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A detective inspector explains the process involved in a rape investigation

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DI Dougie Shaw

DOUGIE Shaw has been a detective inspector for 11 years and takes managerial responsibility for investigations of stranger and acquaintance rapes in Warrington.
“Stranger rapes are very rare, there have only been two in the last 12 months to my recollection,” he said.

“The vast majority is committed by people who know their victim – most predators don’t jump out from behind bushes, they will take you for a drink.

“There are five considerations with any investigation. Firstly, there is a victim that needs to be dealt with properly in terms of forensic issues, statements, after care and support.

“Then there is the forensic examination of any scenes, followed by a trawl for witnesses and that may be via house to house enquires, from CCTV or relatives.

“Fourthly, there is an offender who needs to be dealt with appropriately – when he is arrested he will be swabbed and interviewed by properly trained officers.

“Lastly, resources need to be matched to these to make sure they are all completed and I will open a policy book so all my decisions are recorded for transparency.

“It is important to have a swift police response as the critical part of a rape investigation is gathering forensic evidence and from the time the rape takes place evidence is immediately being lost.

“We have anything up to four or five reports of rape every weekend but a large number of complaints turn out to be something else with some not thinking about the consequences of false allegations but we always take allegations of rape seriously and do everything we can to gather evidence.

“Most weekends we also have a report from somebody saying their drink has been spiked with rohypnol – while we have had cases where women have been drugged these are extremely rare.

“We actually have significantly less genuine rape cases than those reported so it is important to consider the percentage of bona fide reports when looking at conviction statistics, which appear low because they encompass all reports.

“We then report the facts to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a prosecution review. They will look at the evidence to see if there is a realistic prospect of a successful conviction and there can come a point we can’t do anything if there is insufficient evidence.

“Likewise, if a victim decides to withdraw their complaint we cannot prove the issue of consent, which is central in a rape allegation so it is vital victims have confidence that they will be supported and dealt with properly.
“There are a large number of rapes that have not yet been reported. I would implore those people to come forward – especially male victims who we see infrequently – as there is every chance we can gather the evidence to successfully prosecute their attacker.”

http://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/4103217.A_detective_inspector_explains_the_process_involved_in_a_rape_investigation/