

The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London

Our ref:TP/AH01

04 October 2024

Dear Home Secretary

RE: An inspection report on progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations in early adopter police forces.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this inspection on progress to introduce Operation Soteria.

There were five recommendations which impacted on police forces and chief constables. Suffolk Constabulary have provided an update on their progress with regard these recommendations which I attach and will publish on my website.

The status of Suffolk Constabulary's adoption of the national operating model is routinely discussed and monitored as part of my Accountability and Performance Panel arrangements, ensuring any obstacles to timely implementation are noted and addressed.

Yours sincerely



Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk



Response to HMICFRS' report: [An inspection report on progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations in early adopter forces](#), August 2024

In August 2024, HMICFRS released this national thematic report which detailed the findings of its inspection into the roll out of Operation Soteria, a national programme to transform how the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police forces in England and Wales respond to rape and other serious sexual offences (RASSO).

In total, the report makes 14 recommendations, of which five are for police forces. Suffolk Constabulary accepts these recommendations and the below sets out the constabulary's response to these.

Recommendation 3

By 31 January 2025, all forces should make sure personnel working on rape and other serious sexual offences receive College of Policing approved training on the investigation of word-on-word cases.

All Suffolk Safeguarding Investigation Unit (SIU) officers have received the College of Policing's Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigative Skills Development Programme (RISDP) training as face-to-face over two days (delivered in early 2024).

In addition to this training, the force will be rolling out the Operation Soteria National Operating Model (NOM) products through the transformation and implementation plans in line with national timescales. The Pillar 1 NOM products below are those which directly relate to this recommendation. These products will be delivered to all RASSO investigators through the implementation programme and ongoing RASSO CPD:

- *The Full Code Test for RASSO*
- *The Threshold Test for RASSO*
- *Investigative strategy guidance 7: Consent*

These products are national NOM products to ensure consistency across victim-centred, suspect-focused, context-led RASSO investigations.

Recommendation 5

By 31 July 2025, chief constables should make sure their forces use the new definition of repeat rape and other serious sexual offences suspects to identify and manage them.

The national Operation Soteria team have not yet provided a new definition of repeat rape and other serious sexual offences suspects for Suffolk Constabulary to use. Work is ongoing nationally to agree this and, once agreed, it will be discussed with the constabulary's analytical department to ensure it can be incorporated into data produced, including Power Bi products, for use across RASSO.

Once provided, the definition will be included in any suspect management process and policy and form part of the ongoing RASSO reporting.

Until the national definition is agreed, Suffolk will continue to utilise Vulnerability Victim Offender Location (VVOL) data alongside a Power Bi RASSO Repeat Suspect dashboard already in existence to take repeat suspects to tasking meetings and seek disruption opportunities in line with the principles of Operation Soteria.

Recommendation 7

By 31 January 2025, all chief constables should make sure their forces prioritise identifying and disrupting rape and other serious sexual offences (RASSO) suspects. This includes making sure that:

- forces track, manage and respond effectively to breaches of bail and protection orders in RASSO cases; and
- all relevant personnel complete National Operating Model training on using criminal and civil orders to tackle RASSO.

Suffolk Constabulary already prioritises suspects of RASSO for identification, arrest and disruption. This is monitored through department and force performance meetings and the Local Policing Board. There is ongoing force-wide work to agree a robust process for managing protection orders which the RASSO suspects will form part of. This is being managed through a workflow demand and an ongoing review into local policing proactivity.

The NOM training on criminal and civil orders will form part of the implementation plan required to be signed off by Suffolk Constabulary Chief Officers in January 2025, in line with national timeframes. This training will form part of the plan for all RASSO investigators.

Recommendation 9

By 31 January 2025, chief constables should make sure their forces have good processes in place for applying to retain DNA and fingerprints to improve their use of section 63G of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984.

Suffolk Constabulary already has a good process in place for managing these reviews and applications under section 63G of PACE 1984. All relevant cases are reviewed by a nominated Detective Inspector within the Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management (CSIM) command who applies the guidance and makes the request to retain wherever this is applicable. The process is currently being reviewed to ensure having a single point of contact (SPoC) is appropriate, and this recommendation forms part of that review.

Recommendation 11

By 31 March 2025, all chief constables should make sure that, as part of adopting the National Operating Model, their forces:

- develop a rape and other serious sexual offences problem profile;
- include the National Operating Model flight deck within their strategic performance monitoring; and
- adopt any key performance indicators that are agreed and published by the Soteria Joint Unit.

Suffolk Constabulary has an existing RASSO problem profile which was refreshed in 2024.

Once the transformation plan has been completed, the recommendation will be reviewed to confirm whether the NOM flight deck will be monitored through Local Policing or Performance boards. Implementation of the Operation Soteria NOM is currently managed through a strategic project board with Assistant Chief Constable chair.

An ongoing review of KPIs continues with force analysts. There are currently barriers to meeting the reporting of protected characteristics due to limitations in the constabulary's record management system (Athena). This has been raised with the relevant boards to address.