


PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version: Sept 24

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	Progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations
Published Date	22 nd August 2024
Inspectorate	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>In May 2023, the then Home Secretary commissioned us to inspect progress so far. This was to make sure learning from the first 19 forces can improve future rollout of Soteria and the NOM.</p> <p>In this inspection, we looked at nine early adopter forces who have been putting Soteria and the NOM in place since 2021. We set out to understand the benefits and challenges they have already found from Soteria.</p> <p>We examined seven questions relating to Soteria. These are:</p> <p>To what extent have forces adopted the pillars of Soteria and to what extent do they prioritise suspect-focused investigations?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How effectively do forces identify and disrupt repeat suspects? 2. How effectively do forces carry out victim-centred investigations and achieve procedural justice? 3. How effectively do forces provide for their officers' well-being in the context of RASSO investigations? 4. How effectively do forces prioritise officer and staff learning and development on the national standards for RASSO investigations? 5. To what extent do forces have good strategic analysis to improve RASSO investigations and prevent offences? 6. How effectively do forces' digital forensic services provide quality and timely support for RASSO investigations? <p>Using these questions, we have mapped the police approach to Soteria in nine early adopter forces. We evaluated the progress they have made and the benefits and challenges they have found so far.</p>
Grade	
Recommendations	<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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 1984.</p> <p>Recommendation 11 By 31 March 2025, all chief constables should make sure that, as part of adopting the National Operating Model, their forces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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Areas for improvement

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s initial response

From a PFCC’s office perspective, the Victim Lead and Sexual Assault and Abuse Lead are involved with the delivery of Pillar 3 (Using Procedural Justice to Underpin Victim Engagement), alongside the Force’s VJU Manager who is pillar lead. As well as pillar leads, the Force have an assigned project manager. Progress is fed back via regular governance meetings, and work is developed through separate task groups, and individual pillar check-ins. Pillars have their own work breakdown structures detailing the problem statement, long term aim, recommendations, and stakeholders involved. Pillar 3 progress includes:

- The Force have nominated a rep to regularly attend the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Steering Group.
- ISVA Memorandum of Agreement has been developed and signed off.

Work ongoing:

- Review of the victim contact process to explore best practise, including case conferencing between partners and OIC, ensuring the CPS VTP/Victims Code Journey aligns.
- Explore opportunities around introducing a victim engagement officer.

Chief Constable's response

Staffordshire Police is always committed to deliver HMICFRS' recommendations further to a thematic report. As a force, we will be looking at our systems, the way we work and what is not working and how the model can help us address this. This will not be a comfortable experience, but is a vital one. The only way we can improve is by addressing what we need to change.

All the HMICFRS recommendations have been transferred to an improvement plan with various actions under each recommendation. Each owner will update their progress accordingly and report to the monthly Op Soteria Board chaired by the force's Public Protection Unit Command's Chief Superintendent.

The force has a dedicated project manager from the force Change Management Team, who ensures all work emerging from the national Op Soteria Joint Unit (including the NPCC's self-assessment which helped the force's developing its transformation plan when setting up its RASSO improvement project) are integrated into the force's RASSO work as well as the HMICFRS recommendations improvement plan. All HMICFRS recommendations being progressed and are on track to be delivered by 2025.

Rec 3: 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.

Under the work of Pillar 4, the force is auditing the SSAIDP2 to ensure that this topic is covered within and developing a training schedule for College of Police approved training for RASSO staff. This training is to be broadened to PPU Adult teams including adult safeguarding, MOSOVO, Modern day Slavery & PSD). The force will utilise the JOIM meeting to understand how we can be assured that supervisors and decision makers are alive to this issue, supported by the guidance within the NOM product "The Full Code Threshold Test".

Rec 5: 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 force Op Soteria Project Team continues to be sighted on all communications from the Joint Unit to ensure that guidance due to be released will be received in a timely manner. The Pillar 1 & 2 lead will share pertinent communications across the relevant internal stakeholders to adopt the definition and ensure consistency.

Rec 7: 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.

This is part of existing work underway through the Project under Pillar 1, 2 & 5 and docked into a number of transformational products. One of these products is the development of a Tactical RASSO meeting, under Pillar 5, where identification of opportunities for disruption and prevention through analysis and collaborative working across a number of departments are at its focus. The Pillar 1 & 2 lead is developing a set of scheduled training to be included within the dedicated RASSO CPD days (including the Op Soteria CPD learning package and any additional focus on the disruption toolkit including NOM products around criminal and civil orders).

Rec 9: *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 1984.*

This is being monitored under Pillar 1 & 2 through a working group which is developing a process utilising best practice.

Rec 11: *all chief constables should make sure that, as part of adopting the National Operating Model (NOM), 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.*

A strategic problem profile has been completed by the force Knowledge Hub (within the Intel function) utilising the supporting NOM product “How to use data more effectively in RASSO investigations strategic problem profile template”. The force performance team has been developing a performance framework baselining this against the “measuring success key performance indicators for forces” document held within the flight deck of the NOM. Any further KPIs introduced by the Soteria Joint Unit will be incorporated as part of this framework.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s overall comments

I look forward to monitoring progress against all HMICFRS recommendations within Staffordshire Police’s improvement plan and being an impactful partner in Pillar 3 - Using Procedural Justice to Underpin Victim Engagement.

The development of the performance framework is key to driving continuous improvement and I am confident that Staffordshire police will use these recommendations to drive efficiency and effectiveness in RASSO investigations.