



Safeguarding children

# Reporting abuse you experienced as a child

There are different ways in which children can experience abuse, all of which are serious and can have an effect on a child. This can include further long term effects on them as they grow older.

This leaflet is designed to help those who have experienced sexual abuse as a child. This leaflet gives information about how to report what has happened, and also how to get support and help.

Abuse suffered as a child can be very painful for people to accept when they are adults and can affect people in different ways.

For some it may be that they are unable to remember significant periods of their childhood, or perhaps have general memories of being unhappy and partial memories of the abuse. For others they may recall much of what happened to them, but choose not to think about it.

## Are you ready to report the abuse you suffered?

Taking the decision to report the abuse you suffered as a child to the police or social services can be a difficult process, which can raise all sorts of worries for people.

People who have suffered abuse in the past may be worried that the person who abused them could be abusing other children.

Others feel that they want the person who abused them to take responsibility for what they did.

If you decide that you want to proceed with reporting your abuse, there are two options available to you:

### Reporting your abuse to the police



Any adult who has experienced abuse as a child can report what they have suffered to the police for them to investigate and see if the person who abused them can be prosecuted.

There is no time limit to report the abuse, but if it happened a long time ago, it might be difficult for the police to gather evidence. There are also legal rules about the evidence which can be used in court, which may mean that in some cases a prosecution can't happen. In an emergency anyone can contact the police via the 999 number, or by text phoning 0800 112 999. If it is not an emergency, you can contact the police by calling 101, which will connect you to your local police force. You can also visit your nearest police station in person and report any crimes there.

You should be prepared to provide the following details:

- Your name
- Your address
- Details of the abuse
- Name of the person/people who abused you if you know this

Once you have reported the abuse you suffered, you will be given a reference number relating to this report and you will need to keep a record of this for any future communication.

### What happens once you report your abuse to the police?

After the abuse is reported, your complaint/report will be given to an officer to look at in detail and decide how best to proceed. Once this has been decided, the police will contact you and ask you to make a formal statement. This usually happens within days of the report being made.

Specially trained police officers will then attempt to find the person you have accused and speak with them. This can be done under caution or they may arrest them.

If the offences you reported happened some time ago, there may be limitations on the amount of evidence the police collect. However, they may look to see if other reports have been made against the person you have accused and they will link in with other agencies to review their records.

If the police feel there is enough evidence to proceed with the case, they will pass your case over to the Crown Prosecution Service who are responsible for prosecuting.

They will then be ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not to prosecute. Throughout the process the specially trained officers will support you.

## I want to share what happened to me with the police, but don't want to pursue an official complaint?

It is possible to report your abuse to the police and it not be taken forward as an investigation if that is what you wish. In the majority of cases this will be honoured. However, it is not possible to give a 100% guarantee the police will not proceed with a criminal investigation.

It may be that as a result of the information you provide and subsequent police checks, another child is identified as possibly being at risk. This may then result in discussions taking place with children's social care, which will then determine how they proceed.

Even if you do not wish for any action to be taken at the time you report the abuse, the information will still be recorded on the police systems and allocated a reference number. If you should choose to change your mind at a later date, you can refer to this.

## What if I reported the abuse in the past but I'm unhappy how it was investigated and/or I have new information not known at the time?

It does not matter how long ago the investigation took place, if you do not feel the abuse was investigated properly or you have new information that was not shared at the time, you can speak to the police at any time.

Either you, a friend, family member or support worker can call the non-emergency police number 101 and discuss how this can be taken forward. The police will respond to your concerns and/or new information.

### Reporting your abuse anonymously

You can call 101 the non-emergency police number, stating that this happened to you as a child, that you do not want to proceed with a criminal complaint or want anyone arrested, but wish to share the information

When possible it is better to give your name, as this will help to identify or confirm anyone else at risk. This does not mean you will be contacted.

### Crimestoppers

If you want to report what has happened to you, but you don't want to speak to the police, you can speak to or email the charity Crimestoppers.

Crimestoppers allows you to report any offences anonymously. This can also be carried out by a family member, friend or someone who supports you.

Crimestoppers guarantee anonymity. The only way anybody will know you contacted Crimestoppers is if you tell somebody.

This allows you to report the offence and provide information to the police, but it will not lead to a police investigation.



If you think this would be best for you, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## What if a child is currently at risk?

If a child is identified as being currently at risk, you can help to ensure this child is protected. A referral will need to be made to children's social care; you will be supported to do this, or it can be completed by your support worker.

## Will the abuse be reported without my knowledge?

Whenever possible information will be shared with your knowledge and consent, but in some circumstances, information may need to be shared without your knowledge and consent. This can be because of an increase in risk to a child, to you, to your support worker or others, or because information may be given to the person who carried out the abuse or undermine any further investigation.

## Can someone report the abuse on my behalf?

A family member, friend or a professional can make a call to 101 for you. They should state that they are making the call on your behalf, and it is a third party report. They would need to be clear how you wish to proceed.

## Is there any support I can get?

Whether or not you decide to report an incident or series of incidents, there are places you can go to seek support and advice to help you come to terms with what has happened to you.

Here are a list of agencies that can provide you with support. These organisations are non-NHS and therefore Oxford Health can not vouch for their governance arrangements:

### NSPCC

The NSPCC give support to those who have experienced child abuse in the past, or for those who are concerned about a child in the present.

- Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Text: 88858
- Make a report online at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### NAPAC

NAPAC is the National Association for People Abused in Childhood, providing a helpline and support to people who experienced past abuse.

- Support line: 0800 085 3330 (times vary on different days - see website for details and for freephone numbers for different mobile phone networks)

- [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

## MOSAC

This charity aims to provide a unique and specialist service, offering practical and emotional support to non-abusing parents, carers and families.

- Helpline: 0800 980 1958
- Email: [enquiries@mosac.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mosac.org.uk)
- [www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk)

## Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre

This organisation offer support and advice to women who have experienced sexual violence and abuse. They provide confidential, independent information on the reporting process and the options open to survivors of abuse. Practical advice on housing and finance are also provided.

- Helpline: 01865 726295
- Email: [support@osarcc.org.uk](mailto:support@osarcc.org.uk)
- [www.osarcc.org.uk](http://www.osarcc.org.uk)

## The Solace Centre

The Solace Centre is a sexual assault medical centre that collects evidence.

If you want to speak to someone you can contact them on the following:

- Tel: 0300 130 3036
- [www.solacearc.org.uk](http://www.solacearc.org.uk)

## The Survivors Trust

The Survivors Trust is a UK-wide national umbrella agency for 141 specialist organisations for support for the impact of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse throughout the UK and Ireland.

- [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)

## Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! is an organisation run by Lucy Faithful House that is at the forefront of activity to prevent child sexual abuse.

- [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

## Links to other helpful information:

### Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/relationships/children-and-young-people/child-abuse/police-involvement/child-abuse-police-involvement/>

### Rights of Women

<http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Reporting-an-offence-to-the-police-a-guide-to-criminal-investigations.pdf>

### Victim Support

[https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/P1008%20Rape-Female%20leaflet\\_web.pdf](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/P1008%20Rape-Female%20leaflet_web.pdf)

### Thames Valley Police

<http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/reptcr/reptcr-vic.htm>

### Ministry of Justice

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/420565/victims-of-crime-leaflet.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420565/victims-of-crime-leaflet.pdf)

Please contact us if you would like the information in another language or different format.

**Arabic** يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتسيق مختلف.

আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে **Bengali** পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

**Urdu** اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

**Chinese** 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

**Polish** Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

**Portuguese** Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutro idioma ou num formato diferente.

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Trust Headquarters  
Warneford Hospital  
Warneford Lane  
Headington  
Oxford  
OX3 7JX

Switchboard 01865 901 000  
Email [enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)  
Website [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

This service is part of our Adult Directorate.

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