

# Watford Observer

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## **‘Naive’ woman fined more than £700 for false allegations of rape**

**A Kingston University student has admitted making a false allegation of rape because she was having such a hard time with her studies.**

Victoria O'Dowd, 18, from Ayrshire, who was studying journalism, admitted wasteful employment of police time at Kingston Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, January 24.

The court heard how her allegation, that she had been raped in Balaclava Road, Surbiton, on December 4, had been made up because she felt lonely and wanted to go home.

Defence lawyer Mr Kadri said: "She wanted closure to her time in Kingston without admitting failure.

"If she learns from this experience, then society will be richer for it."

O'Dowd initially only told a friend that she had been raped and her friend then informed police without her knowledge, the court heard.

But when police questioned O'Dowd, she persisted with her lie and told them she had come home and showered in her clothes.

She refused to give officers her clothes for analysis, but did give them a urine sample.

She then went back to Scotland to be with her family.

The allegation led to police appeals, published in the Surrey Comet, warning women to be on the lookout for a sex attacker and asking for witnesses to come forward.

Police analysed CCTV footage and two officers were sent to Scotland to do forensic examinations on O'Dowd.

After investigation, officers realised her story did not add up and challenged her, at which point she admitted she had made it all up.

O'Dowd was arrested on Tuesday, January 23, and gave a full admission.

The whole investigation cost £10,000 of public funds, a figure which astounded magistrates, who said she had been naive.

The bench said: "You have wasted public funds of £10,000. The bench cannot quite believe it. To show this is a serious offence we have even considered custody.

"We believe it was your age and misunderstanding of life that led you to do this."

O'Dowd was given a two-year conditional discharge by magistrates, ordered to pay £700 in compensation to police and £75 legal costs.

Detective Chief Inspector Penelope Banham, from Kingston Police, said: "This incident must not deter genuine victims from reporting serious crimes such as this."

[https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/1163648.\\_\\_\\_\\_Naive\\_\\_\\_\\_woman\\_fined\\_more\\_than\\_\\_\\_\\_700\\_for\\_false\\_allegations\\_of\\_rape/](https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/1163648.____Naive____woman_fined_more_than____700_for_false_allegations_of_rape/)