**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2017/18**

**Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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| **Title of Report:** | **Vulnerable Groups Quarterly Report** |
| **Agenda Number** | **7** |
| **Chief Officer** | **ACC Andy Prophet** |
| **Date Paper was Written** | **5th November 2018** |
| **Version Number** | **V1.1** |
| **Report from:** | **Essex Police** |
| **Date of Meeting:** | **29th November 2018** |
| **Author on behalf of Chief Officer:** | **Insp Alison Hooper** |
| **Date of Approval:** | **16th November 2018** |

1. **Purpose of Report**

This reportsets out the work of the Crime and Public Protection Command, reporting by exception only.

1. **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations to be considered within this report.

1. **Executive Summary**

The report will provide the current position and progress made in these areas for Q2 of 2018/19. 1st July 2018 – 30th Sept 2018.

**4.0 Introduction/Background**

4.1 The solved rate in relation to rape offences continues to be the key area of work for the command.

**5.0 Current Work and Performance**

5.1 Rape Performance Data

5.1.1 Total rape (adult and child)

* 366 offences of rape were recorded compared to 329 in Q2 2017/18. An increase of 37 offences or 11.25%.
* Of these 96 are classed as non-recent offences.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* 4 offences were solved which is a decrease from the 6 offences solved in Q1 2017/18 (1.09% compared to 1.52%).

5.1.2 This can be broken down into adult and child offences as follows:

Child Rape (victim aged 0-17yrs)

* 122 offences of child rapes were recorded in Q2 compared to 130 in Q2 2017/18. A decrease of 8 offences or 6.15%.
* 2 offences were solved which is a decrease from the 5 offences solved in Q2 2017/18 (1.64% to 3.85%).
* 4 offences were resolved[[2]](#footnote-2) compared to 3 offences resolved in Q2 2017/18 (3.28% to 2.31%).

Adult Rape (victim aged 18+)

* 246 offences of adult rape were recorded in comparison to 199 offences in Q2 2017/18. An increase of 47 offences or 23.62%.
* 2 offences were solved an increase from the 1 offence solved in Q2 2017/18 (0.81% to 0.50%).

5.2 Rape Investigations Improvement Plan

5.2.1 During Q2 work continued to deliver against the Rape Investigation Improvement Plan.

5.2.2 To further improve the quality of files submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service, Rape and Serious Sexual Offences team (CPS RASSO) a process change has introduced the requirement of a Detective Sergeant’s authority before submitting a file under the full code test.

5.2.3 Work is underway to understand the discrepancy between the charges authorised by CPS RASSO compared to CPS Direct. In Q2 there were no charges from 15 submissions to CPS RASSO and 4 charges from submissions to CPS Direct. CPS RASSO have recently recruited a number of new lawyers and national guidance will require a number of existing RASSO lawyers to rotate to other functions in the next reporting period. ACC Prophet has requested a meeting with the Chief Crown Prosecutor (Mr Chris Long) who takes up his post as the Head of CPS East on 21 November 2018.

5.2.4 The Continued Professional Development event was planned for Q2 moved into the beginning of Q3 so that all investigative staff could attend with cover being arranged from outside of the command.

5.2.5 A peer review was conducted with Kent Police for Rape Investigations and identified that Essex Police have stringent processes and scrutiny in place for our investigations. The review identified challenges in relation to rape investigations faced in Kent are similar to those faced in Essex and nationally.

5.2.6 Resourcing within the Public Protection Investigations Hubs continues to be a challenge. The hubs have an establishment of 117 FTE posts. In spite of the action outlined in 5.2.7 and 5.2.8 there are currently 7.87 vacancies. Four transferee Constables are currently being processed and adverts are placed to identify additional candidates to fill these vacancies. Workforce projections identify that by 31/01/2017 a further 7 vacancies will arise.

5.2.7 In Q2 4 newly promoted Detective Inspectors took up posts within the Investigations Hubs and the Sergeants promotion process was held with postings expected in Q3.

5.2.8 Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Prophet posted 11 officers from Local Policing Areas to reduce the vacancy rate within the Public Protection Investigation Hubs.

5.2.9 A proposal to grow the investigative capacity within Public Protection has been submitted to Chief Officers for consideration. This growth focuses on building a capability to deploy Sexual Offence Liaison Officers (SOLO) to secure early engagement with victims. Evidence from other forces indicates this reduces the number of victims who disengage during the investigation. In addition the proposal includes building a capability for expert legal advice during an investigation to significantly improve the development of the case for consideration by CPS.

5.2.10 A presentation to inform partners of the demand and challenge faced in respect of Rape and Serious Sexual Violence investigations was given by ACC Prophet and Detective Chief Superintendent (DCS) Worron at the Essex Criminal Justice Board (ECJB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board resulting in work to develop an Essex Rape Scrutiny Panel. The proposed Terms of Reference for this panel has been prepared and will be presented at the next meeting of both Boards with an ambition to deliver the Panel in the final quarter of 2018/19.

**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

Included in Section 5.

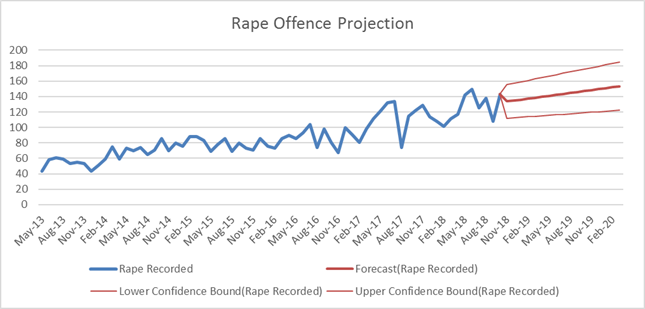
**6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

The investigation of rape and resourcing link to the following priorities of the Police and Crime Plan:

* Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse,
* Tackling gangs and organised crime,
* Protecting children and vulnerable people.

**6.2 Demand**

As shown in the data provided in Section 5, demand within the area of rape investigation continues to increase. The below table shows the number of rape offences recorded by Essex Police since May 2013. The rate of increase in record rape in Essex mirrors the national trend.



**6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

Risk URN 1635 is recorded on the Risk Register.

C& PP Command Recruitment Challenges: Crime and Public Protection are currently suffering from recruitment challenges including:

1. The inability to attract the appropriate staff/officers with the required skill sets,

2. Inability to retain skilled staff/officers,

3. A low number of transferees from other forces

4. Delays within the recruitment process

Mitigating actions are on-going:

1. Command team work to identify and encourage officers to join the command,
2. The introduction of mentoring for those identified officers,
3. Command team engagement across the command to acknowledge the good work of officers and the challenges faced with the types of investigations,
4. A continued recruitment campaign for transferees from other forces.

**6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

There are no identified issues in relation to Equality of Human Rights.

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

There are no identified issues in relation to Health and Safety.

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

This report has been written in consultation with the Public Protection Command and Human Resources.

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

In Q3 work will continue to address the resourcing challenges of the Investigations Hub and progress the Rape Investigation Improvement Plan.

Specifically the Standard Operating Procedure for the Investigation of Rape will be revised and reissued to all officers in November 2018. This will provide clear direction to allow reasonable decisions to be made to prioritise the investigations. The key elements of the revisions that set out which cases will be deemed investigative priorities are reproduced below.

**Priority investigations are those:**

* with strong evidence from the outset or likely to result from identified lines of enquiry that will meet the Threshold or Full Code Vital evidence would otherwise be lost, compromised or destroyed (over and above any evidence which would routinely be captured within golden hour principles) which could prove or disprove the offence.
* The investigation is declared a critical incident as the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have an impact on the victim, their family and/or the community.
* An offence of rape which is not initially assessed as an investigative priority, or which following a subsequent review is assessed as no longer being an investigative priority may be classified as a safeguarding priority. In all such cases safeguarding to mitigate the risk of further harm to an individual or the wider community must be progress before the enquiry is closed.

The presumption is offences not assessed as an investigative priority will be closed and solely safeguarding will be progressed.

The impact of this revision will reduce the total open rape investigations ensuring investigative resources are focused on the allegations that are most likely to reach the threshold set out in the Full Code Test.

A proposal to utilise agency investigators to cover vacancies will be submitted for consideration making use of the devolved pay budget underspend.

A revised performance framework will be designed and implemented during November 2018 to improve governance and accountability providing a single data set to service the needs of Chief Officers through to Detective Inspectors.

A submission will be made to the national Vulnerability Coordination Centre to seek validation of the delivery of ‘Drink Aware Crews’ into night time economy venues that are identified as presenting a disproportionate risk of offending.

**9.0 Future Work/Development**

It is proposed that the next reporting period focuses on analysing future demands for rape investigation to inform resourcing proposals and to consider areas of focused activity that can be aligned to the Crime Prevention Strategy.

**10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

There are no decisions sought in relation to this report.

1. Non-recent offences are those reported more than a year after they took place. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Resolved is defined as outcome 9,11 and 20 of NCRS. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)