



# Rape & Serious Sexual Assault Policy

**OFFICIAL**

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| <b>Publication Scheme Y/N</b>     | Policy can be published on Force Website<br>Procedure should be withheld  |
| <b>Department of Origin</b>       | Matrix Serious & Organised Crime (MSOC)   |
| <b>Policy Holder</b>              | D/Supt Public Protection Unit   |
| <b>Author</b>                     | D/I Unity Team  |
| <b>Related Documents</b>          | <a href="#">NPCC/NPIA Guidance on Investigating and Prosecuting Rape 2009</a><br><a href="#">Merseyside CPS/Police Protocol in Investigation and Prosecution of Rape</a><br><a href="#">Critical Incident Policy</a><br><a href="#">Vulnerable Adults Policy</a><br><a href="#">Child Abuse and Neglect Policy</a><br><a href="#">Domestic Abuse Policy</a><br><a href="#">Home Office Counting Rules</a> |
| <b>Date First Approved at BMG</b> | 22/02/2006  |
| <b>This Version</b>               | Version 3.5 – Created 04/09/20  |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b>        | 30/11/2020  |



**September 2020**

# Policy

## Statement

Merseyside Police will deal professionally with all allegations of rape and serious sexual assault, in accordance with relevant legislation. We will act in a compassionate and supportive way to help victims, whilst ensuring that all enquiries are progressed thoroughly and proficiently.

We will also consider the cultural impact at each stage of our investigations. This means being aware of the religious and cultural allegiances and practices of the victim and any other party involved or affected by the incident.

## Aims

The main aim of this policy is to embed minimum standards of investigation in dealing with victims, scenes and suspects in all cases of rape and serious sexual assault. This should help ensure that we provide all victims with the most professional and compassionate service available, that results in the best possible evidence being presented to criminal courts.

This policy is underpinned by procedures designed to provide clear, definitive and unambiguous direction for all those involved in its deployment.

## Objectives

Specific objectives relating to distinct activities are to:

- a) Improve compliance with National Crime Recording Standards
- b) Increase use of Early Evidence Kits
- c) Maximise forensic opportunities
- d) Improve effectiveness of multi-agency working to aid investigation and crime reduction initiatives
- e) Improve standards (quality and timeliness) of prosecution files
- f) Increase number of offenders brought to justice
- g) Improve identification of linked offences
- h) Retain full compliance with Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS)
- i) Raise awareness amongst officers and staff of the vulnerability of victims due to effects of Rape Trauma Syndrome
- j) Increase overall performance against the minimum standards set in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the standards of care set in the Witness Charter

## Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non-statutory policies, including College of Policing APP, provide guidance only. They are 'living documents' and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly, if staff depart from a policy but are able to give a good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported.<sup>1</sup>

This policy particularly applies to officers and staff involved in any aspects of the reporting, recording and investigation of rape and serious sexual assault. It also specifically applies to anyone fulfilling the role of Specially Trained Officer, STO

The Chief Officer lead for Rape & Serious Sexual Assault is the Assistant Chief Constable Intelligence and Investigations.

## Outcome Evaluation

Outcomes should reflect the specific objectives listed previously and be measured against these objectives on a routine annual basis.

Policy compliance may also be measured through internal inspection in accordance with Force policy.

Progress against specific objectives should be measured on a routine basis. The head of crime/chair of PVP performance will determine responsibilities and activities involved in measurement

The Professional Standards Department will monitor complaints under the codes of practice for victims of crime.

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph inserted 23/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion. Version number remains unchanged.