



Crown
Prosecution
Service



Rape Strategy Update

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Rape Strategy Update

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On 24 February 2022 we incorporated more data into the strategy update to correct the current figures on police recorded crimes and referrals to the CPS. We have included figures for both 2019/20 and 2020/21.



Max Hill QC, Director of Public Prosecutions



Rape is a truly devastating and life-changing crime. Victims of this most invasive abuse can suffer lasting trauma, and too often their experience of the criminal justice system adds to their suffering. I am determined to change that.

Without doubt there is a crisis of public trust in the criminal justice response to rape and crimes of violence against women and girls. Too few victims are seeing justice done. The CPS has looked at every aspect of our work so we can drive up the number of rape cases going to court, and build confidence that all rape victims

and suspects are treated fairly. We want to secure justice in every possible rape case, which means increasing significantly the number we bring to court, year on year.

Leading this transformation will need sustained focus. This paper provides an update on the actions and progress we have made since the publication of our five-year strategy on Rape and Serious Sexual Offences – [RASSO 2025](#) – in July 2020. We have worked hard to understand and address the reasons behind the stark drop in the number of offenders brought to justice since 2016.

The cross-Government rape review found the reasons for the decline were complex and wide ranging and identified changes that are needed at every stage in the criminal justice system. I am confident that our prosecutors are making the right legal decisions, applying the legal test fairly and objectively in order to bring even the most complex and challenging of cases whenever it is possible to do so. However, without doubt, there are things we at the CPS could have done differently – either better or more quickly – to get a grip on the drop in rape prosecutions.

We were slow to respond, and we could have communicated better with police and stakeholders on how we were managing the pressures of these cases. We recognise that some of our action plans for the police were disproportionate. Stronger partnership working and case quality is the key to driving the improvements we need, and is central to our comprehensive action plan to improve every aspect of how we manage these sensitive cases.



If we are to build confidence that we are taking the right steps, we must be transparent about every aspect of our practice and our decision-making. We must demonstrate that we are upholding the timeless principle of justice – fairness to both defendants and victims.

We have made significant changes and will continue to do so. Our focus has been on three main areas of work:

- better collaboration with the police from the very start of an investigation, taking an offender-centric approach to case-building;
- supporting our prosecutors and expanding the size of our specialist units so that they are properly resourced to respond to these challenging and complex cases; and
- improving the support given to victims, and recognising the trauma they experience.

This update explains our actions end to end, outlining what we have already done, what comes next, and how it will make a difference. There is much more to do.

My priority is to make sure that we keep our focus on collaboration and improvement so every rape victim can feel confident that, when they come forward to report a crime, they will be treated fairly and sensitively and given the right support at this most traumatic time.

Introduction



Too few rape victims are seeing justice done. With sustained commitment and prioritisation, we will change that.

We are building strong partnerships across the criminal justice system (CJS) to lead the change that is urgently needed, and to drive improvements, both in our own work and through support for our partners. In July 2020, the CPS published a five-year strategy to improve every aspect of how we manage rape and serious sexual offences prosecutions.

This strategy update provides an overview of the work we have undertaken since then; it affirms our ambition to build on this foundation and to make significant year-on-year increases in the number of rape cases we bring to court. It is structured to show what happens from the point an allegation of rape is made, through the police investigation, CPS decision-making and then taking a case to court. We are improving our response to rape and serious sexual offences cases end to end.

This document sets out what we want to achieve, our actions, delivery and outputs since July 2020, and the next phase of activity. Throughout we have included real examples of our work to illustrate the improvements we are seeing across the country as a result of the changes and improvements we are making.

Victims

Hearing and learning from those impacted by rape and serious sexual offences, and the groups and individuals who speak up for victims, is vital. Our continued thanks go to those individuals and organisations who work alongside us to bring about lasting improvements.

We have listened to victims who tell us they have felt let down by their experience in the criminal justice system and specifically in their dealing with the CPS. Throughout this strategy update, we set out how we are seeking to improve the support we provide at this most difficult time. Underpinning our work is a commitment to trauma-informed communication with victims. We have launched a new commitment to rape victims, published a [new framework for working with Independent Sexual Violence Advisers](#), and created [a guide for victims](#) to explain the process of a criminal trial.

We recognise that the quality of our communications with victims is often unacceptably poor. For that reason, we have commissioned in-depth research into victims' needs – the first of its kind for the CPS – to understand what victims need and want from us so we can serve them better. This research is the first part of our fundamental review in how we improve our engagement with victims, and we are committed to making significant change on the back of it. We will shortly publish findings and work with individuals and organisations on how we can design improvements to the way we engage with and support victims.

We want to make significant year-on-year increases in the number of rape cases we bring to court so that more victims, irrespective of background and circumstances, see justice done.

We know we cannot do this alone, and our work needs to support and complement that of our partners, particularly in policing.

Joint working with the police

Close joint working between the police and prosecutors is key to driving up the number of successful prosecutions. We have launched a wide-ranging Joint National Action Plan and have established Operation Soteria, an ambitious programme of work to drive reform and improve collaborative working, with a focus on an offender-centric approach. An offender-centric approach means looking closely at the actions of the suspect before, during and after the alleged assault, so that their behaviour is the focus of the investigation. This joint work will be independently evaluated and – alongside CPS work to introduce baseline delivery standards across all CPS Areas – will provide the foundation for a new operating model for how we manage these complex changes.

Supporting our prosecutors

At the CPS we have a very clear purpose: to make sure the right person is prosecuted for the right offence. Our people come to work every day to bring offenders to justice whenever the legal test is met; they do this fairly and with integrity.

Every rape case in the CPS is dealt with by a specialist prosecutor in a dedicated rape and sexual offences (RASSO) unit. Our staff in these units are highly trained and given extensive guidance and wellbeing support. Without question, these are among the most challenging cases to prosecute, so we are increasing resources for our specialist RASSO units so they are equipped to deal with more cases, more quickly.

We have overhauled our legal guidance for prosecutors considering rape and serious sexual offences cases, comprehensively updating the information on issues such as countering myths and stereotypes, disclosure and the impact of trauma.

We have also implemented new baseline standards across CPS Areas, to make sure that the best ways of working are applied consistently throughout England and Wales.

Terminology

Language and terminology are important when discussing rape and serious sexual offences. Throughout this report, the term ‘victim(s)’ is used to refer to those affected by alleged rape and/or sexual assault. It encompasses other terms such as ‘complainant(s)’, and ‘survivor(s)’. The term victim as used also encompasses both sexes and all genders, whilst explicitly recognising that females make up most victims.

Our ambition

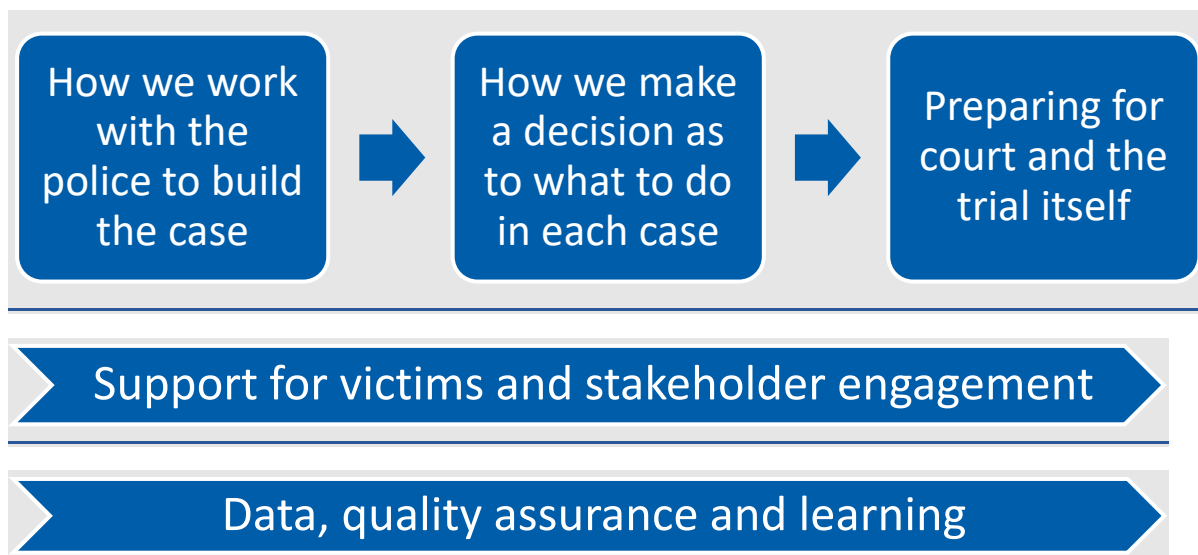


The CPS is determined to increase significantly the number of rape cases we bring to court, year on year. Our purpose is to prosecute the right person for the right offence. We want to secure justice in every possible rape case so that all victims can have confidence that the justice system has treated them fairly. To achieve this needs sustained commitment and prioritisation, and we are building strong partnerships with the police to jointly lead the change that's urgently needed.

The actions set out in this strategy update are designed to support year-on-year increases in the number of rape cases going to court.

In developing our strategy to improve how we prosecute rape, we have reviewed every aspect of how we work on these complex cases, from start to finish.

This update looks at the improvements and explains our work along the journey of a case¹ – from working jointly with the police to gather and bring forward evidence, charging decisions and then, depending on that decision, presenting the strongest possible case in court. Throughout this journey and underpinning its success is the support of trauma-informed communication with victims. At each stage we have outlined the main pieces of work we have already done, and what we are doing next.



Central to the work of the CPS is strong partnership working with the police. Since the publication of RASSO 2025 in 2020, we have launched Operation Soteria in partnership with the police, which cuts across the whole journey above.

¹ The journey outlined in this strategy focuses on those elements of the criminal justice system where the CPS has a key role.

Operation Soteria



Operation Soteria is an ambitious programme of work to transform the way that rape investigations are handled, and cases are prosecuted and progressed, with a focus on the suspect as opposed to the victim. It sits across all stages of the case and will be the foundation, following evaluation, of a new operating model for the CPS Areas.

We launched this initiative in September 2021 in five pathfinder CPS Areas and police forces: London South (Metropolitan Police); North East (Durham); South West (Avon & Somerset); Wales (South Wales) and West Midlands (West Midlands). Operation Soteria prioritises early partnership working to ensure the strongest possible cases are built from the outset, so that more can be charged, more quickly.

In the CPS it will be delivered through a test, learn and evaluate approach supported by academic evaluation, focusing on six workstreams – all underpinned by a closer joint working relationship with the police:

- **Partnership working on investigations (Early Advice)** – enhancing the provision of early advice to the police on building stronger cases, testing several methods including themed surgeries, and committing to returning our advice to the police in specified timeframes. We expect this to improve the number, timeliness and quality of police referrals to the CPS so that more rape and serious sexual offence cases go before the courts;
- **Action plan monitoring (Pre-charge decision)** – sometimes we need to set an ‘action plan’ when police refer a case to us before we can decide whether to charge it. Action plans help set out key aspects of the investigation and case that need to be built to make sure that if it can be charged, it will be. We want to make sure, however, that all proposed actions in the plans we set are necessary and proportionate. We are therefore carrying out greater scrutiny of our action plans, including dip-sampling and joint CPS-police surgeries to improve timeliness and make sure the requests are proportionate and reasonable;
- **No Further Action (NFA) scrutiny** – increasing the quality and public confidence in decision-making through expanding our ‘no further action’ scrutiny panels. These are regular – at least quarterly – panels at which police, local stakeholders and the CPS will jointly scrutinise decisions not to progress RASSO cases. We are increasing the amount of NFA scrutiny activities we undertake and expanding the external element of NFA scrutiny through Local Scrutiny Involvement Panels;
- **Case progression and trial readiness** – improving timeliness and increasing RASSO case volumes by ensuring more trials go ahead; developing case trackers with the Digital Innovations Team, and introducing joint case progression meetings with the police;
- **Supporting victims** – enhancing our communication and engagement with victims, and increasing engagement with Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), to improve victim and public confidence, reduce victim attrition and increase understanding in the criminal justice system; and

- **Our people** – implementing joint learning with the police and participating in a staff welfare pilot to increase learning and development, and support our people’s wellbeing.

How we work with the police to build the case



We know that most rapes and sexual offences are not reported to the police and we want to encourage more victims to feel confident to report these serious crimes. Reporting sexual abuse can be a daunting prospect and is an incredibly brave step, and this bravery should be matched by an empathetic, effective, and professional response from the entire criminal justice system.

What we’ve done	What we will do next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched a national Early Advice Memorandum of Understanding between the CPS and National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor effectiveness of different mechanisms for providing early advice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) in partnership with the police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and refresh the Joint National Action Plan by Summer 2022.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed joint training packages with the police on third party material and reasonable lines of enquiry and delivered joint training webinars on the JNAP with policing. • Provided training for RASSO prosecutors, advocates and managers on proportionality and disclosure in RASSO cases, as well as additional training on trauma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver joint training packages with the police on key activities identified through Operation Soteria learning and academic evaluations, which will further increase our ability to deliver high quality casework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched Operation Soteria in five CPS pathfinder Areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Operation Soteria and continue leading through the review of an independent academic, who will consider evidence-based success measures on volume, quality, timeliness and victim experience, to help us monitor and amend the innovative changes being implemented by the pathfinder areas.



The police are responsible for investigating reports of rape and for gathering evidence. The police do not send every complaint of a criminal offence to the CPS. Where the police think there is enough evidence to support an allegation, they should refer the rape case to one of our specially trained prosecutors, who will make the decision whether to charge it. The CPS will always seek to prosecute when the legal test is met, no matter how complex or challenging the case.

We are committed to working closely with the police to build the best possible cases as quickly as possible. The CPS role begins when the police contact the CPS for a decision on the case – to review the evidence and consider whether we can bring a prosecution. The police can also, before that, consult and seek ‘early advice’ from us from the beginning of an investigation to build and strengthen a case. The CPS is actively promoting the use of early advice to work in partnership with the police to help build stronger cases from the outset.

Focus Spotlight – Threshold Test Charging

Usually, charging decisions are made after all reasonable lines of inquiry have been pursued. However, in particularly serious cases where certain conditions are met, and immediate action is needed to protect a victim or the public from potential harm, the CPS is able to charge on the threshold test. This means that a court can agree to an early charge and a defendant being remanded in custody for a reasonable period of time so that further investigation can take place to allow a full code test decision to be made.

In one case, a complaint of rape, involving allegations of significant gratuitous violence, was made by a victim who had met the suspect via a dating app. The police took a detailed account and carried out key enquiries, including initial investigation of the suspect’s phone and conducting an interview. The officer submitted a request to CPS Direct, our out of hours priority team, for an urgent charging decision over a weekend. The prosecutor was unable to apply the full code test as there were key enquiries outstanding, but agreed the conditions for a threshold charging decision were met. The charge was authorised in the early hours of Sunday morning. A detailed action plan was set by the prosecutor and the suspect was remanded in custody after charge. Further detailed investigation led to a confirmed full code test decision in respect of the original allegations and sufficient evidence to charge additional allegations against other women.

This case is a good example of prompt action being taken by the police and the CPS to ensure that a case was charged at the earliest opportunity.

Focus spotlight - Early Advice and Case Progression Clinics

To support casework quality, the CPS and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) created a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2021, which sets out how we will work more closely together from the early stages of investigation of a rape or serious sexual assault. The aim is to build stronger cases, improve file quality and offer a better understanding of how legal decisions are made – all of which mean providing better support to victims. The MOU has been taken forward in all CPS Areas and police forces from July 2021. The impact of the MOU is being evaluated nationally.

Case study showing the importance of Early Advice: Operation Garnet

The police received a report relating to a violent relationship where the offences of rape, assault and controlling and coercive behaviour were alleged. Using an offender-centric approach, the defendant's phones were analysed which helped evidence these behaviours. Additional victims were identified and the predatory behaviour of the perpetrator demonstrated, highlighting the risk he presented to women in Surrey. Operation Garnet was launched and the CPS provided advice at the earliest stages through a pre-charge case progression clinic. This case had the benefit of an early consultation with a CPS prosecutor in relation to potential new charges arising from these extensive investigations. The police and CPS worked together to develop a strategy to guide the investigation, which included disclosure of information related to digital data and third-party material, as well as the strategy of joining the additional charges relating to other victims to the matters involving the first complainant. We and the police agreed a digital strategy so that a dedicated officer/digital forensic technician could deal with all digital downloads. These meetings and the appointment of a police strategist were crucial in the presentation of this case in court. Regular meetings were held between the police and the same CPS lawyer, who had been assigned to the case to further inform the investigation before the case was charged. Joint strategy meetings considered how best to present digital evidence, resulting in iPads being provided in court, to assist the jury. The defendant was found guilty of 18 offences including Rape, Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and Controlling and Coercive Behaviour. This case is a good example of police identifying early a case that would benefit from early advice and thereafter excellent collaborative working. (CPS South East)

Early case discussion and planning between police and CPS is key to a fair investigation and prosecution and ensuring that investigators balance both the requirements of an investigation and an individual's right to privacy by agreeing reasonable lines of enquiry.

In December 2020, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) introduced the Investigation Management Document (IMD), which sees that the reasonable lines of enquiry and digital strategy of a case are documented and explained by investigators at the outset of the investigation. The CPS uses the IMD to inform the Disclosure Management Document (DMD). Disclosure Management Documents outline the prosecution's strategy and approach taken to disclosure and are used to set out how disclosure responsibilities have

been managed, including lines of enquiry pursued, timescales for disclosure and any third-party material. Transparency of approach is crucial, and the DMD is intended to be a living document and support fair and just process.²

The CPS and NPCC have created two webinars, one focusing on digital devices and reasonable lines of enquiry and the second focussing on third-party material and reasonable lines of enquiry. These products have been created for the use of all RASSO investigators and prosecutors and will be available in Spring 2022. The webinars reaffirm that victims' and witnesses' personal data must be obtained only when it is in pursuit of a reasonable line of enquiry. This approach is vital to ensure fair and transparent justice, including where it may produce evidence making the case stronger and support a prosecution. In developing this training, we have listened to the concerns expressed by stakeholders, victims and witnesses around the impact of these enquiries. The aim of the training is to promote consistency and transparency between the police and CPS to protect victims', witnesses' and suspects' privacy rights.

By working together to develop this vital learning, we are not only improving standards but also our collaborative working relationships. These improved relationships directly impact on the prosecution team approach to efficient and effective prosecutions.

Focus Spotlight – Joint working with the police

In January 2021, the CPS and police published a RASSO [Joint National Action Plan](#) to deliver a wide-ranging joint programme of work to address issues including case progression, building the strongest possible cases from the outset, and accelerating the time taken to bring them to court. This joint plan builds on and is informed by close joint working in all CPS Areas with police colleagues.

Case studies showing the importance of joint working with the police:

Essex

A recent successful prosecution from Essex Police and CPS East of England shows the importance of joint working. It was a non-recent case dating back to the 1970s in which the defendant groomed the victim as a 14-year-old and sexually assaulted her while he was her teacher. The victim's complaint came decades later.

The main challenge with the case was the prosecution was limited in their charging options because of the legislation in place when the offences took place. Despite this, the CPS and police developed a strategy proving offences that could be charged.

Essex Police cited the case as a fantastic example of joint working between CPS and the police. It was described by police as a great example of teamwork and meticulous investigative enquiries - searching through hundreds of third-party documents, which resulted in a disclosure being found to help corroborate the victim's account. The victim

² [Please see the Disclosure Manual on the CPS website.](#)

expressed satisfaction at the imposition of a custodial sentence of 4.5 years. This case demonstrates that, despite a lengthy passage of time, prosecutions remain viable. (CPS East of England)

The South West

The South West CPS Area recently held a joint reflective conference considering how the CPS and police work together, what the barriers to joint working are, and what commitments to strengthening relationships between police and CPS should be taken forward. This has included focus groups for officers, two-hour sessions with CPS on specific topic areas, with learning videos shared which forces are mandating for all RASSO police officers. In December 2021, the Area also hosted joint training for officers and lawyers on the offender-centric approach.

In the Devon and Cornwall police force area, senior CPS staff are undertaking a series of show-and-tell events across the counties for police colleagues, covering key topics such as communication, early advice, and myths and stereotypes. The sessions are interactive, encouraging professional challenge. Nearly 200 officers have attended to date, with feedback being universally positive. Since the start of the events, the Area has seen an increase in Early Advice and more interaction between CPS and police. Across the South West Area, there has been a 120% increase in early advice between the year Q3 2020/21 – Q2 2021/22, compared with the previous four quarters (Q3 2019-20 / Q2 2020/21). (CPS South West)

The North East

CPS North East, in partnership with Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria police, in November 2021 held their first annual RASSO conference. It was an opportunity for the CPS, police and key partner agencies to meet and consider how we presently engage to ensure that we are working to achieve justice. This conference also enabled all partners to have a better understanding of the needs of victims, the barriers to reporting and how we can work together to support them. 76 participants attended the conference, with positive feedback received on this event and the proposal to hold future conferences. (CPS North East)

How we make a decision on what to do in each case



Once the police believe they have enough evidence, they will pass the case to the CPS, ask us to review the evidence and consider whether we can bring a prosecution for rape or serious sexual assault.

What we've done	What we will do next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained 115 more prosecutors to deliver justice in rape and serious sexual offences cases and continued a comprehensive learning and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued and sustained recruitment of frontline staff and ongoing professional development for these roles. We will appoint 70

<p>development programme for RASSO prosecutors.</p>	<p>experienced staff into RASSO posts in the five Operation Soteria pathfinder areas by March 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a series of digital products including webinars, podcasts and how to guides covering key topics and challenges frequently faced by prosecutors. These products will provide a source of continual development and reflective learning opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated our RASSO legal guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish revised pre-trial therapy guidance. A full public consultation on draft guidance was carried out in 2020. Since then the Attorney General published new disclosure guidelines and is currently carrying out the first annual disclosure review. We are awaiting the outcome of this review and will ensure our new guidance reflects any changes to those disclosure guidelines. We have published a fundamental principles document on our website to provide clarity for stakeholders in advance of the publication of the full guidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched a national RASSO enhancement programme of work across the CPS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver on enhancement activity to deliver national baseline standards across all CPS Areas.

All rape and serious sexual offences cases referred to the CPS are handled by highly trained prosecutors working in specialist units. Having the right number of prosecutors and frontline CPS staff is critical to ensuring delivery against this strategy. In the last year, we have successfully recruited 532 new members of staff into the CPS across a mix of roles to contribute to efficiency and resilience, and given 115 more prosecutors specialist training so that they can now consider and review RASSO cases. By the end of March 2022, we will have appointed at least an additional 70 experienced staff into RASSO posts in the five Operation Soteria pathfinder areas, increasing our national pool of over 350 specialists by approximately 20 percent.

The CPS legal training team delivers bespoke RASSO training courses that reflect the offender-centric approach, the impact of trauma on victims, and how to tackle myths and stereotypes. Despite the impact of the pandemic, the team has delivered the full range of available RASSO-related courses. Since March 2020, there have been over 1,600 prosecutorial attendees for RASSO training courses.³

Last year, we published substantially updated legal guidance on RASSO, following extensive consultation with experts and victim groups. Key changes in the guidance, its first full revision since 2012, include: updated sections on the impact of trauma, specifically the impact on memory, behaviour and demeanour; an offender-centric approach; and reasonable lines of enquiry, including digital data.

Informed by victims' groups, the legal guidance now reflects changes in sexual behaviours and encounters driven by technological change. This includes providing advice on the growing trend of exchanging naked selfies and misconceptions around the use of 'hook-up' dating apps, as well as information around why someone might remain in contact with their attacker after an incident. The new legal guidance also includes a section on cases involving [same-sex suspects and complainants](#), and issues relevant to particular groups, including minoritised ethnic communities, gypsy, Roma and traveller victims, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers and those with disabilities.

Focus spotlight – An offender-centric approach

Police investigators and CPS prosecutors are asked to place the primary focus on the actions and behaviour of the suspect when conducting rape investigations and prosecuting these cases – a so-called 'offender-centric approach'. This approach is at the heart of the Joint National Action Plan that the CPS co-delivers with police partners.

In May 2021, the CPS published updated [Rape and Serious Sexual Offences \(RASSO\) legal guidance](#), delivering on our ongoing commitment to make the prosecution of these horrific crimes reflect today's rapidly changing society. In developing the new guidance, we took on board considerations from a wide range of victim support groups, psychologists and the legal community, following a full public consultation.

The updated RASSO legal guidance encourages prosecutors to adopt an offender-centric approach to case-building, which involves looking closely at the actions of the suspect before, during and after the offence. This enables a prosecutor to understand fully the circumstances and context of the offence, including considering whether the suspect targeted, exploited or exerted control or coercion over the victim. It may also include assessing how and why a suspect interacted with an intoxicated victim.

³ Individual prosecutors will attend multiple different courses

This approach is intended to ensure the investigation is fair and not unduly focused on the behaviour and actions of the victim and aims to help build the strongest possible cases.

We have started a key programme of national enhancement work across the CPS on RASSO to make sure all Areas are meeting the same high standards. To ensure consistency of casework quality and approach in our handling of RASSO throughout England and Wales, we conducted analysis of each Area’s RASSO Unit workload, how they manage their work and how they work with their police counterparts. As a consequence of that analysis, we have identified elements of best practice that will support national improvements in how we handle RASSO and in particular our implementation of the recommendations arising from Her Majesty’s Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate’s (HMCPIS) December 2019 Inspection in a consistent way.

We identified 11 key activities directly related to casework quality, casework efficiency, and improving public confidence and stakeholder relationships. By taking a consistent, national approach to these 11 activities, we will build and progress more RASSO cases more quickly, so that more victims secure justice. These activities also form the bedrock of our improvement programme and of our Operation Soteria work. We are working to make sure each of our 14 CPS Areas is meeting the same high standard.

Of the 11 activities, we have already implemented five, and we will have implemented and launched the others in all CPS Areas by the end of the financial year.

RASSO national enhancement activities



Implemented and live across all 14 CPS Areas	Implementation across all 14 CPS Areas to be launched by the end of the financial year
National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of early advice between the CPS and National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC).	Revised approach to joint performance management with the police.
Joint scrutiny of NFA cases.	Case tracking.
Robust management of casework action plans ⁴ .	Triaging aged cases.
Reform of the pending response-further investigation (formerly known as admin finalised) process.	Early case progression conferences.
Focused work with ISVAs and support services.	Trial readiness checks.

⁴ This work strand involves reviewing cases where there are more than two action plans after the provision of Early Advice. This is to ensure that a) action plans are proportionate, b) we are asking for enquiries at the right time to identify learning when we could have asked for requests earlier and c) to ensure a thinking approach to investigations and following up additional lines of enquiry prior to a formal request for a charging decision from the CPS.

	Local Case Management Plans on high risk cases.
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Focus spotlight – Scrutiny and professional challenge

In many cases, it will be decided that no further action can be taken against a suspect after an allegation has been made. This decision may be taken by the police or by the CPS. The police may make the decision before anything has been shared with the CPS, or after seeking early advice.

We actively invite scrutiny of our No Further Action (NFA) decisions from expert practitioners and community members.

NFA scrutiny is all about learning from cases and improving the quality of police and CPS decision-making, promoting best practice and increasing public confidence. NFA scrutiny happens in every CPS Area.

Local Scrutiny Involvement Panels (LSIPs) are the key mechanism by which the CPS engages with local communities and their representatives, and key partner agencies such as the police. These regular panels focus on the scrutiny of case files, including review of CPS NFA decisions. Since January 2021, every Area has held a RASSO-specific LSIP. These groups play an important role in feeding back issues to local staff to improve casework quality and support for victims and witnesses. We draw out lessons, casework issues and actions in these meetings, discuss them and take forward improvements.

Operation Soteria case studies showing the importance of scrutiny and professional challenge

Every CPS Operation Soteria pathfinder Area undertakes at least one form of NFA scrutiny. We are testing different forms of scrutiny in different Operation Soteria Areas. Methods of scrutiny include NFA scrutiny panels, which are joint police/CPS meetings that review police NFA decisions, LSIPs, and police-led NFA scrutiny panels. These panels ensure that cases that could and should be prosecuted, are prosecuted. An additional benefit is that lessons are learned about when cases should be referred to the CPS and what lines of investigation are reasonable for investigators to pursue. CPS West Midlands hold multi-stakeholder panels where their NFA decisions are scrutinised; in the South West and London South, dip-sampling of police NFA decisions take place.

In CPS North East, our prosecutors and police hold clinics to consider samples of cases in which police colleagues have proposed no further action. These are cases that would not normally be seen by the CPS, but under Operation Soteria are being shared monthly with the CPS. Clinics are set up to provide feedback on the cases and advice given to police where CPS would advise there are additional lines of enquiry available, which may result in a decision to charge. Analysis of the reasons for cases not reaching the full code test provides our prosecutors and police investigators with a valuable source of learning, which leads to

better collaboration and understanding between agencies. Scrutiny enables us to work jointly to build cases for charge and prosecution that would otherwise not be progressed, and helps us improve decision-making by sharing learning and best practice.

In CPS South East, NFA Scrutiny Panels are theme-based, where cases are randomly selected by senior officers, CPS managers and victim representatives. The SE Area holds regular meetings with each of their police forces in their Area where six cases are considered. Across the Area, the panels have advised officers to further review approximately a third of these cases on the basis that they could potentially be built towards prosecution or because a decision had been taken to NFA the case too early. Discussions during the NFA panels allow for scrutiny of the decision-making and the supervisor endorsements. As the relevant Detective Inspectors attend the meetings, they have been able to clarify issues raised by the Panel without the need for the case to be re-opened for further review. As a consequence of these reviews, areas of good practice and learning have been established, including clarifying some misunderstandings of charging thresholds. Having a victim’s voice in these panels has been incredibly beneficial, to address any victim-blaming language and demonstrate a real commitment by all involved to scrutiny, learning and ultimately improving the way this work is dealt with. This is in addition to the existing national CPS [Victims’ Right to Review \(VRR\)](#) scheme that has been in place for some time. (CPS South East)

Preparing for court and the trial itself



Once we have made a decision to charge a suspect with rape or serious sexual assault, the role of the CPS is to work to present the best and strongest case possible to the court to try to secure a conviction.

What we’ve done	What we will do next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published an updated Advocacy Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot new familiarisation meetings to better engage with victims.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted the use of Section 28 special measure for victims of RASSO cases in seven pilot Crown Courts and nationally for vulnerable victims and witnesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the use of a range of special measures for RASSO cases.

High-quality advocacy is critical to achieving our organisational aims. In March 2021, we published our updated [Advocacy Strategy](#). As part of our efforts to capture and disseminate best practice regarding advocacy in RASSO cases, we developed a survey which, in August 2021, we sent to all members of our external Rape Advocates List and to CPS-employed higher court advocates who are qualified to prosecute RASSO cases. This invited views on a

range of issues relevant to the advocates’ in-court experience. The responses we received provided us with a valuable evidence base, which we will use to support our ongoing improvement work.

We will shortly pilot new guidance on the use of ‘familiarisation meetings’ to support victims when a not guilty plea is entered. These meetings provide the victim with the opportunity to meet the prosecution team, discuss special measures, raise any questions they may have about the process, and share any concerns they may have about giving evidence. They also provide an opportunity for the CPS to provide information to the victim that may help reassure them, and promote their increased engagement with the case and criminal justice process.

When a case goes to trial, a victim will usually be required to give evidence. Giving evidence in court can be a daunting experience for anyone, none more so than a victim of rape or serious sexual offence. Pre-recorded cross-examination offers an opportunity to support victims to give their account of events outside and in advance of the court hearing. This is known as ‘Section 28’ (s.28).⁵ Vulnerable victims and witnesses (defined as children under 18 or adults with mental or physical disorders or disabilities or social functioning impairments) have been able to access s.28 in three pilot courts for a number of years. From August 2020, s.28 measures have been made available nationally in every Crown Court for this group of vulnerable victims and witnesses. S.28 was also made available to all victims of rape, serious sexual offences or modern slavery from 2019 in the same three pilot Crown Courts. From September 2021 this pilot was expanded, meaning this is now available in seven Crown Courts.

Our Joint National Action Plan with the police includes a commitment to increase awareness of currently under-used special measures, such as clearing the public gallery, known as ‘Section 25’.⁶ We have now developed an information sheet on this provision, which has been shared with CPS advocates, external advocates, RASSO Unit Heads and organisations who provide training to ISVAs.

Support for victims



It is critical – to support victims and build public trust – that we better explain the role of the CPS, how and why we make decisions and what support is available to help victims and witnesses navigate the stressful and complex criminal justice system.

What we’ve done	What we will do next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published a new guide for victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences that explains the timeline of a case. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the new guide for victims, statement of commitment for victims.

⁵ Section 28 (s.28) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA)

⁶ Section 25(4)(a) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published and consulted on a statement of commitment for victims and a new rape policy statement. 	<p>and rape policy statement after public consultation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained engagement with victim representatives and stakeholders through our External Consultation Group, which includes the Victims' Commissioners and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims' needs research to be published to inform a new, improved model of communication between the CPS and victims.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created new letters so that correspondence with victims throughout a case is better, trauma-informed and more empathetic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the service we provide to victims with the greatest need to ensure our engagement is tailored appropriately.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published a new national ISVA framework in partnership with the police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovate and pilot new ways to strengthen our engagement with victims.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned research into the needs of victims, including victims of rape and serious sexual offences. 	

In October 2021, we published a ['Guide for Victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences'](#) on the CPS website to explain what rights victims have, how we make charging decisions, what happens at the various hearings in the courts and what support is available to help victims give their best evidence, including special measures. This 'walkthrough' guide is written in plain English, with legal terminology clearly explained and supplemented by infographics and staff videos. There are more videos planned with lawyers to explain disclosure and decision-making. We welcome comments or views on this guide so we can continually improve it.

Alongside this, we also published for consultation a statement of commitment to victims and our updated rape policy statement. These provide information about what people can expect from the CPS in considering, charging and prosecuting RASSO cases. The CPS has sought feedback from a range of advocacy groups, including those who support women and girls, men and boys, those from ethnic minorities, disabled and LGBT+ victims. Following consultation, both documents will be translated into Welsh, British Sign Language and the top ten most commonly spoken languages across England and Wales to ensure that victims from as many communities as possible have access to this important information.

We recognise that our engagement and communication with victims is not good enough; in particular, the letters we send to victims are rightly seen as too often being inconsistent,



inaccurate, untimely or lacking in empathy. As a first step, we have created new letters and will be piloting these in various CPS Areas to assess what level of communication at what stage gives the greatest value to victims. We will make sure that letters introduce the reviewing lawyer to the victim, explain what is happening on their case, highlight their rights under the Victims' Code and suggest avenues for support.

To inform our longer term ambitions to improve we have commissioned an extensive piece of research into what victims need from engagement and communication with us so that they can better understand the role of the CPS, how we make our decisions and what their rights are. The researchers have spoken to more than 200 victims and support service professionals including ISVAs, 150 CPS staff, our statutory partners and stakeholder groups to ensure we have a detailed picture. This Spring we will publish the research findings and engage stakeholders as we design an improved approach to victim engagement and communication that is more two-way, proactive and better fits the diverse communities we serve and the needs of the victims within the criminal justice system.

The CPS employs an Inclusion and Community Engagement Manager in every CPS Area. This network works with communities to better understand local concerns about criminal justice issues and the work of the CPS. These insights help shape our policies and processes, for example how and when we communicate with victims of crime. These roles are also pivotal in the coordination of activities to engage with diverse and seldom-heard groups.

It is vital we hear from, listen to and engage with our stakeholders to strengthen our approach to prosecuting RASSO cases. We have regular and sustained engagement with our key stakeholders, and regularly consult on key public documents to improve our work.

Focus spotlight – work with victims

Case studies showing the importance of strong engagement with victims

The defendant was the Head of Care at a boarding school and was accused of sexually assaulting a number of students. These were non-recent offences where the evidence was challenging due to some victims having denied that anything had occurred during earlier investigations. The lawyer understood that these denials were down to a mixture of trauma and social pressures at the time. She worked hard to identify evidence to support the victims and demonstrate their trauma at the hands of the defendant, rather than seeing this material as simply undermining the case. The defendant, 85 years old, was convicted on four counts of indecent assault and sentenced to four years imprisonment. The case shows that it is never too late to secure justice for victims of sexual abuse, and how we can actively tackle rape myths and stereotypes in prosecuting RASSO cases. (CPS East Midlands)

CPS East Midlands in November 2021 delivered a Victim Focus joint training course for lawyers, paralegals and Victim Liaison Unit staff. This was a practical course to explore what good communication with victims of sexual abuse looks like, whether that be in written form, or in face-to-face special measures meetings, or through the Victims' Right to Review

scheme. Individual victims contributed, including an 18-year-old who made a film. The ISVAs, Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (CHISVAs) and victims took the CPS staff through individual letters highlighting what worked in them and why, and also specific examples of victim meetings and the learning to be taken from them. Specific focus was placed on how to avoid victim-blaming, how to communicate with empathy and ensure clarity of message. The event received praise from both CPS staff, victims and their supporters because it gave the opportunity for direct and open discussion in a safe space. (CPS East Midlands)

Focus spotlight – Working with support services

Alongside direct, accessible and trauma-informed communication with victims, working closely with support services is vital to the successful delivery of justice in RASSO cases. On 18 June 2021, as part of our Joint National Action Plan with the police, we published a new [National Framework](#) to improve the way we work with Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs); we developed this framework in partnership with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The framework is a result of hard work and close collaboration by the CPS, NPCC, ISVAs and support services to improve the way we work together to support victims of rape and sexual offences.

The framework includes a range of minimum standards, including single points of contact across the police, CPS and ISVA agencies to forge stronger working relationships and seamless communication between partners; holding Multi-Agency Rape Strategic and Scrutiny Groups, which bring together key figures from across the criminal justice system to oversee the way this framework is implemented; and improved communication with victims, considering their individual needs and preferences.

Case studies showing the importance of work with support services

West Midlands

The ISVA SPOC and CPS RASSO Unit Head deliver monthly presentations to all the ISVA providers in the West Midlands – to address any common misunderstandings – for example, why victims cannot discuss the evidence of the case with the Crown Advocate – and to answer any questions they have to support improved joint working. (CPS West Midlands)

London South

CPS London South holds regular open forum meetings with ISVAs. These forums allow thematic issues to be raised, listened to and resolved. ISVAs are also invited into team meetings, providing an opportunity for CPS to ensure that ISVAs can support victims to understand the work of the CPS. (CPS London South)

East of England

In CPS East of England, ISVA liaison groups take place every six weeks. We have improved lines of communication with ISVAs, put in place standardised witness care processes, and

ISVA representatives have attended CPS RASSO team meetings to enhance our understanding of our respective roles. We are adopting a post-charge meeting memorandum of understanding – ISVAs will request a meeting in appropriate cases with the prosecutor, officer in charge (OIC) and note taker. The meetings will help to improve the confidence of the victim, introduce the victim to the lawyer prosecuting the case and provide reassurance around the process. (CPS East of England)

East Midlands

In CPS East Midlands, we have approved an information-sharing agreement between the CPS, police and ISVAS/CHISVAs to ensure that when a report is made to the police, the police automatically offer ISVA support and share these contact details with the CPS upon referral for a charging decision. This means that we can liaise with the ISVA/CHISVA and invite them to special measures meetings, seek their advice and support regarding any additional victim communication needed, and use their skills to keep the victim updated in the best possible way. (CPS East Midlands)

North East

Regular ISVA forums in CPS North East area have led to the introduction of a dedicated CPS/ISVA mailbox – a new and direct route for ISVAs to contact the CPS to make general enquiries or seek updates on case file information on behalf of the victim. The forums have also led to the agreement to offer victims and their ISVA a post-charge meeting with the allocated lawyer in their case. (CPS North East)

Data, quality assurance and learning



The use of data, robust quality assurance processes and ongoing learning sit across all activities and levels in the CPS.

What we've done	What we will do next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed in partnership with the police a proof of concept rape data analytics tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support plans to expand the rape data analytics tool into more areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported increased transparency in the performance of the criminal justice system (CJS) by providing expertise and assistance to design and publish the Government's first quarterly all-crime and adult rape CJS scorecards. The scorecards provide information on three key stages of the CJS: the investigation stage, the charging stage, and the court stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work collaboratively with CJS partner agencies to improve scorecards for future publications. This includes the development of regional scorecards to improve understanding of local performance. Disaggregate referrals for early advice from referrals for a full charging decision in CPS data to

	better understand the operational picture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began holding data-specific consultation meetings with our External Consultation Group to coincide the CPS quarterly data releases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working to develop and include new metrics as we develop better quality data.

Focus Spotlight - Rape data analytics tool

In 2021, the police and CPS jointly developed a rape data analytics tool to act as a ‘proof of concept’ that rape data can be joined across the criminal justice system for the first time. The tool provides insights into attrition points and where improvements can be made to support victims and ultimately increase the number of RASSO cases that progress through the criminal justice system.

Using currently available data from Avon and Somerset police and CPS, from the period 2016-2020, the tool provides end-to-end data analysis of the key stages in rape cases from report to prosecution. The first section of the tool from police report to CPS prosecution has been completed and currently court data is being added to the tool. This allows us to explore and understand attrition and timeliness in the cases at each stage using different timeframes, demographics of suspects and victims and type of cases, e.g. domestic abuse rape cases or non-recent cases.

The tool can drill down into the gaps between police and CPS and help assess the impact of measures on outcomes at each stage. We will now support cross-system plans to expand this data capability into more areas.

We have implemented an enhanced assurance and compliance regime to ensure complete oversight in relation to casework management and progression – this is important to improving the quality and timeliness of the process for RASSO cases, which also helps better support the victim and reduce the risk of the case falling before it reaches court. In addition to the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP), each Area has its own action plan to address both the recommendations from Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) reports [on RASSO](#) and individual Area issues and pressures. To ensure that every Area is addressing the recommendations for improvement and consistency, we have mandated minimum levels of activity that should be contained within each Area action plan. Collectively all the activities will improve relationships with stakeholders, improve casework quality and therefore ultimately drive up poor performance or maintain and share good performance.



This is in addition to the mandated activities required under our RASSO enhancement programme.

High quality analysis and evidence is essential to good policymaking and delivering better outcomes. We are developing a comprehensive research programme for the CPS that will provide a more robust platform from which the organisation can drive evidence-based policy change and operational improvements with our partners.

The CPS strongly believes in transparency and accountability. In 2020, for the first time, we introduced quarterly publication of [CPS data on rape flagged prosecutions](#), and began holding meetings with our External Consultation Group to coincide with these quarterly data releases to allow for conversation and scrutiny of the data from a range of stakeholders.

We supported the development and design of Government's commitment to create and publish regular criminal justice scorecards, which show how the whole system is performing. The aim of the scorecards is to shine a light on performance, increase and promote transparency in the criminal justice system, and improve collective cross-system accountability. The scorecards provide information about the investigation stage (with metrics provided by the police and Home Office), the charging stage (with metrics provided by the CPS) and the court stage (with metrics provided by the Ministry of Justice and HMCTS).

There is one scorecard for all crime types and a specific scorecard for adult rape cases. The scorecard for adult rape cases will ensure progress against the ambitions published in the cross-Government Rape Review. The scorecards include a range of metrics that align to our and the Government's priorities for recovery of the criminal justice system, especially in respect of RASSO. These priorities are improving timeliness, quality and volumes of cases, and victim engagement. The first set of national scorecards [was published in December 2021](#).

Focus Spotlight – Accountability, Leadership and Governance

Delivering robust leadership through clear governance, accountability and scrutiny is critical to successful delivery of this strategy and our joint work with the police, delivered through the Joint National Action Plan.

Internally the overall responsibility at the highest levels of the CPS is owned by the Director of Public Prosecutions, and is overseen by the Executive Group, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer. The implementation of this RASSO strategy is overseen by the RASSO Internal Steering Group.

Jointly with the police, senior oversight and accountability is led by the Joint Operational Improvement Board (JOIB), co-chaired by the Director of Public Prosecutions and Assistant Commissioner, Nicholas Ephgrave, as the NPCC lead for Criminal Justice. Not only does the Board provide leadership on RASSO but it also ensures join-up across key related agendas including disclosure.

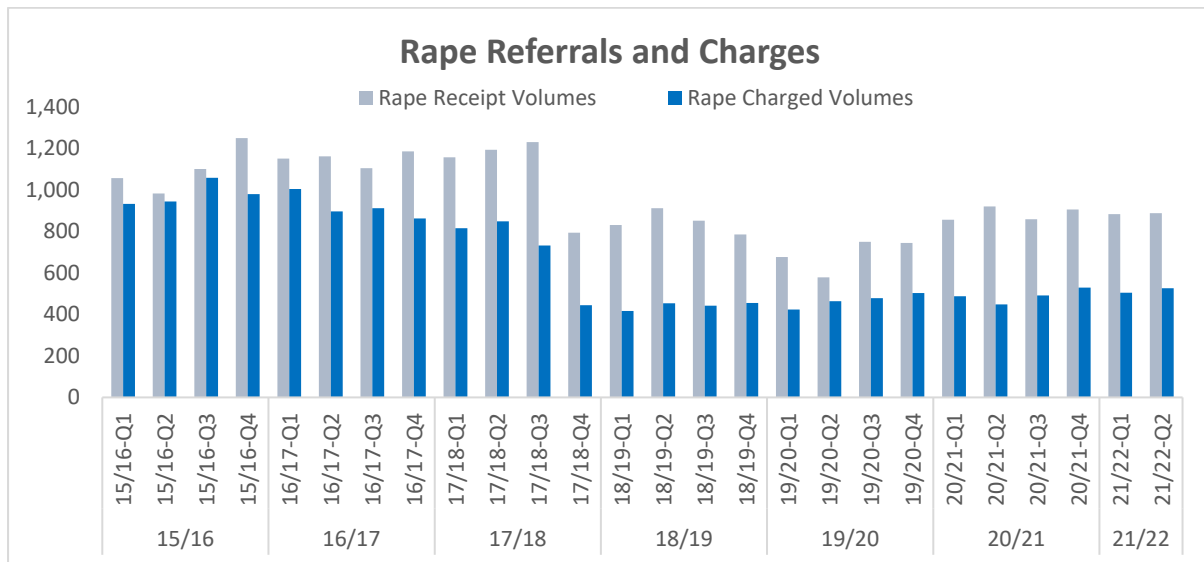
Significantly increasing rape volumes, charges and convictions is a cross-system priority. Another important feature of our governance arrangements is working closely across the criminal justice system to achieve systemic reform in the overall response to RASSO. CPS is an active contributor to the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Group on the Rape Review and a standing member of the Rape Review Task Force, chaired by the Minister of State for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences.

Data headlines



After steady year-on-year increases, the number of people charged and convicted of rape peaked in 2016 – 17. There has rightly been a great deal of scrutiny of the factors behind the stark fall since that period: there has been a fall in receipts sent from the police to the CPS, a fall in charge volumes and a fall in cases reaching court. The cross-government Rape Review looked at this in detail and found no single reason for the significant drop in rape cases taken to court since 2016. Rather, a number of factors, including resources, the impact of digital evidence and the response to disclosure failings all played a part. We fully accept that there were things we could have done better. Too few victims have seen justice done and changing that is a priority for the CPS. To achieve this needs sustained commitment and prioritisation, and we are building strong partnerships with the police to jointly lead the change that’s urgently needed.

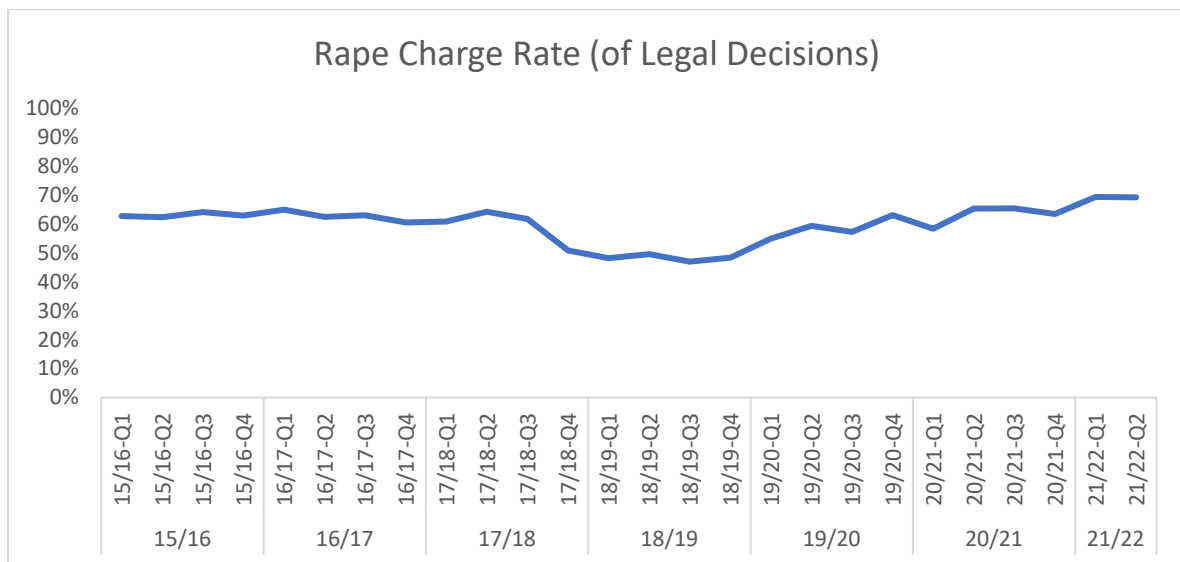
The data in this section highlights the significant work we still have to do, alongside demonstrating that the decline in cases has halted, and is showing slight recent improvements and signs of system recovery.



A large proportion of reports of rape to the police are not referred to the CPS for consideration. According to published data, in 2019/2020 the police recorded a total of

58,967 Rape offences. In 2020/21 this figure was 55,569⁷. Over the same period receipts to the CPS were 2,747 and 3,539 respectively⁸. Our strategy is built on joint partnership working, and through our actions we are investing in early partnerships working with the police to increase the volume of quality files referred to us. It is a positive step forward that we are seeing a rise in the volume of cases sent to the CPS by the police. Quality partnerships between the CPS and policing, including Operation Soteria and the provision of early advice, help ensure strong cases are built at an early stage and encourage a greater number of high-quality referrals from the police into the CPS so we can consider them for charge.

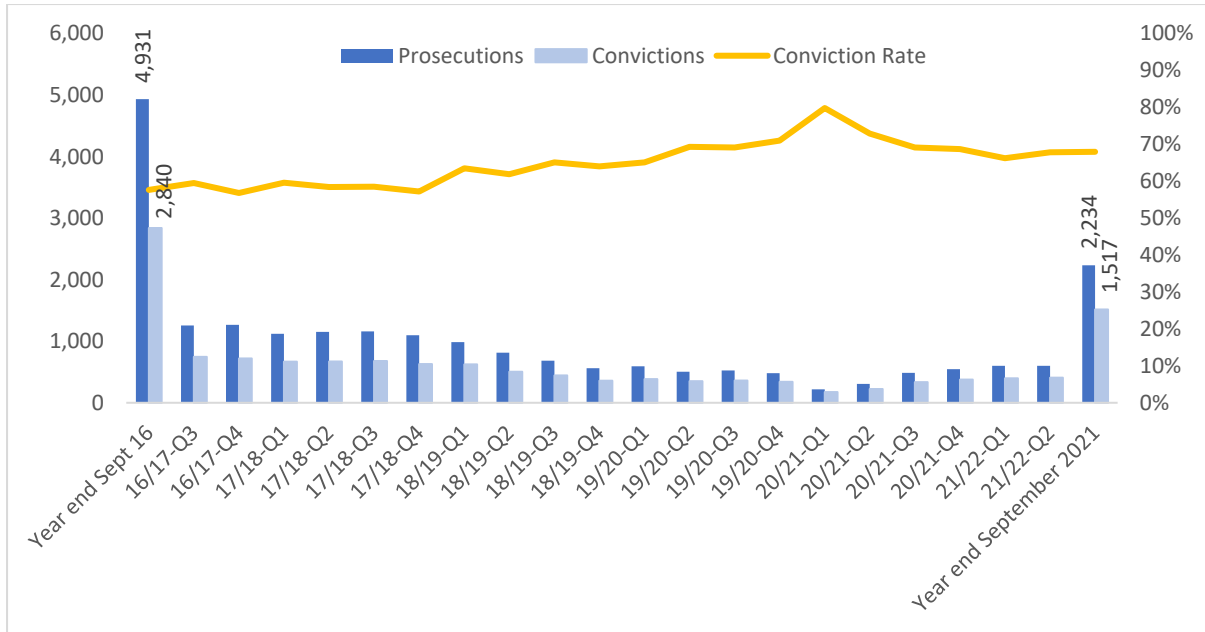
It is also important to note that the CPS drive to provide early advice in RASSO cases to support police colleagues to build the strongest possible case at an early stage will affect our data. We are working for future data summaries to ensure that we can disaggregate referrals for early advice from referrals for a full charging decision; that will make our data more meaningful and increase transparency in these numbers.



We are seeing a rise in the charge rate for rape offences. Alongside rising police referrals, and a drive to provide more early advice, this is a promising pattern, bringing the charge rate for these offences in line with those of other offences. There is a lot further to go and we remain determined to see further improvements.

⁷ [Police-recorded crime open data Police Force Area tables from year ending March 2013 onwards](#) - Please note this is a live Home Office dataset, and these figures are correct as of 24 February 2022.

⁸ CPS record the number of referrals by number of suspects.



As we follow a journey of case through the criminal justice system, prosecutions and convictions rose slightly between the year ending June 2020 and the year ending September 2021. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the criminal justice system (CJS). Despite innovations introduced during this period, social distancing has had a significant impact on the progression of cases through the CJS.

Timely justice is important for all crimes but felt particularly acutely in RASSO cases. This is true both for victims and defendants. RASSO cases have become more complex for a number of reasons – including the volume of digital material and the changing nature of relationships. Providing early advice – a deliberate choice in our partnership with the police to build stronger cases and bring more cases to court – does mean cases are entering the CPS system earlier in the ‘life’ of an offence. Adopting an offender-centric approach, which will strengthen these cases with the intention of bringing more offenders to justice, can also increase the time it takes to progress cases. The time to charge rose in the year ending September 2021,⁹ and we are working to improve and speed this up. As cases take time to progress through the CJS, victim engagement and engagement with support services is ever more important. Supporting victims through the journey of case, particularly as the case reaches court, is crucial and our reforms to victim engagement will be critical here.

Whilst we are encouraged by the improvements seen within the last year, we recognise there is still a long way to go. We remain determined to drive up the number of rape cases going to court and build confidence that the criminal justice system is treating rape victims and suspects fairly.

⁹ The average time for the police and CPS to charge rose to 159.8 days in year ending September 2021 from 145.0 days in year ending June 2020.

Reporting against success measures



In RASSO 2025, we committed to reporting against a number of measures; these include:

Community panel who agree with “The CPS responds to our feedback”.	In the latest data 81.4% of community panel members agree with this statement.
Public who agree with “I am confident that the CPS is effective at prosecuting people accused of committing a crime”.	The Office for National Statistics’ Crime Survey, published in July 2020, has shown a steady increase in public confidence in the CPS. Last year, those who were ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ confident that the CPS is effective stood at a combined total of 63% – up from 51% in 2011. ¹⁰ .
Timeliness of response to, and compliance with, judge directions.	In 2020/21, nearly 96% of directions in rape cases were complied with on time. This is in comparison to 82.4% in the year 2016/17.
Guilty pleas at first hearing.	Around 30% of rape cases resulted in guilty pleas at the first hearing in the Crown Court in the year 2020/21. In 2016/17, this figure was just under 19%.
Timeliness of charging decisions.	The data for the year 2020/21 shows that there was an average of around 146 days between police referral and decision to charge. This is in comparison to an average of 67 days in 2016/17.

We will undertake additional reporting in line with the [CPS business plan and annual report publication](#). Going forward, we will monitor our progress in a number of different ways:

- Through the publication, regular review and scrutiny of CPS quarterly data release, including engagement with stakeholders on these;
- Through the publication and scrutiny of the criminal justice adult rape scorecards; and
- Through the design of specific outcome measures on RASSO service delivery.

¹⁰ This data is not currently being collected by the Office of National Statistics Crime Survey.

2025

