



Background Information

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is the professionally recognised Rape Crisis Centre for Leeds. SARSVL exists to support women and girls whose lives have been affected by child sexual abuse, rape and all forms of sexual violence, to promote their needs and rights, and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence and abuse.

SARSVL is run by women for women and girls. We are 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;
5. To challenge and change public attitudes about sexual violence against women and girls.

Development so far

SARSVL was started by a group of women activists in 2009 and registered as a charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2010, launching its first service (a specialist telephone helpline) in 2010.

In 2012, SARSVL secured its first Government grant, moved into its own rented premises for the first time and began recruiting to its small, valued staff team, which continues to support and enables our service delivery, development and capacity-building.

SARSVL's current specialist services are: a Freephone helpline, open some hours six days a week; helpline support via SMS text and email;(delivered by helpline volunteers); an Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service and a Counselling service, including short and longer term therapeutic options and group work.

For more information about SARSVL visit www.supportafterrapeleeds.org.uk



Counselling service

SARSVL's Counselling Service was added to our existing range of support services (Helpline and Advocacy) in August 2016 and has grown rapidly into a thriving and busy service. The Counselling Service offers holistic, feminist, trauma-informed and women-centred counselling to adult women who have experienced sexual violence or abuse of any kind, at any time.

The Counselling Service provides different strands of therapy and pathways to support women in recovery. The Counselling Service offers 20 sessions of weekly Counselling, 8 weekly Self-Care Sessions, Pre-Trial Therapy, Group Work, and Complementary Therapy. The Counselling Team includes the Senior Counsellor, who is responsible for service delivery and provides clinical supervision to all Counsellors, four one-day Staff Counsellors, Volunteer Counsellors and Trainee Counsellors. Counsellors work from different therapeutic approaches while providing holistic, trauma-informed and women-centred counselling, creating reach and diverse support.

The demand for the specialised women-centred Counselling Service is high and we receive self-referrals and referrals from other organisations. The Counselling Service is always growing and its most recent development has been the delivery of online counselling.