

# Impact Report

April 2020 — March 2021



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## The Pandemic and its impact on sexual abuse survivors and our specialist services supporting them



# Welcome to our Annual Impact Report

## From the Chair



Raman Dhillon

For RSVP 2020-2021 has been testing due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the overnight changes that had to be made to the services we offered to survivors.

COVID-19 and its restrictions resulted in us being unable to provide face to face counselling for 5 months of the year for children, and longer for adults. The long-term strategic aim has always been to reduce the time that survivors wait for counselling, however, this was directly impacted by COVID-19 in that more survivors were subjected to abuse during lockdown and ISVA support was required for longer periods of time due to delayed court cases.

Towards the end of this year, average times for adults waiting for counselling began to reduce. However, the reality is that for most survivors the wait is still too long, measured in months not weeks, and can cause distress. To provide better support we increased the range of services we provided while survivors were waiting for counselling.

We continue to work towards our specialist

support services becoming increasingly bold, big-hearted and believing. Our blended approach to counselling continued through a combination of face-to-face and telephone counselling, and we later introduced online counselling. This increased choice further allowed the team to be agile when we moved in and out of remote working. Extra COVID-19 funding enabled us to train all our team in online support, and we added this to our blended offer. Next year, we will offer online counselling to more survivors.

We considered how our staff and volunteers worked during this time, ensuring their needs were met through altering working patterns and offering wellbeing sessions.

A medium-term strategic goal was to expand our ISVA services to 7 days a week to bring this in line with counselling services and allow survivors more flexibility with when they receive support. I am pleased to confirm that we were able to achieve this in January 2021 thanks to the huge efforts of our ISVA team.

Despite the challenging funding landscape, we were able to increase our annual income by 25.78%, an extraordinary achievement.

“

My counsellor was remarkable! I felt listened to, unjudged and supported from the beginning. I was given ideas about how to build up my coping strategies. These all proved to be extremely valuable in helping me process and understand my thoughts and feelings.

”

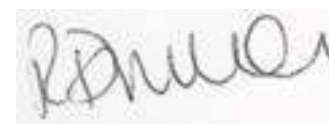
Client comment.

The focus of this year's AGM was to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on survivors, and the support we provide to them. The team has dealt with the strain of COVID-19 fantastically well. The dedication of Lisa Thompson, Anjella Darcy, Fran Ford, Sarah Lafford, and Yvonne Langham, and their teams, has meant that RSVP has continued to thrive in the most unpredictable and unprecedented times.

The board of trustees will be undergoing change with Jason Clark and Simon Bateman standing down from the board following the AGM. I would like to personally thank both Jason and Simon for their dedication and commitment to the board as well as the individual expertise they were able to share.

I look forward to working with the board and Lisa over the coming year to continue to work towards RSVP's strategic aims.

The success of RSVP is down to the staff and volunteers who work tirelessly for children and adults subjected to sexual violence, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation, taking bold steps, showing survivors we believe them in a world that often doesn't, and demonstrating big hearted support. We are so proud of the huge and meaningful differences the RSVP team helps to make for children and adults subjected to sexual abuse.



# 2,244

adults and children  
were supported in all  
counselling services

# 1,387

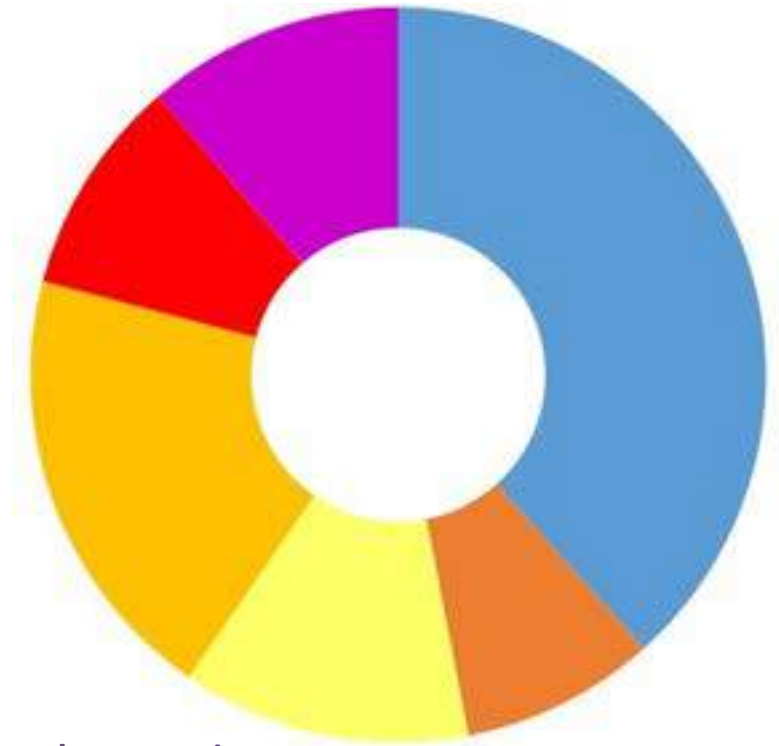
adults and children  
were supported in all  
ISVA services

## 11,497

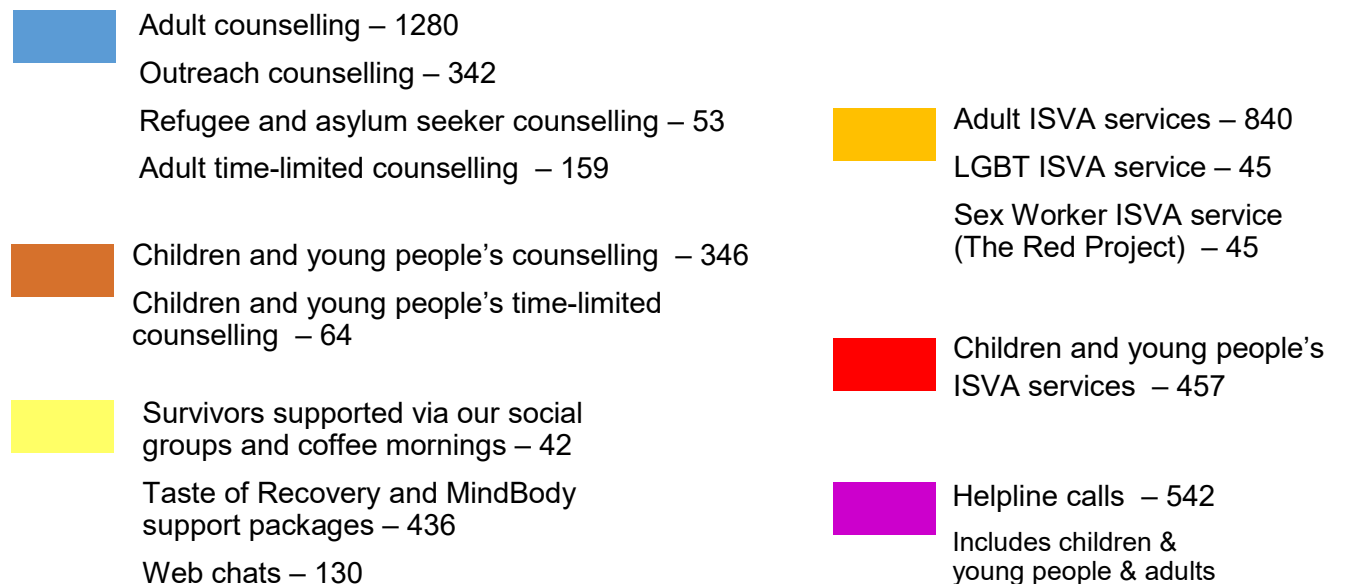
counselling sessions we  
offered, an 8% increase on  
last year

## 23%

The number of survivors we  
supported who were under  
18, the highest proportion of  
children and young people  
we have supported



### Numbers of survivors supported through our services



# The Pandemic and its impact on sexual abuse survivors and our specialist services supporting them

**RSVP's vision is a world free from sexual violence and sexual abuse, whether that is globally or an individual's world. We do this by supporting children and adults of both sexes who have been subjected to sexual violence and abuse to thrive and enjoy a future of hope and confidence. In all our work we boldly stand with survivors and challenge victim blaming attitudes.**

On Wednesday 18 March 2020, before the national lockdown was announced, we closed our main office and outreach sites, ceased all face to face services, and moved to supporting survivors remotely, in response to Covid-19. This was a huge undertaking. To implement this bold but safe move all our team went above and beyond their usual duties. Warm thanks to everyone for their help and dedication, from the start of remote working and through every day since, you have truly been remarkable.

Although how we delivered our services changed due to Covid, our determination to maintain the critical support we give to survivors never wavered. We knew the pandemic would mean that some children and adults would feel more isolated,

anxious, and scared, and that for some home was not a safe space. So our Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) offered support on the phone, our counsellors made wellbeing calls to every survivor who'd been receiving counselling, and later telephone counselling for those who wanted to, or had a private space to, take calls. Our helpline volunteers continued to support people on the phone. Some face to face support resumed in September, albeit in a small limited way, in accordance with government guidelines and our own rigorous risk assessment.

We have supported survivors through a blended approach for some time, offering a combination of face to face and telephone support. We added online support to the

blend during remote working. In previous consultation survivors told us they sometimes find it hard to travel to face to face support due to triggers, phobias, anxiety, or location. Having the option of phone or online support when this happens means that support isn't missed. This year the importance of our blended approach and wide choices in how survivors access support were highlighted.

Sadly, our strategic aim to reduce the time that survivors wait for counselling was impacted by Covid, as was the number of survivors needing ISVA services, which rose to its greatest level ever. This related to more survivors being subjected to abuse during lockdown and support being required for longer periods of time due to severely delayed court cases.

**This annual impact report is a record of how we've supported survivors and our team in what were unprecedented and uncertain times. Read on to see how we achieved this.**

# Adult Services

**Our confidential counselling and wellbeing services are delivered with compassion, professionalism and humanity, offering safe supportive connection, coping strategies, and understanding to overcome the effects of sexual violence for a hopeful and confident future.**

We build our services on what survivors tell us about their needs and how we can create services that safely respond to these. Our aim is to ensure that survivors have shorter waits for counselling, however, the pandemic made this hard.

COVID restrictions meant that survivors had more wellbeing and counselling sessions on the phone, since we were unable to provide face to face counselling for 5 months of the year for children, and longer for adults.

While more telephone counselling also directly responded to previous survivor feedback, (to give better choices in how we supported them) we know that COVID also caused disruptions to survivors and their face to face counselling when they were already facing so much. We knew that not everyone felt comfortable or was

able to have counselling by phone, some had no safe space to talk. Initially, this led to even longer waits for counselling. Later in the year, although waiting times started to decrease, they remained far too long. Next year, our focus will remain on reducing times survivors wait for counselling and also on introducing more online counselling (which we successfully piloted in Jan 2021.) This will increase choices of how support can be accessed and will add to our blended approach.

During the year we also better supported survivors waiting for counselling, We made sure that everyone knew about our other services in our welcome letters. We also told more survivors about our online programmes, Taste of Recovery and MindBody, and also contacted everyone on our waiting lists to ask how we could provide support while they waited.

# Counselling

# 1,834

**adult survivors supported this year through counselling**

# 67%

**of all of the adult survivors we supported had improved wellbeing and confidence after counselling**

# Counselling

## **One survivor shared on the blog on our website how telephone counselling was enough during the pandemic**

Today, instead of sitting with my therapist in person, I had my first session over the phone. I'd known for a while that it was likely we'd need to stop face to face sessions at some point, but I was anxious at the thought of it. I was worried there'd be long, embarrassing pauses, or we'd talk over each other, or I'd get embarrassed and introduce the cat.

But mostly I was worried that it wouldn't be... enough, that it would be a poor substitute for seeing my counsellor in person and I would lose the momentum I'd built up in sessions.

The first few minutes *were* a bit weird. I paced up and down the room whilst we chatted lightly about the week. Then, I sat down on the sofa and talked... and talked. And it was fine, better than fine, in fact. I probably said more in that call than I do when I'm sitting in front of her and I surprised myself by telling her about something I'd been wanting to for a while, but hadn't been able to find the words.

I'm pleased to report too, that her skills in person were replicated, seemingly effortlessly. She knew when to let me be silent and when to gently push, at one point astonishing me by asking what was making me cry when I swear I wasn't making a sound but just had tears in my eyes.

We're doing it again next week, and the one after, and the one after that, and so on until this pandemic has passed. After which, I will return to seeing her in person. Until then, phone appointments are meaningful and supportive and, well... enough.

## **One of our counsellors talks about the impact counselling had on a survivor**

In her counselling, a survivor spoke about how she felt overwhelmed by a combination of different issues going on in her life following the recent sexual assault she had been subjected to. Counselling had become her safe space and she was able to confidentially explore her feelings and what was contributing to her overwhelm and distress. She reflected on how her coping strategies had been stretched, and she had reached her limits. With the counsellor's support she focused on the issue that was taking up the most headspace, she prioritised her own emotional health and wellbeing and decided to lean on some close friends for extra support. By the end of the session she knew that although the issues were still there they didn't feel as suffocating and she also recognised her own coping strategies as big strengths and something to feel proud of.

# Support for Male Survivors

10%

of all of the adults we supported were males

“

Being a gay guy and being raped was just so difficult for me, I have faced and been up against a tough battle, but without my counsellor's support I really don't know how I would have got through this awful time in my life.

”

Client comment.

While the majority of all survivors that we support are female due to the gendered nature of sexual offences, 10% of the adults we supported through counselling were male.

We know that the myths about male survivors can create barriers to society's understanding of their needs and build obstacles when males seek support. While we know that most people subjected to sexual abuse, violence, and exploitation are female and that most people who perpetrate these crimes are males, we also acknowledge that boys and men can be survivors and girls and women can be abusers too.

To show our commitment to reducing the barriers and obstacles faced by male survivors seeking support from RSVP, we worked towards independent quality standards. We wanted to demonstrate the quality of our services and we were delighted to achieve the Independent Accreditation Programme 'Quality Mark' and Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence in August 2020.

## One of our counsellors shares how she supported a male survivor

Neil was groomed by his sports coach as a boy and subjected to child sexual abuse. Neil's home life was stressful and the perpetrator used that to win Neil's trust, acting as a caring and supportive father figure, before he sexually abused and raped him. Through the gentle building of the counselling relationship Neil felt safer and developed trust. He was able to release some of the emotions he'd held tightly in his body since childhood, and explore his trauma responses and coping strategies. Neil also came to understand

how the responses had aided his survival. This led him to a place where he felt more empathy towards himself, and in turn he reduced the self-blame he felt. At the same time he put more boundaries for himself in his friendships to look after and prioritise his own needs, and ensure he had time with his friends and on his own too.

When Neil ended counselling he described feeling empowered and confident.

Name and some details changed to protect identity

**Our Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service offers practical and emotional support to child and adult survivors irrespective of whether they have reported to the police or not. The service ensures that the needs, views and feelings of survivors are listened and responded to by all those who support them.**

# Advocacy

## **64% of adult ISVA clients told us they felt better informed about the criminal justice process**

Lockdown saw cancelled court cases delays in Birmingham and Solihull, as with the whole of the UK. This added to the already lengthy waits for court dates. As a result survivors needed ISVA support for longer to cope with the distress, anxieties, and fears caused by the delays. Some survivors were so impacted by these delays that they considered whether to withdraw the report they'd made. However, with the support of their ISVA they decided not to and waited for their rescheduled court date. While face to face support was suspended, survivors attending police interviews or health appointments were supported via phone, email and text, before, during, and after their appointments.

Over the coming months ISVAs received training in online advocacy support, following our blended approach. From September they also resumed face to face support at police interviews, court cases, and health appointments. During the whole year ISVAs have shown determination to maintain a quality service for survivors of sexual violence and abuse, in the face of increasing need and the challenges of the pandemic. In response to growing need and extra funding, we expanded our adult ISVA team, and welcomed Oscar and Jas.

**For more information on our ISVA/Advocacy service visit our website:  
[www.rsvporg.co.uk](http://www.rsvporg.co.uk)**



# 840

**survivors supported  
this year through  
Adult ISVA services**

# Advocacy

“

I was put in touch with RSVP through the police after I was assaulted. From the beginning they were amazing. My ISVA helped me with everything that happened with the police and explained every stage. She helped me to feel informed, from the police interviews to the options I had. When I was told the police weren't going to take my case to court my ISVA helped me through it all.

”

Client comment.

A key success came in January 2021 when we expanded our ISVA service to a seven day service, including some evenings as well, matching our seven day counselling service. We had listened to survivors who told us they wanted the ability to see their ISVA after work or school, or on a weekend. We thank the whole ISVA team as it is through their dedication that we've been able to make our services even more accessible. We're now available until 7pm Monday to Friday, and 10am to 4:30pm most weekends.

## One of our ISVAs describes how she supported an adult survivor

I've supported Julie for a number of years now and have helped her go to various health appointments, knowing how hard it is due to the rape she suffered. During one of our calls she became distressed as a clinic had not offered her specialist support. I agreed to call the clinic on her behalf, as she found it too traumatic to explain why she needed to be seen face to face. I was able to outline Julie's needs to the

clinic and make an urgent appointment for her. She felt relieved that she'd finally get treatment and that I could go with her to the appointment (due to restrictions lifting). She felt safer having me there to help with the questions the clinic needed to ask. She was also more confident that her needs would finally be heard and met.

Name and some details changed to protect identity

# 45

**The number of people supported through LGBT Advocacy this year**

# 45

**The number of people supported through our Sex Worker Advocacy this year**

## Specialist Advocacy

### Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans (LGBT) Advocacy

Bev and Mark, our specialist LGBT ISVAs, continued to give excellent support to LGBT survivors. They saw lower referrals into our service this year. This could be due to a variety of reasons: feeling unsafe for LGBT survivors to ask for support since they were locked down with people unaware of their sexuality, restrictions limiting the access that LGBT people had to safe spaces (e.g. in RSVP and in the LGBT centre), and fewer social meetings due to rules around social isolation.

### Sex Worker Advocacy via The Red Project

Claire, our specialist Sex Worker ISVA, continued to offer excellent support to female sex workers who had been subjected to sexual violence, abuse or exploitation. As evidenced in the October 2020 report by Changing Lives: "Nowhere to Turn", the pandemic saw a sharp increase in sexual violence perpetrated against sex workers and the number of women exploited through sex work. At the same time the pandemic had a challenging effect on how we could offer our specialist support. Restrictions meant that we could no longer see women face to face in our own or other community locations. Instead, we had to engage through telephone and emails only. This worked for some women but not for others, and as a result, while we knew there were women needing our services, for many it was unsafe for them to reach out and our referrals were sadly lower than normal.

This specialist service has its own website, [www.theredproject.co.uk](http://www.theredproject.co.uk) and Twitter account @TheRedProjectWM where sex workers can find up to date information and details on our support available to them.

# 42

## Adults were supported through our social groups

# Our wellbeing services

At RSVP we know that many survivors felt isolated even before the pandemic and its associated restrictions. For a number of years now our social groups have provided a way to reduce isolation, build supportive friendships with other survivors and increase confidence to socialise. Groups are also a great support for survivors waiting for counselling, as well as during and beyond counselling too. Each month we held 6 groups: a coffee morning, 2 women only groups, a Chinese women's group, an asylum seeker & refugee group, and a mixed gender group.

Initially, remote working meant that we cancelled all our social groups, instead staying in touch with survivors via wellbeing calls. However, from September 2020 we restarted some groups online and by the end of the year all, except the Chinese women's group and asylum seeker & refugee group, were running well on Zoom.

### Online social groups via Zoom restarted in September 2020. Topics included:

- Assertiveness
- Coping Strategies
- Preparing for Christmas
- Expression through crafts
- Pampering: How it can help our wellbeing
- Gardening: How gardening can help our health
- EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) Tapping — specialist led session.

### Webchat

Our new service was launched in November 2020 and benefited 130 survivors to cope with the effects of sexual violence and abuse, to receive information on our other services, and to know what help other agencies offer. Check our website for opening times.

### Taste of Recovery and MindBody Online Support Programme

These online programmes are self led and are particularly useful for clients waiting to access our counselling or our other services. As the pandemic meant we all spent more time online, increasing numbers of survivors used this online support, up from 61% from last year.

# How creativity got us through lockdown

It's probably fair to say that most of us have never experienced living in lockdown, having to self-isolate, only going out when absolutely necessary either to buy essential goods or for exercise. Some of us will have experienced feelings of uncertainty and loneliness, and for survivors this can be particularly distressing. Creativity can settle our amygdala, the part of our brain which is panicky, distressed and responds to real and perceived danger, increasing positive emotions and a sense of control. Our website became the perfect platform to share creative resources, to help survivors enjoy the process, and feel grounded in the moment in times of stress.



Our Youtube channel has several art and craft videos produced by our Community Fundraiser, and her fabulous fundraising volunteers. Topics included:

- Make a Caterpillar and Butterfly,
- Drawing Basics –pencil techniques,
- Draw a rose,
- Draw a cat and dog, step by step,
- Create a 'Good Vibes' jar

They can be viewed online: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8qUgaU2SH-FT2a47bO2czw>

Creative resources were also drawn by Naomi, who generously allowed us to share them. Naomi created a fantastic set of cartoon animals for people to download and colour in. As she explains, *'Motivating myself to create something each day really helped my own well-being'*. Thanks to Naomi for her talent and kindness. Check out her amazing drawings online: <https://rsvporg.co.uk/resources/go-create/>

Although Arts with Hearts our survivor led craft group couldn't meet this year it didn't stop their creativity, they just went online instead to share their joy of arts and crafts. <https://rsvporg.co.uk/services/arts-with-hearts/>

# Children & Young People's Services

Just after the start of remote working we were delighted to hear we had won a tender from Birmingham Children's Trust. This meant we could expand the support we gave to sexually abused children and the people supporting them from August 2020.

After the beginning of this expansion, we were joined later in November 2020 by Fran, our new Head of Children's Counselling and Wellbeing Services. Before this Anjella had previously been our Head of both Adult and Children's services and was instrumental in developing our early offer to children. Huge thanks to her for the children's services that she started and the support she gave to Fran too.

Supporting children throughout the pandemic has been particularly challenging; telephone counselling is not always suitable for very young clients who need face to face engagement. Instead parents and carers of very young survivors received wellbeing calls so they could talk through their concerns and feel well equipped to support their child. During this year we also offered online counselling for children aged 12 and above, and a dedicated website for children and the people supporting them called The Survivor Hub. This provides information and resources, including on online abuse and can be viewed here: <https://survivorhub.co.uk/>

## Counselling

# 410

**children and young people were supported this year through short and long term counselling, an increase of 22% on last year.**





I need support

**94%** of children said they know there's someone at RSVP that they can always talk to

**One of our children's counsellors describes how specialist counselling supported a young survivor**

During therapy, Ahmed and I discussed his feelings of threat and what gives him a sense of calm in his life. We discovered that he felt angry, anxious and sad a great deal of the time. He wanted to feel happier, so we looked at ways he could feel calmer and things he already did that lifted his mood. We talked about his strengths and what was currently giving him happiness and a feeling of achievement and success.

Together we built a picture of what life was like for Ahmed and how connecting with other people after the abuse was a

struggle. This meant he often isolated himself and tried to make things better by staying on his own, as he was understandably scared about trusting anyone.

Therapy became an important way for Ahmed to stay connected to someone when things got too much, building his trust in me and others too. In turn he understood his initial response to trauma and felt less threatened when connecting with other people.

*Name and some details  
changed to protect identity*

# Counselling

## 346

children & young  
people were  
supported this year  
through longer term  
counselling

## 64

children & young  
people were  
supported this  
year through time-  
limited  
counselling

# Advocacy

# 457

supported this year  
through Children  
and Young People's  
ISVA services

This represents a  
**12% increase** from  
last year's figures

**Our Children and Young People's (CYP) ISVA service ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and that their needs are understood and met by all those supporting them. This service also keeps children informed, helping them understand each step of their journey through healing and justice processes too.**

Nationally, being isolated from school, friends, and wider family networks saw more children turning online to maintain connections, undertake schooling, and seek support. At the same time more abusers turned to the internet to target children and subject them to online sexual abuse. Sadly, this was reflected in Birmingham and Solihull and the children we supported. Restrictions also meant that some younger children had their direct support put on hold, as they were too young to be supported on the telephone. Instead we indirectly supported them through their parents. We also prioritised the return to face to face support for all children, as soon as we possibly could, which was in September. We grew our CYP ISVA team and welcomed Nikki in December.

## **A Children and Young People's ISVA reflects on how she supported a survivor**

Leanne was subjected to child sexual abuse by an adult in a position of trust. She disclosed to a school teacher, social services were alerted, and Leanne made a report to the police. The abuse and the distress of disclosing impacted on Leanne's wellbeing, home life and schooling.

Over time I began to understand Leanne's needs. She requested counselling and I referred her to an RSVP counsellor. I also liaised with her school so they could better support her to attend and feel safe. We

talked about how she was coping and built on her strengths.

After a long time the trial date approached and the abuser pleaded not guilty. For weeks before I had met frequently with Leanne and her family to talk about what to expect in court and to allay her fears. At court I also supported her. The abuser was found guilty, put in prison and placed on the Sex Offenders Register. Leanne then started and benefited from counselling.

*Name and some details changed to protect identity*

# How working in partnership supports survivors

**Working in partnership, both operationally and strategically, means we can ensure that survivors' needs are understood and prioritised across the organisations they attend for support. These are just a few of the partners we work closely with:**

Umbrella Sexual Health Services – this ongoing successful partnership ensures that through our ISVA and training services together we can improve the sexual health and support responses to people subjected to sexual violence, abuse or exploitation. Next year our partnership will be strengthened when one of our ISVAs will be based at Whittall Street Sexual Health Clinic four days a week.

Birmingham's dedicated Child Safeguarding Hub Empower U – through our ISVA service we have strengthened our partnership with the Hub. Our CYP ISVAs now regularly attend meetings in the Hub, to more quickly identify and support children subjected to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Irwin Mitchell Solicitors – although our free monthly drop-in clinics were suspended due to Covid, Irwin Mitchell continued to provide initial free legal advice to survivors via email.

**One of our Child ISVAs describes how strong partnerships helped a survivor receive the support she needed.**

Since I knew Suki, who was 17 years old, felt scared to attend face to face sessions, I tried different ways to reduce her fear and to support her. I contacted Suki and her mother through a blended approach, via phone conversations, texts and emails, hoping Suki would one day feel able to see me.

I started to have some safeguarding concerns about Suki and child sexual exploitation. Suki went missing overnight on several occasions, later being found at a hotel.

In partnership with Birmingham Children's Trust and the local Community Operating Group, Suki was supported and the hotel was added to a list of locations being monitored. Whilst I never met Suki face to face, I was able to highlight her needs to social services, a police investigation was started, and family support was put in place.

Both Suki and her mother were aware they could return to RSVP at any time, including if Suki feels ready to access counselling or our other support services

*Name and some details changed to protect identity*

# Looking after our Team

Supporting children and adults subjected to sexual violence and abuse is definitely rewarding, important, inspiring and fulfilling. However, it can also be stressful, emotional, difficult and distressing. We are always alert to the increased chances our team face of developing secondary and/or vicarious trauma, and remote working made us even more alert to these increased risks. Secondary trauma can develop suddenly and unexpectedly when traumatic and overwhelmed feelings are caused due to hearing and witnessing survivor stories. Vicarious trauma can develop cumulatively over a longer period from the repeated exposure to other people's trauma.

Due to the need to work remotely, our team faced a real possibility of being disconnected from their colleagues and peers, and feeling alone and isolated as they went about their work. Also, the boundary between home and work became blurred and the balance between the two was also harder to achieve. We knew that remote working meant that our team made huge adaptations to their work and personal lives. They juggled home schooling, their own and their loved ones ill health, and increased anxiety and stress, while still continuing to offer big hearted and believing support to sexually traumatised children and adults.

We prioritised the emotional health of our team and put in extra support and wellbeing measures, to reduce the risk of secondary and vicarious trauma and the extra risks the pandemic brought. We:

- Had socials and group 'get-togethers' on Zoom, giving everyone a chance to connect .
- Offered a series of group wellbeing programmes and one to one wellbeing sessions to everyone, through Asha at Mindability.
- Regularly had one to ones with our team to understand and respond to their individual needs.
- Circulated free booklets on self care during the pandemic, created by GINA our sister organisation.
- Gave our counsellors more time between counselling sessions and also set a maximum number of clients they could support each day and week to protect their own wellbeing.
- Wrote more regular e-team updates to share RSVP and wider news, COVID regulations, and training opportunities, and to celebrate our achievements and successes too.

We were, and remain, indebted to every team member for their bold action and dedication which meant that despite every challenge we faced, we continued to offer support to survivors throughout the whole pandemic.

# How our training supports survivors

We trained 713 professionals online, mainly from external organisations, but also some from our own team too. Training was on varied subjects: 'Online sexual abuse', 'Supporting children who have been subjected to trauma', and 'Sexual violence & the law'.

As with all our services COVID meant a re-think on how to deliver our specialist training. Although our Bitesize learning sessions launched before lockdown, they were adapted and relaunched virtually in August 2020. Alongside bespoke training, the sessions became one of our success stories, raising significant funding and giving us ways to engage professionals and improve their responses to survivors.

In addition to Bitesize sessions we continued to provide specialist training to Umbrella Sexual Health Services. Sessions included 'Building trust and connections', 'What is self-care, and why it is important', and 'What is victim blaming?'

Interested in training for your organisation? Email Cara at: [trainer@rsvporg.co.uk](mailto:trainer@rsvporg.co.uk)

**Our most attended/popular topics were 'An introduction to trauma informed practice', and 'Support survivors of sexual violence and abuse'.**

“ Really well delivered with clear messages and helpful examples. Very engaging with lots of opportunities to interact and contribute. The training was based on evidence and this was a solid foundation on which to build trauma informed practice. ”

Aston University – Course on:  
An Introduction to trauma informed practice

“ This was one of the best online training sessions that I've undertaken. The trainer had an excellent delivery manner, was informative, and ensured that there was good participation from all. She was also familiar and proficient with the technology that allowed the session to be delivered remotely. ”

FE College – Course on:  
Sexual violence and the law

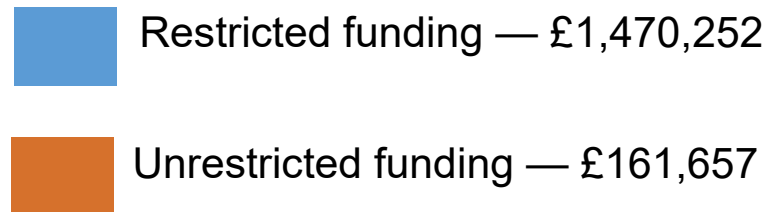
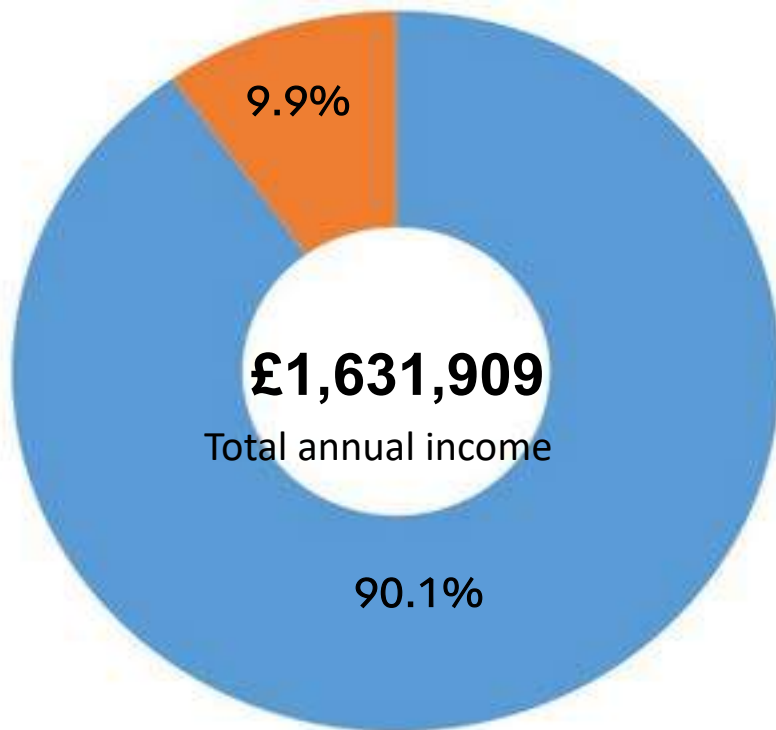
# 713

**professionals  
trained by our  
specialist trainers**

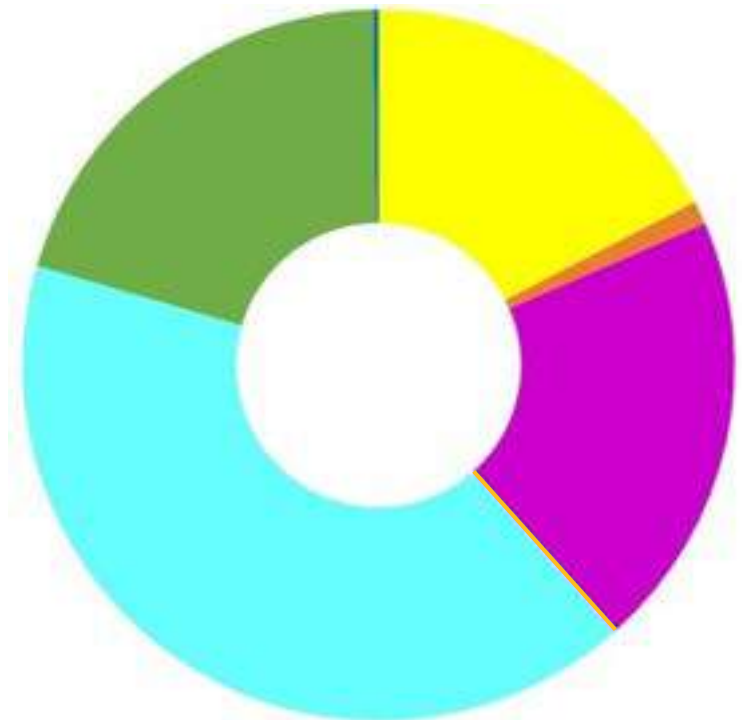
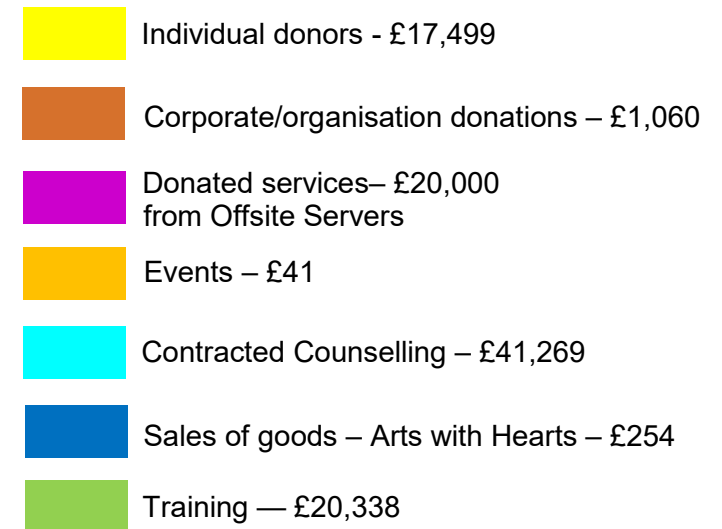
It's hard to support survivors of sexual violence and abuse when you may not know how to. How do you recognise sexual abuse, what's victim blaming, how do you best support someone going through trauma because of rape?

At RSVP our specialist training can create and deliver high quality training sessions for professionals supporting abuse survivors. We've supported the police, prison staff, medical professionals, universities, schools, care staff, counsellors and many other services, to consider their impact on those they support.

# Finance and Funding



## Breakdown of Donations, Gifts & Traded Income



## Funders

1961 Charitable Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
BBC Children in Need COVID-19 fund  
Big Lottery Fund: Reaching Communities  
Birmingham Children's Trust  
Birmingham City Council COVID-19 support  
Birmingham City Council - Adults and Communities Directorate  
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme  
Heart of England Community Foundation  
Henry Smith  
Lloyds Bank Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation COVID-19 fund  
Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Rape Support  
MOJ Rape Support COVID-19 support  
ROSA  
Sheldon Trust  
The Clothworkers' Foundation  
The Grimmit Trust  
University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust  
W A Cadbury Foundation  
West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner Victims Fund  
West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner COVID-19 support

# 25.78%

**Increase from  
last year's  
annual income**

- Annual income was £1,631,909 compared to £1,299,026 the previous year. This was a 25.78% increase, a phenomenal achievement especially given COVID and the related funding landscape and challenges.
- **Huge thanks to our Head of Business Development Sarah & our Community Fundraiser Sophie who successfully pivoted our fundraising at the start of remote work. This enabled us to both maintain our existing funding and secure additional funding, including via emergency COVID funding.**
- Our strategic aim is to grow unrestricted funding and increase the balance between restricted and unrestricted funding. This year we had 90.1% restricted income compared to 9.9% unrestricted. Growing our unrestricted funding will give us more flexibility as it enables us to spend the funding where we most need to, as well as save appropriate reserves.

## Finance and Funding



# Maintaining funding & finding ways to sustain our services

Our fundraising success during the pandemic was due to the actions of our Head of Business Development and Community Fundraiser who pivoted how we fundraised at the start of the first lockdown. We shifted from a focus of organising our own events (pre-pandemic) to providing stewardship to individuals and organisations (during and post pandemic) to encourage them with their own collections, Facebook fundraisers, sponsored events etc. This ran in parallel with a greater focus on raising funds through smaller grants (including COVID specific ones) to bolster our income raised from larger grants and contracts. We would like to thank our fundraising team and each and every one of our fundraisers, who have bowled us over with their huge efforts.

**Even though it's been a tough year and fundraising activities have been seriously curtailed we've still been in receipt of one off donations and gifts from our wish list. We're extremely grateful to everyone who's raised money in support of RSVP; here's some of the highlights:**

- Birmingham Chinatown Lions raised £1,000
- Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire donated £1,000
- ASDA Foundation - £500 was raised through the Green Token Giving vote at ASDA Chelmsley Wood
- Handsworth Charity gave us £1,000 grant
- The Methodist Church sent us £80 grant
- Waitrose Harborne raised £330

**We're so thankful to everyone who's raised money in support of RSVP; here's some of the ways we achieved this (and had fun, as well):**

- Fundraising Guide – full of tips for anyone to keep active and socialising while fundraising and supporting survivors too.
- Virtual Run – done in the runner's own pace and time, with the ability to set a target and track progress via the Virtual Run website.
- Wellbeing weekend – 2 days of wellbeing workshops and creative tutorials. Huge thanks to all those who donated their time and resources to run the workshops for us.

A huge thank you to all our funders and donors, both individuals and companies. Your generosity means so much to us and shows your belief in the survivors we support. The economic climate is increasingly challenging, even more so with COVID-19, which made the support you showed us all the more important and much appreciated, enabling us to continue to offer counselling support to children, women and men subjected to sexual violence and abuse.

If you'd like to join our fundraising friends visit our website: <https://rsvporg.co.uk/support-us/> or email Sophie: [sophie@rsvporg.co.uk](mailto:sophie@rsvporg.co.uk)

**Finance and Funding**

If ever there was a time when the value of your team shines out more brightly than usual, this year has been the one. We couldn't have achieved all that we have without the hardworking, loyal, warm individuals who make RSVP. They truly have shown their bold, big-hearted and believing dedication in continuing to support survivors of sexual violence and abuse in the most unprecedented times.

**Thank you, each and every one of you!**

Here's just a few of our amazing team



# The Team

- Counselling staff
- Senior Counsellors
- Counselling volunteers
- Team Leaders
- Support Worker for asylum seekers & refugees
- ISVAs
- Helpline volunteers
- Office support
- Social group facilitators
- Specialist trainers
- Reception
- Fundraising, including volunteers
- Leadership team
- Trustees