

Pre-recorded evidence for rape victims rolled out across Wales

- all Crown Courts in Wales now offer pre-recorded cross-examination
- measure aims to reduce trauma for victims and witnesses to help them give better evidence
- nearly two-thirds of all Crown Courts in England and Wales now provide this support

The provision – which is already available in 47 Crown Courts in England – allows victims and witnesses of crimes such as rape and modern slavery to have their cross-examination video-recorded and played later during trial. This is subject to a successful application to the court.

The recording takes place as close to the time of the offence as possible, while memories remain fresh, and helps victims avoid the stress of giving evidence in a live trial, which many find traumatic.

From today, all 6 Crown Courts in Wales will now offer this support, including in Caernarfon, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Mold, Newport and Swansea.

The move follows the successful implementation for vulnerable victims, such as children or those who have limited mental capacity, across the country – with more than 2,500 witnesses having already benefitted from the technology since August 2020.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab, said:

While rape convictions are up two thirds in the last year, we are determined to ensure even more victims get the justice they deserve.

That's why we have rolled out pre-recorded evidence to seven more crown courts – to spare more rape victims the trauma of testifying in the glare of the courtroom.

We are also recruiting more independent sexual violence advisors, piloting specialist rape support in courts, delivering a new Victims' Bill and boosting collaboration between police and prosecutors.

The measure is also designed to maintain a defendant's right to a fair trial and any decision to pre-record evidence is made by a judge on a case-by-case basis.

It will mean that 54 Crown Courts can offer pre-recorded evidence – nearly two thirds of all Crown Courts in England and Wales. The government is

committed to rolling it out nationwide by September 2022.

Secretary of State for Wales Robert Buckland said:

To improve conviction rates for rape and sexual violence it is vital that victims can provide the best possible evidence and are not further traumatised by their experiences in court.

Video evidence works and is part of our ongoing programme to transform the criminal justice system so victims are at its centre. I helped begin this work during my previous role in government and I am delighted to see these measures being rolled out in every crown court in Wales.

Welsh Women's Aid Chief Executive Sara Kirkpatrick said:

Special measures to ensure that victims and witnesses are not further traumatised by their experiences through the courts are a vital component of a victim centred criminal justice system. We welcome that all crown courts across Wales will now have the facility to use pre-recorded evidence of victims, which will help to provide scope and flexibility for individuals to engage with historically intimidating justice systems.

While video evidence is a proactive and positive step in addressing issues of distrust and low public confidence, it must be just one improved element in a wider, systemic change that places survivors at the centre of all processes.

The expansion of pre-recorded evidence is a key pledge within the government's Rape Review Action Plan. The plan sets out clear actions for the police, prosecutors and courts. These include a new approach to investigations, reducing the number of victims withdrawing from the process, increasing the volume of trials being heard, protecting the public and putting more rapists behind bars.

While more must be done these efforts are beginning to have an impact. The latest figures show that across Wales there was a 13 percent increase in prosecutions for adult rape in 2021 compared to 2019.

Last month, the government published the latest Rape Review Progress report and committed to piloting specialist rape support in three courtrooms as recommended by the Joint Inspectorates of the CPS and Police. This would offer support, such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, within the court itself, as well as providing trauma training to court staff. These courtrooms will be set up at Snaresbrook Crown Court in London as well as Leeds and Newcastle Crown Courts.

Today's announcement builds on recent government action to make our streets

safer and increase confidence in the justice system, including the publication of a draft Victims' Bill. The legislation seeks to amplify victims' voices, and places greater accountability on agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police for the service they provide to them.

Notes to editors:

- Both the defence and prosecution lawyers will be present in court during the pre-recording as will the judge and the defendant.
- Decisions to grant section 28 hearings are taken by independent judges following an application to the court.
- Pre-recording cross-examination preserves a defendant's right to a fair trial.
- Vulnerable witnesses and victims are defined as all child witnesses under 18 and any witness whose quality of evidence is likely to be diminished because they are suffering from a mental disorder or physical disability or has significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning.
- Intimidated witnesses and victims for the purposes of this pilot are defined as complainants of sexual offences and modern slavery offences who are witnesses in proceedings relating to that offence, or that offence and any other offences.
- The measure is being rolled out to the following courts today:
 - Caernarfon
 - Cardiff
 - Merthyr Tydfil
 - Mold
 - Newport
 - Swansea
 - Preston Crown Court and Family Court (Sessions House)
- The courts already operating pre-recorded evidence for intimidated victims are:
 - Sheffield
 - Doncaster
 - Newcastle
 - Portsmouth
 - Southampton
 - Isle of Wight
 - Winchester
 - Bournemouth
 - Bristol
 - Exeter
 - Gloucester
 - Plymouth
 - Salisbury
 - Truro
 - Liverpool
 - Leeds
 - Kingston-Upon-Thames
 - Harrow

- Isleworth
 - Wood Green
 - Durham
 - York
 - Grimsby
 - Hull
 - Bradford
 - Teesside Crown Court
 - Warwick
 - Shrewsbury
 - Stafford
 - Stoke-on-Trent
 - Worcester
 - Hereford
 - Nottingham
 - Lincoln
 - Leicester
 - Northampton
 - Taunton
 - Bolton
 - Burnley
 - Preston Combined Court
 - Carlisle
 - Lancaster
 - Warrington
 - Chester
 - Manchester Crown Square
 - Manchester Minshull Street
 - Swindon Crown Court
- There are 71 Crown Court Centres in the UK, and a total of 83 Crown Court locations.
 - Rape convictions are increasing – there has been a 15 percent increase in the number of people convicted for rape offences in the last three months across England and Wales. There were 467 convictions last quarter (CPS Prosecution Statistics – October to December 2021), compared to 407, 398 and 376 in the quarters before. Total completed prosecutions for rape cases have increased by 10 percent from 600 (July – September 2021) to 661 (October-December 2021).
 - In England and Wales the average number of days for adult rape from CPS charge to the case being completed continued to fall, down by 38 days (8.3 percent) since the peak in June 2021 – down from 457 days to 419 in October – December 2021.

[Subsidy Advice Unit calls for views on](#)

guidance to assist public authorities

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is consulting on guidance that sets out the role of the Subsidy Advice Unit (SAU). The SAU is a new CMA function created by the Subsidy Control Act, which provides a new regime for governing the provision of subsidies within the UK following its exit from the EU.

Subsidies are offered to achieve specific public objectives (for example, car manufacturers could be offered a subsidy to help lower the price of electric vehicles to support the achievement of environmental targets). The SAU will provide advice to public authorities at all levels, evaluating their assessments of financial assistance they provide, via subsidies, to organisations.

The SAU will provide independent, non-binding advice on the assessments of certain high-value subsidies that are referred by public authorities, taking into account any effects that they might have on competition or investment in the UK. The SAU will publish these reports. Decisions on whether or not to offer subsidies are for public authorities, not the SAU or CMA.

In addition, the SAU will periodically monitor and review the operation of the UK subsidy control regime.

The CMA is seeking views on its draft guidance, particularly how the SAU will:

- Exercise its functions, including its information gathering powers, and the procedures it will adopt, including the way it will engage with public authorities.
- Evaluate and report on the public authority's assessment of the subsidy or scheme's compliance with the subsidy control requirements.
- Decide which subsidies and schemes to review when it has discretion to do so.

Rachel Merelie, Senior Director at the CMA, said:

The CMA has been asked to play a specific and important role in the new UK subsidy control regime. We will use our expertise to ensure public authorities have expert and independent advice to help inform their policy decisions.

We're keen to hear a range of voices on our draft guidance to help make sure the UK benefits from a world-leading subsidy control regime.

The draft guidance explains the SAU's proposed approach to transparency, consultation, confidentiality, and publication of its reports. It also provides information about its online Public Authority Portal, which public

authorities will use to submit referrals to the SAU once the new regime comes into effect.

The CMA is also [consulting on a draft Statement of Policy](#) in relation to the enforcement by the SAU of its information-gathering powers for the performance of its monitoring functions.

The CMA welcomes all views on its [draft guidance](#) and Statement of Policy by 10 August 2022 and plans to publish its final guidance later this year.

The launch of the SAU's consultation follows the publication of the [BEIS consultation on the statutory guidance for the Subsidy Control Act 2022](#).

1. The establishment of the Subsidy Advice Unit is one of a series of new measures contained within the Subsidy Control Act. The Act establishes a new system of subsidy oversight and control within the UK to replace the EU State Aid regime.
 2. The Act, which was granted Royal Assent in April 2022, will establish the Subsidy Advice Unit within the CMA as a Committee of the CMA Board. The SAU will play a defined role in the UK's new subsidy control regime through its review and monitoring functions.
 3. Subsidies can take various forms including; a cash payment, a loan with interest below the market rate, or a guarantee. Subsidies are administered by all levels of government in the UK. The definition of public authority is wide and captures any person who exercises functions of a public nature, including public authorities at any level of central, devolved, regional or local government and non-governmental bodies that are performing a public function.
 4. Since 1 January 2021, the UK has complied with the commitments on subsidy control set out in its free trade agreements with other countries, notably the provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules on subsidies, as well as the relevant provisions within the Northern Ireland Protocol.
 5. The government is exempting a limited set of subsidies from the control principles, such as those required for safeguarding national security and subsidies granted temporarily to address emergencies such as flooding. All subsidies will still be subject to WTO rules.
 6. Subsidies which can be referred to the SAU are those which fall under the definitions of a Subsidy or Scheme of Interest (discretionary referral) or Subsidy or Scheme of Particular Interest (mandatory referral). These definitions were [consulted on by BEIS earlier this year](#) and will be confirmed in regulations.
 7. Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy can also call in any subsidy pre- or post-award to be treated as a Subsidy or Scheme of Particular Interest.
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Questions and Answers: CSSF Call for Proposals

The CSSF team has received a large number of questions on the [call for proposals](#) published on the 21st June. Many questions received were broadly similar and have been grouped together with answers below.

Question: The call for proposals states projects must commit to deliver a project in line with HMG policy. What is this policy and what does it include?

Answer: HMG stands for Her Majesty's Government and this refers to the policy of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Of course there would not be enough space within this post to describe all of UK government policy in Israel and the OPTs, however some broad elements to keep in mind are below.

- The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees
- The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community
- The UK is in regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of one another to contribute to building the conditions needed for peace.

Question: Does the term 'Palestinians' refer only to Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (East Jerusalem/West Bank and Gaza) or does this also refer to Palestinian citizens of Israel residing within the green line?

Answer: The UK government will welcome proposals for any project that meets the goals and objectives set out in the Published call. In this context the call for bids will welcome projects that engage with individuals and groups including, but not limited to, Jewish Israeli's, Israeli Arabs/Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The proposal must however demonstrate how it will impact the objective of ensuring that "Women are central in building support for and increasing political prospects of achieving the 2 state solution".

Question: Who is eligible to apply for CSSF funding?

Answer: There are no set eligibility criteria for submission. An organisation can be eligible for funding if they propose a project that meets the requirements set out in the call for proposals. Israeli, Palestinian or international organisations may submit an application.

Question: Can the project be extended past March 2023?

Answer: No. Funds are allocated in yearly cycles. Funds allocated for a given financial year, running between April and March, cannot be spent after the end of that financial year. Funds allocated to project activities in this financial year must therefore be spent on activities that take place on or before 31st March 2023 and activities that take place after that date cannot be included within the project.

Question: Can organisations submit more than one proposal?

Answer: Yes, we will welcome all proposals for projects that meet requirements detailed in the published call. If an organisation wishes to submit more than one proposal these will be reviewed separately and on their own merits.

Question: When do you expect a final decision will be reached?

Answer: The deadline for submission is the 18th July. The CSSF team will endeavour to process the submissions and come to a decision as soon as possible, however the length of time until a decision is made will be dependent on the number and quality of submissions.

Question: Can organisations submit a proposal jointly with another organisation?

Answer: Yes, certainly. However the proposal should be submitted on behalf of one organisation with the other organisation listed as a partner. Payment can only be made to one organisation and then can be transferred to downstream partners for particular activities as part of a single project.

Question: Can organisations include overhead in the budget under this call for proposals?

Answer: Yes overhead costs can be included in the budget of a project but these costs can only make up a maximum of 10% of the entire project budget. For example, for a project costing £380,000, £38,000 of the total can go toward overhead costs such as office rent or electricity. As outlined in the call for bids; the relevant section reproduced below:

Bidders are required to differentiate in the Annual Budget between their:

(a) Administrative Costs (e.g.: general administration and support costs; office maintenance, repair and running costs; accountants, HR, and senior managers; other cross-cutting staff costs not directly attributable to a single project and are shared across the implementer's business platform and

any mandatory operational or legal costs incurred by an implementer in order to operate in a given location administrative staff salaries, office maintenance, repair and running costs).

(b) Project Costs which should include all project associated costs including implementing staff costs, travel, M&E costs. Please explain clearly, what you have included in each category.

Administrative costs must not exceed 10% of the total project budget.

[Romsey flood alleviation scheme is officially unveiled](#)

Romsey flood alleviation scheme, which will better protect 127 properties, was officially unveiled today (Friday 8 July) by Caroline Nokes MP for Romsey and Southampton North.

The scheme that became operational in autumn 2021, reduces flooding from the River Test and surface water. It cost approximately £9.5 million to build, of which the Environment Agency contributed approximately £6.4 million through government grant in aid.

Romsey has a history of flooding in the 1960s, 1995, 2000 and 2001. In the winter of 2013/2014, water overtopped Fishlake Stream and the Barge Canal, badly flooding 36 homes and 44 commercial properties with devastating consequences for families and businesses.

Simon Moody, Area Director, Environment Agency, said:

The climate emergency is bringing greater risks. We're seeing more extreme weather, with an increase in flooding. Our response must be to protect our communities as best we can, make them more resilient, and to tackle both the causes and consequences of climate change. We can make a difference if we all work together, like we have done on this scheme.

The flood alleviation scheme includes a tilting weir structure used to control the flows of Fishlake Stream and earth embankments to contain the excess water within a flood plain. At the Causeway, more earth embankments have been built to manage flood water as well as a new bridge and a spillway to enable the flood plain to drain into the River Test.

The risk of surface water flooding has been reduced by improvements to the existing drainage system including ditches, pipes and road drainage at Mainstone junction and Middlebridge Street.

As well as reducing flooding, there are additional ecological benefits from the scheme. Some 150 metres of new water vole habitat have been created and 150 metres of river environment have been enhanced by managing vegetation and improving the structure that controls water flow in the Barge Canal. The London plane trees, some of the oldest in the country, were also carefully preserved during construction.

Members of the local community were consulted throughout the scheme's development to ensure they were happy with the design. As a result, the new bridge on the Causeway is a Dutch, carbon-friendly design made of glass-reinforced plastic and is covered in timber to blend in with the picturesque surroundings.

The scheme, which took 3.5 years to build, has been developed through partnership working with Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council.

Councillor Edward Heron, Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy at Hampshire County Council, said:

This is an important scheme and we have been delighted to play our part in helping protect residents in Romsey. We contributed £1.5 million towards the total cost and worked in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Borough Council and other local stakeholders on the planning, design and construction of the scheme.

While there will always be a risk of flooding, thanks to the work that has been completed, residents' properties, businesses, roads and other infrastructure are now much better protected and more resilient.

In addition to building and maintaining flood defences the Environment Agency also runs a free flood warning service. You can sign up for free flood warnings in minutes on gov.uk at [Check for flooding – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-for-flooding) or call Floodline free on 0345 988 1188.

The scheme was funded from flood and coastal erosion risk management grant in aid (£6.4 million), local levy from the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (£1.2 million), Hampshire County Council contribution (£1.5 million), Test Valley Borough Council contribution (£0.3 million) and EU funding (£0.1 million).

In the 2020 Budget the Government doubled its investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management in England by committing a record £5.2 billion in 2021-27. This long-term commitment will better protect hundreds of thousands of properties, including homes, businesses, schools and hospitals from the risk of flooding.

UK provides increased support for Ukraine's energy sector

- UK government announces further £5 million to support Ukraine's energy sector, helping provide safety and security equipment for their civil nuclear sector
- follows £10 million announced last week to fund and help reconnect power across the country, and a further £7 million previously allocated to supply generators
- this builds on the ongoing UK-wide effort to support Ukraine in the face of Russia's brutality

The UK's Business and Energy secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, announces today a £5 million support fund designated to providing safety and security equipment to Ukraine's civil nuclear sector, supporting the country's ongoing effort to stand with Ukraine.

The civil nuclear support fund will see high priority items, which could include personal protective equipment, communications systems, and radiation monitoring equipment, supplied to Ukraine. This will enable the high levels of safety and security required to be fully restored at Chernobyl and Ukraine's other nuclear sites following Russian attacks.

The provision of vital equipment to Ukraine also contributes to widespread efforts to supply equipment for guard forces and to enhance the detection of the illicit movement of materials within Ukraine and across its borders, helping the country recover from Russian control of Chernobyl.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Energy systems play an indispensable role in ensuring national security and economic resilience.

Today the UK is ramping up our support to the Ukrainian people in their time of need by helping reconnect power across the country and protecting the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear sector, ensuring their frontline is fully equipped in the face of Russia's brutality.

Melinda Simmonds, UK Ambassador to Ukraine said:

Ensuring Ukraine has access to available energy will not only make sure the economy continues to function, but will also keep people warm and allow hospitals to provide emergency healthcare when it's

needed.

I'm proud of all the UK is doing to support Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.

Today's news follows the Foreign Secretary's announcement last week of a [£10 million Energy Support Fund](#), forming part of a package to help Ukraine defeat Putin and rebuild the country. This fund will help keep Ukraine's energy system running in wartime, enabling essential repairs to energy infrastructure and help reconnect power across the country. The package included both immediate financial and longer-term support for the Ukrainian people, utilising UK expertise and British businesses to accelerate Ukraine's economic recovery.

Together this brings UK support for Ukraine's energy sector to £22 million, including the [UK's £7 million donation of over 850 generators earlier this year](#) that are already in use, helping to power essential services such as hospitals and shelters.

These support packages come as international partners and allies from around the world joined together last week for the Lugano Conference on Ukraine's Recovery in Switzerland in a united stand with Ukraine.

The £22 million figure includes:

- the £10 million [Energy Support Fund](#) from the Energy Resilience and Energy Security programme, announced before the invasion. This 3-year FCDO fund is intended to keep Ukraine's energy systems running in wartime and prepare for modern-era post-war reconstruction, with the other £7 million transferred to BEIS to supply 856 portable generators
- today's £5 million from BEIS allocated to support Ukraine's nuclear sector. The United Kingdom will procure these items of equipment and work with the International Atomic Energy Agency to deliver them to Ukraine