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From: [Ministry of Justice](#) and [HM Courts & Tribunals Service](#)

Pre-recorded evidence for rape victims available nationwide

New technology which spares victims of rape the stress of being cross-examined during a live trial is now available at every Crown Court in England and Wales.



- **Measure aims to reduce trauma for victims and witnesses to help them give their best evidence**
- **Government delivers on pledge to ensure this vital measure is available across the country**

The Government has today (26 September) delivered on its pledge to ensure this vital measure is available nationwide to boost rape convictions and ensure better support for victims.

The tool allows victims and witnesses of crimes such as rape and modern slavery to have their cross-examination video-recorded and played later during trial. This is subject to a successful application to the court.

The recording takes place as close to the time of the offence as possible, while memories remain fresh, and helps victims avoid the stress of giving evidence under full glare of a live trial setting, which many find traumatic.

From today, the measure will be available at a final 20 Crown Courts in Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, East Anglia, Essex, London and the South East, and marks the completion of national rollout.

The move follows the successful implementation for vulnerable victims, such as children or those who have limited mental and physical capacity, across the country – with more than 3,000 witnesses having already benefitted from the technology since August 2020.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Brandon Lewis said:

We're overhauling the entire response to rape – boosting support for victims so that more cases come to court and more rapists are put behind bars.

Today we have delivered on our pledge to roll out pre-recorded evidence to every Crown Court in England and Wales, sparing victims of this awful crime the additional trauma of testifying under the full glare of a courtroom.

The successful rollout of pre-recorded evidence meets a key pledge within the Government's Rape Review Action Plan which sets out clear actions for the police, prosecutors and courts. These include a new approach to investigations in order to reduce the number of victims withdrawing from the process and increase the number of cases reaching court.

The measure is designed to maintain a defendant's right to a fair trial and any decision to pre-record evidence is made by a judge on a case-by-case basis. Following today's completion of national rollout to Crown Courts, the Government has announced that it will be piloted for children and vulnerable adult witnesses for all offences at Leeds Youth Court, considering how it could be used more widely in trials of under 18s.

Jayne Butler, CEO of Rape Crisis England & Wales said:

We very much welcome the fact that pre-recorded evidence for intimidated witnesses and victims will now be available in all Crown Courts in England and Wales. Pre-recorded cross-examination prior to trial, offers choice to victims and survivors, and can make seeking justice far more accessible for rape victims and survivors who often feel re-traumatised by having to go into court. For many, attending court can be intimidating, and this measure is an important step forward in improving the experiences of survivors in the criminal justice system.

For this special measure to be a success, it is crucial that everyone working in and engaging with crown courts is aware of it, offers it as an option for survivors, and approves its use where appropriate. If implemented correctly, this measure will go some way to ensure that intimidated witnesses and victims – constituting the large majority of rape and sexual abuse survivors – have better experiences of court.

In June, the Government published the latest Rape Review Progress report and committed to piloting specialist rape support in three courtrooms as recommended by the Joint Inspectorates of the CPS and Police. These courts offer support such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisors within the court itself as well as trauma training to court staff and are being set up at Snaresbrook, Leeds and Newcastle Crown Courts.

[Notes to Editors](#)

This final phase will include:

- Amersham, Aylesbury, Basildon, Cambridge, Canterbury, Chelmsford, Guildford, Hove Trial Centre, King's Lynn, Lewes, Norwich Combined Court Centre, Peterborough Combined Court Centre, Reading and Southend in the South East;
- Croydon, Snaresbrook, Southwark, the Central Criminal Court, the Inner London Sessions House and Woolwich.

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