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Crown Prosecution Service denies prosecutors were urged to drop 'weak' rape cases



By Holly Pyne

Tuesday, September 25, 2018



The Crown Prosecution Service has denied changing its approach to rape prosecutions to improve conviction rates.

The Guardian newspaper reported that advice to take a proportion of “weak cases out of the system” was set out in training seminars by two senior figures in the CPS.

The CPS said the workshops had been run for prosecutors, but insisted it was “completely untrue” that they signalled a change of approach.

Reacting to the Guardian article, End Violence Against Women Co-Director Rachel Kryz has said

Ms Kryz told talkRADIO’s Matthew Wright: “[The Guardian article] absolutely rings true to us.

“A number of women talk about their cases being dropped quite quickly after reporting to the police.

“What we do know is that lots more people are reporting rape.”

‘hardly any cases get charged’

**EVAW Coalition**

@EVAWuk Sep 25, 2018

Replying to @EVAWuk

Still no word from @MoJGovUK @DavidGauke on what they're going to do to address this massive unfairness which leaves victims of rape choosing between justice and their right to privacy.

**EVAW Coalition**

@EVAWuk

Victims often told that they should report to the police, as if it's a duty. But this week's revelations have shown us a system which doesn't care about justice or fairness for victims of rape. We have to do much better than this. #RapeJusticeFail #MeToo #WhyIDidntReport

1 4 12 PM - Sep 25, 2018

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The CPS said the workshops were undertaken alongside a range of other measures in recent months including the introduction of pre-charge case management panels in the most challenging cases, and training on reviewing and prosecuting rape and serious sexual offence cases involving vulnerable witnesses and young people.

Ms Krys added: "The CPS are really looking at how many people are charged, and then how many people end up in conviction.

"The truth is hardly any cases get charged, so out of the number who actually report to the police a tiny amount ever get to charging.

"We couldn't say that we are having too many cases charged in the first place.

"What we are seeing that when the person accused is a young man, it is much harder to get a conviction than an older person.

"It looks like some types of rape, so where the two people involved might have known each other in advance or what people used to call "date rape" – it seems those cases are getting harder and harder to charge."

'Support specialist prosecutors with decision-making'

The CPS added that rape cases are particularly challenging, as seen in the lower-than-average conviction rate.

57.6% for rape-flagged prosecutions in 2016-17 compared with 83.9% overall.

A CPS spokesman said: "The CPS runs ongoing training to ensure our prosecutors have

access to the latest information on new and refreshed legal guidance, emerging trends and operational issues.

"These workshops were designed to support specialist prosecutors with decision-making in difficult cases.

"It is completely untrue that they signalled a change of approach. Every decision on whether to charge must be based on the test set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors."

The CPS said it will be updating its joint rape action plan with the police and its legal guidance to ensure prosecutors have the right information and directions at hand when making charging decisions and prosecuting cases.

Rape case Crown Prosecution Service End Violence Against Women

Matthew Wright

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