



For more information on the criminal justice process, you are able to download the 'report to court' booklet here:

<http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/From-Report-to-Court-a-handbook-for-adult-survivors-of-sexual-violence.pdf>

**In an emergency always call 999.**

**For urgent medical advice regarding a recent incident please contact Saint Marys SARC-0161 276 6515 or SAFEplace SARC -0151 295 3550.**

For further information please contact us:

Tel: 0330 363 0063

Email: [support@rapecentre.org.uk](mailto:support@rapecentre.org.uk)

Visit: [www.rapecentre.org.uk](http://www.rapecentre.org.uk)

[www.cheshiresarc.org.uk](http://www.cheshiresarc.org.uk)



Registered Charity No:1049826 in England & Wales

# Police Reporting



**Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre**  
(Cheshire & Merseyside)



Deciding whether to report to the police about a sexual offence that has happened to you can be an extremely difficult decision to make and takes a lot of courage. It may be the first time you have told someone and you may have lots of concerns, worries and questions. You may feel unsure what to do for the best, embarrassed, ashamed or worried that you won't be believed. The prospect of talking out loud to a stranger and friends/family finding out what has happened may be extremely upsetting for you. You may be unfamiliar with the police process and what will happen if you decide to tell someone what has happened.

RASASC is here to help and our specially trained Independent Sexual Violence Advisors can advise you about your options, answer any questions you have and will provide you with the information you need, to enable you to make an informed decision on how you want to proceed and move forward.

We will not tell you what you should, or shouldn't do, **you are in control** over your situation and what happens next. Whatever the decision you decide upon, RASASC can support you along the way. There are a few different routes you can take with regards to speaking to the police about an offence which has happened to you, one of the options is making a **formal complaint to the police**.

### **How**

To do this, you can either go into your local police station or call 101. A friend or relative may also call on your behalf if you prefer. Once you are through to the control room, you will need to provide your full details, contact number and advise that you are wanting to report an incident/s of sexual violence/abuse. It would also be helpful to advise if this was a recent or historical incident.

### **Interview**

You will likely then be contacted by a police officer from a specialised unit such as the PPD—Public Protection Department, the DRU—Dedicated Rape Unit or the Unity Team.

They will either arrange for you to come into a local police station or visit you at home and have a brief chat with you about the incident/s and record this in a police sexual offences booklet. They will explain what will happen if you make a formal police complaint and the steps they will take to investigate.

If you wish to proceed with the complaint after speaking to the police and they deem that an offence has been committed, you will be invited in to complete a detailed statement at a local police station. The statement is now normally completed as a video interview and is also referred to as an ABE interview (achieving best evidence).

You are able to take someone along to the video interview with you, but usually you will be alone in the interview room with the police officer. You should be offered a choice of a male or female officer who will complete the interview. During the interview you will be asked in detail about the incident/s. The whole interview process can take a few hours. The interview is recorded and there will normally be another police officer in an adjoining room monitoring the interview.

### **Police Investigation**

Once the interview is complete the police will begin to investigate the offence and you should be provided with a point of contact (OIC—officer in charge) who will keep you up to date on the progress of the investigation.

Any other relevant persons—such as family, friends, doctors, other professionals may be asked to

provide a statement or release records if they have any information to add to the police investigation.

If the police identify a suspect they may arrest or invite them in for an interview where they will be questioned in respect to the complaint you have provided and asked to provide an account of events. The suspect may be released on 'bail' which is set of conditions whilst the police investigation continues. The police investigation can take number of months and can end in various different ways.

The case will have to meet certain thresholds before the investigation can progress. If the police deem they do not have enough evidence to progress the case to the next stage—the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), then the case will be NFA'd by the police—no further actioned. This means the investigation has come to an end. You are able to ask for a second opinion on your case decision under the **Victims Right to Review Scheme**.

If the police deem they have enough evidence to proceed, the case will be passed to the CPS.

### **Crown Prosecution Service**

The case is passed to a CPS lawyer to decide if there is enough evidence to charge, a 'realistic prospect' of the suspect being found guilty at court and if it is in the public interest to prosecute. The case will have to meet certain evidential thresholds before the prosecution can be approved and a charge brought.

If the CPS deem there is no 'realistic chance of prosecution' or it doesn't meet the evidential threshold then the case will be dropped and no charge will be brought. You are able to ask for a second opinion on your case decision under the **Victims Right to Review Scheme**. If the CPS approve a prosecution then the suspect will be formally charged.

### **Court**

A first hearing date at the magistrates court will be set and depending on the nature and seriousness of the offences the case may be moved to the Crown Court. The case will then progress through the court system and a number of hearings will take place at court which you do not need to attend.

You do not need a lawyer/solicitor, as the case has been brought to court by the CPS. The witness care unit (police staff) have a duty to keep you up to date on the case as it moves through court. A plea date will be set and if the accused pleads guilty the case will be adjourned for sentencing. If the accused pleads not guilty then a trial date will be set. You will likely be asked to attend the trial and your video interview would be played. You would then be asked questions (cross examination) based on your evidence. The accused would also be cross examined and then it will be up to the Jury (12 members of the public) to decide if the offender is found guilty or not guilty. If the defendant is found not guilty, the case will be acquitted. If the defendant is found guilty, a sentence date will be set and the case concluded.

An ISVA can support you throughout this process both practically and emotionally. They can advise you, ensure you are kept up to date on the progression of your case and advocate to the police/CPS on your behalf. ISVAs can support you at court if you are required to attend for a trial and can arrange counselling and other support services.

At RASASC we will listen to you, we will believe you and we will respect you.  
**Please see our 'anonymous intelligence' leaflet for further reporting options.**