



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

The Baroness Hamwee
Chair
Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee

By Email Only

MoJ ref: 101557

6 December 2022

Dear Baroness Hamwee,

LAUNCH OF THE 24/7 RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT LINE

I am pleased to inform you that tomorrow, 7 December, we are launching the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line, a free and confidential emotional support service for all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse, aged 16 and over, in England and Wales.

The Government's End-to-End Review of the Criminal Justice System Response to Rape, June 2021, found provision of support for victims of rape and sexual violence to be inconsistent across the country and often not tailored to meet their specific needs.

In response to these findings, we know that the right thing to do is to ensure that all victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence have access to quality support, appropriate to their needs, and importantly, available when they need it. The 24/7 emotional support and listening service will provide victims and survivors who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any point in their life with access to specially trained advisers via telephone and webchat, with additional resources available online.

Where appropriate the service will point them to specialist support such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisers, Sexual Assault Referral Centre and local Rape Support Centres. We know that having access to support means that survivors are much more likely to feel believed and are less likely to suffer long-lasting trauma. Victims who speak to an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser are 49 percent less likely to withdraw from the criminal justice process. The more support a survivor receives the more perpetrators we will be able to bring before the courts.

We have worked in collaboration with our delivery partner, Rape Crisis England and Wales, to develop the service. Rape Crisis England and Wales have decades of experience supporting victims, including operating a national sexual violence helpline in partnership with Rape Crisis South London for over 30 years, and I look forward to continuing to work with them on this vital new service.

The support line is a key part of our plan to transform outcomes for victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence. In June 2021, we published the cross-system Rape Review Report and Action Plan. We are delivering this by:

- More than quadrupling funding for victim support from to £192 million by 2024/25;
- Increasing the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 by 2024/25;
- Completing the rollout of pre-recorded cross-examination for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Courts in England and Wales in September;
- Working with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to roll out a new investigatory model for rape, which focuses on the suspect's rather than the victim's behaviour, called Operation Soteria. This has begun operating across nineteen police forces, with a full national rollout ready from June 2023.

We are starting to see progress – rape convictions in 2021 were up by two thirds compared to the year before, and custodial sentences for this crime have increased by nearly two years in the latest year. But there is more to do, and we continue to prioritise tackling rape and sexual assault and supporting victims.

The 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line is available via telephone on: 0808 500 2222 and online at: 247sexualabusesupport.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP