

**LET'S TALK**

**ABOUT SEX AND**

**RELATIONSHIPS**



STUDENTS'  
UNION



RESPECT  
EQUALITY  
DIVERSITY  
SAFETY

**US**

UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX

University is a time for learning and discovery. You will meet new people, have new experiences, and form new relationships. We want you to have an enjoyable and safe time at Sussex. That's why we want to have a conversation about relationships, sex and consent.

At Sussex, we are working as a community to promote our REDS values: Respect, Equality, Diversity and Safety.

For more information visit:

**[www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/reds](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/reds)**



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# WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is about saying “yes” to sex and about respecting other people’s right to say “no” – whether they are communicating this verbally or non-verbally, at any stage of having sex or physical contact, and at any point in a relationship. If someone is communicating consent they show that they are comfortable, in agreement and keen to continue.

Talking openly about sex can be embarrassing and difficult, but it’s important to be able to communicate what you want and when and how you want it. Don’t pressure anyone into having sex or make them feel uncomfortable. Equally, don’t let yourself be pressured or made to feel uncomfortable. Sex should be about pleasure, and communication is key.



## SEX WITHOUT CONSENT

**SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITHOUT CONSENT IS AGAINST THE LAW – IT IS CLASSED AS RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT. IF SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING TO YOU THAT YOU DON’T WANT, WHEN YOU’VE SAID ‘NO’ (OR YOU WERE UNABLE TO SAY ‘NO’), THAT IS NON-CONSENSUAL SEX.**

In the law, consent has three components and all three must be present for there to be consent:

### CHOICE

a person wants and chooses to have sex, each way, each time;

### FREEDOM

a person makes this choice freely and does not feel forced into having sex due to their circumstances;

### CAPACITY

a person must be capable of choosing to have sex and is not too drunk or ‘out of it’ or merely asleep so that they don’t know what they are doing.

Consent is about each person agreeing to any sexual contact. Not just yes to having penetrative sex, but to any sexual contact at all – this includes kissing or touching any part of someone’s body.

If somebody:

- comes into your flat or study bedroom
- dances with you in a club or party
- agrees to be alone with you or studies alone with you
- kisses you

it doesn’t necessarily mean they want to have sex with you! Always ask and always accept that no means no – don’t repeatedly message them or follow them to make them change their minds.





**YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY A STRANGER IN A DARK ALLEY**

**REALITY: FALSE**

The vast majority of reported cases involve someone known to them.

**YOU CAN PROVOKE RAPE THROUGH WEARING REVEALING CLOTHING OR BY FLIRTING**

**REALITY: FALSE**

Provocative clothing does not mean a ‘yes’. There is never an excuse for making unwanted sexual advances towards someone because of what they wear. No one is asking to be sexually assaulted or raped.

**IF YOU TAKE DRUGS OR DRINK ALCOHOL, YOU SHOULD EXPECT UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCES**

**REALITY: FALSE**

If someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol they’re vulnerable. This does not mean they are consenting to sex or able to give consent. You can’t consent to sex if you are unconscious and you can’t make an informed choice when you are drunk.

**YOU CAN’T BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY SOMEONE YOU’RE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH OR HAVE HAD SEX WITH BEFORE**

**REALITY: FALSE**

People can be sexually assaulted or raped by someone they’re in a relationship with, including a long-term partner. It doesn’t matter whether you’ve had sex with a person before or not, you still have to agree to sex next time.

**SOME PEOPLE REGRET HAVING SEX SO THEY PRETEND THEY’VE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED**

**REALITY: FALSE**

There is no evidence that more than a tiny percentage of people lie about being sexually assaulted. However, there is evidence that most people do not report being sexually assaulted because they feel ashamed or fear that they will not be believed.

**YOU CAN ONLY BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY A MAN WITH A PENIS**

**REALITY: FALSE**

Women, men and people with other gender identities can be sexually assaulted by someone of the same or a different gender. Although our legal definition of rape only involves a penis, sexual assault by penetration can involve any other part of the body or any object. Other forms of sexual assault do not necessarily involve any penetration at all.



ASKING  
FOR  
CONSENT

**SO, IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO CHECK WHETHER WHOEVER WE'RE KISSING OR TOUCHING ACTUALLY WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH US! HERE ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU CAN CHECK WHETHER SOMEONE IS CONSENTING:**

Can I kiss you?

What would you like me to do?

Are you OK with me locking the door?

Does this feel good?

Do you want to change position?

You can tell me if you want to stop/slow down/take a break/do something else

I'd like to do [?], how would you feel about that?

Are you enjoying yourself?

You and/or your partner have the right to say 'no' to anything that you don't want to happen or aren't comfortable with, and can say 'no' at any time. It could be saying 'not tonight', 'not there', 'no, sorry', 'please stop' or something else – it all means no.

If they haven't actually said 'no' but they just don't seem that into it then you should double check – communication can be non-verbal too.

If you're a first year student, you'll learn more about consent through one of our interactive workshops.



An important part of having consensual sex is taking joint responsibility for sexual health and contraception. It might not seem that fun or sexy, but getting it sorted will help you to relax and be able to enjoy yourselves better!

Before things get hot and heavy, make sure that everyone involved has talked about how you will make sure you're protected from pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and that you're happy with the decision you've jointly made.

Remember that even if you know and trust someone it's important that each of you has a full sexual health check-up and gets the 'all clear' before you stop using barrier methods of contraception (which help to prevent the spread of STIs) such as condoms.

[www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualhealth](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualhealth)



Sometimes abuse isn't easy to recognise, especially in an intimate relationship (one with partners or family members.) It can feel as though there's a fine line between being either caring and romantic, or being overbearing and controlling. So, what's the difference between romance (which is ok!) and other behaviours which are not?

In an abusive relationship there is a pattern of controlling behaviour, which can have a significant negative effect on your feelings, emotions and health. However, it's important to recognise that if a relationship is unhappy, it doesn't mean that it's abusive. For more information on coercive control and other forms of domestic abuse see [www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/domesticabuse](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/domesticabuse)



### **COULD BE PART OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

- ▶ They want to spend time with you.
- ▶ They compliment you when you look nice.
- ▶ They text you to say they miss you.
- ▶ They send you some flowers.
- ▶ They like to post photos of you together on social media.

### **INDICATIONS OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR**

- ▶ They want you to spend all your time with them, and they try to stop you from spending time with other people.
- ▶ They tell you what you should and shouldn't wear, or how you should look.
- ▶ They're constantly checking up on you all day, asking where you are and who you're with.
- ▶ They keep sending you gifts and messages, even when you've asked them not to contact you.
- ▶ They monitor or control your social media accounts.

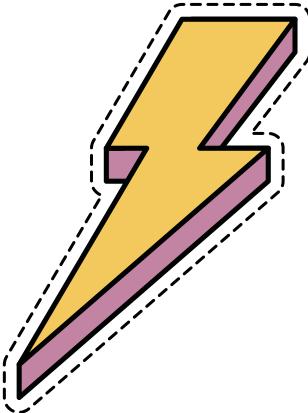


# SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT UK UNIVERSITIES

## A 2015 SURVEY OF UK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, COMMISSIONED BY THE TELEGRAPH FOUND THAT:

### 1 IN 3 FEMALE STUDENTS

reported having experienced sexual violence, harassment or abuse.



### 1 IN 8 MALE STUDENTS

reported having been subjected to groping or unwanted sexual advances.

### 1% OF ALL STUDENTS

had been raped at university.

## A 2016 UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STUDENTS' UNION (USSU) SURVEY FOUND THAT AMONGST THE 370 RESPONDENTS:

### A MAJORITY (52%) OF STUDENTS

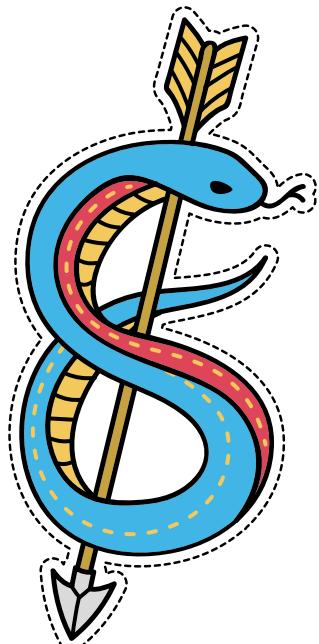
perceive levels of sexual harassment in Brighton nightlife to be either fairly or very high.

### OVER A QUARTER OF STUDENTS (28%)

have seen someone sexually assaulted or harassed whilst on a night out.

### LESS THAN A FIFTH OF STUDENTS

would definitely report incidents of sexual harassment or assault to the police.





## BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Being part of a caring, respectful community at Sussex means taking notice and speaking out when we see things that don't look right.

- If you see someone who looks like they're in trouble, ask them if they're ok.
- If you witness street harassment you could distract the harasser e.g. by asking them for directions or the time.
- If you witness an incident but don't feel able to intervene, you can call our security team or the police for help.
- Don't let a friend who is not in control leave without you. Look out for each other.
- If you witness a friend behaving badly towards other people, gently explain to them how this makes you feel and that you want them to stop. Concentrate on your feelings rather than being critical and never be antagonistic or violent.

**BUT NEVER PUT  
YOURSELF IN DANGER  
- CALL FOR HELP!**



**HELP!**

## HELPING A FRIEND

If a friend tells you that they have experienced sexual violence there are a few things you can do to be supportive and help them:

- Be prepared to believe them – don't question their judgement.
- The most important thing is to listen and not to ask lots of questions.
- Don't ask them how much they've had to drink or question their behaviour.
- Respect boundaries – they may not want a hug at this time. Always ask them first.
- Help your friend find expert support. Talk to your friend about the services in the back of this booklet and support them to contact them if this is what they want.
- Go with them if they want you to, but always be prepared to leave when appropriate.
- Always ask. It's up to them to decide what to do next.

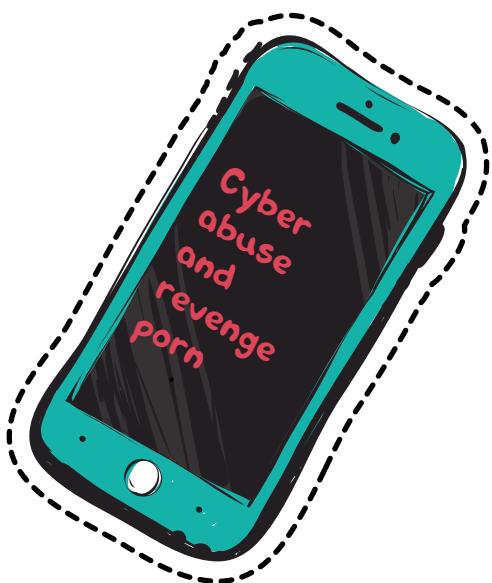
**WHAT ACTION THEY TAKE  
MUST BE THEIR CHOICE  
ALONE – DO NOT ACT  
WITHOUT CONSENT**



**Sexual violence** is a broad term which can include any kind of unwanted, non-consensual sexual touching or harassment. This could include rape, sexual assault or any kind of verbal, emotional or physical abuse of a sexual nature.

**Sexual misconduct** is the name we give to these behaviours in our university discipline system.

Stalking, cyber abuse and “revenge porn” are all forms of harassment which can be a criminal offence. Examples of such behaviour are following someone, watching them, spying on them, monitoring them electronically or pretending to be someone else online etc. All these behaviours are unwanted, intrusive and can cause serious alarm or distress.



## REVENGE PORN

**REVENGE PORN REFERS TO THE DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE SEXUAL PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEOS WITH THE INTENT TO CAUSE DISTRESS. IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE.**



# SEXUAL VIOLENCE

IS ANY UNWANTED SEXUAL ACT OR ACTIVITY

sexual harassment      stalking

rape      sexual assault

SEXUAL ABUSE

revenge porn      sexual  
exploitation

**FINDING  
IMMEDIATE HELP  
AND SUPPORT  
FOR RECENT  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE**



If you're in danger or need immediate medical help, phone the emergency services on 999 (off campus) or through Security (on campus) on 01273 873333.

**GET SUPPORT AND FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS BY TALKING TO A SPECIALLY TRAINED MEMBER OF STAFF AT ANY TIME**

**WHAT YOU DO NEXT IS COMPLETELY UP TO YOU**

**IF YOU ARE ON CAMPUS OR IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION AT NIGHT OR AT THE WEEKEND**

You can get help from the Campus and Residential Support team, who will come to you. This team is on 24-hour alert and can be contacted out-of-hours through your residential advisor, porter or the Security team. Call 01273 873333 (or 3333 on an internal phone). Alternatively you can go in person to York House (open 24 hours).

They will support you, whatever you decide to do, whether you choose to report direct to the police, self-refer to the Saturn Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre SARC) or choose not to report at all.

**REMEMBER, TAKE YOUR TIME, IT'S UP TO YOU**

If you would prefer to contact the police or the SARC independently, details are on page 20.

**IF YOU ARE OFF CAMPUS AT NIGHT OR AT THE WEEKEND**

You can also ask to speak to the Campus and Residential Support team for advice by calling Security on 01273 873333. Or call JAM, our out-of-hours call-back service, on 02089 383873 and ask for the duty Residential Community Coordinator to return your call.

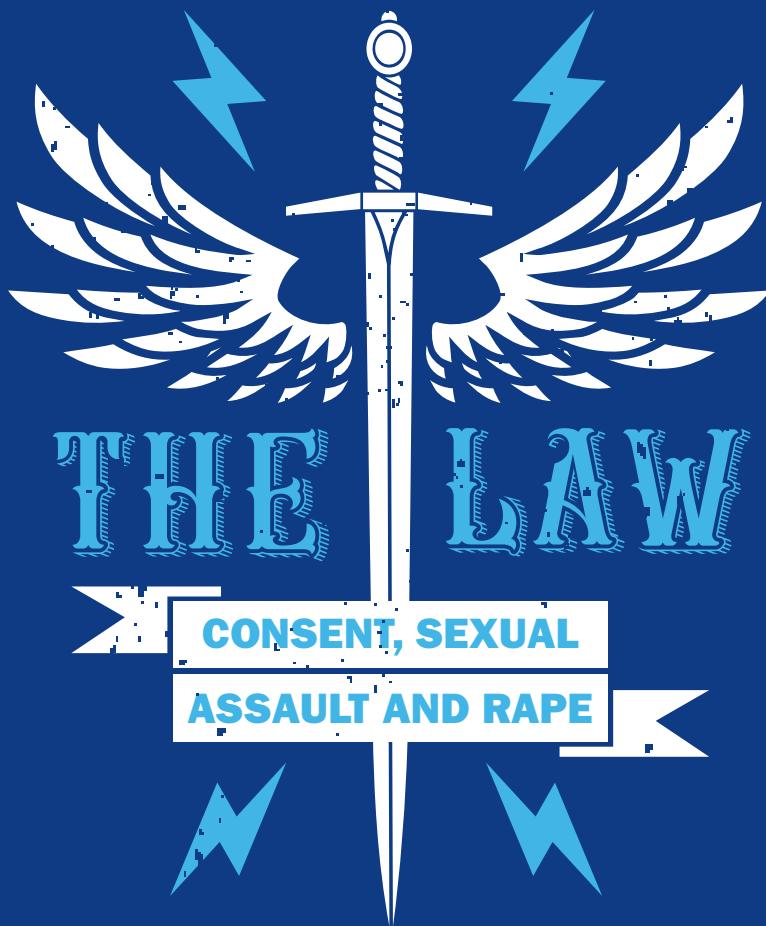
**DURING WEEKDAYS 9AM-5PM**

You can get help from the Student Life Centre, which is located in the ground floor of Bramber House. Call 01273 876767 and ask for a priority appointment or email [studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk)

**REPORTING TO DISCIPLINE**

If you don't want to report to the police, you are still able to report any incident to our Discipline team who may be able to take action against an accused student or staff member. [www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline)

For more information and advice see  
[www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualassault](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualassault)



The current legal definition of rape is intentional penetration of another person's body (vagina, anus or mouth) with a penis, where the person being penetrated does not consent to the penetration and the suspect does not reasonably believe that the person consents. The law also criminalises other forms of unwanted sexual touching and refers to this as sexual assault. Touching covers all physical contact, whether using a part of the body or another object, including through clothing.

If you haven't consented to sexual activity you have a legal right to take action and you can go to the police and report your rape or sexual assault as a crime, if you want to do so.

## UNIVERSITY SUPPORT CONTACT DETAILS

If you experience sexual violence and choose to disclose it to a member of staff, we will help you find support. Only you can decide whether or not you want to report this: to either the police, our discipline team or to both. However you choose to move forward, whether this involves reporting or not, we will respect your decision and provide you with the support and information you need.

### CAMPUS & RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Ground floor, York House

**01273 678234**

[www.sussex.ac.uk/campus-support](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/campus-support)

[campus-support@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:campus-support@sussex.ac.uk)

- Available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.
- Phone number above during office hours (Mon-Fri 9am–5pm).
- Out-of-hours, contact them through Security 01273 873333, your Residential Advisor, or porter.
- Off campus, call JAM, our out-of-hours call-back service, on 02089 383873 and ask for the duty Residential Community Coordinator to return your call.
- Crisis intervention and specialist support for students who have experienced sexual violence or harassment.
- Sign-posting to appropriate external services.

### SECURITY

Ground floor, York House

**01273 873333** or **3333** on an internal phone

[www.sussex.ac.uk/sef/services/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sef/services/security)

**security**

[security@sef.fm](mailto:security@sef.fm)

- Available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to students on campus.
- Call Security if you need emergency help from police, ambulance or fire.
- Call Security if you need support from the Campus & Residential Support team out of hours.

### STUDENT LIFE CENTRE

Ground floor, Bramber House

**01273 876767**

[www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre)

[studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk)

- Available 9am–5pm Monday to Friday, during and outside term-time.
- Ask for a priority appointment with a Student Advisor.
- Specialist support for students who have experienced either recent or historical sexual violence and harassment.
- Sign-posting to appropriate external services.
- Advice on issues affecting academic work and attendance.
- A Student Life Advisor can help you to report an incident and fill in the form at [www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline/online-forms/incident-reporting)
- [student-discipline/online-forms/](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline/online-forms/incident-reporting)
- [incident-reporting](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline/online-forms/incident-reporting)

## COUNSELLING SERVICE

Health Centre Building

**01273 678156**

[www.sussex.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/counselling)  
[counsellingreception@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:counsellingreception@sussex.ac.uk)

- Available 9am–5pm and some evenings, Monday to Friday during and outside term-time.
- Specialist and professional counselling support for students who have experienced either historical or more recent sexual violence and harassment (though not recommended immediately after an assault).

## STUDENTS' UNION SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY TEAM

First Floor Falmer House

**01273 877038**

[www.sussexstudent.com/support](http://www.sussexstudent.com/support)  
[advice@sussexstudent.com](mailto:advice@sussexstudent.com)

## GOOD NIGHT OWLS

- Sussex Students' Union run a scheme called Good Night Owls. GNO volunteers work in night clubs on Wednesday evenings, offering support to students who may be vulnerable or distressed.

## COMMUNITY SPECIALIST SUPPORT

### THE PORTAL

Freephone: **0300 3239985**

[www.theportal.org.uk](http://www.theportal.org.uk)

[info@theportal.org.uk](mailto:info@theportal.org.uk)

- The Portal is a one-stop shop for survivors of sexual and domestic abuse in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex. It is run in partnership by RISE, Survivors' Network and CRI.
- The Portal also offers specialist help to self-identifying women, LGBTQ+ people,

self-identifying heterosexual men, and members of the BME community.

## THE SATURN CENTRE (SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRE)

Crawley Hospital, West Green Drive,  
Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7DH

[www.saturncentre.org](http://www.saturncentre.org)

[sc-tr.saturncentre@nhs.net](mailto:sc-tr.saturncentre@nhs.net)

- Available 24 hours.
- 9am–5pm Monday to Friday call **01293 600469** for an appointment
- Out-of-hours call **0800 0337797** for advice from the on-call team for crisis and medical support following recent sexual violence
- Can provide collection of forensic evidence so that reporting to the police can be delayed.

## SURVIVORS' NETWORK

6a Pavilion Buildings, Brighton, BN1 1EE  
[www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk)

- Support services for all genders ages 14–18 years
- Support services for self-identifying women survivors of sexual abuse aged over 18 years
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) support for people of any gender: call **01273 203380** and select option 2 or email [referrals@survivorsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:referrals@survivorsnetwork.org.uk)
- Helpline: 7–9pm Wednesdays, call **01273 720110**
- Drop-ins: 7–9pm Mondays and Thursdays, plus 11am–1pm on the third Friday of each month: call **01273 203380** or email [dropin@survivorsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:dropin@survivorsnetwork.org.uk)
- Counselling: call **01273 203380** or email [counselling@survivorsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:counselling@survivorsnetwork.org.uk)

## TRANS SURVIVORS' SWITCHBOARD

Helpline: Sunday 3–5pm

- UK helpline for trans and non-binary survivors of sexual violence and abuse
- Call **01273 204050**
- Live webchat: [www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support](http://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support)
- Email [info@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:info@switchboard.org.uk)  
(please put TSS in the subject heading)

Drop-in: 7–9pm on the last Wednesday of each month, Rainbow Hub, St James' Street, Brighton, BN2 1TP

- Provides a safe space for trans and non-binary people who have experienced violence, crime and/or abuse. It is run by trans and non-binary peer facilitators

## MANKIND

**01273 911680**

[www.mkcharity.org](http://www.mkcharity.org)

[admin@mkcharity.org](mailto:admin@mkcharity.org)

- Sussex-based support for men who have been affected by unwanted sexual experiences

## RESPECT

[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

- UK charity who run support services and programmes for people of all genders who use violence within relationships, and for self-identifying men survivors of domestic abuse.

Respect Phoneline: advice and support for anyone who's violent or abusive towards their partner

- Freephone **0808 802 4040** Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm
- Webchat Tues and Thurs, 10am-4pm  
[www.respectphoneline.org](http://www.respectphoneline.org)
- [www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk)

Men's Advice Line: help and support for male survivors of domestic violence

- Freephone **0808 801 0327**

- Webchat Tues and Thurs, 10am-4pm,  
[www.mensadvicecline.org](http://www.mensadvicecline.org)
- [www.mensadvicecline.org.uk](http://www.mensadvicecline.org.uk)

## RISE

**01273 622828** Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

[www.rise.org.uk](http://www.rise.org.uk)

- RISE is a Brighton-based charity that helps people affected by domestic abuse. They offer practical help ranging from direct advice to refuge accommodation for those whose lives are at risk.
- If you need immediate help and support call the freephone National Domestic Violence 24hr Helpline on **0808 2000 247**.
- Wednesday 10am–12pm weekly drop-in at Hove Town Hall.
- Crisis accommodation in refuge for women and children escaping domestic abuse.
- Self-refer to therapeutic and counselling services **01273 622828**

## SAFE SPACE

St Paul's Church, West Street, Brighton

[www.pavilions.org.uk/services/safe-space](http://www.pavilions.org.uk/services/safe-space)

- Every Friday and Saturday (11.30pm–4.00am), supporting residents and tourists of all ages.
- During your night out in Brighton, you might become unwell, upset, distressed or injured. Maybe you lose your friends or are unable to get home.
- Trained first aid professionals offer medical support, and experienced, non-judgemental staff provide emotional and practical support. They will make sure you are OK, reconnect you with your mates, and support you to continue your night or get home safely



R E S P E C T  
E Q U A L I T Y  
D I V E R S I T Y  
S A F E T Y

