



Ms Janaya Walker
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9 June 2022

Dear Janaya,

Thank you for your letter of 29 April to the Home Secretary about Operation Soteria. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this issue and I am very sorry for the delay in replying to your letter.

We are driving improvements in the criminal justice response to rape and transforming the way rape is investigated. To achieve this, the Home Office is funding the policing aspects of Operation Soteria, the objective of which, as you may know, is to develop a new national operating model for the investigation of rape, to be made available to all police forces by June 2023. A substantial amount of work is underway to drive progress in the five pathfinder forces, expand the programme to 14 further police forces and ensure a robust operating model is delivered.

We are committed to delivering this work, and all other Home Office led commitments in the Rape Review transparently. The academic-led deep dive research will complete in the final pathfinder police forces – South Wales – in September. Findings from across the five deep dives will be published in the Autumn, at the conclusion of the first phase of the programme. In the interim however, key findings from the academic-led research to date (in Avon and Somerset Police, the Metropolitan Police Service and Durham Constabulary) will be published in the next Rape Review Progress Update, which is due for publication in June.

We are committed to working closely and collaboratively with voluntary and community sector organisations working to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) and support victims. This includes holding quarterly VAWG sector stakeholder meetings. We have invited Professor Betsy Stanko and Dr Katrin Hohl – the academic co-leads for the programme – to deliver an update on the development of the new national operating model at a forthcoming meeting.

I will also be hosting a Parliamentary briefing event to provide Parliamentarians with an opportunity to hear directly from Professor Betsy Stanko and Dr Katrin Hohl. The date of this event will be confirmed in due course; however, I can confirm that it will take place before the summer recess and VAWG sector stakeholders will be invited to attend.

It is of course critical that learning from the programme is shared with frontline police officers and prosecutors as soon as it becomes available. That is why the national learning network and programme of events has also been established. I am also pleased that, as referenced in your letter, the events hosted by the network include invitees from the voluntary and community sector, given the important role you play, as well as government officials and representatives from other criminal justice agencies.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the End Violence Against Women and Girls coalition and all of the organisations included in your correspondence for taking the time to write to me with your concerns on this important issue. Please feel free to circulate this response amongst your fellow organisations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Maclean', with a small flourish at the end.

Rachel Maclean MP