

Draft motion on Jack Straw

This _____ condemns the comments made by Jack Straw that “there is a specific problem which involves Pakistani heritage men... who target vulnerable young white girls ... who they think are easy meat”.

It is obvious that the crimes committed by these men were heinous, but the fact is there is no statistical evidence to support Jack Straw’s statements.

Straw has clearly failed to examine all the evidence, which would contradict his assertions. He also used incredibly provocative language in doing so, which made his statement all the more inflammatory.

To make matters worse, his comments were made in the run-up to the Oldham East and Saddleworth by-election, following the dispatching of Phil Woolas - whose own racist comments brought shame upon the Labour Party, and which were condemned by many Party members.

It is deeply problematic that there appears to be an acceptance of casual racism in the Parliamentary Labour Party - where Woolas was defended. There has also been little condemnation from the PLP of Jack Straw’s comments.

While it is important that politicians are able to address controversial issues, this should be based on facts and rational debate, not prejudice and hyperbole.

There is of course a more important need to tackle the underlying issue of violence against women. This requires significant cultural and political change in all communities.

We will also write to the Labour Party NEC to call on them to open an inquiry into whether Straw should be allowed to continue as a Labour MP and party member.