

**Male Sexual Victimization and the Specialist Officer: A Critical Analysis of the Police Response to  
Adult Males**

**By**

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## *Abstract*

This thesis addressed the under-researched area of male sexual victimisation as it related to policing, specifically in relation to specialist officers known as Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers. SOIT officers are held to be vital to rape investigation, their main purpose being to support survivors throughout investigations, as well as being responsible for some initial evidence gathering and liaising with investigators. As the main contact within the police for survivors, the way SOITs conduct themselves with survivors is paramount. Despite this, the role of SOITs in the police response to male survivors of sexual victimisation has not been reviewed since Jamel (2008). From a review of the literature, four research questions were identified: (1) How do male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood view the police and interpret their experiences of the police? (2) How are SOIT officers trained and prepared for their role? (3) What impact do SOIT officers have on the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood? (4) What are the experiences of SOIT officers in supporting male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood? Using the theoretical perspective of hegemonic masculinity, data was gathered through interviews and a questionnaire with SOITs, counsellors, and male survivors and analysed through thematic analysis with the aid of a qualitative software package, NVivo. The findings suggested a lack of experience and training of SOITs concerning male survivors, and largely negative experiences with the police on behalf of survivors, with three themes being identified: The Effective SOIT, Gender, and The Male Experience, consistent with hegemonic masculinity. This thesis concludes with recommendations to police services and the College of Policing to improve the police response to male survivors of sexual victimisation.

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## Abbreviations

ABE	Achieving Best Evidence
AVI	Additional Verifiable Evidence
BTP	British Transport Police
CCCU	Canterbury Christ Church University
CICA	Criminal Injury Compensation Authority
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CoP	College of Policing
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
DA	Domestic Abuse
E&W	England & Wales
EBP	Evidence-Based Policing
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EEK	Early Evidence Kit
EU	European Union
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTP	Forced-to-Penetrate
GBT	Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
HMCPSI	Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service
IRO	Initial Responders to Rape Officer
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Bisexual and Transgender
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
PRC	Police Recorded Crime
PIP	Professionalising Investigations Programme
CPS RASSO	Crown Prosecution Service Rape and Serious Sexual Offence
RMA	Rape Myth Acceptance
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SOA	Sexual Offences Act 2003
SOIT	Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques
SOLO	Sexual Offences Liaison Officer
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
STO	Sexual Offence Trained
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

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## *Chapter 1: Introduction*

### **1.1 Introduction**

“If we are to be a society that takes sexual violence seriously, then it is important that we recognise all victims and perpetrators of rape” (Rumney, 2007, p. 510).

Male survivors of sexual offences have largely been side-lined in discussions of reform to rape investigation and academic research. Over two decades ago, Rogers (1998) claimed that research regarding male rape was 20 years behind that of female rape. This claim has been repeated by research in recent years, and it is difficult to argue against this (Pearson and Barker, 2018; Javaid, 2016a; Fisher and Pina, 2013; Sleath and Bull, 2010). This disparity is somewhat understandable given that the Office for National Statistics (2021a) estimates there are four times as many female survivors as male, based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (E&W). While there is a growing body of research exploring both male-on-male and female-on-male sexual offences, little is known regarding experiences specifically in relation to the police, with the little research that has been conducted suggesting a ‘postcode lottery’ in police responses (Weare; 2018a; Weare 2018b; Weare, 2018c; Jamel, 2008; Rumney, 2008; Walker, Archer and Davies, 2005). Prevalence of male rape and sexual assault is difficult to predict with accuracy, particularly as studies use different methodologies using varying assessment methods, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and definitions of sexual victimisation (Depraetere *et al.*, 2018). Reporting rates in male survivors is therefore equally difficult to predict. However, research suggests that males are just as unlikely than female survivors to not contact the police, potentially even less so (Javaid, 2015a). Police services across E&W have claimed to be striving to improve their response to survivors of sexual offences, both male and female, in response to a myriad of reports and reviews into rape investigation (Jordan, 2011). Waddington (2015) suggests that following reviews and criticism, polices services often state ‘lessons have been learnt’, but this is simply a rhetorical device to deflect from the issues at hand. One development towards improving the police response to rape has been the inception of Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers, also termed Sexual Offence Trained (STO) and Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs)

(Horvath and Yexley, 2012, p. 116; Jamel, Bull and Sheridan, 2008). The duties of these officers vary from service-to-service, although generally they are used as the single point of contact for survivors of serious sexual offences, working as an intermediary and supportive ear for survivors (Horvath and Yexley, 2012, pp. 116-118). SOITs are viewed within the police as vital to sexual offence investigations. However, little research has been conducted since significant developments in policing have occurred and the beginning of the regulation of the SOIT role by the College of Policing (CoP) (Freedom Of Information (FOI) request available in Appendix A).

It is vital to define the terminology used throughout this thesis for clarity. Rape is defined using the legal definition of rape according to section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2003, that is: the intentional penetration of a person's anus, vagina or mouth with a penis without consent and without reasonable belief in consent (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). When referring to sexual assault, this will generally refer to sections 2-4 of the SOA 2003 together, namely other non-consensual offences of assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). Legal definitions of these offences will be used to ensure consistency. While there is debate surrounding how these legal definitions should be developed in the future, police officers are more likely to use and recognise the current legal definitions of these terms (Weare and Hulley, 2019; Sjölin, 2015; Elvin, 2008; Westmarland, 2004). The term 'SOIT', while referred to differently across police services, will also be used throughout this thesis for consistency. The term SOIT has been used by previous research. The role is, however, poorly defined across police services and within the CoP guidance, and so while there are a variety of terms used, SOIT was deemed to be the most appropriate term. There is little consensus regarding how to refer to those who have experienced a sexual offence, with documentation from the Government as well as charities and organisations involved in care, using 'victim', 'survivor' and 'complainant' (RAINN, 2021; Home Office, 2020e; Home Office, 2017). Throughout this research, the term 'survivor' is used as the default term, although 'victim' and 'complainant' may also be used dependent on context.



This thesis aims to analyse the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in relation to the police and specialist officers, as well as how SOIT officers are trained for their role and their experiences of supporting male survivors of sexual offences. It is important to research the police response because the police are the 'gatekeepers' of the criminal justice system (CJS) (Jordan, 2004). This unique role means that survivors of sexual offences must go through the police in order to access other parts of the CJS and compensation (UK Government, no date; Sleath and Bull, 2017). The police have the power to determine which reports proceed through the CJS, and this is vulnerable to the influence of bias and poor decision-making (O'Neal, 2019). SOIT officers have direct contact with survivors of sexual offences, working with them to gather evidence, take statements and provide information and resources for outside support (CoP, 2021a). It is therefore vital that SOIT officers provide a consistent and adequate response to these survivors. Reports of sexual offences made by males have been increasing in recent years (Home Office, 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2021a; 2021b). As such, it is important that SOITs and the wider police have the knowledge and resources available to adequately support males and understand the unique challenges males may face in initially reporting and talking about their victimisation. Previous research has indicated a lack of training available to SOITs regarding male survivors, and a general lack of experience in supporting males (Jamel, 2008). Previous research has also utilised a hegemonic masculinity framework to underpin it; that is, the expectations of masculinity in society (Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2015b). The generally accepted attributes of masculinity include aggressiveness, strength and domination (Sjoberg and Via, 2010, p. 3). These attributes can conflict with sexual victimisation and therefore cause members of society to doubt the masculinity and victim status of male survivors (Javaid, 2017a). This theoretical framework was employed in this research, as it is established in academia.

This research used a combination of semi-structured interviews and online qualitative questionnaires to speak to SOITs, counsellors and male survivors. SOIT officers were asked about their training, general day-to-day work and experiences of supporting male survivors, while counsellors were asked about their experiences of both the police and male survivors. Within this research there was a mix of

male survivors who had reported to the police and those who had not. Those who had reported were asked about the police response in general, and in relation to any specialist officers assigned to them, along with where they felt the police could have improved their response. Survivors who had not reported to the police were asked why they chose not to contact the police, and how, if at all, the police could encourage them to make a report. Both groups of survivors were also asked about any experiences with support services. These results were then analysed using thematic analysis through the lens of hegemonic masculinity.

This thesis begins with a review of the current literature relating to male sexual victimisation and the policing of sexual offences. The literature review considers the history of the law as it pertains to males specifically, the prevalence and reporting of sexual offences, police duties and the challenges officers face in policing sexual offending, before concluding with a review of specialised training in the police and the current knowledge of the experiences of male survivors who report to the police. This will move into a discussion of the methodology utilised in this research, including the theoretical framework, research questions and the methods of data collection and analysis. The findings section outlines the three themes identified through analysis: The Effective SOIT, Gender, and The Male Experience. This culminates in the discussion chapter, drawing on previous research to discuss the implications and meaning behind these findings. Finally, concluding thoughts and recommendations for future practice to police services, support services and the wider CJS are made.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This research explores the following research questions:

1. How do male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood view the police and interpret their experiences of the police?
2. How are Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers trained and prepared for their role?

3. What impact do SOIT officers have on the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood?
4. What are the experiences of SOIT officers in supporting male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood?

## *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

### 2.1 Introduction

Research regarding male survivors of sexual offences has been estimated to be twenty years behind that of female survivors, but greater effort is being made to research this largely under-represented group (Pearson and Barker, 2018). Therefore, little is known about how male survivors perceive the police, or the police response to male survivors, particularly in relation to specialist officers, termed Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques or Sexual Offence Investigative Trained (SOIT) officers (Jamel, Bull and Sheridan, 2008). The only research to address this gap in knowledge is that of Jamel (2008), although this research is now over a decade old. In this time the policing of sexual offences has undergone a number of challenges and developments, through austerity, through reviews, through changes to training, and through greater public scrutiny (Rumney *et al.*, 2019; Jordan, 2011). For example, in 2014, the CoP developed a new national standard for the training of SOITs, requiring police services to provide a two-week course with inputs on interviewing and investigation management and support (available in Appendix A). No research has been conducted specifically relating to male survivors since this development, suggesting a gap in knowledge. This chapter will analyse the available literature regarding male survivors and the policing of sexual offending.

To understand the context and history of male rape, the law, both past and present, will be addressed as this is reflective of how male survivors have historically been treated. Defining the law of sex offences will also provide clarity to further discussions of the experiences of male survivors. This will lead into a discussion of female-on-male offending, as it is argued that the law does little to acknowledge the seriousness of this offence. The prevalence of offences targeting men will also be assessed. These discussions provide a valuable backdrop to the critical analysis of the police response to those reporting sexual offences, specialist training and the experiences of male survivors regarding police investigations of sexual offending.

## 2.2 A History of the Law Relating to Male Survivors

The law has been considered by many to be a reflection of a society; a mirror image of the ideas and aims of a society (Tamanaha, 2001, pp. 1-2). Male rape has historically not been treated with the same gravity in law as female rape in E&W (Johnson, 2019). It was not until section 142 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 was enacted, that male rape was recognised as a crime for the first time in law in the United Kingdom (UK) (Graham, 2006). Prior to this the anal rape of a man was termed 'buggery' and had been within criminal law as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century when responsibility for trying cases of buggery was moved from the ecclesiastical courts, i.e. those run by the church, in the interest of effectively punishing buggery for the 'detestable and abominable vice' it was considered to be (Mikochik, 2007, p. 485). Indeed, the maximum sentence for buggery increased to the death penalty until 1861, when the sentence was reduced to ten years (Hepple, 2012). At this time and until 1967 buggery was equally used to describe and punish not only anal rape but consensual homosexual sex (Johnson, 2019). The developments in decriminalising consensual homosexual acts therefore strongly correlates to development in the recognition of male-on-male rape (Johnson, 2019). During the 1950s there had been a steep rise in the number of men being convicted for homosexual offences under the laws of buggery, which sparked public interest, particularly after the conviction of three high-profile men in 1954 (Huws and Finnis, 2017; Grimley, 2009). This led to the commission of the Wolfenden Report, published in 1957, which concluded despite the testimony of many against it, that homosexual acts carried out in private should be decriminalised (Lewis, 2016, p. 52; Robinson, 2007, p. 38).

Following ten years of parliamentary debate on the matter, a new law, section 1 of the SOA 1967, was passed which decriminalised private consensual homosexual activity for those over the age of 21, while non-consensual buggery remained illegal under section 12 of the SOA 1956 (*Sexual Offences Act 1967; Sexual Offences Act 1956*). While this was considered a step forward for the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, the law still restricted the activities LGBT consensual couples could legally partake in. Firstly, the decriminalisation of homosexual sexual activity only applied to those 21 and over, despite the age of consent being 16 for heterosexual couples at the time

(*Sexual Offences Act 1967*). Further, sexual acts could only take place in private, defined as being between two persons (Johnson, 2008). This law remained in place until 1994, by which time there had been mounting pressure to form a gender-neutral Act which would not discriminate against victims (Javaid, 2014a).

One of the key points of contention was the maximum sentence for the offence of buggery of a man and that of a woman; while the buggery and vaginal rape of a woman carried maximum sentences of life imprisonment, the buggery of a man carried a maximum sentence of ten years (*Sexual Offences Act 1967*; *Sexual Offences Act 1956*). This led to the creation of the new offence of rape of women and men within section 142 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, carrying the same maximum sentence for crimes involving either male or female victims (*Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*). This Act also brought the age of consent for consensual homosexual acts down from 21 to 18, however still two years older than the age of consent for heterosexual couples (*Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*). The first case of rape involving a male victim to be charged and tried was that of R v Richards in 1995; Richards choked the intoxicated victim and forced him to perform oral sex before attempting to anally rape him ('R v. Richards (Andrew Gestyn)', 1996). The sentence imposed in this case for attempted rape, at first a life sentence and then reduced to nine years after an appeal, is perhaps the best indicator that male and female victims of rape were to be treated equally in law from that point onwards (Javaid, 2014b; 'R v. Richards (Andrew Gestyn)', 1996). A move for LGBT equality came soon after in 2000, bringing the age of consent for homosexual acts in line with the heterosexual age of consent, 16, and decriminalising group sex between men (Stonewall, 2017; *Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000*). A further significant development in equality had arisen in 1992, the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 providing, for the first time, anonymity for male victims of buggery, aligning with rights already afforded to female victims of rape since 1976 (*Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976*).

Following the publication of two reports concerning sexual offence legislation, *Setting the Boundaries* (Home Office, 2000) and *Consultation Paper on the Review of Part 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 1997* (Home Office, 2001), a major development came in the form of the SOA 2003; sexual offence laws at the time were a fractured patchwork of provisions without any structure or consistency and so these reports were commissioned to determine how the law could be updated for the modern era and worked into one piece of coherent legislation (Home Office, 2000, p. iii). This was also designed to ensure that laws within the UK were in line with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Court of Human Rights, by removing offensive language and discrimination such as the use of 'defective' as a term for the mentally ill and disabled (Westmarland, 2004). Some of the main recommendations of *Setting the Boundaries* were that rape be redefined to include oral penetration with a penis and new offences of assault by penetration and sexual assault be created (Home Office, 2000, p. iv). These recommendations were implemented within the SOA 2003, the legislation currently in force (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*).

Rape is now defined under section 1 of the SOA 2003 as the intentional penetration with a penis without reasonable belief of consent, of the vagina, anus or mouth of a person who does not consent to the penetration (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). As well as the inclusion of oral rape for the first time within rape law in E&W, the Act clarified issues surrounding how to define 'consent' in sexual offences (Elvin, 2008). Consent is defined by section 74 of the SOA 2003; a person consents if they are able to agree by choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). This definition introduced a number of presumptions regarding consent and belief in consent; section 75 outlines evidential presumptions regarding consent, such as violence against the victim, and section 76 outlines conclusive presumptions regarding consent, such as impersonating someone known to the victim (Hamer, 2014; Rivers, 2014; *Sexual Offences Act 2003*). The definition of consent has been further clarified through case law ( 'R v. Bree (Benjamin)', 2007; 'R v. H', 2007; 'R v. Jheeta (Harvinder Singh)', 2007). While the Act makes good attempts at defining what circumstances can negate consent, little is done to define what a 'reasonable belief' in consent entails (Clough, 2018;

Gray, 2014). The Act states belief is reasonable dependent upon the circumstances, but without a clear definition within law, this may be clouded by rape myths i.e. false beliefs with regard to rape which usually work to blame victims and exonerate perpetrators (Larcombe *et al.*, 2016; Gray, 2014).

The SOA 2003 also developed the law of sexual offences to include new offences, some completely new, some developed from older laws (Lowe and Rogers, 2017). Assault by penetration, covered by section 2, was a new offence to cover those instances where penetration occurs with an object or a part of the body excluding the penis without consent (Lowe and Rogers, 2017). Sexual assault, section 3, also created a new offence to cover those offences of sexual touching without penetration (Temkin and Ashworth, 2004). Both sections 2 and 3 derived from the offence of indecent assault in the Sexual Offences Act 1956; indecent assault covered a wide range of behaviours, and the new offences of assault by penetration and sexual assault aimed to clarify offences and provide appropriate sentencing (Temkin and Ashworth, 2004) Section 4 of the Act, causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent, was created to signal that other forms of forced sexual activity, not legislated against within sections 1-3, were also offences (Temkin and Ashworth, 2004). Section 4 has both a penetrative and non-penetrative aspect, meaning that a wide variety of offences are included within the Act, from forced masturbation, to forced sex with another victim, and where a person forces a victim to penetrate them with the victim's penis (Temkin and Ashworth, 2004; *Sexual Offences Act 2003*).

Rape, as defined in the SOA 2003, must involve a perpetrator penetrating the victim with their penis (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). This penis can be surgically constructed, as per section 79(3), but without a perpetrator forcing penetration with their penis, the offence of rape cannot take place (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). This means that women, or those who do not have penises, cannot be charged with rape unless they are assisting a male offender (Weare, 2018a). In cases where a man is forced or coerced to penetrate a female, the female is liable to be convicted of causing a person to engage in sexual activity (Weare, 2018a). This distinction between male perpetrated penetrative sexual offending and female perpetrated penetrative sexual offending was determined to be appropriate in



the Setting the Boundaries report as rape was clearly understood by the public to be perpetrated by men (Home Office, 2000, p. 15). The authors of the report also felt that penile penetration, only capable by men or those with a penis (including a surgically constructed penis) carried the risks of both pregnancy and sexually transmittable diseases and therefore should be treated with a greater degree of seriousness than other penetrative offences (Home Office, 2000, p. 15).

Rape and causing a person to engage in sexual activity both carry the same maximum sentence (life imprisonment) and so a male convicted of rape and a female convicted of a penetrative offence within section 4 of the SOA 2003 for a forced-to-penetrate case could, in theory, receive the same sentence (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*). Fitz-Gibbon (2016, p. 49), however, argues that it is not the maximum sentence by which the seriousness of crime should be measured, but rather the minimum sentence. Rape has a minimum sentence of four years, whereas causing a person to engage in sexual activity has a minimum sentence of a community order for penetrative offences (Weare and Hulley, 2019, p. 6; Sentencing Council, 2014). This is perhaps the greatest indicator that these two offences are not considered to have equal weighting (Weare and Hulley, 2019). This means that in a scenario where a male rapes a female, he is liable to be sentenced to a minimum of four years imprisonment, however a female forcing a male to penetrate her may receive as little as a community order (Weare and Hulley, 2019, p. 6; Sentencing Council, 2014). Where two offences are considered to have equal weighting in their seriousness, the expectation would be that perpetrators would receive similar sentences (Weare and Hulley, 2019, p. 6). Within the Setting the Boundaries report (Home Office, 2000, p. iv), it was stated that one goal of reforming sexual offence laws was gender neutrality, as this was in the best interest of providing protection to all potential survivors. However, in separating the laws under which male perpetrators and female perpetrators of penetrative offences would be prosecuted, this seems to directly contradict this goal.

Research regarding the experiences of male victims of female perpetrators is lacking, although there is a growing body of research which considers forced-to-penetrate (FTP) cases i.e. those cases which

involve a perpetrator forcing a male victim to penetrate their vagina, anus or mouth with their penis (Brodlova, 2018; Weare, 2018a). This research largely argues that FTP cases should be included within the definition of rape in E&W, not only because of the discrepancies in minimum sentencing, but also because of the potential for harm to male victims, both physically and psychologically (Javaid, 2018b, p. 23; Weare, 2018a). Previous research has clearly demonstrated that sexual victimisation causes severe psychological and physical problems for both men and women, with men commonly experiencing psychological distress and difficulty functioning in consensual sexual relationships after victimisation (Weare, Porter and Evans, 2017; Fisher and Pina, 2013). For instance, Weare, Porter and Evans (2017) interviewed male victims of FTP and found that 20.9% of victims reported severe negative emotional impacts (a score of ten out of ten on their scale), while only 5.9% reported no negative emotional impact. Perhaps one of the greatest arguments for including FTP cases within the definition of rape is that these men most commonly labelled their experience of being FTP as 'rape'; 'forced sex' and 'non-consensual sex' were also commonly used to describe the assault, these being essentially synonymous with the term 'rape' (Weare, Porter and Evans, 2017). Where these men are denied the label of rape victim, it minimises the offence; the label of rapist for a perpetrator does after all carry more weight than causing a person to engage in sexual activity (Powlesland, 2005).

As cases of FTP are severely under-researched, little is known regarding the prevalence of this offence. The only research concerning the prevalence of penetrative offences under section 4, determined that between 2005-06 and 2017-18 1763 offences had been recorded, 41.1% of which involved a male victim (Weare, 2020). Women normally account for the majority of victims in sexual offending, so while this research does not specifically focus on forced-to-penetrate cases, it may be argued that men account for such a large proportion of penetrative section 4 offences because their experiences cannot be classed as rape, and that more research should be conducted with a view to understanding the prevalence of forced-to-penetrate offences, understanding this offence and how this affects male victims (Weare, 2020).

The law surrounding sexual offences today is radically different from the law even thirty years ago, particularly as it pertains to male-on-male rape. If we are to accept that the law is a reflection of society as Tamanaha (2001, pp. 1-2) suggests, then this would imply that attitudes surrounding male-on-male rape in wider society are also radically different today than thirty years ago. In order to discuss the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences, it is vital we understand the context and history of such offences, particularly as research regarding male victims falls significantly behind that of female victims (Pearson and Barker, 2018). Little research addresses male sexual victimisation, potentially due to the relatively recent developments in law recognising this victimisation as equal to that of female sexual victimisation.

### 2.3 The Prevalence and Reporting of Sexual Offending Against Men

Since male rape was first recognised in law in 1994, there has been a growing body of research into the prevalence of sexual offences against men, although this falls far behind research concerning female victims (Hammond, Ioannou and Fewster, 2016). What little research there is indicates that offences against males happen less often than offences against females, but that a significant number of men are victims at some point in their adult lives (Coxell and King, 2010). The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates that 3.8% of men aged between 16 and 59, compared to 20.3% of women, had been victim to a sexual assault (including attempts) at some point in their life (Office for National Statistics, 2018). 0.3% of men, compared to 6.4% women, had been victim to rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) (Office for National Statistics, 2018). This is consistent with academic research within the UK: Plant, Miller and Plant (2004) estimating 3.2% of men surveyed had been victimised since the age of sixteen. The charity Safeline (2020) also estimates that one in six, or five million men have been targets of sexual assault or rape at some point in their life. Sexual violence amongst the gay, bisexual, and transgender community (GBT) is believed to be significantly higher than that of heterosexual and cisgender men, cisgender being those who identify as the same gender that they were assigned at birth (Livesey and Bradbury, 2017; Aultman, 2014; Coxell and King, 2010). Although little research has been conducted as to the accuracy of this statement within the UK, within

the USA adult sexual violence perpetrated against gay or bisexual men is believed to be between 11% and 45%, whereas in the general population of men, this figure is believed to be 6.7% (Livesey and Bradbury, 2017; Rothman, Exner and Baughman, 2011). Previous experience of being victimised as a child also contributes to the likelihood of being victimised as an adult (Coxell and King, 2010). However, it is unlikely that the true number of sexual offences perpetrated against men will ever be known due to under-reporting on the part of victims and the under recording on the part of authorities (Javaid, 2017b).

Sexual offences against both male and female victims are significantly underreported. There is conflicting evidence as to whether males are more or less likely to report to the police with recent evidence suggesting they may be more likely than female victims to make a report (Ministry of Justice, 2021a; Pearson and Barker, 2018). Underreporting is often attributed to how a victim fears they will be perceived or treated by those they tell, particularly the fear of being disbelieved (Javaid, 2014c). This is sometimes related to the belief in certain rape myths, and the fear that those they tell will subscribe to these rape myths (Pearson and Barker, 2018). Rape myths are false or prejudicial beliefs about rape, perpetrators of rape or victims of rape which create hostility towards those victims (Burt, 1980). A false belief concerning a rape victim may be that if they did not fight off their attacker then it was not 'real rape'; this may be particularly true of male victims, where false beliefs concerning masculinity may lead a person to believe that male victims are physically stronger than female victims and therefore able to defend themselves (Walfield, 2021; Javaid, 2017c). This may lead victims to question their manhood (Hancock, 2019). Victims may also fear that police officers, medical professionals, or counsellors may hold additional false beliefs such as that all male victims are gay, obtaining an erection or ejaculating during an assault means a victim was enjoying the experience, men are not as affected by rape as women, that an offence is more serious when a victim is heterosexual than homosexual, or simply that men cannot be raped at all (Walfield, 2021; Javaid, 2015c; Stermac, Bove and Addison, 2004). These rape myths, particularly where it concerns a heterosexual male victim, tend to conform to stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity i.e. those

characteristics expected of men such as dominance and strength (Javaid, 2015a). When a male is raped, this goes against those stereotypes of men and can serve to perpetuate rape myths (Javaid, 2015b). These beliefs may serve to perpetuate ideas of 'real rape' and 'genuine victims', meaning victims may become concerned that their accusation of sexual assault will not be classed as a 'real rape' and therefore not report the offence (St. George and Spohn, 2018). Recent studies have indicated that negative perceptions around male rape are rampant within society; a recent review of Reddit responses to male survivors indicating clearly that hyper-masculinity, victim blaming, and misunderstandings of the nature of male victimisation contributed to negative responses to male victims (Posey, 2019). Research shows that men are most likely to report their victimisation only when they have significant physical injury and therefore must report through medical necessity, potentially because this also shows some resistance to their perpetrator (Pearson and Barker, 2018; Walker, Archer and Davies, 2005).

Further barriers to reporting to the police may include the fear of family and friends finding out about the assault, as well as the feelings of shame and embarrassment preventing them from speaking out (Weiss, 2010). A heterosexual male victim who has been victimised by another man may also be unsure of how to feel about their assault, and this may lead them to question their sexuality and whether they did something to encourage their attacker (Sivakumaran, 2005). Victims may also doubt the gravity of an offence where the perpetrator was female, or fear that others will diminish the gravity of the offence once they discover the perpetrator was female (Fisher and Pina, 2013).

Studies also suggest that the perception of men as strong and unemotional may prevent men from reporting not just to the police, but support services as well, for fear of looking weak; the rhetoric 'men don't cry' cited as a key reason for not seeking help (Donne *et al.*, 2018). Monk-Turner and Light (2010) analysed help-seeking behaviour of male survivors of sexual offences in a two year period in the United States (US); their findings suggest men are less likely to seek counselling where the offence involved penetration, the likelihood decreasing by 58% in such cases. The researchers suggested that

this may be because penetration added to feelings of guilt and confusion. This has further implications for likelihood of reporting to the police. Monk-Turner and Light (2010) found that 88% of men had not reported to the police, and while this research does not assess the likelihood of those penetrated in comparison to those not in reporting to the police, it can be posited that penetration would also be a significant factor in determining likelihood of reporting, as well as seeking counselling.

An older study, conducted in 1997, concluded that of 115 men analysed, some of whom had been victimised in childhood, only 15% had reported to the police (King and Woollett, 1997). Respondents in this research found it difficult to state why they had not reported to the police, six stating they were too ashamed, two that they were trying to forget the assault, two were too frightened, one was not able to talk about the assault, and a further one saw no point in reporting to the police (King and Woollett, 1997). Rumney (2008) also found survivors not willing to report to the police due to fears surrounding how their families would react, and the impact it would have on their loved ones. These explanations may go some way to explain why rape is the violent crime least likely to have been reported (Hockett *et al.*, 2015; Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Office for National Statistics, 2013).

For those offences which are reported to the police, they are recorded in line with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime (Home Office, 2019d; Home Office, 2019e). The police have previously been criticised for under-recording those offences which have been reported, or for 'no-criming' reports without sufficient justification (Hohl and Conway, 2017; Hohl and Stanko, 2015). Police services may no-crime a report where additional verifiable information (AVI) is uncovered that indicates the allegation is false or no crime occurred (Saunders, 2012). Research has shown that there are discrepancies with how no-criming is used, with no-criming occurring simply because of inconsistencies within a victim's statement, with no additional evidence to suggest a false report (Hohl and Conway, 2017). This is particularly worrying as victims can have a difficult time recounting their experience with accuracy (Hohl and Conway, 2017).

Further issues arose after complaints were made in relation to Project Sapphire, the specialist rape investigation team of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2013; Russell, 2013). Allegations were made against the unit that they were not effectively investigating reports of rape, with a pressure on officers to classify withdrawal statements as retraction statements (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2013; Brown, 2011). A withdrawal statement is used when a complainant maintains that the offence happened, but no longer wants to support the prosecution; however, a retraction statement is used when a complainant states that the reported offence did not actually happen (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2013). In doing this, MPS were able to discount these cases from their official statistics, artificially inflating the statistics and making them look to be more effective at investigating rape than they actually were (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2013).

While police services in E&W are expected to follow the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime, which have been updated since the Sapphire Unit dissolved, it is clear that recording standards within the country are less than ideal, especially where sexual offences are concerned (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2014). In 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS), then Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), determined that crime recording across E&W was substandard, and that in a majority of services victims of crime were being "let down", with over 800,000 reports going unrecorded (HMIC, 2014, p. 18). The recording of rape and other sexual offences has been highlighted as significantly worrying (HMICFRS, 2018). HMICFRS have since completed inspections of police services in order to determine whether progress has been made in relation to the recommendations made in 2014 (HMICFRS, 2018). Reports indicate very mixed results in implementing these recommendations; while some police services have been rated as outstanding in their crime recording, others, as little as two years ago, were rated as inadequate or requiring improvement (HMICFRS, 2020a, 2020b; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2019d; 2019e; 2019f; 2019g). Services rated outstanding in the previous two years accurately recorded between 95.8% and 98.8% of sex offences reported; however, Derbyshire Police, who were rated as inadequate

in 2019, were only recording 77.9% of sex offences reports (HMICFRS, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c). Of particular concern to HMICFRS, is the treatment provided to vulnerable victims by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) (HMICFRS, 2020c). One in five reports of crime are not recorded by GMP appropriately, with victim safeguarding procedures not being implemented, and half of all investigations lacking appropriate supervision (HMICFRS, 2020c). With regards to rape specifically, GMP had improved the rate at which they correctly recorded rape but had incorrectly cancelled a number of reports of rape, without appropriate understanding of the criteria required to cancel an offence (HMICFRS, 2020c). Rape investigations were not progressing in appropriate time frames, with the potential for forensic evidence and lines of enquiry to be lost (HMICFRS, 2020c). This suggests that the accurate recording of rape is a postcode lottery in E&W.

A potential explanation for what appears to be a systematic failure to accurately record sexual offences may be because the cases do not involve the 'ideal victim'. Some survivors of rape may not be seen as 'legitimate' victims because they do not fit into the narrative of 'real' rape perpetrated by rape myths; certain characteristics of the victim, perpetrator or the offence meaning they are not, as Christie (1986, p. 18) calls them, 'ideal victims' (Christie, 1986, p. 19). Christie (1986, p. 18) used this term to describe the victims who are "most readily given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim". He described the ideal victim as weak, carrying out a respectable project, in a place they could not be blamed for being, the offender being big and bad, and having no relationship to the victim (Christie, 1986, p. 19). Christie (1986, p. 21) also highlights the importance of a victim having the power to make their victimhood known, while still maintaining a perception of weakness. When applied to rape victims, particularly male rape victims, there are clear indications that few victims would ever be considered to be legitimate; Christie himself states that a male victim of a physical assault could not be seen as the ideal victim, men often being expected to fight off attackers (Christie, 1986, p. 19). This may go some way to explain why the majority of male participants report negative experiences in relation to the police; officers may question how a man can be raped, particularly if they feel that a man should have been able to fend off an attacker. Further characteristics may de-legitimise their



victimisation in the eyes of officers, homophobia for instance may mean, for some officers, that men who are raped and then perceived to be gay may not have been 'carrying out a respectable project'. This has serious ramifications for a number of reasons, including because the police are seen as the gatekeepers of the CJS (Jordan, 2004). Where the police de-legitimise victims based on characteristics beyond their control, an investigation ceases, and a victim is denied justice, and potentially the support made available to survivors through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), who require a police report and crime reference number to make a claim (Sleath and Bull, 2015; UK Government, no date).

Little research has been conducted into crime outcome data as it applies specifically to male victims of sexual offences. However, some of the most recent research by Hine *et al.* (2021) gives insight into the attrition of male-on-male rape cases within the MPS area. They determined that men were more likely to exit the CJS as a result of a police decision, rather than choosing to withdraw from the CJS; the rate at which reports were determined to have been 'no-crimes' or assigned an outcome of no further action (29%), differing by 7% from the proportion of cases concluding when a victim chooses to withdraw (22%). The likelihood of specific outcomes was significantly impacted by characteristics within cases, with voluntary consumption of drugs by the victim prior to an assault causing a high likelihood of no-crimes and conversely, a voluntary consumption of drugs by a perpetrator reducing the likelihood of no-crimes. Age of the victim and the mental health of the victim prior to the assault were also determined to be significant factors in the likelihood of no-crimes. Only one procedural characteristic appeared to impact upon the odds of no-crime, withdrawal or no further action outcomes: whether a suspect was identified within the case. A suspect being identified reducing the likelihood of these outcomes. This research focused on a specific time period within one service in England, and therefore may not be representative of attrition through E&W, or applicable to other time periods.

Since 2015, crime outcome data across E&W has been annually published, detailing how reports of crime have been concluded within each financial year (Home Office, 2016). This data provides further insight into police recorded crime (PRC) outcomes year on year, with a distinction between rape of a male aged sixteen or over and the rape of a female, allowing for comparisons to be made. Combining data across the available financial years (years ending March 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020), and then calculating the total number of reports of incidents of rape, and the outcomes of these reports, shows distinct differences in the proportion of various outcomes between male and female victims (Home Office, 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2021a; 2021b). Between April 2014 and March 2020, 173,799 offences were reported and recorded within the 43 territorial and the British Transport Police (BTP) service areas, of which 163,390 involved a female victim and 10,409 involved a male victim (not including those recorded reports which were later cancelled or transferred). The number of reports across the six years has dramatically increased – by 196.13% in female reporting and 295.83% in male victims – a steady increase with the exception of the final year (2019-20) in which the number of reports fell, consistent with accepted statistics analysed by the Office for National Statistics (2021b).

By far the outcome taking the greatest proportion of cases in figures for both male and female victims is a victim choosing to withdraw (51.63% in female cases and 47.5% in male cases, where cases involving a suspect identified or otherwise are combined). The case outcome taking the lowest proportion of cases for both male and female victims, is a charge or summons being brought against a perpetrator (6.64% for female and 3.26% for male victims). These figures paint a worrying picture for rape investigation across E&W, the majority of cases ending when a victim chooses to no longer engage with the CJS, with no perpetrators brought to justice. While these figures are consistent with those reported in academia and in the media, the distinction between cases involving a female victim and a male victim is, as already stated, largely under-researched, with figures only recently being reviewed as part of the latest End-to-End Review of rape investigation (Ministry of Justice, 2021b). These figures suggest that men are less likely to choose to withdraw from the CJS, and yet cases

involving male victims are half as likely to result in a charge or summons being brought. A further key distinction between those cases involving a female victim rather than a male, is the likelihood of a suspect being identified – when cases assigned the outcomes of ‘investigation complete, no suspect identified’ and ‘evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action’ are combined, it can be seen that the rate of no suspect being identified is over double in cases involving male victims, in comparison to female victims (47.38% vs. 21.96%).

This finding correlates to Hine *et al.* (2021) research, wherein it was suggested that men are more likely to be victim to ‘stranger rape’ than women, owing to the greater likelihood of men engaging in anonymous sexual encounters with other men in the practice known as ‘chemsex’. The Ministry of Justice (2021a) supports this finding; while 15% of cases involving a female victim are perpetrated by a stranger, this figure stands at 45% for male cases. This high rate of apparent stranger rapes in cases involving male victims may account for a lack of charges/summons within these statistics. However, police services prioritise the investigation of stranger rapes, classifying them as one of the crimes that necessitate a major investigation, alongside homicide and kidnap (Lancashire Constabulary, 2021; Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire Constabulary, 2016; Centrex, 2006).

It is difficult to surmise the exact causes of the lower conviction rates and higher incidents of no suspect being identified through pure numbers, suggesting that far more research is needed to understand how cases involving male victims differ from those involving female victims from an investigative standpoint. Further research is also required to determine the exact causes of more apparent stranger rapes in the cases involving male victims, as the current hypothesis that men are more likely to engage in anonymous sexual activities is speculative.

Javaid (2016b) suggests that police officers are likely to overestimate the number of false reports of rape, particularly by men. Previous research suggests that police officers are notoriously bad at accurately estimating the proportion of reports, some police officers estimating that up to 90% of

reports of rape made are false (McMillan, 2018). While it is difficult to accurately estimate the number of false reports, existing research estimates that the proportion of false reports is minimal (Weiser, 2017; Rumney and McCartan, 2017). There is little to say whether there are differences in rates of false reporting between men and women, although McMillan (2018) noted that very few police officers participating in their research referenced males making false reports, unsurprising given the relatively low proportion of reports made by men, but perhaps indicative that officers associate false reporting more with female complainants than male. It is surprising then, that the number of no-crimes reports contained within PRC outcome data differs significantly between males and females, with males more likely to have a report no-crimes (females: 1.51%; males: 2.81%). On the surface, this may suggest that men are more likely to falsely report rape, the officers in Javaid's (2016b) research suggesting that men falsely report due to poor mental health or 'regretful' consensual sexual encounters. However, the evidence in favour of this is anecdotal, and, as already stated, officers are not generally able to accurately predict the proportion of 'false' to 'legitimate' reports. Previous research supports this finding; a review of the MPS statistics finding that while 23% of cases involving a female victim were no-crimes, 41% of cases involving a male victim were no-crimes (Deputy Commissioner's Command, Directorate of Strategic Development and Territorial Policing and Project Sapphire cited in Rumney, 2009). This is yet another under-researched area of sexual violence as it relates to males. Significant differences between the case progression of reports made by males and females is indicative of significant differences in either the police response to male survivors, or the circumstances surrounding the sexual victimisation of males.

While exact figures differ dependent on the inclusion/exclusion of cancelled data, as well as where missing data is estimated and included, the overall findings remain the same. A detailed table of the PRC outcomes are available in Appendix B.

## 2.4 Rape and Sexual Assault Investigations: The Policies, Procedures and Practices

The investigation of sexual offences in E&W is under constant scrutiny; as such, there are constant cycles of reviews and reforms (Jordan, 2011). These reviews, whether national or regional, tend to stem from similar concerns time and again, such as specific incidents of police failings coming to light, and/or the falling conviction rate for rape and serious sexual offences. One particularly notable instance of a real public outcry for reforms to modern police handling of sexual offence allegations came following a documentary in 1982; officers were filmed aggressively interrogating a rape complainant, questioning the veracity of her account and her previous sex life, until she was bullied into withdrawing her complaint (Bourke, 2018; Westmarland, 2011, p. 87; Foley, 1990). The Home Office issued guidance but the police as a whole has been plagued with problems since this, from criticisms regarding 'no-criming', the treatment of victims, and the handling of high-profile investigations, to name but a few (Dodd, 2020; Barr, 2019; Waterson, 2019; BBC News, 2018; Westmarland, 2011, p. 87; Glass, 2010a; Glass, 2010b).

In response to criticism the police and Home Office have developed improved policies and procedures regarding sexual offence allegations and investigations to achieve best practice; these developments include the inception of specially trained officers and specialist investigation teams, alongside the improved training for all officers, and improvements to the enforcement of Home Office Counting Rules for recording crime (Rowe and Macauley, 2019; Rumney *et al.*, 2019; Brown, 2011). There have also been developments in approaches to victims with the improved availability of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and Early Evidence Kits (EEKs), as well as an improved approach to the handling of investigations, Henriques (2019) suggesting that officers use the term 'complainant' rather than 'victim' to ensure the presumption of innocence and the appropriate investigative mindset is upheld (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2012). Specifically relating to male victims, since the early 1990s various police services have made efforts to improve their response, engaging with various support groups (Rumney, 2008). These changes are praised by reviews, often stating that the polices are right, it's the implementation

of these policies that needs to be improved, with inconsistent approaches and adherence to policy from service-to-service (Angiolini, 2015; HMIC and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2012; Stern, 2010; Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2007). One potential reason for poor implementation of the right policies may be police officers' omission of these policies from their decision making, caused by police organisational culture (Demirkol and Nalla, 2019).

Police culture can be defined as a shared set of unofficial attitudes, norms, and values which serve to form a sense of solidarity in a stressful work environment (Demirkol and Nalla, 2019). This work culture creates high levels of secrecy, and a sense of 'us vs. them', meaning prejudice and suspicion of outsiders are accepted and encouraged by socialisation with fellow officers and isolation from the public (Campeau, 2015; Loyens and Maesschalck, 2014). Further research indicates these characteristics form a kind of hypermasculinity or machismo persona of officers, where stereotypical displays of masculinity are expected (Rich and Seffrin, 2013; Page, 2008). This kind of culture does not lend itself to the sensitive nature of rape investigation, with an inherent culture of scepticism of reports of rape and serious sexual assault (Javaid, 2018c; Sleath and Bull, 2012). Male rape victims may challenge the norms set within the hypermasculine work environment of policing, challenging the status quo of set gender norms (Javaid, 2016b). Javaid (2017d) posits that rape myths concerning male victims may be inherent to police culture, due to this emphasis on masculine militaristic norms. This culture of scepticism together with hypermasculine norms, may cause officers to discredit male victims of rape whether intentionally or not, causing the investigation to end prematurely either because the male victim has withdrawn, or the police have failed to investigate effectively. This can be somewhat supported by the accounts of specialist police officers, who state that the police are not best suited to providing support to victims, especially given the macho culture and a focus on criminal investigation rather than emotional support (Javaid, 2018b, pp. 198 and 208).

## 2.5 Specialised Training

There are a variety of specialised roles within the CJS concerning rape and serious sexual assault investigations, from specialist investigators, specialist liaison officers, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Rape Coordinators and CPS Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) units, and specialist prosecutors (CPS, 2016; National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010, p. 133; CoP, no date). These roles have been developed to provide the best possible response to victims. The role of Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers, also known as Specially Trained Officers (STOs) and Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs), is particularly important in investigating rape and serious sexual offence cases (Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HMIC, 2007). SOITs were first developed in the 1990s and termed 'chaperones', with the purpose of supporting the victim and referring them to external support services, as well as liaising with the officers investigating and the victim (McMillan, 2015). This was replaced in the early 2000s by the more detailed SOIT/STO/SOLO role, still comprising of the responsibilities of chaperones, as well as arranging and conducting victim interviews, arranging forensic examinations, and being the single point of contact for victims (McMillan, 2015; Horvath and Yexley, 2012, p. 118; CoP, no date). SOIT officer training is delivered according to the CoP's course which comprises of two weeks of classroom-based learning, with no mandatory refresher training (Appendix A). Some services, such as MPS, have extended this training, however, to be four weeks (Metropolitan Police, no date). The little research that has been conducted concerning SOITs has shown that the deployment and care of SOITs has been varied in recent years, with these officers feeling over-stretched and under-appreciated (Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2007). There have also been problems with the way fellow officers view the role of SOIT, officers who have been through particularly stressful incidents at work often being pushed into the role of SOIT, seen as less stressful than operational work, and the work itself of SOIT, supporting victims, being seen as 'pink and fluffy' and outside of the focus of traditional policing i.e. arrests (Williams, 2019).

Very little research has been conducted into the effectiveness of specialised roles including SOITs, and even less research has been conducted concerning their effectiveness in relation to male victims of sexual offences (MacMillan, 2015). The key research concerning male victims and SOITs is Jamel's (2010; 2008) work which found very limited experience of working with male victims and a lack of training given to SOITs with regard to male victims. 11% of officers in the sample had never supported a male victim, and 53% had only supported a maximum of three male victims (Jamel, 2008). There were also issues highlighted concerning the victims' ability to choose the gender or sexuality of SOIT officers, as well as maintaining contact with the victim through a singular SOIT officer due to limited resources and a lack of male SOIT officers (Jamel, 2008). One SOIT officer also suggested a 'postcode lottery' with inconsistencies from borough to borough within their service (Jamel, 2008). Some SOITs also highlighted the difficulty of getting cases to court, with some cases not proceeding when SOITs believed that they should (Jamel, 2008). Many of these issues were also highlighted by the sample of male victims; an inability to choose the gender of their SOIT, and frustration getting their case to court (Jamel, 2008). Many victims also described prejudicial and offensive attitudes from officers involved in their case with one man being told that they were "by nature more guilty of this crime and could not be a victim of it" (Jamel, 2008, p. 126). This kind of insensitive response from the police led some respondents to develop depression and attempt suicide (Jamel, 2008). A lack of further support referrals made by police also meant victims were often not aware of relevant services that could support them outside of the police setting (Jamel, 2010). It is important to note, that while this study had many examples of negative police practices, there were also examples of positive police practice, with survivors stating that their SOIT was understanding, kept in contact and explained the process well (Jamel, Bull and Sheridan, 2008; Jamel, 2008).

Jamel's findings are further supported by Javaid (2018b, p. 223), who found an inconsistency in whether victims were offered the choice of gender of their SOIT and Javaid (2016c) who found an inconsistent level of police communication with male victims. Goddard, Harewood and Brennan (2015) also reported that respondents were more likely to feel believed, safe and listened to by Haven



SARC staff (90-95%) than SOIT officers (60-75%). Specialist training in general has been further criticised in its lack of effectiveness in reducing levels of rape myth acceptance (RMA) and victim blaming (Sleath and Bull, 2012). Specialist training should address false beliefs concerning victims and perpetrators of rape, and therefore officers who have undergone this training should exhibit lower levels of RMA than their untrained counterparts (Sleath and Bull, 2012). This also extended to officers with SOIT training (Sleath and Bull, 2012). Several studies have been conducted across the world, and found similar results (Hine and Murphy, 2017; Goodman-Delahunty and Graham, 2011). Conversely, there is some evidence that intensive training can work to reduce RMA and change officer perceptions of victims and perpetrators; this would therefore suggest that differences in the intensity or type of training, as well as time elapsed since training, may impact on effectiveness to different degrees (Darwinkel, Powell and Tidmarsh, 2013). Others have suggested that the ineffectiveness of specialised training may also be caused by a lack of communication between police services and academia, training typically being very insular to the police (Stanko and Hohl, 2018, p. 176).

## 2.6 The Experiences of Male Victims in Reporting to the Police

The proportion of men reporting their victimisation to the police and related agencies has been steadily increasing, as evidenced by the greater proportion of men being referred to SARCs by the police and an overall rise in police statistics (McLean, Balding and White, 2005; Home Office, 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2021a; 2021b). Rape and serious sexual assault of men is still severely underreported however (Javaid, 2018a). Of those few male victims of rape who decide to report to the police, research suggests they have largely negative experiences (Javaid, 2016b; Javaid, 2015a). For example, Walker, Archer and Davies (2005) had forty respondents to their questionnaire, of which only five had reported to the police, and of those five only one stated that the police were responsive and helpful. The other four had received disinterested or homophobic responses from police and regretted their decision to report (Walker, Archer and Davies, 2005). One of the perpetrators of these men was convicted, however, the victim was left feeling more like a suspect than a victim and felt more victimised from their court experience (Walker, Archer and Davies,

2005). Many of the victims in the study also wished that the police treated them equally to women, publicised that men can be victimised too, and treated male victims with empathy, without homophobia and believed them when they came forward (Walker, Archer and Davies, 2005). This is further emphasised by Jamel's (2008) findings: male survivors were treated with hostility and often disbelieved.

More recent research has had similar results. Weare, Pattison and Hulley's (2019) interview participants stated that victims felt re-traumatised by their police experiences, with many male victims feeling interrogated and feeling that they cannot risk speaking to anyone else. Many of these studies focus on male-to-male sexual violence, but the even smaller pool of research concerning female-to-male violence has also signalled similar experiences of male victims of female perpetrators (Weare and Hulley, 2019). Five of the thirty men interviewed in one study had reported their FTP experience to the police, typically as part of a complaint of domestic abuse (Weare and Hulley, 2019). One participant reported that officers had insinuated that because he had waited to report his victimisation, that he must have enjoyed it, and other victims had felt the police had been unsupportive (Weare and Hulley, 2019). Other participants did state that their experience of the police had been positive or had positive elements, although negative experiences were far more common (Weare and Hulley, 2019). Negative responses from the police, support agencies, or those involved in the care of male survivors may have a significant impact on the likelihood of seeking further help and increase feelings of self-blame (Hawkins *et al.*, 2019). It is vital that male survivors have positive interactions with practitioners to promote and encourage healing and help-seeking behaviours (Hawkins *et al.*, 2019).

In analysing police interactions with male survivors, it is wise to do so with some caution; for one, samples of participants who have reported to the police tend to be small, and additionally, it is difficult to know when some participants may have reported to the police, the worry being that those who reported a significant time ago may have had different experiences to those reporting today (Rumney,

2008). Research from further afield than the UK, particularly in the US, appears to support the existing research from the UK, however, with male survivors reporting significantly negative experiences in their interactions with the police (Javaid, 2014b). The majority of existing research regarding male rape has been conducted in the US, with only a limited pool available assessing the police in the UK (Javaid, 2014b).

## 2.7 Conclusion

It is clear that there is little academic research to suggest how male survivors of sexual offences may experience the police, nor is there much research to suggest how SOIT officers perceive male survivors. What little research has been conducted suggests that while developments have been made to improve the recognition of and response to male survivors, further work is required. Male survivors frequently report negative experiences in their interactions with the police, and SOIT officers report a lack of experience and training with regards to male survivors. Much of this research consists of smaller samples or can now be considered to be somewhat outdated. It is therefore vital for research to be completed in the present day to understand the experiences of men in reporting sexual victimisation to the police. This suggests a number of broad research questions: how are SOITs prepared for the role? Do male survivors still have largely negative experiences with the police? Do specialist officers have any impact on survivors?

## *Chapter 3: Methodology*

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the methodology utilised within this research. It is vital to discuss the methods used within a research project to clearly outline how this study was conducted to allow for replication and justify the data collection, sampling, and analysis methods. This chapter begins with an analysis of policing research, focusing on the growing body of academic research and evidence-based policing (EBP), to provide context as to how this research works with existing research to provide a knowledge base from which police practice can be improved. This moves into outlining the specific research aims and theoretical framework employed, providing yet more context to this research, and defining the scope and background. An analysis of various data types and collection methods will culminate in a description of how this research utilised semi-structured interviews and a qualitative questionnaire to gather data. Thematic analysis was used to analyse this data, and so a review of the strengths and weaknesses of this method will justify this decision. Finally, this chapter will discuss ethics and reflect upon the challenges faced during this research, particularly around finding participants and working during a pandemic.

### **3.2 Policing Research**

As policing research has developed, greater emphasis has been placed upon conducting research with the aim to produce scientific evidence of best practice (Sherman, 1999). In doing this, an approach can be developed in which practice is reviewed and modelled to this evidence to inform policy and practice; this is termed evidence-based policing (EBP) (CoP, 2020a). Policing research of this nature can be used for two purposes: to better understand an issue or to evaluate a policing intervention; and should be based on peer-reviewed and carefully conducted studies (CoP, 2020a; Brown *et al.*, 2018). Continuous evaluation of best evidence should take place by practitioners to learn how best to fit this evidence into their day-to-day work to continue a cycle of reflection on practice (CoP, 2020b). Universities are increasingly becoming involved in producing this evidence through partnerships with

police services, and a new generation of recruits with degrees (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018, p. 28; Scottish Institute for Policing Research, 2017; Sherman, 2013). A key part of the focus to innovate policing is the What Works Centre, developed by the CoP in 2013 to collect and share research with the aim to reduce crime (CoP, 2020b). While policing research has developed exponentially in recent years, there are many areas of policing yet to be explored and with new ways of committing crime being developed every day, it is crucial policing continuously develops to ensure best practice.

EBP has previously been criticised for over-reliance on quantitative studies as well as the exclusion of professional experience in favour of research, potentially discounting valuable information (Kriegler, 2019; Lumsden and Goode, 2016; Hammersley, 2005). The focus on determining evidence-based best practice in any field is one embedded within epistemology, but this multi-disciplinary approach alongside the use of experience and situational factors does not necessarily work within the epistemological approach to EBP (McDonald, 2003). Policing research is regarded to be set within epistemological and ontological assumptions, with a focus on scientific discovery of achievable knowledge alongside social research (Wood *et al.*, 2018). Ontology is concerned with the reality of the world and epistemology can be defined as being concerned with how knowledge can be obtained and communicated (Scotland, 2012). Policing is closely related to social work in that situational judgement alongside experience and a multi-disciplinary informed approach is required for responding to complex incidents such as domestic abuse or sexual offences, and critics have argued the same objections to this epistemological approach to policing research (Brown *et al.*, 2018).

EBP has, however, gained a large following as it is difficult to argue that policy should not be written using evidence that it will be effective (Hammersley, 2005). The question to be considered is what form this evidence should take; a reluctance by some to include professional experience may exclude valuable insights into how this policy is used in practice (Hammersley, 2005). Rape investigation has been at the centre of reviews, reforms and inspections for much of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with recent examples including the End-to-End Rape Review, The London Rape Review, and the 2019 Rape

Inspection by Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPsi) (Ministry of Justice, 2021c; Dearden, 2019; HMCPsi, 2019; Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime, 2019). The response to victims of rape consistently forms a significant part of these reviews and inspections, as well as a focus of the Victims' Commissioner, as evident within a recent Annual Report (Baird, 2020, p. 16). What is also evident is the drive for victims to be able to voice their experiences (Baird, 2020, p. 44). The importance of hearing the voices of victims has gained much recognition and these voices can have great influence over policy decisions (Walklate *et al.*, 2019). Where EBP prioritises quantitative research over other forms of evidence, however, victim voices may be discounted alongside professional experience (Hammersley, 2005). This would suggest that a balance should be struck in looking for an evidence-base in policy and practice decisions.

### 3.3 Theoretical Framework

Much research concerning male survivors of sexual offences uses the theoretical perspective of hegemonic masculinity; that is, what is understood as those practices allowing men to rule over women in society (Javaid, 2017a; Javaid, 2015b; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Lee, 2000). Hegemonic masculinity refers to the masculine expectations dominant within society, which may contrast with male survivors of sexual offences, as men are expected to be the model of aggressiveness, dominance, and physical strength, and victimhood challenges this perception (Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2015b). Victimhood is often understood to refer to a loss or weakness, in direct conflict with aggressiveness and dominance (Rock, 2002, p. 14). It is theorised that it is this conflict which explains why so few men choose to report to both the police and support agencies, for fear that they will face stigma in the form of rape myths perpetrated by hegemonic masculinity (Kassing, Beesley and Frey, 2005). Rape myths (prejudicial, false beliefs concerning rape, perpetrators of rape and victims) commonly associated with male survivors include that "real" men are capable of fending off attackers, that only gay men are the perpetrators and victims of rape, men are not as affected by rape as women, or that men cannot be raped at all (Turchik and Edwards, 2012). The link here is obvious, in a society where men are expected to be aggressive and macho, victimisation in the form of rape

directly contradicts this expectation, leading to false beliefs about the kind of man who experiences sexual offences and fear of these false beliefs when making a report. This may be particularly true when considering reporting to the police, a body largely viewed as exemplifying hegemonic masculinity (Fielding, 1994, p. 47).

Fielding (1994, p. 47) defines police culture as a pure form of hegemonic masculinity, with emphasis on aggressiveness, competition, misogyny and competing 'in groups' and 'out groups', the 'out groups' being ostracised. A culture formed on the basis of masculinity does not lend itself to the at times sensitive nature of rape and sexual offence investigation, particularly when a male survivor challenges the perception of "real" men (Javaid, 2016b). Research suggests that police officers, in particular male officers, are more likely to treat male victims with disbelief and will often assume a victim is homosexual because perpetrators are often men, leading to homophobia directed at those victims perceived to be homosexual (Rumney, 2009). This is illustrated by Abdullah-Khan's (2008) research involving police officers; officers suggested that their colleagues were unlikely to accept or understand that a male was not able to fend off attackers during a rape (Abdullah-Khan, 2008, p. 131). Officers' responses also suggested that bigotry was rife throughout the police, with some officers suggesting that a "homosexual lobby" had emphasised the issue of male rape in order to gain attention, dismissing the suggestion of a greater number of reports resulting from an increase in legitimate victims (Abdullah-Khan, 2008, pp. 123 and 131). Abdullah-Khan (2002) also noted that some officers were unconcerned with male rape due to the proportionately few victims who reported: "...an insignificant part of one percent of reported serious crime", therefore suggesting that male rape was not an issue the police needed to concern themselves with. A further officer also stated that they had experienced fellow officers "sniggering" during a rape investigation (Abdullah-Khan, 2002). Harmful rape myths were evident in some cases, one officer believing that homosexuals are promiscuous and therefore more likely to be victim to rape and sexual offences, and other officers believing that homosexuals enjoyed the attention and drama of reporting (Abdullah-Khan, 2002). Yet another officer believed that highlighting the issue of male rape would promote "unconventional lifestyles"

(Abdullah-Khan, 2002). While some officers, particularly SOIT officers within the study, were confident that officers treated male victims appropriately, the research highlights that attitudes towards male survivors may be influenced by hegemonic masculinity; homophobia and masculine attitudes affecting the perception of male survivors. Due to the established research base utilising a hegemonic masculinity framework, and the applicability to the chosen research subject, hegemonic masculinity will be utilised through this research. In doing so, it ensures this research is compatible with existing research in the field. Using hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical perspective from which to base my research is therefore the most appropriate choice to make.

### **3.4 Research Design**

This research utilised a phenomenological design, that is one that focuses on the lived experiences of members of a group relating to a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). In doing this research, phenomenologists focus on the common or shared aspects of this phenomenon and speak to individuals or analyse materials which offer insight or explanation of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). The focus is on what was experienced and how they interpreted this experience (Creswell, 2013, 76). For the purposes of this research, this group comprised of those capable of offering insight into the phenomenon of male sexual victimisation as it relates to policing. After determining how and if a phenomenon can be researched using this approach, researchers must gather data from participants capable of discussing the phenomenon being studied; it is recommended that this sample is comprised of between five and twenty-five participants (Polkinghorne, 1989, cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 81). Thematic analysis works well with phenomenological designs, identifying themes emerging from the data (Benner, 2008, p. 463).

### **3.5 Research Methods**

#### **3.5.1 Data Collection**

Generally speaking, there are three types of data collection: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Kalaian, 2008, p. 726). Quantitative research aims to collect objective data to describe and



explain something, typically using a deductive approach i.e. a top down approach stemming from a theory and testing hypotheses (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010, p. 21; O’Leary, 2007, p. 56). Quantitative research tends to focus on patterns that can be represented by numbers and associations between variables within the numbers (Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 183). Converse to quantitative methods, qualitative methods, in the simplest terms, involves research using data that is not nominal (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013, p. 3). Qualitative research is interested in how subjects understand and experience the world around them, typically using an inductive approach, allowing a theory to emerge from data as it arises (Merriam, 2009, p. 13; O’Reilly, 2009, p. 104). Mixed methods research is the blending of quantitative methods and qualitative methods in some form (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016, p. 57). In developing this research, each form of data collection was considered. Initially, quantitative methods were considered due to their reliable and logical nature, objectivity, and the ability to have large samples representative of the population or phenomena being studied (Pierce, 2008, p. 42; Garwood, 2006, p. 251). Further, quantitative data is relatively cheap, easy, and quick to gather, not necessarily being as constrained by needing face-to-face interactions or being as time intensive regarding data analysis as qualitative data (Pierce, 2008, p. 42). However, quantitative methods are sometimes criticised for not reflecting the complexity of subjects when used within social research (Pierce, 2008, p. 44; Paley, 2008, p. 649). This is related to the notion that quantitative research is too detached and clinical to analyse complex social circumstance, the position of some sociological researchers being that researchers cannot stay detached but rather are a part of the personal experiences of participants as the research progresses (Pierce, 2008, p. 44; Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 155). It is therefore difficult to conduct quantitative research in a social context because it is difficult to achieve the standards of the natural sciences (Pierce, 2008, p. 44). Due to this difficulty in being able to accurately convey in the appropriate depth the experiences of participants if using quantitative methods, this was determined to not be an appropriate method to achieve answering the research questions. As such, qualitative methods were considered more applicable.

Qualitative research encompasses a broader variety of data collection methods than quantitative and allows for a wider range of theoretical frameworks (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013, p. 3). A further key feature of qualitative research is the use of flexibility and open-ended questions, particularly in focus groups and interviews, with the ability to probe further once an answer has been given (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013, p. 5). Qualitative methods were determined to be best for this research because, in contrast to quantitative methods, they are considered the ideal for understanding social constructs, particularly through the ability to probe further into answers through interviews and focus groups (Pierce, 2008, p. 45). Qualitative methods allow for a researcher to see the world or a particular experience through the eyes of a participant and therefore use inductive reasoning to form theories (Kennedy, 2018, p. 51). This allows for researchers to form recommendations based on the experiences of the group being studied, with the potential for policy change to arise as a result (Pierce, 2008, p. 45). Qualitative studies allow us to understand the 'why' and 'how', while quantitative methods focus on the 'what' of the subject being studied, they allow for an in depth analysis of what influences the phenomena and are best used where the specific measurements of a phenomena are not important, but rather the explanation for why phenomena occurs in the first place (Carson et al., 2001, p. 66).

While qualitative methods were determined to be ideal for this research project, they are not without their faults. Qualitative research is sometimes considered less reliable than quantitative research, largely due to the ease with which a researcher can become biased and over-identify with subjects and participants (Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 30). Researchers may also be prone to observer drift, wherein an observer becomes less accurate at recording results as they accept results as the norm that should be recorded as relevant (Miller, 2007, p. 84). Quantitative research, by nature impersonal and clinical, is not as susceptible to this bias and therefore lack of reliability (Pierce, 2008, p. 46). Because of this, qualitative methods are sometimes viewed as 'soft' science (Pierce, 2008, p. 46). Reliability can also be affected by the researcher attempting to really see through the eyes of the participant; where fundamental differences lie between the researcher and participants it can be

difficult to accurately portray the subject's interpretation of the world, as this requires a degree of interpretation on behalf of the researcher (Pierce, 2008, p. 46). In order to combat these criticisms, during qualitative data gathering, strict measures and controls were put in place; an interview guide outlined the questions and flow to give consistent structure to interviews, transcripts were carefully written and thoroughly checked to avoid bias or misinterpretation, and data was analysed with careful consideration for the meaning behind each answer.

Mixed methods research was also considered as this can improve the reliability of results, to compensate for the weaknesses of both quantitative research and qualitative research, and to provide the broadest range of data possible relating to the research question/questions (Denscombe, 2008). Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) identify mixed methods researchers as being on a scale. At one end of the scale is pure qualitative research, at the other pure quantitative research i.e. those using only one method in research (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). In the centre of this scale is pure mixed methods research where researchers utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods equally (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). Between the centre and far ends of the scale is qualitative mixed and quantitative mixed (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). Qualitative mixed, being qualitative dominant, tends to use a theoretical stance aligned with qualitative research, utilising quantitative methods to the advantage to the research project (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). The opposite is true of quantitative mixed, being quantitative dominant (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). In determining a data collection method, a qualitative mixed approach was considered as this would allow for the richness of data gathered through qualitative methods, with the potential for quantitative methods to boost the reliability of these results and the understanding of the police response to male survivors (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p. 9). However, mixed methods research can be time intensive, and with the Masters programme only running for one year, it was determined this would be too difficult to achieve within this limited time (Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There is also the danger in mixed methods research that rather than balancing out the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative

methods, they can enhance the criticisms around both forms of data being collected; where one is susceptible to bias, the other is as well, especially where the data is being gathered from a single source e.g. the same participant completing a quantitative questionnaire and a qualitative interview (Hastings, 2010, p. 1539). Once it was determined that qualitative methods would be the most appropriate for this research study, it became necessary to consider the method for data collection.

Initially it was determined that all data collected from participants in this research would be collected via semi-structured interviews. Broadly speaking, there are three forms of interview: structured, semi-structured, unstructured (Morse, 2012, p. 194). Structured interviewing does not offer the flexibility necessary to fully explore the research questions, while unstructured interviewing would prove too difficult to appropriately compare the answers of participants and therefore code. Semi-structured interviews offered both flexibility and the ability to code appropriately. Semi-structured interviewing utilises a set of pre-determined open-ended interview questions or topics in the form of an interview guide, which the participant can answer in any way and in any depth (Ayres, 2012, p. 811). Semi-structured interviews offer a more flexible approach to interviewing than structured interviews, while still offering more structure than unstructured interviewing. Semi-structured interviewing is very flexible; a researcher may choose to strictly follow the interview guide or move with the flow of the interview and change both the order of questions/topics and how these questions/topics are broached (Ayres, 2012, p. 810). Open-ended questions allow for the participant to control the interview in some respects; they are able to discuss their experience from their perspective and to guide the flow of the interview with their answers (Roulston, 2008, p. 598). This was deemed vital to adequately explore the experiences of participants and weave the voice of the survivors and practitioners throughout the discussion and recommendations. One of the key strengths of semi-structured interviews is the ability to allow participants to answer questions in their own way, and to introduce themes and topics that a researcher may not have included on their own (Heath et al., 2009, p. 81-82). This allows for a participant to explain their perspective with their own words with the ability to probe further to gather rich data (Morris, 2015, p. 8). While conducting semi-structured

interviewing and transcription can be time intensive, this additional effort was deemed vital to fully encapsulate the experiences of participants (Morris, 2015, p. 8).

Interview questions were developed using previous research and the research questions within this study. Previous research has indicated a lack of training regarding male survivors, a lack of choice in the gender of SOIT officers for survivors, and a general lack of experience in supporting males (Jamel, 2008). As such, questions aimed at addressing whether these claims still held true, as well as developing knowledge of the police response today. For example, SOITs were asked to describe their initial training as well as any refresher training. SOITs were then asked: 'when you think about the training you have received, how effective would you say it has been in preparing you for the role?'. This question aimed to understand not only where SOITs felt their training lacked, but also as a way to see if SOITs stated unprompted whether their training had been lacking concerning male survivors specifically. This then worked as a good gateway into asking directly about whether their training had included any male-specific inputs. From here, the interviews moved to discussing day-to-day work such as through the question: 'what would you say are the main responsibilities of a SOIT officer?'. This then moved to more direct questions about male survivors. The progress of questions was designed into sections of training, day-to-day work and the male survivors. This not only made it easier to focus on specific topics, but was aimed at producing a rapport with participants before asking questions that delved more into their specific views and opinions such as: 'how could existing approaches to male victims be improved?'. Questions to counsellors followed a similar structure, with questions divided into topics designed to move into those questions which are more complicated and emotive, such as 'how would you describe police interactions with survivors of rape and sexual offences?'. Interviews always ended with the same question: 'is there anything else you want me to know or anything else you want to say about male survivors or your work?'. This allowed for new themes to emerge from answers, and for participants to ensure they had highlighted the subjects most important to their view-point. The interview guide used in this research can be found in Appendix C. While semi-structured interviews were deemed the best method for exploring participant

experiences, it became apparent after data collection had begun that few male survivors were willing to participate in interviews, presumed to be because it was too difficult to speak to someone about their experiences, and despite reassurances of anonymity, the fear of being identified. Questionnaires were determined to be a reasonable compromise after only finding two survivors to participate. At the end of data collection, one survivor had participated in an interview, one had received the interview questions via email and returned their answers in the same manner, and the remaining six had completed the questionnaire, developed after the first two interviews.

A questionnaire, in simple terms, is a way of collecting data through a set of standardised questions, usually administered in a standardised way (Trobia, 2008, p. 653). Questionnaires allow for open-ended questions, just as semi-structured interviews do, but also provide a level of anonymity that interviews do not, while being both time and cost effective (Sue and Ritter, 2015, p. 7; Chasteauneuf, 2010, p.770). Questionnaires are usually designed to have three parts: the introductory page, instructions – when the questionnaire is self-administered – and the main body containing the questions (Trobia, 2008, p. 653). The introductory page of the questionnaire contains information about the aims of the study, outlines the rights of participants i.e. anonymity and confidentiality, and attempts to encourage prospective participants to complete the questionnaire (Trobia, 2008, pp. 653-654). The instruction page is rather self-explanatory, describing how to answer questions and navigate through the questionnaire (Trobia, 2008, p. 654). Finally, the main body contains the questions, with a specified structure to ensure the logical sequence of questions (Trobia, 2008, p. 654). The questionnaire designed for male survivors followed this same structure, as found in Appendix D. Additional safeguards were put in place to ensure the wellbeing of survivors, including ‘ESCAPE’ buttons which would allow participants to be directed straight to a page with the details of support services, with the additional option of whether to withdraw or keep their answers. A ‘finish later’ option was included on each page to allow survivors to take breaks as well. Questionnaires are seen as one of the easiest methods for data collection and are favoured by inexperienced researchers; as such, they are prone to make common mistakes including over-complicated wording, poor question

sequencing and unappealing formatting and design (Julien, 2012, pp. 847-848). To safeguard against this, the questionnaire was proofread and reviewed by experienced researchers and the Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) Ethics Committee (approval in Appendix E). Questionnaires do not allow for researchers to probe further into participant responses and there is a danger participants will not answer questions appropriately, however it was deemed necessary to make this choice to ensure that recommendations could be made using the experiences of survivors (Chasteauneuf, 2010, p.770). Questionnaires followed a similar progression of questions to interviews with practitioners. Questions were divided into sections to provide structure and allow for survivors to navigate the questionnaire only answering those questions relevant to their experiences. Answers to the few single choice 'required' questions routed them to questions to probe further into their specific experiences. For example, after being asked to explain their reasoning for reporting to the police and the sequence of events after reporting, survivors were asked 'were you assigned a specialist officer who kept in contact with you? This officer may have been called a SOIT, a SOLO or STO.', with only 'yes', 'no' or 'don't remember/unsure' as available answers. Answering 'yes' directed them to questions about this officer such as 'were you offered a choice in the gender of your specialist officer?', whereas answering 'no' or 'don't remember/unsure' directed them to questions such as 'how do you think having a specialist officer would have affected your experiences with the police?'. For those who did not report to the police, they were asked questions such as: 'why did you choose not to make a report to the police?' and 'if you were made aware of specialist officers within the police, there to support survivors of sexual offences when they make a report and throughout the investigation, would this encourage you to report?'. These questions were aimed at fully understanding the thought processes, experiences, and feelings of survivors, and how this impacted on their decision-making and overall impressions of policing. Survivors were not asked to disclose their identities, details of the offence, or the police service they had reported to, where applicable. Questionnaires were entirely anonymous, collecting only basic demographic data. The interview and email interview were both arranged via email and so some identifiable information was available to the researcher in the form of the email

address, through which contact was arranged, and any information attached that email such as their name. This information was securely stored and destroyed and is not available to anyone outside of the researcher. Owing to the nature of emails, the potentially identifiable information is not verifiable, and these two participants may have used aliases or untraceable email addresses, however.

Using the online platform Jisc Online Surveys ensured that participants would only answer those questions relevant to their experiences. Using questions which required a response such as 'did you report the offence to the police?' would mean that survivors were directed to the correct page, with no possibility of answering the wrong set of questions (as may have happened with a paper questionnaire) as participants had no access to those questions they were not directed to. This was done using the routing tool within the Jisc Online Survey software. The use of online questionnaires may have some disadvantages, however; it is difficult to know who exactly is participating in the research as characteristics are self-reported and therefore the questionnaire is vulnerable to a lack of validity if those not eligible to participate are dishonest in their answers and participate regardless (Wright, 2017). In the case of survivors, it may have increased validity to only allow those to participate whose perpetrator had been convicted of the offence and to verify that this had been the case through crime reference numbers or confirmation from the investigating officer. However, this would not only severely reduce the already limited available pool of participants, owing to low conviction rates, but would have also alienated many survivors who wished to remain anonymous. It was determined that the risks of using an online questionnaire outweighed the risks of alienating survivors and not achieving any participants for the study.

Interviews with SOITs and counsellors were conducted over the phone, in line with the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic (further described within the Reflections section of the Methodology). Initial contact was made via email and text message, these details being provided by a single point of contact (SPOC) within each organisation. These organisations and police services were chosen due to existing contacts formed by staff within the School of Law, Policing and Social Sciences at CCCU. Each police



service and the counsellors are located within the South of England, but to ensure the anonymity of participants, these organisations are not named within this thesis. Times for interviews were arranged to work within the schedules of SOITs and counsellors, and participants were asked to engage in interviews in a private room or area to ensure their answers would remain anonymous and they could speak freely. Prior to interviews, participants were briefed on what interviews would involve, their right to withdraw and anonymity and confidentiality. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions before the interview began. After the interviews, participants were again briefed on their right to withdraw and anonymity and confidentiality, as well as again being given the opportunity to ask questions. Questionnaires were structured in a similar manner, with the contact details of the researcher and supervisor, as well as support services for those in crisis and male specific services.

### 3.5.2 Sampling Method

Sampling is a process through which a researcher selects a sample of the population to participate in a research project (Fritz and Morgan, 2010, p. 1302). This sample is used to generalise the results to the wider population; the ability to generalise the results is a reflection of the external validity of the research (Fritz and Morgan, 2010, p. 1302). A sample based within an appropriate sampling method should be both reliable and impervious to bias and therefore produce comparable results if replicated (Fritz and Morgan, 2010, p. 1302). Based on the research questions, it was deemed purposive sampling would be the best choice to gather participants. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. Using non-probability sampling means that all those within a target population do not have an equal chance of being selected for participation and is therefore the opposite of probability sampling (Daniel, 2012, p. 66). In purposive sampling, the researcher uses their judgement to determine criteria participants must meet in order to participate, rather than participants having the same chance of being selected (Battaglia, 2008, p. 645; Saumure and Given, 2012 p. 563). When using purposive sampling, the researcher chooses participants with certain characteristics relevant to the study (Morse, 2004, p.884). This is therefore appropriate to use when researchers are focusing on a particularly small sample group (Daniel, 2012, p. 92). Daniel (2012, pp. 88-89) identifies five steps in

the process of selecting a sample of participants using purposive sampling: define the population being studied, identify relevant criteria for inclusion and/or exclusion, determine how the participants will be recruited, decide upon the target sample size, and finally the target number of population elements should be assessed and selected.

Defining the population in this research was straightforward; survivors, SOITs and counsellors could each offer insight into different aspects of the police response to male survivors. SOITs work closely with survivors during a police investigation, counsellors have experience working with male survivors, and survivors can answer questions specifically relating to males. In order to ensure extraneous variables did not impact on the results, inclusion criteria for male survivors were identified early on: survivors needed to be cisgender males, be aged over eighteen at the time of the offence, the offence must have occurred within England and/or Wales, the offence must have been non-familial, have occurred outside of a prison environment, and if reported, must have been reported within E&W. SOITs must have been currently working in the role of SOIT or equivalent and counsellors must have previously supported a male survivor. At the start of this research project, only those who had reported the offence to the police were eligible to participate. However, those who had not reported were later allowed to participate due to difficulty in locating eligible participants. SOITs and counsellors were located through SPOCs within the target organisations of police services and a charity. Male survivors were recruited through social media websites (Twitter and Reddit), as further discussed within the Reflections section of this chapter. Due to small size of the target populations, no upper limit was set on the maximum number of participants, recruitment suspending when it was determined an appropriate sample had been obtained or time became a factor. Eight SOITs, three counsellors, and eight male survivors were eventually recruited. Using this sampling method allowed the researcher to ensure the sample used was the most appropriate sample to answer the research questions. Bias may be introduced where researchers are controlling the sample to this degree, however inclusion/exclusion criteria development was overseen by a supervisor to ensure reliability (Daniel, 2012, p. 92).

### 3.5.3 Analysis

Thematic analysis was determined to be the most appropriate for a number of reasons. In a thematic analysis, a researcher searches for themes in the forms of topics or patterns through the qualitative data produced in the research (Hawkins, 2017, p. 1756). These themes are commonalities or patterns observed during the collection and analysis (Lapadat, 2010, pp. 925-926). Thematic analyses are often used in circumstances where the research topic is relatively new or little is understood regarding it (Hawkins, 2017, p. 1756). Thematic analysis may be used in a variety of research methods and can be used to analyse many forms of data including interview transcripts, diaries, historical documents and video files (Lapadat, 2010, pp. 926). In a thematic analysis, it is important for the researcher to immerse themselves within the texts being analysed – to re-read texts and to continuously make notes and search for themes throughout the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As interviews had taken place over almost a year, the transcripts were reread multiple times to ensure the researcher had an in-depth understanding of each interview. The questionnaire responses were also thoroughly examined. From this, coding began; a process of sorting and labelling data (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 34). This coding was completed using NVivo, a software designed to aid in analysis of qualitative data (Davidson, 2018, p. 1165). NVivo was used in the analysis of this research for a number of reasons, first and foremost because of the lack of experience in analysing qualitative data on behalf of the researcher, as well as the relative ease in both access and use. NVivo allows a researcher to organise their data using a wide range of features, which allows new meanings to emerge (Davidson, 2018, p. 1165). From the data inputted, codes can be easily organised, and visual models can be created to show links between data (Bazeley, 2018, pp. 159-166). Using NVivo saves a researcher valuable time and allows them to analyse a large quantity of data, a difficult task without the aid of computer software (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). NVivo cannot analyse data for a researcher, however it can greatly aid in analysis (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011).

Codes were developed inductively, looking at the surface meaning of quotes, as well as the meaning behind them, these processes are known as inductive coding, and latent and semantic coding (Braun

and Clarke, 2006). Themes were then devised, with different codes being sorted within these themes towards the goal of creating clear and definable themes distinct from one another (Ignatow and Mihalcea, 2017, p. 76). These themes were created with the research questions and the lens of hegemonic masculinity in mind. Thematic analysis is often praised for the flexibility it affords researchers in terms of theoretic framework as well as providing a detailed understanding of the data produced in the study (Hawkins, 2017, p. 1760). The results of a thematic analysis are often easily understood, by researchers and the general public alike, and can therefore have great impact upon policy and knowledge (Hawkins, 2017, pp. 1759-1760). This may lead to theory development and understanding (Hawkins, 2017, p. 1760). This was considered ideal for a subject that has little research attached to it, for a researcher with limited experience and to allow for recommendations to be made, easily understood by police services and support services alike. Critics of thematic analysis, however, state that in order to understand what data is telling you, you cannot piecemeal it into codes and themes, to do so rejects the interpretation of participants and instead allows a researcher to form their own interpretation of how the data connects (Joffe and Yardley, 2004, p. 66). This again was controlled for with supervision and thorough re-reading and checks.

### 3.6 Ethics and Data Protection

In conducting research, it is paramount for strict ethical guidelines to be met (Borgatti and Molina, 2005). To ensure this research was conducted in an ethical and transparent manner, this study was submitted to and approved by the CCCU Ethics Panel (Appendix E). A further requirement of academic research is the responsible and lawful processing of data, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, as well as individual institution's data policies (Cornock, 2018). GDPR applies to research where a researcher in the European Union (EU) collects personal data about a participant, or a researcher outside the EU collects personal data relating to EU citizens, and requires safeguards be put in place for the responsible handling of this data (UK Data Service, 2021). Personal data may only be processed where there is a legal basis for doing so; commonly in research, the key bases being the consent of participants, legitimate interest, and/or

research conducted in the interest of public interest (UK Data Service, 2021). Personal data is any data through which a person can be identified, whether directly from the information provided, or indirectly identified when used in combination with other information (Information Commissioner's Office, no date). GDPR further requires that data only be held for as long as is necessary, although the Regulation does not set out specific time limits (Information Commissioner's Office, no date).

To ensure compliance with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and CCCU's data policies, participants in this study were asked to sign consent forms (Appendix F), confirming they agreed to participate, have had the opportunity to ask questions and understand the participant information sheet, agreed to be audio/video recorded, understood how their personal information will be processed, and that evidence of misconduct or risk of harm would need to be reported. Further, data sharing agreements (Appendix G) were written for organisations involved in this research to ensure that all parties were aware of the rights of participants and the expectations of the organisations and individuals involved in research. To guarantee the anonymity of participants, the police services involved in this research will not be named, only referred to as services within E&W, and the charity through which counsellors are employed by will only be referred to as a counselling service specialising in trauma. Participants in this research will be assigned codes in place of using their names e.g. SOIT001 for SOIT officers, COU001 for counsellors, and MS001 for male survivors. Each of these measures is in place to ensure the anonymity of participants. Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed on a private, secure laptop and then deleted upon completion of said transcripts. Transcripts were stored securely. All forms containing identifiable information were also stored securely and securely disposed of in line with GDPR.

At the beginning of each interview these measures were outlined to participants to ensure they understood their rights and how their data would be used. Particularly, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in the interview and up to two weeks afterwards, as well as guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality. Prior to interviews, participants were provided

with participant information sheets (Appendix H) and consent forms (Appendix F). Every effort was made to ensure participants were aware of their rights, as well as having ample opportunity to ask questions. Several survivors in this study completed a questionnaire, hosted on the website Jisc Online Surveys, formally Bristol Online Surveys, rather than participating in interviews. These participants were provided with the same information as those interviewed, contained within the first page of the questionnaire. Each survivor was supplied with the contact information for support services, including those that cater specifically to male survivors and others, to ensure that survivors had as much support as possible following the interview/questionnaire. Officers and counsellors were also debriefed at the end of the interviews and asked if they were okay or needed any additional support. These measures were important to ensure safeguarding of vulnerable people and those talking about sensitive subjects. To ensure the mental wellbeing of the researcher, also given the sensitive nature of the material, frequent check-ins were conducted between supervisors and the researcher.

### 3.7 Reflections on This Research

Over the course of this research, a multitude of issues required great flexibility and adaptation from the original conception of the content of this thesis. Originally, it was intended that ten SOIT officers, and ten male survivors of sexual offences who chose to report to the police would participate in semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face. In March 2020, the UK entered into a lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, restricting non-essential travel and face-to-face interactions for the majority of the original prospective research timeline. The pandemic presented a number of challenges for all academic research across the majority of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, and this research was not immune to those challenges. It was decided that participants would need to be interviewed via either the phone or video chatting software due to restrictions. However, ongoing concerns within the university regarding data and GDPR compliance of various video conferencing software initially restricted participants to phone interviews only. It was eventually determined that Microsoft Teams was GDPR compliant and so this option was offered to participants, although all participants opted to have interviews via the phone. The pandemic caused further issues in arranging

interviews with prospective participants. Officers reported difficulty arranging times for interviews, particularly with constraints of working from home and adjusting to the 'new normal'. The response rate from officers who were contacted and invited to participate was also incredibly low, assumed to be due to adjusting to the pandemic's restraints on their work. Due to these concerns, counsellors specialising in trauma counselling were also included within this study, to give a new perspective to this research as practitioners who have experience working with male survivors. Interviews with officers and counsellors were conducted between June 2020 and March 2021.

There were further issues experienced in trying to find male survivors willing to participate in this research. Understandably, few men are willing to speak about their victimisation, and few charities are willing or able to assist in finding eligible participants. A large number of charities working with male survivors of sexual offences were contacted, their details obtained through the Male Survivors Partnership's membership page on their website. These charities were asked for help in contacting male participants who may be willing to participate in semi-structured interviews. While some responses were positive, few were able to provide any help in locating participants. As little progress had been made in finding participants through gatekeepers, social media provided a viable alternative. The moderators of Reddit communities, termed subreddits, focusing on supporting rape survivors and providing outlets for survivors to discuss their experiences, were contacted through a Reddit account created for the purpose of contacting potential survivors. The rules of posting within the subreddits required contact to be made to ask permission to create a post advertising research studies. Once permission was obtained, posts were made within the communities *r/MenGetRapedToo*, *r/Rape*, and *r/RapeCounselling*, outlining what participants would be required to do and asking anyone interested to make contact.

Due to a lack of responses, after additional ethical approval was gained, a survey was developed to ask male survivors of sexual offences in adulthood; the criteria for participating was also amended, so that those who chose not to report to the police could also participate to discuss why they chose not

to report and their experiences with any support agencies they contacted. This is largely due to concerns that this research would not include any male survivors if the criteria were not expanded. The survey was shared using the subreddits already utilised, as well as through Twitter, by contacting charities and organisations directly through the platform and asking them to retweet the link to the survey. Several charities, organisations, groups and individuals retweeted the study, and finally some male survivors submitted survey responses.

### 3.8 Conclusion

This research was conducted over the period of one year and nine months, owing to the difficulties of conducting research during the pandemic. With an emphasis on creating evidence-based policy and practice in policing, it is important research is conducted to assess the police response to male survivors and ensure that the best response is being given. This research used semi-structured interviews and a qualitative questionnaire to collect data from SOITs, counsellors, and male survivors, to answer questions about SOIT training, day-to-day work, and the experiences of male survivors relating to the police. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, through SPOCs and the use of social media. Their answers were analysed through thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo software. This research faced several challenges, but these were overcome to form a piece of research capable of contributing to an important, and yet under-researched, area.



## ***Chapter 4: Findings***

### **4.1 Introduction**

Through interviews with eight SOITs across two police services, and three counsellors specialising in trauma, as well as a mix of interviews and questionnaires with eight male survivors, three key themes were identified: The Effective SOIT, Gender, and The Male Experience. The Effective SOIT encapsulates those traits, qualities and resources that allow a SOIT to work effectively. This includes the training they receive, the assessment and supervision of SOITs, the ability to use discretionary powers, as well as the choice to believe survivors of sexual offences. These aspects of SOIT work each contribute to how survivors are supported, and how SOITs operate day-to-day. Gender is an issue that seemed to affect a variety of aspects of policing sexual offending, from the gender of practitioners to the perception of rape as a gendered offence. Gender also plays into the perception of masculinity and therefore in the stigmas that male survivors face relating to strength and weakness. Finally, The Male Experience as a theme captures the thoughts, feelings and experiences of male survivors, whether they reported to the police or not, and the use of support services. For ease of reference and to maintain anonymity, references to specialist officers by alternative terms such as SOLO, STO or Sexual Assault Investigation Team (SAIT) officers, have been replaced by the term SOIT.

### **4.2 Demographics**

SOIT officers within this research were a mix of four warranted police officers and four civilian staff members across two police services, with one male and seven female officers. The most common age group in this research was between 34-49 years old (four officers), the next most common was between 50-64 (three officers) and the final officer was 25-34 years old. These officers had a mix of backgrounds; five officers had a background relating to safeguarding or working with vulnerable people either within the police or outside the police, two had previously worked in policing including response officer roles, and one had not worked in any form of safeguarding or policing role prior to being a SOIT. The majority of these officers had long police careers, three having had a police career

spanning over 21 years, one between 16-20 years, two between 11-15 years, and the final officer only having worked within the police for between 0-5 years. Finally, six had only worked in the role of SOIT (or equivalent) for between 0-2 years and 1 for between 3-4 years. One SOIT had had a particularly long career as a SOIT, with over 11 years' experience. One male and two female counsellors specialising in trauma participated in this research, one having worked with vulnerable people outside the CJS, and two having worked with survivors of crimes previously.

Male survivors ranged in age from between 18-64: two were between 18-24, two between 25-34, two between 35-44, one between 45-54 and one between 55-64. Demographic data was incomplete for all survivors owing to some survivors preferring not to state characteristics or simply not selecting an option. Of those participants with available data, four had occurred before 2013, one in 2014, and two within 2020/2021. Of those five who had reported the offence(s) to the police, one had reported prior to 2013, one in 2014, one in 2019, and two in 2020/2021. Three of these participants had contacted the police before another agency. The majority of those participants where ethnicity data was collected were from British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh backgrounds, one was Irish Traveller or Gypsy, and one mixed black Caribbean and white.

## 4.3 The Effective SOIT

### 4.3.1 Training

SOITs across the two services had mixed experiences of their training, dependant not only on the service they belonged to, but also the length of time in the role. Both services had independently developed the role only recently, however both services had previously employed officers in roles with similar responsibilities. This meant some officers had previously undertaken this training, either in an equivalent role to SOIT, or as Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) or Initial Responders to Rape Officers (IROs) (n=4).

*...because we're IROs, Initial Response Officers to rape, some of us were FLOs, we knew how to respond to... these sort of offences. -SOIT002*

*...the initial training which I had in 2010, was a two-week course. -SOIT005*

*I've had my initial IRO course, and then an ABE course, and then obviously there are other courses I can do. -SOIT001*

In contrast, those who had joined the police as civilian staff working as SOITs with no prior policing experience (n=1), had extended training to certify them with the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) 1 accreditation before undertaking SOIT courses.

*...civilians had to do a PIP1 qualification which is an investigators qualification... and so we have to do that as like a minimum and which is good cos we learn about other crimes... so we do our PIP1 qualification which at the time I think was seven weeks and now I think it's about a nine week course.-SOIT006*

The content of these courses had significant similarities, with Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews being at the forefront. However, recollections of the training differed between SOITs, with different aspects being highlighted by different officers, and difficulty in recalling the content of the courses by others.

*We did two SOIT courses at the beginning. You want me to tell you what was on them? I can't really remember... there was a lot of stuff at the very beginning about rape myth type stuff and about culture within the police and victim focussed stuff. Then there's quite a lot of practical stuff in terms of how to take a Q&A, how to take forensic exhibits, that sort of thing and... I'm also ABE trained. -SOIT008*

*...we had CPD training, mental health training. We had input from the ISVA Service, but... when we first started, the role was obviously very new so they were trying to fit in what they thought was appropriate to suit us but we were on different courses with detectives from Adult and Child Protection so it was a bit of a mixed bag really. -SOIT002*

The assessment methods used in these courses also differed by service and the year in which officers had completed their training. It was evident in these interviews that services were developing their courses over time, and therefore the assessment methods used as well. While some SOIT officers had very little assessment (n=5), more recent recruits in one service were required to demonstrate the ability to complete a number of SOIT duties. Other officers commented on the development of assessment of ABE interviews they had carried out and the importance of continuous feedback.

*She's got a one file that she works through, she has to be able to say...there's like twenty five different things you have to be able to do, you have to be able to do each one three times so I sign her off of that... there's things like taking the initial account but then that's broken into like ten different things like ensuring the victim's understanding the investigative process, you've explained it to them, that they're comfortable, their needs have been met, establishing*

*whether they need an interpreter or a supporter there with them. There's loads [SIC]. There's like doing DNA eliminations, seizing clothing, just... it's everything we do when we write the report but broken down like to tiny little headings and then some of them have got more underneath them so there's like twenty five but there's actually more than that cos you have to be able to do like ten things in one of them. -SOIT006*

*We are just starting to have ABEs reviewed which I think is a really positive thing. -SOIT008*

There were also mixed feelings regarding the effectiveness of the training that SOIT officers had received. While some were positive about their experiences and felt fully prepared to enter the role (n=3), others felt that their training had been lacking (n=5), requiring greater thought and specialisation to the role.

*They did their best but they were hurrying us through everything, everybody else's training went on hold and they cobbled together all the courses that they thought were relevant for us and put together in a package but they didn't adapt them. So, one of the main roles that we have... that's really important is the ABE interview. Because this is the evidence in chief of our victim. And when we did the training for ABEs, we weren't allowed to practise doing anything sexual. Nothing even... a sexual assault let alone a rape and I had actually done this training before... and we did do a rape scenario and we did talk a lot about sexual assaults because that's the work we were going in to. And you need to be able to talk about, body parts and you need to be able to interview someone who's reluctant to do that and to know what level of evidence is necessary. -SOIT004*

*Yeah, very effective. -SOIT001*

*...definitely things could have been added on and improved. -SOIT003*

This mix of opinions and experiences were also highlighted with regards to continued and refresher training.

*But I do think that once the training had finished that was it, you were sent out, you were on your own and that was it, and I think that personally there should be more training, perhaps ongoing training, perhaps refresher training would be nice... we've not had one refresher training at all. -SOIT007*

*So perhaps more repeat, you know, sort of more shorter but more repeated training would have been helpful to actually make you feel confident that you... did know what you were doing when it came to it as opposed to winging it a little bit and learning as you go. -SOIT008*

Several SOITs also emphasised the impact of guest speakers (n=5), particularly survivors of sexual offences. The specialist expertise provided by guest speakers allowed SOITs to learn about subjects not covered within the materials produced by their services and the CoP, ask questions to learn more and better support survivors.

*On one of our CPD days at headquarters we did have input from some survivors that spoke about their experiences... but that was massive impactful, and what was so impactful was that she spoke about her treatment by police, not that it was negative. -SOIT002*

*You'd have guest speakers who were specialist in their roles and things like that which was... always good and sometimes you would actually have victims come in and talk about their experiences. -SOIT004*

Few SOITs were able to say definitively whether, as part of their initial or refresher training, they had had any input specifically relating to male survivors of sexual offences (n=1). Although, SOITs were confident that the training they had applied to both male and female survivors (n=5), and that male sexual victimisation would have been addressed. It is therefore fair to assume that few SOITs had had any input specifically relating to the challenges males experienced, or any specific considerations SOITs should make when supporting a male making a report.

*Ugly Mugs came and did some training. I was particularly keen. They sort of did a pre-whatever sort of saying "what do you want to get out of that?" and I specifically asked around male victims because it's been a concern for me around male victims. So, you know Ugly Mugs being the sex workers, and so, you know, we spoke about male victims there. So, has there been an input entitled 'male victims and survivors'? No, but you know the issues have been there within other bits of training. -SOIT003*

*I don't remember anything being specifically men only or like LGBT. I'm sure... that was raised... in everything that was said. -SOIT004*

*I can't remember that far back if there was anything specific because it was always under... the victim so there was no he or she... the service you were giving them will be the same whether they're a male or female. I don't remember anyway. -SOIT005*

#### 4.3.2 Discretion

The duties of SOITs can vary from service-to-service, however the core duty of SOITs is to support those reporting sexual offences. When asked about their duties, SOITs were quick to say that their first duty, in any case, was the person making an allegation (n=6).

*Looking after the health and welfare of the victims, obviously, keeping them up to date with what's going on, giving them information regarding counselling, medical, you know, sort of passing details on... who they can contact etc and just keeping them up to date with the progress of the investigation. -SOIT001*

*Well it's the victim... is the main responsibility obviously. -SOIT004*

Appropriate care of survivors of rape and sexual offences often related to the level of contact between SOIT officers and survivors. SOITs are expected to abide by Victim Contracts, a binding agreement to

contact victims of crimes at least every 28 days to update them on the progress of the investigation. While SOITs did not use the word 'discretion' while describing their duties, it became apparent that SOITs have a great deal of discretion in their contact with survivors, not only in how often they make contact, but also the forms this contact can take. While some survivors required more frequent contact, other survivors wished not to be contacted unless necessary. SOITs therefore, determined ad hoc when to make this contact. While some survivors required more frequent contact, either because the investigation was in the initial stages and therefore greater contact was necessary to arrange interviews and evidence gathering, or because they needed more support, other survivors did not wish to be reminded of their victimisation on a regular basis.

*I am also very conscious that we are that reminder of what's happened to them so, like, when you're months after an event, do you really want someone ringing you up every day reminding you that that event has happened? So... I encourage them to ring me in the meantime but... I will ask what sort of contact they want. -SOIT004*

*I think that the most critical thing that's needed is time, you know, time to spend with your victim, time to ensure that you are keeping them updated when they need to be updated, not just when the computer says so or our investigation says so, time to make them feel that they have got somebody there at... at the end of the phone or who can drop in with them. -SOIT003*

*...every 28 days is standard but occasionally I cut that shorter just to... check. So, if like Christmas is coming up, I'll check in with them just before Christmas... and then after Christmas, New Year I'll call them... I do tailor my victim contacts to every victim. Some of them need a lot more reassurance than others... some are happy for you not to be contacting them every so often so that it's not a trigger every time you call. -SOIT005*

SOITs exercised discretion in a number of ways to support survivors, applying their experience and expertise to each situation. Personality and personal styles also greatly affected how SOITs chose to conduct their duties, intersecting with service policy to create unique approaches between individual officers.

*My own standard is I give as much information about the investigation process to a person before we put pen to paper, so that they understand what journey they're taking, so they can make an informed choice as to what they would like to do, because I appreciate that whenever anyone phones up the police it's a case of they've done that bit but they're not sure what happens afterwards. -SOIT005*

*My rapport is always the same, as I say, I sometimes use slight humour... I don't make jokes about them or it but it's just breaking that ice. -SOIT005*

*...everything that I do is within policy and what we are told to do but maybe the way I prioritise things and do things is... I know that each one of us, every SOIT, all my colleagues we all do things differently. So, yeah. I'd say it's half and half. It's all policy but it's also kind of, look, I do things differently because I've learnt to do things differently, to adapt my approach to certain people. -SOIT006*

*...if I give them all the information on the first day, I know that they're listening, but they can't hear what I'm saying... I would say that policy is... we have to do certain things by a certain time, and then everything else is our decision. -SOIT007*

A further form of discretion SOITs may choose to exercise is how to address those who make allegations. Generally, the term 'victim' is used within the police to describe those making allegations of an offence. However, three SOITs expressed discomfort in using this term.

*I keep saying victim, not all people impacted by these sorts of crimes like to be, sort of, known as victims. They don't want to put themselves in that bracket but how do you... I suppose it's just generalising. -SOIT002*

*Victim compliance probably is the big one because... yeah... victims are... it's probably complainers, I don't know which is the best word to... we always refer to them as victims, so I'll probably just keep on with that. -SOIT004*

*...on your initial contact with that victim... I don't like that word... with your person... sorry there are some words that I really detest... I'm gonna say person. -SOIT005*

In a role with such great levels of individual decision making, supervision would seem to be important to the continued and consistent care given to survivors. A crucial part of adequate supervision was feedback, particularly relating to ABE interviews. While officers from one service believed that they had a good level of supervision and support from supervisors (n=4), officers from the other service had experienced difficulties in gaining this feedback (n=4). Feedback on ABE interviews was viewed as crucial, the importance of a good interview being the difference between a conviction or an offender walking free.

*We have good supervision, plenty of supervision: there's a DS with us all the time, whether or not that's in the office or at another station, they're always contactable by phone. -SOIT001*

*...with our interviewing course, I'm only now three years later getting a higher-level interviewing course... For a long time, we didn't have our video interviews reviewed by our sergeants. When we should have, especially having no investigative background. I think that definitely should have been done but it wasn't. It is now but when you're new... it's like maybe three years later is a little bit too late. -SOIT006*

### 4.3.3 Civilian or Warranted Officer

Both services involved in this research used a mix of warranted officers and civilian staff for the role of SOIT. Of those civilian staff who participated in this study, two had been previously employed as warranted officers in the police, and two had not. Again, a variety of views were held by officers relating to civilian staff undertaking the role. Previous experience of policing was seen as a positive, however it was clear that SOITs did not believe there was any difference beyond salary between warranted officers and civilian staff. Some SOITs believed that having no experience of policing may actually be beneficial to the role.

*I think it helps having a good grounding within the police. As I say I've been to lots of sort of IROs jobs over the years, and I think that sort of prepares you well for the job, and a good understanding of obviously how the victims feel and their needs. -SOIT001*

*I think it's more experience can taint people one way or the other and yeah so if... a civilian has had a lot of indicative experience then there shouldn't be any difference. -SOIT004*

*Other than the pay difference... in doing our role as a SOIT there's no difference -SOIT006*

*I know in [my force] that we are trying to make the role civilianised, that we're not recruiting any more police officers... I think it's the cost -SOIT006*

*...I'm not quite sure how to express that really but... it's different, it's very different and I think mainly because actually I have always dealt with victims and I've only dealt with victims whereas police officers have dealt with suspects, and I think if you deal with suspects, especially at a low level, for any period of time... it's really jading in terms of the Criminal Justice System... I think it's quite different. -SOIT008*

### 4.3.4 Belief

Believing those who make reports to the police was seen as fundamental to the role of SOIT. SOITs stated that in their role, they will always choose to believe a person's allegation (n=6).

*We will believe them, and we will support them. -SOIT002*

*We're not going to not believe them. -SOIT007*

*...it is a shame if they feel that they can't come to us because they should do because they are believed, and we do give them a lot of support. -SOIT001*

## 4.4 Gender

### 4.4.1 Gender of Practitioners

The majority of practitioners participating in this study identified as female (n=9), with only two male practitioners. Seven SOITs identified as female, and one as male. Two counsellors identified as female,



and one as male. Across both genders, there were concerns relating to whether a male survivor would feel comfortable talking to them based on their gender. The gender of practitioners was not a concern for some survivors, however (n=2), the ability of practitioners being more important than their gender, and therefore being offered the choice of gender in their practitioner was a lesser concern. This would suggest that more awareness of the needs of male survivors is needed within professional organisations.

*I think talking to another male might be quite hard. They may find it easier to talk to females about the past. -COU001*

*I didn't mind either way. -MS001*

*I believe it's important - however not as important and [SIC] the officer being good at their job with the time and skills to engage with you. -MS003*

*...if it was myself personally, and I was to take the call, obviously, then the first thing we would ask is if they're happy and comfortable to speak with an officer of the opposite sex. -SOIT001*

One SOIT stated that the lack of male SOITs was simply due to a lack of appropriate officers identifying as male applying for the role.

*I spoke to my sergeant... and she said that there wasn't... enough males that came forward to apply for the job. So that's why there wasn't. Obviously, I don't know how many they interviewed but there just wasn't enough that were suitable that had applied. -SOIT006*

Some practitioners (n=3) specifically asked those survivors of the opposite gender if they were comfortable to have them assigned as SOITs or counsellors. Others, however, stated that there were not enough male SOITs available to routinely offer the choice, but they would put every effort into finding a SOIT of the preferred gender (n=4). Of those survivors who had been assigned a specialist officer (n=4), two had been offered the choice of gender of their SOIT. This would indicate that while this is not routinely offered, at least by the services involved in this study, the choice is available on a discretionary basis to those who SOITs feel may require this choice, or those who specifically ask for a practitioner of a particular gender.

*...if it is a male. Because, obviously, we have male [SOITs], they would ask a female if they're happy with a male [SOIT]. So, yes, it is something that if we can facilitate – there is an officer on of the same sex – and they prefer that, then that is something we would look to facilitate for them. -SOIT001*

*...if someone is calling in and saying to us they'll only speak to a female, we're not gonna [SIC] say 'no, we've got one man available'. We might say, 'there's only a chap available at the moment, but we have a female coming on at such and such a time, it might not be that day, it might be tomorrow, but if you are happy to wait, we don't want you to wait, but if you're happy to wait then that's what we will do'. -SOIT002*

#### 4.4.2 Masculinity

A key pattern which emerged from conversations with both practitioners and survivors was the concepts of weakness and strength. Practitioners often cited fear of being perceived as weak as a driving factor for why so few men choose to report their victimisation to the police or seek counselling. Of those survivors who did not report the offence to the police (n=3), none of them cited the fear of being perceived as weak as a reason why they chose not to contact the police. Considerations in their personal lives or the minimising of the offence by others were cited, however.

*I think a sense that they might be weak but actually I feel it's the reverse. I think you have to... come from a strong place to come in to counselling and to confront the trauma that's happened, but they don't see it like that. -COU002*

*...it would show them as weak, they're not a man. So, there's a lot more... barriers for men unfortunately. -SOIT005*

*The offence was committed by someone whom I had considered a close friend at the time and friendship groups were intermingled. -MS007*

*I was made to feel it was a minor thing and didn't need to be reported. This came from staff at the club. -MS006*

The differences between male and female survivors were also highlighted through the interviews with practitioners. SOITs and counsellors both stated that they felt men found it more difficult to discuss the offences they had experienced (n=7), also often because of the fear of being perceived as weak or other attributes commonly accepted as being masculine.

*...it's that male sort of attitude of put up and shut up type of thing, you know don't... don't want anyone to see that they're weak or they were weak at some point. -COU003*

*I have noticed that females who have been raped or had digital penetration, that sort of thing, are more likely to talk to the police than a male victim and I think it is a pride thing. -SOIT007*

Closely linked to masculinity are the stigmas and misunderstandings that come attached to it. These stigmas and understandings were also linked to why some men may find it more difficult to report their victimisation. One survivor also stated that physical capabilities, particularly being able to

overpower perpetrators, are not always relevant in a sexual assault because it may be preferable to not risk further physical violence.

*People seem to believe that just because a man is bigger and stronger, it can't happen. The consensus seems to be that if you can beat the attacker in a fight, then you can't get assaulted. Yet I have learnt that is far from the truth. Anyone can leverage violence to get sex... I see now that its not about physical strength or fighting capability in some cases, rather, some people would rather just comply than face further violence regardless of if they could probably overpower the attacker. -MS002*

*Whether we like it or not having experienced sexual offence is deemed as weak by society. We still have a long way to go to develop a healthier view of masculinity. -MS006*

#### 4.4.3 A Gendered Crime

Several times during interviews with practitioners, it became apparent that rape is often viewed through the lens of male-on-female assaults. The examples used by some, and the pronouns assigned in hypothetical examples often reflected the assumption that victims of these crimes would identify as 'she' and 'her'. One SOIT also stated that it can be difficult sometimes to understand male sexual victimisation when the majority of cases involve male-on-female violence.

*if it's a live job then I would explain my role... and who I am and where I'm coming from, and what the process is that we need her to go through. But, three things I say to her 1) is I'm not going to be judgemental. Secondly, I'm going to believe what she's saying, and third I'm not going to make her do anything she doesn't want to do, because in a rape or a digital penetration they have lost control because this has happened to them. -SOIT007*

*I mean I still hear some people now say 'were they wearing a short skirt or were they drunk'... -SOIT002*

*I think the difficulty for me is that all the perpetrators are men, you know, and so I think that is a bit of a barrier sometimes to seeing male... survivors or male victims... as victims... I don't know why but... it is because there... is this sort of... that the males are the perpetrators and the females are the victims kind of thing so there is that kind of understanding because it's true, in order to rape you have to have a penis. You know, so you have to be male and, you know, so I think that, you know, it doesn't... help the cause of... males who are on the receiving end of that. -SOIT008*

One SOIT also indicated the lack of resources available for male survivors, specifically in relation to the booklet titled 'From Report to Court'.

*I am amazed that the first page says 'Rights of Women: Helping Women Through the Law'. Where's the men one then? You know. Why isn't it 'Helping Victims of Sexual Assault*

*Through the Law'? Just disgusting really...I think they think that it's just women that get raped, and it's just all men get left out a little bit. -SOIT007*

The nature of rape as a gendered crime was also apparent through the lack of training given to SOITs regarding males (outlined above) and the lack of experience in supporting male survivors. Of those SOITs interviewed, the majority had previously supported a male survivor of an adult sexual offence (n=7), as had the majority of counsellors (n=2). The majority of the survivors practitioners were supporting were female, however. Those cases involving a male were usually a historic offence that had been reported.

*Certainly not as much as my experience with female survivors. -COU002*

*When I knew you were doing something like this, I did have a look, to look to see roughly how many have I dealt with and there's a mixture. I can say literally on one hand... I've dealt with live incidents with males, so that's a live deployment where a SARC is involved or within... a seven-day window of the... event happening but the majority has always been historic. -SOIT005*

One survivor was concerned that by discussing their experiences, they would be intruding upon discussions of violence against women. This highlights the sometimes gendered nature of discussions of sexual violence, and how this may serve to prevent men feeling supported enough to reach out for help.

*...I have felt unable to speak out about my experience in light of sexual offences and harassment discussions for women as I am fearful this will be deemed to be undermining the female experience of this. In addition, it is still not the norm for men to talk about experiences or emotions. -MS006*

## 4.5 The Male Experience

### 4.5.1 Supporting Male Survivors

Practitioners stated that there were clear differences between male and female survivors (n=9).

*I think there are extreme differences between men and women I would say 80% of clients that are referred to me or come to me are female and the difference is quite marked. -COU001*

*I think they find it far harder to open up to you. -COU002*

*I think the other thing is the male doesn't think the police will get a result, whereas the female is not that worried about the result, they... would like to get a result but... the fact is the female is more concerned if this guy that did this to her would do it to someone else, whereas the male doesn't care; 'well, I'm not going to get a result, I'm not going to'. -SOIT007*

There were a mix of opinions regarding how to support male survivors, with some practitioners changing their approach (n=2), and others treating all survivors the same(n=4).

*I don't see gender... like I would see anything else different about a person. They've been the victim of one of the most horrific crimes and they'll be treated accordingly. -SOIT002*

*I think mind set wise I'm very conscious that it's probably harder for a male to come forward, so I'm very keen to reassure them. -SOIT004*

#### 4.5.2 Reporting to the Police

Of those survivors who reported their victimisation to the police (n=5), there were a variety of reasons for doing so, with no clear pattern emerging.

*Because I knew what had happened to me was wrong and if... nothing was addressed you don't know, he could do it to someone else. -MS001*

*I wanted justice and validation. Early on I found it hard to close the book on what happened and move on. I thought reporting and seeking justice would be the way to do that. -MS002*

*It was important to have the offences recorded. -MS003*

*After my rape I went straight to the police because I knew it was abuse. -MS004*

*Reported after ditch [SIC] courage drinking without being fully committed to doing so. -MS005*

Practitioners also had differing ideas around the factors influencing the decision to report.

*Well I'd like to think that they'd report to us because they want to go ahead with the police prosecution. -SOIT001*

*To be heard and for it to be acknowledged. -SOIT003*

*What I hear time and time again is: 'I don't want it to happen to anyone else'. -SOIT006*

Of those survivors who chose not to report to the police (n=3), each survivor stated reasoning relating to not realising the seriousness of the offence and the reaction of others.

*At 19 I didn't have either the wisdom or confidence to report especially when made to feel was [SIC] minor. -MS006*

*The response from my support group I felt was not the best and though I ceased to be friends with the perpetrator, I felt that I was stronger emotionally to cope with the offence as opposed to him coping with the law. -MS007*

*I never truly labelled it as abuse or considered it to be a violation of my consent until a few years later. At that time I didn't feel ready to deal with having to talk about that abuse, and I felt that there wouldn't be a body of hard evidence to draw from in the case of any legal proceedings... though I am worried about him continuing to perpetrate such acts in future... -MS008*

When asked if they could be encouraged to report to the police, understanding of the process and greater awareness of male sexual victimisation were viewed as paramount, although personal

considerations were highlighted by one survivor.

*I think there is a greater awareness of what constitutes a sexual offence now. I would say this awareness raising needs to continue. -MS006*

*I didn't feel I could at the time and risk damaging relationships -MS007*

*I'm not sure really, perhaps having some information about how the abuser and survivor are separated through any legal proceeding, and what kind of judgements can be made that protect potential future victims of the perpetrator. -MS008*

The perception of others can have a significant impact on the ability of survivors to talk about their victimisation. This can be further linked to the discussion around masculinity and stigma.

*It's hard being a male survivor or at least coming out about it because the perception is that 1) it's not really rape and 2) well there must be a reason why you did it, it's ironic really, no one really ever thinks about how men get basically the same comments that unfortunately women receive... -MS001*

*People seem to believe that just because a man is bigger and stronger, it can't happen. The consensus seems to be that if you can beat the attacker in a fight, then you can't get assaulted. -MS002*

#### 4.5.3 Interactions with the Police

Counsellors within this study who had previously had interactions with police officers (n=2) had mixed things to say.

*I think it's... almost luck of the draw to some degree as to almost like a postal lottery as to who you get as your investigating officer and team... -COU002*

*We never had any problems with the officers coming in, they were always respectful, they were always understanding, and kind and they were really, really good with the clients that they were bringing in and working with. On the other side of things, with a few clients over the years that have been called in for things like that, they've had a completely different sort of dealings with the police. -COU003*

This was true of the survivors within this study as well. There were mixed views on the interactions survivors had with the police (n=5), both at the point of the reporting and throughout any subsequent investigations. No pattern appeared between the years in which offences were reported or the outcome of the report. Encouragingly, however, the survivor who had made a report most recently had had the most positive experience. Four survivors had reported the offence after or during 2014,

and one prior to 2013. One report was not investigated by the police, but rather another statutory body.

*In summary, terrible. -MS002*

*An inconvenience and as if I conducted myself in the wrong way after I was raped. -MS003*

*Bad, poor and very brief... -MS004*

*IPCC were very good. -MS005*

Two survivor accounts indicated that victim blaming played a part in their negative experience of the police.

*I ran into the police station saying I needed help and that I'd been raped. Two men (not in uniform) told me "Yeah, of course you have, just go home sober up." I went home, my friends turned up, one of my friends phoned the police and had a go at them. Police turned up. I told them what happened, and one said "You walked off with him willingly after it happened? That won't look very good in court." I told the police to leave and I signed some sort of paperwork. They left and that was it. -MS004*

*I had to go in to make an official video recorded statement that would be used in court. Immediately after it finished, I sat with two officers who spent about 20 minutes victim blaming under the guise of 'managing expectations.'... My statement described how I had tried getting away from her, pushing her off numerous times, telling her to stop, trying to wake other people up but the police said "why didn't you just turn the lights on?"... They also tried to justify what she did by saying "your thinking was obviously blinkered at the time" insinuating that it was me that allowed it to happen. I tried to explain that when your body enters the 'fight or flight' mode, the hippocampus (logical and rational part of the brain) switches off, and you are literally in survival mode. I feel penalising me for this was very unprofessional and another case of victim blaming. The worse part was how they interpreted the events. It seemed that instead of viewing her attacking me as an attack, they saw it as some form of seduction from a woman who just knows what she wants. -MS002*

When asked about how treatment by the police had made survivors feel, this was again a very mixed set of answers.

*I thought it was great. I knew that it was a hard thing anyway to like get results for and anything but they were really helpful, they tried their best and they were really well catering for the victim. -MS001*

*It made me wish I'd never reported. -MS003*

*Genuinely traumatised. I used to trust and respect the police, but now I have no faith in them at all. -MS002*

#### 4.5.4 Specialist Officers

Of those who reported to the police, three were assigned a specialist officer termed SOIT, SOLO or

STO. Following the same trend, experiences with specialist officers differed between survivors.

*...the [SOITs] were really friendly, they didn't question me harshly, they didn't do anything that could make me uncomfortable they wanted to put me at ease. I felt safe with them and they were also the ones that conducted my video interview in the room and they were nice there as well. -MS001*

*They seemed professional but overworked and sometimes contact seemed like a tick the box exercise... Limited and process driven - I was insightful enough to know I was one of many case files on the officer's desk. -MS003*

Only one survivor was offered the choice in the gender of their specialist officer, although no survivor stated an obvious preference or need for this option being given.

*I believe its important - however not as important and [SIC] the officer being good at their job with the time and skills to engage with you. -MS003*

*I didn't mind either way. -MS001*

One survivor felt there were areas of improvement for their specialist officer, however, the other survivors were more positive (n=2).

*Don't think the process was really in the control [SIC] I was lucky they were as professional as they were... -MS003*

*Frequent welfare/safeguarding checking in, always made herself available for questions and support, frequent face to face briefings on the case with her and the senior investigator. -MS005*

*...they just weren't as clinical. Like a police officer will be clinical when they're talking to you like it'll not be harsh but there won't be any warmth to their words whereas the [SOIT] is more caring. -MS001*

Of those survivors who were not assigned a specialist officer (n=2), it was suggested that a specialist officer may have made an impact upon their experience of reporting.

*...having someone who was educated about it would have made a huge difference to my experience and the case itself. -MS002*

*I'm not sure. It would have depended on their conduct, personality, knowledge, attitude. Through my professional work I know there are some good police, but I know there are some that are not so good. -MS004*

Three survivors had not reported their victimisation to the police. There were differing opinions as to how knowledge of specialist officers would have affected the decision not to report.



*I have an image of the general police force that is generally negative, and I have the impression that the older, more politically right-leaning officers in the force might not take me seriously. -MS008*

*Not at the time no. -MS007*

*Not at the time it wouldn't have. It would now, however. -MS006*

#### 4.5.5 Perceptions of the Police

Following reporting to the police, survivors had differing views of policing.

*I'd just say that if you have ever experienced something like this just go to the police... they're kind, they're non-judgemental and at the end of day they are the greatest chance you have of stopping a person from doing it to either you again or to anyone else. -MS001*

*It quickly became clear that I knew more about the dynamic of sexual assaults, and the relevant laws than they did. It was obvious they were uneducated in the necessary areas. -MS002*

*I've given up thinking about the police and sexual violence - they are a lost cause in relation to deal with it properly - investigation should be taken from them and given to a new agency supported with specialist courts to hear cases using a roman law model. -MS003*

*I think the police need a lot more training around the issue. -MS004*

Survivors were then asked if they would report a future offence or advise friends to report based on their experiences. Of the survivors who had reported to the police (n=5), there was an equal division of those who would report (n=2) and those who would not (n=2), with one survivor unsure.

*Yeah because it needs to be done, I get why some people struggle but at the end of the day nothing's gonna [SIC] change if you don't start reporting it. -MS001*

*Sadly, I would tell them to avoid it at all costs. It was a horrible experience and really not worth it. I just feel that the police really couldn't care less and will say whatever to undermine your case so they don't have to investigate it. -MS002*

*I wouldn't report again and I would advise anybody to think carefully about doing so. If they decide to go ahead they should prepare for a lottery in professional experiences with the police. -MS003*

*I don't know... It wouldn't be a definite no, but it certainly wouldn't be a definite yes... Because of the huge inconsistencies in how police respond to those who disclose rape/abuse. -MS004*

*Yes - 100%. -MS005*

#### 4.5.6 Support Services

Awareness of support agencies specific to adult males was sporadic across the two police services involved in this research. SOITs in one service had awareness of a local charity with support available to male survivors of domestic abuse (DA), as well as a local charity for those identifying as transgender

(n=4). The need for male specific charities was highlighted, however.

*I don't think there are different agencies, well there is for the domestic abuse side of things but with regards to rape, there isn't, so it would still be the ISVA service. -SOIT004*

*I suppose when it comes to men one, one of the things I struggle with is the support services and I'm always finding I'm googling rather than just knowing. -SOIT006*

*[DA Charity], [Transgender Charity], is a couple that we use, but that's about it, really... but it's not to say that the other agencies that we have are... can be used for male as well, so if you want an ISVA – an independent sexual violence advisor – they don't just deal with females, they deal with males as well, so... all our agencies... can be used for male as well. -SOIT007*

Of the survivors who took part in this research, the majority had had some level of contact with a support service relating to their victimisation (n=5), of which three had utilised a support service specifically for male survivors, and two had used services catering to both male and female survivors.

Of the survivors who had reported to the police (n=5), three had been referred to support services, none of which specialised in male sexual victimisation. Reasoning for not utilising support agencies correlated with reasoning for not reporting to the police: personal considerations and being made to feel the offence had been minor. Of those who did utilise support services, there were largely positive things said, although survivors stated a need for more specialised services.

*I don't think there are any that are specific to men to be honest. I can't remember exactly which website it is, I think it's Rape Crisis, but on their website it literally says that we are aimed at females but we will try and offer some support to men as well but we're basically the afterthoughts and a lot of places like that are very female orientated which doesn't really help the men. -MS001*

*Even before I started counselling with survivors and I was on the waiting list, they called me regularly to check in with me and ask how I was coping etc. The resources linked through their website really helped me to understand my situation, and helped to open up and speak about my history of abuse with close family members I previously felt unable to talk to about it. -MS008*

*I was contacted by Victim Support who were very unprofessional - it was only later that I heard that many retired police officers end up working for Victims [SIC] Support and its clear to me that police culture - which creates issues for male and survivors is [SIC] works like a virus via the colonisation of Victim Support by retiring police officers. -MS003*

SOIT officers mentioned the role of ISVA in varying contexts (n=5), with one SOIT stating that ISVAs played an important role within support services in helping survivors. Two survivors stated that they had utilised support services in the form of ISVAs, although the majority of survivors who had accessed support services did not specifically mention ISVAs when discussing the term 'support services' (n=3).

*...the ISVA service. They're our main sort of supporting agency... the ISVA service is very*

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has identified three themes from the data, covering the attributes that make a SOIT effective in their role, how gender interacts with the police response to male sexual victimisation, and the lived experiences of male survivors in reporting to the police and accessing support services. The themes identified in this research have shown a mix of experiences and opinions, from both practitioners and survivors. Generally, practitioners have a lack of knowledge and training concerning male survivors, and male survivors have inconsistent experiences with the police and support services. Gender permeates multiple factors in the police response to male survivors, from the gender of practitioners to the gendered approach to training and resources. These themes have some links to existing research and have identified some areas for further exploration, as discussed in the next chapter.

## *Chapter 5: Discussion*

### 5.1 Introduction

This research aimed to understand the specialised role of SOIT as it relates to male sexual victimisation through the investigation of SOIT training, SOIT work, and male survivors' experiences with the police. Participant responses indicated three key themes: The Effective SOIT, Gender, and The Male Experience. These themes were divided into smaller sections for greater ease in presenting findings. This discussion will follow the same sequence as the findings chapter, relating findings to key previous research and contextualising findings into police practice and policy. This chapter will first discuss SOIT training, including the content, assessment methods and refresher training, as well as the role of discretion in SOIT work, and the concept of belief. The impact of gender and masculinity will then be analysed, focusing on the gender of practitioners as well as rape being viewed as a gendered crime. Finally, this chapter will analyse the experiences of male survivors, both in relation to the police and support services. A key aspect of this is the police response to rape, as well as the barriers to reporting victimisation to the police.

### 5.2 Interpretation

A significant portion of this research focused on the training SOIT officers receive both at the beginning of their role and subsequent refresher and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) days. Interviews suggested that training had had ongoing development since the inception of the SOIT role within each police service. SOIT officers had mixed views regarding the effectiveness of their training, one criticism being that at the initial inception of the role, the training was rushed and did not provide the bespoke training programme SOITs felt was necessary for their role. A more shocking revelation was that one SOIT had not been able to use sexual assault and rape scenarios while completing their Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview training. Funding was cited as a key reason for this, as the training was rushed through while the funding was available. Interviews with other SOITs indicated that training had much improved since, with tutoring by more experienced SOITs being standard in

one service. The mixed feelings on training extended to refresher and CPD days as well. Some officers felt they would benefit from greater levels of ongoing training, whereas others felt they had a good number of inputs. However, the assessment and feedback levels offered to SOITs was lacking, with it being only a recent development for ABE interviews to be reviewed by supervisors. This paints a portrait of a lack of specific focus on the role of SOIT and suggests greater attention should be given to how SOITs are operating and the standards to which they operate under.

Williams (2019) research combined with the theory of hegemonic masculinity may go some way to explain the lack of focus on the role of SOIT, as SOIT work is not viewed as 'proper policing' but rather emotional and 'fluffy'. For this reason, the SOIT role may not receive the same amount of attention and training may suffer as a result of prioritising other areas of police work. The theory of hegemonic masculinity tells us that society has expectations of masculinity involving dominance and strength, and Fielding (1994, p. 47) states police culture can be seen as a pure form of hegemonic masculinity (Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2015b). Where policing prioritises more physical and masculine activities, SOIT duties and the training of SOITs may be neglected.

Little research has been conducted into the training SOITs receive at the beginning of their role or through CPD days. An FOI request to the CoP (Appendix A) indicates that as of 2014, the College had developed a course for SOITs, delivered at a police service level. This classroom-based course is conducted over a two-week period, with continued development through CPD days and a work-based portfolio. Individual services are able to develop their training further to the CoP requirements, as evidenced by the MPS training course (Metropolitan Police, no date). While the College do not require specific focus on male survivors, the MPS do have specific inputs. The MPS has previously been praised for their training for specialised officers, albeit before the College developed a standard course (Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2002). The MPS also work with the Royal Air Force Police, Royal Military Police and Royal Navy Police, endorsing the training given to SOIT officers working within the armed forces (Ministry of Defence, 2017). This training would appear to follow the

same programme as delivered to MPS officers, as the materials and policy documents are delivered by the MPS (Ministry of Defence, 2017).

Of particular importance to many SOITs in their training was the inclusion of guest speakers, particularly survivors, who could provide them with new perspectives and expertise, not otherwise available to them. This would suggest that the police services involved in this research, like the Met, have put some effort into developing their courses and providing additional inputs. It was clear, however, that no SOIT had had any input relating to male survivors specifically, despite the inclusion of guest speakers in their training. There seemed to be confidence in SOITs' beliefs that the training they had received was applicable to all survivors, regardless of gender, and that while no SOIT could recall whether males had been mentioned directly, they were certain that their training would have covered males. This finding in and of itself was not unexpected as previous research has indicated a general lack of attention given to male survivors during training (Jamel, 2008). SOITs within Jamel's (2008) study, had, however, previously attended seminars concerning male victimisation. Training in general has also been affected by austerity measures implemented in recent years. In Williams' (2019) research, one officer stated that austerity measures had inevitably led to cuts to funding in relation to rape investigation. The effect of austerity on policing cannot be understated, and often services are required to disband specialised units in order to cut costs (Rumney, McPhee and Fenton, 2019). While it is unclear how austerity may have affected the training SOITs received, as this is outside the scope of this research, this may be one reason why SOITs involved in this research had not been given the opportunity to have outside agencies and experts in male sexual victimisation attend training and CPD days. Hegemonic masculinity may also play a role in explaining the lack of attention given to male survivors; if society has expectations of men that victimhood challenges, it may be expected that police officers and their training will focus on female survivors because this may seem to be the more obvious context within which victimhood would occur.

Of importance to the SOIT role was the role of discretion. Discretion in a policing context is often used in relation to front line policing activities such as stop and search, and describes the everyday decision making and the freedom of officers to perform their role based on their own judgement (Horvath, Tong and Williams, 2011). SOITs have considerable levels of discretion; while they must follow police service and national policy, it was clear that the way in which SOITs choose to conduct the role can be affected by personality, experience, and the needs of individual survivors. For example, police officers are generally required to contact victims of crime at least every 28 days to update them on the progress of the investigation (Essex Police, 2017; Leicestershire Police, no date). In investigations of rape or sexual assault, this contract will often be fulfilled by SOIT officers. Due to the traumatic nature of rape and sexual assault, contact from officers can be triggering for survivors, however, and so SOITs stated they will often work with survivors to determine the appropriate level of contact and the form this contact should take. SOITs also took initiative to contact survivors at key points through investigations and the year, for example at Christmas, to check on their welfare, above and beyond the policy. The personality and experience of SOIT officers also had an influence over their working styles and practices. Some officers felt it was best to tell survivors all they would need to know during the initial conversation after a report had been made, while others felt it was more appropriate to only tell survivors what they needed to know in the immediate future. This was largely guided by two principles: those who gave all the information immediately felt it was important for survivors to understand the process before moving forward, while those piecemealing the information felt survivors were not always capable of retaining it.

Discretion plays an interesting and sometimes controversial role in policing, particularly relating to rape investigation. When police discretion is applied in the context of sexual assault investigation, it usually refers to detective decision-making in an investigatory capacity, with criticism heavily relating to the influence bias and false beliefs can have on how and if an investigation progresses (Venema, 2016). SOITs hold a unique role in the police, being a part of an investigation, but largely outside of investigative decision-making (CoP, 2021). The SOIT role is instead generally limited to the initial

evidence gathering, support and liaison with the victim, with investigative decision-making being the sole responsibility of the Senior Investigative Officer (SIO) and detectives (CoP, 2021). Discretion as it applies to SOITs is under-researched, with little scholarship considering the impact individual decision-making of a sole point of contact within the police can have. Jamel (2008, p. 103) briefly highlighted how discretion was used in one instance by officers to disguise the contact a survivor was having with police through the use of unmarked cars for transport. The uses of discretion in this research, as well as Jamel's, seems to be strongly related to the welfare of survivors; levels of contact and the general approach to a SOIT's role would seem to be related to ensuring survivors are well catered for and continue engaging with an investigation. While these decisions are not necessarily related to investigative decision-making, it is important not to understate the potential downsides of discretion in the SOIT role. Bias and false beliefs can still impact on how a SOIT would choose to support a person making an allegation, this having a significant impact on the likelihood of a survivor to continue engaging with the police. No such biases or false beliefs were exhibited by SOITs in this research, however.

Closely linked to one another, as well as to discretion, are the wording that SOITs use and belief. SOITs expressed a dislike of the word 'victim' to describe those reporting sexual offences, often because those reporting do not like to consider themselves as victims. One SOIT stated the more appropriate word was 'complainer', however SOITs within their service continued to use the word 'victim'. This is in direct contrast to the recommendations made by Henriques (2019) following the high-profile criticism surrounding MPS actions in relation to complaints made against high-profile figures regarding sexual misconduct. Henriques (2019) recommended the use of the word 'complainant' in relation to those making reports to ensure that the police remain unbiased throughout an investigation. He asserted that not all 'complainants' of sexual offences are 'victims', and where the police choose to use the term 'victim' before a formal prosecution, it biases an investigation towards a belief in the complainant, removing neutrality in dealings with complainants, suspects and witnesses (Henriques, 2019). SOITs within this research stated their commitment to believing complainants as fundamental



to their role as support. This is again, however, in direct contradiction to Henriques' recommendations, as he states officers should review the evidence objectively and impartially. It is, however, well established that one possible reason for not reporting to the police is the fear of not being believed (Dewald and Lorenz, 2021). The police cannot be perceived to disbelieve those reporting sexual offences but must be open to all hypotheses during an investigation (Naughton, 2013, p. 77). Focusing on one hypothesis, particularly the presumption of guilt as a hypothesis, is responsible for a history of miscarriages of justice, because the assumption is made throughout the investigation that investigators are working to prove a case against suspects (Naughton, 2013, p. 77). The current Home Office Crime Recording Rules state that when a crime is reported it must be immediately recorded as a crime, the emphasis being on a "victim orientated approach to crime recording" (Home Office, 2021). This suggests that the police must walk a fine line around allegations of sexual offences, and SOITs in particular must balance carefully the concept of belief and the responsibility of the police to remain neutral.

A key theme which emerged through this research was gender, particularly around the gender of practitioners and the concept of masculinity. Throughout the interviews, both practitioners identifying as female, and those identifying as male expressed concern that their gender would be a barrier for male survivors to feel comfortable talking to them. As part of this, officers stated that they make a special effort when talking to male survivors to ask if they are more comfortable talking to a SOIT of the same or opposite gender. Conversely, survivors were more concerned with whether the specialist officer assigned to them would support them appropriately, rather than the gender of this officer. There was some indication that this choice would be important to some survivors, although the majority were not concerned. Of those survivors who were assigned a specialist officer, two were offered the choice in gender of the SOIT assigned to them, while two were not. This implies an inconsistent approach from service-to-service, as well as a lack of understanding from practitioners concerning the needs of male survivors. Throughout the interviews it became apparent that it may

not always be possible for a survivor to choose the gender of their specialist officer owing to two reasons: a lack of male SOITs and a lack of funding and therefore SOITs overall.

This finding corresponds with the existing research which suggests that SOITs are more likely to identify as female (Williams, 2019; Jamel, 2008). Williams (2019) suggests that the area of rape in policing is traditionally viewed as the domain of female officers, with SOIT work seen as 'fluffy' in comparison to other policing work. This perception of the SOIT role meant that male SOIT officers participating in Williams's (2019) study had been discouraged from becoming a SOIT, one sergeant suggesting that an officer must be a 'pervert' to want to apply for the role. One SOIT in this research suggested that the reason there were far fewer males working in the role was simply because fewer men had applied. If Williams' (2019) research can be generalised to other services, this may indicate that the lack of available male SOITs stems from culture that discourages male officers from entering roles perceived as less masculine than other police work. This, again, ties to hegemonic masculinity. Men are expected to portray a masculine personality, and where 'fluffy' work is seen as the domain of female officers, males working in this role go against these expectations. This may explain the disbelief of the sergeant in the example given in Williams (2019) work. Hegemonic masculinity has been shown to have profound impacts on workplaces seen as exemplifying masculinity, for example in manual labourers, where engaging in risky behaviour can be commonplace and masculine hobbies and interests are expected (Lacuone, 2005). As such, it may not be surprising if in a "macho" environment like policing, hegemonic masculinity influences the perceptions of a care related role like SOIT.

The concept of masculinity was clear throughout participant answers. Generally, this was referred to through discussions of weakness and strength, particularly the belief that in reporting a sexual offence, a person may appear to be weak. This fear was one stated by practitioners as a driver behind the low reporting rate and the difficulty for males to discuss their victimisation, although was not necessarily shared by survivors. Survivors were more likely to fear reporting because of personal considerations

and being made to feel that the offence was not one serious enough to warrant reporting. Being made to feel the offence was minor may be rooted in masculinity and the stigmas that come with it, however. The theory of hegemonic masculinity tells us that society has certain expectations of the masculine man, particularly dominance and physical strength (Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2015b). Sexual victimisation challenges this perception and so may be why one survivor in this research was made to feel like their assault was minor (Javaid, 2018a; Javaid, 2015b). The stigmas attached to male sexual victimisation are often related to masculinity, for example that men are physically strong, and are therefore unable to be raped (Walfield, 2021). These stigmas were felt by survivors from outside society and may go some way to explain why rape is often viewed as a gendered crime, males being viewed as perpetrators and females as victims (Javaid, 2015c; Graham, 2006). Rape as a gendered crime was apparent throughout interviews, one SOIT in particular defaulting to using she/her pronouns when referring to victims of sexual offences, and another using examples of stigma more likely to refer to those identifying as female. Further to this, one other SOIT stated the difficulty they face in perceiving males as victims, given that far more often they are seen as the perpetrators. The lack of training regarding male survivors, as well as the lack of specific knowledge regarding the resources available to men, is also indicative of rape being seen as a gendered crime.

Of those practitioners involved in this research, the majority had previously supported a male survivor, with only one SOIT and one counsellor not having done so. This correlates with previous findings; Jamel (2008) found that in their sample of nineteen SOIT officers, 11% had not previously supported a male survivor. This may be somewhat surprising given that reporting, especially by males, has increased substantially since 2008, however it is important to note that the SOIT in this research who had not supported a male was relatively new to the role (Home Office, 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2021a; 2021b). Of those survivors SOITs had supported, it was suggested that the majority of reports were made a significant time after the offence had taken place, termed historic offences, distinct from those cases involving a female victim. Further to this difference, practitioners reported that the difference between male and female cases can be quite marked, males

finding it more difficult to open up to practitioners, as well as one SOIT's assertion that males, unlike females would not report to prevent the perpetrator attacking others. Despite practitioners noting the differences between males and females, few SOITs stated they alter their approach to male survivors.

This study involved a mixture of male survivors who had chosen to report the offence to the police and those who had not. Reporting to the police appeared to be a very personal decision made for individual reasons, with no clear pattern. While some survivors felt that it was a way to seek justice and validation, others felt it was important to prevent the offence from happening to others, or because they felt it was the right thing to do more generally. Practitioners also stated a number of reasons for why survivors choose to report the offence to the police, from seeking prosecution, to preventing others being victimised and the belief that you simply should report offences. Of particular note, it seems, is how practitioners' views of why survivors may choose to report their victimisation differs from the reasons given by survivors.

One SOIT specifically stated that they hoped survivors reported because they wished to proceed with a prosecution. While some survivors stated the importance of ensuring the offence did not happen to others, perhaps hinting at the possibility of wanting a prosecution, no survivor explicitly stated this as a reason for reporting. This suggests that the perception of a sense of 'justice' for survivors may differ from the perception of 'justice' for SOITs. This phenomenon has been termed 'kaleidoscopic justice', the meaning of 'justice' constantly shifting and changing with new developments and circumstances, where justice can mean a variety of everchanging results and endings (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019). Usually survivors are not the ones defining justice in conventional conversations on sexual offending, the usual focus on prosecution not necessarily representing their needs and wants (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019). Even where survivors may want the 'traditional' form of justice of a long prison sentence, this is not necessarily a way to punish the offender, but rather prevent the offence from happening to others (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019). Survivors within McGlynn and

Westmarland's (2019) research viewed justice as equating to much more than punishment; recognition, support, being treated with dignity by practitioners within the police and wider justice system, being allowed to have a voice, the rebuilding of self, and the prevention of harm to others were seen as key forms of justice to survivors. This indicates that there may be a misalignment in the perception of justice from SOIT officers and survivors. To illustrate this, we can think of two parallel lines, one representing the justice outcome for the police, one the outcome for survivors. The goal of both of these lines is that justice, but the destinations are different, the lines do not meet when the police adhere to the idea of traditional justice in a criminal court. Instead justice must be thought of as constantly shifting roadmap, the lines of justice intersecting, with endless possibilities of what justice can mean, blending criminal justice and justice as the individual survivor perceives it. This is a somewhat difficult feat for the police, with the primary function of investigators being to gather evidence for criminal prosecution where applicable. It is vital, however, for SOITs and the wider policing network to understand that the idea of justice for some may not align with this function. Within this research, this misalignment of priorities was especially evident through the answers of MS003; despite achieving a prosecution as a result of his report, he described his experience with officers negatively, and stated that he would not report future offences.

Something only mentioned by one practitioner, a counsellor, was the particular difficulty men face in choosing to report where they have physically responded to a rape. There is significant research indicating that males while not consenting to sexual acts can have unwilling physiological responses to rape including erection and ejaculation (Rumney, 2009). This phenomenon is not limited to males; female survivors have also reported unwanted sexual arousal and orgasm (Levin and van Berlo, 2004). It is somewhat surprising then that only one practitioner involved in this research highlighted this as an issue preventing a person from being able to report to the police.

Of those survivors who had not reported, there again seemed to be no real pattern emerging, being made to feel the offence was minor, and not realising the significance of the offence as a non-

consensual act were cited as reasons, but there was no central thread throughout the responses. In order to report in the future, continuing to raise awareness of male sexual victimisation and having an understanding of the processes involved in investigating and convicting a sexual offence were seen as paramount. Practitioners and survivors also stated their belief that the perception of male sexual victimisation from others could prevent males from coming forward. This again relates back to the discussion around masculinity and stigma. While females face significant prejudice in the form of rape myths, males can also experience this prejudice, which in conjunction with the fear of being perceived as weak and therefore not masculine, can prevent a man from ever discussing their victimisation.

It can be suggested that the experiences of male survivors in their interactions with the police are indicative of a 'postcode lottery'. The extreme mix of experiences suggest an inconsistent approach from service-to-service. As no discernible pattern emerged from demographic data or the years in which offences occurred or were reported, this would perhaps imply differing levels of understanding and ability to support male survivors between individual police services. While the experiences of some survivors were described with positive language, others experienced doubt, victim blaming and a general lack of support. Throughout the retelling of their experiences, MS004 and MS002 indicated the police had in some capacity questioned the actions of survivors during and following the assault, directly resulting in a negative experience of the police. Interactions with the police were largely described with negative words. Only two survivors had had a positive experience with the officers involved in the investigation, one of whom had reported to a separate statutory agency. For MS002, their negative experience of officers had permanently changed their perception of the police as a whole, no longer having faith in them.

Previous research has shown an extreme mix in experiences with the police. Walker, Archer and Davies' (2005) participants for example, involved only a small percentage of the overall sample who had decided to report, and of those only one had had a positive experience. Negative experiences were generally associated with a poor police initial response, with officers appearing disinterested in

their discussions with male survivors (Walker, Archer and Davies, 2005). Respondents in Jamel's (2008) study had a broader mix of experiences, some positive, some negative. Those with negative experiences had had officers shout at them, make assumptions about their sexuality and survivors had been made to feel like more of a suspect than a victim (Jamel, 2008). In contrast, survivors participating in Abdullah-Khan's (2002) study, reported mostly positive experiences with the police, finding them helpful, kind and understanding. Rumney (2008) also found a mix of experiences, positive experiences involving the officers believing them and listening to their statement, but negative experiences involved feeling disbelieved, particularly when one respondent disclosed that he had been erect for part of the assault. Small sample sizes, a mix of locations, and reports made across a broad timeline, mean it is very difficult to generalise these results and make definitive assertions as to the type of experience a male can expect. The cautious assertion can be made that a wide variety of factors influence the level of police response, and that these responses are inconsistent, not only between police services, but individuals working within services as well, and so the term 'postcode lottery' best encapsulates this research.

The findings of this study do suggest, however, that specialist officers in the role of SOIT or equivalent can have a significant impact on an individual survivor. The interactions with SOIT officers were described as friendly and professional, although officers seemed overworked. The support offered by SOIT officers seemed to be directly related to how positively survivors described their experiences. This aligns with Jamel (2008), with one survivor specifically stating their SOIT was a positive aspect of their report experience. One survivor in this research did state that they felt their SOIT sometimes contacted them as a tick-box-exercise, the assumption being they were one of many cases that SOIT was assigned. This may be symptomatic of a police service in austerity with limited resources and overworked SOITs, however, nonetheless has left a negative impression of the police. For those who had not reported, knowledge of specialist officers would not have necessarily impacted on their decision of whether to report. Positive experiences of SOIT officers, in contrast to experiences of those officers not working in a SOIT role, may be indicative of the level of training and therefore potential

greater understanding of the dynamics of rape and sexual assault. Previous research shows that intensive training can have positive impacts on officer attitudes and beliefs as well as victim engagement (Mourtgos, Adams and Mastracci, 2021; McKee, Mueller-Johnson and Strang, 2020; Darwinkel, Powell and Tidmarsh, 2013). This would therefore suggest the need for SOIT officers, to ensure that survivors are well catered for, receive adequate support, and referrals to external agencies. Recent studies suggest that while there are a myriad of reasons for why survivors may choose to withdraw from a police investigation, a key reason for many is the stress associated with working with the police and being reminded of their victimisation (Hansen, Ravn and Hansen, 2020). Being treated with respect has also been shown to increase the likelihood of a survivor choosing to continue assisting an investigation (Patterson and Campbell, 2010). Where training improves understanding of the needs of sexual assault and rape survivors, SOIT officers may provide a greater source of support due to their increased level of training.

Perhaps the most important indicator of how the police response affected survivors was whether they would make the choice to report any future offences, or advise others to report. Those who had positive experiences felt confident that they would report again. However, those who had negative experiences stated either definitively that they would not consider reporting again and would not advise others to, or would be very hesitant to, fearing the inconsistent police response. This would mean future victimisation may not come to the attention of the police. A key duty of the police, beyond investigation, is referrals to outside support and safeguarding. If survivors feel they cannot contact the police for support, this may have wide reaching effects for their welfare and recovery. If the police are seen as unapproachable, this denies survivors access to other parts of the CJS, as the police are the gatekeepers, through which survivors must go (Jordan, 2004). For example, to access the Criminal Injury Compensation Authority, you must be able to provide a crime reference number as well as the name of the police station in which the crime was reported (UK Government, 2021).



Finally, a key aspect of SOIT duties identified was the awareness and use of support services available to male survivors. No SOIT involved in this research could name any charities specific to male survivors, even going so far as to say that there are no agencies available to males, rather agencies that cater to survivors regardless of gender. Some SOITs were able to name charities which support male survivors of domestic abuse related offences, as well as one working with transgender survivors, however it was clear that SOITs had a lack of immediate knowledge of the resources available. Several charities working specifically with males have national helplines and chat services, as well as directories to local services offering support, and resources for survivors and professionals (Male Survivors Partnership, 2021; SurvivorsUK, 2021a; SurvivorsUK, 2021b; SurvivorsUK 2021c; SurvivorsUK, 2021d; Safeline, 2021). Referrals to support services has been shown to reduce the number of survivors withdrawing from police investigations; Rumney *et al.* (2019) found that referrals by specialist officers to Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) reduced the likelihood of withdrawal from 50.9% to 27.1%. While no research has been conducted to indicate how male specific referrals to support services can impact on attrition rates, it is important for SOITs to have this knowledge at hand. One SOIT had highlighted the importance of ISVAs in the context of supporting a survivor, and others stated they referred survivors to services offering ISVA support, although these were not ISVAs who specialised in supporting male survivors. The role of ISVAs within the CJS is an important area for future research, particularly how male survivors may benefit from specialised ISVAs.

The apparent lack of resources available to males specifically was highlighted again in relation to the 'From Report to Court' booklet, produced by Rights of Women, who aim to provide resources to women through free legal services and campaign on the behalf of women (Rights of Women, 2018). This booklet is designed to ensure those affected by sexual violence have the information required to understand the entire process, from the moment of reporting, through to court processes (Rights of Women, 2018). While this booklet does have a section devoted to male survivors, one SOIT believed that this was evidence that male survivors are left out of conversations around sexual violence. Similar booklets have been produced specifically for male survivors in other countries, for instance in Australia

where NSW Health Education Centre (2013) has produced the booklet 'When a Man is Raped: A Survival Guide'. This booklet provides tailored information for male survivors and practitioners, describing the process of reporting to the police and where to turn for help (NSW Health Education Centre, 2013).

Use of support services by survivors was sporadic, as well as referrals to support by the police. Respondents indicated mixed experiences with these services, as well as a lack of awareness of male specific support services. One survivor, MS001, in particular was not aware of male specific support services, despite only recently having been referred to support by the police. This would again indicate officers have a lack of awareness of the support available. MS001 also indicated the difficulty in being a male survivor and looking for resources in female-centric spaces, such as through Rape Crisis. This comment echoed the thoughts of the SOIT officer in relation to From Report to Court, that men are seen as an afterthought in discussions of sexual offences and the resources provided to survivors. Positive aspects of support services included frequent welfare checks, as well as providing information and resources to better understand their victimisation. Further to this, one survivor who had had negative contact with Victim Support held that support workers, believed to be former officers, exhibited features of police culture in their response to him. This further emphasises the need for a consistent, and positive response to male survivors.

Overall, the themes identified in this research seem to relate strongly to hegemonic masculinity. The Effective SOIT outlined the aspects of training and working as a SOIT that create the ideal officer to support a survivor of a sexual offence. Discussions with SOITs highlighted the lack of available training regarding male rape and sexual victimisation, as well as the general lack in knowledge of where to refer male survivors for male specific services. Through a hegemonic masculinity lens the assumption can be made that this absence is due to the expectation that males cannot be victimised in this way, and so knowledge building and training are focused on the female perspective. The lack of attention given to the content of some SOIT training may also be due to a perception of SOIT work as outside

the realms of 'real', and more masculine, police work. As already discussed, a lack of male SOITs and masculine attitudes also relate to the expectation of masculinity and the victim blaming and lack of seriousness afforded to the reports of male survivors who participated in this research may also be indicative of how hegemonic masculinity affects male survivors and the police response.

### 5.3 Limitations

A key limitation of this research is the relatively small sample size, and therefore the difficulty in applying this research to larger populations within the police, counselling services and survivors. The appropriate sample sizes within qualitative research is contextual, however, dependent upon the theoretical framework, and subject matter (Boddy, 2016; Sandelowski, 1995). Previous research regarding male sexual victimisation, particularly those who have reported to the police, has also faced difficulties in obtaining larger samples, suggested to be not only because so few men report sexual offences, but the difficulty in determining where to advertise a study to reach the appropriate audience, particularly in circumstances where charities are unable to assist in research (Jamel, 2008). Gathering a significant sample size obtained in this research was also hindered by COVID-19, the pandemic creating significant difficulties in contacting potential participants and organisations capable of assisting this research, as well as in then arranging appropriate times for interviews to take place. COVID-19 has had significant impacts on research across several fields and disciplines, causing research progress to slow as researchers adapt to remote working and change research methodologies to align with local restrictions (Omary *et al.*, 2020; Saini *et al.*, 2020). It is imperative that police services and support agencies collaborate with researchers to assist in gathering samples representative of the larger populations.

Further to this, due to difficulty in gathering male survivors to participate in interviews, this research was required to adapt and use a questionnaire. As already stated, questionnaires do not allow researchers to probe further into participant answers but were deemed necessary to allow participants uncomfortable with interviews to participate in research.

Upon reflection and consideration of interview transcripts and questionnaire responses, it became apparent that there were subjects which may have benefitted from further exploration within data collection. For instance, while the use of support services was discussed, this research could have developed questions further and probed further from participant responses through continued questioning. This would have had the danger, however, of making interviews and questionnaires too long, causing participants to lose interest or withdraw. This is an area which should form the basis of future research.

A final limitation to be considered is the difficulty in defining the role of SOIT. Services across E&W use a variety of terms to describe these officers as well as assigning them with a variety of duties.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This research has shown that the police have done little to prepare SOITs for supporting male survivors; there is a general lack of training, experience, and knowledge relating to male sexual victimisation. SOITs did, however, highlight their commitment to supporting all survivors, particularly relevant in how they use their powers of discretion and the role of belief in reports of sexual offences. These aspects of SOIT duties seemed to be reflective of working within the police, while also trying to support survivors in whichever way was the most appropriate and effective. Gender also plays a key role in how SOITs and survivors interact. Practitioners were concerned as to how their gender would impact on a male survivor's ability to talk freely to them and how perceptions of masculinity would impact on whether male survivors even chose to report their victimisation. This links clearly to the theoretical perspective employed in this research, hegemonic masculinity, because how we perceive masculinity as aggressiveness and physical strength affects the expectations of one another on the behalf of practitioners and survivors. Misperceptions of male survivors and survivors in general were clear in how practitioners perceived the reasoning for reporting offences, where SOITs believed reports were made to achieve prosecutions but survivors' reasoning for reporting varied considerably. This form of kaleidoscopic justice, where justice can mean different things for different people,

suggests SOITs need a greater awareness of the needs and wants of survivors. The experiences of male survivors was also a key theme emerging from data. There was disparity between individual survivors, with some describing their experiences negatively and some positively. Specialist officers seemed to have a positive impact on the experiences of survivors, however. Each of these aspects has significant implications, negative experiences with the police meaning survivors may be less likely to seek help in the future, as evidenced by survivors who had negative experiences stating they would not contact the police after further victimisation.

## *Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations*

### 6.1 Conclusion

This thesis has examined the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in relation to the police, as well as the training and experiences of SOIT officers. The training SOIT officers received varied greatly not only between police services but the year in which officers appeared to have completed their training. There also seems to be inconsistent standards in assessment and supervision of SOIT officers, as well as a general lack of knowledge and experience relating to male survivors. There were some positive indications that SOITs used their powers of discretion to tailor their response to individual survivors, particularly in how they made contact and the frequency of contact with survivors. This discretion also extended to how information was conveyed to survivors, with some SOITs choosing to limit the information given in the first instance, and others choosing to provide all the information survivors need to know throughout an investigation in the initial conversation, to ensure they understood the journey they were about to take. The wording SOITs used was also guided by discretion; the debate of 'victim' vs. 'survivor' vs. 'complainant' seemed to be guided by both their experiences with survivors, their own personal opinions, and police policy. Finally, belief plays an important role in how SOITs conduct themselves, with SOITs stating that they believe survivors in all instances. This seems in direct contradiction of the duty of the police to remain neutral investigators and has some broader implications for rape investigation.

The experiences of male survivors are, as COU002 stated, akin to a postcode lottery, ranging from extremely positive to extremely negative, with no apparent links to any demographic data or the years in which offences occurred or were reported. This suggests an inconsistent police response. While there seemed to be some indication that SOITs had positive impacts on individual survivors, negative experiences still greatly affected survivors. This was evident particularly when survivors were asked if they would consider reporting a future offence or advise their friend to do so; while those who had had positive experiences stated that they would, this was a much more difficult question for those

who had negative experiences, with two stating that they absolutely would not, and one being unsure. Masculinity seemed to be a consistent concept throughout answers given by both practitioners and survivors; the perception of being weak was seen as a barrier to reporting to the police and utilising counselling services. The role of gender was also apparent in the ways in which practitioners viewed rape as a gendered crime. One SOIT in particular seemed to default to using feminine pronouns of she/her to refer to survivors, and another found it more difficult to perceive males as survivors, as they were more likely to perceive rape as between a male perpetrator and a female survivor.

Overall, this study has demonstrated that the police still have some way to go to further improve their response to male survivors of sexual offences, although has shown some initial promising indicators that specialist officers may improve the experiences of survivors. Hegemonic masculinity can be seen to have a significant impact on various aspects of the police response to male survivors, with indications that masculine expectations can permeate various aspects of male sexual victimisation and SOIT training and work. It is essential that further research is conducted into SOIT officers and male survivors more broadly, from both a hegemonic masculinity standpoint or otherwise. There is a general lack of research, knowledge and understanding of how the police operate specifically in relation to male survivors, as well as how male survivors perceive the police. The role of SOIT is particularly important to research, not only because of their close contact with survivors, but also because SOITs appear to be charged with holding an expansive multi-disciplinary knowledge, being expert in forensics, victim care, investigative practices, ABE interviewing, and support services. This role is therefore incredibly demanding and vulnerable to compassion fatigue, but vital to the police response to survivors. This study utilised a small sample of practitioners and survivors, however, has provided valuable insight into the police response to male survivors in the present day.

## 6.2 Recommendations

To the police:

1. Individual police services should improve working relationships with local and national charities and organisations specialising in male sexual victimisation through open communication and inclusion in the training of officers. An open forum should be developed to allow specialist services to make recommendations for improved practice.
2. Continue efforts to facilitate guest speakers specialising in male sexual victimisation and, where possible, male survivors to talk about their experiences and enable knowledge exchange.
3. Improve general knowledge of the services and resources available to male survivors and practitioners, through collaboration with experts in the field.
4. Engage with academics researching male sexual victimisation and policing to enable an evidence-based approach to supporting survivors, such as Avon and Somerset's research collaboration with The Open University, Project Bluestone (Avon and Somerset Police, 2021; Gibbons, 2021; The Open University, 2021).
5. Look to other police services to replicate examples of good practice. For instance, West Yorkshire Police's collaboration with Victim Support to encourage reporting by male survivors, including campaign posters, a dedicated page on individual police services' websites, and advertisement of useful contacts specific to males (West Yorkshire Police, 2021).
6. Develop campaigns to raise awareness of male sexual victimisation in local police service areas.
7. Work to present police services as an avenue of support for male survivors, encouraging reporting and raising awareness of specialist officers in the police.
8. Improve the availability of SOITs through increased recruitment to improve the workload of existing SOITs and enable them adequate time to appropriately support survivors and develop their knowledge of sexual victimisation.



To the College of Policing:

1. Mandate training relating to male survivors in initial SOIT courses, detective courses, and CPD days.
2. Expand SOIT training to incorporate examples of good practice from individual police services, such as the MPS training.
3. Work with police services to develop more regulated assessment and supervision standards.

Nationally:

1. Develop specific guidance and information packages for both practitioners and male survivors. This should take the form of a 'From Report to Court' style document. Similar documents have been produced at governmental level in other countries, such as 'When a Man is Raped: A Survival Guide' produced by NSW Health Education Centre (2013) in Australia.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: College of Policing Freedom of Information Request



College of  
Policing

College of Policing  
Central House  
Beckwith Knowle  
Otley Road  
Harrogate  
HG3 1UF

college.police.uk

T 01423 876999  
contactus@college.pnn.police.uk

**Date:** 25/11/2019  
**Our Reference:** FOIA-2019-0094  
**Your Reference:** N/A

*(Via e-mail)*

#### **RE: Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request**

I write in response to your Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or 'FoIA 2000') request dated 28 October 2019. I note from your request that you seek the following information:

1. Whether the College of Policing has a training programme itself that SOIT/STO officers must undertake nationally, or whether it is left to individual forces to provide their own training programmes. Including:
2. How long the initial training for SOIT officers is
3. How this training is delivered e.g. experts in the field, police trainers, e-learning courses (NCALTs), discussions with survivors, etc.
4. Whether there are any courses made available to SOITs regarding male victims of sexual offences specifically
5. The key areas covered by any national training
6. What, if any, mandatory refresher training is given to existing SOIT officers
7. If courses are designed and delivered to SOITs by individual forces, whether the College of Policing has any input or scrutinises these courses

#### **Decision**

After conducting careful searches for any information relevant to your request, I can confirm that there is information held in relation to your request. Please see below for answers to the questions above.

1. The College developed a course for SOITs in 2014 which is licenced by the College to Home Office forces (and others on application for a licence) for local delivery. Officers attending the course are required to be trained to Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) level 1 and serious and complex interviewing where they are to conduct the victim interview, in order to qualify for the role.
2. The classroom course is approximately two weeks long, but this is preceded by distance learning and followed by a work based portfolio.
3. This is a classroom based course and police trainers must adhere to the course content. They may call in experts or victims where appropriate.
4. There are no separate courses regarding male victims of sexual offences.

College of Policing Limited is a company registered in England and Wales, with registered number 8235199 and VAT registered number 152023949. Our registered office is at College of Policing Limited, Leamington Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry CV8 3EN

5. Key areas covered are;
  - Responding to Sexual Offence Allegations
  - Investigation Management and Support
  - Interviewing Sexual Offence Complainants
  
6. There is no mandatory refresher training but officers are required to complete continuing professional development under their local personal development review process.
  
7. The College does not conduct any quality assurance process for delivery. Quality assurance is delivered through classroom assessment and subsequent portfolio in the workplace.

Your rights are provided at Appendix A.

Yours sincerely,

**Legal Services**

**Information Management and Legal Services**

**College of Policing**

Email: [FOI@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@college.pnn.police.uk)

Website: [www.college.police.uk](http://www.college.police.uk)

## **Appendix A**

### **Rights**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or our decision made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you have a right to request an internal review by the College of Policing.

Internal review requests should be made in writing, within **forty (40) working days** from the date of the refusal notice and should be addressed to: FOI team, Central House, Beckwith Knowle, Otley Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 1UF or via email: [FOI@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@college.pnn.police.uk)

The College of Policing will aim to respond to your request for internal review within **20 working days**.

#### **The Information Commissioner**

If, after lodging a review request you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make an application to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information/>.

Alternatively you can write to the ICO:

#### **Information Commissioner's Office**

**Wycliffe House**

**Water Lane**

**Wilmslow**

**Cheshire**

**SK9 5AF**

**Phone: +44 (0)1625 545 700**

## Appendix B: Crime Outcome Tables

Below is compiled data from Home Office Released Data of Crime Outcomes in England and Wales. This data is divided into three groups: Mixed Gender (data regarding females over the age of 16 and males over the age of 16 reporting rape combined), Female (females over the age of 16), and Male (males over the age of 16). The 'Rate %' column is the proportion of cases resulting in each crime outcome. The second table includes those crimes Cancelled AVI. The No Suspect Identified Combined Data compiled data of those reports not resulting in a suspect being identified. 'Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-%' indicates the percentage increase/decrease from the first financial year of data to the last.

Outcome Type	Mixed Gender			Female			Male		
	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers
Total Offences (14/15 – 19/20)	+196.13%	-	T: 173,799	+191.15%	-	T: 163,390	+295.83%	-	T: 10,409
Charged/Summoned	-82.54%	6.44%	T: 173,799 C/S: 11,193	-82.4%	6.64%	T: 163,390 C/S: 6.64%	-82.55%	3.26%	T: 10,409 C/S: 339
Investigation Complete, No Suspect Identified	+30.19%	10.19%	T: 173,799 ICNSI: 17,711	+25.22%	9.41%	T: 163,390 ICNSI: 15,367	+44.33%	22.52%	T: 10,409 ICNSI: 2,344
Investigation Complete, Victim Supports Action	-21.51%	30.02%	T: 173,799 ICVSA: 52,166	-20.54%	30.41%	T: 163,390 ICVSA: 49,693	-35.49%	24.1%	T: 10,409 ICVSA: 2,509
Withdrawal Rate	+51.89%	51.38%	T: 173,799 W: 51,89%	+53.14%	51.63%	T: 163,390 W: 84,360	+34.07%	47.5%	T: 10,409 W: 4944
No Suspect Identified Combined Data	+75.37%	23.48%	T: 173,799 NSI: 40,806	+71.97	21.96%	T: 163,390 NSI: 35,874	+76.7%	47.38%	T: 10,409 NSI: 4,932

No Cancel Data Included

Outcome Type	Mixed Gender			Female			Male		
	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers	Percentage Increase/Decrease +/-	Rate %	Total Numbers
Total Offences (17/18 – 19/20)	+65.19%	-	T: 141,476	+63.58	-	T: 132,559	+92.64%	-	T: 8,917
Cancellations	-28.58%	1.6%	T: 141,476 C: 2,258	-28.9%	1.51%	T: 132,559 C: 2,007	-32.33%	2.81%	T: 8,917 C: 251
Charged/Summoned	-65.2%	4.36%	T: 141,476 C/S: 6,173	-65.06%	4.5%	T: 132,559 C/S: 5,960	-64.13%	2.39%	T: 8,917 C/S: 213
Investigation Complete, No Suspect Identified	+15.88%	10.34%	T: 141,476 ICNSI: 14,622	+12.97%	9.51%	T: 132,559 ICNSI: 12,605	+24.62%	22.62%	T: 8,917 ICNSI: 2,017
Investigation Complete, Victim Supports Action	-16.2%	28.6%	T: 141,476 ICVSA: 40,464	-15.6%	29.08%	T: 132,559 ICVSA: 38,550	-24.36%	21.87%	T: 8,917 ICVSA: 1,950
Withdrawal Rate	+20.95%	53.18%	T: 141,476 W: 75,240	+21.43%	53.54%	T: 132,559 W: 70,971	+15.46%	47.87%	T: 8,917 W: 4,269
No Suspect Identified Combined Data	+33.34%	24.78%	T: 141,476 NSI: 35,063	+32.28%	23.17%	T: 132,559 NSI: 30,711	+30.51%	48.81%	T: 8,917 NSI: 4,352

Cancel Data Included



## Appendix C: Interview Guide

### Demographics questionnaire – SOIT005

- How do you feel your previous roles outside of the police have impacted on your role now as a [REDACTED]
- Can you describe to me the distinction between [REDACTED] and SOIT in [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]?
- How do you feel your other roles have impacted on how you perform your role as [REDACTED]?
- What attracted you to the role of [REDACTED]
- How does being civilian staff rather than a warranted officer impact your work as a [REDACTED]?

#	Question
1	<p>What SOIT training have you had with the police?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key things you took away from your training?</li> <li>• What refresher training, if any, have you had regarding the role of SOIT?</li> </ul>
2	<p>When you think about the training you have received, how effective would you say it has been in preparing you for the role?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is that?</li> </ul>
3	<p>How could the training you received be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes you think that?</li> </ul>
4	<p>What would you say are the main responsibilities of a SOIT officer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about your responsibilities?</li> </ul>
5	<p>What are the things that enable you to do your job effectively?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do this compare to your actual experience?</li> </ul>
6	<p>What are the barriers to performing your role effectively?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does that effect you?</li> <li>• How does that effect the victims you're assigned to?</li> </ul>
7	<p>What are your experiences of male victims of sexual offences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any examples?</li> </ul>
8	<p>What approach do you take if a victim of a sexual offence is male?</p> <p>What approaches should you have if a victim of a sexual offence is male?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this any different to an approach to female victims?</li> </ul>
9	<p>How do you feel a male victim's interactions with the police would differ from a female victim's interaction?</p> <p>Are there any differences to how male victims and female victims experience the police in a broader sense e.g. those involved in an investigation outside of a SOIT (DCs, response officers)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel officers' behaviour around male victims differs from their behaviour around female victims?</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is that?</li> <li>• Should this be the case?</li> </ul>
<b>10</b> ! How could existing approaches to male victims be improved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would this happen?</li> </ul>
<b>11</b> ! If you could change anything about this response to male victims, what would it be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel the police's relationship with male victims could be improved?</li> <li>• How could male victims be encouraged to report their victimisation to the police?</li> <li>• Why is that?</li> </ul>
<b>12</b> ! How often on average would you say you contact victims? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this compare to how much contact you would ideally have?</li> <li>• How does this compare to ISVAs for example?</li> </ul>

Additional questions:

- Do you think victims in general appreciate the role of SOIT? Do they benefit from the role of SOIT?
  - o How does the role of SOIT benefit male victims specifically?
- Are the victims routinely offered a choice in the gender of their SOIT?
  - o Any other demographics?
  - o Should they?
  - o Do you think your gender impacts upon your role in any way?
- Why do you think victims choose to report to the police?
  - o Are there differences in why male and female victims choose to report?
    - Why?
  - o Do you think the police are the best organisation for this?
- Describe to me your relationship with partnership agencies
  - o How would you improve this relationship?
- Do you refer victims to support agencies?
  - o Which ones?
  - o Are you aware of any support agencies or resources specifically for men?

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

<b>Victims</b>	
#	Question
1	<p>Why did you decide to report to the police?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did you report?</li> </ul> <p>tell explain describe</p>
2	<p>What happened after you made the report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you feel about that?</li> </ul>
3	<p>How would you describe your interactions with the police?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What made you feel that way?</li> </ul>
4	<p>Were you assigned a specialist officer who kept in contact with you?            [IF NEEDED] They're sometimes called STOs, SOITs, or SOLOs.            [IF NEEDED] Did anyone go to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre with you and/or stay with you during the examination?            [IF NEEDED] Was there someone who explained the process of a police investigation or tried to keep you up to date with the investigation?</p>
5a	<p>[YES] How would you describe your experience with your SOIT/STO/SOLO?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why is that?</li> <li>Were you given a choice of gender of your specialist officer?</li> </ul>
5b	<p>[NO] [EXPLAIN ROLE] Would you have wanted a SOIT/STO/SOLO?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why is that?</li> <li>How do you feel the police officers you interacted with fulfilled this role?</li> </ul>
6	<p>How often was your SOIT in contact with you?            [IF NO SOIT ASSIGNED] How often were the police in contact with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does this compare to the level of contact you wanted?</li> <li>What did they contact you about?</li> </ul>
7	<p>How did your treatment by the police overall make you feel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What about your treatment made you feel that way?</li> </ul>
8	<p>How was your case concluded?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your awareness of the police disposal of the case?</li> </ul>
9	<p>How could the way the police dealt with you be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do you feel that way?</li> </ul>
10	<p>If you or a friend of yours were victim to a similar offence in the future, would you report again or advise your friend to report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you feel your experiences impact that decision?</li> </ul>
11	<p>Is there anything else you want me to know, or anything else you want to say about your interactions with the police?</p>

### Counsellors

#### Demographics:

- Am I right in thinking you are a counsellor?
- Do you have a counselling specialism?
- Do you refer to those you counsel as clients or?
- Can I ask how old you are?
- Gender
- How long have you been working as a counsellor?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your career history?

#### Questions:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your training to become a counsellor?
- How much experience do you have with male survivors of sexual offences?
- How do male survivors differ from female survivors, in your experience?
- Do you have different approaches to counselling a male survivor to a female survivor?
- What would you say are the main reasons men come forward for counselling?
- In your opinion, why might some men be hesitant to come forward for counselling?
- Of the men you have counselled, how many would you say reported the offence to the police?
- Why would men choose to report the offence to the police?
- Why might they be hesitant to do so?
- How would you describe police interactions with survivors of rape and sexual offences?
- How about specifically to male survivors?
- How do you feel the police could improve their approaches to survivors of sexual offences?
- What is your relationship with the police like?
- Is there anything else you want me to know or anything else you want to say about male survivors or your work?

## Appendix D: Male Survivors Survey



# Male Survivors Survey

0% complete

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## Welcome Page

Thank you for your interest in my research study.

### **Background to this study:**

This research study is being conducted independently by myself, Kathryn Phillips, as part of my Masters thesis at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), under the supervision of Dr Martin O'Neill, also of CCCU. Academic research concerning the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in reporting to the police and utilising support agencies is severely lacking in England and Wales. This study aims to address this gap in academic knowledge and use your responses to make recommendations on how best to improve police practice, as well as making wider recommendations to all organisations involved in the support of male survivors.

### **What will you be required to do?:**

All answers provided are anonymous and confidential. Any identifiable information provided within answers will not be published or included within my completed Masters thesis.

Participants in this study will be required to complete the following survey, in their own time. Participants who reported the offence(s) to the police, will be asked a series of questions concerning their interactions with officers, their thoughts and feelings around their experience with the police and their perception of how the police response may have been improved. You may also choose to answer some questions about any support agencies you accessed, and your thoughts and feelings around this.

Participants who did not report the offence(s) to the police will be asked a series of questions about any support agencies they may have accessed as well as why they chose not to report to the police.

You do not have to have reported to the police or used any support agencies to participate. Those participants who have not reported the offence or utilised agencies will be asked separate questions about why they chose not to do so.

The majority of the questions within this survey are 'free-text', meaning that you will be able to answer questions in your own words, with as much detail as you feel comfortable to give. Some questions in this survey are required to be answered. This is to ensure you are asked questions relevant to your experiences.

If at any point in the survey, you require a break or would like more time to think about your answers, you can use the 'finish later' option at the bottom of the page. This will require you to provide an email, through which a link will be provided. This will save the answers you input and allow you to finish the survey at a later date. Please note, this will not provide the researcher with your email address.

The amount of time needed to complete this survey varies from participant-to-participant. If at any point in this survey you feel you need a break, please utilise the 'finish later' option.

If you have experienced an offence meeting the below criteria more than once and would like to speak about each experience, please either complete this survey more than once, detailing one experience at a time. Alternatively, you may choose which experience you would most like this researcher to know about and only answer the survey once.

**None of the questions in this survey will concern the offence(s) directly or the perpetrator(s) of this offence(s).**

#### **ESCAPE buttons:**

At the end of each page you will see an ESCAPE option. This option will take you directly to the page containing details of support services you can contact, with the additional option to withdraw your answers from the study or keep your answers. If at any point you feel overwhelmed or would like the survey to stop, select one of the ESCAPE buttons at the end of the page and click next page. Note – using this option will not allow you the opportunity to return to this survey and complete your answers. You must use the 'finish later' option if you wish to return to the survey.

During this survey, you may be asked about sensitive issues. You do not need to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with.

#### **Withdrawal from the study:**

If while you are completing this survey, you decide you would no longer like to participate, please utilise the ESCAPE button explained above by selecting the option 'ESCAPE- take me to support and withdraw my answers'. Please save the receipt provided at the end of this survey or make a note of your receipt number. You have the right to withdraw up to two weeks after submission. In order to do so, you will need to contact the researcher ([kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk)). Utilising the option to withdraw is made easier using your receipt number. Alternatively, you can provide the date and approximate time of submission.

**To participate in this research, you must:**

- Have been 18 or over at the time of the offence
- Be a cisgender male (the gender you identify as corresponds to your birth sex)
- The offence must have been non-familial i.e. your perpetrator was not an immediate genetic relation such as your parent, sibling or child
- The offence must have occurred outside of a prison environment
- The offence must have occurred within England and/or Wales
- If reported to the police, this must have occurred within England and/or Wales

**Feedback:**

Participants will be able to obtain a copy of my Masters thesis upon completion and approval from examiners to see how their responses have been used. Details of how to obtain a copy are provided at the end of this survey.

**Confidentiality and Data Protection:**

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) will be processed:

General background of the participants including age and gender will be gathered with the consent of the participants involved. General background information may be used to categorise participants into groups to provide context to the answers given. All data will be confidential and anonymised.

The legal basis of the processing of data is through the consent of participants, as defined and covered by GDPR. Processing of personal data is necessary to provide context to answers given by participants i.e. how general characteristics may impact upon experiences with the police upon reporting a crime. Personal data will be used for the purposes of academia.

Data can only be accessed by, or shared with:

The principle researcher within the study, the supervisor of this study within the university and examiners assessing the written thesis.

There is the potential for participants to disclose actual or potential harm to themselves or to others. If this circumstance were to arise, this information would be passed onto the relevant authority e.g. the organisation through which participants were recruited and/or the authorities. This is to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing of both participants and others implicated as at risk of harm. All other data gathered would remain confidential, only information which suggests harm to themselves or others would no longer be considered confidential.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project:

All identifiable information will be deleted at the end of the Masters programme. Anonymous data will be deleted after 5 years.

**Any questions?:**

Please contact Kathryn Phillips on the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk), or through the School of Law, Criminal Justice and Policing Department at Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, CT1 1QU. Alternatively you may contact Dr Martin O'Neill, the supervisor of this study, using the number 01227 921874 or the email address [martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk).

**By participating in this research, you are agreeing that you have:**

1. Read through and understand the above information and that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions before participating.
2. Understood that any personal information you provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential and in line with the University Research Privacy Notice
3. Understood that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time during the survey or up to two weeks afterwards, without giving a reason.
4. Understood that you may use the 'ESCAPE' option at the end of each page to leave the survey or decline to complete the survey at any time for any reason.
5. Understood that you will be signposted to avenues of support.

By clicking 'next page' you agree to participate in the above project.

**To submit your answers, you will need to reach the final page of the survey which will display a message that you have submitted your answers. Unless you reach this page, your answers will not be submitted and researchers will not be able to see your responses.**

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**Next >**

[Finish later](#)

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## Male Survivors Survey

4% complete

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### Support Agencies

Below is a list of support agencies available to survivors of sexual offences within the UK. This list will also be available at the end of the survey.

**If you are in crisis, please contact Samaritans:**

- <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- Phone Number
  - 116 123
    - Open 24/7
- Email
  - [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
    - Response time: 24 hours

**SHOUT:**

- <https://giveusashout.org/get-help/>
- Text SHOUT to 85258
  - Available 24/7

### **SUPPORT SPECIFIC TO MEN:**

**Safeline National Male Survivors Helpline:**

- <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
- Phone Number:
  - 0808 800 5005

- Monday 9am – 5pm
  - Tuesday 8am – 8pm
  - Wednesday 9am – 5pm
  - Thursday 8am – 8pm
  - Friday 9am – 5pm
  - Saturday 10am – 2pm
- Text Support Line:
    - 07860 065187
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm
  - Male Survivor Live Chat
    - <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm

**SurvivorsUK:**

- <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/>
- Chat Service:
  - <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline/>
  - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Text Support:
  - 020 3322 1860
    - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Whatsapp Support:
  - 074 9181 6064
    - 12pm – 8pm every day

**Male Survivors Partnership (for a directory of local services accredited to support men):**

- <https://www.malesurvivor.co.uk/support-for-male-survivors/directory-of-services/>

**Mankind Initiative (for male domestic abuse survivors):**

- <https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/how-we-can-help/>
- Phone Number:
  - 01823 334244
    - Weekdays 10am – 4pm

**OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

**Rape Crisis:**

- <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/want-to-talk/>
- National Telephone Helpline:
  - 0808 802 9999
    - 12pm – 2:30pm every day
    - 7pm – 9:30pm every day
- Live Chat Helpline:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/live-chat-helpline/about-the-live-chat-helpline/>
    - Monday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Tuesday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Wednesday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Thursday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Friday 9am – 11:30am
- In Person Contact:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rape-crisis-centre/> (directory of local services)

**GALOP (LGBT+ domestic abuse support):**

- <https://www.galop.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Domestic Abuse Helpline:
  - 0800 99 9 5428
    - Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm
    - Wednesday to Thursday 10am – 8pm

### Victim Support:

- <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Support Line:
  - 08 08 16 89 111
    - Open 24/7
- Support Near You:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Live Chat:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat>
    - Open 24/7

### NAPAC (support for survivors of child abuse including sexual abuse):

- <https://napac.org.uk/calling-our-support-line/>
- Support Line:
  - 0808 801 0331
    - Monday to Thursday 10am – 9pm
    - Friday 10am – 6pm
- Email:
  - [support@napac.org.uk](mailto:support@napac.org.uk)
  - It may take several hours or days to receive a response

If you are in immediate danger please call 999.

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## Male Survivors Survey

9% complete

### Demographics

Are you completing this survey for the first time? *Optional*

- Yes
- No, I have submitted answers regarding a separate experience

If you are completing this survey again and would like your submissions to be linked together, please include either your receipt number from your previous submission(s) or the approximate time and date of your submission.

Current Age

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

What is your ethnicity?

Asian or Asian British

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Another Asian background

#### Black, African, Black British or Caribbean

- African
- Black British
- Caribbean
- Another black background

#### White

- British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh
- Irish
- Irish Traveller or Gypsy
- White European
- Another white background

#### Another Ethnic Group

- Arab
- Another ethnic background

#### Mixed Background

- Asian and white
- Black African and white
- Black Caribbean and white
- Another Mixed background
- Prefer not to say

Gender \* *Required*

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Transexual
- Other
- Rather not say
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

13% complete

### Demographics Continued

Did the offence take place in England or Wales? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey



18% complete

### Demographics Continued 2

Were you over the age of 18 at the time of the offence? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

22% complete

### Reporting to the Police

Did you report the offence to the police? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

27% complete

### Reported to the Police

Approximately what year did the offence take place?

- Prior to or during 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- Other
- Rather not say

Approximately what year did you report the offence to the police?

- Prior to or during 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- Other
- Rather not say

Were the police the first organisation you contacted?

- Yes
- No
- Other

If no, please indicate which organisation you initially contacted and how long it was between contacting this organisation and the police.

Please indicate which other support organisations you were or still are in contact with regarding the offence.

Please explain why you chose to report to the police.

What happened after you made the report?

Were you assigned a specialist officer who kept in contact with you? This officer may have been called a SOIT, a SOLO or STO. \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- Don't remember/unsure
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

31% complete

### Specialist Officer Assigned

Please explain your experience with your specialist officer.

Were you offered a choice in the gender of your specialist officer?

- Yes
- No
- Don't remember

If yes, did you utilise this option?

How did you feel about this option being given?

If no, would you have wanted this option?



Why/why not?



How would you describe the level of contact you had with your specialist officer?



---

Please describe anything that your specialist officer could have improved upon.

Please describe anything your specialist officer did that you found particularly positive.

How would you describe the level of contact you had with the other officers involved in your report?

ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

36% complete

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### No Specialist Officer Assigned

How do you think having a specialist officer would have affected your experience with the police?

Please describe what duties you would want a specialist officer to have.

How would you describe the level of contact you had with the officers involved in your report?

ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

40% complete

### Reported to the Police Continued

How did your treatment by the police overall make you feel?

How was your case concluded? If your case has not yet been concluded, please skip this question.

If applicable, how were you informed of this?

---

How could the interactions you had with the police have been improved?



If you or a friend of yours experienced a similar offence in the future, would you report again or advise your friend to report?



Why/why not?



Were you referred to any support agencies by the police?



---

If yes, which ones?

A support agency includes, but is not limited to: counselling services, ISVA services, helplines, or any other organisation or group supporting victims of crime.

Is there anything else you want me to know, or anything you want to say about your interactions with the police?

ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

45% complete

### Did Not Report to the Police

Why did you choose not to make a report to the police?

Could the police do anything to encourage you to report?

---

If you were made aware of specialist officers within the police, there to support survivors of sexual offences when they make a report and throughout the investigation, would this encourage you to report?

Why/why not?

Are you aware of whether your local force has any specialist officers?

Are you or were you in contact with any support agencies in relation to the offence? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

A support agency includes, but is not limited to: counselling services, ISVA services, helplines, or any other organisation or group supporting victims of crime.

## Male Survivors Survey

50% complete

---

### Additional Questions

Would you like to answer some optional questions about support agencies? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No - take me to the end of the survey
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

54% complete

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### Use of Support Agencies

Are you or were you in contact with any support agencies in relation to the offence? \* *Required*

- Yes
- No
- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

A support agency includes, but is not limited to: counselling services, ISVA services, helplines, or any other organisation or group supporting victims of crime.

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## Male Survivors Survey

59% complete

### Support Agencies and the Police

How did the response of the agency/agencies you were in contact with compare to the response of the police?

#### ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

63% complete

### Support Agencies

Please indicate which support agencies you were or are still in contact with regarding the offence.

A support agency includes, but is not limited to: counselling services, ISVA services, helplines, or any other organisation or group supporting victims of crime.

How helpful did/do you find these organisations?

---

What services did/do the support agency/agencies offer?

Which of these services did you access?

How did the response you received from this agency/these agencies impact on your decision to tell others?

How long after the offence took place did you contact a support agency?

- Within 24 hours
- Within one week
- Within one month
- Within one year
- Over a year after
- Rather not say
- Other

---

Did this organisation specialise in supporting male survivors of sexual offences?

- Yes
- Yes, and other survivors
- No
- Other
- Rather not say

How accessible did you find support agencies?

How did you find the support agency/agencies you contacted?

ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

68% complete

### No Contact with Support Agencies

Why did you decide not to contact any support agencies?

Have you ever told anyone about the offence?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how would you describe your relationship to this person/these people?

---

If no, why have you decided not to tell anyone?

Are you aware of any support agencies specific to male survivors?

- Yes
- No

How likely are you to contact a support agency in the future?

A list of support agencies and their contact details, specific to men and some general agencies, are listed at the end of this survey.

ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

72% complete

### Reported to the Police, but No Support Agencies

Why did you decide not to contact any support agencies?

Are you aware of any support agencies specific to male survivors?

- Yes
- No

How likely are you to contact a support agency in the future?

A list of support agencies and their contact details, specific to men and some general agencies, are listed at the end of this survey.



ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

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## Male Survivors Survey

77% complete

### Other Comments

Is there anything you want me to know, or anything you'd like to say about being a male survivor?

### ESCAPE

- ESCAPE - take me to support but keep my answers
- ESCAPE - take me to support and withdraw my answers

This is the final question in this survey. The next page contains information regarding support agencies.

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## Male Survivors Survey

81% complete

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### Thank You for Your Interest in this Research

Unfortunately, based on your answers to the demographics questions, you do not meet the criteria to participate in this research. This does not mean that you are not worthy of research or attention. Every form of sexual offence is under-researched, and every survivor deserves to have their voice heard. Please do not be discouraged from sharing your story with future academics conducting research. On the next page, a list of support services is available. If you feel you need help or just someone to talk to, please contact one of the following agencies.

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## Male Survivors Survey

86% complete

### Support Agencies Contact Details

Please note - this is not the final page. To submit your answers you will need to continue through this survey until you click the 'finish' button. Your answers will not be submitted unless you click this button.

**If you are in crisis, please contact Samaritans:**

- <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- Phone Number
  - 116 123
    - Open 24/7
- Email
  - [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
    - Response time: 24 hours

**SHOUT:**

- <https://giveusashout.org/get-help/>
- Text SHOUT to 85258
  - Available 24/7

### **SUPPORT SPECIFIC TO MEN:**

**Safeline National Male Survivors Helpline:**

- <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
- Phone Number:
  - 0808 800 5005

- 
- Monday 9am – 5pm
  - Tuesday 8am – 8pm
  - Wednesday 9am – 5pm
  - Thursday 8am – 8pm
  - Friday 9am – 5pm
  - Saturday 10am – 2pm
- Text Support Line:
    - 07860 065187
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm
  - Male Survivor Live Chat
    - <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm

#### **SurvivorsUK:**

- <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/>
- Chat Service:
  - <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline/>
  - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Text Support:
  - 020 3322 1860
    - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Whatsapp Support:
  - 074 9181 6064
    - 12pm – 8pm every day

#### **Male Survivors Partnership (for a directory of local services accredited to support men):**

- <https://www.malesurvivor.co.uk/support-for-male-survivors/directory-of-services/>

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**Mankind Initiative (for male domestic abuse survivors):**

- <https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/how-we-can-help/>
- Phone Number:
  - 01823 334244
    - Weekdays 10am – 4pm

**OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

**Rape Crisis:**

- <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/want-to-talk/>
- National Telephone Helpline:
  - 0808 802 9999
    - 12pm – 2:30pm every day
    - 7pm – 9:30pm every day
- Live Chat Helpline:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/live-chat-helpline/about-the-live-chat-helpline/>
    - Monday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Tuesday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Wednesday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Thursday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Friday 9am – 11:30am
- In Person Contact:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rape-crisis-centre/> (directory of local services)

**GALOP (LGBT+ domestic abuse support):**

- <https://www.galop.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Domestic Abuse Helpline:
  - 0800 99 9 5428
    - Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm
    - Wednesday to Thursday 10am – 8pm

#### Victim Support:

- <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Support Line:
  - 08 08 16 89 111
    - Open 24/7
- Support Near You:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Live Chat:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat>
    - Open 24/7

#### NAPAC (support for survivors of child abuse including sexual abuse):

- <https://napac.org.uk/calling-our-support-line/>
- Support Line:
  - 0808 801 0331
    - Monday to Thursday 10am – 9pm
    - Friday 10am – 6pm
- Email:
  - [support@napac.org.uk](mailto:support@napac.org.uk)
  - It may take several hours or days to receive a response

If you are in immediate danger please call 999.

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[Finish later](#)

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## Male Survivors Survey

90% complete

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### Withdrawal from the Study and Support Services

You have now withdrawn from the study. Your answers will be deleted, and you will not be contacted further. Thank you for your interest in my research.

If you selected this option by mistake, please use the back button to return to your place.

#### If you are in crisis, please contact Samaritans:

- <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- Phone Number
  - 116 123
    - Open 24/7
- Email
  - [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
    - Response time: 24 hours

#### SHOUT:

- <https://giveusashout.org/get-help/>
- Text SHOUT to 85258
  - Available 24/7

### SUPPORT SPECIFIC TO MEN:

#### Safeline National Male Survivors Helpline:

- <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
- Phone Number:
  - 0808 800 5005



- 
- Monday 9am – 5pm
  - Tuesday 8am – 8pm
  - Wednesday 9am – 5pm
  - Thursday 8am – 8pm
  - Friday 9am – 5pm
  - Saturday 10am – 2pm
- Text Support Line:
    - 07860 065187
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm
  - Male Survivor Live Chat
    - <https://www.safeline.org.uk/contact-us/>
      - Monday 9am to 5pm
      - Tuesday 8am to 8pm
      - Wednesday 9am to 5pm
      - Thursday 8am to 8pm
      - Friday 9am – 5pm
      - Saturday 10am to 2pm

**SurvivorsUK:**

- <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/>
- Chat Service:
  - <https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline/>
  - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Text Support:
  - 020 3322 1860
    - 12pm – 8pm every day
- Whatsapp Support:
  - 074 9181 6064
    - 12pm – 8pm every day

**Male Survivors Partnership (for a directory of local services accredited to support men):**

- <https://www.malesurvivor.co.uk/support-for-male-survivors/directory-of-services/>

**Mankind Initiative (for male domestic abuse survivors):**

- <https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/how-we-can-help/>
- Phone Number:
  - 01823 334244
    - Weekdays 10am – 4pm

**OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

**Rape Crisis:**

- <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/want-to-talk/>
- National Telephone Helpline:
  - 0808 802 9999
    - 12pm – 2:30pm every day
    - 7pm – 9:30pm every day
- Live Chat Helpline:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/live-chat-helpline/about-the-live-chat-helpline/>
    - Monday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Tuesday 2pm – 4:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Wednesday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Thursday 12pm – 2:30pm, 6pm – 9pm
    - Friday 9am – 11:30am
- In Person Contact:
  - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rape-crisis-centre/> (directory of local services)

**GALOP (LGBT+ domestic abuse support):**

- <https://www.galop.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Domestic Abuse Helpline:
  - 0800 99 9 5428
    - Monday – Friday 10am – 5pm
    - Wednesday to Thursday 10am – 8pm

**Victim Support:**

- <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Support Line:
  - 08 08 16 89 111
    - Open 24/7

- Support Near You:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- Live Chat:
  - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat>
    - Open 24/7

**NAPAC (support for survivors of child abuse including sexual abuse):**

- <https://napac.org.uk/calling-our-support-line/>
- Support Line:
  - 0808 801 0331
    - Monday to Thursday 10am – 9pm
    - Friday 10am – 6pm
- Email:
  - [support@napac.org.uk](mailto:support@napac.org.uk)
  - It may take several hours or days to receive a response

If you are in immediate danger please call 999.

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< Previous

Next >

[Finish later](#)

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## Male Survivors Survey

95% complete

### Thank You for Participating

Thank you for participating in this research. Your answers will provide valuable data and be used to make recommendations to both the police and organisations involved in the care and support of male survivors.

If you would like a copy of my thesis sent to you upon completion, please provide an email address below. Your email address will only be used to provide you with my completed thesis. *Optional*

Please enter a valid email address.

If you would not like a copy, or do not wish to use your email address, please leave the above field blank. My completed thesis will be made available on the communities [r/MenGetRapedToo](#), [r/Rape](#) and [r/RapeCounselling](#) on Reddit.

The following page will allow you to download a digital receipt and a copy of the answers you have given. Please save this receipt. If at any point in the next two weeks you make the decision to withdraw from this study, it will be easier to identify your answers using the unique number given on this receipt. If you lose this receipt or do not download it, but later choose to withdraw your answers, you will need to provide the date and time of submission.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this research, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again.

[< Previous](#)

[Finish ✓](#)

[Finish later](#)

# Male Survivors Survey

100% complete

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## Final page

Your responses to this survey have been submitted.

If you need a formal record of your submission, please use the following details:


### Completion receipt

Receipt number: 1-1-1  
Submission time: 2021-06-21 16:10:33 BST

 [Print](#)  [Download PDF](#)  [Email](#)

### Download my responses

You have 15 minutes to view this data

 [My responses](#)

---

## Appendix E: Initial Ethics Approval and Amendment Approvals

### Ethics ETH1920-0176: Miss Kathryn Phillips : Decision

---

Sent on 21 Apr 2020 by Dennis Nigbur

[Download as PDF...](#)

Miss Kathryn Phillips

School of Law, Criminal Justice and Policing

Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences

21st April 2020

Dear Kathryn

**Confirmation of ethics approval: The experiences of male victims of sections 1-4 Sexual Offences Act 2003 who report to the police, and the views of specialist police officers of male victims' experiences with police.**

Your ethics application complies fully with the requirements for ethical and governance review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures, and has been approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the [Research Governance Framework](#) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics approval.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform [ethics@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@canterbury.ac.uk) once your research has completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences Ethics Panel

[dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk)

## Ethics ETH2021-0039: Miss Kathryn Phillips : Decision

---

Sent on 02 Nov 2020 by Ping Zheng

[Download as PDF...](#)

Miss Kathryn Phillips

School of Law, Criminal Justice and Policing

Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences

2nd November 2020

Dear Kathryn

### **Confirmation of project amendment ethics approval: Doctoral Research Project**

Your application to amend your research project has been reviewed and approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the [Research and Enterprise Integrity Governance Framework](#) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any further significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics review.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform Canterbury once your research has completed.

Wishing you continued success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel

ping.zheng@canterbury.ac.uk

## Ethics ETH2021-0164: Miss Kathryn Phillips : Decision

---

Sent on 15 Feb 2021 by Ping Zheng

[Download as PDF...](#)

Miss Kathryn Phillips

School Of Law, Policing And Social Sciences

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences

15th February 2021

Dear Kathryn

### **Confirmation of project amendment ethics approval: Doctoral Research Project**

Your application to amend your research project has been reviewed and approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the [Research and Enterprise Integrity Governance Framework](#) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any further significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics review.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform Canterbury once your research has completed.

Wishing you continued success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel

ping.zheng@canterbury.ac.uk



## Appendix F: Participant Consent Forms



### CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** An Investigation into the Experiences of Male Victims of Serious Sexual Offences and Perception of Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques Officers.

**Name of Researcher:** Kathryn Phillips

**Contact details:**

**Address:** Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences  
North Holmes Rd,  
Canterbury,  
CT1 1QU

**Email:** kp347@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box



1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. (If applicable) I confirm that I agree to any audio and/or visual recordings.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential and in line with the University Research Privacy Notice
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time during the interview and up to two weeks after, without giving a reason.
5. I confirm that I understand that any disclosure of misconduct in their course of my work will be reported to [REDACTED]
6. I agree to take part in the above project.


Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:
Researcher: Kathryn Phillips	Date:	Signature:

Copies: 1 for participant  
1 for researcher

## Appendix G: Data Sharing Agreement



### Information agreement and data protection statement between Kathryn Phillips (MSc Researcher, Social and Applied Sciences, Canterbury Christ Church University) and [REDACTED]

The purpose of this document is to outline the roles and responsibilities of parties involved in this research and to outline the data protection and data security arrangements to protect the personal data of those participating in research with Canterbury Christ Church University.

#### Project Title:

An Investigation into the Experiences of Male Victims of Serious Sexual Offences and Perception of Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques Officers.

#### Principle Researcher:

Kathryn Phillips

#### Research Supervisor(s):

Dr Martin O'Neill

#### Data Subjects:

Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers; male survivors of serious sexual offences

#### Data Controller:

Canterbury Christ Church University

#### Data Processor:

Kathryn Phillips

#### Data Protection Officer:

Robert Melville  
Assistant University Secretary  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
Rochester House  
St George's Place  
Canterbury  
CT1 1UT

E-mail: [dp.officer@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:dp.officer@canterbury.ac.uk)

Telephone: 01227 767700

#### Legal Basis of data collection:

Consent

#### Methodology:

Phase 1: Semi-structured interviews with adult male victims of serious sexual offences, who's reporting to the police resulted in the perpetrator being charged with the offence, using audio recording equipment. Respondents will be asked about their experiences regarding interactions with

specialist police officers (SOIT officers) upon reporting their victimisation and in any ensuing investigation

Phase 2: Semi-structured interviews with adult male victims of serious sexual offences, who's reporting of the police resulted in the perpetrator not being charged with an offence, using audio recording equipment. Respondents will be asked about their experiences regarding interactions with specialist police officers (SOIT officers) upon reporting their victimisation and in any ensuing investigation. The aim of these interviews is to highlight themes within responses from victims with regards to treatment by police and potential improvements that could be made to police policy and practice.

#### Details of Data Security and Data Handling to ensure GDPR Compliance:

- Informed consent will be gained from all participants via an information sheet which participants can retain and the signed consent forms,
- Academic tutor has completed e-learning on GDPR.
- Data Processor(s) i.e. primary researcher(s) (Kathryn Phillips) to be security vetted by Kent Police prior to research being conducted.
- Force will be provided with details of Data Protection Policies.
- CCCU will be the only agency outside of ████████ to receive the information, and only the staff from within CCCU's social and applied sciences actively involved in the research shall receive the information.
- Information received i.e. interview transcripts, interview recordings and participant details will be stored in an independent encrypted database (CCCU systems only) with password protection and access restricted to the named researchers only.
- Hard copies of data will be stored in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher/data processor/School research assistant will have access, which is located at Glebe House.
- If electronic data needs to be physically transported between locations encrypted USB sticks provided by the University will be used – However, this is unlikely to occur as it will only be used on CCCU computers.
- Consent forms which contain names and contact details to be collected and transported separately from completed transcripts.
- Consent forms will be coded upon retrieval to allow any data subject to withdraw their data at any time (GDPR requirement)
- Consent forms to be stored separately from any other data.
- No attempt will be made to match consent forms to transcripts to ensure that raw data is suitably anonymised (with right to withdraw data accepted as above).
- No attempt will be made to identify individual participants from demographic data.
- The identity of subjects taking part in interviews will be kept strictly confidential.
- Only general trends will be reported in any writing.
- Recordings of interviews will be deleted once they have been transcribed to avoid voice-identification.
- An auditable log will be kept of data access and processing.
- The physical data will be stored until successful completion of the work and only anonymised responses will be stored for future use, if deemed necessary.
- University data protection policies will be strictly complied with.



Signed – Principle Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn Phillips".

Name: Kathryn Phillips

Date: 6/11/20

Signed on Behalf of CCCU

Name:

Position:

Date:

Signed on Behalf of [REDACTED]

Name:

Position:

Date:

## Appendix H: Participant Information Sheets



An Investigation into the Experiences of Male Victims of Serious Sexual Offences and Perception of Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques Officers.

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Kathryn Phillips, supervised by Dr Martin O'Neill.

#### **Background**

Academic research concerning both training given to specialist police officers who work with victims, and the experiences of male victims of sexual offences in reporting their victimisation, is severely lacking in England and Wales. This study aims to address this gap in knowledge and use your responses to make recommendations to your police force to optimise their response to future male victims, as well as to other forces and those involved in the support of survivors of sexual offences. This study is being run independently by myself, Kathryn Phillips, as part of my Masters thesis at Canterbury Christ Church University. It is important to note here, that participants from the police, and male survivors of sexual offences will be interviewed individually and will therefore at no point interact with one another. Participant responses will also be anonymised in all data collected, with data made confidential.

#### **What will you be required to do?**

Participants in this study will be required to partake in audio recorded interviews with myself, lasting approximately thirty minutes to an hour. These interviews will comprise of approximately ten questions concerning your training as a Sexual Offences Investigative Technique (SOIT) officer (or equivalent title e.g. SOLO, STO, etc.) as well as your experiences of working with male victims of sexual offences within this role. You do not need to have worked with a male survivor to participate. The answers to these questions may lead to further questions to clarify or expand upon your answers. Participants can withdraw from this study during the interview or up to two weeks after the interview without giving reason and without consequence.

#### **To participate in this research, you must:**

Be currently working as a SOIT/SOLO officer (or equivalent title), either part time or full time, and have therefore completed your initial SOIT/SOLO training.

#### **Procedures**

You will be asked to participate in an interview conducted via the phone at a time and date organised at your convenience. Interviews will likely be arranged to take place within your station in a private room or in your home to ensure the anonymity of your answers. These interviews will last approximately thirty minutes to an hour.

#### **Feedback**

Participants will be able to obtain a copy of my Masters thesis upon completion and approval from examiners to see how their responses have been used. If you would like a copy, please contact the lead researcher, Kathryn Phillips, at the email address kp347@canterbury.ac.uk.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) will be processed:

General background of participants including gender, employment status and employment history within the police will be gathered with the consent of participants involved. This will be used to provide context for answers given and enable participants to be categorised by experience. All data will be confidential and anonymised.

The legal basis of the processing of data is through the consent of participants, as defined and covered by GDPR. Processing of personal data is necessary to provide context to answers given by participants i.e. how general characteristics may impact upon experiences with the police upon reporting a crime. Personal data will be used for the purposes of academia.

Data can only be accessed by, or shared with:

The principle researcher within the study, the supervisor of this study within the university and examiners assessing the written thesis.

There is the potential for participants to disclose actual or potential harm to themselves or to others. If this circumstance were to arise, this information would be passed onto the relevant authority. This is to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing of both participants and others implicated as at risk of harm. Any disclosure of gross misconduct on the part of participants or others will also be passed onto the relevant police force. All other data gathered would remain confidential, only information which suggests harm to themselves or others, or disclosure of gross misconduct would no longer be considered confidential.

Participants are asked to refrain from discussing the specific details of any cases to protect the identity of victims who have reported to the police.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project:

Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. All identifiable data will be deleted at the end of the Masters programme. Anonymous data will be deleted after five years.

If you would like to obtain further information related to how your personal data is processed for this project please contact Kathryn Phillips through the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk).

You can read further information regarding how the University processes your personal data for research purposes at the following link: Research Privacy Notice -

<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notice/privacy-notice.aspx>

### **Dissemination of results**

Results of this study will be published through the written Masters thesis, and therefore be made available through the Canterbury Christ Church University library system. This study may also be used to write journal articles and create conference posters. Data will be anonymised in all dissemination methods.

**Process for withdrawing consent to participate**

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this research project at any time during the interview and up to two weeks after the interview without having to give a reason. To do this please email Kathryn Phillips through the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk). On receipt of this email all records of personal data including transcripts and recordings of interviews, and consent forms will be destroyed.

Further information on the rights of participants relating to your personal data can be found on the university website in the Research Privacy Notice.

**Any questions?**

Please contact Kathryn Phillips on the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk), or through the School of Law, Criminal Justice and Policing Department at Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, CT1 1QU. Alternatively you may contact Dr Martin O'Neill, the supervisor of this study, using the number 01227 921874 or the email address [martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk).



An Investigation into the Experiences of Male Victims of Serious Sexual Offences and Perception of Sexual Offence Investigative Techniques Officers.

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Kathryn Phillips, supervised by Dr Martin O'Neill.

#### **Background**

Academic research concerning the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in reporting to the police is severely lacking in England and Wales. This study aims to address this gap in academic knowledge and use your responses to make recommendations on how best to improve police practice, as well as making wider recommendations to all organisations involved in the support of male survivors. This study is being run independently by myself, Kathryn Phillips, as part of my Masters thesis at Canterbury Christ Church University, and being supervised by Dr Martin O'Neill, also of Canterbury Christ Church University. All participants in this study will be interviewed separately and all responses will be anonymised, with data made confidential.

#### **What will you be required to do?**

Participants in this study will be required to participate in an interview with myself, conducted either over the phone or email. Participants who choose to participate in phone interviews will be required to partake in one audio recorded interview with myself. Participants who choose to participate in email interviews will be emailed a list of questions to be returned to myself. There is the potential for email participants to be contacted further to clarify or expand upon their answers. All interviews will comprise of approximately ten questions concerning your experiences with the police following reporting that you had been victim to a sexual offence. These questions will in no way concern the offence itself, or the perpetrator, only the interactions you had with police. These questions will mostly concern interactions with specialist police officers, however answers concerning the police in general are also helpful. The answers you give to these questions may lead to follow up questions to clarify or expand upon your answers. Phone interviews will last approximately thirty minutes to an hour. You may withdraw from the interview and study at any point during the interview and up to two weeks after the interview without giving reason and decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable.

#### **To participate in this research you must:**

- Be over the age of eighteen
- Be a cisgender male
- Have been victim to a sexual offence during or after 2015 and reported this offence to the police, even if you later withdrew the report
- Have been eighteen or over at the time of the offence
- The offence must have been non-familial, i.e. your perpetrator was not an immediate genetic relation such as your parent, sibling or child
- The offence must have occurred outside of a prison environment
- The offence must have occurred and been reported within England and/or Wales



These criteria are to ensure that no other factors such as being in prison or being young enough to be treated as a child would have impacted upon interactions one can have with the police.

#### **Procedures**

You will be asked to participate in interviews conducted via email or phone at a time and date organised at your convenience. Phone interviews will be arranged to take place where you are able to be within a private room or your own home to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of answers given. These interviews will last between approximately thirty minutes and an hour.

During the interview we might talk about sensitive issues. You do not need to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with. If you do feel distressed, please, let the researcher know and we will signpost you to avenues of support.

#### **Feedback**

Participants will be able to obtain a copy of my Masters thesis upon completion and approval from examiners to see how their responses have been used. If you would like a copy, please contact the lead researcher, Kathryn Phillips, at the email address kp347@canterbury.ac.uk.

#### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) will be processed:

General background of the participants including age and gender will be gathered with the consent of the participants involved. General background information may be used to categorise participants into groups to provide context to the answers given. All data will be confidential and anonymised.

The legal basis of the processing of data is through the consent of participants, as defined and covered by GDPR. Processing of personal data is necessary to provide context to answers given by participants i.e. how general characteristics may impact upon experiences with the police upon reporting a crime. Personal data will be used for the purposes of academia.

Data can only be accessed by, or shared with:

The principle researcher within the study, the supervisor of this study within the university and examiners assessing the written thesis.

There is the potential for participants to disclose actual or potential harm to themselves or to others. If this circumstance were to arise, this information would be passed onto the relevant authority e.g. the organisation through which participants were recruited and/or the authorities. This is to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing of both participants and others implicated as at risk of harm. All other data gathered would remain confidential, only information which suggests harm to themselves or others would no longer be considered confidential.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project:

Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. All identifiable data will be deleted at the end of the Masters programme. Anonymous data will be deleted after five years.

If you would like to obtain further information related to how your personal data is processed for this project please contact Kathryn Phillips through the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk).

You can read further information regarding how the University processes your personal data for research purposes at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx>

#### **Dissemination of results**

Results of this study will be published through the written Masters thesis, and therefore be made available through the Canterbury Christ Church University library system. This study may also be used to write journal articles and create conference posters. Data will be anonymised in all dissemination methods.

#### **Process for withdrawing consent to participate**

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this research project at any time during the interview and up to two weeks after the interview without having to give a reason. To do this please email Kathryn Phillips through the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk). On receipt of this email all records of personal data including transcripts and recordings of interviews, and consent forms will be destroyed.

Further information on the rights of participants relating to your personal data can be found on the university website in the Research Privacy Notice.

#### **Any questions?**

Please contact Kathryn Phillips on the email address [kp347@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:kp347@canterbury.ac.uk), or through the School of Law, Criminal Justice and Policing Department at Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, CT1 1QU. Alternatively you may contact Dr Martin O'Neill, the supervisor of this study, using the number 01227 921874 or the email address [martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:martin.oneill@canterbury.ac.uk).

# Appendix I: Demographic Forms

## Demographic Questionnaire

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Code Assigned  
(Researcher Only): \_\_\_\_\_



Age:

18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-49	<input type="checkbox"/>
50-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-binary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	<input type="text"/>

Length of Police Career:

0-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
6-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 years+	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Previous Roles Held within the Police (the last three if employed in more than three roles):</b>

<b>Time Spent in Role:</b>

<b>Previous Employment (Outside of the Police) (the last three if employed in more than three roles):</b>

<b>Time Spent in Role:</b>

Time Spent in SOIT role  
(or equivalent):

0 - 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 - 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 - 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 - 8 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 - 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 years+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you currently:

A Warranted Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
OR	
Civilian Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you previously been a SOIT for another force or had any break from being a SOIT? If so, please briefly detail:

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## Demographic Questionnaire

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Code Assigned  
(Researcher  
Only): \_\_\_\_\_

Age:

18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-49	<input type="checkbox"/>
50-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65+	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-binary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_

Year of Offence (approx.):

Prior to 2013	<input type="checkbox"/>
2014	<input type="checkbox"/>
2015	<input type="checkbox"/>
2016	<input type="checkbox"/>
2017	<input type="checkbox"/>
2018	<input type="checkbox"/>
2019	<input type="checkbox"/>
2020	<input type="checkbox"/>

Year of Reporting to Police (approx.):

Prior to 2013	<input type="checkbox"/>
2014	<input type="checkbox"/>
2015	<input type="checkbox"/>
2016	<input type="checkbox"/>
2017	<input type="checkbox"/>
2018	<input type="checkbox"/>
2019	<input type="checkbox"/>
2020	<input type="checkbox"/>

Were the police the first  
organisation you contacted?:

Yes   
No

If no, please indicate which organisation you initially  
contacted and how long it was between contacting this  
organisation and the police:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any other organisations you were or still are in contact with regarding the  
offence:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_