

SARSAS

*Listen.
Believe.
Support.*



Strategy 2025 - 2028



A world without sexual violence

WHO WE ARE

Founded in **2008**, SARSAS supports adults across **Avon** and **Somerset** who have experienced **rape** or **sexual abuse** at any time in their lives. Our core services include counselling, groups, helplines, specialist 1:1 support, and community outreach. These trauma-informed services put **safety, choice** and **empowerment** at their very heart.

We exist because sexual violence should not. Everyone has the right to live free from fear of abuse. Alongside supporting survivors, we campaign for change through prevention work and training, challenging the systems that enable sexual violence to continue.

Innovation is at the heart of our work, especially in reaching those whose voices are too often unheard. From our specialist service for people with **learning disabilities** and **autistic people** to our ground-breaking **sibling sexual abuse** website, we strive to shine a light where silence has prevailed.

We're committed to inclusivity, welcoming people of **all genders, identities** and **backgrounds**. We know that the impact of trauma is lasting, and we are here for survivors at every stage of their journey. We also recognise the power of collaboration, working with partners across the sector and providing a **holistic response** that gives survivors choice and excellence.

Our new **three-year strategy** builds on our incredible achievements to date, setting out clear and ambitious goals. Demand for our services continues to grow and exceeds our available resources. That is why we will continue to campaign for **sufficient** and **sustainable funding**. Every survivor deserves support at the time they need it the most. But it isn't just about the numbers we support, our new strategy puts equal emphasis on continually improving the quality and impact of our support, with **survivor voice firmly its centre**.

The strength of SARSAS lies in its people – our trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and, above all, the survivors who inspire us every day. Our work will not be complete until **every survivor** is **heard, believed** and **supported**, and until we live in a society free from sexual violence.



Weaving



Rachel Notely

WHY WE EXIST

Sexual violence is an epidemic – and it's happening right here. In **England and Wales**, sexual violence is widespread. And the harsh reality? You know a survivor – whether you're aware of it or not.



The numbers in Avon & Somerset are devastating: around **6,000 sexual offences** are reported every single year – including nearly **2,500 rapes****. These aren't faceless statistics. These are your neighbours, your friends, your colleagues – living with the aftermath of unimaginable trauma.

At SARSAS, we refuse to accept this as normal. We're fighting to **end sexual violence** – but we can't do it alone. Whether it's donating, calling out harmful behaviour, supporting survivors, or spreading awareness – your action matters.

Why? Because **this is a crisis**.



*SARSAS go beyond supporting survivors – they champion those often left out of the conversation, including older women and people with intersecting needs. Through **innovative practice** and **sector leadership**, they're shaping a better future for all affected by sexual violence.*

LAURA BATES (SARSAS Patron)



* [Rape Crisis England & Wales](#)

** [2024–2029 Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Plan - Safe and Secure Communities \(p5\)](#)

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

This **three-year strategy** is **our roadmap**, a clear guide to ensure everyone at SARSAS is moving in the same direction, with a shared understanding of where we want to be and how we'll get there. It helps us focus our energy, place our resources where they are needed most, and measure our progress along the way.

Creating this strategy has been **a collective effort**. We consulted widely with **staff, volunteers, trustees and survivors**. Their voices, experiences and expertise have shaped every part of it, making sure it reflects the realities of our work, the challenges we face, and the change we want to create.

The strategy is structured at **four levels**:

- **Our vision** describes the future we are striving for.
- **Our mission** sets out how we will create that change.
- **Our values** are the golden threads running through all we do – our heartbeat.
- **Our five goals** are the commitments that guide us and hold us accountable, ensuring our ambition is matched with action.



This structure gives us both **ambition** and **clarity**. It reminds us of the long-term change we seek, while keeping us focused on the immediate steps needed to get there.

With this roadmap, we can align our collective efforts, track our progress, and **remain true** to **our vision** of a **future free** from **sexual violence**.

“

*We know that prevention is still the most cost-effective, long-term way to stop violence. **SARSAS excels at amplifying the voices of survivors** and leads the way with their dedication to standing up for the eradication of sexual violence.*

CAROL SLATER (Head of Service, Public Health, Communities & Public Health Division, Bristol City Council)

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OUR VISION

A world without sexual violence

OUR MISSION



We **listen** to, **believe**, and **support** survivors while advocating for an end to sexual violence, so that everyone can live a life free from abuse and its impacts.

“

*Inside I was broken but SARSAS started to build me back up again... **hope is stronger than your fears**, and once you're given that, which is what SARSAS do, then you know you're going to be alright.*

MEL (SARSAS Client)

”

OUR VALUES



QUALITY

Delivering excellence across every area of our organisation.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

Understanding how traumatic experiences can impact survivors.



SURVIVOR-LED

Ensuring survivor experiences shape everything we do.

IMPACTFUL

Measuring our progress to ensure accountability and inform decisions.



INCLUSIVE

Tackling gender-based violence through an intersectional feminist lens and uplifting diverse voices.

1 Transforming survivors' lives

We support survivors of sexual violence to process their trauma and understand their experiences. We stand beside them as they regain control, rebuild trust and reclaim their lives after abuse.

WE OFFER HOPE AND HEALING FOR THE FUTURE



We provide **holistic, evidence-** and **strengths-based support** at the time it is needed.



Our **specialist staff** are experts in addressing the needs arising from sustained and multiple forms of abuse.



Survivors **inform, co-produce** and **lead** our services.



We collect **meaningful data** to help inform and shape our services.



We actively work to **remove barriers**, ensuring **marginalised communities** can access the support they deserve.

2 Creating social & cultural change

We lead ground-breaking projects on often-overlooked issues, campaigning and collaborating with organisations to raise awareness and drive meaningful change – locally, nationally, and throughout society.

WE CHALLENGE SYSTEMS & HARMFUL MISCONCEPTIONS



Our campaigning reaches wider audiences with **meaningful messages** that drive change.



We **advocate** for **all survivors**, including those who wish to remain anonymous.



As a respected and expert voice in the sector, we **amplify survivor voices** calling for change.



Our external communications **influence policy**, funding and **systemic change**.



We challenge dominant narratives and harmful stereotypes around rape culture, working to **end stigma and shame**.



*Rooted in **intersectional feminism**, our campaign work recognises gender inequality as both cause and consequence of sexual violence. We challenge injustice and drive change to help **end violence against women and girls**.*

LISA DURSTON (she/her)
Communications Manager



3 Preventing rape & sexual abuse

We collaborate with schools, community groups, and businesses to spark conversations about sexual violence. Our educational programmes inspire individuals and wider society to take action and foster a culture of consent.

WE'RE WORKING TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



We deliver evidence-based training **rooted in research**, exploring the drivers of sexual violence, its prevalence in certain settings, and **effective prevention strategies**.



Our expert facilitators are **trauma-trained professionals** who create safe, inclusive spaces for learning at all levels.



Our knowledge isn't just theoretical – it's shaped by lived experiences and survivor-centred practices that **inspire meaningful behaviour change**.



We actively seek feedback from the organisations we work with, listen, adapt, and follow up to **assess the real-world impact** of our training.



Our training is **grounded in intersectionality**, acknowledging and addressing the complex ways discrimination and inequality impact survivors and influence prevention work.



Education is the essential first step toward ending sexual violence.

Through comprehensive training and meaningful partnerships, we don't just respond to harm – we help prevent it, creating safer spaces where everyone can truly thrive.

TRACEY LEE (she/her)

Head of Income Generation, Training & Comms



4

Supporting our team

We recognise that valued and supported staff and volunteers are essential to our success. By prioritising wellbeing and fostering a positive environment, we lay the foundation for a strong and effective organisation.

THE WELLBEING OF OUR TEAM IS A TOP PRIORITY



Staff and volunteers are **well-supported**, informed, and equipped with the skills they need.



Our team has the time and space to manage their responsibilities while feeling part of a **supportive, connected workplace**.



We support staff and volunteers with lived-experience and **value what they bring**.



Informed by staff feedback and HR data, we **continuously monitor and improve** our working environment and culture.



We have a **diverse and inclusive team** with a strong collective sense of belonging.

“

*I can honestly say in all my years of employment I've never worked for an organisation where I have **felt so holistically supported** as I do at SARSAS.*

BELINDA BIGGAM (she/her)
Training Coordinator

”

5 Building organisational resilience

We recognise that sustainability relies on strong internal governance and that fostering robust external relationships with funders, commissioners, and partners is key to securing and increasing funding.

WE'RE READY TO THRIVE IN FUTURE CHALLENGES



We uphold clear, current, and relevant policies, frameworks, and processes, **ensuring financial stability** through diverse income streams, while using resources ethically and efficiently.



We're led by strong, compassionate leaders whose practices are grounded in **safety**, **trust**, and **wellbeing**, recognising the impact of trauma on both individuals and systems.



Survivors are **represented at all levels** of governance and decision making in the organisation.



We collect **meaningful**, **robust data**, supported by effective and secure IT systems.



We thrive by centring **diversity** and **equity**.

“SARSAS continues to grow in their commitment to **collaboration**, **quality** and **co-production**. As a commissioner, I am confident that their services and approach represent stability, innovation and value for money.

BECKS MARSH
Sexual Assault & Abuse Strategy Commissioner,
Health & Justice Commissioning Team, NHS England - South West

”

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

The success of any strategy lies not only in its ambitions, but in how it is delivered and the impact it achieves. To stay accountable, we have developed a clear internal business plan with measures that **track both progress and learning**.

Survivors at the Centre: the voices of survivors are central to the quality of our services. We use **feedback tools** to understand how well we are meeting needs and to shape service design. One way that we track change is through a standard tool that **tracks changes** for **clients** across **four key areas**:



Reduced
Symptoms



Improved
functioning



Improved
Wellbeing



Reduced
risk

Alongside these outcomes, survivors are invited to give feedback and take part in **advisory** or **co-production groups**, ensuring their voices actively guide our direction. Honest feedback shows the difference we make – and where we must do better.

We also gather **demographic data** to see who we are reaching, and importantly, who we are not. This helps us **identify underrepresented groups** and take action to remove barriers to support.

Our Team: our impact depends on the wellbeing and strength of our staff, volunteers and trustees. That is why this strategy places equal emphasis on caring for and developing those who make our work possible. We will monitor this through **annual staff surveys**, **retention** and **diversity data**, and feedback gathered through **supervision** and **team forums**. By tracking these outcomes alongside service impact, we ensure that all our team are supported, have the skills they need they need and feel truly valued.

Our Organisation: to thrive, we must ensure our **structures**, **policies** and **processes** are robust, ethical and future proof. This includes maintaining financial stability, using resources wisely, and embedding resilience across the organisation. Accountability is upheld through our Board who bring oversight, and expertise. We will measure progress through the **strength** of our partnerships, the **diversity** and **security** of our funding, the **quality** of our governance and policies, and the **confidence** of our team in our leadership.

OUR VISION

A world without sexual violence

OUR MISSION

We listen to, believe in, and support survivors while advocating for an end to sexual violence, so that everyone can live a life free from abuse and its impacts.

OUR GOALS

1. Transforming survivors' lives
2. Creating social & cultural change
3. Supporting our team
4. Preventing rape & sexual abuse
5. Building organisational resilience



Quality



Trauma
-informed



Survivor
-led



Impactful



Inclusive



OUR VALUES



“

After I speak to SARSAS, I always come off the phone feeling a lot more hopeful.

HELPLINE CALLER

”

“

Since starting support and talking about things, I feel like I am slowly starting to be able to breath again.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT WORK CLIENT

”

“

A heart-warming, empowering experience that allows you to make connections you didn't realise you needed.

PEER GROUP PARTICIPANT

”



WE HEAR YOU

watch our video
to learn more
about our work.



Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS)

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