

A new tool for UK police forces to improve rape investigations

February 15 2024

Severity assessment grids

Summary of adverse impact:				
	Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Stakeholder feedback on severity and likelihood assessment:
Moderate adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Severe adverse impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Credit: *RASSO victim impact assessment (RVIA) Template, (2024)*

A new tool for police forces to improve rape investigations has been created by UofG academics as part of the UK Home Office Operation Soteria.

Highlighted in the UK Government's update to the Rape Review, the tool has been developed by University of Glasgow academics Dr. Ruth Friskney and Dr. Kelly Johnson, together with Professor Clare McGlynn from Durham University, to help police forces to better protect victims' rights.

The new Rape Victim Impact Assessment (RVIA) tool will help police forces improve services to victims by providing a clear process to support officers and staff to systematically review how police policies and procedures could impact victims. It is developed from similar processes such as Equalities or Environmental Impact Assessments which are now routine in many sectors.

The tool is part of the new National Operating Model (NOM) for the investigation of [rape](#) and serious sexual offenses by police forces. Dr. Friskney, Professor McGlynn, and Dr. Johnson continue to work with police forces across England and Wales to explore how the tool is used in practice and how it can be improved to increase its value to forces and victims.

While the Rape Victim Impact Assessment was developed in the specific context of police investigations of rape, it has the potential to be applied across all areas of the criminal [justice](#) system. It provides a flexible, systematic tool to truly put victims—their rights and interests—at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Dr. Ruth Friskney, of the UofG based Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), said, "The RVIA expands the existing practice of impact assessments in other fields such as equalities and

environmental impact assessments and applies it to the context of rape investigations. It, therefore, draws on long-standing practice and expertise, now developed for the specific context of rape and policing."

Commenting on the potential impact this will have, Professor Clare McGlynn, Durham University, said, "While the RVIA was developed in the specific context of police investigations of rape, it has the potential to be applied across all areas of the criminal justice system. The RVIA provides a flexible, systematic tool to truly put victims—their rights and interests—at the heart of the criminal justice system."

Dr. Kelly Johnson, University of Glasgow, said, "The RVIA will help the police to embed the principles of procedural justice—dignity and respect, fairness, voice, safety and trustworthiness—which were developed as part of Operation Soteria."

She added, "It also reflects findings in Year One that there was a lack of strategic oversight and planning for policy development to ensure it carefully considered victims' interests."

The RVIA tool provides a process for the police to analyze the potential impact a [policy change](#) may have on victims, including identifying and gathering evidence, and considering ways to mitigate any adverse consequences.

It will give assistance for the police to provide a better service for victims, putting their rights and interests at the heart of the criminal justice system, and help [police officers](#) to develop greater confidence that all policies have been designed with the rights and interests of victims of sexual offenses in mind, including those from minoritized and marginalized groups.

The tool is also an opportunity for victims, stakeholders and the public

to understand police decision-making, as it advises forces to publish and share their assessments with the local community to support transparency and accountability.

More information: Tool template: [www.sccjr.ac.uk/wp-content/upl ...
VIA-Sep-2023-Web.pdf](http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/wp-content/upl...VIA-Sep-2023-Web.pdf)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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