



Dame Diana Johnson MP  
Home Affairs Committee  
Select Committee Team  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**MoJ ref:** SUB97405

15 June 2022

Dear Dame Diana,

### **IMPROVING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE TO RAPE**

I am writing to inform you of a number of announcements the Government is making tomorrow, as part of our ongoing commitment to transform the criminal justice system response to rape, following the publication of the End to End Rape Review Action Plan last year. This includes announcing additional funding for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, publishing a progress report on the implementation of the Rape Review Action Plan, and publishing the next iteration of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Delivery Data Dashboard (previously named the CJS scorecard).

Each of these measures form an important part of our commitment to ensure victims get the support they deserve, that we are transparent to the public, and that we deliver on our ambition to increase the number of rape cases going through the system. Recognising that this is a crime that disproportionately impacts women and girls, we will also continue to make wider concerted efforts across government to tackle violence against women and girls, including through the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and through our landmark Domestic Abuse Act.

#### **Increased victim support funding**

Acknowledging the crucial support victims need to help them cope and recover, we are announcing an additional £6.6m per annum boost, on a multi-year basis throughout this Spending Review period, for services supporting victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse. This means, in addition to the extra funding provided at the Spending Review, the Ministry of Justice will now be increasing funding for victim and witness support services to £192m by 2024/25. This represents an uplift of 92% on core budgets from 2020/21. By confirming funding on a multi-year basis - a minimum of £460m over three years – victim support services, and those commissioning them, will be able to provide consistency to victims receiving support. It will help to ensure that high quality support is available to victims when needed, regardless of whether they wish to report the crime to the police.

#### **Rape Review Progress Report**

One year on from the publication of the Rape Review, we are publishing our latest update which demonstrates the progress we have made on implementation of the Rape Review Action Plan. As the

report sets out, we are beginning to see positive increases in the number of referrals of adult rape cases being made from the police to the CPS, and the number of charges as a result. We are committed to going further and pushing harder on our actions so that we can drive bigger impacts, deliver wider system change and crucially, deliver justice.

In line with this, I am pleased to confirm that we will be trialling new enhanced specialist sexual violence support in selected Crown Courts in Leeds, Newcastle and Snaresbrook. These pilot locations have been selected because they are currently dealing with a higher-than-average number of sex offence cases. These will look to improve the experience in court for rape victims, and working closely with the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and judiciary, boost ongoing efforts to tackle the court backlog and bring victims swifter justice.

The Ministry of Justice has also worked closely with the Home Office, CPS, and AGO to consider the important recommendations made by the Home Affairs Select Committee in their report on the investigation and prosecution of rape. The government will be also sending its response to the committee shortly.

Tomorrow, we are also launching a survey aimed at sexual violence and rape victims to seek their views and experiences of accessing support services. The findings from the survey will inform the recommissioning of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund ensuring victims receive the support they need.

### **Criminal Justice System (CJS) Delivery Data Dashboard**

I am also pleased that we are publishing the third iteration of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Delivery Data Dashboard, previously named the CJS scorecard. This publication will include additional Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) metrics and population adjustments. The core purpose of the product is to increase transparency, increase understanding of the justice system and support collaboration, particularly at a local level through Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs). Multiple stakeholders have told us that the term 'scorecard' is not reflective of its purpose and could be perceived negatively, especially for victims of rape, as trivialising a victim's experience. We are confident that the new name addresses this.

Thank you for your continued engagement on these crucial issues. I look forward to further joint working to continue to deliver this important work to the benefit of all our constituents. As the lead minister for tackling violence against women and girls, I want to assure you, and in turn your constituents, that the government acknowledges that importance of improving outcomes for RASSO cases, and changing it is a personal priority of mine.

Yours ever,



**VICTORIA ATKINS MP**