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November 2025

(This document is also available in Welsh)



Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys

Scrutiny Panel Dip Sampling Exercise

Op Soteria- Victims of RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences)

Members' Findings & Feedback

November 2025

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1. Overview, Background, Purpose and Methodology

The Quality Assurance Terms of Reference (ToR) is available on the [PCC's website](#) which states the background, purpose and methodology of the Panel.

On the 26th of November 2025, Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) members met at Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) Headquarters to revisit a selection of incidents involving victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Offences (RASSO).

The OPCC, in collaboration with the Force, have agreed to revisit this topic in order to strengthen the robustness and value of its findings from the report in [September](#). Firstly, by increasing the sample size, the QAP will be able to draw conclusions that are more representative and reliable, ensuring that any patterns or concerns identified are not based on isolated cases. Secondly, this review provides an opportunity to establish greater accountability in relation to operational incidents, ensuring that actions taken are transparent and subject to appropriate oversight. Finally, revisiting the topic allows the QAP to build on previous work, deepening their understanding and reinforcing their commitment to continuous improvement in practice and outcomes for RASSO victims.

The QAP were tasked to view a series of Body Worn Videos (BWV) of frontline officers interacting with RASSO victims only; allowing feedback provided from the first report time to embed with regards to the virtual service GoodSam. The QAP were asked to review the footage and consider:

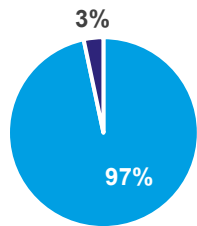
- The Force's service towards RASSO victims by assessing frontline officers' compliance regarding the 5 Procedural Justice (Fairness, Dignity and Respect, Voice and Recognition, Safety, Trustworthiness).

For background information in relation to Operation Soteria and the 5 Procedural Justice Principles please revisit the first report [here](#).

2. Executive Summary

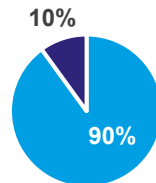
QAP members assessed 4 cases. This is a summary of their evaluation of the DPP's performance in relation to the 5 principles of the Procedural Justice.

Did the officer display
Fairness?



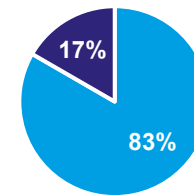
■ Yes ■ No

Did you feel the officer
showed Dignity and
Respect to the victim?



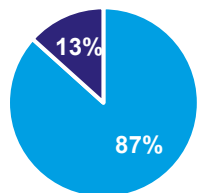
■ Yes ■ No

Did the officer listen to the
Voice of the victim?



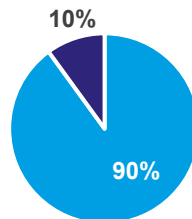
■ Yes ■ No

Did the officer consider the
victim's Safety?



■ Yes ■ No

Did the officer show
Trustworthiness?



■ Yes ■ No

Overall assessment:

Positives:

Evidence of Officers Displaying Supportive Demeanour

- In all cases the QAP viewed, the officers displayed courteous, empathetic and respectful responses to victims of RASSO whilst also respecting their wishes on whether they wished to proceed with the criminal justice process.

Support Services Signposted

- Officers signposted appropriately various support services including New Pathways and social support workers.

Areas for improvement:

Assigning Same Sex Officer

- Whilst officers of both genders are being trained to support victims of RASSO, operational commitments prevent the option for victims to have this preference.

Intrusive Radio Transmittance

- Officers are not mandated to wear issued earpieces to obtain Witness Information Booklet (WIB) accounts from the victims. The QAP determined the radio transmittance to be intrusive to sensitive disclosures.

Police Jargon

- QAP found evidence of frontline officers using police jargon with their interactions with victims of RASSO, which may prevent them from understanding the criminal justice process.

3. Queries Raised by QAP

Observations	Force response
<p>From all frontline BWV footage observed, there was no evidence that the victim was given the opportunity to state their preference regarding the gender of the officer they wished to speak with. Can you clarify, is this a pre-arrangement or should this be captured at the point officers attend the scene?</p>	<p><i>Op Soteria will say that forces should offer victims the choice of a male or female officer to attend reports of Rape. This has been subject to discussion during the recent National Operating Model continuous professional development (CPD) training in Dyfed-Powys Police. Dyfed-Powys Police has seen a significant increase in the number of both male and female sexual offence trained officers (SOTOs) meaning there is greater opportunity to dispatch an officer with the correct skills to attend such crime types. Unfortunately, operational commitments, certain timing of reports (i.e. in the early hours) and officer abstractions does not always allow for a SOTO nor the choice of officer gender being available. It would therefore be unfair on a victim to ask this question to then be unable to honour their wishes. Victims should only be asked if the force is able to dispatch an officer meeting the victim's wishes.</i></p>
<p>The BWV picked up background interference from the officer's radio. Can you advise if this is due to the sensitivity of the BWV camera or if this is what the victim would have been exposed to?</p> <p>If so, the QAP considered the radio intrusive to handling delicate and private disclosures; however, they appreciated that officers would need to be available</p>	<p><i>Officers are equipped with earpieces that prevent radio transactions being heard by other parties. Certainly, in serious and complex cases such as sexual offences and sudden deaths, it would be recommended that officers use this equipment because of the sensitivity of the incident the officer has attended. Since BWV was introduced in Dyfed-Powys Police, the non-mandated use of earpieces has created disclosure issues as any communications that can be heard that does not relate to the incident attended by that</i></p>

operationally in case of an emergency. Should there be consideration from frontline officer's to either wear an earpiece or to turn their radio down when conducting enquiries with RASSO victims?	<i>officer would need to be redacted before a casefile reaches court. The above recommendation can be built into the recently developed Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) Response Booklet as part of an aide memoire.</i>
With regards to Case 2, as soon as the term 'rape' was disclosed, the officer appeared to immediately progress to a WIB which was considered abrupt by the QAP. Can you advise what would be the best practice for officers to comply with in obtaining details from victims who choose to disclose a RASSO incident?	<i>To help victims understand the criminal justice process, there needs to be an explanation about the stages of an investigation to ensure victims can make an informed decision whether to support a criminal justice outcome or not. The risk of not doing so may mean that victims enter the process not fully committed to the outcome and this may result in high attrition rates pre-charge. It is the responsibility of officers to communicate with victims what options the victim has, which must be set at the victim's pace, and then proceed to obtain an initial account if the victim has chosen to engage and make a complaint.</i>
Some of the language used by officers appeared to be formal and occasionally would use police "jargon" during their interaction. Is there any specific training that officers receive in terms of how they communicate with victims that avoids this?	<i>Police officers from their initial probationary training are encouraged to not use police jargon both when engaging with victims and when recording their updates on police systems. This is to prevent victims feeling confused and provides transparency should any police records be subject to audit and scrutiny. If there is a pattern of officers using jargon, this will be fed back to the RASSO uniform single point of contact.</i>
With regards to Case 4: 1) The officer was having a discussion with their sergeant via the radio outside of the property	<i>1) No, this would not be a breach of confidentiality. The Sergeant would assume responsibility of supervising the investigation at this juncture prior to the investigation being allocated to CID. The Sergeant</i>

regarding the various aspects of the disclosure, which the Panel queried whether this would be a breach of confidentiality. Can this be validated?

- 2) In your assessment, should the attending officers have considered their environment to conduct the WIB?
- 3) The QAP raised concerns regarding tone and inappropriate remarks made by the leading officer. Can you view and advise whether you would agree with this assessment?

needs to be privy to all information available to them in order to conduct risk assessments and oversee golden hour enquiries. The environment where the information is shared with the officer's supervisor should be suitable and confidential, out of the hearing of anyone who does not need to hear the officer's updates.

- 2) *Yes, similar to the answer in question 1, the environment should be suitable and confidential. It would be appropriate for the officer to ask the victim if they would like to move to a more comfortable area. But if the victim would prefer to remain where they are i.e. on the stairs, anyone else in the room should politely be asked to leave unless they are supporting the victim. If the victim would like a person to stay in the room, officers are to confirm if the victim has told that person what has happened, and efforts should be made to obtain a witness statement from them prior to them being present during the victim's initial account. This maintains independence in the witness' evidence.*
- 3) *I too picked up on the officer's use of language. Themes that stood out for me was the officer's casualness in the incident. There were a number of leading and closed questions which officers should use open questions to prevent defense lawyers accusing victims of being coached into telling the*

	<i>police what happened. It should be noted that front line officers will not be trained to the same level as investigations in terms of interviewing styles.</i>
Are officers pressured to ensure the victim proceeds with a criminal justice prosecution or is there pressure upon the officers to avoid actively encouraging victims to proceed with a criminal justice process?	<i>Officers should neither persuade nor discourage victims from engaging with the criminal justice process. Officers are responsible for explaining the process and to reassure victims that the decision to support a criminal justice outcome remains theirs. Procedural justice is about giving victim's a voice and reinstating an element of control that offences such as Rape can remove.</i>
Is there a victim information pack to assist frontline officers with expectations and offer adequate support for victims? If so, should all officers have this readily available upon attending a RASSO incident?	<i>Yes, officers are able to access both the victim information guide, an aide memoire and the newly developed RASSO response booklet to assist them attending reports of Rape. An Op Soteria intranet page was created approximately a year ago containing relevant guidance which officers can access on their mobile data terminals. It is the responsibility of officers to familiarise themselves with available material following the circulation of bulletins and news articles published on the force's intranet.</i>

4. Review of RASSO Cases

Record 1

Circumstance

The attending Officer responded to the rape disclosure with the victim reluctant to proceed with the Criminal Justice Process.

*Did the officer display **Fairness**?*

- The officer was sympathetic, courteous, listened carefully, and respected the victim's decision not to proceed.
- Initially the officer appeared nervous and hesitant but became more relaxed as discussions progressed.
- The QAP were uncertain in relation to the communication prior to the officer's attendance, as the victim appeared unaware of officer's attendance, though was heard apologising for this.
- The QAP queried why only one officer was allocated who was the opposite sex to the victim, raising concerns about perception and suitability.

*Did the officer show **Dignity** and **Respect** to the victim?*

- The officer was not heard asking if the victim would prefer to speak to someone of the same sex.
- However, they considered the officer to be courteous and conscientious of not overloading the victim with information regarding the criminal justice process.

*Did the Officer listen to the victim's **Voice**?*

- Under difficult circumstances, the QAP considered that the officer handled the situation very well with their demeanour considered gentle, calm, patient and offered reassurance regularly.
- However, certain QAP members noticed that the officer remained standing throughout the interaction which may come across to the victim either as authoritative or that they were in a rush.

*Did the Officer consider the victim's **Safety**?*

- The disclosure of the victim's self-harm led to a consultation with the social worker, where the officer prioritised wellbeing over investigation.
- The officer also ensured that the victim was not going to be on their own once they departed by discussing the victim's plans for the day.

*Did the Officer show signs of **Trustworthiness**?*

- The officer was perceived to be respectful of victim's wishes and concerns.
- The victim disclosed having prior experience of proceeding with the criminal justice process for a similar allegation. Officer was not heard acknowledging this or signposting to appropriate support services.

*Any **positives** raised from the Panel?*

- The officer displayed excellent empathy whilst also gently reminding and encouraging the victim to disclose further details regarding the rape.
- The officer respected the victim's wishes and gave them time to consider their wishes.

*Any **areas of improvement** considered by the Panel?*

- The QAP queried whether the victim was offered the choice of same sex.
- The officer's response radio was considered to be intrusive to discussions.

*Any **queries** raised?*

- Was the victim afforded the opportunity to advise of her preference to speak to an officer of the same sex?
- The BWV picked up background information from the officer's radio. Can you advise if this is due to the sensitivity of the BWV camera or if this would be what the victim could hear? As officers would need to be available operationally in case of an emergency, should there be consideration from frontline officers to either wear an earpiece or turn their radio down when obtaining sensitive information in relation to RASSO victims?

Record 2**Circumstance**

The officers were responding to a separate incident, when the victim disclosed a historic rape.

*Did the officer display **Fairness**?*

- The officer displayed a non-judgemental approach and responded appropriately to a dynamic situation.
- The QAP considered that the officer may have been abrupt in determining the process for a WIB; however, once the WIB was completed, the officer appeared to ease into the interaction with the victim and offered a lot more information regarding next steps.

*Did the officer show **Dignity** and **Respect** to the victim?*

- There were three officers on the scene of both genders and the leading officer who conducted the WIB was not heard offering the victim the choice of having questions asked by someone of the same sex.
- The leading officer specified that the process of conducting a WIB will require some scribing; and therefore, will include prolonged silences, which the QAP considered to be courteous and best practice as it sets expectations of the required evidential process, whilst maintaining the dignity of responding to the victim's answers.

*Did the Officer listen to the victim's **Voice**?*

- The victim was seen signing the WIB without reading or having it read to them, despite the officer making countless attempts to ensure.
- Despite the officers attending a regarding a separate incident, the leading officer acknowledged the disclosure of rape immediately and the subsequent enquiries were conducted at the victim's pace.
- The leading officer sounded embarrassed when asking for details about the intrusive sexual act.
- Officer offered reassurance on more than one occasion, advising on how difficult it is for them to disclose.

*Did the Officer consider the victim's **Safety**?*

- The officer conducted a Domestic Abuse and Stalking Harassment (DASH) risk assessment upon recognising that the rape had been conducted by an ex-partner, advising that this is to support the victim's safeguarding.
- The officer asked about provisions and persons that will be available once they depart.
- Advice surrounding the phone always being charged and switched on was provided for the purposes of specialist officers recalling to establish further details.
- Other officers in the background were heard signposting New Pathways and were establishing what support the victim was currently receiving.

*Did the Officer show signs of **Trustworthiness**?*

- Leading officer displayed personal commitment to the victim that they were contactable if they had any further questions in the interim of receiving contact from specialist officers in relation to the rape disclosure.
- Victim's demeanour appeared relaxed throughout the interaction with the officers' attendance.

*Any **positives** raised from the Panel?*

- QAP members heard officers signposting relevant support services.
- Officers provided personal commitment to the victim in offering to answer any questions after taking details of the account.

Any **areas of improvement** considered by the Panel?

- There were long silence periods for handwriting the WIB. Whilst the QAP understand this is the current judicial process, they consider this aspect of the enquiries to be a real barrier or for the victim to re-read the details of the WIB which may be re-triggering their trauma of disclosing the incident.
- The airwave-radio was considered intrusive to disclosures and enquiries.
- Three officers were present of both genders and at no point did the QAP ascertain if the victim would like to speak to someone of the same sex.
- Certain QAP members felt that it was unnecessary for there to be 3 officers in the same room for the disclosure. They considered whether this could be handled more privately as certain officers would hold different conversations on the radio.

Any **queries** raised?

- As soon as Rape was disclosed the officer appeared to immediately progress to a WIB which was considered abrupt by the QAP. Can you advise on the best practice in obtaining details from victims who choose to disclose?
- Some of the language used by officers appeared to be formal and occasionally would use police “jargon” during the interaction. Is there any specific training that officers receive in terms of how they communicate with victims?

Record 3**Circumstance**

Officers are responding to a domestic incident where rape was disclosed in the DASH.

*Did the officer display **Fairness**?*

- The victim was having potentially panic attacks when attempting to recount what had happened. The leading officer instructed on breathing techniques which the QAP considered was helpful.
- There was a clear rapport between the victim and the officer and showed no indication of judging them.

*Did the officer show **Dignity** and **Respect** to the victim?*

- The officer that spoke with the victim was of the same sex.
- The officer displayed an empathetic interview style under difficult circumstances with the victim visibly distraught.
- The victim was not perceived to be reluctant but struggled to disclose the encounter. The officer was gentle in their persistence of enquiries and allowed the victim to disclose at their own pace. The officer was looking for alternative methods for the victim to disclose that included writing it down instead of verbalising it which the QAP considered to be considerate and pragmatic.

*Did the Officer listen to the victim's **Voice**?*

- The officer was perceived to be reacting to the body language of the victim, using their intuition to establish that there was

more than what was being initially disclosed.

- In acknowledging the victim's feelings, the officer offered their hand in support, which in most instances may not have been appropriate; however, the QAP considered this to be helpful.

*Did the Officer consider the victim's **Safety**?*

- The officer factored that the victim was not in a position to obtain a WIB due to intoxication and advised that this would be delayed until the following morning.
- There was no discussion regarding safeguarding that the QAP heard; however, they considered whether the victim was in the mental capacity to obtain that detail due to the trauma and intoxication.
- The officer was persistent with the line of questioning to ensure that the police could remove the alleged offender/ex-partner from the house.

*Did the Officer show signs of **Trustworthiness**?*

- The officer explained the process upon hearing the disclosure and was transparent with their actions which was beneficial to set expectations to the victim.

*Any **positives** raised from the Panel?*

- The officer's demeanour throughout the interaction was pitched at the victim's level.
- The officer attempted to ascertain alternative methods to help the victim disclose what they were upset about.

*Any **areas of improvement** considered by the Panel?*

- Some of the officer's choice of colloquial language including "come on" or that "I am not a mind-reader" the QAP felt were unfortunate phrasing as it could be considered as insistent or judgemental.

Any **queries** raised?

- Some of the language used by officers appeared to be inappropriate during the interaction. Is there any specific training that officers receive in terms of how they communicate with victims?

Record 4**Circumstance**

The victim has disclosed an incident of rape at their home and is reluctant to share details or proceed with a criminal investigation.

*Did the officer display **Fairness**?*

- It was difficult to ascertain the conversation between the victim and the officer, as both attending officers were holding two simultaneous discussions at either end of the staircase. The leading officer was in a difficult position, as the victim did not want to enter their home due to the trauma of the incident, but the QAP queried whether the accompanying officer could have spoken to the unknown person outside or in the police van to offer the victim some more privacy.
- The QAP felt that whilst the officer displayed patience with the victim, who was potentially known to police as they made a number of distrusting remarks regarding the police service and were also challenging in obtaining answers due to their level of intoxication, the leading officer was also heard making a number of judgemental remarks and the tone appeared to imply that the victim could have done more to have prevented the incident.
- The QAP did not hear any reassurances or acknowledgments of empathy during the disclosure.
- The officer used jargon terminology including the location of a *SARC*, referring to Sexual Assault Referral Clinic, and did not explain the *forensic window* clearly.

*Did the officer show **Dignity** and **Respect** to the victim?*

- The officer was having a discussion with their sergeant via the radio outside of the property discussing various aspects of the disclosure, which the Panel queried whether this would be a breach of confidentiality. The tone of the conversation

appeared judgemental from the perspective of the officer too.

- On more than one occasion, the victim advised that they “wanted to die” which was neither acknowledged nor offered reassurance which the QAP determined was disrespectful.
- The officer offered to take the victim to any location they felt safe in the interim that their property was being locked for evidential purposes.

*Did the Officer listen to the victim’s **Voice**?*

- The victim disclosed being abused in their childhood, which the officer provided no reassurance or signposting support at this stage.

*Did the Officer consider the victim’s **Safety**?*

- The officer offered the victim the option of a safe place for them to stay whilst their home would be locked to preserve for forensic evidence.
- Due to the victim’s perceived intoxication and lack of trust in the police, it made it difficult for the officer to build a rapport but it was felt that this was achieved by the end of their interaction.

*Did the Officer show signs of **Trustworthiness**?*

- Whilst the victim was advised of the testing procedure and details surrounding a SARC, this did not appear comprehensive.
- The victim described their behaviour towards police on previous occasions being uncooperative which the officer agreed but then advised that this was not the case on this occasion.

*Any **positives** raised from the Panel?*

- The officer displayed patience throughout the interaction which on occasion the victim could be abusive or abrupt to the officer's questions.
- During the disclosure, the officer crouched to be at the same level as the victim to obtain WIB details, which the QAP considered to be courteous and respectful.

Any **areas of improvement** considered by the Panel?

- The officer did not appear to communicate the process in accessible language and appeared unsure of the process.
- The decision to conduct the WIB on the staircase alongside the accompanying officer conducting their line of enquiries, appeared to be unsuitable for the private and sensitive questions posed by the officer and distracting for the victim.

Any **queries** raised?

- The officer was having a discussion with their sergeant via the radio outside of the property regarding the various aspects of the disclosure, which the Panel queried whether this would breach of confidentiality. Can this be validated?
- Should the attending officers have considered alternative environments to conduct the WIB?
- Are officers pressured to ensure the victim proceeds with a criminal justice prosecution?
- Is there a victim information pack to assist frontline officers with expectations and offer adequate support for victims? If so, should all officers have this readily available upon attending a RASSO incident?

5. Next Steps

DPP has established a date to commence the NFA (No Further Action) Rape Scrutiny Panel at the end of January 2026. The Panel will focus on four cases that were NFA'd to establish whether this was the correct decision. The Panel will consist of representatives of the Force, the OPCC, New Pathways and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) who will meet on a bi-monthly basis.

The purpose of the Panel will be to seek guidance and advice on the pre-charge decision of each case. The scrutiny will work in partnership with North Wales Police (NWP) who will view DPP rape cases and vice versa.

It is hoped that the Panel will provide ongoing learning for police officers and CPS to ensure investigations involving RASSO are consistent, effective and holistic in evidence gathering; and most importantly, are engaging and empathetic towards the victim-survivors throughout.