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# Rape Crisis welcomes new approach to prosecuting child sexual abuse

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17 Oct 2013

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) today (17th October 2013) published new guidance that represents a fundamental shift in the way child sexual abuse cases are to be prosecuted. Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Keir Starmer announced the change in approach after a three-month public consultation that confirmed widespread support for the new guidelines.

Responding to the announcement, Katie Russell of Rape Crisis England & Wales said:

"These new guidelines reflect a vital and long overdue shift in approach to prosecuting child sexual abuse cases, which Rape Crisis and other women's organisations have been calling for for many years. We are particularly pleased with the new emphasis on addressing the myths and stereotypes that too often lead to prejudicial and hostile treatment of sexual violence victims within the criminal justice system. Through our frontline specialist support work, with children and young people as well as large numbers of adult survivors of child sexual abuse, Rape Crisis knows how damaging and re-traumatising such treatment can be. The same experience tells us that this guidance would be similarly relevant to the prosecution of all sexual offences.

"Rape Crisis sincerely hopes that these new guidelines will translate into improved practice and a more positive experience of the criminal justice system for those affected by sexual violence. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the vast majority (85%) of sexual violence survivors do not report to the police. It is therefore crucial that the resourcing and sustainability of specialist Rape Crisis services, which work with survivors regardless of whether or not they have reported, remains a cross-party priority."

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