

TAKE 5 MINUTES

SARC – Sexual Assault Referral Centre

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Purpose of the Briefing

- To ensure staff understand how to refer individuals who have or are suspected to have experienced sexual assault or abuse to the appropriate SARC service.
- Reinforce safeguarding responsibilities and patient individual choice.

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What is a SARC?

- SARC provides a comprehensive and co-ordinated forensic, counselling and aftercare service to men, women and children living in the Greater Manchester area who have experienced rape or sexual assault, whether this has happened recently or in the past.
- SARC is available 24/7, free of charge, for adults and children regardless of police involvement.

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Referral Options

- Self-referral: Individuals can contact SARC directly.
- Police referral: If reported, police will offer SARC services - Police reporting is not necessarily required to access SARC.
- Social Care can refer with consent. Other agencies can support clients to 'self-refer' or to refer to the police.

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Key Steps for NHS Staff

Immediate care: Address immediate health care needs (any injuries, post-exposure HIV prophylaxis (PEP), contraception and safeguarding).

Explain options (if age-appropriate):

- Forensic evidence is best collected as soon as possible, however SARC can store samples when police are not involved for up to 2 years to allow for future decisions.
- Reporting to police is not mandatory.
- Staff in the community should phone SARC for additional advice and support the client in their next steps.

Safeguarding duties:

- Children → MASH referral to trigger section 47 enquiries. Discussion with on-call Paediatrician.
- Adults at risk → Follow Locality Adult Safeguarding Policy or Raise and adult safeguarding concern.
- Document and escalate concerns as per your organisation policy, follow record keeping guidelines.

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Contact & Resources

Saint Mary's SARC: Phone: 0161 276 6515 Email: stmarys.sarc@mft.nhs.uk Website: www.stmaryscentre.org

[St Mary's Centre :: Resources and general information](#)

Greater Manchester Procedures (tri-x) Website: [Welcome to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children...](#)

Key Takeaways...

- Choice and consent are central.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – anyone can contact SARC for advice on how to proceed.
- Timely referral or signposting to a SARC ensures trauma-informed, specialist support that may significantly improve safety, recovery, and wellbeing.