Request reference: 4800_14

Does the force have a specialist unit for investigating rape and serious sexual assault?

Within the Public Protection Unit (PPU), the Adult Abuse Investigation team investigate rape and serious sexual assault offences.

If so:

1a. How many officers are currently working in the unit - please provide numbers by rank eg 3 police constables, 5 detective sergeants?

Currently the Adult Abuse Investigation team consists of:

1 x Detective Chief Inspector  
5 x Detective Inspectors  
22 x Detective Sergeants  
120 x Detective Constables

In addition to this, the PPU Domestic Abuse team will investigate sexual offences relating to domestic abuse.

1b. Has this staffing level increased or decreased in the last 3 years (or since the unit was set up, if this was less than three years ago) By how much?

The Adult Abuse team has increased by approximately 25 Detective Constables.

2. How many of the force's officers are specially trained in sexual offences?

Only Adult Abuse Investigators perform the role of Specially Trained Officer’s for Rape and Serious Sexual Assault (STOs). Approximately 80 – 100 Adult Abuse Investigators are trained as STOs. There are also approximately 50 Officers who have Serious Sexual Abuse Investigators Development Programme accreditation.

3. Of the force's specially-trained officers, how many work solely on sexual offences?

All of our STOs work solely on sexual offences.

4. What does the specialist sexual offence training consist of?

Our specialist sexual offence training is victim centred which includes training on victim evidential accounts, forensic medical examination support and wider support referral to other agencies.
5. Is it force policy that rape and serious sexual offences may only be investigated by specially trained officers, or may these be investigated by other officers on occasions?

Rape and serious sexual offences are only investigated by officers from within the Public Protection Unit, who have received specific training to investigate this type of offence.

6. What training in sexual offences is received by front-line (uniformed, non-specialist) officers?

Uniformed officers are only trained in the use of early evidence kits. This is because the Public Protection Unit attend to the victim within an hour of a report being received.

7. Are early evidence kits used by the force in sexual offence cases and if so, which officers carry them (eg front-line officers or specially-trained officers only).

Early evidence kits are carried by both Public Protection Officers and Response Officers.