



# **Understanding SARCS: Support and Care After Rape or Sexual Assault**

STUDENT TOOLKIT



**Healthier  
Scotland**  
Scottish  
Government

## WHAT IS SARCS?

SARCS (Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service) is a dedicated NHS Scotland service that provides healthcare and support in the days following a rape or sexual assault, for those who are not ready or unsure about going to the police.

SARCS offers a self-referral service for anyone aged 16 or over to access healthcare and request a forensic medical examination if they are not ready or unsure about going to the police. Across Scotland, SARCS offer a safe space to help provide any medical, emotional or practical support people might need. If appropriate, SARCS can offer a forensic medical examination to collect certain forensic evidence which can be kept for up to 26 months, in case individuals want to tell the police at a later date.



View the campaign advert here:

<https://youtu.be/bhKVBVOhTvY>

We would appreciate your support in raising awareness of SARCS by sharing our campaign messages with your followers on social media.

You can also download posters, leaflet (language options available) and digital assets here:

[Scottish Government Marketing News \(prgloo.com\)](https://www.prgloo.com)

## WHY STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SARCS

It's important for every student to know where to turn for help and support if they experience rape or sexual assault. SARCS offers a safe space for students to get healthcare and emotional support after an assault, without the need to involve the police right away.

SARCS is available to all students and offers support from trained healthcare professionals who will treat you with dignity and respect. If you're unsure about your next steps, SARCS can help you make informed decisions without pressure.

If you or someone you know has been raped or sexually assaulted, SARCS is here to provide the care and support you need.

## HOW TO ACCESS SUPPORT THROUGH SARCS

If you've been raped or sexually assaulted in the past seven days, you can contact the NHS Scotland sexual assault self-referral service, available 24/7, by calling 0800 148 88 88. The call is free from both landlines and mobiles.

Once you contact the service, a healthcare professional from SARCS will phone you back to discuss your care options and arrange the necessary support, including referral to other support services if appropriate.

If you self-refer to a SARCS, you will be supported to make a police report if and when you wish to do so. For more information, visit [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS).

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Every student should know where to turn for help if they experience sexual assault. SARCS offers support without needing to speak to the police right away. Find out more at [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)  
**#TurnToSARCS**

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, SARCS offers care and support, for those who are not ready or unsure about going to the police. Find out more at [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)  
**#TurnToSARCS**

SARCS is here to help if you've experienced sexual assault. You can access care without needing to report to the police if you're not ready. Learn more at [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)  
**#TurnToSARCS**

SARCS can help you make informed decisions without pressure.

**#TurnToSARCS**  
[www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)



You don't need to be ready to report to the police to access SARCS.

**#TurnToSARCS**  
[www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)



**"THE STAFF WERE VERY SKILLED, PROFESSIONAL AND EMPATHETIC. THEY HELPED US AS A FAMILY WORK THROUGH THE MEDICAL AND EMOTIONAL PROCESS. WE KNEW THEY WERE ALWAYS THERE WHEN NEEDED."**

Anonymous SARCS user



# CONTACT

We're looking forward to working with you.  
Please feel free to contact the team with any  
questions, suggestions or comments:

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