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VICTIMS OF RAPE NEED MORE HELP, SAYS CUMBRIA CRIME CHIEF

By Nick Griffiths Crime Reporter

Last updated at 12:09, Weanesaay, 08 May 2013

Cumbria's crime commissioner says it's "unacceptable" the county has no centre where sex attack victims can go to be examined.

People who have suffered rape or other sexual assaults currently have to be taken to Lancashire – and Richard Rhodes has raised his concerns about the set-up.

Mr Rhodes, who was elected last year to oversee county crimefighting, says he is in discussions with Cumbria Police over the issue and has flagged up the possibility of cash being made available for a centre.

County police stopped using a rape suite in Longtown a number of years ago because of issues with finding suitably qualified doctors to staff it.

Victims currently travel to a sexual assault referral centre in Preston, meaning they could face a four-hour round trip.

Mr Rhodes said: "There isn't one in Cumbria and I find that unacceptable. If the constabulary has need to access these resources they have to take the victim all the way to Preston.



Richard Rhodes

"If you have an incident in Whitehaven and you have to take the victim to Preston, that is a long way to go."

Mr Rhodes said there had been talks about the issue.

"I have been having discussions with the constabulary over the last couple of weeks about what I see as this gap in our provision," he added. "I am concerned that we do not have a sexual referral centre in Cumbria and will be supporting efforts to ensure that we have the right facilities in the county."

Mr Rhodes said Cumbria's geography posed an added problem. "We have a particular issue in Cumbria, because: Where would it be?"

"You could argue Cumbria needs three."

Mr Rhodes said there was the possibility the Government might make funds available for a centre.

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Have your say

This situation was brought on by the police we have a large number of fantastic doctors here in Cumbria, non of which are run by the police????????????

Posted by anon on 9 May 2013 at 19:53

What will be the point of creating another centre unless Mr Rhodes first resolves the original problem of finding suitably qualified doctors to staff it? Is this more about quick wins to court popularity than it is about listening to the community and reflecting their priorities?

Posted by Dave on 9 May 2013 at 17:20

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