



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**
for Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland

Your Communities - Your Commissioner

Police and Crime Panel for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

18th June 2024

Op Soteria and Rape Performance

Report Date	18 June 2024
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Security Classification	Official

Purpose of Report

1. In his role as the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) the Commissioner is required to secure efficient and effective policing for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, hold the Chief Constable to account and contribute to national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary.
2. The PCC brings this report to outline for the Police and Crime Panel how he is fulfilling his duty by holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Force in relation to Rape Offences and demonstrate how he is supporting the force and local partners to tackle local priorities.

Request of the Panel

3. In their role to scrutinise the actions and decisions of the PCC, the Commissioner requests that the panel examines the contents of this report. He would specifically like to ask the panel their opinion on the following questions;
 - a. Is the Panel content that the PCC is ensuring this important topic is kept as a priority across the Force and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)?
 - b. Would the panel like to make any recommendations to the PCC in relation to this matter?

Summary

4. It is the opinion of the PCC that the Chief Constable is on track to achieve the 12-month target to increase the positive outcomes relating to rape offences to 8%. It is of the opinion of the PCC that the Force are taking the right steps to support the work and objectives of Op Soteria.
5. The PCC's evidence for this is the recently refreshed Force Vulnerability Plan and the OPCC Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. The PCC's ongoing funding for commissioned services will continue to support victims and encourage victim engagement to maximise the chance of prosecution, and therefore increase the positive outcome rate.

Background

6. Rape is a Force Priority as identified in both the Strategic Assessment and in the Force Management Statement.
7. In LLR, the number of reported rape offences per 100,000 population has increased from 91 in 2019 to 122 in 2024, an increase of 34%. This does however include reporting campaigns to improve victim confidence in reporting. Nationally the force sits 29th out of 43 forces for volume of rape offences for the year ending March 2024, this is also 6th out of the 8 most similar forces group.

8. The Force have managed to drive down the median length of rape investigation times by 10 days to an average length of 84 days as of February 2024.
9. The positive outcome rate (offence resulting in a charge) for rape offences in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) is currently 6%, which is 1% below the national average and 32nd for the volume of positive outcomes recorded.
10. A refreshed Force Vulnerability Strategy was developed in November 2023 which provides clarity around the force commitment to protecting those who are vulnerable and prosecuting those who cause harm, with Rape being specifically identified as a key performance and delivery focus within that strategy.
11. The Force have presented their strategy to the PCC including a delivery plan to reflect best practice. Guidance for Leicestershire Police has been developed and is being overseen by a dedicated Detective Superintendent, reporting to the Force Vulnerability Board chaired by ACC Kerr. The delivery plan reflects the '4P' approach of **Protecting** the Public, **Preventing** Harm, **Preparing** the Force and **Prosecuting** Offenders.
12. Leicestershire Police have set a short term 12-month target to achieve an 8% positive outcome rate for rape offences in LLR. One of the main actions to ensure this target is achieved is ensuring victim referrals to support services and the service providers having enough resources to manage demand.
13. Following on from a previous report for the Panel brought in December 2023, the Force is also continuing to implement and deliver against the Op Soteria objectives. This includes the completion of a thorough self-assessment in December 2023 of the Force's response to rape, from which the insights have informed the Force's refreshed delivery plan and reports into the Force Vulnerability Board.
14. The Force is delivering the new national RASSO Investigative Skills Development Programme (RUISDP) to 180 officers and staff across specialist teams throughout the summer of 2024. Increased resources have been allocated to the Signal Team and in March the new operating model was launched with an additional two Detective Sergeants and Detective Inspector alongside twelve Police Constable's (PCs).
15. The new structure ensures that the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit takes primacy in rape investigations where rape forms a part of a pattern of intimate partner Domestic Abuse (DA). All DA detectives will undergo relevant programmes to become accredited RASSO investigators.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

16. The Police and Crime Commissioner provides funding to numerous services who provide both diversionary intervention for potential offenders, and victim support where a rape offence has occurred.
17. Diversionary courses typically relate to domestic abuse perpetrators in which the content of the course is designed to prevent behaviour from escalating. While not all cases escalate to sexual violence, these courses can help prevent escalating behaviour and protect potential victims of sexual assault.
18. The PCC funds a wide range of victim support services in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who provide specialist support services for victims of domestic abuse and rape offences in LLR, including trials for new initiatives to further support victims in the city and county, such as support for CARA (Conditional Cautioning and Relational Abuse).
19. A brief summary of each commissioned service has been listed below:

Service provider	Summary of services	Total funding from OPCC to 31 st March 2024
Juniper Lodge (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)	Juniper Lodge provides a free and discreet service to anyone aged 18 years and over, male or female that has been subject to a sexual assault. Staff support victims by accessing medical support, make referrals to specialist agencies, and enable the individual to make choices about their case by providing clear information to victims.	£67,906.00
New Dawn New Day	New Dawn New Day offers practical, emotional and therapeutic support to women who are considered vulnerable and have multiple and complex needs. Our support helps women to change their lives and look forward to a brighter future. NDND use assessment planning tailored around the individual, provide one to one advice plus group programmes among other activities to provide support and build confidence.	£32,050.00
Freeva	HES – Helpline & Engagement Service. FreeVA is a free helpline for people who have experienced or are experiencing violence and abuse. Callers speak to trained advisors who will listen and provide support. Freeva also provide organisational training for a range of support services.	HES: £434,708.00 DASV: £176,539.00

Leicester Rape Crisis	Provides support for victims of rape via telephone helpline support, face to face support, support groups and tailored services.	£43,500.00
Quetzal	Quetzal provides support for female survivors aged 16 and above who are recovering from the trauma of childhood sexual abuse in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. Quetzal offers long-term counselling, crisis counselling, and a telephone helpline to assist these survivors in their recovery journey.	£7,625.00
Victim First	Victim First are a team of experienced and professional caseworkers, supported by a team of dedicated and highly trained volunteers to help support victims in their journey of recovery. Victim First provide confidential and independent advice to both adults and young people, tailored to victim's needs.	£508,845.00
Women's Aid Leicestershire	Women's Aid Leicestershire offer temporary refuge accommodation and support services for all victims of domestic abuse and violence. WAL provide support to both adults and children through family practitioners. WAL offer an Empowerment Programme to support female survivors of domestic abuse.	£64,294
Living Without Abuse	LWA provides information and advice, as well as practical and emotional support, to anyone experiencing domestic abuse and/or sexual violence in Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland. Within LWA, The Amber Service is an independent service providing support to children, young people, and adults who have experienced rape and/or sexually assault. The Amber Service includes Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) support for children and adults going through the court process and a team of Sexual Violence Support Workers who support those who choose not to, or are unable, to engage in the criminal justice process. LWA also offer a dedicated Pregnancy and Maternity Specialist Support IDVA.	£132,981.00
Hampton Trust - Cara	Through engagement in two workshops and feedback from victims, CARA is designed to enable offenders to understand what domestic abuse is, the impact and its consequences.	£44,000.00

Partnership working

20. Representatives from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner have wide-reaching attendance on strategic boards across the Force and with external partners, which enables a strong multi-agency approach to tackling VAWG offences across both Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and the wider region.
21. A representative from the OPCC attends the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) board chaired by Leicestershire Police. This is a quarterly board in which the force discusses the figures of the most recent quarter, initiatives and activities undertaken in the quarter prior, horizon scanning and forward planning. The latest meeting included discussion on the relentless pursuit of perpetrators and embedding the voice of the victim/lived experience in all workstreams. The objectives of this VAWG partnership board are to maintain ownership and progression of the Force VAWG Delivery Plan mapped to the National VAWG Delivery Framework and give direction to, and maintain oversight of, relevant Delivery Groups and their delivery plans to ensure alignment with national VAWG priorities. next meeting is scheduled for 13/08/2024.
22. The OPCC also attend the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence partnership group, between representatives of the City, County and Rutland. The group is held quarterly, and the objectives of this board are to ensure a coordinated response across LLR through commissioned providers. The latest meeting included discussion on interrogating data across the OPCC and Local Authorities to map the victim's journey and identify gaps where reporting could better align. The next meeting is scheduled for August 2024.
23. The OPCC has recently been invited to also attend the Family Court Justice Board, which will enable the OPCC to provide insight to the board on the positive impact of commissioned services, and gain insight on the impact that such crimes have on policing and the challenges faced in the judicial system with relation to what are typically domestic offences involving abuse and sexual violence. The first meeting in which the OPCC will attend is scheduled for 26 June 2026.
24. Whilst not all victims of rape are female, 75% of rapes reported in LLR are committed against female victims, with nearly 90% being over the age of 16.
25. The PCC has funded a new VAWG Officer post for 12 months to lead on the delivery of the OPCC's recently approved LLR Partnership VAWG Strategy

2024-2026 which details planned partnership objectives and deliverables for the next two years. The VAWG Strategy is aligned to the force's RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) Delivery Strategy. Looking at the most recent year's data, one in every 5 suspects was under the age of 19 according to local data. With the above in mind, the Violence Reduction Network and OPCC secured Home Office funding under the Safer Streets Bid to develop educational interventions with boys and young men to promote healthy relationships and positive attitudes towards women and girls, including challenging negative behaviours and misogyny.

26. As part of each report request in the Corporate Governance Board, the PCC asks the Force how the OPCC can support on the subject area, allowing any changes to be agreed together in partnership with shared outcomes. Opportunities for consideration highlighted by the Force included working with the OPCC to deliver the LLR VAWG Strategy, increasing focus on offenders and prevention methods, and increasing support for victims.

Next steps

27. Force

- Implementation of the new force model for response to adult rape;
- Training delivery for all rape investigators – RISDP programme;
- Increase of early investigative advice from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS);
- Embed the RASSO National Operating Model (Op Soteria¹) principles and NOM products to support "The Investigator's Journey";
- Secure the future funding stream for the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Juniper Lodge, and work towards UKAS accreditation;
- Reduce the number of victims declining or withdrawing support for police action and prosecution;
- Increase use of Sexual Harm Orders to disrupt offenders.

28. OPCC

- The PCC will look to continue funding for all victim support services, particularly those that deal directly with female victims of rape.
- The OPCC are working on delivering a 12-month pilot to offer direct 24-hour access to Crisis Workers from the Sexual Assault Referral Unit, regardless of whether or not the victim attends SARC.
- The OPCC will continue to link in with the Force on the delivery of the VAWG Strategy 2024-2026 and provide updates to the panel on how the OPCC and partners are delivering against the plan as and when requested.
- The PCC will continue to attend partnership working boards and ensure all actions and outcomes are tracked and delivered.

- The OPCC's VAWG Officer will work with the identified target age group of offenders to deliver diversionary and educational work to prevent rape and serious sexual offences.

----- **End of Report** -----