London Mayor supports urgent charity campaign #StandTogther to support 100s more women recover from sexual violence, as reported rapes in the capital increase by 20%

Friday 23 March, 2018

They might seem invisible but women in London are being raped and sexually assaulted right now.

In order to ensure every woman and girl that comes forward can recover from the trauma of sexual violence, Solace Women's Aid is launching an urgent London-wide campaign, #StandTogether with Naomi, to raise £50,000 for life-saving rape counselling services.

Sadiq Khan, London Mayor, said:

"Keeping Londoners safe is my number-one priority but violence against women and girls is on the rise. I want to do everything I can to address this issue and ensure all women and girls in London feel safe – including funding Rape Crisis centres, Sexual Assault Referral Centres and other specialist services across the capital. As a long term support of the work of Solace Women's Aid, I'm proud to support their #StandTogether campaign and the work they're doing to support victims of rape and sexual assault."

There have been over 8,000 rapes and 11,000 sexual assaults reported in London in the last year, a shocking increase of almost 20%.

Statistics are important but they don't begin to tell you of the trauma, devastation and the psychological pain that rape and sexual assault victims experience. Without help some women end up self-harming and feel like ending it all.

Women like Naomi, who was raped by a colleague. Luckily Naomi found Solace and had life-saving counselling sessions to help her recover from the horrific attack. Another survivor said:

"In my final year of university my world stopped. I was brutally and horrifically sexually assaulted. Solace is a charity who helped save me from drowning in an unspoken world, a lonely dreadful place."

But too many women don't get the support they need, when they need it. Solace has been forced to close their counselling waiting lists and turn away women who bravely seek help. This can't go on.

Mary Mason, CEO Solace Women's Aid, said:

"Until violence against women and girls stops, Solace is appealing to London to stand together and support victims of rape and sexual assault; as we simply don't have the means to help the rising number of women and girls seeking our help."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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The **#StandTogether with Naomi campaign** is being launched across London. The campaign aims to raise £50,000 to ensure every woman who experiences rape or sexual assault can access vital counselling through the Solace Rape Crisis service.

Donations can be made at
https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/solacewomensaid/standwithnaomi

Solace Women's Aid - For more than 40 years Solace has supported women and children in London to build safe, strong lives free from violence and abuse. Solace provide life-saving support to more than 11,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence a year. Solace offers holistic range of specialist services including refuges, advice, counselling, advocacy, support groups and family & children's projects enabling them to live their lives independently, free from domestic and sexual abuse.

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