

Justice Committee

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

Written submission from Rape Crisis Scotland

Rape Crisis Scotland welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence on the impact of the creation of a single police force in relation to the investigation of sexual crime. We have restricted our comments to this issue, as this is where our experience lies.

1. In our experience, the move to a single police force has transformed the way rape and other sexual crimes are investigated in Scotland. It has allowed far greater consistency of approach, including to the training of police officers and to the use of specialist officers. No service is perfect, and we do occasionally receive negative feedback from rape survivors about their experience of the police, but this is far less common than prior to the creation of Police Scotland.

2. We operate an automatic referral protocol with Police Scotland, where anyone reporting a rape or serious sexual assault is referred on an opt out basis to our helpline. As part of this process, we ask callers (where appropriate) a number of questions about their experience with the police. We submit monthly reports to Police Scotland summarising this feedback. This means that the National

Rape Taskforce has a comprehensive overview of complainers' experiences reporting rape across the country. They are then able to coordinate any training or protocol development in response to any issues arising, although generally the feedback from complainers is very positive.

3. There have been no negative impacts that we are aware of in relation to the impact of the creation of a single police force on the investigation of sexual crime; on the contrary the creation of Police Scotland has had a very positive impact in enabling significant improvements to be made to how sexual crime is investigated across different areas of Scotland.

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