



# SOSRC

Southend Rape and Sexual Abuse Specialist Service

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 24



## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

**Registered Charity Number:** 1194207

**Registered Name:** SOS Rape Crisis

**Registered Office:** Clarence House, 20-24 Clarence Road, Southend on Sea SS1 1AN

---

### TRUSTEES:

**Ros Dunhill** Chair

**Alison Smith** Vice Chair

**Laura Martin** Treasurer

**Rachelle Stone** Secretary

**Mali Dunkley**

**Maggi Howell**

**Lesley Richardson**

**Caroline Jennings**

---

### CEO:

**Cathryn Cardoza**

---

### Auditors:

**Venthams Chartered Accountants** - Millhouse, 32 - 38 East Street, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1DB

---

### Bankers:

**CAF Bank** - 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ



# CONTENTS



---

04

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

---

05

ABOUT SOS RAPE CRISIS

---

06 - 07

VISION AND PURPOSE

---

08

OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

---

09

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

---

10-15

OUR ACTIVITIES 2023/24

---

16-17

YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE

---

18-24

TRUSTEE REPORT / FINANCES

---

25

THANK YOU

# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

At **Southend on Sea Rape Crisis (SOSRC)**, we remain unwavering in our mission to offer a robust spectrum of interventions and therapeutic support to children, young people, and adults affected by sexual violence, no matter when the incident occurred.

Our services are open to **survivors, their families, supporters, and anyone impacted by sexual violence**, ensuring they have continuous access to the specialised support they need to heal and rebuild their lives. Despite the enduring impact of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns, our commitment to survivors has been steadfast.

The **Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA)** service, which provides critical advocacy and support, has faced unprecedented challenges due to significant delays and backlogs in court cases and systemic issues across the Criminal Justice System. These barriers have deeply affected survivors seeking justice. Yet, through additional funding, we have been able to maintain and even enhance our support to both longstanding and new clients accessing SOSRC during this difficult period.

In response to the rising demand, we have dedicated substantial resources to **expand our services for young people**, recognising that early intervention is key in supporting younger survivors as they navigate the effects of trauma. The increased frequency of young people's groups and workshops has allowed us to foster a supportive environment that prioritises empowerment, resilience-building, and self-confidence. These sessions emphasise the power of peer support and provide a safe space where young survivors can connect, share, and heal together.

**Thanks to the vital financial support from The National Lottery Community Fund, Essex Community Foundation, and Children in Need**, we have been able to go beyond therapeutic services. By providing essential items like hygiene products, clothing, and food, we are helping these young individuals face the growing pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. This holistic approach aims to address not only the emotional and psychological toll of sexual violence but also the practical challenges that can exacerbate trauma recovery.

Throughout this reporting period, we have observed that survivors are presenting with more complex needs. Many are dealing with intensified emotional and mental health challenges, which have been compounded by the isolation during the pandemic and the economic strains of the cost-of-living crisis. These factors have added layers of anxiety, depression, and insecurity, making our work more critical than ever.

Our **dedicated team** at SOSRC remains resolute in providing trauma-informed, empathetic support to ensure every survivor feels heard, validated, and empowered on their path to recovery.

**ROS DUNHILL**  
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES





# ABOUT US

**SOSRC (Southend on Sea Rape Crisis)** has been established since 2011, supporting survivors of any form of sexual violence, sexual abuse or sexual assault that has occurred at any time in their lives.

**SOSRC** supports survivors and their relatives/supporters who live in Southend-on-Sea, **Castle Point** and **Rochford**.

**SOSRC** is an accredited member of National Rape Crisis England and Wales [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk) . This means that the services we provide to survivors and relatives/supporters of survivors are to a quality assured standard

**SOSRC** works in partnership with **SERICC** and **CARA** (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse) delivering specialist community-based services for victims and survivors forming the Synergy Essex Partnership



# THE VALUES WE UPHOLD ARE REFLECTED IN OUR WORK

**The service we provide** will be in response to what women and girls say they want or need, to enable and empower women to have greater control and choice in their lives.

**We are a pro-choice organisation** respecting a woman's right to make her own decisions about her life, her body, her sexuality, and her lifestyle

**We provide a free service** which is accessible to all. **We seek to work with all women** in ways that demonstrate quality, respect and care; to be an organisation that is accepting of difference (disability, race, sexuality, class, background, faith, lifestyle etc) and to be non-judgmental. We work to provide information resources that can be used by all women to help themselves.

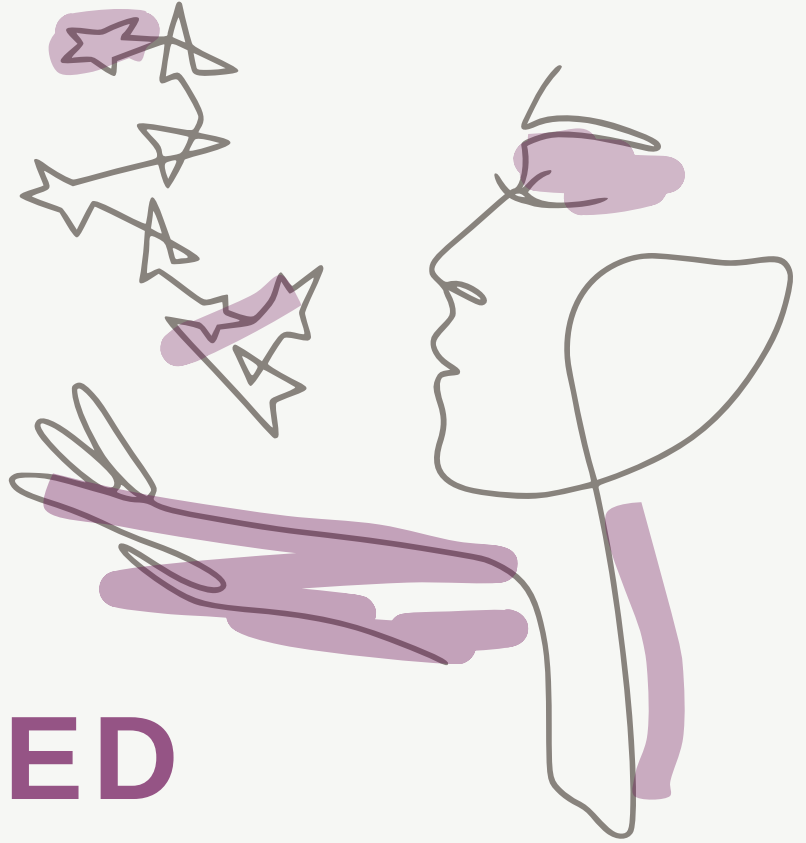
**We are a pro woman organisation.** We respect women's relationships with men and recognise and support men's actions to redress society's oppression of women.

**We provide a free high-quality service** – effective management which values and supports its staff and volunteers enables us to provide a high-quality support service to women and girls in the local area. Through provision of information, support, and counselling by appropriately skilled staff in a safe and confidential environment we can help women to move forward and take control of their lives.





# OUR VALUES CONTINUED



Survivor's voice - we encourage a woman to speak about her experiences; we listen without judgement and believe her story. We take a survivor-led approach: we will not attempt to advise, direct, or persuade. Empowerment - we believe in empowering the survivor. She is the expert on what is the best way to deal with and move on from her experience. We will respect her choices and support her in her decisions.

A gender-specific response – our services are run by women for women in a safe, women-only space. We believe that this is the most appropriate and helpful environment for the women and girls we support. We have a dedicated space to support trans and male survivors as we recognise sexual violence happens to all genders, all cultures, (\*socio-economic) and comes from the same power structures.

Human rights – sexual violence infringes the human rights of women. We actively promote women's human rights through our women-centred empowerment approach which encourages and supports survivors in taking control of their lives. We acknowledge the diversity of our service users and support them on an equitable basis, providing advocacy support where necessary to promote their needs and rights.

Social change – We are responsive to local needs. We provide training and education and work in partnership with local agencies to raise awareness about sexual violence in our community.

# OUR VISION

A community free  
from sexual violence  
and its impacts

# OUR PURPOSE

**SOSRC** work to *raise awareness, prevent, and reduce sexual violence* through the provision of holistic, high quality emotional and practical support services.



# OUR STRATEGY

1

Providing women-centred support in a safe place for women and girls in our community.

2

Endeavour to effectively manage our waiting lists - address developing strategies to effectively manage the waiting list while still offering support.

3

Encourage resilience/prevention work on accessing statutory services.

4

Reach more women and girls who may experience barriers to accessing our support, including: Women who have not reported to the police Black British women, women from ethnic minority communities, older women who have survived but not ever disclosed non-recent abuse.

5

Challenging social "norms", victim-blaming/shaming and raising awareness in our communities of different kinds of sexual violence and abuse and its impacts on Survivors.

6

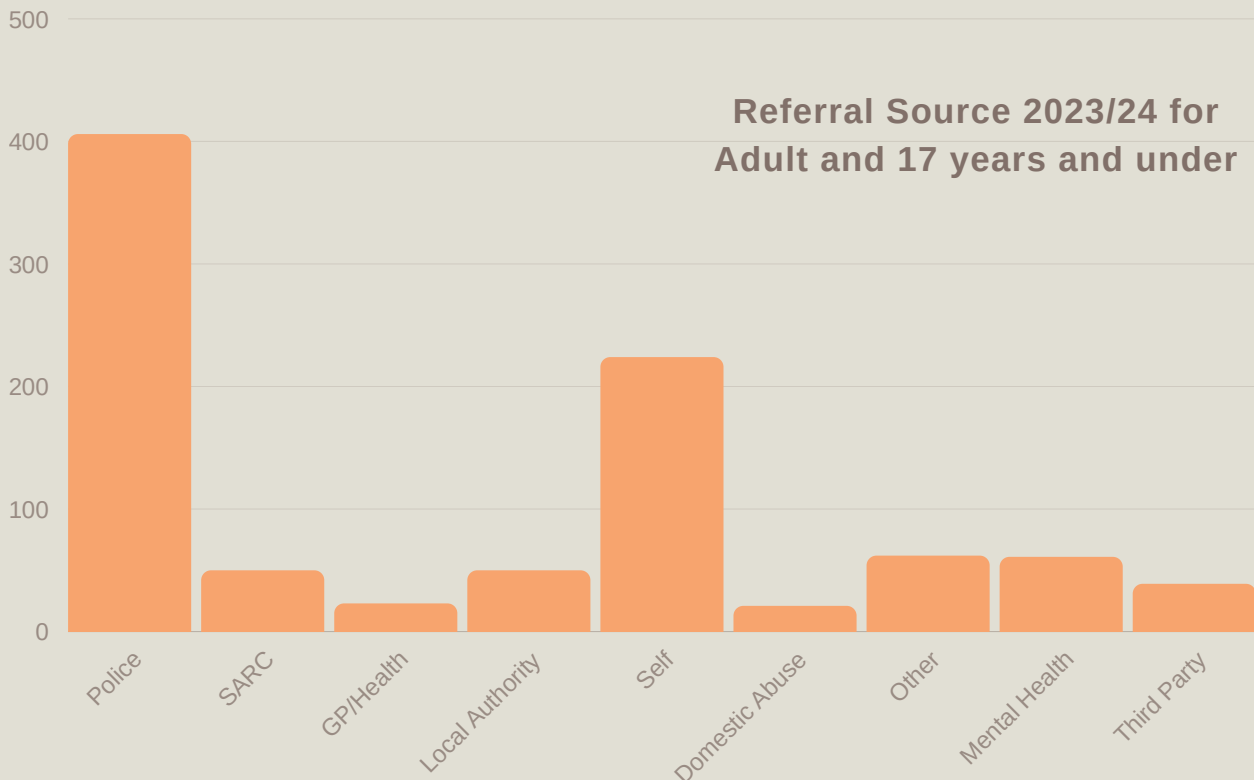
Ensuring SOS Rape Crisis services are financially positive.

7

Developing our responses to technologically enabled grooming and abuse.

8

Developing our Children and Young Person's Service to ensure empowerment groups (GTTF) and support for parents/carers are embedded within the SOS Rape Crisis service delivery.



## OUR SERVICES AND IMPACTS

**ISVA and Advocacy** - all our ISVAs and CHISVAs are accredited; meaning that they hold specialist qualifications in order for them to deliver this service to Survivors who have reported to the police, or who are considering reporting to the police. **ISVAS have worked** in partnership with Essex Police to ensure survivors in our communities have received appropriate support.



**672** Survivors accessed ISVA services this year



**1,365** ISVA/CHISVA face-to-face support sessions completed



**10,680** ISVA contacts were made this year including emails, phone calls and text messages

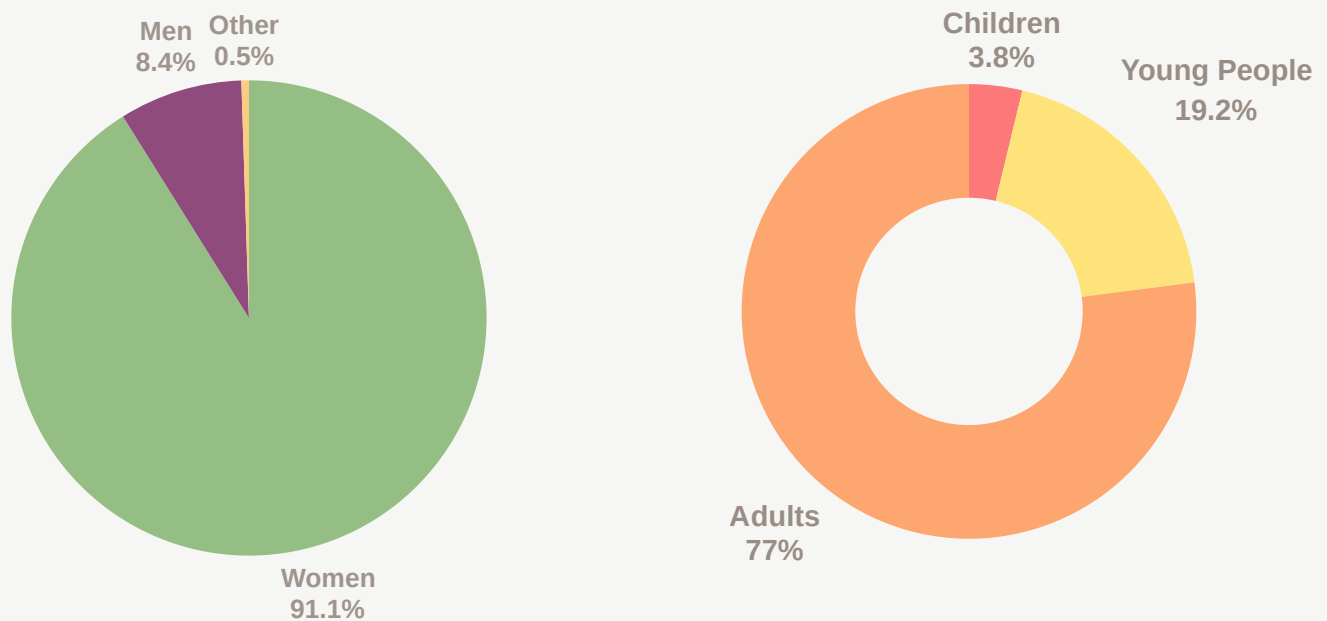


*"I had a helpful CHISVA who showed me other services and was really empathic and there when I needed her. To come and to chat to someone who is extremely understanding and helpful and to make you feel comfortable and believed is so comforting."* **Young Survivor, CHISVA**

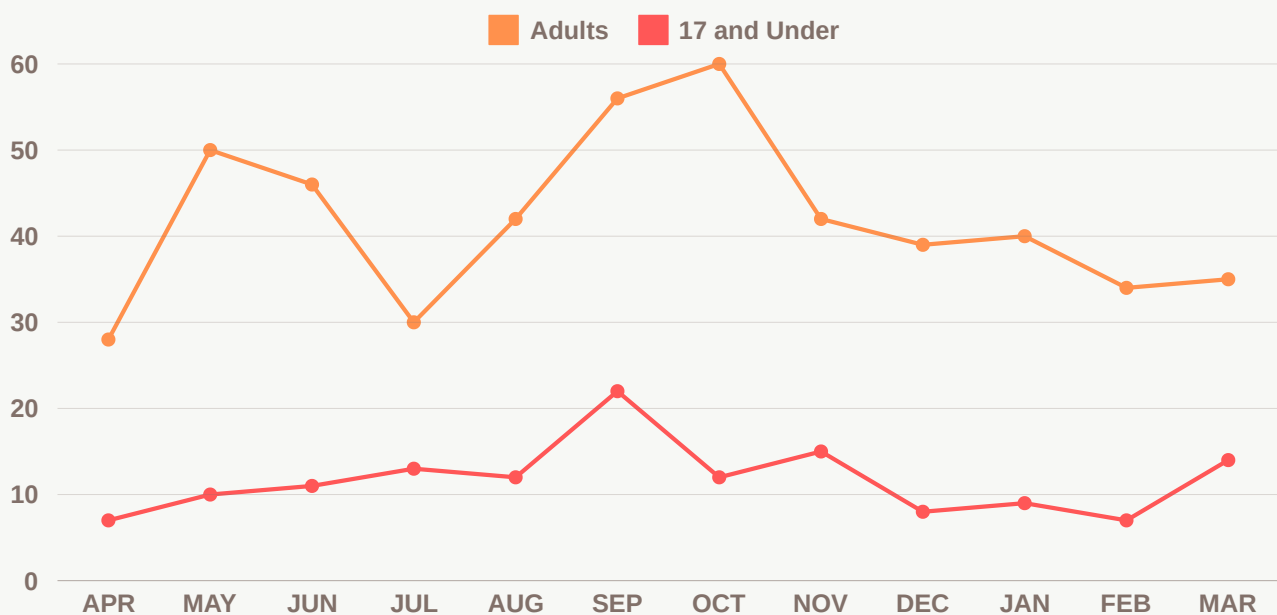


# SOSRC 2023/24 AT A GLANCE

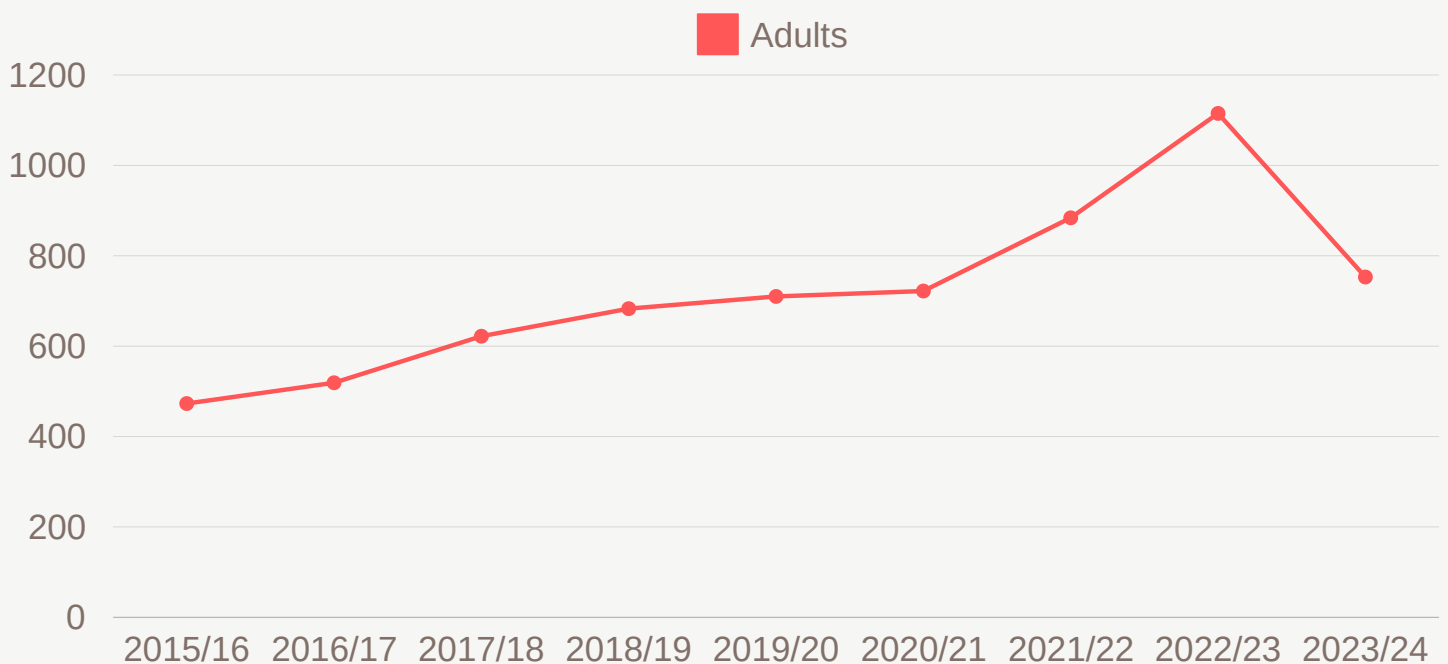
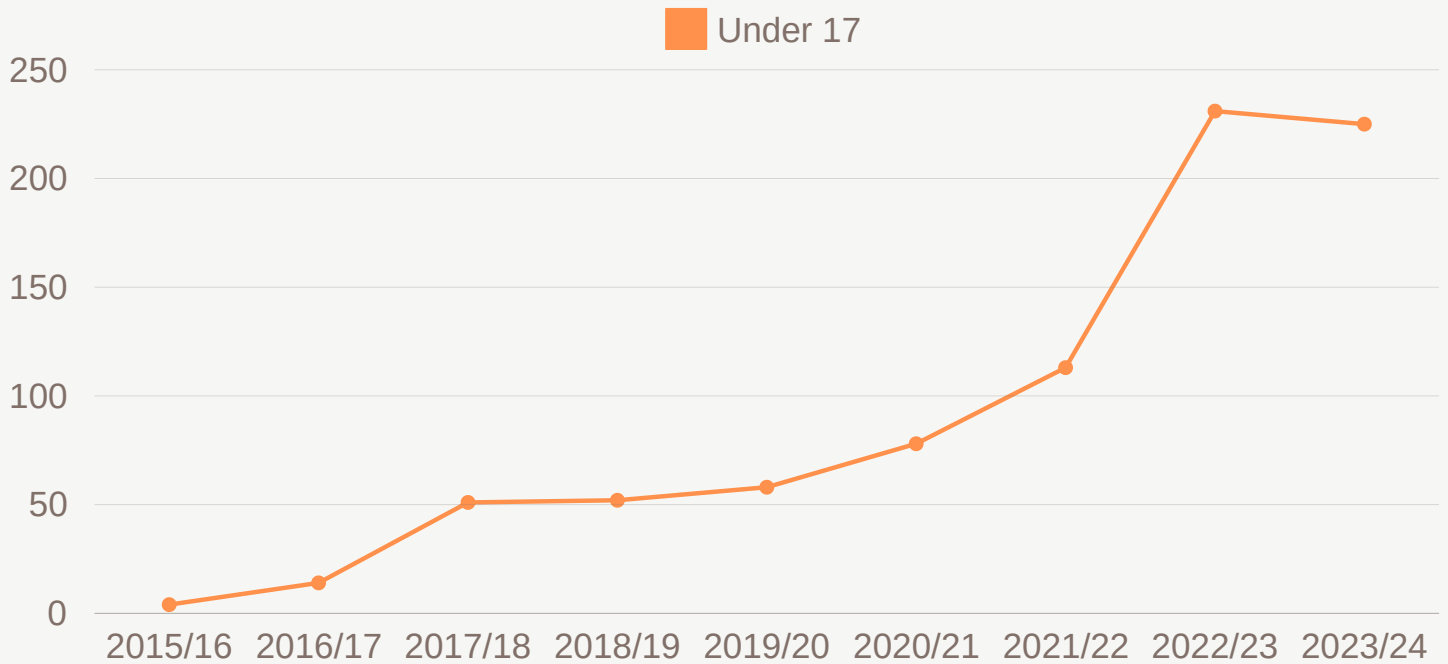
In 2023/24, we reached a total of **978** individuals, this includes **891** women and girls, **82** men and boys, and **5** individuals identifying as other. Breaking down the data further, '*children*' refers to those 12 years old and under, '*young people*' encompass those aged 13-17 years old, while '*adults*' are individuals aged 18 years and above. This information provides valuable insight into our reach and impact over the past year.



## Quarterly Referral Breakdown - Adults vs 17 years and Under



## Individuals who were active year on year starting from 2015/16 to 2023/24







# 100%

100% of Survivors who accessed our services this year showed positive in one or more indicators of **feeling more in control of their lives**

# 100%

Every Survivor and their supporters who engaged with our services this year **unanimously felt heard, believed, and supported throughout their journey.**

# 94%

Survivors who accessed our services experienced an incredible 94% increase in their **confidence to make decisions about their future** from the moment they first reached out to us

# 95%

Survivors who accessed our services showed a 95% increase from when they first accessed our services have a **better understanding of how the sexual violence and impacted and effected them.**



*"I have been able to talk more openly without feeling ashamed or guilty about hurting others with what I have to say. Thank you for holding such a safe space. I was able to talk about my trauma for the very first time without fear of being judged. My Counsellor gave me my voice back."*

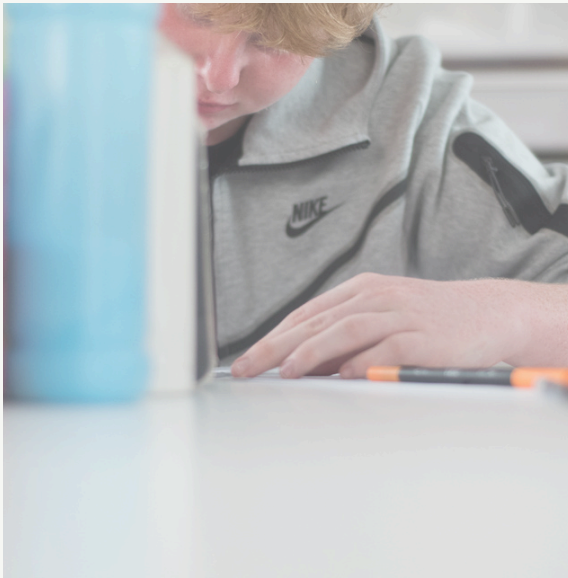
**Adult Survivor, Counselling**

---

*"I value the ease, comfort, trust and confidentiality. I felt extremely comfortable and safe. I found it easier to talk with [my counsellor] than I've ever been able to talk and open up with anyone else before - it's a big move in the right direction. I have learned to feel stronger."*

**Adult Survivor, Counselling**

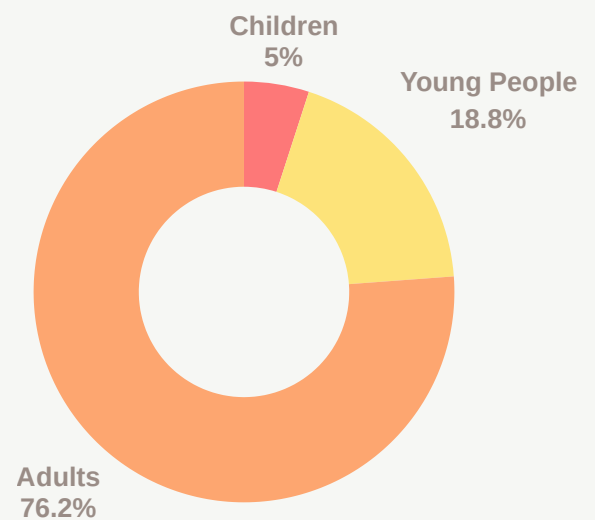




**Counselling and Play Therapy Service.** Our counselling service received funding from The National Lottery Reaching Communities Grant - funding the annual salaries of 2.5 FTE specialist sexual violence counsellors. Our counsellors work from a person-centred approach, working from the empowerment model and providing trauma-informed support for Survivors and their supporters.



**We provided 2810 counselling/play therapy sessions over 2023/24**



**1,042** Survivors accessed Therapeutic services this year



**11,255** contacts including text messages, phone calls, emails and signposting.



**42** anonymous helpline calls provided to survivors and people effected by sexual violence.





# YOUNG PERSON SERVICE



## Girls to the Front (GTTF)

GTTF group, part of the Children & Young People Service, is for survivors aged 11 to 19. They have two sessions per week with activities like arts, Book Club, and activism, plus trips such as visiting exhibitions or sports games. Survivors can stay in GTTF until they're 19. Even if they were referred for counselling, many keep attending GTTF. One member has been coming since 2017, and 43% stay for over a year. Some initially choose GTTF over other support but later ask for additional help from SOS Rape Crisis.

In December, the GTTF group embarked on an exciting day trip to Winter Wonderland in London, offering young people a chance to experience the magic of the season. Highlights of the visit included exploring the enchanting Ice Kingdom and taking a ride on the Ferris Wheel, where they enjoyed views of London's skyline and iconic landmarks.

The trip also provided opportunities to engage with the festive stalls, win prizes, and immerse themselves in an environment many had never visited before. For some, this was a trip that they had wanted to go on for a while. Feedback from the group was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees expressing how much they enjoyed the experience. Many shared that it was their first time at Winter Wonderland, and the visit left a lasting impression, creating memories they'll treasure for years to come.

*"Girls group really keeps me going, even when I feel really sad. Everyone is so kind and genuine. It's so lovely to be a part of."*

**GTTF member**



# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 1)

Our services are deeply rooted in a women-centred, feminist perspective, providing counselling irrespective of gender. We cater to individuals of all ages, offering specialised wrap around holistic support to Survivors, their supporters and professionals.

**Performance:** Our **ISVA and Advocacy** services provide survivors with comprehensive practical and emotional aid, particularly navigating the complexities of the Criminal Justice System.

Our dedication to **children and young people** is evident through our specialised Young Persons Service, which received specialist funding from BBC Children in Need and The National Lottery Community Fund.

This service, tailored for ages 4-17 years old, aims to empower and support individuals through workshops, activities, play therapy and talking therapy.

**Education** remains at the forefront of our strategy to help reduce sexual violence in our community by delivering lessons about consent, toxic masculinity, the harms of pornography, and active bystander in secondary schools. Not only do these lessons encourage young people to reach out for support but we hope to prevent future behaviours that can lead to sexual violence towards women and girls.

**Therapy** in addition to the children and young people therapy, we continue to deliver specialist therapy to adult survivors and their supporters. Although we have seen most of the individuals who access our services return to face-to-face sessions we still offer, online and telephone support when needed.



# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 2)

**Charitable Activities:** In the last financial year, SOS Rape Crisis received **646** new referrals and provided support to a total of **979** individuals, including **43** children (aged 12 and under), **183** young people (13 years – 17 years old) and **753** adults. We can also break this data down so that it reflects **871** women, **89** men and **18** people who identify as being transgender. We continue with our commitment to survivors, striving to provide comprehensive support while adapting to the evolving needs of those we serve.

**Governance, Structure and Management:** The Board of Trustees at SOSRC diligently conducts ongoing reviews of existing policies and consistently ratifies new ones throughout the year. Their commitment to upholding the charity's standards aligns with their role, ensuring adherence to the high benchmarks set by the Rape Crisis England Wales (RCEW) National Service Standards. The charity is an active member in the National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO) which provides trustees with regular access to diverse training opportunities, focusing on enhancing governance practices and addressing contemporary issues. These sessions are routinely attended by the trustees, further enriching their knowledge and expertise. The charity is controlled by its governing document.







# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 3)

## Financial Review

**Reserves Policy:** SOSRC adheres to the guidelines set by the Charity Commission for England and Wales by maintaining unrestricted reserves equivalent to approximately 9 months of budgeted expenditure. This reserve policy serves as a safety net, enabling the charity to cover unforeseen costs such as redundancy, maternity leave, long-term sickness, and essential building maintenance. The reserve also guarantees that, in the event of operational cessation, we can continue providing services for up to six months.

## Investment Policy and Objectives:

Trustees have the authority to manage and invest the charity's funds prudently, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to sustain our mission. At present, the general reserve funds are held in a dedicated savings account, separate from our operational accounts with CAF Bank, ensuring that these reserves are available when needed while still providing a modest return.

**Risk management:** The trustees are responsible for identifying and assessing risks that the charity faces, ensuring the implementation of effective controls to mitigate fraud and errors. The approach to manage risk involves:

- Annual review of the risks the charity may face.
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the plan.
- Implementation of the procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 4)

**Public Benefit:** In accordance with Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006, the trustees confirm that they have met their obligation to consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. All activities undertaken by SOSRC directly further our charitable purposes and aim to serve the broader public. This is further elaborated upon in our Annual Report, which provides a comprehensive overview of the charity's achievements.

**Future Developments:** The Trustees remain committed to seeking self-sustaining income avenues that will ensure long-term support for the charity.

**The Trustees** who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

<b>Chair</b>	Ms Ros Dunhill
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Ms Alison Smith MBE
<b>Secretary</b>	Ms Mali Dunkley
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ms Laura Martin
<b>Trustee</b>	Ms Maggi Howell
<b>Trustee</b>	Ms Rachelle Stone
<b>Trustee</b>	Ms Caroline Jennings

As set out in the constitution the Chair of Trustees is nominated by her fellow trustees. The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity. The Trustees have the power to appoint additional Trustees. In compliance with Rape Crisis England and Wales Membership criteria – all honorary roles within the Trustee Board and Senior Management positions within the charity are held by women.



# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 5)

## Employees during 2023/24

CEO	Ms Cathryn Cardoza
Operations Manager	Ms Ellie McGregor
ISVA Manager	Ms Anne-Marie Betts
Clinical Manager	Ms Liz Lockwood
Counselling Lead	Ms Caroline Parry
Information Lead	Ms Becki Scott
CH/ISVA	Ms Sam Anderson ( <i>previous surname Ingle</i> )
CH/ISVA	Ms Cat Bentley
CH/ISVA & YP Worker	Ms Louise Murphy
Sexual Violence Counsellor	Ms Sarah Lowndes-King ( <i>sessional</i> )
Sexual Violence Counsellor	Ms Ariana Pedzikowska
First Contact Navigator	Ms Lauren Ashton
Young Persons Engagement Worker	Ms Kelly Farrell

## Employees who have left SOSRC during 2023/24

Sexual Violence Counsellor	Ms Yazmin Kiraz ( <i>departure Dec 2023</i> )
Sexual Violence Counsellor	Ms Veedia Ramalingum ( <i>departure Nov 2023</i> )





# TRUSTEE REPORT

BY LAURA MARTIN (PAGE 6)

**BBC Children in Need** Originally scheduled to conclude in November 2022, this grant was extended for an additional year, now continuing until November 2023. The funding is specifically designated for staff hours and resources, ensuring that specialist support is available for children and young people. This extension allows us to provide ongoing, dedicated care and services to meet the unique needs of these vulnerable individuals.

**The National Lottery Community Fund** In the third year of a three-year grant, this fund supports 2.5 full-time equivalent therapists delivering face-to-face sessions to survivors. An uplift of £9700 was granted to fund the "Girls to the Front" (GTTF) group, covering essential living costs, resources for activities, and food – this grants end in March 2024.

**The National Lottery Cost Living Grant:** We received a payment of £50,727.45, which has been allocated to support survivors by providing food vouchers, assistance with utility bills, and covering staffing costs. This funding will be utilized until the grant concludes in March 2024, helping to address the essential needs of survivors during this period.

**Essex Community Foundation:** We received a grant of £10,000 to contribute towards the rent for 24 Clarence Road for a period of one year. This grant will be in effect until it concludes in August 2024.

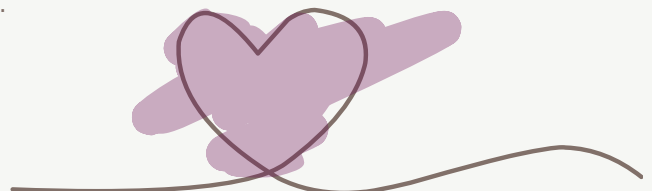
**Police Fire Crime Commissioner Community Fund:** We received £1,000 to support staffing costs for delivering school education lessons. This grant concluded in March 2023.

**Essex County Council Sexual Violence Domestic Abuse Fund:** We received £51,943.50 in commissioned funding, which was allocated to increase staff hours dedicated to supporting survivors residing in secure accommodation who have experienced both domestic abuse and sexual violence. This funding allowed us to extend our services to these vulnerable individuals, ensuring they received the necessary emotional and practical support. Additionally, SOSRC provided support to survivors within our own service areas and extended our reach by delivering services on behalf of SERICC in their designated areas. This collaborative effort ensured comprehensive care for survivors across multiple regions – this fund started in August 2023 and ends in March 2025.

**Synergy Partnership Funding:** Through funding from the Fire, Police, and Crime Commissioner (FPCC) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), we have been able to support the ISVA service and other core functions of the charity. We received £200,700.00 which is our core funding without the extra funds from the MOJ. £207,306.00 additional funding came from several funds including The Rape Support Fund, Domestic ISVA fund, Male Support Fund and Engagement ISVA fund.

**Better Outcomes through Linked Data Project (BOLD):** received £8,675 from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to contribute valuable data and insights towards the initiative. The BOLD project aims to improve outcomes for survivors of sexual violence by using linked data to better understand their experiences and needs, particularly those whose cases have been marked 'no further action' (NFA) by the Criminal Justice System. Through this funding, SOSRC is supporting the collection and analysis of data that highlights the ongoing engagement of survivors with support services, such as counselling and emotional support, even when legal proceedings do not advance. Our contributions help ensure that the project is grounded in real-world experiences, ultimately aiming to improve services and resources for survivors, enhance decision-making processes, and inform policy development within the sector.

Laura Martin  
Treasurer



## SOS RAPE CRISIS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	3	175,868	517,612	693,480	636,373
Charitable activities	4	-	2,520	2,520	1,770
Investments	5	-	1,760	1,760	1,309
<b>Total income</b>		<b>175,868</b>	<b>521,892</b>	<b>697,760</b>	<b>639,452</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	6	157,047	451,328	608,375	586,966
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>157,047</b>	<b>451,328</b>	<b>608,375</b>	<b>586,966</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>18,821</b>	<b>70,564</b>	<b>89,385</b>	<b>52,486</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		22,358	663,396	685,754	633,268
Net movement in funds		18,821	70,564	89,385	52,486
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>41,179</b>	<b>733,960</b>	<b>775,139</b>	<b>685,754</b>





# THANK YOU

SOS Rape Crisis extends its sincerest gratitude to our funders, stakeholders, and partners. Your unwavering support and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping SOS Rape Crisis into an outstanding organisation committed to empowering survivors and effecting meaningful change.

The generosity and belief in our mission displayed by our funders have allowed us to implement vital programs and services, ensuring that survivors receive the care and support they deserve. Your investment in our cause has directly contributed to the strength and resilience of our organisation.

To our stakeholders, your guidance, partnership, and shared commitment to our vision have been invaluable. Your input and collaboration have shaped our strategies, ensuring that our efforts align with the needs of survivors and the community.

Finally, to the survivors who have placed their trust in us, your courage and resilience inspire every aspect of our work.