

Information for Victims of Sexual Assault



New Zealand
POLICE
Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa

Police take every complaint of sexual assault seriously.

We know how difficult it is to seek help following a sexual assault and we will guide you through the process of reporting and making a complaint.



Sexual assault is a crime that involves a wide range of offending from indecent assault to rape. If you feel confused and unsure about what has happened to you, then you can still come to Police for help.

Sexual assault can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, or personal circumstances. You may have been assaulted by someone you know or a stranger.

When you report a sexual assault Police will investigate your complaint and work alongside other services to make sure that you are offered:

- ≈ Medical help and advice
- ≈ Counselling
- ≈ Help with your recovery

This brochure tells you about what happens once a sexual assault is reported.

After a sexual assault

You can report a sexual assault whether it has just happened or whether it happened to you a long time ago. Regardless of whether it is a recent or historic assault, the Police and other specially trained people will help you and your family/whānau decide what to do next.

Safety

Our first concern is your safety. We can give advice and take steps to help keep you and others safe. If you are worried about your safety at any time please contact Police. In an emergency dial 111.

Making a complaint

Once you have decided to make a complaint about a sexual assault Police will organise specialist interviewers to record your account of what happened. This is where you can tell what happened in an uninterrupted way. Wherever possible we will provide you with your preference of male or female interviewer.



The interview may be recorded on DVD to allow your actual words to be preserved. If the matter goes to court, your DVD may be given to lawyers. There are strict rules around storage and security of these DVDs. They cannot be copied or given to any other person without the Court's consent.

Once we have your information, an investigator who is trained in sexual assault will investigate your complaint. You are encouraged to give feedback about either the investigator or the process at any stage of the case.

Specialist support

After your first contact with Police, you will be offered the opportunity to talk to a specialist support person. This person is independent of Police and will discuss your options with you, provide information to help you make choices and explain the processes Police undertake for sexual assault complaints.

The specialist support person is available to you during the medical examination, the police interview and later during the court process.

If a specialist support person is unavailable immediately they will contact you as soon as possible.

They will also discuss counselling options with you.

Medical help

Police may arrange for you to see a specially trained doctor who will provide medical assistance and carry out a forensic examination. This examination has two purposes:

- ≈ To address any health concerns you have, for example injury, sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy.
- ≈ To help the Police investigation through the collection of evidence, if appropriate.



Most often this doctor will be female, but if you prefer a male doctor we will do our best to locate one. There may be a nurse available to assist the doctor and to support you.

The doctor will explain the examination process to you and keep notes about the examination. The examination will be done in private at a medical clinic.

You can have a friend or family/whānau member with you for the examination if you wish and/or your specialist support person.

The doctor may need to keep your clothing and other items for forensic testing. This testing can take some time and it may damage your clothes or other items. Any undamaged items will be returned to you as soon as possible. If this delay causes you any concern please talk to the police investigator in charge of your case.

Your specialist support person can provide you with clothing if required and will also provide any additional information to you including what financial help is available.



With your consent the doctor will complete the necessary referrals to ACC so that you can access subsidised ongoing health assistance, including specialist counselling. You may be referred to the same specialist health service for any follow up treatment/services or you may prefer to see your own GP.

What happens next?

Police will investigate complaints in a professional and timely manner. Police will speak to people who may have information about the sexual assault and seek evidence from wherever possible.

Police will always protect your privacy throughout an investigation.

The investigation may take some time. Suspects are usually spoken to after key enquiries are completed.



We will keep you informed as the investigation progresses. You can contact the officer in charge of your investigation for information if you wish.

Prosecutions and other outcomes

The job of the investigating officers is to find out what happened and gather evidence needed to prove it. Once Police have all the evidence and spoken to the relevant people a decision will be made on whether to prosecute (charge someone and take your case through the court process). The decision to prosecute will be made on a number of factors including all the evidence available and other considerations.

Police will consult with you before a decision is made.

Your rights during an investigation

The Victims' Rights Act 2002 gives you rights and requires Police to:

- ≈ Treat you with courtesy and compassion
- ≈ Respect your dignity and privacy
- ≈ Advise of services available to you
- ≈ Keep you informed of progress in the investigation
- ≈ Advise you whether charges are laid and what the charges are, or the reasons for not laying charges.

If you have any concerns about the way your investigation is being handled you can contact the National Sexual Violence Team at Police National Headquarters for advice, by emailing ASA@police.govt.nz



Contacts

Officer in charge of the investigation:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Second police contact:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Support worker/Counsellor:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Doctor who saw me:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

File Number:

Event Number:

