

# “Investigation ongoing”

**A super-complaint regarding excessively lengthy police investigations into sexual offences**

**December 2025**

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## About Us



**Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)** is a charity offering free specialist support to survivors of sexual violence in Cambridgeshire. Cambridge Rape Crisis' services are confidential, non-judgemental and user-led. They aim to support survivors to not only cope and recover from the impacts of sexual violence but to go on to flourish and thrive.



**Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ)** is a lawyer-led charity focused on challenging failings and discrimination against women in the criminal justice system. They carry out strategic litigation and work closely with frontline women's sector organisations on using legal tools to challenge police and prosecution failings around violence against women and girls.



**Rape Crisis England & Wales (RCEW)** is the national campaigns and membership body for a network of Rape Crisis centres providing specialist support to women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence or abuse, at any time in their lives. This includes rape, child rape and sexual abuse (CRaSA), sexual assault, sexual harassment, and all other forms of sexual violence and abuse in England and Wales. They also run the national 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line.



**Bindmans**

**Bindmans LLP** is an award-winning law firm based in London. They were founded in 1974 by Sir Geoffrey Bindman KC with the aim of protecting the rights and reputations of individuals. For over 40 years, they have been holding the police and other detaining authorities to account for abuses of power, unlawful operations and acts of misconduct. Bindmans represents clients in a wide range of cases including judicial review claims, complaints and civil claims against the police and under the Victims' Right to Review Scheme.

# Introduction

Substantial delays and backlogs now characterise every stage of the criminal justice system, generating increasing concern about the system's efficiency, fairness and long-term sustainability. Some crimes are known to typically progress more slowly through the system than others, with sexual offences subject to some of the longest timeframes, but overall, the fewest prosecutions<sup>1</sup>. This situation makes reporting rape and other serious sexual offences an acutely challenging prospect and yet survivors persist, with increasing reports of serious sexual violence year-on-year. In 2024/25 there were 71,540 police recorded rapes, compared to 29,420 in 2014/15.<sup>2</sup>

As organisations with extensive experience of supporting survivors through the criminal justice system, we are aware of a number of sexual offence cases that are not just taking a 'long time' to be investigated, but appear to be stagnating entirely. Often they are not progressed effectively by police for years at a time, resulting in some staggering and inexplicably long delays of four, five, six, and even seven years, prior to a charging decision. If and when cases are charged, survivors are then subject to further lengthy delays, due to the extensive backlog in the courts.<sup>3</sup>

Prompted by the cases we have witnessed, we requested data from the Home Office via Freedom of Information request. This data shows that over the past decade:

- **37,188 sexual offence investigations have taken longer than three years to investigate.**
- **More than half of these investigations have taken longer than four years; and many considerably longer.**
- **There was a 652% increase in closed police investigations into sexual offences which took longer than three years to conclude (see figure 1, below).**

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, there were 13,949 ongoing sexual offence investigations that had been open for more than 3 years; 1,716 of these had been ongoing for more than 7 years – the amount of time it will take for a child to finish their primary school education.<sup>4</sup>

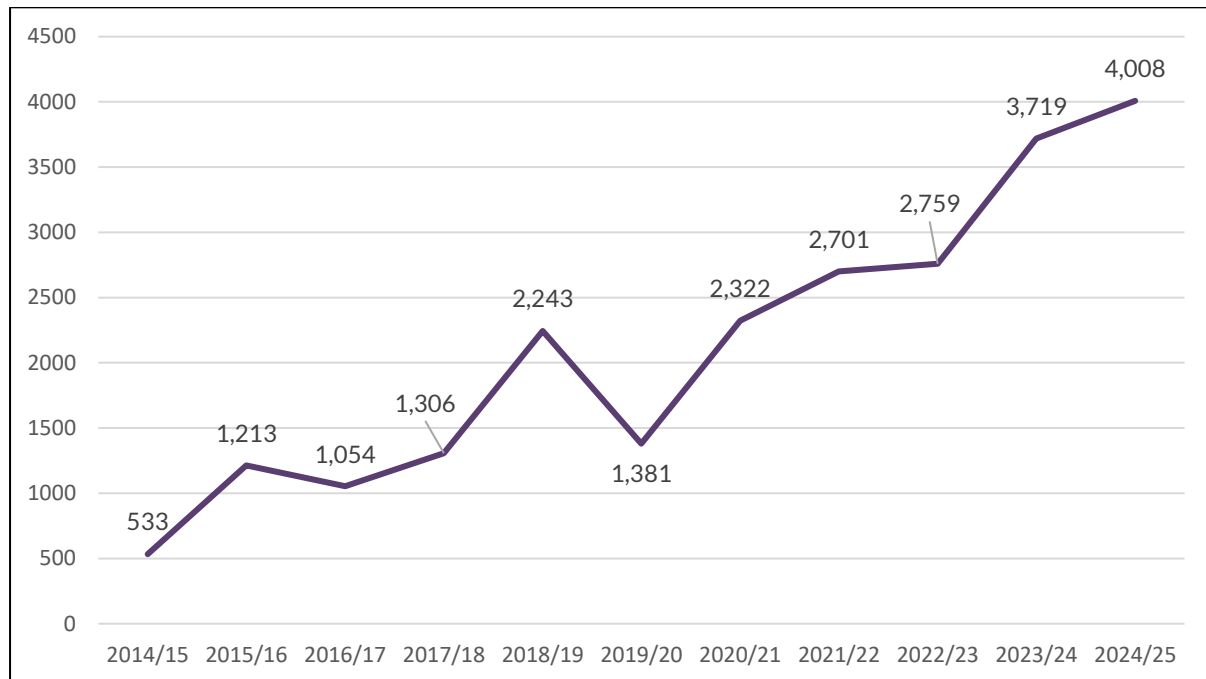
<sup>1</sup> Home Office. (2025). Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2024 to 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025#section2>; HM Government (2025). Criminal justice system overview. Available at: <https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/overview>.

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2025). Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2025. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/sexualoffencesinenglandandwalesoverview/yearendingmarch2025>.

<sup>3</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2025). Living in Limbo: Our second report on the retraumatisation of rape and sexual abuse victims and survivors in the Crown Court backlog. Available at: [https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo\\_NEW\\_b.pdf](https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo_NEW_b.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Please see Chapter 3 for information about Home Office Freedom of Information request data caveats.

**Figure 1: The number of closed sexual offence investigations that have taken longer than 3 years to complete, by financial year, 2014/15 – 2024/25 (Home Office FOI data).**



This situation is inhumane for those survivors whose cases become effectively stuck in this way, and it is also legally untenable, representing a potential systemic breach on the part of the UK Government to effectively deliver its positive obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The experiences of survivors caught up in these very long-running police investigations are currently obscured from public view due to the way in which timeliness and investigation length are presented in national crime data. However, using data obtained via Freedom of Information requests, surveys and focus groups, this super-complaint presents more insightful analysis on the scale of the problem, as well as evidence on the impact on survivors. We also present the factors within policing which we believe contribute to the excessive delays to investigations.

A certain level of delay or drift within investigations may, at times, be unavoidable. However, the routine nature of the problem factors we have seen in these very long cases point instead to chronic systemic issues within policing, exacerbated by a lack of due regard for the seriousness of the matters in question. It's clear that some survivors are now expected to accept the truly unacceptable when it comes to the timeliness and management of their cases.

We heard from experienced Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) - the majority with over a decade's experience each - that when they first took up their roles, timescales from an initial report to the end of a trial would typically be under two years. Since then, they have witnessed ever-lengthening investigations, coupled with extreme court delays. Many feel the timescales are becoming so unreasonably long that it is difficult to communicate this to survivors at the start of the process in case it dissuades them from engaging.

Without effective interventions to address the causes of delay, ‘justice’ – even in evidentially strong cases – may become so diluted, that the concept is undermined entirely. We will also continue to see high levels of survivor attrition. At present, 58% of adult rape investigations are closed pre-charge because the survivor no longer supports police action. A further 20% of survivors withdraw support post-charge.<sup>5</sup> Whilst there is no official qualitative data examining the reasons for this attrition, anecdotally we know that many survivors withdraw due to excessive delays at both the investigation and trial stages of the criminal justice system. If we are to bring offenders to justice and prevent further harm, we must be able to offer survivors a criminal justice system that responds to them in a timely manner, at the very minimum.



**You know, it used to be two [years from report to court], you're probably looking at about four at the moment, but we do have a number of clients that have been waiting 6–7 years.”**

**(Experienced ISVA Midlands)**



**“[Survivors] used to baulk at two years, I'm now telling clients five years from report to court. if it gets to court, and then it might be subject to adjournments anyway. So it could be longer.”**

**(Experienced ISVA Yorkshire)**



**I try to tend not to [give time estimates now] unless they ask specifically, because when we're having realistic conversations, usually people do ask. But we're kind of being quite honest around sort of expecting about four years as such in and in actual fact, it's probably more four to seven, which is for particularly for child abuse.”**

**(Experienced ISVA East of England)**

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<sup>5</sup> HM Government. (2025). Criminal justice system delivery data dashboard: Increasing victim engagement. Available at: <https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/victim-engagement>.

# Methodology

## Police data

We sent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the Home Office, as well as each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. We requested:

- Data on the number of police investigations for rape and sexual offences that have exceeded three years from initial report to police outcome, since 2014, broken down by the number of years that the investigation has taken, from 3 to 9+ years.
- Data on the number of investigations currently open that have been ongoing for more than three years.

The Home Office and 33 forces provided data.

## ISVA data

We sent a survey to Rape Crisis Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) services in England and Wales, seeking information about sexual offence cases known to their services where police investigations lasted over three years.

12 ISVA services from London, South of England, East of England, Yorkshire, the North-East and the North-West of England provided data on investigations conducted by the following forces:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Avon & Somerset    | • Merseyside          |
| • Cambridgeshire     | • Metropolitan Police |
| • Cheshire           | • South Wales         |
| • Derbyshire         | • South Yorkshire     |
| • Devon & Cornwall   | • Surrey              |
| • Durham             | • Sussex              |
| • Essex              | • Thames Valley       |
| • Gloucestershire    | • Warwickshire        |
| • Greater Manchester | • West Mercia         |
| • Kent               | • West Yorkshire      |
| • Leicestershire     |                       |

We held two focus groups in May and June 2025 with experienced ISVAs and ISVA managers. Eight in total participated, all from different parts of the country, with experience in the sector ranging from 7-16 years. We asked whether investigation lengths have changed over time and sought their views on factors contributing to delays in investigations.

## Evidence from survivors of sexual violence

We circulated an online survey for survivors to complete. Questions asked about their experiences of reporting sexual offences that took over three years to be investigated. Survivors were invited to tell us about the delays they had experienced and how the delays had impacted them.

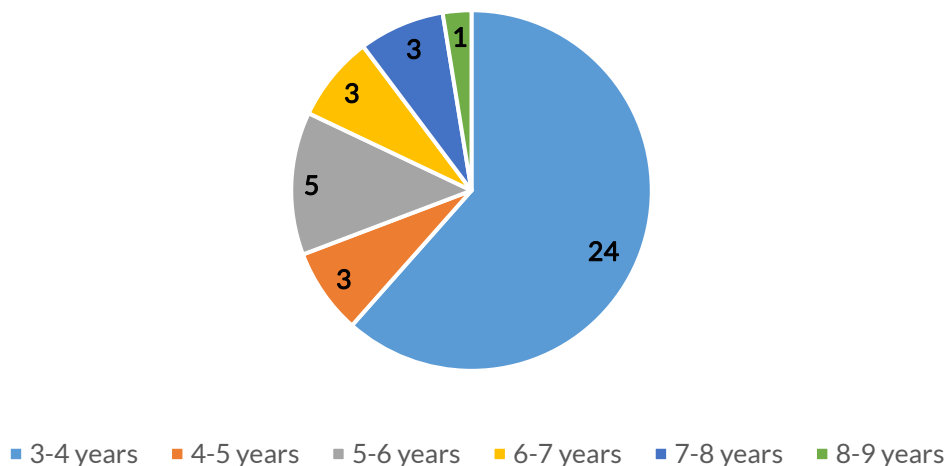


75 responses were received in total. Survivors told us about investigations managed by 26 different police forces across England and Wales, many of which were still ongoing. Forces represented in the data were:

- Cambridgeshire
- Cleveland
- Derbyshire
- Devon & Cornwall
- Essex
- Gloucestershire
- Greater Manchester
- Gwent
- Hampshire
- Kent
- Lancashire
- Merseyside
- Metropolitan
- North Wales
- North Yorkshire
- Nottinghamshire
- South Yorkshire
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Thames Valley
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- West Yorkshire
- Wiltshire

39 survey respondents told us that investigations into reported sexual offences had concluded. Investigation lengths ranged between 3 and 9 years:

Figure 2: The number of survivor survey respondents who were subjected to police investigations lasting 3+ years



A further 26 survey respondents identified that they were involved in investigations that were still ongoing more than three years since they first reported.

We will refer to the information shared directly by survivors throughout the report. Data has been anonymised to protect their identities.

# Chapter 1. Case studies and timelines

Below, we set out three case studies of survivors who have experienced excessive delays in long-running police investigations.

## 1. AB's case

On 29 December 2014, AB reported childhood sexual abuse, including rape, by her father, to the police.

The perpetrator was arrested soon after but was not charged until 2021 – almost seven years after reporting. For the duration of the investigation, he remained in the community and was subject to very few (if any) bail conditions. AB's case eventually came to trial in September 2022, but it was postponed due to the barristers' strike and subsequently relisted for August 2023. At this stage, AB could no longer cope with the emotional toll of supporting the prosecution, and almost eight years since she reported to the police, made the difficult decision to withdraw from the case to prioritise her mental health and recovery. A second survivor remained in the case. The perpetrator died shortly after on 6 February 2023, and before the next trial date.

During the course of the long investigation, AB suffered with flashbacks, nightmares and often feared for her children's safety. It affected her day to day living, the choices she felt able to make or not make, the uncertainty as to what was in fact going on with the investigation and the fear of her father retaliating against her or her children, or abusing other children. Her fears were exacerbated by an absence of proper updates from police, and at times, she worried that the case may have been closed without telling her.

AB describes being robbed of years of her life because she was always stressed, dissociated or preoccupied with the case. She was unable to book holidays, and isolated herself from family and friends, including her best friend, who was a witness in the case. AB's ability to work was also severely affected by the significant deterioration in her mental health caused by the lengthy police investigation. Whilst the investigation was ongoing, AB felt she did not have the space or emotional capacity to commit to a more demanding role because of her preoccupation with the case, and because of how exhausted she felt after eight years of stress and uncertainty. Had the investigation not taken so long, AB would have returned to full time work far sooner and progressed further in her career.

AB speaks powerfully of her experience. In her words: *"I find it difficult to bring myself to explain the level of pure disappointment I feel towards the police. The police are supposed to be a body that protects citizens. The police have not just failed me, but many others. It is truly inhumane to put a victim through a process lasting nine years. I have been disappointed by the so-called justice system under which we are meant to feel safe"*.

AB has since brought a successful claim against the police for breaches of her human rights under Articles 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

## AB's investigation timeline:

Date	Description
1975 - 1977	AB is raped and sexually abused by father.
29 December 2014	AB reports the sexual abuse to the police and provides details of a number of family members, friends and professionals to whom she had disclosed the abuse.
2 January 2015	AB provides a full account in ABE interview.
6 February 2015	The OIC (officer in charge of the case) updates the case file noting that the suspect interview was still outstanding, as was a request for third party material. He stated that progression had been slow due to other investigations and s.47 enquiries. <sup>6</sup>
18 February 2015	Perpetrator arrested and interviewed by the police. Perpetrator denies the allegations.
23 February 2015	DS (Detective Sergeant) identifies action plan, including actions that were the same as those assigned in earlier reviews of December 2014 and January 2015.
1 March 2015	DS conducts a further review, which is almost identical to that which was recorded in the previous review of 23 February 2015.
04 March 2015	Initial account taken from witness.
05 March 2015	Submission of the perpetrator's electronic items seized on arrest for examination.
24 March 2015	DS conducts review of the case and identifies tasks to be completed, some of which are the same as those identified four months earlier.
30 March 2015	Initial account taken from AB's ex-partner.
14 April 2015	Statement taken from witness.
07 July 2015	Police submit a request for Early Investigative Advice (EIA) to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
09 July 2015	EIA action plan set by CPS, with actions for police to complete.
14 July 2015	Statement taken from witness
22 July 2015	Statement taken from witness
28 July 2015	DS identifies a number of outstanding actions, including those identified in earlier April, May and June reviews.
16 August 2015	Further request for EIA submitted to the CPS.
11 September 2015	EIA return from CPS with a further action plan for the police.
12 October 2015	Police notes incorrectly suggested that third party material was awaited, despite it having been received.

<sup>6</sup> A legal investigation is required under section 47 [Children Act 1989](#), when there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Section 47 enquires can be led by either children's services or the police, or by both working together.

3 November 2015	Notes incorrectly suggested that third party material was awaited, despite it having been received.
3 January 2016	Police deemed that bail was no longer proportionate and necessary. Bail restrictions are lifted, though the suspect remained under investigation.
15 January 2016	Notes from DS review are unchanged from earlier reviews of 23 September and 25 November 2015.
17 February 2016	DS completes further review. Notes from the review are again copied from the previous reviews on 23 September 2015, 25 November 2015 and 15 January 2016.
19 February 2016	OIC on training course for four weeks, without any cover.
20 June 2016	Statement taken from AB's partner, over a year after the task was first identified.
04 August 2016	Electronic file submitted to CPS for charging advice, over a year from when AB reported the offences to the police.
1 September 2016	File returned from CPS with outstanding actions.
08 November 2016	Further statement from AB.
December 2016 – March 2017	AB received no updates from the OIC.
8 February 2017	Police deem safeguarding concerns to be low risk, despite the perpetrator no longer being subject to bail conditions.
29 March 2017	OIC indicates that investigation has been delayed for some time due to other investigations with a higher safeguarding risk taking priority.
7 July 2017	OIC conducts a review of the investigation and prepares an action plan. The plan is copied from an earlier version dated 29 March 2017.
22 September 2017	Statement taken from witness.
Sept - Dec 2017	OIC off work on sick leave, no cover assigned.
16 January 2018	Statement taken from witness.
26 March 2018	Statement taken from witness, after this task was identified in August 2017.
23 May 2018	OIC updated AB, some three and a half months since she had last been updated.
17 June 2018	MG3A <sup>7</sup> endorsed and sent to CPS for charging advice.
July 2018	Further action plan sent to police by CPS. No substantive work undertaken from when the file was returned by the CPS on 26 July 2018 until December 2018
18 December 2018	AB expresses a wish to make a formal complaint about the lack of contact she has received.
17 January 2019	Download of AB's Facebook data, requested by CPS five months earlier in July 2018.

<sup>7</sup> An MG3A is a specific form used by the police to make a further report to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). It is used to update the CPS with new evidence or information, after an initial report has already been made to them using an MG3 form. Police will submit an MG3A form to ask the CPS to make a final charging decision on a case. The form will detail why a case should proceed to charge.

13 March 2019	Download of AB's mobile phone data.
1 October 2019	Facebook and mobile data review completed.
November 2019	Further file submitted to CPS for charging advice.
18 February 2020	Further action plan sent back to police by CPS.
13 April 2020	Updated third-party records requested.
22 April 2020	Further third-party records received in relation to AB.
May 2020	Further enquiries with AB to clarify CPS queries.
11 June 2020	Further file submitted to CPS for charging advice.
June – September 2020	No updates from the police to AB.
27 November 2020	OIC told AB that there were difficulties with low staffing in the department and the need to prioritise cases which present a 'higher risk'.
4 December 2020	Almost six years after AB first reported the allegations, the CPS had returned the file and authorised charges, three of which related to AB.
30 July 2021	Court summons issued to the perpetrator.
17 August 2021	First court appearance at Huntingdon Magistrates' Court. Not guilty pleas entered by perpetrator.
14 September 2021	Plea and Trial Preparation hearing.
12 September 2022	Pre-trial review hearing.
21 September 2022	Trial vacated due to barrister strikes.
5 October 2022	Second trial date fixed for 7 August 2023.
6 October 2022	AB decides to withdraw from proceedings.
7 February 2023	Perpetrator dies.

## 2. SD's case

Between the ages of 12 and 14, SD was abused by the perpetrator who was circa 20 years older than her. SD reported the abuse to the police in May 2015. She was one of multiple survivors who had made similar allegations against the perpetrator. The investigation was affected by serious issues of delays and communication failures and the perpetrator was not charged until June 2020 and convicted in December 2022.

Date	Description
1997 - 1999	Sexual abuse of SD.
29 May 2015	SD reports abuse.
8 June 2015	ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) interview of SD. <sup>8</sup>
June 2015	Perpetrator interviewed and denied all offences.
May 2016	Perpetrator further interviewed subject to criminal caution.
28 June 2016	The file was purportedly ready for CPS advice.
July 2016	File sent to CPS for a charging decision.

<sup>8</sup> An ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) interview is a video recorded interview of a victim or witness explaining what happened in a case. In some cases the video will be played in court as the victim-survivor/witnesses' evidence in chief.

September 2016	The CPS returned an action plan for the police, which was not completed until March 2020 - some three and a half years later.
November 2016	SD was informed that the case was no further along but someone was being allocated to help at the end of the month.
May 2017	SD's mother becomes SD's full-time carer due to poor mental health.
16 January 2018	More than 15 months after the CPS had identified relevant actions in September 2016, SD was informed by the police that there were delays to the case and that the perpetrator had still not been charged.
August 2018	CPS request further actions but the OIC (officer in charge of the case) is absent from work.
13 September 2018	SD's phone is downloaded, over three years after the offence was reported.
07 March 2019	The police prepare a file for the CPS, nearly three years after it had originally been sent. CPS actions from August 2018 remain incomplete.
May 2019	SD signed off work as she was suffering with severe anxiety caused by the protracted investigation.
24 June 2019	OIC confirmed that the case would be ready to go to the CPS in the next two weeks.
6 August 2019	OIC advised that the case would be ready to go to the CPS as soon as possible and hopefully by the middle of the following week.
15 October 2019	OIC responded explaining that the case should go to the CPS this week.
Around November 2019	File submitted to CPS.
16 June 2020	28 charges authorised by the CPS, over five years from SD's report to the police.
September 2020	SD referred for Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, as she had been self-harming.
3 December 2020	Perpetrator appeared before Crown Court and entered not guilty pleas.
4 October 2021	The trial was initially listed to begin but was vacated due to a lack of judicial capacity.
March 2022	AD referred to a psychiatrist due to poor mental health.
June 2022	AD attends hypnotherapy sessions to treat her anxiety.
24 October 2022	Trial began.
2 November 2022	Perpetrator changed plea to guilty in respect of five of the seven charges in relation to SD.
16 December 2022	Perpetrator sentenced to 21 years and seven months' imprisonment. Judge criticised police delays.
6 April 2023	Chief Constable issued a public apology for the delays.

### 3. XY's case

As a teenager, from age 14 onwards, XY was abused by a grooming gang, with two particular abusers being especially implicated. Approximately twenty years later, in April 2022, XY reported the two abusers to the police. Over five years later, in September 2022, XY was informed that the CPS had authorised a charge in relation to her case and the other women abused. The trial is likely to be in 2027. For a period of two years during the investigation XY held off having therapy as she was told it could affect her evidence at trial, and during the investigation into suspect two, four survivors dropped out - one of them a key witness to the prosecution, due to developing a very serious medical condition. Six survivors remain engaged in the prosecution.

Date	Description
April 2020	XY reported to the police. She was told her case was part of a large investigation involving other survivors.
April – June 2020	XY did four video-recorded interviews over a couple of months.
June 2020	Police were planning to arrest abuser 1 for interview; XY was told there would be dawn raids.
September 2020	XY gave information to the police that there is reason to believe that abuser 1 is still abusing young girls.
November 2020	Update from police, they are not arresting abuser 1 as they plan to arrest suspects in a different case (i.e. they did not have enough resources to carry out both operations).
February 2021	Police still had not taken statements from XY's father and sister; she was told they are too busy on other operations
March 2021	XY's mental health deterioration became acute, one of the other survivors involved in the case dropped out.
June 2021	XY was told that abuser 1 would be invited for voluntary interview (despite all the safety fears she had told police about). She was told it would not be possible to impose bail conditions.
June & July 2021	Police contacted XY's father and sister for statements.
August 2021	Police said they had had all evidence needed on abuser 1 and would build a file for CPS.
April 2022	XY was asked a list of questions from CPS and given a final version of her statement to sign.
June 2022	Abuser 1 charged with two counts of rape and one indecent assault. Postal charge, no bail conditions set.
July 2022	Abuser 2 was interviewed for the first time about XY. He was serving a long prison sentence for a violent offence on a previous partner (not one of the survivors in XY's case). He had been in prison from 2020 to 2022 so there were no difficulties in police locating him (though some delays due to lockdown).
November and December 2022	XY told investigation into abuser 2 was on hold due to police working on a more pressing investigation.



May 2023	XY told the case was still on hold as another 'job' had come in where a survivor was in danger.
January 2024	Two more survivors came forward and suspect 2 was interviewed about them.
June 2024	XY was told that police were working on the file for suspect 2 to get it ready to send to CPS.
September 2025	XY informed that a CPS meeting about suspect 2 was finally held after three cancellations. XY was informed that CPS have authorised a charge in relation to her case and the other women, trial is likely to be in 2027.



## Chapter 2. The impact of excessive delay on survivors

### Overview



**I believe that the CJS is often its own separate trauma on top of the trauma the survivor has already endured. Clients have described themselves as being a "victim of the system" and that they feel "punished" for reporting. It's almost impossible to quantify the impact in words but the key themes are: worsening mental health, clients with already poor mental health reaching crisis, worsening physical health, loss of income, loss of employment, loss of relationships (familial, partners and friends), limiting of opportunities (clients can feel unable to make future plans until they have 'closure' from the CJS), shift in world view, loss of psychological, emotional and/or physical safety, loss of autonomy."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**One of my clients has been diagnosed with PTSD from the police investigation, rather than the abuse she was subjected to."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**I have had no room to deal with anything else, it's completely detrimental to my entire life and has been for years."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 4 years)**

The case studies in chapter 1 demonstrate the severe psychological harm that can be caused by excessive investigative delays and police failings spanning multiple years. Failing to respond efficiently to such serious offences not only exacerbates existing trauma, but also *causes* it. It engenders a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness for those affected and keeps them stuck in a system where they have no control, very little dignity, and cannot easily walk away. It can steal years of women's lives by keeping them in a perpetual state of readiness, anticipating re-living traumatic and degrading incidents, at a future imagined trial, with no idea whether this will ever become a reality.

Long-running investigations also lead to a profound loss of trust in agencies, arising from the gradual realisation that those charged with keeping everyone safe appear unwilling, or unable to help.



**The experience of the criminal justice system/police investigation has been so re traumatising and has ruined my life."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 5 years & 5 months)**

There has arguably been an increase in public awareness and discourse concerning sexual violence and abuse in recent years, in part due to reporting on high-profile cases involving celebrities and public figures. This can lead to a skewed perception that women coming forward to report their experiences to the police is common. The reality

is that only around 15% of sexual abuse survivors ever approach police,<sup>9</sup> and when they do, the decision is rarely taken lightly. Perpetrators are typically known to survivors,<sup>10</sup> and the social repercussions of disclosing can be significant. The decision to report often represents the 'least bad' option for a survivor at the time, and many individuals only come forward due to fears for their safety, or the safety of others. In these circumstances, police action can represent protection and legitimacy for the survivor, especially if the offender still holds power in their family, social circle, or wider community.

In short, many survivors just want help as they try to 'do the right thing.' To approach the police in good faith, only to be met with years of delay, inaction, and silence, is therefore a confusing and humiliating experience.



**It's been so long that I really think reporting was pointless. I didn't want him to rape/assault anyone else and I found out he had done so multiple times which is why I reported nine years later. He could have done it over and over in the last 3 years for all I know."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 3 years)**

## Direct harms caused by lengthy delays

The detrimental impacts of excessive police delays are multi-faceted. Survivors, and the specialist services who support them, report that long-running investigations have a profoundly harmful effect on individuals' mental health, as well as many other areas of functioning, such as their relationships, family life, parenting, education, employment, and physical wellbeing.



**The impact is enormous. They often struggle with, or develop, mental health issues around the pressure of being part of an investigation for so long. They lose faith in the CJS and question whether it can help them. They feel worthless and insignificant within the process, as if what happened to them doesn't matter. There can be anger alongside despair. The effect ripples into all areas of their lives and touches relationships with family and friends, work and romantic relationships every day."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**It put my life on hold for 6 years. I lost a job over it because I couldn't handle the high levels of stress and the support from my employer only really lasted 3 months."**

**(Survivor, investigation concluded after 5–6 years)**

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2023). Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/sexualoffencesinenglandandwalesoverview/march2022>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



**My case is still open after 4 years from reporting. This has had a huge impact on me. I keep things to myself as not to upset my daughters. I feel like giving up on it sometimes. I can become anxious if I hear or see anything to do with trials either on the news or TV programmes. Overall anxiety, wondering what will happen as it is a family member who is the perpetrator. I worry in case he dies before there is an answer to the decision.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years 1 month)**

When investigations span multiple years, it can harm survivors’ lives in ways that cannot later be undone. Reporting is a significant undertaking that often requires emotional energy and can prevent forward planning in other areas of life. For example, women sometimes delay starting families or avoid new relationships whilst awaiting the conclusion of investigations, wishing to try and close a traumatic chapter fully, before opening a new, hopefully better one. If they have no idea when this hoped-for ‘closure’ may arrive, it can cause prolonged distress and steal their ability to plan for the future. Few are given realistic timeframes – indeed, the police themselves may have no idea how long the case will take to progress. For survivors, this can feel like an indefinite pause has been placed on their lives.



**You feel like you can't move forward and [you are] stuck in this place of not being able to fully heal as you're aware you could potentially go to court and re-live it, and not knowing if it will be accepted or not is a horrible place to be emotionally.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 5 years 2 months)**



**I'm trying to move on and close that chapter in life but I can't because 5 years later I am still waiting for answers.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 5 years 2 months)**



**Each time I had to deal with the police or CPS or chase them up the mental and emotional toll on me was huge. I cut my working hours by half to cope. I put off[f] starting a family for years. When I did get pregnant the pregnancy was marred by ongoing stress with pursuing the ca[se] and with PTSD being triggered.”**

**(Survivor, investigation lasted 3–4 years)**

For children and young people, the negative impacts of serious delays can span important developmental milestones, and the long-term consequences for their mental health, education, and future life chances can be even more significant.



**...a lot of the 14-year-old girls we worked with ended up just not going back to school. Because the perpetrator was another student, so I just think that... everybody suffers with the with the long, the long waiting times but, that's a definite negative impact that on the rest of that girl's entire life, you know.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, North East)**



Every single aspect of my entire teenage and adult life has been shaped by it. Mental health, development and therapy for 6 years. I wasn't well at all, and still have PTSD."

(Survivor, investigation lasted 5–6 years)



Impacted my uni[versity] work from all the worry, missing lessons to go interviews etc. [It was] always hanging over my head."

(Survivor, investigation lasted 3–4 years)



My daughter (who the case is about) started self-harming and tried to commit suicide. We have suffered as a family."

(Mum of survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years 3 months)

For adults, the impacts of long investigations on employment and parenting can also be particularly detrimental. Many of the survivors who completed our survey spoke about the way ongoing delays harmed their careers, and their ability to look after their children.



I struggled to maintain full time work which impacted on the wellbeing of myself and children. I was not emotionally available enough to them and I worry that will have lasting effects."

(Survivor, investigation lasted 3–4 years)



It's massively impacted my life. I've put off studies, I've been signed off work multiple times. I've lost contact with loved ones. I have developed CPTSD. I don't sleep well, I'm on edge. When I get contact from police it triggers me. I'm very careful where I go out because my perpetrator lives near me. My children have continuously seen me breakdown. I've been suicidal."

(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years 5 months)

Evidently the impacts of protracted police investigations permeate many aspects of survivors' lives and demonstrate why it is so important that effective solutions are found as soon as possible. Sexual violence is already a highly gendered crime – 91% of people prosecuted for sexual offences are men aged 18+ and 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted since the age of 16<sup>11</sup> – and the delayed police response compounds and exacerbates many other pre-existing inequalities in the home and the workplace, creating uniquely stressful challenges that further impact women's overall functioning and life chances. For women and girls subjected to multiple forms of disadvantage – such as severe mental health challenges, poverty, homelessness, disabilities, and uncertain immigration status – it can be even more challenging to remain engaged with police processes over such long periods of time, leaving them without protection and vulnerable to further abuse.

<sup>11</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2025). Rape and sexual assault statistics. Available at: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/statistics-sexual-violence/>.

## The impact on the availability and effectiveness of support



**I have accessed counselling but that has been impacted by it being pre-trial and due to the stress of the ongoing investigation. My ISVA has been changed 2 times due to the length of time. I live in fear of the outcome either way and am constantly doubting myself and why I put myself through this process.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 3 years 5 months)**

Survivors subjected to long-running investigations are often prevented from fully benefiting from the support and help available to them from specialist support organisations, such as Rape Crisis centres. Survivors described feeling unable to talk about their experiences for fear of jeopardising their case. Indeed, survivors are often advised by police not to talk to other witnesses – including family members – about the case. Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) are specialist support workers who can support survivors to help them navigate the justice process. However, statutory guidance<sup>12</sup> relating to this role makes clear that ISVAs must limit their exposure to evidence.

Similarly, therapeutic spaces should be safe and confidential spaces for survivors to talk openly about their experiences, but survivors involved in criminal trials are only able to access ‘pre-trial therapy’, where the details of the incident(s) are not discussed to avoid future claims of ‘witness coaching’, and limit the possibility of their notes being requested and used to undermine them at trial.<sup>13</sup>

In some cases, survivors with immense trauma have no meaningful guarantee that sensitive records will not end up at court and don’t therefore feel able to access the support they desperately need and deserve. This would be detrimental enough over a 12 to 18-month period, but when investigations span multiple years, with additional severe court delays post-charge, the damage can be irreparable.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) updated their guidance on pre-trial therapy in 2022,<sup>14</sup> to try and prevent individuals being dissuaded from accessing therapeutic support whilst a case was ongoing. However, not all therapeutic service providers are confident in delivering ‘pre-trial therapy’ and instead turn survivors away.



**I have tried numerous places / support services for support but was told it could affect a trial so suffered for years without help or support. This attitude needs to change.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing 5yrs 5months)**

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2025). Independent Sexual Violence Adviser Statutory Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-sexual-violence-adviser-statutory-guidance>.

<sup>13</sup> Crown Prosecution Service. (2022). Pre-Trial Therapy. Available at: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/prosecution-guidance/pre-trial-therapy>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

In addition, the updated guidance still fails to offer any meaningful guarantee that private records will not end up at court, and as such, fails to reassure survivors or support services.

New provisions in the Victims and Prisoners Act will, when brought into force, raise the legal threshold under which police can access survivors' therapy records.<sup>15</sup> We are hopeful that these new provisions will provide greater protection to survivors seeking therapy pre-trial, but it will take time for this to translate into greater confidence and changed practice on the ground.

Survivors' responses to our survey demonstrate that in long-running cases, historic poor practice does not just disappear when policies are adjusted. The impacts are still there and acutely experienced by those who remain stuck in the system. For example, those who were told not to access therapeutic support before the revised CPS guidance in 2022 do not appear to have been informed of a change in approach.



**It has delayed me being able to process or recognise what happened to me. You cannot talk about the rape until after trial so it has affected me even getting support.”**

**(Survivor, investigation lasted 3–4 years)**



**It was re-traumatising, I struggled mentally, financially, socially, all aspects of my life was made worse by the investigation and length it took especially since I was limited to getting professional support. I accessed [name of support service] but they had long wait times and even when receiving them I spent most of sessions crying about treatment from police rather than the actual crimes committed against me. I tried all other counselling services, through work etc. and even charities and no one would let me because it was to do with rape, so I felt more alone, silenced and shameful. I felt like a disease that no one wanted near or to help in case they catch what I have. Most of the time I wanted to die, I was really suicidal.”**

**(Survivor, investigation lasted 3–4 years)**



**I have not been able to discuss the sexual offence in therapy, meaning it's been hanging over my head, with no idea when it'll be closed and I can move on. I have been living in limbo for three and a half years, unable to fully process what happened to me, as I wait to see what, if any, outcome will be.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing 3yrs 8months)**

<sup>15</sup> Section 44a Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. See further: Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2024). Campaign Win: Government changes law to better protect survivors' counselling notes. Available at: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/news/campaign-win-government-changes-law-to-better-protect-survivors-counselling-notes/>.





**[It's] the impact it has on your mental health. You can't move on. You can't seek counselling in case your notes are somehow used against you. Meanwhile, the perpetrator is allowed their liberty and to reoffend as many times as they like."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing 4yrs 3months)**

Another way in which excessive delays impact the quality of support survivors receive is via a lack of continuity due to the inevitable staff turnover that occurs over such long periods. Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) for example, were intended to be a single point of support for survivors from report to court.<sup>16</sup> Although ISVAs are highly skilled and passionate professionals, it is a high-stress, low-paid role, often on short-term and unstable contracts, making long-term staff retention difficult. Indeed, many Rape Crisis Centre's commissioning and funding cycles are shorter than the entire criminal justice journey for many survivors, and so as well as staff turnover within teams, contracts may not get renewed and services can be transferred to entirely different organisations as a result of competitive tendering processes.



**Clients have commented that they did struggle when having to change ISVAs. One client had 3 over the course of her case."**

**(ISVA, online Survey)**



**As the process is taken so long people leave and clients cases are still not concluded and having to be passed to another worker. This impacts the client as they have to form another relationship and might have to go over things that they have already spoken about."**

**(ISVA, online Survey)**



**My ISVA helped me raise a complaint recently which has changed nothing. If I had not had my ISVAs (now on number 3) I don't know what I would have done."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing 6yrs, 5mnths)**



**Due to a high turnover in ISVA roles – especially those based in the charity sector – longer-term service users may have had many different ISVAs during their time in service. This can be very disruptive, especially when combined with the high turnover of officers in their case, and make them feel further devalued. We try to minimise this where possible, but services like ours often have short fixed-term contracts and limited resources so we can only do so much."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

Equally, a high turnover of police officers during the life of a sexual offence case can further destabilise the continuity of relationships and the investigative narrative, and means survivors are having to re-explain personal information, or work harder to be

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2025). Independent Sexual Violence Adviser Statutory Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-sexual-violence-adviser-statutory-guidance>.

known and understood. Operation Soteria progress reports describe ongoing issues with high levels of officer burnout<sup>17</sup> which, in turn, impacts survivors' trust and confidence in the justice process.

ISVAs also spoke about the challenges of trying to provide effective information to survivors in the context of delays - particularly the need to balance optimism for their hopes of justice, with the reality of the possible time frames and outcomes they may be likely to experience. Between June 2024 and June 2025, just 3.2% of adult rape investigations resulted in a charge in the same period in which the offence was recorded, let alone a conviction.<sup>18</sup>



**And it's getting that balance right, isn't it? Because you don't want to put people off reporting. I mean, obviously, you know, we want people to report. So it's kind of like you say, you don't want to be a, you know, all doom and gloom, but then also you've got to manage their expectations as well. So, but yeah, it's very difficult."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Midlands)**



**Sometimes as an ISVA I feel useless, as when I speak/meet with my client once a month I haven't nothing new to give them from the police. Sometimes it is just the same update every single month, such as "no new updates".**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**It can also make us look incompetent, cause we're unable to get the updates that they want because we don't get any, or [the] officer never responds and we have to escalate things and even at our place when things have been escalated, it's taken a year to get a response."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Yorkshire)**

Despite ISVA services' best efforts, excessive delays in investigations are clearly detrimental to the quality and consistency of advocacy support that survivors receive, making support 'from report to court' an increasingly remote possibility. There was evidence in our research of this causing vicarious trauma for ISVAs, making it likely that they will leave the sector in order to protect their own wellbeing, leading to greater inconsistencies and a loss of experienced staff.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example: Home Office. (2023). Independent report: Operation Soteria Bluestone Year One Report (accessible version). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operation-soteria-year-one-report/operation-soteria-bluestone-year-one-report-accessible-version#:~:text=There%20is%20a%20direct%20link,victims%20and%20challenging%20to%20suspects.>

<sup>18</sup> HM Government. (2025). Criminal justice system delivery data dashboard: Improving quality of justice. Available at: <https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/quality-justice>.





**As manager of the service – it's hard to motivate the team sometimes, because we all know the situation is unlikely to improve any time soon. The police keep telling us how busy they are, and officers are juggling too many investigations. We are told they have to prioritise "live jobs" and so the older an investigation becomes; the less priority it is given. ISVAs spend a large majority of their time requesting updates."**

**(ISVA Manager online survey)**

## **The cumulative impacts of criminal justice delays**

It is also important to recognise that for survivors reporting to police, the police investigation is only step one, with increasing backlogs and further delays post-charge, in the courts, should a case proceed that far. Sir Brian Leveson has recently provided a detailed overview of these worsening backlogs and delays<sup>19</sup> and for those whose reports take years to be progressed by the police, the delay post-charge compounds the harm of this still further.

Rape Crisis England & Wales' recent report<sup>20</sup> sets out the impact that Crown Court backlogs have on sexual violence survivors in particular. 13,238 sexual offence cases were awaiting trial as of the end of June 2025 – a 66% increase since their first report on the same issue was finalised in 2022.<sup>21</sup> Sexual offence cases now make up 17% of all cases awaiting trial in the Crown Court backlog,<sup>22</sup> and adult survivors of rape are made to wait far longer for their day in court compared to people who have experienced other crimes – 499 days on average, compared to 284 days on average for other crime types.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Leveson, B. (2025). Independent Review of the Criminal Courts – Part 1. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49\\_MOJ\\_Ind\\_Review\\_Criminal\\_Courts\\_v8b\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2025). Living in Limbo: Our second report on the retraumatisation of rape and sexual abuse victims and survivors in the Crown Court backlog. Available at:

[https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo\\_NEW\\_b.pdf](https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo_NEW_b.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2023). Breaking Point: Our report on the retraumatisation of rape and sexual abuse survivors in the Crown Court backlog. Available at:

[https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/RCEW\\_-\\_Breaking\\_Point\\_report\\_-\\_March\\_2023.pdf](https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/RCEW_-_Breaking_Point_report_-_March_2023.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales. (2025). Living in Limbo: Our second report on the retraumatisation of rape and sexual abuse victims and survivors in the Crown Court backlog. Available at:

[https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo\\_NEW\\_b.pdf](https://rcew.fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/LivinginLimbo_NEW_b.pdf), p15.

<sup>23</sup> HM Government. (2025). Criminal justice system delivery data dashboard. Improving Timeliness: Average days from charge to completion at Crown Court. Available at: [https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/improving-timeliness/courts?time=Quarterly&offence=Adult+rape&area=National&median\\_or\\_mean=median&custody=both#outstanding\\_cases\\_12m--table](https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/improving-timeliness/courts?time=Quarterly&offence=Adult+rape&area=National&median_or_mean=median&custody=both#outstanding_cases_12m--table).

In 2025, sexual offences proceeding through the justice system clearly face an increasingly long and difficult journey. There remains a risk that over such extended periods, cases will come to be closed before trial for a variety of different reasons. This can include problems with witness availability, the defendant's health, or further evidential reviews by CPS. The strength of the evidence in cases that rely heavily on individual memories can also be impacted by the passage of time. This uncertainty compounds the harms to survivors, who often have to tolerate long waits for hearing dates, and repeated, short notice adjournments



**Now we're even looking at 2028 [for trial dates]... we've spoken to witness care as well. Witness care are literally at the at the end of their tether as well with all the delays."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Midlands)**



**I think that's something that's forgotten, for the survivor, the whole journey...they don't really...the investigation and then to court is the whole thing, is still, you know, their life. And I think that's another thing... you know, I know we're talking about police stuff, but it's quite normal to get 4, 5, 6 adjournments [for trials] now [with] yearly gaps. I mean I just had one [case] that was literally 6 adjournments pretty much a year [between] each one, now it's normal."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**



**I am concerned at the length of time before this even gets to court dates and delays. The lack of support from the police and how little of the process is trauma-informed is so saddening. Whilst individuals care, the system is not at all caring and inflicts further pain and trauma. I live in limbo hoping that someone I've never met in the police and CP[S] will make a decision on what to do with the most personal and harrowing moments of my life".**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 3 years 5 months)**

The longer cases take to progress, the more chance there is that cases will collapse. In particular, in childhood sexual abuse cases, perpetrators can be quite elderly, and issues around physical and mental fitness to stand trial may be raised by the defence.



**Survivors often vocalise feelings of being failed by the system especially when suspects were fit during the investigations and are deemed unfit during lengthy court delays (multiple adjournments)."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**We had a case that was terrible where the perpetrator developed [degenerative disease] so was then not fit for trial."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Yorkshire)**



**I think the court thing is also interesting because it's the interplay of delays within the investigation stage that can trigger some of the delays in the court stage... an example is [in one] long investigation... everybody in the case became that much older, which meant there was fitness issues in the court process which caused delays there. So like [it's from]... one impact to the other."**

**(ISVA, South East)**

Many of the survivors we have worked with in these cases feel profoundly hurt and let down by the way they were treated by police, and **52 of the 75 respondents to our online survivor survey advised they would not, or were unsure if they would, approach the police for help again.** This demonstrates the ongoing harm from police inaction, which shatters very reasonable expectations around individuals' basic rights to security and protection, leaving women more at risk and effectively excluding them from equal access to protection under the law.



**The way that the officers made me feel, I would never report anything to the police again. Especially crimes of this nature. They made me feel like the case, not only wasn't worth investigating, but it wasn't worth me reporting at all."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 3 years 5 months)**



**I would not only not report something again I would urge others not to. I actively tell people around me not to because of how awful it has been."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years)**

If we do not have a criminal justice system that is capable of resolving cases in a timely manner, we will find that - contrary to the government's own mission to halve violence against women and girls in a decade - more women and girls will be at risk of violence and abuse, as perpetrators go effectively unpoliced and free to offend again.

## Chapter 3. Data on delay

### Home Office data

Since 2014, the Home Office has gathered and reported on police crime figures from all forces annually. The super-complaint authors submitted a request under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to the Home Office, seeking data regarding the number of sexual offence investigations over the last decade that exceeded three years from the date the survivor reported, to the date that the police registered an outcome on their system.

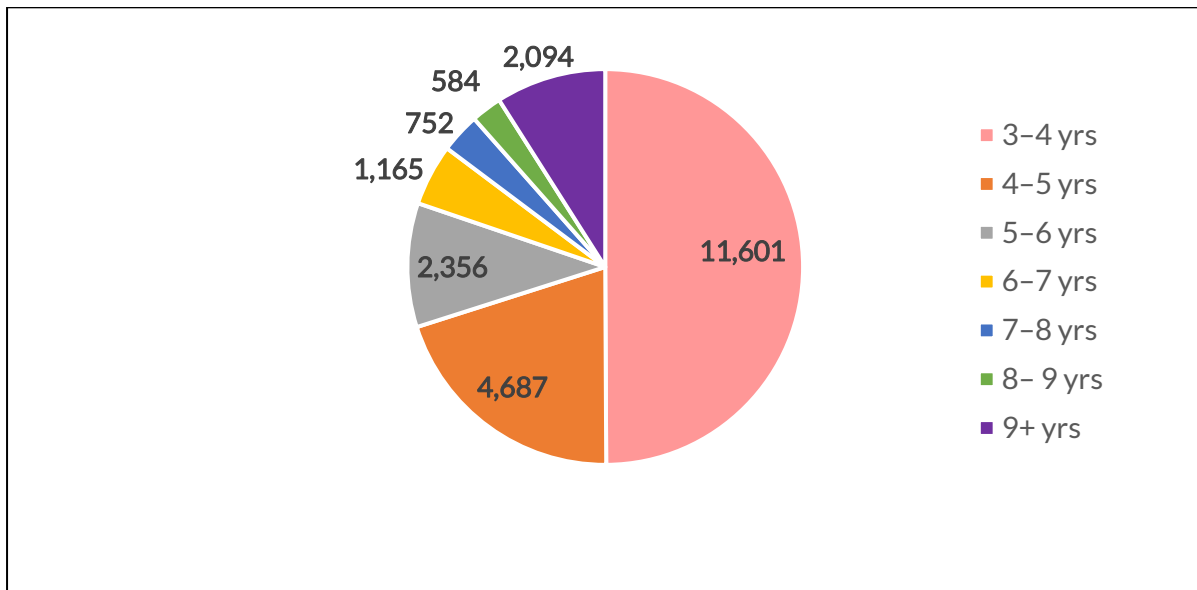
The data returned by the Home Office is shown below in Table 1.<sup>24</sup> Dates refer to the year in which the police outcome was recorded. An 'outcome' means a decision to close the case, or where the suspect was charged.

Table 1: The number of closed sexual offence investigations that lasted over three years, by investigation length, 2014/15 – 2024/25.

Length of investigation Financial year	3–4 yrs	4–5 yrs	5–6 yrs	6–7 yrs	7–8 yrs	8– 9 yrs	9+ yrs	Total investigations taking 3+ years
2014/15	137	72	71	32	29	38	154	533
2015/16	454	252	139	77	48	28	215	1,213
2016/17	442	155	122	53	46	37	199	1,054
2017/18	713	217	87	50	39	29	171	1,306
2018/19	1,174	428	206	80	55	42	258	2,243
2019/20	734	265	133	56	27	26	140	1,381
2020/21	1,283	459	218	92	61	28	181	2,322
2021/22	1,257	531	209	162	193	154	195	2,701
2022/23	1,447	603	254	134	81	52	188	2,759
2023/24	1,699	929	493	221	90	75	212	3,719
2024/25	2,261	776	424	208	83	75	181	4,008
Total lengthy investigations	11,601	4,687	2,356	1,165	752	584	2,094	23,239

<sup>24</sup> The Home Office also provided this data broken down between rape and other sexual offences. See Annex A.

Figure 3: The number of sexual offence investigations closed between 2014/15 and 2024/5 that took longer than 3 years, by length.



We also asked the Home Office for the number of sexual offences investigations that are currently open that have been ongoing for more than three years. The figures for sexual offences recorded by the police since 2015/16 that were yet to be assigned an outcome as of the end of the 2024/25 financial year, are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: The number of sexual offence investigations lasting over three years that were still open at the end of 2024/25, by investigation length and offence type.<sup>25</sup>

Length of investigation	Rape Offences	Other Sexual Offences	Combined Totals (all sexual offences)
3-4yrs	1,840	1,941	3,781
4-5yrs	1,842	2,243	4,085
5-6yrs	1,376	1,604	2,980
6-7yrs	632	755	1,387
7-8yrs	232	325	557
8-9yrs	195	322	517
9+yrs	240	402	642
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6,357</b>	<b>7,592</b>	<b>13,949</b>

This data shows that over the past decade:

- **37,188 sexual offence investigations** have taken longer than three years to investigate.
- **More than half of these investigations** have taken longer than four years; and many considerably longer.

<sup>25</sup> This data was provided by the Home Office on all sexual offences that were a) yet to be assigned an outcome, b) offences that were recorded since 2015, and c) were outstanding at the end of the financial year 2024/25. It is possible that some may now have been assigned outcomes, i.e. charged or closed.

- There was a 652% increase in closed police investigations into sexual offences which took longer than three years to conclude (see also figure 1, page 5).

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, there were 13,949 ongoing sexual offence investigations that had been open for more than 3 years; 1,716 of these had been ongoing for more than 7 years – the amount of time it will take for a child to finish their primary school education.

There are a number of limitations with police-recorded data which we discuss below. However, even when accounting for these, there can be no doubt there is a systemic issue with lengthy police investigations, affecting thousands of people, and a significant section of the public.

In many of these cases, there could be a breach of positive obligations under the ECHR, whereby the state is not fulfilling its duty to conduct effective investigations into credible complaints of ill-treatment. In some cases, as AB's experience in chapter 1 demonstrate, the delay itself prevents justice being done at all, such as when survivors drop out or perpetrators die before cases can reach trial. We cover the legal position in relation to these delays in more detail in Chapter 5.

A clear pattern emerging from the Home Office data is that there has been a steady increase over the past decade, year on year, in the number of cases with excessive delays. There was a **more than six-fold increase** in the total number of investigations taking over three years, and a **15-fold increase** for investigations lasting between three to four years, from 2014/15 to 2024/25. These steady and large-scale increases reflect the experiences of ISVAs who have been working over this decade, who told us that overall investigations have been getting consistently longer and longer. The data provide evidence of a problem that has been growing over the years, and which has been largely hidden in public records due to the way that timeliness is reported (see below).

Currently, the Home Office data confirms typically greater numbers of cases taking between 3 and 5 years. However, we have still seen a significant increase in cases taking longer than this. Between 2014/15 and 2024/5 there has been a **53% increase in investigations taking longer than 7 years to conclude**. The scale of the problem is very significant even if the longest time periods remain relatively less common, and the trend of increasing delays suggests that unless measures are implemented to reverse this, the numbers of these longest investigations will continue to grow.

Factoring in these timescales, together with worsening delays in court hearings and adjournments post-charge due to the Crown Court backlog, many survivors now face a journey through a barely functioning criminal justice system.

## Individual police force data

We also sent individual Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all police forces in England and Wales. The Home Office data combines crime figures for all forces, and we wished to assess any differences between force areas. 33 forces sent data.

Unfortunately, however, the returned data is not usable since different forces interpreted the questions differently, and replies were highly variable in terms of quality and adherence to what was asked. However, the replies do demonstrate that the problem is national, rather than localised, with all but one of the 33 forces reporting investigations into sexual offences that were three years and longer. The highest figures appear to be in the large urban forces, particularly the Metropolitan Police, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Police.

## Data from ISVA services

We collected survey data from Rape Crisis Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) services. ISVA services do not systematically monitor investigation timescales or police outcome data, and so the data provided is not representative of all cases in which they have supported survivors. However, ISVAs produced available data from their case management systems and the information provided offers a snapshot of what they see in their day-to-day work: significant numbers of investigations into sexual offences ongoing for many years.

The below data comes from ISVA services in London, Brighton, Essex, Merseyside, Leeds, Gloucestershire, Darlington & County Durham and Cambridgeshire, and relates to investigations conducted by 21 different police forces.

Table 3: The number of lengthy sexual offence investigations (3+ years) reported by ISVAs, by investigation length

Police investigation time frame	Total # of lengthy investigations seen by ISVAs
3-4 yrs	152
4-5 yrs	41
5-6 yrs	24
6-7 yrs	17
7-8 yrs	10
8-9 yrs	1
9+ yrs	6
<b>Total # investigations that took longer than 3 years</b>	<b>251</b>

It is difficult to compare between ISVA services as they have different staff team sizes and caseloads. However, we note that London ISVA services reported higher numbers of delayed investigations, and that the Metropolitan Police were over represented, with ISVA services in multiple areas supporting survivors in long running cases investigated by the Metropolitan Police.



## Data published on timeliness fails to identify long-delayed cases

FOI data is relied upon in this super-complaint, because the ‘timeliness’ data available from publicly available official sources and academic research adopt methodologies that completely obscure the issue of excessive delays, and essentially make the problem of very long investigations invisible. This is for a variety of reasons.

### A. Use of medians

Firstly, the use of medians rather than means (averages) for lengths of investigations creates a focus on the middle ground and removes the outliers. This fails to capture the realities of long-running investigations, and results in the large volume of investigations at the lengthy end of the spectrum disappearing.

There can be striking disparities between the median and the mean, so that data is not meaningful where very long time periods are involved. As an example, an academic article on timeliness published in 2022<sup>26</sup> highlights that the number of days from offence taking place to a survivor reporting has an average (mean) of around 1,400 days which is 3.8 years, but the median is around 10 days. Whilst time from offence to report is not relevant for our super-complaint, it serves to illustrate how, when assessing timeliness, where there is a wide degree of variation, medians can be particularly inadequate in explaining the actual experiences of those reporting.

As an aside, we note that the academic research on timeliness referred to above cannot be relied upon when it comes to the long-running investigations that we address in this super-complaint. The research was based on cases *opened* in particular years, as compared with our FOI data which is based on cases *closed* in particular years. The researchers have confirmed that the research was carried out in 2021 and 2022, and the three-year data set consisted of cases reported to the police in 2018 to 2020. Those cases that were still ongoing were omitted from the data, and so, by definition, this dataset would not contain the category of cases that we are concerned about, i.e. those which are ongoing for over three years and more.

### B. Data published by the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office is based entirely on medians

The Home Office crime outcome statistics<sup>27</sup> covering the 12 months to March 2025 provides the median number of days to assign an outcome in England and Wales, over the past six years, by offence type.

<sup>26</sup> Lovett, J. et al. (2022). What can we learn from police data about timeliness in rape and serious sexual offence investigations in England and Wales? *International Criminology* 2, 286-298. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43576-022-00069-8>.

<sup>27</sup> Home Office. (2025). Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2024–2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025>.



Table 4: Median number days taken to assign an outcome in cases, by offence type, 2019-2025.

	Year ending March 2019	Year ending March 2020	Year ending March 2021	Year ending March 2022	Year ending March 2023	Year ending March 2024	Year ending March 2025
Violence against the person	18	18	18	21	23	22	22
Sexual offences	77	66	69	62	72	68	65
Rape	126	98	97	94	104	107	103

The figures presented by the Home Office are a world apart from the reality for many survivors. They suggest that rape investigations typically take under four months, and sexual offences around two and a half months.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) publishes ‘scorecards’ for adult rape offences,<sup>28</sup> which report that the median number of days it took police to record a successful outcome or to charge was 331 days, in the year ending March 2025. This data is very different from the Home Office figures, as it includes only the cases that result in a successful outcome or charge (less than 10% of the total) and does not include sexual offences other than rape, or those recorded against under-18s which appear to be one of the categories that suffer the worst delays.

The MoJ ‘dashboard’ on improving timeliness states that:

*“for sexual offences, including rape and other sexual offences, the time to reach a charge/summons decision was similar to that reported last year, (273 days last year and 275 days in the current reporting period); however within this category, rape offences took on average 11 days longer for investigations to reach a charge/summons outcome (from 423 to 434 days in the current year)”*

275 days equates to around nine months, and 434 days is around 16 months, both also a far cry from the long-running cases sighted in this super-complaint.

<sup>28</sup> HM Government. (2025). Criminal justice system delivery data dashboard: Improving timeliness. Available at: <https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/improving-timeliness>.

Overall, in our view, the publicly available data on timeliness for sexual offence cases is highly misleading and obscures the true length of delays experienced by many survivors.

## Relevant categories of cases for assessing timeliness

We believe that a simple move to using means (averages) rather than medians is inappropriate and not the answer to a meaningful assessment of timeliness of investigations. This is because there are certain categories of cases that have very short time frames, which would skew the data and prevent a true understanding of how long 'ordinary' investigations take.

Considering firstly cases with outcome codes 14 and 16 - cases closed due to lack of support from the survivor (outcome 16 is where a suspect has been identified and outcome 14 where not). These include a large volume of sexual offences recorded where the survivor did not want an investigation in the first place. This group of cases was identified in Operation Soteria research<sup>29</sup> as amounting to around 50% of cases closed with outcome codes 14 and 16. They include both reports by third parties where the survivor herself never supported an investigation, and so-called 'telling not reporting' cases where the survivors informed the police about a sexual offence, for example as part of a domestic abuse risk assessment, but had not intended for that offence to be investigated. Many of these cases are closed very early in the process (because the survivor declines to give a statement or interview, which is the first step in an investigation), and they are not relevant to the question of how long investigations are taking.

A further category that would also distort averages are those where there is a very quick decision to charge because the suspect is in custody. These are cases dealt with under so-called 'threshold charging' where a suspect is considered to be a flight risk and is charged within custody time limits of 24 to 96 hours, on the assumption that further evidence will become available. These are likely to be 'stranger rapes', or incidents involving a high degree of physical violence.<sup>30</sup> Although this represents a small percentage of all reported sexual offences, including these cases within averages would distort the picture of how long investigations take though the standard investigation process.

Official figures need to be disaggregated to reflect the range of case lengths for reported sexual offences, accounting for these short-span cases, for example by using averages which exclude those cases closed within a specified short initial time period. In addition, to assess the true extent of cases with long time spans, separate timeliness statistics

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<sup>29</sup> Lovett, J., Kelly, L., and Vera-Gray, F. (2024). The unintended consequences of improving police recording of rape in England and Wales, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, p3. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paae086>.

<sup>30</sup> Lovett, J. et al. (2022). What can we learn from police data about timeliness in rape and serious sexual offence investigations in England and Wales? *International Criminology* 2, 286-298. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43576-022-00069-8>.

should be produced for long-running cases, for example those over three years, to ensure that they are not lost within averages.

## Police-recorded crime data caveats

In 2014, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) used its powers under the Statistics Registration Act 2007 to remove the national statistics status of crime figures based on police-recorded crime data.<sup>31</sup> This was due to substantial concerns about the reliability and accuracy of information about crime recorded by the police. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS, formerly HMIC) identified widespread under-recording of crimes, particularly sexual offences, which they linked to a culture of data manipulation connected to performance measures. They also highlighted issues with the police seeking to 'disprove survivors' prior to deciding whether to record crimes.<sup>32</sup>

The UKSA made a number of recommendations for improvements and advised that reaccreditation would only be possible when the Office for National Statistics and Home Office were able to demonstrate the robustness of the underlying police data and quality assurance processes to reassure them that the reliability problems had been addressed.<sup>33</sup>

Over ten years later, this has still not been achieved. A recent report on the issue by the Office for Statistics Regulation found several areas around police-recorded crime data that require improvement before they would be able to reassess compliance with their code of practice for statistics.<sup>34</sup> A key issue is that the Home Office allows forces to quality assure their own data but has no means of monitoring or verifying its effectiveness.

We note the following features which limit the accuracy of police and Home Office data:

### Delays to recording outcomes

There can be a delay between an investigation ending and the police registering an outcome on computer systems. Operation Soteria researchers looked into the

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<sup>31</sup> UK Statistics Authority. (2014). Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: Statistics on Crime in England and Wales. Available at:

[https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessmentreport268statisticsoncrimeinenglandandwale\\_tcm97-43508-1.pdf](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessmentreport268statisticsoncrimeinenglandandwale_tcm97-43508-1.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> HMIC. (2014). Crime-recording: making the victim count. Available at: <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> UK Statistics Authority. (2014). Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: Statistics on Crime in England and Wales. Available at:

[https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessmentreport268statisticsoncrimeinenglandandwale\\_tcm97-43508-1.pdf](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessmentreport268statisticsoncrimeinenglandandwale_tcm97-43508-1.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Office for Statistics Regulation. (2024). The quality of police-recorded crime statistics for England and Wales. Available at: <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/the-quality-of-police-recorded-crime-statistics-for-england-and-wales/>.

timeliness of sexual offence investigations in two forces.<sup>35</sup> They noted that in outcome 15 cases (where the survivor supports but the case is deemed to have insufficient evidence), the time lag between submission of the case for closure by the supervisor and final completion date was 202 days, which is over 6 months. Outcome 15 cases are also the category where a survivor is more likely to request a Victim's Right to Review, which may delay recording. We note that the FOI data presented will include an element of administrative as well as investigative delay. However, this does not alter the overall pattern we see of many years of delay, nor negate the fact that in thousands of cases, survivors are experiencing delays which raise issues around their rights under the ECHR.

### Overwriting initial closure dates

Where cases are closed and re-opened, sometimes years later, the police seemingly overwrite the initial closure date on their system. It is unclear if individual forces have protocols in place to mitigate this problem before submitting timeliness data to the Home Office.

Cases may be closed and re-opened for a number of reasons. For example, if the survivor initially withdrew, but now feels ready to proceed. Alternatively, the police may close a report made by a single survivor, but the suspect subsequently reoffends, and so older similar cases are re-opened and combined into a single prosecution. The practice of overwriting the closure date means that the time between the first report and the final outcome being applied will not always accurately reflect the length of time spent investigating. Indeed, this was cited by some forces as a reason for refusing to respond to our FOI request:

*"Some investigations will have been closed then re-opened then closed again which ultimately changes the time period, where it will alter the times of the reported date and outcome date. Some investigations will also have been reclassified. In such circumstances, this will not be an accurate reflection of the investigation time taken. In order to appropriately assess these, it will require manual review of each investigation and this will exceed the appropriate time limits under FOI."*<sup>36</sup>

*"When an investigation is issued with a crime disposal outcome, it may have the Disposal Date field completed on the crime report. This field is flexible, however, and should an investigation be amended at a date after the initial disposal date, or reopened entirely, the Disposal Date field may not be updated again. Owing to this, it would require the extensive manual review of every sexual offence crime report to determine the precise date on which a final crime disposal outcome may have been applied, amounting to many thousands of crime reports in a single year, which is a level of work estimated to exceed the 18 working hour limit."*<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Lovett, J. et al. (2022). What can we learn from police data about timeliness in rape and serious sexual offence investigations in England and Wales? *International Criminology* 2, 286-298. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43576-022-00069-8>.

<sup>36</sup> Lancashire Constabulary, Freedom of Information request response, 2025.

<sup>37</sup> Kent Police, Freedom of Information request response, 2025.

This practice of overwriting outcome fields could distort some figures in the FOI data we present. However, based on our frontline experience and data from surveys and focus groups, we do not believe that this issue can explain the scale of long-running cases seen in the Home Office data. In addition, if the majority of these cases were those that had been closed and re-opened, we would not expect to see the pattern identified above of a steady increase in long-running cases from 2014/15 to 2024/25, in all the various investigation length categories.

When taken together, despite these caveats, the data suggests high numbers of long-running sexual offences investigations, across different force areas, and points to the need for an urgent audit to establish the true numbers and scale of the problem. It also highlights the need for decisive action to improve standards of police recorded crime data.

## Chapter 4. Causes of delay

Identifying the specific causes of, and solutions to, excessive delays in sexual offence investigations is not the role of any of our four organisations. However, our proximity to policing in this area, experience working with survivors, and the empirical data we have gathered, has enabled us to identify a number of factors that contribute to the problem:

- i. Prioritisation decisions
- ii. Resourcing and staffing
- iii. Failures in supervision, leadership and management
- iv. Joint working with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- v. Structural changes around decisions to bail and release under investigation (RUI)

This section focuses on how these factors operate in practice to create an environment where delay and drift in some investigations can become so egregious as to potentially constitute a human rights breach, and at the same time, entirely normalised so as to go unnoticed.

### i. Prioritisation decisions

11 out of the 12 ISVA services who replied to our online survey said that prioritisation decisions, especially around perceived risk, contributed to the issue of excessive delays. They advised that these decisions were linked to the type of offences, how recently they occurred, and the relationship to perpetrators, but there was no evidence of an auditable or systematic approach to prioritisation being applied.



**Particularly in “legacy” cases, we can find it difficult to get these prioritised by officers/CPS.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Investigations take longer where the offence(s) are non-recent, such as non-recent child sexual abuse. For adult survivors of CSA, the wait is often longer, whereas we see shorter delays for younger survivors of CSE.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), when examining delays in volume crime investigations, identified that high workloads can lead to officers prioritising cases that they perceive as offering a ‘quick win’, rather than more protracted long-running investigations.<sup>38</sup> In relation to sexual offences specifically, researchers involved with Operation Soteria found that informal hierarchies of importance are applied by officers to different types of sexual offence

<sup>38</sup> HMICFRS. (2025). An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime. Available at: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/how-effectively-police-investigate-crime/>.

cases, as early as the initial call handling stage of an investigation.<sup>39</sup> The application of these informal hierarchies were evident in our research as contributing factors in very long-running investigations, with decisions around prioritisation effectively meaning that some cases are neglected for extended periods of time whilst officers deal with what they perceive to be higher priority, or more urgent 'live jobs'.



**It's also because live jobs...come in, other priorities - even things that aren't related to sexual offences - always take priority..."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**



**[Police officers say] 'oh I haven't been able to work on this case because I've been dealing with live jobs' and then it just makes...the person, you know, feel that their case isn't important."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Midlands)**



**Survivors are very often told, you know, we're told, if we chase updates, 'I'm really sorry. I've been busy on a live job'."**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**

We have been unable to identify any clear definition or policy pertaining to what constitutes a 'live job', despite this being a term that those supporting survivors across the country hear frequently. It would appear that the definition of a 'live job' is subject to individual officers' judgments and workloads. Whilst we acknowledge that prioritisation of workloads is necessary, and that this must be based to some degree on risk assessments, we maintain that there must be a process that allows all work to be completed efficiently, especially when the 'jobs' are investigating the perpetration of harm.

The repeated de-prioritisation of some investigations, to the extent they may not be progressed for months, even years at a time, appears to be a significant contributing factor to the excessive delays we continue to see.

As demonstrated in the case studies in Chapter 1, some investigations into very serious sexual offending take many years to progress to a point of charge. Within these timeframes, we know that there are substantial periods where the case is not being progressed; however, the survivor is regularly told that the investigation is 'ongoing', without any explanation about what 'ongoing' actually means or how frequently enquiries are actively being progressed. Ongoing could mean just 'still open' but not currently being worked on.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, O. et al. (2025). The systemic procedural injustice faced by victim-survivors in police responses to rape and 'serious' sexual offences: A comprehensive study of four forces in England and Wales, *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* (82)100756. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1756061625000321>.



In some cases, police officers do not even attempt to shroud inaction with phrases such as ‘investigation ongoing’. ISVAs shared with us examples of survivors being informed openly that the police officer ‘does not have time’, or that their case is ‘not a priority’.



**It’s not acceptable, I have a client who reported in 2018, and her case only went to the CPS yesterday (June 2025), it can’t take 6 years just to gather some TPM [third party material], statements etc. and build a casefile.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Particularly with this idea of...other priorities coming in on top and...sometimes, police officers will tell them what they've been doing instead. ‘I've been investigating like a murder or a stranger [rape]’...that's not helpful, you're literally telling them they're less important.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**



**[There is a] lack of transparency about why they [police officers] do some things and not others...we try to pin them down on why are you arresting some suspects and not others.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, Yorkshire)**

Direct observations of police practice around sexual offence investigations by Operation Soteria researchers found that in one force, a hundred ‘historic’ investigations were deliberately placed into a sealed file for twelve months, as a way of officers managing their capacity.<sup>40</sup> It is highly unlikely that this decision was communicated to the survivors in these cases, who may have rightly wished to raise concerns or request some level of external scrutiny or accountability around this. Our research suggests that the cases that are most often de-prioritised are older investigations, reports of non-recent abuse, and particular cases, such as non-recent child sexual offences.



**I was now classed as historic so new cases would take priority.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 5 years)**



**They say it is because new cases come in that have to be dealt with first.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 4 years)**



**As a historic case it wasn't priority.”**

**(Survivor, investigation took 3–4 years)**

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.





**A lack of priority, even though I strongly believe other women are at risk.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 4 years)**

It became apparent through our research that reports of non-recent child sexual abuse by adult survivors are particularly likely to be de-prioritised. Official figures on timeliness typically report on rape offences committed against adults only.<sup>41</sup> This obscures any difference in timeliness based on offence/survivor/offender types. Non-recent child sexual offence cases may feasibly take longer if historic records need to be located, or if due to the prolific nature of some offenders, multiple survivors are identified. However, these factors mean it is even more important to avoid further unnecessary delays.



**It's almost like the longer ago it happened, the less, the further down the priority list it becomes. And I...just wonder if there's also something around – if it was child abuse that happened 30 years ago and the perpetrator was a lot older at the time – if there is something around, ‘well, the perpetrator is so old, maybe they're offending is not happening anymore’. So it's less of a...priority in that regard.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, South East)**



**Where there is only SV [sexual violence], particularly for CSA [child sexual abuse] cases, the time frame seems to be much lengthier.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Investigations take longer where the offence(s) are non-recent, such as non-recent child sexual abuse. For adult survivors of CSA [child sexual abuse], the wait is often longer.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

The impact of child rape and sexual abuse on the mental health of survivors is significant and often enduring<sup>42</sup>. Many survivors are only able to come forward and disclose years later, as adults.<sup>43</sup> The perpetrators may well be older by the time they are reported, and despite coming to police attention are frequently left free in the community, unsupervised for extended periods. Some will even pass away and evade justice completely – possibilities that are increasingly likely when there are long delays investigations. Lengthy investigations may also impact these cases in other ways. For

<sup>41</sup> HM Government. (2025). Criminal justice system delivery data dashboard: Improving timeliness. Available at: <https://criminal-justice-delivery-data-dashboards.justice.gov.uk/improving-timeliness>.

<sup>42</sup> Vera-Gray, F. (2023). Key Messages from Research on the Impacts of Child Sexual Abuse. Barkingside: Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47117/XHQX7049>.

<sup>43</sup> Karsna, K. and Kelly, L. (2021). The Scale and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse: Review of Evidence (revised edition). Barkingside: Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47117/OBKC1345>; Smith, DW., et al. (2000). Delay in Disclosure of Childhood Rape: Results from a National Survey, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(2), 273–287. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10695522/>.

example, witnesses may experience issues with memory recall or health problems which will affect the evidence in, and viability of, prosecutions.



**I think one thing that we haven't talked about enough really, is when...justice doesn't happen, because people die in the process or become too unwell.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**



**The client is telling the police, ‘*this is the thing that needs to happen*’, and telling it to multiple officers... [the] client I'm thinking of is telling the police ‘*you need to interview [family member]. Because [they’re] not well. She's going to pass away*’, and repeating that, and then eventually the [family member] did pass away without giving her evidence or her evidence being captured.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, South East)**

The extent to which particular types of sexual offences are de-prioritised routinely within forces and teams is important to understand. Especially as violence against women and girls (VAWG) is often subject to inappropriate minimisation, and failing to appreciate the seriousness of certain types of sexual offending prevents officers addressing ongoing risks to the wider public.<sup>44</sup> Arguably, all offenders reported for sexually abusing children ought be considered a ‘live job’ and it should not be assumed that an absence of reports of recent offending means an absence of current risk, as those targeted are often too young and/or vulnerable to report contemporaneously.

Similarly, where an offender perpetrated abuse in a relationship that ended prior to the police report, they may be continuing to offend in a new relationship. The direct risk to the individual reporting is not the only risk that police should attend to in these high-harm cases. We have heard that in some areas, sexual violence perpetrated in a domestic abuse context is especially vulnerable to drift and delay and again, there does not appear to be a justifiable basis for this de-prioritisation.



**The domestic abuse cases...I don't know whether officers have a fear of them, or don't treat them with the...respect and don't think they're serious... [that] they're going to get back together again, or it's just not as serious because it's within the home, I don't know. But for me, domestic abuse cases drag on and on and on.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**



**6 of the 14 cases [we identified that were over three years in length] involve adult survivors of sexual violence committed within the context of domestic abuse/CCB [coercive and controlling behaviour] – in each case the survivor was no longer in a relationship with the perpetrator, and therefore not viewed by the police as high risk.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

<sup>44</sup> The Angiolini Inquiry. (2024). The Angiolini Inquiry Part t 1 Report. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e05420cf7eb1b0e5f57eff/E02740018\\_Angiolini\\_Inquiry\\_HC\\_530\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e05420cf7eb1b0e5f57eff/E02740018_Angiolini_Inquiry_HC_530_Accessible.pdf).

In some forces, decisions to divert time and resources away from non-recent offences appear to be so entrenched and commonplace that they operate as an unpublished policy. The lack of any external communication around these decisions, however, makes them inscrutable to those reporting, or to the wider public. Survivors have a right to understand how the crimes they report will be responded to by police. Instead, lengthy delays are obfuscated, and survivors are having to wait for indeterminate periods for any decision in investigations.



**They dragged their feet, refused to answer my questions, refused to interview crucial witnesses, they did not care.”**

**(Survivor, case took 3–4 years)**



**I’m trying to move on and close that chapter in life but I can’t because 5 years later I am still waiting for answers.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 5yrs 2 months)**

Some officers appear to assume that if many years have passed since sexual offences occurred, delays in investigation after disclosure will have little impact. This is a serious misunderstanding of the nature of sexual offending, the trauma it causes, and the stigma survivors face when reporting offences committed by close contacts or family members. Disclosure often prompts perpetrators to act to regain control, including discrediting survivors or discouraging further reports. A swift police response is therefore critical. Reporting breaks long periods of silence and can intensify trauma symptoms such as flashbacks and sleep difficulties. The period following disclosure is particularly stressful and cannot be treated as a continuation of the years before. Survivors may feel, or become, less safe, and delays in reporting due to trauma do not justify police delays in investigation, once offences are disclosed.



**It makes me feel like no[one] believes me. I feel unsafe and scared I don't really leave my house[.] It's impacted my mental health so much. When I explained to the officer in charge how much waiting this long affects me i was told it's not like I haven't waited long in the first place.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years)**



**In my experience long-running investigations cause more trauma to an already traumatised person. Reporting it to the police is not an easy decision. It took me decades. I feel that the emotional impact is not considered when there is a long time to wait and really having no sound information as to why or what is happening.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years 1 month)**

Violence against women and girls has rightly been identified as a national threat and as such is covered by the Strategic Policing Requirement.<sup>45</sup> This places forces under a duty

<sup>45</sup> Home Office. (2023). The Strategic Policing Requirement. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64955fb9de8682000cbc8cf0/Strategic\\_Policing\\_Requirement\\_V1.3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64955fb9de8682000cbc8cf0/Strategic_Policing_Requirement_V1.3.pdf).

to develop robust and proactive responses to all crimes of this nature, in order to manage ongoing risks to the wider public and disrupt this type of offending. To do so effectively and meaningfully, any routine minimisation around particular types of reports or offences must be acknowledged and addressed.

## ii. Resourcing and staffing issues



**I have been told that it is due to the lack of [p]olice resource, the levels of caseloads and funding problems.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, 4 years 9 months)**



**But the domestic abuse team, my God... if I had a pound for every single time I'm told how strapped they are.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**

Police resourcing and staffing issues were raised by both ISVAs and survivors as significantly contributing to excessive delays, and were often referenced interchangeably. Whilst linked, it is important to note that the two issues are not necessarily the same thing, and may contribute to delays in different ways.

The core funding allocated to police forces is weighted for local demographics and socio-economic factors<sup>46</sup>, however it is up to local forces, overseen by their Police and Crime Commissioners to determine how resources are allocated. It is feasible for an organisation to have adequate resources but still struggle with issues related to staffing, including absences, recruitment, wellbeing, and performance. There are also important decisions for forces to make about *how* to deploy available organisational resources, including staff. HMICFRS have previously highlighted that delays in rape investigations can be exacerbated by the re-deployment of specialist officers to police public events, such as football matches and festivals.<sup>47</sup>

We appreciate that all public services operate in a difficult funding environment. Whilst

<sup>46</sup> Home Office. (2025). Police funding for England and Wales: user guide. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-user-guide/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-user-guide#police-force-and-regional-breakdowns-1>; Home Office. (2025). Police grant report (England and Wales) 2025–2026. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provisional-police-grant-report-2025-to-2026/provisional-police-grants-in-england-and-wales-2025-to-2026-accessible#appendix-b-definition-of-indicators-used-to-calculate-police-main-grant>; Home Office. (2013). Guide to the police allocation formula. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-to-the-police-allocation-formula>.

<sup>47</sup> Sandeman, G. (2024). Rape cases held up by football policing – watchdog, *BBC News*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c79wl52g2dgo#:~:text=Rape%20cases%20held%20up%20by%20football%20policing%20%2D%20watchdog&text=Rape%20investigations%20are%20being%20delayed,festivals%2C%20a%20watchdog%20has%20found.>

police funding is 19.2% higher in real terms now than it was in 2016,<sup>48</sup> demand has also increased, alongside technological, legal and social change that have altered the way police investigate crimes. Sexual offences reported to the police have significantly increased over the last decade<sup>49</sup> and for a period, this coincided with substantial financial cuts to many areas of criminal justice,<sup>50</sup> leading to an environment with fewer officers dealing with greater demand. Since 2023, overall officer numbers have increased significantly due to additional investment from the Government.<sup>51</sup> However, the net result is not necessarily a more capable and resilient workforce. A much larger proportion of officers (36%) had less than five years' experience in 2024 compared with 2016, when this was just 14%.<sup>52</sup> This increase in inexperience will undoubtedly negatively impact forces' ability to effectively investigate sexual offences particularly, as these investigations require a greater level of experience and training that many newer officers are yet to attain. However, the onus is on forces to manage this in a way that does not prevent the proper investigation of these very serious crimes.



**That's another thing we found, that it's taking ages for ABEs [achieving best evidence interviews] to be done as we don't have enough trained officers to do them, so we've had people report and it's taken 6 plus months to get an ABE."**

**(ISVA, Yorkshire)**



**It's not necessarily the officer's fault that they're not trained properly, they're...trying to send stuff through to sergeants and CPS [the Crown Prosecution Service], and it's not up to standard. So it's then getting knocked back and it's...almost like that foundation stuff hasn't happened, so it's getting knocked back at every hurdle."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**

The ISVAs that spoke to us about excessive delays perceived that ongoing staffing problems within police teams managing reports of sexual offences contributed heavily to investigations taking longer than they should, and we know from our working

<sup>48</sup> Home Office. (2024). Police funding for England and Wales 2015 to 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-2015-to-2025/police-funding-for-england-and-wales-2015-to-2025>.

<sup>49</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2023). Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/sexualoffencesinenglandandwalesoverview/march2022>; National Audit Office. (2025). Report – value for money: Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls. Available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls/>.

<sup>50</sup> Leveson, B. (2025). Independent Review of the Criminal Courts – Part 1. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49\\_MOJ\\_Ind\\_Review\\_Criminal\\_Courts\\_v8b\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> HM Government. (2024). Rape Review progress update. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb5cc2103de2000eb8f375/rape-review-progress-update.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Home Office. (2025). Accredited official statistics: Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2025 (second edition). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2025>.

experience that some RASSO teams regularly operate with a staffing deficit.



**Long-term sickness is high amongst teams in [force name] and cases are not being handed over. OICs [officers in charge] [are] being promoted and having to take their cases with them e.g., a recent officer was promoted to DS [Detective Sergeant] and is having to take 17 live cases with her."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Delays in arranging VRIs [video-recorded interviews] due to staff shortage, individual police officer caseloads are too high leading to burn-out, long term sickness and turn over. Shortage of SOITS [Sexual Offence, and existing SOITS [Sexual Offences Investigation Trained officers] with very high caseloads taking long term sick leave as a result."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Wherever there's a high turnover of officers in a case, it tends to be delayed. Where certain offences are being dealt with by different teams/BCUs [Basic Command Units], this causes additional delays."**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**He'll be burnt out, off sick and then you won't have an officer for six months."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**

ISVAs linked the frequent capacity problems in RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offence) teams with staff sickness, perceived burnout, and high officer turnover, with some units operating with too few officers over long periods. This increases the likelihood of further staff then going off sick due to overwork and/or burnout, and compassion fatigue amongst remaining officers when working with survivors. ISVAs expressed frustration at poor management of teams when officers were on sick, and noted that when officers were away from work or had left a department, there was little or no communication and investigations were not being progressed due to a failure to reallocate tasks.



**Sometimes SOITs/OICs just disappear for months due to going on sick leave/maternity/paternity without informing us, then [we are] struggling to get the contact of the new officer on the case."**

**(ISVA Online Survey)**



**If one of my ISVAs goes off, I, you know, I make sure that something happens with that case. I make sure it's just not sat there...gathering dust. I mean...that's the way you [work] as a professional service, that's what you do."**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**





**They [investigations] just sort of sit there until they come back.”**  
**(Experienced ISVA, Yorkshire)**



**If they leave the department for other reasons...cases, just get dropped... I'd say even if they get picked up...getting up to speed with the case [takes ages].”**  
**(Experienced ISVA, South East)**

An independent review on police productivity commissioned by the Home Office and published in 2023<sup>53</sup> has highlighted sickness and absence as a significant barrier to forces making the best use of their available resources. The high turnover of police officers involved in rape and serious sexual offence cases is not only destabilising for survivors, but also impacts the overall quality of investigations, leading to a lack of focus and continuity around outstanding tasks.



**I'm thinking about this case where they had to get third party material from [an agency] overseas, and...there was also high turnover of OICs, [so] whoever was on the case at that time would request the information and it wouldn't be forthcoming, and then it would get left for a while and somebody would try again, and so it's just repeating the same, just asking, over and over.”**  
**(ISVA, South East)**

Operation Soteria placed a renewed emphasis on officer wellbeing and support. However, recent progress reports identify ongoing high levels of burnout, due to a culmination of unmanageable demand, and a lack of specialist knowledge amongst new officers, due to an inability to access learning.<sup>54</sup>



**We do note the high turnover of specialist police officers in sexual abuse investigation units, resulting in some cases seeing a high number of changes in OICs during active investigations, e.g., officers leaving the force, moving to other departments and long-term sickness. In conversations with some officers they have disclosed symptoms of PTSD.”**  
**(ISVA, online survey)**



**I was shocked at how little support officers get in terms of their...mental health. So, you know, the kind of things that they're listening to, day in, day out, they don't,...get any clinical supervision or you know, they're just expected to just get on with it. So no wonder they're going off on long term sick.”**  
**(Experienced ISVA, Midlands)**

<sup>53</sup> Home Office. (2023). Independent Report: The Policing Productivity Review. Improving outcomes for the public. Available at: [https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0895/Policing\\_Productivity\\_Review.pdf](https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0895/Policing_Productivity_Review.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> See, for example: Stanko, B. (2022). Operation Soteria Bluestone Year One Report. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operation-soteria-year-one-report>.



Without detailed knowledge of force budgets, human resource processes, and demand fluctuations, we cannot fully assess the extent to which resourcing and staffing challenges directly or indirectly contribute to delays in the investigation of sexual offences. What is evident, however, is that officers frequently report difficulties in managing cases effectively and within appropriate timeframes. Strengthening staff capacity and wellbeing is therefore a logical step towards mitigating some of the problematic practices highlighted in this super-complaint.

There is a clear responsibility on individual forces and the UK Government to ensure that capacity constraints are addressed. These issues must not be allowed to impair policing teams to the point where they risk routinely breaching the human rights of members of the public reporting sexual offences, the majority of whom are women.

### iii. Leadership, management, and supervision



**If I was getting complaints [about] one of my ISVAs regularly, I would be having performance management meetings...[there is] nothing like that.”**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**

Adjacent to the issues with prioritisation and resourcing are overarching failures of leadership to effectively manage the teams and officers responsible for delayed investigations. A recent HMICFRS report<sup>55</sup> on efficiency within volume crime investigations outlined the importance of effective supervision to minimise drift and delay. One example noted in this report is below:

*“One investigation was over 12 months old and there was an outstanding suspect who the investigator hadn’t interviewed. There was no investigation plan and no update from the investigator for three months. The crime had several supervisory reviews, but these reviews just noted that the case was still open. One review simply said: “Case ongoing.”<sup>56</sup>*

This example mirrors some of the supervisory failures that we have seen in long-running sexual offence investigations, and crystallises the importance of good supervision across the board in policing, but especially in high-harm cases, such as those involving rape and sexual violence.

Supervision issues were identified by ISVAs as a particular concern in very delayed RASSO cases. Better oversight is a key factor in ensuring progress in cases that are drifting into unreasonable time frames.

<sup>55</sup> HMICFRS. (2025). An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime. Available at: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/how-effectively-police-investigate-crime/>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p 74.



...and...in their case reviews, like, what is happening with management? Why aren't their DSs saying, what are you doing here? Why isn't this happening?"

(Experienced ISVA, East of England)



There's one particular officer who...comes up time and time and time and time again, his investigations are always poor, really, really long, and then what we always get from them is, 'yeah, he means well. He just says yes to everything. So he takes too much on, but he means well...He's a nice fella. If you met him'. That's what we get... from the Inspector."

(Experienced ISVA, North England)



And that's where case management comes in, because they may have been a fantastic officer for 10 years [but] something's happened [-] burnt out, jaded, can't. That's... [then] for someone else who's managing them to say 'hmm'."

(ISVA, East of England)

It is the role of supervisors and leaders to set and uphold the culture within their teams and institutions, and to motivate staff to meet organisational goals and priorities. The number of long-running sexual offence cases raises the question of whether managers and leaders are failing to notice and address performance issues, or if they are contributing directly to a culture in which delays develop, by failing to place enough emphasis on – or indeed allocate enough resources to – the effective investigation of serious sexual offences.



The OIC [officer in charge] has relayed many times that she has other jobs to complete despite [my] client expressing that this makes her feel like her case is not important. We have had meetings with sergeants who our client feels made excuses for the OIC, and despite them advising that the OIC will update client monthly, the OIC failed to do this."

(ISVA, online survey)



I only met like, a few officers that were really passionate about, you know, really trying to investigate it, so I'm not saying this about every officer...but there's definitely a lack of drive to do, with some of the officers I've worked with."

(Experienced ISVA, North East England)

A lack of urgency from police is often perceived by survivors as indifference, discrimination, or disbelief. As a public body, the police hold significant influence in shaping societal attitudes toward the value and dignity of those who report sexual violence. Prolonged delays, compounded by minimal communication or concern, constitute a degrading experience that conveys to survivors that they, or the harm they suffered, are not regarded as important.



**I don't believe they believe me therefore [they] don't care as much.”**  
**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 3 years)**



**...they didn't believe me or listen to me. The key witness in my case was my best friend, me and my ISVA gave their contact details multiple times... [but were] told multiple times we haven't provided them and still it took them a year to make contact and get their statement. They brushed it off as [if] it wasn't that important.”**  
**(Survivor, investigation took 3–4 years)**



**Our client feels like she is not important, she has no faith in the police. She has expressed to 2 different sergeants how she is feeling, that she feels as [though because] she is black her case is not important, her concerns that a rapist is walking the streets[.] [H]owever [she] did not feel that they took this seriously.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**



**Rape cases aren't prioritised enough in general and taken as seriously as they should be.”**  
**(Survivor, investigation took 4–5 years)**

Where senior officers lack the capacity and resources to manage day-to-day demand, it is essential that these challenges are communicated clearly to senior leadership within the force. Failure to raise or address such issues reflects shortcomings in leadership and governance that warrant closer scrutiny. Equally, if concerns are being escalated but not acted upon, this indicates a significant failure in resource allocation, with the consequence that some of the most harmful forms of crime may not receive the priority they require.

#### **iv. Cooperation between the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)**



**[We have seen] cases with CPS for a number of years. Either no updates from CPS, or constantly being bounced back and forth between CPS and Police.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

Another factor which appears to contribute to excessive delays is poor joint working and communication between police and CPS throughout the duration of an investigation. Published data on CPS timeliness<sup>57</sup> typically report on the time between a case being received by the CPS from police (for a charging decision) and the CPS applying a charging decision. However, before this stage, many cases are sent back and forth

<sup>57</sup> Crown Prosecution Service. (2024). CPS quarterly data summaries. Available at: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-quarterly-data-summaries>.

between the police and CPS, with action plans to complete by the police before the CPS will make a charging decision. This back and forth can lead to considerable delays to the investigation. This process also appears to create a gap in accountability whereby each agency perceives the other as responsible for case progression.

Recent reports into joint (police and CPS) case building highlight inherent inefficiencies in inter-agency collaboration, with delays attributable at times to basic IT issues and files lost between the two agencies.<sup>58</sup> In long-running cases, at least some delay may be driven by CPS processes and how the police respond to demands placed on them by the CPS. We submit that there needs to be a further examination of the cooperation between the police and CPS during lengthy investigations, with a specific focus on how this contributed to avoidable delays.

Nine of the 12 ISVA services who responded to our online survey perceived that lengthy pre-outcome delays can be exacerbated by CPS processes and their working relationship with police. In our focus groups, experienced ISVAs also identified the cooperation between the police and CPS as an issue in lengthy investigations, and it was referred to heavily by survivors completing our anonymous survey.



**The only information I really get from them [the police] is that they are awaiting a decision from the CPS. After waiting for a long period of time they will hear back from CPS and they will ask for more information like copies of my birth certificate or names of people that were informed around the time etc. it has been going backwards and forwards like this now for years.”**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 8 years)**



**We often see cases “stuck” at the case management/CPS charging decision stage – sometimes there can [be] 6–12 months with little update. We also see cases bounce between CPS and police due to action plans.”**

**(ISVA, online survey)**

ISVA respondents identified that police officers will often advise survivors that the CPS are driving delays. However, given that there is no way to verify this, there is a concern that officers sometimes seek to mitigate their own responsibility by apportioning blame externally. HMICFRS have also previously identified several issues with how the police and the CPS work together,<sup>59</sup> as well as a tendency for each agency to blame the other for failings. There was evidence of this blame culture in our data, and a definite

<sup>58</sup> HMICFRS and HMCPSP. (2024). Joint case building by the police and Crown Prosecution Service. Available at: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/joint-case-building-by-the-police-and-crown-prosecution-service/>.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. See also: HMICFRS and HMCPSP. (2021). A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service’s response to rape - Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action. Available at: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/a-joint-thematic-inspection-of-the-police-and-crown-prosecution-services-response-to-rape/>.

perception that police sometimes use CPS delays as an excuse for failing to progress investigations.



**There's also, in my experience, a lot of passing the buck between police and CPS that always blaming each other."**

**(Experienced ISVA, Yorkshire)**



**When you raise an issue with them, they go well, that's the CPS."**

**(Experienced ISVA, North East)**



**They just blame CPS."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 4 years)**

Those reporting sexual offences are reliant on both agencies' diligence and co-operation to ensure their cases are progressed in a professional and timely manner, and when updates from police appear contradictory and apportion blame for delays with CPS, they understandably may feel confused, undermined, and mistrustful, with seemingly inexplicable and repeated back and forth between professional agencies.



**The police have told me that the case went to CPS in 2022, 2023 and 2024, however, it has yet to be prepared and submitted to CPS."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 4 years)**



**[You get told] it's going to CPS and then you get told that six months later, oh, it's going to CPS, it's going to CPS. It's like the biggest lie ever told is it's going to CPS next week."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**

Experienced ISVAs told us that communication and decision-making between police and the CPS has grown increasingly complex. This makes it harder to advise survivors and to identify who is accountable for delays and poor outcomes.



**I would say in 2012/13...probably up to [20]15/16, it was a lot more straightforward. The investigation side of it, it was like each stage kind of followed, unless it was something completely complicated that they'd never...dealt with before...you had all your stages, you know, they were arrested, then they were put on bail, and then this, you know, it was very like structured, whereas now it definitely doesn't feel like that."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**



**"when you were told it had gone to CPS...you would get a CPS either charge or NFA, but then midway around the time it all started getting quite long and complicated, I would say we then were getting police**

**NFAs when we're told it was CPS. So it all did get, I agree, it got a lot muddier to know what to advise clients."**

**(Experienced ISVA, East of England)**

ISVAs also identified that in recent years, the CPS requirements for police files became stricter. The CPS now require cases to be fully ready for trial before the CPS will make a charging decision, whereas previously some work could be completed post-charge to make the case fully 'trial ready'. This issue has also been raised directly by police officers involved in other research into RASSO investigations.<sup>60</sup> It is believed that this more stringent approach to charging decisions may be causing delays to cases.



**But the police say they are now required, because of the file requirements... to present a full, what they call 'trial ready' file to CPS, it has to be trial ready, which means...all the Is have to be dotted, all the TS have to be crossed, the file has to be in perfect condition, including all of the material."**

**(Experienced ISVA, North of England)**



**The file submission process for getting the file to CPS adds to delays. The file has to pass through multiple police departments once it's been authorised by the Evidential Review Officer – and it can sit with each department for months."**

**(ISVA, online Survey)**



**There seems to be many teams it has to go up and down through as it goes to CPS and back. The communication between the police and me has been appalling and often months go by without any updates."**

**(Survivor, investigation ongoing, over 3yrs)**

Ultimately, unless a case is charged, survivors have no direct access to the CPS to follow up or query any delays. Individuals report crimes to the police, not the CPS, and so it is reasonable to expect the police to take responsibility for cases pre-charge by seeking timely updates from the CPS and ensuring joint work is as efficient as possible.

Research suggests that junior officers find it more difficult to effectively communicate with the CPS than senior officers,<sup>61</sup> so ensuring that less experienced staff have access to adequate support and avenues for escalating problems may be one way police can address some of these issues. It is important, however, that any inefficient CPS processes contributing to excessive delays are identified, as police at least seem to perceive CPS as contributing to delays in long-running cases.

<sup>60</sup> Gekoski, A. et al. (2023). Barriers and challenges to police and Crown Prosecution Service joint working on rape and serious sexual offence cases: A police perspective, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 17, paad041. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paad041>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.





I think there were systemic failures like understaffing and poor communication between the police and CPS but also that both services kicked the ball down the road because it was complex and easier to procrastinate than make a decision.”

(Survivor, investigation took 3–4yrs)



I think it's like all of those steps, if they're [police] not following up and chasing [CPS], everybody can just...it can just sit in someone else's inbox.”

(Experienced ISVA East of England)

## v. Changes to pre-charge bail and RUI



The officer even said ‘I don't even know if he thinks he's still under investigation because I'm not gonna ring him. He doesn't need to know’.”

(ISVA, East of England)

The final factor that we have identified as contributing to excessive investigative delay is the consequence of legal changes to bail and the introduction of the category of ‘release under investigation’ (RUI) in April 2017.

Before April 2017, following an arrest, if they were not remanded in custody, suspects would be released on pre-charge police bail by the custody sergeant for specific periods of time. These could be extended indefinitely, so that in some cases suspects could be on bail for many months or even years.

In order to try to limit the time periods that suspects were on bail, a new system of pre-charge bail was introduced, alongside a presumption of RUI (release under investigation) in April 2017. Suspects could now only be released on pre-charge police bail if this was authorised by an Inspector (rather than a custody sergeant), and then only for 28 days, after which a Superintendent had to authorise any extension.

Suspects ‘released under investigation’ were not required to return to the police station, and no options were available for restricting their behavior and movements, as is possible with bail conditions<sup>62</sup>. RUI does not have the end dates and extension points, which applied to bail under both the pre- and post-April 2017 systems, and there is no need for authorisation by any senior officer.

This led to a significant shift to RUI, including in domestic abuse and sexual offences cases, where despite the need for bail conditions, the bureaucratic hurdles of

<sup>62</sup> Hucklesby, A. (2020). Pre-charge bail and release under investigation (RUI): an urgent case for reform, *Criminal Law Review*. Available at: <https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/pre-charge-bail-and-release-under-investigation-rui-an-urgent-cas/>.



authorisation by senior officers meant that junior officers would avoid bail and instead opt for RUI.<sup>63</sup>

In practice, the changes made in April 2017 ended up having the opposite effect to that intended, which is that the use of RUI led in many cases to investigations taking even longer than pre-April 2017, without the oversight that bail extensions provide through fixed deadlines.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the safety of survivors was compromised, as suspects were not monitored as closely as they would have been if bail conditions were enforced.

The pre-charge bail system introduced in April 2017 was eventually revised in October 2022, through the introduction of measures in section 45 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. Since then, the use of RUI has declined in VAWG cases.

It is now well-established that the restrictions on the use of bail and routine use of RUI have led to far longer investigations, as a result of the removal of the set deadlines previously imposed by bail dates.<sup>65</sup>

Although some safeguards have now been built back into cases in recent years, and the use of bail has increased again for VAWG offences,<sup>66</sup> it is still time bound. Under a new system introduced in October 2022, police can only extend bail for up to nine months, and after that they must apply to the Magistrates Court for any further extensions. In many cases Magistrates will not continue to extend bail where a suspect has had bail conditions for a long time (for example several years), particularly where there does not appear to be progress in the police investigation. The law does not allow extensions if the investigation has not been progressed expeditiously. In some cases police officers will allow bail to lapse and not seek extensions for this reason. Therefore, many suspects of sexual offences, although initially bailed, end up on RUI after a period of time, because police fail to re-apply to the courts, or the courts do not grant an extension. Many older cases (pre-October 2022) where suspects were never bailed are likely to feature in the numbers of excessively delayed investigations we have seen, so the hangover from the 2017 bail changes and introduction of RUI remains to date.

Sir Leveson's recent 'Independent Review of the Criminal Courts' condemns the use of RUI, due to its worsening impacts on criminal justice delays:

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<sup>63</sup> Centre for Women's Justice. (2019). Super-complaint: Police failure to use protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa98420f2e6b1ba0c874e42/t/5c91f55c9b747a252efe260c/1553069406371/Super-complaint+report.FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup> HMICFRS and HMCPSP. (2020). Pre-charge bail and released under investigation: Striking a balance. Available at: <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/pre-charge-bail-and-released-under-investigation-striking-a-balance-1.pdf>; Hucklesby, A. (2020). Pre-charge bail and release under investigation (RUI): an urgent case for reform, *Criminal Law Review*. Available at: <https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/pre-charge-bail-and-release-under-investigation-rui-an-urgent-cas/>.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

*“Where an individual is released under investigation, there is not the same pressure of time on the police and that can lead to investigations of RUI cases taking longer and lacking the same scrutiny that is afforded to bail cases... Beyond the impact on individual victims in particular cases, more generally, indefinite periods of RUI can also mean that victims lose confidence in the process and withdraw from the investigation.”<sup>67</sup>*

We support Sir Leveson’s calls for RUI to be further regulated as one way to tackle some of the excessive delays that are the focus of this complaint.

The changes to bail and RUI between 2017 and 2022 demonstrate that timeliness in police investigations may be responsive to accountability mechanisms. There are real and pressing problems in progressing investigations, but it appears that fixed bail deadlines can influence officers’ behaviour positively when it comes to progressing investigations. We believe that other forms of external accountability could also remedy the other factors outlined in this section on causes of excessive delays.

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<sup>67</sup> Leveson, B. (2025). Independent Review of the Criminal Courts – Part 1. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49\\_MOJ\\_Ind\\_Review\\_Criminal\\_Courts\\_v8b\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf).

## Chapter 5. The legal position on delay

As well as being detrimental to the interests of justice, and incredibly harmful for survivors who report, the long delays presented in this super-complaint also represent a possible systemic breach by the UK Government to properly protect the human rights of those involved. The police play a key role in ensuring that the UK discharges the burden of its positive obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). If investigations into reports of serious domestic and sexual abuse are not conducted effectively, the UK may be in breach of its positive obligations under Article 3 (inhuman and degrading treatment), Article 8 (respect for private and family life), and/or Article 14 (discrimination) of the ECHR.

### Article 3

Article 3 of the ECHR places public authorities, including the police, under a number of obligations. Of particular relevance to this super-complaint is the investigative duty, which places upon the police an obligation to conduct an effective investigation into all credible allegations of inhuman and degrading treatment by individuals.

The leading authority on the police's investigative duty, *DSD v Commission of Police of the Metropolis*,<sup>68</sup> makes clear that the police have a duty under Article 3 ECHR to conduct effective investigations into credible or arguable allegations of conduct by private parties which breaches Article 3 ECHR. *DSD* also confirms that "grave" or "serious" crimes, including rape and serious sexual assault, constitute inhuman or degrading treatment.

The parameters by which the degree of effectiveness and, therefore, legality, of an investigation required by Article 3 ECHR, are well established.<sup>69</sup> These include:

- (1) the adequacy of the investigative measures;
- (2) the promptness of the investigation;
- (3) the involvement of the victim; and
- (4) the independence of the investigation.

To achieve an investigation of sufficient thoroughness/adequacy, public authorities must:

- "take reasonable measures available to them to obtain evidence relating to the offence in question"
- "always make a serious attempt to find out what happened"
- clarify "all the relevant facts", including with regard to patterns of perpetrator behaviour and obtain corroborative evidence from survivors, and
- in circumstances of sufficient seriousness, undertake "a full and careful analysis of the evidence".<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *DSD v Commission of Police of the Metropolis* [2018] UKSC 11; [2019] AC 195.

<sup>69</sup> See: *AM v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2009] UKHRR 973; reiterated in *X and others v Bulgaria*, which concerned an investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse.

<sup>70</sup> *X and others v Bulgaria*, §§ 185, 227, 204.

Article 3 ECHR also gives rise to a general positive obligation to have in place an appropriate legislative and administrative framework to prevent the occurrence of treatment which violates Article 3 ECHR. This is known as the systemic aspect of the procedural and/or investigative obligation (the ‘systemic duty’) and includes preventative operational measures with suitable supervisory control and monitoring.<sup>71</sup>

### Article 8

Article 8 ECHR protects the right to family and private life, and physical and moral integrity. Any interference with that right must be in accordance with the law, in pursuit of a legitimate aim and justified as necessary and proportionate.

The courts have recognised that public authorities have positive obligations under Article 8 to establish and apply effectively a system punishing all forms of domestic violence and to provide sufficient safeguards for survivors.<sup>72</sup> This includes safeguarding a survivors’ physical or psychological integrity.<sup>73</sup>

### Article 14

Article 14 ECHR requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the ECHR must be protected and applied without discrimination, and provides that *“discrimination occurs when you are treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation and this treatment cannot be objectively and reasonably justified”*.

Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits the ability of women and girls to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. It therefore gives rise to requirements of due diligence in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators. If events which engage rights under Articles 3 and 8 ECHR are handled in a way that is directly or indirectly discriminatory due to the survivor’s sex, there will be a breach of Article 14 ECHR.

### The General Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women<sup>74</sup> maintain that effective investigation of all acts of gender-based violence include a responsibility to ensure that laws, institutions, and systems in place to address such violence *“function effectively in practice”*, and emphasise that *“a failure to investigate, prosecute and punish, and to provide reparation to victims/survivors of such acts provides tacit permission or encouragement to acts of gender-based violence against women”*.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *LW v Sodexo* [2019] EWHC 367 (Admin); *R (Middleton) West Somerset Coroner* [2004] 2 AC 182, *DSD v Commission of Police of the Metropolis* [2018] UKSC 11; [2019] AC 195, § 223.

<sup>72</sup> *Volodina v Russia (No 2)*, (App 40419/19), 14 September 2021.

<sup>73</sup> *K.U. v Finland*, § 46, and *Söderman*, § 84.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (2024). General recommendations: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/general-recommendations>.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, General Recommendation 35.

### The Istanbul Convention

On 1 November 2022, the UK ratified the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention requires effective action in response to domestic and sexual abuse and necessitates legislative and other measures to protect the rights and interests of survivors, and prosecute the perpetrators. Such measures are required to involve, among other things, enabling survivors:

- To be heard and to have their views heard
- To be protected from repeat victimisation
- To have their needs and concerns presented and duly considered.

The Convention also requires investigations and judicial proceedings to be carried out without undue delay, while taking into consideration the rights of the survivors during all stages of the criminal proceedings.<sup>76</sup>

### Civil claims for compensation

An individual whose human rights are breached by the police is entitled to claim damages as a result, where it is necessary for just satisfaction of the breach.<sup>77</sup> The damages that may be claimed extend to psychiatric injury and pecuniary losses arising from the breach, including loss of income.<sup>78</sup>

Long-running investigations into allegations of serious domestic and sexual offences can amount to a breach of Articles 3, 8, and 14 of the ECHR, by preventing the full and proper investigation of serious crimes. It is clear that the passage of time will inevitably erode the amount and quality of the evidence available, thereby violating the procedural obligation under Article 3 ECHR. Furthermore, excessive delays can be re-traumatising for the survivors and their families. Where there is evidence of specific and detrimental impact of the failures, delays, and uncertainty upon the private and family lives of survivors, there may also be a breach of Article 8 ECHR.

Notably, the courts have found breaches of the ECHR in the following long-running cases:

- 1) *Matasaru & Savitchi v Moldova* (2010), 38281/08 - a delay of 4 years
- 2) *Y v Slovenia* (2016) 62 EHRR 3 - a delay of 7 years
- 3) *CAS v Romania* (2012) 26692/05 - a delay of 5 years, with no significant steps for 3 years
- 4) *Mățăsar and Savițchi v Moldova* (2010) 38281/08 - an investigation that was still ongoing after four years with other procedural failings
- 5) *MS v Italy* 32715/19, 7 July 2022 - a delay of 8 years
- 6) *DMD v Romania* (2018) 23022/13 - a delay of 8 years

<sup>76</sup> Chapter VI – Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures, Article 49 – General obligations.

<sup>77</sup> Section 8 Human Rights Act 1998; *Commissioner of the Metropolis v DSD and another* [2019] AC 196; *Van Colle v Chief Constable of Hertfordshire* [2009] 1 AC 225.

<sup>78</sup> *Hans Husson v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2020] EWCA Civ 239.

Bindmans LLP recently represented eight clients in successful civil claims against the police, arising from serious and significant operational failures, as well as systemic and structural failures under the ECHR. These failings included a lack of promptness which stretched for almost a decade and at an institutional level, as well as systemic failure to effectively monitor and supervise the investigation of non-recent allegations of abuse. The police force agreed to pay damages to the survivors, to provide an apology for their failings, and to put in place measures to improve the promptness of investigations.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See confidential Annex B, which sets out approximate figures for settlements in these cases.

## Conclusion

It is clear to us that very delayed and ineffective investigations into sexual offences are a widespread and systemic issue within policing. They cause significant harm to individuals whose reports take several years to progress, lead to survivor attrition, and call into question the effectiveness of criminal justice agencies to keep members of the public safe from often prolific and dangerous sex offenders.

The embedded nature of many of the causes of delay we have identified indicate that small-scale or localised measures to address these will not be enough, and that there is both a moral and a legal duty on individual police forces and the UK Government to find solutions that work. It is woefully inadequate, irresponsible, and unrealistic in practice, to expect those who report serious crimes to simply accept a five-year wait for a police investigation to conclude. Survivors do not accept this, we do not accept this and we do not believe that members of the public would accept it either.

If solutions are not found, those failed so significantly by the criminal justice system will turn increasingly to the civil courts in an attempt to have their rights upheld, and substantial damages and costs will be payable. This will further exacerbate the pressures on police resources that we refer to in this complaint and will do little to deliver justice or keep the wider public safe. Survivors want fairness and equality of treatment when they approach the police for assistance; they do not expect, or deserve, years of inaction, silence, and poor treatment. Functional, timely, and transparent criminal justice processes are the absolute minimum that every citizen has the right to expect, and we ask the agencies investigating this complaint to do everything in their power to help deliver this.



# Recommendations

## To Chief Constables:

1. Complete an immediate **audit of all live investigations** into sexual offences to identify investigations that have been ongoing for three years or more. Identify the factors contributing to these lengthy investigations and develop an action plan to remedy the issues in current and future cases.
2. Develop an **investigative strategy to progress long-running cases**, in conjunction with the CPS where necessary, to ensure all outstanding enquiries are prioritised and completed promptly.
3. Ensure that there is **improved communication with survivors**, including keeping them informed of steps being taken to remedy the delays.
4. Where a high number of long-running cases are identified, **establish a team to focus solely on progressing these cases** effectively. Ensure officers are not abstracted from this team for other tasks, so that their time is dedicated to progressing cases impacted by excessive time frames.
5. Instruct force registrars to **review the timeliness of outcomes** in sexual offence cases being recorded on police systems following a decision, and **implement effective strategies to prevent inaccuracies in recorded timeliness**.
6. Where suspects are **released under investigation** in sexual offence cases, ensure additional safeguards are in place to ensure that the case is still progressed in a timely manner and the need for bail conditions to safeguard the survivor and/or general public has not been overlooked.
7. Ensure that all officers take an **accurate approach to risk assessment**, which considers the suspect's wider risk to the public, alongside the risk to survivors caused by delay and lack of progress.
8. Establish effective measures to **protect and support frontline officers** handling sexual offence investigations from burnout and vicarious trauma.
9. **Supervision arrangements:**
  - a) **Review supervision arrangements** for the management of sexual offences. Case supervision must include a specific focus on timeliness, progressing enquiries, and addressing any signs of drift and delay.
  - b) Update force policies and practice to include guidance on **proper and timely reviews of investigations when the OIC is absent** from their normal duties. In these circumstances, outstanding tasks must be re-allocated to continue

progress whilst the officer is away. This must include communicating with the survivor about the officer's absence and updating when they have returned.

- c) Appoint senior staff members to act as **designated single points of contact (SPOCs) for communicating with the CPS**, to ensure that more junior officers are able to escalate issues with inappropriate CPS requests/action plans effectively and with appropriate support.
- d) Ensure any **policies around prioritisation of different sexual offence cases** are fully articulated in an auditable format and included with force policies on the management of serious sexual offences. If such prioritisation is not supported, then forces must identify where informal policies/practices may have developed and supervisors must take responsibility for effectively addressing this with the staff and teams impacted.
- e) Ensure all officers, including supervisory officers, have **appropriate training** in relation to the challenges of long-running investigations and meeting the needs of survivors.

#### 10. Oversight and accountability

- a) **Report quarterly to Police and Crime Commissioners** the numbers of **open sexual offence investigations exceeding three years**.
- b) **Report quarterly to Police and Crime Commissioners on staffing levels** in specialist policing teams to ensure any deficits in staff numbers or resources remain a standing agenda item and can be escalated by the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Home Office.
- c) **Ensure sexual offences investigations are resourced adequately**. Police and Crime Commissioners, or any future alternative oversight bodies must monitor and ensure appropriate scrutiny of this.

#### To the Home Office:

- 11. **Urgently engage with the UK Statistics Agency (UKSA)** to implement their recommendations and measures needed for the re-accreditation of police crime data.
- 12. **Publish quarterly data** on the number of sexual offence investigations that have been ongoing for longer than three years, to allow proper monitoring and scrutiny.
- 13. **Support force registrars with workable solutions to recording timeliness** when a case is re-opened that doesn't overwrite closure dates. We recommend that the Home Office look to the 'bail clock' approach for open/closed/re-opened cases.

14. Lead on **implementing further regulations on the use of RUI**, with a particular focus on timeliness, the need for bail conditions and ensuring this is managed appropriately where RUI is used instead of bail.
15. Review and identify any **additional scrutiny and accountability** structures that may be effective in addressing delay within sexual offence investigations.

### To the Home Office and Ministry of Justice:

16. Consult with the UKSA, HMICFRS, and Rape Crisis about the most appropriate way to **capture and present data on timeliness in sexual offence cases publicly**, in a clear and meaningful way that builds trust and does not obscure delays. Any approach must fully consider the different trajectories for different sexual offence cases, such as 'telling not reporting' and 'threshold charging', factoring in how these may influence aggregated data on timeliness.
17. Ensure **publicly available data on sexual offence cases is broken down by the offence type and relationship to perpetrator**, to ensure that any patterns of prioritisation and differences in case length are evident in the data for public scrutiny.

### To HMICFRS:

18. **Require all forces to report** to HMICFRS on the numbers of long-running investigations (over three years) identified during their individual audits (see recommendation 1). This should include currently open investigations, and those that were assigned an outcome in the last year. HMICFRS should take measures to satisfy themselves that this data is reliable, and **publish** this in the response to our complaint.
19. Conduct an **inspection of forces** with regard to timeliness in sexual offence investigations. We would recommend this is a joint inspection with HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI).
20. Ensure **future inspections focussing on crime recording also focus on assessing the accuracy and timeliness of recording outcomes**, not just the initial recording of crime reports.

### To the Crown Prosecution Service:

21. **Review 'file readiness' requirements** for sexual offence cases, to establish whether these are reasonable and proportionate at the point of police seeking a charging decision.
22. **Complete an audit** of all investigations for sexual offences that remain outstanding where it has been more than eighteen months since the initial

referral from police, and review these jointly with senior officers, in order to identify ways to progress the cases to an appropriate outcome in a timely manner.

23. **Implement routine reminders to police every 28 days**, where cases have been sent back to police with further actions, to ensure both agencies retain responsibility for the prompt and effective progress of investigations.

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## Annex A: Home Office data received via Freedom of Information Request

Below is the data received from the Home Office regarding the time between report and outcome assigned, broken down by rape offences, and all other sexual offences. Combined data for all sexual offences can be found on page 27, in Table 1.

Table 5: The number of rape investigations that lasted over three years, by investigation length, 2014/15 – 2024/25

Length of investigation	3-4yrs	4-5yrs	5-6yrs	6-7yrs	7-8yrs	8-9yrs	9+yrs	Totals
2014/5	70	35	37	9	13	13	46	223
2015/16	279	167	80	41	19	16	88	690
2016/17	244	90	65	25	24	15	98	561
2017/18	251	118	41	28	23	14	88	563
2018/19	676	267	111	43	25	24	123	1269
2019/20	358	145	65	27	12	9	73	689
2020/21	697	226	95	49	28	14	102	1211
2021/22	612	221	92	74	78	64	95	1236
2022/23	705	286	141	60	34	20	76	1322
2023/24	908	533	291	90	39	40	112	2013
2024/25	1196	427	229	119	46	37	89	2143
Totals	5,996	2,515	1,247	565	341	266	990	11,920

Table 6: The number of sexual offence (excluding rape) investigations that lasted over three years, by investigation length, 2014/15 – 2024/25

Length of investigation	3-4yrs	4-5yrs	5-6yrs	6-7yrs	7-8yrs	8-9yrs	9+yrs	Totals
2014/5	67	37	34	23	16	25	108	310
2015/16	175	85	59	36	29	12	127	523
2016/17	198	65	57	28	22	22	101	493
2017/18	462	99	46	22	16	15	83	743
2018/19	498	161	95	37	30	18	135	974
2019/20	376	120	68	29	15	17	67	692
2020/21	586	233	123	43	33	14	79	1111
2021/22	645	310	117	88	115	90	100	1465
2022/23	742	317	113	74	47	32	112	1437
2023/24	791	396	202	131	51	35	100	1706
2024/25	1065	349	195	89	37	38	92	1865
Totals	5,605	2,172	1,109	600	411	318	1,104	11,319

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