

1. Background

There is growing recognition that the appalling treatment of Gisele Pelicot in France was not an isolated case. UK policing agencies are working with European counterparts following evidence of similar sexual abuse patterns, where men have drugged and raped partners and invited others to participate, including through networks of abusers. National policing agencies expect more victims may come forward and contact their GP.

2. Recognising and responding

Greater Manchester Police have identified a case involving a man alleged to have drugged and raped his wife over many years, involving other men directly or online. One alleged perpetrator is a senior paramedic and others held prominent community roles. The trial is scheduled for September 2026, and increased publicity may prompt others to come forward if they recognise similar patterns of domestic abuse. Read this case [here](#)

3. Project Medusa

It is emerging that there are internationally coordinated and organised abuse rings now being investigated to help identify perpetrators, victims, and misogynist groups, involved in these heinous crimes. This suggests the scope of this type of domestic abuse is more widespread than previously thought. The investigation is called Project Medusa. You can learn more [here](#)

8. Key messages from Police

- If something sexual happened without consent, it is a criminal offence.
- Consent means having the freedom and capacity to choose. If someone was asleep, unconscious, affected by alcohol or drugs, or not fully aware, they could not consent.
- Sexual assault or rape can involve partners, ex-partners, trusted people, strangers, or more than one person.
- The person will not be judged for trusting someone or for the situation they were in.
- They can speak confidentially to support services without involving the police.
- If they report to police, specially trained officers should listen, take them seriously, focus on what may have been done to them, and involve them in decisions.



4. Briefings available

- The National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection has produced a 16-page briefing to help partner agencies recognise Organised Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault and share key messages with those who may have experienced it.
- NHS England has reissued a one-page briefing for NHS staff on Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), including when to discuss this support with patients which are free, confidential and provide emotional support for anyone affected by recent or non-recent sexual assault. You can access this [here](#)
- NHSE has also produced guidance on possible signs of drug facilitated sexual assault and how clinicians should respond. You can access this [here](#)

7. Key messages

The decision to contact the police must remain the individual's choice.
If they are unsure, ensure they know about confidential support options, including local domestic abuse services.

Victims may feel confused, have memory gaps, or be unsure how to describe what happened. They do not need proof, certainty or a clear account to seek help or be taken seriously.

- Rape Crisis England and Wales: 0808 500 2222
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

6. Supporting someone

- Listen without judgement and respond with care and dignity.
- Use a trauma-informed approach and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Support individuals to make informed choices at their own pace.
- Signpost to Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) where appropriate. SARCs provide free, confidential 24/7 medical, emotional and practical support following sexual assault, whether or not someone chooses to involve the police. Local support is available through [The Glade SARC](#).

5. Recognising signs

While some victims may have no idea they have been harmed, others may have a sense of something not feeling right in their relationship or they may be in a controlling and coercive relationship and recognise patterns.

Each case will be different, but there are some features that victims have been explaining, which include:

- experiencing unexplained memory gaps or confusion
- raising concerns about repeated illness, sedation or feeling 'unwell'
- questioning events that occurred in private or domestic settings
- unexplained injuries and health issues, including UTIs and STIs
- being accompanied to health appointments by their partner who dominates and steers the conversation with the health professional.

