

# VICTIMS SERVICES CAPACITY FUND

Coventry 2014/2015



west midlands  
police and crime  
commissioner

Coventry Police & Crime Board was allocated just over £75,000 by the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner as a victim services capacity fund. The funding was provided to local Boards in order that they could work locally with their victim support services in order to build capacity and capability in the voluntary sector to deliver services to victims of crime.

Coventry City Council received the funding on behalf of the Board and Voluntary Action Coventry (VAC) put in place an application process with a panel drawn from the Board. The funding was allocated by the Board to five voluntary sector projects from CRASAC, Coventry Haven, Kairos WWT, Coventry Law Centre and Valley House, with a small residual amount to be used for hate crime training together with a project showcasing event on 11 November and this summary leaflet.

This leaflet therefore gives a brief introduction to the five projects and their host organisations. On the back page we've also included some other information on other services and initiatives including contact details for the hate crime training. VAC runs a quarterly Community Safety Forum to link our voluntary and community groups with the voluntary and community sector representatives (including VAC) on the Coventry Police & Crime Board. To join the mailing for these, please e-mail Rob Allison at VAC at [r.allison@vacocoventry.org.uk](mailto:r.allison@vacocoventry.org.uk)

**kairos<sup>w</sup>**  
women working together

Kairos Women Working Together (WWT) is a charity based in the Hillfields area of Coventry, and we believe in the value and dignity of all women. We aim to support, empower, and give a voice to women at risk of or subject to sexual exploitation, including those caught up in sex work, and those aspiring to leave it. We provide safe spaces, a listening ear and opportunities for change and growth.

Through previous pilot projects and feedback from existing service users, we identified a need for a service for 18-24 year old women, aimed at reducing the risk of sexual exploitation.

The money from the Victims Services Capacity Fund has enabled us to do further research into this and identify options for addressing the need. We have run several pilots aimed at women aged 18-24 years old, who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, or who have been

victims of it. These have included a women's group - aimed at reducing social isolation, offering peer support, skill development and workshops on protective behaviours; workshops to the service users of other agencies; one-to-one work, and drop in sessions. We have also attended the Henley College fresher's fair, where we handed out safety packs to the students and the Coventry Sports Foundation week where we distributed literature on sexual exploitation.

In addition to the direct work with service users, we have worked in partnership and networked with other agencies, which has opened up referral pathways. We have also developed a resource containing workshop materials and resources to prevent sexual exploitation aimed at enabling facilitators to deliver sessions in their organisations to 18-24 year olds.

Finally, this piece of work has served as a pilot to inform how we will develop our future prevention service.



# Coventry Law Centre



Coventry Law Centre provides free legal advice to 6,000 people each year. We're community-based solicitors - serving the community and helping the most vulnerable and marginalised people in Coventry.

The UK's largest law centre, we employ 36 staff, including ten solicitors. We hold the Specialist Quality Mark in:

- Discrimination
- Debt
- Employment
- Family
- Welfare benefits
- Health and community care
- Housing
- Immigration and asylum
- Public law

## The issue

Recent cuts to legal aid severely restrict free legal advice for family law and immigration cases and we've seen a significant drop off in the numbers we can help - with many people believing free advice is no longer available.

## Our response

Safeplace - a dedicated domestic service so victims can access free legal advice: empowering them to use this knowledge to regain control in their lives. The combination of legal expertise we offer is unique within Coventry and our 'one-stop service' means victims don't have to repeat their story several times.

Our Victims Services Capacity Fund Grant is helping us promote this and we've built new links with other DVA organisations, delivered training to specialist groups and health professionals, and extended our services into local community settings.

We're developing publicity materials and a new secure microsite to provide victims (and professionals) with information about our service. We're also, uniquely, developing a secure space within the site for each service user and their permitted professionals to access correspondence and talk confidentially with a solicitor, eliminating any fear that a perpetrator may trace evidence of contact with us.

## Can you help?

We now want to recruit a team of volunteers who we'll train to help us reach victims and build their confidence to seek our help. If you're interested please contact Ravinder Bains on 024 7625 2681 or email [Ravinder.bains@covlaw.org.uk](mailto:Ravinder.bains@covlaw.org.uk)

Too much to cope with alone?

Who to trust and confide in?

Nobody to talk to?

Nowhere to turn?

Who will ever understand my situation?

# Valley House Power to Change



Established by local volunteers in 1977, and based in North East Coventry, Valley House supports over 2,000 disadvantaged, disenfranchised and

hard-to-reach individuals each year and provides a range of integrated, holistic and person centred services including support for victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Power to Change (developed by Women's Aid) focuses on building self-esteem and empowerment through two programmes - self-help and self-esteem. The self help programme covers: basic rights, definition of abuse, families/children, boundaries, assertiveness skills/techniques, practicing assertiveness/risk assessing, coping with emotions, healthy relationships.

The self esteem programme covers: defining and understanding self esteem, right/needs, legal options,

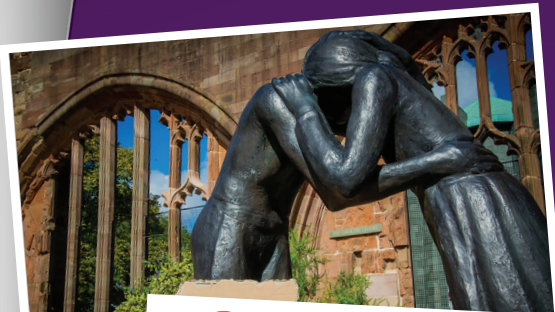
**'Evaluation has confirmed that 80% of women felt 'significantly better' after attending the programme and that 100% would recommend the course to others'.**

self evaluation of personal needs, needs within a relationship, education and socialization of women, why is it so hard to leave, endings and new beginnings. Each programme runs for six weeks and consists of one two hour support group per week.

The aims of the support group are to:

- Develop awareness regarding domestic abuse
- Understand the impact of domestic abuse on children
- Promote positive change
- Prevention from returning to abusive relationships
- Build on confidence, self-esteem and empowerment

Support from the Victims Services Capacity Fund has enabled Valley House to successfully deliver both self-help and self-esteem programmes for Valley House service users. A self-help programme for BAMER service users, delivered in partnership with Panahghar, is also planned and Valley House is actively developing opportunities to further enhance the current Power to Change programme and develop other support programmes and groups with partners including Coventry City Council and Coventry University.



**CRASAC**  
COVENTRY RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE

CRASAC has been established for over 30 years, providing free services to women and girls, men and boys in Coventry, aged 5 years and above who are victims or survivors of sexual violence and abuse either now or in the past.

**We provide:**

- Helpline
- Counselling (including therapy groups for adults and children and Life skills- psycho-educational programmes)
- Crisis and advocacy (ISVA) for those at the point of crisis or who choose to go through the criminal justice system
- Outreach services
- Training and awareness raising
- Prevention support

We address the well-being, health and mental health effects of sexual violence and abuse in a safe environment. CRASAC supports over 6,000 victims and survivors of rape and abuse through all of our services and the volume increases every year.

The city of Coventry did not have a counselling service for men who are victims or survivors of rape and abuse and CRASAC needed infrastructure support to launch this project and fill the gap in services. In addition, over time CRASAC's waiting list for female counselling had lengthened to over 6 months and we had decided to implement a Volunteer Counselling Project to increase the number of face to face counselling hours and so reduce waiting times.

The Victims Services Capacity Fund has allowed us to upgrade our telephone systems and purchase IT equipment that is essential for us to deliver these services to clients, it will allow us to take clients off our waiting list and provide a much-needed counselling service to men in Coventry.

# Coventry Haven

Coventry Haven Women's Aid has been supporting women and children affected by domestic violence and abuse for over 42 years. We are an Independent Women's service who believe that all women and children have the right to live free from violence, abuse and fear.

**We provide:**

- Helpline advice and support
- Community-based and central drop-in services
- Safe, confidential emergency accommodation through 3 refuges
- Outreach support in the community (supported by volunteers who speak a range of community languages)
- Help with criminal and civil legal proceedings
- VEV – photographic evidence recording of injuries
- Counselling
- Training for professionals
- Awareness Raising work

We are part of a national network of specialist refuge services and work in close partnership with key agencies to ensure the best outcomes for women and their children. Our one-to-one, tailored support services deliver not just crisis intervention but long-term, positive outcomes for women and their children by addressing all of their needs including safety, poverty, debt, homelessness, housing, legal issues, health and wellbeing.

The Victims Services Capacity Fund has enabled our agency to improve our I.T structures and will transform the way we case manage, supporting the work of our new IDVA service and our ability to respond to a notable increase in the number of new referrals in to our services over the last quarter.

**CRASAC**  
COVENTRY RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE

**'We believe you'**

Support for **any** victim or survivor of sexual violence or abuse & their supporters

**Helpline: (024) 7627 7777**  
Mon-Fri 10am-2pm, Mon & Thurs 6pm-8pm  
24 hour answerphone

Email: [helpline@crasac.org.uk](mailto:helpline@crasac.org.uk) or Txt: 07936 816 130  
For more information visit: [www.crasac.org.uk](http://www.crasac.org.uk)

You can also find us on...  
Facebook: CRASAC Twitter: @CRASAC

**mySOS** #saverefugessavelives

Keeping women and children safe.  
We listen, we care,  
we support, we BELIEVE.

women's aid  
and women & children are safe

COVENTRY HAVEN  
**SOS** save refugees, save lives



## Hate Crime Training

The Victims Services Capacity Fund is funding some new training for volunteers representing community and voluntary sector organisations who would like to become hate crime reporting centres. In turn they will cascade the training to colleagues in their respective and partner organisations.

If you are interested in the training, and / or in becoming a hate crime reporting centre, please contact Alison Quigley on 024 7683 2131 or [Alison.quigley@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.quigley@coventry.gov.uk)

## CRASAC Services

CRASAC provides a range of services to victims and survivors of Sexual Violence from the age of 5 including an advocacy support – Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service. We have a team of 5 full time ISVAs who support over 500 women, men and children from the age of 5 years old.

If you would like to refer someone to CRASAC or you would like more information on our services, please call our helpline on 024 7627 7777 (Mon-Fri 10am- 2pm, Mon & Thurs 6pm-8pm. 24 hour answerphone) or email [helpline@crasac.org.uk](mailto:helpline@crasac.org.uk) or text us on 07936 816 130.

## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

**25 November – 10 December** in the Chapel of Christ the Servant at Coventry Cathedral.

Please contact Di Sliwinski at [disliwinski@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:disliwinski@dsl.pipex.com) if your group or agency would like to include a display.

## Terrence Higgins Trust SWISH Coventry and Warwickshire

THT SWISH offer an established, specialist confidential Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service for women, men and transgender sex workers in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Our specialist ISVA supports those involved in sex work or who are exchanging sex for favours & members of the LGBTQ Communities who have been a victim of rape or sexual assault. Our ISVA can help address their needs and support them through the criminal justice system, if this is the route they wish to take including accessing the Coventry & Warwickshire SARC. The specialist ISVA also co-ordinates The National Ugly Mugs Scheme in Coventry and Warwickshire.

This scheme enables sex workers to report crimes committed against them and also to nationally alert other sex workers of potential dangerous individuals. For more information contact Katrina on 024 7622 9292.



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