

## **Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner**

**Topic:** Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

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### **Purpose of briefing**

To brief the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on the current position and any associated issues relating to the Durham SARC.

### **Background**

SARC facilities are intended to be part of a wider network of support including specialist support and clinical interventions for victims of rape and/or sexual violence (SV). The network is expected to offer multiple care pathways tailored to the needs of individual victims and often involve complex interdependencies between services.

Responsibilities in respect of commissioning and delivering services that support victims of rape or sexual assault (and their families where appropriate) span several agencies. These responsibilities are outlined in documentation published by NHS England (*Service Specification No. 30: Sexual Assault Referral Centres, February 2016*) and include PCCS, Police, NHS England. Nationally, NHS England are expected to be the lead commissioner of SARC services.

### **Current issues**

- In 2018, a decision was made to work with NHS England and Cumbria, Cleveland, and Northumbria PCCs to introduce a regional approach to commissioning and procurement of SARC services. An unsuccessful procurement exercise in 2020 has resulted in amendments being made to the specification and removing Cumbria from the regional arrangements. It is expected that the revised specification will be ready to go out to tender in April 2021.
- The Forensic Science Regulator introduced independent accreditation for SARCs and this will generate significant work to achieve the requirements and ensure compliance.
- The SARC facility was relocated to Chester-Le-Street in March 2020 and it is hoped to have an official opening in June 2021.

### **Decisions needed**

None pending.

### **Partnership involvement**

Responsibilities relating to commissioning, procurement, governance and performance monitoring lie with PCC, Police, NHS England, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). A Health and Justice Partnership Board was set up in 2017 but meetings were suspended when a project group was mobilised to concentrate on the regional commissioning exercise. A local SARC Board has recently been introduced.

### **Police involvement**

The Constabulary is a key partner in delivering SARC services.

### **People to meet**

Representatives from Police Safeguarding, NHS England, Northumbria, and Cleveland PCCs.