



TRANS

MEDIA WATCH

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Charity comments on Lucy Meadows inquest

Trans Media Watch
BM TMW
London
WC1N 3XX

info@transmediawatch.org

Trans Media Watch responds to Lucy Meadows inquest

Trans Media Watch (TMW), the charity dedicated to improving media representation of transgender (trans) and intersex people, today welcomed the coroner's remarks at the inquest into the death of Lucy Meadows. "We are deeply saddened that this inquest should ever have been needed," said TMW Chair Jennie Kermode. "We are glad, however, that the coroner has recognised the serious problem of press character assassinations and the devastating effect they can have on people's lives."

Lucy Meadows was a popular school teacher who last year decided to transition from male to female. At the inquest into her subsequent death, coroner Michael Singleton said "To the members of the press, I say shame. Shame on all of you."

Regrettably, abusive press treatment of people like Lucy is not at all uncommon. TMW highlighted the problem in its submissions to the Leveson Inquiry and concerns have since been raised in the House of Commons. TMW frequently hears from private citizens concerned about press intrusion into their lives, including photographers camping outside their houses for days so that they are afraid to go out. Some of the victims are children. They often report feeling that they are under siege, unable to go about their ordinary business, with many experiencing feelings of panic and fearing that they will never be able to live normal lives.

As well as causing acute distress, being 'monstered' in the press can place people at risk of attack,

with an incident in 2011 in which a disabled trans woman was pulled from her mobility scooter by a gang of young men who said they had seen her story in the papers. Multiple studies have shown that trans people already face a high level of harassment and violence, making this particularly worrying.

Despite the entrenched problem with press hostility toward trans people, some individual editors and journalists work very hard to write accurately and respectfully. “We welcome those journalists who are working toward change. They have shown that a different kind of journalism is possible,” said TMW Secretary Helen Belcher. “Nobody should have to endure attacks by the press just because of who they are.”

Find out more:

<http://www.transmediawatch.org>

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