



Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Adult, Police & Self-Referral Procedure

This document is part of North Yorkshire Police policy to which all Chief Constable personnel and the functions provided by the Deputy Mayor for Policing as part of the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority are required to adhere.

Procedure Statement

Rape and serious sexual assaults by their nature can have a traumatic effect on the victim, family and society. York and North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning are committed to protecting and supporting victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Assault.

In April 2023 the York and North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning along with the Yorkshire and The Humber Regional Procurement team and NHS England commissioned Mountain Healthcare Ltd to carry out and deliver the forensic medical services for the region with representation at the North Yorkshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which is based at Acer House, Hackness Road, Northminster Business Park, York YO26 6QR

Mountain Health Care specialise in the provision of Forensic Medicals using qualified Forensic Nurse Examiners and Paediatricians in SARCs and Police Custodial Health Care services. The contract is to provide services to children, young people and adults at the North Yorkshire SARC (Acer House). The service includes the management of the SARC areas, within ACER house this is the upstairs area of the building, and includes the Adult and child forensic suites, the freezer and laundry room. Mountain Health care also have the Adult SARC office and the CSASS (Child Sexual Abuse support service) office which are located on the ground floor. The service provides a SARC manager who oversees the forensic Nurse Examiners, Crisis Workers and the out of hours /on call service via the call centre.

The Services provided

Adult Service and Young People 16 and over. This applies to Police and self- referrals

North Yorkshire SARC known as Acer House will see victims of any gender. The minimum age for a Self-Referral Client is 16 in recognition that the legal age for consent is 16. Self-referral clients under the age of 18 will have all necessary safeguarding referrals completed by Mountain Health Care and the Police will be notified. The Police may become involved to oversee the assessment via a Strategy meeting and to identify if an investigation is necessary.

- Individuals will be offered support and guidance following a rape or serious sexual assault.
- Individuals will be offered a medical assessment and treatment

- Individuals will be offered a forensic examination
- Referrals to partner agencies, these can include support from an Independent sexual Violence advisor, sending a GP letter and a referral to the Sexual health clinic the afore mentioned are the most common used
- Individuals will be offered an option's talk with the Police SARC SPOC who can discuss reporting options or reporting anonymously

All forensic medical examinations will be conducted at the approved SARC premises. This is to ensure that the victim receives the highest level of care in approved and dedicated premises compliant with environmental monitoring and video imaging equipment for intimate injuries.

Forensic Samples and any clothing samples obtained will be stored at the SARC for a period of 2 years as per the current national guidelines for retention. The exact duration can be extended if the complainant chooses to extend the timeframe to allow for more time to decide whether to report to the police.

Children and Young People aged 0-15 Service (Acute pathway 0-13 days)

For Acute (Forensic) cases, Monday to Saturday 10:00-18:00 and Sundays 11:00-16:00 at the Hazelhurst Centre, Leeds

Victims aged 13-15 years old will be offered an appointment within the adult (16 years +) service if clinically appropriate.

Advice and information is available 24/7 via phone.

All appointments are made via Mountain Health Care in the first instance by calling **0330 223 0099**

All 0-15 appointments can only be made by the Police and /or Children's Social Care.

Police officers should Follow Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures – if sexual violence or child sexual abuse is suspected, a strategy meeting will be convened and MHL invited

- All young people will be seen by a Paediatric Examiner and a Paediatric Support Worker
- Under 18s with learning disabilities, complex need or familial abuse should be seen within the paediatric service
- At the strategy meeting, consideration will be given to parental responsibility, Gillick/Fraser competence/social care input, and the supportive network needed to ensure an effective examination
- Baseline STI screening is provided during the appointment at the SARC with follow up provided if needed
- Cases are reviewed by MHL paediatric team
- MHL will review each case, assess needs and make ongoing referrals
- MHL will ensure injuries and documentation meets the required standards
- MHL will ensure wider needs such as CSE, safeguarding and statutory obligations are undertaken
- MHL will ensure reports and statements are written with appropriate peer review

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Children & Young People Aged 0-15 years Non-Acute Pathways (14 days and over) By Appointment only

For non-recent incidents, a **Weekly Non-recent Clinic on Tuesdays 10:00-18:00 at Acer House, York**

Where a disclosure, allegation, or concern for sexual abuse/assault of child or young person with the last incident happening 14 days ago or more.

Police officers contact Mountain Healthcare Pathway Support Service Team (PSS) – **0330 223 1154**

- An appointment will be made for assessment by Mountain Healthcare in their non-recent clinic
- Child / young person will be seen by a Paediatric Examiner and supported by a Paediatric Support Worker. STI screening is provided during the appointment
- Onward referral to other agencies as appropriate
- Information sharing with social services, community paediatricians and GP
- A report on findings of the examination will be provided to the allocated social worker

- Statements are available on request

Procedures

Safeguarding Children from Abuse
Safeguarding Adults
Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
Domestic Abuse

Other Documents

Child Abuse Subsite
Briefing note for police first responders to a report of rape or sexual assault
Rape and sexual offences | College of Policing

Process

Access to the Service:

North Yorkshire Police acknowledge that victims who report Rape and serious sexual offences within the geographical area of North Yorkshire may require transportation to the SARC which is based in York. This must not be a barrier to the victim attending.

The SARC Regional Commissioning agreement has provision and agreement that allows a victim to access other Yorkshire and The Humber SARCs in emergency cases where the forensic window is tight and thus forensic evidence may be compromised.

The SARC medical area within ACER house is only accessible by Mountain Health Care personnel. The VRI (Visual Recorded Interview rooms) are only accessible by Police Personnel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Call handlers – Follow the North Yorkshire Police Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Procedure

Police Officers

- Police officers should call Mountain Healthcare via their Call Centre **03302230362 (Adults) and 0330 223 0099 (Children 0-16)** to arrange an appointment best suited to the victims needs and after discussions with the victim and the victim's family in the case of a child to establish when & what happened and what has happened since in terms of forensic evidence
- Appropriately trained SARC staff will quickly and appropriately assess if the victim falls within any forensic time frames as outlined within the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine Guidelines (FFLM)
- The Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) will confirm if the victim is fit for a medical
- Adult Victims who fall outside of forensic timescales (FFLM guide), have reported to Police and whether or not an investigation is taking place, including where a decision has been made to take no further action, should be offered, with their consent a referral to the ISVA service using the form on NICHE via the occurrence / person/ report tab

- Adult Victims who are within Forensic timescales but reluctant when reporting and are undecided should be given the details of the SARC and the contact details: **0330 223 0362** acer.house@nhs.net MHL can deal with the victim as a self-referral and make onward supportive referrals
- Adult and Child victims who are outside the forensic timescales and have reported to the Police should be offered an ISVA at the earliest opportunity, this can be done using the form on NICHE via the occurrence / person/ report tab
- Adult victims who report to the Police and withdraw their complaint should also be offered an ISVA to ensure they continue to be supported; this can be done by completing the form on NICHE via the occurrence / person/ report tab

Police Officers should ensure a PPN is submitted for victims 0-18 and Adults with Care and Support needs as defined in The Care Act 2014 to ensure VAT and MAST are able to join up the above process with Social Care

SARC SPOC (Single Point of Contact)

- The SARC SPOC will provide an options talk and where necessary take Intelligence from victims who wish to remain anonymous and do not want to make a formal complaint. This is usually carried out with a support /welfare worker.
- Submit intelligence under a unique SARC reference number.
- Weeding of old records and maintenance of the self-referral database.
- Update the Business Continuity plan (BCP) for the SARC.
- Attend local and regional operational groups in the absence of the York and North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning.
- Point of contact for Police colleagues.

Mountain Health Care:

- Will work with Police to gather forensic evidence where victims have reported Rape and/or Serious Sexual Offences proving the service to Adults, Young people and Children
- Will support victims who self-refer having suffered Rape and /or Serious Sexual offences.
- Will submit Intelligence to Police where a self-referring victim discloses a stranger rape and, where possible provide location, description of offender and when it occurred whilst protecting the victims who wish to remain anonymous.

Mountain Health care will be responsible for self-referral forensic samples which are stored in a confidential freezer along with any additional clothing which is stored in a dry evidence area in evidence bags. This evidence is held on SARC premises @ Acer house York should a victim decide to report to the Police in the future. This evidence is kept for 2 years.

Intelligence Department Responsibilities:

- **Receive the intelligence report from the SARC SPOC and record and acknowledge requests**
- Send a task to the 'Crime and Incident Registrar' via Niche in order to comply and record the N100 incident in line with the requirements of NCRS.

Crime & Incident Registrar responsibilities:

- Record an occurrence in Niche and create a stats class page applying the appropriate N100 classification
- Record the reporting party as the business organisation 'SARC' (Bus org no: 1374394)
- X refer the intelligence occurrence number with the N100 occurrence
- Record the SARC reference number in the external file field of the occurrence.
- Finalise the occurrence once complete.

Crime Recording Requirements

Reported Rape Incidents: All reported incidents of rape whether from victims, witnesses or third parties must either be recorded as a confirmed crime or, as an **N100** record on the force crime system in keeping with HOCR guidance.

Clarification: Unless already recorded as a crime, every report of rape, suspected or possible rape, must be taken at face value and recorded on the force recording system under the N100 classification, irrespective of the source of the report. This includes reports made by third parties, through partnership working or from other agencies. The reported incident of rape will be in addition to any other force record e.g., command and control system or any other system such as CATS or similar public protection system.

Reports of Rape from Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC):

A report of rape must be recorded as a crime in the following circumstances:

- The victim provides personal details and seeks a police investigation; or
- The victim (whether anonymous or not) provides details of the report to be passed to the police but decides not to pursue the case; or
Victim undergoes a forensic examination with samples submitted to the police for analysis (whether or not personal details are passed to the police)

A report of rape **must be recorded as a reported incident of rape (Classification N100)** in the following circumstances:

- The victim does not seek a police investigation but is happy for some de-personalised data to be passed to the police for intelligence purposes; or
- The victim wishes to remain anonymous and does not want details of the allegation passed to police (if any information at all received by police); or
- The victim undergoes a forensic examination and samples are frozen at the SARC in case the victim decides to pursue the case at a later date (forensic samples are not passed to police).

Cancellation of reported incidents of rape: Once recorded a reported incident of rape or attempted rape can only be cancelled in cases where a genuine error has been made by the person taking the report.

Further Information

Non recent Cases

There are no restrictions on when a victim can access North Yorkshire SARC Services.

Victims can contact Mountain health care **0330 223 0362** or acer.house@nhs.net

Non recent Self-referral victims will be offered referrals to support agencies and offered the service of the SARC SPOC to discuss their options with or without Police involvement.

Training

All members of Mountain Health SARC Staff will be appropriately trained and will not conduct any roles until such training has been completed.

Definition of Special Terms

FFLM	-	Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine
FNE	-	Forensic Nurse Examiner
SARC	-	Sexual Abuse Referral Centre
ISVA	-	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor
SPOC	-	Single point of contact
CSAAS	-	Child Sexual Assault Assessment Service