

Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse

Information to support people
seeking asylum in the UK



Have you been harmed through sexual assault or sexual abuse?



Sexual assault or abuse can happen to anyone; it may be a single event or happen repeatedly. This booklet provided important information on your legal rights and how to access help for past or current sexual abuse or assault.



We know that some people seeking asylum have experienced harm from sexual violence and abuse; both before their arrival to the UK and whilst in the UK.



People seeking asylum can find it difficult to access the right support and care in the UK.

You have rights



Everyone has the right to live free of abuse.



Sexual assault and sexual abuse are crimes. You have a legal right to report any incident. This will not affect your asylum claim.



Talking about sexual assault and sexual abuse can make us feel uncomfortable but by talking about it we can support people and help prevent these crimes.

How do I know if this has happened to me?

What is sexual abuse?



Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual act forced upon an adult or child without their consent. Children under the age of 16 are too young to provide that consent.



This can happen in person, on the phone, by text or email, or online.

What is sexual assault?



Sexual assault is any sexual act without consent or that is forced against a person's will. It can involve violence and includes rape.



Sexual assault is not always violent but can cause severe distress, emotional harm and injuries which can't be seen but are equally as serious.

What is rape?



Rape is when someone puts their penis in another person's vagina, anus or mouth on purpose, without the other person's consent.

What is grooming?



Grooming is to befriend and trick someone to gain trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can happen to anyone.

What is sexual consent?



Consent happens when all people involved in any sexual activity agree to take part by choice. They also need to have the freedom and ability to make that choice. Children (under 16) cannot legally give sexual consent.



We all have the right to not want sex or any form of sexual activity. This includes kissing, sexual touching, watching or performing a sexual act either in person or on a camera, phone or computer.



We all have the right to change our minds at any time. We can consent to one sexual act but still have the right to say no to anything else at any time.

How do I know if someone is making me unsafe?



When another person displays unwanted sexualised behaviour, you have the right to feel safe and to say no.

Here are some examples:

- Unwanted sexual or shaming comments
- Unwanted questions about sex or sexual orientation
- Unnecessary exposure of a person's body
- Any sexual act without consent
- Taking photographs or film without consent
- Being forced to watch pornography or indecent images
- Watching someone undress without their consent
- Unwanted touching
- Exchange of drugs or services for sexual favours

Even when married, sexual partners should respect these boundaries.



Do you feel safe or need help?

- Are you often afraid of someone or a member of your family?
- Have you been physically attacked?
- Does anyone demean or threaten to hurt you?
- Does anyone use fear, intimidation, threats or name calling to hurt and control you?
- Do you have to ask anyone's permission to spend your money or socialise with friends and family?
- Does anyone threaten to hurt your children or to take them away from you?
- Does anyone touch you in a way that you don't want to be touched?
- Do you ever feel pressured to have sex against your will?
- Has anyone destroyed your belongings in order to control or scare you?
- Has someone taken your passport or other important documents?
- Has anyone blackmailed you so that you are afraid to seek help?
- Are you getting married against your will?



If you answer **YES** to any of these questions, you might be in an abusive and controlling relationship or situation.

How to get help



You are entitled to feel and be safe. If you have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused, it is **NOT** your fault.



Sexual assault and sexual abuse is a crime - no matter who commits it or where it happens. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



As an adult, you do not have to report the assault or abuse to the police if you do not want to.



For children, local safeguarding policies and procedures must be followed. For NSPCC contact details, see Page 10.



To understand your rights and how to access case, see Page 10 onwards for contact details of organisations that can help.

Before your call

- Try to find a safe place. If you are not safe, call 999
- Make sure your phone is charged
- If you need one, ask for an interpreter during your call

If you feel in immediate danger

- Call 999 and ask for police
- Inform a member of the accommodation staff



Sexual Assault and Referral Centres (SARCs)

SARCs provide a safe space and care for anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused at any time.

Services include:

- crisis and emotional care
- medical and forensic examinations
- emergency contraception
- testing for sexually transmitted infections

Scan the QR code to find a SARC near you.



You do not have to be medically examined. But if you do decide to, it is better for this to happen as soon as possible.



If you choose to, a specialist doctor or nurse can examine you and collect and store any forensic samples. This does NOT mean the police have to be involved.



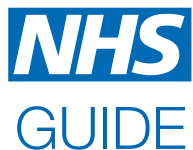
Try not to wash or change your clothes immediately after a sexual assault. This may destroy evidence that could be important if you want police to be involved in the future.



Adults do not have to report the assault to the police. The choice is yours.

Contact details

When contacting any of these organisations, remember that you are entitled to ask for an interpreter at any time.



Download the NHS Safeguarding App here:



Visit: england.nhs.uk/safeguarding/nhs-england-safeguarding-app/



NSPCC Support for Children



Call: **0808 800 5000**
(open Monday to Friday, 10am-8pm)



Email: help@NSPCC.org.uk



Rape Crisis



Call: **0808 500 2222** (open 24 hours a day, every day of the year)



Visit: 247sexualabusesupport.org.uk



The Survivors' Trust



Call: **0808 801 0818**



Visit: thesurvivorstrust.org/our-helpline



National Domestic Violence Helpline



Call: **0808 2000 247**



Galop (LGBTQ+)



Call: **0800 999 5428**



Respect Men's Advice Line



Call: **0808 801 0327**



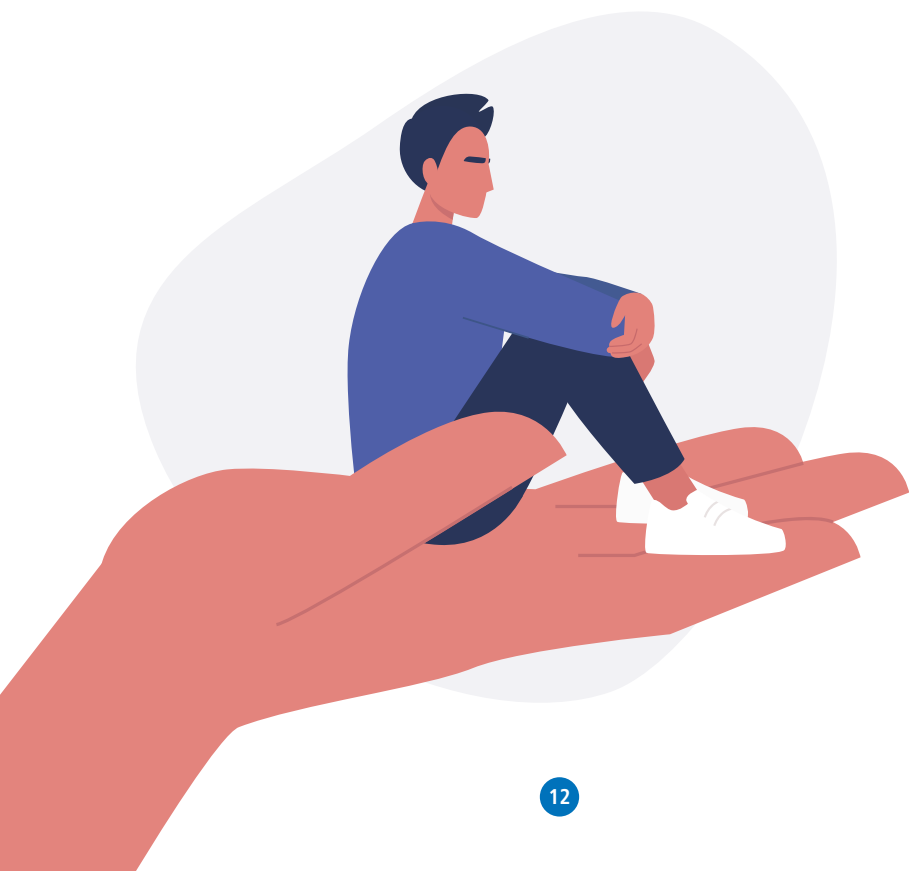
Your local authority child or adult safeguarding team

Visit your local authority website for contact details.



Other places you can ask for help

- Children or adult social care safeguarding team at the local authority
- a doctor or practice nurse at your GP surgery
- a hospital accident and emergency (A&E) department
- a genitourinary medicine (GUM) or sexual health clinic
- a contraceptive clinic
- a young people's service
- Call 111 or visit: 111.nhs.uk
- If you feel in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for police
- If you are not in immediate danger, speak to the police on 101



Tips for feeling safer

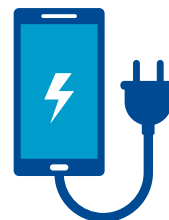
Sexual assault or abuse is NEVER your fault. There are some things that you can do that may help to make you feel safer.

Take precautions when going out – especially if alone



Know how you will return to the place where you live. Plan ahead if you are going somewhere that you do not know. Tell a friend or family member where you are going and when to expect you back.

Keep your phone charged



Make sure your mobile is charged and able to make calls, in case of an emergency or in case you lose the people that you are with.

Keep personal details safe



Do not share personal details online. Do not give out your address or telephone number. Do not invite people to where you are staying that you do not know well.

Other organisations that can provide support



The Refugee Council



Visit: refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services



Micro Rainbow

For support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans queer folk



Visit: microrainbow.org/contact-us



Migrant Help

For all concerns regarding accommodation:



Call: 0808 8010 503



Visit: migranthelpuk.org



Freedom from Torture



Visit: freedomfromtorture.org



Asylum advice and guidance

To view advice and guidance on asylum, please scan the QR code.



Translated advice:

Available in the following languages:

- Arabic
- Albanian
- Amharic
- Indian Punjabi
- Farsi
- Kurdish Sorani
- Mandarin
- Pashto
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Urdu



Translations

This leaflet is also available in the following languages:

- Albanian
- Arabic
- Farsi
- Kurdish Sorani
- Pashto

To find out more visit:
[**migranthelpuk.org**](https://migranthelpuk.org)

