

Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross



Annual Report 2009-2010

Support for women, young women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused at any time in their lives.

Registered Charity SCO37982
WRASAC P&K is funded by the Scottish Government

BACKGROUND TO WRASAC P&K

WRASAC P&K was established in March 2007 with funding from the Scottish Government Rape Crisis Specific Fund to provide support, information and advocacy for women and girls aged 13 and over who have experienced rape or sexual violence at any time in their lives.

We have 3 paid part-time staff members and 6 volunteers who provide regular support and assistance in running the Centre.

Our services include:

- Direct support to sexual violence survivors on a 1:1 basis, in groups and remotely using the phone and internet.
- Support to family members and friends following disclosure by the survivor.
- Training and resources for other organisations to enable them to better support survivors.

We are a women only organisation providing a comprehensive service, including face to face, email and telephone support. We can also provide information on legal and medical issues arising from rape or sexual abuse. Women can talk about their experience confidentially in safety, and without judgement. Our support is not time limited as we understand that at each stage of healing women need time to process and come to terms with what has happened to them.

OUR MISSION

“Women Working Towards Freedom from Rape and Sexual Abuse”

OUR VISIONS

At WRASAC P&K we aim to relieve the distress of women, young women and girls who have been raped and/or sexually abused and of their partners, families and friends through the provision of emotional and practical support, information, advice and advocacy and; to advance education through the provision of information, advice and advocacy among professional bodies and the general public about the causes, nature, extent and effects of rape and sexual violence against women, young women and girls and ways of preventing or relieving the suffering it causes.

The Centre, (WRASAC P&K) established in March 2007, offers support to women, young women and girls who have been raped or in any way sexually abused at some time in their lives.

We are a women only organisation providing a comprehensive service, including face to face, email and telephone support. We can also provide information on legal and medical issues arising from rape or sexual abuse. Women can talk about their experience confidentially in safety, and without judgement. Our support is not time limited as we understand that at each stage of healing women need time to process and come to terms with what has happened to them.

The true extent of rape and/or sexual abuse is unknown although it is estimated that as many as 1 in 4 women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse and/or rape fear not being believed and are also afraid of what might happen to them and/or their families if the perpetrator is not convicted. Our referrals for face to face support have grown year on year from 27 in our first year to 106 this year. Our helpline calls have increased from 69 per year to 505. 48% of the women seeking support from us are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and 30% have experienced Rape and/or sexual assault in adulthood.

Sexual violence of any kind can have devastating effects on the survivor: Physical damage, flashbacks, nightmares, mental health difficulties, depression and anxiety, suicidal thoughts and eating disorders are only some of the effects caused by sexual violence. Many of the women coming to WRASAC P&K report having attempted suicide and many of those women also self-harm.

OUR VALUES

We believe that any woman, young woman and girl, regardless of ethnic background, culture or sexuality, should have access to non-

judgemental, confidential support at any given time.

We believe that no woman, young woman or girl regardless of behaviour, dress or lifestyle is to blame for any form of rape, sexual abuse or sexual assault.

We believe that it is everyone's responsibility to adopt zero tolerance to any form of rape, sexual abuse and sexual assault of any woman, young woman or girl.

OUR VALUES

At WRASAC P&K we work towards our mission through our ongoing commitment to the following visions...

Prevention:- To change societal attitudes and beliefs through awareness raising events, campaigns and education. Working in collaboration with relevant agencies to eliminate gender based violence against women.

Protection:- Creating a safe environment where women can freely express themselves.

Provision:- To continually grow and adapt our services in response to those who need us.

Participation:- Overcoming all barriers to give survivors a voice through the promotion of service user involvement.

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HOW OUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE

As a result of the support provided directly and indirectly, women and girls who have experienced sexual violence have told us :

“I was very grateful for the support and it has made a big difference in me and my family’s life. Just wish I had done it sooner. Thank you”

“Very relieved, burden slowly unloaded great to know someone cares and understands”

“Just talking, being believed and understood is making me feel better about myself

“Has helped me feel less diminished in other people’s eyes”

“Enabled me to talk about a part of my life that I can’t talk about with others”

“It kept me alive”

“It helped give me back my life, helped me sort out confused feelings and gave me some confidence”

“Just talking about something I have hidden for many years is letting me see how badly the rape has affected my whole life” I am starting to do new things and feel less anxious. I know I will never be able to go out at night on my own but that’s OK for now”

- Being believed and given the opportunity to voice what has happened to them without, being judged in any way, improves women’s self-respect.
- Providing positive ways to cope with the effects of their experience can empower women to make appropriate choices and regain control of their lives.
- Knowing there is someone to call when all seems lost and life is too painful can be the difference between life and death.
- With the support of WRASAC P&K survivors can explore safe, effective ways of dealing with their feelings and regain their self esteem and find positive ways to take their lives forward.
- We have seen increasing referrals annually from 27 in 2007-2008 to 106 in 2009-2010. Helpline calls are up from 69 to 505 during the same period.
- Of the women we supported 48% have experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse. Women may experience more than one type of abuse over her lifetime.
- The effects of abuse are manifested in many different ways and many women will experience and cope with multiple effects.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Recruitment of Management Committee Members brought interest from a range of professionals and we now have six members who provide Governance.

The Survivor Scotland fund for a 32 hour Support post and 30 hour admin/finance post ended in September 2009 and our volunteer pool was down to two members. Without additional funding from September 2009 to continue the posts lost from SASDF, the service was in danger of being drastically reduced and being left with the very little capacity to support women, and none to recruit, train and induct new volunteers.

Thankfully, we were averted from a crisis situation when TSB Foundation, Forteviot Fund, Choose Life fund and Perth & Kinross Community Safety Partnership made contributions and we were able to maintain a part-time support post. Sadly, the admin/finance post was lost in favour of maximising support. The finance work was contracted out and the admin spread across the remaining posts. At the same time we had a member of staff on maternity leave which left two staff and 2 volunteers.

Our plans to move to Company Limited status are nearing completion and we hope to have this in place for next year.

The Management Committee would like to thank staff and volunteers for their ongoing hard work and commitment.

Management Committee

NEW INITIATIVES

At our Development day in May this year we piloted our new group support pack and self-harm and suicide prevention training with good results

We have introduced the opportunity for women using our service to participate in group support with the ultimate aim of achieving a 'user consultation group'. This will enable women to feel less isolated and supported by others who have had similar experiences. It will allow them to be heard and give their views on what they feel is helpful to their recovery from rape and sexual abuse. It will also help us to know what services women find most helpful.

Our daytime helpline hours were extended from two to seven hours to provide better access to women who are unable to come into the Centre.

Delivery of Personal Safety Workshops took place across Perth & Kinross. Feedback from these sessions indicated the need for further delivery.

“These packs should be delivered in local youth groups, schools and anywhere young people are” (Young Person).

“The knowledge and awareness of how to keep myself safe when out and knowing that it’s not my fault if something happens” (Woman).

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We continue to forge links with other agencies and to participate in the work of the Violence Against Women Partnership, where we continue to maintain the profile of the need for support to women, young women and girls who have been sexually abused or raped. Our participation in the three sub-groups of the Partnership enabled us to contribute to the decision to change the name from Domestic Abuse Forum to widen the agenda to include consideration of all types of violence against women.

The 16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women and International Women's Day gave the opportunity to include events relating to sexual violence. In partnership with the Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership, we have participated in events and campaigns to highlight our service and have supported events challenging the acceptance of gender based violence, the use of pornography and commercial exploitation in our society.

TRAINING/AWARENESS RAISING

We have delivered talks to various organisations and have co-facilitated Multi-Agency awareness training, funded by the Tayside Violence Against Women Training Consortium.

Through training and resources developed, staff from other agencies and the public in general are more able to:

- Respond more effectively to disclosure of sexual violence.
- Provide better and more consistent support to women and girls following disclosure.
- Be better equipped to challenge and explore attitudes which place blame on the victims of these crimes.

Mailings to relevant agencies have increased access to information about our service.

During 2009 we extended the RCS campaign 'This is not an invitation to rape me' by having two taxis in the City printed with the graphics and ran a Festive campaign in pubs and clubs using posters with the same message. The taxis, funded by Perth & Kinross Choose Life Fund, will run up to September 2010. Our presence at the annual Volunteer Market also gives us the opportunity to profile the organisation and recruit volunteers.

We continue to drive home the message that there is no excuse for rape and/or sexual abuse.

CHALLENGES

Despite our lack of capacity throughout the year we were able to recruit and train a new group of eight volunteers. Volunteer training is intensive, and consists of, 10 workshops covering five full Saturdays and seven Tuesday evenings. Once training is completed there is a further 80 hour induction period. Six completed their training and went on to induction. The process of recruiting, training and induction demands a high input from paid staff.

With the help of these trained volunteers we were able to increase our telephone and email support which goes some way towards improving access for women who cannot come to the Centre. All but one of our volunteers come from rural Perthshire which helps them to relate to the additional difficulties and barriers which exist for women in outlying areas. The supervision and training costs for volunteers were funded by the Scottish Communities Fund.

Although the accounts appear to show a healthy fund balance, we are still short of the amount we would prefer for 3 months running costs. We are actively seeking funding from other sources to ensure the continuation of the core funding currently being funded by the Rape Crisis Specific Fund which ends in March 2011. We are also actively seeking new funding to enable us to continue our support work after March 2011. Like many other organisations the future feels uncertain but WRASAC P&K will continue to actively seek funding from other sources to ensure that the service remains adequately funded.

We look forward to the coming year working towards our mission and providing a service which is accessible and appropriate to women, young women and girls who have been affected by sexual violence in Perth & Kinross.

Maggie McVean
Development Manager

VOLUNTEERING WITH WRASAC P&K

My experience of volunteering at WRASAC P&K has been a two way process – although I have given my time, I have gained so much more.

The workers at the centre put in so much time and effort into the volunteer training process and it taught me so much, not just about sexual violence but also about myself. Whilst the training was intense and harrowing at times, it was a necessary experience to prepare us as much as possible. The support that was given to us during the training, and our induction, is helping me become equipped to help others and increasing my emotional intelligence so I am as prepared as possible.

In volunteering with WRASAC P&K, I have become empowered and inspired to help others, just as they do every day. It has been an honour to be part of such an amazing organisation that bring women together to support and aid survivors of rape/sexual abuse to:

- Feel less isolated, have improved self-respect and better quality of life.
- Learn positive ways to cope with the effects of their experiences.
- Learn how to deal with suicidal feelings and self-harming coping strategies.
- Be empowered to make choices that will enable them to gain control over their lives.
- Learn how to improve their personal safety and so feel safer in their communities.

Marie S



Support room

THANKS

WRASAC P&K would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their financial support:

Scottish Government Rape Crisis Specific Fund

Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland

The Scottish Community Foundation

The Henry Smith Charity

The Forteviot Fund

The Tayside Training Consortium

Perth & Kinross Council Community Safety

Partnership/Choose Life fund

People of Perth & Kinross for their kind donations

Thanks also go to the Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership for their support.

Copies of WRASAC P&K accounts for this year are available from the Centre.

Should you wish a copy please email info@perthshirerapecrisis.org

Telephone **01738 626290**

Or write to-

WRASAC P&K,

PO Box 7570,

Perth PH2 1BY

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Eleanor Brown Chairperson

Kate Falconer Treasurer

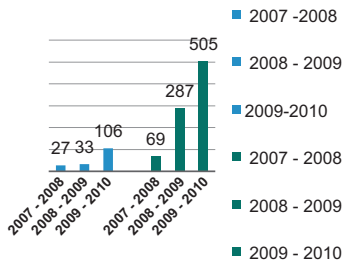
Victoria Greir Secretary

Julia Melville

Jo Armstrong

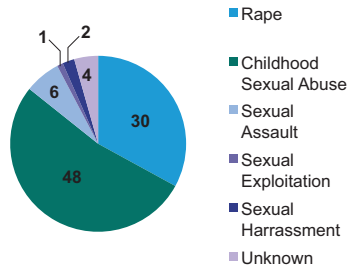
Gordon McKay

Referrals & Helpline Calls



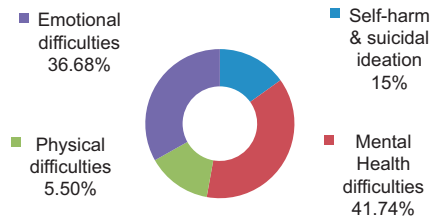
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Types of Abuse



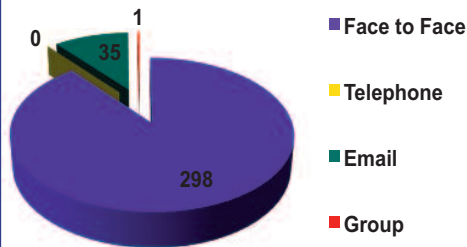
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Effects

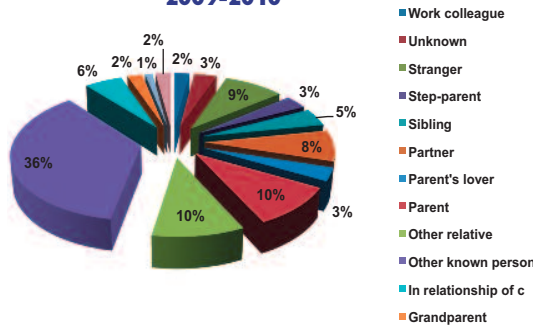


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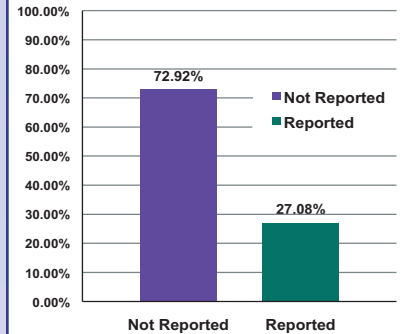
Number of Support Sessions 2009-2010



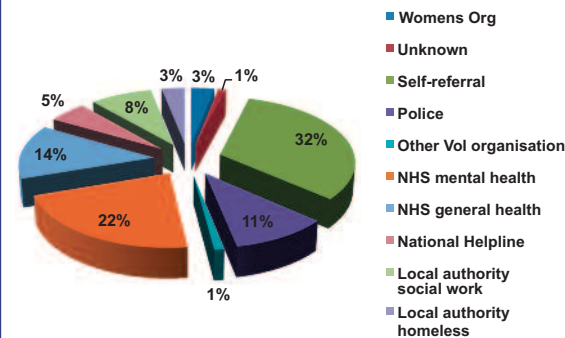
Recorded Abuser Relationship 2009-2010



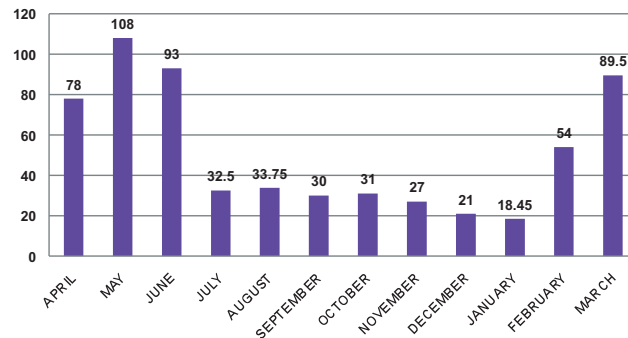
Reporting Trend 2009-2010



Source of Referrals 2009-2010



Recorded Volunteer Hours 2009-2010



This is a total contribution of 616.2 hours made by WRASAC P&K volunteers from April 2009-March 2010. The decrease in hours contributed from July to January reflects the fact that we were training a new team of volunteers throughout this period. Against minimum wage our valued volunteers have contributed approximately £3573.96 worth of working time to our service.

Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross

HELPLINE - 01738 630965

DAILY MON-FRI 9.30am to 4.30pm

EVENINGS TUESDAY & SUNDAY 7pm to 9pm

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www.perthshirerapecrisis.org

The Henry Smith Charity
founded in 1628

