



# Rape and sexual assault self-referral campaign

TOOLKIT



## WHAT IS THE RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SELF-REFERRAL CAMPAIGN?

The campaign is designed to raise awareness and understanding of SARCS (Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service). This is a dedicated NHS Scotland service which can offer healthcare and support in the days after an assault, if people are not ready, or unsure about going to the police.

The campaign will signpost people to NHS Inform which will provide information about how they can access help and support and understand the options available to them.

SARCS offer a self-referral service, meaning that anyone aged 16 or over can access healthcare and request a forensic medical examination in the days following an assault, without first having to make a report to the police.

Across Scotland, SARCS will look after people's immediate healthcare and wellbeing needs and can support people to have a forensic medical examination if appropriate. This includes collecting certain forensic evidence (which can be kept for up to 26 months) in case they 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://prgloo.com)

## SPREADING THE MESSAGE

A series of short films have been created to provide more detail about what the service is, explaining the journey for those who choose to contact the service and why it is important for so many people. The films will run on Scottish Government and NHS social media channels and websites.

Watch the film 'What is a SARCS and how can it help?'

Watch the film 'How can the NHS Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service (SARCS) help me?'

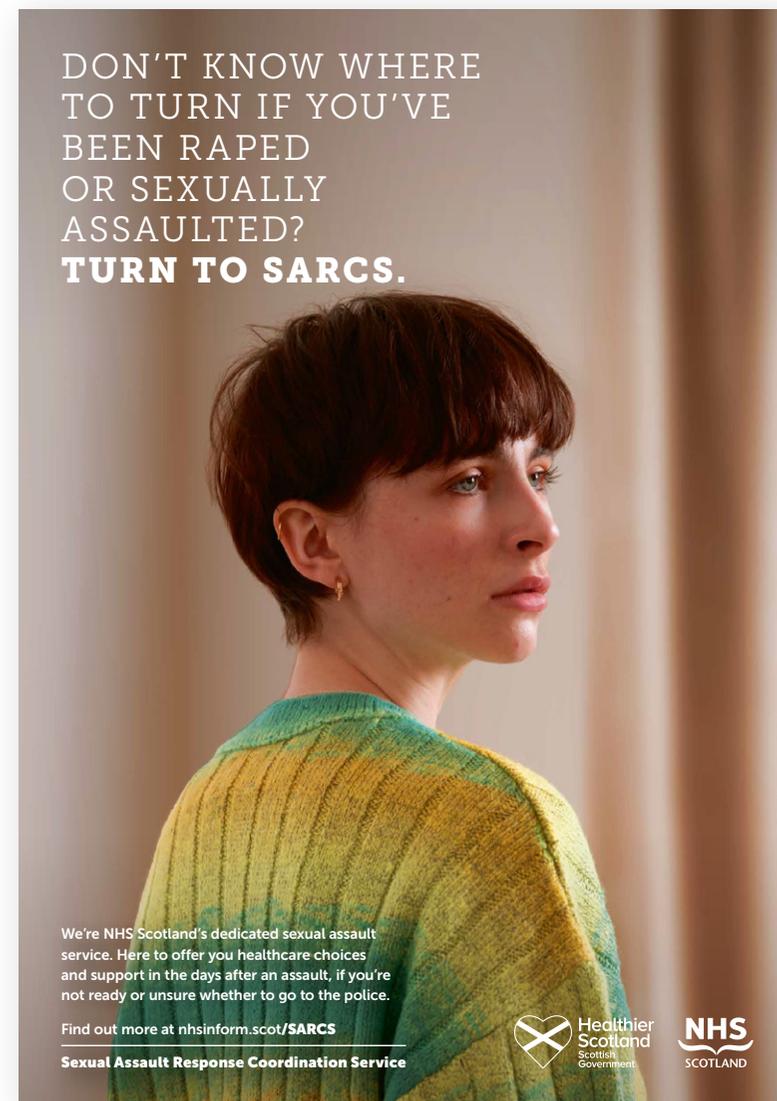
Real stories featuring real people have a greater impact in terms of communicating campaign messages in the media and we are always on the lookout for people to be involved.

If you would like to contribute to the campaign as a spokesperson or to tell your story (confidentially), please contact: [selfreferral@smarts.agency](mailto:selfreferral@smarts.agency)

Your support is invaluable in helping us to share our messages on social media. As the campaign progresses we will share visuals, films and updates on social media on a regular basis.

Please follow our social media channel and share our content with your followers to help get our important messages out:

[facebook.com/healthierscotland](https://www.facebook.com/healthierscotland)



DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN IF YOU'VE BEEN RAPED OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED?  
**TURN TO SARCS.**

We're NHS Scotland's dedicated sexual assault service. Here to offer you healthcare choices and support in the days after an assault, if you're not ready or unsure whether to go to the police.

Find out more at [nhsinform.scot/SARCS](https://nhsinform.scot/SARCS)

**Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service**



Healthier Scotland  
Scottish Government



NHS  
SCOTLAND

**"I CAN'T FAULT THE WAY I WAS TREATED BY THE STAFF. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THEM FOR BEING THERE FOR ME."**

Anonymous SARCS user

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

SARCS is a dedicated NHS Scotland service which can offer healthcare and support in the days after an assault, if you are not ready to tell the police or are unsure **#TurntoSARCS**

A dedicated national NHS sexual assault service (SARCS) is available to offer you a choice in healthcare and support after rape or sexual assault, if you aren't ready to tell the police or are unsure **#TurntoSARCS**

The dedicated national NHS sexual assault service (SARCS) will help with your immediate healthcare needs and you can potentially have forensic evidence collected and kept in case you want to tell the police at a later date **#TurntoSARCS**

To access the dedicated NHS sexual assault service (SARCS) you can phone the NHS 24 telephone number (24/7), found on [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS) and speak to a specially trained healthcare professional **#TurntoSARCS**

"We're there to support you and believe you."

Barbara-Ann Robb from NHS Fife



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



"The person you speak to will believe you."

Hazel Somerville from NHS Forth Valley



#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

## KEY MESSAGES

If you are writing about the campaign to your followers or on your website, here are some campaign key messages that might be useful to include:

- ▶ A dedicated NHS sexual assault service is available for you to get support if you have been raped or sexually assaulted within the last 7 days, if you are not ready to tell the police or are unsure.
- ▶ Anyone aged 16 and over can self-refer to the service, subject to professional judgement.
- ▶ The service will help with your immediate healthcare needs and you can potentially have forensic evidence collected and kept in case you want to tell the police at a later date.
- ▶ If the assault has happened within the last 7 days, it may be appropriate for you to have a Forensic Medical Examination (FME) and the sooner you access the service it's more likely that forensic evidence can be captured.
- ▶ This is a specific type of medical examination for people who have experienced rape or sexual assault and is carried out by a specially trained healthcare professional.
- ▶ You can ask to have a trusted friend or relative with you before, during and after the examination if you wish.



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**Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service**



Healthier  
Scotland  
Scottish  
Government



NHS  
SCOTLAND

**"THE NURSES WERE VERY KIND AND  
MADE IT CLEAR I WAS IN CONTROL."**

Anonymous SARCS user

# ADDITIONAL MESSAGES

- ▶ You will be treated with compassion, dignity and respect at all times.
- ▶ The healthcare staff are there to help provide any medical, emotional or practical support you might need.
- ▶ The person you speak to will explain the options available to you. You will be supported to help find the right option for you.
- ▶ If an FME is appropriate the person you speak to will help to arrange an appointment with the NHS sexual assault service of your choice.
- ▶ Any potential evidence from the FME will be kept for a period of 26 months. During that time, you can decide whether or not you want to make a report to the police and if so, your evidence will be transferred to them.
- ▶ An FME is normally only carried out if the assault has happened within the last 7 days, but if you are unsure about what to do, you should go to [www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS](http://www.nhsinform.scot/SARCS)

- ▶ The staff at the SARCS are there to answer any questions you may have and will organise any necessary follow up healthcare appointments or referrals to other support such as Rape Crisis Scotland.
- ▶ They will also provide you with information about how to make a police report if that is what you decide to do.



**“FOR WHAT HAPPENED, I CAN’T FAULT THE WAY I WAS TREATED BY THE STAFF. IT HAS BEEN A YEAR SINCE IT HAPPENED, BUT I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THEM FOR BEING THERE FOR ME.”**

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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Scottish Government

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