

## Sexual harassment and bullying rife in the army

Exclusive: A leaked army document written by a senior officer reports that **every female officer asked said she had received "unwanted sexual attention."**

**Channel 4 News** has seen a high level restricted British Army document which lists a damning series of its failings on sexual harassment, bullying, and trust in its service complaints system. The restricted document is a letter written on 25 October 2012 by the high ranking Major General John Lorimer to the Adjutant General Lieutenant General Gerry Berragan. It outlines a summary of his views on equality and diversity (E&D) in the Army after speaking to 6,000 army personnel.

### Sexual harassment

Damningly, on sexual harassment, Maj Gen Lorimer states that **"every female officer or OR [other rank] that my Comd Sgt Maj has spoken to claims to have been the subject of unwanted sexual attention.** This is an unacceptable situation and one you might consider to be a future area of pan-Army focus." Maj Gen Lorimer spoke to **400 women.** It comes a year after the death of Corporal Anne-Marie Ellement - the 30-year-old Royal Military Police (RMP) officer who **hanged herself** October at Bulford Barracks in Wiltshire, after accusing **two colleagues of raping her.** The Royal Military Police's Special Investigations Branch investigated the allegation but no charges were brought.

An inquest into her death in March recorded a verdict of **suicide**, but a new inquest has recently been ordered by the High Court after her sisters sought a judicial review. The family's lawyer, Liberty's Emma Norton, claimed that the original inquest had not sufficiently looked into the context of Cpl Ellement's suicide and is currently waiting for the MoD to decide whether it will re-investigate the rape claims. Sharon Hardy, Cpl Ellement's sister, told **Channel 4 News** there was a lack of independence in the military investigation into her sister's rape allegations. She said there were "no independent witnesses. The RMP were actually investigating the RMP. How independent can that be? I don't think it can be at all. No charges were brought...surprisingly."

### Bullying

In the report, Maj Gen Lorimer describes bullying as a major problem, saying: "There is still evidence from some that bullying – in all its manifestations – is perceived as acceptable. Some personnel have experienced physical bullying and have been involved in or witnessed this behaviour."

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And he warns that issues of trust in the chain of command are preventing troops from making complaints, claiming: "there is an over-riding sense that soldiers who believe that they have been treated unfairly are not inclined to report the fact because they lack trust that the chain of command will deal appropriately with the complaint."

**I'm too scared to come out of my room. I'm too scared to go to the canteen.** *Corporal Anne-Marie Ellement*

Cpl Ellement's other sister, Khristina Swain, claims that Anne-Marie was subjected to constant bullying from colleagues after she had made the rape complaint. She said: "After it actually happened I remember receiving a phone call from her from Germany. She was stuck in her room and she was absolutely in tears and she said to me 'it's awful. The girls are outside. They're shouting things at me, I'm getting bullied.'" She added: "All the girls just turned against her. She said 'I'm too scared to come out of my room. I'm too scared to go to the canteen. I'm not eating properly. I'm being sick', and you know to actually hear that from Germany and there's nothing you can actually do here in England, the only thing you can actually give her is reassurance."

### Racism

On racism in the Army Maj Gen Lorimer says although racist attitudes and behaviour have not been eradicated, "there have been huge improvements in this area". But he raises concerns over a "growing trend" of soldiers who have expressed views on social media sites which have "racist connotations". Recognising the importance of these issues within the Army, he recommends the introduction of "widespread, effective and professionalised E&D training". He says: "Deepening our soldiers understanding of the issues and driving lasting, attitudinal changes to behaviour will...cement 'respect for others' into the forefront of our normal daily routine". An Army spokesman said: "The British Army has a zero tolerance approach to all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination. The letter obtained by Channel 4 News demonstrates how determined the Chain of Command is to fulfil their responsibility to protect their soldiers from instances of unacceptable behaviour. The Army's values and standards are reinforced throughout military training, any reported infringements are investigated, and appropriate action taken, up to and including dismissal."