

**38degrees**

**Reactive statement**

“A lot of information on the petition is just not accurate and we’re getting in touch with 38degrees to point this out. It’s difficult to go into the ins and outs of individual cases, because we want to respect the privacy of people concerned, but we think it’s necessary to clear some things up, while making sure we don’t breach confidentiality.

“In Maggie’s (not her real name) case, we spent 15 months trying to work things out with her before we took action. This involved working with a mental health organisation which was also in contact with Maggie directly. We ensured that at all times we operated with humanity and concern for Maggie’s safety and dignity. As always, we only remove boats after review by a Court and with an appropriate Court order. On the final day, a representative from the mental health organisation was there throughout, and was fully supportive of our actions. We always have High Court Enforcement officers onsite during boat removals and we made sure one of these was female. Because of the sensitivity of the situation the police were also involved, and we closed the towpath to give Maggie more privacy. Alongside the mental health organisation, we made sure Maggie had all the details of housing support agencies and emergency shelter, who had advised us they could only take instruction from the people directly involved.

“This is how we act in all these situations: we know how devastating the consequences can be for the boaters concerned. We don’t take these decisions lightly and, when we do act, we make sure that those organisations able to provide support are fully involved. We also try to keep the boaters’ families informed. To give a bit more context, during 2013 the Trust contacted nearly 250 liveaboard boaters as part of the enforcement process for breaching licence or mooring rules. The vast majority of these cases were successfully resolved and the Trust only needed to enforce Court orders against six boats.”