

Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross



*Women working towards freedom
from rape and sexual abuse.*

Annual Report 2010-2011

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

OUR MISSION

“Women Working Towards Freedom from Rape and Sexual Abuse”

BACKGROUND TO WRASAC P&K

WRASAC P&K was established in March 2007 with funding from the Scottish Government 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 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 and in groups, face-to-face and remotely using the phone and email.
- Support to family members and friends following disclosure by the survivor.
- Training and resources for other organisations to enable them to better support survivors.

In this, the last year of a three year funding term from the Scot Govt., WRASAC P&K has achieved the goals set for 2010-2011. Being in the final year of core funding, on which the survival of the Centre depends, has not diminished our enthusiasm to continue to develop services for women and young women and to consult with them on what works for them. In preparation for developing services for young people and for those in the rural areas of Perth & Kinross we have focussed on gathering data from young people about the issues which affect them and finding out from women in rural areas about the need for services tackling violence against women in rural Perthshire.

Our need for long term funding has never been greater. Our referral statistics reflect the breadth of survivors experiences, including recent rape, historic rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, long term abuse and isolated incidents. At a time when our referrals are increasing rapidly, our core funding has been reduced to a one year term. Our priority for the coming year will be to stay optimistic and to do everything we can to protect the funding for our centre which provides an essential service to women who have experienced sexual violence.

M Mcvean

This year we have continued to highlight the need for placing responsibility for sexual violence firmly where it belongs – with the perpetrator. Sadly the most recent research shows little change in women blaming attitudes in our communities.

Recent research reveals that almost one in five Scots believe a woman is partially to blame for being raped if she is wearing revealing clothing - a survey of 1,040 Scots carried out by Cello MRUK in February 2010 for the Scottish Government found that:

- 23 per cent think a woman can be at least partly responsible if she is drunk at the time of the attack
- 17 per cent thought that a woman bore some responsibility if she wore revealing clothing
- 15 per cent say there should be some burden of responsibility for rape if the woman is flirting
- 8 per cent think rape can be the woman's fault if she is known to have had many sexual partners

These attitudes can make it difficult for women to speak out about being raped, because of fear of being blamed for what has happened. There are also significant concerns about the impact these attitudes might have on rape survivors' ability to access justice, in terms of attitudes which jury members might hold.

Although many people genuinely believe they wouldn't judge a rape victim by what they wear, how drunk they were, or if they had been flirting all night, they often actually do; particularly when sitting as a juror in court.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our continued membership in the Violence Against Women Partnership has given us the support we need to continue to drive home important messages aimed at challenging these judging attitudes towards victims of sexual violence within our own communities. In support of the RCS 'Not Ever' campaign which wants to prompt people to keep their judgments in check and to remember that there's only one person who is responsible for rape and it's not the victim. It doesn't matter what you wear, how many sexual partners you've had, or if you're out getting drunk with friends - no one deserves to be raped - ever, WRASAC P&K took the message forward with a local joint initiative.

'Drinking is not a crime: Rape is'

This joint initiative led by Tayside Police, Western Division, in partnership with Women's Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre, P&K and Perth & Kinross Community Safety Partnership was launched on the 25th November at Barrack Street Police Station. Local and national press and television were in attendance and there was good coverage and promotion of the campaign. The campaign aimed to promote the clear message across Perth & Kinross that sex without consent is rape, no matter what the circumstances. The postcards were distributed across Perth & Kinross by police officers, and were made available for all organisations to use and distribute. Thanks to all who promoted the campaign.



Drinking is not a crime. Rape is.

No matter how much she's drunk.....

No matter what she's wearing.....

No matter if you've already kissed.....

.....sex without consent is rape.

If there's any question over whether a woman has drunk too much to give consent' assume she hasn't given it.

Tayside Police investigate every single report of rape. Responsibility for rape will always lie with the rapist.



CHANGES

One of the most important advances in the fight against sexual violence was the radical overhaul of the law on sexual offences. The new Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 came into force, bringing with it a number of significant changes to the law on sexual offence in Scotland.

The definition of rape is now wider than was previously the case, reflecting a recognition within the law that men as well as women can be victims of rape. Consent is now defined in statute in Scotland for the very first time. Hopefully this will overcome problems caused by the subjective interpretations to which its previous location in common law inevitably left it open. Under the new law, consent is defined as "free agreement" and this is supported by a non-exhaustive list of circumstances which, if proved, will indicate that consent was not present. People with a limited or no capacity to consent (for example the very young, or those with a mental disorder) are also better protected within the terms of the new Act.

The new law legislates on a number of related offences. These include sexual coercion (forcing others to take part in sexual activities without their consent), voyeurism, sexual exposure, and sending indecent images by email or text. This Act also extends its jurisdiction beyond the UK in cases where offences against children are committed abroad. These can now be prosecuted in Scotland irrespective of where the offence was committed, or of laws which pertain in that country. (RCS 2010)

WRASAC P&K welcomes the changes within the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act. We are hopeful that these will improve the prospects of obtaining justice for victims of sexual violence.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

At this year's Volunteer Market £245 was raised. The cup cakes and banana loaf were a big hit!! **A BIG THANKS** to all who helped out and made donations to the tombola.

Our car bootie also raised £234 much needed cash.

DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to improve access for young women, we have developed and re-designed our young women's materials and have called this part of the service SYSTA (Supporting Young Survivors – Tackling Sexual Abuse).

As a result of growing concern about the impact of sexualisation of our young people by the media and music industries, WRASAC P&K carried out some research into young people's views on Media influences and Sexual Bullying. We consulted with young people from the City Base, SCYDS, Perth College and at various community events.

The research into Media Influences showed that, overall, the young people taking part tended to access magazines and newspaper daily. The biggest reason being that they were bought for advice re fashion-relationships etc. The majority felt that the media helped shape their daily life but they also identified that the media stereotyped certain groups in a detrimental way. Although they felt that the media had a negative impact on young people, this didn't stop them seeking advice from the media.

Our Sexual Bullying survey revealed that of 61 participants 23% had experienced sexual bullying and 28% had witnessed it. When asked what young people felt should /could be done about sexual bullying the top priority for 50% of the young people was "schools and other youth settings to teach and talk about gender equality and respect in the classroom for each year".

The information gathered and our continued consultation with young people will be instrumental in informing us of the issues we need to be addressing in the coming year.

RURAL SERVICES

In a joint initiative with Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership we provided an employee who distributed questionnaires to women's and youth groups in Blairgowrie and Pitlochry. The purpose of the survey was to establish a baseline of understanding and views of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault across rural communities and to identify gaps, issues and barriers to providing effective support. The results of this research highlighted the need for more awareness raising and more access to services in rural areas. 80% of participants agreed with the following: 'Living in a rural area can result in additional difficulties for women, children & young people experiencing domestic abuse/rape & sexual assault.' A participant commented 'I am delighted to see that focus is being directed towards rural areas. For too long rural areas have been overlooked and regarded as places where domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault do not occur. All these things happen in rural areas and must be addressed' ('Exploring domestic abuse, rape & sexual assault within rural communities across Perth & Kinross' Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership): The results of the research confirm that there is a need for services tackling violence against women in the rural areas of Perth & Kinross and this remains one of our goals for improvement in the future. Copies of the research are available from the Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership KMcmillan@pkc.gov.uk.

SUPPORT GROUP

The first of our 6 week 'feel good' group programmes got underway and was well attended and enjoyed by the women who went along. The women reported that they have benefitted from the social element and also from being able to try out things that they would not normally have the opportunity to do. 'The nicest thing about it was that no one wanted anything from me' (service user). The evaluations point to a need to continue to provide this type of service and we have plans to repeat and develop this in the coming year.

DONATIONS FORM

FUNDING and DONATIONS

The Management Committee thanks the staff and volunteers for their commitment and hard work maintaining the service through yet another challenging year.

We are grateful to the funding bodies who have supported us over the past year.

Scottish Government Rape Crisis Specific Fund

The Henry Smith Trust

The Forteviot Fund

Perth & Kinross Council Choose Life Fund

Scottish Communities Fund

People of Perth & Kinross for their kind donations

We must also thank Perth & Kinross Council Community Safety Partnership and the Violence Against Women Partnership for their support.

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

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 Grier Secretary

Julia Melville

Jo Armstrong

Gordon McKay



ACCOUNTS

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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The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628

