

Have you recently been raped or sexually assaulted?

# SARN

The Sexual Assault Referral Network

This information sheet is for anyone age 16 years and over who has been raped or sexually assaulted within the last 7 days.

If this has happened to you, you are able to access the Sexual Assault Referral Network.

## WHAT IS SARN?

In the immediate aftermath of a rape or sexual assault you may not have decided whether or not you want to report to the Police. The Sexual Assault Referral Network offers the opportunity to be referred for a forensic medical examination without the need to report. Forensics are stored anonymously for up to 8 years. This means that if you later decide to make a report to Police Scotland that any valuable forensic evidence will have been stored.

## HOW DO I CONTACT SARN?

You can contact SARN by telephoning **0300 365 2001**.

When you telephone this number you will speak to a Rape Crisis Support Worker. If calling between Monday and Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm, you will be speaking to a worker from either WRASAC Dundee & Angus or RASAC Perth & Kinross. Out with these hours your call will be responded to by a worker from the Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline.

Should you telephone and get an answering machine please leave a message with your name and number so that someone can call you back as soon as possible.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

The worker will take your details and may ask for some additional information about the assault so that we can arrange the referral as soon as possible. They will then contact the Custody Nurse at the Tayside Forensic Suite in Dundee. The Custody Nurse will speak to the Forensic Physician who will decide if a medical examination can take place.

If calling Monday – Friday during working hours, the Rape Crisis Support Worker from Perth or Dundee will phone you back with an appointment. If you phoned out with these hours and have spoken to the Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline, a Nurse will contact you directly.

We can arrange for a Support Worker to accompany you to the examination. Transport can be provided if required.

After the examination, a SOLO (Sexual Offences Liaison Officer) will be notified and will be given the forensic samples for storage. You will not have any contact with the SOLO officer. No personal details will be passed on as all samples are labelled with a unique reference number.

## WHAT DOES A MEDICAL EXAMINATION INVOLVE?

Depending on the nature of the assault and a range of other factors every medical examination will be different. However, there are some common features of medical examinations that you can expect:

- A medical history will be taken
- You will be asked to provide details about the nature of the assault
- Depending on the information that you have provided a range of swabs and collection of other physical evidence will take place and
- You will be provided with information about sexual health screening and services.

You should expect the examination to last a minimum of one hour. A Forensic Physician will carry out the examination and a nurse will also be present.

## PRESERVING FORENSIC EVIDENCE

If you need some more time to think about your options, there are a number of things that you can do to try and preserve any forensic evidence that might be present. You may not feel able to do some or all of the things that are listed. If possible:

- Try not to wash. If you do wash, try to wipe yourself with tissues first and keep these.
- Do not clean your teeth or fingernails.
- Do not wash any clothes you were wearing. Any clothes from the assault can be put in a carrier bag if you wish to change. Any bedding or other items which you may have can also be bagged.
- Try not to eat or drink anything and avoid taking any substances such as alcohol or drugs.
- If you go to the toilet, try to keep any tissues that you use and any sanitary protection.
- Keep any text messages or take photos on your phone of anything else that may be used as evidence.

Remember, that if you are unable to do some or all of these things you can still access SARN.

