

RASASC

Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre



May/June 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

I have a wonderful announcement to make.

In the February issue of the newsletter, we included an article about our nomination for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services. I am so pleased, and proud, to let you know that, on 2nd June, Buckingham Palace announced RASASC as a recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018. The announcement was made in a special publication of the London Gazette.

This award represents a tremendous achievement for RASASC and is the MBE for volunteer groups. Everyone involved with RASASC, especially our lovely and dedicated volunteers, should feel immensely proud of the recognition that this Award represents.

The award was created by Her Majesty The Queen in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of the Queen's coronation, recognising excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community.

As a winner of the award, together with one guest, I was invited to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. As my guest I invited Martine Pilling to accompany me. Martine is one of our volunteer Counsellors and has been with RASASC since 2006.

We had an amazing day and experience and enjoyed the occasion and afternoon tea on the lawn. Present at the garden party were HM The Queen, HRH The Prince Andrew, Duke of York; HRH The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex and HRH The Countess of Wessex, GCVO.

As a recipient of the Award we will receive a signed certificate from Her Majesty The Queen and an English Crystal with our logo. We also have permission to use the official QAVS logo on our stationery, publications and website.

For those of you not aware of RASASC's history the newsletter includes an article about where we started and our growth.

Lesley Devonport, Operations Manager

RASASC's History

RASASC was established in 1992 when the need for a centre was identified by staff at the local GUM clinic. We initially set up as a Helpline service with our first volunteers recruited in 1993 and the Helpline opened as a listening service for two evenings a week from September that year. It was the same year that we obtained our first amount of funding.

Over the next few years our services grew at a pace and in 1995 our face to face counselling service started and in 1996, to meet growing demand, our helpline service was extended to five evenings a week. 1996 saw RASASC achieve registered charity status from the Charity Commission.

Our first paid worker, a part time post, started in 1997.

From 1998, we introduced our self-help support groups and over the next few years recruited more volunteers for our helpline and counselling services. In 2002 we became a member of The Survivors Trust.

Finding the financial resources to support RASASC and the support we deliver, is and has always been a challenge. In 2004 a financial crisis that threatened RASASC's continued survival was averted and in 2008 again we faced a similar challenge with a threat of closure due to lack of funding. A funding injection from the Peter de Haan Charitable Foundation and Gallaher Ltd prevented this from happening

In 2010, with funding from the Home Office our first Independent Sexual Violence Advisor was recruited. To continue to meet survivors needs and changes in demand the ISVA service has steadily grown and we now have seven (= 5.5 FTE) ISVA supporting our clients. Two of these roles, recruited in 2018, specialises in supporting people with complex mental health needs and supporting young people from age 13 – 17.

We can never be complacent about funding. Sustainable funding continues to remain a concern, and so, in October 2016 RASASC recruited a part time professional fundraiser. We now have a fundraising strategy and policy and are diversifying our funding streams and working toward achieving equal funding of a third from Statutory organisations, a third from Community organisations and donations and a third from Trusts.

RASASC believes in raising awareness in the community, and educating the general public, about the impact of rape and sexual abuse and about the services we offer, and in October 2017 we established our Community Engagement role.

This has been followed in 2018 with the introduction of our Youth Counselling and Family Support Counselling Service.

We have moved several times since our beginning and have been in our current premises since 2011. We would like to seek larger premises with disabled access, an ambition for us to maybe one day secure funding for.

RASASC began as a very small organisation in 1992 but due to the needs of survivors and the demand on our services we have grown to meet these demands. We are the only rape and sexual support service in Surrey and are proud to be able to offer the support we can to help survivors, both women and men, on their road to recovery.

A sad farewell

With much sadness we have to report the sudden passing of one of our volunteer counsellor's Maria White.

Our Counselling Co-ordinator, Felicity, has this to say about Maria.

“Maria White was a dear kind friend to RASASC and to all of us who knew her here. Maria was a truly gifted therapist who had just finished her Masters in Psychotherapy when she died suddenly in January at 43.

Maria first joined RASASC as a Helpline Volunteer in 2007, when she was training as a counsellor. She became a key member of the counselling service for many years and worked as RASASC Helpline Trainer alongside her therapeutic work.



Maria was still doing assessments for RASASC's counselling service one week before her untimely death. The assessment team will miss her intelligence and her unfailing kindness and generosity to clients and colleagues alike. Thank you Maria, for so much you gave to all of us and thank you for always for the sunshine in your smile.

These sentiments are echoed by all at RASASC, we will miss Maria greatly and our thoughts and prayers are with Maria's husband, family and friends.

Welcome

Our newly revamped Helpline training programme started on 20th May. Our new training model contains a mix of classroom and flexible learning. We welcomed five new trainees, Debbie, Vicki, Maria, Joanne and Jasmin, to the programme and look forward to seeing their progression over the coming months.

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 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.

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.

24-hour Spinathon

Tom Day a personal trainer at PureGym in Camberley, is holding a 24-hour Spinathon with RASASC as his chosen charity.

Tom has managed to recruit several of the other PureGym personal trainers and gym members to take part. The event is being held from 9am on 16th June to 9am on 17th June.

If you would like to donate to this worthy charity event please visit:

<https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/tomdatfitness>

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.

Tesco's Bags of Help

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag charge is being used to fund thousands of local projects in communities right across the UK.

We are pleased to announce that RASASC has been selected for this scheme in six stores across Surrey Heath from 1st July to 31st August. You do not need to buy a bag to get a token to vote for us.

The stores are:

- Balmoral Drive, Camberley Express
- Blackwater London Express
- Darby Green Express
- Sandhurst Extra
- Sandhurst Yorktown Road Express
- Yateley Express

If you are shopping in these stores or passing by please pop in and help support our charity.

Thank you

Charity walk



On Sunday 13th of May the RASASC team donned their trainers, hiking boots and wellies to take part in the annual Rotary Club of Guildford, charity walk. The event was well attended with representatives from many local charities participating on the day. Everyone who took part really enjoyed the event which was kindly hosted by members of the Rotary club.

We were proud to field one of the largest teams and all our members, even our tiny ones finished! Rachel from RASASC who galvanised our team into action said "it was a

great event and a real showcase of Guildford's voluntary sector in action. I am proud that RASASC took part"

Volunteers Week

The 1st - 7th June was volunteers week and it was a chance for RASASC to recognise all the wonderful work our volunteers do and thank them for their ongoing commitment. Due to the dedication of our helpline volunteers we have been able to re-open the line one extra evening, so it is now open four evenings a week. This provides more opportunities for survivors to call and access the support they need. We have 28 volunteer counsellors who each dedicate 3 hours a week to helping survivors on their journey to recovery. RASASC survivors and other volunteers dedicate their time to supporting us at events and help us to continue to raise awareness. Other volunteers support us in many ways including independently fundraising for us, every penny they raise goes a long way to helping to continue to sustain RASASC's invaluable services.

For all those who have volunteered for RASASC past or present we would like to say a massive THANK YOU.

Thank you...

Although we hope all our volunteers will stay with us forever, we do understand that this is not always possible! A very big thank you to Rachel, one of our lovely Helpline Volunteers, we recently said goodbye to. We send Rachel our best wishes for the future.