

## Where will the assessment take place?

Acute forensic medical assessments (within 7 days of the incident) will be carried out within one of our specialist centres. SARCs provide a private and calm environment with specialist staff to help make you feel as relaxed and comfortable as possible.

Children and young people under the age of 18 are also treated at our specialist children's unit here.

Non-recent cases (more than 7 days since the incident) will also be assessed through the Exeter SARC and referred to the right support organisations.

All referrals should be made through the single point of access at [www.sarchelp.co.uk](http://www.sarchelp.co.uk) or via **0300 303 4626** to ensure access to medical and support services (we will make sure that you get the right treatment and support from the right people).

## What happens after an assessment?

The medical assessment will include developing a plan for on-going care and support. This may include referring to other professionals or organisations, with your permission.

We will provide a routine follow-up approximately two weeks after the initial medical assessment. This will often be a telephone call from our specialist nurse but may also be a face-to-face appointment for clinical review.

Following every medical assessment, a report is compiled summarising the assessment and any clinical findings or further action required. This will normally be shared with other professionals including police, social care and your GP. This will only be done with your permission.

## How to access the service

Call **0300 303 4626** or fill in a quick **Get help!** form at [www.sarchelp.co.uk](http://www.sarchelp.co.uk) and we will contact you back.

# Devon & Cornwall SARC

## Sexual Assault Referral Centres

### Visitor information

Our Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are run by the NHS and offer medical, practical and emotional support after rape or sexual assault. Devon and Cornwall SARC operate SARCs in Truro, Plymouth and Exeter including a dedicated paediatric service for children and young people, which is based in Exeter.

### PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact the PALS desk on 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services) or on 01271 314090 (for North Devon services). Alternatively, email us at [rduh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals@nhs.net).

[www.sarchelp.co.uk](http://www.sarchelp.co.uk)

Telephone number **0300 303 4626**

## Who is the service for?

This service is for women, men and children who have, or may have been, raped or sexually assaulted. The service covers Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

## If you have been sexually assaulted

If you have been sexually assaulted and want to involve the police then call **101** or **999**. A specially trained officer will speak to you about what has happened and will arrange an appointment with the SARC if required.

### Other formats

If you need this leaflet in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- [rduh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals@nhs.net)

If you are unsure or do not want to involve the police then call us on **0300 303 4626** or fill in a quick **Get help!** form at [www.sarchelp.co.uk](http://www.sarchelp.co.uk). One of our specially trained staff will talk to you about what to do next and how we can help. We can arrange for a doctor or nurse to examine you and check that you are OK. They can also carry out a Forensic Medical Assessment to collect and store forensic evidence in case you change your mind later and would like to support a police investigation.

## What happens when I arrive?

When you arrive at the SARC, a crisis worker will meet you. They are specially trained to support and care for you from the moment you arrive. The crisis worker will introduce you to your nurse or doctor. They will ask you some questions to determine what medical care you need and what support might be helpful afterwards.

If you have been sexually assaulted you don't have to have a forensic medical examination, however it can provide useful evidence to support a police investigation.

## What is a Forensic Medical Assessment?

The examination is carried out by a doctor or nurse specially trained in sexual assault forensic medicine.

The doctor or nurse will ask some questions – for example, about your medical health, the assault or any recent sexual activity. They will examine you and look for any injuries you may have. They will take samples, such as swabs from anywhere you have been kissed, touched or had anything inserted. They will also take urine and blood samples and occasionally hair, depending on the information you provide about the assault. They may also retain some clothing and other items.

The forensic examination will go at your pace and you will be given time to decide what happens to you. You can choose if there are parts of the examination that you don't want and you can also change your mind at any time.

People sometimes worry about having a forensic medical assessment however the process can be a very positive and therapeutic experience. It allows the chance to discuss any concerns, receive reassurance and access any medical care or support you may require.