

Disclosure of Rape or Sexual Assault – Guidance Document for Healthcare Professionals

Dear Colleagues,

The Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services (SARCS) Network is delighted to share with you the updated and digitised [Disclosure of rape or sexual assault \(SARCS\) | Right Decisions \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://scot.nhs.uk)

This guidance has been co-produced with a wide range of professionals working in many settings across the NHS. This guidance goes to the heart of the SARCS Network's vision to ensure that people have access to coordinated, holistic, person-centred, trauma-informed healthcare and forensic medical services following a rape or sexual assault regardless of where they disclose.

We would be very grateful for your help in ensuring this guidance is disseminated as widely as possible.

Who is this guidance for?

- This guidance is for any healthcare professionals working across NHS Scotland who may receive a disclosure of sexual assault or rape. This may include, but is not exclusive to, GP's, sexual health healthcare professionals, pharmacists, emergency department healthcare professionals, gender based violence groups and other primary care settings.
- This document supersedes the previous guidance hosted on the Scottish Government website – which will be archived with accompanying text to redirect people to the updated guidance.

How can I access the guidance?

Via this QR code:



Or via this link: [Disclosure of rape or sexual assault \(SARCS\) | Right Decisions \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://scot.nhs.uk)

- The Right Decisions site will serve as a “one stop shop” for this guidance to ensure that any subsequent changes can be made in real time and ensure that it is always up to date.
- There is a pdf version of the guidance via the link above for people to use or print if they so wish. **NB.** If you decide to print, please ensure you check back regularly for any updates.
- You can also download the ‘Right Decisions: Health & Care’ app via your mobile app store. Once in the app, simply search ‘SARCS’ and the toolkit will appear.

What is included in the guidance?

- As you will see, there are three components to the toolkit:
 - **Pathway** - determining the steps that each healthcare professional should take following a disclosure of rape or sexual assault, and the referral options available. Each step in the pathway contains hyperlinks to their corresponding section in the main document, should the healthcare professional wish to find out more information

- **Responding to disclosure** – further text and advice for each step of the pathway as well as links to further support
- **Checklist** – a resource for healthcare professionals to check over and confirm that all necessary steps have been taken when discussing the disclosure with the person

Next Steps

- As a valued stakeholder, we would be extremely grateful if you could assist us in ensuring that this guidance reaches as far and wide as possible in your internal and external Networks. This may include:
 - Updating any webpages or documentation that currently direct to the Scottish Government webpage
 - Updating any internal communications or websites that your organisations use
 - Sharing the guidance with any colleagues or services that you liaise with
- We have a stock of leaflets, pens and business cards with the QR code and link to the guidance. If you wish for some of these to be sent to your organisation for distribution, please get in touch: nss.sarcsn@nhs.scot

We would like thank the SLWG volunteers for their time, effort and collaboration in producing this guidance.

Kind Regards

SARCS Network Programme Team

National Services Directorate (NSD) | NHS National Services Scotland

Please disseminate this email to appropriate team members.
If you have any other queries, or no longer wish to receive these emails, please [get in touch](#)