

**WE LISTEN
WE BELIEVE
WE SUPPORT**

**NOTTS
SVS
SERVICES**

**LISTEN
BELIEVE
SUPPORT**

If you are 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 2024-25

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

30 CHAUCER STREET, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 5LP

Office: 0115 947 0064 Helpline: 0115 941 0440

Email: admin@nottssvss.org.uk Web: www.nottssvss.org.uk

As the Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services Board of Trustees, we hold ultimate responsibility for the management and governance of the charity, setting its strategic direction and ensuring its policies and objectives reflect our mission and values. Operational responsibility is held by the Chief Executive Officer, supported by a skilled and committed Senior Management Team and a highly skilled staff group whose work underpins all that we achieve.

The conclusion of the financial and reporting year provides an important opportunity to reflect on our progress, achievements, and challenges. Each year brings its own uncertainties, as the political, economic, and environmental landscape continues to shape the context in which the third sector operates. Despite this, the organisation has continued to deliver vital services and pursue its strategic goals.

Key achievements over the past year include:

1. The ongoing delivery of high-quality support to all our service users across the organisation, made possible by the dedication and professionalism of our staff.
2. The successful launch of the Peer Support Service, funded for five years by the Big Lottery, expanding our offer to survivors.
3. The introduction of a range of staff social and wellbeing initiatives, strengthening team cohesion and supporting workforce resilience.
4. The completion of our second staff survey, providing valuable insights that will inform future action plans.
5. The review and approval of key organisational policies and the introduction of new policies to support staff and enhance governance, including:

Maternity Policy

Paternity Policies

Adoption Policy

Parental Bereavement Policy

Ordinary Parental Leave Policy

Carers Policy

Flexible Working Requests Policy

Compassionate Leave Policy

Fertility Treatment Policy

Hybrid Policy

Recruitment and Selection Policy

6. Continued progress, albeit gradual, towards our relocation to new premises, pending the completion of legal processes and building modifications

Looking forward, priorities for the coming year include: the successful completion of our relocation; ongoing board development to ensure effective governance in a changing environment; including the establishment of new subgroups on fundraising and performance; and a continued commitment to securing the organisation's financial sustainability through a robust fundraising strategy.

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who contribute to the charity's success. Our funders provide crucial support that enables us to sustain and develop our work. Our staff bring skills, dedication, and resilience to their roles every day, ensuring that our services remain of the highest quality. Above all, we thank our service users, who place their trust in us and whose courage and strength inspire our ongoing commitment.

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our mission to deliver the best possible services to survivors. We conclude this reporting year with pride in what has been achieved and confidence in the charity's continued growth and impact in the year ahead.

Angie Piesold

Co-Chair

Notts SVSS

This year the Government described Violence Against Women and Girls as a national emergency. The statistics speak for themselves.

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2025 estimated that over 898,000 people aged 16 years and over experienced assault (including attempts) in the last year.¹
- In 2024, 71,227 rapes were recorded by the police. The majority of survivors don't make a report.²
- Rape Crisis England and Wales states that 1 in 4 women will experience rape, while the same is true of 1 in 18 men. 1 in 6 children have been sexually abused.³
- A 2021 report by Survivor's UK found that nearly half of gay and bisexual men have experienced sexual assault.⁴

Around 50% of survivors live with the after-effects of abuse for two years before asking for support. It is not surprising then, that survivors are impacted in many ways. Our top 10 reported impacts over the last few years routinely include anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Other impacts include family breakdown, loss of work or education, unwanted pregnancy and terminations, even homelessness. Through prevention is key, it is vital that support services continue to receive sustainable funding, otherwise we are letting survivors down.

This year our helpline/hub took 1016 referrals into our counselling and therapy services. The hub acts as a survivor's first contact with our service, so it is vital they feel listened to and believed. We have been told that being told 'I believe you' literally saves lives. The hub also ran our waiting-list initiative, including check-ins, access to group mindfulness and creating safety courses. This helps survivors to self-regulate and learn supportive interventions,

increasing the impact of counselling that is received.

Our counselling and therapy team works with survivors to overcome the effects of the abuse and to apportion blame with the perpetrator. We know that recovery isn't linear and a vital part of therapy is helping survivors develop strategies to use as they move away from our service.

Our Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) Service and Survivor's Support Service continues to be in demand across the city and county, supporting 2281 people throughout the year. Of the 171 survivors in court, 96 saw their cases adjourned. Our ISVAs show great tenacity supporting survivors with issues that impact their lives, around housing, employment, benefits and wellbeing so that survivors can continue to give best evidence when their case is finally heard.

Helping to support all our staff working with adult survivors is the Mental Health Nurse Specialist seconded to us from the NHS. This means that we are able to safeguard to a high level, providing mental health stabilisation and seamless referral into additional services where they are needed.

We continue to provide Crisis Worker support at the East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPSAS). This work involves taking referrals, providing crisis support during forensic medical examinations, and referring into support services. They are part of an interagency team, including doctors, nurses and forensic medical examiners. This year the EMCYPSAS Team won the People First Award in the category of Partnership Working in recognition of the work they do, providing vital support to young survivors and their families.

This year we renewed our accreditations for the Male Standards with the Hub and Therapy services, and the ISVA Standards for our ISVA and Survivors

Support Service teams. We are currently renewing our Rape Crisis England and Wales National Service Standards accreditation. We are one of very few organisations to hold all three accreditations simultaneously, assuring survivors of the quality and safety in the support offered.

In addition to our campaigns, we continue to be central to the Consent Coalition and are proud to host their website, and developing and editing resources. This year we have continued to build on our relationships with groups representing communities who are less likely to know about or use our service, resulting in increased referrals from diverse groups.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Senior Management Team for their strategic leadership, insight, and commitment, strengthening our development and continued growth. My gratitude also goes to all our managers and frontline staff. Your professionalism, expertise, and dedication are evident in the delivery of our much-needed specialist service.

I want to recognise our back-office team working across administration, data, logistics, management support, engagement, and HR. Often unseen, their skills and commitment are essential to keeping our service running.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Board of Trustees, who voluntarily give their time, energy, and expertise to support the service and my role as Chief Executive Officer. Their insight, specialist knowledge, and readiness to respond to new challenges are invaluable to a service such as ours.

I would also like to acknowledge Shane Morgan, who previously stepped down as Co-Chair. Shane's knowledge, drive, leadership and commitment has strengthened our work and has been fundamental to our progress. This year, Clare Ward steps down from the Co-Chair role, and I want to thank her for the expertise and commitment she has brought. Her leadership has strengthened, developed, and supported our work in deeply meaningful ways.

Our current Co-Chair, Angie Piesold, has had a very good year, offering excellent listening skills, strong critical thinking, and unwavering dedication that have greatly benefited the organisation. We will be welcoming Claire Fox as our incoming Co-Chair. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that will be vital in the years ahead.

While some areas of the country have little provision in place, 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 recovery is possible. Thank you to all our commissioners, stakeholders, fundraisers and donors who support and fund our services.

At the heart of all our work though, are the survivors. You share with us the most difficult of times and trust us with that information. Your tenacity and determination to get through these situations is truly astounding. You drive everything we do and we will always do our best to support you in your decisions and to regain power and control of your lives, thank you.

Novlet Holness

Chief Executive Officer

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesprevalenceandtrendsendlandandwales/yearendingmarch2025>
- 2&3 [Rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse statistics | Rape Crisis England & Wales](#)
- 4 <https://www.survivorsuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Silenced-Survivors-Press-Release-SurvivorsUK.pdf>

- 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 renewed their Lime Culture Male Quality Standards accreditation, 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 or 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 our Lime Culture accredited 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 (NOPCC).
- 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 have been awarded with additional funding by NHS England (via the NOPCC) to provide a Clinical Psychologist service.
- 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 97% 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 focussed on removing barriers to our service. This has included specific work on meeting with and working with diverse groups, trans inclusion and continuing to use the Recite Me Accessibility Tool on our website. We have met targets set to us by commissioners with respect to reaching survivors from diverse groups.
- 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.

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, later 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.

Helpline Support

We know that talking about sexual violence or asking questions about a situation you are in can be a difficult first step. It is not surprising then, that around 50% of survivors wait more than two years following an incident to get support and may often have complex or multiple needs.

It is vital that callers are met with staff who are able to listen to them, believe them and offer support in a way that is supportive and non-judgmental. Our dedicated and highly-trained hub team are able to respond quickly to safeguarding issues and have suicide risk assessments and safety planning tools in place.

Sometimes a one-off call is all that is needed, others might use our regular caller service of two 30-minute support sessions a week, while others might ask for a referral into one of our other services.

This year, our longstanding Hub Coordinator retired, leading to recruitment to this and other roles. Despite this our team have remained steadfast, continuing to provide key services while transitioning to a new leadership team.

Drop In

The helpline manages our Drop-in, which gives callers time to talk to one of our counsellors. These one-off sessions are longer than those provided by the helpline and can be used to provide solution-focussed support, including grounding techniques, coping strategies and services exploration.

Support while on the waiting list

Our helpline supports those people who are on the waiting list, keeping them up to date with their waiting time, re-risk assessing where needed.

As part of the waiting list initiative, service users approved at assessment are offered the chance to take part in mindfulness groups and Creating Safety groups. These groups impart valuable skills while also readying survivors so they are able to make the most of formal therapeutic support.

Feedback from survivors led to these groups regularly running face-to-face, with evening slots also being offered.

“ This year the organisation has given me opportunities to grow in my career and it has been exciting to see how far I’ve come in a short amount of time ”



4093

Contacts made with the hub



6

members of staff



1016

referrals



100%

Self-referrals attempted contacted within one working day

“

Thank you for making this process so easy for
me, you have been very supportive

(male providing feedback on the helpline)

”

Case Study

Connie* a woman in her late 40s, was initially referred into our Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) team by the police officer in charge of the investigation. Following discussion with the ISVA service, Connie was referred to the ASA Hub for counselling and emotional support.

A Hub Support Worker called Connie on the same day the referral was received and explained the different options of support available to Connie, and the assessment process for this. Connie decided she would like to access the Hub support services as well as be considered for long term counselling, and gave her availability for completing a Hub Assessment.

During the assessment, Connie disclosed that she had experienced sexual violence from a previous partner. Although a non-molestation order was in place, she reported ongoing harassment. This led to her experiencing intrusive thoughts with ongoing suicidal ideation. A suicide risk assessment was completed with Connie in response to this disclosure.

The Hub Support Worker discussed the assessment with their line manager, and the case was reviewed at a case management meeting to ensure the potential risks had been managed. The Hub Support Worker contacted Connie's GP surgery, with her consent, to share concerns about her mental health and suicide ideation and ensure Connie had access to support from them. Additionally, with Connie's permission, the Hub Support Worker requested the most recent DASH-RIC (risk assessment) from the professional who had previously referred Connie.

Upon reviewing case documents, the Hub Support Worker completed an updated DASH-RIC with Connie. This was shared with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and her referring professional to review and update their records.

The Hub Support Worker maintained consistent communication with Connie throughout this process, ensuring she felt informed and supported. Connie later shared that her GP had been in touch to offer additional support options. The Hub Support Worker booked Connie into a drop-in session with a counsellor, and she was reminded of the helpline and email support she is able to access.

Connie is now waiting for a clinical assessment for counselling with Notts SVSS.

Identifying details have been changed

The ASA Therapy Team provides a comprehensive service throughout the week from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Services include assessment and referral into therapy, individual counselling and group therapy, drop-in sessions, email support and short-term therapy for partners, carers and family members. All services are available face-to-face and remotely via telephone or online platforms.

The team comprises ten employed counsellors and one sessional counsellor offering a range of trauma-informed therapeutic interventions. All survivors are offered sessions with a therapist of their preferred gender, with women offered support in a woman-only space. Management and clinical supervision are provided by three Lead Therapists and the Counselling Coordinator.

Due to the nature of sexual violence and trauma, many survivors present with additional issues such as CPTSD, disassociation, overwhelm, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. Our experienced therapists work closely with our Mental Health Nurse Specialist to ensure that survivors are supported appropriately and kept safe.

Support for survivors requiring an interpreter has been further developed. Dedicated staff liaise directly with translator services to ensure this specialist group can access equitable therapeutic care.

Clients on the therapy waiting list continue to be offered

participation in the Creating Safety and Mindfulness programmes, both now delivered online and in-person, enhancing accessibility.

The Beyond Survival group therapy programme continues to provide trauma-focused support to survivors who have completed individual therapy, with increased face-to-face delivery in response to client feedback.

Challenges

Demand for therapy services continues to rise, leading to increased waiting times for long-term individual therapy. The waiting list has stabilised at 27 months for long-term therapy and 16 months for pre-trial therapy. Client feedback continues to highlight the importance of reducing waiting times, and the team has worked proactively to ensure that clients remain informed and supported while awaiting therapy.

Delays within the judicial process remain a significant challenge, affecting the delivery of Pre-Trial Therapy. The therapy team continues to provide compassionate and consistent support to survivors experiencing postponed or adjourned trial dates.

There has been a year-on-year increase in Subject Access Requests for therapy notes, resulting in a higher administrative workload. We are reviewing internal processes to ensure responses remain timely, ethical, and compliant with data protection requirements.



4477

Therapy Sessions Offered
(to adults)



396

adults received
counselling/therapy



594

Assessments booked



Year on year increase in
survivors from under-
represented groups

Successes and Developments

Requests for in-person group sessions have grown, and the Creating Safety, Mindfulness, and Beyond Survival programmes have been successfully delivered face to face whenever possible. Client feedback continues to reflect the team's commitment to providing survivor-centred, high-quality therapeutic care.

Following the service's Male Quality Standards (MQS) accreditation from Lime Culture in 2023–2024, the therapy team successfully achieved re-accreditation this year. Additionally, the team contributed to the Rape Crisis England & Wales Quality Standards Award re-submission. During the March 2025 site visit, team members presented evidence of the quality, compassion, and professionalism underpinning service delivery.

Recruitment of new staff has further expanded capacity for face-to-face and remote sessions, including individual counselling, group work, assessments, and drop-in sessions. This expansion enables clients to choose their preferred mode of support, enhancing autonomy and accessibility.

Service users are now able to complete evaluations via our website, which also facilitates anonymous post-therapy feedback, complementing existing feedback mechanisms.

Safeguarding and risk management policies have been reviewed and updated to align with NICE guidelines and the revised BACP framework, ensuring clear and effective pathways for clients at risk of suicide.

Regular welfare checks are carried out with clients on the waiting list to ensure ongoing contact and to identify additional needs, allowing us to signpost appropriately.

Feedback from Pre-Trial Therapy clients remains overwhelmingly positive,

with most rating the service as “good” or “excellent”. Many highlighted the team's compassionate approach and understanding of the complexities involved in judicial proceedings.

Plans and Priorities for the Coming Year

- Continuing to prioritise Pre-Trial Therapy clients, offering split sessions to those affected by delayed or adjourned trials.
- Review and streamline the assessment process to enable earlier triage and connection to appropriate support.
- Establish a new system for managing Subject Access Requests, ensuring timely, compliant, and ethical responses.

“ We have fully embedded a hybrid system of work and delivery, offering service users their choice of in-person or online face-to-face support for counselling. ”

Case Study - Survivor Using the Counselling Service

Jane* is a female client in her early 30s who was referred for counselling by her ISVA. She lives with her partner and their dog and works full-time, from home whenever possible. Jane was raped by her half-brother when she was aged approximately 13 and reported the incident to the police in January 2021 after she had completed a previous episode of therapy during 2020.

Jane presented with high levels of anxiety, frequent dissociation, fear linked to being around men and mixed emotions about reporting and the possibility of an upcoming trial. She was originally allocated 20 sessions of pre-trial therapy and an extension of an additional 7 sessions was granted due to CPS delays.

The therapy initially focused on Jane's day-to-day symptoms of anxiety and dissociation, with psycho-education on the 3 systems of emotional regulation from Compassion Focused Therapy and exploration of Jane's experience of each of these systems. This led to consideration of soothing in Jane's life and how she could consciously activate her soothing system to support her coping mechanisms. Jane identified a range of ways to soothe including activities, people, places, smells and sensations, she began to implement these regularly in her life and reported really positive effects on her symptom management.

During Jane's therapy, she recognized recurring feelings of irritation, frustration and anger, and so several sessions were used to focus on this. Some of the underlying causes were explored. They included the unfairness of her own experiences and the impact on her life since her rape. Attention shifted to how this played out in her daily life. Psycho-education was provided on using regular scaling as a tool to check-in with frustration levels and respond accordingly.

Jane continued to use scaling as a means of recognizing her emotions, including where they might be affecting her relationship and their intimacy. She started to consider how she communicated this to her partner and together they were able to find ways to prevent disagreements by allowing a time-out if either of them is feeling overwhelmed. Jane was able to talk to her partner about what is important in their relationship and they prioritized making time for fun and ways to be connected and intimate with each other which did not focus purely on intercourse.

Once a trial date was set, Jane's therapy was deferred so that she could be offered a further 10 sessions of therapy nearer to this time. Jane's therapy began four weeks prior to the trial date, focusing on fear surrounding the trial, coping mechanisms and implementing soothing in readiness for the trial. The trial went ahead as planned and a verdict of not-guilty was returned. Jane's sessions continued immediately after this, helping her to explore and process her emotions surrounding the trial and verdict. Jane explored what life was going to look like for her now the trial had concluded.

Jane reported that she believed that she was only able to manage her anxiety and dissociation throughout the court case by using the skills and techniques that she had learned during her first 27 sessions. Although it had been difficult, she had not felt overwhelmed by her emotions and was able to give her evidence in a way that she was happy with. Despite the verdict, Jane feels optimistic for her future; her anxiety, frustration and dissociation have all reduced now that she enjoys regular self-care activities, which include yoga, walking, drawing, grounding herself in nature and creative writing. She explained that she had started to write poetry based on her experiences and wanted to share this with others as a means of supporting other survivors.

Jane also showed an interest in joining the Beyond Survival group following her therapy to further connect with other survivors and support her wellbeing.

***Identifying details have been changed**

“

It has been a positive experience. I felt listened to without judgement. I feel believed and understood. It has also meant that I have improved my relationship with myself. I have learned a lot about myself and have a better understanding of my needs and how I can meet them myself. The resources I have received have also been useful to help me manage my mental health and to help me to stay more positive.

My counsellor has been very patient with me, believed in me and has built me up again after a bad experience with counselling I have had previously and has helped me realise the benefits of prioritising my own needs and that is okay to say no; this has been a really important message for me

”

BEYOND SURVIVAL GROUP SUPPORT

Our Beyond Survival Group is an eight-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 group 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

16

Our email support service is available for people who prefer to communicate in writing or who 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.

This number of incoming and outgoing emails demonstrates the usefulness of this service, including from clients seeking ongoing contact and reassurance between sessions.

Mental Health Support

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. With one foot in the NHS mental health services and one in Notts SVSS and access across dual data systems, she is able to bring cohesion between services. This means that we have a strong, risk managed referral pathway into services where this is needed.

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. She has a key role assisting with risk management and safeguarding. In risk assessing new referrals into our service, she is able to identify extra needs and vulnerability, helping survivors to manage their mental health, including while on the waiting list for counselling. This means that when survivors are at the top of the waiting list, they are in the best place they can be to receive support, recover and then grow away from the service.

As well as working with counselling and support staff with their roles, our mental health nurse specialist has been working hard with other agencies, such as the NHS and GP practices to raise awareness on how trauma and sexual violence link to poor mental health. She continues to build links with agencies who provide services to marginalised people, including those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantages (SMD). She has built strong links with the SMD Partnership and has formed a virtual team focussing on substance misuse and homelessness in Nottinghamshire Healthcare Mental Health Service.

We are extremely grateful for our partnership with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, which enables us to support clients whose mental health is particularly vulnerable in a way that is client-centred while keeping safety as its core focus.

“

We need more
'Ellie's', I honestly do
not know what I
would have done
without you. You
have been one of the
only people who
have stayed with me
& not left me
(on support from mental health
nurse specialist)

”

“

I have had a regular safe space to process what has happened and my feelings around it, which has helped me to work through it and reduced the amount it manifests negatively in my life. I have felt listened to and supported by my counsellor, even on sessions where I have not known what to bring, my counsellor has made it so the session still feels productive and beneficial.

Most important to me, I feel, is that I have a stronger understanding of my emotions, and their roots in my past experiences, which is the biggest concern I came with at the beginning of the service, and I now feel I have a much better handle on my emotions. I'm also able to be easier on myself when this is not the case, knowing that healing is not linear, thanks to the reminder of my counsellor

”

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.

We have two Therapeutic Support Workers (TSW) operating the service. Duties include processing referrals from EMCYPSAS, assessing clients and providing therapeutic support. Within this timeframe, 116 clients were offered sessions; 417 sessions in total were offered; and 334 sessions were completed. A small amount of these sessions were completed by therapists working within the adult service who have experience with younger clients.

The workers will travel to different venues such as schools, colleges, libraries and community centres, ensuring that these young people have a safe space for their sessions that doesn't interfere with their studies. Instrumental to this service is partnership working with other agencies involved with the young person and support/psychoeducation for parents and carers.

We know that childhood sexual abuse can be devastating for the whole family, especially in cases of intrafamilial abuse. The team provides boundaried support to parents and carers, making onward referrals, either to other agencies or for family therapy within the Notts SVSS adult service.

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.

*At the end of this financial year, we were asked to reduce the number of sessions offered from 10 to 6, due to demand on the service, while criteria for accessing the service was tightened. This means that only those reporting an incident within six months are supported by us, while survivors of non-contact abuse are referred to other services. We have strong links with other services, including SafeTime, who we are able to refer into should it be identified that longer-term support is needed.

“As one of the two workers within our team we have both built up a positive reputation and as recognisable ‘faces’ in the community. We are known within education, social care, community and health settings. This helps with multi-agency working and safeguarding the young people in our community”

Case Study - Survivor using the Therapeutic Support Service

Acacia* was a teenager who disclosed being raped by her boyfriend at the time. A referral was made into our Therapeutic Support Service. Acacia's mum reported that she was withdrawn, was experiencing anxiety and panic attacks, was missing school and was staying in bed. When she was in school she seemed distant and unable to concentrate.

At assessment Acacia shared that she was experiencing flashbacks, zoning out and feeling numb. She would also have angry outbursts with her family, overthink and ruminate over situations. This was happening in cycles and she was progressively becoming more withdrawn. She had stopped going out with her friends, was struggling to get meaningful sleep and had questions about her sexuality due to the assault.

Early sessions were triggering to Acacia so it was agreed with our worker that they would make the space feel more like a conversation. Check-ins via texts happened between sessions helping to build trust in the therapeutic relationship. Once things started to stabilise, psychoeducation on trauma and the brain, and fight, flight, freeze and flop responses were discussed. Care was taken to use third-party examples, so that the sessions weren't triggering and Acacia spent less time in dissociation.

Throughout the following sessions work was carried out on self-care where a personalised 'Emotional First Aid Kit' was drawn up of things that Acacia could do on a daily basis for herself to help with her anxiety and dissociation. Deep conversations were had around ruminations and overthinking and how self-awareness can help challenge negative thoughts which were identified as a trigger to Acacia's anxiety. Relationships were also discussed in depth.

Slowly, through Acacia's sessions and deepened development of self-awareness she was able to identify and trust her gut instinct more in everyday life, which helped her break away from a new relationship she was in and also helped her in other relationships with friends.

Acacia completed 10 sessions with our worker, but was very nervous and resistant to the ending. At the start of therapy Acacia's Core 10 total was 22 and by the end the total was 11, this helped Acacia see how much growth she had made. A discussion was had over the things that had changed for Acacia since starting therapy and what she was now doing differently. This conversation helped Acacia feel more empowered as she was able to see that it was by her own actions and doings that her anxiety levels had lowered and she was controlling her negative thinking more. Acacia also commented that she trusted her own judgement more in situations and was not 'zoning out' as much.

Acacia contacted the worker nearly a year later, as she was experiencing some difficulties. Due to the nature of the service, we could not offer more sessions, but our worker did spend some time talking to Acacia and explored what was happening for her. Acacia realised that a new relationship was showing some toxic traits, which was where the issue lay. It wasn't until she was able to unpick this information in a trusting therapeutic space and was reminded of the psychoeducation she had learned in her previous sessions that she became empowered. She then felt able to control the situation she was in, making a decision that would benefit her mental health.

Further referral into longer-term support was offered. Acacia declined this as the conversation had reminded her of the work she carried out in therapy previously and she was now able to trust her instinct and manage the situation appropriately for herself.

Identifying details have been changed

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 a part-time ISVA/Survivors Support Service Contract Lead, ISVA and SSS Manager, Senior ISVA, 6 full-time ISVAs, 3 part-time ISVAs and 2 part-time administrators. All 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, meeting survivors at venues suitable to them. Each ISVA has a special area of expertise, for example; neurodiversity, people of colour, disability, benefits and so on.

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 and advocacy around safeguarding, housing, employment and education, finance, health, mental health and emotional wellbeing, ensuring survivors are receiving support that meet their needs.

Overview of the year

As with many specialist support services, referrals into our service remains high. We had 96 court adjournments this year. This stubbornly high number not only creates a backlog within our service, it is extremely impactful to survivors, who will require a high level of support over a longer period of time.

To help reduce the waiting list and ensure earlier support, we undertook a service review, adapting our service provision to enable us to support as many survivors as possible.



2281

people supported



3030

advocacy hours



171

survivors supported at court



Bases in the Community

at police stations and the SARC



multi-award winning service



consistently excellent feedback



We implemented a dedicated ISVA working with non-criminal justice survivors, to provide immediate support. This and other measures have led to an overall decrease in waiting list numbers, with non-criminal justice cases receiving immediate support.

Survivors with complex mental health needs continue to require intensive work, including ongoing safeguarding and risk management. We work closely with our Mental Health Nurse Specialist to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and survivors are closely monitored. We also meet counselling and therapeutic staff regularly to ensure continuity and appropriate support across the service. We work with many external groups and organisations including the SMD Working Group, Witness Service, RASSO Scrutiny Panel and the Rape Crisis England and Wales CJS Working Group.

In addition to our own service, we are very fortunate in having strong and respected working relationships with both Nottinghamshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. Together we work to manage impact and look at local solutions to CJS delays.

“

Being an ISVA is truly rewarding, it builds character, determination and personal strength, mostly from the inspiring courage of the survivors we work with

”

“

I was so scared
to report, but
you made me
feel believed
and valued,
can't thank you
enough
(male survivor)

”

Case Study – Survivor Using the ISVA Service

The client is black British female in her 50s, with physical and mental disability. She has adult children and when first contacting the service was still in the marital home. She was referred to Notts SVSS by police following multiple reports she made of childhood sexual abuse.

Initial assessment and multiple reviews were completed over time. The client has been diagnosed with PTSD, depression and anxiety. She identified some of her triggers and the ISVA provided emotional support, coping strategies and grounding techniques to be used when feeling triggered or overwhelmed, including how to manage the impact of trauma day-to-day.

Whilst the client was on the waiting list for therapy, the ISVA arranged a drop-in session on the client's behalf due to her anxiety and empowered the client to do so for herself when she felt a further drop in was needed. Support was provided in the interim, with monthly telephone calls when the client felt she needed extra support.

Throughout support the client would discuss aspects of her marriage and the impact this had on her including triggers, trauma responses and challenges around her husband's understanding of sexual violence and trauma. It became clear that the husband was displaying emotionally abusive behaviour and gaslighting the client. Our ISVA helped the client to recognise this over time and she was signposted to Juno Women's Aid.

The client decided to end the marriage and leave the family home for her safety. Our ISVA referred her into support programmes, signposted to solicitors for legal advice around divorce and an occupation order. The ISVA provided a letter to the solicitor supporting the request for an occupation order; this would force the husband to vacate the marital home, allowing the client to return. This concluded in September and the outcome was positive.

Support with the criminal justice service was provided by the ISVA throughout. This included the ISVA liaising with the Officer In the Case to provide monthly updates. Any questions from the client with the police went through the ISVA as the client found it traumatic to speak with police about the case. Support around locating one of the Persons Of Interest and managing risk was also given.

After over two years of investigating the client's case, it was decided that the case did not meet the evidence threshold to send to the CPS. The outcome was no further action and the ISVA supported the client to meet police, to understand this decision.

The client was well supported throughout the criminal investigation, helping her both with the criminal process and other life events that impacted her during this period. Her financial situation was also steadied through successful applications for Higher Level PIP and Limited Capability Universal Credit. Moving forwards, the client has a good support network away from the service and will be applying for compensation through the CICA scheme.

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 49 survivors supported by this service from April 2024 – March 2025. Survivors in this service tend to require support for longer periods of time, predominantly due to the impact on mental health.

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. This helps 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, Department of Work and Pensions and the 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 the services they need.

”



49

survivors supported



194

advocacy hours



works closely with other organisations



consistently excellent feedback

“

My ISVA's support was like nothing I've known before. Her patience, honesty, knowledge and the way she communicated got through to me at a time when I didn't trust anyone. She made me feel safe and not many people can do that[...]

I am now a support worker for other vulnerable adults and that is because of the example she set. I never thought I would be in this position. I am so grateful

”

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, including 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, their families and carers, who may be extremely traumatised, in crisis or suicidal. Crisis support workers 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 took in 943 referrals into the service, with 72 being passed to Serenity in Northamptonshire. We carried out 221 examinations, made 411 therapeutic referrals, 308 CHISVA referrals and 242 safeguarding referrals. All referrals were for children aged 0-17 years old, different genders and ethnicities, as well as different cities across the East Midlands

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 crisis workers, have been working extremely hard to meet these requirements. Referral Pathways and Standard Operating Procedures were re-visited, reviewed and updated. We have also been managing the service while additional building work has been taking place.

Due to changes in the commissioning of external services not related to Notts SVSS/EMCYPAS, we were also handed back a list of nearly 200 children and young people who still needed therapeutic support. We rose

to the challenge, re-referring young survivors into the new services as quickly as possible, while still managing the daily processes at the centre.

We have also had challenges in recruiting to the service, this is in part due to the high calibre of personnel required for this role and potential over-vetting of candidates. Despite these challenges, the service has remained at an exceptional level, with 100% forensic suite cleanliness maintained and several staff being acknowledged for their support work within the service.

Successes

In May 2024 the new EMCYPSAS Lead Doctor attended Buckingham Palace for a celebration, hosted by the Queen, which recognised those who support survivors of sexual assault. The celebration also championed Queen Camilla's work with the Wash Bags Project, which provides essential self-care items to survivors of sexual assault using the centre. In March 2025 EMCYPSAS held a spectacular event in celebration of the Lead Doctor who had strived and advocated for decades to establish EMCYPSAS as an excellent specialist child centred service. A signed letter of thanks and recognition from the Queen was also received.

Our crisis support workers reached out to different businesses to explain the work we do and how they can help support children and young people accessing our services. As a result of this we received some lovely clothes and pyjamas from Tesco and Asda supermarkets, a huge box of brand-new toys from The Entertainer and some bath and skincare products from Lush.

The whole of the EMCYPSAS department was recognized in the 'Partnership Working' category in the Nottingham University Hospital Peoples First Awards. We attended a black-tie event and are delighted to say that we won this category. This gave our service and staff the positive recognition they so rightly deserved and gifted £100 for the suite.

Plans for the future

EMCYPSAS is due to be relaunched as Coral Cove Paediatric SARC in July 2025. This is an extremely exciting time for the team and we look forward to welcoming a number of key guests, including Jess Phillips MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls.



EMCYPSAS staff with their People First Award

“

[The Crisis Worker] and the doctor were amazing and even though it was difficult, they made me feel comfortable, strong and brave

(young person visiting the EMCYPSAS)

”

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. Internal engagement also helps to maintain a connected, happy, and motivated team where staff feel cared about and seen as a valued part of the organisation.

Our Engagement Strategy looks 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.

Reaching out to different providers and community groups

Our Engagement Officer has been building links with other organisations who support vulnerable people and those less likely to know about or use our service.

This year, we worked with Friends and Bredrins (FAB) to put on event during Men's Health Week. The event included talks and presentations from groups including FAB, Refugee Roots, Al-hurraya and ourselves. Together we raised awareness on prostate cancer, the importance of early diagnosis and how we can remove barriers to male survivors who are concerned about their

prostate or other health issues. We also looked at the value of counselling for men from black and Asian backgrounds and common issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK.

Your Voice Matters

This year we held our first ever service user garden party and feedback event. The event enabled service users to find out about other providers, take part in activities such as art therapy, yoga and Zumba, listen to motivational talks, eat food and practice self-care. We were able to get valuable service user input at the event and were able to use this learning to relaunch our Service User Forum, which now meets monthly.

Staff Engagement

This year we held two staff self-care events. These provided an opportunity for staff to build better links with members from dispersed teams, take part in self-care activities and feel motivated and cared about.

We have continued to invite staff from different areas of the service to help support stalls and partnership working.

Things that were set up during the year, which are now in place include staff support groups, on issues such as menopause and parenting as well as a people of colour solidarity space. We have also set up a series of 'Lunchtime Talks' for staff, to run on a monthly basis, enabling us to find out about other services and client support groups that run externally to us.

Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (SASVAW)

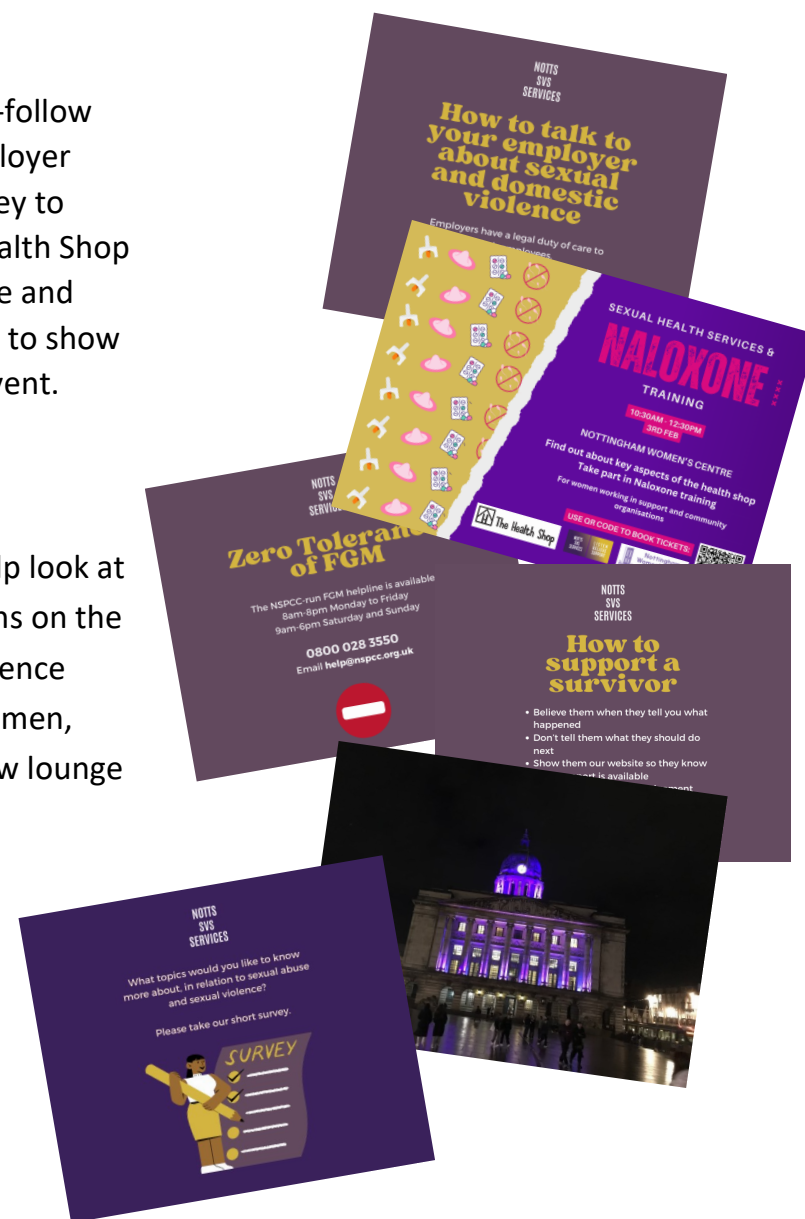
This SASVAW we hosted our second 'Week of Action.' This week included seven easy-to-follow actions for each day of the week, including; challenging a rape myth; talking to your employer about their policies; wearing purple to show support for survivors and completing a survey to 'keep the conversation going'. We also worked with other organisations, such as The Health Shop to deliver naloxone training, while Al-hurraya wrote a guest blog for us on sexual violence and support in the South Asian community. We encouraged people to wear purple on Friday to show support and awareness and Nottingham Council House was lit up purple as part of the event.

Improving Rail Safety

This year we worked with a group of organisations headed by the Railway Children to help look at railway safety for young people and women. This included train ride-on, audits of stations on the Robin Hood Network and recommendations being made. As specialists in the sexual violence sector we brought knowledge on particular barriers to safe rail use that might impact women, including isolation, lighting, safety buttons, potential for upskirting under bridges and how lounge and waiting-room facilities could be improved.

Write to End Violence Against Women Awards (WEVAW)

We have continued to be on the Steering Group for the WEVAW Awards 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) who work 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.

We have supported the work of the coalition this year by promoting Consent Coalition resources, in particular the newly-translated Your Journey guide and the Safe Space Pledge initiative particularly among college students who are just starting to experience Nottingham's night-time economy. It was decided at the end of this year, to maximise the impact of the Safe Space Pledge, that it needed its own website. Work has since started and we are in a core team helping with the development in this area.

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.



Reaccreditations

2024-2025 was a busy year for Notts SVSS as we went through the process of renewing our accreditations.

We have retained and renewed our accreditations with the Lime Culture Male Quality Standards for our ASA Hub and Therapy services and the Lime Culture ISVA Quality Standards for our ISVA and Survivors Support Services.

We are currently in the process of renewing our Rape Crisis England and Wales National Service Standards accreditation, which is described as a 'benchmark for excellence' in sexual violence support services.

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.



Peer Support - Big Lottery Community Fund

We were successful in applying to the Big Lottery Community Fund, to fund the launch of our Peer Support groups. Work this year has included appointing a Peer Support Counsellor to lead the project, training of staff, creation of resources and working with service users to discuss what the groups should look like.

These groups are something which service users identified as providing value to them, acting as a bridge between focussed support and life away from our service.

GWVN Conference

This year we worked with local organisations to host the Girls and Women's Violence Network conference. This conference provided a chance for services working in the VAWG sector to provide talks and presentations, focussing on the needs of minoritised groups, such as black and Asian survivors, LGBTQ+ survivors and women engaged in sex work.

Recommissioning of Services

We have been fortunate to receive relatively long-term commissioning for our services. These will be due for renewal or extension over the next year. We work closely with our commissioners and will continue to do so, to ensure that future funding rounds are successful for us and our survivors.

Fundraising

Lead by our Trustees, we will be focussing on fundraising and will be working with Nottingham Business School to help develop our fundraising reach. As well as raising our profile with different organisations and businesses, this will help us to afford the 'nice-to-have' things survivors need that are not always included in the commissioning of services.

We will be registering with Easy Fundraising and Give As You Live - type platforms, which enable a proportion of online spending to be gifted to organisations such as ours.

We are also going to look at working with different businesses to be their 'charity of the year' and creating fundraising packs for individuals and corporate businesses.

EDI & The Equality Act

As a service centred around survivors and tailoring support to individual needs, we are constantly assessing how we can be more inclusive and welcoming as a whole. Staff receive yearly EDI Training, with Anti-Racism training and specialist Neurodiversity Training scheduled for this year.

The Supreme Court ruling in June has implications for services such as ours who support survivors of all genders. As part of our commitment to gender-awareness, we provide support to women in women-only spaces, while holding an open and proud trans-inclusive stance.

We are continuing to work with sector partners, including Rape Crisis England and Wales to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of all survivors and that the provision to women, men, trans and non-binary survivors are not diminished as a result.

“

In the beginning I was very anxious about starting counselling, however my counsellor quickly made our sessions a safe and inviting place for me to feel comfortable and open up. She helped me make some real strides and gave me a lot of strategies to use in day-to-day life going forward

”

The financial environment remains challenging for the organisation and for our staff, and we have continued to budget carefully to protect our financial stability and maintain the quality of our services.

Our income in 2024-25 remained broadly stable at slightly over £2.1m. We continued to be commissioned and funded by The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire (NOPCC), NHS England (via the NOPCC) and the Big Lottery. Notts SVSS was also subcontracted by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

We recognised the substantial impact of the challenging economic environment on our staff and therefore took a decision to award a 3% increase in staff salaries in 2024-25. This was made possible by our healthy level of reserves. Our total expenditure during the year was slightly under £2.1m.

Our financial risks relate to contract renewals, staff retention and recruitment, and uncertainties over the premises move and refurbishment costs.

One of the principal risks identified by the charity trustees is the recommissioning of our largest contract in 2026. Our Senior Management Team (SMT) is proactively preparing for this by reviewing and strengthening service delivery, impact measurement, and value for money to ensure a competitive submission to any future tender. In parallel, the SMT is actively identifying and preparing to apply for alternative grants and tender opportunities that align with our mission and capabilities. These strategic actions are designed to mitigate the financial risk posed by potential changes in core funding, enhancing long-term sustainability.

We are in the process of securing a 10-year lease on premises that we anticipate will meet our longer-term needs. The office space will require some reconfiguration. The move and refurbishment costs will be covered by our reserves, as an investment in the sustainability of our services.

Ruth Tarlo

Treasurer

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

88%

female clients

10%

male clients

14

trans clients

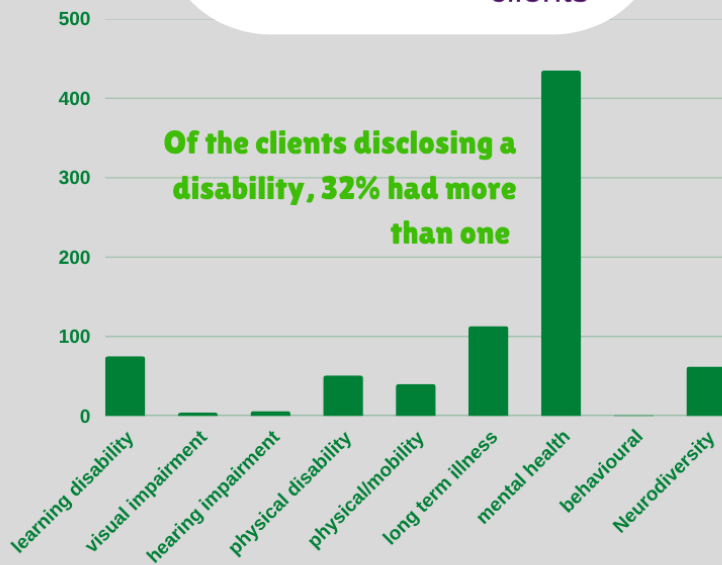
10

non-binary clients

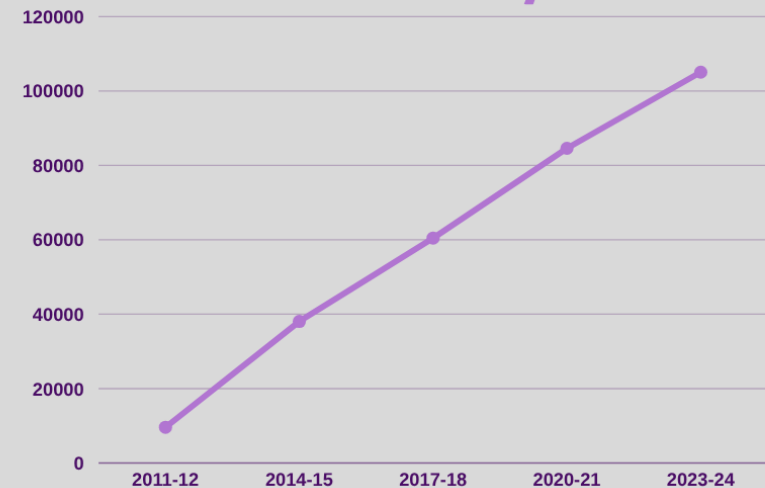
24% of clients are from **minoritised ethnic groups**



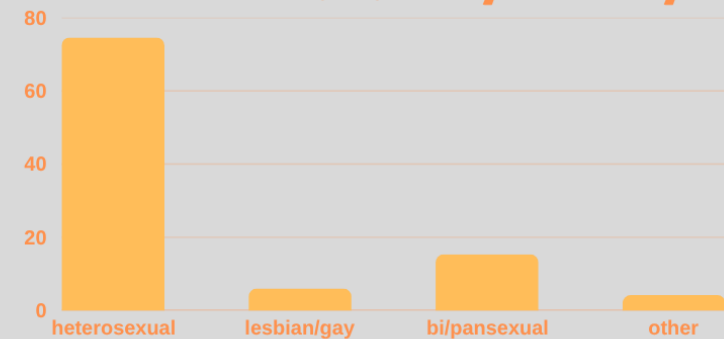
49% of clients disclosed they had a disability
(11% said they had no disability)



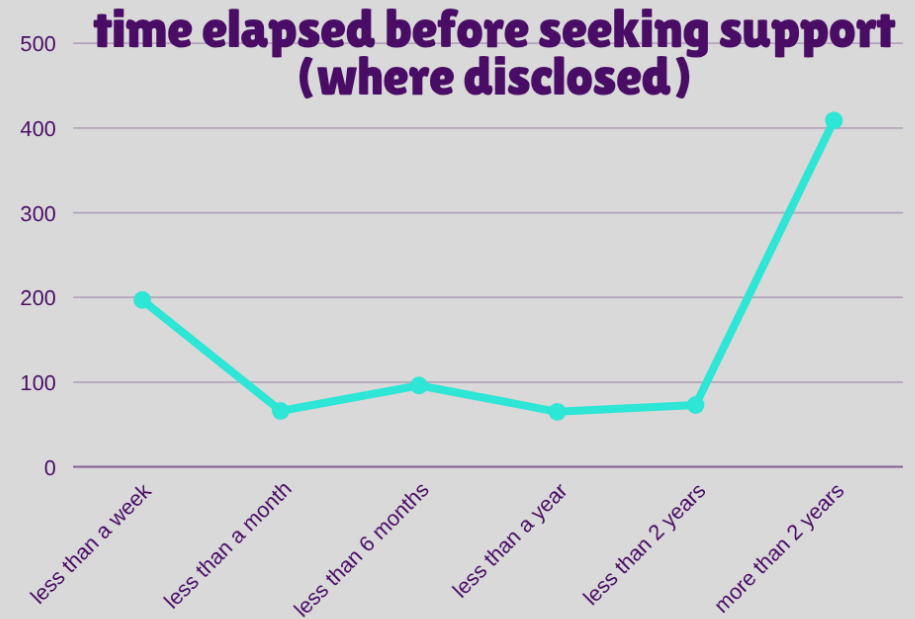
contact over the years



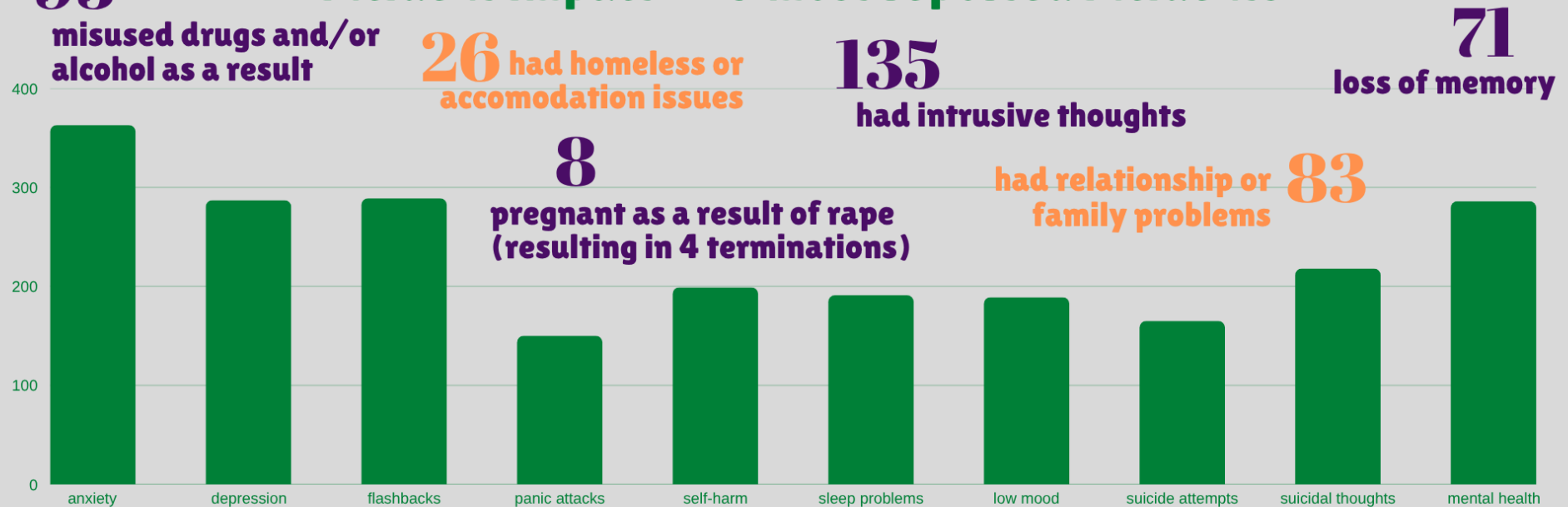
sexual orientation where disclosed (%) 18+ years only



presenting incidents



incident impact – 10 most reported incidents



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.

“

When I began working as a counsellor I was struck by how many people have experienced sexual violence and the impact this has on their lives. This is why I wanted to work for Notts SVSS. I've been here a year now and I find the work so fulfilling. It's so important that people can access free counselling to help them cope and I am glad to be a part of the organisation.

”

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.

“

My counsellor has literally saved my life. I come to counselling a complete wreck and mess and [my counsellor] has helped, supported, guided, and cared me into showing me things that happened were not my fault. [My counsellor] has provided ways I can control my anxiety and setting boundaries. My life has changed and this is the happiest I have ever been and it is thanks to [my counsellor]

”

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

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There are lots of ways to support our work. We are signed up to Easy Fundraising, which means that you can raise money for free while doing your online shop. People often take part in challenges, or arrange one-off or regular giving, all of which can be done via our page on Just Giving. We are also open to people selecting us as their Charity of the Year or Month. You can find out more on our website: <https://nottssvss.org.uk/donate>

We are a registered charity, number 1103071. If you are a UK taxpayer you can complete a Gift Aid declaration, which enables us to claim back tax.

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.

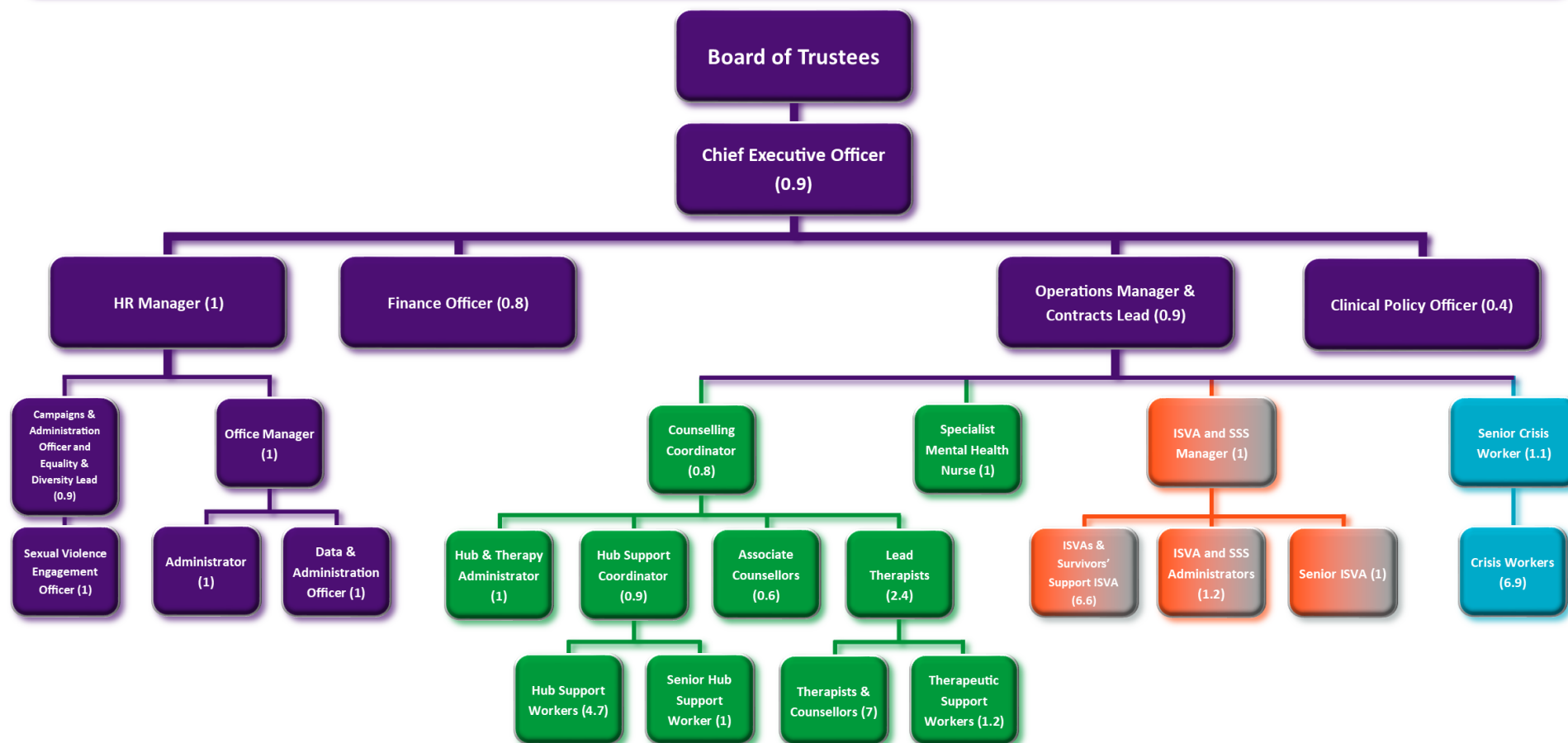
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All Friends of Notts SVS Services
Barclays Bank
Community Accounting Plus Ltd
East Midlands Children's and Young People's Sexual Assault Service
Equation
EVAW Coalition
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 Community Safety Partnership
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

Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services Staff Structure Apr 2024



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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

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“

I'm not really able to fully express my gratitude, as there are really no words I know to use, to say thank you properly.

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