

**RAPE CRISIS - SOUTH LONDON  
RESPONSE TO POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2013 - 2017**

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We welcome a 20% delay in trial dates. Although we still feel that specialist rape courts would be a good option and now that CAIT teams and Sapphire teams are linking up, there could be a specialist court for both. With up to date technology and a facility for videotaping cross-examination of children out of a court environment.

I understand that the hierarchical structure of Sapphire units will be reduced but an important element to maintain is supervision of front line officers so that a case like Southwark does not reoccur.

Safer Neighbourhoods policing: Hopefully they will be given training around sexual offences and given or have access to Early Evidence Kits.

An increase in women (and men) reporting sexual offences would be seen as a success target and would mean that the public have more confidence in the police. Currently, numbers are down because of the sensational news stories around Sapphire units. But it is important that every allegation is recorded and that officers do not make arbitrary decisions about crime reports without the back up of a senior officer. Perhaps there should be a system that they could all follow before deciding whether it is a crime or not. A point system if you like. Possibly encouraging survivors to access ISVA support if they are not sure about reporting. N.B. The attrition rate of cases supported by an ISVA is negligible therefore encouraging ISVA support will reduce the number of cases failing because of non-attendance. Perhaps a simple system could be set up to ensure that witnesses for the defence attend (collected, texted, etc). Illnesses of perpetrators seem to be increasing and can result in non-attendance, are there systems in place to check this?

I worry about sanctioned and detection rates increasing, this could mean that only the simplest and most straight forward cases are considered and the more complicated and time intensive cases are shelved.

Agreed: Survivors of sexual violence must continue to be given the opportunity for officers to speak to them in the comfort of their own homes or in other places that feel comfortable for them.

Could there be a transparent process openly available to survivors who report giving the name of an officer who is overseeing the case in case they need to complain (obviously not the investigating officer but their superior). Many complaints go into a black hole and the response is a big silence.

Growing Against Gang Violence/Rape crisis and Victim Support are already delivering a very successful programme to schools to prevent sexual violence and gang involvement. There are too many organisations professing to achieve results, so I just want to put this initiative on the map (especially as there will be a £1 million crime prevention fund available)! It is essential that the focus on prevention does not only fall on women to protect themselves but that potential perpetrators are targeted.

A failing in many cases are when Restraining Orders, Bail Conditions and Non-Molestation Orders are in place but not enforced by the police. Obviously their time is valuable and perhaps another department needs to be responsible to responding when these orders are transgressed so that women feel safe and the orders are definitely enforced.

Wasted Court time: There are so many reasons why cases are postponed, there is a huge waste of time but one reason is that Barristers do not seem to have papers until the morning of the trial and when anything is missing the case is postponed until the correct piece of paper is in place. Surely, something can be done about this - it is usually the CPS who are at fault.

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Alcohol Abstinence. Pubs and Clubs who do not ensure the safety of women clientele need to have their licenses looked at. Safety also includes ensure that women leaving the premises are able to do so.

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