

Male survivors of sexual offences and the criminal justice system

Research concerning the experiences of adult male survivors of sexual offences in reporting to the police from a human rights perspective (current practice and the implications of *DSD v The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis*)

Key details

Lead institution	Canterbury Christ Church University
Principal researcher(s)	Kathryn Phillips kp347@canterbury.ac.uk
Police region	South East
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	December 2021
Date due for completion	April 2025

Research context

The United Kingdom, as a member state of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), is obligated to ensure individuals' human rights are upheld. Article 3 of the ECHR protects citizens from degrading treatment and torture which includes child abuse, assault and sexual offences.

Where an individual makes an allegation that they have been subjected to such treatment, whether by state agents or other private individuals, the state, and by extension the police, are obligated to perform an effective investigation capable of apprehending the offender.

A recent case, [DSD v The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis \[2018\] UKSC 11](#), found the Metropolitan Police Service had breached the rights of DSD and NBV in their investigation of John Worboys' offending through a series of systemic and operational failings.

This research aims to consider the experiences of male survivors of sexual offences in relation to the police from a human rights perspective, considering whether current practice meets the obligations set out by Article 3 of ECHR for male survivors in light of the DSD judgement.

This PhD research consists of four studies, each aimed at understanding current practice in police services across England and Wales and the experiences of male survivors in reporting to the police. Research concerning male survivors of sexual offences is extremely limited and equally little is known concerning police officer perceptions and understanding of male victimisation. This research aims to fill this gap in knowledge while also generating recommendations to improve the police response to male victimisation and encourage reporting by men.

Research methodology

Study 1

An online survey for police officers across England and Wales to assess officer understanding and perception of male sexual victimisation through the Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (MRMAS) and a series of open questions. Officers will be divided into three groups: those who have completed specialist training concerning sexual offences, officers who have not completed specialist training, and officers who are new in service and therefore have not completed any training relating to sexual offences. Officers responses will be analysed and their level of male rape myth acceptance will be scored, with the three groups' scores compared.

Study 2

Analysis of crime outcome data to map the likelihood of cases of male rape resulting in positive criminal justice outcomes in comparison to female rape cases.

Study 3

Interviews with specially trained officers concerning their training and day-to-day work in relation to male sexual victimisation. Officers will participate in semi-structured interviews to consider how effective their training is in preparing them to investigate allegations of sexual offences made by male survivors. Interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis.

Study 4

An anonymous online survey for male survivors of sexual offences. Male survivors are divided into two groups, those who reported to the police and those who chose not to. Those who reported to the police will be asked about their perception of the investigation and police response, whether they found the police response to be effective, and officers understanding and knowledgeable. Those survivors who did not report to the police will be asked why they made this choice and whether the police could do anything to encourage them to report their victimisation.

Each study was designed and will be analysed through the lens of the human rights obligations imposed by Article 3 of ECHR.

Research participation

Police forces with an interest in the research are invited to email the researcher at kp347@canterbury.ac.uk.

Tags

- [Criminal justice](#)