

Wake Up To Rape Research Summary Report

Prepared By:

Opinion Matters

Prepared For:

The Havens (Sexual Assault Referral Centres)

Introduction

2010 is the tenth anniversary of the Haven service for victims of recent sexual assault and rape in London. From the initial pilot project in Camberwell in 2000, there are now three Havens covering all of London (in Camberwell, Paddington and Whitechapel) providing a forensic medical examination and follow up medical and psychosocial care for men, women and young people up to one year post assault. Children under 13 are referred to community services for follow-up care following forensic examination.

The Haven service is open to everyone who has been raped, regardless of whether they have chosen to report to the police. However, most of the people who attend the Havens have already reported to the police. Given what we know about the level of underreporting of rape, this means that a significant number of people who could access support at the Havens are not doing so.

This research was commissioned to identify people's attitudes towards rape and sexual assault so that we could have a better understanding of the emotional barriers which prevent people from being able to access support when they have experienced sexual violence.

Previous national surveys have shown that the majority of people who have been raped do not report the assault to the police. It is often assumed that the reporting of low conviction rates in the media acts as a deterrent to those considering whether or not to report to the police. This report shows that the reasons for not reporting are considerably more complex and involve beliefs about rape and the fear of being judged or held responsible.

The aims of this report are to challenge the stereotypes that are still widely held about rape by bringing them out into the open for discussion and to increase awareness that services such as the Havens are open to people who have been raped where they will not be judged or held responsible for whatever has happened.

Methodology

Accreditation

- Opinion Matters / Tickbox.net comply with the Code of Conduct (2005) as set out by the Market Research Society. Within these parameters there are guidelines that ensure all research is carried out in a professional and ethical manner. Furthermore as members of ESOMAR and AIMRI Opinion Matters abide by the ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research.

Online Methodology

- Opinion Matters surveyed a random sample of 1061 people in London aged 18 to 50 online. The sample includes 349 men, 712 women, 213 aged 18 to 24, 386 aged 25 to 34 and 462 aged 35 to 50. The sample also included 922 heterosexual, 71 homosexual, 52 bisexual and 16 asexual respondents.

Using the Internet for Research

- The use of online as a method of accessing people for survey based research has increased dramatically as a result of the access we have to the internet. For example, within the UK “In 2008, 33.9 million adults (71% of the UK adult population) accessed the internet in the three months prior to interview. This was an increase of 6.6 per cent (2.1 million adults) from 2007” (www.statistics.gov.uk). Similar stories are to be seen globally.
- Therefore the internet has become a valuable source for accessing large numbers of respondents due to its ability to have a wide reach whilst being extremely cost and time effective. The internet has facilitated the gathering of robust samples as well as those which are nationally representative.

Self Administered Interviews

- A valuable reason for using online is that the anonymity the respondent feels allows for the generation of more ‘truthful’ responses. Respondents are free to answer the questions without the immediate influence of an interviewer or observer. They are also not restricted by time constraints as the respondent can take their time navigating through an online survey. This positive online may be especially useful when surveying topics of a particularly sensitive nature.
- Secondly, another advantage of self completion interviews is that the questions are always standardised, i.e. each respondent is presented with exactly the same question asked in the same format. Online prevents any interviewer bias arising through the use of more than one interviewer on a research project.
- Also, online is a great portal for accessing attitudinal based information and comparing this to people’s actions. For example, do we find that the majority of people in the UK are unconfident about their knowledge about a particular topic area? But establish that the norm is for a high level of awareness when looking at behavioural trends?

Are you keeping safe?

There are precautions we can all take against the possibility of an assault, but Londoners it would seem are still quite blasé when it comes to being safe. For example:

- Almost a half of Londoners have walked home via back streets on their own months (46%)
- Over a quarter have left a drink unattended in a bar (26%)
- One in five has been so drunk they have lost their memory of an evening (20%)
- One in five have got into a taxi without checking that it is licensed (20%)

Men are taking far more risks than women; they are more likely to have:

- Walked home via back streets on their own (58% vs. 40%)
- Left a drink unattended at a bar (34% vs. 23%)
- Been so drunk they have lost their memory of the evening (26% vs. 17%)
- Got into a cab without checking it was licensed (24% vs. 18%)
- Gone back to a person's home that they just met that night (16% vs. 7%)

As Londoners get older, they begin to take fewer risks. The 18 to 24 year olds are most likely of all the age ranges in the last 12 months to have:

- Walked home via back streets on their own (58% vs. 37% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Got into a cab without checking it was licensed (27% vs. 12% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Been approached by a stranger late at night when alone (24% vs. 11% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Gone back to a person's home that they just met that night (15% vs. 5% of 35 to 50 year olds)

The 25 to 34 year olds are most likely in the last 12 months to have:

- Left a drink unattended at a bar (31% vs. 21% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Been so drunk they have lost their memory of the evening (26% vs. 14% of 35 to 50 year olds)

In London, sexuality also has a bearing on the risks people take:

People who classify themselves as bisexual are most likely in the last 12 months to have:

- Walked home via back streets on their own (60% vs. 45% of heterosexual respondents)
- Left a drink unattended at a bar (42% vs. 25% of heterosexual respondents)
- Been so drunk they have lost their memory of the evening (25% vs. 19% of heterosexual respondents)
- Been approached by a stranger late at night when alone (25% vs. 13% of homosexual respondents)

People who classify themselves as homosexual are most likely in the last 12 months to have:

- Got into a cab without checking it was licensed (30% vs. 19% of 35 of bisexual respondents)
- Gone back to a person's home that they just met that night (21% vs. 9% of heterosexual respondents)

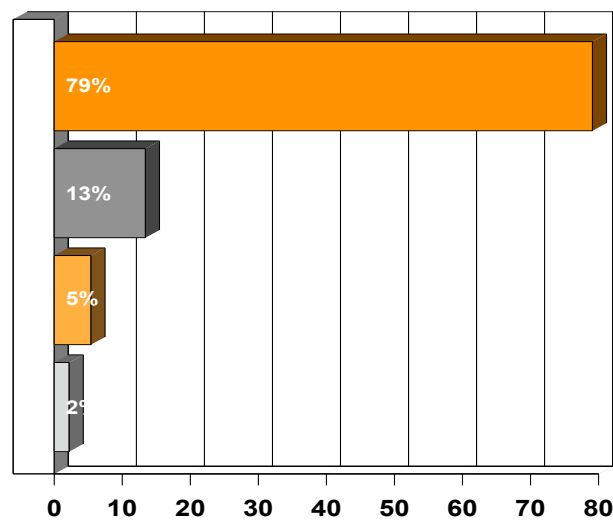
What would you do?

When asked what you would do if sexually assaulted or raped, worryingly not all Londoners would take action. Some would do nothing at all and keep it to themselves.

- One in twenty-five Londoners would do nothing and keep a sexual assault or rape to themselves (4%)
- Few people would go to an official port of call such as calling a helpline (15%), going to Havens (3%) or to a doctor (38%)
- Almost two thirds of Londoners would not even tell their partner (62%)

When asked specifically about reporting a sexual assault or rape to the police a significant number of respondents were unsure:

- Over one in ten claimed they would ‘maybe’ report it to the police (13%) and one in twenty admitted they didn’t know (5%)
- One in fifty respondents were clear that they would not report a case of rape or sexual assault to the police (2%)



This begs the question; why? What is it that prevents people from letting the police know? The main reasons are:

- I would be too embarrassed / ashamed of what had happened (55%)
- I would just want to forget it ever happened (41%)
- I wouldn't want to go to court (38%)
- I would be afraid of repercussions from the assailant (31%)
- I would be afraid that my family would find out (25%)

- Men are more likely than women to be too embarrassed (62% vs. 53%) and fear repercussions from the assaulter (34% vs. 29%)
- The 18 to 24 year olds are most likely to choose all reasons for not wanting to approach the police

Some open responses to this question were:

“The rape conviction rate here is the lowest in Europe. I wouldn’t want to relive the experience in court, and have to be in the same room as my assaulter, considering the odds of getting a conviction are so low. Prison time is so low even if a conviction”

“I would be afraid of being demoralised by the police and society during court proceedings, why bother when they are just going to get off the charges anyway?”

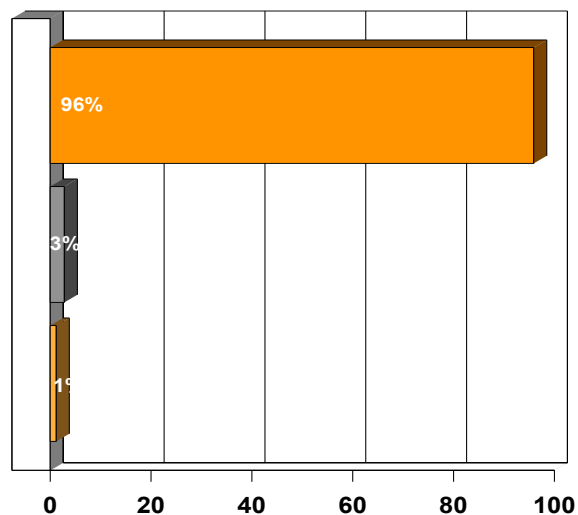
“I am not sure whether I would be taken seriously and the follow through procedure would be thorough”

“My statement of truth being doubted”

“Rape victims rarely get justice”

Although Londoners would not report a rape or assault on themselves, they would however offer advice to a friend if they had confided in them about such an assault.

- The vast majority of Londoners would advise their friends to seek immediate medical attention if they had been sexually assaulted (96%)



Yes

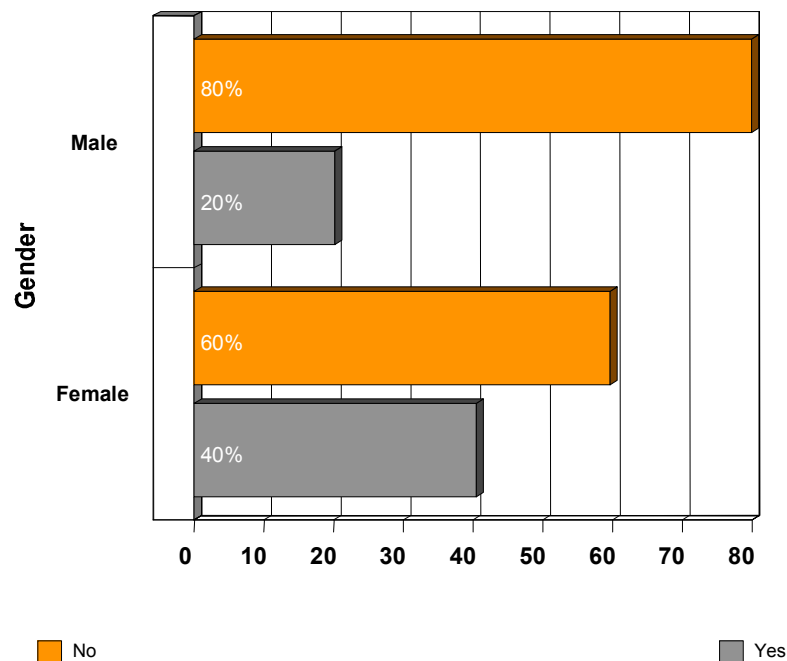
I don't know

No

What have you experienced?

Shockingly, over a third of Londoners have been in a situation where they could have been made to have sex when they didn't want to (34%)

- Women are twice as likely as men to have been in this situation (40% vs. 20%)



- Age does not have a significant affect on whether Londoners have been in a situation where they could have been made to have sex and did not want to
- People who are bisexual are the most likely to have been in this situation (48% vs. 31% of those who are asexual)

How many people have actually been in the situation of being made to have sex when they didn't want to?

- One out of five adults in London have been in a situation where they were made to have sex when they didn't want to (20%)
- More women than men have been made to have sex when they didn't want to (23% vs. 15%)
- More bisexual adults have been made to have sex when they didn't want to than any other sexuality (35% vs. 18% of people who are heterosexual)

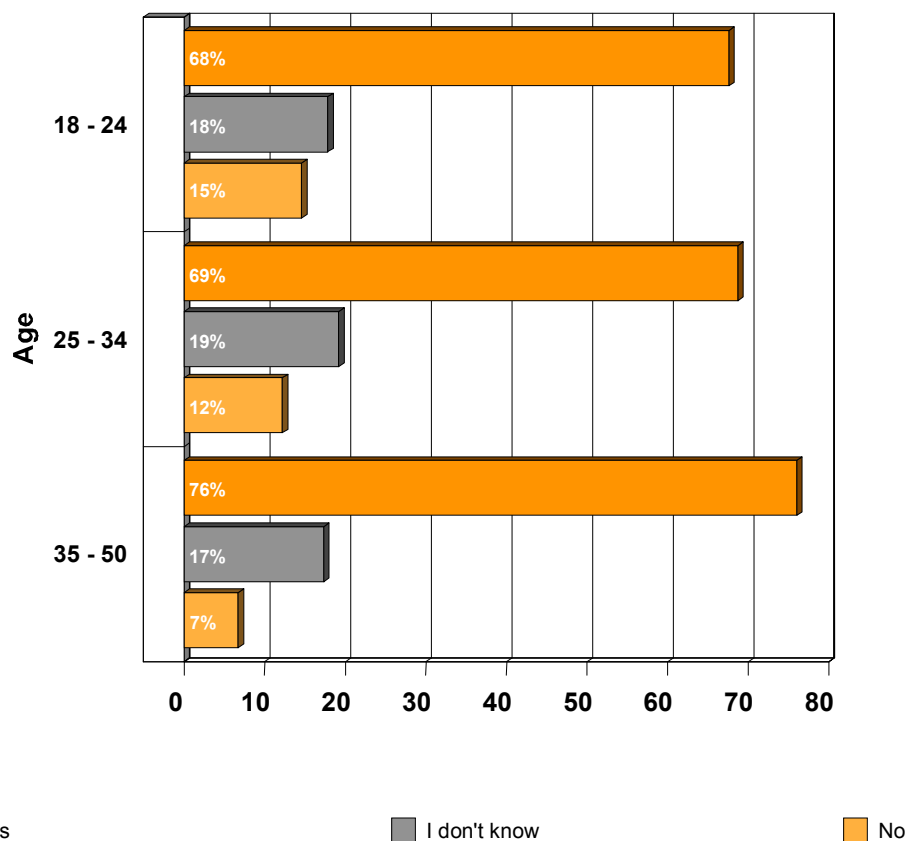
Who would you believe and whose fault is rape?

The research has shown that Londoners are cynical about rape claims:

- Close to one in five respondents agree with the statement, “most claims of rape are probably not true” (18%)
- Men are almost twice as likely to take this viewpoint than women (27% vs. 14%)
- People who are heterosexual are less likely to agree that “most claims of rape are probably not true” (16% vs. 44% of people who are asexual)

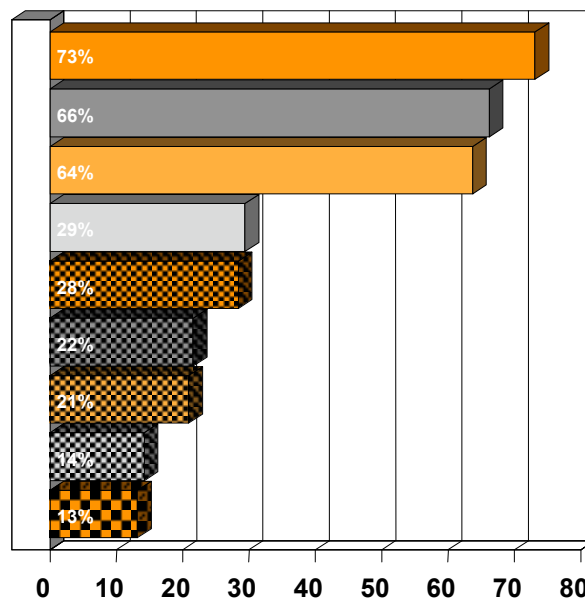
People in London are not even sure what can count as rape or who should accept responsibility for it:

- Close to one in five respondents do not know whether in a committed relationship it is rape when a man makes their partner have sex when they don’t want to (18%)
- One in ten do not believe it is rape when a man makes their partner have sex when they don’t want to (10%)
- The older generation are most likely to agree that this situation is in fact rape (76% of 35 to 50 year olds vs. 68% of 18 to 24 year olds)



There are many situations in which some people feel that a person should take responsibility for being raped. Over half (56%) of those surveyed think that there are some circumstances where a person should accept responsibility. Of those people the circumstances are:

- Performing another sexual act on them (73%)
- Getting into bed with a person (66%)
- Drinking to excess / blackout (64%)
- Going back to theirs for a drink (29%)
- Dressing provocatively (28%)
- Dancing in a sexy way with a man at a night club or bar (22%)
- Acting flirtatiously (21%)
- Kissing them (14%)
- Accepting a drink and engaging in a conversation at a bar (13%)



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Performing another sexual act on them |  Dancing in a sexy way with a man at a nightclub or bar |
|  Getting into bed with a person |  Acting flirtatiously |
|  Drinking to excess / blackout |  Kissing them |
|  Going back to theirs for a drink |  Accepting a drink and engaging in conversation at a bar |
|  Dressing provocatively | |

Women are less forgiving than men. They are more likely to think that a person should accept responsibility when:

- Performing another sexual act on them (75% vs. 70%)
- Getting into bed with a person (71% vs. 57%)
- Going back to theirs for a drink (35% vs. 19%)
- Dressing provocatively (31% vs. 23%)
- Dancing in a sexy way with a man at a night club or bar (23% vs. 19%)
- Accepting a drink and engaging in a conversation at a bar (15% vs. 11%)

The younger generation, the 18 to 24 year olds are also most likely to think a person should accept responsibility in different scenarios. They are more likely to think that a person should accept responsibility when:

- Getting into bed with a person (68% vs. 63% of 25 to 34 year olds)
- Going back to theirs for a drink (39% vs. 22% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Dressing provocatively (33% vs. 25% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Dancing in a sexy way with a man at a night club or bar (29% vs. 18% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Kissing them (23% vs. 8% of 35 to 50 year olds)
- Accepting a drink and engaging in a conversation at a bar (20% vs. 7% of 35 to 50 year olds)