



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: 13 March 2014

AGENDA ITEM: 2B - Constabulary Performance

SUBJECT: Rape

Background

This report deals with the specific issue of Rape, detailing the Constabulary response, and providing context to the issues surrounding this complex area of crime.

All rape investigations are now being conducted from within Public Protection Units (PPU), and the policy and standards for the investigation of Rape and Serious Sexual Assault have been updated and refreshed. The high standing of the Constabulary in this field has meant that these standards have been shared with a number of other Forces across the country.

Nationally there has been significant focus on historical child and adult sexual abuse offences following the Savile revelations and enquiries, and the successful prosecution of Stuart Hall. This prosecution drew extremely favourable reporting for the Constabulary and its treatment of victims, and has set the benchmark in this area. We continue to work with key partners to ensure that victims of such traumatic offences are confident of the services that we provide in Lancashire, including access to counselling services, and we are working closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to identify and close gaps in the provision of such services. In January 2014, "The Trust House" opened its doors and this centre will provide support for victims of sexual offences across Lancashire and has managed to widen its remit through the direct intervention of the police and OPCC.

The Constabulary has continued to give out clear messages that there is no time limit on the ability of victims to seek justice against their attackers, and that we will always support people who report offences to us. This was illustrated by the coordinated and committed response to the recent acquittal of William Roache, when, despite intense media pressure, partners remained steadfast in the message that we want people to come forward and will deal with them in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

There is a continuing strong focus on Child Sexual Exploitation, and we have seen a steady rise in sexual offences, including rape, against children. Lancashire continues to be

identified nationally as an area of best practice and is continuing this through its increased commitment to tackling Internet facilitated offending. The recent Operation Toledo led to the arrest of 20 persons for possessing Indecent Images of children, and the increased resources and commitment led to disclosures of contact offending in 20% of those cases. The formation of the dedicated On Line Child Abuse Team (OCAIT) in April 2014 will increase the activity and success in this arena, and allow for more interventions into distribution offences and provide greater Safeguarding opportunities

Rape Offences and Analysis

The victim profile remains the same as previous years, with females accounting for around 90% of rape victims. Approximately 73% of victims are under the age of 25 at the time of the offence, and 40% of victims are under the age of 16. Analysis of the figures for recorded offences of rape for the year 01/04/2013 to date show a YTD rise in reported rape crime of 28%. The figures indicate a fall in the first quarter of the year, but rises in the following two quarters of approximately 50% per quarter (when compared to the previous year). Despite these increases, the Constabulary has maintained a detection rate of 29%, and in fact have actually detected more offences than this time last year.

The categorisation of offences mentioned in the December update allows further analysis into the areas of increase to be done. It is apparent from this research that there have been significant increases in four categories of rape offences, as set out in the Lancashire Rape Problem Profile, namely a) 'stranger rapes', b) rapes in domestic settings, c) historic rapes, including those committed by offenders in position of trust, d) 'acquaintance 3' type offences (people involved have known each other for over five days but have never been in a relationship).

The percentage of stranger rapes has increased to some 6% of the total (from a previous 2%). Whilst this increase is significant, and as yet unexplained, it does illustrate that within Lancashire, Rape is not an offence committed by strangers for the most part. We, as a Constabulary, identify over 90% of rape suspects. It would therefore be anticipated that we would have a higher detection and conviction rate, but factors of societal beliefs, use of intoxicants by all involved, consent and other evidential issues, combine together to complicate the investigation of an offence to which there are still generally few independent witnesses.

To begin to counteract this, the Constabulary is working with a variety of partners to tackle false myths, and perceptions, through publicity campaigns, and continues with its victim centred, high quality approach to investigations in which every rape investigation is overseen by a Detective Inspector, and each and every victim is supported according to their needs.

Stranger Rapes

In the original Rape Problem Profile, four different types of stranger rape offences were identified through the analysis of the offences that had taken place over a three year time period in Lancashire:

1. Offender approaches lone victim during hours of darkness in a secluded location and engages in conversation before committing the offence
2. Offender attacks the victim during the hours of darkness in a secluded location without any conversation

3. Offender approaches victim outside / near to night club and drags them into a nearby alleyway before committing the offence
4. Offender is a taxi driver and commits the offence after picking up the victim as a customer (usually from a night club / licensed premise)

The majority of the 21 stranger rape offences that have been recorded during 2013/14 fit into these four categories. Although there are a number of isolated offences that have a very different MO, there does not appear to have been any real change in the types of offences taking place. The majority of offences during 2013/14 have occurred during the hours of darkness when the victim has been walking home alone with most of these involving the offender dragging the victim into a dark alleyway or wooded area.

52% (n=11) of the 21 crime reports detailed that the victim was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence. 66% (n=14) of the victims were already known to Lancashire Constabulary at the time of the reported stranger rape. The majority had prior entries on the Protecting Vulnerable People database for a variety of reasons including Domestic Violence, drugs misuse, mental health, and child cruelty. Most of the 14 victims known in Lancashire had previous intelligence relating to mental health concerns, and many had been reported missing from home. Two street sex workers who had reported stranger rapes during the time period had been the victim of numerous previous offences committed by clients including theft, robbery and assault.

It is clear from examining all of the stranger rape offences that vulnerability continues to be a main factor in this type of offence.

Domestic setting – rape

Domestic rapes account for around 20% of all rape offences in Lancashire and have increased steadily since 2009/10. Many reports of domestic rape refer to multiple incidents or prolonged sexual abuse within the relationship. Many occur shortly after separation with many crime reports detailing offences taking place when ex partners have met to discuss the future of their relationship, arrangements for children, or to collect belongings. This highlights that the threat of domestic violence and sexual assault often continues once the relationship has ended.

Previous research on detection rates suggests that the detection rate for domestic rapes is lower than for many other categories of rape. It is felt that victims of domestic rape are more likely to be uncooperative after the initial report, particularly if they continue the relationship with the alleged offender.

As part of the ongoing work to tackle this issue of rape in a domestic setting we are;

- a) Working with CPS around charging decisions
- b) Ensuring that staff are fully alive to the potential for defendants influencing the victims' decision to retract – assisted by rape teams / central ownership and governance of PPU
- c) Doing further analysis of our categories of offences to establish the effect of DASH on figures and why complainants will not support prosecutions – this is to provide an evidence base to challenge assumptions and garner support from partners, as well as increasing our understanding of the problem
- d) Continue to explore what interventions can be put in place with partners to keep complainants safe if they are in a relationship where abuse takes place (i.e. recent Christmas domestic abuse campaign)

- e) Linking in with partners to add support services, particularly around counselling and IDVA / ISVA provision to better support victims

In addition to this, with the agreement of partners, the remit of the Strategic Rape Steering Group is to be widened and the group itself re-named to become the Strategic Sexual Violence Steering Group. It is felt that this better reflects the wider problem of sexual violence, and will allow greater opportunity for interaction with partners across the widest possible arena.

Historic, including those in a position of trust

Historic offences are those that are more than 12 months old before being reported. Reports of historic rapes have increased in Lancashire since 2012 and now account for around 36% of all rape offences compared to 25% in 2009/10.

Most reports of historic rapes relate to abuse by a family member (usually step father or father) or a partner. Reports of historic breach of trust offences have also been seen to increase since 2012 with offenders including teachers, carers and family friends. Cases in Lancashire have included Hall/ Roache/ Boardman/ [REDACTED]. The review, plus debriefing of operational staff, indicates a significant proportion of offences are “historic” and reflect the national increases arising out of publicity surrounding cases such as Jimmy Savile, and Stuart Hall. In these types of cases increased reporting can be taken as a sign of confidence in the police response and gives us a better baseline of offending. The investigations however are challenging and resource intensive, and are significantly impacting upon the resilience of PPU departments.

A notable success however was the case of Andrew Boardman, a male who had abused a huge number of children and young adults in the Preston area for many years. All of his victims were vulnerable due to family circumstances and went on to become dysfunctional with a wide range of issues around criminality, substance misuse etc. increasing the issues around their perceived lack of credibility. Boardman was found guilty of over 40 charges relating to 15 different victims and was sentenced to over 20 years in prison. CPS are currently reviewing the evidence of a further 20+ victims but there is no doubt that this investigation has taken a very dangerous individual off the streets of Lancashire.

‘Acquaintance 3’.

In the ‘Problem Profile – Rape in Lancashire’ the type of rape offences were broken down into categories to assist research so that they can be addressed and responded to appropriately. The ‘Acquaintance 3’ category refers to the people involved having known each other for over 5 days but have never been in a relationship. The majority of the acquaintance 3 rapes this year have occurred following a night out or party with both parties usually under the influence of alcohol.

Summary

In summary, the area of Rape investigation remains central to Lancashire Constabulary’s priority to protect vulnerable people, and the force has dedicated significant resources to it. There is also no doubt that although the investigation of such offences remains complex and difficult, the landscape is slowly changing and the victim centred approach is paying dividends.

Case Study – REDACTED