**Helpline Volunteer Application Information Pack Autumn 2020**

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

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, providing 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, at any time.

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, in a women-only safe space, 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, Counselling.

**What is the 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. 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 SARSVL Helpline.

The Helpline is currently 3 days week and survivors can contact us via telephone, text (SMS) and email. We hope that as we start transitioning back from our reduced Covid-19 hours that we move towards our full shift model in which the SARSVL Helpline was open 6 days a week.

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. You will always work alongside at least one other person. During the office being closed, we are operating a remote volunteering system where you will be volunteering from home at the same time as another volunteer and a SARSVL staff member and will be in contact with them for the duration of the shift, so there will be no lone-working. We hope that we will soon be able to operate helpline shifts in the SARSVL building before the end of the year.

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 and other opportunities as they arise.

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 a mobile, laptop, earphones with a microphone, reliable wi-fi and a quiet room with a door to take confidential calls where you will not be disturbed or overheard, if you are volunteering remotely
* Be available to do one regular 3 hour shift each week
* Be able to use a telephone headset, and sit in an adjustable office chair or chair at your home 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 in meeting the responsibilities of your volunteering role.

All new volunteers to the Helpline will have to complete a training programme which consists of 8 sessions covering a range of topics around sexual violence and building skills needed to be a Helpline Volunteer. In addition to the 8 sessions, there will be an opportunity to engage in further training and development.

Volunteering on 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 2020 recruitment of volunteers. All sessions are online (apart from 2 sessions which will be held in person) and are 3 hours long. Each week you will have some self-guided learning, this will be a mix between reading, videos, reflective exercises or planned pair activities. Estimated hours of self-guided learning is detailed in the table below. The course had a total of 32 hours of learning.

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. Please also give us an initial indication of which dates work for you for sessions 3 and 5 when there are 2 date options for in-person training. SARSVL has undertaken extensive risk assessments to ensure the safety of these 2 in person sessions, the appendix on page 6 details the guidance for volunteers attending in-person training. If you would like to talk further about these measures please get in touch with [info@sarsvl.org.uk](mailto:info@sarsvl.org.uk)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Session number** | **Day** | **Date** | **Time** | **Hours guided by SARSVL** | **Estimated hours self-guided** |
| Selection Evening | Tuesday | 20/10/2020 | 17:30 -20:00 | 2.5 | 0 |
| Session 1 | Saturday | 24/10/ 2020 | 10:00- 13:30 (incl. 30 min break) | 3 | 0.5 |
| Session 2 | Tuesday | 27/10/2020 | 17:30- 20:30 | 3 | 1 |
| Session 3  In person session- choice of 2 dates | Tuesday | 03/11/2020 | 17:30- 20:30 | 3 | 0.5 |
| OR  Saturday | 07/11/2020 | 10:00 - 13:30 (incl. 30 min break) |
| Session 4 | Tuesday | 10/11/2020 | 17:30 – 20:30 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Session 5 In person session- Choice of 2 dates | Tuesday | 17/11/2020 | 17:30 – 20:30 | 3 | 0.5 |
| OR  Saturday | 21/11/2020 | 10:00 -13:30 30 min break) |
| Session 6 | Tuesday | 24/11/2020 | 17:30 – 20:30 | 3 | 0.5 |
| Session 7 | Tuesday | 1/12/2020 | 17:30 – 20:30 | 3 | 1 |
| Session 8 | Tuesday | 8/12/2020 | 17:30 – 20:30 | 3 | 0.5 |
| Post course interviews | Flexible | 8th,9th, 15th December | Flexible 20 minute slots | 0.3 | 0 |

**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 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 (this isn’t a requirement and 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](mailto:info@sarsvl.org.uk) with the subject line “Helpline Volunteer Application” by **Monday 12th October at midnight.**

At SARSVL we are committed to providing a service that is reflective of the women we serve in Leeds. We currently have an underrepresentation of women of colour and transgender women in our volunteer cohort. We especially welcome applications from women of colour and transgender women.

**Contact Details**

All information regarding the Helpline volunteer role, responsibilities, training dates etc are included in this pack. If you have any additional questions, including questions about health and safety for the 2 in person training sessions, please contact us via:

* **Email** – [info@sarsvl.org.uk](mailto:info@sarsvl.org.uk)
* **Phone** – 01132439102

**\***Please note all applications are processed and stored in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

To request a copy of our complete GDPR Policy, please email info@sarsvl.org.uk.

**Attending in-person training health and safety measures**

As part of the helpline volunteer training there are some sessions where the content can be particularly impactful on the attendee. To ensure that these sessions are delivered sensitively, are impactful and have appropriate access to staff to debrief we have taken the decision to run 2 sessions in person. These will be the sessions on child sexual abuse and suicide & self harm.

To ensure that these sessions will be safe for volunteers to attend there are number of measures that all attendees and trainers must adhere to. These are outlined below and are designed to safeguard yourself and others. If you have any questions, please do get in touch.

1. **Numbers and environment**

* Sessions will run, either split into 2 separate groups of 5-6 at SARSVL premises, as recommended by external risk assessors, or as a group of up to 10 in another space that is large enough for 10 people to adhere to social distancing regulations with appropriate ventilation
* Before the training the building and training area will be cleaned with particular attention to shared common spaces, such as door handles, light switches and railings
* During the day the trainer will also sanitise surfaces during a midday cleaning and safety check
* Doors will be propped open whenever possible so attendees will not have to unnecessarily touch shared surfaces
* Windows will be left open to provide good ventilation in rooms so do wear suitable clothing, especially if the weather is cold

1. **Instances when you should not attend in person training**

* Please do not attend the session if you are displaying symptoms of Covid-19.
  + a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
  + a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
  + a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
* Please do not attend if you or a member of your household is self-isolating
* Please do not attend if you or a member of your household have recently been exposed to a person who has recently tested positive for Covid-19
* **A staff member will be in touch with you before the training by phone to verbally confirm that you are symptom-free and fit to attend before the session. They can advise you if you have any questions on whether you should attend or not**

1. **Travelling**

* Take care when deciding how to travel to the session and select the most appropriate form of travel for you
* If you do use public transport you should wear a mask unless you are an adult who is exempt from wearing a face covering
* If you are sharing a car with another volunteer or person outside of your personal bubble you must also wear a mask unless you are an adult who is exempt from wearing a face covering

1. **Attending the session**

* Attendees should not congregate in groups and keep a 2 metre distance at all times, this includes when entering the building, waiting to be let into the training rooms, waiting to access toilets, having a smoke break or other areas. If the fire alarm is activated attendees use the nearest fire exit and meet at the assembly point ensuring a 2 metre distance from other attendees
* Upon entering the building, the first thing attendees must do is wash their hands
* Attendees will be able to stay 2 metres away from one another, therefore it is up to the individual whether they would like to wear a mask or not. Attendees are welcome to other wear PPE if that would make them feel able to attend the training such as gloves or a visor if they wish. Please be respectful of everyone’s individual decision
* Any PPE brought to the training by an attendee should be removed and disposed of by the attendee at the end of the training
* Please bring your own notebook and pen and do not use any shared equipment in the building
* Please wash your hands regularly, this includes:
  + Upon arrival at the training centre
  + after using the toilet
  + before and after eating
  + after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
  + and, if you use a tissue, make sure you dispose of it straight away into the bin.
* Attendees will not have access to a shared kitchen so are advised to bring their own water bottles/ drinks and if they do bring snacks will not be able to use a microwave
* Attendees should not share food or drink. If SARSVL provides any refreshments such as biscuits, these will always be individually packaged.

1. **If you fall ill during a session:**

* If an attendee experiences Covid-19 symptoms during training you must inform the trainer immediately and go home, trying not to touch make contact with anything as far as possible, and go and get a Covid-19 test.
* If this occurs, we will advise other attendees and conduct a full cleaning
* SARSVL will treat the situation sympathetically to avoid embarrassment for individuals or others as much as possible. We will also participate in any relevant track and trace methods to ensure safety of all attendee.