

# Help available for patients after rape and sexual assault



If you have a patient who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused, at any time in their life, a sexual assault referral centre (SARC) can help.

## What is a sexual assault referral centre?

Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) provide immediate emotional support, as well as medical and practical support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused.

Adult patients can choose whether to involve the police or report what happened. And if they choose not to, they can still get help from a SARC. They can share as much information as they wish and can ask to remain anonymous if they prefer.

Children are generally referred to a SARC via the police or social services.

## What care and support does a SARC provide?

They offer a range of services, including:

- medical examinations
- emergency contraception
- testing and assessment for STIs and HIV
- referral to sexual health services, including an independent sexual violence advisor
- referrals to mental health services and emotional and psychological support, which could include help from a domestic violence worker and counsellor

For recent cases of rape or sexual assault, individuals will be offered a forensic medical examination to capture evidence.

[NHS video about what happens at a SARC](#)

[NHS video about how SARCs support children and young people](#)

[Find the nearest SARC for your patient](#)

[Training on identifying and responding to sexual assault and abuse](#)

### Further information

- Go to [nhs.uk/sarcs](https://nhs.uk/sarcs) or scan this QR code
- To promote SARCs within your service, download these resources
- Email [england.saasadmin@nhs.net](mailto:england.saasadmin@nhs.net)

