



## Nozstock The Hidden Valley: Sexual Assault Policy & Guidance

We have always promoted a fun-loving and relaxed atmosphere at Nozstock, and pride ourselves on our reputation for being “the friendliest festival around” (efestivals). However, understanding that there are those who must be safeguarded against predatory behaviour, we felt some guidance was in order to help frontline staff when dealing with a situation of rape or assault at the event, or feeling confidence to potentially prevent a situation in the first place. We recommend you read the entirety of this document. However, we have included a short summary of the most important points.

### *What Is Sexual Assault?*

A person commits sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person, the touching is sexual and the person does not consent.

### *Prevention*

Always err on the side of caution. Warning signs of predatory behaviour include: making physical contact without permission, overemphasis on sexual talk, being pushing with drinks or substances and attempts to isolate an individual.

### *What to do*

Importantly, establish safety for the individual, e.g taking them to welfare or medical and/or contacting a friend or family for them. Staff should listen to what the survivor wants, NOT coerce them into any decisions, as this can further traumatise them. Nozstock’s Chill Welfare team (based in campsite) is open 24 hours a day and team members have experience dealing with situation of sexual assault. Staff can radio welfare for advice at any time.

### *Supporting A Survivor*

DO: Listen, let them stay in control, be patient, believe what they are saying, remember it’s not their fault and recognise their courage.

DON’T: Don’t ask why they didn’t say anything sooner, don’t judge, don’t ask why they didn’t fight back.

### *Report*

Any information should be passed on face-to-face, factually and sensitively and not divulged to anyone outside of the team involved. If the individual wishes for the police to be involved, the welfare manager will be able to assist in this. Survivors who feel unable to report an assault to the police can still seek help and guidance by contacting their nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre. (SARC) The Glade SARC serves the West Mercia area. You can contact them on 0808 178 2058. People can phone the SARC just for a chat and have their evidence stored so they can take time to decide if they want to report to police.

### *Further help*

There are lots of organisations that can provide support. Including your local SARC and National Rape Crises. Useful contacts are listed at the end of this document.

## Prevention Guidance

Be aware of your surroundings, tune into conversations around you and look at the body language of our visitors.

- How well do people know each other?
- Do those talking seem like good friends?
- Does someone seem to be trying to get away but keep getting drawn back into conversation?
- Is someone physically guarding themselves from somebody?

Try to get to know your patch and the people in it.

- Get to know faces and friendship groups in your area
- Keep an eye for anyone who might be vulnerable, alone or with a stranger

Warning signs of predatory behaviour

- Making physical contact with a visitor without permission
- Conversation with an overemphasis on sexual talk
- Being pushy with drinks or substances
- Trying to take someone to an isolated location or 'back to a tent'

What to do

- Be confident in asking if people are ok? if you can help?
- If someone looks like they're trying to get away from somebody, go and ask them if they need anything from you, or if they would like to be escorted anywhere
- Check people are with their friends, don't be afraid to ask if they want help reconnecting. We have a lost friends board at the info office to relocate pals.
- If someone is heavily intoxicated, ask them who their friends are, where they are and if you can help them find them. The welfare tent is a great place to reunite friends.
- Don't be coerced by anyone who seems predatory. Err on the side of caution and intervene when someone looks like they could use some support.
- Call security to support if someone predatory reacts badly to your intervention and becomes agitated or physical.

## Definitions of Sexual Assault and Consent

A person commits sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person, the touching is sexual and the person does not consent. The offence of causing someone to engage in sexual activity covers situations where someone removes choice from a person and causes another person to engage in sexual activity, perhaps because violence is used against them, or because they are threatened with something else, such as harm to others. The defendant does not have to touch the person in order for an offence to have been committed. Drug facilitated sexual assault includes all forms of non-consensual sexual activity whether it involves the forcible or covert administration of an incapacitating or disinhibiting substance, as well as sexual activity by an assailant with a victim who is profoundly intoxicated by his or her own actions.

In order to consent to sexual activity a person must have the freedom and capacity to choose. If someone has temporarily lost their capacity to choose (for example through intoxication) whether or not to enter into sexual

activity and sexual activity takes place then (depending on whether the defendant has a reasonable belief in their consent) the defendant will have committed an offence. Whether or not a person has lost the capacity to consent depends on their ability to understand and make a decision at the time the sexual activity took place. A complainant may have lost the capacity to consent without having lost consciousness. If the complainant is unconscious when the sexual activity occurs then there is a presumption that the complainant did not consent and that the defendant did not reasonably believe that they consented.

Where the complainant has consumed significant quantities of alcohol or another substance but did in fact consent to sexual activity then no offence is committed, even if the person concerned would not have consented if they had not consumed the alcohol or substance.

(Adapted from: Handbook of adult survivors of sexual violence and ACMD 2007)

### **Supporting a survivor**

If an individual has been raped or sexually assaulted, it is entirely up to them whether or not they choose to report it to the police. No-one else can or should make that decision for them. However it is equally important that the survivor feels fully supported to do so and that their allegation is taken seriously.

Everyone responds differently to a traumatic event. Common signs are:

- Shock-This can mean that they feel numb or unemotional. They might be in total disbelief, be crying, shaking, laughing or physically being sick
- Feeling to blame and responsible for what has happened
- 'Reliving' the events (having flashbacks). This can be triggered by a sound, situation or smell and can be very frightening for them
- Lack of confidence and trust in themselves/others
- Feeling worthless, angry, dirty or ashamed.
- Feeling afraid of people, places and being on their own.

The most important thing is to establish safety for the individual, this may be supporting them an onsite support area e.g. welfare or medical and/or contacting a friend or family member to be present with them. It may be that the survivor would prefer to speak with someone of a specific gender. The person may have physical injuries and may require medical assistance, they may also be experiencing shock so staff should be aware of outdoor temperatures and facilitate access to warm clothing, blanket and hot drinks if required. It is very important that staff listen to what the survivor wants and not coerce them in to any actions or decisions they do not want as this can further traumatise them.

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, including packing up their things.

Nozstock's Chill Welfare team (based in the campsite) includes staff who are trained in counselling skills and some will have experience in supporting survivors of rape and sexual assault. Welfare is open 24 hours a day and can provide a response team as necessary. Even where a person does not wish to seek support straight away, advise them that they can access support at any time from the welfare area, this includes advice about sexual health. Staff can also radio welfare for advice at any time.

Supporting a survivor of sexual violence can be daunting; many people are afraid of saying 'the wrong thing', but you

don't have to be an expert. If you are prepared to listen, the survivor who has confided in you will be able to guide you in what they need.

**DO:**

- **Listen:** Listen, even if it's difficult for you to hear. You might have a lot of questions but try not to interrupt.
- **Let them stay in control:** Sexual abuse can make a person feel powerless. Survivors want to feel in charge of their lives again. It's important you don't 'take over', for example by arranging and doing things that you think are best. Instead, support her/him to explore their feelings and options and make their own decisions. Respect those decisions, even if you don't agree with them. Doing things for a survivor (like making an appointment on their behalf without checking that it's what they want first) can end up making things worse, even when you were trying to help.
- **Be patient:** Don't push for them to tell you anything before they're ready. It might not be easy for them to start talking about experiences. They might feel ashamed, responsible, threatened or be traumatised.
- **Believe:** People rarely lie about sexual abuse. Why would they? It is important to believe what they are saying even if it's difficult for you to hear.
- **Remember it's not their fault:** No survivor should ever be blamed for not preventing their own abuse or violence against them. The blame lies with the perpetrator.
- **Recognise their courage:** It takes a great deal of courage both to survive and to talk about experiences of sexual violence; acknowledge that.

**DON'T:**

- **Don't ask why they didn't say anything sooner:** They might have tried to tell before and not been believed. They might have been too frightened to say anything. They might have blocked out events too painful to think about.
- **Don't judge:** It is important to accept the way they are reacting, even if it's not what you were expecting. It is best to get rid of any ideas you have of how a person who has been raped should behave and to accept their reactions as their own.
- **Don't ask them why they didn't fight back:** This will only make them feel blamed for what happened. Sexual assault is a terrifying experience to which people react in different ways. It's very common to freeze when confronted with a terrifying situation, for example, or for our bodies to go limp.
- **Remember to take care of yourself as well.** Supporting a survivor can be difficult. It's OK to take time and space for yourself sometimes. It's important not to betray a survivor's trust by telling others about their experiences without their permission, but you can talk confidentially to and get specialist support from your nearest Rape Crisis service

*(adapted from rape crisis guidance)*

## **Reporting a rape or 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. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the need to

prevent further incidents at the event.

- If someone comes to the welfare service reporting that they have been sexually assaulted at the event, inform the supervisor immediately. The supervisor must inform the welfare manager.
- The welfare manager should inform an appropriate person in the event organiser's team as soon as practicable. Any information should be passed on face-to-face, factually and sensitively.
- A team member of the same sex should stay with the person (unless it is a same-sex assault allegation)
- The person's clothing should not be disturbed, removed or cleaned.
- The person should not wash or clean themselves
- The site of the incident should be identified and not disturbed.
- The welfare team can give the person a blanket and comfort them. 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 wishes, we can enable them to try to contact their friends at the event or someone off-site. We 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. Later you can make a confidential note of what they have said.

Do not discuss the matter with anyone outside the team, except to give factual information to the medics, steward supervisor or police, if they are involved.

If the person does not want to speak to anyone outside the welfare team, this wish should be respected (The only exceptions to this are if we learn that someone is currently in serious danger of harm – for example an identifiable child who is being abused now). We can (gently and without any pressure) point out that by speaking to the police/security etc, it may help to identify an offender or prevent others from suffering the same experience.

In some circumstances when the person does not want to speak to anyone, it may be more appropriate for us to inform the event organiser after the person has left. We should describe what was reported to us and where and when the incident happened, but no personal details.

Survivors who feel unable to report a assault to the police can still seek help and guidance by contacting their nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre. (SARC) The Glade SARC serves the West Mercia area. You can contact them on 0808 178 2058. People can phone the SARC just for a chat and have their evidence stored so they can take time to decide if they want to report to police.

Survivors can also access telephone support via **National Rape Crisis** Free phone: 0808 802 9999 (everyday 12-12.30pm & 7-9.30pm)

if an individual wishes forensic evidence to be collected, time is an important factor; they should report to the police or go to the SARC within 72 hours of the assault wherever possible to gain access to PEP, contraception etc.

If possible, encourage the person to take these steps:

- Do not wash
- Do not brush teeth
- Do not have a cigarette
- Do not eat or drink
- Do not change clothes

- If they change their clothes, do not discard or wash them but put them in a clean plastic bag
- Try not to go to the toilet
- Do not clear up anything from the area of the incident

Reassure the person not to worry if they have already done some of these things. It's possible that there is still forensic evidence to collect.

If a survivor decides to report the incident to the police, they will be asked to make a statement. It's important not to leave any information or details out of the statement, even if they find them upsetting or embarrassing. If there are things they can't remember, they should tell the police that, rather than trying to speculate about what might have happened. They should be honest with the police even about things that they might be worried will reflect badly on them, like how much alcohol they'd had to drink or if they'd taken drugs; **stress that none of these factors make what happened to them their fault and they are not to blame.**

It may be that the survivor may want the police to be aware of the incident but do not want to make contact with them directly. If this is the case they can ask a third party (such as a friend or welfare staff member) to report the incident to the police. A third party report can include as much or as little detail as the individual wishes. The third party does not have to reveal who the individual is or give full details about the sexual violence they have experienced. The police value third party reports, which are confidential. However, there are circumstances when the police may try and make contact with the survivor. For example, it may be that the information that is given links the case to others, or that they are able to identify the person responsible. If this is the case the police would contact the person or organisation that made the third party report and ask them to contact the survivor. If you make a third party report on behalf of someone who has experienced sexual violence the police officer you speak to should take a detailed report of the incident from you and give you details of a nominated Investigating Officer so that you can contact them again to provide any additional information.

### Further information and contacts

- **The Glade SARC** [www.theglade.org.uk](http://www.theglade.org.uk) 0808 178 2058 (24 hours)
- **National Rape Crisis** Free phone: 0808 802 9999 (everyday 12-12.30pm & 7-9.30pm)
- **NHS 111 Service** 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. The following advice is taken from NHS Website (04/04/2017) <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealth/Pages/Sexualassault.aspx>
- Nozstock supports the Association of Independent Festival's [Safer Spaces at Festivals](#) campaign, to raise awareness of sexual assault at festivals and abide by their [charter of best practice](#).
- **UK Victim Supportline 0808 1689 111** (free) (Weekdays 08.00-20.00; weekends 09.00-19.00) Victim Support is here to help anyone in England and Wales affected by crime, not only victims and witnesses, but their friends, family and any other people involved. They offer immediate emotional support as well as helpful information and practical advice over the phone.
- **Survivors UK 020 3598 3898** (office hours) Survivors UK helps men who have been sexually violated and raises awareness of their needs.
- **Switchboard: The LGBT+ Helpline 0300 330 0630** (free) 10:00 to 22:00 daily. Switchboard provides a one-stop listening service for LGBT+ people.