

Impact Report

April 2023 — March 2024



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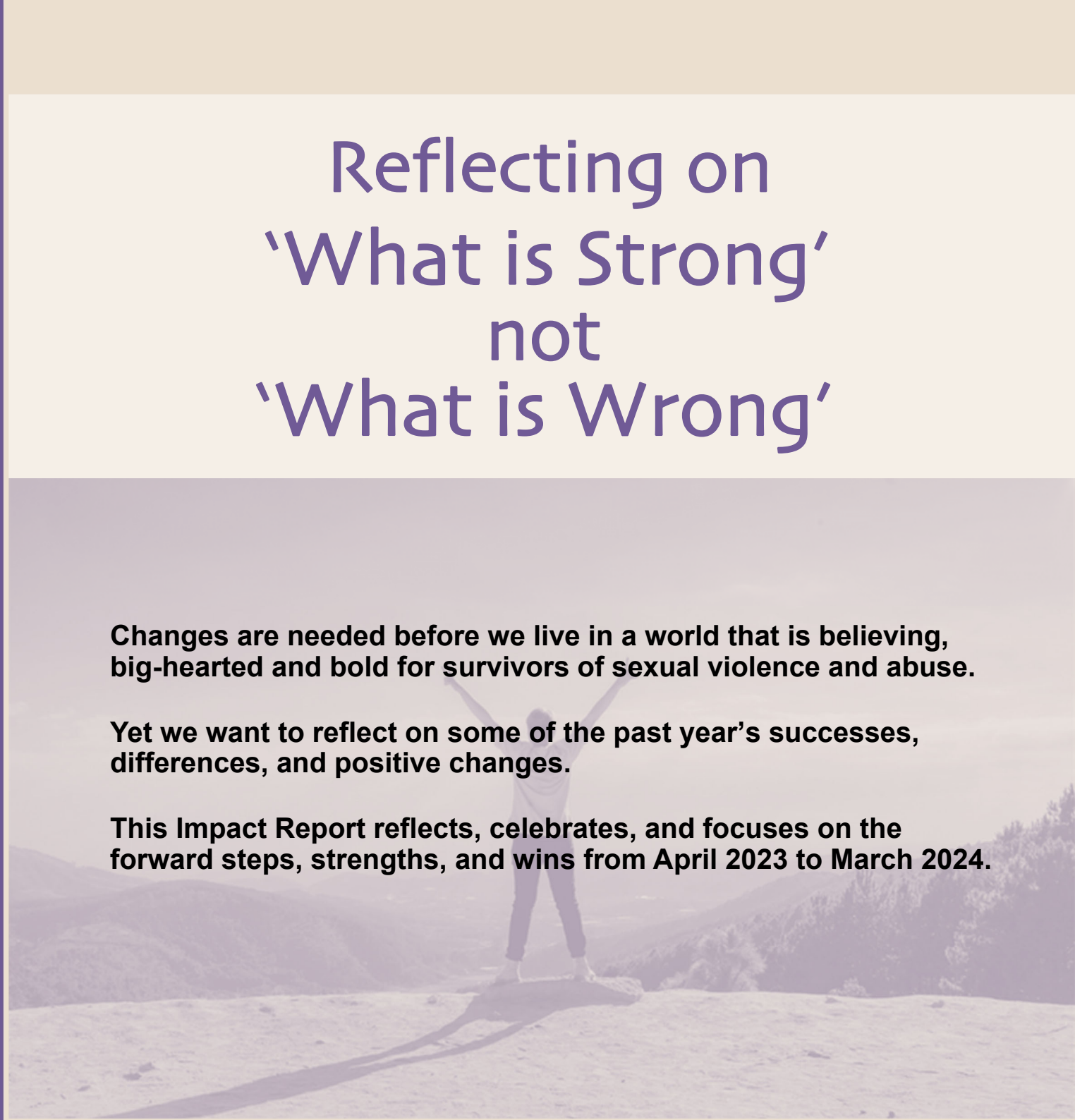
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Reflecting on 'What is Strong' not 'What is Wrong'

Changes are needed before we live in a world that is believing, big-hearted and bold for survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

Yet we want to reflect on some of the past year's successes, differences, and positive changes.

This Impact Report reflects, celebrates, and focuses on the forward steps, strengths, and wins from April 2023 to March 2024.



Welcome to our Annual Impact Report

From the Chair



Rachel Scott

This year's AGM theme has really struck a chord, 'What is Strong not What is Wrong' – sometimes the enormity of the challenge ahead to boldly, bravely, and big-heartedly support survivors and their families can be overwhelming. It's time to celebrate our achievements over the last year – to shout and be proud of the difference that our staff and volunteers are making in their communities.

This year is 10 years since the inauguration of the Above and Beyond awards, and myself and the other Trustees are moved by every single nomination we receive from the team at RSVP. Choosing the worthy winners remains one of my favourite tasks of the year. I'm excited to see who will win and why! As in life in general, sometimes it's the small gestures, such as being ready to lend a non-judgemental ear to someone who needs it, right through to the grit, determination, and the self-belief that's needed for one of our team to run 215 miles across a country, and raise funds for RSVP. We salute all of the nominees this year and every year!

The challenge of continuing to attract funding in an increasingly unpredictable landscape remains as demand for our services grows ever higher. I urge you to read the Client Journeys to see how vital the services RSVP provides are. We remain hopeful that the new Government will effect positive change for survivors of all genders, to ensure we can continue to support the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Thanks, finally, to you all for your support to survivors and for this incredible charity.

We are mission, vision, & outcome led, ensuring that survivors are supported to make the positive, meaningful changes that are important to them.

Mission:

- We support children & adults subjected to sexual violence & abuse to thrive and enjoy a future of hope and confidence.
- We boldly stand with survivors and challenge victim blaming.

Vision:

- A world free from sexual violence & abuse

Outcomes

- Reduce waiting times for survivors needing counselling
- Remove barriers to access our services
- Expand our Advocacy/ISVA Services
- Support our team to ensure they can develop, flourish & thrive.

This annual impact report is a record of how we've supported survivors and our team.
Read on to see how we achieved this.

4,908

adults and children were supported by our counselling and wellbeing services

2,056

adults and children were supported in ISVA services (inc. ASR Support)

86% female

12% male

2% trans, non binary, other

15,941

counselling sessions offered to children, young people, and adults, a 5.5% increase on the sessions we offered last year.

1,318

The number of children and their supporters whom we supported through our counselling and Advocacy/ISVA Services.

We also offered 148 wellbeing calls to children and young people (CYP) and 69 counselling sessions to the parents, carers & loved ones



Numbers of survivors supported through our services

- Adult counselling (at RSVP premises, or on phone or online) – 1,991
- Adult counselling at outreach sites – 201
- Refugee/asylum seeker counselling – 47
- Adult crisis/time-limited counselling – 330
- Children and young people's counselling – 621
- Children and young people's crisis/time-limited counselling – 43
- CSE Counselling services – 5
- Supporters' Counselling & Support – 45
- Survivors supported via our wellbeing social groups and coffee mornings – 218
- Pre-Therapy groups – 33
- Adult ISVA services – 1,215
- LGBT+ ISVA services – 92
- Sex Worker ISVA services (The Red Project) – 110
- Refugee/asylum seeker support – 35
- Children and young people's ISVA services – 585
- CSE ISVA services – 19
- Helpline calls – 1,268
- Web chats – 106

Adult Counselling Services

Our confidential counselling services offer safe supportive connection, wellbeing strategies, empathy and understanding to enable survivors to heal from the impact of trauma and live a hopeful, confident future.

Average waiting times varied for adult survivors this year from 5 months at some of our outreach sites to 7 months at our city centre premises. Recognising that waiting for counselling support can be difficult, distressing, & traumatising, we took a responsive approach to meet survivors' needs by:

- Expanding our team by training & recruiting new counsellors.
- Increasing the number of sessions offered each week e.g. we added 15 additional sessions a week at our Kings Heath outreach site.
- Working towards ensuring all counsellors can offer online counselling to enable an enhanced blended approach to support & offer survivors greater choice.
- Introducing new trauma-informed pre-trial therapy groups to support survivors waiting for counselling (in collaboration with Coventry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre, & Black Country Women's Aid).
- Streamlining admin processes to ensure efficient & faster responses for survivors.

We continued working towards reducing barriers to accessing counselling through our Asylum Seeker & Refugee support (now aligned with our ISVA team).

We offered training to 16 team members to support those working with interpreters, ensuring any survivor with a language need can access counselling support.

Unfortunately, a reduction in funding has resulted in sessional counselling being phased out which has impacted on our ability to respond quickly to a growing need for counselling.

Adult Counselling

2,569

adult survivors were supported through our main, outreach, time limited, & specialist asylum seeker/refugee counselling.

This was an 2.5% increase compared to the number of adults we supported last year.

Adult Counselling

Client Journeys

One of our Adult Counsellors describes how she supported a survivor

Joy appeared a little nervous at the beginning of the assessment. I explained I worked with a person-centred approach which is a non-directive way. However, Joy stated she'd prefer I made some suggestions for the sessions to see how we could work together. She was not sure where to start so I suggested she could do a timeline – 5 years at a time, which would give us some structure to our work together.

Joy has experienced a great deal of trauma, resulting in self-harming. We explored together triggers and thoughts, and also looked at coping strategies, by distraction techniques and planning activities on days that are triggering.

We focused on feeling safe, not only in the environment but also within herself. Joy came to realise the self-harming no longer helped because it resulted in her ending up in hospital which she no longer wished to do. She explored coping strategies by listening to music, and downloading an app which showed her how long she managed not to self-harm – a progress chart, which really helped. Significantly, she managed to stay out of hospital.

She felt able to disclose the trauma experienced in growing up and managed to gain more control in her life. We looked at positive self-talk and being kind to ourselves.

Our Asylum Seeker and Refugee (ASR) Counsellor recalls supporting a survivor

Ahmed accessed ASR support work and ASR counselling at RSVP. He'd been subjected to child rape, adult rape, asylum seeking, domestic violence, and homelessness, and was experiencing flashbacks, sleep issues, nightmares, paranoia, and anxiety. He didn't feel safe outside his home, isolating himself from others as he couldn't trust anyone due to his experiences.

Ahmed had tried counselling before but felt this time was different; he felt more comfortable with me and found RSVP a safe space. He spoke about things he'd never spoken about before, processing previously blocked childhood trauma and gaining practical knowledge on how to manage wellbeing, including flashbacks, panic attacks, anxiety, and sleep issues.

Ahmed began not knowing what a future could look like, not wanting to stay in the UK as it didn't feel like a community. But he ended the sessions feeling positive about future plans, working towards getting a British Passport, and pursuing his dream job.

ASR support included food vouchers, housing issues, medical support, and financial support. He also received clarity on ongoing processes regarding his status and stay in the UK.

Names and some details changed to protect identity

Our Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) offer practical & emotional support after sexual abuse. They are independent from other agencies such as the police or social services. They advocate on behalf of survivors to ensure survivors' voices, feelings, & needs are heard & responded to by other services.

When survivors had cases progressing to Court, they waited increasingly longer for trials to be heard due to ongoing Court backlogs. This saw ISVAs offering support to survivors for longer periods of time. When trials were heard over 71% of them (where our ISVAs supported adult survivors), resulted in a guilty outcome. We offered the following to meet survivors' needs:

- We expanded the ISVA Team & welcomed Jo & Siobhan as new Adult ISVA Team Leaders.
- All Advocacy Services continued to be offered 7 days a week, to give choice, with weekends being available when individual survivors requested this.
- We ensured other organisations were aware of ISVAs & the support they offer to survivors.
- We continued to upskill other professionals to meet survivors' needs by providing awareness raising sessions, & ensured good partnership working, e.g. with Birmingham LGBT+, Muslim Women's Network, and more.
- We continued to work in partnership with Umbrella Sexual Health, supporting survivors attending the Abuse Survivors' Clinic & other sexual health services.
- We adapted our services to include an 'Ask an ISVA' morning each month, held at Whittal Street Clinic, reflecting survivors' needs.
- West Midlands Police re-introduced a non-recent abuse team (dedicated to investigating reports of sexual abuse and sexual violence of adults who were abused under the age of 18 years). We were delighted about it returning, with the ISVA team seeing the positive impact this had on survivors.
- Our ISVA Team continued to inform survivors about the free legal advice they could gain from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors.

Adult Advocacy

1,215

survivors were supported this year through Adult ISVA services

(this excludes the number of adults we supported through our specialist LGBT+ & Sex Worker ISVA services)

an increase of 1.6% on last year's figures

For more information on our ISVA/ Advocacy service visit our website:
www.rsvporg.co.uk

Adult Services

Specialist Advocacy

92

The number of
people supported
through LGBT +
Advocacy this year

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

This year, Ian joined Bev as our specialist Advocates for LGBT+ survivors of sexual violence & abuse, collectively supporting 92 survivors. Working closely with Birmingham LGBT meant we could again give LGBT+ survivors choices of where they were seen (at Birmingham LGBT or RSVP), & work alongside Birmingham LGBT each week.

LGBT+ court cases are few due to additional barriers to reporting which this community face (which is deeply understood by our specialist service). Most of Bev & Ian's support surrounds accessing therapeutic support, sexual health services, housing support, & offering support with reporting, if survivors wish to do so. Bev & Ian continue to reduce barriers for this community by raising awareness, boldly standing up for LGBT+ survivors, & challenging LGBT+ myths & stereotypes held by other professionals (including police & clinicians).

Race & Equality Advocacy

This year we welcomed Sadé, our new Race & Equality ISVA. This role focuses on how survivors from Black & minoritised groups face additional barriers, & what actions can be taken to remove them. Barriers relate to reporting, accessing support, & seeking justice re: sexual violence & abuse (especially pertinent as institutional racism in the police is well documented).

Sadé continues to facilitate collaborative working with other specialist organisations, hosting events internally to raise awareness among our team of specific barriers and needs of minoritised groups.

110

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

The Red Project has its own website giving information about this specialist service. Visit it here:

www.theredproject.co.uk

Specialist Advocacy - Sex Worker Advocacy via The Red Project

Our specialist Sex Worker Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (SW-ISVA) supports survivors who are sex workers to cope with trauma by offering a range of emotional and practical support, including:-

- Offering safe supportive spaces in various community venues, passing on free mobiles, contraceptives, and sanitary products.
- Weekly drop-ins from Handsworth library to support sex workers in the area e.g. dance & nail painting sessions. Next year we plan more drop-in surgeries in community venues.
- Vocational help to find other jobs if wished; many sex workers can have gaps in their CV and struggle to enter the mainstream economy due to lack of confidence, or fear of adjusting their lifestyle.
- Referring clients to training opportunities, e.g. the Princes Trust, and Fir Croft College, for courses to boost self-esteem, confidence, and learn new skills.
- Peer support sessions, where sex workers lead on creative sessions for one another, e.g. make-up, card making, exercise classes, and nail sessions.

We continue to work closely with other organisations to provide this support, such as WM Police, Umbrella Sexual Health services (especially The Safe Project), probation, mental health services, & GPs.

Specialist Advocacy - Sex Worker Advocacy via The Red Project

Our SW-ISVA describes how she supported a sex worker survivor

100%

of survivors felt they
had a better
understanding of the
criminal justice
system

86%

of survivors felt
listened to

Dee was referred to me, as the SW-ISVA at The Red Project at RSVP, by the sexual health clinic for sex workers (called the SAFE clinic.) Her landlord was sexually harassing her & as a result she felt unsafe in her home. She was struggling because she had been refused access to benefits as an EEA national, who are often subject to No Recourse to Public Funds.

Dee was so distressed she left her home and also felt suicidal. She presented herself at hospital for support; however, she was not admitted but discharged to temporary accommodation for the evening and told to leave in the morning. She received no follow up from mental health services and was now also homeless.

I referred Dee to different agencies for support & also advocated for her, to ensure

her needs were better understood. Despite my advocacy some other agencies did not know how to support Dee, with her being No Recourse to Public Funds. Some even told her they could not help, which left her feeling very frustrated & upset. However, I arranged for support to be offered from a specialist asylum seeker group called BAOBAB (a women's group) & they helped her to feel physically & emotionally safe.

I also arranged support via the mental health trust, homeless pathways team, SIFA Fireside, Irwin Mitchells, Birmingham City Council, foodbank, & Birmingham community law centre. Through this support Dee knew more about available services & what information she needed to share to receive help.

Name and some details changed to protect identity

80% of clients felt more confident following support

Adult Advocacy

Two of our ISVAs describe how they've supported adult survivors

Case Study One

Flo googled our service to find our website and used our accessibility tools to translate it into her own language. She'd been raped abroad, had received medical attention for her injuries but hadn't received medical testing for STDs. (sexually transmitted diseases).

As a result of the support I offered (via an interpreter) Flo thanked me for my help, saying she felt safe talking to me. Flo is Black African and felt I heard and understood her culture. I discussed Umbrella Sexual Health Services, referring her for full sexual health testing. I also discussed the SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) so she could explore all reporting options. Flo decided she did not want to report to the police. She was referred for RSVP counselling, and I gave her details of our other wellbeing and pre-therapy services to ensure she was well supported while waiting for counselling.

Case Study Two

Mia was raped whilst on holiday; the case is due to go to trial in that country. She self-referred for support with navigating the criminal justice process as she had no idea what was going on with her case, and was finding it difficult having to chase up information herself.

I was able to liaise with the Foreign Office on Mia's behalf; they made useful suggestions for Mia reporting to the UK police as they may be able to get Interpol involved.

Despite lack of access and resources to liaise with international police (meaning it's been difficult to obtain detailed case updates), and by communicating regularly and reassuring her on her case, Mia felt less stressed, less alone, and more supported through the process.

Names and some details changed to protect identity

Adult Services

Our wellbeing services

Our wellbeing services endeavour to meet the physical, holistic, embodied, & social needs of survivors.

James, our Wellbeing Services Team Leader, continued to successfully oversee our wellbeing services. We restarted our Chinese Women's Group (the first time since lockdown) which proved a success following advertisement efforts.

We re-introduced our Asylum Seeker & Refugee social group, known as Connections, for the first time since lockdown in March 2020. However, uptake was low so we are currently liaising with specialist organisations to explore any barriers that clients are facing in accessing our Asylum Seeker & Refugee social group.

218

adults supported through our social and wellbeing groups

“

The experience of coming to the social groups has been so helpful to me. I come to the Coffee Morning, Arts with Hearts, and Women's Day Group. I've felt accepted, supported and validated from both survivors and facilitators. The groups are a very important part of my coping and recovery journey; they have a safe, supportive atmosphere. I've not experienced this before.

”

Groups offered to survivors:

- Young Women's Group
- Women's Evening Group
- Women's Day Group
- Mixed Gender Group
- Chinese Women's Group
- Coffee Mornings
- Connections
- Arts with Hearts

Arts with Hearts meets every third Friday 10.15 am -12.45 pm.

The co-facilitator working alongside Sally, who's led the group from the start, said it's wonderful to welcome survivors into the group, and see how they all share a love of arts & crafts.



Topics explored include:

- Art with Lorna
- Games Night
- Painting by Numbers
- Meal Out
- Mini Golf
- Thai Chi
- Aromatherapy
- Coping Strategies for Stress



The Women's Day Group had a great morning making Chilli Bean soup & mint tea. Thanks to Kate from 'Cook & Grow Together' for taking the session.

Adult Services

“

I was just chatting to someone on the Webchat while I was walking my dog. I just wanted to send thanks for the chat because it really helped.

”

“

Your support has been life-changing; I'm so grateful to RSVP and all your team.

”

Our wellbeing services

Telephone Helpline Service and Webchat Services

We took 1,268 calls from survivors and the people supporting them (partners, families, friends and professionals). This is a 208.5% increase from the 411 calls we took last year. 106 survivors used our Webchat this year, representing a 96.3% from the 54 Webchats last year. This huge increase is indicative of the number of survivors requiring a fast response and support.

James (our Wellbeing Services Team Leader) has continued to train & recruit new volunteers; this has enabled us to offer more consistent opening hours on our Helpline & Webchat Services, & offer a quicker response to survivors, with information to cope with the impacts of sexual trauma.



Taste of Recovery and MindBody Online Support Programme

Taste of Recovery is an online tool created by a survivor for survivors, providing information, tools & techniques to avoid self-blame & feel more in control. It's free to clients waiting for, or already accessing, our services. The MindBody programme compliments Taste of Recovery and explores grounding practices e.g. mindfulness and sleep, and is also free to our clients. This year the tools were accessed 1,064 times, including by 176 survivors for the very first time.

Support for Male Survivors

12%

of all of the adults & children we supported were males

RSVP counsellor Mike, and Ian, our LGBT+ ISVA, along with Sean and Ben who are placement counsellors, make up the males on our team. This gives reassurance to male survivors of sexual violence and abuse that we have males represented on our team and that they can choose the gender of the worker they will be supported by.

It's not uncommon for male survivors to feel the sexual assault/abuse is their fault and that they should have been able to stop it, even though it can happen to anyone, regardless of size, strength, appearance, or sexual orientation. Although the majority of perpetrators are male, men and boys can also be sexually abused by women and girls. Due to these specific issues, and being related to myths about sexual violence and abuse against males, male survivors often wait longer to open up and talk about the abuse.

Here at RSVP we understand that, and all our team can support male survivors when they are ready, and at their own pace. It's also why we're proud to be awarded, once more, the Independent Accreditation Programme 'Quality Mark' for achieving the Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence.

One of our counsellors shared how they supported a male survivor

Fred found the idea of counselling difficult. He was overwhelmed by emotions and thoughts he'd kept locked away for decades. He lashed out at people and felt shame and guilt by his behaviour. He didn't want to be this angry person anymore. We went through techniques on how to release his anger in a healthy way, e.g. a punch bag in his shed.

We spoke about how he was groomed by his abuser and this was not his fault as he was just a child. He slowly began to forgive himself as he felt he was partly to blame for the abuse he suffered. When we went through the manipulation and the grooming process the abuser did to him, Fred was able to let go of his own blame and guilt.

Fred was able to take his life back and he felt very empowered by doing so. Providing a safe space where he didn't feel judged allowed Fred to open up and release his emotions and thoughts. He was extremely thankful for counselling, realising there is life after abuse, something he thought would never happen if he hadn't had therapy.

LIME CULTURE

INDEPENDENTLY ACCREDITED

MSP | MALE SURVIVORS PARTNERSHIP

QUALITY STANDARDS

for Services Supporting Male Victims and Survivors of Sexual Violence

06/26

Support for adults who are supporting young survivors

Comments from one carer who'd completed the Supporters' Programme and Supporters' Circles via online group sessions.

'I can't believe you listen to everyone talking about their stuff each week... You are such good listeners and I can just come here and say anything I need to say... all the things I can't say to anyone else. People can express themselves however they need to do... I understand more now that it's about taking care of the whole body.

You are so calm and you are cool and take it all. You are doing such a good job.

I came here so emotional and struggling, and I now know how to support my daughter, and I've felt able to feel these things and it has helped me. My child is so happy to go to counselling; it has really helped them to stay positive.

As well as group support we also offer counselling and wellbeing calls to supporters. Here's an account of one of our counsellors (name has been changed)

Omar is a grandfather of a young person who is receiving counselling from us. He was offered wellbeing calls as he was finding it exhausting to care for his grandson.

At first he used these phone calls to tell me what was happening, needing someone to listen and acknowledge the enormity of his role. As the primary carer, he was responding to many high risk incidents when his grandchild was showing signs of distress, layered on top of 'normal' teenage experimentation and behaviour, whilst also managing his own health issues and complex issues within the family.

Over time, I've been able to offer alternative perspectives and ideas, and we've been able to problem solve together. While we cannot fix many of the contextual issues he faces, we can help to support him and to know he is not alone.

The phone calls are a lifeline to him, to feel that someone else sees what he is going through, helping him to be grounded enough to support his grandchild.

Support Services

If you are a parent, carer, loved one, we have a Supporters' Programme which explores ways you can support young survivors, and a Supporters' Circle, where supporters can come together and talk.

“ Joining the programme has opened my eyes to so many things. Thank you. ”

Children & Young People's Services

The mission of our children's services is to meet children & young people with timely, appropriate, & compassionate specialist support

This year, 714 children, young people (CYP), and parents/carers/supporters were supported through counselling, wellbeing calls, and support for supporters. We focused on reducing waiting times while continuing to offer big hearted, compassionate services and a relational approach:

- We expanded our CYP Counselling Team, & offered more CYP counselling from their school.
- We ran a CYP pathway training programme, to support the development of our adult counsellors. After training, the adult counsellors met the competencies needed to counsel children. The pathway increased opportunities for our counsellors and meant we expanded our CYP team with counsellors we already knew and had worked alongside.
- We partnered with Bright Spaces to enhance our spaces & make them more welcoming, comfortable, & accessible for CYP.
- We commenced with our Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pilot to support parents supporting CYP where sibling to sibling abuse was present.
- We strengthened supervision arrangements for our team, giving more reflective spaces.
- We continued with our Supporters offer with a Supporters' programme & Circle.
- We offered specialist training for our team (including training on: Working with Interpreters, Suicide Awareness (ASSIST) & Supporting CYP re: Harmful Sexual Behaviour.)
- We expanded our offer to support CYP subjected to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Sadly, we also saw our Head of CYP Services, Fran Ford, leave at the end of September. Despite huge efforts to recruit into this post it stayed vacant until May 2024 when Katrina Blake joined us as new CYP Head. We'd like to give special thanks to Janet and Gemma, CYP Team Leaders, Lisa, CEO, and Lucy, Exec Assistant, who together helped to support the CYP Team, take on some of the tasks of the CYP Head, and lead on recruitment of the new CYP head, in difficult and challenging times. Your hard work, dedication, and support was noticed and truly appreciated.

Counselling

“

Just wanted to say huge thanks for the resources through the post. We knew you may send my daughter some of the craft she'd done with you and she can't wait to do it now. She has really enjoyed your sessions and I really appreciate your help. Also, the pocket hug was so thoughtful. It made my daughter feel very special. Thanks again.

”

Our fabulous schools team sent out craft packs to clients not accessing counselling during the summer holidays. This message was from a grateful parent.

The Survivor Hub is our dedicated website for children and the adults supporting them. Through this we are starting to provide more information and resources, including online abuse against children. All this can be viewed here: <https://survivorhub.co.uk/>

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

Tia was very nervous at our first session. Playing games broke down the barrier to help her talk about some of the things she was feeling. The trauma caused her anxiety, anger, and not knowing who she could open up to.

The counselling gave Tia a safe place to talk about some of her issues, which she did not feel comfortable discussing with her parents. It took several sessions for Tia to trust me and open up about things, especially her self-harm as this was something which was happening regularly.

Most counselling sessions were done through play therapy and using the person centred approach, allowing the client to talk about whatever she wanted to, knowing I wouldn't make her talk about something she didn't want to. Play therapy is important as sometimes it gives the client a variety of ways to open up without feeling pressurised to talk. It also helps them understand more about their own feelings and thoughts. By working together we looked at grounding techniques and how important these are about grounding Tia back to the present moment and knowing that she is safe.

Towards the end of our sessions, Tia was open and felt the sessions had helped her, especially in regulating her emotions. She knows she will have bad days and the trauma will be part of her. It was powerful to see the change in her and become confident in herself, knowing she can talk to her parents. Tia's parents were very grateful, noticing they have definitely seen a change in her.

Name and some details changed to protect identity

Counselling 626

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

43

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

Children and Young People's Advocacy

585

children & young people were supported this year through CYP ISVA services

19

CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) survivors supported this year

Our Children and Young People's (CYP) Advocates, called ISVAs, offer practical & emotional support after sexual abuse. Independent from other agencies such as the police or social services, they advocate on behalf of child survivors (& parents & carers too) to ensure their voices, feelings, & needs are heard & responded to by all services.

- We kept children informed through criminal justice processes, helped children understand trauma and its effects, and ensured children had emotional support to aid their healing journey.
- Our CYP team continued to conduct outreach work, including supporting children at school when parents/caregivers were not able to, or did not wish to bring the child/young person into RSVP.
- We've enhanced our focus on exploring additional barriers faced by children & young people who are in care or are care leavers.
- We continued to work alongside Birmingham Children's Trust Safeguarding Hub, attending daily briefings to enhance our multi agency response to sexually abused and exploited children.

Client Journey

Teenager Kylie was referred for counselling as she'd been sexually abused as a 9 year old. She had frequent flashbacks, often triggered by certain situations or intrusive thoughts. She was provided wellbeing calls whilst waiting for counselling. In her ISVA assessment the discussion led to sexual health. We discussed the various options around specialised support from ASC (Abuse Survivors' Clinic) and the option of self-testing kits. Kylie felt heard and that someone was on her side. She found it beneficial speaking to someone who understood triggers and who could offer coping strategies around flashbacks. She also felt more informed on her options around sexual health. She was previously worried that having an appointment or using a self-testing kit may be triggering; however, she now felt more likely to access these services, if and when needed, as she knew she could access a clinic where people have an understanding of the impact of sexual violence and the potential triggering nature of discussing sexual health. She also felt more comfortable using self-testing kits, knowing they are discreet should she prefer not to have a face-to-face appointment. *Name and some details changed to protect identity*



Looking after our Team

We continued to ensure RSVP is a space where our team could flourish, grow, and develop their role. Here are some examples of how we achieved this.

- We gave our team access to our BHSF wellbeing app. Useful sections include Smarter Spending, with discounts on grocery and high street shopping, and advice on money and bills. The team can also access counselling through this app.
- We continued to offer The Wellness Hub, a free online resource pack designed by RSVP and Asha of Mindability, to increase knowledge, cultivate wellness, and develop resilience. Topics include self-care, sleep, signs of stress, and nutrition.
- We updated our HR policies, focussing around wellbeing. We were in the 2% of organisations to have a new Menopause Policy, and Leadership attended training on Menopause in The Workplace. We also introduced our Domestic Abuse Policy.
- We are arranging HR contract consultations — we've been working on more advantageous terms and conditions for our team, including increasing wellbeing. One way we did this was to increase annual leave entitlement in August 2023.
- Having introduced Team Wellbeing Champions to the team last year to support and drive wellbeing initiatives, we found we need to revisit this format. We've put this on hold while we reconsider its aims.
- Maintaining our connection with the team remains vital. We held an Xmas Grotto at our main office, arranged lunch dates to the German Market, and sent goodie boxes to all our outreach and remote workers. Jo, one of our adult ISVAs, organised a Christmas Festival Social, and we celebrated both Eid al-Adha, organised by Sadé, our Race and Equality ISVA, and Black History Month.



“ Self care is how we take back our power and return our sparkle ”



Our own Santa's Grotto



Lisa, our CEO, attended the first Roshni Birmingham Red Carpet Annual Gala Awards & Charity Evening.

It was a night filled with glitz & glamour, celebrating the movers & shakers from the local & national violence against women and girls sector, with a focus on & celebration of Black and minoritised professionals & activists.

Celebrating Black and minoritised colleagues

Nurturing Wellbeing



Resilience

Support



BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2023 SALUTING! SISTERS

Black women have emerged as luminaries in business and entrepreneurship, showcasing unparalleled talent. Their endeavours epitomise grit, innovation, and an unyielding drive to challenge established norms. Recognising their achievements not only applauds individual successes but also carves a path for future generations. The trailblazing women highlighted here have broken barriers, ignited change, and crafted a lasting legacy. To these remarkably talented women, we salute you.

Vanessa Kingori MBE
"Success is not about who you are but what you become."

Sharmadean Reid
"Creativity is intelligence having fun."

Kanya King CBE
"Follow your passion, not just the latest trends."

Izzy Obeng
"The world needs more people who dare to take the unconventional path."

Jacky Wright
"Inclusion drives innovation"

How our training supports survivors

“ A huge thank you from us all for an excellent session today. Everyone is telling me how helpful they found it. It's so helpful to see things more from the client's perspective and understand how best to support them through their cases. So much helpful information to take away and use. ”

Some of the courses we've run:-

- Introduction to Sexual Violence and Abuse
- Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence
- Introduction to Trauma-informed Practice
- FY2 Training
- Male Survivors of Sexual Violence
- Becoming Trauma Responsive Supporting Survivors

We recorded our training for use as part of the training programme offered to music venues participating in the Safer Dance scheme.

Organisations who have benefited from our training:-

- Anthony Collins - Solicitors
- Aston University
- Behind Closed Doors
- Birmingham Diocese
- Gam Care
- Irwin Mitchell - Solicitors
- Pow and Jericho
- Robin Hood Academy
- Safer Dance
- Umbrella Community Partners
- University Hospital Birmingham
- University of Birmingham
- West Midlands Police

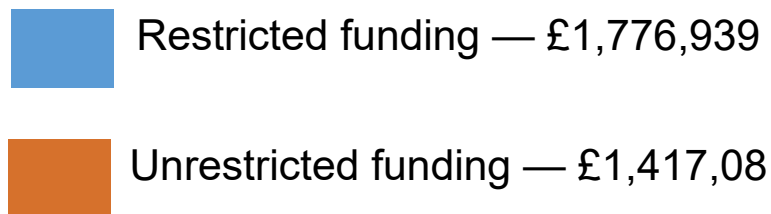
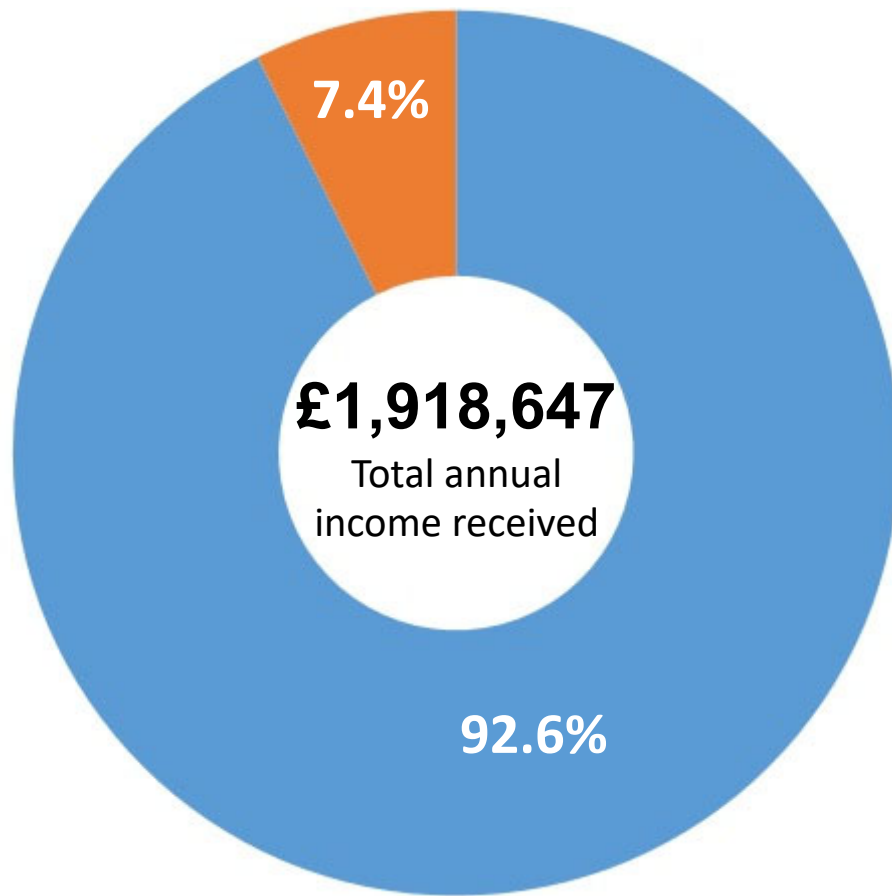
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professionals
trained by our
specialist trainers

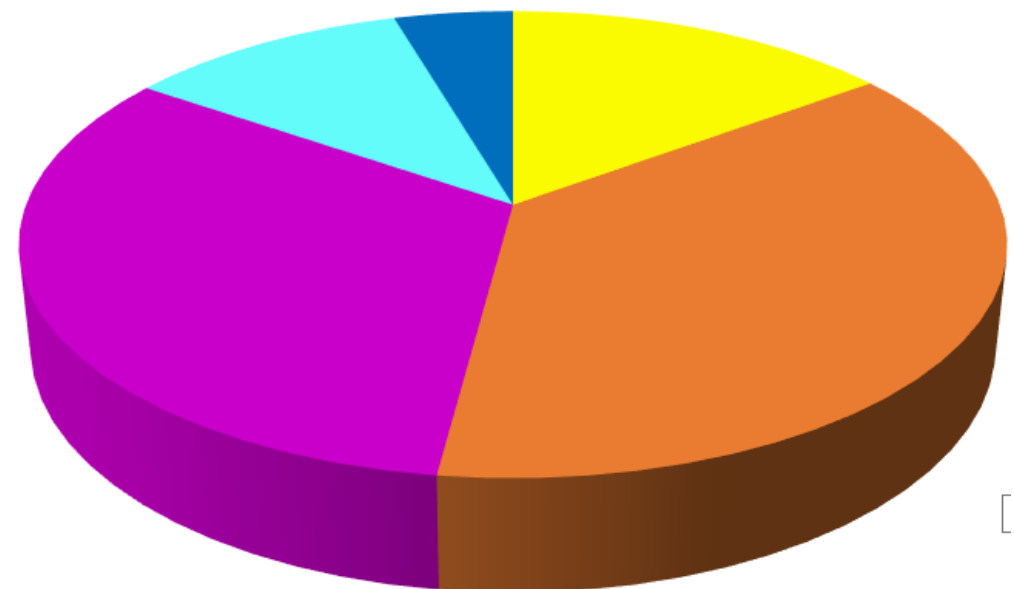
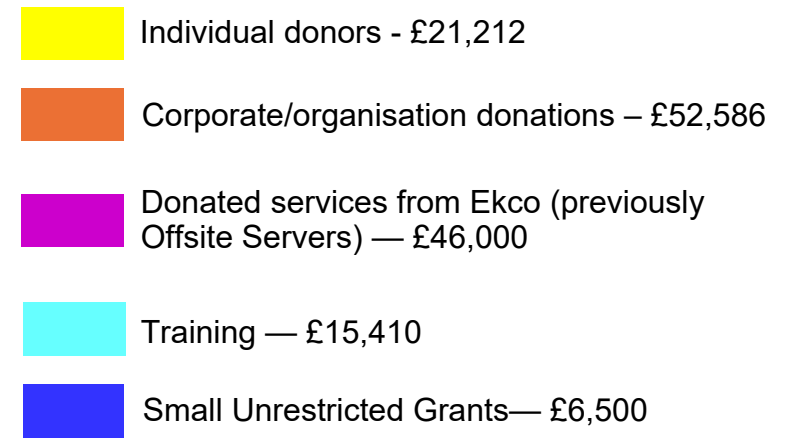
It can be hard to support survivors of sexual violence and abuse when you may not know how to. How do you recognise abuse, or challenge victim blaming? How do you best support someone going through trauma due to rape?

At RSVP our specialist trainers 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 Unrestricted Income: Small Grants, Donations, Gifts, & Traded Income



Grant Funders

Adult Sexual Assault Referral Centre (ASARC)

Big Lottery Fund

Birmingham City Council

Birmingham Children's Trust

Birmingham Children's Trust CSE

BBC Children in Need

Brook Trust

Charles Hayward Foundation

Eveson Enhance

Henry Smith

Home Office

Lloyds Bank Foundation - England & Wales

L'Oreal

Mazars Charitable Trust

Ministry of Justice Rape Support

Ministry of Justice Rape Support Male Survivors

NHS England

WM CYP Services (previously P-SARC)

UHBFT

West Midlands PCC—Victims Fund

£1,918,647

Annual Income

11%

increase from
last year's
annual income

Annual income was £1,918,647 compared to £1,724,405 in the previous year. This was a 11% increase.



Finance and Funding

Maintaining funding & finding ways to sustain support services

We continued to improve the sustainability of RSVP by:

- Increasing the number of funding sources to reduce reliance on one/two large funders.
- Working with our sister organisation GINA – who offer paid for counselling to survivors & paid for & free resources. Surplus made through GINA is donated to RSVP to fund our services. In 2023-2024 GINA donated £45,000 to RSVP. We are truly grateful.
- Offering training to income generate & to ensure more partner agencies can better respond to survivors' needs.
- Making plans to expand our training & other ways we income generate.
- Starting work on a new fundraising strategy to diversify income & reduce reliance on grants and contracts.

Over the next few years we aim to have stronger corporate fundraising. This year to work towards this, we:

- Explored ways to increase connections with corporates;
- Considered which network groups we could join, to be in front of as many businesses as possible;
- Started to shape & develop a bigger corporate offer, meeting CSR strategies.

As well as the above, we continued to work with, support, and share our thanks to all individuals, groups, and businesses who fundraised for us this year. We are hugely indebted to everyone.

Huge thanks to all our funders and donors, individuals and companies. Your generosity means so much to us and shows your belief in survivors. The economic climate is still challenging, making the support you gave us all the more important and appreciated. You enabled us to continue to support people subjected to sexual violence and abuse to live a future filled with hope and confidence.

Want to join our fundraising volunteers? Visit our website: <https://rsvporg.co.uk/support-us/> or email Sophie, our Fundraiser: sophie@rsvporg.co.uk

Want to explore how your business could support and partner with us? Email Paula, our new Head of Fundraising and Partnerships: paula@rsvporg.co.uk





RSVP delivered its services due to the bold, big-hearted and believing dedication of warm individuals who work here. We couldn't have achieved what we have were it not for their dedication, skill and loyalty.

Thank you all!

Here's just a few of our amazing team

The Team

- Bookkeeper
- Counsellors
- Senior Counsellors
- Placement counsellors
- Team Leaders
- Support Worker for asylum seekers & refugees
- ISVAs
- Helpline volunteers
- Webchat volunteers
- Office support staff
- Social group facilitators
- Coffee morning facilitators
- Specialist trainers
- Communications Officer
- Fundraisers
- IT volunteers
- Fundraising volunteers
- Trustees
- Leadership team