

HELPLINE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION INFORMATION PACK

Thank you for your interest in volunteering on the Helpline at Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL). Our volunteers make a huge contribution to the work that we do, and the service we provide to women and girl survivors of sexual violence.

This pack gives you information about who we are, what is involved in volunteering on our Helpline, and about our Helpline Training Course.



What is SARSVL?

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is an accredited Rape Crisis Centre, we provide free, independent and confidential specialist support services to women and girls in Leeds whose lives have been affected by sexual violence and abuse of any kind and at any time in their lives.

All our services are underpinned by our feminist rationale, which recognises that sexual violence, as a form of violence against women and girls, is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. We actively tackle sexual violence against women and girls by providing specialist support services. Our women-only safe space, is designed to meet the needs of women and girls, by raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence, and by providing specialist training to other agencies.

We offer three free and confidential specialist frontline services – Helpline, Advocacy and Counselling.

What is SARSVL Helpline?

The Helpline is made up of specially trained volunteers who provide free, anonymous and confidential emotional support to women and girls of any age affected by sexual violence of any kind, and at any time in their lives. The support offered through the Helpline is grounded in non-judgmental listening and emotional support.

Although we have one paid part time member of staff to support volunteers, the majority of the frontline support to survivors who contact our Helpline is delivered by volunteers. Volunteers are a central and important part of SARSVL and the SARSVL Helpline.

The Helpline is currently open 6 days a week and survivors can contact us via telephone, text (SMS), email or meet face-to-face.

Our service is not available to men or boys, but we will provide initial support and help male callers find an appropriate service for their needs.

What do Helpline Volunteers do?

Helpline Volunteers normally do one shift every week providing emotional and listening support via our various contact methods. As a volunteer you will always work alongside at least one other person. Apart from providing the frontline service, Helpline volunteers are also required to complete a small amount of admin on each shift.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to engage with ongoing training and development throughout their time at SARSVL.

Volunteers do not offer advice, answer legal or medical questions or disclose anything personal about themselves to callers.

What qualifications or experience do I need?

You don't need any special qualifications or experience to become a SARSVL Helpline Volunteer. However, there are a few basic requirements that all Helpline Volunteers need to meet to be able to carry out the work on the Helpline:

- Self-identify as a woman
- Be aged 18 or over
- Have basic literacy and numeracy - good spelling or grammar are not important, but you must be able to read and write basic English
- Have a good level of English and be able to make yourself understood, as well as understand spoken English
- Have access to an email and a mobile phone so that we can keep in regular contact regarding shifts etc.
- Be available to do one regular 3–4 hour shift each week
- Be able to use a telephone headset, and sit in an adjustable office chair for 2 –3 hours at a time
- Commit to being a Helpline Volunteer for a minimum of 12 months

If you have any specific access or support needs that you wish to discuss with us prior to application, please contact us using the details at the end of this pack.



What training and support will I get?

SARSVL is committed to providing you with a thorough induction, training and support necessary to meet the responsibilities of your volunteering role.

All new volunteers to the Helpline will have to complete a training programme which consists of 7 sessions covering a range of topics around sexual violence and building skills needed to be a Helpline Volunteer. In addition to the 7 sessions, there will be an opportunity to engage in further training and development.



Volunteering on the Helpline can be challenging for volunteers, and we are committed to providing ongoing support including:

- **Peer support** - volunteers support each other, and you are encouraged to form friendships and bonds with other women, and to both ask for support and offer it to others
- **Debrief** after each call and shift with shift partners. This is a chance to talk through the call and discuss how you feel. It's also a chance to learn and improve your call practice
- **A Monthly Peer Support** group facilitated by the Helpline Coordinator
- **The Helpline Coordinator** who is available for any additional support

We encourage volunteers to think about their own sources of support outside SARSVL in addition to the above.

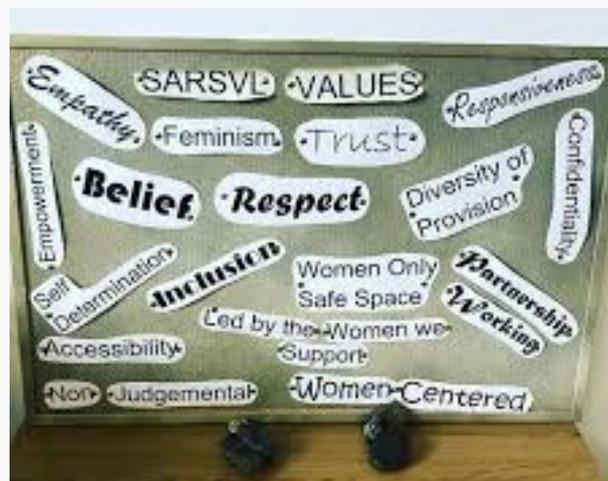
Throughout the training, you will be invited to reflect on your experience by completing a learning journal. Although rare, sometimes volunteers do not 'pass' the training programme due to not fully meeting requirements to be a Helpline volunteer. If any concerns are identified during the training programme, or if volunteers are concerned themselves, we encourage both our trainers and volunteers to be open and honest about this. If you feel, at any stage, overwhelmed or like being a Helpline volunteer isn't for you, please talk to the Helpline Coordinator as soon as possible so that we have the opportunity to provide you with any additional support that you might need.

SARSVL values its volunteers and wants to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of a volunteer's role, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel.

Training Timetable

Below is the training timetable for our Autumn 2019 recruitment of volunteers. All the sessions are important and build on each other as we progress through the weeks. For this reason, we ask that volunteers attend all sessions with a minimum requirement that you will attend 80% of the training programme (this gives flexibility to miss up to 6 hours of training depending on topic). If you are unable to commit to attending at least 80% of the training programme, we might not be able to accept your application this time, but encourage you to apply during the next recruitment period.

Please indicate on your application form whether or not you are able to make each session of the training programme.



Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Post Course interviews
Saturday	Tuesday	Tuesday	Saturday	Tuesday	Tuesday	Saturday	Tuesday or Wednesday
28/09 2019	01/10 2019	08/10 2019	19/10 2019	29/10 2019	5/11 2019	09/11 2019	12 or 13 November 2019
10am-5pm	5:30-8:30 pm	5:30-8:30pm	10am-5 pm	5:30-8:30pm	5:30-8:30pm	10am-5pm	time to be arranged (30 mins)

What happens after training?

After completion of the training programme, there will be a post-course informal interview to support your transition onto the Helpline. This will also be an opportunity to discuss any remaining concerns regarding meeting requirements to be a Helpline Volunteer.

During the last few weeks of the training or once we're happy that you've completed the training course and are ready to become a Helpline volunteer, there will be a formal induction process which includes observation of more experienced Helpline volunteers. You will observe at least two Helpline shifts, listening in to calls from our service users and will have a chance to debrief after each call. When you feel ready, you will start taking calls by yourself with support from an experienced volunteer.

There will be a 6 month 'probation' period during which you will have the opportunity to attend additional training sessions and monthly Peer Support groups. At the end of the 6 months, we will collectively review how you are doing in terms of Helpline Service delivery and whether you require any additional support

Disclosure and Barring Service

All Helpline volunteers are legally required to have an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check due to the nature of the service we provide on the Helpline. Everyone who applies to be a Helpline volunteer will be asked to disclose if they have a criminal record or not. In most cases, having a criminal record does not automatically bar you from volunteering. However, due to the sensitive nature of our work, we would need to make a decision on a case-by-case basis.

Please note if you do disclose a criminal record, we will treat this information in line with our confidentiality policy. If you chose not to disclose any criminal convictions which are later found out through the DBS check, this would bar you from volunteering at SARSVL.

If you'd like to talk to us about your past convictions before applying, please email to the email address given at the end of this booklet.

I've read this pack and want to volunteer. What do I do?

Great news! To apply, please complete and return:

- The volunteer application form
- Equality and diversity form (it isn't compulsory to fill this in and it will be separated from your application form. It helps us monitor if we are meeting one of our core aims to 'reflect the community we serve')

Send your completed forms to us by email to:

info@sarsvl.org.uk with the subject line "**Helpline Volunteer Application**"

Contact Details

All information regarding the Helpline volunteer role, responsibilities, training dates etc are included in this pack.

If you have any additional questions, please contact us via:

Email – info@sarsvl.org.uk Phone – 0113 243 9102

