



Business Plan Executive Summary

2019/20 – 2022/23

Working to end rape and sexual violence by supporting and empowering women and girls in Darlington and County Durham.

Introduction

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (RSACC) provides free and confidential support to survivors of rape and sexual violence in Darlington and County Durham. We have been established since 1990 and are the only specialist provider of sexual violence support in the area. Both nationally and locally the number of reported sexual offences continue to rise and demand for RSACC has risen reflecting this.

Organisational Overview

RSACC deliver a range of services that support and empower women and girls affected by sexual violence. These include a helpline, counselling, groupwork and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor support. Our vision, mission and values are outlined below.

Vision

Working to end rape and sexual violence by supporting and empowering women and girls in Darlington and County Durham.

Mission

The objects of the charity are:

1. To relieve the distress of individuals in County Durham and the surrounding area who have suffered any form of sexual violence, sexual abuse, domestic abuse or harassment – in particular, but not exclusively by the following means:
 - a. the provision of a confidential face to face and telephone counselling service;
 - b. the provision of a centre specifically for women and girls needing further support;
 - c. by referring with permission those clients needing help of a more specialist nature.
2. To educate the public and undertake research into the subject of sexual abuse and to disseminate the useful results thereof.

Values

RSACC has 4 core values which inform all our work. These are outlined below.

FEMINIST

RSACC is a feminist, women led organisation that works from a feminist perspective that recognises sexual violence as a crime of violence, an abuse of power, and as a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Our feminist perspective underpins all that we do from the organisational governance through to how we support women and girls.

EMPOWERING

RSACC works within a framework of empowerment. We believe the best way to support women who have experienced sexual violence is to empower them. This means we work to create an environment where women are able to use their own agency and achieve their full potential.

PERSON CENTRED

RSACC works from a person-centred approach. We believe that that individual women have within themselves the capacity to effect change and make decisions that are both real and meaningful to them when supported appropriately. RSACC acknowledges that particular groups of women are affected differently by the compounded effects of past and continuing inequalities based on gender, sexuality, disability, faith, age, ethnicity, economic situation and other status and pro-actively works towards making services available and accessible to all women.

SPECIALIST

RSACC has worked over many years to become a specialist in sexual violence. It is the experiences and views of women who have experienced sexual violence that we have built our understanding and knowledge on. We believe that gender-based violence requires an evidence-based, gender-specific response.

Consultations

To help us develop our Business Plan for the next 3 years between March and April 2019 RSACC undertook a consultation exercise with clients, staff and volunteers. A brief summary of this consultation is included below.

Client Consultation

The feedback from clients about RSACC's support was extremely positive. Clients feel comfortable, understood and supported by RSACC services. They value the experience of the staff and volunteers and they feel listened to and believed. They also value the non-judgemental, friendly environment at RSACC. Some of the responses from clients are included below.

"Kindness, understanding, comfortable environment, could express exactly how I felt and not hold anything back. Helped me understand my emotions"

"Trust, warmth without crossing boundaries, patience, professionalism and longevity of sessions offered."

"I have never in all my years of receiving therapy felt that it addressed my problems until I came here (12 years)."

When asked what could be improved and what additional support was needed for survivors in Darlington and County Durham the most common response was a reduce in waiting times and to improve the promotion of our services so survivors know where to access support. When asked what additional support might be helpful, clients suggested family therapy, talks in schools and information handouts to take away.

Staff and Volunteer Consultation

When staff and volunteers were asked how we could improve the support for survivors in Darlington and County Durham the most common response was to increase our capacity so we could reduce waiting time. In addition, respondents were also keen we increased our coverage of the county so more women and girls could access support. Other popular suggestions included increasing the number and type of groups we run and providing more digital support. When staff and volunteers were asked if there were any groups of women they thought we were not reaching the most common response was children and young people and the LGBT+ community. Other suggestions included women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, ex-offenders, trafficked women, older women, women in rural communities and men.

When asked about the issues RSACC should be campaigning about the most popular issues from staff and volunteers were;

- To raise awareness of rape and sexual abuse
- Challenge myths around sexual violence
- Improve government response to sexual violence

This is similar to the issues clients wanted RSACC to campaign about when asked.

The survey also explored staff and volunteer satisfaction. Satisfaction for both groups was very high across all areas, the only issue that was highlighted was that communication from management could be improved.

RSACC Delivery Plan

Based on our consultation with clients, staff and volunteers, as well as the current local and national context we have developed five aims and a delivery plan to achieve them over the next three years. These are informed by our vision and mission and underpinned by our values, shown in the following diagram.

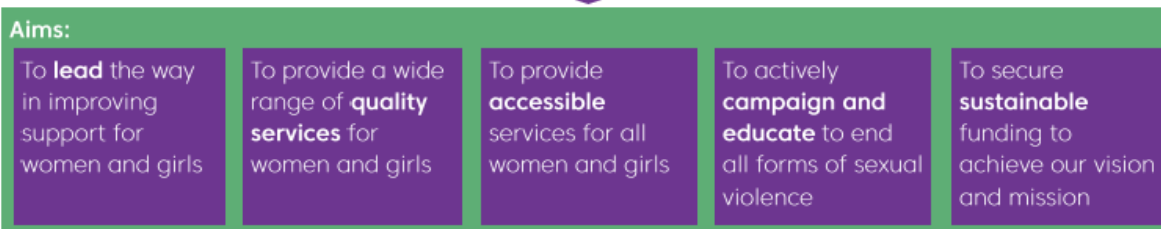


Values:
Feminist Empowering Person Centred Specialist

Vision: Working to end rape and sexual violence by supporting and empowering women and girls in Darlington and County Durham.

Mission:

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A detailed Delivery Plan is included in the full Business Plan, but below we outline a summary of the key actions under each of our five aims.

Lead- to lead the way in improving support for women and girls

- Develop existing services including the SELFIE Project, services in HMP Low Newton and the ISVA service.
- Develop new services and models of delivery including extending groupwork across Durham, developing new groups, developing online support and children counselling.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to engage in wider Centre activities
- Enhance RSACC's existing profile

Quality Services- to provide a wide range of quality services for women and girls

- Sustain current service levels within the organisation
- Tender successfully for contract work

- Achieve and maintain the Rape Crisis (England & Wales) National Service Standards (NSS) certificate and quality mark
- Strengthen the infrastructure of the organisation in terms of Trustees, Human Resource, Performance Management and Management Structures
- Improve monitoring and evaluation systems in preparation for commissioning.
- Transform internal IT systems
- Maintain Health and Safety standards within RSACC
- Deploy ongoing training and professional development activities for all Centre Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

Accessible- To provide accessible services to all women and girls

- Develop external profile and quality of information for clients
- Increase service outreach including exploring potential for expansion of both ISVA & Counselling service to east and west of the county to Peterlee/Seaham, Consett, Barnard Castle areas.
- Work with agencies to provide additional outreach services where necessary & improve access for rural communities
- Reach disadvantaged and minority groups
- Develop better services for older people

Campaign and educate- to actively campaign and educate to end sexual violence

- Develop external training opportunities
- Arrange Awareness-Raising Events and campaigns to raise profile and promote service
- Continue to promote SELFIE within schools and partner agencies to reach a wider audience and create further opportunities for the programme delivery
- Strengthen approach to service user engagement to achieve ongoing and regular service user feedback

Sustainable- to secure sustainable funding to achieve vision and mission

- Improve financial procedures and financial strategy & address sustainability
- Implement Financial Strategy including exploring funding options to support innovation and service development and review funding action plan
- Consolidate working relationships with key partners especially around GP commissioning and engaging with the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC).