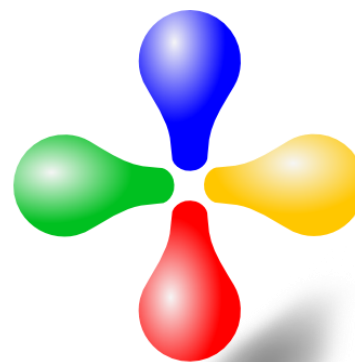


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Trans Media Watch welcomes Law Commission Report on
Hate Crime**

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TRANS
MEDIA WATCH
Accuracy - Dignity - Respect
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New report “shows the importance of responsible reporting in this area.”

Trans Media Watch, the charity that aims to see transgender (trans) and intersex people treated with accuracy, dignity and respect by the media, today welcomed the publication of a new report by the Law Commission, *Hate Crime: Should the Current Offences be Extended?*

“We were glad to be invited to contribute to this report as an organisation with expertise in trans and intersex issues and the media,” said Christabel Edwards, a Trans Media Watch trustee. “By request, we also looked at the way these issues are depicted in social media. Whilst there is a lot of positive stuff out there, we were saddened to encounter some extreme examples of hostility, including the suggestion that trans people should be shot or gang raped. Remarks like these are particularly worrying because of the already elevated risk of violence that trans people face.”

Trans Media Watch supports the report’s proposals to extend enhanced sentencing for hate crime offences to include disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, but has ongoing concerns about not extending the aggravated offences. However the charity does support the request for a thorough review, and also believes that the media has a substantial role to play in handling this difficult area sensitively and responsibly.

Trans Media Watch does not think all criticism of trans and intersex people should be banned, and believes that most editors and social media moderators are capable of telling when something crosses the line into hate speech. It is always ready to help in uncertain cases. It appreciates that there can be a legitimate public interest in reporting on crimes that happen to be committed by trans or intersex people, but has expressed concern at gratuitous reference to such status, in line with the stance taken by the Press Complaints Commission.

“This report shows the importance of responsible reporting in this area because it’s all too easy for the media to reinforce negative myths about trans and intersex people, increasing the risks they

face,” said TMW Director Helen Belcher. Trans Media Watch’s submission to the Law Commission referenced, among others, the January 2011 assault on Miranda Lee, a trans woman who reported being pulled from her mobility scooter by young men who said they had seen her in the papers.

The submission also made reference to a number of articles about hate crime law itself. “There’s a misunderstanding that we’re looking for special treatment for particular kinds of people,” said Helen. “Hate crimes are not only attacks on individuals, they’re acts aimed at intimidating whole communities and we think it’s only right that the law should take this seriously. Trans and intersex people cannot escape the effects of hate speech simply by not reading or listening to it. They still have to live with the behaviour of people who do.”

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Trans Media Watch is a charity which works alongside the UK’s media to ensure that trans and intersex issues are reported with accuracy, dignity and respect. In 2012 the charity gave evidence and made two submissions to the Leveson Inquiry regarding press coverage of trans issues. The charity works alongside journalists, broadcasters, advertisers and regulators, providing training and advice on trans and intersex issues. Last year two of the charity’s directors, Jennie Kermode and Helen Belcher, were placed joint 13th on the Independent on Sunday’s Pink List of the most influential LGBT people in the UK.

<http://www.transmediawatch.org>

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