What the national operating model means for victims

The model was developed in conversation with victims and organisations supporting victims to make sure that throughout the investigator's journey, victims' rights and needs stay central to the process.

First published 10 July 2023

3 mins read

What the implementation of the national operating model will mean for victims

The implementation of the national operating model will have significant implications for victims of rape and serious sexual offences. With its victim-centred approach, the model aims to centre the rights and needs of victims from all backgrounds throughout the investigation process. By placing victim rights and needs at the centre, the model seeks to address the historical challenges and shortcomings that victims have faced in the criminal justice system.

The national operating model emphasises procedural justice for victims, ensuring that victim rights, needs and interests are respected and victims are treated from a trauma-informed perspective.

What victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led means and how it benefits victims

A victim-centred, suspect-focused and context-led investigation, as encapsulated by the national operating model, represents a balanced and holistic approach to investigations.

Victim-centred

The principle of victim-centred in the national operating model underscores the importance of centring victim rights and needs throughout the investigation process. In doing so, the model ensures that their voices, experiences, decisions and rights are respected and valued.

Suspect-focused

Specialist knowledge of sexual offending behaviour and its impact on victims informs RASSO investigations and offence prevention. Officers are bound to act consistently with the human rights of suspects and victims, as set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998.

The suspect-focused principle emphasises the commitment to holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes by collecting all evidence relevant to the alleged offending.

Context-led

Officers take the context of the offence into consideration from the moment the offence is disclosed to police. This includes the:

- victim-suspect relationship context
- victim context, including whether they want an investigation
- suspect context, uncovered through a suspect-focused investigation

Benefits for victims

By adhering to these principles, the national operating model will benefit victims in several ways.

1. It ensures that victim rights, needs and decisions are at the heart of how officers engage with victims and make decisions that may impact on victims.
2. The focus on suspects promotes thorough investigations that aim to gather robust evidence for effective prosecutions.
3. Lastly, the context-led approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances surrounding the offence, leading to more comprehensive and tailored investigative strategies that can result in improved outcomes for victims.

Information for victims

The **investigator's journey** is open for all to see and read.

This will give victims a clear view of the route the investigation will likely take and where and how they will interact with the police and possibly other professionals throughout their case.

We have also created an informational guide which is specifically designed for victims of rape or a serious sexual offence to help them navigate their own journey and inform them of their rights.

- **Read the investigator's journey**

- **Reporting rape and serious sexual offences to the police – useful information for victims (pdf) 569.79 KB**

Survey

If you are a victim, over 18 years old and would like to tell us about your experience of the police you can take part in the City, University of London survey.

Complete the survey

Additional resources for police officers and policing staff

- **Find further national operating model materials on Knowledge Hub (you will need need to log in)**

Tags

Rape and sexual offences