

# CONTENTS

Introduction Supporting Member Centres Working Together Specialist Skills, Best Practice & Quality Assurance Survivor Activism Communications Survivor Reference Group Helpline National Advocacy Project Prevention Scottish Women's Rights Centre Member Centres Finance & Funding

	4
	6
	7
2	8
	9
	10
	12
	14
	18
	20
All see	22
	28
	30

# **INTRODUCTION**

We have had another very busy and productive year. Our teams working in prevention, advocacy, the helpline, communications, membership development and the Scottish Women's Rights Centre have achieved a huge amount.

Our national helpline service received a total of **5,630** support contacts and launched the successful webchat service which has received very positive feedback for survivors. Prevention workers in member centres across Scotland have delivered workshops to over **35,000** young people in over **200** schools. **3,764** survivors were supported by the National Advocacy Project.

Our member centres have delivered lifesaving support to almost **10,000** survivors amidst a difficult funding climate. We welcomed the Scottish Government's temporary extension of funding to help address waiting lists for specialist support. This much needed extension allowed centres to continue to employ specialist staff to reduce the time survivors need to wait to access crucial support. We hope to receive confirmation of longer term, more sustainable funding for Rape Crisis.

We have continued to work closely with partners across health, justice, education and the third sector, as well as with survivors and member centres to improve responses to sexual violence.

# We have done a significant amount of work to improve survivors' experience of the justice system



We have done a significant amount of work to improve survivors' experience of the justice system. We have continued to be involved in the Scottish Government's Governance Group to implement the recommendations from Lady Dorrian's review of how sexual offences are handled in Scotland. Our responses to the review and how it could best be implemented have been shaped by the perspectives of members of the Survivor Reference Group. We have also briefed MSPs on upcoming reforms to the justice system and published a briefing summarising our **responses** to key proposals in the Scottish Government's "Improving Victims' Experience of the Justice System' consultation which incorporated survivor responses. We hope these changes will make seeking justice a more positive experience for survivors in Scotland.

We have also worked closely with sister organisations to campaign for women to be able to access abortion services without fear of harassment or abuse. Our Chief Executive attended the Abortion Summit chaired by the First Minister which looked at creating buffer zones around abortion clinics. We also published our supportive response to the consultation on Abortion Services Safe Access Zones.



We have spoken out on these issues, and many more, in the media. Our media work has allowed us to continue to be the most prominent campaigning voice to end sexual violence in Scotland.

We also finalised our strategic plan for 2023-26 and look forward to implementing its focuses across our work to end sexual violence over the next three years.

# **Supporting Member Centres**

This year the Training and Membership Development team has expanded and now includes a Training & Membership Development Manager, a Membership Development Worker and an Access and Inclusion Coordinator.



# Working Together

We have produced an interactive digital map and timeline charting the victories and growth of our movement and the work of so many women workers and survivors over the past 45 years.

We organised training for centres and RCS staff on a range of topics.

We introduced some taster wellbeing sessions for all frontline workers The wellbeing of staff and volunteers across the network was a priority this year. We introduced some taster wellbeing sessions for all frontline workers. These aimed to be a space for Rape Crisis workers to come together, reconnect and share experiences of working in the 'post' Covid climate and to offer simple body-based practices for relaxation. Workers from 10 member centres attended. We hope to offer more regular self-care sessions for workers across our membership. RAPE CRISIS SECTIAND KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING HUB

# Specialist Skills, Best Practice & Quality Assurance

We have continued work on our accredited training programme, have delivered training to support workers in centres and have facilitated knowledge exchange through six Learning Circle events with speakers including the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, Poverty Alliance, Scottish Autism and the Scottish Commission for Learning Disability.

We have also been working in collaboration with Rape Crisis England and Wales to strengthen and deepen our shared Rape Crisis National Service Standards. Our Knowledge & Learning Hub is now live and its resources are accessed by workers across the network

LOGIN

Our Knowledge & Learning Hub is now live and its resources are accessed by workers across the network. We have produced a robust draft of the new National Service Standards self-assessment portal and maintain a calendar of network events and trainings.

# **Survivor Activism**

We have supported a group of survivors at RASASH to develop the skills they need to lead zine workshops across the Highlands and Islands.

WorksHop



# Communications

We have continued to be the leading voice in Scotland raising awareness of sexual violence, highlighting support services, platforming the voices of survivors and holding decision makers to account.

We published **15** news stories and **9** blogs on topics like survivor activism and exploring the role of advocacy workers. We refreshed our approach to social media and updated our strategy.

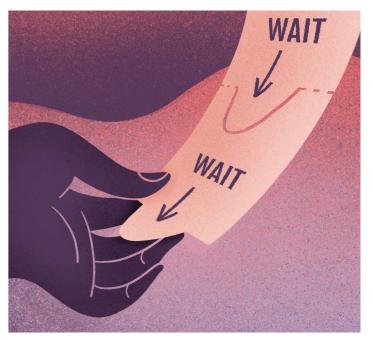
# We refreshed our approach to social media and updated our strategy

We commented on a huge range of issues including access to court transcripts, on sports clubs signing perpetrators of sexual violence and on waiting lists for Rape Crisis support.

We spoke out about the issue of waiting lists for support at Rape Crisis Centres across

Scotland. This received a significant amount of media attention, support from MSPs from different parties and social media support. The Scottish Government agreed to extend the crucial waiting list funding until 2024.

We worked in partnership with women's and social justice organisations to call for change, including producing a list of asks of the next leader of the SNP and First Minister of Scotland. Our call was published on the front page of a national newspaper.



# **Survivor Reference Group**

It was a busy and productive year for the Survivors Reference Group (SRG).

In September 2022 we welcomed the new role of Participation & Resource Worker. We broadened the focus of the SRG beyond solely justice issues, meaning it is now open to any survivor, irrespective of whether they reported what happened to them to the police.

The SRG participated in a consultation with Close the Gap on guidance for managers to support survivors in the workplace. SRG members also took part in an information session with the RCS prevention team. Members contributed to a review of prevention materials and helped to develop workshops for young people on understanding sexual violence.

Members contributed to a review of prevention materials and helped to develop workshops for young people

We recorded more episodes of the SRG podcast mini-series and released one of these.



# Helpline

The Helpline has continued to evolve while providing support to survivors across Scotland this year. The webchat service launched in December 2022, following a 2021 pilot which demonstrated clear demand. The webchat service received **111** contacts within the first four months and made up **6%** of all written contacts to the helpline during that time, a proportion which has continued to increase.

## The webchat service launched in December 2022, following a 2021 pilot which demonstrated clear demand

We provided support to survivors of stalking, supporting **101** survivors to sign up to the Scottish Women's Rights Centre's Followitapp, enabling survivors to log and record instances of stalking.



We also offered support to **721** survivors who had recently reported incidents of serious sexual violence to Police Scotland, as part of the Direct Police Referral scheme. The Rape Crisis Scotland helpline received a total of **5630** support and information contacts over the year, a **4%** increase from the previous year. **66%** of contacts this year were phone calls, and **32%** of all contacts were received via written channels, including email, webchat, text and letter. We also had **1730** hang ups and **266** silent calls over the year, evidence that reaching out for support continues to be challenging.

# Feedback

I've called a number of times when I'm struggling. Everyone I've spoken to have been life saving really. So supportive, gentle, calming and considerate as well as authentic. The person who responded to my email was really helpful and kind and went to some lengths to reassure and inform me which I really appreciated.

Other helplines should take training and lead from RCS helpline. Really the gold standard.

The helpline was very validating and has really helped me process and accept my experience.

It was a lifesaver to be understood. She understood what I was saying and helped me to understand what is happening to me. The person I spoke to was so kind and she stayed talking with me for as long as I needed. She just understood and it was good to talk to someone who just got it.

I am so grateful this service exists.

I feel a lot calmer and validated in my decisions, I feel ready to seek face to face support which I've never done before.

> I feel less anxious and stressed... it gave me an hour of talking to someone who understands.

> > I feel less alone.

17

# National Advocacy Project

The National Advocacy Project is a network of advocacy workers across Scotland who provide support and advocacy to anyone that has engaged, or is considering engaging, with the justice system following a sexual crime.

In 2022-23, **3,764** survivors were supported by the National Advocacy Project. This is over **80%** more survivors than were supported in 2021-22. We supported survivors at every stage of the criminal justice process, with **159** survivors supported at police statements, **35** were supported with video recorded interviews, **66** were supported with victim impact statements, **46** supported at precognition, **76** were supported to court familiarisation visits. Support was provided for **21** survivors to engage with complaints processes.

We supported survivors at every stage of the criminal justice process

**MORE SURVIVORS** 

NAP workers supported **220** survivors to attend court. Last year, court delays were made even worse by the impact of COVID. This impact carried on throughout 22-23 and meant the National Advocacy Project dealt with very high case loads and waiting lists throughout the year. **12** centres operated waiting lists during this period and **1,235** survivors spent time on a waiting list for advocacy, a **64%** increase on the previous year.

# Last year, court delays were made even worse by the impact of COVID

We continue to hear from survivors about the difficulties they experience at all stages of the justice process. In 2021-22, we continued to consult on justice reform and what changes would make a meaningful change for survivors.



# Prevention

In 2022-23, prevention workers delivered workshops to **34,933** young people across over **194** schools. This was considerably higher than previous years with schools keen to re-engage following the disruption caused by the pandemic. Centres also supported **265** young people to take the lead in youth activism work, focusing on what they want to change in their schools and communities.

Equally Safe at School is a whole school approach to responding to gender-based violence which supports schools and young people to take the lead in their communities. ESAS was launched in August 2021 and by the end of this year, **77** schools had registered with an Equally Safe at School account.

Equally Safe at School is a whole school approach to responding to gender-based violence Work continued throughout the year on refreshing the prevention materials used by workers to deliver workshops. New workshops will be delivered to young people with the refreshed materials in 2023-24.

We continued to work with Rape Crisis Centres to deliver the Equally Safe in Colleges and Universities programme which provides specialist training to local colleges and universities to improve responses for survivors. This year, **36** training sessions were delivered in **7** colleges and universities across the country by Rape Crisis Centres with support from RCS.

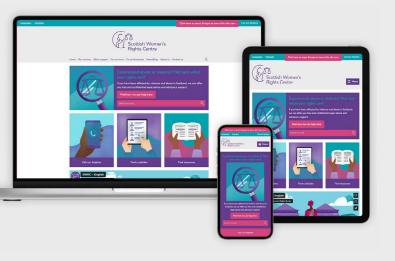


# Scottish Women's Rights Centre

The Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC) is a unique collaborative project which provides free legal and advocacy services to survivors of gender-based violence in Scotland. The SWRC partnership between



Rape Crisis Scotland, JustRight Scotland (JRS) and the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic delivers Scotland wide legal information helplines, advice surgeries and some representation as well as specialist advocacy support and FollowItApp, an incident recording smartphone app for women survivors in Scotland.



SWRC was delighted to launch a new website in December 2022. Funded by the Rosa Fund, the website has clearer navigation and improved accessibility, and it was designed with survivors in mind. The new website offers translations for the homepage, translated resources, easier access to signposting of services and a separate section for professionals. Thanks to the Rosa Fund for enabling us to make information and resources from SWRC more accessible to survivors.



In 2022-23, the SWRC advocacy service provided ongoing support to **35** women.

The SWRC Advocacy Triage Helpline answered **483** calls, responding to initial disclosures, signposting to services and streamlining legal advice call backs in accordance with detailed guidance from the legal team. **110** legal advice call backs were provided.

# • **66%** of callers reported experiencing domestic abuse

- **14%** of contacts were related to stalking and harassment
- **17%** were in relation to sexual offences
- **3%** were in relation to other forms of gender-based violence

The most frequent legal issues callers raised concerned children (21%), protective orders (19%), dissolution of relationships (14%), access to the civil justice process (12%), reporting crime (8%), immigration/asylum (8%) and CICA (5%). The remaining 13% of contacts related to a variety of issues such as rights within the criminal justice process, housing, employment and debt or financial issues. SWRC helplines are extremely busy. To boost capacity, we launched a recruitment campaign for pro-bono solicitors to volunteer on the legal helpline. **7** solicitors have been recruited and will receive SWRC training.

The SWRC helplines and advocacy service works with the Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline to deliver FollowItApp. At the end of 22-23, the app had **509** registered users, a **33%** increase on last year.

SWRC legal surgery appointments remain online, and **79** online advice appointments were delivered. In addition to tailored legal advice, survivors were able to access support and signposting to services, including to other legal service providers and support services. A weekly immigration surgery is also available, staffed by solicitors from JRS with expertise in immigration law. **35** immigration appointments were delivered.

> Since my appointment, for the first time in 4 years I feel I have the knowledge to move forward and help my situation.

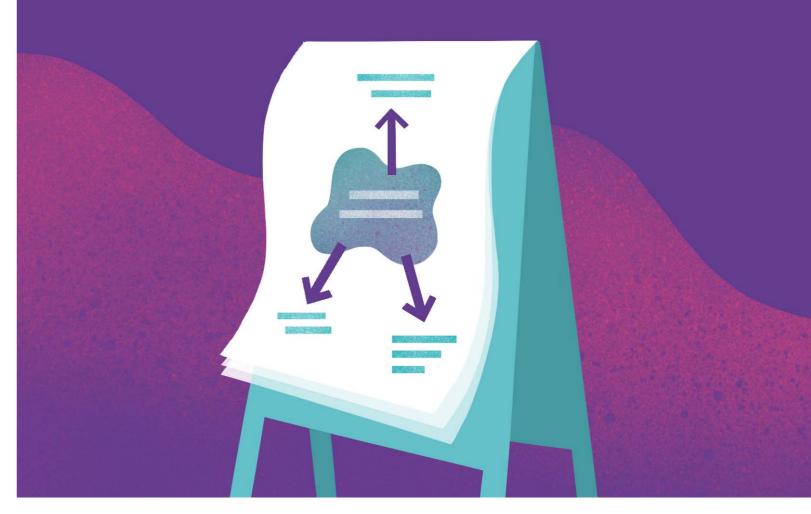
> > Feedback from a survivor who accessed an advice surgery

SWRC is developing 2 Lived Expertise Panels (LEP), funded by the Legal Education Foundation (LEF) to improve access to SWRC services and to the justice process itself and for survivors with experience of dual and malicious reporting who have accessed the SWRC services. The LEPs will engage directly with survivors, ensuring their expertise informs SWRC services, policy, training, and resource development during 2023-24. We also developed an accountability committee, made up of organisations which work with groups of women currently under-represented in SWRC services and in the justice process itself, to assist SWRC in identifying and overcoming barriers to participation.

The LEPs will engage directly with survivors, ensuring their expertise informs SWRC services, policy, training, and resource development We supported a successful funding bid by JustKnow How (JKH), a social enterprise of Just Right Scotland, to the Workplace Equality Fund to develop and deliver sexual harassment in the workplace training specifically for the legal profession, the e-learning module can be accessed from our website in the 'for professionals' section.



**59** solicitors completed the SWRC two-day approved training for solicitors on domestic abuse and the law and developing trauma informed legal practice. The training is delivered bi-annually and solicitors who have completed the training are invited to join the SWRC solicitor signposting network. There are now 60 fully qualified solicitors in the network.



We developed a new training calendar. Since its launch in February 2023, we have provided a wide variety of training to third sector agencies including Stalking, Harassment and using the FollowIt App; Protective Orders and Gender Based Violence and Child Contact, Residence, and Domestic Abuse. Funding from LEF enabled us to recruit a Justice Policy Worker and increase our capacity in responding to policy consultations. We responded to the following consultations: Witchcraft Convictions (Pardon) Bill; Proposed Domestic Abuse (protection) (Scotland) Bill; Police Complaints; Proposed Abortion Services Safe Access Zones (Scotland) Bill.

#### Member centres

This year was incredible busy for Rape Crisis Centres. Demand has been very high and centres provided support to a record number of **9,942** survivors. This is an increase of **21%** on the previous year.

An extension to emergency funding meant that member centres could provide support to a record number of individuals this year. The Scottish Government's extension of emergency waiting list funding was welcome but the need for long term sustainable funding to allow member centres to meet this high demand without interruption or uncertainty is clear. To support every survivor who needs it, member centres urgently need more resources.

During 2022-23, Rape Crisis Centres in Scotland have provided essential, life-saving emergency services to survivors of sexual violence. They have faced extraordinary demand for support services and have also responded to the diverse needs of survivors in a very difficult economic climate.

## The Rape Crisis movement began with a handful of women who wanted to 'do something'

The Rape Crisis movement began with a handful of women who wanted to 'do something'. For over four decades, Rape Crisis Centres in Scotland have fought to end sexual violence and to make sure survivors across Scotland know they are not alone. We look forward to this work continuing throughout 2023/24.

# Member centre statistics

Service users by centre Total - 9942 - 21% increase

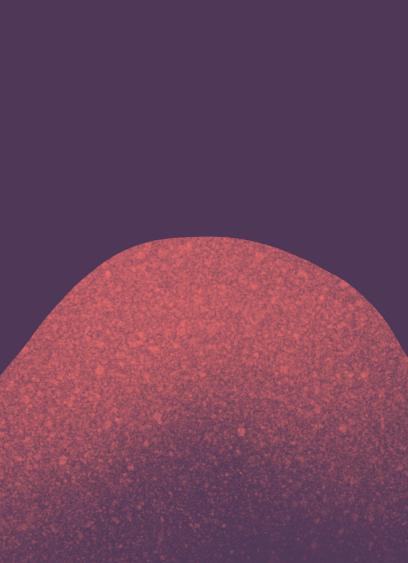
Argyll & Bute Rape Crisis - 276 The Compass Centre (Shetland) - 97 Dumfries and Galloway Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Support Centre - 252 Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - 1200 Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre - 835 Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre - 411 Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis - 3006 Lanarkshire Rape Crisis Centre - 471 Moray Rape Crisis - 236 Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service - 72 Rape Crisis Grampian - 605 Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross - 336 Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland - 509 Scottish Borders Rape Crisis - 277 The STAR Centre (Ayrshire) - 490 Western Isles Rape Crisis Centre - 56 Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (Dundee & Angus) - 813

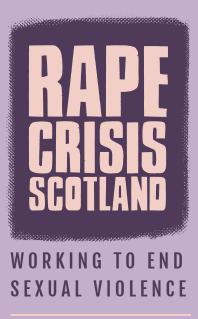


# **FINANCE & FUNDING**

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31st March 2023

Income and endowments from:		Fund Balances as of:	
Donations	£27,096	1st April 2022	£343,114
		31st March 2023	£437,507
Charitable activities			
Sexual violence support	£5,753,103	Funding	
Investment income	£1,095	Other Grants	£20,500
Total incoming resources	£5,781,294	Donations	27,096
		3rd Sector Early Intervention	338,600
Expenditure on Charitable activi	ties	Scottish Government -	
Sexual violence support		Justice Funding	2,002,278
Total resources expended	£5,687,007	Scottish Women's Rights Centre	620,437
Net Income	£94,287	National Prevention	42,841
		Equally Safe Colleges	
Other recognised gains/(losses)		& University	42,835
Actuarial gains/		Tampon Tax	252,355
losses on defined benefit schemes	£106	Waiting List	1,125,000
Net Surplus	£94,393	Delivering Equally Safe (DES)	893,928
		DES Partnership	414,329
			5,780,199
Please contact us if you would			
like a copy of our audited accou	nts.		





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

> Rape Crisis Scotland, Abbey House, 10 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G2 6LU Office tel: 0141 331 4180 E: info@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk Web: **www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk**

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