



Ministry
of Justice

Support following a rape or sexual assault

Accessing a support service.

Contacting support services.

Different types of support.

Support services and contact details.

If you are a victim of rape or sexual assault, this guide will help you understand what support is available to you.

You can access a **glossary** for more information on the terms used in this guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guides-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault/glossary-of-terms>).

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, it's important to remember that it was not your fault. At all times you deserve to be treated with dignity, listened to and understood.

Being a victim of rape, sexual assault or abuse is a difficult and traumatic experience.

Help is available to you, whenever and wherever the offence occurred or if you are still experiencing abuse. It is never too early or too late to ask for help.

You do not have to report the crime to the police to get support.

Accessing a support service

Through support services you can:

- tell someone what happened
- get help to access further support
- get help to navigate the criminal justice system and other systems
- get emotional support, including from trained counsellors and therapists
- get help to access medical care

If you choose to report the crime, you can find out more from support services about:

- how the police will investigate your case
- who the Crown Prosecution Service are and what they do (<https://www.cps.gov.uk/about-cps>)
- what happens if your case reaches the courts

Contacting support services

You can access support services by phone, online and face-to-face.

You can contact support services yourself, or some organisations will allow someone else to get in touch for you. This could be a friend, family member or a supporting professional.

Different types of support

There are many types of support available. You can contact a service that feels right for you.

Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs)

You may be supported by an ISVA. You do not have to report your experience to the police to get support from an ISVA.

An ISVA will offer you independent practical and emotional support and will work with other organisations to make sure you get the help you need. This could include health or housing support.

They will also be able to give you information about the police, Crown Prosecution Service and court processes if you choose to report.

You can contact any of the organisations in this guide to find out more about ISVA services or to request an ISVA. You can also ask the police to refer you to an ISVA service.

While ISVAs can provide emotional support, they are not counsellors or therapists.

Rape and sexual abuse support centres

These are locally led centres independent from the police, Crown Prosecution Service and courts. Services include:

- practical support and information
- emotional and peer support
- counselling
- therapy
- advocacy services to help you navigate the criminal justice system

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

A SARC can offer confidential medical and practical support to people who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

You do not need to report to the police to visit a SARC.

At a SARC, you can:

- get a forensic medical examination to collect evidence
- get medical help for any injuries
- get free pregnancy and STI tests

You can choose to have any forensic evidence stored in case you decide to report to the police in the future. Some SARCs can take and keep forensic evidence safely for several years if you ask them to. Any evidence that is collected will only be given to the police if you decide to report the crime.

You can find your nearest SARC on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/locationsearch/364>). You can contact a SARC directly. They will offer you advice and can refer you on to other support services.

Support can also be provided from voluntary organisations

A useful list of organisations and ways to contact them can be found at the end of this guide.

Specialist services that provide counselling and therapy

You can get help from counselling or therapy services. You can find more information from the following organisations:

- 1 in 6 – 1in6.uk
- Survivors UK – survivorsuk.org
- Safeline – safeline.org.uk
- Rape Crisis – rapecrisis.org.uk

You can access counselling and talking therapies from the NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/>).

GP or another medical professional

You can seek help from a GP or another medical professional. Medical professionals will only report what has happened to the police if you ask them to, or if they believe that someone else (for example a child) might be at risk of harm.

Support services and contact details

24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line

The 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line is a confidential emotional support and listening service for anyone aged 16 or over in England and Wales who has experienced sexual violence or abuse at some point in their life. It is totally free and open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by phone and webchat.

Website: 247sexualabusesupport.org.uk

Phone: 0808 500 2222

Rape Crisis England and Wales

Provides free, confidential and specialist support and advocacy services, available 24 hours a day for people whose lives have been impacted by sexual violence and abuse, at any time.

Website: rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 802 9999

Victim Support

Provides 24-hour free and confidential support to people affected by crime or traumatic events, including non-recent sexual abuse.

Website: [victimsupport.org.uk](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 1689 111

The Survivors Trust

Provides confidential information, advice, support and referral information for anyone affected by rape and sexual violence, whether recent or in the past, including parents, partners, carers and professionals working with survivors.

Website: [thesurvivorstrust.org](https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)

Phone: 0808 801 0818

Email: helpline@thesurvivorstrust.org

Imkaan

Imkaan is not a direct service provider, but they provide information on specialist services and support for Black and Minoritised women and girls.

Website: imkaan.org.uk/get-help

Phone: 020 7842 8525

Email: info@imkaan.org.uk

Services for children and young people

Childline

Whether you have experienced sexual abuse in the past or it is still happening, Childline offers a free and confidential helpline 24 hours a day. You can also use the Ask Sam service (<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/ask-sam/>) to send a message through their website and talk about anything you want without anyone knowing who sent it.

Website: [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 1111

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

NSPCC has a dedicated support line for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance, including for non-recent abuse.

Website: [nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 136 663

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood)

NAPAC offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, narcissism and neglect.

Website: [napac.org.uk](https://www.napac.org.uk)

Phone: 0808 801 0331

Email: support@napac.org.uk

LGBTQ+ services

Galop

Provides a free, confidential and independent service for all LGBTQ+ people who have experienced any form of sexual assault, violence or abuse, regardless of when it happened.

Website: galop.org.uk

Email: referrals@galop.org.uk

Live Fear Free Helpline (Wales)

Open 24 hours a day to provide help and advice about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to people in Wales.

Website: gov.wales/live-fear-free
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 80 10 800

Text: 07860 077333

Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

Support services for men

National Male Survivor Helpline and Online Support Service

A dedicated service for men and boys in England and Wales affected by rape or sexual abuse and those that support them, such as friends and family.

Website: safeline.org.uk
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 800 5005

Text: 07860 065187

National Online Helpline for Male Survivors

Operated by SurvivorsUK to support men and boys (trans or cisgender) and non-binary survivors of sexual abuse.

Website: survivorsuk.org
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 020 3322 1860

Domestic abuse services

You can also access support if the harm you have experienced is the result of domestic abuse. Again, you can choose which service you would like to contact.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Provides free, confidential support 24 hours a day to people experiencing domestic abuse and those who are worried about friends or loved ones, regardless of if they are in a refuge.

**Website: nationaldahelpline.org.uk
(includes a live chat service)**

Phone: 0808 2000 247

Women's Aid

Provides support for women who are experiencing or have experienced physical, mental, sexual or domestic violence or abuse.

Website: [womensaid.org.uk/information-support](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support)
(includes a live chat service)

Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

National LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Provides emotional and practical support for LGBTQ+ people experiencing domestic abuse.

Website: [galop.org.uk](https://www.galop.org.uk)

Phone: 0800 99 5428 or 0300 999 5428

Support services for men

Men's Advice Line

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them.

Website: mensadviceline.org.uk
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 8010 327

Housing support

Shelter

Provides general advice regarding housing, including legal options.

Website: england.shelter.org.uk
(includes a live chat service)

Phone: 0808 800 4444

LGBTQ+ support services

Stonewall Housing

Provides advice and support related to housing for people who identify as LGBTQ+.

Website: [stonewallhousing.org](https://www.stonewallhousing.org)

Phone: 020 7359 5767



Ministry
of Justice