

Initiative launched to empower victims to report non-contact sexual offences

We're running a campaign to help empower victims to report non-contact sexual offences across Staffordshire.

These types of crimes are often unreported and have historically been overlooked in society as a form of violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls.

In the past, victims of exposure, voyeurism, up-skirting, spiking and cat calling, have not felt the crime is serious enough to report. We want them to know, and everyone across Staffordshire, that it is serious and will always matter to us.

The initiative was first launched by Thames Valley Police in September after Lisa Squire, a campaigner from Buckinghamshire, lost her daughter Libby to a sexual predator with an extensive history of escalating offending.

Libby was studying at university when she was refused entry into a club on 1 February 2019 because she was too drunk. Tragically, she was then raped and murdered.

Her death was totally preventable.

Sadly, we know that sex offenders often start by committing non-contact sexual offences. Their confidence grows, especially if the offences aren't reported and no action is taken, causing their need for gratification to grow and then an escalation in their offending.

Detective Superintendent Bev Matthews, from our public protection unit, said: "Victims of sexual offences are at the forefront of our focus. We need them to know that any sexual offence matters deeply to us, no matter how minor or serious they might think it is.

"Being a victim of any sexual offence, no matter if there is contact or not, can be incredibly distressing and change the lives of victims. We want attitudes about non-contact sexual offences to change, but we need the help of our communities to do it.

"More needs to be done as a society to recognise these behaviours and understand the seriousness of them. We need to think of the bigger picture, especially given that non-contact sexual offenders are extremely likely to carry on their offending and increase the level of satisfaction they're looking for."

We want people to speak up, stand together and stay safe.

Reporting non-contact sexual offences is absolutely fundamental to changing how they are seen in society. It also helps us to gather intelligence around suspects, understand their patterns of offending and allows us to act proactively against those who are a risk to our communities.

Nine in 10 people, regardless of sex or gender have experienced non-contact sexual offences. Your voice is powerful, and your actions can ignite lasting change.

If you've been a victim and you'd like to talk to specialist officers in confidence, call us on 101 or message us using Live Chat on our website.

To read more about the campaign, visit our website [here](#)