



SAFEGUARDING

**Reporting abuse you
experienced as a child**



Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

NHS
Wiltshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

About this leaflet

There are different ways in which children can experience abuse, all of which are serious and can have an effect on a child. This can include further long term effects on them as they grow older.

This leaflet is designed to help those who have experienced sexual abuse as a child. This leaflet gives information about how to report what has happened, and also how to get support and help.

Abuse suffered as a child can be very painful for people to accept when they are adults and can affect people in different ways.

For some it may be that they are unable to remember significant periods of their childhood, or perhaps have general memories of being unhappy and partial memories of the abuse. For others they may recall much of what happened to them, but choose not to think about it.

Are you ready to report the abuse you suffered?

Taking the decision to report the abuse you suffered as a child to the police or social services can be a difficult process, which can raise all sorts of worries for people.

People who have suffered abuse in the past may be worried that the person who abused them could be abusing other children. Others feel that they want the person who abused them to take responsibility for what they did.

If you decide that you want to proceed with reporting your abuse, there are two options available to you.

Option 1: Reporting your abuse to the police



Any adult who has experienced abuse as a child can report what they have suffered to the police for them to investigate and see if the person who abused them can be prosecuted.

Reporting your abuse to the police continued...

There is no time limit to report the abuse, but if it happened a long time ago, it might be difficult for the police to gather evidence. There are also legal rules about the evidence which can be used in court, which may mean that in some cases a prosecution can't happen but this shouldn't stop you reporting.

In an emergency anyone can contact the police via the 999 number, or by text phoning 0800 112 999. If it is not an emergency, you can contact the police by calling 101, which will connect you to your local police force. You can also visit your nearest police station in person and report any crimes there.

You should be prepared to provide the following details:

- Your name
- Your address
- Details of the abuse
- Name of the person/people who abused you if you know this

Once you have reported the abuse you suffered, you will be given a reference number relating to this report and you will need to keep a record of this for any future communication.

What happens once you report your abuse to the police?

After the abuse is reported, your complaint/report will be given to an officer to look at in detail and decide how best to proceed. Once this has been decided, the police will contact you and ask you to make a formal statement. This usually happens within days of the report being made.

Specially trained police officers will then attempt to find the person you have accused and speak with them. This can be done under caution or they may arrest them.

If the offences you reported happened some time ago, there may be limitations on the amount of evidence the police collect. However, they may look to see if other reports have been made against the person you have accused and they will link in with other agencies to review their records.

If the police feel there is enough evidence to proceed with the case, they will pass your case over to the Crown Prosecution Service who are responsible for prosecuting.

They will then be ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not to prosecute. Throughout the process the specially trained officers will support you.

I want to share what happened to me with the police, but don't want to pursue an official complaint

It is possible to report your abuse to the police and it not be taken forward as an investigation if that is what you wish. In the majority of cases this will be honoured. However, it is not possible to give a 100% guarantee the police will not proceed with a criminal investigation.

It may be that as a result of the information you provide and subsequent police checks, another child is identified as possibly being at risk. This may then result in discussions taking place with children's social care, which will then determine how they proceed.

Even if you do not wish for any action to be taken at the time you report the abuse, the information will still be recorded on the police systems and allocated a reference number. If you should choose to change your mind at a later date, you can refer to this.

What if I reported the abuse in the past, but I'm unhappy how it was investigated and/ or I have new information not known at the time?

It does not matter how long ago the investigation took place, if you do not feel the abuse was investigated properly or you have new information that was not shared at the time, you can speak to the police at any time.

Either you, a friend, family member or support worker can call the non-emergency police number 101 and discuss how this can be taken forward. The police will respond to your concerns and/or new information.

Option 2: Reporting your abuse anonymously

You can call 101 the non-emergency police number, stating that this happened to you as a child, that you do not want to proceed with a criminal complaint or want anyone arrested, but wish to share the information.

When possible it is better to give your name, as this will help to identify or confirm anyone else at risk. This does not mean you will be contacted.

Crimestoppers

If you want to report what has happened

CrimeStoppers.

to you, but you don't want to speak to the police, you can speak to or email the charity Crimestoppers.

Crimestoppers allows you to report any offences anonymously. This can also be carried out by a family member, friend or someone who supports you.

Crimestoppers guarantee anonymity. The only way anybody will know you contacted Crimestoppers is if you tell somebody.

This allows you to report the offence and provide information to the police, but it will not lead to a police investigation. If you think this would be best for you, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

What if a child is currently at risk?

If a child is identified as being currently at risk, you can help to ensure this child is protected. A referral will need to be made to children's social care; you will be supported to do this, or it can be completed by your support worker.

Will the abuse be reported without my knowledge?

Whenever possible information will be shared with your knowledge and consent, but in some circumstances, information may need to be shared without your knowledge and consent. This can be because of an increase in risk to a child, to you, to your support worker or others, or because information may be given to the person who carried out the abuse or undermine any further investigation.

Can someone report the abuse on my behalf?

A family member, friend or a professional can make a call to 101 for you. They should state that they are making the call on your behalf, and it is a third party report. They would need to be clear how you wish to proceed.

Is there any support I can get?

Whether or not you decide to report an incident or series of incidents, there are places you can go to seek support and advice to help you come to terms with what has happened to you.

Here are a list of agencies that can provide you with support. These organisations are non-NHS and therefore Oxford Health can not vouch for their governance arrangements:

Support for you

NSPCC

The NSPCC give support to those who have experienced child abuse in the past, or for those who are concerned about a child in the present.

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Text: 8858

Make a report online at www.nspcc.org.uk

NAPAC

NAPAC is the national Association for people abused in Childhood, providing a helpline and support to people who experienced past abuse.

Support line: 0808 801 0331 (times vary on different days - see website for details)

Online: www.napac.org.uk

MOSAC

This charity aims to provide a unique and specialist service, offering practical and emotional support to non-abusing parents, carers and families.

Helpline: 0800 980 1958

Email: enquiries@mosac.org.uk

www.mosac.org.uk

Support for you

FIRST LIGHT (SARC)

Provided by First Light, SARC is the Swindon & Wiltshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre. It is the first point of contact for people who have experienced rape and serious sexual assault.

Helpline: 01793 267018

Secure email: sw.sarc@firstlight.cjsm.net

Online: <https://www.firstlight.org.uk/swindonwiltshiresarc/>

THE SURVIVORS TRUST

The Survivors Trust is a UK-wide national umbrella agency for 130 specialist organisations for support for the impact of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse throughout the UK and Ireland.

Online: www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Support, advice and info: 0808 801 0818

STOP IT NOW!

Stop It Now! Is an organisation run by Lucy Faithful House that is at the forefront of activity to prevent child sexual abuse.

Online: www.stopitnow.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 1000 900

Links to other helpful information

CITIZENS ADVICE

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and-young-people/child-abuse/police-involvement/child-abuse-police-involvement/>

RIGHTS OF WOMEN

<http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Reporting-an-offence-to-the-police-a-guide-to-criminal-investigations.pdf>

VICTIM SUPPORT

https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/P1008%20Rape-Female%20leaflet_web.pdf

WILTSHIRE POLICE

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/article/1129/Child-Abuse>

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

<https://www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime>

REVIVAL

Revival – Wiltshire RASAC offers free, confidential counselling and support to male and female survivors who have been raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited.

Online: <https://www.revival-wiltshirerasac.org.uk/>

Counselling enquiries: 01225 751 568

Email: appointments@revival-wiltshirerasac.org.uk