



**WEST MERCIA PCC: DISCLOSURE LOG
RESPONSE TO REQUEST**

Reference: 2017- 133

Date of response 27th February 2017

FOI Query

Thank you for your email dated the 23rd of February 2017. In your email, you asked:

- 1) Is the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Mercia Police Force doing anything specifically to improve the conviction rate of rape and sexual incidences? By "improve", we are referring to the speed at which the process of recorded rape cases, by the police, reach the Crown Prosecution Service, as statistics show that the time period between the reporting of a rape case and it reaching court is significantly bigger than any other offence. What do you believe the reason for this large time gap is?*

Response

I would like to outline work being carried out in West Mercia Police to address the time it takes between an alleged offence of rape and a charging decision made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

West Mercia Police and the CPS have set up a weekly review process designed to improve the overall quality and timeliness of rape investigations. Live rape investigations are logged onto an excel spreadsheet and reviewed weekly by a senior lawyer and police officer. The spreadsheet looks at both pre-charge cases and early investigation advice cases. If cases exceed specified time limits they are escalated to an Assistant Chief Constable for review.

The Police and CPS have reviewed issues contributing to the delay and often times the delay is attributed to waiting for further information from partners, such as social services. In addition, some of the delays are attributed to the processing of digital evidence.

While the length of time taken between offence to charge has been longer for rape cases, I can report that over the past six months West Mercia has made significant progress in reducing the number of pre-charge rape cases which have taken over 56 days to charge from 69 cases to 5, a reduction of 93%.

My office receives weekly performance reports from the CPS to ensure that partners remain focused and committed to ensuring a timely investigation is conducted.

I hope you find the above overview helpful. If you require any further information, please feel free to contact my Criminal Justice Policy lead; Chris Jensen on 01905 747024.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Campion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Campion
Police & Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Complaints

If you think that the Police and Crime Commissioner has failed to supply information in accordance with the publication scheme, then you should write in the first instance, to the:

Chief Executive, OPCC – West Mercia, Hindlip Hall, Worcester, WR3 8SP.

The PCC will aim to deal with your complaint within 10 working days. If you are dissatisfied with the response you can ask for the matter to be internally reviewed. Internal reviews will be completed promptly and a response given to you within 20 working days of your further request.

If, after the internal review, you remain dissatisfied, then you can complain to the Information Commissioner (Office of the Information Commissioner), Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF).