



London Why we need Sadiq

Rajesh Agrawal, Chairman & CEO, RationalFX

What I love about London is that it is a city of opportunity. A city where anyone can come, live, work, start a business and succeed. A city that is open, tolerant, dynamic and safe.

This was the London I experienced when I moved here from India, and it is this London that I want my children to live in as they grow up.

Sadiq Khan knows the value of the London I love. He was the son of immigrants and his father was bus driver. Yet Sadiq became a top lawyer, the MP for his community and the first Asian to attend Cabinet.

Nothing has held Sadiq back, and that's what he wants for others in London too.

I don't usually like to get personal when it comes to politics, but background, values and experience do count when it comes to the role of Mayor. In Sadiq, I see a person who shares my ambitions and aspirations for this city and I think that many readers of this paper will see the same.

Sadiq knows that too many Londoners are now being held back in a way he wasn't. It is changing that that drives him. And is this reason why London now needs Sadiq, not Zac, as our next Mayor.

Sadiq can relate to those suffering under the rising cost of housing in our city. The Conservatives have a dismal record and no will for change on this priority issue. But Sadiq has put building more affordable homes for rent and sale front and centre of his campaign. He has

a bold plan to utilise public land for housing and will make affordability a spending priority for City Hall.

Sadiq also knows what it takes to improve London transport. As Minister for Transport he was responsible for getting the first Crossrail project off the ground. As Mayor he will use this experience to champion Crossrail 2, to bring more of London's substandard commuter rail services under TfL control and to freeze TfL fares.

Importantly, Sadiq knows that London is a city of enterprise. He has run his own business. Sadiq recognises that Labour did not do enough to win the support of business at the last General Election, and has, more than any candidate, spent time engaging with businesses to understand our priorities in the early part of his campaign. I know that Sadiq is genuine in his commitment to be the most business friendly Mayor ever (even if this puts him at odds with his Party leader from time to time!)

Finally, Sadiq understands the importance of London's diversity. He has been Minister for Community Cohesion, and has long worked hard to promote understanding between London's communities and faiths, and to tackle discrimination and prejudice.

Sadiq doesn't ask for our votes in May because he is Asian, but because of what he has done and will do for London as Mayor. I for one would be proud to see him installed at City Hall next May.

I believe that the London I love needs him.

Court of Appeal Provides a New Hope for Domestic Violence Victims



Sarah Jopling

"Domestic violence is a blot on any civilised society but is regrettably prevalent". These were the introductory remarks of Lord Justice Longmore sitting in the Court of Appeal last week. He was one of three Judges hearing an application brought by 'Rights of Women' against the Lord Chancellor's dept.

Domestic violence has a wide remit and doesn't just mean being physically beaten as many assume. It can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial. It is essentially a situation of imbalance of power where one half of a couple uses whatever means necessary to take control of the other half. There is often an assumption that the victim is the wife or female half of the relationship but that isn't always the case either.

Legal Aid aims to provide access to Justice for all who need it. It is, like other welfare benefits, funded by the state and so regulations and rules are necessary to ensure the fair distribution of that fund to those who need it most.

In 2012 the regulations governing legal aid provision in family cases fundamentally changed. Instead of a presumption in favour of providing legal aid to those whose own finances prevented them paying for legal advice, a further 'merits' test was imposed. Those requiring legal aid in their family case had always had to show that their financial circumstances were below the threshold, and they had also had to show that their case was meritorious; but now they had another hurdle to jump. They had to show either that there were child protection concerns or that they were the victim of domestic violence. The latter hurdle is what the Court of Appeal were asked to look at.

'Rights of Women' argued, amongst other things, that the evidence that women had to provide in order to prove they had been the victim of domestic violence was so restrictive that it excluded many women who ought to have been offered legal aid to

help them. The main issue was that the regulations had provided a list of evidence that was acceptable and also required it to be less than 24 months old. It left those who had been victims historically out in the cold and left little discretion for those who had evidence that wasn't on the list.

Those working with victims of domestic violence knew only too well that often such violence was unreported due to fear of reprisal and so there was no evidence. They were also well aware that for many, the two year rule left them vulnerable to old partners who frankly didn't care that time had gone by. The Court were provided with case studies of women who had been denied legal aid. One such woman was M who had been the victim of serious physical, sexual and psychological abuse, including rape, strangulation, beating, and controlling behaviour. She had 8 objective pieces of evidence which satisfied the regulations- but none of them were within the last 24 months. When her ex husband applied for contact with their children she was refused legal aid and was expected to represent herself without a lawyer.

The Court of Appeal were not persuaded that the 24 month rule assisted in ensuring that the public fund was used in the most deserving of cases and in fact considered that the evidence it had heard showed that often the contrary was the case. They were concerned as had been legal aid family solicitors, that the rule had effectively left many vulnerable victims without legal representation when their estranged and dangerous ex partners made spurious applications for contact with their children. The problem was that although the victims had a time limit of 24 months, the perpetrators had no time limit imposed on them and could start divorce, financial or children act proceedings whenever they wanted to.

The Court also decided that the regulations prevented any victim of financial abuse from ever obtaining legal aid.

Thanks to the Court of Appeal's decision, more victims will now be able to have access to justice and be offered legal aid and representation in their family cases.

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Toddler's near miss when washing machine exploded

A toddler had a lucky... shocked to



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Toddler's near miss when washing machine exploded

A toddler had a lucky escape when a washing machine exploded "like a bomb" in a family home in Harrow.

Darshak Purohit's four-year-old daughter Hinal was in the kitchen with the machine when it blew up in the first 10 minutes of a cycle.

The explosion blast through some of the kitchen worktop and shat-



Darshak Purohit with his four-year-old daughter Hinal

tered glasses that were stood on the sideboard.

Mr Purohit, his partner, wife and one-year-old daughter were in another room when they heard a "huge bang" on Friday morning.

Mr Purohit rushed into the kitchen and was



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shocked to see the remnants of the destroyed Hoover washing machine.
The 35-year-old marketing manager said: "When I spoke to Hoover they were not at all helpful and said that they have no answer. The only thing they can do is to sell me a 12-month service plan where either they will repair it or replace it with new one. This is not at all helpful as this kind of fault might take someone's life."