

Press release: Government increases funding for rape and sexual abuse victims

- rape support centres to benefit from greater financial security and stability
- five Police and Crime Commissioners to be given full control of devolved funding
- funding for victim support services has doubled since 2012/13 to £96 million

Specialist rape and sexual abuse support services will receive a £800,000 (10%) boost to help more victims across England and Wales under government plans announced today (Wednesday 7 November 2018).

Over 150,000 sexual offences were recorded by police last year with 1 in 5 women having experienced some type of sexual assault in their lifetime and a 200 per cent increase in the number of men and boys accessing support*.

The additional funding – now totalling £24 million over the next 3 years – will go towards vital services providing advice, support and counselling to help victims cope with and, as far as possible, recover from these devastating crimes. It will also increase the resilience of the wider sector supporting vulnerable individuals to provide timely, wrap-around support.

In addition, dedicated support organisations will now benefit from longer-term funding with government extending the funding period from 1 to 3 years. Ministers have acted to provide support organisations with greater stability and security to ensure they can focus on delivering their essential services.

Justice Minister Edward Argar said:

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes, so I am encouraged that more victims are coming forward to get the support they need.

By providing additional and longer-term funding we are ensuring that victims can access these vital practical and emotional services, so that fewer are left to suffer in silence.

Today's announcement builds on the government's commitment to further devolve justice powers. Five Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) (Greater London, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hampshire and Nottinghamshire) are to be given full commissioning responsibilities for sexual violence and abuse services as government recognises the importance of identifying local need when providing support.

In 2018/19 the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) allocated around £7.2 million towards independent, specialist support to female and male victims of sexual violence, including victims of child sexual abuse. This will now increase to £8 million annually over the next three years and is part of £96 million funding towards victim support services which has doubled since 2012/13.

Faye Maxted OBE, Chief executive of the Survivors Trust, said:

The announcement of this funding is very welcome and the fact that it will be awarded for a three-year period will allow specialist agencies to plan ahead and feel some security in offering support for victims and survivors. Rape and sexual abuse can have a devastating impact on someone's life, affecting their health and wellbeing for years and impacting on their ability to live a fulfilling and happy life. Security and safety are such vital elements in recovery for victims and survivors and this means that specialist support agencies themselves need to be sure the services they offer are well supported too.

Duncan Craig, CEO of Survivors Manchester & Co-Founder of Male Survivors Partnership, and survivors of childhood sexual abuse:

The government's announcement of the investment it's making in tackling rape and sexual abuse is more than welcome. Increasing the amount of money available for organisations to access and extending the grants to three years gives a clear message that the Minister is taking our needs as survivors seriously. Organisations like mine, those members of networks such as Male Survivors Partnership or Rape Crisis England and Wales are struggling to meet the increasing demand on our services from people who often, are speaking out for the first time. This announcement feels like help is on its way and gives me hope that we will be able to not only continue to provide the support services to men and women, boys and girls who have been sexually violated, but in doing so give people hope that healing is possible.

Katie Russell at Rape Crisis England & Wales said:

Demand for independent, specialist sexual violence and abuse support services is at unprecedented levels and continues to rise each year.

In 2017-18, our member Rape Crisis Centres provided over 650,000 sessions of specialist support, counselling and advocacy to more than 78,000 victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, rape and all forms of sexual violence.

This is the only dedicated, central government funding for sexual

violence and abuse organisations and recognises the significant need for these vital services, and the considerable expertise and experience of our specialist sector.

Three-year core grants also provide some much-needed stability for centres like ours, enabling them to focus more energy on service delivery and further development, and less on survival.

APCC Victims Lead, Dame Vera Baird QC said:

I welcome the 10% increase, and it is particularly positive that funding for rape support will now be for a three-year period. Longer-term funding will provide these vital organisations with the stability they require, and free them from the burden of making fresh bids every year, so they can devote their time and resources on better serving victims.

Notes to editors

- A grant funding competition will allow providers to compete for grant funding for 3 years, rather than the one-year grants previously awarded, providing greater long-term security.
- MOJ funding for victim support services has almost doubled since 2012/13 (by increasing revenue raised from offenders). This year, we plan to spend about £96 million on these services.
- MOJ provides a contribution to 97 rape support services across England and Wales and the level of grant funding varies. In 2018/19 we allocated around £7.2 million to these centres to provide independent, specialist support to female and male victims of sexual violence, including victims of child sexual abuse. This will now increase to £8 million annually.
- In 2018/19 we allocated Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) around £68 million funding to locally commission emotional and practical support services for victims of crime as they are best placed to respond to local need.
- In 2017/18 PCCs reported spending £8.40 million from the MOJ grant in supporting victims of sexual violence and abuse and £4.86m supporting victims of child sexual abuse (recent and non-recent)
- *The [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) estimated that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims and 631,000 male victims.