

COMMENTS ON A GUIDED VISIT TO “THE SHORES” SEXUAL ASSAULT
REFERRAL CENTRE, [SARC] BOURNEMOUTH BY CLLRS BILL PIPE AND
BARBARA MANUEL IN DECEMBER 2017

The SARC, or Sexual Assault Referral Centre adjacent to Bournemouth Police Station is a dedicated site for the reporting and gathering of evidence of sexual assaults upon both the male & female gender. The centre has an “Open Door” policy of self-referral as well as one of referral by others [police and other agencies] throughout Dorset. Once contact with the civilian reception team is made by the victim, a dedicated SOLO [Sexual Offences Liaison Officer] will begin the important task of collecting forensic evidence and is accompanied and aided in this task by a dedicated doctor from the Royal Bournemouth hospital. Family rooms are provided for the gathering of video testament and ultra-sterile examination rooms are available with sterile connecting passages for the collection of vital forensic evidence.

To enable useful forensic evidence to be collected, it is vital that victims report these offences as soon as possible. The forensic time scales for certain types of rape and serious sexual assault are as follows:

- Vaginal Rape-7 days
- Anal Rape-3 days
- Oral Rape-2 days, and
- Digital Penetration-2 days

The centre is staffed by four dedicated SOLO police officers of Detective Constable rank and civilian reception staff. A female Detective Constable showed us all of the facilities at the SARC over a two hour period. Our impression was that both the civilian staff & our police guide were “happy with their lot” in terms of facilities, staffing, workload, financial provision and the vital cooperation provided by other agencies.

Once evidence is gathered, a feedback form is given to victims to report back upon their experience at the SARC. All comments are quickly acted upon by the full team in order to make the experience better for future users.

We plan to make visits to the Victims Bureau, the Victims Champion, Crown Court to see how video evidence impacts upon witnesses and to meet with the Court Witness Care Service.

Cllr Bill Pipe and Cllr Barbara Manuel

Circulation: - Police & Crime Commissioner; PCP Panel Members

Dorset Police and Crime Panel – 1st February 2018

Pillar 3 – Supporting Victims, Witnesses and reducing Reoffending

Pillar Lead Briefing Note