

Lincolnshire Police

Policy Document



Rape investigation policy PD 176

Policy document information

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Policy sponsor:	ACC
Policy owner:	Head of PVP
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Version history

Version	Date	Reason for issue
4	November 2017	Review
5	August 2019	Biennial Review
6	August 2021	Biennial Review
7	July 2023	Biennial Review
8	June 2026	Biennial Review

Code of Ethics

All staff involved in carrying out functions under this policy and associated procedures and appendices will do so in accordance with the principles of the Code of Ethics. The aim of the Code of Ethics is to support each member of the policing profession to deliver the highest professional standards in their service to the public.

Legislative compliance

This document has been drafted to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance, this means striking a fair balance between the rights of the staff and those of the rest of the community. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

Equality and Diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and meet our legal obligation in relation to the equality duty. In addition, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Health and Safety Issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy or procedure will therefore ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and internal policies.

Other legislation/law which this policy has been drafted to comply with:

- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(in particular A.14 – Prohibition of discrimination\)](#)

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [H&S legislation](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Freedom Of Information Act 2000](#)

Security classification

Policy to be published on Intranet: Yes

Policy to be published on Force Website: Partially (not appendices)

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

This policy should be read in conjunction with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on Rape and Sexual Offences [Rape and sexual offences | College of Policing](#), [National operating model for investigating rape and serious sexual offences | College of Policing](#), [Major-Crime-Investigation-Manual-Nov-2021.pdf](#) , [RASSO-2025-strategy.pdf](#) from CPS and the Operation Soteria Protocol and Supervisors guide [Op Soteria - Intranet](#)

1. Policy aims (Purpose)

- 1.1. Lincolnshire Police is committed to providing a consistently high level of service to victims of rape and serious sexual assault and to rigorously investigate these crimes and to hold offenders accountable through the criminal justice system.
- 1.2. The PVP Rape Policy has been produced to provide a framework and signpost Officers to the correct guidance to allow Lincolnshire Police to achieve these high standards. It is therefore incumbent on all those involved to ensure that every victim is left assured, regardless of the outcome and that everything possible was done to bring the case to a successful conclusion.

- 1.3 Lincolnshire Police aim to work cohesively with, and draw on the expertise of, East Midlands Crown Prosecution Service, Spring Lodge Sexual Assault Referral Centre, East Midlands Children and Young People Sexual Assault Service and other partner agencies to deliver an improved service, which will give members of the public the confidence to report such incidents and the strength to support a prosecution. This policy reflects the new Approved Professional Practice 'Guidance on Investigating and Prosecuting Rape and Serious Sexual Assault' produced on behalf of NPCC and CPS by the College of Policing
- 1.4. In June 2023, Lincolnshire Police introduced Operation Soteria as part of the national roll-out of an enhanced approach to rape investigations. The details of this can be found at [Op Soteria - Intranet](#) which provides detailed guides about actions to be taken and necessary links. Soteria supports this overarching policy and provides specific details about rape and sexual offence investigations.

2. Policy statement (Key information)

- 2.1. All staff involved in the investigation of rape and serious sexual assault should refer to the APP guidance. The PVP Rape Policy defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the conduct and management of rape and serious sexual assault investigations, from first contact to the investigating officers and their supervisors, through to post trial evaluation.

Officers involved in investigating RASSO should be trained in the appropriate courses (SSAIDP for example) and achieve the necessary accreditation. Where there is not an SSAIDP accredited officer investigating the offence, then it must be a PIP2 Officer or one on the PIP2 pathway overseen by an appropriately trained Detective Sgt and Detective Inspector.

2.2. Offences

2.2.1. This rape policy covers the offence of Rape – Section 1 Sexual Offences Act 2003 but should also be utilised when investigating other sexual offences including Section 2 (assault by penetration), and Section 3 (sexual assault) as well as historic sexual offences that occurred prior to the introduction of the 2003 legislation.

2.2.2 There are different types of Rape offending as follows:

- Acquaintance Rape
- Drug-Assisted Rape
- Domestic or Relationship Rape
- Stranger Rape
- Multiple Offender Rape.

Some offences may fall into more than one category. These categories change from time to time and are further defined in the APP. It is important to recognise what type of offending the rape comes under to identify the best investigative opportunities.

2.3 Victim Care and Considerations

2.3.1 Vulnerable Victims and Victims in Situations who are particularly vulnerable may be victimised a number of times on separate occasions and possibly by different offenders. Officers must take a victim centered approach and should not doubt such reports on the basis that the victim has made previous reports - there is evidence that sexual offenders target victims whom they regard as vulnerable.

2.3.2 If there is a domestic element to the offending, then consideration must be given to referral to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) via completion of a Public Protection Notice (PPN).

2.3.3 Officers should have consideration that victims who are from the LGBTQ+ community may require additional support and specialist services should be sought in these occasions. Additional support may be for instance where

victims, who are not heterosexual, haven't revealed this to friends or members of their family. This dilemma is intensified when a victim is raped and faced with the potential need to inform medical staff and the police, thereby creating a fear that it might become public should a case go to court. Transgender individuals nationally fear discrimination and inaction by Police, and also may have concerns about their case or gender status with regards to confidentiality. It is therefore imperative for officers to respond professionally and provide appropriate reassurance to gain their confidence.

2.4. Roles and responsibilities.

- 2.4.1 When a rape or serious sexual assault is reported to Lincolnshire Police the allocation policy should be followed to determine the correct OIC. Primarily this will be PVP, but some offences disclosed as part of a secondary offence which are outside of a forensic window may be investigated by other departments including CID who are PIP2 trained.
- 2.4.2 Consideration should be given to classifying rape offences, particularly those of a stranger and also repeat nature, as critical incidents, and the appropriate policy followed.
- 2.4.3. Depending on where the report is received, it is the responsibility of the recipient (traditionally the Force Control Room (FCR) or the Town Enquiry Office) to take steps to ensure the immediate safety of the victim, provide reassurance, respond to medical needs and protect evidence pending the police first response. Where a complaint is received of Rape or serious sexual offence, an Initial Contact Officer (ICO) or if available, a PVP Hub Investigator will meet with the victim at the very earliest opportunity to assess both the report and the victim's immediate needs.
- 2.4.4. Early police contact is essential and in an empathetic and victim focused way. If urgent medical assistance is required, an ambulance or medical assistance should be called, and there should be an immediate police response. A report of rape or serious sexual offence should receive an 'immediate response' from the Force Control Room and an officer should be dispatched.

- 2.4.5. When a report is received where the victim is in a safe location, it may be that there is attendance from an Initial Contact Officer (ICO) or PVP Hub Investigator (where possible). Having a PVP officer to attend to establish a first account in the first instance would be the 'most appropriate response' but availability should be considered, and it may unduly delay attendance which should be avoided. The FCR should advise the caller that an officer will be attending as soon as possible and provide a realistic timeframe. Once the offence has been established and a first account obtained in the 'green booklet' it is important this is updated to the Niche crime management system so the account can be read by supervisory officers and PVP investigators.
- 2.4.6. It is the responsibility of the Response Sergeant and Inspector to ensure that the principles of Early Evidence Kits and the Golden Hour are adhered to until the investigation has been taken over by a secondary investigator/ PVP. The supervisors should ensure sufficient resources are available in the initial period of the investigation and support the IO and investigator from the PVP Team. Particular notice should be taken of preservation of evidence and minimum cross contamination between scenes and parties.
- 2.4.7. This should all be done in communication with the Investigating Officer (IO) from the PVP Investigation Team. Contact here is imperative to maintain appropriate victim care and continuity of the investigative approach. Reports of non-recent rape and serious sexual offences must undergo the same assessment of risk upon the initial report, officers are reminded that risk maybe present to other persons and not just the victim, this includes the suspect. Consultation with the relevant PVP investigation hub is advised to ensure a high standard of victim care and continuity of the investigation is maintained.
- 2.4.8. The effective investigation of rape and other serious sexual assaults relies upon teamwork to satisfy the needs of the victim and secure best evidence. Golden Hour principles should be followed, and it is imperative that the victim is at the heart of the investigation.
- 2.4.9. The finalisation of rape occurrences for outcomes 15 & 16 must have the OIC finalisation template, the supervisor finalisation template and then must

be reviewed by a DI who will complete the appropriate VAWG finalisation template.

- 2.4.10 Rapes that are finalised as outcomes 14 & 18 will be reviewed after the supervisor finalisation stage by the RASSO DI.

2.5. Recording of offences

- 2.5.1. Officers must record the offence of rape in line with National Crime Recording Standards. Lincolnshire Police uses the N100 recording system for rape, and the process of this is detailed in the N100 guidance.

2.6. CPS, Case Building and Early Consultation

- 2.6.1. Police Officers and CPS must work together during the investigative stage to build cases and develop a proactive approach to investigating and prosecuting offences. Officers should consult with CPS using the principles of Early Advice detailed in the Operation Soteria protocol and Appendix B.
- 2.6.2. Due to the complex and specialist nature of rape and serious sexual assault offences, the PVP case officers will act as the gatekeepers/checkers for cases to ensure the correct submission. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Detective Sergeant overseeing the OIC to ensure all relevant documents are present and sign the certification as per CPS guidance.

3. Other related documents and appendices

- 3.1. Please list any relevant documentation here, such as other policies that are linked to this one, guidance documentation and the appendices.
- Appendix A Operation Soteria protocol and supervisors guide
 - Appendix B – Guidance on RASSO Early Advice MOU CPS & Police

4. Monitoring and review

- 4.1. Review amendments will be made to the policy using any good practice from other Forces or changes in legislation prior to the formal review. A formal review will be conducted every two years.
- 4.2. The PVP management team is responsible for reviewing the policy.

5. Who to contact about this policy

- 5.1. This policy is owned by Head of PVP. Any enquires about this policy should be directed to the PVP Detective Chief Inspector