



Background and Herstory

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is the professionally approved Rape Crisis Centre for Leeds, accredited against the specialist Rape Crisis National Service Standards.

We exist to support women and girls whose lives have been affected by child sexual abuse, rape and all forms of sexual violence at any time, to promote their needs and rights, and to work towards the elimination of all sexual violence and abuse.

SARSVL is run by women for women and girls. We're proud to be a feminist organisation because we recognise that sexual violence is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality.

Our vision is of a world where all women and girls can live free from the fear and experience of sexual violence and abuse. We share this vision with Rape Crisis England & Wales, of which we are proud to be a member.

Our main aims are:

1. To provide free, confidential support to women and girls whose lives have been affected by sexual violence of any kind, at any time
2. To reflect the community we serve, working actively to encompass the diversity of needs amongst women and girls who may wish to access our services
3. To contribute to the development of local sexual violence-related services, aiming towards comprehensive support for women and girls in Leeds and surrounding areas
4. To raise awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse
5. To challenge and change public attitudes about sexual violence against women and girls

Story so far

SARSVL was started by a group of women activists during the 16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women & Girls in 2008, and registered as a Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2010. We launched our first service - a specialist telephone helpline - in April 2010.

This service continues to be run primarily by skilled and trained volunteers, and the time and commitment of a range of volunteers – including our Trustees – remains crucial to what we do at SARSVL.

In 2012, we secured our first Government grant, moved into our own rented premises for the first time and began recruiting to our small, valued team of paid staff, which continues to support and enable our service delivery, operations and development.



Background and Herstory

SARSVL's current specialist services are: a Freephone helpline, open some hours six days a week (currently reduced due to COVID-19); helpline support via SMS text and email; an Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service; and a counselling service, including short and longer term therapeutic options and group work.

SARSVL also does range of awareness-raising work around sexual violence and abuse, including providing talks, workshops and training to other organisations, groups and professionals.

Next steps: Developing our Trustee Board

Ten years on from the launch of our first service, this is an exciting and challenging point in time for SARSVL.

We're coming towards the end of a five-year business plan and in the process of developing our next. As part of this, we're reviewing our staffing structure to ensure it continues to meet the Charity's needs into the future.

We're looking as ever at tested and new ways to generate income both to support the sustainability of our existing work, and to grow in response to significant and increasing need and demand for our services.

All this while responding to external challenges like the global pandemic and increasing our digital capacity to ensure we can continue to offer life-changing and life-saving services to women and girls no matter what the future might bring.

To support and enable this work, we're looking for some new women to join our Board, and bring fresh expertise and perspectives to add to the considerable experience and knowledge of longer-serving Trustees.

It's one of our organisational aims to reflect the community we serve, and diversity and inclusion are among our core values. We want women from underrepresented groups and communities - including Black, Asian and minoritised, Disabled, and Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans (LGBT+) women - to succeed and thrive at SARSVL, and we have policies and procedures in place to ensure that can happen. Through this recruitment, we're especially hoping to welcome more women from these groups and communities to our Board and we encourage you to join us. [Read more about our approach to diversity and inclusion.](#)

We're also hoping to attract applicants with one or more specific skills and experience to our add to those of our existing Board, including women with counselling and safeguarding qualifications and expertise, those skilled in income generation and financial management, and those with legal and HR backgrounds. *Read the role description and person specification enclosed to find out more.*