



The Topaz Centre

Sexual Assault Referral Centre
& forensic medical examination



The Topaz Centre is a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) that offers free, professional and confidential support and practical help to anyone in Nottinghamshire who has experienced sexual violence and/or sexual abuse. The Topaz Centre has trained specialist staff, who will guide you through an assessment of your needs and the options available to you.

You can access support at the centre without Police involvement. If you have already contacted the Police they may also encourage and support you to attend the centre

First Steps

The Topaz Centre team are there to make sure that you are heard and get the help you need in taking your next steps. You can contact them at any time of day or night, and they are always there to listen and provide advice.

At the Topaz Centre you will be able to:

- Talk to someone about your experience and get emotional support
- Get advice about what services are available to you
- Discuss sexual health concerns after an assault or be referred to sexual health services
- Report someone anonymously to the Police.

If something has happened in the last 7-10 days

If something has happened to you within the last 7- 10 days, the Topaz Centre team may advise that you attend the centre as soon as possible. They can help you decide if you would like evidence collecting and ensure you have your healthcare needs met.

You do not need to have reported an offence to the Police to attend the Topaz Centre.

The Topaz Centre team will explain all of your options and may recommend an appointment to meet with one of their specialist nurses, who can carry out a check up to preserve evidence. They would recommend that if possible you don't wash or shower before attending the centre. With your consent the Topaz Centre are able to store forensic evidence, including clothing and DNA samples, in a secure facility. This gives you the opportunity to take some time to think about your choices, before making the decision whether or not to inform the Police.

The Police are happy to receive information which does not have your name on (Depersonalised Data), but it would help the Police to have as much information as possible. Any personal data would be used 'for intelligence purposes only'. The team will not share information unless you ask them to.



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Here is what would normally happen when you contact the Topaz Centre...

Making Contact

The Topaz Centre cannot offer a drop-in service, so please let them know you are coming. If you do not feel comfortable giving your name or details, the team can still offer you the same help and support. Depending on your needs, they will either arrange a time for you to attend the Topaz Centre or help you to make contact with other services that may be beneficial. They may ask you to come and see them quickly, to make sure you receive important healthcare. If you have already chosen to involve the Police, then they will contact the Topaz Centre on your behalf.

Arriving at the Topaz Centre

A team member will be there to meet you when you arrive for your appointment at the centre. From your initial conversation with them, you will know how to get there and who you will meet. You are welcome to bring somebody with you to support you if that makes you feel more comfortable. If you have contacted the Police first and asked for them to be involved, they will usually bring you to the Topaz Centre.

The team member will talk through the process and the options available, and will ask you a few questions. They will always make sure that you understand and are comfortable with everything that is happening. All of the staff at the Topaz Centre are female. If you would prefer to speak to a male team member, please just let the Topaz Centre know at the earliest opportunity. You can choose to use as much or as little of the service as you want to. It's fine if you change your mind at any point – the staff are there to support your choices.

Everything you tell the staff is usually treated in confidence and you don't need to tell them anything you feel unable to talk about. Sometimes they have to inform other agencies if children or others may be at risk. They will always seek your consent to share any personal information.

Forensic Medical Examination

Depending on when the incident took place, the staff will give you the option to have an examination, which can help to preserve evidence (this will depend on what has happened, due to timings for evidence collection). They can offer this even if you don't want to involve the Police at the moment, but feel that you might want to in the future. The examination will be carried out by a specially trained Forensic Nurse/Medical Examiners (FNE/FME) and you will be supported by a Crisis Worker.

The team are there to support you as much as you need throughout your time at the Topaz Centre. They understand that the examination is not a pleasant experience, but your Forensic Nurse Examiner and Crisis Worker will do all they can to make the examination as comfortable as possible.

You can stop or pause at any point...there will never be any pressure.

There are three parts to the examination, and the FME and Crisis Worker will explain each part of the examination to make sure you understand.

You will be asked to change into a gown for the examination, and the FME will ensure you remain as covered as possible throughout. Only the FME and the Crisis Worker will be present and you can stop or pause at any time during the examination.

The three parts of the examination are:

1

Collecting your medical history - this allows them to get a clear picture of your overall health, including any medication you are currently taking.

2

A full head to toe examination, which may include an internal examination. The staff will talk you through the different evidence which they can collect. Depending on what has happened, this may include:

- Making a note or photographing any injuries (bruises, cuts & scrapes)
- Collecting urine, hair and possibly a blood sample
- An internal examination, like a smear test, to take forensic samples
- Keep your clothing (especially undergarments)
- Swabbing parts of your body.

3

After the examination, you will have the opportunity to have a shower and change into more comfortable clothing. The team will give you a personal self-care toiletry bag. The workers will then have a discussion with you about emergency contraception or other treatment needs. They can provide emergency contraception if this is required. The team are also able to provide immediate sexual healthcare advice and give information about screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Next Steps

Whether you choose to have an examination or not, the team will be able to talk you through the other services that they can refer you to. This will ensure that you have ongoing support after your visit to the Topaz Centre. They can make contact with any or all of the services below on your behalf:

- GP
- Local Sexual Health Services
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)
- Safeguarding Services
- Specialist Sexual Violence Support Services

Follow Up

The team understand that you might have questions after you have left the Topaz Centre and you are welcome to call them at any time.

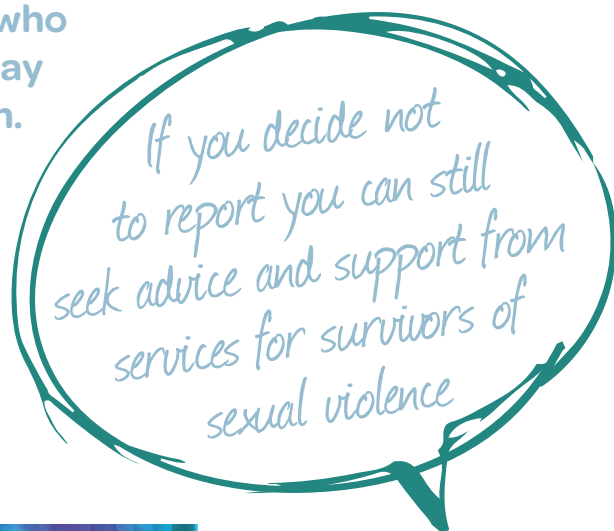
Supporting Someone Else

If you would like to talk to the Topaz Centre about something that has happened to a friend or relative, they can talk you through their services and offer emotional and practical support.

The team will also call you six weeks after your visit to see how things have been and if there is anything else they can do to help.

In Nottingham there are specialist sexual violence support organisations, who support people who have experienced sexual violence and you may benefit from making contact with one of them.

Some people choose not to report an offence to the Police and that is entirely your choice.



Topaz Centre
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

24hr Helpline Number: 0800 085 9993

www.topazcentre.org



Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services (Notts SVS Services)

0115 947 0064

www.nottssvss.org.uk



Nottinghamshire Police

Emergency Number: **999**

Non Emergency Number: **101**

www.nottinghamshire.police.uk



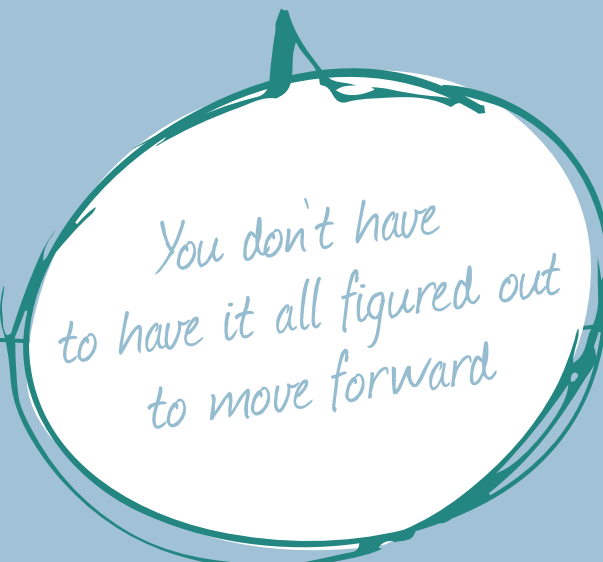
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE
PROUD TO SERVE

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

0808 800 0340

www.junowomensaid.org.uk





You don't have
to have it all figured out
to move forward

Please feel free to visit the Consent Coalition website
for more information and support nottssvss.org.uk/consent-coalition/

