



Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

Inclusive Cultures Strategy

RAPE & SEXUAL ASSAULT: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

This information was produced and reviewed in January 2020 and is based on information from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Trust webpage <http://www.cpft.nhs.uk/GTRT/rape-and-sexual-assault.htm>, and from the Rape Crisis website: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/reporting-to-the-police/what-happens-if-i-report/>

If you have experienced sexual violence, you can access immediate information and support at the following link: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/>

If you have experienced sexual violence, including having been sexually assaulted or raped, this guidance provides information on the things that you might want to consider to help you make an informed choice about what to do, both in the near future and perhaps later on.

Rape and Sexual Assault: Definitions

[Rape Crisis](#) define **RAPE** as “one type of sexual violence. Sexual violence is the general term we use to describe any kind of unwanted sexual act or activity.”

They also explain that [The Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) defines rape as follows:

Rape

(1) A person (A) commits an offence if—

(a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis,

(b) B does not consent to the penetration, and

(c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

(2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents.

[Rape Crisis](#) define **SEXUAL (OR INDECENT) ASSAULT** as “any physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent”.

It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts other than those which amount to rape. Penetration of another person’s vagina or anus with any part of the body other than the penis, or with any object, without their consent is defined as ‘sexual assault by penetration’. This crime carries the same sentences as rape.

Sexual assault doesn’t have to involve other physical violence or weapons. Just because you don’t have visible injuries, doesn’t mean you weren’t sexually assaulted.

The [Crown Prosecution Service website](#) states¹ that “the elements of the offence of sexual assault are:

- A person (A) intentionally touches another person (B)
- the touching is sexual
- (B) does not consent to the touching, and
- does not reasonably believe that (B) consents.”

It also states that, “Where there is sufficient evidence, penile penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth should be charged as rape and penetration of the vagina or anus with any part of a person's body or other object should be charged as assault by penetration.”

and

“**Consent** is a fundamental issue in rape and sexual assault cases because the prosecution is required to prove to the court that the victim did not consent and that the suspect did not have a reasonable belief that the victim was consenting.”

What is consent?

In law, sexual consent is when we agree by choice, and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

That means that someone cannot give their consent when they are:

- scared or threatened
- bullied
- very drunk or under the influence of drugs
- asleep

If you said ‘yes’ to something because you were scared for your life or safety, or for the life or safety of someone you care about, you didn’t consent.

If your body froze or ‘flopped’ / went limp or you weren’t able to speak, it doesn’t mean you gave your consent for what happened to you.

In other words, being drunk, stoned, tricked or forced/put in a position where you felt you had no choice, means you didn't know or couldn't choose, and therefore weren't in a position to give your consent. And if you didn't struggle or fight back that doesn't prove anything either.

You may have very mixed feelings about what happened, and whether to tell anyone. People who experience rape and sexual assault can react very differently, and you should not feel under any pressure to act in any specific way. It can also take a long time for people to process what has happened to them to be able to make a decision about whether or not they want to report it/take the matter further. The aim of this guidance is to support you in helping you reach an informed choice about what you might want to do, and to provide you with information about things you might want to consider.

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/rape-and-sexual-offences-chapter-2-sexual-offences-act-2003-principal-offences-and>

Checklist of initial steps to consider:

1. Are you in a safe environment?
 2. Do you want to take some time to think things through?
 3. Time limits to be aware of
 4. Police procedures
 5. Who can you talk to?
 6. External Agencies
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7. Reporting to the Police: the reporting process

Further information about each of the above steps can be found below in this guidance.

1. Are you in a safe environment?

If the assault has just occurred, you might want to consider whether you feel safe where you are. If you or others feel at risk or consider the situation to be an emergency, you can call the Police or an ambulance on 999.

2. Do you want to take some time to 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. You might want to contact a friend or a member of staff for support. Each person's reaction to sexual assault or rape can differ as will the effect that it has on you. You might be in shock so trying to be somewhere that feels safe and warm might help.

3. Time limits to be aware of

- If you suspect you were given any type of drug, it is best to be **tested within 24 hours**.
- If you want emergency contraception, the **medication should be started within 72 hours**.
- If you would like HIV prophylaxis, the **medication should be started within 36 hours**.
- Any forensic evidence collected can be stored whilst you decide what to do next.

Please see section below on the collection of forensic evidence. It is up to you to choose what kind of support you want to access, but you might want to consider getting medical attention even if you do not want to report the assault to the Police.

4. Police procedures

Reporting at a police station or attending a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) can be a very lengthy process that can take many hours, and can be upsetting. So bringing a supportive friend or relative along might be helpful and is encouraged.

It might be worth bringing a set of spare clothes if you have not changed since the assault, as the Police might need to keep them as evidence.

If you wish to contact the Police but don't feel it is an emergency, you can call 101.

When you call 101, the system will determine your location and connect you to the police force covering that area. You will hear a recorded message announcing the police force that you are being connected to. The recorded message will then give you a choice of which force to be connected to.

Calls to 101 are answered by police officers and staff in the control room of the local police force. This ensures that staff with local knowledge can answer and deal with the calls and respond appropriately.

The line is staffed 24 hours a day by trained operators. You can request to talk to the Rape Investigation Team directly, but it might take longer to speak to them. If you speak to the Operator, they should be able to best assess who is available at the time.

The police can take you to your nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) where you can have a forensic medical examination and get medical and emotional help.

A list of SARCs is provided at the end of this guidance. A full list of external agencies is provided in the document 'Supporting students who report sexual harassment or assault: Guidelines for Staff', which can be found on the CDD website www.cdd.ac.uk.

Preserving evidence

To help get the best quality forensic evidence, the SARC recommends that you try not to eat, drink, smoke, wash, change your clothes, go to the toilet or clear up the area where the assault took place. However, if you have done any of these things, don't worry – it is often still possible to get some forensic evidence, so this should not stop you reporting.

- If you believe you were drugged, or your drink spiked, you can have urine or blood tests done to prove this, the sooner the better.
- If you choose to do so, when you give your statement to the police, try not to leave anything out, however embarrassing or painful it may be. If you can't remember something, it is okay to say so.

Don't be afraid to tell the truth about things like how much you had to drink, or using recreational drugs, because if the truth comes out later it may harm the chances of prosecution.

5. Who can you talk to?

If you experience an incident at any time of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape, as a student or staff member of one of the Conservatoire Schools, you are strongly encouraged to tell someone about your experience and seek support from your School. If you do, this is known as 'making a disclosure', and the [Conservatoire Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours](#) will be followed. Anyone, regardless of whether they are a student, staff member, or an individual who is external to the Conservatoire and its schools, can make a disclosure to a member of staff of the Conservatoire. Further information about the policy and its procedures can be found in the [Guide to the Policy](#) and [Guide to the Procedures](#).

Many people do not wish to report immediately, but decide after a while that they want to do so. This is perfectly acceptable and there are steps you can take to make this easier.

If you are not sure what to do or not sure if you feel comfortable telling a member of staff in the Conservatoire and its schools, you can go to a SARC, or to Rape Crisis. They can talk you through the different options available to you. The SARC can store forensic evidence for you until you make up your mind about reporting. If you wish, they can keep DNA results on record and let you know if it matches with other reported assaults, still with no obligation on you to report. The SARC also provides medical and emotional help, which you can access without reporting to the police.

Another option is to report anonymously to the police. It can put the perpetrator on the police radar. They might not be arrested, but it can help make another reported case stronger.

If you do not wish to see anyone, information on the Rape Crisis website states that it is possible to preserve some evidence yourself. They recommend putting your clothes (including e.g. sanitary pad) in a clean bag in the freezer can help preserve evidence, as can brushing your teeth and then freezing the toothbrush.

6. External Agencies

[Rape Crisis](#) focuses particularly on the needs and rights of women and girls, and on providing specialist services within women-only safe spaces; however, they of course recognise that boys and men also experience sexual violence, and that the impacts of sexual violence on the lives of boys and men are no less devastating and can be just as wide-ranging and long-term.

Over half of member Rape Crisis Centres provide specific support services for men and boys who have experienced sexual violence as a child and/or as an adult. Some can also offer support to male partners, friends and supporters of sexual violence survivors. Please see the Rape Crisis website for further information on support for male individuals: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/support-for-men-and-boys/>

Rape Crisis Centres that do not provide direct services for men or boys will be able to give you information about relevant local support organisations.

[Survivors UK](#) provides a dedicated web-based helpline and other services for adult men (aged 18+) who want to talk about rape or sexual abuse. If you need to talk to a specialist service, you can contact the #5MillionMen National Male Survivors Helpline: 0808 800 5005 Find out more about this service at the [Safeline website here](#).

Find information about other sexual violence support services that are not members of Rape Crisis England & Wales [here](#).

Or click [here](#) or on the purple button to the right to find information about Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).

7. Reporting to the Police: the reporting process

You have options about how and where you report. You can phone the police and arrange to go into a station, or for the police to come to your home or meet you somewhere else.

Your [local Rape Crisis centre](#) might be able to support you through the reporting process, including going with you and providing information. [Find out more about specialist Rape Crisis advocacy or ISVA services and how they can help you.](#)

The police will take an initial report. Try to be as clear and detailed as you can and not to leave anything out. If you can't remember everything, that's OK.

If it's a recent rape or sexual assault, they will probably ask you to visit a local [Sexual Assault Referral Centre \(SARC\)](#) to collect physical evidence.

In many areas, you can also visit a [SARC](#) without reporting. They can hold evidence for up to 7 years for you.

Depending on the police's investigations, you will then go through a process that could end in your case going to court or might end sooner than that. You can read more about the [Report To Court process here](#).

There's no time limit on when you can report, so even if it happened a long time ago, you can still go to the police if you want to.