

**catch  
22**

# SEXUAL ABUSE & VIOLENCE

Self-help booklet



# What is Sexual Abuse and Violence?:

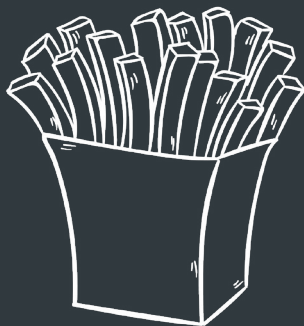
Sexual Abuse and Violence is defined as any sexual contact without your consent, and it is a crime. It can involve any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act.

Examples might include:

- **Indecent exposure**
- **Sexual harassment**
- **Cyber-flashing**
- **Sextortion**
- **Unwanted sexual comments and advances**
- **Rape**

However, this is not an exhaustive list - just because it is not listed, this does not mean it is not sexual violence. Rape and Sexual Assault are most often carried out by someone known to the victim, such as a partner, friend, colleague or family member, but could also be a stranger.

Consent is extremely important. Consent must be:



**F**reely Given  
**R**eversible  
**I**nformed  
**E**nthusiastic  
**S**pecific

## Myth busting

Myth	Fact
<p>Consent can be implied through clothing or behaviour.</p>	<p>Consent must be explicit and cannot be inferred from your clothing, previous sexual history, or behaviour. Each person has the right to choose what they wear and how they behave, without it being interpreted as an invitation to sexual activity.</p>
<p>Consent can be given once and is valid for all future encounters.</p>	<p>Consent must be obtained for every individual sexual act. Just because you consented to one act does not mean you have consented to others. Consent can be revoked at any time.</p>
<p>If a person doesn't physically resist, they must have consented.</p>	<p>Consent is not determined by physical resistance. Many victims may freeze or feel unable to resist due to fear, shock, or trauma. Lack of resistance does not equate to consent.</p>
<p>Excessive alcohol or drug use means someone can give consent.</p>	<p>If you are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, you may lack the capacity to provide informed consent. Consent requires clarity and understanding, which can be impaired by substances.</p>
<p>Men cannot be victims of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Men can and do experience sexual violence and assault. It's essential to recognise that anyone, regardless of gender, can be a victim.</p>

## What can you do?

If something has happened to you, you might be feeling a range of emotions. It is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to feel. There are a range of different options available to you when you are ready. Here are some things that you might want to do or to think about.

It is important to remember that whatever has happened, it is never the fault of a victim or a survivor. Please see below for some things you might want to consider if you have experienced any sexual abuse or violence.

**Make sure that you are safe**, this could involve going somewhere that you feel safe such as at home, work or A&E. You may want to ask someone that you trust to be with you.

**If you are injured**, then you may want to get medical attention. If this is urgent call 999 or go to your local A&E department, if it isn't an emergency visit your local SARC or speak to your GP or call 111.

**Carrying a personal alarm** might help to make you feel safer when going out in public, it will allow you to alert passers-by that you are in danger. Catch22 Victim Services may be able to provide you with one of these.

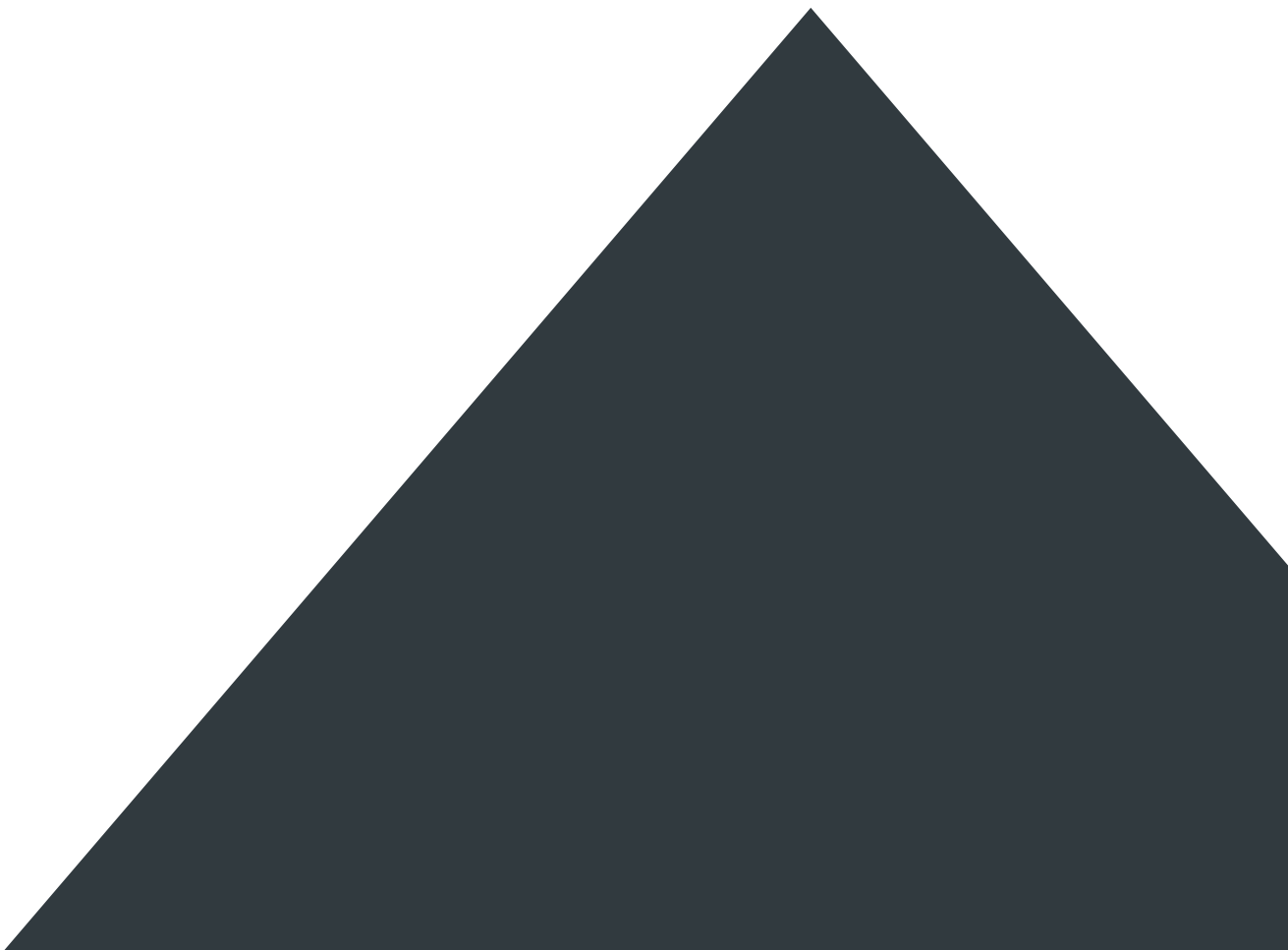
**Access Restorative Justice:** Restorative justice is a voluntary process which offers you the opportunity to potentially communicate with the offender. You may be able to talk about the incident, the harm caused and ask any questions that you may have. To access Restorative Justice, speak to your local Catch22 Victim Service.

If you have been sexually assaulted recently, you can visit your local sexual assault referral centre (SARC), you can do this without talking to the police. SARCs offer confidential medical, practical and emotional support. This can include completing a forensic medical examination, where any forensic evidence can be collected. This can be stored for a period of time in case you want to make a report. To find out more about SARCs and find your local one visit - [Find a rape and sexual assault referral centre - NHS](#)

You might want to consider emergency contraception, risk of pregnancy and sexual health. You can access pregnancy tests and emergency contraception from a pharmacy, your GP, local sexual health clinic and from a SARC. It may also be possible that you have caught a sexually transmitted infection because of a sexual assault, you can access free tests from your GP, local sexual health clinic or from your local SARC.

No matter how recent (days, months, or years) you experienced sexual abuse or violence, you will always be able to access support. Catch22 Victim Services can support you; we may also signpost you to a local specialist service where there are Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA'S). ISVAs are specialist sexual violence professionals who support survivors of sexual abuse and provide emotional and practical support if you want to report to the police or are thinking about reporting.

Although it may never undo what happened, you may be able to access compensation through the [Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority \(CICA\)](#), a government funded organisation that can make payments to victims of violent crime, including sexual violence.



# What can Catch22 Victim Services do?

Through our victim services, we are here to support anyone who has been affected by sexual abuse and violence. Our person-centred approach aims to empower and build resilience; we provide the necessary tools to navigate your recovery journey and move forward from the impact of crime. Support offered by our victims' services is free, independent and confidential, and available to victims and witnesses regardless of whether the crime has been reported or not.

We can help in the following ways:

**Emotional support**

**Practical Support including crime prevention and safety advice**

**Advocacy**

**Support through criminal justice processing**

**Signposting and onward referrals**

**Access to Restorative Justice**

# Useful organisations

[24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line](#) - Provides free, specialist and confidential support for victims of sexual violence or abuse. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call: 0808 500 2222

[The Survivors Trust - Rape & Sexual Abuse Services UK](#): provides a helpline for survivors of all types of sexual abuse and an online ISVA advisory service for people who do not have access to an ISVA due to closure of services.

[National Male Survivor Helpline and Online Support Service - Safeline](#): Safeline runs the national male survivor helpline and online support service.

[Find your local Rape Crisis centre | Rape Crisis England & Wales](#): Find your local rape crisis centre to access support.

[Find a rape and sexual assault referral centre - NHS](#): Find your local SARC, where you can access medical and practical support.

## Reporting

You can also report to the police:

- In an emergency always call 999.
- In a non-emergency call 101
- Report online - [Contact us | Police.uk](#)
- Visit a local police station
- To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers at 0800 555 111, or visit [Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously | Crimestoppers](#)

If you do not feel ready to report, you can visit a sexual assault referral centre (SARC) or get more support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor. They can help to explain your options of reporting and help you access support that is available to you. [Find a rape and sexual assault referral centre - NHS](#).

How to contact our victim services:

**Catch22 Victim Services**

To find out more about the victim services that we deliver and to access support visit:

[Victim services | Catch22](#)

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