

Hebridean Celtic Festival

Procedures for reporting and supporting sexual crimes

Crime

If someone reports a crime or suspicious behaviour to any volunteer or member of Safespace, they should be encouraged and enabled to report it to the police or security as soon as possible.

This is important to prevent the situation happening again and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual.

If the person does not want to report the crime themselves, Safespace can report on the person's behalf, with their consent. Safespace should take down details of what happened.

Even if the person refuses to report the crime, Safespace should inform the Security Coordinator as soon as possible, giving anonymous facts as they know them.

Sexual assault

A report of a sexual assault at an event, like anywhere, is an extremely sensitive, frightening and distressing situation that must be treated very seriously and sympathetically. While details what exactly happened may never be known to volunteers, the priority for the Safespace service and volunteers must be to respond supportively and offer comfort to someone seeking assistance.

All NHS staff working in the safe space must follow the Rape and sexual assault referral pathways provided on the intranet of the Western Isles NHS Board, as well as following these onsite guidelines.

The Safespace team at the festival will provide support to anyone who has experienced sexual harassment or assault and if the person is willing it is advised to take the person to the Safespace tent.

If the incident involves a child under the age of 13 this will require an immediate response and Child Protection Protocols must be followed. A referral must be made to Police, the event Child Protection Contact notified, and the child safeguarded. For young people aged 13, 14 and 15 years old the underage sex child protection protocol is to be actioned and they are to be given the same confidentiality rights as any adult.

Safespace can support the person but it is useful for all volunteers and staff to be aware of the following:

- The person may be very scared and distressed and we should offer support and comfort and possibly try to make arrangements for them to stay somewhere else.
- They may want our assistance to try to contact their friends on site or someone at home.
- They may want to leave the event and we can try to arrange help to make this as smooth as possible for them.
- At the same time, it is important to be aware of the need to prevent further incidents at the event.

Safespace procedure

- If someone comes to the Safespace reporting that they have been sexually assaulted at the event, discreetly inform the Safespace shift supervisor/manager immediately.
- The shift manager should inform an appropriate person in the event organiser's team as soon as practicable. This would be the HebCelt Security Coordinator (or if unavailable the Hebcelt Site Manager). [L] [SEP]
- A team member of the same sex should stay with the person (unless it is a same-sex assault allegation). It is important to gain confirmation from them that they are happy to remain with that person [L] [SEP]
- The person's clothing should not be disturbed, removed or cleaned. [L] [SEP]
- The person should not wash or clean themselves, but if they insist on this, then this should not be prevented [L] [SEP]
- The site of the incident should be identified and not disturbed. [L] [SEP]
- The Safespace team can give the person a blanket and make the person as comfortable as possible.
- Unfortunately giving someone a drink may destroy evidence, although this may be necessary if it is in the person's best interest.
- If the person is in need of immediate medical attention, the on-site medics should be contacted.

The Safespace team should outline options to the person; any information should be passed on face-to-face, factually and sensitively. These could include:

- If the person wishes to report this formally themselves they can speak directly to the Security Coordinator or the Police.
- If the person wishes they could see a medic
- If the person wishes, Safespace can enable them to try to contact their friends at the event or someone off-site. The team can try to do this on their behalf, if they prefer.
- If the person wants to talk, listen to what they describe as having happened. Inform the person that later you will make a confidential note of what they have said. You will be expected to provide a statement to the Police should an investigation commence.

Do not discuss the matter with anyone outside the team, except to give factual information to the medics, head of security or site manager or police, if they are involved.

If the person does not want to speak to anyone outside the Safespace team, this wish should be respected (see note on confidentiality**). Safespace can (gently and without any pressure) point out that by speaking to the police/security etc, it may help to identify an offender and keep others safe from harm.

In some circumstances when the person does not want to speak to anyone, Safespace are still required to report the incident to the Security Coordinator or Site Manager as soon as practicable. Details should be described as what was reported and where and when the incident happened, but no personal details. The victim may remain anonymous.

**** Note on confidentiality:**

In these circumstances there is an obligation to act upon the information and inform the Police or other authorities. Exceptions to confidentiality would be:

- A significant risk to other members of the public
- The matter involves a child
- A crime is ongoing at that time, other people are at risk and require protection

Safespace is delivered on behalf of the Hebridean Celtic Festival by NHS Western Isles and Action for Children

Further information and contacts

The following advice is taken from NHS Website (04/04/2017)

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealth/Pages/Sexualassault.aspx>

For partners, friends and relatives - supporting a victim of sexual assault

The advice includes:

- Listen to the person, but don't ask for details of the assault. [L] [SEP]
- Allow them to be in control: ask how you can help – you might have ideas about what they should or shouldn't be doing, but it's important to allow them to come to their own decisions without feeling pressurised. You could help them find useful information, but don't insist on them doing anything or speaking to anyone they don't want to. [L] [SEP]
- Respect their decisions, for example whether or not they want to report the assault to the police. [L] [SEP]
- Don't take over: respect their decisions and never plan their recovery for them. Only they know how they feel, so it's important they're allowed to recover at their own pace. Trust is important, so never break your promise of confidentiality. [L] [SEP]
- Offer practical support, such as going with them to appointments. [L] [SEP]
- A person who's been assaulted may find physical contact difficult and may not want to be touched, so you should respect their wishes. Even a hug might upset them, so ask first. If you're in a sexual relationship with them, be aware that sex might be frightening and don't put pressure on them to have sex. [L] [SEP]
- Listen and be patient: as well as listening, you need to remain patient. Try not to ask them about details of the assault, because they might not feel ready to talk about it. If they don't feel ready to talk about their experience, you may suggest that they write it down to help them "let it out" and begin to make sense of what has happened to them. [L] [SEP]
- Give them space: knowing when to give someone space is essential. An important part of their healing process will be to take back a sense of control over their life, so allow them to do this. [L] [SEP]
- Be supportive: they may need your support for a long time.

Rape Crisis Scotland <https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/>

Phone free any day between 6pm and midnight on 08088 01 03 02

Our helpline offers free and confidential support and information by phone or email. It is for anyone, women and men, affected by sexual violence, no matter when or how it happened. We can also put you in touch with local rape crisis centres or other services if you need longer-term support. The helpline has a minicom service for Deaf or hard of hearing people. The minicom number is 0141 353 3091. We can arrange for language interpreters if your first language is not English.

Scottish Women's Rights Centre <https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/>

Helpline | 08088 010 789

We run a helpline every Tuesday from 6pm-9pm, Wednesday from 1.30pm-4.30pm and Friday from 10am-1pm available to any woman in Scotland looking for legal information or advice.

The Scottish Women's Rights Centre help self-identifying women aged 16 and over affected by violence and abuse by providing free legal information and advice through our helpline, legal surgeries and ongoing casework.

Victim Support Scotland <https://www.victimsupportsco.org.uk/>

0345 603 9213 Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm

Victim Support Scotland is here to help anyone in Scotland affected by crime, not only victims and witnesses, but their friends, family and any other people involved. Because we're an independent charity, you can talk to us whether or not you reported the crime to the police. If you want, we can support you without the involvement of the criminal justice system, and we won't contact them about you unless we feel someone is at risk. We are here just to support you.

Survivors UK <https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

020 3598 3898 office hours

SurvivorsUK helps men who have been sexually violated and raises awareness of their needs. Anyone affected by male sexual violation is appropriately supported.

Terrence Higgins Trust www.tht.org.uk

0808 802 1221 (free). Opening hours: 9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday

For confidential advice about HIV. There is also a Scotland based Terrance Higgins Trust
<http://www.tht.org.uk/our-charity/our-work/scotland>

NHS 24 Scotland Service <https://www.nhs24.scot/>

If you're worried about HIV or emergency contraception phone the 24 hour NHS 111 service on 111 to speak to a qualified medical professional.

Police Scotland website – Help for victims of Sexual Crimes

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/advice-for-victims-of-crime/sexual-crimes/>

Police Scotland website – Keep Safe

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/>

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/festival-safety>