



WRC 'appalled' at proposals to slash by half sentences for rapists who plead guilty, calls for Kenneth Clarke to apologise over rape comments

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The justice secretary's proposals to halve sentences for rapists who plead guilty are appalling and, once again, leave rape survivors with no recourse to full and proper justice, the Women's Resource Centre says.

Kenneth Clarke should also apologise for further denigrating rape survivors by stating to the BBC that so-called "serious rape" cases would still get longer terms, effectively applying a "sliding scale" for victims in such cases.

"Kenneth Clarke's appalling comments over rape sentencing smack not only of ignorance but of outright misogyny," said Vivienne Hayes, chief executive of the Women's Resource Centre.

"The justice secretary's proposals to reform rape sentences are disastrous and amount to a mere slap on the wrist for this most serious of crimes. Attempting to apply a 'sliding scale' to so-called types of rape such as date rape further denigrates victims and lets off perpetrators too lightly.

Rape conviction rates across England and Wales are already appallingly low, as last year's [Stem Review](#) observed, but cutting sentences in an attempt to bump up such rates will be of little solace to women who see their rapists walk free after a minimal sentence.

Baroness Stern's report recommended that support for survivors of rape "should be given as high a priority as prosecution and conviction of perpetrators". Judging from Clarke's comments, it is all too apparent for survivors of sexual violence that this advice has not been taken to heart.

For further information or interviews of our chief executive, Vivienne Hayes, please contact Sarah Brown, WRC head of communications: Sarahbrown@wrc.org.uk or call 0207 324 3040.

You can also find WRC on Twitter: @whywomen

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Notes for editors/about WRC

About WRC - the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) is a charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our 350 member organisations work in a wide range of fields including violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women.

Women's Resource Centre – Understanding and supporting women's organisations