

**PE1521/A**

**PE1521 Supporting Evidence**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/nomorepage3>

In summary, the petition calls upon the Scottish Parliament to:

- Urge the Scottish Sun editorial team to remove pictures of naked women from page 3 in its newspaper
- Until this occurs, to remove all copies of the Sun from the Scottish Parliament being cognisant of its objectification of women and the SP's equality framework.

**Page 3 Feature <sup>TM</sup>**

1. The first "Page 3" girl was published in the Sun in 1970. Our society has developed and evolved since the 70s. At the moment there is a real examination in society of the misogynist culture which was widely believed to be acceptable in the 70s. This trademarked packaging of women is part of that culture.
2. Bluntly, if you break it down to its bare essentials page 3 is a symbolic consumption of gender in 2014, a "tourist" gaze on women. How creepy does that sound? Then on Tuesdays now titled "check em Tuesday" we see the promotion of cancer awareness, sexualised for male titillation.
3. Since 1970, governments have implemented legislation to address the cruelties and violations associated with a lack of Equal Pay, the debilitating effects of Sexual Harassment, the violence of Rape and Sexual Assault and we face new challenges all the time in an effort to achieve true equality – FGM being one example to add to the ones such as page 3 which still exist.
4. There is simply no place for a naked, sexualised woman in a trademarked newspaper feature in our society and culture. A newspaper will report on rape, sexual violence, domestic violence etc and any important and positive messages for the readers in relation to these issues is completely lost by the prominence given to a view that women are merely sexual objects to be viewed, owned and controlled by men.
5. To continue to allow Page 3 to portray women in this light is to add a normality to this view, to accept this view and to encourage a view that women are merely sexual and are not full capable human beings with the potential to achieve anything and the right to take their full place in society. Some of the daily effects of this view of women can be seen if you follow the twitter feed of #everydaysexism.
6. Some may say this is prudish but the campaign has never suggested that there is no place for nudity in society but we emphasise that a "family" newspaper is not the appropriate or right place for this. A newspaper should not reinforce message of racism or homophobia or sexism.
7. The Sun newspaper is popular and can be found in many public places. We don't believe that individual readers would stop buying the Sun without Page 3. They will continue to buy it because they like the general approach of the paper or the content from the journalists. The Sun newspaper will not fall out of circulation because they don't have a naked woman on Page 3.

8. Interestingly, when the Sun issue their free cut-down World Cup version on 12 June via the Royal Mail, page 3 will have been removed, as it's presumed that it could cause offense and be contrary to the Royal Mail service delivery standards guidelines.

### **Levels of Public Support**

9. Indeed the Sun's own research shows that those in favour of page 3 are in a clear minority. It appears YouGov and the Sun are conducting another poll, to see if they should keep page 3. The last one in 2012, told them that in a statistically significant sample of over 1700, more than we predict general elections with, less than a third of the UK population supported page 3<sup>1</sup>.

10. When broken down further, Scotland had only a quarter of respondents actively supported keeping page 3. These results also seem to have been gathered pre the *nomorepage3* campaign gathering seriously momentum and generating greater awareness within the population. Indeed at over 50% Scotland had the highest support of any geographical section of the survey in their opposition to the continuation of the page 3 feature.

11. When it's said to be a middle class disapproving gaze on this harmless fun, even their own statistics don't back this up. The split between the two main social groups displayed only a 5% gap between responses to the survey. Which given a margin of error of only 2-3% is still within the bounds of no statistical difference on that variable.

### **Links to inequalities/violence against women and girls**

- On average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner:
- 1 in 4 women will suffer domestic violence in their lifetimes.
- 1 in 3 teenage girls has experienced sexual violence from a partner.
- 1 in 2 boys & 1 in 3 girls think it is ok sometimes to hit a woman or force her to have sex<sup>2</sup>.

12. Men suffer violence too but patterns of violence against women are different from those against men.

13. Globally, men are more likely to die as a result of armed conflict, violence by strangers and suicide, while women are more likely to die at the hands of someone close to them, including husbands and other intimate partners.

14. Statistics show that women and girls are more likely to experience violence than men. The reasons for this are complex but deeply rooted harmful attitudes towards women as being inferior to men as well as their unequal economic and political position in many societies are well documented causes.

15. Shona Robison MSP in the November debate noted the link between sexualised images of women and the likelihood that sexual predators and criminals will act on a view of women that they are no more than a summary of body parts.

16. UN Commission on the Status of Women and its latest report<sup>3</sup> (March 2014) on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. The report

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<sup>1</sup> [http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/6jyst3v95o/YG-Archive-Pol-Sun-results-021012-Page-3-girls.pdf](http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/6jyst3v95o/YG-Archive-Pol-Sun-results-021012-Page-3-girls.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://en.breakingthecircle.org/>

states that, “almost 15 years after the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, no country has achieved equality for women and girls and significant levels of inequality between women and men persist...”

*“Recognise the important role the media can play in the elimination of gender stereotypes, and to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, increase the participation and access of women to all forms of media, and encourage the media to increase public awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals...”*

17. Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur, has said that sexism in the UK is more “in your face” than in other countries and raised concerns about the portrayal of women in the media (BBC news online 15 April 2014<sup>4</sup>). Manjoo said that there was a “more visible presence of sexist portrayals of women and girls” and a “marketisation of womens’ and girls’ bodies” in the UK, which was more pervasive than elsewhere (Guardian 15 April 2014). The full report<sup>5</sup> is expected to be published later this year, and presented to the UN human rights council in June 2015.
18. The European Commission has previously estimated the cost of violence against women within the European Union of gender-based violence to be €228 billion in 2011, 1.8% of EU Gross Domestic Product, of which €45 billion a year equates to costs to public and state services and €24 billion of loss economic product.

### **Effect on children and young people**

19. We want to live in an open and mature society where there honest, responsible messages around sexuality, sexual activity which link to equality outcomes etc. We see an acceptance of this in other forms of media such as on television where there is a clear watershed time and everyone understands that material broadcast after this time would not be suitable for children or some young people. In cinemas or when watching DVDs, we have age appropriate certificates which again help to protect children from material which would be confusing, upsetting for them or even just remove a valuable innocence of childhood.
20. Models are posed on page 3 to depict their availability, their accessibility to anyone and they are coquettish and subservient. This provides and emphasises a very derogatory view of women and girls to both boys and girls. How can girls be expected to achieve their full potential if they are aware that for some in society they will grow into nothing more than a pair of breasts and to be judged in this way? How can boys achieve and maintain healthy, equal relationships with the women and girls in their lives if they are led to believe that these people are less valuable or merely a tool for their own sexuality.
21. Also, what view of “beauty” does Page 3 perpetuate? The models are young, thin, white and able-bodied. This is no healthy celebration of sexuality or the human body but a rather dangerous view of beauty that very few in our communities can aspire to or would appreciate.
22. The European Union report on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in December 2012 highlighted the need to reconsider the significant impact negative gender stereotypes

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2014/L.7](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2014/L.7)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27034117#TWEET1101674>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14514&LangID=E>

can have on a young women's confidence and self-esteem, particularly on teenagers, resulting in a restriction of their aspirations, choices and possibilities for future career possibilities. It concluded by observing that it should not be forgotten that gender equality is a fundamental human right."

23. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) Union in February 2014 published survey findings<sup>6</sup> expressing concern from members of the increasing sexualisation of children and ease of access to pornography. The continued inclusion of soft pornographic material within one of the biggest selling newspapers does nothing to reduce or prevent the further spreading of this uneducated sexualisation of children, rather than focussed, mature sexual education of children to teach respect, diversity and consent.
24. The Herald reported early this year that there were 1293 rapes recorded from April to December 2013, compared with 1372 in the 12 months up to April 2013. In a further newspaper report early this year in the Independent a quote was attributed to a senior member of the Metropolitan Police suggesting that for vulnerable members of society, rape has effectively been decriminalised given the difficulties in obtaining evidence and securing convictions, to me a deeply distressing statement to read.
25. The Herald report highlighted a concern from Rape Crisis Scotland that they are particularly concerned about the effects of extreme pornography on figures for rape and other sexual assaults. "We are worried about young men in their formative years seeing images of women being raped and this being associated with arousal from a young age. This could give us significant problems."
26. A letter was written to the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland, asking whether society should also be concerned about the availability of softer forms of pornography and objectification of women daily in national newspapers is a matter for inclusion in the wider preventative action debate. Young men and boys have daily access to images objectify, commodify and de-humanise women whilst reading the news in publications such as Scottish Sun. Below is an example of the difference in portrayal of men and women in one day's recent publication of the Sun.

<http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/88260456200/example-of-gender-imbalanced-representation-in-a>

27. The question was asked to whether soft porn and general objectification of women in a prominent publication such as the Scottish Sun could be viewed as a gateway to more extreme forms of pornography? Similar to the Gateway drug theory that use and exposure to softer lower class drugs can for a number of susceptible people lead to harder drugs, do you have any criminological intelligence that the same theory applies to soft pornography in newspapers, leading to consumption of more extreme form of pornography and impacts on your operational policing of violent crimes towards women?
28. The reply from Assistant Chief Constable Graham highlighted that he had:

*"Previously stated publicly that there is a concern that the increasingly effortless access to pornographic material and the general objectification of women in various medium may well be distorting the views of young men in particular in respect to their attitude towards women and girls. This view is based on a number of emerging*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.atl.org.uk/Images/10%20Feb,%20%202014%20-%20ATL%20porn%20survey.pdf>

*academic studies that suggest immature minds can be influenced by exposure to such material, which may impact on both attitudes and behaviours”.*

## **Prevention / Equally Safe Strategy**

29. The emerging Scottish Government and COSLA Equally Safe: A Strategy to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls<sup>7</sup>, highlighted within its strategic approach to reduce this inequality the need for prioritising prevention on this matter.
30. The strategy utilises a definition of violence which covers a range of actions which harm or cause suffering and loss of dignity to women and children. This includes but is not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, incest and child sexual abuse. It also includes sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere, commercial sexual exploitation including prostitution, pornography and trafficking.
31. We would highlight that none of the *nomorepage3* supporters are asking him or any parliament to ban it. We think change should come from convincing editors such as Dave Dinsmore at *The Sun* take a responsible, mature and equitable decision to remove it and it could be a further landmark step to generally improving the reporting of gender, diversity and equality across the press in Scotland and send a clear signal about prioritising the prevention of reducing violence against women.
32. We also disagree with the issue of “if you don’t want to see it don’t buy it”, such arguments could be reiterated for a number of other behaviours that cause social harm to others e.g. I don’t smoke but that’s no defence against breathing second-hand smoke, but within Scotland, wider civil society has taken a progressive approach on such issues, surely promoting equality by replacing semi naked objectifying pictures of women with news, would be an easier task but with similar societal benefits. It also just requires a mature editorial decision by Gordon Smart and other editors across similar newspaper titles not legislation or significant enforcement.
33. The landmark step of removing page 3 the iconic feature in one of our largest selling newspapers would be a clear and immediate step in delivering on the key outcomes specified in the Strategy:
  - Scottish society reflects the values of equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls;
  - Women and girls thrive in an equal Scotland, and situational and structural protective factors are strengthened.
  - Interventions are early and effective, disrupting violence, and maximising women’s safety and wellbeing.
34. The literal and symbolical consumption of women via page 3 has to stop. It’s part of a continuum of consumption, objectification, violence and abuse of women, if we are serious about ending violence against women, we need to take a long-term preventative approach to all aspects of gender equality, it’s the icon of gender inequality, we are aware getting rid of page 3 won’t equalize society completely but it’s a good visible place to continue the journey towards an equal Scotland.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cosla.gov.uk/sites/default/files/private/l140530item04.pdf>



## Equalities and Dignity at Work

35. Despite all this background strategic and operational harm data, the fundamental premise of our petition is that The Sun with its page 3 feature should not be sold on the Holyrood Campus, As we said in our postcards to you all earlier this month, due to its incompatibility with your equalities and dignity at work frameworks. The defence proposed by Scottish Parliament Senior management that it is sold because it is popular and there is demand for the paper with its soft pornographic content, does beg the question what other forms of publication could be requested for sale within the Holyrood campus if this position is deemed appropriate?
36. Scottish Parliament's Equality Framework<sup>8</sup> seems pretty clear to use in its guiding principles and desire for mainstreaming these outcomes into everyday decision making that it seems strange that The Sun can still be on sale given the following guiding principles:
- That all staff will be treated equally and with respect and steps are taken to remove or minimise disadvantage experienced by people because of a personal characteristic;
  - That we foster a culture whereby everyone is valued and where staff are not afraid to challenge behaviours which are offensive or otherwise unacceptable;
  - That equality is embedded into our working practice and is incorporated into business planning and decision making processes; and
  - That there is recognition and promotion of diversity within the Parliament and in engaging with Scotland's diverse communities.
37. Furthermore, the published Scottish Parliament Dignity at Work Policy<sup>9</sup> goes on to spell out in clear and laudable detail to all the standards expected of employees at Holyrood, specifically by developing and maintaining a culture in which dignity and respect can flourish and become a natural and integral part of the organisation.
38. The policy outlines that harassment can take many forms. It may include unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Harassment may occur in a face-to-face setting, by telephone or in written or electronic communications. The following list provides examples of the type of behaviour which can amount to harassment – this list is, by no means, exhaustive:
- Unwelcome written, visual or physical interaction. This may include sending unwelcome e-mails, notes or pictures, displaying or sending offensive material (e.g. displaying offensive pin-ups or screen savers), making obscene or offensive gestures, persistently sending unwanted gifts, notes, cards or unsolicited emails or following, spying or stalking someone.
39. It's unclear what is displaying offensive pin-ups, does reading a paper specifically page 3 count as displaying offensive material in public areas or workspaces, exacerbated by the fact that such offensive soft pornographic material to some can be purchased or referenced within the Scottish Parliament building.
40. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any equality impact assessment undertaken for the sale of newspapers on the basis of popularity and potential unintended consequences of that policy to be shared with the Committee on 17 June.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/30314.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/16483.aspx>

The Equality impact assessment public sector guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission highlights that even indirect discrimination needs to be justified according to legal requirements to avoid unintended consequences on certain communities or groups.

## **Conclusion**

41. We request the Scottish Parliament no longer stock/sell The Sun or Scottish Sun newspaper, we appear to be not alone in these thoughts, given the over 2500 supporters of the petition and indeed during the debate last year Hanzala Malik MSP discussed boycotting newspapers like The Sun and continued, *"I am sure that the Scottish Parliament .....will be one of the first organisations to take steps to cancel that newspaper if it continues to produce such photographs."*
42. Given your equalities and diversity duties we would hope to have presented a case for the removal from sale of the Sun in the Scottish Parliament buildings until it removes the page 3 feature permanently.

Jane O'Donnell and George Eckton

## **Non-exhaustive List of Nomorepage3 campaign supporters**

- Girlguiding UK (over 500,000 young members);
- Mumsnet (Mumsnet is the UK's largest website for parents, with 4.3 million monthly unique visitors);
- The British Youth Council (over 220 youth organisations);
- UK Youth (working with approx. 1 million young people, and 11,000 youth clubs);
- Members of the Girls' Brigade England and Wales (just under 20,000 members);
- The NUT, NASUWT, ATL, NAHT (combining over 780,000 teachers, lecturers and Head Teachers);
- Unison (our largest union, 1.3 million members);
- The National Assembly of Wales;
- The Scottish Parliament;
- The Royal College of Midwives and The Royal College of Nursing;
- 33 universities and University Colleges have voted to stop selling The Sun until it drops the page 3 topless images;
- Rape Crisis and Rape Crisis Scotland;
- Woman's Aid End Violence Against Women's Coalition (national group of more than 60 women's organisations);
- Youth Media Agency (working with over 300 exciting media platforms);
- YWCA and YMCA Scotland;
- The Everyday Sexism Project;
- Shape Your Culture;
- Breast Cancer UK and
- The Scottish Government.

## **Other Lobbying**

Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

<http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/87419823795/glasgow-2014-team-scotland-p3-com>

Tesco <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/87007244590/tesco-equality-employers-vs-employees>

BBC Trust CBeebies <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/85346859415/bbc-worldwide-cbeebies-and-the-sun-cont>

LEGO Group <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/85606489185/legoland-but-not-legoland-confused-consumer>

Co-operative Group <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/84343529410/my-plea-to-northern-irish-and-scottish-co-op-members-re>

Premier League and FA <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/84051086738/premier-league-fa-and-page-3-own-goal>