



Young People's Rights Review

Lewis O'Neill MSYP - 'Mosquito' Devices

Disease ridden, they bite at our ankles and infest our streets. For years, we have used 'sonic rat deterrents' to drive away vermin from our homes with an irritating frequency only they could hear. Perhaps this technological innovation had good intentions. But something has gone so horribly wrong.

My name is Lewis O'Neill and I am an MSYP for Glasgow Shettleston. In consultations with hundreds of school pupils on young people's rights in my constituency, the most shocking issue raised was the continued use of 'mosquito' devices. About a decade ago, these devices were created as a mutation of the animal repellent devices. Their high frequency can only be heard by young ears - meaning only children and young people are subject to the agonising devices.

New research commissioned by the Scottish Government, SYP and Young Scot published in January 2018 highlighted that the devices were found at bus stations, outside shops, in town centres, outside schools and outside private residences across Scotland. The research also told us that Mosquito devices cause headaches, earaches and migraines. In a focus group I led, a young person spoke about being targeted by this device when waiting for the train. Ladies and gentlemen, is waiting for the train a crime?

Despite SYP's campaigning for an outright ban on these devices since 2010, the only positive progress noted in the past three years is the ScotRail ban we achieved last year and some local bans since.

The justification for the use of these devices is flawed and unevidenced - youth crime today is halved compared to the previous generation, and alternatives measures such as youth work are much more constructive. This is disproportionate age discrimination - a breach of our freedom to assemble in Article 11 of our human rights. These devices are a clear example of all young people being tarnished with the same brush. They are discriminate in the way they treat only young people, but indiscriminate in the way it affects ALL young people.

The draft Children and Young People's Rights Act Plan in section 3.5 will 'review whether the use of mosquito devices is compatible with human rights'. **While I welcome the coverage of mosquito devices in itself - the plan as it stands does not go far enough. The verdict is clear - these devices are not compatible with human rights. Please listen to the views of young people which have been gathered and note the research on their prevalence. Please revise the plan to ban these devices in a binding, not guiding, way.**

Ladies and gentlemen, young people are not vermin - so let's not treat them like it.