SARSAS

Listen. Believe. Support.

IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

Supporting survivors.
Preventing sexual violence.
Creating change.



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Contents

3–4	CEO & Chair welcome
5	Our new strategy
6–7	At a Glance: Our impact
8–10	Transforming survivors' lives
11–12	Survivor voices
13–14	Supporting our team
15–16	Preventing rape and sexual abuse
17	Creating social and cultural change
18–20	Building organisational resilience
21	Finances
22–23	Thank you

Listen. Believe. Support.

Somerset and Avon Rape and
Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS).
Registered Charity No. 1126682

Welcome - a message from our CEO and Chair

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the progress SARSAS has made and grateful to everyone who has contributed to it. In a challenging environment for the voluntary sector, we have strengthened our financial position and built greater organisational stability, helping to ensure that survivors can continue to access the support they need both now and in the future.

This year marked the completion of the first year of our current strategy. We have made strong progress across all five strategic priorities, expanding our services and training offer, strengthening support for our staff and volunteers, amplifying survivor voices and strengthening our communications and digital presence, improving organisational infrastructure and governance, and building the foundations for long-term sustainability and growth.

We are particularly proud of our team. The results of our staff survey highlighted a positive, engaged and committed team whose expertise, compassion and dedication underpin everything we do. Alongside strengthening leadership and inclusive practice, we have continued to invest in creating an organisation where people feel valued, supported and able to thrive.

We are proud of the progress made through the Sexual Violence Alliance with The Bridge, The Greenhouse, The Southmead Project and Womankind, this year. The Alliance reflects the very best of partnership working, bringing together organisations with a shared vision of improving support for survivors and driving lasting change. Through collaboration, mutual learning and a commitment to collective action, we have achieved far more together than we could have individually.

We would like to thank all the Alliance members for their energy, expertise and commitment to survivors. Their partnership continues

to strengthen our sector and extend our impact across Avon and Somerset.

Inclusivity remains at the heart of our work. We are committed to ensuring that everyone affected by sexual violence can access support that is safe, welcoming, and responsive to their needs. As the world around us continues to evolve, and so often seems to reflect division and inequality, our focus remains firmly on listening to survivors, and delivering services that are accessible, equitable and inclusive.

This report highlights the difference that has been made over the past year. We hope it demonstrates not only the impact of our services, but also the collective effort. This has only been possible because of the commitment of our staff, volunteers, board, funders, supporters, partners and local communities, and we thank everyone who has invested in our work.





Lorri Weaving (she/her)
CEO

Rachel Notley (she/her)
Chair of Trustees

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

OUR VALUES



Quality



Trauma -informed



Survivor -led



Impactful



Inclusive

At a glance

Our impact in numbers 2025-2026

Counselling & support work

394
Individual survivors receiving 1:1 support

86
Specialist support work clients

24
Learning disability and autism service clients

284
Counselling clients



Pathways & helpline

1913

Referrals
(an increase of 27% on the previous year)

5 referrals are received on average every day

634

E-support contacts

787

Assessments

344

Emotional support calls

3134

Helpline contacts (phone, live chat and email support)



Transforming survivors' lives

How we support survivors

Helpline & Live Chat

Our helpline services continue to be an important first point of contact for people affected by sexual violence, offering here and now, trauma-informed support when it is needed most. For many callers, the helpline is the first step towards accessing further support, helping them feel heard, believed and less alone.

Group Work & Outreach

Our group work offers opportunities for survivors to connect with others, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. A range of therapeutic, creative and peer support groups, including spaces for older women and trans, non-binary and intersex (TNBI) survivors, help people to build confidence and support one another in their healing.

1:1 Counselling & Specialist Support

Our 1:1 trauma counselling and specialist support helps survivors make sense of and process the impact of sexual violence. Our BACP registered counsellors and experienced support workers offer a safe space for survivors to regain control, improve their wellbeing and move forward with hope for the future.

"I found the live chat very informative and easy to use also very friendly and helpful. Thank you for the kindness and understanding shown."

Live chat client

"I cannot express how much working with SARSAS has helped me. I was stuck in a very dark place and it has given me some light back."

SSW client

"There were many tears, there were laughs, there was silence, there was thinking. Crucially there was learning; understanding and acknowledgement; there is now peace."

Counselling Client

Spotlight on Waiting Well

"Thank you! Absolutely helpful session! First time in my life I was able to start feeling safe and accepting what happened to me"
Online course client

336
Getting Started Programme online course clients

27%
Increase in referrals to our service

244
Emotional support calls



Trauma and self-care: online course

We have created this free online course for anyone who wants to find more information on trauma and self-care.

It contains information on the impact of trauma and suggests techniques and creative tools that can help you to cope with some of these impacts.

Our pathway to support includes an assessment process that helps people access timely, appropriate support and ensures their next steps are shaped around their individual needs.

As part of this pathway, we offer a range of 'Waiting Well' initiatives designed to provide meaningful support to clients while they are waiting for structured interventions.

Spotlight on Drop-In Reach-Out (DIRO)

Funded by National Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund (£260K)

This year, we launched our new monthly drop-in and community outreach support service. These spaces are designed to provide a calm, safe and welcoming environment for people who are waiting for one-to-one support, seeking support, or wanting to find out more about the services we provide. Each session includes an optional self-care activity and an opportunity to explore coping and grounding techniques.

"Today's session made me realise that my emotions are valid and I am not alone in my trauma."

DIRO participant

336

Getting Started Programme online course clients

78

People attended our community outreach drop-in



70

People attended our Bristol hub drop-in



Survivor voices

Why I work for SARSAS – Susannah



"Slowly, gently, I began to see myself not as broken, but as someone of value, a survivor."

There was a time when my world became too heavy to hold. About six years ago, I had a breakdown and became suicidal. I had already learned how to survive by shrinking, by going silent, by hiding in the corners of myself. I tucked my colours in tight, trying not to be seen. As an autistic person, words often disappear when I need them most.

The thing is, when I was younger, when I tried to speak out, I didn't have the words. And the words I did try to use… some people ate my words like monsters. And after they'd eaten them, their eyes told me I was disgusting, shameful, not good like the others. So, I curled up, smaller and smaller, and things went from bad to worse.

I survived by masking. Friendly, fun, often "off my head", a performance in the hope I could be loved. And for a long time, that worked. Until it didn't. After many years, I had a massive breakdown and I struggled to speak, ticcing constantly.

But this time, people didn't eat my words. Their eyes were filled with love and empathy. They didn't leave. They wanted to help me live. Alongside the care

and support from other brilliant therapists, including the NHS mental health team, I began to feel held in a different way.

Then my partner contacted SARSAS for me. After waiting, Bethan, a counsellor, called. I wasn't sure I was ready to speak, but I did.

In that space, I was allowed to be everything: silent, devastated, uncertain, or speaking the unspeakable. I kept checking she wasn't disgusted by me. She never was. Instead, she met me with a deep, steady understanding, the kind that says, you are safe now . Slowly, gently, I began to see myself not as broken, but as someone of value, a survivor. The abuse was not my fault. I no longer had to shut down to survive.

Bethan suggested a writing group with the Viv Gordon Company. I thought I would just listen, but I was invited to speak. I wrote, and I read my words out loud. The power of hearing my own voice, and others finding theirs, was incredible. I found language for the "unmentionable" and learned that our words are precious, and that spaces must exist to hold them.

There, I found community, "an army … of survivors… who know how to love, laugh and cry.

With the encouragement and belief of people from SARSAS like Tara and Holly, I set up Creative Minds, running workshops for other survivors with SARSAS and Somerset Recovery College. I later joined the Upfront Survivors creative leadership training, created by the Viv Gordon Company in partnership with SARSAS, The Green House, and Coventry University. It was life-changing.

People believed in me when I had very little belief in myself. I went on to become a trainer with the company, supporting others to use the ABC of CSA, helping create safer, better conversations about child sexual abuse.

This all led me to become a Group Work Facilitator with SARSAS. Now I run groups alongside brilliant, kind, skilled people like Kathy and Mae. What was given to me/us ripples outward. People arrive unsure, sometimes silent, and slowly, together, voices return.

None of this is perfect, we are all still learning together. But what matters is this: creating spaces with people who are willing to listen, believe, and change things for the better.

I hold onto these words I wrote during a creative workshop:

"Even now when your words stumble… now they're listening." "Listen younger me, you will speak."And now, together, we do.

Supporting our team

Staff survey

95%

Would recommend SARSAS as an employer



95%

Feel like they are making a difference

92%

Feel like they belong at work

100%

Believe in our organisational aims

Being a trauma-informed service applies as much to our staff and volunteer team as it does to our clients.

We recognise that supporting people through difficult experiences can have an emotional impact, so we prioritise wellbeing, reflection and support across the organisation. This helps build a culture where staff, volunteers and clients can thrive.

This year, we have introduced gender-affirming care leave, enhanced our sick pay and absence management processes to better support colleagues with disabilities and long-term health conditions, and ensured all staff receive training on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and the intersecting challenges faced by the communities we serve.

We are a Disability Confident employer, strengthening the practical steps we take to attract, support and develop a diverse staff and volunteer team.

Volunteers – the heart of our organisation

SARSAS was founded by volunteers almost 18 years ago, beginning as Bristol Rape Crisis, and that legacy of volunteering remains central to who we are today. Our volunteers are integral to everything we do. From providing vital support through our helpline to representing SARSAS at events and amplifying our messages through communications activities, their dedication helps us reach and support more survivors.

They are often the unseen force behind our work, giving their time, skills and compassion to make a meaningful difference. As trusted advocates and ambassadors, they also champion our mission within their communities, helping to raise awareness and extend our impact far beyond our direct services.

50

Active volunteers

33

New volunteers recruited

"SARSAS is very supportive of all the team, from the CEO to the volunteers, everyone is valued, part of team, appreciated, included and supported. I believe there's always a chance to get involved with new things, develop roles within the company and try new things. I believe here at SARSAS we are making a difference one person at a time."

Feedback from our SARSAS Volunteer Survey



Preventing rape and sexual abuse

Training

Our trauma-informed training helps create safe, inclusive spaces that support meaningful cultural change.

64
Sessions delivered across the UK

"Pitched at the right level, really engaging and the team thought the training was fantastic. Big shout out to Jade too, you did a wonderful job."
Sexual Harassment at Work Training Participant

90+
Businesses, charities and statutory services

1109
Participants





Jade, our Senior SARSAS Trainer

Campaigning

"We use our platform as leading experts in sexual violence to shine a light on lesser-known or emerging forms of abuse. This is a key part of our prevention work."

Tracey Lee - Head of Income Generation & Comms



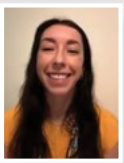
There is growing concern around the issue of non-fatal strangulation (also know as 'choking') and the lack of awareness that there is no safe way to strangle someone, alongside the growing prevalence of strangulation amongst young people.

We were commissioned by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (ACPCC) to create a website campaign page and develop and deliver webinars for professionals as part of the 'Non-fatal strangulation: There is no safe way' campaign.

Due to overwhelming demand, the initial three sessions sold out, leading to additional Ministry of Justice funding to deliver a further three. In total, 688 professionals from 89 organisations attended, helping to improve understanding of non-fatal strangulation and strengthen responses to victims and survivors.

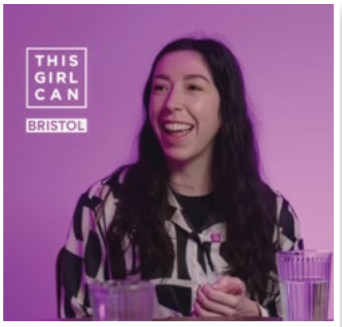






Jade appeared on a Bristol Girls Can Podcast on Safety, Space & Belonging

We teamed up with Refuge for 16 Days of Activism to discuss the issue of tech-facilitated abuse



Creating cultural and social change

Influencing



Our new SARSAS film 'We Hear You' was a finalist in the national Smiley Film Awards



Our patron, Laura Bates, filming for 'We Hear You'

- A strong presence on Avon & Somerset multi-agency and violence reduction boards
- Joined Government All-Party Parliamentary Group and round tables advocating for survivors
- Hosted visits with the Ministry of Justice and the Avon & Somerset PCC
- Spoke on panels for International Women's Day and film screenings
- Survivor-led Health Research Partnership with UWE
- Met with the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls and the Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls



SARSAS had a presence at Freshers events across Avon and Somerset, letting students know about available support



Supporting Bristol Pride on the Downs

Building organisational resilience

Fundraising



The London Landmarks Half-Marathon raised £6,175



Runners in the Bath Half-Marathon raised £4,882

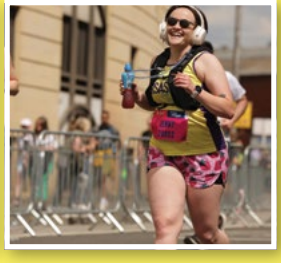


Robbie completed the London Marathon and raised £1,000

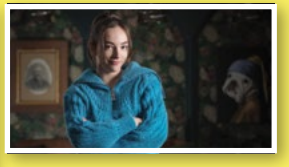
Running events

Our running events really took off this year. We had runners in events across the country, including Manchester, London, Bristol and Bath. Most of our running events are inclusive for people to run, walk and wheel and their popularity as a way of raising funds and awareness, while ticking off a bucket-list item, continues to grow.

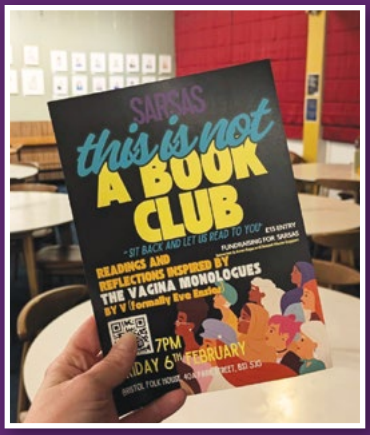




Runners in the Great Bristol 10k and Half-Marathon raised £3,527.40



Isabelle Smith, star of Holly oaks, ran the Manchester 10k to raise £1,184 for SARSAS and shine a light on the topic of sibling sexual abuse





Multiple 'Kates' raised £1,013. by performing on land and sea for 'The Most Wuthering Heights Day' ever

'This is not a book club' raised £740 on a collaboration at The Bristol Folkhouse.

Community fundraising

We are constantly amazed by the creative ways that our supporters raise vital funds to help us continue providing our life-changing support. This year saw a flash mob style 'Wuthering Heights' event in Bristol and Clevedon and a spoken word event join the SARSAS portfolio fundraising innovations!

Isabelle Smith was back to supporting SARSAS again when she appeared on Celebrity Come Dine With Me with other Hollyoaks cast members. Although she didn't win the cooking, the Hollyoaks cast generously split the winnings, and Isabelle donated £200 to SARSAS.





Our regular giving events were back this year, raising more than ever. Our Online Silent Auction raised £3,203 with 6 items donated by amazing local businesses and the Women & Girls Big Give Match Fund raised a whopping £20,035 for our Specialist Support Service.

"Thanks for the amazing but hard work you and your team do! You really are changing lives and making them feel liveable again for so many people."

Silent Auction Bidder

Supporter event



The amazing Survivor panel



Serving refreshments to our supporters



Our Community and Partnerships Fundraising Lead talks all things fundraising



Our amazing supporters



It was great to hear from Clare Moody, Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner



SARSAS CEO, Lorri Weaving, opened the event

Autumn highlight

In October, we welcomed supporters, partners and local leaders to a special supporter event celebrating the impact of SARSAS. Attendees included the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, Kerry McCarthy MP, colleagues and valued supporters. The highlight of the evening was a powerful panel of survivor speakers, who shared their personal experiences of healing and the difference SARSAS had made to their recovery.

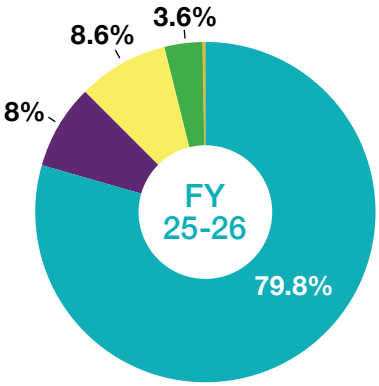
Their courage and honesty provided a moving reminder of why specialist sexual violence services matter and the life-changing impact that compassionate, trauma-informed support can have.

"It's rare to truly grasp the depth and impact of your work. The survivors' stories were powerful, sensitive - they conveyed resilience and hope that your support makes possible. It was a privilege to witness the strength of your community and the care embedded in everything you do."

Supporter Celebration Attendee

Finances

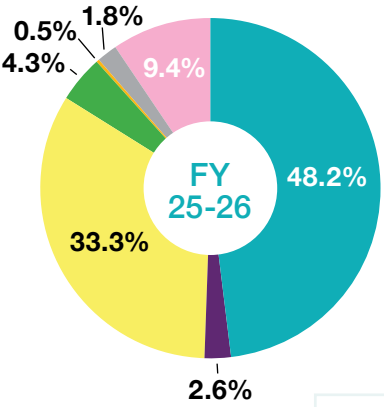
Income



	FY 25-26	FY 24-25
	£	£
Public Sector grants	**2,341,754**	2,151,486
Trusts & Foundations grants	**235,160**	441,766
Fundraising	**252,713**	58,603
Other trading income	**105,080**	165,414
Investment income	**3,723**	5,066
TOTAL	**2,938,430**	2,822,335

Public Sector grants
Trusts & Foundations grants
Fundraising
Other trading income
Investment income

Expenditure



	FY 25-26	FY 24-25
	£	£
Staff costs	**1,273,380**	1,344,043
Staff related costs	**68,588**	81,843
Partnership work	**880,687**	906,158
Other direct service and project costs	**114,290**	412,457
Volunteer costs	**12,059**	8,743
Fundraising costs	**46,495**	1,250
Overheads	**247,728**	365,830
TOTAL	**2,643,227**	3,120,324

Staff costs
Staff related costs
Partnership work
Other direct service and project costs
Volunteer costs
Fundraising costs
Overheads

Thank you

Every achievement in this report has been made possible because people chose to stand alongside survivors.

Whether you volunteered your time, made a donation, commissioned our training, funded our work, partnered with us, or helped raise awareness, you have played a part in creating cultural change and supporting survivors.

This year we have welcomed more survivors to SARSAS than ever before, launched new services, strengthened our organisation, expanded our prevention work and continued to advocate for meaningful change.

None of this happens in isolation. It happens because so many people believe, as we do, that everyone deserves to live a life free from sexual violence.

To our staff and volunteers: thank you. Your compassion, professionalism and dedication make SARSAS the organisation it is. Every conversation you have, every person you support and every challenge you take on helps survivors feel listened to, believed in and supported.

To our funders, commissioners, corporate partners and charitable trusts: thank you for investing in our work and sharing our vision. Your support enables us not only to respond to the needs of survivors today, but to build sustainable services for the future.

To our partner organisations and local communities: thank you for working alongside us. By collaborating, sharing knowledge and championing survivors' voices together, we create greater impact than any organisation could achieve alone.

And finally, to every survivor who has trusted us to be part of their healing, challenged us to do better, or shared their experiences to help improve services for others, thank you. Your courage inspires everything we do.

Together, we are working for a world without sexual violence and where every single survivor is heard.

Thank you for being part of that journey.

The SARSAS Team



During FY 2025 - 2026, we were grateful to receive statutory funding through:

Avon and Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Bath Council

Bristol City Council

Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos. Integrated Care Board

NHS England

Somerset Community Foundation

Somerset Council

Somerset Integrated Care Board

South Glos Council

The Home Office

The Ministry of Justice

A big thank you to all of the trusts and foundations who continued to invest in our work during FY 2025-2026:

Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation

Barnardo's

BClear

Garfield Weston Foundation

Henry Smith Charity

National Lottery Community Fund

Screwfix Foundation

St Austell Brewery Charitable Trust

St James's Place Charitable Foundation

The Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund

The Brook Trust

The Society of Merchant Venturers

Tides Foundation

SARSAS

Listen.
Believe.
Support.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

SARSAS is a registered charity (No: 1126682)