

False Accusations

While it isn't common, sometimes people do spread false accusations of sexual assault or rape. This could be in the form of an official complaint or a rumour circulated in social groups or posted online.

This can have a really damaging effect on the accused, especially when there is no evidence to suggest that the accusation is false.

Remember, quite often you won't know the full story or all the details of a situation. It's important not to judge or act in a disrespectful way towards someone, regardless of what you might think you know.

Research for the Home Office suggests that only 4% of cases of sexual violence reported to the UK police are found or suspected to be false.

False accusations can:

- Impact the accused's relationships. Often people close to the accused turn on them or change their opinion of the person.
- Impact the accused's reputation. It's not only personal relationships that can be effected but their professional relationships and the way that people (even strangers) react to them.
- Cause the accused person to be the target of online and offline abuse. If the person's name is made public, they could experience online abuse on a large scale.
- Cause emotional damage and distress.
- Result in the accused person going to prison or getting a criminal record.



The best way (and often one of the only ways) to defend yourself against false accusations is to ensure that you know the law and fully understand consent.

It also helps to be aware of the law and understand consent legislation before accusing anyone of rape or sexual assault.