

WE
BELIEVE
YOU



Survivors'
Network

REPORTING OPTIONS

We support survivors of sexual violence and abuse in Sussex. We understand that a healing journey starts with a small step and are here to help you.

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YOUR CHOICE



We understand that it can be really overwhelming time to think about what to do, we hope that this will help you make a decision that is best for you. You may be having chats with family, friends or people supporting you who maybe giving you advice on what to do next. While this can be helpful, we want to remind you that you are the most important person in all of this and whatever you choose to do is the right thing.

The responsibility that you have now is to yourself and making sure that whatever action you choose to take supports and helps your recovery.



We know that reporting to the police can be a really scary thing to do, and it is your choice whether it is the best action for you to take. If you do choose to do this, there are options about how to do this below. We want to remind you if at any point in the police process you feel like this is not the best course of action for you, you have every right to withdraw your support. This will mean that you will no longer be involved in the case, and you will not be expected to go to court. This may not stop the case, as in some instances the police may choose to go forward with a 'victimless prosecution' due to the case being seen as in the public interest, however this is very rare.



REPORTING OPTIONS

There are a few different options available to you when looking at how to report, if you decide you'd like to.

Phone

You can call 101 and make a report over the phone to a police call handler who will take some basic details of what happened and your information to pass this on to an officer who will be in touch to arrange taking a more detailed statement from you. As 101 is not the emergency number, you may be on hold for a while before speaking to someone, depending on how busy they are.

In person

You can go to your local police station and ask to speak to a police officer about making a report there. Again, there may be some waiting around as it depends on who is available to come and talk to you at that time.

Online

You can make a report online where you fill out your information and some basic details of what happened, and someone will be in touch to follow up and get some more information from you. The link to the Sussex Police reporting form is below. They advise it can take about 20-30 minutes to complete it.

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/rsa/alpha-v1/v1/rape-sexual-assault-other-sexual-offences/>

Third party report

A third-party report is an anonymous report to the police. You complete a form with an ISVA with details of what happened and the person who did it (if you know) and your ISVA will send it to the police. The report will have no information about you on there and nothing that can identify you. This means there will not be an investigation into the offence and you will not have any contact with the police, but they will be aware of what happened and it will be logged on their system.



REPORTING OPTIONS

There are a few different options available to you when looking at how to report, if you decide you'd like to.

Informal chat with SOIT

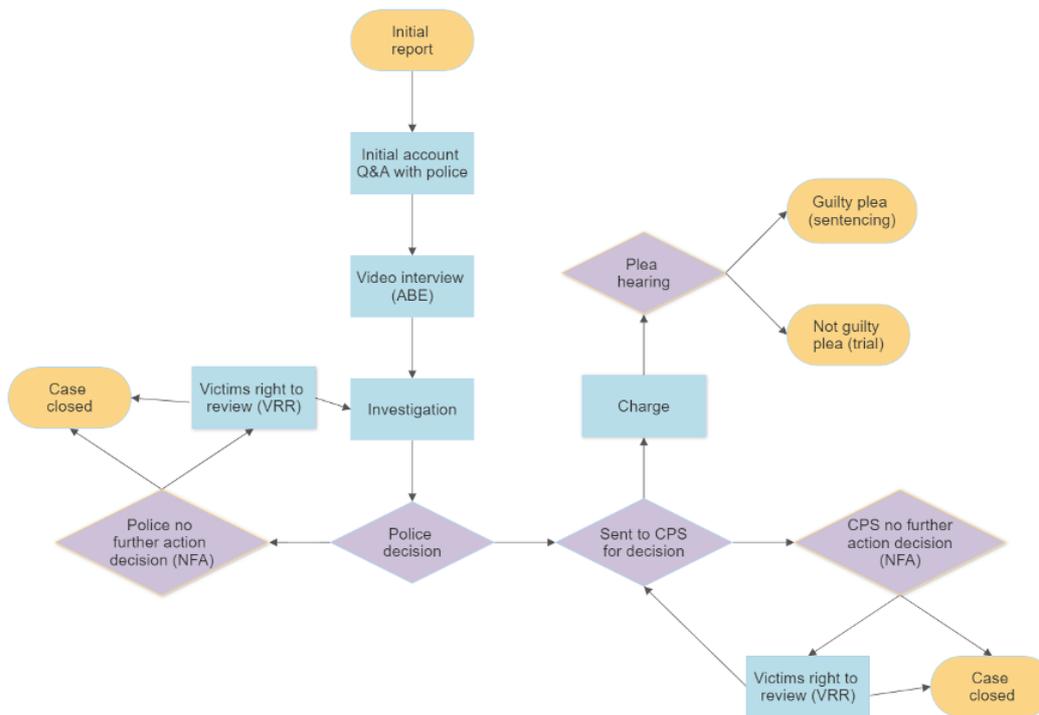
You can ask an ISVA to arrange an informal chat with a police officer who is specially trained in dealing with sexual offences. You do not have to share any details about yourself with them so they won't be able to follow up with you, but it is an opportunity for you to ask any questions you might have about what happens when you make a full report to the police and what might happen in an investigation. There is no pressure for you to go on to make a full report, the meeting can be set up just to make sure you have all the information you need to make the decision that is right for you.

Reporting to an institution

There is also the option of not reporting to the police but reporting to an institution instead if there is a breach in a safeguarding responsibility they had towards you when the abuse took place. An example of an institution you can report to is the church or the local authority. You may decide to look at this option for various reasons including if the criminal justice process is not open to you because the perpetrator has died. Different institutions have different options available so you can ask an ISVA to talk through the options open to you for your specific situation. It is important to know reporting to an institution may not result in a criminal investigation, but there is a chance it will if there is a concern of ongoing risk.



OVERVIEW OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS



Timeframes of the Criminal Justice Process

Not all cases that are reported to the police go to court and there are lots of stages the case needs to go through before it can get to that point. In criminal law, a case needs to be proved beyond all reasonable doubt to get a conviction in court, and the police and CPS need to see there is a reasonable prospect of conviction based on the evidence to be able to take it to court.

Below are very rough timeframes of how long a case can take to go through each stage of the process:

- Investigation – 9 months–1 year (can be much longer though)
- Police decision – 1–2 months
- CPS decision – 3–6 months
- Trial date – 1 year from charge
- Sentencing – straight away or up to 2 months after the guilty verdict

Total is around 3 years however this doesn't take into account any additional delays.



OVERVIEW OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

Case closures

Most cases are closed because there is not enough evidence to reach the burden of proof. However, there are a few other reasons why a case might be closed:

- If the suspect can't be identified or located
- If the suspect is abroad and there no grounds for extradition (to ask them to come back) then the case will be closed pending them coming back, which could take years if at all
- If the suspect has died or dies during the investigation

Offences that happened abroad

You can report offences that happened abroad in same ways to Sussex Police like you would if it had happened here. Sussex Police will gather evidence and accounts here and then it will be transferred to the local police where offence happened. There can be differences in the process as different countries have different systems, but an ISVA can help you with understanding this.



IMPACT OF REPORTING

There are some impacts of reporting your case to the police that you might want to think about to help inform your decision.

People finding out

Other people such as friends and family may need to be interviewed by the police if they have any information. This means they would be made aware of the case and what happened to you (although they will not be given details).

The suspect

The suspect will be interviewed by the police and so will be aware you have made a report against them. If you have any concerns about your safety because of this, you can speak to the police or an ISVA about putting some things in place to help you feel safer, for example a non-molestation order or a marker on your phone and address.

Often, the suspect will not be arrested to be brought in for an interview, but they will be contacted and asked to come in voluntarily. After the interview they may not be given any bail conditions but they will be told they are not allowed to contact you directly or indirectly or that would be witness intimidation.

If you don't know who the perpetrator is, for example if they are a stranger, or you only know their first name, you can still report to the police and they will do their best to identify them. If they cannot identify them though, unfortunately the case will be closed. If the perpetrator has died, then the police will not be able to investigate the case either as someone who is dead cannot be charged or stand trial as they are unable to defend themselves. Depending on the circumstances of the offence, there may be other options open to you for example reporting to an institution (see page 4 reporting options).

Anonymous reporting

If you decide to report by doing a third-party report (anonymously) then usually the police won't do anything further with the information you have given. Sometimes though, they will have a duty to look into it if they feel there is a safeguarding concern for example the suspect is currently working with children.



IMPACT OF REPORTING

Social Services

The police, or Survivors Network, will not automatically get in touch with social services just because you have reported a crime. If social services are already involved, there is a chance the police may contact them to make them aware and see how you can be supported best. If the police think there is a safeguarding issue though (involving you or your children) then they would have to let social services know if they are worried about you or your children's safety.

Immigration

If during an investigation the police find out that you have insecure immigration status, they may share this information with Immigration Enforcement who will decide what to do. This can be worrying, but we think it's important to tell you about the possibility, so you can make an informed choice about what to do. If you are worried about this there are support services who can tell you about your rights and help you decide what to do.

Moving away

If you move away from the area but still want to support the investigation this is absolutely fine. The police can still keep you informed throughout the process and be there to answer any questions you have. You can make a contact agreement with the police (and an ISVA) about the best ways to contact you.

Counselling

You can have counselling if you have an ongoing police investigation. If you have already been having therapy or you are due to start, then once you have reported there will need to be something called pre-trial conditions put on the counselling sessions. This means you won't be able to talk in lots of detail about what happened to you specifically and should try to focus more on the impact of it. Your counsellor will go through this with you. There is also a chance that the police may request your counselling notes as part of the investigation although it is your choice about whether you give consent for this.

If you have any questions more specifically about the investigation process or court process, then please see our [Police Investigation](#) and [Going to Court](#) documents.



**Survivors'
Network**

**WE
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**Supporting survivors
of sexual violence and
abuse in Sussex.**

Call us

Telephone (for general enquiries): 01273 203380

Helpline (support for survivors & their supporters): 01273
720 110 (Mondays 7pm-9pm & Wednesdays 12pm-2pm)

Email us

Use our simple contact form on our website to send us a
message, or email us directly:
info@survivorsnetwork.org.uk