



<b>Subject</b>	A joint thematic inspection of the police and CPS response to rape: Phase 2 – Post Charge
<b>Date</b>	17/03/22
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Constabulary response to the recommendations
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The report titled ‘**A joint thematic inspection of the police and CPS response to rape: Phase 2 – Post Charge**’, was issued in February 2022.

The report contains nine recommendations, only three of which include direct requirements for the police. This briefing note outlines the Suffolk Constabulary response to those recommendations.

**Recommendation 1.** Immediately, police and prosecutors should review and significantly improve communications with victims from the point of charge onwards.

**Suffolk Constabulary Response** – This is being discussed at the Eastern Region RaSSO Governance Board and will form part of the Eastern Region Action Plan. It is recognised and accepted that improvement is needed at this vital stage of an investigation. The issue has been magnified during COVID 19 where Crown Court trials have been significantly delayed and there is now a backlog of rape cases in all Force areas. Some regions are not expecting to clear the backlog situation until 2025. In Suffolk we have not had access to any of the Nightingale Courts which were set up to help with the backlog in rape trials.

**Recommendation 8.** Immediately, the police and the CPS should work collaboratively to ensure that bad character is considered in all rape cases and progressed wherever it is applicable.

**Suffolk Constabulary Response** – This is being discussed at the Eastern Region RaSSO Governance Board and will form part of the Eastern Region Action Plan. Some early scoping suggests there are missed opportunities to collate bad character evidence. This is likely to require a new procedure to be agreed by CPS and Police to formalise how this issue should be dealt with.

**Recommendation 9.** Immediately, forces should make sure that victims of rape are given the opportunity to make a victim personal statement (VPS) at the earliest possible time, with the option of updating this statement closer to the court trial date.

**Suffolk Constabulary Response** – We are proactive in taking VPS; however, a review will be conducted to examine whether this right is offered to victims at the most appropriate time.