

Police Told Mother of Rape Gang Victim, 12, That She Was 'Prostituting Herself'

Where were "Reclaim the Streets" when all this happened? From The [with a first alleged victim, Hannah, whose story we told last month](#). Neither girl knew each other.

Karen said: "I was 12 or 13 when I went with my mum to the police to report the first rape. But a female police officer accused me of lying and that just broke me. I went off the rails after that."

Her mum said: "She was always going missing after that, we'd have to pick her up at the police station after she was found by them, sometimes at hotels. The police asked me if I knew what was happening and I said if I did I'd have an idea how to deal with it, I had no idea. And they said, 'Well, we think your daughter is prostituting herself'. I could have dropped to my knees at that point because we were talking about a young girl."

Karen was 12 or 13 when she says she was first raped by a man in his mid 20s at a Walsall flat. "A friend and I went to an older woman's flat and within 15 minutes four or five older Asian men just barged in. . . That night I was raped. I was 12 or 13 at that time."

Karen's mum told us: "She was telling them a horrible crime that had happened and I felt awful because I had been aware of what had happened and I had told her 'We need to go to the police, this needs to be reported'. And then sitting there and my daughter's being called a liar so I felt really bad then because I made my daughter go there to put her trust into the police to do the work and then they call her a liar. You put your trust into the authorities though, don't you? That's the

first thing, you go to the police and you expect their help.”

She (Karen) now knows social services had been notified she had reported being raped in 2012 – but had not been in touch with her or her family. The men would take her to a local bail hostel and a local house and ply her and another girl with alcohol.

Karen says police officers frequently told her she was “running out the system”.

“But Social Services didn’t actually pick up my case after the first rape in 2010. In 2010 there was a request to social services for help for me but it was just left. Then basically after the other incidents happened social services in 2012 said my mum and dad couldn’t safeguard me and it was basically their fault what happened to me. So I went into care.”

But being in care didn’t stop the abuse. “Social services put me in a foster home for two weeks which was much closer to where the abuse was taking place – so it was ever easier to spend time with the men.” . . . in the end she was placed in a secure unit in Kent for her own safety before eventually being returned to her parents.

“Not everybody can speak out straight away – it needs us girls who were victims of it in Walsall – to all step forward, those who can, so that the police can finally do something.

“I know other girls – I don’t know if they will speak to the police but I think I will.

“It’s taken me to see Hannah’s interview to think, ‘It’s time to speak up’. But the police need to listen and act now, to get us justice, and to save other girls.”

West Midlands Police said in a statement: “In October 2010 a 21-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of rape and bailed while enquiries were conducted, however he was subsequently

released without charge due to insufficient evidence. We take all allegations of abuse extremely seriously, no matter how long ago it happened, and will always endeavour to bring offenders to justice.

In response to the story, West Midlands Police said that “We accept that there have been failings in some historical cases in the past,” but insisted that “We always strive to put victims at the heart of all our investigations and will be led by what the victim wants” – directly contradicting the victims themselves. . . We accept that there have been failings in some historical cases in the past, and in 2012 we expanded our Public Protection Unit to improve our service to victims of abuse.”