

## Abbey Hulton dad reveals '18 months of hell' after being falsely accused of rape

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DAD Sean Kerr is calling for those facing sex charges to be protected by anonymity after his 'world was turned upside down' by a false rape accusation.

The 36-year-old is now trying to rebuild his life after being cleared by a jury of historic sex crimes.

His family was forced to flee their Abbey Hulton home after yobs put a brick through the window and vandalised his car.

And Sean believes the trauma of being labelled a 'paedo' could have been avoided if the law was changed to only report the names of those accused of sex crimes once they are found guilty.

The father-of-two, of Woodhead Road, said: "The law should be changed so people accused have the same protection as victims until they are found guilty, because of the devastation it causes. We feel let down by everything. We are just one family but I dread to think how many people this has happened to. It's frightening."

Sean's nightmare began when he was arrested and charged with five offences of indecent assault and one of the rape of a young girl in October 2012. It was after his first court appearance last September that vigilantes attacked his home on two occasions.

Yobs threw paint at his windows before returning the next day with baseball bats and smashing his front door, living room window and two cars causing up to £20,000 in damage.

Weeks later, former wood worker Sean, who was on sick leave for a leg injury, received a letter from his employer offering him a £6,000 pay off.

His bosses said they were not convinced his injury was as serious as he said, but Sean believes the dismissal was motivated by the sex claims.

He was also referred to social services to assess if he should be allowed around his two young boys, but no concerns were raised. His family has also been threatened with kids taunting his 10-year-old son about his 'paedo dad'.

He added: "If the police had done a proper investigation they could have saved the taxpayer a lot of money. They treated me like a criminal. The boys have suffered too.

"My 10-year-old has been living with the fact his dad could go to prison for something he didn't do. All because of a lie."

Sean and partner Holly Marfleet believe there is a strong link between what happened to him and the furore surrounding paedophile Jimmy Savile when hundreds of his victims finally came forward in autumn 2012. Holly, aged 27, said: "I didn't know our house was being attacked until my son said, 'mummy, there's a bad man with a bat'. He was so scared.

"How can they act as judge and jury without knowing the facts? The police haven't caught anyone for that.

"People always think there's no smoke without fire but in this case there is. What has happened to Sean is an insult to the people who really have been abused. In 2012 Jimmy Savile was all over the TV and a month later my partner is arrested for an historic rape. It's a no-brainer."

Inspector Ian Hancock, of Stoke-on-Trent Central Local Policing Team, said: "Staffordshire Police takes a victim-centred approach to investigating all crimes of rape and serious sexual assault. Once all evidence is gathered we present it to the Crown Prosecution Service who make a decision on the next stage of the criminal justice process.

"We are aware of issues affecting Mr Kerr. We investigated these issues and offered him support. We are disappointed that Mr Kerr feels unsatisfied by our investigation."

A West Midlands CPS spokesman said: "Following the review of all of the information and statements, we concluded there was sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and it was in the public interest to charge Sean Kerr with sexual offences. Having had an opportunity of hearing both cases and all of the available evidence, the jury found Mr Kerr not guilty of all of the charges, a decision which we respect.

<http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/abbey-hulton-dad-reveals-18-months-hell-falsely/story-21011095-detail/story.html>