



My complaint to the Metropolitan Police

This email details the complaint I have made to the Met Police for the handling of my case and the victim blaming language used by the officer dealing with my case. I wrote about the incident in further detail on my blog, which you can access [here](#). I will be providing further updates as the complaint progresses.

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Crime reference [Redacted]

I wish to make a formal complaint in reference to the above crime number, having been the victim of an assault on Monday, 9th December 2013. My complaint covers both the procedure of the way the case was handled, as well as the personal conduct of the investigating officer dealing with my case, and the fact that my request to make a complaint has been ignored.

I have copied in Assistant Commissioner Byrne, as I understand he is in charge of the Victims' Charter, and feel that he should be made aware of cases such as this where victims of crime are being left unsupported and distressed.

At around 8.10pm on the evening of 9th December, I left Brixton tube station and went to Sainsbury's Local. Around 8.15pm, I left the shop and walked up the road towards my flat. As I left [Redacted] and crossed over [Redacted] Road, I noticed a man several paces to my right, listening to music playing out of his phone, whose presence made me uncomfortable (there was nothing noticeably wrong; more a gut feeling).

As we crossed [Redacted] Road and walked towards the [Redacted] bus stop on [Redacted] Road, I slowed my pace so that he was ahead of me, as I was concerned he would follow me. He turned left down the nearside of [Redacted] Road, and I then crossed over the road and turned into [Redacted] Road on the opposite pavement. At this point, he was continuing to walk down the road with music playing.

Around ten paces down [Redacted] Road, before I'd come to the first house, he turned around, and ran across the road towards me with outstretched arms. He grabbed my upper arms.

I screamed very loudly, at which point he seemed to freeze and let go of my arms, and I continued to scream while running towards my flat on [Redacted] Road. I believe that had I not screamed at the top of my voice and distracted him, he would have gone on to commit a further more serious crime, possibly injuring me physically or sexually, or stealing my handbag. I screamed so loudly my throat was sore the following day.

At this point my neighbours from the flat below came out to the road, and my boyfriend came down from our flat. My neighbour took hold of me and tried to calm me down, while my boyfriend ran up the road and after my assailant, whom he stopped from walking away.



At this point, neighbours at number [Redacted], and also across the road at number [Redacted] had come down into the street. My neighbour from number [Redacted] called the police and also took a photograph of my assailant at my request (please see the picture attached [Redacted by EVB]). In anger and shock, I was shouting at the assailant at this point, due to enormous distress in having been approached in this way. My assailant couldn't give a reason for his actions, just kept claiming that he was "listening to his music".

Around five minutes later, two non-uniformed police officers arrived and spoke to the assailant, whom my boyfriend had detained from leaving. One of the officers came up to the flat, where he took my statement, and explained that the assailant was known to them as well as being "not a nice guy" and having mental health issues.

I was given a Victim Care Card, and told someone would be in touch furthering the investigation.

The following morning (Tuesday, 10th December), I was left an answerphone message from PC [Redacted] at around 8.30am, explaining that they had kept my assailant in custody overnight and asking whether I had any bruising on my arms. I called him back at 9.15am but there was no answer. He called back at 10.03am to say that he was investigating, and that the assailant was undergoing a mental health assessment. At 1.05pm, he called to say that there was no further action being taken on the case, as there was no CCTV evidence to show that my assailant had assaulted me. In his account, he had said he was jogging and happened to bump into me, and that in court it would be my word against my assailant's. I protested this, as I was deeply aggrieved and disappointed that the case would not be pursued. He said there was nothing they could do as there was no evidence.

PC [Redacted] then proceeded to advise me to get in touch with the council and request CCTV is put in on [Redacted] Road. Additionally, he advised that I think about changing my route home in the dark; carrying a panic alarm; and also spoke the phrase, "Well if you will live in Brixton... I moved out to Blackheath years ago."

The complaints I have are as follows:

Procedure:

- Despite my boyfriend witnessing the immediate aftermath of my assault, and detaining the assailant, a statement has not been taken from him
- No statement has been taken from my neighbours in the building, despite their presence immediately afterwards and witnessing my obvious distress
- No house to house calls were made in the street, despite other neighbours being present immediately afterwards
- At no point did an officer ask to see my arms where I'd been grabbed, including at the scene
- Is it correct that my assailant is known to the police? If so, is it for offences of a similar nature? I was also informed that he has mental health issues: I realise this makes a case more complex, but wonder if this had a bearing on my case being taken no further (categorised as "too difficult to deal with", perhaps). I am extremely upset that his health issues have meant that his needs are being put above mine in this case



- My assailant changed his story between speaking to me and my boyfriend at the scene, and the ultimate account he gave to police
- In his final account, he claims to have been jogging, despite wearing layers including a denim overcoat and knitted beanie hat
- My assailant was categorically not jogging. I encountered him first along [Redacted] Road, and we both walked past the [Redacted] bus stop where I believe there to be CCTV that should show this is not the case. I do not believe this can have been checked
- I was not told by PC [Redacted] that the case had been referred to, and dropped by, the CPS, leading me to believe that the local station made the decision to drop the case. However, if it was the CPS who dropped the case, at no point was I notified of my right to request a review of that decision, as I believe is my right under Killick
- Despite having contacted the station on Wednesday, 11th December stating I wished to make a complaint, at no point have I been contacted by an officer of correct rank to deal with a complaint. DS [Redacted] was very helpful in passing on details when I called this morning (17th December), but I would have expected to have been contacted before this point by someone who could have progressed my complaint. Having been through this process to find that I'm stymied while also trying to make a complaint is enormously frustrating, and gives the impression that not only does the Met not care about its victims, there is willful discouragement of victims to complain.

Conduct of investigating officer:

There were several comments made by PC [Redacted] that I found highly inappropriate, patronising and offensive, and that amount to victim-blaming:

- He suggested I think about changing my route home when walking in the dark and advised me to carry a panic alarm. I should not have to modify my private, law-abiding behaviour in order to avoid assault
- When discussing the assault, he said: "Well, if you will live in Brixton... I moved out to Blackheath years ago." Again, I should be able to live where I choose without fear of assault. In the circumstances, this was a deeply insensitive remark, and I believe completely at odds with the values of the Met.

The suspect appears to have had his needs prioritised over mine in this situation, and this is extremely distressing. My overwhelming experience of this case is that no real thought has been put into victim care, and that the Met's Victim Charter has been roundly ignored.

I am deeply unhappy with the outcome in this instance. There has been absolutely no deterrent given to the suspect, whom I'm told lives very close to my flat. I feel there is absolutely nothing to stop him attacking someone else - or even myself again - in future, possibly more seriously next time.

The duty of care that I believe I deserve has been sorely lacking: the follow up was highly unsatisfactory, and I was told of it very quickly after the event over the phone, rather than the investigating officer making the effort to see me in person, which would have been appreciated given how shaken I was by the assault. No attempt has been made to put my mind at rest and reassured that this won't happen again: instead, I've been told to modify my behaviour and change the route that I take to travel to my home. My wish to complain has also not been taken



seriously. The only person who's inconvenienced by this is me.

I would appreciate being contacted with regards to my complaints **as soon as possible**, with information about how you are planning to deal with both the procedural and staff issues I've raised.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted]