

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Harsher sentences for crimes against elderly

By Christopher Hope, Telegraph Legal Affairs Correspondent 08/11/2007

Criminals who attack elderly people should get harsher sentences, prosecutors said. **Attacks on old people will be treated the same as race hate and anti-gay crimes under new guidelines, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said.**

Prosecutors fear that up to 500,000 elderly people could be the victims of street crime, bogus traders and abuse in their homes, and that only a few of the crimes ever come to court. They said that crimes against older people are vastly underestimated because many victims do not report them through fear or embarrassment.

The CPS said it was determined to see those who prey on society's most frail and vulnerable citizens brought to justice. Sentencing guidelines already dictate that a victim's vulnerability should be taken into account when a judge is sentencing a convicted criminal.

Sir Ken MacDonald, the Director of Public Prosecutions, said: *“If there is any evidence that there is an aggravating element to an offence based on a victim's age, we will draw it to the attention of the court.”*

The CPS said that it feared many crimes against older people are overlooked. Research by the National Centre for Social Research and King's College London this year found that **227,000 people over the age of 66 were neglected or abused in the UK in the past year.**

And adding in crimes by strangers who have singled out older people because of their vulnerability, the figure jumps to as much as **500,000 old people out of 10 million elderly people across the UK.**

The draft guidelines set out how the CPS will bring cases against suspected offenders and how they will support victims. It hopes that new special measures, such as video links between courts and the homes of victims, could help increase the number of successful cases.

Sir Ken said *“We want older people, their families, communities and the general public to be confident that the CPS understands the serious implications of crimes against older people. We will work with police, health and social care agencies, voluntary and community organisations, not only to gather evidence but to support older people during a case.”*

The draft CPS policy is the latest in a series on hate crimes including **racist, religious and homophobic offences.** When similar policies have been launched, the number of crimes has increased.

When the policy on anti-gay crimes was reviewed, the number of reported incidences crimes doubled from 400 to 800.

Mr MacDonald said: “Safety and security and the right to live free from the fear of crime, arising from mistreatment or abuse, are fundamental rights and go to the core of older people’s sense of well-being. Feeling and being unsafe, or ‘at risk’, has a significant negative impact on older people’s health and sense of well-being and can leave them isolated and unable to participate socially and economically in their community.”

Senior prosecutors met community groups, charities that help elderly people and victims of crime as they drew up the draft guidelines. The CPS wants to focus on several key crimes including abuse or neglect by family members in the home or by care workers at institutions. Other crimes targeted include those where elderly people are picked on because they are vulnerable, such as muggings, doorstep theft or rogue traders, and crimes motivated by hostility or even hatred towards people because of their age and infirmity.

The PPP comments ... the seriously skewed priorities of the government and CPS are highlighted when one compares the above numbers... 800 cf 500,000.

Obviously the PPP are totally supportive of protecting by prevention all vulnerable groups. BUT achieving what they claim seems highly unlikely, when every Prison and Police cell is full and daily they are releasing serious criminals earlier. AND the man of Straw (Jack) pleads with the magistrates and Judges NOT to jail these type of criminals in the first place.