

RASASC

Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre



February 2018 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 (ISVA), family support, pre-trial support, survivor cycling, coffee mornings, presentations and awareness raising.

Welcome

It has been a busy few months for RASASC, with recruitment of new staff and Trustees, the Royal visit to RASASC in December to celebrate our 25th anniversary, the introduction of new services and our involvement in the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week from 5 – 11th February.

In January, the Board of Trustees confirmed the appointment of three new Trustees: Eleanor March, Billie Phillips and Andrea Holder. They bring with them a wealth of skills with legal, mental health and communication experience. They are already involved in several projects we have underway such as the redesign and development of our website and the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which comes into effect in May. We wish them a warm welcome and look forward to working together to continually strive to deliver and develop support for survivors and ensuring the sustainability of RASASC.

We are pleased to welcome back from maternity leave Caroline Holton our fundraising manager. Sadly, with Caroline's return this means we have to say good bye to Sarah Shaw who temporarily replaced Caroline as our Fundraising monitoring officer. Sarah has proved to be a valued member of the team ensuring we completed our funders' mid-year monitoring reports and was the lead/coordinator for the successful Royal visit in December. We wish Sarah continued success in her future endeavours.

We welcome to RASASC two new Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), Charley Willoughby and Jo Colmer. Charley joined us in December replacing Jacki Smith who left to continue her career with Surrey Police. Jo recently joined us on 19th February as our new young person's ISVA. This is an exciting new role and Jo will be supporting young survivors aged 13-17.

In March the ISVA team will be joined by Tia Arberry who is an ISVA specialising in supporting people with mental health issues. These new additions to the ISVA team are to meet the growing need of support from survivors.

Lesley Devonport, Operations Manager

25th Anniversary Celebrations

RASASC has been providing support to male and female survivors across Surrey since 1992. The charity has grown from a Helpline Service to offer a range of vital services for survivors including the ISVA service, Counselling, and Self-confidence and Self-esteem programmes and therapeutic peer support groups. The growth of the charity in the last 12 months and looking ahead into 2018 has been significant, largely due to a surge of funding achieved by our Fundraising Manager Caroline. This surge has led to an expansion of services within the ISVA team of specialists in Mental Health and Young People, the development of a Young Person and Family Counselling service and the addition of a Community Engagement Officer.



To celebrate this milestone in our charity history, we invited HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO to visit our offices and meet with our staff, volunteers, trustees, local dignitaries and selected Corporate Sponsors. The Countess of Wessex arrived modestly driving her own vehicle and was greeted by the Lord Lieutenant Michael More-Molyneux, Mayor of Guildford Councillor Nigel Manning, Police Crime Commissioner David Munro, University of Surrey Council Chair Dr Jim Glover and Deputy Chair of Trustees Helen Turner.

Lesley our Operations Manager and Caroline our Fundraising Manager, met privately with the Countess to talk about our Charity, challenges we face, services offered and our strategic aims going forwards. The Countess is a patron of the NSPCC and is heavily involved in Childline, so she was able to offer us great advice through her knowledge of working with these charities to enable us to enhance our existing services in those areas.

After meeting briefly with some of our sponsors and trustees, the Countess spoke privately at length with one of our female survivors about her experience, how she coped, the impact on her life and how she received support from RASASC. The Countess was very humbled when speaking with her and grateful that she felt able to share her experiences. Lesley then introduced The Countess to members of staff and volunteers. She was very gracious and showed real interest in finding out about the work we do, offering her own insight and valuing the contribution each person makes.

The celebrations were rounded off with The Countess unveiling our Anniversary plaque, cutting our celebratory cake and viewing feedback quotes and poems from our Survivors. Thank you to all those who attended and helped to make the event a great success.

Nomination for the Queen's Award

RASASC have been nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and have excitingly made it through to the final stage. We were privileged to attend the nominee reception at Loseley Park on Monday 19th February, alongside other nominated charities in the final stage. It was a wonderful opportunity for RASASC to showcase our amazing volunteers and celebrate the great work they do in order to keep our services running for survivors.

RASASC and the other nominees were able to have a stand which detailed more information on the charity and its services. Mayors and Mayoresses from across Surrey, Surrey Police Crime Commissioner, the Lord Lieutenant, the Queen's Award Assessors and many others were able to speak with each organisation and find out in much more depth how the volunteers impact the community through the work they do.

It was a lovely evening and RASASC were kindly supported by some volunteers who came along to celebrate this great achievement, two counsellors, a helpline volunteer and a member of RASASC board of Trustees all joined us to chat with others about their voluntary roles.

The big reveal for which organisations have been lucky enough to win the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service comes on 2nd June, so fingers crossed!



Announcing our new Youth and Family Counsellor Service

We are delighted to announce that our new youth and family support counselling service started on 8th February.

Sharon Komakech our Youth Counsellor, and Pat Walsh our Family Support Counsellor, have many years of professional counselling experience.

Sharon will provide individual face to face counselling sessions to young survivors age 13 – 17 and Pat will support the families of the young survivor. The referrals to this service is through our ISVA service or our counselling service.

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week

The 5th – 11th February marked Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week in the UK with the theme of 'ItsNotOk'.

At 6pm on Monday 5th February, RASASC organised a candlelit walk through Guildford High Street, this was in line with similar solidarity events across the UK which marked the beginning of the week of awareness. The RASASC walkers carried signs which had written on them reasons why 'its not ok', highlighting the importance of this awareness week and letting people know of RASASC's services and sending a strong message to perpetrators that this behaviour will not be tolerated.

On the walk RASASC were joined by the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford, David Munro the Surrey Police Crime Commissioner, members of Surrey Police and students from the local University of Surrey, it was a great show of solidarity within the local community. The walk came to



a close with a reading of an inspiring survivor's poem to highlight the importance of raising awareness of these issues.

The week continued with a number of awareness events across Surrey such as at Waitrose in Hersham and Walton library, and media coverage. This gave members of the public an opportunity to chat to RASASC about the work we do and the services we provide in order to support those who need it.

The week was wrapped up with a brilliant and heart-warming flash mob in Guildford High Street performed by over 200 members of local Guildford, Godalming and Farnham Rock Choir. They performed a powerful version of 'Halleluiah' and thanks to their wonderful support we raised further awareness of RASASC, issues of sexual abuse and sexual violence and also over £200 which will go towards the continued support of survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

You can view a recording of the flash mob

at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rO5a9XOqWPRKHc9hUwGy9vY5C8y0-zyb/view>

Overall the week importantly allowed the opportunity to raise further awareness of why services such as RASASC's are vitally important by highlighting these issues of sexual abuse and sexual violence and showing how support can positively impact on many individuals' lives.

Peer production joint working

Earlier in February, RASASC met with the group Peer Productions to discuss their play 'Losing it' – a play about falling apart and coming together. The play highlights important issues such as consent, indecent images and pornography. The Peer Productions group perform this play around schools in Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire.

We met with the group of young actors to talk about RASASC, the work we do and the ways in which we provide support. The talk gave the actors an opportunity to openly discuss and ask about issues of consent, common behaviours that might be displayed after a rape or sexual assault, the consequences of sharing indecent images, the impacts of pornography on young people's perception of sex and the ways in which to support a peer or family member if they have experienced sexual abuse.

As a result of our engagement, details of the services RASASC offer and our contact details are being included in the teachers pack which is handed out to each school where the play is performed, this will allow anyone in Surrey who has been affected by these issues in the play to be signposted to RASASC's services for specialist support. It also provided an opportunity to show the kinds of support services available in the areas which the play is shown.

The actors are a very talented group and the play was an incredibly impactful way of highlighting important issues which can often affect students.

Dan – Duke of Edinburgh Award

Just a few weeks ago Dan, from Guildford County School, completed his time volunteering with RASASC. Dan was with RASASC for three months as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award, during this time he provided important support in the office such as putting together information packs which our Independent Sexual Violence Advisors hand out to clients. Dan was a pleasure to have in the office and keen to understand more about RASASC's work, he left with a widened understanding of these issues and the support services we have available. We wish Dan all the best on the next stage of his Duke of Edinburgh Award!

You Could Really Help – Start Volunteering Today

“Your support can really make a difference to the lives of those affected by rape and sexual abuse”

We have a number of great volunteering opportunities for people to get involved with in RASASC all of which are detailed here.

Our **Events Assistant** role is an important support role as it allows RASASC to participate in more events across Surrey, the main elements of this role are providing support on the stand, speaking with members of the general public and helping to set up and pack away equipment ensuring everything is safely returned to the office. This role is flexible and can fit in with the volunteer's availability and other commitments.

We are now looking for new **Helpline Volunteers** to join the new training programme which is beginning in May 2018. We ask for volunteers to commit to one 2 ½ hour shift (19:15 -21:45) every other week for a minimum of 18 months. The helpline is a listening, information and signposting service and all volunteers will receive full training.

We are looking for enthusiastic & energetic volunteers to join our new **Fundraising Group**. The fundraising group will organise events and activities across Surrey, they will work with local clubs and organisations. Fundraising activities will help spread the word about our work and encourage local clubs and organisations to support us through fundraising activities. The group will meet regularly to share ideas and organise events. The commitment for this is flexible and can fit in around volunteer's availability.

We are also looking for qualified **counsellors** to provide voluntary support to survivor's in Surrey from our Leatherhead hub. This is an opportunity for counsellors to provide long-term therapy for 1-2 years.

If you can spare three hours on a Wednesday evening from 6pm – 9pm then please get in touch. Our counsellors will need to be BACP accredited and unfortunately, we cannot take counsellors on a placement.

If any of these volunteering opportunities interest you and you think you are able to help then please email rachel@rasasc-guildford.org or call 01483 568000

Events and Fundraising

Bridge Masterclass 2018

Our next Bridge Masterclass will take place on 1st November at East Horsley Village Hall. The Masterclass will be delivered by Andrew Robson, The Times' Bridge correspondent.

For more details or if you would like to book a table, please contact Rachel on rachel@rasasc-guildford.org or call 01483 568000.

The Sky's the Limit



A group of five survivors, will be taking part in a charity skydive for RASASC. The group includes Jane and Katie and they have told us, "*that they wish to support RASASC and raise awareness of our services, so other survivors can benefit from the support we provide*". A positive group whose motto is '*Learn from the past, live in the present*'.

The skydive was originally planned for March but this has now been moved to late summer. To donate please visit <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/rasascskydive/452035> or send donations to: RASASC, PO Box 1009, Guildford, Surrey GU1 9EE. Please make cheques payable to RASASC, thank you.

Every donation will help us 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.

