

The Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel

What is the Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP)?

If a victim or survivor reported allegations of child sexual offences before 5 June 2013 and the police or the CPS decided that no further action should be taken at the time, they can request that the Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel reconsider the decision, if they are not satisfied that the original allegations were dealt with appropriately. CSARP is a joint enterprise between the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

What does the CSARP do?

The panel will consider whether the approach taken by the police or CPS was wrong and advises whether the allegations should be reinvestigated by the police or the prosecution decision reviewed by the CPS. To do this, they will look at the information requested of and provided by the relevant police force or CPS area, to decide whether to advise that the original decision was correct or if further action should be taken.

If the decision is made to reinvestigate or review the case, it will be referred back to the police force or CPS area from where the case originated for them to decide on the action to be taken.

If the panel agrees with the original decision to take no further action, the victim or survivor will be informed by letter with specialist help and support provided or signposted. There is no appeal point beyond the panel.

Sole responsibility for taking these decisions in the panel rests with the police and CPS members. The independent representative in the panel will play an advisory role i.e. they will receive and consider the relevant information and provide views to the police and CPS members of the panel as to the decision they consider should be taken.

Why was the CSARP set up?

CSARP was set up in June 2013 to look again at cases that were not covered by the Victims' Right to Review (VRR) Scheme.

VRR was introduced to make it easier for victims to seek a review of a CPS decision not to bring charges or to terminate all proceedings; however, the scheme only applies to decisions made on or after 5 June 2013.

Cases will be considered if:

- The report is about an alleged sexual offence against the victim or survivor.

- The victim or survivor is referring to a report previously made to the police about the sexual offence.
- A decision to take no further action was taken by the police or by the CPS.
- The alleged sexual offences was committed when the victim or survivor was under 18 years of age.
- The alleged offender may still pose a risk.
- The alleged offence was committed in England and Wales.
- The case was investigated and marked no further action by police or CPS before 5 June 2013.

It is important to note that even if the victim or survivor has previously asked the police or the CPS to look at the decision they made previously, their case will still be considered.

Cases will not be considered if:

- The victim or survivor hasn't previously reported the matter to the police as this will therefore be a new complaint that the police will need to investigate.
- New evidence has come to light prompting a fresh investigation by the police.
- The case was investigated and marked no further action by police or CPS after 5 June 2013.

Who is on the panel?

The panel consists of a Chief Crown Prosecutor, a chief police officer, a specialist prosecutor, an experienced child abuse police investigator, and an appropriate independent representative.

How do victims and survivors refer a case to the panel?

Cases can be referred to the panel directly through a dedicated email address: nationalpanel@npcc.police.uk.

Alternatively, the victim or survivor can also bring their previous complaint back to the police force or Crown Prosecution Service.