



## Consultation on CPS Interim Guidance on Perverting the Course of Justice - Charging in cases involving rape and/or domestic violence allegations

February 2011

### Response Form

To understand what may happen to your personal details and the responses you give, please read the "confidentiality of responses" information which can be accessed via the consultation home page at:  
[www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/pcj\\_index.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/pcj_index.html)

**If you are a member of the public or from an organisation (including a statutory body) please fill in the following details:**

Your name	Joanne Creighton
Any organisation you represent	Respect
Postal address	Fourth Floor, Development House, 56-64 Leonard St, London, EC2A 4LT
Contact telephone number	020 7549 0578
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:joanne.creighton@respect.uk.net">joanne.creighton@respect.uk.net</a> and <a href="mailto:info@respect.uk.net">info@respect.uk.net</a>

**If you are a member of CPS staff please fill in the following details:**

Your name	
Your Area, Group, HQ Division, or Directorate	
Contact telephone number	

## About Respect

Respect is the UK membership association for Domestic Violence Prevention Programmes (DVPPs) and Integrated Support Services (ISSs). Our vision is to end violence and abuse in intimate partner and close family relationships. Our key focus is on increasing the safety and well-being of victims by promoting, supporting, delivering and developing effective interventions with perpetrators. We represent a network of organisations who work with perpetrators of domestic violence and also those who work with male victims.

Our work includes:

- Providing support, resources and training for members
- Managing accreditation of DVPPs and ISSs
- Developing work with young people
- Promoting knowledge of research about domestic violence and collaboration between researchers, practitioners and policy makers
- Influencing public policy and providing a national voice on men's violence against women
- Running the Respect Phonenumber, an advice and referral line for perpetrators
- Running the Men's Advice Line, a helpline for male victims
- Running Dads' Space, an online child contact centre

Respect is a UK registered charity, number 1083968.

To find out more about our work please visit our website [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

Respect welcomes the decision by the CPS to produce interim guidance on 'perverting the course of justice' in cases involving rape and/or domestic violence allegations and this consultation. This document is particularly timely due to the recent increase in the number of prosecutions for 'perverting the course of justice' in relation to women withdrawing or retracting complaints of domestic violence or rape.

Respect and the VAWG sector have worked closely with the CPS in recent years. Respect are active members of the DV and VAW ECG meetings and we hope that these meetings will continue in the future to ensure that further progress is made around VAWG. VAWG costs society £40 billion a year and it is only through statutory and voluntary organisations working together that victims will be protected and perpetrators brought to justice.

Our response reflects our role as a national 2<sup>nd</sup> tier infrastructure organisation. Our CEO, Jo Todd, attended both roundtable events hosted by the DPP and raised key points then. We do not have the capacity to compile a full paper response. Therefore, we would like to register Respect's full support for Rights of Women's response to you. Please find below some additional issues and those that we would particularly like to stress.

1. We are concerned that the very publication of a document on perverting the course of justice in rape and domestic violence cases plays into public (and in some cases Prosecutors') misconceptions around victims – especially women and girls – lying / making up allegations.

Therefore we suggest that:

The intention, purpose and context of the document need to be clearly stated:

- that there is no evidence that false allegations are more common in rape/dv cases
  - that the purpose of the document is as much to ensure victims are not criminalised as it is to ensure those who pervert the course of justice are prosecuted
2. Communications around the publication of the document, and training for Prosecutors, also need to be clear and robust, to offset public misconceptions (see above).
  3. The issues of false allegations, retractions and withdrawal of retractions (double retractions) need to be viewed and dealt with completely separately, with clear definitions and pathways.
  4. Information needs to be included around perpetrators of domestic violence and rape perverting the course of justice, to give balance to the document and clear information to Prosecutors and the public that this is not just an issue regarding victims. Activities such as harassment, intimidation and contacting the victim when he has been charged with an offence against her, is in itself perverting the course of justice. It is currently rare for perpetrators to be charged with this offence.