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West Yorkshire Officer Faces New Rape Charge in Ongoing Case

July 10, 2025

— Categories: Crime



A West Yorkshire Police officer, already accused of serious sexual offences, has been charged with an additional count of rape, bringing the total number of alleged victims to five. PC Jo Lavender, aged 43, is now facing a seventh rape charge alongside earlier allegations of six counts of rape and two counts of indecent assault on a girl under 14. The charges stem from off-duty incidents described as non-recent by authorities.

West Yorkshire Police's Professional Standards Directorate, which has been investigating the officer, confirmed the new charge. A force spokesperson stated: "PC Jo Lavender, now aged 43, had already been charged with six counts of rape and two counts of indecent assault on a girl under 14-years-old. These charges relate to off-duty non-recent offences against four females. He has been further charged with a seventh count of rape against another female."

Lavender, who has been suspended from duty since the investigation began, is scheduled to appear at York Magistrates' Court on 15 July for the first hearing related to the new charge. The case has drawn significant attention, raising concerns about trust in policing, particularly in light of the serious nature of the allegations.

The investigation has proceeded under the scrutiny of West Yorkshire Police's internal standards body, which has prioritised addressing the allegations thoroughly. The force has not released further details about the new victim or the circumstances of the alleged offence, citing the ongoing legal process.

Public confidence in law enforcement remains a critical issue, especially as cases like this fuel debate about accountability and oversight within the police. The charges against Lavender, spanning multiple victims and serious offences, underscore the need for rigorous internal investigations to uphold justice.

As the case progresses, all eyes will be on York Magistrates' Court, where the next chapter of this troubling saga will unfold. The allegations, spanning multiple victims and serious crimes, serve as a stark reminder

of the importance of vigilance and transparency in maintaining public trust.