

What is rape and sexual assault?

A person commits rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with their penis without consent. Sexual assault covers any other sort of sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted, ranging from touching to any other sexual activity.

What is Consent?

The law defines consent as 'someone agreeing by choice to the sexual experience, and having the freedom and capacity to make the choice'. Consent can be given, refused and taken back at any point. Consent might also be given for some things but not others.

What to do if you're raped or sexually assaulted

Try to find somewhere safe. If you are in immediate danger or have been injured, you should call 999.

It is important to understand that what happened to you wasn't your fault. The person who did this to you has committed a crime and you shouldn't be afraid to get help.

To preserve vital forensic evidence:

- Don't wash any part of your body
- Don't brush your teeth
- Don't brush your hair
- Keep safe all of the clothes you were wearing safe and don't wash them

How to contact us

We cannot offer a drop-in service at the SARC so please phone or email to arrange an appointment.

How to find us

SARC is based at Hope House, on the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital site, but has its own discreet side entrance.

FREE parking available directly outside the front entrance of SARC.

Hope House and SARC are clearly signposted across the hospital site but should you have any problems finding us, please give us a call.

Hope House SARC

Gloucester Royal Hospital
Great Western Road GL1 3NN

- 📞 Phone: **0300 421 8400**
- @ Email: **hopehouse.sarc@ghc.nhs.uk**
- 🌐 Website: **www.hopehousesarc.nhs.uk**
- 📘 Facebook: **@GloucesterSARC**
- 🐦 Twitter: **@HopeHouseSARC**
- 📷 Instagram: **HopeHouseSARC**



HopeHouse
Sexual Assault Referral Centre

Do you need support after rape or sexual assault?

We're here to help

**It's okay to tell someone.
Never give up hope.**

Hope House Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Hope House SARC offers immediate emotional and practical support, as well as medical care, to anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

Our service is confidential and you do not need to report the assault to the police in order to receive our support.

A crisis worker is contactable 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

What next?

First steps...

We know how difficult it can be to talk about being raped or sexually assaulted. You may be confused about what has happened, overwhelmed, emotional or numb. You may feel alone, angry, ashamed or frightened. These, and many other thoughts and feelings, are all normal responses to being sexually assaulted or raped.

Our crisis workers are here to help and have been specially trained to support you. We are always here to listen and can arrange for you to visit us. We will support you throughout your time at the centre.

You are welcome to bring somebody with you to support you.

How can the SARC help?

We offer a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment which focuses on the needs of the individual, offering the following services:

- Immediate emotional support and information for you, your family and friends.
- Address any contraception and sexual health needs by referring to sexual health services.
- Immediate access to emergency contraception and assessment for HIV and Hepatitis B.
- Information on your reporting options.
- Medical examination to gather forensic evidence.
- Facility to self-refer and have forensic samples stored, allowing you time to think.
- Referrals to other specialist agencies, including our local Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service (ISVA).
- Early Intervention, Pre Trial and Post Trial Counselling.

Is the service confidential?

Yes, however if you or someone else is at serious risk of harm, we have an obligation to inform other agencies. Where possible we will seek your permission to share information.

If you are under 18 years of age we also work in partnership with the Centre of Paediatric Excellence, located at The Bridge SARC in Bristol. This is in order to ensure that you receive the best possible care. We have a legal duty to share your information with social services.

Reporting to the police

Following a sexual offence some people choose to report to the police straight away. The police have specially trained officers who are experienced in working with victims of sexual violence.

There is no time limit to report to the police. If you are unsure about reporting, the SARC can assist without police involvement and can give you information to help you decide. In most circumstances, if you report to the police you will automatically be referred to the SARC where you will have the opportunity to speak to a crisis worker.

It is entirely your choice whether or not to involve the police.

Medical examination

If something has happened within the last ten days, we may give you the option to have an examination, which can help to preserve any evidence. We can offer this even if you do not want to involve the police at the moment, but feel that you might want to in the future. We can store your samples for two years, giving you time to decide.

The examination will be carried out by a specially trained medical examiner and you will be supported by a crisis worker throughout. Each stage will be explained to you beforehand and you can stop or pause at any time.