinformation involve the sharing of incorrect or misleading information as if it were true. Disinformation and malinformation involve intentionally sharing information in order to stir up tensions towards asylum seekers.

Far-right actors are most likely to share allegations of GBV as disinformation and malinformation. Members of the community might share misinformation because of a genuine concern for safety or even with empathy for the victim because they have also experienced GBV. However, others will share misinformation because they have not reflected on the quality of the information provided. These people might share elements of far-right ideology, but not all will have links to the organised far right. Labelling those who have shared misinformation as far-right or fascist can be counter-productive, as it fails to consider that these posters might be unaware of the wider consequences of their actions.

CASE STUDY: ONLINE ALLEGATIONS OF GBV

These allegations are all taken from real posts but have been edited to remove identifying details and for concision.

CASE 1: MALINFORMATION (INFORMATION IS RELIABLE, INTENT TO HARM)

“I walked the girls to school today. Holding on to them, taking in what they looked like, waved them off and walked out, anxiety mounting. I told the deputy head that I don’t feel they are safe. Then I burst out crying. I’ve driven to work holding back an anxiety attack.

WHAT HAS OUR TOWN BECOME. WHAT’S IT GOING TO TAKE. I’m completely broken.

PLEASE STAND WITH US ON SUNDAY. The sole reason why I began protesting was to keep my children safe, now I no longer feel like they are.”

The poster is clearly concerned and struggling with her mental health. However, the purpose of the post is not to seek support, rather it is to encourage people to attend a protest. Her emotional state might be based on legitimate past experiences, which is why it is harmful to question her feelings of anxiety. However, she is weaponising her emotions for political reasons.

CASE 2: DISINFORMATION (QUESTIONABLE RELIABILITY OF ALLEGATION, INTENT TO HARM)

“Just had a non-pleasant experience in town. Went into a shop and three of the hotel lot were in, all looking at me. I walked out and they followed me, I stood waiting outside the shop where they were still staring at me. I asked them what they were looking at, to which they said not looking at you, I said yes you are. Luckily, there was a man that came out and walked me up the road. If he hadn’t been there, I know I would have been followed home. Even worse, I suffer with anxiety and depression which has been made worse by the scum.”

In this case, it is difficult to know the full extent of what happened. It is clear that the poster was upset, but the details of the asylum seekers’ actions could just as easily be explained by them exiting the shop at the same time, accidentally making eye contact and then trying to reassure the woman. The use of the word “scum” implies a prejudiced opinion that could have predated the described encounter. This, alongside the assumption that the poster would have been followed home, suggests an intent to weaponise the incident to present asylum seekers as threatening.

CASE 3: WEAPONISATION OF GBV CONCERNS

“PLEASE SHARE: we need to hear about any criminal or sexual harassment cases that concern guests of the hotel:

- Have you had unwanted attention in the local park or pool?
- Has your school girl daughter been approached by a guest of the hotel?
- Has a guest of the hotel used unwanted sexual language to you?
- Have the guests taken any pictures or videos of you or your children?

If we can show that the cases aren't one-offs and guests are committing a high percentage of crimes, we could quite possibly have them removed from our local community!!!

In this post, no specific allegations are made but the call for allegations has a clear political interest. The poster is not concerned about the wellbeing of victims, nor particularly even about the safety of women and children - the only focus is being able to prove that asylum seekers are inherently criminal and should not be allowed to remain in the community.



Credit: [Cornwall Live](#)

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF GBV

If you suspect that allegations are spreading through the community and creating poisonous narratives around asylum seekers, it can be helpful for your organisation to speak out against this. Allegations of GBV can be weaponised whether they are confirmed to be true or whether they are hearsay. Remember that the focus here is on the weaponisation of the allegations, not the allegations themselves. Do not add to speculation by providing your own assessment of the truth. **Address those who are co-opting the story** for their own purposes, and not the victim. Your response should recognise the wider reality of GBV.

The vast majority of allegations of GBV are made because someone has experienced a violating and traumatising incident. Coming forward with allegations takes a lot of courage in a society that doesn't believe victims, blames them and holds them to unfairly high levels of scrutiny.

Avoid insinuating that a victim of GBV is lying. This is risky and very harmful, for both the individual and wider society. It can deter victims from coming forward with traumatic experiences, and can lead to a breakdown in trust in institutions who deal with these incidents. The misogynistic and harmful idea that women falsify allegations of GBV to “ruin lives” has resulted in a society where victims’ allegations are not believed and it is normal to question someone’s motivations when they are making a disclosure. It is exceedingly rare that someone would claim to be a victim of GBV and not be telling the truth.

IDENTIFYING WEAPONISATION

You might find it helpful, when faced with a series of allegations online, to consider the role of the person posting and their intentions:

WHO is posting?

- The victim
- A friend or family member of a victim who wishes to remain anonymous
- Someone unrelated to the incident who has heard about it through the grapevine
- Someone who thinks they have witnessed an incident, but hasn't spoken to the victim

WHY are they posting?

- Disclosing a traumatic experience
- Encouraging other people to seek support
- Warning people to be vigilant about a danger in the community*
- Making a wider political point e.g. about police, immigration or the local area

** If they are encouraging vigilance, who are they telling people to avoid? How might the victim feel about their story being used in this way? Is it likely to make people feel panicked?*

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF GBV:



As a story about GBV develops, you might also receive more information about the potential victim and perpetrator. It can be helpful to tailor your response based on what you know. The following categories can be used as guidelines, but individual situations will differ in their context.

1. Unspecific victim, unidentifiable accused

Example: Someone posts on a local Facebook group that he saw a girl in school uniform walking in the town centre, being followed by a man. The post specifies that the man has dark hair and a non-local accent, and assumes that the man is an asylum seeker. The poster encourages other Facebook users to warn their children and be careful walking alone in the town centre.

Hearsay circulates community groups on Facebook, Nextdoor or WhatsApp and the accused is described as an asylum seeker with no further verification or information. Anecdotes with very similar details pop up on community groups in different corners of the country. In some cases, they will be linked to a specific location in town but details about the time, victim and perpetrator will be vague.

- Don't repeat or draw attention to hearsay as it only amplifies its effect.
- Don't publicly challenge the veracity of the claims.
- Don't respond unless there is a concrete allegation that is explicitly linked to your town.
- If you feel inclined to respond, welcome the relevant experts (e.g. in social media verification, police etc.) to investigate the claim and condemn the act in general.
- Refer to the allegation as hearsay and focus on how it is being weaponised.

2. Identifiable victim, but accused cannot be identified as an asylum seeker

Example: A woman writes in a community WhatsApp group that a man tried to snatch her friend's bag and followed her out of the supermarket and down the road. The friend is going to the police because she is hoping that they will check the CCTV from the shop and identify the perpetrator. People reply to the message with tirades against asylum seekers, even though the original post contained no description of the perpetrator.

In these cases it is especially important to tread carefully, as there is the potential for the victim's trauma to be weaponised by people with anti-migrant agendas. Even if the story ends up being used as far-right rhetoric, it is important to remember that at the centre, there is likely a victim of violence.

- Condemn the act of violence in general.
- Don't challenge or question the trustworthiness of the victim or the poster.
- Acknowledge the difficult experience of the victim and say they should get support.
- Encourage a full investigation by the relevant authorities if that's what the victim wants.
- Point out that assuming that the perpetrator is an asylum seeker is unfair and no conclusions can be drawn until the investigating authorities confirm this.
- Highlight that using someone's personal experience as material for racist or xenophobic views is disrespectful to the victim's experience.
- Emphasise that when the identity of the perpetrator is not known, this type of suspicion opens up minority members of the community to hostility and possibly even violence.

3. Identifiable victim, accused is confirmed to be an asylum seeker

Example: Following a police investigation of a serious sexual assault in a town, the accused perpetrator is charged with rape and given a court date. Police give the name of the perpetrator, which is a traditionally Muslim name, and the address which is that of a hotel known to be housing asylum seekers. Local news reports on the case and the comments are filled with Islamophobic vitriol and hatred towards the asylum seekers staying in the hotel.

In these cases, it is important to separate the actions of an individual from an entire group and to avoid the consolidation of a stereotype around asylum seekers in the community. Of course, there is a limit to what an individual organisation can achieve, but clear and decisive statements which separate fears around GBV from racist generalisations about asylum seekers can be impactful.

- Acknowledge the difficult experience of the victim and recognise the reality of GBV.
- Encourage a full investigation into what happened by the relevant authorities.
- Emphasise that crimes and misdemeanours are perpetrated by some members of all races, religions and nationalities. This has a negative impact on both individuals and the wider community. It is fair to point out that GBV is disproportionately perpetrated by men, but there is no evidence to suggest that men from particular racial, ethnic or religious groups are more likely to be perpetrators of GBV. To suggest otherwise is racist.
- Explain the context of asylum seekers: although your organisation is not in a position to comment on police matters, what you can explain is that the majority of asylum seekers are fleeing violence and danger and they have come to the UK in good faith.

DO I HAVE TO RESPOND?

The pressure to respond quickly can sometimes lead to unhelpful or unconsidered responses. Remember that if there is any doubt, it is not your role as an organisation or individual to find the sources of videos or images which claim to identify abusers, evaluate evidence or psychologically assess victims. If not enough information is available for you to know how allegations are spreading, there is no requirement for you to do so urgently, and it can be helpful to see how the story develops. You might also want to reach out to a local women's organisation as well as other groups in the area supporting asylum seekers - a list of members of the End Violence Against Women coalition can be found [at this link](#). If you write and release a statement together you might be less likely to unintentionally cause upset, as more people can have input on the wording and content. You can also frame your response more generally in support of the humanity of asylum seekers, as opposed to addressing the weaponisation of allegations directly.



Credit: @BurtchaellJohn on Twitter

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS

DO

- ✓ Mention the gravity of GBV and consider adding in statistics
- ✓ Acknowledge why the community might have concerns around GBV
- ✓ Distinguish fear of GBV from racism, xenophobia or fear of asylum seekers
- ✓ Refer to hearsay generally, rather than repeating particular allegations
- ✓ Emphasise that, like any other group of people, not all asylum seekers are the same

DON'T

- ✗ Dismiss claims of GBV, it reinforces a harmful narrative and is not your role
- ✗ Investigate the truth of claims or evaluate the victim yourself
- ✗ Accuse everyone who is concerned about GBV of being racist or far-right
- ✗ Repeat specific rumours or anecdotal information which perpetuates stereotypes
- ✗ Insist on the innocence of all asylum seekers, especially before investigations

CASE STUDY: COLOGNE'S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF GBV

On New Year's Eve 2015, reports of mass sexual assaults in Cologne resulted in the vilification of refugees and migrants living in Germany, particularly those of Arab and North African origin. In January 2016, refugees protested not against their treatment, but against sexism and sexual assault. They also thanked German people for taking them in. They handed out flowers and notes explaining how they condemned the attacks to German women in public places like town squares and train stations.

One note read:

"In the name of humanity, which unites us all, and the right for all human beings to live in freedom and peace, we are here today: To stand in solidarity with the victims of sexual assault, and to condemn any kind of harassment, racism, violence and hatred!" #SyriansAgainstSexism

German women responded by forming a campaign titled "Flowers for Humanity in Cologne". Women went to the biggest refugee centre to hand flowers to refugees and migrants to show their solidarity, and make the [wider point](#) that they wanted to be on the side of humanity and unity. The women were also able to have wider conversations with the refugees, who shared their experiences. One participant said, "hundreds of women here and across the country are choosing to build bridges and overcome fear by reaching out in love".



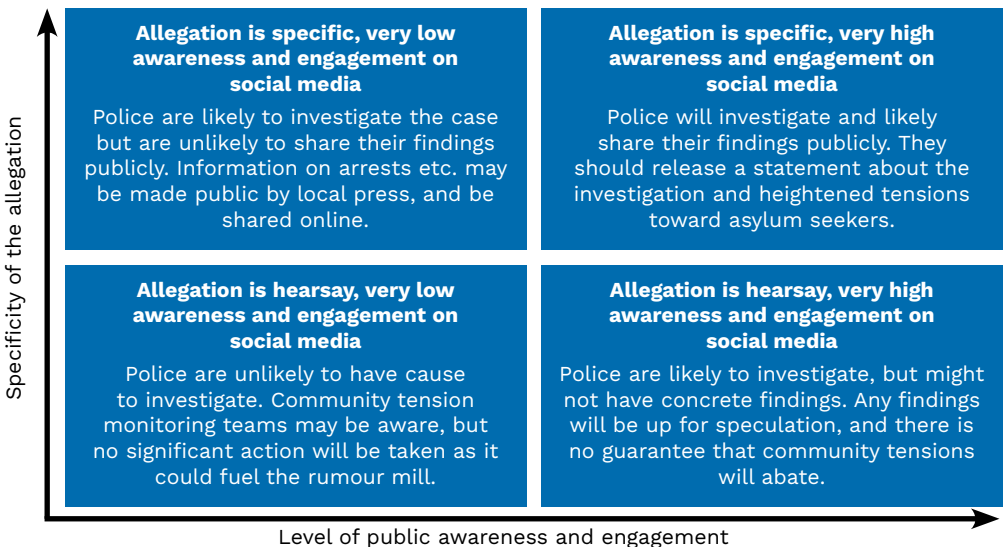
Credit: AFP/Getty Images

WHERE DOES THE POLICE COME INTO THIS?

The truth of the allegation should not have a large effect on your response. This is because allegations can still be weaponised by the far right irrespective of the objective truth. However, allegations which gain a lot of traction on social media are often followed by calls for a police investigation. If there is enough detail in allegations for an investigation to take place, or the victim comes forward about their experience, police will look into the matter and there might be pressure for them to come forward with the results of their investigation, which are likely to be a focus of local news and social media speculation.

Although it can be helpful to consider the outcomes of a police investigation, it is important to understand the role of the police within the wider context of GBV:

- **Only 15%** of serious sexual offences are [reported to the police](#)
- **Just over 1%** of rapes reported to the police result in a charge or summons
- **76%** of women (and 71% of all respondents) think the **culture of policing has to change** in order to better respond to [violence against women and girls](#)
- **10%** of women would be **less likely to report** sexual assault to the police following the murder of [Sarah Everard](#) by a police officer
- **Just 1%** of more than 1,500 police officers or staff facing complaints about their treatment of women in a six-month period were [removed from their role](#)



POLICE INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALLEGATIONS OF GBV

Remember that the outcome of a police investigation cannot be seen as the final word on exactly what happened, as the criminal justice system has had longstanding (and self-admitted) issues with handling cases of GBV and supporting victims. However, there might be pressure for your organisation to comment on the case and it can be a helpful time to respond, as the community will be paying attention to what relevant authorities have to say.

1. Police don't have enough evidence to investigate a case

2. Police investigate, but no further action is taken against the accused asylum seeker

You should not imply that the accuser lied or that the event did not happen. However, you should encourage everyone to cease speculation. Mention that the victim is likely to still be suffering, and weaponising allegations is insensitive to this. If mistrust of the investigation persists, this becomes a matter for the police and local authority to deal with. It is their job to maintain trust with the community in their abilities to protect everyone. You could consider contacting women's organisations or community leaders such as school governors, faith leaders or your police and crime commissioner to discuss how to improve feelings of safety in the community.

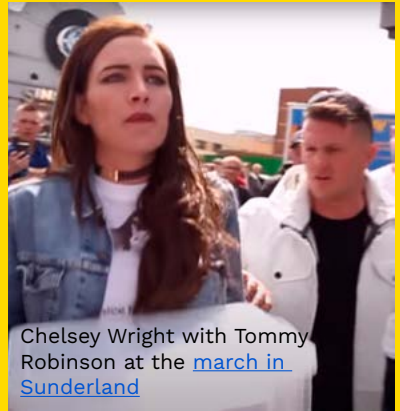
3. Police investigate a case, the accused asylum seeker is charged

4. Police investigate a case, the accused asylum seeker is found guilty

The likelihood is that community tensions will be running high. It will be important to word any statements or responses carefully to ensure that people's concern around safety is acknowledged. Mention that the victim is still likely to be suffering, and this should not be co-opted or weaponised. You can also point out that there is no racial, ethnic or religious imbalance when it comes to perpetrators of GBV, although perpetrators are disproportionately men. Seeing a specific minority group as more dangerous is not only racist, but also unhelpful in tackling all cases of GBV. It can be helpful to point out that the majority of asylum seekers are happy to be part of the UK, including being subject to its laws as citizens are.

CASE STUDY: TOMMY ROBINSON'S WEAPONISATION OF GBV

The far right creating stereotypes around marginalised groups and GBV is sadly not new. In 2017, a woman named Chelsey Wright alleged that she was drugged and attacked by six men of “Middle Eastern appearance”. Robinson used Wright’s story and the slogan “Justice for Chelsey” to stir up community suspicion towards Muslim and South Asian men. He filmed for his own YouTube channel in Sunderland as he and Wright led a march and handed in a petition to a police station with a claimed 50,000 signatures demanding justice for “Muslim men raping girls”.



Chelsey Wright with Tommy Robinson at the [march in Sunderland](#)

The far right weaponise GBV by focusing exclusively on the cases which support their pre-existing racist and Islamophobic narratives. This is bolstered by political and media narratives around “grooming gangs”, which falsely insinuate that, disproportionately, white girls are abused by Pakistani, South Asian or Muslim men. This sensationalised the very real and traumatic experiences of young women and girls and contributed heavily to the creation of racist tropes in the public imagination, which is exactly what Robinson and the far right wanted.

There is no evidence to suggest that Muslim or Pakistani-heritage men are more likely to be perpetrators of sexual crime than men of any other religious or ethnic group. On the contrary, perpetrators of group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation are most commonly white, and the victims of sexual exploitation in these cases were not all white girls. These facts were found by a [Home Office report in 2020](#). The far right care about GBV insofar as it suits their own purposes; when the reality of GBV fails to fit in with their ideology and worldview, they simply ignore it.

Robinson has long sought to use the issue of sexual exploitation to [push his racist and Islamophobic agenda](#), sometimes explicitly against the wishes of the victims. He has even acted in ways that have compromised legal proceedings against perpetrators. Since he founded the EDL in 2009, Lennon has made frequent references to “rape jihad”, whilst simultaneously failing to address concerns around child sexual exploitation in his own organisation. His close friend and ally Richard Price was convicted of making four indecent images of children. There have been at least 20 members and supporters of the EDL convicted of child sexual exploitation offences. At least ten of these were active in the organisation while Lennon was still leading it. For many people who share a story like Chelsey Wright’s, concern for the victim’s wellbeing is secondary to whether the victim serves their own political and ideological purposes.

PRESS COVERAGE OF ALLEGATIONS OF GBV

Local news sites, especially those which are active on social media, act as a point of connection for sharing information and can often influence community opinion. For this reason, it is crucial that they cover allegations of GBV against asylum seekers in a balanced and non-inflammatory way.

Local News
Riot breaks out in Liverpool after migrants seen harassing young girl

Several reports of schoolgirls being harassed in rural English county by groups of foreign men

Four teenage asylum seekers arrested on suspicion of Dover school rape

MERIDIAN | ASYLUMSEEKERS | KENT | Monday 13 February 2023 at 6:01pm

Local news outlets spreading misinformation

Home > Dover > News > Article
Police investigating 'alleged rape' of Dover schoolgirl find no evidence of assault

Knowsley Council leader condemns asylum seeker rumours

Newquay rape leads to new protest at asylum seeker hotel that has nothing to do with the crime

Local news outlets correcting disinformation

If you are concerned about local press or comments on local news articles spreading misinformation or disinformation, or not standing clearly enough against the criminalisation of asylum seekers, it could be helpful to do the following:

- **Write to the editor.** Writing as your organisation, explain why you find their coverage objectionable (is GBV being weaponised? Is there inadequate focus on the victim? Are they irresponsibly reproducing hearsay? Are they racialising the perpetrator?)
- **Flood the comments section.** Get members of your group and the wider community to copy and paste the same statement in reply to any hostile comments or articles. The statement should address the weaponisation of GBV and concern for the victim. Commenters should avoid getting into arguments and debates, as this can bring on trolling and exacerbate the issue.
- **Be your own positive story.** Contact a journalist from the newspaper whose work you respect and ask them if they would be interested in writing about your group's work and response to the allegations. It can be helpful to agree on your main talking points and then choose a spokesperson to be interviewed.

CASE STUDY: NEWQUAY LOCAL PRESS



Two anti-migrant protests have been held so far in 2023 outside the Beresford Hotel in Newquay, which currently houses around 200 asylum seekers. The second protest was prompted by the discovery that a man had been charged with rape whose address was given only as a road name - the same road as the Beresford Hotel. Rumours flooded the community until it emerged clearly that the accused was neither staying in the Beresford Hotel, nor an asylum seeker. Incidentally, the organiser of the protests, Mylo Gregory, has been mired in controversy since it emerged that he had previously been arrested for minor fraud and an assault on a woman in Newcastle. This is yet another example of a far-right actor using GBV for his own purposes, not out of concern for women's safety.

"We believe that it is vital to consider that the two very serious issues of violence against women and that of the right to claim asylum should not be mixed up. By using this horrific incident as an attempt to further an anti asylum seeker agenda, harm is being done not only to the asylum seekers but also to the fight against violence towards women. Women should always have the right to live free from violence and this message should never be forgotten or marginalised."

– Newquay Refugee Support Group

“We’re devastated that Mylo Gregory is using this rape as an excuse for another racist protest outside the Beresford Hotel. There’s no evidence the (alleged) perpetrator is a refugee or a resident at the hotel, and a local refugee support group has confirmed the perpetrator was not a resident. If he had been, we still oppose this racism and the scapegoating of a diverse group of people from different backgrounds.”

– Cornwall Resists

Local groups [Cornwall Resists](#) and [Newquay Refugee Support Group](#) were quick to respond to the allegations of GBV. They were able to have their statements published in the local newspaper, which clearly distinguished the rape accusations from the hotel, and GBV from asylum seekers more broadly. Their statements are excellent examples of groups in the migration sector taking responsibility for their impact on wider political narratives.

KERNOW 161 | @CORNWALLRESISTS

RESIST THE FAR RIGHT! STAND WITH REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS



**SUNDAY 26TH
MARCH, 9:30 A.M.
BERESFORD
HOTEL, NEWQUAY,
CORNWALL**

Please remember that British Summer Time (BST) begins on Sunday 26th March

COUNTER-PROTEST AGAINST RACISTS TARGETING REFUGEES HOUSED IN THE BERESFORD HOTEL

We stand in support of survivors of sexual violence, whose trauma is being co-opted by racists to incite hatred towards refugees.

Make some noise, bring signs & banners, wear a mask. Show racism that it has no place in Cornwall.

Credit: @cornwallresists on Instagram

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

This list is not comprehensive, and you should seek external support from a specialist organisation and ensure you are fulfilling statutory safeguarding requirements if someone comes to you with a disclosure.

- [Rape Crisis England and Wales](#) - a national charity with local centres, see also [Rape Crisis Scotland](#) and [Rape Crisis Northern Ireland](#).
- [The Survivor's Trust](#) - an umbrella organisation supporting survivors of GBV.
- [Survivors UK](#) - a charity supporting male victims of sexual violence.
- The [End Violence Against Women Coalition](#) website has a strong support section, including demographic-specific services.



Credit: @RuthCoppingerSP on Twitter

Credit: HuffPost



SHARE YOUR STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE WITH US!

HOPE not hate are always looking to champion communities who put up a fight against harmful far-right narratives. If you would like to share news about acts of solidarity happening in your community and be the hope for someone else, email us at towns@hopenothate.org.uk

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