



The Government of Sierra Leone

NATIONAL REFERRAL PROTOCOL SUMMARY

This document is a short version of the 2024 National Referral Protocol (NRP)

Responding effectively to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) means delivering survivor-centred services. This requires a wide range of people being coordinated and collaborating effectively, and each fulfilling their roles and commitments with respect and confidentiality. The NRP ensures that the reporting system works by building trust, respecting confidentiality and ensuring non-discrimination without harming the survivor.

The 2024 NRP sets out how governmental and non-governmental entities support the process of reporting and responding to cases of SGBV experienced by women and girls, men and boys, and people with disabilities. It is implemented in accordance with existing laws, policies and the guiding principles of respect for confidentiality, dignity and rights of survivors. The protocol guides the coordination of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and frontline service providers responding to SGBV by:

- 1 Outlining roles and responsibilities for delivering survivor-centred and trauma-informed response services.
- 2 Reinforcing the importance of providing survivors with consistent, confidential and professional case management support, enabling them to make informed choices.
- 3 Defining ways to coordinate and refer survivors to receive prompt, coordinated and effective services from the various agencies and providers involved in their care.
- 4 Prescribing standards of professional practice of response services, including case management and referrals, confidentiality, information sharing, recording of sensitive information and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- 5 Presenting a framework for monitoring and evaluation of the protocol.

The NRP also outlines roles and responsibilities for those involved, so that survivors are firmly at the centre of the response.

The following agencies play pivotal roles by committing to undertake the roles and responsibilities assigned to them:

- Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
- Office of the Vice President represented by the SGBV Advisor
- Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
- Teaching Service Commission
- Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Justice
- Judiciary, represented by the Hon. Chief Justice
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Sierra Leone Police, Family Support Unit
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
- Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
- Legal Aid Board Sierra Leone

It is critical that services collaborate and coordinate to take a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach, and that effective case management supports a survivor to engage with, and navigate, the reporting system. Figure one gives an example of how services can coordinate to support survivors to access services.

Figure 1: A demonstration of how services can be coordinated to support survivors

