



The Bridge Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) is a specialist NHS service that supports children and young people who have experienced sexual harm at any time in their lives. We are based in Bristol and support children and young people from across the South West.

How can I get support?

A referral can come from professionals in organisations such as police, social care, witness and victim services, schools and colleges, or health services. Some young people may also self-refer, which means they contact us themselves. The Bridge only contact people who have agreed to the referral.

What happens after I say yes to a referral?

When a referral comes through to our secure email inbox, a Crisis Worker will call either a parent/carer or, if the young person is 13 or older, we are likely to contact them directly. You can choose who you think the best person to speak to is, but at The Bridge it is really important that the voice of the child/young person is heard in any decisions that are being made about them.

We call from a withheld number in daytime hours. If we miss you, and it's ok to leave a message, we will leave a voicemail/text. We will make three attempts at contacting you. If we are unable to make contact after three attempts we will stop calling you, but you are welcome to reconnect with The Bridge when you feel able.

What will you offer?

We will offer you a supportive phone call and onward referrals for further support, which can include:

- Referral to therapeutic and emotional support services to help process difficult experiences
- Referral to advocacy services for an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor, to help through any police or court process
- Referral to sexual health services for testing for any infections
- Information sharing with your GP, in case you need support from them
- Information sharing with your school/college/workplace, if you need support from them
- An appointment with one of our specialist doctors if you need to talk about your health or have a check of your body (or a referral to another specialist for this)



Is there anything else I need to know?

Sometimes we are unable to accept a referral, and if this happens, we will contact the referrer and ask them to speak with you and explain why. It might be that based on where you live, you need to be put in touch with a different service to ours.

Part of our job is to make sure you have the right services in place to support you moving forwards. However, there can be waiting times for support services that are beyond our control.

Safeguarding

All children and young people should be helped, supported and protected when things are difficult. Safeguarding means protecting people from being treated badly, whether that is in or outside the home, including online. It's also about making sure that you are provided with safe and effective care. For all young people we see or speak with, we will discuss contacting children's social care for safeguarding.

Contact Us

This leaflet is to answer some of your questions about a referral to The Bridge SARC. If there is anything not answered here, you are welcome to contact us:

0117 342 6999

thebridge@uhbw.nhs.uk

www.thebridgecanhelp.org.uk