



## **Background Information for Applicants**

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSVL) is a specialist charity offering a range of integrated services to women, girls and non-binary people 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 because working with these topics is our sole focus and purpose.

As a professionally-approved Rape Crisis Centre, we take an intersectional feminist approach to what we do, 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, and the West Yorkshire Rape Crisis Partnership, with Bradford Rape Crisis and RASAC (Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield).

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, including 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 15 paid members of staff and 25 active volunteers, as well as a dedicated Board of nine charity trustees.

SARSVL's current specialist services include:

- Our confidential, emotional support 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 organisation and services to meet more of the need and demand 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 service delivery relationship with sister organisation Together Women.

After three years in this important role, our current Office Co-ordinator has moved on to another job within SARSVL, and we are looking to recruit a new colleague to fill this vacancy and join our busy, friendly team.

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