

## **Information if you have been sexually assaulted or raped**

**We are sorry this has happened to you.** The University of Salford is committed to providing a safe environment for its students, and to responding appropriately to any incidents. This guidance provides information that you might want to consider when making a decision about what to do next, and support which is available for you. Whilst the guidance is aimed at students who have recently been sexually assaulted, it includes information about sources of support which may be useful for any student who has experienced sexual assault.

**If you want to disclose to us and for us to provide you support and help with options, you can let us know through our [Report and Support](#) facility.**

**If you have just been raped or sexually assaulted you may be feeling many things.** Some people report that they feel numb or shocked, confused or frightened or fragile or angry. There is no right or wrong way to feel. It might be helpful for you to know that many people report that these feelings do not last. **However you are feeling, try to remember that this is not your fault, you are not to blame, and you are not alone.**

You should not feel under any pressure to act in any specific way. Any decisions made will be yours alone and will be respected.

**Please see below the checklist of steps to consider. There is more information about each of them in the rest of this document.**

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## 1. Are you in a safe environment?

If the assault has just occurred, you may consider whether you feel safe and supported where you are.

### EMERGENCY HELP

- If you or others feel at risk or consider the situation to be an emergency, you can call the Police on 999.
- If you need urgent medical help you should call for an ambulance (also on 999).
- If you are on a University campus, after calling 999 you may wish to contact the [University Security Service](#) (emergencies: 0161 295 3333) for additional support and to help the emergency services reach you quickly.

### Non-emergency help and next steps

#### Security on campus

You can contact the University's Security Service by phone from any campus, or go to the Security Office at Maxwell Well on Peel Park Campus, 24 hours a day (down the road to left of main Maxwell entrance then turn right and ring the intercom).

#### Healthcare

If you require medical treatment but not urgently, you can contact the St Mary's Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre – a specialist service for you) helpline 0161 276 6515, or access NHS services ([this website](#) describes the different services and also allows you to search for services near you). If you are not sure what help to access you can call the NHS non-emergency advice line 111.

#### Take care of yourself

If you are not at risk now...

- Try to find somewhere safe and warm as you may be in shock. If you can, phone a friend to come to you.
- If you think you might want forensic evidence to be collected, try, if possible, not to drink, eat, wash, smoke, brush your teeth, go to the toilet or change your clothes.
- If condoms or other protection were used and you think you might want forensic evidence to be collected, keep them, and any bedding, in a clean paper or plastic bag if possible.
- You can also choose to do nothing now. If you feel that it would be useful for you to take time and to think about the options open to you then that is a perfectly valid decision.

#### Reporting

If you do not feel at further risk and the situation is not an emergency but you want to report the assault to the Police, you can call the Police on 101. You may not choose to report to the Police – it is entirely your decision. See below for further information about the options available to you.

#### Talking and support

You are welcome to talk to someone you feel comfortable with in the University. University and Students' Union staff are not trained to provide specialist support and reporting services for survivors of sexual violence. However, they can provide initial support and signpost you to specialist support services in the local area and nationally



## 2. Do you want to take some time to talk, or think, things through?

If the situation is not an emergency, you may want to take some time to think things through or to talk to someone you trust, such as a friend or a member of staff at the University. University staff are not trained to provide specialist support for survivors of sexual violence. However, they can provide initial support and signpost you to specialist support services in the local area and nationally.

### Initial support and signposting

The University's [Counselling & Wellbeing Service](#) provides a listening ear and can also support you if you want to know what next steps might be available for you. Their services are completely confidential. This client confidentiality will only be broken with your express permission, or in exceptional circumstances, where you are deemed to be a danger to yourself or to others, or if there is a legal duty. How to contact Counselling & Wellbeing.

Alternatively, you may wish to speak to someone in your school such as your personal tutor or programme leader. **School staff** can provide initial support and signpost you to relevant support services at the University and in the local community. They can also help put a plan in place for your studies if you need any reasonable adjustments. They can be contacted during normal office hours, and if you are not sure how to get in touch your School Office can help you.

**If you want to disclose to us and for us to provide you support and help with options, you can let us know through our [Report and Support](#) facility.**

You can also access advice and guidance from your **GP surgery** (you may be registered with the [Langworthy Practice - University Medical Centre](#) or otherwise you can look up local G.P.'s information [here](#) if you can't remember).

If you have been left with an accommodation issue, and your landlord /accommodation provider can't help, or you need financial help, or other non academic advice, contact the [askUS:Enquiries](#) team.

Salford University [Students' Union Student Advice Centre](#) also provide independent advice and support on a range of issues.

### Specialist support in the local community and nationally

You may prefer to speak to someone outside of the University such as a specialist support service for survivors of sexual assault.

[St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre \(SARC\)](#) provides a comprehensive and coordinated forensic, counselling and medical aftercare service to anyone in Greater Manchester who has experienced rape or sexual assault (whether recently or in the past). Services are offered on a 24-hour basis and if you do not wish to report the matter to the police, you can refer yourself. The police will not be contacted without your consent. If you are not in Greater Manchester at the moment you may find you have a SARC for your area or county too.

[Manchester Rape Crisis](#) provides a confidential support service run by women for women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused.



[Rape Crisis England & Wales](#) is a feminist organisation that exists to promote the needs and rights of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, to improve services to them and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence.

[Survivors Manchester](#) offers support and counselling for adult male survivors of sexual abuse and rape, regardless of when the event happened.

[Survivors UK](#) provides information, support and counselling for men, who have been raped or sexually abused.

### [Victim Support & Witness Service Greater Manchester](#)

This support service helps Greater Manchester residents cope with the effects of crime by providing confidential support, counselling and information to victims and to witnesses attending court. They also provide support in the community and a separate waiting area in Magistrates and Crown Courts.

The services are free, confidential, independent of the police, courts and Crown Prosecution Service and available to everyone, whether or not the crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened.



### 3. Time limits to be aware of

It is up to you to choose what kind of support you want to access and whether or not you want to report the assault to the Police. However, before you make a decision, there are a few time limits you need to be aware of:

- If you want to provide **forensic evidence**, this is best collected as soon as possible and within 72 hours.
- If you suspect you were **given any type of drug**, it is best to be tested within 24 hours.
- If you want **emergency contraception**, access advice as soon as possible. There are several options available. Two of these are available up to 5 days (120 hours).
- If you would like **Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV**, the medication should be started within 72 hours.

Any **forensic evidence** can be collected at your local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), and stored whilst you decide whether or not to report the incident to the Police. If you want forensic evidence to be collected, you should try and go to the SARC straight away if you can, or at least within 72 hours of the rape or assault. Also try, if possible, to take these steps:

- Do not wash
- Do not brush your teeth
- Do not have a cigarette
- Do not eat or drink
- Do not change your clothes
- If you do change your clothes, do not wash them, and put them in a clean paper bag
- Try not to go to the toilet
- Do not clear up anything from the area of the incident

Don't worry if you have already done some of these things. It's possible that there is still forensic evidence to collect.

If you need **emergency contraception** you can access sexual health services at the SARC or find a service [here](#).

If you think you may have caught a **sexually-transmitted infection (STI)**, you can access sexual health services at the SARC or find a service [here](#).

If you need **HIV Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)**, you can access sexual health services at the SARC or find a service [here](#) or if it is at the weekend, go to an Accident & Emergency (A&E) department – find the nearest one [here](#).

## 4. Deciding what to do next

The choices you have in terms of expert support and advice can vary according to the time and place at which the incident occurred. However, you can seek advice from a number of agencies at any time after the incident, even years later - support is not limited to those who choose to make an immediate report. Any decisions made will be yours alone and will be respected.

### Reporting the incident to the Police

You can report an incident to the Police at any time by:

- dialling 999 in an emergency
- dialling 101 if it is not an emergency
- going to your nearest police station. You may want to ask a friend or relative to go with you
- contacting one of the University's police liaison officers

#### **What you can expect if you report to the police**

If you choose to report an incident of sexual violence to the Police, a specially trained officer will be sent out to see you or will speak to you over the phone. The officer will ask some basic questions to make sure you are safe and find out what happened, when and where, and who was involved. They will work out what needs to be done next and tell you about the support services that are available locally.

The officer may also be able to take mouth and urine samples immediately so that forensic evidence can be preserved and you will be able to eat, drink and go to the toilet without fear of losing such evidence.

The officer may, with your permission, take you to the nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). You can take a supportive friend or relative with you. Take a change of clothes as they will need the clothes you are wearing. Also take any bedding or used condom if relevant.

The staff at the SARC will be able to discuss with you immediate concerns relating to the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, as well as assessing any injuries that may be present. Staff can also help and support you through the immediate trauma.

At some point you will be asked to give an official statement to the Police, this will usually be in a special room with comfy sofas and hot drinks, where you can be interviewed if that feels ok for you. Alternatively you could decide to be interviewed in another location where you feel more comfortable, when you are ready.

You should be aware that although you have called the Police, you can opt out of the reporting process at any point without losing the support of the SARC staff. You should be offered a referral for additional specialist advice and support services in your local area too.



## **Reporting the incident to the Police at a later date**

Many people do not wish to report an incident of sexual assault to the Police immediately, but decide after a while that they want to do so. This is perfectly valid and there are steps you can take now to make it easier to report to the Police at a later stage.

You can go to your nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for information and support – for University of Salford students this will usually be St Mary's Centre in Manchester. It's good to take a friend or trusted person with you if you can. At the SARC, you will be allocated a Support Worker who can talk you through the different options available to you.

At the SARC, you can have a forensic medical examination, as well as tests for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. The SARC should not pressure you into reporting to the police and they can store the results of the forensic examination (or evidence) until you make up your mind whether to report to the police or not.

If there are signs of a disturbance at the scene of the assault, it would be useful if you could take photographs in case you decide to report it to the police at a later date. Remember to keep any relevant clothes, bedding or used condom.

## **Reporting the incident to the Police anonymously**

Another option is to report the incident to the Police anonymously. It is unlikely that the police would be able to prosecute anybody from an anonymous report, however it could alert them to information which could lead them to serial offenders or help to prevent future attacks.

A SARC can pass on information to the Police without giving away any details which could identify you. SARC will always ask your permission before they pass on any information. Another option is to report anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

## **Not reporting the incident to the Police**

If you are certain you do not want to report the incident to the Police at any time, then you can still access the support of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services. You can choose not to provide forensic evidence but can still receive specialist medical support and be referred for additional support.

## **Reporting to the University under the Student Disciplinary procedure or Complaints procedure**

The University has internal procedures for addressing misconduct by students and staff, such as the Student Disciplinary procedure. You can speak to askUS services or a member of staff in your School to find out more about this. It's helpful to be aware that as these are internal institutional procedures they are limited in scope and may be put on hold until the completion of any legal or criminal proceedings.



## 5. Continuing support at the University and in the local community

### Support at the University

The University's Counselling & Wellbeing Service and provides a safe, confidential environment for students to discuss any concerns they may have, including traumatic experiences such as sexual assault or sexual abuse. Their services are completely confidential.

Alternatively, you may wish to speak to someone in your school such as your personal tutor or programme leader. School staff can provide initial support and signpost you to relevant support services at the University and in the local community. They can be contacted during normal office hours, and if you are not sure how to get in touch your School Office can help you.

You might want only one or two people in the University to know what has happened, or you might want quite a few people to be aware. You can decide how far to disclose. You can also ask one staff member to tell certain other staff (for example you might ask a Wellbeing Advisor to inform your Programme Leader of some or all of what has happened, so that staff can arrange to put any agreed support arrangements or reasonable adjustments in place). We will need to follow our procedures but will be guided by you as far as possible how we can best support you.

The only exception to you deciding who information is shared with, would be if there was a legal requirement on us to share the information such as if you tell us about a risk to a vulnerable person or a child. Even then we would only share what we were required to and with specified people, and we would tell you first unless there was a specific reason why we judged we could not.

### Specialist support in the local community

As well as providing immediate support to victims of sexual assault, [St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre \(SARC\)](#) can provide a range of follow-up support including counselling, a specialist dedicated support worker called an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), and support through criminal proceedings if this is the path you decide to take.

[Victim Support & Witness Service Greater Manchester](#) helps Greater Manchester residents cope with the effects of crime by providing confidential support, counselling and information to victims and to witnesses attending court. They also provide support in the community and a separate waiting area in Magistrates and Crown Courts. The services are free, confidential, independent of the police, courts and Crown Prosecution Service and available to everyone, whether or not the crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened.

[Survivors Manchester](#) offers support and counselling for adult male survivors of sexual abuse and rape, regardless of when the event happened.

[Manchester Rape Crisis](#) provides a confidential support service run by women for women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused at any time in the past.





## 6. Other useful information and contacts

[The Survivors Trust \(TST\)](#) is a national umbrella agency for specialist rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse support organisations throughout the UK and Ireland.

[Refuge UK](#) is a national charity providing a range of services for women and children affected by domestic violence.

[Men's Advice Line](#) provides advice and support for heterosexual, gay, bisexual and trans men experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

[National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline](#) provides advice and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

[National Stalking Helpline](#) offers specialist advice and support for anyone experiencing stalking.

[Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service](#) is a national service assisting high risk victims of stalking in England and Wales.

[Karma Nirvana](#) is a national charity supporting victims of forced marriage and 'honour' based violence.

[Forced Marriage Unit \(FMU\)](#) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office including a Global Response Centre.

[Respect Phonenumber](#) an information and advice line for anyone who is concerned about their own violence or abuse towards a partner or ex-partner.

*This document is based on guidance developed by the University of Brighton in consultation with Survivors Network, the Rape Crisis Centre for Sussex. It is based on The University of Cambridge's Sexual Assault Disclosure Information Sheet for Students, The University of Sussex's Sexual Assault Disclosure Information and Options Sheet for Students, and information provided on Survivors Network's website: <http://survivorsnetwork.org.uk/content/if-youve-just-been-assaulted>*

If you require this guidance in an alternative format, or have any questions relating to this guide, please contact the askUS:Disability Service [disability@salford.ac.uk](mailto:disability@salford.ac.uk).