Rape & Sexual Assault: Information for students

The University of Liverpool is committed to providing a safe environment for our students, and to responding appropriately to any incidents. This guidance has been produced for students who have been sexually assaulted or raped. It gives information on the things you might want to consider to help you make an informed choice about what to do.

You may have very mixed feelings about what happened, and whether to tell anyone. People can react very differently and there is no easy answer about whether to report or not.

You should not feel under any pressure to act in any specific way. The aim of these guidelines is for you to have access to some of the information that you might want to consider.

The list below provides some steps to consider:

1. Are you in a safe environment?
2. Do you want to take some time to think things through?
3. Time limits to be aware of
4. Police procedures
5. Who can you talk to?
6. External agencies
1. **Are you in a safe environment?**

If the assault has just occurred, you might want to consider whether you feel safe where you are.

If you or others feel at risk or consider the situation to be an emergency, you can call the Police or an ambulance on 999. If you are in University accommodation, you can alert the reception desk or the duty residential adviser. For incidents on other University premises you can call the University Security Office on 0151 7943252.

2. **Do you want to take some time to talk or think things through?**

If the situation is not an emergency, you may want to take some time to think things through, or to talk to someone you trust. You might want to contact a friend or a member of staff for support.

Each person’s reaction to sexual assault or rape can differ as will the effect that it has on you.

You might be in shock so trying to be somewhere that feels safe and warm might help.

3. **Time limits to be aware of:**

- If you suspect you were given any type of drug, it is best to be tested within 24 hours.
- If you want emergency contraception, the medication should be started within 72 hours.
- If you would like HIV prophylaxis, the medication should be started within 36 hours.
- Any forensic evidence collected can be stored whilst you decide what to do next. Please see section below on the collection of forensic evidence.

It is up to you to choose what kind of support you want to access, but you might want to consider getting medical attention even if you do not want to report the assault to the Police.

4. **Police procedures**

- Reporting at a police station or attending a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) can be a very lengthy process that can take many hours, and can be upsetting. So bringing a supportive friend or relative along might be helpful. It might be worth bringing a set of spare clothes if you have not changed since the assault, as the Police might need to keep them as evidence.

**Reporting immediately**

- You can call the Merseyside Police on 101, if you have just been attacked please dial 999. The line is staffed 24 hours a day by trained operators. You can request to talk to the Unity Team directly, but it might take longer to speak to them. The University Police Liaison Officer suggests you speak to the Operator who can best assess who is available at the time.
- Alternatively you can contact Safe Place Merseyside the sexual assault referral centre 0151 295 355 [http://www.safeplacemerseyside.org.uk/home.htm](http://www.safeplacemerseyside.org.uk/home.htm).
- Safe Place will ask you for the following information:
Your name (just a first name will do)
Your date of birth
Your Liverpool postcode
Your telephone number
The date and time of the assault (this may be recent or have been some time in the past)
Some brief details about the assault
Do you think you might need emergency contraception?
Do you want the police to be informed?
Would you like a forensic medical examination?

- If you call Safe Place out of hours an operator will take your name and phone number only and will arrange for a crisis worker to call you back.

- The police can take you to Safe Place or Safe Place will make arrangements for you to visit the centre. You will be where you can have a forensic medical examination and get medical and emotional help. To help get the best quality forensic evidence, the SARC recommends that you try not to eat, drink, smoke, wash, change your clothes, go to the toilet or clear up the area where the assault took place. If you have done any of these things, don’t worry – it is often still possible to get some forensic evidence, so this should not stop you reporting.

- If you believe you were drugged, or your drink spiked, you can have urine or blood tests done to prove this, the sooner the better.

- When you give your statement to the police, try not to leave anything out, however embarrassing or painful it may be. If you can’t remember something, it is okay to say so. Don’t be afraid to tell the truth about things like how much you had to drink, or using recreational drugs, because if the truth comes out later it may harm the chances of prosecution.

- Another option is to report anonymously. It can put the perpetrator on the police radar. They might not be arrested, but it can help make another reported case stronger.

**Reporting later**

- Many people do not wish to report immediately, but decide after a while that they want to do so. This is perfectly acceptable and there are steps you can take to make this easier.

- If you are not sure what to do, you can go to Safe Place. They can talk you through the different options available to you. Safe Place can store forensic evidence for you for up to two years while you decide whether you want to report the assault to the police. Safe Place also provides medical and emotional help, which you can access without reporting to the police.

- If you do not wish to see anyone, information on this Rape Crisis website states that it is possible to preserve some evidence yourself. They recommend putting your clothes (including e.g. sanitary pad) in a clean bag in the freezer can help preserve evidence, as can brushing your teeth and then freezing the toothbrush. ([http://www.hertsrapecrisis.org.uk/gettinghelp.html](http://www.hertsrapecrisis.org.uk/gettinghelp.html))

5. **Who can you talk to?**
If you experience an incident of sexual harassment, sexual assault, during your time at Liverpool, you are strongly encouraged to tell someone about your experience and seek support.

You can talk to any of the following people in the University:

- GP
- Student Support Services
- University Counselling Service
- Chaplain
- Student Advice Service
- Learning and Teaching Support Officer
- School Student Experience Team

6. External agencies

For expert advice on these issues, you can contact the following agencies:

**Sexual Assault**

 Safe Place – Sexual Assault Referral Centre [http://www.safeplacemerseyside.org.uk/home.htm](http://www.safeplacemerseyside.org.uk/home.htm) Tel 0151 295 355

**Sexual Assault and Childhood Sexual Abuse**

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (Cheshire and Merseyside) – [http://www.rapecentre.org.uk/index.php](http://www.rapecentre.org.uk/index.php) offer counselling, access to Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and an information line 0330 363 0063


M-Power – for male survivors, Helpline: 0808 8084231, Thurs 8-10pm

**Domestic Abuse/physical violence**


National Women’s Aid - [http://www.womensaid.org.uk/](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/)


Savera - [http://www.saveraliverpool.co.uk/](http://www.saveraliverpool.co.uk/) for women from black, minority ethnic and refugee communities experiencing domestic violence.

Southall Black Sisters – for black and Asian women and children experiencing domestic and sexual violence, including forced marriage and honour crimes.


Rights of Women is a women’s voluntary sector organisation which provides free legal advice and information to women affected by sexual violence. They publish a range of free information on
areas of sexual violence law to support women through the criminal justice process, including
From Report to Court: a handbook for adult survivors of sexual violence.

http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/

Sexual health clinic

There are a number of sexual health clinical in Liverpool details can be found at
http://www.sexualhealthliverpool.co.uk/

Sexual Harassment

Advice Place

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace/healthandwellbeing/harassment/sexualharassment/

Stalking

Stalking Helpline http://www.stalkinghelpline.org/

Network for surviving stalking http://www.nss.org.uk/

General

Student Support Services – http://www.liv.ac.uk/studentsupport/index.htm

Counselling Service – http://www.liv.ac.uk/studentsupport/counselling/

Leaflet Based on The University of Cambridge Guide to dealing with Sexual Violence/Assault, and from the Rape Crisis website, which contains further information:
http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/reportingrape2.php

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