

**WE LISTEN  
WE BELIEVE  
WE SUPPORT**

**NOTTS  
SVS  
SERVICES**

**LISTEN  
BELIEVE  
SUPPORT**

If you're aged 15+ and have experienced rape, sexual violence or childhood sexual abuse  
either recently or in the past then we are here to help you

**About Notts SVS Services**

We are not part of the police, NHS or any other public  
service. We are a Registered Independent Charity that has  
been supporting survivors of sexual violence for over 30  
years in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

**You are not alone**

We are here to listen to you and  
support you. We won't judge you  
and most importantly we will  
believe you

# Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

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As Trustees of Notts SVSS we have ultimate responsibility for managing and governing the charity and making strategic decisions about its policies and objectives. Responsibility for the operational running of the organisation is held by the Chief Executive Officer.

Despite all the challenges faced by the third sector, we have had a very positive year, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our key successes.

1. We carried out the staff survey, and staff feedback lead to a review of sick pay, more social and well-being events, and reduced parking rates for staff at Victoria Centre.
2. Accreditation achieved for ISVAs and Male Quality Standards.
3. As requested by employees, trustees have had much more direct engagement with staff at well-being events and other events to improve visibility. We will continue to look for opportunities to engage with staff.
4. A bid to the Big Lottery for five years funding for the Peer Support Service was submitted and at time of press we have found out is successful.
5. The very exciting news is that we will be relocating to a new building in the city centre, so that almost all of our staff can be based in one place. We remain committed to keeping some accommodation at Nottingham Women's Centre for those of our clients who request contact in a women-only space.

In the next year, some of the key objectives for Notts SVSS include:

- Ensuring a smooth transition to the new building
- Building on the staff survey by investing in internal training
- Diversifying our funding
- Mobilising the Peer Support Service

I am standing down as Co-Chair and would like to say a huge thank you to all our Trustees who have supported me so brilliantly as well as supporting the work of Notts SVSS. Thanks also go to our Chief Executive Officer Novlet Holness and the Senior Management Team, and all our employees, whether on the front line delivering our services or working tirelessly behind the scenes.

A big thank you to all our funders for your continued support and confidence in us: including the Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottingham City Council, Integrated Care Board, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust.

The last thank you must go to our service users, who put their trust in us to support them through the most traumatic experiences. We shall always do our utmost to support you.

*Shane Morgan*

Co-Chair

Notts SVSS

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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This year, I have continued to have immense pride in the service we provide at Notts SVSS and our staff team that work so hard for survivors of sexual violence.

While many have now moved on from the pandemic, it is true that the impact remains for the most vulnerable people in society. For survivors who are experiencing the effects of sexual violence, they have had to navigate an already difficult time against the backdrop of an unsteady economy, record household bills, and increased homelessness.

Between July 2023 – June 2024 police recorded 69,184 rapes, with only 2.7% seeing charges brought in that same year.<sup>1</sup> But we know that around 5 in 6 women and 4 in 5 men don't report their experiences to the police.<sup>2</sup> According to Rape Crisis England and Wales 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult, while 1 in 6 children have been sexually abused.<sup>3</sup> Research by Mankind found that at least 1 in 6 males have been sexually abused or assaulted,<sup>4</sup> while a report by Survivor's UK found that nearly half of gay and bisexual men have experienced sexual assault.<sup>5</sup>

We know that across the UK, around 50% of survivors live with the after-effects of an assault for over two years before accessing support. It is not surprising then that demand on our service remains high, with the number of survivors with impacted in multiple or complex ways very noticeable. Our top 10 reported impacts of an incident include anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Survivors have also reported suicide attempts, pregnancy as a result of rape, family and relationship breakdown, loss of employment and homelessness. Survivors who have made a report to the police often wait years before their case is seen in court.

Like many support organisations we have waiting lists across many of our services and this requires an adaptable response. We have a specialist mental health nurse seconded to our service who works with survivors across both settings, to support mental health and those at high risk. Our waiting list initiative, run by the Hub, includes check-ins, access to mindfulness and group creating safety courses. These interventions help survivors learn how to self-regulate, putting them in a better place to start counselling when it is offered. The Hub is also usually the first point of contact for survivors reaching out for counselling/support and the team work to provide a welcoming, supportive and informative environment in order for Survivors to choose the support or intervention they need.

Our counselling and therapy team work with service users to both overcome the effects of the abuse and put in place strategies to help them as they move away from our service. The service has consistently received 100% good or excellent rating over many years, with this year being no exception.

Our Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) Service and Survivor's Support Service continues to be in demand across the city and county. With 91 adjournments over the past year, many survivors are left feeling like their lives have been put on hold. Our ISVAs are extremely tenacious, supporting survivors with issues that impact their lives, around housing, employment, benefits and wellbeing so that survivors can continue to give best evidence at trial. We continue to meet with criminal justice organisations to improve the experience of survivors reporting abuse and have a 100% good or excellent rating with survivors.

At the East Midlands Children and Young People Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPAS) our Crisis Support Worker team have been very busy supporting examinations and managing the 24/7 helpline. Our Therapeutic Support Worker has also continued to provide support to young people aged 13-17 referred into the service. All paediatric SARCs

are working towards national accreditation and I am proud of the work that has been done by our staff in respect of this. We continue to receive positive feedback about our crisis worker team from young people, their families and professionals at the service and the staff have been recognised both individually and as a team for their work.

This year we spent time renewing our accreditations for the Asa Hub and Counselling/Therapy services with the Lime Culture with the Male Quality Standards, our ISVA Service with Lime Culture and the whole of Notts SVSS has the Rape Crisis England and Wales National Service Standards kite mark. At the time of going to press, both the Male Quality Standards and the ISVA Lime Culture Accreditation have been renewed. We are one of very few organisations across the UK to hold all three accreditations, which assures survivors of all genders that they will receive quality assured and safe support which meets their specific needs.

In addition to our own campaigns, we continue to have a close relationship with the Consent Coalition, hosting their website, staffing events and developing resources. We have also been focussing on engagement with survivors who are less likely to know about or access our service and have rewritten our Engagement Strategy to support this.

I must also mention our team of back-office staff who work on administration, data, office logistics, management, engagement and human resources. They are often unseen but they are vital to organisation and without them, our service would not exist.

We know that some areas of the country have very little provision. We are very fortunate to have commissioners who are aware of the needs of survivors and are willing to put in place long-term funding provision that gives us the stability to meet those needs. Your continued understanding of the issues faced by survivors and adaptability to meet their changing needs means that long-term recovery is possible. I thank all our commissioners, stakeholders, funders and donors as they continue to support and fund our services.

I would like to thank our Board of Trustees who voluntarily and thoughtfully devote their time, energy and expertise to support the service and my role as Chief Executive Officer. Their insight and specialisms have really supported us and staff have appreciated your visibility within the organisation.

My thanks go to all staff, managers, frontline and back office. You are a strong team who work hard to support each other in the work we do. I am in awe of your dedication, professionalism, adaptability and ability and above all your caring and kindness, which are highlighted in the feedback we get from survivors.

At the heart of all our work though are the survivors. You are tenacious and determined and astound us with your ability to get through the most difficult of situations. We will always do our best to support you in your decisions and to regain power and control of your lives.

Novlet Holness

Chief Executive Officer

- Notts SVSS continued to be commissioned by The Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire to deliver Asa Sexual Violence and Abuse Hub Support and Specialist Therapy for adults in Nottinghamshire. The funding secured has enabled Notts SVSS to continue with the provision of all our hub and therapy services raising our profile.
- Our Asa Hub and Counselling/Therapy Services are Lime Culture Male Quality Standards accredited, assuring male survivors on the quality of services we offer to them.
- We continued to meet the needs of service users on our waiting list through the Waiting List Initiative. This includes check-ins, mindfulness and Creating Safety groups and enables survivors to get the most from the counselling/therapy that follows.
- Notts SVSS continued to be subcontracted by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust to provide 24/7 hub and crisis support services at the East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service.
- Notts SVSS continued to deliver an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service and Survivors Support Service (for adult survivors of institutional Childhood Sexual Abuse) as commissioned by The Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire.
- Notts SVSS has continued to work with a full-time Mental Health Nurse seconded to us via Nottinghamshire NHS Trust. This person has worked to embed ethical and holistic mental health care that is risk managed and signposted to the appropriate services
- We contact and safeguard all referrals made into our service in a timely manner. All self-referrals for counselling/therapy services are contacted within one working day, while 93% of other referrals are contacted within 2 working days. 97% of referrals are offered a risk and needs assessment within one working week.
- We have focused on removing barriers to our service and have met targets set to us by commissioners with respect to reaching survivors from diverse groups.
- Networking with partners has resulted in improved awareness and referral pathways and has strengthened joint working activity with other agencies, including probation and prison services and organisations working with the homeless and vulnerably housed.
- Notts SVSS continues to be heavily involved with the development of campaigns and messaging around consent. This year we led a Week of Activism for Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week.
- We continue to work within the core group for the Consent Coalition. We took the lead on writing the Safe Space Guide which, as part of the Safe Space Pledge, was used in the bid for Nottingham's purple flag reaccreditation.

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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Notts SVS Services originally started as a self-help group run by women who were angry at the incidents of rape within the county, the way female victims were treated and the images and myths that were attached to rape. The group ran on insecure funding and the determination of women involved becoming the charity Nottinghamshire Rape Crisis Centre.

Today, Notts SVSS is a specialist service providing support to all survivors (aged 18+) of sexual violence and abuse living in Nottingham/shire. We can support people whether the abuse occurred recently or in the past. We are open 6 days a week, including weekday evenings and our services are free-of-charge. This means that we are able to support survivors in the way they need and at a time that is right for them. Our services include:

- Helpline/Hub
- Drop-in
- Counselling
- Therapeutic Support (including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing)
- ISVA Service (Support through the criminal justice system)
- Support for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

We are able to offer survivors their choice of a male or female counsellor and we are unique in that we offer support to women in our women-only space.

Our counsellors, ISVAs and support workers are highly trained professionals from varied backgrounds in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and personal experience. Our services are available to survivors of all genders and we are aware of the additional challenges faced by those who are LGBTQ+ or who are from black, Asian or minoritised ethnic groups, asylum seekers or Refugees.

We are a member of Rape Crisis England and Wales, and have completed the National Service Standards a 'benchmark for excellence' for organisations working in this area. Our ISVA Service is Lime Culture accredited and our Asa Support Services hold the Lime Culture Male Quality Standards.

“

Our vision is for a world free from sexual violence and the systems and beliefs that enable sexual violence to happen.

”



**For many people our Helpline/Hub is the first contact they will have with our service. Our caring and skilled team answer helpline calls, referral emails, and online referral forms coming into the service. They work closely to ensure quality and continuity throughout the referral process.**

**You do not need to report to get support.**

## **Helpline Support**

People usually contact our helpline for support, information or because they don't know who else to talk to. We know that talking about sexual violence or asking questions about a situation you are in can be really difficult. We are valued by callers for listening and believing in a way that is both supportive and non-judgemental.

Sometimes, a one-off call is all that is needed, while others might use our 'regular caller service' having two 30-minute telephone support sessions per week.

## **Referrals into services**

We listen to survivors and help direct them toward the services and support that will best meet their needs. This can include referrals into our own and other services.

People often contact us in high levels of distress. Around 50% of survivors wait more than two years before they reach out for support. We have continued to take more referrals into our service

than ever before, and have noted an increase in callers with complex or multiple needs.

## **Drop In**

The helpline manage our Drop-in, which gives those who are in crisis situation or need a little longer to explore their options the time and space needed. Appointments are made in advance so that a trained therapist can be present and we receive excellent feedback on how supported people feel using this service.

## **Support while on the waiting list**

There continues to be a sustained demand on our service and so we have a waiting list for counselling and therapy. This can often be impacted by other systems, such as when cases are delayed in going to trial.

Our helpline runs a dedicated waiting list service, which includes check-ins with service users and reminders of additional support available, group mindfulness and group-creating safety courses. These groups enable survivors to learn techniques to maintain wellbeing, get referral into other services as needed and be in a place where they can best receive the benefits of counselling when their turn comes.

Feedback about the hub remains very high, with service users telling us that the support they received is individualised, caring and kind.



**4252**

Contacts made  
with the hub



**10**

members of  
staff



**1109**

referrals



**100%**

Self-referrals  
attempted  
contacted  
within one  
working day

“

The initial referral form made me feel at ease  
and I was able to trust [the helpline worker],  
I usually struggle with trusting organisations.

Thank you for doing your job

*(survivor on using the helpline service)*

”

### **Frank - Helpline Client**

Frank is a 45-year-old white man who has been on our counselling waiting list for 18 months. Frank called the helpline for the first time after experiencing a trigger a few days prior. Frank was triggered by a certain smell he encountered which brought back memories of the sexual abuse he had experienced as a child. Frank explained that this had led him to recall additional information of the child sexual abuse and possibly another perpetrator, though the memory was still very unclear.

The Hub Support Worker allowed Frank the time and space to explore how this has been making him feel and to support him through this. Frank was reassured that what he was feeling was normal and encouraged to think about how to make himself feel better in the moment. The Hub Support Worker suggested Frank should write down how he was feeling and reflect on what is making him feel better or worse. The Hub Support Worker discussed how this could be useful for Frank when he starts counselling with the service as he has approximately 6 months left on the waiting list.

Frank spent 30 minutes on the phone with the Hub Support Worker and was silent for some of the call. Frank was reassured that silence was okay and that the support worker would be on the other end of the phone to support him through the silence or to listen if he had more to say.

Frank told the Hub Support Worker that he felt better after expressing how he was feeling and was better able to process the new memories he was beginning to remember. The Hub Support Worker offered Frank a drop-in session with a counsellor so that he could talk through this in more detail and offered to send Frank some resources to help him in the future which Frank accepted. Frank was reminded that he could call the helpline twice a week for up to 30 minutes a time if he continues to find it helpful.

Our Hub Support Worker used a person-centred approach to support Frank, allowing him to talk and explore how he was feeling. Frank was able to sit in silence during the phone call allowing him to process his feelings in a safe space. He was offered ongoing support in the form of a drop-in session, future helpline use, and a pack of support resources. The support resources included our Creating Safety course and documents to help Frank understand how to deal with the new memories and how incidents of sexual violence could have affected him.

**Identifying details have been changed**

**Our counselling and therapy services are provided by an experienced, dedicated team of practitioners who specialise in delivering a range of short-term and longer-term therapies to survivors of sexual violence.**

Support available includes long-term and short-term one-to-one therapy, group therapy, email support, drop-in appointments, EMDR and CBT. Our service is gender-informed with survivors being offered a choice of a male or female support worker and women offered support in our women-only space. We have a range of options to help us adapt to the needs of clients. These include:

- appointments in the daytime, evening and weekend
- support in-person, by telephone or via online counselling rooms.
- flexible appointments to fit around shifts
- accessible rooms and facilities
- access to interpreters

We also offer short-term therapeutic support for family members, partners, spouses and carers of survivors. This helps them to remain emotionally well while responding to the needs of those close to them.

## Pre-Trial Therapy

The 2022 Crown Prosecution Service guidance recognised the impact that delaying access to therapy could have on both a survivor's wellbeing and the likelihood of a successful trial. They are clear that 'therapy should not be delayed for any reason connected with a criminal investigation or prosecution.'

Our therapists work inline with pre-trial guidance, enabling those in the criminal justice system to receive therapy and still give their best evidence. We are flexible, enabling service users to put therapy on hold or defer as the service user needs, enabling them to remain in control during this time.

## A tailored service

We continue to receive record referrals into our service, including many people with complex needs. We continue to review how service users are assessed for therapy and support, ensuring that the services offered are tailored to meet their needs and with the shortest wait time possible.

We work with a specialist mental health nurse, seconded to our service, to ensure those with the highest needs and greatest complexities are fully supported by both Notts SVSS and mental health services.



**4380**

Therapy Sessions Offered



**426**

people received  
counselling/therapy



**580**

Assessments booked



**100%**

Rated good/excellent

## **Case Study - Survivor Using the Counselling Service**

This survivor, a married female in her fifties, self-referred into the service for therapeutic support following a disclosure of sexual violence to a family member in 2021. She had suffered with long term physical health conditions and periods of poor mental health since the incident many years earlier. Having recently learned that the perpetrator had passed away, she approached the service for support to work through her feelings.

The service user shared in her assessment that the perpetrator was her biological father who she had been estranged from since being a baby. She was a teenager when her mum told her that her biological father was alive and, following a detailed search, she client was keen to make contact and meet him. Her father had married again and there was a step-family that was keen to meet her too. During the one time they met, her biological father had sexually abused her. Following the abuse, the survivor experienced episodes of anxiety and depression. She did not disclose the abuse to anyone for over thirty years.

In the first sessions of counselling the service user shared that no-one in her immediate family was aware of the abuse. She was keen to keep this disclosure from them, wanting the time and space to work out for herself how to live with the sexual violence she had experienced without being bound by it. In these first therapy sessions she shared her feelings of low self worth, mistrust of others and anxiety when not in control of her environment. She blamed herself for seeking out the man who she had hoped could be a paternal figure in her life. The service user shared that she felt responsible for the abuse occurring, as she had made contact with her biological father against her mum's advice. Much of our work throughout therapy revolved around the survivor's identity and her experiences and thoughts as a primary care giver; and what these meant for her. The service user shared how music, TV themes and smells could trigger flashbacks, especially during times of heightened stress, and these led to her feeling out of control with her life and unable to self-soothe. During some of these first sessions we explored grounding techniques that could be used to better manage flashbacks and the rape myths which had reinforced her feelings of blame.

As our therapeutic relationship developed and the service user began to trust the process of therapy, she shared the anger and confusion she felt when hearing comments from her step family acknowledging how much she looked like her perpetrator. These innocent comments had been so hurtful that she had often been unable to separate herself from her perpetrator; feeling enmeshed; as though a part of him was looking back at her from the mirror. These feelings had damaged her self esteem and identity growing up, often leading the service user to feel stressed and unable to trust herself and others when making life decisions. During this section of our therapeutic work, I invited her to use the Rewind Technique (RT) to work through her memory of the abuse, helping her to develop control of her involuntary audio and olfaction triggers.

As our sessions progressed the service user was able to acknowledge and mourn the loss of her teenage innocence and her happy-go-lucky character as direct results of her abuse. From this acknowledgement, she then developed and identified her protective factors – her strong familial relationships with her mum and step dad; her loving relationship with her spouse, her strong attachments to her children and her new found sense of identity and survivor resilience.

Towards the end of our sessions the service user felt she had used her therapy sessions to work through her feelings in her own way and her own time; and we arranged to meet up for our final sessions after taking holidays over the summer. The client emailed me during the summer to share that she had decided these sessions weren't needed, she felt safe to move forward with her life and shared her thanks for the support and insights she had developed during our work.

**Identifying details have been changed**

“

I felt welcomed, believed and listened to. The counselling I have received has given me the tools to completely transform my life.

I didn't think it was possible to be happy again but I was proven wrong and I couldn't be more grateful. I will never forget the help I was given at the lowest point in my life.

*(female survivor on using the counselling service)*

”

## BEYOND SURVIVAL GROUP SUPPORT

Our Beyond Survival Group is a 8-week follow-on course offered to clients who are coming to the end of their individual therapy. The group aims to instill hope for group members, giving them strategies, techniques and a positive outlook for their future moving forward.

Group work supports survivors to connect and feel part of a group that is united by a commonality. Members are able to move from surviving their experience of trauma into a different phase of their recovery where thriving is possible.

Although the group is planned and structured by the facilitators it is modelled on a person-centered approach led mostly by the group's members. This gives space to share, explore and connect.

The current 8 weeks topics are as follows;

- Week 1 – Course introduction, Grounding and Meditation
- Week 2 – Trauma and Self-Care
- Week 3 – Healthy Relationships
- Week 4 – Boundaries
- Week 5 – Anger and Creativity
- Week 6 – Positive Thoughts and Affirmations
- Week 7 – Trust and Self-belief
- Week 8 – Group Ending and Moving Forward

Groups are delivered in-person or online dependent on the expressed wishes of group members.

## EMAIL SUPPORT

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Our email support service is available for people who prefer to communicate in writing or would struggle with face-to-face or telephone support for whatever reason. We maintain both GDPR and confidentiality processes, ensuring our clients details are treated confidentially and with the same protection we offer to all our clients.

Email support can ensure privacy for the client as they can engage whilst at home for example. Additionally, individuals may be more comfortable in writing / typing their emotions rather than talking face-to-face. The email service is client driven, so they can choose when to engage; the information they wish to share and the pace of their therapy; this allows time for reflection and for the client to feel more in control.

“

Working with my counsellor has really helped me understand what has happened and why my brain was responding in the way it has. I am also experiencing less flashbacks and feel more in control of my life than before.

*(male survivor on using the counselling service)*

”

Our Mental Health Nurse Specialist is a valuable member of our team. Seconded in post via Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, she has helped to embed ethical and holistic mental healthcare within the structure of our service. This means that we have a strong, risk managed referral pathway into services where this is needed.

Our mental health nurse specialist has been involved with risk management and safeguarding. She helps to risk assess new referrals into the service, helping survivors manage their mental health including while on the waiting list for counselling. She also works hard to establish connections and smooth pathways between services. Her work helps to reduce decline in mental health, improving outcomes for recovery.

Our Mental Health Nurse Specialist has built strong relationships with staff, enabling them to feel more confident when working with people who have complex mental health presentations.



### **Case Study - Survivor using the Counselling and Specialist Mental Health Nurse services**

This survivor was in his early 30s when he referred himself into our service. He was experiencing significant distress as a result of experiencing childhood sexual abuse and sexual violence. His psychological distress was further exacerbated by his neurodiversity, challenging family relationships, and mental health struggles. Additionally, he had grown up living in countries where it was illegal to be gay, and as a gay man this not only contributed to messaging about shame, but also left him feeling unsafe to report incidents of sexual violence with same sex partners. The service user was allocated 20 sessions of pre-trial therapy. At this point the he had been supported by an ISVA for 2.5 months, and this support continued after therapy ended due to his ongoing investigation.

At the beginning of support the service user disclosed feeling that his emotional wellbeing had deteriorated since his last assessment with us. He was now finding it hard to leave the house due to fear of seeing the perpetrator who he had reported to the police. He also reported an increase in panic attacks, ongoing self-harm, eating distress, and strong suicidal ideation with planning. This triggered our safeguarding policy and so the client's GP was contacted, a safety plan was put in place, and his case was raised with our mental health nurse at the next case management meeting. When goals and aims for support were discussed during this session, the service user advised that he felt ready to explore the trauma he had experienced, and wanted the opportunity to talk through all incidents.

In early sessions, it quickly became clear that the emotional distress the service user was experiencing day-to-day was putting him at risk and left little room to explore the trauma he had experienced. By session six another risk-monitoring form was completed as the survivor disclosed active suicide planning and as a result a referral was put in to our resident mental health nurse. It was at this point it was agreed between the service user, counsellor and mental health nurse that ongoing support session with our mental health nurse would be beneficial. It was felt that this would provide a space for the survivor to get support for his mental health struggles day-to-day, allowing room to explore the historical sexual abuse in his therapy sessions.

With the introduction of sessions with our mental health nurse, support from his ISVA, and local mental health team, by the half-way point the service user had begun working through and exploring past incidents of sexual violence. There was a lot of learning, and self-reflection present at this point as the survivor was beginning to recognise the impact that his autism, family relationships, and cultural surroundings had had on his ability to recognise danger and seek support. It was evident at this point that he had been carrying a huge amount of self-blame and shame, which he was beginning to let go of through this work. Suicidal ideation was still something that the survivor struggled with, and these concerns were passed to our mental health nurse when they arose, keeping the service user safe whilst also retaining therapeutic focus in sessions.

Towards the end of his support the service user was able to demonstrate a significantly improved sense of self-awareness, reflection, and self-esteem. Through exploring the impact of his sexual trauma, he was able to release the shame he had been holding which contributed to an improved sense of self-worth. From this standpoint, he was then able to look at the boundaries he had been holding through a different lens and begin to explore how these could be changed to create a happier and healthier future.

As sessions came to an end, the service user expressed feeling that he had met his goal to explore the trauma he had experienced. He also reported a significant reduction in both the number of flashbacks and their intensity, and noted that he felt more in control of his life. The service user worked hard throughout his sessions to challenge himself and to confront difficult memories, and in the end acknowledged that it was a tough journey but could see that his hard work had paid off.

**Identifying details have been changed**

“

I feel I have been incredibly lucky to have received support from both mental health nurse (before my counselling began) and my counsellor. I have always been given honest and appropriate information and dealt with in a manner sensitive to my needs. This has helped me massively with my progress and dealing with a lot of trauma.

*(quote from survivor who received mental health support and counselling)*

”

The Therapeutic Support Service offers therapy and information to young people between the ages of 13 and 17 who live within the Nottingham area. Referrals come to us directly from the East Midlands Children and Young People Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPSAS).

We offer up to 10 one-to-one sessions for each young person referred to the service, although this can be reviewed to include additional sessions if appropriate. Sessions are delivered within the community, in venues such as schools, GP surgeries and college settings as agreed with parent/guardians and provision available.

As part of this work we liaise with schools, social services, families, and GPs to support the young people through safeguarding needs, and to deliver appointments. The development of greater links with more schools following the continued request for face-to-face therapy has helped create a wrap-around service for young people in a setting which they feel comfortable to be seen in.

We often refer into and onto other services, working alongside them where needed. We have strong links with other services that support young people with different aspects following a disclosure, including IMARA and their ChISVA (Children's Independent Sexual Violence Adviser) Team, EMCYPSAS Crisis Workers, CAMHS and Designated Safeguarding Leads throughout educational institutions.

Young people who reach 17 years of age continue to be referred into the ASA Hub and Therapy Service for support if they wish to receive additional emotional or therapeutic support from Notts SVSS. Young people under 17 years of age have been referred to Safe Time for additional therapeutic support.

**Our Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) play a vital role in supporting survivors of sexual violence with reporting to the Police and accessing the Criminal Justice System (CJS).**

## The ISVA Team

The ISVA team consists of an ISVA/SSS Contract Lead (part-time), ISVA and SSS Manager, Senior ISVA, 4 full-time ISVAs, 3 part-time ISVAs and 2 part-time administrators. All our ISVAs are fully trained and accredited, with the service accredited with the Lime Culture Quality Standards.

Our ISVAs are based in Nottingham and out in the community. We often meet service users at venues suitable to them, and have several staff working from bases at Nottinghamshire Police Stations and at the Topaz Centre (Nottinghamshire's SARC).

## What an ISVA does

The role of an ISVA is very dynamic; with one foot in the criminal justice system and one foot in the holistic system. The support we offer helps to keep service users well while supporting them with practical issues as they

move through the Criminal Justice System (CJS). On the day of the trial ISVAs motivate, support and re-assure survivors, and where possible we sit in the witness stand with them. We offer support post-trial, which can be especially important where a not-guilty verdict has been returned. We also support those service users whose cases have not progressed to court.

Our ISVAs provide assistance with safeguarding, housing, employment and education, finance, health, mental health, and emotional wellbeing, which are all areas that can be impacted by sexual violence. We have strong, respected links with Police, CPS, DWP, Witness Services and other statutory and voluntary organisations. We hold and attend many meetings with partnership agencies to ensure survivors are receiving appropriate support to meet their needs.

## Challenges and how we met them

One of our main challenges is the ISVA waiting list which, although this has decreased, is still too high. This is often caused by delays in court, especially court adjournments which are extremely impactful to survivors and the service.



**598**  
people supported



**4687**  
advocacy hours



**91**  
Court cases adjourned



**Bases in the Community**  
at police stations and the SARC



**multi-award winning service**



**100%**  
excellent feedback



Adjournments result in an increase in anxiety and trauma for survivors who are then requiring a high level of support over a longer period of time, impacting our waiting list. We are working with all the agencies involved to try and manage this, discussing the impact and looking at local solutions.

Service Users who are not going through the Criminal Justice Process are now seen by a dedicated ISVA who offers immediate support. This helps those survivors get access to practical support and streamlines the criminal justice waiting list. As a result, we do not have a waiting list for survivors requiring non-criminal justice support.

#### **Service Promotion/Engagement**

The ISVA Service works with many agencies to reduce the impact of criminal justice proceedings on clients and ensure that their voice is at the centre of decision making. These include:

- Lime Culture
- SMD Working Group
- Witness Service Partnership Work Meeting
- Op Soteria Planning Meetings
- CPS RASSO Scrutiny Panel
- CJS Reference Group
- Neurodivergence Work Stream
- Police Partnership Meeting
- Attended Nottm City Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Conference
- RCEW CJS Working Group.
- Developing Local Response to CSA
- Chayah Project
- Sexual Violence Action Network (SVAN)

“

Thank you ISVA, I  
cannot thank you and  
the police officers  
enough who have  
always been there and  
worked hard to get me  
justice

*(ISVA service user—a guilty verdict  
achieved)*

”

### **Case Study – Survivor Using the ISVA Service**

The service user is an autistic 19-year-old, bisexual, non-binary individual whose pronouns are they/them. They were living back in the family home, following sexual violence and domestic abuse by their ex-partner. This had been their first ever relationship and caused a lot of trauma and negative impact on their mental health.

Initially when contact was made with the survivor they did not engage. Their mother was listed as a third party who we were permitted to contact to arrange appointments on their behalf. We liaised initially with the mother which enabled the ISVA to be clear of the survivor's needs from the start and the best and most appropriate service and approach. Following an assessment with the service user, we were then able to arrange contact routes directly with them, giving them greater control and understanding on the case development. Over time it became clear the service user was in a domestic abuse relationship with their current partner.

### **Processed Followed**

Our ISVA liaised with the police Officer In the Case (OIC) and advocated that service user's pronouns and chosen name be used in communication. The ISVA fed back OIC updates to the service user in plain and simple terms that they could comprehend, which was important as they would often get confused about the stages of the investigation. Safety plans were made with the survivor should they bump into the perpetrator.

The service user would often reach out to ISVA outside of monthly sessions for some support and discussion around their current relationship as it was beginning to mirror their experience of domestic violence. Sometimes they would present extremely tearful and low. Over time ISVA worked with them to help them recognise the abuse within their relationship and understand what was happening. Emotional support was provided, appropriate referrals were made and openness and flexibility from ISVA and other services enabled the service user to safely leave their abusive partner and his toxic family. The survivor was referred into the Freedom Programme which has been beneficial and insightful and has signed up to other courses. They were also made aware of Clare's law for which they are in the process of applying.

The service user was referred to counselling and has worked with the ISVA to find what coping mechanisms and strategies work for them.

### **Outcomes Summary**

The CPS decided not to take the case any further due to the evidence and various other reasons. The news was delivered to the service user at their home address. The ISVA made the survivor aware of the Victim's Right to Review process, which they decided against.

The service user has since been referred to Equation and an LGBT domestic Violence service, where healthy relationship work will be completed with them.

**Identifying details have been changed**

**Our Survivors' Support Service offers specialist support to anyone aged 18 and above, living in Nottingham/shire, who is a survivor of recent or non-recent institutional child sexual abuse.**

The service was set up to support the number of people coming forward as adults disclosing that an institutional organisation had failed to protect them from child sexual abuse. We also support those people who have been sexually abused as a child and told a person in authority, for example a police officer, social worker or a teacher, who then ignored the report or did not act upon it properly.

There were a total of 48 survivors supported by this service from April 2023 – March 2024. Survivors in this service tend to require support for longer periods of time, predominantly due to mental health complexities.

## What we do

We support our service users to exercise greater choice and control in all aspects of their lives. We help survivors experience improved health and wellbeing by gaining appropriate access to health and other services and help them develop coping

strategies to better manage their mental health, emotional wellbeing and any substance misuse. This support can be especially helpful where there has previously been a distrust of services due to the abuse experienced.

Our support workers work within a multi-agency setting, providing a tailored response to meet the survivor's needs. This can include information provision, support with options exploration and accessing other partner agencies, such as housing, immigration, welfare benefits, education and emotional and physical wellbeing.

The service continues to hold strong working links with the Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), DWP and Nottingham CSA Group. We work closely with the local Clinical Commissioning Group to enable survivors to access a Personal Health Budget.

The service continues to receive excellent feedback.

“

*Due to the impact of institutional child sexual abuse on a survivor's mental health, survivors require access to longer term support and more robust therapeutic support.*

*There can also be a distrust of services and so the support worker, while making referrals, will also advocate for the survivor and support them to access they need*

”



**48**  
survivors  
supported



**293**  
advocacy hours



works closely  
with other  
organisations



**100%**  
excellent  
Feedback

“

I have had my ISVA for more than a year and I can't thank her enough so I wanted to send this thank you, so everyone knows! Unfortunately, my case didn't get the justice it should have done. However, through all of this I have had my ISVA to support me. She is amazing and doesn't realise how much of an impact she has made on my life and helped me keep going and feel heard. She has been there for everything I have needed.

*(Survivor on Support Received from one of our ISVAs)*

”



# EAST MIDLANDS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICE (EMCYPAS)

25

**Notts SVS Services is sub-contracted by Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH) to work collaboratively with a broad range of health and voluntary sector organisations across the East Midlands to deliver the East Midlands Children and Young Peoples Sexual Assault Services. Notts SVSS manage the crisis support workers working in the centre.**

## **Overview of Service**

East Midlands Children and Young Peoples Sexual Assault Services (EMCYPAS) is a paediatric sexual assault referral centre that supports children and young people aged 17 and under or until 24 if the young person has severe learning difficulties.

EMCYPAS covers the whole of the East Midlands which includes Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire. There is also a hub in Northamptonshire called Serenity. EMCYPAS offers forensic examinations, acute-non-forensic examinations, non-recent examinations, and sexual health screening.

The main point of contact for our service is the 24/7 helpline that is managed by our Crisis Support Worker team. For every child or young person that comes through our service, we are able to refer them on for therapeutic support and CHISVA (Children's ISVA) Support. We are also able to take referrals from professionals and young people aged 16 years and over for support referrals only.

The EMCYPAS team is made up of clinically trained staff and a team of Crisis Support Workers. The Crisis Support Workers are employed by Notts SVSS and overseen by our Operations Manager and Contracts Lead. Our Senior

Crisis Support Worker works 40hrs a week, while six Crisis Support Workers cover a total of 220hrs between them. NUH Staff are made up of one Clinical Lead, seven doctors, one Service Manager and one specialist nurse.

## **Crisis Support Workers**

The Crisis Support Workers manage the 24hr telephone helpline and work alongside the Safeguarding Nurses and Clinicians to provide expert information and advice to those accessing the centre.

Crisis Support Workers provide support calls for children and young people and their families and carers who may be extremely traumatised, in crisis or suicidal. They will arrange the necessary appointments to facilitate forensic medical examinations and will help to arrange ongoing support for the children and young people after attending the centre, making safeguarding referrals where needed.

During this year the EMCYPAS team carried out 315 examinations, while Serenity covered 85. Of these, 254 were referred to a Children's ISVA, 333 were referred to therapy and 71 had safeguarding referrals made. Many other children and young people were referred into the service and were referred onwards for support without an examination.

## **Challenges**

Following on from the proposals of UKAS to implement accreditation for all SARCs (Sexual assault referral centres) NUH with the support of the Notts SVSS EMCYPAS Team have been working extremely hard to develop a working plan to ensure we are able to meet requirements and standards set

by the ISO (international standards). This will ensure that all patients who journey through SARC services will be met with competence and quality that can be measured.

This has led to many changes in the service that have at times been timely and challenging to implement. All SARCs are expected to have met these requirements by October 2025. Despite the challenges that have naturally followed from the movement towards the implementation of the UKAS accreditation, EMCYPSAS are making steady and effective progress to meet the deadlines with minimum disruption.

### **Successes**

Our crisis support workers are the heartbeat of our service. While developing and managing the 24/7 rota can be challenging, our staff are always extremely supportive of each other and flexible to fill shifts where and when needed. Management listen to their staff and work extremely hard to ensure the staff are happy and motivated while we continue to deliver an effective high quality service.

We have moved to a new telephone system using NUH phones, enabling out of hours staff to remain at home unless they are called in.

### **Hopes for the future**

The specialist Nurse and Lead Crisis Support Worker will develop a service presentation and make local connections within our service area to share the presentation and raise awareness around our service to reach out to as many professionals, children and young people as possible.

We will continue to work towards the SARC accreditation and achieve this by October 2025.

“

Patsy is always welcoming  
and cheerful with staff,  
Children and young people.  
She is always keen to  
support in examinations  
and this is where the  
special mention is earned.  
Feedback from young  
people and their carers has  
always been full of praise  
for her kind, caring and  
thoughtful approach.

*(Our Crisis Support Worker Patsy was  
awarded October Star of the Month  
across the NUH )*

”

**Engaging with others, including survivors, organisations and the general public is key to ensuring that people know about our services and feel able to contact us if they need support. This year we have focussed on survivor groups under-represented as service users, to help us understand barriers to getting support and how they might be overcome.**

This year we have refreshed our Engagement Strategy and now look at engagement under four different headings:

- Service User Engagement (those already involved in our service)
- Diverse and Representative Groups (providing a focus on different groups who may experience barriers to accessing services)
- General Engagement and Awareness Raising
- Staff Engagement

Under these headings we have several projects happening or planned to happen ensuring our service is accessible to as many as possible. This includes projects like the Peer Support Groups, Professional Survivors Network Panel and attendance at Notts Pride and other events.

## **Reaching out to different providers and community groups**

Our Engagement Officer has spent a lot of time building links between ourselves and other organisations who support vulnerable people and those less likely to know about or use our service.

We have successfully worked alongside different organisations and groups to look at common concerns, share knowledge and build relational trust between ourselves, professionals and other service users. We have helped to deliver the 'Sexual Controller' element of the Freedom Programme to both Nottingham Muslim Women's Network service users NIDAS (based in the county) and have been invited to lead future sessions.

We are working alongside Friends and Bredrins to put on an event for Men's Health Week looking generally at men's health, prostate cancer and the concerns faced by male survivors.

Our first Your Voice Matters service user garden party will be taking place in July.



## Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (SASVAW)

SASVAW was set up around 5 years ago to raise awareness of sexual violence. While this is not an ongoing campaign, the logo is changed yearly and different services use this week to raise awareness on sexual abuse and related issues.

This SASVAW we hosted a 'Week of Action.' This involved seven easy-to-follow actions for each day of the week, including; challenging a rape myth on social media; writing to your MP about the Keep Counselling Confidential campaign; talking to your employer about their policies; wearing purple to show support for survivors and completing a survey to 'keep the conversation going'. This was a success, with our posts being shared widely and many organisations and individuals wearing purple on the Friday. The Council House was lit up purple as part of the event.

## Amplifying Survivor Voices

Our 'Use Your Voice' page on our website continues to highlight different surveys and consultations that survivors and supporters can take part in. This is in response to requests from survivors about how they can help to bring about wider change.

## Write to End Violence Against Women Awards (WEVAW)

We have continued to be on the Steering Group for the WEVAW which works to recognise responsible reporting on violence against women and girls in the press.



Notts SVSS are active members of Nottingham's Sexual Violence Action Network (SVAN). This is a group of 20 organisations (including Nottingham City Council, local universities and Nottinghamshire Police) working together to reduce sexual violence and to improve the outcomes of those who have experienced an assault, whether or not they choose to report.

The SVAN sits behind the Consent Coalition the public-facing arm of the network. Notts SVSS have been at the core of much of the work undertaken by this group and hosts the website where many of the resources are housed. Work we have been involved with this year has included:

- Creating the copy for the Safe Space Pledge Guide. This was then used, along with the Safe Space Pledge and other schemes to present to the Purple Flag Assessors. We have been involved with the development of the Safe Space Pledge since the beginning, including the first draft of the pledge and its inclusion in the Best Bar None Nottingham scheme. In re-awarding Nottingham Purple Flag Status, assessors described the pledge as 'national best practice.'
- Promoting and presenting the Safe Space Pledge, how it was developed and how it is run, with different partners including the Rape Crisis England and Wales Prevent Group.

The Consent Coalition has received acclaim up and down the UK and now across four continents, for its resources, social media messaging and shareable content.

We are proud to be part of this great initiative and to host such a positive and preventative piece of work on our website.



## Increasing accessibility to our service

At the beginning of this year we added the Recite-Me accessibility tool to our website. This innovative tool enables visitors to our website to access it in a way most appropriate to them. The tool's features include:

- Computer translation of the website
- Text to speak (where written text is read out aloud, including in many translated languages)
- Font formatting - colour, size, font style etc
- Reading aids - eg rulers, magnifying glass, margins etc

These new features work across all our online forms, making it more easy for clients to self-refer and on PDFs that are viewable on our site.

Statistics for the first 10 months show that 269 people benefitted from this tool, visting over 4.7 pages per visit, higher than the industry average.

56% used the screen reader (text to speech) tool, 27% used the translation facilities, 16% used styling options and 7% used reading aids.

The tool has proved helpful for survivors who are neurodiverse, have learning disabilities or who experience language barriers.

## Evaluation Forms

We have increased service user ability to provide feedback on our services by putting our Evaluation Form for Counselling and Therapy Clients online. This means that survivors are able to input information online and submit it securely, making full use of the Recite-Me tools and removing barriers to taking part.

## Reaccreditations

2024-2025 will be a busy year for Notts SVSS as we go through the process of reaccrediting our services with the Rape Crisis England and Wales National Service Standards, Male Quality Standards for the Hub and Counselling Services and the ISVA Standards.

At the time of going to press we have been re-accredited with the Male Quality Standards and the ISVA Standards and we are awaiting assessment for the RCEW National Service Standards. These accreditations are crucial to services such as ours as they provide reassurance around standards of service, professionalism, suitability and accessibility, both to survivors and those commissioning our services.



## Events

We are looking forward to hosting both our Your Voice Matters service-user feedback event and It's Time to Talk men's health event. These will help to ensure that survivor voices remain at the centre of our service and help to remove barriers to other service users.

## Big Lottery Community Fund

We are currently in the process of applying to the Big Lottery Community Fund, to help fund our Peer Support work.



“

[Counselling] has helped me to understand more about how my experiences in childhood and adulthood and how my choices of partners has impacted my life and kept me in perpetual abuse and trauma. It feels a bit safer knowing that I understand more about boundaries and how to use my own personal boundaries to keep me safer from abuse and being taken advantage of

*(Survivor on the Counselling Service)*

”



The economic environment remained challenging during the financial year 2023-24, with inflation falling from the previous year's peak, but price rises and cost of living pressures continuing. Our income increased by just under 4% to £2.1m, as funders responded to these rising cost pressures.

During the previous financial year we drew on our reserves to award a flat-rate increase in staff salaries, in recognition of the unusually severe pressures on the cost of living. During 2023-24 we were able to award a 3% increase in staff salaries. Elsewhere we maintained a cautious approach to spending and we were able to bring our total expenditure down by 11% over the year, to just under £2m. As a result, we have rebuilt our reserves to a level very close to 4 months' operating costs, which is our long term aim.

The financial environment remains challenging and uncertain and we continue to be committed to budgeting carefully to protect the financial stability of the organisation and mitigate risks. We carried out a review of our reserves policy in 2024, to reflect our business plan, financial projections and funding strategy. Given the funding environment, we are continuing to pursue opportunities to increase and diversify our funding and protect our reserves.

*Ruth Tarlo*

Treasurer

More detailed information about our finances can be provided upon request or viewed on the Charity Commission website.

**85%**

female clients

**13%**

male clients

**8**

trans clients

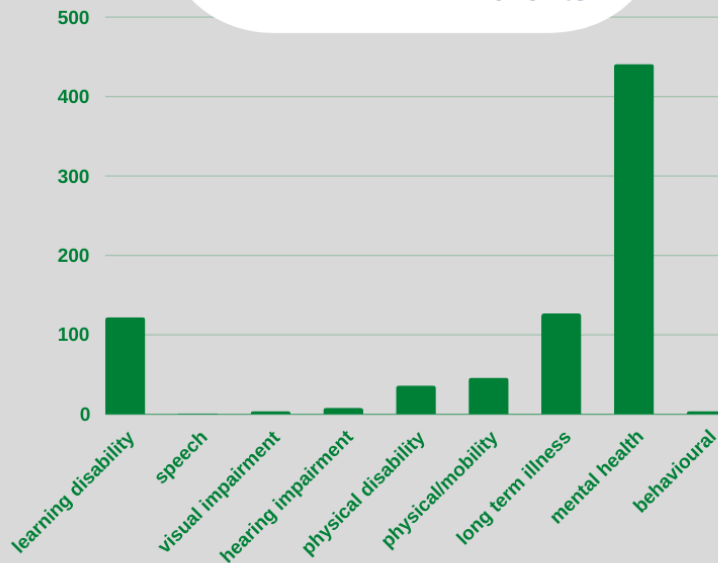
**7**

non-binary clients

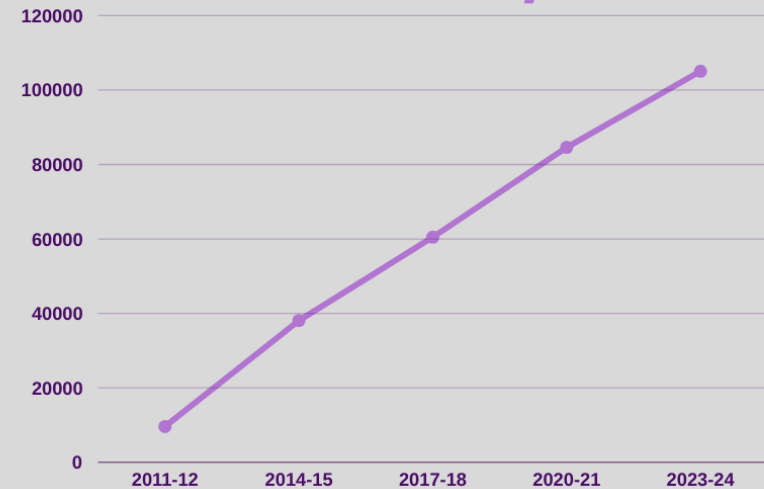
**24%** of clients are from minoritised ethnic groups



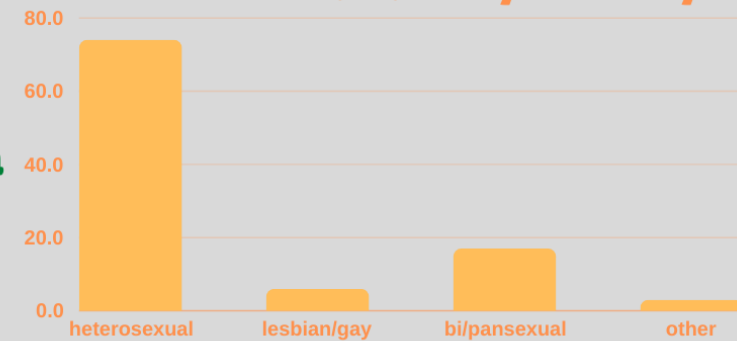
**49%** of clients disclosed they had a disability  
(11% said they had no disability)



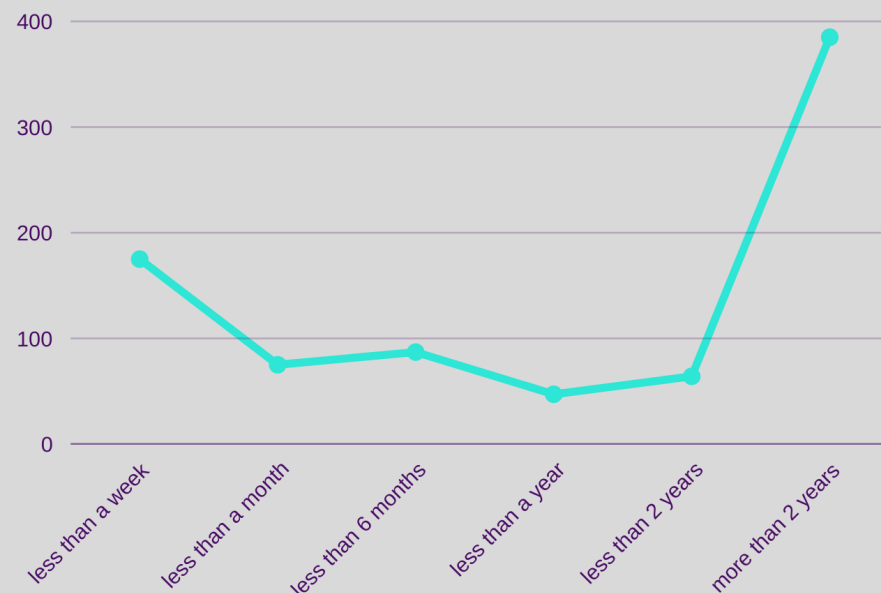
contact over the years



sexual orientation where disclosed (%) 18+ years only



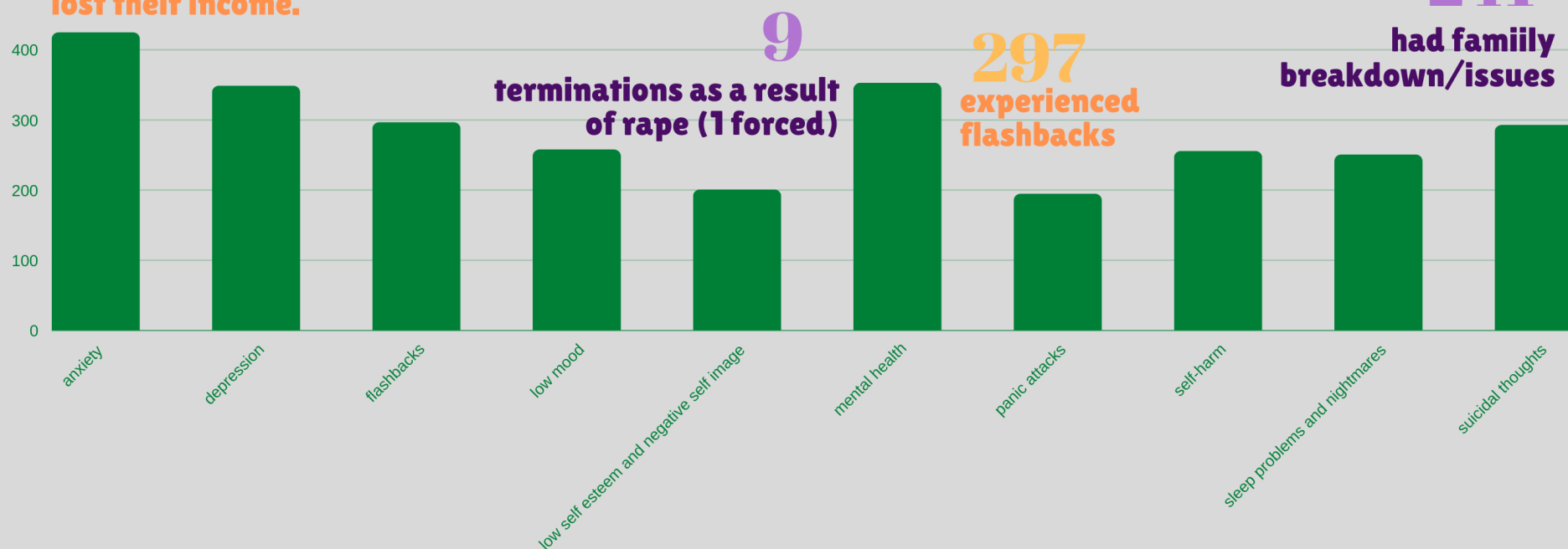
## Presenting Incidents



**92**  
experienced  
work issues. 16  
lost their income.

**25**  
had homeless or  
accommodation issues

## incident impact – 10 most reported incidents



**9**  
terminations as a result  
of rape (1 forced)

**297**  
experienced  
flashbacks

**241**  
had family  
breakdown/issues

## Aims

- To offer a range of free, confidential, client-focused counselling, support and advocacy services to survivors, aged 18+, of sexual abuse, sexual violence and rape, whether this has occurred recently or in the past.
- To raise awareness through the media and education and training on issues around rape, sexual violence and abuse.

## Objectives

- To operate a telephone helpline staffed by trained support workers.
- To provide, telephone, online and face-to-face support and counselling services to all survivors of sexual violence, aged 18+, regardless of their gender or other protected characteristic.
- To offer support that meets survivors' needs, including where they experience multiple, intersecting oppressions. This includes, but is not limited to; support for women in a women-only space, access to translated information and interpreting services, choice around gender of counsellor/support worker, services at outreach venues, support over the phone and via online counselling rooms, access to ground floor and accessible rooms.
- To accompany and support a survivor through the criminal justice process
- To assist a survivor in understanding their rights and services they can access and provide assistance with practical matters
- To act as a resource and information centre for statutory and voluntary organisations and the general public.
- To provide talks, training sessions, and workshops in a variety of settings, e.g. hospitals, schools and the police.
- To raise awareness of the multiple issues around sexual violence and survivors' needs by; instigating positive change through active campaigning; working with local and national government, statutory and charitable organisations; maintaining an active and reliable online presence.
- To recognise the gendered aspect of sexual violence and violence against women and girls (VAWG), as demonstrated through statistics, and use this knowledge to consider and challenge the wider social setting that allows this to happen.
- To work in partnership with statutory organisations and the voluntary and support sector to challenge and reduce violence against women and girls in our communities.

## Our Commitment to Supporting Survivors

All our policies, procedures and guidelines have been implemented with the intention of providing an ethical and supportive environment to our service users. As part of that commitment we are a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

## Customer Care and Complaints

We take all complaints seriously and are committed to enabling survivors to be to be empowered to do so. All staff must adhere to our Code of Ethics. The organisation is recognised by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and we work to BACP criteria. If you are not happy about the standard of service received or about the way in which you have been treated, by a paid or unpaid worker(s), you have the right to make a complaint. A copy of the complaints procedure can be found on our website or obtained on request.

“

I feel really lucky to work for the ISVA service because of all the hard work the service does to support people who have been through such traumatic situations in their lives. I feel proud to be a part of that and to be able to directly support survivors as they navigate through the criminal justice system  
(ISVA)

”

## Our Vision

Our vision is for a world free from sexual violence and the systems and beliefs that enable sexual violence to happen.

## Our Mission

We Listen. We Believe. We Support. We listen to survivors of sexual violence and we believe the things they tell us. We offer specialist support without judgement and empower survivors to make decisions and take control of their lives.

We actively challenge attitudes around sexual violence, victim-blaming and consent through education, campaigns and collaboration, as we work towards a society free from abuse.

### We do this by:

- Providing a range of free, confidential and non-judgemental therapeutic, support and advocacy services to people aged 18 and above, in Nottingham/ Nottinghamshire, who have experienced any form of sexual abuse, sexual violence or rape at any time in their lives.
- Offering support, whether or not a person has reported to the police.
- Empowering survivors to make their own decisions on the support they receive, including sexual health, reproductive rights and healthcare choices.
- Being gender-aware and offering support to women in women-only spaces.
- Promoting an accessible, equitable and inclusive service, while adapting support to meet a survivor's individual needs.
- Being specialists in our field. Our empathetic staff are trained and experienced in supporting survivors of sexual violence and the affect it can have on people with multiple and intersecting oppressions.
- Listening to and collaborating with survivors when developing our services.
- Being accountable and adhering to national quality standards and BACP ethical guidelines.

- Challenging the myths and stereotypes that surround gender and sexual violence.
- Working in collaboration with statutory bodies, charities and other organisations to promote survivor voices, professional experiences and knowledge to bring about wider social change.

## **Statement of Values**

### ***Survivor-centred***

Our services are survivor-centred and designed to respond to the expressed needs of individual service users. We listen to survivors and believe what they say; empowering them to make choices about the support they receive. All people in contact with our service are treated with dignity and respect, within a culture of belief.

### ***Accessible and Inclusive***

Our services are open to anyone aged 18+ living in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We are proactive in our inclusivity, through the images we use, accessibility tools we have in place and options in how support can be accessed and offered. Our diverse staff team work hard to engage with people who are less likely to access support, identifying and removing barriers to our service. We have an anti-racist approach and oppose discrimination in everything we do.

### ***Empowering Choice***

Trauma can impact survivors in many ways. We believe in listening and empowering survivors to make the choices that are right for them. We work in partnership with other agencies to offer survivors choice in the services they receive and how they can access them.

### ***Gender Informed***

Our services are gender informed. We offer services to women in a women-only space, and empower women to take back their autonomy and make decisions that are right for them.

Our counselling and therapeutic services are also Male Quality Standards accredited and staff are trained in the specific needs of male survivors. Our Trans Inclusion Policy details the specialist support available to trans and non-binary survivors accessing our service.

### ***Feminist***

We work with all genders and we are a feminist organisation.

Sexual offences are classed as VAWG\* and are predominantly perpetrated against women. An intersectional feminist perspective helps us to consider the wider social setting, including gender and other inequalities, that enable this to happen and what can be done to challenge this.

We understand that terms like VAWG can impact male survivors who may feel unseen and unheard. Feminism is about equality and equity. Our counselling, therapy and helpline services are Male Quality Standards assured and we recognise and campaign for the needs of male survivors in their own right.

*\*VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls is a term denoting forms of violence predominately used by men against women. The term is widely used by government, commissioners, policing and domestic and sexual violence organisations.*

### ***Trauma Informed***

Sexual violence can impact a survivor's life in many ways. We recognise the signs, symptoms and impact of widespread trauma and how this can affect all aspects of a person's life. We prioritise the safety of survivors and work holistically to identify areas where they need support, referring into other services where needed.

We know that survivors of sexual violence can feel powerless. Through listening, collaboration and offering choice we empower survivors to take back control, minimising impact and reducing re-traumatisation

### ***Accountable***

We welcome and encourage feedback from survivors, commissioners, staff, professionals and the public. Service Users are invited to provide feedback at regular intervals with us and we have a feedback facility and complaints policy on our website. We meet regularly with commissioners to discuss our work and meet with survivor groups to listen to their ideas and feedback.

Our You Said – We Did page features changes we have made to our service as a result of feedback.

### ***Quality Assured***

Our services are quality-assured by national bodies and organisations and we work to the BACP ethical framework. This reassures survivors and commissioners of the safety, quality and efficacy of the services we provide.

### ***Believe in Change***

We believe that a world free from sexual violence is possible. We campaign to raise awareness of sexual violence; we challenge decision makers and we work collaboratively with other organisations. Until a world free from sexual violence is possible, we will ensure that sexual violence and support for survivors is high on the local and national agenda.



“

I don't know how I'd get by without the  
helpline, you don't judge, I think all of you  
[on the helpline] are worth your weight in  
gold

*(survivor on the helpline service)*

”

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

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Donations towards our work are always welcome; cheques should be made payable to Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services and sent to us at 30 Chaucer St, Nottingham NG1 5LP. We are a registered charity, number 1103071. Many people choose to fundraise for us, details of our Just Giving site are available on our website.

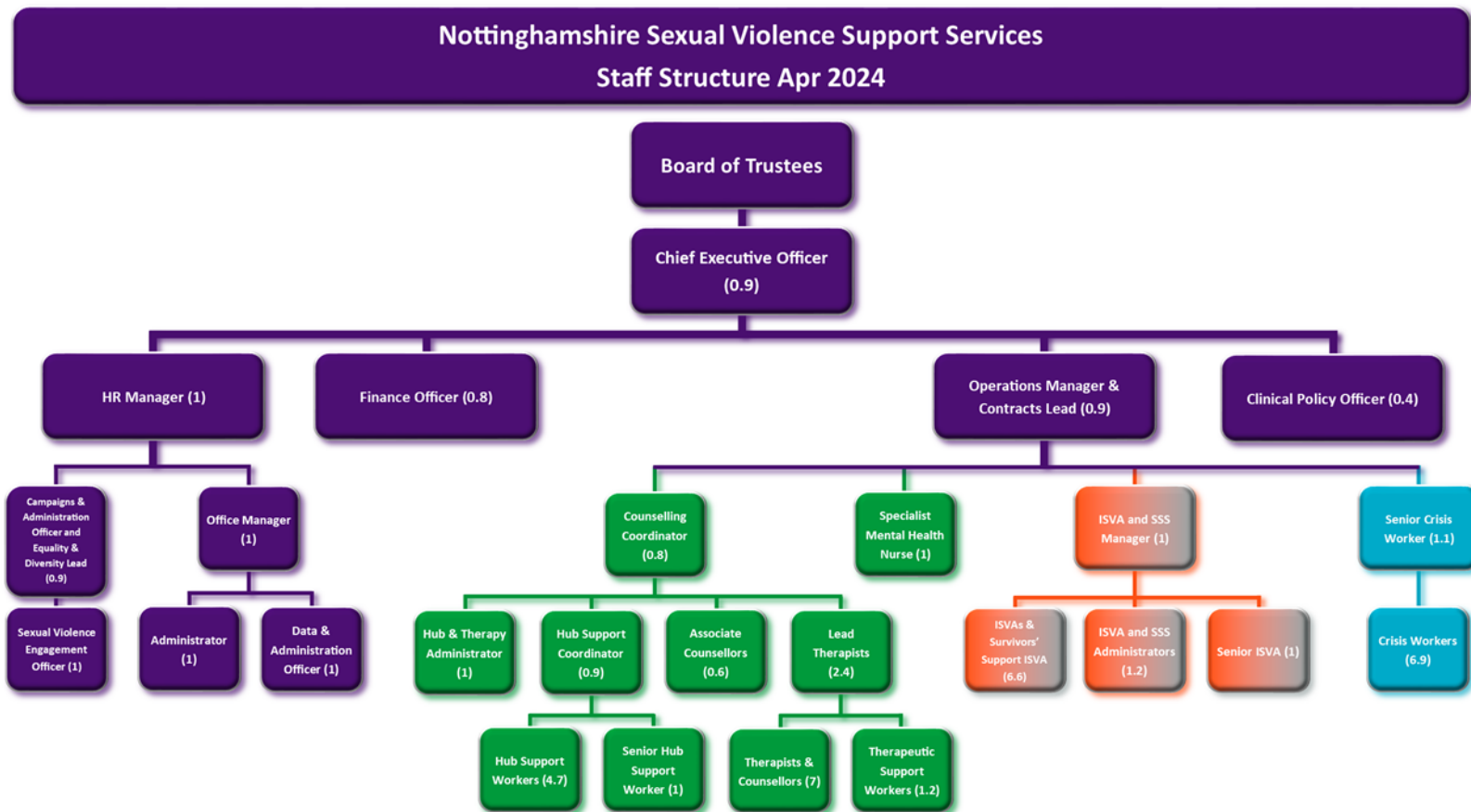
If you are a UK taxpayer you can complete a Gift Aid declaration, which enables us to claim back tax. For details please contact us at the above-mentioned address. Alternatively, if you would like to join the Board of Trustees, contact us on 0115 947 0064 and we will be pleased to discuss how to become involved.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **We would like to thank the following for their generous support:**

All Friends of Notts SVS Services  
Barclays Bank  
Community Accounting Plus Ltd  
East Midlands Children's and Young People's Sexual Assault Service  
Equation  
Lime Culture  
Ministry of Justice  
Nottingham City Council Crime and Drug Partnership  
Nottingham City Council Communities of Identity Fund  
NHS Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group  
NHS Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Groups  
Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service

Nottingham University Hospital's NHS Trust  
Nottingham Women's Centre  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Grant Aid  
Office of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner  
Rape Crisis England and Wales  
Rushcliffe Council for Voluntary Service  
Shake Social  
Smellie Savage  
38 Degrees  
Zero Tolerance



### Board of Trustees

CO-CHAIR: Shane Morgan and Claire Ward  
TREASURER: Ruth Tarlo

MEMBERS: Angie Piesold  
Arya Suresh  
Clare Fox  
Leah Cleghorn  
Léonie Mathers  
Kate O'Neill  
Kristan Hopkins

### Chief Executive Officer

Novlet Holness

We employ a team of dedicated and experienced staff, have received various awards and been recognised for our work with survivors of sexual violence.

*Registered Charity: 1103071*

*Company Limited by Guarantee: 4823994*

“

This is the only helpline that I feel  
comfortable speaking to

*(survivor on the helpline service)*

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