



**West Midlands
Paediatric Sexual
Assault Service**

**Delivering Best Care,
Preserving Best Evidence**

**Information for
professionals/referrers**

**Referral Criteria for
West Midlands
Paediatric Sexual Assault**

Nature of concern/referral criteria	Timing of suspected offence	Reason for medical exam	Referral route	PSAS provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure or suspected disclosure of any contact sexual assault/abuse (CSA). <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other reason for concern about possible recent sexual abuse e.g. unexplained genital or anal injury. 	<p>Recent, within 'forensic window'.</p> <p>Vaginal rape within last 7 days (consider up to 10 days in post pubertal girls).</p> <p>Other forms of contact sexual assault within last 3 days.</p> <p>Or where the multi-professional strategy discussion indicates a more immediate assessment is in the best interests of the CYP.</p>	<p>Collection of forensic samples.</p> <p>Documenting injuries.</p> <p>Emergency health needs (contraception/Hep B/HIV prevention).</p> <p>Holistic health needs including reassurance of child or family about any positive or negative medical findings and counselling.</p>	<p>Contact G4S call centre and request acute medical under the West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service: 0800 953 4133.</p> <p>Call handler will then connect you to on-call paediatrician for case discussion.</p>	<p>24/7 acute service:</p> <p>Same day examination (or next day if more appropriate for child).</p> <p>At the Hub location.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure or suspected disclosure of sexual assault/abuse outside 'forensic window.' This includes assaults which may have occurred years earlier. • Child about whom there are strong grounds to suspect CSA e.g. siblings and any other child living in the same household as a child who has disclosed CSA. • Overt sexualised behaviour - refer to Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool: www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool • Paediatric gynaecology/genital health, where there is concern about possible sexual abuse e.g. genital or anal warts, confirmed STI in under 13s, suspicious genital or anal abnormality. • Where there is concern about possible sexual abuse, the conjunction of TWO or more of the following concerns will be accepted as meeting referral criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. possible/mild sexualised behaviour 2. other safeguarding concerns 3. secondary enuresis or soiling resistant to treatment 4. selective mutism, food refusal, sleep problems 5. self-harming 6. known or suspected contact with offender/suspected offender. 	<p>Outside 'forensic window' and non-recent.</p>	<p>Documenting injuries - healing injuries may be found up to 3 weeks later; healed injuries maybe found indefinitely.</p> <p>Emergency health needs (Hep B vaccination within 6 weeks).</p> <p>Holistic health needs including reassurance of child or family about any positive or negative medical findings including STI screening and counselling.</p>	<p>Contact G4S call centre and ask for a strategy discussion with the West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service: 0800 953 4133.</p> <p>Call handler will then take brief details, which will be passed to the paediatric co-ordinator or Paediatrician for strategy discussion and triage.</p> <p>The Coordinator will email a referral form to book an appointment.</p>	<p>At the Spoke Clinic</p> <p>A choice of venues, dates and examiners will be offered, as appropriate for the case.</p> <p>In most cases this will be at the clinic most local to the CYP; however in some cases a sooner appointment may be offered at another spoke location, to meet the individual's needs.</p>

The West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service offers a holistic health assessment for any child or young person (CYP) under 18 year of age who may have been sexually assaulted.

Victims of recent sexual abuse will usually be seen by the on-call team at our **Horizons centre** (Hub), Ida Road, in Walsall. Where appropriate, the PSAS team aim to be available within 90 minutes of referral. **The on-call team is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

Alongside its urgent response service, the PSAS also operates week-day clinics which offer planned appointments at five venues (spokes) across the region:

- **New Cross Hospital**, Wolverhampton
- **Blue Sky Centre**, George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton
- **Oasis Suite**, Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham
- **The Glade**, Bransford, Worcester
- **Grange Park**, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent

These provide medical examination and holistic care for CYP where there is concern about possible sexual abuse, but the concern is not deemed to be within the forensic window (non-recent). The clinic offers a choice of venues, dates, and examiner.

Why refer non-recent abuse, and concerns where the child has not disclosed?

If there is any concern about possible sexual abuse, a medical examination should be considered; the PSAS doctors are happy to give telephone advice and be involved in strategy discussion.

The medical examination is undertaken in a child-friendly way and is generally very well tolerated. Most CYP say they felt reassured by it.

The reasons for medical examination are to:

- **ensure the health needs of the CYP is met** - this includes screening for sexually transmitted infections.
- **provide emotional support** - the CYP referred to the service is offered a package of counselling and emotional support.
- **to provide reassurance** - the importance to the CYP of knowing they are physically 'normal' should not be underestimated. Even where there are physical findings, the CYP can be reassured that it has taken a specialist examination to detect them. It is a chance to discuss any fears the CYP has in relation to their experiences.
- **to provide evidence** - it is important to understand that the examination can never rule out sexual abuse, as a high percentage of CYP who have been abused will have normal examinations. However, in some cases, there are examination findings to substantiate the concern; this can significantly contribute to safeguarding decision-making.

Please note this service has a paediatrician on call 24 hours a day. If you are unsure about whether or not to refer a CYP to the West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service for a medical, please **Tel: 0800 953 4133** for a case discussion with the on-call paediatrician.

Crisis counselling

Crisis counselling may be offered to clients who are seen by a paediatrician as part of the service.

Referral criteria - ALL four points must apply:

1. CYP under the age of 18 years OR with a vulnerability (such as a learning difficulty, aged 18-20 with significant learning difficulties) AND in full-time education
2. resident, looked-after child or victim of offence within catchment (area served by West Mercia, Warwickshire, Staffordshire or West Midlands Police)
3. referred to children's social care/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
4. CYP must be aware of referral and consent.

One of the following must also apply:

- attendance of a person with parental responsibility
- a court order with directive to examine in place
- the CYP is likely to be Gillick competent.

How to refer:

- Follow Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) processes: refer safeguarding concerns where the CYP is thought to be at risk of significant harm to MASH.
- In addition, if the CYP needs urgent medical attention for physical injury (e.g. life-threatening/severe ongoing bleeding refer urgently to local paediatricians for stabilisation).
- Suspected/disclosed sexual assault should not be referred to local paediatricians.
- If a clinician/practitioner wishes to talk through a case (e.g. unsure if a child's actions represents sexualised behaviour or physical symptoms are of concern) the PSAS paediatricians are available 24/7 to give advice via the single point of contact telephone number: **Tel: 0800 953 4133** for referrals from professionals or agencies.

PSAS is delivered by:

