

ADVOCACY

Volunteering Guide



Volunteering Guide

The guide is designed to give you information if you are thinking about becoming an advocacy volunteer with SARSVL.

Training dates

Please ensure that you can attend **all** training dates listed below, it is very important that you can attend all sessions as everyone is an essential part of the volunteer training.

Interviews Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th October

Tuesday 11th October - 5.45pm-8.45pm

Friday 14th October - 10am-2.30pm

Tuesday 18th October - 5.45pm-8.45pm

Friday 21st October - 10am-2.30pm

Tuesday 25th October - 5.45pm-8.45pm

Friday 28th October 10am -2.30pm

Tuesday 1st November - 5.45pm-8.45pm

Friday 4th November 10am-2.30pm

Tuesday 8th November - 5.45pm-8.45pm

Friday 11th November - 10am-2.30pm

Friday 18th November - Post course interviews

Who are SARSVL?

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is a member of Rape Crisis England & Wales.

Our mission is to support women and girls who have been affected by sexual violence of any kind, at any time in their lives.

We are a volunteer led service, run by women for women, and our Centre is a women only safe space.

We provide support through our helpline service, and through our advocacy service, as well as carrying out outreach and awareness raising work. We will shortly be providing support through our counselling service.

Our values are

- Confidentiality
- Feminism
- Responsiveness
- Inclusion
- Woman-centred practice
- Trust & Belief
- Empowerment
- Women-only safe space
- Accessibility
- Led by the women we support
- Respect
- Diversity of provision
- Partnership working
- Empathy
- Non-judgemental

SARSVL Advocacy Service

Advocacy is about helping people to access information and services, to be involved in decisions about their lives, and to explore their views and wishes. It assists people in exploring choices and options, defending their rights and speaking out about issues that matter to them, to regain or maintain power and control over their own lives.

Our Advocacy Service is an independent service working with women over the age 18 who have been affected by rape or sexual violence at any time in their lives. We help women to regain control of your life, make informed choices about issues affecting them, and access the support that they may need.

The service is free and confidential, our ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advocate) can also offer specialist information and advocacy to women around reporting to the police and support throughout that process.

SARSVL's Advocacy Service is a new and innovative service for Leeds. The service is constantly developing, led by what survivors tell us is helpful, and responsive to changing need. We therefore welcome feedback about our service.

We aim to offer advocacy support in a number of key areas that our work with survivors tell us are often areas of need after experience of sexual violence. These are practical support around issues to do with housing, legal, health, welfare rights, education and work, as well as emotional support, however it is not a counselling service.

What do advocacy volunteers do?

After experiencing any form of sexual violence a woman may find it difficult to cope with everyday issues. A volunteer can offer practical help and support to existing SARSVL clients, supporting the woman to overcome these difficulties. Working alongside our advocacy service, our volunteers are here to make sure women get the practical support they may need.

This could be supporting a women to attend a meeting, or completing an important form or making a phone call. It could be supporting a women to access another service where she can get the advice she requires or ensuring she is aware of her rights and entitlements.

We also ask our advocacy volunteers to

- Work with each service-user as an individual
- Record advocacy work in line with SARSVL policies and procedures
- Attend monthly supervision and ongoing training for advocacy volunteers
- Commit to **3 hours** a week from Mon-Fri during the day to volunteer for the service
- **You will not** - tell survivors what to do, give advice, provide counselling or replace other services

What qualifications do I need to be a volunteer?

1. Be able to commit to 3 hours a week during the week from Monday to Friday
2. Have basic literacy and numeracy. Good spelling or grammar are not important, but you must be able to read and write basic English.
3. Have access to email and/or a mobile phone. We can provide support to set up an email account.
4. Have a good level of spoken English. You don't need to be a native English speaker, or even speak completely fluently, but you must be able to understand spoken English and make yourself understood clearly and effectively.
5. Be open, honest, and committed to SARSVL values
6. Commit to being an Advocacy Volunteer for a minimum of 12 months.

Please do consider carefully if you feel that you can carry out the work. You are the best judge of your ability. If you are unsure please do contact us, as we can often provide support with access needs and learning.

What training will I get?

The training course for potential volunteers will take place over 5 weeks, with a training evening held on a Tuesday evening and a training day held during the day on a Friday.

The training will cover the essential knowledge that you will need to be an advocacy volunteer as well as developing your skills as a volunteer so you can feel able and confident to support women who access our service.

After the training course we will discuss how you have found it and if there are any further training needs you have identified.

On-going training

As well as the training you will have done to become a volunteer we will organise additional training events in which we can learn about specific topics relating to

working with survivors of sexual violence. This can be informed by the volunteers themselves and what they feel that they need additional training on.

How is it assessed?

There is no formal assessment on the training course, however the trainers will be observing prospective volunteers throughout the training and we will meet with you after the course to discuss how you found it and give you individual feedback. We also ask that throughout the training you complete your own learning journal which allows you to reflect on the course and any concerns or areas of development that you think you might need.

What happens after the course?

Once you have completed the course, you will be invited to a post-course interview where we will discuss how you found the course, give you feedback and discuss you becoming a volunteer.

Initially you will undertake an observation session with a current advocate or volunteer, as well as orientation session for the office and building.

When you are ready to volunteer we will base this on the needs of the women accessing the service and your availability. We will ensure that you will meet with the woman you will be supporting at least once with the volunteer coordinator before you begin supporting her.

There will be a 6 month probationary period in which the volunteer coordinator will observe you with a woman accessing the service and give you feedback. You will feedback how you are finding volunteering and if you have identified any further training needs.

At the end of the 6 month probationary period you will meet with the volunteer coordinator for a review meeting in which we will assess your skills and strengths as a volunteer, and if appropriate how we can further develop the volunteer role for you.

I'm worried that I may get upset when supporting women who have experienced rape or sexual violence, what support is available for me?

We understand that the Advocacy work can potentially be upsetting for volunteers, and that volunteers require support.

As a volunteer you will receive regular one-to-one supervision with the Advocacy Volunteer Coordinator where you can discuss your volunteering role and the impact of the role on you.

We also hope that you and your fellow volunteers will provide peer support to one another and will facilitate this by organising group supervision and group meetings where you can meet other advocacy volunteers and share your experience.

I have some support needs. Who can I speak to?

If you have any additional support needs, please mention this on your application form. A trainer will get in touch with you to talk about what you need, both for the course itself and when you are volunteering with SARSVL.

If you'd like to discuss support needs before you apply, please email the Advocacy Volunteer Co-ordinator on the address given at the end of this booklet.

I have a past criminal conviction – can I still volunteer?

Most of the time a prior conviction will not be a barrier to volunteering with SARSVL, but failure to tell us about convictions will result in you being asked to leave the training course.

We carry out enhanced Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks on all our Advocacy volunteers, so we will see any convictions, including 'spent' convictions.

This means that you should tick 'yes' on the application form if you have any prior convictions, even if they are considered 'spent'.

We understand that disclosing a previous conviction can be embarrassing. Like all aspects of your application, any disclosures will be kept confidential to the Training Team. If you'd like to discuss this issue before applying, please do email the Advocacy Volunteer Co-ordinator on the email address given at the end of this booklet.

I want to become a volunteer. What do I need to do?

Please check that you attend all of the training dates, it is important that you can come to all of the dates as every training session builds on the last. If you can then you can complete the application form by downloading it from our website. If you would rather a hard-copy please email lucy@sarsvl.org.uk with your full name and address so we can send an application form out to you.

Please return your completed application form along with the Equality and Diversity Monitoring form to lucy@sarsvl.org.uk or post to PO Box 827, Leeds LS1 9PN.

Please return your completed application form and completed Equality and Diversity Monitoring form by **5pm on Monday 19th September**, any applications received after this time will not be considered.

Once your application has been received, we will review your application, make a request for references from your referees and if appropriate invite you to a short

interview in the week commencing Monday 3rd October. If successful at interview we will ask you to join the training course which commences on Tuesday 11th October.

I've got a question, who should I contact?

You can contact the Advocacy Volunteer Co-ordinator via phone 0113 2002930 or email to: lucy@sarsvl.org.uk

You can write to us at PO Box 827, Leeds LS1 9PN.

Is there any other way I can volunteer for SARSVL?

Yes! There are lots of ways to volunteer with SARSVL outside of the Advocacy. You could:

- Become a Helpline Volunteer and work with women via our helpline.
- Become a Volunteer Counsellor
- Fundraise for us and organizing social events

To find out more about volunteering with SARSVL please check out our website www.supportafterrapeleeds.org.uk/volunteer

General Enquiries

Email: info@sarsvl.org.uk

Office phone: 0113 2439102

