

# The London Rape Review

A review of cases from 2016

July 2019

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

## **Acknowledgements**

MOPAC would like to express their sincere gratitude to the research team from Evidence & Insight: Daniela Wunsch, Barry Charleton and Dr Julia Yesberg.

Many thanks also to Dr Anthony Murphy and Dr Ben Hine from the University of West London for their support for this project.

MOPAC would also like to thank Dr Paul Dawson and Mat Pickering for their advice throughout the research, as well as Fil Agrestini, Laura Duckworth, Charlotte Keeble, Rachael Parker, Jeannette Woodcock and Julita Siuta for the coding of the data.

Many thanks to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for supporting the coding team and providing useful guidance during this review. Finally, thanks to all those partner organisations who contributed to and supported this review with their insightful feedback: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Services (HMCTS), National Health Service (NHS) England, The Havens, Women and Girls Network, Solace Women's Aid, Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC), NIA, Galop, Survivors UK and End Violence Against Women (EVAW).

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*At a glance ...*

# The London Rape Review

*The Rape Review is a collaborative piece of research between MOPAC and the University of West London seeking to drive insights into the nature of reported rape in London.*

501 allegations of rape across London taken from April 2016

146 variables coded covering the entire case progression

84% of allegations were classified as a crime by police.

7% of cases were perpetrated by a complete stranger.

58% of victims/survivors withdrew the allegation.

29% of cases the Police decided to take no further action

Almost three in five offences took place in a private or domestic setting.

6% proceeded to trial

28% of all rape allegations were related to domestic abuse.

3% resulted in a conviction

18 months the average length of time from the date of reporting to trial outcome.

The strongest predictors of **victim withdrawal** and police **No Further Action** were procedural characteristics.

# The London Rape Review: A review of cases from 2016

## Executive Summary

### About the London Rape Review

The London Rape Review is a collaborative piece of research between the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and the University of West London (UWL). The overall aim of the research is to examine reported rape in London, with a specific focus on how key factors related to the victim/survivor, suspect and offence, as well as the subsequent investigation by the police, may affect different outcomes for victims/survivors and the progression of rape cases through the criminal justice system. A total of 501 allegations of rape in April 2016 were examined as part of this review. This research builds on previous reviews of rape in the MPS conducted between 2005 and 2012.

### Key Findings: Attrition of rape allegations



- Victim/survivor withdrawal was the most common form of attrition in the sample of classified cases (58%), followed by no further action by police (29%).
- The majority of classified cases (86%) were not submitted to the CPS. Only 9% were charged by the CPS, 6% proceeded to trial and 3% resulted in a conviction.
- Victims/survivors who withdrew did so soon after reporting, and the majority within the police investigation stage. Reasons for victim/survivor withdrawal were complex and often interrelated. For example, some withdrew because of the stress and trauma of the police investigation.

### Key Findings: Who reports rape in London?



- Victims/survivors were predominantly female (89%) and of a white ethnic background (57%). Two thirds were under 30 years old at the time of the offence.
- There has been an increase in male reporting and an increase in Asian victims/survivors compared to previous years' reviews.
- 95% of victims/survivors had at least one need present (e.g. mental health, under 18, learning difficulty). Cumulative needs were common among victim/survivors, with just over one third of victims/survivors having two needs present, and one in five having three or more needs.
- 41% of victims/survivors presented with a mental health issue: a significant increase from previous rape reviews. There was a significant relationship between mental health and previous victimisation.

### Key Findings: Suspect profile



- The profile of suspects has remained reasonably consistent with previous years' reviews. Almost all suspects were male (99%) and aged between 18 and 49 (77%).
- Black suspects (35%) and those aged between 18 and 49 years (77%) were over-represented in the sample. On the other hand, white suspects (43%), those aged under 18 years (12%) and those aged over 50 years (12%) were under-represented.
- A minority of suspects were recorded as having a prior police record (29%), or a history of domestic abuse (11%) or sexual assault/rape (9%).

### Key Findings: Types of rape being reported



- 28% of rapes reviewed as part of this review took place within the context of domestic abuse. Asian victims and suspects were over-represented in domestic abuse cases.
- 17% of all rapes were reported in response to the DASH questions asked by police when attending a domestic abuse call. This form of reporting was related to a higher victim withdrawal rate (77%).
- In 84% of cases the victim knew the perpetrator and most offences did not involve other forms of violence.
- There has been an increase in non-recent reporting with 27% of rapes being reported more than 1 year after the offence took place.
- Third parties account for two fifths of all reports and were most commonly support services or family and friends.

### Key Findings: Timeliness and evidential challenges



- On average, case progression from reporting to trial outcome took over 18 months. The length of time between submission to the CPS and decision to charge was 138 days.
- There was no relationship between case characteristics and timeliness of case progression.
- The lack of forensic evidence was common amongst cases, along with other evidential challenges. There was less evidence present in non-recent cases, and in cases where the victim was over 30 years old.

### Key Findings: Predicting attrition



- The strongest predictors of victim withdrawal were procedural characteristics. For example, withdrawal was 6x less likely in cases where the victim/survivor participated in a Video Recorded Interview.
- Victim, suspect and offence characteristics were less important in predicting withdrawal. However, being male (3x less likely) and reporting the rape via DASH (3x more likely) were significant predictors.
- Procedural characteristics – particularly those related to evidence – were the most important predictors of police NFA. If other evidence cast doubt on the case police NFA was 7x more likely and if there were no forensic opportunities police NFA was 5x more likely.
- Cases where the victims/survivors were under 18 years old were significantly less likely to end in police NFA.
- Victim/survivor mental health was a significant predictor of police NFA on its own; however, this relationship could be explained by victim/survivor inconsistency in testimony.
- Finally, comparing model fit across outcomes showed the case characteristics coded in this review were far better at predicting police decision making than victim decisions to withdraw.

### Conclusion

The London Rape Review provides a comprehensive picture of reported rape in London and there are clear implications for policy and practice arising from the findings. As the MPS continues to record more incidents of rape than ever before and conviction rates remain low, developing a greater insight into the journey of rape cases through the criminal justice system, as well as identifying key factors affecting case outcomes, is essential. It is hoped the findings from this review will facilitate discourse about how the criminal justice service and its partners can work together to improve experiences and outcomes for the victims/survivors who choose to report their experiences of rape to the police.

# 1. Introduction

This report outlines the findings from a collaborative research project between the Evidence & Insight Team (E&I) of the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and the University of West London (UWL). The overall aim was to examine the characteristics of reported rape in London. The focus was on how key factors relating to the offence, those involved, and subsequent responses to it may affect the progression of rape cases through the criminal justice service.

The research supports a key ambition in the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 (P&CP): to *“put victims at the heart of the Criminal Justice Service”* (p. 65).<sup>i</sup> Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a key priority for the Mayor and the P&CP is clear on the need to better protect those most vulnerable and to tackle high harm crimes. In 2017, Claire Waxman was appointed as London's first independent Victims' Commissioner, taking on a key role in making sure victims' voices are heard and their experiences of services – and of the criminal justice service in particular – are improved. This research contributes to our understanding of victims and their vulnerability, and the findings can be used to drive practical learning and meaningful change.

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 The MPS Rape Review 2005-2012

This research updates the methodology used by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Rape Reviews, which examined all rape allegations made to the MPS during the months of April and May from each year between 2005 to 2012.<sup>ii</sup> Using the MPS Crime Recording Information System (CRIS), each crime report was coded for victim/survivor and suspect characteristics, elements of the offence and, in 2012, elements of the investigation.

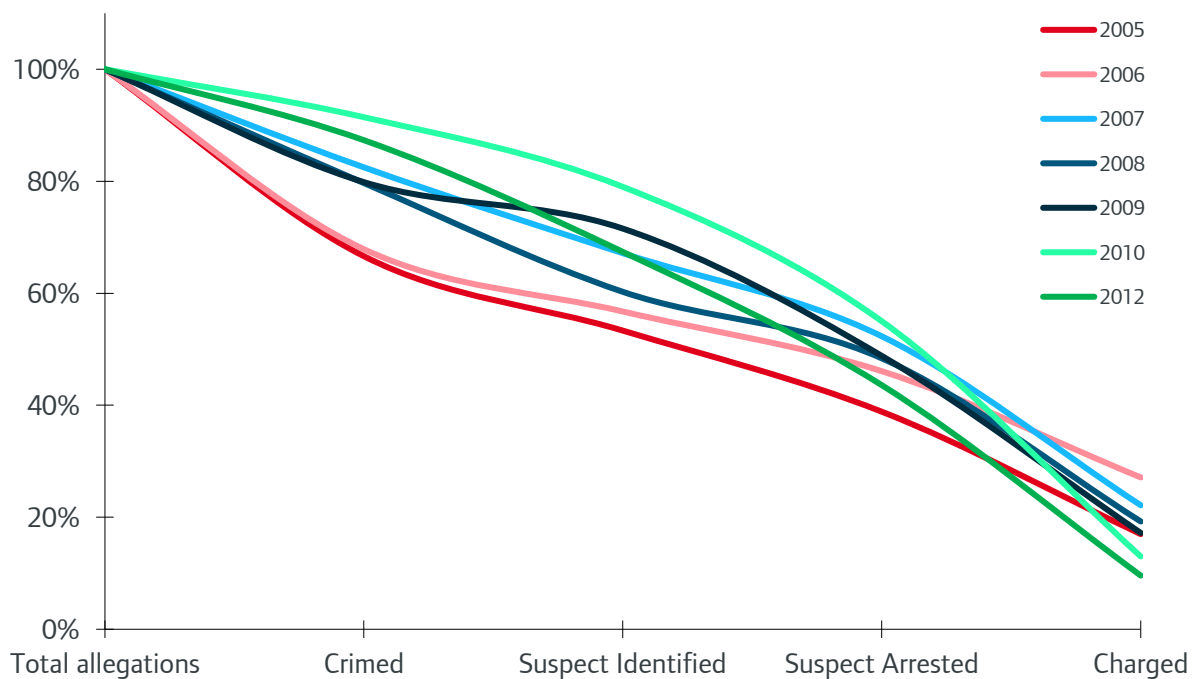
These rape case reviews proved extremely useful in providing insight into the nature and context of rape and serious sexual assault across the capital. The findings provided both important information on the demographic and situational characteristics of rape offences, and on the trajectories these cases took through the criminal justice process, as well as the associated procedural decisions that occurred throughout investigation and prosecution. Importantly, using inferential analyses, the reviews were able to identify which characteristics had a significant bearing on outcomes.

For example, from the 2012 review, important data on the attrition of cases within the sample were identified (e.g. that approximately half of cases ended in victim withdrawal), as were the proportion of cases containing characteristics relevant to operational and investigative challenges in cases of rape (e.g. that 69% of cases involved a delayed report of >24 hours, or that just under 30% of cases involved voluntary consumption of alcohol by the victim). Moreover, accompanying analyses revealed several characteristics acting as significant predictors of case outcome. For example, victim withdrawal was 3x more likely in cases where co-operation or communication problems existed between officer and victim but was 4.5x less likely in cases where the interview was recorded.

The 2012 review also highlighted the influence of rape myths<sup>1</sup> on the investigative process.<sup>iii</sup> For example, victims were almost twice as likely to withdraw if they were in an intimate relationship with the suspect, and cases were twice as likely to receive a ‘no further action’ (NFA) classification by officers if the victim had voluntarily consumed alcohol. If the victim had resisted the assault, they were 2x less likely to have their case receive an NFA<sup>2</sup> classification. The existence and influence of rape myths on judgements made by the general population is well documented,<sup>iv</sup> as is their possible impact on police officers’ classification of rape cases, decision making, and case processing.<sup>v</sup>

The previous rape case reviews also provided important information about the trends in rape case progression over time. Figure 1 compares attrition rates across seven previous reviews and reveals a generally consistent trend, with most cases failing to reach the charge stage. There have been some shifts in where attrition occurs in the process. For example, in 2005 and 2006 the greatest dropout was at the allegation to crime stage, whereas in 2010 and 2012 attrition occurred later in case progression when charging a suspect. The 2012 review saw the lowest rate of suspects charged, with just 10% of all allegations made reaching this stage.

**Figure 1: Attrition rates over time by percentage of all allegations**



<sup>1</sup> Rape myths are defined as ‘descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (i.e., about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims, and their interaction) that serve to deny, downplay or justify sexual violence that men commit against women’

<sup>2</sup> Police No Further Action (NFA) refers to when a decision is made by a supervising officer to discontinue an investigation. This can be for a variety of reasons, including victim withdrawal. Police NFA usually occurs when all investigative opportunities have been exhausted and officers feel that the case as it stands does not pass a full code test to pass on to the CPS. Although the investigation is closed at point of NFA, it can be reopened upon discovery or disclosure of other evidence which enables further investigation to take place.

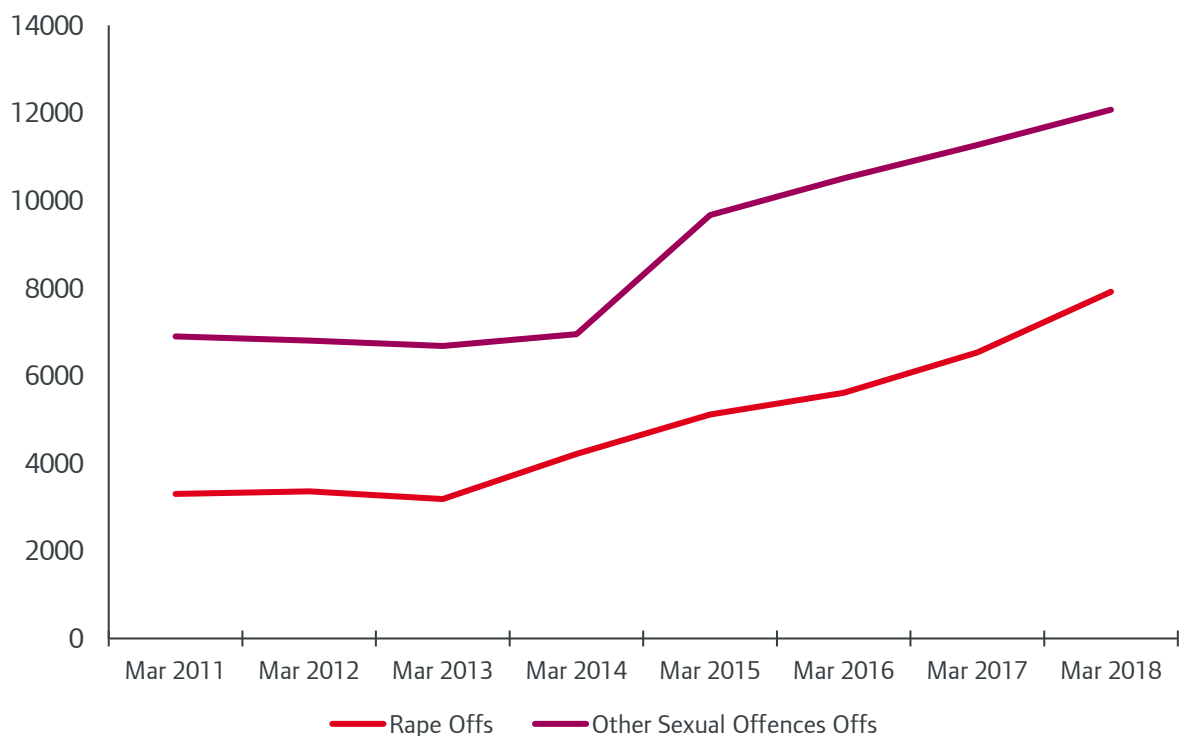


### 1.1.2 Changes and developments since 2012 review

Since the 2012 review, several events pertinent to the investigation of rape within London, and the country as a whole, have occurred. These include many high profile and widely publicised sexual abuse scandals and subsequent prosecutions, such as the Jimmy Savile case and Operation Yewtree.<sup>vi</sup> More recently, cases that have collapsed due to disclosure issues<sup>vii</sup> have provided renewed and intensified focus on the procedural, investigatory and prosecutorial decisions taken during the criminal justice process. These events are set within the broader context of the publication of substantial rape investigation reviews, such as the Dame Elish Angiolini Review in 2015, and associated dramatic reforms of police training.<sup>viii</sup>

Alongside - and perhaps triggered by - these events, there has been a rise in recent years of non-recent reporting and an overall increase in reported rape. As Figure 2 shows, for sexual offences recorded by the MPS, there is a clear upward trend both for recorded rape offences and other sexual offences. At the end of 12 months to March 2018, rape offences recorded by the MPS were 140% higher than those recorded in the period to March 2011 (equivalent to over 4,600 more recorded offences). Interestingly, data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) shows little change in the prevalence of rape over the same period. A recent report from MOPAC investigated this disparity ('Beneath the Numbers') and concluded that the increases in recorded crime is more likely due to improved crime data integrity and compliance with the National Crime Recording Standards.<sup>ix</sup>

**Figure 2: Recorded sexual offences in the MPS year ending March 2011 to March 2018**



Because of these developments, both the reporting habits and demographic make-up of rape cases, as well as the associated criminal justice response, may have significantly changed since

previous in-depth case reviews were conducted. As such, a new research collaboration between E&I and UWL provided the opportunity to conduct an updated review of rape cases reported to the MPS.

## **1.2 The London Rape Review**

The focus of this research was on data related to rape allegations made in April 2016. This sample was chosen to ensure comparability with the previous MPS Rape Review data and to enable, as far as possible, any comparisons and observations of changes over time. The decision to focus on 2016 was made because this represented the most recent year where comprehensive outcome information was available to enable a full end-to-end review.

The research team worked closely with the independent Victims' Commissioner for London, MOPAC colleagues, and academic colleagues at UWL, and consulted with a range of external stakeholders (e.g. MPS, CPS, NHS England, Havens, Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) providers, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) service providers) in developing a set of research questions that were reflective of current issues and concerns.

As a result, this review provides updated information on the profile of rape cases across London, as well as associated data on the trajectories and outcomes of these cases within the criminal justice service (including analyses on which case characteristics predict case outcomes). It also serves to inform the renewed focus on victims and high harm crimes, vulnerability and safeguarding in the Mayor's P&CP 2017-2021.

Key objectives of the research are:

- To contribute to a comprehensive, detailed and up-to-date picture of reported rape in London;
- To describe, as far as possible, key characteristics of victims/survivors, perpetrators and offences, as well as subsequent actions and responses;
- To better understand the needs and vulnerabilities of those who report rape in London (and how these may impact on outcomes);
- To better understand the key characteristics of those perpetrating rape, including offending histories;
- To track cases through the criminal justice service and identify key attrition points;
- To identify key factors influencing attrition of reported rape in London; and
- To make observations on changes over time by comparing findings of the proposed research to those of the MPS Rape Reviews between 2005 and 2012.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Sample

All crime records with an initial classification of rape reported to the MPS in April 2016 were extracted from CRIS for analysis.<sup>3</sup> In total, 617 records were extracted. Cases were excluded if: the initial classification was attempted rape; the classification later changed to a non-sexual violence offence; the case was transferred out of the MPS to another police force; or the record was identified as a duplicate of another. Using these criteria, 116 cases were excluded, leaving a final sample of 501.

### 2.2 Coding and data analysis

A team of researchers from E&I, MPS and UWL read each individual CRIS report for the 501 cases and coded them on a total of 146 variables agreed in the coding framework. All researchers were security vetted and followed strict data management and protection protocols. The coding framework was divided into five categories: Victim/survivor characteristics; Suspect characteristics; Offence characteristics (the circumstances of what happened); Procedural characteristics (the police response and investigation); and Outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Appendix A presents the variables coded and the descriptive characteristics for the full sample.

The coding framework was piloted on 50 randomly selected cases, which were coded by two independent researchers to determine consistency in scoring. From this process, ambiguities over variables were resolved and a detailed and annotated framework was finalised. Throughout the coding process, regular meetings between the researchers addressed any concerns or uncertainties with cases and/or variables.

Throughout the results, descriptive statistics are presented on the key variables that were coded<sup>5</sup>. Relationships between the case characteristics are explored and comparisons are made to previous reviews. Alongside the coding of quantitative variables, researchers took qualitative notes about the reasons given within the CRIS reports for victim withdrawal. Thematic analysis was then conducted on a randomly selected subsample of cases to draw out key themes.

To explore whether case characteristics predict case outcomes, a series of logistic regressions were conducted. Each category of case characteristic was examined separately (i.e. victim/survivor, suspect, offence and procedural characteristics) before being combined into an overall model. The two outcomes of interest were victim withdrawal and police no further action, capturing both victim and police decision making. Univariate logistic regressions were first conducted on each case characteristic and the two outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Significant univariate predictors

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<sup>3</sup> Crime records were extracted using Full Business Objects Client.

<sup>4</sup> Most of these variables were coded dichotomously (1=yes, 0=no), whereas others were categorical (e.g. ethnicity, offence location, relationship between victim and suspect).

<sup>5</sup> Analysis was conducted on the full sample of 501 cases – with the exception of calculations in relation to attrition and case outcome (including prediction of Victim Withdrawal and Police No Further Action), which are based on classified cases only (n=419).

<sup>6</sup> Univariate logistic regression explores the relationship between one independent variable (i.e. one case characteristic) and one dependent variable (i.e. one outcome).

were retained for inclusion in a multi-variate model for each of the four categories of case characteristics.<sup>7</sup> The characteristics that remained significant in each multi-variate model were then retained for inclusion in the final overall model. All analyses were conducted in SPSS version 24.

### **2.3 Limitations of the methodology**

Because the coding framework relied solely on the information available on CRIS, there were areas of the journey from offence to trial outcome that were either not captured or were recorded in an inconsistent manner. For example, CPS decisions and the dates on which they occurred were not always detailed and there were variables, such as nationality, which were missing in a substantial number of cases. Furthermore, although the current coding framework captured a significant number of variables, data recorded and held by the CPS, the courts, and victim support services may provide a more complete picture than data available exclusively on CRIS.

With regards to the CRIS data, there are further limitations. The system was designed as an investigation record, not a comprehensive data capture tool. Therefore, the quality and detail of the data itself is variable. Although there are specific fields available on the database for many of the variables coded as part of this research, completing them is not always mandatory. Furthermore, most of the information coded is derived from the Details of Investigation: a long, free text log, completed by any number of different police officers and staff throughout the duration of the investigation. There may be details or pieces of information that are of interest which are not recorded during the completion of this log (examples ranging from whether the victim has support of third sector agencies, through to exact dates that case files are submitted to the CPS). Furthermore, many of the variables were coded only for their presence which means we cannot determine whether the absence of a variable is due to omission in data recording or it not being a factor in the case. As such this limits the consistency and reliability of what was coded.

Another potential limitation is the sampling of cases. Only rape allegations reported to the MPS during April 2016 were selected for inclusion in this research, to be consistent with previous reviews (all of which used data from April and May in the respective years). These months were previously chosen because they represented 'average' months in terms of volume of reported rapes, and thus were thought to be representative of all rape allegations over the year. However, although the volume of allegations is 'average' for the year, there may still be sampling bias present (i.e. the allegations for these months being in some way systematically different from cases reported during the rest of the year).

A final limitation, which is shared with all research that uses police or official data, is that the cases coded and analysed in this research are only those that were reported to the police. Given the high rate of under-reporting of sexual violence, these cases represent a small proportion of the rapes that may have actually taken place.

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<sup>7</sup> Multi-variate logistic regression explores the relationship between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Attrition of rape allegations

#### Section Summary: Attrition of rape allegations

- Victim withdrawal was the most common form of attrition in the sample of classified cases (58%), followed by police no further action (29%).
- Out of classified cases, the majority (86%) were not submitted to the CPS. Only 9% were charged by the CPS, 6% proceeded to trial and 3% resulted in a conviction.
- Victims/survivors who withdrew did so soon after reporting. Just under half of all withdrawals occurred within 3 months of reporting and 18% within the first 30 days. Reasons for victim withdrawal were complex and often interrelated.



A total of 501 allegations of rape were recorded by the MPS in April 2016 and were coded as part of this research. Figure 3 shows the various stages of the investigation, along with the stages of case attrition. Of the 501 allegations of rape made to the MPS, 16% were not classified by the police as a crime. These cases were either recorded as 'No Crime' (n=3) or classified as 'Rape Not Confirmed' (n=50) or 'Rape Contradictory Evidence' (n=29).<sup>8</sup>

Of the 419 cases that were classified as a crime notifiable to the Home Office, in 67% (n=281) the suspect was identified by the police and in 36% (n=151) the suspect was arrested. In a further 25% (n=103) of cases the suspect, although not formally arrested, was interviewed under caution. The case was submitted to the CPS in 14% (n=60) of cases and in 9% (n=36) the CPS decided to charge (60% of all cases submitted to them). Only 6% (n=23) of all cases proceeded to trial (64% of those charged by the CPS) and only 3% (n=13) resulted in a conviction (61% of those that proceeded to trial).

Victim withdrawal was the most common form of attrition for cases in this sample. Over half of victims/survivors (58%, n=243) decided to withdraw their allegation, with the majority withdrawing during the investigation stage (only 8 cases withdrew following CPS submission). Indeed, withdrawal tended to happen early in the process: of those who withdrew, 18% (n=41) did so within 30 days of reporting, 48% (n=111) within 90 days, and 77% (n=179) within 180 days. Qualitative notes taken by the researchers during coding showed that victims/survivors'

<sup>8</sup> The latter two classifications are referred to as N100s. Following a change in Home Office Counting Rules in April 2015, there is now a requirement to create a CRIS report as soon as an incident of rape is logged and to conduct an initial investigation. Rape Not Confirmed (100/1) refers to a case where the victim or third party cannot be identified, and therefore the rape cannot be confirmed. Rape Contradictory Evidence (100/2) is where credible evidence to the contrary exists, indicating that the offence has not taken place. See Appendix B for the Home Office N100 classification codes.

reasons for withdrawal were complex and often interrelated. There were typically multiple reasons given for withdrawal, the most common being:

- The stress and trauma caused or exacerbated by the investigation, particularly because of having to talk in detail about the incident;
- A desire to move on from what had happened, often intensified by feeling surprised and overwhelmed by the process of official police investigation;
- Concern for their own safety, or for the perpetrator's own situation, particularly in cases with a domestic abuse overlap where the victim's priority often was to put an end to the harmful behaviour, rather than a prosecution;
- The act of reporting in and of itself being enough, with reasons for reporting focusing on wanting to get the incident off their chest or seeing reporting as their civic duty (in terms of providing relevant information and intelligence); and
- Not having wished to report the rape in the first place, particularly in cases where the report was made within the context of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH 2009) (see section 3.4.1).

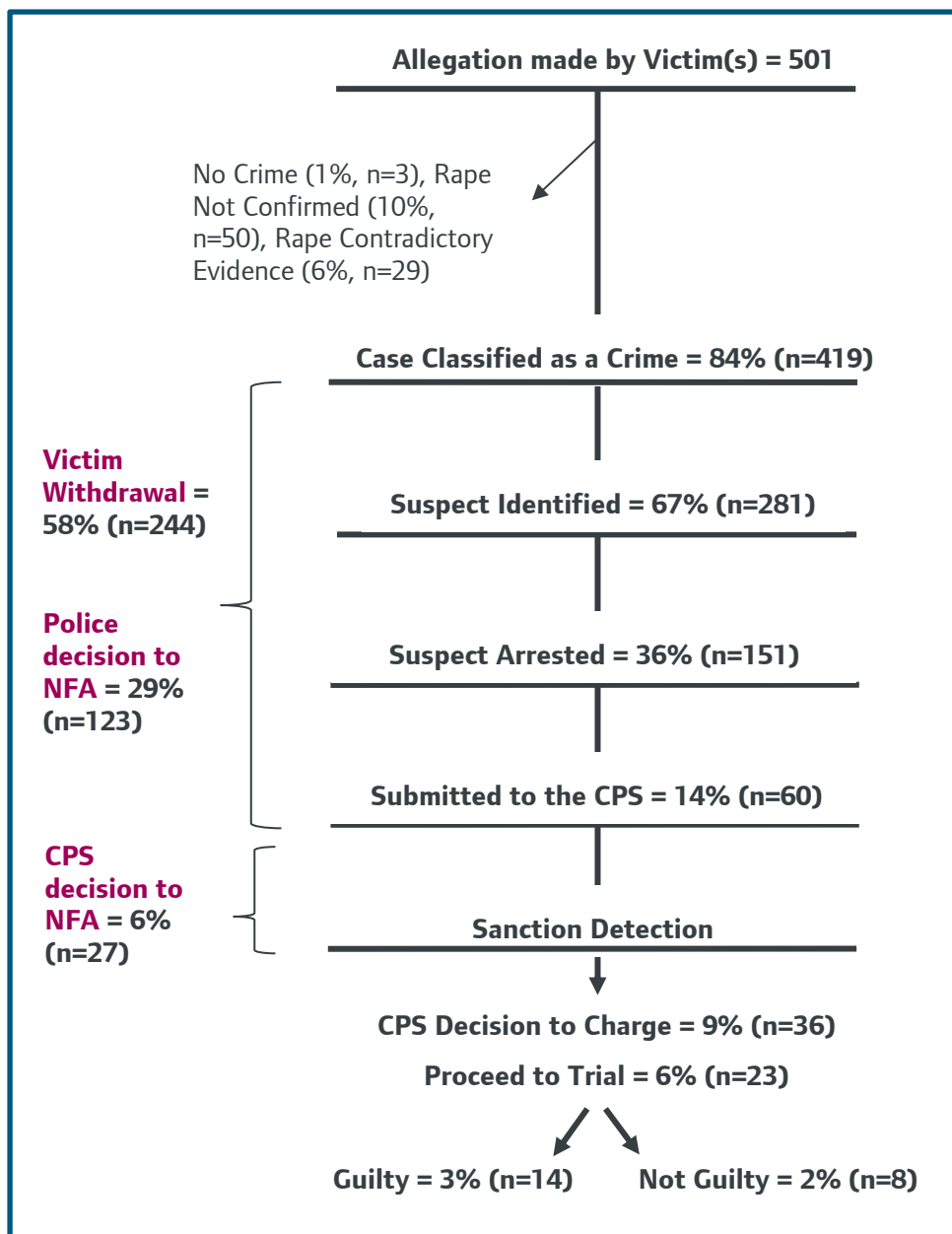
Alongside victim withdrawal, the police decided to take no further action in 29% of classified cases (n=123), for reasons such as insufficient evidence, an un-cooperative witness or it not being in the public interest to proceed. In 6% of cases (n=27) the CPS decided to take no further action (45% of all cases submitted to them).<sup>9</sup>

In 12% of cases (n=62), the investigation determined that no offence had occurred. In 29 cases the victim/survivor stated they had been mistaken and in an additional 19 cases a third party had mistakenly reported a rape. In 14 cases the victim/survivor subsequently stated they had made up the allegation.

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<sup>9</sup> There were 3 cases which were charged by the CPS but ultimately ended in NFA.

**Figure 3: Case progression for rape allegations made to the MPS in April 2016<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>10</sup> Direct comparison between these figures and those of previous rape reviews is problematic due to differences in methodology, as well as changes to crime classification in April 2015.

## 3.2 Who reports rape in London?

### Section Summary: Who reports rape in London?

- Victims/survivors were predominantly female and of white ethnic background. Two thirds of victims/survivors were under the age of 30 years at the time of the offence, with almost one third under 18 years. Black victims/survivors were over-represented in the sample.
- There has been an increase in male reporting and an increase in Asian victims/survivors compared to previous years' reviews.
- 95% of victims/survivors had at least one need present (e.g. mental health, under 18, learning difficulty). Cumulative needs were common among victim/survivors, with just over one third of victims/survivors having two needs present, and one in five having three or more needs.
- 41% of victims/survivors presented with a mental health issue: a significant increase from previous rape reviews. There was a significant relationship between mental health and previous victimisation.



### 3.2.1 Victim/survivor demographics

Overall, the profile of those reporting rape has remained largely consistent when compared to previous years' reviews. In the 2016 sample, as with previous years, victims/survivors of rape tended to be young, with almost 1 in 3 (n=153) being under 18 years old at the time of the offence and over two-thirds under the age of 30 (n=332; see Table 1 for victim/survivor demographics). Like previous years' reviews, victims/survivors were predominantly female (89%, n=444) and of white ethnic background (57%, n=465), and black victims/survivors were over-represented compared to the general London population (22% compared to 16% of the London population).<sup>11</sup>

However, there have been some noticeable shifts in the demographics of those who report, with a small increase in males (from 7% in 2007 to 11% in 2016), a small decrease in black victims/survivors (from 28% in 2010 to 22% in 2016), and an increase in reporting by Asian victims/survivors (from 7% in 2007 to 17% in 2016), with the latter being largely driven by rape allegations made in the context of a domestic abuse investigation (see section 3.4.1).

<sup>11</sup> Ethnicity was determined using the six police identity codes (IC). White European (IC1) and Dark European (IC2) were combined to form one category ('White').



**Table 1: Demographics of rape victims/survivors**

	2007	2010	2011	2012	2016	2016 projected London population
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	93%	93%	92%	93%	89%	50%
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
White	66%	60%	58%	57%	57%	57%
Black	24%	28%	27%	27%	22%	16%
Asian	7%	9%	12%	13%	17%	20%
<b>Age at offence</b>						
Under 18	31%	35%	34%	34%	31%	23%
18 to 29	-	37%	39%	35%	36%	18%
30 to 49	-	25%	23%	28%	27%	32%
Over 50	-	4%	5%	3%	6%	27%

Note: percentages calculated with missing values excluded

### 3.2.2 The cumulative needs of victims/survivors

Alongside demographic characteristics, the coding attempted to capture other circumstances about the victim/survivor that may add complexity to the case. Some of these needs were measured in previous rape reviews (e.g. mental health), but the 2016 coding attempted to capture more specific detail about the victim/survivor (e.g. whether they were an asylum seeker, missing person, or a sex worker).

These needs are presented in Table 2. For some needs, only a small proportion of victims/survivors presented with them (e.g. only 7% of victims/survivors had a learning difficulty and only 2% were an asylum seeker). However, 95% (n=474) of victims/survivors had at least one need present. Over one third of victims/survivors (n=173) had two needs present, and one in five had three or more needs (n=102). It is likely that many of these characteristics are under-reported so the prevalence of these cumulative needs may be underestimated.

The most prevalent need amongst the sample was mental health issues (41%, n=205), which was notably higher than observed in previous rape reviews (e.g. 14% in 2007). This increase could be due to better recognition by officers, but could also be due to changes to classifications, namely the introduction of the 'rape not confirmed' and 'rape contradictory evidence' classifications (with victims noted to have a mental health issue making up 50% of these classifications).

The presence of mental health issues was related to prior experiences of victimisation. Victims/survivors with mental health issues were significantly more likely to have been victimised in the preceding 12 months (36% compared to 23% of victims/survivors without mental health issues), and to have been a previous victim of sexual assault or domestic abuse (38% compared to 25% of victim/survivors without mental health issues). Victims/survivors with mental health issues were also significantly more likely to have a prior police record (25%) compared to those without mental health issues (9%). Unfortunately, the coding of mental health in this review precluded us from understanding what types of mental health issues victims/survivors presented with, or whether the issues emerged following the current rape or were pre-existing.

Other frequently occurring needs amongst victims/survivors in the sample were being in an intimate relationship with the suspect (35%, n=154), being under the age of 18 years (31%, n=153), and consuming alcohol or drugs prior to the offence (27%, n=123; although this need has reduced in prevalence over time). The high proportion of victims presenting with multiple needs – as well as the overlap between mental health and previous victimisation and offending – not only represents a unique challenge for police investigating these rape allegations but increases the difficulty of the victims/survivors’ journey.

**Table 2: Needs of rape victims/survivors**

<b>Need</b>	2007	2010	2011	2012	<b>2016</b>
Mental health issue	14%	14%	17%	18%	<b>41%</b>
Intimate relationship with perpetrator	35%	28%	32%	27%	<b>35%</b>
Under 18	31%	35%	34%	34%	<b>31%</b>
Consumed alcohol/drugs	35%	35%	38%	32%	<b>27%</b>
English not first language	-	-	-	-	<b>16%</b>
Deaf or has physical disability	-	-	-	-	<b>10%</b>
Learning difficulty					<b>7%</b>
Missing person or homeless	-	-	-	4%	<b>7%</b>
Sex worker	-	-	-	2%	<b>3%</b>
Asylum seeker	-	-	-	-	<b>2%</b>
<b>Cumulative needs</b>					
No needs					<b>5%</b>
One need					<b>40%</b>
Two needs					<b>35%</b>
Three or more needs					<b>21%</b>

Note: percentages calculated with missing values excluded

### 3.3 Suspect profile

#### Section Summary: Suspect profile

- The profile of suspects has remained reasonably consistent with previous years' reviews. Almost all were male (99%) and aged between 18 and 49 (77%).
- Black suspects and those aged between 18 and 49 years were over-represented in the sample, compared to the London population. On the other hand, white suspects, those aged under 18 years and those aged over 50 years were under-represented.
- A minority of suspects were recorded as having a history of previous offending, including sexual assault or rape.



The profile of suspects has remained reasonably consistent with previous years' reviews (see Table 3). Almost all were male (99%) and aged between 18 and 49 (77%). The majority of suspects were either white (43%) or black (35%). There was an over-representation of black suspects (35% compared to 16% of the London population) and an under-representation of white suspects (43% compared to 60% of the London population). There was a significant association between suspect and victim/survivor ethnicity, with suspects typically offending against their own ethnic group.<sup>12</sup> The age profile for suspects was slightly older than for victims/survivors, with a smaller proportion of suspects under the age of 18 (12% compared to 31% of victims/survivors).

Only a minority of suspects were recorded as having a history of previous offending, including sexual assault or rape. Less than one third (29%, n=143) were recorded as having a prior police record, which represents a decrease from 2012 where 38% were recorded as having a prior police record. Only 11% (n=57) of suspects in 2016 were recorded as having a history of domestic abuse, and 7% (n=34) a history of sexual assault or rape.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> These associations were statistically significant for all ethnic groups at the  $p < .05$  level according to the results of chi-square tests.

<sup>13</sup> A history of domestic abuse or sexual assault/rape was coded as present if, during intelligence checks by police, the suspect had previously been recorded as a 'suspect' or 'accused' in an offence relating to sexual assault/rape or domestic abuse, or if they were previously convicted of such an offence and it was shown on their PNC record.

**Table 3: Demographics of suspects**

	2012	2016	2016 projected London population
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	99%	99%	50%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	35%	43%	57%
Black	44%	35%	16%
Asian	17%	19%	20%
<b>Age at offence</b>			
Under 18	16%	12%	23%
18 to 29	40%	35%	18%
30 to 49	38%	42%	32%
Over 50	6%	12%	27%

Note: percentages calculated with missing values excluded

### 3.4 Types of rape being reported

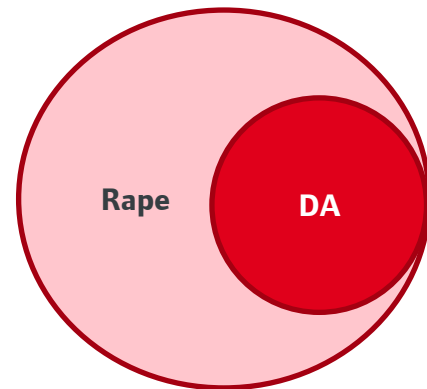
#### Section Summary: Types of rape being reported

- Rape frequently took place within the context of domestic abuse. Asian victims/survivors and suspects were over-represented in cases involving domestic abuse.
- 17% of all rapes were reported in response to the DASH questions asked by police when attending a domestic abuse call. This form of reporting was related to a higher victim withdrawal rate.
- In the majority of cases the victim/survivor knew the perpetrator and most offences did not involve serious violence.
- Compared to previous reviews, there has been an increase in non-recent reporting with 27% of rapes being reported more than 1 year after the offence.
- Third parties accounted for two fifths of all reports and were most commonly support services or family and friends. These reports were associated with lower rates of victim withdrawal.



### 3.4.1 Overlap between rape and domestic abuse

There was an overlap between rape and domestic abuse: 28% (n=142) of all allegations of rape were related to domestic abuse.<sup>14</sup> Victims/survivors in cases involving domestic abuse were more likely to be female compared to victims/survivors in non-domestic abuse cases (94% vs. 87%), less likely to be white (46% vs. 62%) and more likely to be Asian (31% vs. 11%). A smaller proportion of victims/survivors in cases related to domestic abuse had mental health issues (34% vs. 48%). However, a larger proportion of victim/survivors in domestic abuse cases had been previously victimised in the last 12 months (39% vs. 24%) and had been a previous victim of sexual assault or domestic abuse (47% vs. 24%).<sup>15</sup>



Suspects in cases involving domestic abuse were more likely to be Asian compared to suspects in non-domestic abuse cases (33% vs. 19%). They were also more likely to have a prior police record (49% vs. 21%), and a history of domestic abuse (34% vs. 3%), sexual assault/rape (14% vs. 4%), and other types offending (39% vs. 14%). Consistent with the finding for victims/survivors, suspects in domestic abuse cases were less likely to have mental health issues present than suspects in non-domestic abuse cases (14% vs. 4%).<sup>16</sup>

There were also some significant differences in characteristics of the offence between domestic and non-domestic abuse cases. In domestic abuse cases, the victim/survivor was significantly less likely to have consumed alcohol prior to the offence (11% vs. 31%) and were significantly more likely to have physically or verbally resisted (52% vs. 35%).

The DASH model was implemented across all police services in the UK from March 2009 and requires police to use a common checklist for identifying, assessing and managing risk in domestic abuse cases<sup>17</sup>. In this sample, 17% (n=86) of all rapes were reported in response to the DASH questions asked by police when attending a domestic abuse incident. Of note, those rapes that were reported via the DASH questions were far more likely to be withdrawn by the victim/survivor, compared to other reporting methods (77% victim withdrawal rate compared to 53% for cases not reported via DASH).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Domestic abuse was coded as present if a Domestic Violence flag had been attached to a CRIS report, or if other information in CRIS made it clear the case was related to domestic abuse.

<sup>15</sup> All differences were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level according to the results of chi-square tests.

<sup>16</sup> All differences were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level according to the results of chi-square tests.

<sup>17</sup> The Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour-based violence (DASH 2009) questions are a risk identification, assessment and management model used by police services in the UK. A bank of questions is asked when attending what appears to be any domestic incident to identify, assess and manage ongoing risk. The questions include those asking whether any sexual incidents have taken place as part of abuse.

<sup>18</sup> This difference is statistically significant according to the results of a chi-square test:  $\chi^2(1) = 14.85, p < .001$ .

### 3.4.2 Rape misconceptions not supported by the data

It is often assumed that rape occurs suddenly, at night, by an aggressive stranger with a weapon, and involves visible victim resistance and physical injury.<sup>x</sup> However, these misconceptions or ‘rape myths’ were not supported by the data. In most cases, the victim/survivor knew the perpetrator. As Table 4 shows, the most common relationship was an intimate partner (35%), followed by an acquaintance or friend (34%). In a further 12% of cases the perpetrator was a family member, and in 2% a professional or carer. In only 7% of cases was the rape perpetrated by a complete stranger.

**Table 4: Relationship between victim/survivor and suspect**

Relationship	2012	2016
Stranger 1 *	8%	7%
Stranger 2	21%	11%
Intimate	27%	35%
Acquaintance / friend	33%	34%
Professional / carer	2%	2%
Familial	8%	12%

Note: percentages calculated with missing values excluded

\*Stranger 1 is a complete stranger whereas Stranger 2 is someone the victim met a short time before the rape

Consistent with the high level of known perpetrators, almost three in five offences took place in a private or domestic setting: 24% (n=106) at the victim’s home address, 24% (n=108) at the suspect’s home address, and 15% (n=69) at the shared address of the victim/survivor and suspect.<sup>19</sup>

Further, and beyond the intrinsic violence of the offence itself, most of the offences did not involve serious violence or the use of a weapon. Just 23% (n=113) of victims/survivors were recorded as having an injury (76% of which were recorded as ‘minor’) and in only 2% (n=11) of cases the perpetrator used a weapon. Furthermore, in only two fifths of cases (40%, n=198) was it recorded that the victim/survivor verbally or physically resisted.

### 3.4.3 Increase in non-recent reporting

There has been an increase in non-recent reporting since the 2012 review (see Table 5). In the 2016 sample, same day reporting accounted for only 29% of all allegations made, compared to 40% in 2012. Rapes reported more than one year after the incident increased from 18% in 2012 to 27% in 2016. This rise is likely due to the aftermath of high-profile cases in the media, such as those investigated by Operation Yewtree.

<sup>19</sup> Percentages calculated with missing values excluded (offence location was missing in 52 cases).

**Table 5: Time between offence and report**

Time between offence and report	2012	2016
Same Day	40%	29%
1 – 7 days	20%	16%
1 week – 1 month	10%	12%
1 month – 1 year	13%	17%
More than 1 year	18%	27%

Note: percentages calculated with missing values excluded

### 3.4.4 Third party reporting

Overall, two fifths of allegations coded were reported by a third party (42%, n=209). Third parties were most commonly support services, including Havens, Rape Crisis, and counselling services (29%, n=58), family (26%, n=51), friends or colleagues (15%, n=30) or medical staff (11%, n=21). In cases where the rape was reported by a third party, victim withdrawal rates were significantly lower (52% compared to 62% when the victim/survivor reported the crime).<sup>20</sup> Where the third party was a family member or friend, withdrawal rates were the lowest (48%).

## 3.5 Timeliness and evidential challenges

### Section Summary: Timeliness and evidential challenges

- On average, case progression from reporting to trial outcome took over 18 months. The length of time between submission to the CPS and decision to charge was 138 days.
- There was no relationship between case characteristics and timeliness of case progression.
- A lack of forensic evidence was common amongst cases, along with other evidential challenges. A number of case characteristics predicted the presence of evidence in a case including the length of time from offence to report and victim age.



### 3.5.1 Timeliness of case progression

On average, case progression took over 18 months from the date of reporting to trial outcome (see Figure 4). The average length of time between a rape being reported and the police making the decision to take no further action was 213 days (range 0 to 795 days, n=123). The average time from reporting to CPS submission was 345 days (range 1 to 972 days, n=45), indicating that

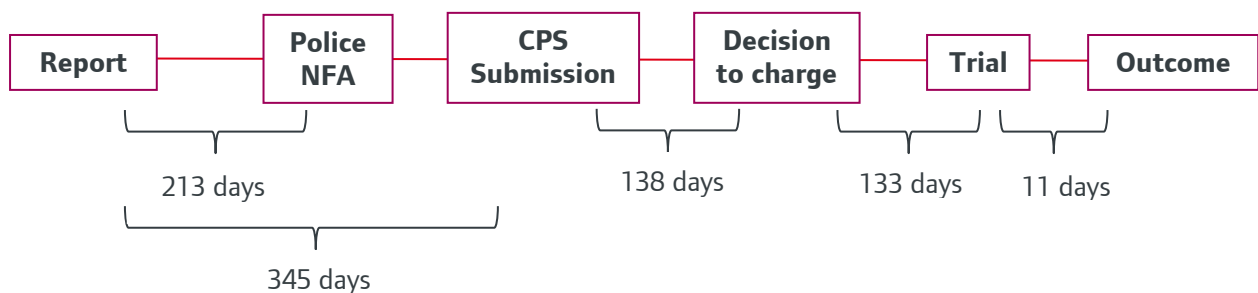
<sup>20</sup> According to the results of a chi-square test:  $\chi^2(1) = 4.44, p < .05$ .

cases submitted to the CPS take over 100 more days, on average, of police investigative time before being ready for submission.

The average length of time between CPS submission and decision to charge was 138 days (range 0 to 604 days, n=40): higher than the average length for all rape cases in London in 2016/17 (which was 95 days) and the whole of England and Wales in the same year (67 days).<sup>xi</sup> There was an average of 133 days (range 23 to 325 days, n=10) between CPS decision to charge and trial, and trials lasted, on average, for 11 days (range 1 to 46 days, n=11)<sup>21</sup>.

Interestingly, there was no relationship between characteristics of a case and how long it took police to decide to take no further action, or to submit the case to the CPS.

**Figure 4: Timeliness of case progression**



### 3.5.3 Evidential challenges

Table 6 shows how common the lack of forensic evidence is, as well as the prevalence of other evidential challenges. In three fifths of cases there were no forensic opportunities<sup>22</sup>. Not surprisingly, having no forensic opportunities was more likely in non-recent cases (85% of cases reported more than one month after the rape had no forensic opportunities), compared to those reported within 24 hours of the incident (36%). Witnesses were available in only 24% of cases and in only 17% of cases was technological evidence available.

An Early Evidence Kit (EEK) was administered in one fifth of cases, the victim/survivor attended a Haven in one fifth of cases and a Video Recorded Interview (VRI)<sup>23</sup> was completed with the victim/survivor in just over one third of cases. These proportions do not necessarily reflect a lack of police effort. An EEK is not always possible or appropriate, for example, if the victim/survivor refuses or is unable to provide a sample, is deemed unable to consent to the EEK (e.g. if under the influence of drink or drugs at the time of report, the presence of learning difficulties or mental health issues, or if the victim/survivor is under the age of 16 at the time of the report), or if administering the EEK would delay medical attention or a forensic medical examination. In many

<sup>21</sup> Differences may be due to different inclusion parameters being used between the rape review sample and overall official figures. The current study likely had stricter criteria, eliminating any duplicate cases from the sample and only including cases with an initial classification of rape, a current classification of rape or another type of sexual offence.

<sup>22</sup> This variable was coded based on the investigating officer explicitly stating within the CRIS report that there were 'no forensic opportunities' present.

<sup>23</sup> Video Recorded Interviews are an evidential record to be presented in court as an Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) form of interview.



cases where Havens attendance was deemed appropriate, the victim/survivor refused or did not attend (n=54). Similarly, the research team noted many cases where appointments for a VRI were repeatedly scheduled but the victim/survivor chose not to participate.

**Table 6: Evidential challenges in case progression**

Evidence	All cases n=501
<b>Physical evidence</b>	
Havens attendance	19% (n=97)
Early Evidence Kit administered	21% (n=103)
No forensic opportunities	61% (n=305)
<b>Victim based</b>	
Video Recorded Interview completed	34% (n=172)
<b>Technological evidence</b>	
Victim or suspect technology seized	17% (n=85)
<b>Other evidence</b>	
Witnesses	24% (n=118)
Social networking sites	13% (n=64)
Other evidence casts doubt	15% (n=77)

This next section explored whether characteristics about the offence, as well as those involved, were able to predict the presence or absence of evidence in a case. A total ‘presence of evidence scale’ was created by combining the evidential variables in Table 6. Total scores on this scale ranged from -2 to 5.<sup>24</sup>

Table 7 shows the variables that were significant predictors of the presence of evidence in a case.<sup>25</sup> Younger victims/survivors were significantly more likely to have evidence present in their case compared to victims/survivors over 30 years old. In cases where the suspect had a prior police record or where English was not their first language, evidence was significantly more likely to be present. In cases where social networking sites were involved, if the victim/survivor had been drinking prior to the offence, and if the victim/survivor resisted either physically or verbally during the offence, evidence was significantly more likely to be present. Finally, the further the date of reporting was from the incident, the less likely there was to be evidence present in the case.

<sup>24</sup> The ‘positive’ evidence (e.g. witnesses) was summed together and the ‘negative’ evidence (e.g. no forensic opportunities) was subtracted from this total to give a final score.

<sup>25</sup> Simple linear regressions were conducted between each case characteristic and the presence of evidence, followed by multivariate linear regression. Only variables that were significant in the multivariate model are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Case characteristics predicting presence of evidence**

Characteristic	B	p
Victim under 18*	0.63	.001
Victim 18 to 29*	0.60	.001
Suspect has prior police record	0.76	<.001
Suspect English not first language	0.76	<.001
Social networking sites	0.53	.007
Victim had been drinking	0.55	.005
Victim resisted	0.66	<.001
Reported 1 week – 1 month after**	-0.96	<.001
Reported 1 month – 1 year after**	-1.27	<.001
Reported >1 year after**	-1.21	<.001

\* Compared to victims over 30 \*\* Compared to same-day reports

### 3.6 Predicting attrition

#### Section Summary: Predicting attrition

- The strongest predictors of victim withdrawal were procedural characteristics. For example, if the victim/survivor participated in a Video Recorded Interview withdrawal was 6x less likely and if an Early Evidence Kit was administered withdrawal was 2x less likely.
- Victim, suspect and offence characteristics were less important in predicting withdrawal. However, being male (3x less likely) and reporting the rape via DASH (3x more likely) were significant predictors of withdrawal.
- Like victim withdrawal, procedural characteristics – particularly those related to evidence – were the most important predictors of police NFA. If other evidence cast doubt on the case police NFA was 7x more likely and if there were no forensic opportunities police NFA was 5x more likely.
- Cases where the victims/survivors were under 18 years old were significantly less likely to end in police NFA.
- Victim/survivor mental health was a significant predictor of police NFA on its own; however, when controlling for victim/survivor inconsistent account, it lost significance, suggesting the relationship between victim/survivor mental health and police NFA was due to inconsistency in testimony.



This final section looks at whether we can predict attrition using the characteristics that were coded as part of the review. The focus here being on the two main forms of attrition in this sample: victim withdrawal and police decision to take no further action (NFA). It was not possible to conduct predictive analysis on the likelihood of CPS NFA because of the low numbers of cases at this stage (n=60). Predictive analysis in crime classification was not included because the introduction of stringent guidelines and criteria around 'no criming' and the introduction of new classifications (e.g. 'Rape Not Confirmed) removes police discretion from this outcome.

Table 8 shows the case characteristics that were significant predictors of victim withdrawal and police NFA. Case characteristics were split into four categories: victim/survivor, suspect, offence, and procedural. The four categories were first examined in separate models before being combined into an overall model.<sup>26</sup> This process allowed the relative contribution of each category to be determined. Each case characteristic presented in the table below was a significant predictor in the separate models. The characteristics in bold represent the variables that remained significant in the overall model (i.e. these variables were predictive of outcomes after controlling for the characteristics in the other categories).

### 3.6.1 What factors predict victim withdrawal?

The only victim/survivor characteristic that predicted victim withdrawal was gender: **male** victims/survivors were significantly less likely (x3) to withdraw compared to female victims/survivors. Although it may seem surprising that no other victim/survivor characteristic predicted withdrawal, the qualitative findings showed that victims/survivors chose to withdraw for many different reasons. One reason was not having intended to report rape in the first place. Indeed, as Table 8 shows, victims/survivors who reported their rape in response to the **DASH** questions asked when police attended a domestic abuse call were significantly more likely (x3) to withdraw than victims/survivors who reported by other means.

In terms of suspect characteristics, in cases where the suspect had a **prior police record** (x2) or was a **family member** (x4) the victim/survivor was significantly less likely to withdraw. The presence of **witnesses** made victim withdrawal significantly less likely (x2), along with cases where the victim/survivor **sustained an injury** (x2).

Several procedural characteristics were significant predictors of victim withdrawal. If an **Early Evidence Kit** was administered (x2) and if the victim/survivor participated in a **video recorded interview** (x6), withdrawal was significantly less likely. It often took many attempts for the VRI to be completed and victims/survivors commonly withdrew before it took place, suggesting a potential barrier to case progression. Interestingly, if the **suspect denied intercourse** or sexual contact had occurred, victim withdrawal was significantly less likely (x6).

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<sup>26</sup> Univariate logistic regressions were first conducted on each case characteristic and the two outcomes. Significant univariate predictors were retained for inclusion in a multi-variate model for each of the four categories of case characteristics. The characteristics that remained significant in each multi-variate model were then retained for inclusion in the final overall model. All predictive analyses exclude cases that were found to be false or mistaken allegations. When predicting victim withdrawal, cases that were not classified as a crime were excluded. When predicting police no further action, cases that were withdrawn by the victim were also excluded.

**Table 8: Case characteristics predicting victim withdrawal and police NFA**

	Victim Withdrawal		Police NFA	
<b>Victim/Survivor Characteristics</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>x3 less</b>	Mental health issues	x2 more
			<b>Under 18 years</b>	<b>x3 less</b>
<i>Model fit</i>	<i>0.03</i>		<i>0.10</i>	
<b>Suspect Characteristics</b>	Prior police record	x2 less	18 to 29 years	x3 less
	Family member	x4 less	Family member	x3 less
<i>Model fit</i>	<i>0.07</i>		<i>0.12</i>	
<b>Offence Characteristics</b>	<b>DASH</b>	<b>x3 more</b>	Witnesses	x2 less
	Injury sustained	x2 less	Offence location private	x2 less
	Witnesses	x2 less		
<i>Model fit</i>	<i>0.10</i>		<i>0.08</i>	
<b>Procedural Characteristics</b>	<b>Multiple OICs involved</b>	<b>x8 more</b>	<b>Evidence casts doubt</b>	<b>x7 more</b>
	<b>Early Evidence Kit</b>	<b>x2 less</b>	<b>Inconsistent victim account</b>	<b>x6 more</b>
	<b>Video recorded interview</b>	<b>x6 less</b>	<b>Police perception of chance of conviction</b>	<b>x5 more</b>
	<b>Suspect denies rape</b>	<b>x6 less</b>	<b>No forensic opportunities</b>	<b>x5 more</b>
	<b>Evidence casts doubt</b>	<b>x8 less</b>	Suspect denies rape	x3 less
			<b>Suspect involved in another rape</b>	<b>x8 less</b>
			<b>Early advice from CPS</b>	<b>x10 less</b>
			<b>Suspect arrested</b>	<b>x15 less</b>
<i>Model fit</i>	<i>0.43</i>		<i>0.64</i>	
<b>Full Model Fit</b>	<b>0.47</b>		<b>0.70</b>	

Note: model fit was assessed using Nagelkerke R square which determines how much variation in the outcome is explained by the model. For example, a figure of 0.47 means the model explains 47% of the variance in outcome. Odds ratio were used to determine how much more or less likely an outcome was, given the constant effect of a predictor variable.

Having **multiple officers in charge** (OIC) of the case predicted a higher likelihood (x8) of victim withdrawal. Although these findings could suggest having one OIC in charge of a case may protect against victim withdrawal (perhaps by leading the victim/survivor to feel more supported in the process), having one OIC was very rare in this sample (n=30) and victims/survivors typically liaised with the Sexual Offences Investigative Trained (SOIT) officer rather than the OIC throughout the investigation.

One additional finding is shown in the table: if **evidence cast doubt** on the case, the victim/survivor was significantly less likely to withdraw (x8). The direction of this finding is counter-intuitive given the importance of corroborating evidence already identified, but it could

simply be due to the fact this variable led another outcome to become more likely, namely police no further action.

The analysis so far has examined each category of case characteristic separately. The last model looked at the four categories simultaneously to determine the relative contribution of each category to predicting victim withdrawal. As can be seen by the characteristics in bold in the table, the strongest predictors of victim withdrawal were the procedural characteristics: all five remained significant in the overall model. Suspect and offence characteristics (aside from reporting via DASH) were no longer significant predictors after taking the procedural characteristics into account, suggesting these variables were less important in predicting victim withdrawal.

### 3.6.2 What factors predict police no further action?

When predicting police decisions to take no further action on a case, two victim/survivor characteristics were of note. First, if the victim/survivor had **mental health issues** police were significantly more likely to NFA the case (x2). However, the coding of this variable precluded us from understanding what types of mental health issues victims/survivors presented with, or whether the issues emerged following the rape or were pre-existing. The second victim/survivor characteristic that predicted police NFA was age: victims/survivors who were aged **under 18 years** at the time of the offence were significantly less likely to have their case end in police NFA (x3).

Related to victim/survivor age, cases where the suspect was a **family member** were significantly less likely to be NFA'd by police (x3).<sup>27</sup> Cases where the suspect was **aged 18 to 29** (compared to over 30) were significantly less likely to be result in police NFA (x3). Offences that occurred in the **private dwelling** of either the victim/survivor or suspect were significantly less likely to end in police NFA compared to offences that occurred in a public place (x2).

Evidential factors were consistent predictors of police decisions to NFA. The first stage of the Full Code test specifies that police must be satisfied there is enough evidence in the case to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. If there were **witnesses** available (x2) and if the **suspect was involved in another rape case** (x8), police were significantly less likely to NFA the case. On the other hand, if **evidence cast doubt** (x7), if the victim/survivor gave an **inconsistent account** (x6) and if there were **no forensic opportunities** available (x5) police were significantly more likely to NFA the case.

Consistent with the presence of evidence weighing heavily on police decision making, cases where the police perceived the **chance of conviction** by the courts to be low were significantly more likely to end in police NFA (x5). If police had sought **early advice from the CPS**, they were significantly less likely to NFA the case (x10), again most likely because police only contact the CPS about cases they think have a chance of being successfully prosecuted. Finally, if the **suspect had been arrested**, the case was significantly less likely to end in police NFA (x15).

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<sup>27</sup> More victims under 18 were offended against by a family member (26%) compared to older victims (2%). This difference was statistically significant according to a chi-square test:  $\chi^2(1) = 67.48, p < .001$ .

When all four categories of case characteristics were included in the same model, victim/survivor mental health was no longer a significant predictor of police NFA. Victim/survivor mental health was significantly related to the victim/survivor giving an inconsistent account.<sup>28</sup> This variable remained significant in the overall model, suggesting that the relationship between victim/survivor mental health and police NFA was due to inconsistency in victim/survivor accounts.

Like victim withdrawal, almost all procedural characteristics remained significant in the overall model, suggesting these variables were most important to predicting police NFA compared to characteristics about the suspect or offence. However, controlling for procedural characteristics, victim/survivor age remained significant in the overall model. This finding suggests that regardless of what procedural characteristics were present (many of which related to the presence or absence of evidence), victims/survivors under 18 years were significantly less likely to have their case end in NFA.

Finally, comparing model fit across outcomes showed the case characteristics coded as part of this review were far better at predicting police decision making than victim decisions to withdraw.

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<sup>28</sup> 35% of victims with mental health issues gave an inconsistent account compared to 16% of victims without mental health issues. This difference was statistically significant according to a chi-square test:  $\chi^2(1) = 19.55, p < .001$ .

## 4. Discussion

The London Rape Review used an innovative and in-depth approach to analysing data on reported rape in London. Through the coding of over 500 crime reports across 146 variables, the resulting data set provides the most up to date and comprehensive picture of reported rape in London, allowing for the tracking of cases within the criminal justice service, and analysis of factors influencing case outcomes. The research serves to inform the renewed focus on victims and high harm crimes, vulnerability and safeguarding in the Mayor of London's Police & Crime Plan 2017-2021.

### 4.1 Summary of key findings

Consistent with previous reviews, and indeed numerous other studies of recorded rape, the London Rape Review found steep attrition of cases following initial reporting: only 14% of all cases were submitted to the CPS for a charging decision, 9% were charged by the CPS, 6% proceeded to trial, and just 3% were convicted. These figures represent a continuation of trends in attrition patterns observed in previous reviews, with the 2016 sample recording the lowest proportion of cases charged and convicted. Victim withdrawal was the most common form of attrition in the sample. Over half of all rape allegations (58%) were withdrawn by the victim/survivor. Those who withdrew usually did so soon after reporting, and all but eight during the police investigation stage. Alongside withdrawal, the police decided to take no further action in a further 29% of cases.

Despite the increase in recording over recent years, including a rise in non-recent offences, the profiles for those who report rape in London – and those suspected of perpetrating rape – have remained broadly consistent across time. Victims tend to be female and young (with a substantial proportion below the age of 18 at the time of the offence), whilst suspects are overwhelmingly male and with an age profile that tends to be slightly older than victims. For both victims and suspects, those with a black ethnic background are over-represented compared to their overall proportions in the London population, although the proportion of black victim/survivors has decreased slightly over time. Interestingly, compared to previous years, the 2016 dataset saw an increase in Asian victims and a slight increase in male victims.

The data also showed a high prevalence of cumulative needs amongst victims/survivors, with 95% presenting with one or more needs and over half presenting with at least two needs. The most common needs were mental health, being in an intimate relationship with the perpetrator, and being a child or teenager at the time of the offence. Other needs captured as part of this review were less prevalent amongst the sample; for example, being homeless, an asylum seeker or a sex worker. This low prevalence may point to the particularly high rates of underreporting (or indeed non-reporting) by such vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, the high proportion of cumulative needs adds to the complexity of cases, both in terms of carrying out the police investigation and attending to victims/survivors' support needs.

Two in five allegations were by a victim/survivor noted to have a mental health issue: a considerable increase from previous rape reviews. Victims/survivors with mental health issues

were significantly more likely to have been previously victimised and to have a prior police record. These findings point to the significant demand placed on first responders and investigating officers around mental health and the implications this has on the training and skills required to progress the investigation in a trauma-informed way. Although sample sizes precluded us from drawing any definitive conclusions, some additional analyses (not reported in the results) showed that where victims/survivors with mental health issues received support (from an RCC, ISVA or Haven), they were more likely to have their cases proceed than where they did not receive support. There is certainly merit in further research aimed at evidencing the impact of support; however, there are related considerations around the extent to which current provisions in London are equipped to consistently and expediently make support available to victims/survivors following reporting.<sup>xii</sup>

One of the most important aspects of this review was being able to identify which case characteristics influence different attrition outcomes. Procedural characteristics emerged as the most important predictors of both victim withdrawal and police NFA. Victims/survivors who participated in a Video Recorded Interview (VRI) and who were administered an Early Evidence Kit (EEK) had significantly lower rates of withdrawal. Within the case files, participation in a VRI emerged as a significant barrier to case progression, with victims/survivors frequently expressing concern or apprehension about the process. This finding raises questions around how each victim can be supported to give the best evidence possible, despite existing complexities and challenges.

There was a substantial overlap between rape and domestic abuse. Reporting via the DASH was a significant predictor of victim withdrawal, with many noting they never intended to report the rape in the first place. At the same time, perpetrators in offences with a domestic abuse link showed a higher prevalence of previous offending. These findings suggest a separate rape investigation may not always be reflective of victims/survivors wishes; however, it may be the perpetrators in these cases that represent the greatest risk of continued harm. Victim/survivor input and autonomy may be essential in these cases to decide whether a separate investigation is the most appropriate course of action, or a focus primarily on safeguarding and harm reduction. Relatedly, victims/survivors frequently mentioned their reason for reporting was related to safety and the discontinuation of risk (i.e. wanting to ensure this does not happen to someone else), rather than seeking a prosecution. Again, this finding suggests that for some rape cases, a criminal justice resolution is not the desired outcome for the victim/survivor. Although some victims/survivors may require additional support to help them continue the criminal justice journey, both Stern (2010) and Angiolini (2015) suggest the exploration of '*alternative outcomes*' or '*other measures of success*'.<sup>xiii</sup>

Where the victim does not withdraw, procedural characteristics – particularly those related to the presence of evidence – emerged as key predictors of police decisions to take no further action. Police NFA was significantly more likely if there were no forensic opportunities available in a case and if other evidence cast doubt on the case. These findings are unsurprising given the first stage of the Full Code test specifies that police must be satisfied there is enough evidence in the case to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. Indeed, those cases where police sought early advice from the CPS were significantly less likely to end in NFA, suggesting police know what makes a 'good case'.



Angiolini (2015) acknowledged in her review *'the evidential opportunities presented by electronic and digital communications and social media'*. More recent developments and cases involving disclosures have raised considerable concerns about how intrusive this may be for the victim/survivor and whether evidence gained in this way is always used in a proportionate and appropriate way.<sup>xiv</sup> In the cases reviewed, social media was involved in 13% of cases and victim or suspect technology was seized in 17%. These variables were not predictive in the multi-variate models; however, both were significantly related to police NFA on their own. As these findings are a reflection of a sample from 2016, analysis on more recent data is needed in order to contribute robust evidence to the current debate around the use of victim disclosure and technology evidence, and the impact of this on victims and on case outcomes.

Compared to previous reviews, victim, suspect and offence characteristics were less influential in predicting attrition. The 2012 review found evidence for some 'rape myths' impacting on police decision making; for example, victims who physically resisted the attack were significantly less likely to have their case end in police NFA.<sup>xv</sup> However, the 2016 review found these kinds of 'real rape' stereotypes did not have a significant bearing on outcomes, suggesting there may be some shifts in how investigating officers are influenced in their decision-making. Yet, consistent with the 2012 review, we found some evidence that being a 'credible victim' was important for case progression. Cases where there were inconsistencies in victims/survivors' accounts were significantly more likely to be given an NFA decision. However, research shows that victim accounts of traumatic events are likely to be inconsistent.<sup>xvi</sup> Therefore, there is a risk that by filtering out these cases, some victims/survivors could be denied access to justice.

Finally, comparing model fit across outcomes showed the case characteristics coded in this review were far better at predicting police decision making than victim decisions to withdraw. The overall model predicting police NFA explained 70% of the variance in outcomes, compared to victim withdrawal which explained 47%. Police case files can only tell the story from the perspective of the police officers involved in the case, so it is likely we are missing out on important information about victims/survivors' experiences of the investigative process which may prove to be stronger predictors of their decision to withdraw.

## **4.2 Future Research**

Although the findings contained in this report provide a comprehensive overview of reported rape in London, there are many avenues for future research using this, and other, data sources. Initial follow-up to the current London Rape Review is underway, which will include more in-depth qualitative analysis around victim withdrawal reasons to better understand the key themes and factors driving attrition at this point. Key partners such as the CPS are being engaged to gather more detail around outcomes, police-CPS contact and correspondence, and decision-making, to build a more complete picture. Finally, although this review represents the most up-to-date picture of reported rape in London, there have been additional developments over the past three years which makes repeating this review with a more recent sample of cases a vital next step.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The MPS is receiving more allegations of rape than ever before and conviction rates are at their lowest since these in-depth rape reviews started in 2005. Within this context, victims/survivors are presenting with more and more complex needs, and more stringent guidance requires police to record and thoroughly investigate all complaints of rape. Developing a greater insight into the journey of rape cases through the criminal justice system, as well as identifying key factors affecting case outcomes and attrition, is essential for shaping policy and practice. It is hoped the findings from this review will facilitate discourse about how the criminal justice service and its partners can work together to improve experiences and outcomes for the victims/survivors who choose to report their experiences of rape to the police.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Case characteristics included in the coding framework

Variable	N	% of sample
<b><i>Outcome</i></b>		
Classified as a crime	419	84%
Victim withdrawal (excl. no crime)	244	58%
Police 'no further action' (excl. no crime and withdrawals)	123	29%
Submitted to CPS (excl. no crime and withdrawals)	60	14%
<b><i>Victim/survivor characteristics</i></b>		
Age at time of offence		
Under 18 years	153	31%
18-29 years	179	36%
30-49 years	134	27%
Over 50 years	30	6%
Age at time of reporting		
Under 18 years	113	23%
18-29 years	181	36%
30-49 years	156	31%
Over 50 years	47	9%
Gender		
Female	444	89%
Male	55	11%
Ethnicity		
White	266	57%
Black	101	22%
Asian	78	17%
Other	20	4%
English not first language	80	16%
Requires interpreter	44	9%
Asylum seeker	9	2%
Recognised as vulnerable or intimidated	295	59%
Deaf or has physical disability	49	10%
Has mental health issue	205	41%
Has learning difficulty	31	6%
Is a sex worker	14	3%
Is a missing person or homeless	37	7%
Has links to gangs	3	1%
No recourse to public funds	4	1%
Previously made false allegation sexual assault	32	6%
Previously made false allegation other	19	4%
Has PNC ID	78	16%
Known as a suspect	85	17%
Previous victimisation last 12 months	141	28%
Previous victimisation of sexual assault/DA	151	30%
History of consensual sex with perpetrator	131	26%
<b><i>Suspect characteristics</i></b>		
Age at time of offence		
Under 18 years	45	12%
18-29 years	126	35%
30-49 years	152	42%
Over 50 years	42	12%
Ethnicity		
White	153	43%
Black	127	35%

Asian	68	19%
Other	12	3%
Gender		
Female	7	2%
Male	461	99%
Deceased	7	1%
English not first language	62	12%
Requires interpreter	6	1%
Asylum seeker	1	0%
Disability	9	2%
Learning difficulty	5	1%
Has mental health issue	33	7%
Has a PNC ID	143	29%
Links to gangs	5	1%
Previous history of domestic abuse	57	11%
Previous history of sexual assault/rape	34	7%
Previous history of other offending	106	21%
Relationship to victim/survivor		
Stranger	78	16%
Intimate Partner	154	31%
Friend or Acquaintance	150	30%
Familial	52	10%
Professional or Carer	9	2%
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<b><i>Offence characteristics</i></b>		
Location		
Victim's dwelling	106	24%
Suspect's dwelling	108	24%
Shared dwelling of victim and suspect	69	15%
Not domestic	166	37%
Drug facilitated	22	4%
Domestic violence related (DV Flag)	142	28%
DV primary issue (DASH)	86	17%
Linked to other offence	160	32%
Witnesses	118	24%
Social networking sites	64	13%
Offence recorded or photographed	20	4%
Injury sustained	113	23%
Weapon used	11	2%
Victim/survivor had been drinking	126	25%
Victim/survivor had taken drugs	33	7%
Victim/survivor believes they were drugged	36	7%
Victim/survivor verbally resisted	184	37%
Victim/survivor physically resisted	71	14%
Perpetrator had been drinking	94	19%
Perpetrator had taken drugs	30	6%
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<b><i>Procedural characteristics</i></b>		
Time taken to report		
Same day	138	29%
1 – 7 days	77	16%
1 week – 1 month	58	12%
1 month – 1 year	80	17%
More than 1 year	131	27%
Reported by		
Victim/survivor	292	58%
Third party	209	42%
Number of SOITs involved in case		
One	269	55%

Multiple	84	17%
None	132	27%
Number of OICs		
One	36	7%
Multiple	465	93%
Victim/survivor attended Havens	97	19%
Video recorded interview	172	34%
Police reference delays due to workload	112	22%
Victim/survivor is difficult to contact	167	33%
Early investigative advice sought from CPS	25	5%
Victim/survivor unsure if offence took place	53	11%
Victim/survivor unsure where offence took place	59	12%
Victim/survivor lack of understanding of consent	40	8%
Victim/survivor gives inconsistent account	127	25%
Victim/survivor identifies perpetrator	369	74%
Victim/survivor gives detailed description of perpetrator	256	51%
Early Evidence Kit administered	103	21%
No forensic opportunities	305	61%
Body Worn Video footage	12	2%
Request for third party material made	179	36%
Possible technological evidence referred to	133	27%
Victim/survivor technology seized by police	54	11%
Suspect technology seized by police	66	13%
Technological evidence		
Supports victim's case	12	7%
Supports suspect's case	21	12%
Supports neither case	84	47%
Not stated	63	35%
Perpetrator claims consent	106	21%
Perpetrator denies intercourse or sexual contact	65	13%
Other evidence casts doubt	77	15%
Perpetrator involved in another rape case	23	5%
Police perceptions chance of conviction	61	12%
Police perceptions victim credibility/reliability	100	20%
OIC expresses doubt about case	78	16%
Victim/survivor receives ISVA support	67	13%
Victim/survivor receives support through RCC	44	9%

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Note: Percentages calculated with missing valued excluded

## **Appendix B: N100 classification codes<sup>xvii</sup>**

### **N100 classification codes**

Following a change in Home Office Counting Rules in April 2015, there is now a requirement to create a CRIS report as soon as an incident of rape is logged.

#### **Every CAD opened or closed as a rape will require a CRIS report.**

Unless already recorded as a crime, every report of a rape, suspected or possible rape must be taken at face value and recorded, irrespective of the source of the report. This includes reports made by third parties, through partnership working or from other agencies. The reported incident of rape will be in addition to any other record, e.g. CAD

**N100 codes are designed to be used in the first stages of an allegation. Once the crime has been investigated by Sapphire a 'no crime' application must be made in the usual way (see How do I change reports to 'no crime' in the Supervision and Review Toolkit).**

#### **Categories**

**100/1** – Victim or in some cases a \*Third party (see below) has not confirmed the crime and/or cannot be traced. Additionally, this code can be used where a crime is not confirmed but further investigation is required (old CRI)

**100/2** – Credible evidence to the contrary exists

**100/3** – Transferred or committed in another force area

#### **N100/1 – Cannot be confirmed**

Following a satisfactory initial investigation where every effort has been made to identify the victim or the third party without success, a 100/1 report is recorded.

The minimum requirement to finalise these entries would be:

That a CID officer and the local Duty Officer have been informed & they are satisfied that no crime has been committed. The CID officer and their own DI are to be named on the dets of the report.

The local Duty officer should also make a formal entry on the dets of the report to confirm that he or she is satisfied with the classification.

\*IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT IF THE THIRD PARTY IS A PARENT, A PROFESSIONAL OR A CARER N100/1 SHOULD NOT BE USED AND THE REPORT MUST BE RECORDED AS A CRIME IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER CONFIRMATION IS RECEIVED – see 'Third Party Information' below.

## **N100/2 – Evidence to the contrary**

First responders must conduct a thorough initial investigation, supporting victims and, in line with the Golden Hour principle, secure and preserve evidence whilst arresting offenders at the earliest opportunity.

Following the initial investigation, if credible evidence has been obtained indicating that the offence has not taken place, then the N100/2 classification should be used.

Perceived or even diagnosed Mental Ill Health or a propensity to make false claims are not credible evidence that a rape has not occurred. Officers are reminded of the impact of trauma on victims and the effect this may have on the consistency of their account. A victim might not always be willing to repeat an allegation or engage with the police from the outset of an investigation.

The credible evidence must be thoroughly documented on the CRIS, e.g. if CCTV is present and allegedly contradicts the allegation, then it must be viewed by the officer.

The Toolkit and associated Policy must be adhered to when a CRIS report is completed for rape; The matter must be referred to a CID officer & the Duty Officer must be informed of the circumstances. Each of their details must be listed in the body of the DETS. A formal entry must be made by the Duty Officer once the evidence gathered by the initial investigator has been reviewed.

## **N100/3 – Transferred to another force**

This classification is reserved for records of rape allegations where the offence has occurred outside the Met. The CRIS reports will be processed by the Transfer Crime Team (TP CRIB) as before, but will be 'classified' as N100/3 as opposed to confirmed crimes.

## **Third Party Information**

In April 2015, the Home Office made amendments to the Crime recording requirements for reports made by third parties. It is beyond the scope of this document to detail these fully here. The complete detail can be obtained from the relevant editions of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) by reading [Counting rules general rules](#). (Navigate, firstly, to NCRS Paragraph 3.6(ii) and, secondly, to Section A Whether and When to Record (3 of 7) and scroll down to the box 'Reports of Rape via 'Third Parties'....')

The brief extract below indicates that many crimes reported by parents, carers and professional third parties must be recorded as crime irrespective of whether the victim provides confirmation:

### **'ii. Parents, Carers and Professional 'Third' Party Reports**

Crimes are often reported by individuals acting on behalf of victims. These may be referred to as 'Third Party' reports and commonly such reports include the following:

a) Persons acting in a professional capacity e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers and teachers reporting crimes, (often of a safeguarding nature), on behalf of victims of any age.

b) Parents or Carers acting as a guardian or responsible adult, ('in loco parentis'), reporting crime in the best interests of and/or to ensure that a child or young person has appropriate access to police services.

When such persons report crimes, they should always be regarded as acting on behalf of a victim. Where there is no doubt as to their status and/or position or the veracity of their report, those reports must be recorded as crimes. Such recording must occur regardless of whether the victim has given their permission for the reporting individual to speak to the police and irrespective of whether the victim subsequently confirms that a crime has been committed.

Other 'Third Party' reports from persons acting on behalf of victims should be treated on their individual merit and in line with guidance at paragraph 2.2 and 3.6 i within the Standard.'



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