

## GOVERNMENT UK / 3 August 2023

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Press release [further distribution via CCJ-News]

# Greater support and better outcomes for victims of sexual violence

Victims of rape and sexual violence will be better supported following a £26 million investment in specialist services across England and Wales announced today (3 August).

From: [Ministry of Justice](#), [Alex Chalk KC MP](#), [The Rt Hon Edward Argar MP](#), and [The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP](#)

- £26 million awarded to over 60 specialist support services over next 2 years
- funding forms part of commitment to quadruple funding for victims by 2025
- government hits third Rape Review ambition 18 months ahead of schedule as CPS charges return to 2016 levels

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund (RASASF), initially launched in 2011, is part of the government's commitment to quadruple funding for victim support services by 2025 compared to 2010.

Innovative projects set to be funded for the next 2 years as a direct result of today's cash boost include:

- Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre, who offer support for adults and young people, including parent and carer sessions and family therapy – keeping victims connected to their loved ones
- Trafford Rape Crisis, supporting women in Greater Manchester include offering a new holistic service which is specifically focused on supporting black and minoritised women
- We Are Survivors, who provide male-specific sexual assault and rape support

The news comes as new figures show the government has achieved its third and final ambition in its landmark End-to-End Rape Review 18 months ahead of target - restoring Crown Prosecution Service charges to 2016 levels.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Alex Chalk KC, said:

I am pleased that all three 2021 Rape Review ambitions have been met so far ahead of schedule. There is more work to do, but this milestone demonstrates real progress in strengthening justice for victims of these appalling crimes.

This continued funding means we can continue our work to ensure victims of sexual abuse across England and Wales receive the support that is so vital to recovery.

Victims have benefitted from funded support services for over 10 years thanks to the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund, which was recently extended as one of the commitments in the government's Rape Review.

The fund was informed by rape victims to better understand their experiences and what they want from support services, helping to inform the commissioning of future support for victims.

62 grants have been awarded to organisations across the country to offer victims tailored support programmes, including counselling and therapeutic services, advocacy, outreach, and group activities.

Justice Minister, Ed Argar, said:

We are determined that, alongside this Government's clear focus and progress on ensuring more criminals who commit rape and sexual offences face justice, victims and survivors of these dreadful crimes get the support they need.

The funding announced today helps ensure that charities and organisations up and down the country are able to continue doing their vital work helping victims of these crimes.

Jayne Butler, Chief Executive of Rape Crisis, said:

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund provides vital funding for front-line services that provide specialist support to victims and survivors. The funding awarded will help them to continue their work providing specialist and trauma-informed support to victims and survivors impacted by all forms of sexual violence and abuse.

Fay Maxted OBE, Chief Executive of The Survivors Trust, said:

The Survivors Trust welcomes the funding made available to our specialist voluntary sector through the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund. Funding of this kind is vital in enabling community-based, voluntary sector rape and sexual abuse services to provide much needed counselling and other support to survivors.

Gary Pleece, CEO of Male Survivors Partnership, said:

The Male Survivors Partnership welcomes the announcement that £26 million is being allocated to support survivors. This was the first government fund that recognized the needs of male survivors and provided dedicated funding for them; 65% of men have experienced sexual violence and this funding is essential to their support.

The funding comes as CPS data published today shows charges for adult rape-flagged cases increased to 567 in the latest quarter, (January – March 2023), 5% over the 2016 quarterly average and Rape Review ambition of 538. This means the

Government has already met all 3 key ambitions in the Rape Review ahead of schedule – restoring the number of police referrals, CPS charges and cases reaching court to 2016 levels.

In July all 43 police forces across England and Wales, and all rape prosecutors across the country, began implementing a new approach to dealing with rape and other serious sexual offences, ensuring forces conduct thorough investigations which put the focus on the suspect and centre the rights and needs of victims.

This new approach, developed through Operation Soteria and previously piloted in 19 police forces and 9 Crown Prosecution Service Areas, uses academic evidence and insight to enable forces and prosecutors to transform their response to rape and serious sexual offences.

The Rape Review progress report published last month shows improvements have been made in response to rape across every stage of the criminal justice system and, crucially, data suggests more and more victims are reporting these abhorrent crimes to the police – demonstrating an increase in victim confidence.

Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, said:

Rape is an abhorrent crime and this government has not shied away from the fact that that victims of sexual violence have been failed by the criminal justice system.

I have been clear that we must transform the way these investigations are handled, to make sure that all victims have the best support possible throughout the entire process. That is why we have funded an ambitious programme, Operation Soteria, to transform the way that rape investigations and prosecutions are handled and progressed. All 43 police forces and all CPS areas across England and Wales are implementing the new National Operating Models developed through the programme.

Alongside the £26 million announced today, I have given over £8 million to support police forces keep improving their response to rape and the service they provide to victims, ensuring investigations focus on the suspect, and never on seeking to undermine the account of the victim.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Rape and Adult Sexual Offences, Chief Constable Sarah Crew, said:

This funding by the Ministry of Justice will help to bring more support to victims of the terrible crimes committed by rapists and sex offenders.

It is timely as all 43 police forces transform their approach to investigating sex offences and supporting survivors, through the recent introduction of a new national approach. Forces are turning the tables on perpetrators to ensure they are the focus of investigations, not the credibility of victims.

Policing continues to work with partners to help support victims and bring offenders to justice, but we cannot do this alone. Funding is vital to enable this to happen and we welcome this round.

A £1.2 million training programme has also been launched for Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Advisors who provide emotional and practical support to victims. The government is funding 1,000 of these posts and the training to make sure these vulnerable victims get better help and stay engaged with the criminal justice system.

### Notes to editors

- A full list of grant winners can be found here: [Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund 2023 to 2025: Organisations awarded funding](#)
- In January this year, a competition opened allowing organisations to bid for up to £26 million. This complements additional RASASF funding already committed to the 5 Police and Crime Commissioner 'test areas' (London (MOPAC), Cambridgeshire, Nottinghamshire, Hampshire and Essex), where the MoJ is testing devolving this funding locally

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