

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Registered Charity No 1119599

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Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine welcomes ASA ruling on claims made by self-swab testing company

The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) welcomes today's ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regarding claims made by a self-swab testing company concerning the potential admissibility in court of evidence obtained using its self-testing kits, as well as claims relating to the incidence of rape.

The ruling supports concerns raised by the [FFLM](#), [NPCC](#), [Rape Crisis](#) and [over 30 other organisations](#) working within the sexual harms sector.

In addition to the inaccurate claims addressed by the ASA ruling, the company also falsely suggested that the FFLM had endorsed self-swabbing, using the names of Senior Officers without permission in support of its claims. The company also claimed support and engagement from the FFLM's Lead Forensic Scientist. This is, again, inaccurate, and misleading; the FFLM does not have a Lead Forensic Scientist.

The FFLM do not support or endorse the use of these kits. As outlined in our [letter to University Vice-Chancellors](#), false reassurances that such kits are approved or beneficial in the aftermath of a sexual assault risks undermining criminal investigations and, more importantly, denying victims access to the high-quality holistic care provided by Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).

Such claims will only compound any suffering experienced, leaving individuals believing they have taken the correct steps to support future action and preserve evidence when, in reality, they may have lost the opportunity to support any future prosecution and missed access to essential healthcare and support services.

Anyone who experiences sexual assault requires support and accurate information when navigating options for therapeutic and forensic care. This includes support addressing the risks of pregnancy and STIs, ongoing psychological support, and forensic examination, which includes consideration of forensic sampling and photo-documentation of any injuries where appropriate.

Dr Alex Gorton, President of the FFLM, said:

"We welcome this ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority. For most organisations, hearing concerns raised by frontline voluntary sector services supporting victims, forensic and sampling experts, and the police would prompt serious reflection about whether their approach is truly in victims' best interests.

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We absolutely must do better for victims of sexual assault — but self-swabbing is not the answer. Victims deserve access to holistic, trauma-informed care including the full wraparound support that a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) can provide.

They do not deserve to be subjected to inaccurate claims that deny them agency in making informed decisions and may mislead them into taking actions that could actively harm their chances of seeking support and justice.

We will continue to campaign for the highest standards across the whole field of forensic and legal medicine to ensure that the best possible services are available to all.”

Further information, including our current position statement on self-swab forensic testing is available here: <https://fflm.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Joint-Position-statement-on-forensic-self-swab-services-after-sexual-assault-or-rape-with-FAQ-10-09-2024-v3.pdf>

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About FFLM

The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) was founded in 2005 by the Royal College of Physicians. It is the UK charity that sets and maintains standards in forensic and legal medicine and is recognised as the authoritative body for the purpose of consultation in matters of educational or public interest concerning forensic and legal medicine.