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1. ITV Report
2. 7 May 2020 at 8:37am

Woman spat on during commute scared to go back to work after lockdown is eased

A City worker has said she is too scared to return when coronavirus lockdown measures are eased after being spat on during her commute.

Jenny Pattinson

Jenny Pattinson, 41, who works in the City of London, said she was shaken and angry after she felt something hit her head from above at Waterloo station in February.

She reported it to the police the same day, but they later told her they were unable to investigate further as the CCTV footage had been overwritten, she said.

London Waterloo

Mrs Pattinson, from Ascot, Berkshire, now does not feel safe in public without her husband, and will continue to work from home for a while once the lockdown is lifted.

She said that racist behaviour and comments are “just a day-to-day reality for Chinese people and this has made it a lot worse”.

It’s escalated, it’s immediately more threatening. I’m a professional woman, I’m 41 years old, I work in the City of London. I’ve worked hard to get to where I’ve got to, I was born here.

But, yeah, I feel scared now. Even if lockdown lifts, I’m not going to be going back to work straightaway because I feel quite scared without being with my husband, to be honest with you.

And that’s a feeling I have not experienced since when I used to get bullied at school, racist bullying when I was a kid, feeling that scared.

– *Jenny Pattinson*

Her story is just one set out in new research into people’s experience of anti-Chinese sentiment since the Covid-19 outbreak, led by Professor Binna Kandola.

Mrs Pattinson, who has a Chinese mother and Scottish father, said she had also noticed other commuters avoiding her on the train before lockdown was imposed.

Her mother, who is in her 70s, was sworn at and called “filthy” on a flight in March, while her cousin, a frontline hospital worker, has also received abuse.

Asked what she thinks will happen when lockdown measures are eased, she said: “I think it’ll be much worse.”

I’ve seen what’s on social media as well, the vitriol.

Sometimes people have commented on news articles that are reporting about this virus, and just the amount of racism, the level of racism, the amount of stereotyping that’s going on, is absolutely horrific.

Just seeing those things just make me feel more concerned and more worried and more scared actually, for myself and for my family members and friends.

– *Jenny Pattinson*

Mrs Pattinson said it is sad that there has been no high-level condemnation from the UK Government, especially after comments from US President Donald Trump about Covid-19 being a “Chinese virus”.

She urged Prime Minister Boris Johnson to speak out, adding: “I think there needs to be somebody standing up and saying, this isn’t right.”

British Transport Police said they received a report from the Metropolitan Police of a woman being spat on at Waterloo Station in February, in early April, by which stage CCTV footage had been automatically overwritten.

Unfortunately, there were no forensic or CCTV opportunities available in this case and it has been closed pending any further evidence coming to light.

We take hate crimes of any kind incredibly seriously and will always pursue any investigative opportunities available to us.

We would urge anyone who is a victim of hate crime, or any other offence on the railway network, to get in touch with us using our discreet text service 61016.

– *British Transport Police*

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