

Welcome.

We are committed to working together with parents/carers, to ensure that their children are happy, healthy and safe. Together, we can work towards the best possible outcome for your child.

We hope this leaflet will help you to understand the assessment process, which is carried out at our SARC.

1. Why does my child need to visit your SARC?

Either you, or someone else, has mentioned that they are worried about your child's wellbeing and that they may have been sexually hurt in some way.

At our SARC, a senior doctor/nurse can carry out an assessment and medical examination, to make sure that your child is ok, and that they have access to any after care they may need.

2. What will happen?

You will normally arrive at our centre with somebody - it might be a Social Worker and/or a Police Officer.

When you arrive, you will be greeted by one of our Doctors and a Support Worker. The Doctor will carry out the assessment, and the Support Worker will support you and your child through the process.

They'll be able to answer any questions you may have, and explain the assessment process in more detail.

3. Consent and choice.

Before our Doctor and Support Worker show you to the medical room, they will ask for your consent to carry out the examination. Even with consent, you can still change your mind and halt the examination at any point if you wish.

Children can refuse to have an examination, and other arrangements will be made. We'll never insist on an examination if the child doesn't feel comfortable.

4. A few questions.

Before the examination starts, the Doctor will ask you and/or your child a few questions.

These questions might cover topics such as; your child's medical background (any illness, medication, vaccinations, etc), their birth and development, their behaviour and progress, and your family background.

This is also a good opportunity for you to ask us some more questions, if you have any.

5. The examination.

It is likely that you will be invited to stay with your child throughout the examination. Sometimes this might change, but the arrangements will be discussed with you first.

The Doctor and Support Worker will change into their 'scrubs' (medical clothing), and they might ask you to wear some protective clothing too.

We'll start with measuring your child's height and weight, and we might do some other routine checks such as; blood pressure, examining your child's ears, and listening to their chest and tummy.

Then, any injuries (maybe bruises, cuts and/or grazes) will be noted on a form.

The Doctor will ask if it's ok to check your child's 'private parts'. This is a normal part of the process. It is not an internal examination – the Doctor will only be inspecting the outside of the body. If your child appears uncomfortable, please let the Doctor know. However, in most cases, the examination is well-tolerated by children.

The Doctor might take some swabs (which look like cotton buds), from different areas of the body. Sometimes a urine sample is asked for too. The Doctor will explain more about this at the time.

The examination will be done at your/your child's pace, and usually takes about 30-60 minutes, but sometimes it can take longer.

6. What is a colposcope?

When the Doctor examines your child's 'private parts' they will normally use a colposcope. This is a medical camera, which has a bright light and magnifier.

It's really helpful for us to be able to take some photos of any injuries as it helps to reduce the examination time for your child, and we are able to double check the images afterwards.

Please be reassured that your child's face will not be recorded, it is only used to document injuries. Any images taken will be stored securely, and will not contain any information which could identify your child.

7. What happens afterwards?

The Doctor will discuss any findings with you, and the Police Officer or Social Worker you attended with. The Doctor will then let you know if your child has any medical needs, or if there are any other support services they need to be referred to. The Doctor will write up a report and send this to the Police and/or Social Care team.

Every child who visits our centre has a letter sent to their GP, local community paediatricians, and Social Services, to let them know that they have attended our centre for an assessment.

Whilst the Doctor is completing paperwork, our Support Worker will stay with you and your child to make sure you are alright, and to answer any questions you may have.

Before you leave, we'll make sure you have contact details for our team, in case you have any further questions or queries. We'll also give you a leaflet, which summarises the care your child has received at our centre, as well as details of any appointments/referrals which may have been made.

8. Feedback.

We'd really appreciate it if you and/or your child would be willing to offer us some feedback.

Knowing what we are doing right, and what we could do better, will help us to continue delivering excellent care.