



## **Background Information for Applicants**

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is a specialist voluntary sector organisation offering a range of services to women, girls and non-binary people (who feel our women-centred approach is right for them) who've been through child sexual abuse (CSA), rape or any kind of sexual violence at any time in their lives.

We're specialists because we have in-depth knowledge and understanding of sexual violence and abuse, the trauma it can cause, and the impacts it can have, and working with these topics is our sole focus and purpose.

As a professionally approved Rape Crisis Centre, we take a feminist approach, and we're committed to social justice, anti-racism, equity and inclusion.

We're run by women for all women and girls (with some age restrictions – see below) and we offer our services in women-centred safe spaces, whether that's in person, online or by phone or text.

We also welcome non-binary people who feel this approach is the right one for them.

As well as our specialist Rape Crisis accreditation, we are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the Helplines Partnership, Mindful Employers and signatories to the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) sector Anti-Racism Charter.

We're also proud members of the Women and Girls Alliance – Leeds (formerly Women's Lives Leeds) with 11 other local women's and girls' organisations.

We're committed to working in partnership with others so we can support and promote the needs and rights of anyone who's been through sexual violence and abuse. At the same time our services are independent, for example of the police or social services.

Our services are also free. We can provide our face-to-face services through interpreters into other languages, and we offer travel and childcare expenses for survivors who need them.

Raising awareness and understanding of sexual violence and abuse, and dispelling harmful myths and stereotypes, for the benefit of all survivors and society as a whole, is also an important part of the work we do.

Ultimately, we want to see a world where everyone is free from the fear and experience of sexual violence and abuse.



## **Our story so far and plans for the future**

SARSVL was started by a diverse group of local women activists during the 16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women & Girls in 2008. We registered as a charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, and launched our first direct service, in 2010.

In 2012, we secured our first major grant, moved into our own rented premises in Leeds city centre for the first time, and recruited our first paid staff.

We now have 13 paid members of staff and 25 active volunteers, as well as a dedicated Board of eight charity trustees.

SARSVL's current specialist services include:

- Our confidential helpline for women, girls and non-binary people aged 13+, via email, text and Freephone
- Our Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service for women, girls and non-binary people aged 13+ who have reported (or are thinking about reporting) to the police
- Our counselling service, including shorter and longer-term one-to-one therapy, dedicated pre-trial therapy (for those who've reported to the police) and group work.

Because of our limited resourcing and the huge demand we already receive for our counselling service, it's currently only available for adults (aged 18+). For the same reasons, we have to operate a waiting list.

Growing our counselling service to meet more of the need for this specialist work in Leeds is one of our top priorities.

As part of this, we are planning and developing a range of outreach and partnership work to help us better meet the needs of some of the most marginalised and minoritised survivors. For example, we've recently begun a new relationship with partner organisation Together Women, delivering counselling to some of their clients who have experienced sexual violence and abuse from their city centre premises.

We are now recruiting for another 2-day-per-week (14 hours) Counsellor to support this vital service. This will be a 12-month fixed term contract in the first instance, with the ambition to make the post permanent subject to funding.

**For more information about SARSVL visit [www.supportafterrapeleeds.org.uk](http://www.supportafterrapeleeds.org.uk)**