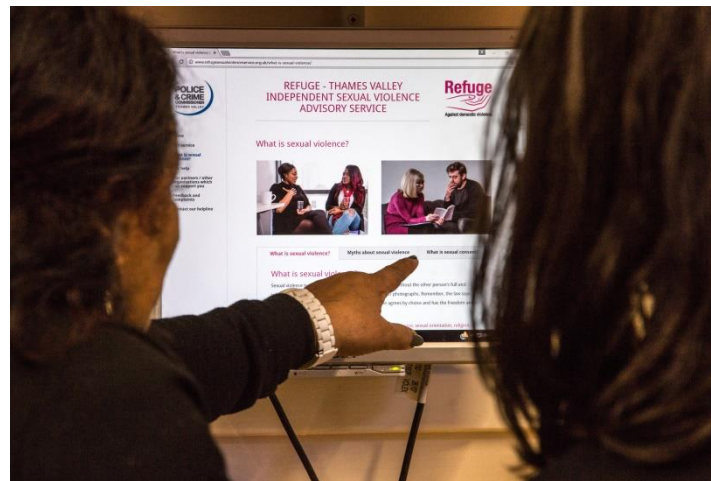


## Thames Valley Independent Sexual Violence Advisory Service



Sharon Erdman – Senior Operations Manager

Sharon\_erdman@refuge.org.uk

# Who we are



- Rachel Barr – Service Manager
- Team of six full time Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs)
- Contact details: **0800 221 8186**
- [isvathamesvalley@refuge.org.uk](mailto:isvathamesvalley@refuge.org.uk)

# Background to the service

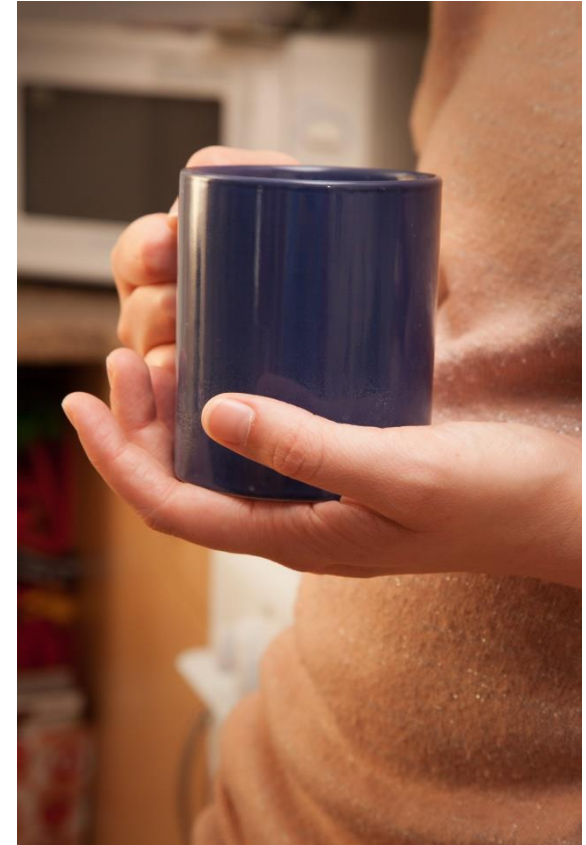
- Funded for four years from 1 July 2015 by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
- To enhance services for those who experience sexual violence



# Our service ethos

The service we provide is:

- Free
- Independent
- Confidential
- Non-judgmental
- Non-directive
- Person centred and needs led



# Who the service is for

## **Anyone who has experienced rape or sexual assault:**

- Men and women over 16
- Living in the Thames Valley area
- The violence can be current or historic
- Can be/have been working with other agencies
- Supporting those who do and do not want to report to the police
- At any stage of a criminal justice process, including post trial

# What the service offers

## Safety

- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Making a report to the police
- Referral to multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)
- Support throughout the criminal justice process, including post trial support
- Securing safe accommodation
- Staying safe in work or education

# What the service offers

## Health

- Advice on sexual health
- Emotional support
- Referral to a sex advice referral clinic (SARC)
- Referral to services relating to physical health
- Referral to services relating to emotional well being

# What the service offers

## Economic wellbeing

- Support with managing debt
- Welfare benefits advice and support
- Support with accessing education, training or employment
- Referral to specialist agencies, e.g. legal advice for immigration issues



# What the service offers

## Social wellbeing

- Developing safe support networks
- Accessing community organisations



# How the service is delivered



## Dependent on the client's needs and wishes:

- Over the phone
- Attending one or our offices (currently Slough or Aylesbury)
- A variety of established community locations, including children's centres, GP surgeries, etc.
- At a convenient location for the client anywhere in Thames Valley area

# Partnership working

## **Our aim:**

To bring agencies together to meet the complex and multiple needs of clients. The ISVA to act as the professional who co-ordinates the response from other agencies to ensure an appropriate service without duplication or gaps.

# Supporting survivors with learning disabilities

- Client centred - tailored support for all clients with complex needs
- Since 2015, 22 survivors aged between 16-60 with learning disabilities were supported
- Referrals from police, Specially trained officers (STOs), Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs), voluntary organisations, self referrals
- Profile of perpetrators – 90% known, 10% stranger
- High co-occurrence of mental health and substance misuse issues
- Average length in service – 23.5 weeks

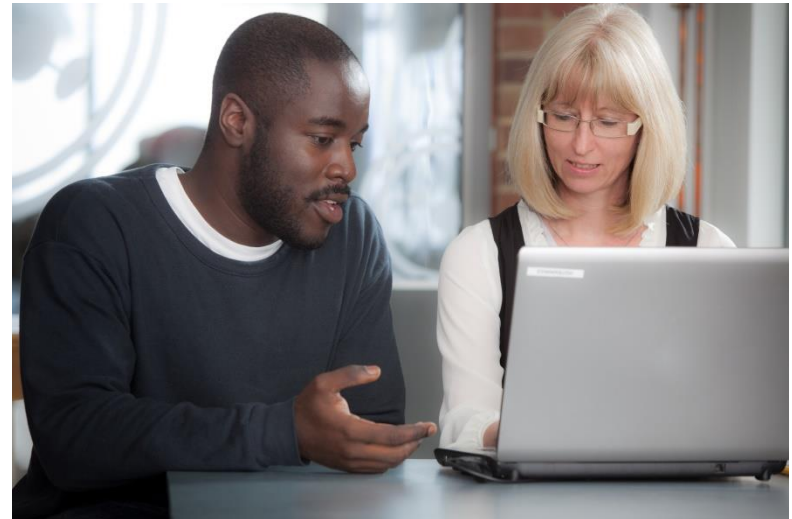
# Outcomes for survivors with learning disabilities

- Supported to access specialist provision for substance and alcohol misuse – 5
- Supported to access specialist mental health services – 9
- Supported to find safe accommodation – 4
- Supported through the criminal justice system - 12



# Client feedback on leaving service

- 80% reported feeling safer
- 100% reported not feeling frightened
- 100% reported improved quality of life
- 100% reported feeling confident in knowing how to access help



# Criminal justice system

- Three cases with criminal charges
- One case with a conviction



# Themes around survivors of sexual abuse and learning disabilities

- Drug/alcohol issues
- Mental health needs
- Multiple perpetrators, repeated incidents of sexual and domestic violence
- High levels of support provided for clients to access other services



# Case study A: background

- Mild learning disability
- Targeted on social media
- Raped by a acquaintance made on social media
- Financially exploited by other perpetrators on social media

# Case study A: support provided

- Support with accessing counselling
- Advocacy with social services
- Support with criminal justice system
- Support with understanding how to use social media safely
- Emotional support to recover from feelings of guilt and shame
- Now volunteering, better family relationships, less isolation, recovering from trauma

# Accessing the service



Any agency can refer to Refuge, via the phone number or email address:

**0800 221 8186**

email [isvathamesvalley@refuge.org.uk](mailto:isvathamesvalley@refuge.org.uk)

Self referrals are accepted too.

Microsite with support information:

**<http://www.refugesexualviolenceservice.org.uk/>**