

September 2018

New premises for the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in the north of the Thames Valley

We are writing to you as an organisation or service that may refer or signpost individuals to the Thames Valley Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC).

Thames Valley Police (TVP) and NHS England jointly commission two SARCs in the Thames Valley: one in the south of the region and one in the north. The SARC in the north of the Thames Valley was previously located within Bletchley Police Station, however, due to the Government's decision to close a number of police stations across England, including Bletchley (which will close in October 2019), this service will be provided in Bicester from immediate effect.

The SARC is in its own newly refurbished building within the grounds of TVP's Bicester Police Station. The associated address is **Solace Centre, Police House, Queens Avenue, Bicester, OX26 2NT**.

There is no change to the way in which you can refer individuals to the SARC. To make a referral, please continue to telephone the service on 0300 130 3036. Self-referrals are also welcome and we encourage our partners to signpost anyone who has, or thinks they have been, a victim of sexual assault or abuse to the SARC.

Please update any public-facing information, for example websites, with the new address. Enclosed with this letter is supporting text that you can use on websites or communications materials to signpost members of the public to the service.

These arrangements have been led by the Thames Valley SARC Partnership Board (comprising representatives from NHS England, TVP, Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board, Care UK, The Survivors Trust and Refuge), which has considered clinical evidence, best practice guidance, patient feedback and the national service specification for SARCs to help inform a decision on the location and premises.

As part of this, engagement was undertaken with individuals who have experienced sexual assault and abuse who highlighted the following priorities:

- A centrally located service for people across the Thames Valley ('Travel time equals thinking time. If it takes too long to get there it gives you plenty of time to change your mind about going. The more travel time, the bigger the barrier.')

- A service that is in a town centre and easily accessible by public transport.
- A service that is near to, but not next to a hospital ('You might see someone you know who asks you why you're there.').
- An anonymous looking service (Victims are more likely to visit a SARC if it is not obvious to passers-by what it is).

Taking the above into consideration, we are pleased to confirm that the new location for the SARC is reflective of these requirements, providing an anonymous looking and independent service, centrally located and easily accessible by public transport.

What does this mean for clients?

Service provision for clients has not changed and the new premises have been upgraded to meet forensic guidance legislation and provide fit for purpose suites and amenities for clients.

Clients can access the service in a number of ways. This may be through the police or via a health or social care professional, a third party organisation, an anonymous referral or self-referral.

The service will continue to be accessible to service users from across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and provided by Care UK, with counselling services provided by Trust House Reading and an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor provided by Refuge.

Further information

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions enclosed for more information about the move and the SARC service.

If you have further questions about this move, please contact DS 1805 Mike Wallen at Michael.wallen@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

For more information about the service visit www.solacesarc.org.uk

Yours sincerely



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