

RAPE  
CRISIS  
SCOTLAND

# Annual Report

2023-24



# Introduction

This was another busy year for Rape Crisis Scotland.

We launched **Survivors Can't Wait**, a national campaign which highlighted the lifesaving work by Rape Crisis workers across Scotland and the devastating impact on survivors who have been impacted by increased waiting times for support.

The need for additional resources to support survivors was also highlighted by the ongoing demand for frontline Rape Crisis support, the growth of national justice and legal advocacy work through our National Advocacy Service and partnership with the Scottish Women's Rights Centre, and ongoing development of sexual violence prevention work with young people.

The **Survivors Can't Wait** campaign drew a significant amount of media attention and led to an extension of funding to address waiting list issues at Rape Crisis member centres into 2024/25. While we delighted with this outcome, we are all too aware of the ongoing impact waiting lists have on survivors.

We will continue to campaign for sustainable long-term funding for Rape Crisis Centres across Scotland, so that every survivor in Scotland can access the support they need when they need it.



# National helpline



The Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline is open every night from 5pm – midnight, providing initial, crisis and short-term support to survivors of rape and sexual violence by phone, email, text and webchat.

In 2023-24, the Helpline received a total of 5840 support and information contacts over the year, an increase on the previous year - 3271 of these contacts were phone calls. In addition, we also had 2579 hang ups and 560 silent calls, a significant increase for both on the previous year.

The newer webchat service, launched in December 2022, received 707 contacts over 12 months during 2023-24. Overall, there continues to be a steady demand for written support across these channels (email, text & webchat). Written channels now make up 35% of our overall contacts, and survivors continue to highlight in feedback the importance of being able to access helpline support via a variety of methods to suit different circumstances and needs.

“It made me feel so much better. I feel less guilty, like someone understands what happened and cared and that it wasn’t right. I feel like I can take steps to change things.”



# National Advocacy Service



In 2023 24, 2915 survivors were supported by the National Advocacy Service, with 1395 new referrals received. Specialist Advocacy Workers supported survivors at every stage of the criminal justice process, with 235 survivors supported at police statements (31 of these being visually recorded interviews), and 85 supported at precognition meetings.

In addition, 343 survivors were supported to attend court to give evidence, 147 supported at court familiarisation visits, 129 in writing victim impact statements and 55 survivors supported to engage with complaints processes. Advocacy Workers provided a combined total of 28, 190 support hours.

Significant court delays in the wake of the pandemic continue to be an issue. This impacts on the National Advocacy Service, with caseloads and waiting lists remaining high. During the 2023-2024 period, 12 out of 19 National Advocacy Service delivery centres in Scotland operated a waiting list, with 866 survivors spending time on a waiting list for dedicated criminal justice advocacy support.

Survivors' experiences of the criminal justice process continue to form the basis of our regular meetings with Police Scotland and COPFS, where we advocate for a system that better meets the needs of survivors. Survivors' feedback also informs the development and delivery of our justice service training.

# Training &

# Development



The Training & Membership Development team continued to provide training, development and support to the wider Rape Crisis membership across Scotland. Alongside a programme of training for staff, this also included the continued development of the sexual violence accredited training programme. We continue to operate the Rape Crisis Knowledge and Learning Hub, which allows Rape Crisis Centres to share resources and best practice across the membership.

**Quality Assurance** is an important part of our work. Over the past year, we have collaborated with our partners at Rape Crisis England and Wales to review and refresh the Rape Crisis National Service Standard. We have worked with member centres and our Board of Trustees to agree an assessment model for the refreshed standards. The assessment will begin in the next financial year.

We continued to provide training to a wide range of partners, including Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Through training provided by the Scottish Women's Rights Centre, focusing on domestic abuse and the law, we currently have 68 solicitors on the SWRC Solicitor Signposting Network.

In addition, the Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC) runs a bi-annual training calendar, which covers: stalking, harassment, and the FollowIt App; Protective Orders and GBV; Damages and Compensation, and GBV; and Child Contact and Residence, and Domestic Abuse.

# Communications, policy & participation



Our communications, policy and participation work ensured that we continue to be a leading voice in Scotland in raising awareness of sexual violence, highlighting support services, platforming the voices of survivors and holding decision makers to account.

**The Survivors Can't Wait campaign** drew significant media and public attention to the issue of waiting lists for support at Rape Crisis Centres across Scotland. The campaign was raised at First Minister's Questions and received broad support from members of the public and MSPs. We welcomed the Scottish Government's extension of funding to address the issue of waiting lists into 2024/25 and will continue to campaign for more sustainable funding to address this issue.

We have also engaged with the media on a wide range of issues to raise awareness of sexual violence. We have issued comments and given interviews on topics including justice reform, the provision of free court transcripts for survivors, and access to support.

We also responded to the following consultations: Children (Care and Justice) Bill; Reforming the criminal law to address misogyny; and submitted significant written and oral evidence on the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill. Survivors have been a vital part of developing responses to consultations and informing our campaigning and policy work, and we would like to extend our thanks to all the survivors who have been part of this work.

# Prevention



**In 2023-24, prevention workers delivered 2,296 workshops on issues such as consent, gender equality, and healthy relationships, reaching over 36,500 young people. In August 2023, the updated Prevention Programme materials were launched.**

**Equally Safe at School (ESAS), a whole school approach to responding to gender-based violence, continued to develop this year. To date, 113 schools are registered on the ESAS website. The University of Glasgow's national evaluation of the ESAS intervention started in 2023, it aims to establish the benefits of ESAS for schools. Around 35 schools are taking part between 2023 and 2026.**

**We also worked with member Rape Crisis Centres to deliver the Equally Safe in Colleges and Universities (ESCU) programme which provides specialist training to local colleges and universities to improve responses for survivors. ESCU First Responder Training was delivered 14 times between 2023-2024 across 9 institutions, since the beginning of the project in 2018 we have reached 15 universities and 14 colleges, with many institutions engaging in multiple rounds of training and prevention education inputs.**

# Scottish Women's Rights Centre



The Scottish Women's Right Centre (SWRC) is a unique partnership project providing free legal and advocacy services to survivors of gender-based violence in Scotland. It is a partnership between Rape Crisis Scotland, JustRight Scotland and the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic, delivering Scotland wide legal information helplines, advice surgeries and some representation as well as specialist advocacy support and FollowIt App – an incident recording smartphone app for women survivors of stalking in Scotland.

During this time, the SWRC helplines responded to 332 calls and 74 online contacts contacts; a further 128 legal advice calls were also provided. During this period, 91 online advice and 35 immigration advice appointments were delivered.

The SWRC advocacy service works in partnership with the Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline to deliver the Followit app for survivors of stalking. At the end of this time period the app had 652 registered users. The advocacy service provided ongoing support to 24 survivors , undertook 196 short term interventions and responded to 346 justice process contacts, 145 of which involved seeking legal representation for survivors – a growing concern in the legal aid crisis.

During this period, the SWRC continued to deliver Lived Expertise Panels (LEP) and an Accountability Committee. Our participation workstreams aim to better understand the experiences of survivors engaged in justice processes and to enhance accessibility to SWRC services by identifying and addressing access barriers.

# Finances 2023-24

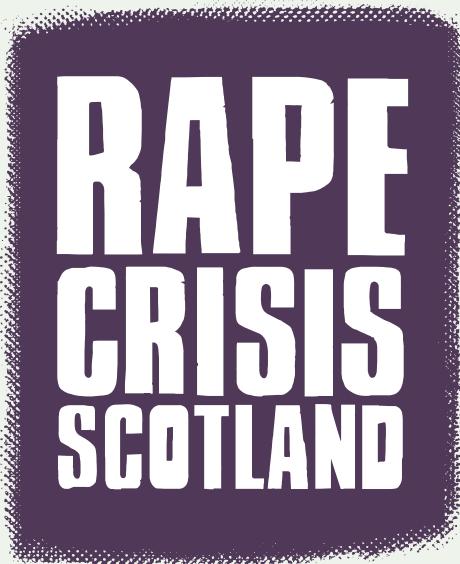
|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Donations:  | £34,520    |
| Charitable activities:                                |            |
| Sexual Violence Support:                              | £8,633,239 |
| Investment income:                                    | £2,814     |
| Expenditure on<br>Charitable activities:              |            |
| Sexual violence support                               |            |
| Total resources expended:                             | £5,650,045 |
| Net income:   | £3,020,528 |
| Other recognised gains/(losses):                      |            |
| Actuarial gains/losses on defined<br>benefit schemes: | £0         |
| Net surplus:  | £3,020,528 |
| Funding:  |            |
| Other Grants:   | £52,544    |
| 3rd Sector Early Intervention:                        | £672,000   |
| Justice Funding:                                      | £2,017,872 |
| SWRC:   | £651,501   |
| National Prevention Post:                             | £42,841    |
| ESCU:   | £44,304    |
| Waiting List:   | £2,310,143 |
| Delivering Equally Safe:                              | £1,931,866 |
| DES Partnership:                                      | £822,703   |
| Diversification & Service Evaluation:                 | £65,000    |
| Small Grants:   | £22,465    |

# Finances 2023-24

|                               | 2023     | 2024         |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| General funds (unrestricted): | £298,937 | £395,967     |
| Restricted funds:             | £138,570 | £3,062,068 * |
| Total funds:                  | £437,507 | £3,458,035   |

\*Included in the restricted funds reserves of £3,062,068 is £2,848,729 of grant funding for the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2025, which was awarded prior to 31 March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.





Rape Crisis Scotland would like to thank everyone who has supported our work during the past year. We are grateful to the Scottish Government for their continued financial support, as well as to the many individuals who have made incredible fundraising efforts on our behalf.

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