



## **POLICY STATEMENT FOR WORKING WITH MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

### **What we understand**

Here at Notts SVSS, we understand and acknowledge that “sexual violence” (which encompasses sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape and sexual exploitation) can happen to anyone no matter of age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Our aim, therefore, is to ensure the development and delivery of gender-sensitive services and, more specifically, gender-specific approaches for interventions that respond to specific needs of different groups of all survivors.

We are aware that an estimated 12,000 males are raped in the UK every year, and more than 70,000 are sexually abused or assaulted. We know that male sexual abuse has profound effects on those who experience it and can deeply affect their mental health and relationships, as well as having an impact on their friends and family. Many male survivors may also face some additional challenges because of social attitudes and stereotypes about men, their masculinity and sexuality which can not only exacerbate symptoms but also create barriers to reporting and seeking help.

Here at Notts SVSS, we understand that although some of the psychological and psycho-social consequences of sexual violence that you are experiencing may be similar among both male and female survivors, the way males and females process trauma, display symptoms, seek help, and engage (or not) with support, is understood to differ according to gender. Our male service is for men and those who identify as male and development of those services therefore requires a gendered lens to look at and understand the male experience in a unique and different light to that of the female experience. However, within this Policy Statement we acknowledge that the wider ‘male’ population is diverse and is not a single, homogenous group but is one where gender identity may be fluid and may include varying definitions under that umbrella term. For the purposes of this Policy Statement individuals will be referred to as males.

### **How we support Male Survivors**

Our approach to engaging with and meeting the needs of male survivors is designed to actively address specific gender differences and the way that males might choose to access and respond or engage with therapeutic/support interventions. Our model of care is gender-sensitive, aims to understand the needs of you as a male survivor and integrate with other local services/resources in order to holistically promote your health, wellbeing and recovery. Providing a quality assured service to all survivors is at the heart of our service delivery aims and objectives. This is reflected in all our Policies & Procedures which are open to view should you so request.

Here at Notts SVSS we are committed to the following practices to ensure an inclusive and equal service for male survivors:

- Our website provides clearly defined information set out specifically for males and for LGBTQ+ survivors
- Services Information Leaflets specifically for males and for LGBTQ+ survivors
- Choice of gender of counsellor/support worker
- Male only service times
- Choice of ways you can access support
- Choice of support/therapy intervention to suit individual needs

- Choice of locations to access support to ensure ease of access to our services
- All services available to all genders; available 7 days a week at varying times
- All premises are accessible, welcoming and gender neutral
- We understand that service users from certain cultural backgrounds fear being recognised by members of their own communities and we take steps to address this concern – measures include: offering different modes of communication, different ways to access support, offer a range of safe and discreet outreach locations for face to face support (i.e. GP surgeries), offer workers from different cultural backgrounds to the service user etc
- Regular Male Service User Forum Groups and Male Consultation Panel with
- Employing a Sexual Violence Engagement Manager to facilitate engagement and consultation; to develop and build on services and raise awareness of male support needs, barriers and gaps in services both locally and strategically; engage Social media posts target messaging, articles/resources, campaigns and events specifically for male survivors
- A Male Advisory Group was implemented to advise and consult when our male service was first being designed, developed and launched in 2016
- Employment and volunteering opportunities open to all genders. We aim to implement a new strategic plan across 2021/2022 regarding volunteering opportunities within the organisation which will be open to all genders
- All staff and volunteers receive training on working with male survivors of sexual violence
- All staff and volunteers receive training on working with survivors who identify as LGBTQ+

We continue to work towards maintaining a presence, as the lead specialist sexual violence support service in Nottinghamshire, with regards to partnership working, providing training and pathway links.

### **How we Engage with Male Survivors**

The above ensures that we provide a flexible, inclusive and accessible service to male survivors and provide opportunities for involvement in consultation and engagement activities to develop, evaluate and improve our services. We recognise that men may take longer to access support (including many attempts to access support) and so we are committed to providing a flexible, expansive and inclusive approach that supports and acknowledges choice and individual preference when accessing support.

As part of our commitment to ensuring quality services to male survivors, we routinely collect and analyse outcomes data to understand and ensure that we are making a positive difference to the lives of our male clients. Furthermore, our Male Service User Forum Groups also provide opportunities to collect feedback on anything positive or negative experiences of engaging with our services; this includes providing ideas and views for service improvement and development. Our job opportunities are open to all genders to ensure our workforce throughout the organisation is diverse and reflective of our local community and so all clients can be offered a choice of gender of worker. This is reviewed in line with our Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies.

### **To conclude**

Here at Notts SVSS, we have a clear management and governance structure and lines of leadership and accountability. Staff in all roles are appropriately trained, qualified and experienced in working with people of all genders who have experienced sexual violence. We work to a robust set of Policies and Procedures (which are reviewed regularly and are available to view upon request) and our ethos and values are aligned with clearly defined aims and objectives for our service delivery to ensure that we offer a safe, ethical and effective service.

*Last review: April 2022*  
*Next review due: April 2023*