

Information for Victims of Sexual Assault



NEW ZEALAND
POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

Police take every complaint of sexual assault seriously

We understand 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 or unsure about what has happened to you, then you can always 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 you are offered:

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

This brochure explains what happens once you report a sexual assault.

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, 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, please contact Police who 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 so your words are 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 Police has your information, an investigator who is trained in sexual assault cases will investigate your complaint.

You are encouraged to give feedback about either the investigator or the process at any stage of the case. Giving feedback can either be done in person or by completing a survey on the NZ Police website, found at the link below:

www.police.govt.nz/advice/sexual-assault/feedback

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 free of charge.

They will discuss your options with you and provide information to help you make choices and explain the processes Police undertake for sexual assault complaints. They will also discuss counselling options with you.

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.

Medical help

Police may arrange for you to see a specially trained doctor. This doctor can provide medical assistance and carry out a forensic examination which is free of charge.

This medical examination has two purposes:

1 To address any health concerns you have. For example: injury, sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy.

2 To help the Police investigation through the collection of evidence, if appropriate.

Most often your 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 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, and/or your specialist support person.

The doctor may need to keep some of your clothing and/or other items for forensic testing. Please note this testing may take some time, and has the potential to damage your items. Any undamaged items will be returned to you as soon as possible. Please talk to your Police investigator if this delay causes you any concern.

Your specialist support person can provide you with clothing if required. They will also provide any additional information to you, such as what financial help is available.

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

What Happens Next?

Police will investigate your complaint in a timely and professional manner. We will also 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 entire 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 at any time.

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 gathered 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.

If the decision is made not to commence a prosecution, you are entitled to ask for the decision to be reviewed. If you want the decision reviewed, you need to advise your investigator or contact the Police National Sexual Violence team at: ***ASA@police.govt.nz***

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 the perpetrator of your assault is prosecuted and is either held in prison, sentenced to imprisonment or home detention, detained in a mental health facility as a special patient, or may become liable for deportation, you are entitled to go on the Victim Notification Register.

If you meet the criteria for registration, you will receive notifications about the perpetrator from the Department of Corrections about parole hearings and prison releases; the Ministry of Health about release from hospital; and Immigration New Zealand about deportation, as appropriate.

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 by emailing: ***ASA@police.govt.nz***

Details and Contacts

Officer in Charge of My Investigation

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

Second Police Contact

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

Support Worker or Counsellor

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

Doctor who saw me

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

File Number

Event Number

Other Notes

Further Information

For further information regarding sexual assault, please refer to the New Zealand Police website at:

www.police.govt.nz/advice/sexual-assault

If you have been the victim of sexual assault you may also provide feedback to the New Zealand Police by completing a short survey. Please refer to the New Zealand Police website at:

www.police.govt.nz/advice/sexual-assault/feedback