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Stockport woman Laura Hood jailed for fake taxi rape claim

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Laura Hood's false allegations "strikes at the very heart of criminal justice"

A woman who falsely accused a taxi driver of raping her showed a "blatant disregard" for him and the reputation of the justice system, a judge said.

Laura Hood, 27, claimed Haroon Yousaf, 29, attacked her in the back of his cab after a night out in January 2017.

But Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court heard the taxi's tracker device proved she had lied about the attack.

She denied perverting the course of justice but was convicted and jailed for three years.

At sentencing, judge Julie Warburton said: "What you did strikes at the very heart of criminal justice.

"It has a tendency to damage the public perception of justice and can impact on the administration of justice in rape cases generally."

‘Clear in my head’

Hood, of Onslow Road, Stockport, told the court she was innocent because she had not knowingly lied, and instead had a false belief of "something so clear in my head".

However, a consultant forensic psychiatrist concluded there was no medical or psychiatric explanation for Hood's belief.

Judge Warburton said Mr Yousaf was arrested and put in handcuffs in front of fellow taxi drivers, interviewed by police and required to provide intimate samples, which he found "harrowing".

A second man was also arrested over the allegations.

Thomas McKail, defending, said Hood fulfilled the criteria for mild depression and had previously resorted to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism for events in her life.

Judge Warburton said on imposing a custodial sentence: "I have to balance those mitigating factors against the impact on two innocent men."

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