



HM Government

Rape Review progress update

July 2023



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Foreword by the Lord Chancellor and the Minister for Victims and Sentencing

Rape is an appalling crime that shatters lives and affects whole communities. To tackle it, every part of the criminal justice system must come together with the conviction, empathy and unwavering determination to see justice done.

Brave victims must be given the confidence to come forward – sure in the knowledge that their case will be investigated properly, that they will be supported to give their best evidence if their case comes to court, and that justice will be swiftly served.

However, it is well-documented that the charge rate and volume of convictions for adult rape dropped drastically after 2016. This was due to a range of factors, not least a lack of join-up across the system, and the criminal justice system overcorrecting following a small number of high-profile disclosure failures.

In 2019, we commissioned the End-to-End Rape Review to look at what went wrong. Published in 2021, it marked a turning point.

The Review set out the Government's clear resolve to improve the response to victims at every stage, from the first report of a crime to their experience in a courtroom, with eight levers that we believed would make the most difference – including better support and better working between the CPS and police.

Two years on, we are making significant progress. We have already met or are on track to meet the ambitious targets set out in the Review ahead of schedule – to more than double the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of this Parliament, and to return volumes of cases being referred to the police, charged by the CPS and going to court, to at least 2016 levels.

Police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service are now above 2016 levels, and up 134 percent from the quarterly average in 2019 when the Rape Review was commissioned. Charges are following suit, now only 12 percent below the 2016 quarterly average, and 93 percent above the 2019 marker.

These increases are driving more cases into court. 605 adult rape cases reached court in the first quarter of 2023, exceeding 2016 levels and double the 2019 quarterly average. And, significantly, adult rape prosecutions continue to rise, up 44 percent over the last year from 1,188 in 2021 to 1,710 in 2022. That's almost double the number of prosecutions achieved in 2019 and 4 percent higher than 2010 levels.

And in the last six months, we have met yet more major milestones.

Through Operation Soteria, we have launched our new National Operating Models for the investigation of rape to rightly ensure that investigations focus on the suspect's behaviour, rather than the victim's "credibility". This new approach will be implemented in all 43 police forces and 14 CPS areas across England and Wales, bringing together frontline policing, prosecutors and academic expertise to transform the response to rape.

These Models will ensure that the police and CPS are working hand-in-glove to conduct rape investigations as considerately, effectively, and efficiently as possible.

We have reached our target of recruiting 20,000 additional police officers, to make our streets safer and give the police the resources they need to deal with priority issues like rape.

And we have introduced the Victims and Prisoners Bill in Parliament, which will stand up for victims and ensure they know their entitlements every step of the way – from emotional support to the right to ask for special measures in court.

It will recognise Independent Sexual Violence Advisors in law and introduce statutory guidance to increase awareness and consistency of their role.

And, crucially, the Bill will block unnecessary and intrusive third-party material requests in rape and sexual assault investigations, which we know can be incredibly distressing for victims. In some instances, it discourages them altogether from seeing through the criminal justice process. Our changes will mean requests can only be made when necessary for the purposes of a fair trial.

These reforms reinforce the progress already made by this Government to support victims to stay engaged with their cases – so we can bring more rapists to justice.

We have already completed a national rollout of pre-recorded evidence, which spares victims the ordeal of appearing before a live courtroom and helps them to give their best evidence during a trial.

To ease the court process further, we will update the Victims' Code, so that the CPS prosecution team must meet with the rape victims they are defending ahead of court cases – to answer their questions and allay any concerns they might have.

And, in the next phase of our Specialist Sexual Violence Support project, we will ensure that at participating Crown Courts – Snaresbrook, Leeds, and Newcastle – the option to remotely observe a sentencing hearing by video link is available to any adult rape victim who needs it, subject to the agreement of the judge.

Our 24/7 rape and sexual violence support line is up and running, helping victims to access emotional support wherever and whenever they need it.

And we have put unparalleled investment into support for victims and witnesses, more than quadrupling funding on 2009 levels and boosting the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors from 300 to over 1,000.

This steady progress shows that the levers in our Rape Review Action Plan are making a difference. And, crucially, that our reforms are rebuilding victims' trust in the criminal

justice system, so they have the confidence to seek justice, and we can put more rapists behind bars.

It is right that the Government is held to account for our progress in delivering better outcomes for victims. But it is also important that the truth of this progress is represented – so victims know that if they come forward, they will see justice done.

But there can be no let-up. Returning outcomes for victims to levels comparable to 2016 is an ambitious goal, which we expect to meet and beat – ahead of schedule.

But it is not the end. We are determined to keep up the momentum. While we have now delivered on the vast majority of our initial Action Plan, we are going further, committing to additional, future milestones for each of our eight levers, building on lessons learned, and exploring every avenue to tackle the most stubborn remaining issues.

As a Government, we will continue to strain every sinew to ensure that the Criminal Justice System prevents and punishes this shattering crime, and that every rape victim gets the support and justice they deserve.

Rt Hon Alex Chalk MP

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

Rt Hon Edward Argar MP

Minister for Victims and Sentencing

Introduction: Progress update on the End-to-End Rape Review Action Plan

The publication of the Rape Review in 2021 demonstrated a commitment to improving the Criminal Justice System process for victims, and to more than double the number of adult rape cases reaching court by the end of Parliament.

Now, two years after its publication, we are making strong progress towards the Rape Review's ambition to return volumes of cases being referred by the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); charged by the CPS; and going to court, to at least 2016 levels. The data shows us that 2016 marked a key point in time where the system faltered: well-documented issues regarding the disclosure of evidence combined with strained relationships between criminal justice agencies, inconsistent support for victims, and ultimately a decline in the number of charges and prosecutions for rape cases. We have made clear our intention to continue reversing these trends.

Having delivered on the vast majority of milestones set out by our Action Plan's eight levers, **we are pleased to report that we have already met two of our ambitions and remain well on-track to meet the one that remains, with a strong upward trajectory.** Whilst we know that there is much more to do, this shows that our Action Plan is working. The latest published data¹ is detailed below, and shows that:

- Adult rape cases referred by the police to the CPS (for either early advice or a charging decision) continue to increase, with **1,079 total police referrals in the fourth quarter of 2022, exceeding our 2016 ambition of 766 referrals.** It is also up by 134% from the quarterly average in 2019, when the Rape Review was commissioned.
- Adult rape cases charged by the CPS have been increasing, with **472 suspects charged between October and December 2022, close to our ambition of 538.** It is also up by 93% from the quarterly average in 2019.
- The number of adult rape Crown Court receipts continued to increase in the first quarter of 2023 with 605 **Crown Court receipts, exceeding our ambition of 553.** It is also up by 162% from the quarterly average in 2019.

¹ An adult rape case is identified through the application of a rape flag and the absence of a child abuse flag on CPS operational management information systems. The absence of the child abuse flag indicates the victim is 18 years old or older. The flags are usually applied from the onset of the case and will remain in place even if the charges are later amended or dropped. If a case commences under a different offence but during the prosecution an applicable charge is preferred, the case is flagged at that stage. This is a consistent method that has been used by the CPS since 2006, to monitor cases involving rape and facilitate support to victims.

Beyond our leading Rape Review ambitions, we have seen increases in the number of adult rape prosecutions, up 44% in the last calendar year (1,188 in 2021 to 1,710 in 2022) and almost double what was achieved during 2019 (879). This is despite the barristers' strike impacting court action during 2022.

We have also seen increases in convictions, rising by 3% over the past year (from 447 in 2021 to 459 in 2022), marking a 33% increase since 2019 (345 in 2019). Whilst convictions are not an ambition of the Rape Review because of the risk of perverse incentives to convict that might create, we understand that it is important to remain transparent on all relevant metrics, especially those regarding trial outcomes.

Both convictions and prosecutions have now returned to similar levels as were recorded in 2010 (see Charts 1 and 2, below), maintaining an upward trajectory back to 2016 levels.

Chart 1: MoJ prosecution volumes for adult rape, 2010–2022 (calendar year)²

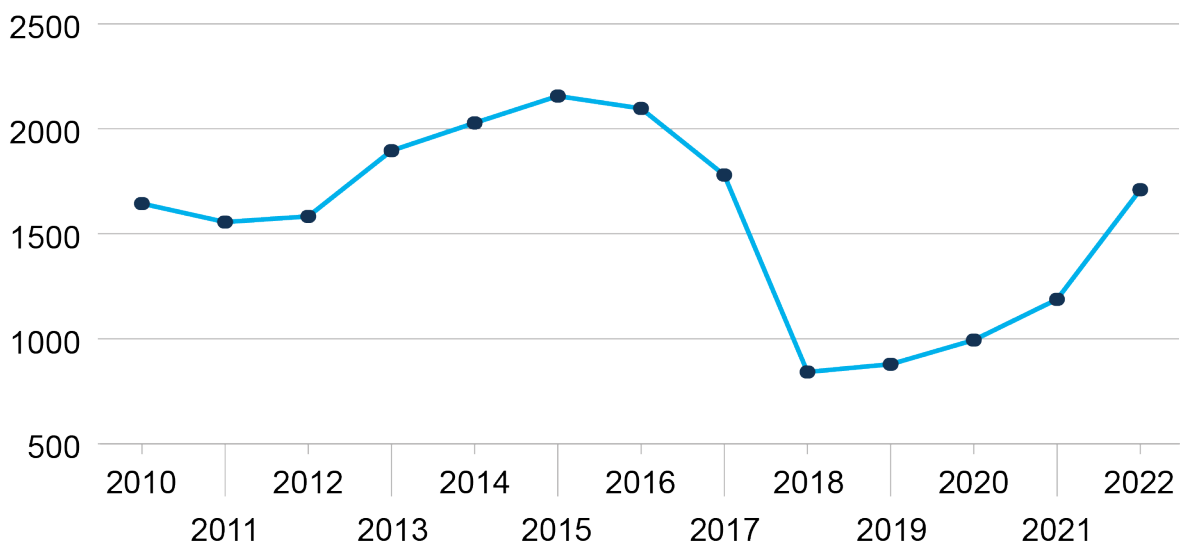
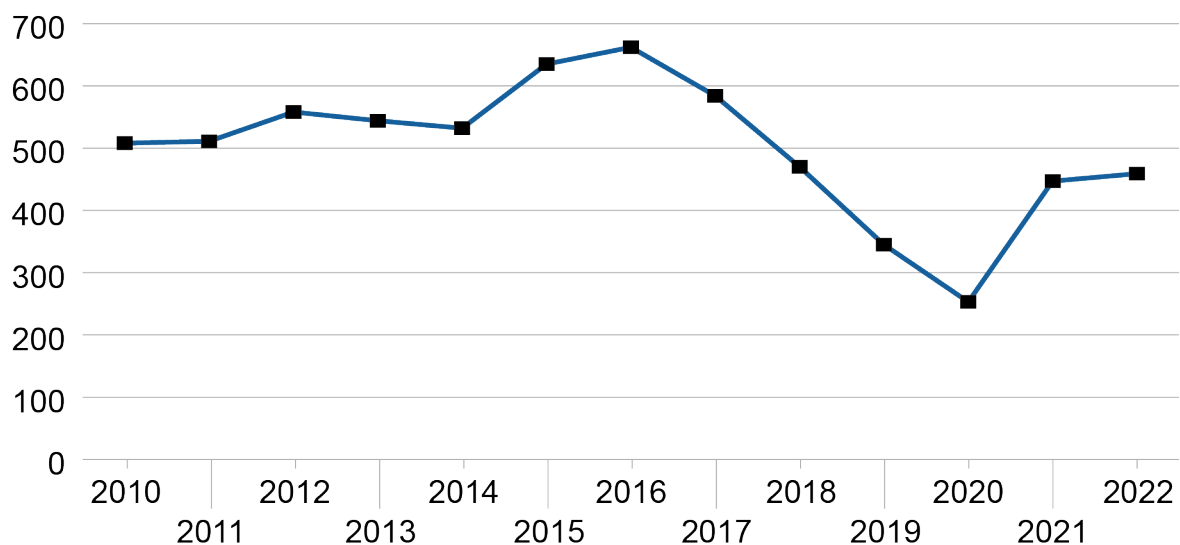


Chart 2: MoJ conviction volumes for adult rape, 2010–2022 (calendar year)³



² [Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December 2022](#), Outcomes by Offence tool. Data prior to 2010 was not produced on a comparable basis and is not appropriate for timeseries comparisons.

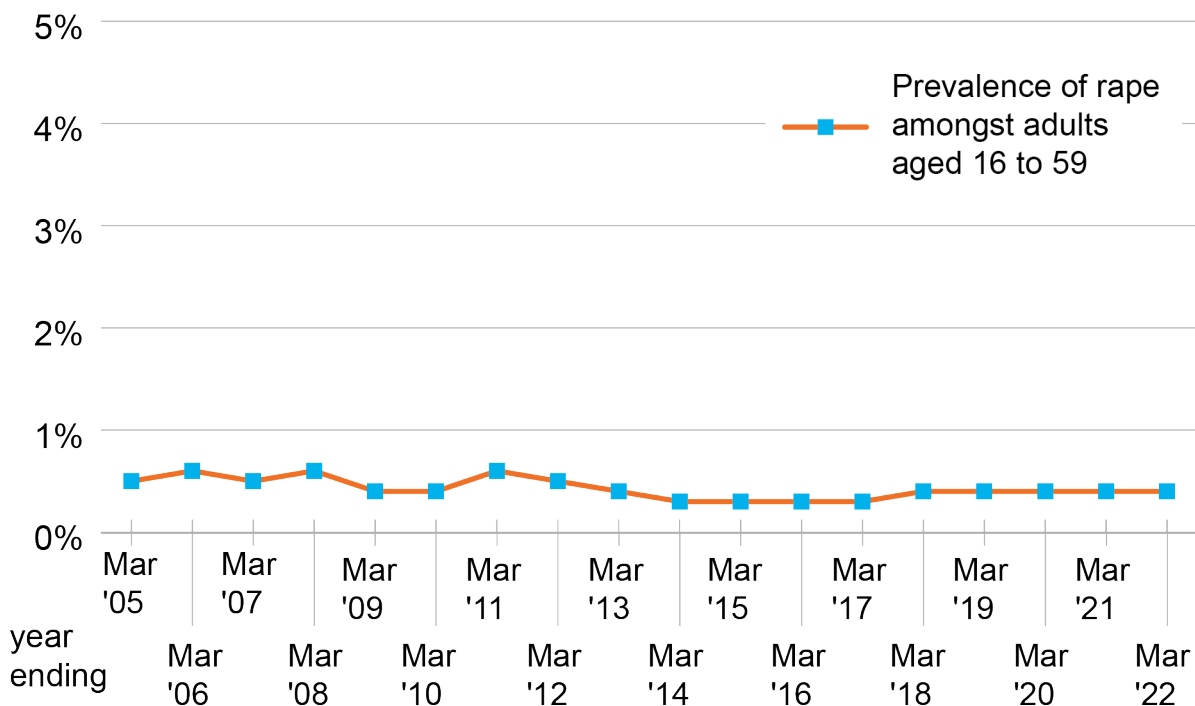
³ Ibid

Each of these datasets shows that we are continuing to make improvements across the stages of the Criminal Justice System’s response to rape. Perhaps more importantly, however, we hope that continued improvements will encourage victims to come forward and seek justice.

As shown in Chart 3, below, the volume of recorded adult rape offences, including historic cases, has followed an upward trend since 2005. The increase in adult rape figures may reflect a number of factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage, and campaigns on people's willingness to report to the police, as well as improvements in the police recording practices for rape offences. Conversely, Chart 4 (overleaf) shows that the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) does not show a substantial rise in the prevalence of rape over the same period.

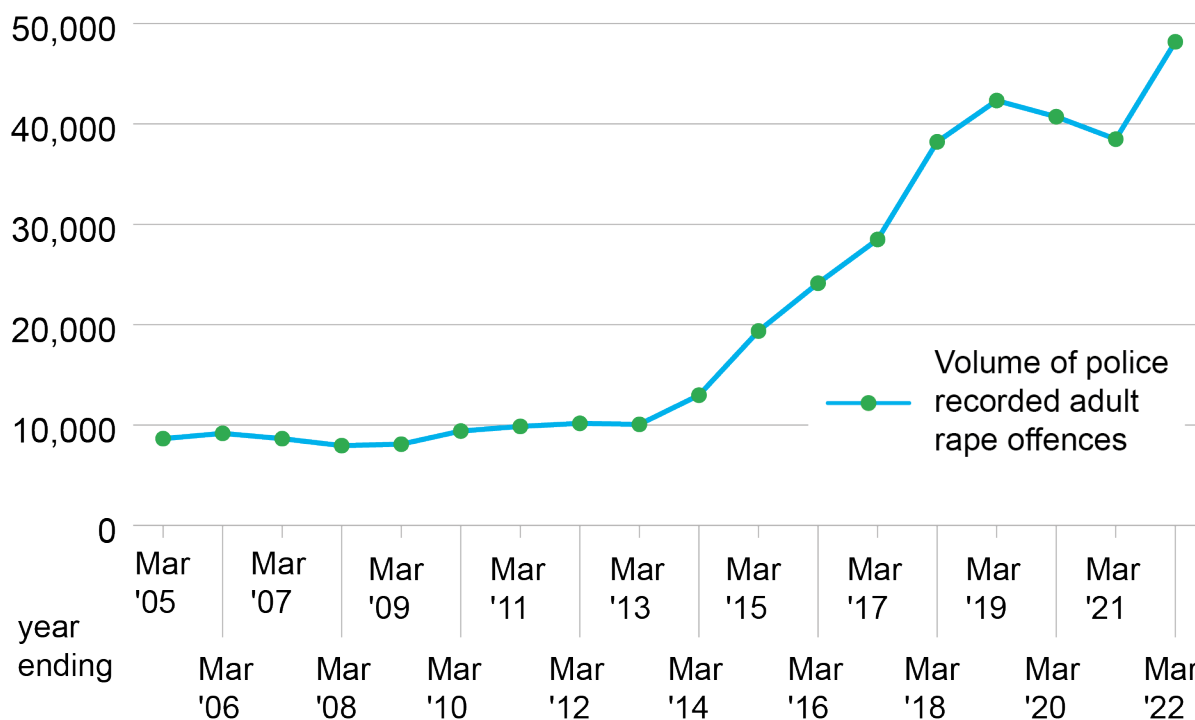
Crucially, this tells us more reports are being made without an increase in the number of victims; a hugely encouraging trend that we are determined to continue.

Chart 3: Prevalence of adult rape victims, 2005 to 2022^{4 5}



⁴ Taken from [Sexual offences prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandcare/articles/sexual-offences-prevalence-and-trends-england-and-wales/2019-09-12), Table 3.

⁵ The Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) was suspended in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the chart it is assumed prevalence remained unchanged over this period.

Chart 4: Volume of police recorded adult rape offences, 2005 to 2022 ^{6 7 8}

Progress against these metrics has only been achievable through delivery of the major milestones that have been reached over the past six months. The Home Office and CPS have launched new National Operating Models (NOMs), which will now be actively implemented by each of the 43 police forces and all 14 CPS areas in England and Wales to transform the way they investigate and prosecute rape. The adoption of these Operating Models will ensure the investigation and prosecution of rape is suspect-focused, rather than based on subjective views of victims' credibility.

Continued progress against each lever remains a testament to the targeted action that continues to be undertaken by each of the key contributors to this Action Plan; ensuring we are pulling every one of our eight system levers to do better by victims. Further examples of the important work undertaken over the last six months include:

- **Introducing the landmark Victims and Prisoners Bill** to Parliament in March, bringing in measures to better serve victims and the public. Persons born from rape and other sexual offences are included in the definition of a victim for the first time and we are legislating to ensure that police requests for third party material (such as medical records, counselling notes, social service records) are necessary and proportionate.
- **Recruiting 20,000 additional police officers**, having now brought in a net increase of 20,951 officers across England and Wales since the launch of the recruitment campaign in 2019, ensuring the police have the resources available to dedicate capacity to priority issues such as rape;

⁶ Taken from [ONS Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#), Table 4a.

⁷ March 2019 to Dec 2022 data exclude Devon and Cornwall.

⁸ 2015/16 to 2021/22 differ to CJS Data Delivery Dashboard (published May 2023) due to exclusions applied to the latter. These exclusions don't affect timeseries trends at the national level and both the ONS PRC and dashboard PRC follow the same trend for the period 2015/16 – 2021/22.

- **Supporting the police's ability to meet our commitment to return victims' phones within 24 hours**, by completing the procurement of a second round of improved technology worth £6 million;
- **Publishing the seventh CJS Delivery Data Dashboard** in May, complete with Data from Q4 2022 (October – December), continuing to ensure we are publicly accountable for the system's performance on adult rape;
- **Publishing our response to the consultation on requests for third party material and legislating via the Victims and Prisoners Bill**. The consultation received excellent engagement, over 400 responses from a variety of respondents, including victim groups, police, the CPS and third parties who respond to requests;
- **The Law Commission publishing their consultation** into the use of evidence in trials involving sexual offences.

While strong progress has been made, we made clear in our last Progress Report that there is much more work to do. The Rape Review Action Plan should remain dynamic and continue responding to the challenges that victims and the criminal justice system continue to face. The number of victims who withdraw from progressing their cases at both the police stage and post-charge remains high, as does the time it takes for cases to pass through each stage of the system. We must consider where we can go further, what more we can deliver, and how we can make change faster.

That is why we are extending the action we are taking under each of our eight levers of the Rape Review Action Plan (Annex A) until the end of this Parliament in December 2024. Given the substantial progress already made and the statistical evidence that these levers are the right ones, we believe it is right to maintain the momentum developed through our existing eight levers, building on the lessons that we have already learned, whilst also exploring new avenues to tackle the most stubborn issues. It also demonstrates our commitment to maintaining the transparency and accountability to the public that is necessary on such a vital area.

The next steps we are taking under this extended action plan include:

- Supporting police and prosecutors as they implement the National Operating Models for the investigation and prosecution of rape, developed through Operation Soteria. For policing, this includes establishing a Joint Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council Unit to drive and monitor progress across England and Wales (Lever 3: Operation Soteria);
- Funding the College of Policing to update the long-term training for investigators on sexual offending and refreshing the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigator Development Programme (Lever 4: Police Resourcing);
- Strengthening support for victims via the Victims and Prisoners Bill, through initiatives like ISVA and IDVA statutory guidance (Lever 2: Expansion of Victim Support);
- Further supporting police forces to meet and evidence their compliance with our commitment to ensure no victim of rape will be without a mobile phone for more than 24 hours (Lever 5: Improved digital forensics).
- Ensuring that police requests for third party material are both necessary and proportionate through the Victims and Prisoners Bill (Lever 8: Third party material).

We are also committing to further advancements in supporting survivors and ensuring justice throughout their experience in the court. For many victims, sentencing hearings are

an integral part of the criminal justice system, and an important opportunity to see justice done. However, the experience of attending court in person, alongside the defendant's family or supporters, can be distressing.

Following the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, which permits the remote observation of sentencing hearings, we will ensure that all adult rape victims at the three Specialist Sexual Violence Support (SSVS) Crown Courts in Newcastle, Leeds and Snaresbrook are afforded the option to remotely observe a sentencing hearing, through video link, subject to the agreement of the presiding judge. This builds on our work to improve the victim experience in court, such as allowing victims to pre-record their evidence, sparing them the trauma of attending court in person.

These extended actions are not the final pieces of the puzzle. We will continue to scope out further interventions to ensure we are always exploring ways to improve the system and ensure we are doing right by victims at every stage of the process.

We are also committed to remaining transparent to you, the public, regarding our progress, and so will continue to publish six-monthly Progress Reports detailing what we have delivered and what we plan to deliver going forward.

Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS): What have we delivered and what are we doing next?

Transforming the way in which rape is investigated and prosecuted is fundamental to improving victims' experience of the criminal justice system and increasing the number of cases being brought to court.

Crucial to this transformation is the commitment of prosecutors and the police to work collaboratively from the outset of a case. The launch of the National Operating Models developed through Operation Soteria, in tandem with increases in police and CPS resources, mark two major completed milestones which will support the delivery of fundamental improvement in the criminal justice response to rape.

We are consistently seeing the police and CPS working together in the data, with 515 referrals for Early Advice made to the CPS by police in the latest quarter ending December 2022. This is an increase of 299% when compared to the quarterly average of 129 in 2019, when the Rape Review Action Plan was published. By working together through the Early Advice scheme, police and CPS can build stronger rape cases, ensuring the best possible version of each case is used for a charging decision, and ultimately increase the number of cases being prosecuted.

The proportion of victims withdrawing at the investigation stage of their case remains high, and so we know there is still more to do. This is why we have introduced legislation as part of the Victims and Prisoners Bill that ensures requests for third party material, such as medical or counselling notes, are both necessary and proportionate. We also continue to recruit the crucial Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence Advisors (ISVAs and IDVAs) to increase the number to over 1000 by 2024/25. These are crucial steps to ensuring victims are protected and supported in the early stages of their journey and throughout the criminal justice process.

We are confident that our investment in improving police and CPS collaboration during investigations will help the system work more effectively to support victims to seek the justice they deserve.

Operation Soteria

In 2021, we committed to roll out a new approach to rape investigations which ensures that there is an early and robust assessment of suspect behaviour and offending patterns, helping ensure decision-making is based on evidence rather than subjective judgements of victim credibility. This new approach has been developed through Operation Soteria, a

unique collaboration between frontline policing, prosecutors, and academics, funded, supported, and delivered by the Home Office and CPS, resulting in the delivery of the National Operating Models for the investigation and prosecution of rape.

These Models, which are distinct but complementary, are now available to all police and CPS Areas in England and Wales.

The policing Model is a culmination of over two years of academic-led research into the police response to rape in 19 police forces⁹ – findings from the first year of research are available in the Operation Soteria Year One Report published in December 2022.¹⁰ This research has been combined with the experiences and expertise of frontline officers to test and develop new techniques and approaches to transform the way police forces respond to rape.

This, however, does not mark the end of the Operation Soteria programme, but rather the beginning of its most important stage. It is of paramount importance that we now shift our attention to effectively implementing both models in every force and CPS area in England and Wales.

It is therefore particularly encouraging that all 43 police forces in England and Wales have committed to actively implementing the policing Model. They will be supported to do so by the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council who are establishing a Joint Soteria Unit, supported by the College of Policing. The NPCC component will be hosted within their Violence Against Women and Girls Taskforce which will ensure Operation Soteria and the implementation of the National Operating Model is firmly set within the broader national effort to tackle crimes which disproportionately impact women and girls.¹¹ To retain the unique collaboration between policing and academics which has underpinned Operation Soteria, the Joint Unit and police forces across England and Wales will continue to be supported by the Strategic Academic Advisers.

Similarly, CPS will continue to bolster academic support of Operation Soteria, having already commissioned an independent academic team, comprising of sociolegal expert Professor Vanessa Munro, Dr Alice King and Lotte Young-Andrade from the University of Warwick, to undertake independent research on the original pathfinder CPS Areas. This has ensured further independent academic oversight of Soteria progress and strengthening the evidence base on which the prosecution Model is built. Their findings have been published alongside the CPS NOM, and her team will continue to work closely with the CPS to evaluate the Model over the coming months.

⁹ The five pathfinder police forces are: Avon and Somerset, the Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Constabulary, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police. These police forces participated in academic-led deep dives into their response to rape between January 2021 and July 2022. The 14 expansion forces are: North Wales, Gwent, Dyfed-Powys, Northumbria, Gloucestershire, Devon and Cornwall, Warwickshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. These police forces are engaging in an academic-supported self-assessment.

¹⁰ [Operation Soteria Year One Report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114444/Operation_Soteria_Year_One_Report_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

¹¹ The term 'violence against women and girls' refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term 'violence against women and girls', throughout this Strategy, this refers to all victims of any of these offences.

Operation Soteria will continue to deliver several tools and guidance, ensuring the models are refined and adapt to further findings from the continued academic research, remaining ambitious and built on best practice. In addition, the Home Secretary has commissioned His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to carry out a thematic inspection on forces' implementation of the Model and will produce a report with findings in due course.

CPS and Police Resourcing

The Rape Review highlighted the critical importance of police officers and prosecutors having the right capacity, capability, and mindset to investigate rape cases effectively. Furthermore, Operation Soteria has highlighted the need to improve the learning and development for officers to ensure they can continually build and develop specialist knowledge about rape and sexual offending.

We have delivered our manifesto commitment to recruit 20,000 additional police officers. There are now more police officers in England and Wales than the previous peak in March 2010.

The CPS continue to make significant progress on our Rape Review milestone of recruiting 194 (Full Time Equivalent) specialist, trained staff into our CPS teams, having resourced 170 FTE into our Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) workforce over the last year, recognising the difficult recruitment environment and the need to balance workloads across the CPS that account for the Crown Court caseload.

In addition, CPS have explored innovative routes to overcome the challenges including increasing the capacity of prosecutor development programmes such as the CPS' Legal Trainee Scheme to enable existing experienced prosecutors to move into RASSO posts and direct recruitment into RASSO units.

We have supported the College of Policing to work with Operation Soteria academics to develop a new interim learning programme – the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigators Skills Development Programme – which provides officers with access to a blended learning programme covering topics such as investigative strategies, victim support and communication. The programme was developed in collaboration with academic experts on sexual offending and piloted with Soteria police forces. Following positive feedback, the programme is now available to all police forces in England and Wales.

Looking towards the future, we are also providing funding to the College of Policing to update the longer-term training for investigators on sexual offending. A refreshed version of the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigator Development Programme will be available mid-2024, incorporating academic expertise on sexual offending and content from the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigators Skills Development Programme to ensure investigators can develop the right skills. As part of this redesign, the College will quality assure the training provided by police forces in England and Wales and require that only investigators who have participated in training which they have quality assured are granted accreditation as a specialist sexual assault investigator. In addition, they will require evidence of continual professional development from investigators to maintain accreditation.

The Home Office will also be consulting with police chiefs on the findings of the Casey review on the effectiveness of dedicated rape units.

Digital forensics technology and digital disclosure

We continue to be on-track to meet the commitment made in the Rape Review that no adult victim of rape should be without a phone for more than 24 hours by the end of Parliament. All 43 forces in England and Wales have committed to meeting this commitment as soon as possible with over a third providing data showing they are already consistently meeting it (as of March 2023).

A third year of funding is underway to validate, roll-out and provide training of technical capability hardware that assists forces to extract digital information from mobile phones belonging to adult rape victims and return them within 24 hours. £2m of Home Office funding in 2023–24 will complete the rollout of the £4m worth of technology procured for forces in 2022–23 via the Police Digital Service. Embedding this technology and working with forces to ensure compliance with our commitment will mark key milestones between now and December 2024.

The extraction of information powers and code of practice introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 came into force in November 2022. We have continued working with the Chief Constables, the NPCC Disclosure Portfolio and the College of Policing to increase awareness of the powers and the code and to embed their use.

We have recently delivered the Selective Extraction and Examination Strategy, which will support forces in using new equipment in a consistent way, assured to be compliant with new regulations. Two digital tools have now progressed from proof of concept to validation. They are set to be ready to be rolled out from July, completed by September, as part of the tech uplift deployment. These will enable quicker and more targeted data extraction.

Third party material

Since the last Progress Report, we have conducted a small case file review from January to March 2023 of 139 rape cases containing a total of 342 third party material requests across eight police forces. The data provides an insight into rape investigations but due to a range of caveats are not representative of all rape cases.

There was an average of 2.5 third party material requests per case. In the 139 cases, 71% contained a request for GP records, 47% for social services records and 29% contained a request for counselling or therapy notes.

Across the 342 third party material requests seen in the file review, 185 (54%) also had a third party request form from the police to a third party. 62% (114) of the TPM request forms did not contain any limits to the intrusiveness of the request (e.g. a date range). Victim involvement in the third party material request (e.g. through the victim signing the form) was also examined. Across the 342 requests seen in the file review, over a third (36%) of requests had no evidence of victim involvement (123 out of 342 requests).

The file review also looked at the rationales given by the police for why the request was made. 197 rationales were found and nearly a third (32%) focussed on establishing perceived victim reliability or credibility rather than the facts of the incident.

Additionally, we published the Government response to our consultation on Police Requests for third party material, which showed overwhelming support from respondents for new legislation to ensure that police requests are necessary and proportionate, and supported by a code of practice.

Following both our case file review and consultation, during the second reading of the Victims and Prisoners Bill we announced that we will be legislating to ensure that police requests for third party material are both necessary and proportionate. In doing so, we want to help bolster confidence in the system, ensure continued engagement in criminal investigations, bring more perpetrators to justice, and honour our commitment to legislate to protect victims from unnecessary, intrusive requests.

The findings from our case file review and consultation will be used to develop a new code of practice for requesting third party material, supported by the NPCC, and ultimately backed by this new, landmark legislation to better protect victims.

Case study: Partnership working between South Wales Police and CPS Cymru-Wales

South Wales Police and CPS Cymru-Wales have increased engagement and partnership working through the use of early advice, which has resulted in key lines of enquiry being identified and explored by police from the outset of a case.

South Wales Police sought early advice from CPS Cymru-Wales in relation to an allegation of a stranger rape upon an intoxicated victim who had been approached by the offender on her way home from a nightclub and taken to his address.

The police requested early advice within 10 days of the offence date and required a strategy around CCTV, forensics, and toxicology as well as medical evidence. The reviewing CPS lawyer considered an offender centric approach, focusing on his behaviour before, during and after the incident. Having discussed the strategy with the officer in the case, a substantial case action plan was put together for the police to progress.

It was agreed with the officer to obtain all relevant CCTV which covered the movements of the offender during the evening in question. This footage included the nightclub attended by both parties and the route to the offender's address. This CCTV footage was crucial evidence as it testified to the victim's inability to consent.

Further engagement between police and CPS was sought as the investigation progressed. It was decided that a sexual offence expert was required to comment on the causation of the victim's injuries and that key messages sent by the offender, alongside other digital material downloaded by police, would be included in the electronic presentation of evidence.

The suspect was then charged with the offence of rape and remanded by the Court.

A familiarisation meeting involving the prosecuting counsel, reviewing CPS lawyer and the officer in the case was held with the victim to explain the court process and to discuss the special measures available. The victim remained supportive of the prosecution case and was willing to attend court.

The offender later changed his plea to guilty and will be sentenced at the Crown Court.

This case demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of partnership working between the police and CPS. By taking an offender centric approach from the outset, the investigation and prosecution built a strong case which focussed on the predatory behaviour of the offender.

Cross-system actions: What have we delivered and what are we doing next?

Since the last Progress Report, we have made significant progress on the Rape Review commitment to increase and improve the emotional, practical, and legal support available to victims at each stage of the criminal justice process. The Victims and Prisoners Bill was introduced to Parliament, introducing key measures to improve the criminal justice process for victims of crime. We are also pleased to be recommissioning the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund (RASAF) to provide specialist services that will offer the direct and targeted support and interventions that victims need.

Expanding victim support

The Victims and Prisoners Bill

The Victims and Prisoners Bill is a significant piece of legislation that seeks to make a positive difference for victims, ensuring that the right support is available for them to access. Since December, we have published our response to the Justice Select Committee report and introduced the Victims and Prisoner Bill into Parliament. The Bill had Second Reading on 15 May.

The Bill introduces measures to improve end-to-end support for victims of crime and awareness of the services that all victims should receive. This includes a joint statutory duty on PCCs, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to collaborate when commissioning support services for victims of sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and other serious violence; as well as requiring the publication of statutory guidance regarding the roles of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs). This will increase awareness and consistency of these vital roles, promoting collaboration between those who support victims. The Bill also clarifies that persons born from rape and other sexual offences are included in the definition of a victim, and this definition will be reflected in the new Victims' Code to ensure this group benefit from the Code and Bill measures. As mentioned above, the Bill also announced the measures we are putting in place ensure that police requests for third party material are both necessary and proportionate.

Implementing the many crucial elements of this Bill, following its journey through Parliament, will represent ambitious new milestones for the Rape Review running all the way until December 2024 and beyond.

Recommissioning the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund (RASASF)

We are pleased to have informed bidders of the outcome of the RASASF competition to continue funding these specialist services across 20 months, from August 2023 until March 2025. The purpose of the RASASF is to fund specialist sexual violence support services to support child and adult victims to cope, recover and, as far as possible, move forward with their lives after victimisation from these abhorrent crimes. The fund has operated since 2011 and has since seen significant increases in investment.

To inform the recommissioning of the RASASF, we undertook multiple strands of research to build upon our commitment to conduct targeted research with rape victims to better understand their experiences and what they want from support services so that future provision meets need. The culmination of all of this research was incorporated into the recommissioning and will continue to guide our approach to funding victim support services, and is publicly available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/formal-support-needs-of-adult-victim-survivors-of-sexual-violence>.

The new RASASF will amalgamate the two current grant schemes (RASASF and the Male Rape Support Fund) into one, consolidated pot open to the voluntary sector. Since December, we have run a competitive grants process to select the service providers; following a full evaluation process to ensure that we are funding services that best meet victim needs, bidders were informed of the outcome of the competition in May.

Improving transparency of the Criminal Justice System

Since publishing the first local Criminal Justice System Delivery Data Dashboard in March 2022, we have published further iterations of the Dashboard on a quarterly basis. The most recent Dashboard was published in May 2023. The Dashboard allows us to monitor local progress, generate insights to further understand local variation, and share best practice to drive progress across the justice system.

The CJS Delivery Data Dashboard is iterative, which means we are continually looking at how to improve it for the next publication. In response to user-testing and stakeholder feedback, the February 2023 publication featured significant changes to the functionality and design of the Dashboard. Following user-testing, we sought to make the dashboard easier to navigate, with simpler language and a quicker interface. To do so, we moved to a new software, which optimises Dashboard navigation speed and interactivity, simplified the names of the metrics, and added explanatory text to make the language more accessible for Dashboard users.

User-testing showed that stakeholders wanted to be able to compare their local data with similar areas and use the Dashboard in a more bespoke way. As a result, relevant metrics within the Dashboard are now grouped, and users can layer metrics to ensure Dashboard data is of maximum value. The February Dashboard also included filters that allow users to compare between multiple local areas, including to most similar areas. The most similar areas are based on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) police force groupings and aggregated to Local Criminal Justice Board level where necessary.

In the February 2023 publication, the Dashboard also included more historical data, both quarterly and rolling annual, for all-crime and adult rape Dashboard metrics since 2015. Prior Dashboard publications only included data from 2019. The expansion of historical data provides greater transparency of trends over time and contextualises quarterly data volatility.

We are currently working through user feedback, primarily from the Local Criminal Justice Board conference held in April and will be using that to scope any changes to the design or the data metrics included in the Dashboard moving forward.

Case study: Use of the Data Dashboard in Wales

We continue to work with LCJBs to understand the positive impact achieved through data-driven insights. Alongside publishing various iterations of the local Dashboard since March 2022, we have supported LCJBs in their use of Dashboard data and conducted a thorough analysis to determine how LCJBs benefit from the platform and use data to drive progress. Through our ongoing dialogue with LCJB Dashboard users, we gain critical insight into how the platform is helping victims and criminal justice practitioners across the system.

In Wales, LCJBs are using the Dashboard as a vital tool to scrutinise data accuracy. Analysis of the Welsh Dashboard's rape data raised important questions about where the data comes from, specifically around Welsh timeliness data for rape. To address this, criminal justice practitioners in Wales met with the Home Office to clarify the origins of the data. This information was discussed at the Wales Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) meeting to confirm that timeliness data was accurate. Wales also introduced quarterly deep dives into timeliness data, which enables senior criminal justice leads to explain the drivers behind fluctuations in timeliness data to LCJBs. At a local level, the Dashboard presents a comprehensive cross-system view of issues to stakeholders and encourages proactive and collaborative decision-making grounded in evidence-based practice.

In practice, LCJBs in Wales are using Dashboard data to interrogate trends, implement solutions and track progress towards Rape Review goals. Data is used to understand where, from the ground up, the system is working and where resource should be allocated in the future. Both local and national criminal justice leads are using data to make effective decisions and understand the impact of interventions across the system. The Dashboard has encouraged Wales to adopt a robust and long-term vision for the tackling Adult Rape.

The Delivery Data Dashboard is an iterative product, and we are committed to its continuous improvement in collaboration with partners across the system.

Courts: What have we delivered and what are we doing next?

We remain determined to build on the Government's commitment to ensure the inevitably difficult experience of attending court is managed with care and consideration of victims' needs. Through these efforts, we have made substantial progress in addressing the issues outlined in the Rape Review.

We continue to make progress in reducing the Crown Court caseload despite recent setbacks caused by the pandemic and the criminal barrister strike. We are pleased that the Law Commission published their independent consultation on the use of evidence in sexual offence cases in May 2023 and look forward to working with them towards the publication of their final report, and beyond.

Similarly, we continue to engage proactively with victims' sector organisations, operational partners, and the judiciary, who have helped provide a stronger understanding of enduring challenges, and how we may be able to address them. We are soon to build on the successful rollout of our Specialist Sexual Violence Support Project (SSVS) by launching a public procurement for trauma-informed training for court staff and exploring how to improve communications with victims throughout the criminal justice process, as well as rolling out technological refits to aid with the process of victims giving evidence through video link in court.

These measures demonstrate our commitment to placing victims at the heart of the legal process, promoting their participation, and addressing their specific needs and concerns.

Ongoing work to support Crown Court recovery

In our last progress update, we reported that the outstanding Crown Court criminal caseload had increased up to 62,500 as of October 2022, with this rise resulting from strike action between April and October 2022. Since then, we have seen some reductions. The latest management information data, published by His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service in June 2023, shows that the total number of outstanding cases stood at 61,712 as of the end of April 2023.

This figure is still too high, and we are determined to drive sustained reductions in the case load. Whilst the listing of specific cases, such as those for adult rape, remains a matter for the independent judiciary, we continue to make significant investments that will support the reduction of the caseload in its totality, improving victim experience at the court stage. For example, we will soon be launching a new recruitment campaign to bring in up to 1000 further judges across all jurisdictions in the 2023/24 financial year. This campaign will run until March 2024. In April 2022 we announced that we had removed the limit on sitting

days in the Crown Court for the second year in a row meaning that courts have continued working at maximum capacity, delivering swifter justice for victims. The HMCTS 2023/24 allocation is not yet finalised and is subject to the ongoing Concordat process.

Similarly, we have announced the continued use of 24 Nightingale courtrooms into the 2023/24 financial year, increasing court capacity to clear through the caseload. This comes alongside the newly opened 'super courtrooms' in Manchester and Loughborough, which have freed up court capacity elsewhere, allowing up to an extra 250 criminal cases a year to be heard across England and Wales.

We will also continue to implement the Court Reform programme, which aims to make our court processes more efficient, so that we can hear more cases more quickly. We are working closely with the Crown Court Improvement Group, a judicially led consultative body reporting to the Lord Chief Justice, which has been established with the purpose of improving overall performance of the Crown Court.

Rollout of Section 28 pre-recorded cross examination

Since the rollout of Section 28 Pre-recorded cross examination (Section 28) (a special measure within the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 that enables those eligible to have their cross examination pre-recorded and then played at the trial), to all crown courts, we are pleased to have seen continual increases in the number of witnesses giving evidence via S28 in adult rape cases. From October – December 2022, 94 witnesses gave evidence via section 28, an increase of 39 on the previous quarter.

Recognising the role of technology in enhancing court proceedings, particularly for victims of rape and serious sexual offences, we have prioritised addressing technological issues in each court centre. We identified nine courtrooms for an audio-visual refit to improve the overall fairness and effectiveness of court processes, including allowing more victims to give evidence via video (either live or pre-recorded) and improving the quality of this evidence. This prevents undue re-traumatisation of the victim and ensures that victims wishing to give evidence via video can give their best evidence possible. This refurbishment has been successfully completed in Leeds and Newcastle Crown Courts as part of our Specialist Sexual Violence Support project (detailed below). One court room is complete in Snaresbrook Crown Court, with the remaining two courtrooms scheduled for completion by July 2023.

Specialist Sexual Violence Support Project (SSVS)

The first phase of the Specialist Sexual Violence Support (SSVS) project is now complete in three Crown Courts: Newcastle, Leeds, and Snaresbrook in London. This means we have delivered a significant uplift to the facilities in these courts that should greatly improve victim experience in court. This includes upgraded witness suites, furniture, and both routes around court and blinds in key areas that shield the victim from the defendant. This will create a more comfortable, safe, and supportive environment in Crown Court that recognises the unique needs of victims in cases of rape and serious sexual assault.

We realise that providing trauma-informed training to court staff and other relevant practitioners is essential to ensure that they possess the necessary knowledge and skills

to engage sensitively with victims of crime. This training aims to raise awareness about the impact of trauma and equip staff with strategies for responding empathetically to victims' needs. We have worked extensively with criminal justice partners and sector organisations to develop key principles and intended outcomes of the training and are launching an expression of interest before we go out to public tender for trauma-informed training for staff at all three Crown Courts, which will enhance their understanding of trauma, its effects on victims, and the importance of providing appropriate support throughout the court process. Training will also be offered, where appropriate, to other practitioners, including ISVAs, witness service volunteers, and judicial colleagues.

We will also be launching recruitment for Case Coordinator roles in all three SSVS Courts in the near future. These are roles that will help improve adherence to the principles of Better Case Management, and to progress cases from receipt in the Crown Court through to disposal, with particular focus on preparation for preliminary hearings and for trial. We are also developing measures to support Case Coordinators with the listing of court cases (using powers delegated to them by Crown Court Judges). They will work with the CPS, defence, and other relevant parties to help ensure that timetables are kept, responsibilities and judicial orders are abided by, and parties are prepared for hearings and trial. We have conducted extensive stakeholder engagement on the scope and design of this role, in order to ensure it will support us to meet the aim of reducing waiting times and minimising the potential re-traumatisation of victims through extended court proceedings.

Finally, through the next phase of our SVSS project, we will ensure that at the participating Crown Courts – in Snaresbrook, Leeds, and Newcastle – the option to remotely observe a sentencing hearing is available to any adult rape victim who needs this provision, subject to the agreement of the presiding judge. Future milestones for the delivery of this work will be confirmed once details have been finalised.

Law Commission review of the law, guidance and practice relating to the use of evidence in prosecutions of rape and sexual offences

In the Rape Review Action Plan (published June 2021), we set out our commitment to ensure that only evidence about the victim that is pertinent to the case is deployed at court and that a victim's credibility is not undermined by pre-conceptions or rape myths. That is why we asked the Law Commission to examine the law, guidance, and practice in prosecutions of serious sexual offences.

In May 2023, the Law Commission passed a major milestone in completing their review by publishing their consultation seeking views on how evidence is used in trials involving sexual offences. The consultation has three goals in mind: improving the understanding of consent and sexual harm; improving the treatment of complainants; and ensuring that defendants receive a fair trial.

Following the consultation process, the Law Commission will consider the responses and publish a final report and recommendations for consideration. We will continue to work closely with the Law Commission to monitor progress up until publication of the final report and recommendations. We are resolute in our commitment to ensure that rape and sexual offence cases must be trialled justly. We look forward to reviewing the final

recommendations that will be made following this consultation process and we will carefully consider each final recommendation in the context of the wider final report.

Annex – Detailed summary of actions

Key lever 1: CJS Delivery Data Dashboard and accountability

Key priorities for the last 6 months:

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
Publish the CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q3 2022 data (July–September 22) – February 2023.	Complete
Publish the CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q4 2022 data. (October–December 22) – May 2023.	Complete
Publish the fourth Rape Review Progress Report (June 2023)	Complete

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by June 2023	
August 2023	Publish the CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q1 2023 data (January–March 2023).
November 2023	Publish CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q2 2023 data (April–June 2023).
December 2023	Publish the fifth Rape Review Progress Report (December 2023)
February 2024	Publish CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q3 2023 data (July–September 23).
May 2024	Publish CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q4 2023 data (October–December 23).
June 2024	Publish the sixth Rape Review Progress Report (June 2024)
August 2024	Publish CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q1 2024 data (January–March 2024).
November 2024	Publish CJS Delivery Data Dashboard with Q2 2024 data (April–June 2024).
December 2024	Publish the seventh Rape Review Progress Report (December 2024)

Key lever 2: Expansion of victims' support

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
Open grant competition for Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund – January 2023.	Complete
Publish Government Social Research with rape victims to better understand their experiences and what they want from support services to inform future provision – January 2023.	Complete The report can be found at the following link: Formal support needs of adult victim-survivors of sexual violence (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Announce Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund Grant Awards – April/May 2023.	Complete
Continue the recruitment process for an additional 300 ISVAs and IDVAs to increase the number to over 1000 by 24/25 – Ongoing.	On track

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	Mobilisation discussions with successful grantees to the RASASF competition.
August 2023	Commence new Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Fund.
2023/24*	Consult on draft guidance on ISVAs and IDVAs.
2024*	Pass Victims and Prisoners Bill.
2024*	Assuming, and following Royal Assent of the Victims and Prisoners Bill, formally consult on Victims' Code of Practice and statutory guidance for local commissioners on the duty to collaborate.

* Victims and Prisoners Bill milestones are subject to parliamentary approval and timings

Key lever 3: Operation Soteria

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
Visit to all 14 expansion police forces by team of academics and subject matter experts – January 2023.	Complete
Operation Soteria conference – an opportunity to bring leaders and practitioners from pathfinder and expansion police forces together alongside academics and policy leads, to share learning and best practice – January 2023.	Complete
Complete CPS Soteria academic report detailing complete findings of phase 1 (interviews, case file sampling, Area observations) – March 2023.	Complete
Continued development and implementation of improvement plans by 14 expansion police forces using knowledge gained through supported application of the self-assessment tool – March 2023.	Complete
CPS Soteria academic consolidates learning and makes recommendations on the future operating model for rape prosecution – May 2023.	Complete
New national operating models for investigation and prosecution of rape available for all police forces and CPS Areas to adopt – June 2023.	Complete

Key actions to December 2024

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	Continuation of CPS evaluation into the National Operating Model
July 2023	Pathfinder and expansion police forces continue receiving support as they implement their transformation plans in respect of rape and implement the NOM at local levels. Adopter police forces begin establishing a change team to oversee implementation of the NOM. Progress regularly monitored by the NPCC and Home Office Joint Unit. ¹²

¹² The five pathfinder police forces are: Avon and Somerset, the Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Constabulary, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police. These police forces participated in academic-led deep dives into their response to rape between January 2021 and July 2022. The 14 expansion forces are: North Wales, Gwent, Dyfed-Powys, Northumbria, Gloucestershire, Devon and Cornwall, Warwickshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. These police forces have been engaging with Operation Soteria since October 2022. An adopter police force is any force in England and Wales who did not participate in Operation Soteria programme as a pathfinder or expansion police force and is actively implementing the National Operating Model.

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	CPS Areas supported as they begin to implement their new national operating model for adult rape prosecutions.
September 2023	Additional NOM products made available, building on the original suite of documents made available in early Summer 2023. Pathfinder and Expansion forces review and evolve existing transformation plans to enable delivery of the NOM.
September 2023	HMICFRS begin thematic inspection on forces' implementation of the NOM.
October 2023	Change teams in adopter forces established to support implementation of the NOM, and reporting progress into the NPCC and Home Office Joint Unit.
December 2023	Commence discovery phase exploring how functionality and usability of the policing NOM can be improved through digitalisation.
December 2023	CPS receive full technical report from their independent academic team.
March 2024	Adopter police forces supported to complete an in-depth self-assessment that will enable them to understand different aspects of their response to rape and begin developing a transformative plan which builds on strengths and addresses challenges identified.
August 2024	Adopter police forces utilising full suite of tools and guidance in the NOM with transformation plan continually reviewed.

Key lever 4: Increased police and Crown Prosecution Service resourcing

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
All 11 modules of the new learning programme for rape and sexual offence investigators developed and available – February 2023.	Complete
Increase the CPS RASSO workforce in the next financial year by 194 full time equivalent (representing a 44% increase in 22/23) – June 2023.	Off track. CPS have recruited 170 staff despite a difficult recruitment environment and the need to balance workloads, accounting for the current crown court caseload. Due to complete September 2023
Complete recruitment of 20,000 additional police officers – March 2023.	Complete
Extend pilot of new blended learning programme for rape and sexual offence investigators to further Operation Soteria police forces – Ongoing.	Complete
Provide ongoing RASSO training to support new, existing and returning RASSO CPS staff with induction training modules and refresher training, including on the impact of trauma on memory – Ongoing.	On track

Key actions to December 2024

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigators Skills Development Programme (RISDP) made available to all police forces in England and Wales.
Aug 2024	Update Specialist Sexual Assault Investigator Development Programme (SSAIDP) to make delivery more prescriptive and to incorporate content from the Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigators Skills Development Programme.

Key lever 5: Improved digital forensics technology and digital disclosure

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
<p>Implement recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) thematic review of digital forensics in police forces in England and Wales, to ensure that forces are able to effectively deliver digital forensic services that support investigations and bring perpetrators to justice – Ongoing.</p>	<p>This includes recommendations that called for a review of the Home Office digital forensics budget and funding processes by April 2023, and asking that that the Home Office, NPCC and others work together to consider the operating model for digital forensics by November 2024.</p>
<p>Complete a second £4m tech uplift by the end of FY 2022–23. This will support the remaining forces that require further technological capability to ensure that they are consistently examining and returning victim's devices within 24 hours – March 2023.</p>	<p>Off-track. Rollout of technological capabilities was delayed by the need to reprocure validation services following a supplier withdrawal in early 2023. This has pushed back rollout of the technology by approximately 4 months. Booking of places on training courses to commence in June 2023.</p>
<p>Complete proof-of-concept tests within forces of technology developed in conjunction with the private sector, as well as new selective extraction technology that will enable policing to be more precise in the data extracted from victim's phones – March 2023.</p>	<p>Off-track (80% completed on time, remaining 20% months delayed). Final proof of concept was to be completed by the end of June 2023, however, is now due to complete by September 2023. This was initially delayed due to difficulties in finding a host force and currently due to agreeing data sharing protocols</p>

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	First data return under the new Annual Data Requirement 722 on mobile phones.
October 2023	Decision made on whether to make the ADR mandatory and start publishing data.
August 2023	Complete validation exercise of hardware for the second tech uplift to expedite the ability for forces to utilise it once deployed to them.
September 2023	Complete deployment of hardware for the second tech uplift to support the forces that tell us they lack the technological capability to consistently turn around victim's devices within 24 hours at a time and location convenient to the victim.
October 2023 (Quarterly)	Second data return under the ADR 722 on mobile phones, which will be subject to HO monitoring and subsequent actions as required.
December 2023	Concluded proof of concept testing for new technology interventions developed and enabled by the Police Digital Service.
January 2024	Add metric measuring progress on 24hr phone target to published dashboard.
January 2024 (Quarterly)	Third data return under the ADR 722 on mobile phones, which will be subject to HO monitoring and subsequent actions as required.
April 2024 (Quarterly)	Fourth data return under the ADR 722 on mobile phones, which will be subject to HO monitoring and subsequent actions as required.
July 2024 (Quarterly)	Fifth data return under the ADR 722 on mobile phones, which will be subject to HO monitoring and subsequent actions as required.
October 2024 (Quarterly)	Sixth data return under the ADR 722 on mobile phones, which will be subject to HO monitoring and subsequent actions as required.

Key lever 6: Improving victim experience in the Court

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
Launch victims communications journey map and information resource to each SSVS location – March 2023.	Complete
Complete roll out Digital Audio Visualisation Evolution (DAVE) technology (a major tech uplift to courts) to each SSVS location – March 2023.	Off track. DAVE is complete in the Leeds and Newcastle Crown Courts. Snaresbrook Crown Court is delayed due to unforeseen structural challenges with the court building. Due to complete July 2023.
Engage with stakeholders and suppliers to develop a training package to roll out in each SSVS location – March 2023.	Off track. We have engaged with stakeholders on the design and specification of the training and explored potential suppliers through the Government learning framework. We will launch a public procurement process to find a specialist supplier to deliver the training in July 2023. Training is due to be rolled out in September 2023.
Case Coordinators begin work in each SSVS location – March 2023.	Off track. Funding has been granted, and we expect case coordinators to start in post in the next six-month period.
Begin setting up and supporting best practise sharing events to share lessons learnt across all Courts (Previously Best Practice Framework) – March 2023.	Complete
Assess the availability of on-site provision for victims and consider if any changes are required – March 2023.	Complete

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	Status
Combine findings from both phases of the Section 28 process evaluation (interview with criminal justice practitioners and interviews with victims and witnesses) into a cohesive Government Social Research report – April 2023.	Complete This report can be found at the following link: Process evaluation of Section 28: Evaluating the use of pre-recorded cross-examination for intimidated witnesses - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) .
Law Commission to publish their consultation paper on the use of evidence in sexual offence prosecutions May 2023.	Complete This paper can be found at the following link: Evidence in Sexual Offence Prosecutions - Law Commission
Implement the agreed best practice for communication with victims about special measures and how to communicate with victims after they give evidence at the three SSVS sites – June 2023.	Ongoing – implementation is being incorporated into a wider communications workstream due for completion in September 2023

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	Snaresbrook DAVE installation complete.
July 2023	Launch of public procurement exercise to find a specialist Trauma Informed Training supplier
September 2023	Roll out trauma-informed training for court staff and those who interact with the victim at court.
Autumn 2023	New Case Coordinators start in post.
Autumn 2023	Law Commission to begin analysis of responses to their public consultation on the use of evidence in sexual offence prosecutions.
December 2023	Complete Section 28 Impact Analysis.
February 2024	Conduct qualitative monitoring of the success of the SSVS measures.
March 2024	Update CPS legal guidance on tackling rape assumptions and misconceptions to be made available to counsel, in collaboration with Equally Ours.
Autumn 2024	Launch Case Coordinators Proof of Concept Pilot.
Autumn 2024	Law Commission to publish their final report and recommendations following their public consultation and subsequent analysis of consultation responses.

Key lever 7: Crown Court capacity

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by December 2022	Status
The Judicial Appointments Commission to run recruitment campaign through which we expect to recruit 1000 judges in 22/23 – Ongoing.	Complete
Continue work to improving productivity with the Crown Court Improvement Group (CCIG). The CCIG is a judicially-led consultative body, chaired by the Senior Presiding Judge, that was established by the Lord Chief Justice to improve the Crown Court's overall performance – Ongoing.	On track. In January, the Senior Presiding Judge published an update on the group's work alongside a progress report summarising the work of each attending organisation, a Better Case Management handbook, and listing advice for the judiciary. They can all be found at the following link: https://www.judiciary.uk/update-from-the-senior-presiding-judge-on-the-crown-court-improvement-group-and-better-case-management-principles/ .
Continue to support HMCTS in the implementation of their flagship Court Reform programme, which aims to make our court processes more efficient – Ongoing.	On track. We are implementing the £1.3 billion Court Reform programme, which aims to make our court processes more efficient, meaning we can get through more cases in fewer sitting days.
Continue to use remote hearings where appropriate, so that they can be heard quickly, and space can be freed up for cases that must be heard in person. This will always be balanced with the interests of justice – Ongoing.	On track. In March, we published a report on the impact of remote hearings on the Crown Court. The results of the report suggested wider outcomes of justice remain the same when remote hearings are used, supporting the judiciary to confidently use their discretion on the use of remote hearings. This report can be found at the following link: The impact of remote hearings on the Crown Court (publishing.service.gov.uk) .

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review action due to be delivered by June 2023	
Autumn 2023	Implementation of other court efficiency measures in the Judicial Review and Courts Act (e.g., online plea and allocation, automatic online conviction and removal of unnecessary hearings).
Autumn 2023	Complete launch of recruitment exercises scheduled in Q1–Q3 of 2023/24 recruitment programme.
March 2024	Transition from system of 'local justice areas' to the implementation of a new, more flexible leadership and allocation system for the way cases are listed and magistrates are deployed in the magistrates' courts.

Key lever 8: Third party material

Key priorities for the last 6 months

Rape Review action due to be delivered by December 2022	Status
Complete data collection on third party material requests. Use the results to inform development of further options to reduce unnecessary and disproportionate requests for third party material.	Complete
Publish consultation response and next steps regarding police requests for third party material.	Complete

Key actions to December 2024:

Rape Review actions due to be delivered by December 2024	
July 2023	Complete analysis of the case file review of third-party material and mobile phone requests conducted in eight police forces and create a summary of the findings.
March 2024	Work with the NPCC to pilot a new process and guidance for requesting TPM to ensure that requests are consistently limited in their scope, specific for each case and that individuals are adequately informed about third party material requests.
2024*	Complete legislation to ensure police requests for third party material are necessary and proportionate as part of the Victims and Prisoners Bill, including a new code of practice.

* Victims and Prisoners Bill milestones are subject to parliamentary approval and timings



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