

Sexual Violence

Guide for staff
supporting
students



This guidance has been produced for front line staff to whom students may report an incident of sexual violence.

Your role is not to investigate, nor are you expected to be a counsellor.

Your role is to provide a safe space for the student, immediate support and provide options so they can decide what action they wish to take.

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**ARE THEY
SAFE?**

Emergency help

If they (or anyone else) are in immediate danger dial 999 for the emergency services or call 6666 for Security.

If there are any serious injuries, contact Security who can provide first aid or advice on calling an ambulance or take the student to A&E for medical treatment.

Do not report to police without the student's consent.

Only in cases where there is an immediate and serious risk to the safety of others should the police be informed before discussing this with the student and obtaining their consent.



Create a safe space

Invite the student to a warm, quiet area where you will not be overheard or interrupted.

Reassure the student that they are safe and provide them with privacy, water etc.

You don't need to be an expert to support them. What's important is that you listen without judgement and let the student know that they are taken seriously and that there is support available.



Inform others

If you are alone with a student who is distressed and possibly feeling vulnerable, it is best to inform someone else (a staff member) what you are doing.

Check if the student is happy to talk to you or would prefer to talk to someone else.

If you are at all unhappy about dealing with the incident, remain with the student until alternative support can be found.



Check in with the student

If the student is accompanied, check that this person's presence is welcomed and if not, tactfully explain that you think it best she/he leaves to allow the student time to regain some privacy.

If the student is not accompanied, check whether they would like a friend to be contacted for support.



Alternative accommodation

Halls staff only

You should check whether the student needs to be found alternative accommodation for their immediate safety or to alleviate shock and trauma.

If alternative accommodation is required during office hours please contact your Halls Manager.

Out of hours please contact Security who will contact the relevant duty manager.



LISTEN AND SUPPORT

Be clear about what you can do

It is important at this stage to tell the student you are there to support and help them decide what they would like to happen next.

Remember, your role is not to investigate or comment on what they say, but to understand the essential facts so you can provide options and support.

Please read this statement to the student:

"I am here to support you and to help you decide what you would like to happen next.

There's some important information I need to give you now before we start talking further.

I will need to make a brief, factual report of our conversation.

The report will be stored securely on a dedicated record system.

I will treat what you say with confidence. This means that only my line manager and key

safeguarding staff will be made aware that I have made this record.

Unless there is an immediate risk to safety, no action will be taken without your knowledge or consent. For example, you might not want anything to happen after our conversation – if no one's safety is at immediate risk, that is entirely your choice.

You don't need to share any details about what has happened if you don't want to, and it's your decision how much you wish to share with me. I can still offer support without you giving me lots of detail.

If you want to talk to someone in complete confidence, you can contact an external service (we can find the details together).

Take some time now to have a think before we talk further – there's no rush."

Allow time to talk

Allow the student time to talk, be patient and let them go at their own pace. Avoid asking any detailed questions.

If you do need to ask a question, gentle and open-ended questions are helpful.

For example:

- What can I do to help?
- What help do you need?

You don't need to talk to me in detail, but you might want to briefly tell me what happened, or what support you would like, so that I can work out how best to help.

Focus on what is being said not on what you are going to say or do.




Discuss the options

Give the student time and space to think and settle down.

Once you think they are ready, give them information about their options (guide for students) and talk this through together if the student would like.

Ask what they would like to do next. Listen carefully to what they want to do and respect those decision.

Remember, the student is in control – it's not your role to advise them on any particular course of action, but to let them know about the options available.



Students can seek advice from a number of agencies, at any time after the incident. A student may wish to take all, none, or any combination of the following options.

- Accessing a Sexual Assault Service
- Informing the Police
- Seeking Medical Assistance
- Informing LSBU through the Report and Support system.
- Accessing LSBU wellbeing support and counselling
- Accessing external support and Counselling

There is no time limit on any of the options.

Reporting to LSBU

If the student wishes to report the incident to LSBU, they can do this through the 'Report and Support' system. They can make a report now, or in the future – they don't have to decide immediately.

Report and Support offers a point of contact to report incidents and access support in relation to sexual violence. If the student uses the reporting system they are not committing to any specific course of action, but they can access advice and guidance on what to do next.

One of the options includes making a formal report, if the incident involves another student or a member of staff at LSBU.



Reporting to the police

Taking control of what happens next is important for the student.

There is no time limit on reporting rape or sexual assault to the police, and no time limit for accessing specialist advice and support.

The student may wish to get advice from an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) before they do. An ISVA's role is to provide accurate and impartial information and tailored emotional and practical support to victims and survivors of sexual violence.

More info and advice to help students with their decision about reporting to the police is available on the Report and Support system: www.go.lsbu.ac.uk/safe



If the student wishes to report the incident to the police, it is preferable for them to make the initial call to the police themselves.

If they don't feel able to, you can only call the police for them if you have their permission (remember, if there is an immediate risk to safety, follow advice for what to do in an emergency).

If the student wants to contact the police, they can contact Southwark Police on 101. The line is staffed 24 hours a day by trained operators.

If the perpetrator is still at the scene or nearby, call 999. The police operator will ask the student for their name, date of birth, address and details of what has happened, so they can make an appropriate response.

Your report

The information you have just been given is really important and you have a duty to report what has happened.

You must report the incident through the Report and Support system, choosing the 'staff reporting' option. This is the case whether or not the student wishes to make a report themselves. You will be given instructions on what information to share.

This report is known as a "first report" and can be used by the Police or in court. This is why the system guides you on what information to include. The report must be brief and factual – no opinions.

Unless safety is at immediate risk, no action will be taken as a result of your report without the student's knowledge and consent.

Respect privacy

It's important to respect the student's privacy. Do not discuss the incident with anyone but your manager or the Mental Health and Wellbeing team.

You should inform your manager that a report has been made and that someone will be in touch about the next steps.

Support for you

Hearing a disclosure of sexual assault can be distressing. It is important that you look after yourself afterwards.

- Take time to look after yourself and do something that's relaxing or that you enjoy.
- Speak to your manager and arrange a de-brief session.
- Contact the employee support line 0800 882 4102 – confidential, non-judgemental, free advice and support, 24 hours a day.



Key contacts

If you need advice the Student Wellbeing team are available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these times, for immediate advice contact The Havens or Rape Crisis.

Emergency contacts

Police: 999 Ambulance: 999

LSBU Security : 6666 (020 7815 6666)

Support and advice from LSBU

Student Wellbeing team

studentwellbeing@lsbu.ac.uk

020 7815 6454

Or visit the Student Life Centre helpdesk.

Immediate specialist support and advice

The Havens Sexual Assault Referral Centre

020 3299 6900

www.thehavens.org.uk



Other useful helplines

Rape Crisis

A national charity offering confidential help, advice and a range of Rape Crisis Centres around the UK.

www.rapecrisis.org.uk / 0808 802 9999

Galop

A national charity providing advice and support to members of the LGBT community.

www.gallop.org.uk / 020 7704 2040

Survivors UK

A national charity supporting men who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

www.survivors.org

Text chat: 020 3322 1860

Crimestoppers

A national charity with a free helpline for reporting crime anonymously.

www.crimestoppers-uk.org / 0800 555 111



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