

Executive Summary:

“Rape and sexual offending are among the most serious and high-impact crimes against the person. Learning more about the impact of this abuse on victims and understanding how to take better account of the effects of trauma in our work builds trust and confidence and encourages victims to report.” College of Policing. March 2020.

The aim of this policy and associated procedural guidance is to:

Provide a framework which will ensure that investigations into allegations of rape and sexual assault are carried out in a diligent and professional manner and are in line with corporate standards. West Midlands Police (WMP) is pursuing a twin-track policy of being committed to improving complainant care and improving the investigation of the offence.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP):

*(*delete as appropriate)*

• This policy has been checked against APP. West Midlands Police has adopted the limited APP provisions in terms of the first responder guide. In the absence of any detailed RASSO APP, WMP has produced its own policy and guidance which reflects local practice and the needs of the communities served by West Midlands Police.

The APP provisions are shown in the links below and can be accessed via the home page of the APP website

- [College of Policing APP \(includes the national decision model\)](#)
- [College of Policing Police first responders to a report of rape or sexual assault](#)

Policy Statements:

- This policy must be read in conjunction with the associated procedural guidance documents.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the [2010 ACPO guidance on investigating and prosecuting rape](#) which the College of Policing has cited is current until further notice.
- This policy is focussed solely on adult investigations. Where the complainant or alleged perpetrator is a child please consult the [Child Abuse Policy](#).
- Where the sexual crime is linked to Domestic Abuse, this policy should be read in conjunction with the [Domestic Abuse Policy](#).
- Where the sexual crime is linked to Modern Slavery, this policy should be read in conjunction with the [Modern Slavery Guidance](#).
- Nothing within this policy dilutes the requirement upon the investigating officer to discharge their responsibilities under the [Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996](#) to investigate all reasonable lines of enquiry.

Our Investigations:

- WMP will continually strive to improve the standard of investigation and prosecution for rape and serious sexual offences, therefore, increasing the number of cases which result in a charge, court case and conviction. WMP will work with our partners in criminal justice to achieve this.
- Where the complainant believes that a crime has occurred it will be recorded as such.
- WMP will treat all reports of crime seriously and investigate impartially, with an open mind in order to establish the facts.
- WMP understands that complainants of rape and sexual violence offences encounter many barriers to reporting and that it takes immense courage to report.
- WMP recognises that an individual's circumstances, culture and specific demographic factors may impact upon their ability and willingness to report an offence.
- We will therefore ensure that we provide appropriate support throughout the investigation and work closely with partner services to achieve this.
- All investigations will be undertaken in a consistent, diligent and professional manner and will adhere to corporate standards.
- Staff investigating reports of rape or sexual offences will exercise caution about making an early assessment of the credibility or reliability of the complainant.
- WMP recognises that false complaints are made from time to time; they may be malicious, mistaken, designed to support others, financially motivated, or inexplicable.
- When considering allegations, investigators will give full consideration to all background information.
- WMP will treat those falsely accused of crime as victims. They will be offered and, if they want it, provided with support and liaison compatible with the gravity of the allegations made.
- WMP will utilise existing national systems to record information and intelligence that will assist in the identification of linked series offences.

Our pledge to complainants and witnesses:

- WMP aims to ensure that complainants of RASSO matters receive a highly effective response every time.
- WMP will demonstrate a victim focussed ethos when responding to any allegation of a sexual offence which will reassure complainants at the start of an investigation that they can expect support throughout.
- It is of paramount importance that investigators are professional and supportive and that our response gains and maintains the complainant's trust and confidence.
- Maintaining complainant confidence in the criminal justice process is critical.
- Regular contact with the complainant is essential throughout the investigation.

- Throughout the investigation, the individual and diverse needs of the complainant will be addressed with particular sensitivity.
- Every complainant must receive the highest standard of treatment and care and that, irrespective of the outcome, they can be assured that every effort was made to build a strong case and present it well.

Working in partnership:

- WMP will adopt a proactive multi-agency approach to the provision of services to all complainants.
- They should experience a seamless service between the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Health services and specialist sexual violence services.
- The CPS and WMP work closely together and strive to obtain the best outcome for all RASSO investigations.

Managing suspects and offenders:

- Offenders should be dealt with professionally, appropriately and proportionately.
- WMP will take effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- Where the alleged perpetrator is in a Position of Trust a referral will need to be made to the LADO, if it meets the criteria as identified in the Managing Allegations Policy ([See Managing Allegations Policy](#))
- Additional guidance must be sought from People and Organisational Development (POD), the Appropriate Authority and the Professional Standards (PSD) team where the complainant or alleged perpetrator is an employee of WMP.

Definitions/Acronyms:

See Procedural Guidance – Definitions, Abbreviations and Consent

Procedural Guidance Documents List:

Documents

- 1- **Definitions & Abbreviations**
- 2- **First Contact**
- 3- **First Response**
- 4- **Forensics**
- 5- **SARC**
- 6- **Drug Assisted Rape**
- 7- **Secondary Investigation**
- 8- **Suspects**
- 9- **Serious Crime Analysis Section**
- 10- **Complainant Care & Safeguarding**
- 11- **Crime Recording**

- 12- WM Regional Support Services
- 13- Civil Orders
- 14- Disclosure
- 15- Early Advice and the Gatekeeper role

Web links

- [College of Policing APP \(includes the national decision model\)](#)
- [College of Policing Police first responders to a report of rape or sexual assault](#)
- [National crime recording standard \(NCRS\) and home office counting rules \(HOCR\)](#)
- [Directors guidance \(DPP\) on charging 5th edition, paragraphs 2 & 4](#)
- [Victims' Code](#)
- [WMP Recognition and identification policy](#)
- [2018 Revised Disclosure Manual](#)
- [CPS Early Investigative Advice](#)
- [An inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service's response to a review of its investigations into allegations of non-recent sexual abuse by prominent people \(the Henrique's report\) 2020](#)
- [Foreign National Offenders](#)

Publication Instructions:

*(*delete as appropriate)*

- Internal document only – unsuitable for publication to public
- The RASSO Booklet must not be shared externally
- Guidance on BWV not to be shared externally
- Emergency accommodation process must not be shared externally
- Forensic team locations must not be shared externally
- ESOS/Eurofins poster not to be shared externally
- SARC Details must not be shared externally
- Disclosure and Thlrd party material not to be shared externally
- Link to Gatekeeper email address must not be shared externally

Policy Ref: PPU/05

Version: 1.0

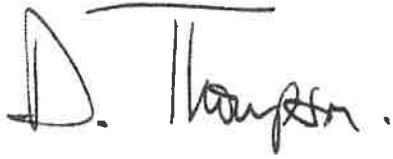
Date: 03/11/2021

Review Date: 03/11/2023

Policy Author [REDACTED]


Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the policy author shown above.

Force Executive Approval:



CHIEF CONSTABLE

Monitoring and Review

| Version | Date Reviewed | No change / Minor Changes / Major Changes (<i>detail</i>) | Amended / Agreed by | New review date |
|----------------|----------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| V1.0 | 23/03/2023 | Policy ref changes to reflect department and portfolio change |  | 03/11/2023 |
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