



January 2016 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

We hope that 2016 is off to a good start for all our readers – it has certainly been a busy start to the year here at RASASC. It's with great pleasure that we welcome many new faces in this Newsletter. Three new Trustees have joined the Committee and the latest Helpline Trainees have completed their 'classroom' training and are onto their Training in Action. We hope they'll all enjoy many years with us at RASASC. And of course we are already looking ahead to a new Helpline training course starting in February – read on to find out more.

You may have seen in the press towards the end of last year that the number of people reporting rape offences to Surrey Police has risen dramatically: an increase of 153% over the last three years. There has also been a 122% increase in reports of sexual offences. While we welcome the fact that more people are now feeling able to come forward and report to the Police, it is essential that they are well supported when they do. In a special feature on the work of our team of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, we take a look at how RASASC is supporting survivors going through the Criminal Justice System.

On behalf of all the team here at RASASC, I'd like to thank you all for your continued support.

Barbara Stevenson, Head of Services

Training in Action for new Helpline Volunteers

Eight new volunteers have completed the 'classroom' portion of their Helpline Volunteer training.



This is a 30 hour course that equips our volunteers with the necessary skills to support callers. They are now putting their learning into practice through their Training in Action.

We wish Barbara, Beatriz, Emily, Holly, Jane, Karen, Kayte and Rachel (pictured above with trainers Cathie and Di) all the best as they continue through the training programme.

Helpline Training 2016

Even with the best of intentions, New Year's Resolutions can be difficult to keep (especially when they involve cutting down on our favourite sweet treats!). But if your resolutions for 2016 include 'learn new skills', 'meet new people', or 'make a difference to vulnerable people', then joining the upcoming RASASC Helpline Training Course will have you ticking all three boxes.

You don't need to have any previous experience – our volunteers come from all different backgrounds – we just ask that you are a good listener, non-judgemental and committed to making a difference.

The next training course will run throughout February – April, with interviews taking place on 31st January and 7th February.

For full details about the training course and to download an application form, visit www.rasasc-guildford.org or contact Vivien at vivien@rasasc-guildford.org

Join the RASASC Pub Quiz Fundraiser!

Round up friends and family and join us for a Pub Quiz fundraiser...

Where: The Keep, 29-30 Castle Street, Guildford, GU1 3UW

When: Quiz starts at 8pm on Tuesday 23rd February

Teams of 4-6 people

£5 per person

The lovely team at The Keep are providing the Quizmaster and will be donating cheese boards for each team at half time – thank you very much to them for all their support so far.

To book a place for your team please contact Vivien at vivien@rasasc-guildford.org. Hurry as tables are limited! If you'd like to participate but don't yet have a team, please do still get in touch and we will put teams together where we can. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

We will also be holding a raffle on the night. If you'd like to donate prizes, buy tickets or help to sell them, please also get in touch with Vivien.

For further information about The Keep, please visit: www.thekeepguildford.pub/home.html

RASASC welcomes three new Trustees

Alex Overington, Helen Turner and Sophie Mansfield have joined the RASASC Board of Trustees, each bringing a range of valuable skills and experience to the Committee. Alex has a wealth of experience in the field of Human Resources, in particular working with Not-for-Profit organisations. Helen brings extensive knowledge of working with survivors of serious crime, such as trafficking, from her Law Enforcement background. Sophie works in the PR and Communications sector, and will be bringing her experience of communications strategy and media liaison to the table.

Alex will act as interim Chair, with Helen as interim Vice-Chair, with formal nominations taking place at the next AGM in June.

We are very pleased to welcome our new Trustees, and would also like to take this opportunity to thank Cathie Smith and Helen Donnison who stepped down from their positions as Trustees last year, with Cathie serving as Chair for 7 years. Luckily for RASASC, both Cathie and Helen have stayed on within the organisation in a different role, with Cathie now a Helpline Trainer and Helen a Helpline Supervisor.

Supporting survivors through the Criminal Justice System

In recent years, and especially since the allegations against the late Jimmy Savile came to light, the rising number of high profile rape and sexual abuse cases has been inescapable. As difficult as it can be to read about these cases, they have shone a spotlight on the widespread nature of abuse, triggered enquiries and motivated others to come forward and seek support. This is reflected in the [statement by Surrey Police](#) in November 2015 that in the last three years there has been a 153% increase in the number of people reporting rape offences, and a 122% increase in the number of reports of sexual offences.

In the last three years there has been a 153% increase in the number of people reporting rape offences in Surrey

But behind the shocking headlines, there are a range of professionals supporting survivors every step of the way. RASASC has certainly experienced an increasing number of its clients deciding to report to the Police, and if they do, the support of an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor can be invaluable.

We have a team of four Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) who support male and female clients across the whole of Surrey. They offer practical and emotional support to survivors, with their aim being to empower clients to make informed decisions.

“Our role is to make sure that our clients have all the information they need to choose which path they would like to take”

“It’s not easy to explain what we do in a few words, as every client is unique,” explains Sally, who has been an ISVA at RASASC since 2013. “When it comes to deciding whether or not to report to the Police, this is a very personal decision – and is not for everyone. Our role is to make sure that our clients have all the information they need to choose which path they would like to take. It is absolutely their choice.”

“If a client decides to report, we can explain prosecution, the court system, arrange private visits to the courts in conjunction with the Witness Service, and arrange for screens and video links in the court. We also work closely with the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Cobham, which offers crisis support, forensic medical examinations and Police reporting rooms. From the point someone decides to report to the Police it can take two years, or even longer, before their case reaches court, so it is a very long process. We are there for them whatever the outcome.”

Our ISVA team also supports many clients who decide not to report to the Police. Besides supporting survivors through the Criminal Justice System, ISVAs support clients to access medical services, counselling, speak with their employer and family, help to find alternative accommodation and relocating away from their attacker.

The RASASC ISVA team are currently supporting over 190 clients, with around half going through the Criminal Justice System

Another important aspect of the work of the ISVAs is to raise awareness about the issues surrounding rape and sexual abuse. With more people than ever coming forward, we have welcomed the opportunity to share our expertise, and most importantly to put forward the voice of the survivor, at training sessions with Surrey Police.

If your organisation would benefit from finding out more about RASASC and the work of our ISVA team, please contact Rebecca at rebecca@rasasc-guildford.org

Surrey Half Marathon 2016

While the festive season is normally a period of (relatively) guilt-free indulgence, for the team running the upcoming Surrey Half Marathon, a few wet and windy training runs were also in order! Amanda, Amy, Jessica, Rebecca and Sophie will be running the Surrey Half Marathon to raise money for RASASC on 13th March 2016. They aim to raise a total of £750, which will make a significant contribution towards the running of our survivor groups. These provide valuable support to survivors, helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem.

To donate you can visit <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/halfmarathonrasasc> or send donations to: RASASC, PO Box 1009, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 9EE. Please make cheques payable to RASASC.

Every donation will help us to support survivors of rape and sexual abuse – please give what you can and help us spread the word by sharing the above link where possible.

Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2016



#ITSNOTOK

1st - 7th February 2016

An Awareness Week has been established to give an opportunity for the general public, statutory and third sector organisations to participate in a discussion about sexual abuse and sexual violence.

The Awareness Week will be the first week of February every year. This year will be the 1st – 7th February.

It is RASASC's mission to support anyone affected by rape and sexual abuse. Raising awareness about the specialist support we can provide and the issues surrounding rape and sexual abuse is also key. We are able to give presentations, provide leaflets and fundraising collection boxes – if your organisation would like to arrange a talk or fundraising activity, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

Contact Rebecca on rebecca@rasasc-guildford.org

Over £3,800 raised at the RASASC Bridge Masterclass

Our 2015 Bridge Masterclass, which took place in November, was a tremendous success, with £3,808 raised for RASASC.

We'd like to thank everyone who attended and the wonderful Andrew Robson, *The Times* Bridge Correspondent, for leading the event.



Our grateful thanks also to several local organisations who provided raffle prizes: GLive and the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre provided theatre tickets and Furniturelink, a social enterprise venture supplying affordable furniture for all by diverting from landfill and offering volunteer placements, very generously donated a £100 gift voucher.

If you'd like to attend our next Bridge Masterclass on 20th October 2016 at Normandy Village Hall, near Guildford, please contact Vivien at vivien@rasasc-guildford.org for further information and a booking form.

Here's what some of the participants had to say about the 2015 event:

"Many thanks – very much enjoyed Monday – Andrew Robson is fantastic! A very worth while charity!"

"We thoroughly enjoyed our day on Monday. We look forward to seeing you next October."