

Sunderland Echo

Sunderland police investigate 253 rapes in just three years



Benjamin Jobling

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POLICE have investigated 253 rapes across Sunderland during the past three years.

These include incidents of male-on-male rape, stranger rape and rape within families.

Northumbria Police today renewed their pledge to support victims from the minute a sex attack is reported to the end of the court case.

The figures come as student rapist Ben Jobling starts a five year jail sentence after raping a 17-year-old on waste ground in Washington.

Jobling posed as a good samaritan, saying he would see the teen home safely following a New Year's Eve party. Instead he assaulted her leaving her naked and terrified.

Detective Chief Inspector Steve Barron, from Northumbria Police's Protecting Vulnerable People department, said: "Rape is a hugely traumatic experience but we want people to know help is always available and we'd urge people to come forward and report it.

"As well as our dedicated Rape Investigation Teams, we work with partners and our two Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Sunderland and Newcastle to provide the utmost support to victims.

"We also have a number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors available – who provide a link between the victim and the police – from the initial call to the end of a court case. They can also help the victim link in with other agencies and welfare support.

"Our aim continues to be to give more victims the confidence to come forward and report they have been raped in the knowledge that their case will be fully investigated by a dedicated team of detectives."

Of those cases investigated during the past three years, officers discovered no rape had taken place on 45 occasions. This could be due to a number of reasons, including false allegations being made or inquiries revealing it was a crime other than rape that had been committed.

Figures obtained by the Echo also reveal that police have not prosecuted any women for making a false allegations of rape during the past three years.

A spokesman for Northumbria Police said: "The stigma to the victim, the perception and threat of alienation from their community, as well as in some cases the breakdown of their relationship are all intangible additional factors why a victim may withdraw an allegation to the point of stating their original allegation had been untrue.

"While not diminishing the impact of a false allegation on the person accused, it is only when there is substantial grounds that the actions of the victim has either attempted to pervert the course of justice or waste police time that action will be considered."

Figures obtained by the Echo also reveal 18 men made allegations of rape to Sunderland police since 2010.

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