

# RASASC

Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre



## September 2015 Newsletter

**Who we are:** RASASC is a Guildford-based charity, working with the Surrey community since 1992. We provide support to male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse, recent and non-recent.

We provide a confidential helpline, counselling, self-support groups, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, family support, pre-trial support, survivor cycling, coffee mornings, presentations and awareness raising.

All services are available by self-referral.

## Welcome

The Summer months have been very busy for RASASC – it's hard to believe Autumn is already here! Our Annual General Meeting took place in June and brought together staff, volunteers and supporters to look back and celebrate our recent achievements. We have also seen the successful pilot launch of our self-esteem classes for women affected by rape and sexual abuse. The feedback from these has been exceptional and we look forward to continuing the classes long into the future.

We're also at that exciting time again when we look forward to our next Helpline Training course and welcoming new volunteers to the team. I am always struck by the feedback we receive from volunteers when they complete their training – it is an incredibly rewarding experience and a vital role within RASASC. Without these volunteers we simply would not be able to answer the more than 2,000 calls we receive each year. Please keep those applications coming in and share the message with friends, family and colleagues who may be interested in joining RASASC.

*Barbara Stevenson, Head of Services*

## Become a RASASC Helpline Volunteer - Applications Open

RASASC is recruiting for new volunteers to join its Helpline Volunteer team.

Every year, RASASC answers over 2,000 calls to its Helpline. The Helpline is open to anyone affected by rape or sexual abuse, and its female volunteers are trained to listen, support and allow the caller time to talk.

As increasing numbers of people come forward to seek RASASC's support, volunteers play a crucial role, as Vivien, RASASC Events & Volunteer Coordinator, explains: "*We would not be able to run the level of service that we do without our team of wonderful volunteers. Full training and supervision is provided, so there is no need to be an expert in this field already. All we ask is that you are caring, non-judgemental and committed to making a difference.*"

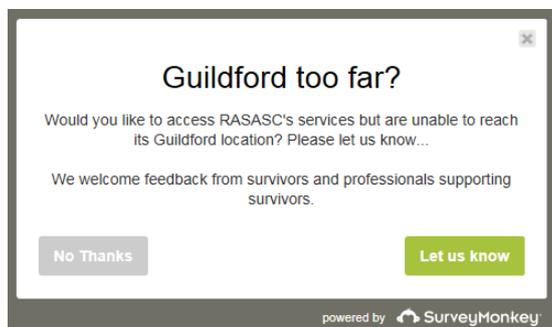
The next training course will run throughout October-December on Thursday evenings and three Sundays. It will equip the volunteers with the necessary skills to provide this valuable listening service.

We look forward to receiving your applications!

For full details about the training course and to download an application form, visit [www.guildford-rasasc.org](http://www.guildford-rasasc.org) or contact Vivien at [vivien@rasasc-guildford.org](mailto:vivien@rasasc-guildford.org)

## RASASC Hub Research

While our staff and volunteers continue to offer fantastic support through our Guildford-based counselling and ISVA services, we are aware that Guildford is not easy to reach for everyone across Surrey. We are looking at how we might expand our services and are researching the potential to open a 'Hub' elsewhere in the county.



Does our Guildford location mean you are unable to access our services, or do you know someone who is affected?

You may have noticed that a survey box now pops up on our [website](#). It asks just one question – the location of a survivor unable to reach Guildford.

Please do not hesitate to submit any information you may have. The more information we receive, the better placed a Hub would be to support more survivors in Surrey.

## Volunteers Needed – Dates for the Diary

If you're unable to join our Helpline or Counselling volunteers, but would still like to help RASASC in your spare time, why not become an Events volunteer?

RASASC has been invited to attend an array of events over the coming months, and we need the help of our lovely volunteers to be on our stand, hand out leaflets, fundraise and help local communities find out more about RASASC and the services we provide.

- Godalming College Activities Fair: Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September
- Epsom Mental Health Week: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October
- Woking Mental Health Fair: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October
- Surrey University Health Fair: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October

If you're available to volunteer at any of these events, or to find out more about volunteering at RASASC please contact Vivien at [vivien@rasasc-guildford.org](mailto:vivien@rasasc-guildford.org) or 01483 568000

You can also keep up to date with RASASC's upcoming events on our website: [www.rasasc.org/news-events](http://www.rasasc.org/news-events)

## Raising Survivors' Self-Esteem

Over the summer, RASASC ran a successful pilot series of Self-Esteem classes for female survivors of rape and sexual abuse. Pat, the course facilitator explained why these classes are so important to the survivors:

*"From my point of view the group originally began as a six week course for women aiming to raise their self-esteem by teaching new coping mechanisms using the power of positive thinking. However, it evolved into much more than this – the women who had started as strangers on week one bonded enough to share their experiences, hopes and fears for the future. They offered encouragement and comfort to each other, and even asked for the group to be extended by another six weeks. In this time it allowed each member to explore their own unique talents and discuss their future careers."*

***"The trust, understanding and encouragement that grew within our group made it somewhere I wanted to be"***

The group consisted of women from a variety of different backgrounds, ages and experiences. Such was the feedback we received from the group that we are very pleased to be running another series of extended classes (over twelve weeks).

As one survivor said: *"The trust, understanding and encouragement that grew within our group made it somewhere I wanted to be. I gained comfort, strength and optimism for the future knowing I was safe, believed and genuinely valued for who I was."*

## Haslemere Thespians raise £2578.82 for RASASC!

The Haslemere Thespians raised a fantastic £2578.82 for RASASC through ticket and raffle sales for their production of The Vagina Monologues.

It was a wonderful production and several RASASC volunteers were lucky enough to see it, as well as provide further information about RASASC to audience members on our stand at intermission.

This amount raised will go an incredibly long way to supporting survivors. Thank you very much again to everyone involved!



## Waiting times for counselling reduced

This time last year RASASC faced exceptional demand for its face to face counselling service, with waiting times reaching nine months. We are very pleased to announce that this has now been reduced to three months!

Although the number of people seeking support continues to be as high as ever, in the past year we have recruited additional volunteer counsellors and introduced an extra evening at the CAB, increasing our capacity by a further 18 sessions a week. We are now running at full capacity across all other counselling evenings, with some counsellors offering extra daytime sessions as well.

This means that RASASC is now offering over 3000 counselling hours a year! This is thanks to the hard work of the RASASC counselling team and the support of additional funding by the Surrey PCC.

## RASASC Annual General Meeting 2015

The RASASC AGM 2015 took place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June at Surrey Satellite Technology Limited. It was wonderful to welcome so many staff, volunteers and other stakeholders to discuss RASASC's achievements in the past year.



*Pictured l-r: Lisa Herrington, Cathie Smith, Malcolm Henderson-Begg*

Our thanks to Lisa Herrington, Policy Officer with the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who was our guest speaker. The PCC have been very supportive of RASASC's work, and Lisa was able to explain how the PCC operates and its commissioning priorities looking ahead.

We were also very pleased to welcome Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford Cllr Gordon and Sue Jackson, and the High Sheriff of Surrey Elizabeth Kennedy.

Cathie Smith, RASASC Chair, and former Vice-Chair Malcolm Henderson-Begg led proceedings. They both thanked staff, volunteers and supporters for working incredibly hard through a year of major change for RASASC. Not only did we undergo a restructure, but we expanded existed services and introduced new services such as Youth Counselling and Crisis Counselling.

You can read more about RASASC's achievements and the wonderful contributions of our staff and volunteers in our Annual Report 2013-14. [Visit our website](#) to download a copy.

## Surrey Half Marathon 2016

Entries are open for the next Surrey Half Marathon, which will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Rebecca, our Communications & Funding Manager has entered and will be raising money for RASASC. If you'd like to join her and help raise even more money, please don't hesitate to sign up. Further information about the event can be found at [www.surreyhalfmarathon.co.uk](http://www.surreyhalfmarathon.co.uk)

If a half marathon isn't quite your cup of tea, any help promoting the online fundraising page will be greatly appreciated. Watch this space for news of when it goes live!



## A big thank you to all our fundraisers

Unfortunately it is not possible to mention all the individuals who have fundraised or donated to RASASC in recent months, but we would like to say a big "thank you" to everyone. Your donations make a huge difference to the lives of survivors from across Surrey...

Parish of Holy Trinity & St. Marys  
Friends of RASASC  
Waitrose Oxshott  
Bridge Day participants

The Barley Mow Pub  
The Leonard Laity Stoaite Charitable Trust  
Waitrose Cheam  
The Chip Stop, Aldershot

Lindt  
Waitrose Epsom  
Haslemere Thespians  
Online donations

Thank you as well to...

Experience Guildford, who donated Guildford Privilege Cards for our volunteers

Everyone who's donated to RASASC through a Payroll Charitable Giving Scheme

Contributions to RASASC collection boxes and purchases of our torches, rape alarms and cookery books

If you know of a local business who would be happy to take a RASASC collection box, please let Rebecca know at [rebecca@rasasc-guildford.org](mailto:rebecca@rasasc-guildford.org)

## Raise money for RASASC through online shopping!

By signing up to [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) you can raise money for RASASC while shopping online.

*How does it work?*

Sign up for free and support RASASC at

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/rasascguildford](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/rasascguildford)

A screenshot of the easyfundraising.org.uk website. At the top right, it shows a total of £10,035,227.6 donated to good causes in the UK. Below this is a navigation bar with links: 'How it works', 'Support a good cause', 'Register your good cause', and 'Raise with business purchases'. The main content area features the heading 'Raise money for...' followed by the RASASC logo and the text 'Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) - Guildford'. Below this is a description of the charity and a green button that says 'Sign up for free &amp; support this cause &gt;'. On the right side, there is a summary box showing the RASASC logo, the amount raised so far (£924.57), and the number of supporters (59).

You can then choose from over 2,700 retailers, and every time you buy via [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) retailers will donate, at no extra cost to you.

We've already raised over £900 through easyfundraising. Encourage your friends and family to sign up too and let's see if we can reach £1000 by the end of the year!

## RASASC on the Radio

RASASC was invited on to BBC Surrey radio's Saturday morning breakfast show last month to talk about our services and upcoming Helpline training course. Eagle Extra also asked us in to contribute to their series of Local Community Podcasts. Find out more about the Community Podcasts [here](#).

