# Allegations of unsafe conditions at HMP Liverpool and systemic failures in domestic abuse justice



Lewis Millar, a former supervising officer at HMP Liverpool, has alleged that his repeated concerns regarding personal safety were ignored by prison authorities, leading him to take the Prison Service to an employment tribunal following his dismissal for gross misconduct. The 33-year-old, who lives in St Helens, claimed that the conditions at HMP Liverpool had become increasingly unsafe, especially as management struggled with staff shortages and mental health issues among officers.

Millar, who had previously served five years in the British Army before joining the Prison Service, reported that upon his return to HMP Liverpool in June 2024, he was not provided with the promised support plan, which would have included reduced hours and diminished contact with prisoners. Instead, he found himself assigned to the busiest wing of the prison, G Wing, covering for absent senior staff due to sickness. Millar alleged that during this time, he received harassment from an inmate resulting in threats to his personal safety.

He has alleged that an Instagram account, which posted threats and sought personal information about him and his family, exacerbated his mental health struggles. Millar stated, “My anxiety was through the roof and I turned to the Prison Service for support. Over the next few months it became a joke how many times I made a report.” Following a heated exchange with the account's creator, Millar faced disciplinary action and was subsequently dismissed from his position.

The Prison Service has stated that it cannot comment on ongoing tribunal proceedings but affirmed its commitment to procedural compliance regarding staff misconduct. In response to Millar's claims, a spokesperson mentioned that staff at HMP Liverpool are at target levels and highlighted ongoing efforts to improve conditions.

The allegations come in the context of a wider investigation by the Liverpool Echo which detailed other staff experiences at the troubled facility, revealing a pattern of violence towards officers. A spokesperson for the Prison Officers’ Association had previously described the governor's position as "untenable", pointing to operational strains that have left staff overworked and under-supported.

Millar described a concerning trend where inexperienced officers were placed in charge of complex inmate populations. He observed, “What transpires is more work which results in mistakes and stress,” due to persistent staff shortages. He recounted incidents in which more serious assaults had occurred, as well as reports of vandalism outside the facility, contributing to a toxic atmosphere both for staff and inmates.

In a parallel account of domestic abuse, a woman known as Natalie has come forward about her harrowing five-year relationship with an abusive partner, Martyn Evans. The 27-year-old from Caerphilly County described a relationship that began in May 2017 and escalated into a nightmare of emotional and physical abuse, compounded by systemic failures in the justice process.

Despite there being previous convictions against Evans for domestic abuse, disclosures from South Wales Police under the domestic violence disclosure scheme did not provide Natalie a complete picture of her partner’s history until years into their relationship. She detailed how, following another Clare’s Law disclosure, she was informed about additional incidents of abuse but continued to rationalise Evans’ violent behaviour.

Natalie's relationship took a deeply troubling turn following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, with Evans becoming increasingly controlling. She recalled feeling pressured into isolating herself from friends and family, culminating in escalating incidents of physical abuse. After a particularly violent event, Gwent Police sought a domestic violence protection order but faced issues during proceedings, as Natalie was coerced into downplaying the severity of her situation due to fear of her abuser.

The failure of judicial processes was further highlighted during a magistrate’s hearing wherein, despite the documented risks, a domestic violence protection order was not upheld as Natalie did not support it due to intimidation. Natalie later expressed her disappointment in the system, recounting how, even with police awareness of her situation, protective measures were inadequately addressed.

Following the end of her relationship in December 2022, Natalie encountered continued harassment from Evans, receiving violent and threatening messages. She reported distressing feelings of fear and paranoia that severely impacted her mental health, leading her to attempt to take her own life. Despite receiving a non-molestation order in September 2023, she continues to experience harassment, and her efforts to stand against the abuse have led to conflicting outcomes in the courts.

Both situations encapsulate alarming issues surrounding workplace safety within the Prison Service and systemic failures in protecting victims of domestic abuse. As these cases develop, the focus remains on the support and protective measures in place for those affected. Natalie's account reveals not just personal trauma but highlights the need for scrutiny regarding how systems respond to domestic violence, particularly in cases that present significant risk to individuals.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-improve-prison-staff-safety> - This URL would support discussions on efforts to improve staff safety in prisons, a critical aspect of Lewis Millar's case where he faced unsafe conditions and harassment.
* <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/live-hmp-liverpool-staff-speak-out-26062127> - This URL could corroborate reports from staff at HMP Liverpool about the facility's conditions and operational strains, mirroring Millar's allegations.
* <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopcs-annual-report-focuses-challenges-facing-police> - This URL relates to systemic issues and challenges in policing, including responses to domestic violence, which could be pertinent to Natalie's experiences with law enforcement's handling of her case.
* <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/> - This URL provides context and information on domestic abuse, supporting Natalie's account of experiencing emotional and physical abuse.
* <https://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/what-is-clare-s-law/> - This URL explains Clare’s Law, which Natalie utilized to learn more about her partner’s past, highlighting failures in systemic disclosure that impacted her safety.
* <https://www.prisonofficer.org.uk/news/hmp-liverpool-due-to-face-criticism-over-staff-safety-concerns/> - This URL would address concerns about staff safety at HMP Liverpool, reflecting both Millar's personal experiences and broader issues within the facility.