

Devon Rape Crisis &  
Sexual Abuse Services

# Impact Report

**2024/25**



# Chair's Report

As Chair of Trustees, I am proud to present this year's report on behalf of the Board. The year 2024–2025 has been one of both resilience and innovation for Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Services. Building on the transformation that began last year, we have continued to adapt our services to meet the growing and complex needs of survivors in Devon and Torbay.

Despite the challenges of reduced funding and sustained high demand, our staff and volunteers have demonstrated remarkable dedication, creativity, and solidarity. Together, they ensured that survivors continue to have access to the safe, specialist support they need.

The Board remains deeply grateful to our Chief Executive, Davina, her senior leadership team, our incredible staff, and our 20 inspirational volunteers. Above all, we are inspired by the courage of the survivors who place their trust in us.

To our funders, supporters, and partners: thank you for standing with us. Your commitment ensures that DRCSAS continues to thrive as a feminist, anti-racist, survivor-led service dedicated to ending sexual violence.

We look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and impact.

*Linda Regan and Maggie Parks*

# A word from Davina

2024/2025 was a year of highs and lows as the organisation continued to make significant changes to complement the transformation that was started in the previous year. Delivering the service, amidst financial reductions and high demand continued to be challenging, but it brought out the best in our leaders, staff and volunteers by encouraging innovation, efficiencies and teamwork.

This was beautifully complemented through our programme of co-production with survivors which brought us even closer to being survivor led. The highlight of the year for me was the delivery of the sexual violence practice conference which was a first of its kind in this area.

Watching the whole organisation come together with the purpose of giving back to the sector and to each other was inspirational and the feedback we achieved for the event truly gratifying.

Whilst this was the year the organisation closed our helpline for good after 14 years, it still felt like a hopeful place to work where everyone at all levels of the organisation remained committed to supporting survivors of rape and sexual abuse, despite the uncertainty of sustainability

I want to thank all our partners and supporters who made 2024/2025 a strong and impactful year for survivors in Devon.



I want to thank everyone for a successful year, particularly the Board of Trustees for their leadership, our dedicated staff and volunteers, my senior leadership team: Joss, Melissa, Ellen, and Emma, and in particular Mandy, our Partnerships and Community Manager, a cornerstone of the Rape Crisis movement, who is leaving after nine years dedication to DRCSAS.

*Dr Davina Cull,  
CEO*

# Outstanding Outcomes

## Criminal justice outcomes



x3

Our service users are nearly **three times more likely to report** rape to the police than the national average.

Our service users have a **conviction rate more than three times higher** than the national.

Support we provide **improves outcomes in the criminal justice system**: through advocacy, emotional support, guidance through legal processes and better evidence handling.

## Mental health outcomes

We created £1,310,688 of social value last year for mental health outcomes alone.

£1.3m - total  
social value  
created

£4,766  
Value per  
service user

For every £1  
received, we  
created £6 in  
social value





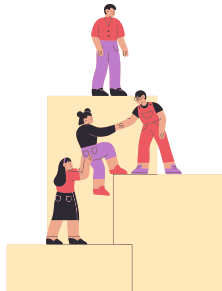
# Service in Numbers



**453** referrals



**1320** volunteer  
hours



**1684** people  
supported



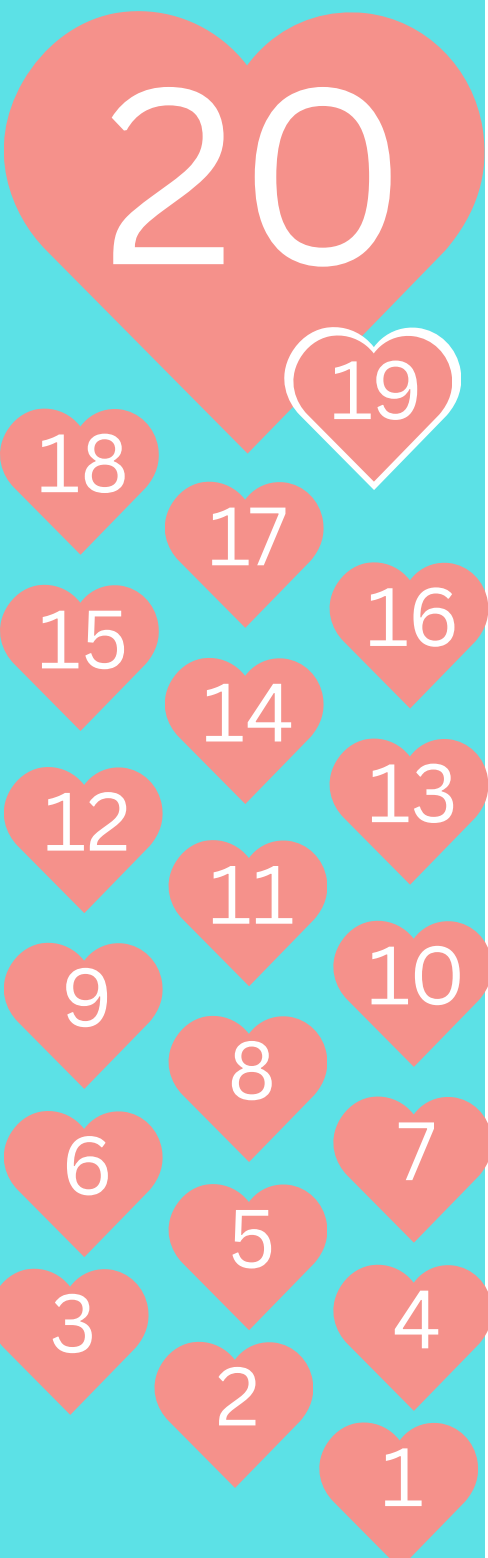
**7** external training  
sessions



**2549** support  
sessions



**174** learners  
trained



# Volunteers

**This year, we celebrate the dedication of our 20 inspirational women volunteers whose compassion and energy remain central to our work.**

In spring and summer 2024, six new volunteers completed our Level 2 training, alongside three new staff and three trustees. The training created space for shared learning and connection:

***“The training has helped me build connections with inspiring women and have thought-provoking conversations...”***

***“The training was a grounding experience and changed my perceptions and understanding of sexual violence..”***

In early 2025, six volunteers completed Level 3 Specialist Support Volunteer Training, enabling them to support with advocacy and group work.

***“Given me the confidence and enhanced my skill set, I feel that it has prepared me for my new volunteer role and that I am equipped with the knowledge and resources to ensure I can support service users.”***

***“Reminded me that I want to support survivors and work alongside my amazing colleagues.”***

So far this year, two Level 3 volunteers have co-organised five creative sessions: a drumming workshop, a sound bath, and three collage-making sessions.

As we marked the closure of our helpline, our volunteers continued to show flexibility, strength, and care. Their contributions remain invaluable.

# Service User Impact

## AMAZING GRACE

We first met Grace (not her real name) in September 2024 to complete a support plan. She had attempted suicide just two months earlier and was bravely beginning the process of reporting historic abuse, supported by her ISVA and community mental health team.

When we invited her to join a support group, Grace responded in January 2025 - but during our pre-group meeting, she disclosed detailed plans to end her life. It was clear she needed urgent, focused support.

After raising safeguarding concerns and working with her GP, we began weekly one-to-one sessions. In those early meetings, Grace often spoke about wanting to die.

Together, we built coping strategies that felt meaningful to her - far beyond the 'taking a warm bath' approach the community mental health team suggested. Slowly, she began to trust in her ability to manage distress.

By our second-to-last session, Grace told us, "I've decided I want to live." In her final session, she still felt strong and ready to support herself.



# Service User Impact



## FANTASTIC FERN

Fern (not her real name) took part in our Specialist Support group in Barnstaple during quarter three. When we caught up in the new year, she shared how important it had been to bring her baby along. Without that option, she wouldn't have been able to attend, as childcare was limited and she didn't yet feel ready to leave him.

Reflecting on her time in the group, Fern described it as a huge achievement. She challenged herself to keep coming and was surprised by how openly she connected with the other women.



For the first time, she was able to name what had happened to her. Her feelings of self-blame began to ease, and she started to be kinder to herself and feel safer in her body and mind.

Soon after the group ended, Fern began EMDR therapy. She told us the group helped her prepare, and she felt more able to open up and engage fully in that deeper work.



# Activism

Over the past year, our team of dedicated volunteers has played a vital role in raising awareness about sexual violence and the support available through our services.

From May 2024 onwards, we proudly took part in a range of community events, connecting with people across Devon in creative and engaging ways.

We attended Exeter Pride in May with four volunteers, followed by Mental Health Awareness Week and the vibrant Respect Festival in June, where eight volunteers engaged with attendees over two busy days.

We also brought our message to new audiences at Exeter City Football Club's "Party in the Park," supported by two volunteers.


During the national 16 Days of Action campaign in November and December, our team was out in force. Twenty-five staff and volunteers joined the Exeter Reclaim the Night march—the largest in Devon, with over 300 participants.

We also held drop-ins in Torbay libraries, worked alongside Exeter City Football Club on the White Ribbon campaign, and collaborated with FearFree and More Positive Me.

Volunteers also supported student events at Exeter University. For International Women's Day in March 2025, we hosted a craft workshop attended by 35 people and ran an awareness stall—continuing to inspire conversations, connection, and solidarity across our communities.







# Equality & Inclusion

The 2024–2025 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Analysis shows that DRCSAS is reaching a diverse range of people in Devon and Torbay, with many demographics reflected in service user data.

We have strong representation across most ethnic groups, showing no significant disparities when adjusted for risk of experiencing sexual violence.

People with disabilities are notably well represented, especially those with learning and physical disabilities—highlighting our accessible, trauma-informed approach.

We're also seeing positive engagement from the LGBTQ+ community, particularly bisexual and lesbian/gay service users, and our gender identity data indicates good alignment with community representation, including transgender and non-binary people.

While younger adults are well represented, there is under representation among teenagers and older people—groups we will focus on through targeted outreach, co-location, and tailored programmes.

Men remain significantly under represented, even when adjusting for risk, so we will continue expanding our offer through male-specific services and inclusive outreach.

There are also gaps in pregnancy, religion, and sexuality data, partly due to collection methods, which we aim to improve.

Overall, DRCSAS continues to meet high Rape Crisis service standards, with a feminist and anti-racist ethos guiding our work. We are committed to continuous learning, ensuring our services remain inclusive, empowering, and responsive to all survivors' needs.

# Living Our Values



At Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Services, our work is guided by a clear vision: a world without sexual violence. Our mission is to provide safe spaces where survivors are supported, believed and self-empowered through advocacy, listening, counselling, and solidarity. This year, we have continued to embody our values and work towards our mission, ensuring that every decision and action aligns with the core principles that define us.

## *Feminist*

Our feminist values guide us to treat everyone with respect, dignity, and compassion, and to offer choice in all aspects of our support.

We have advocated for transformational change in societal attitudes and institutional responses to sexual violence.

This year, we strengthened our partnerships with women in business, and were proud to be recognised as Community Charity of the Year by Devon Women in Business.

## *Trust*

Providing ethical, safe, high-quality support is at the heart of our work.

This year, we were proud to become part of The Bridge Project South West, working alongside Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs).

This project brings together expertise to provide specialist support for adults and children affected by sexual violence across Devon and Cornwall.

## *Collaborative*

We believe in the power of working together.

This year, we have strengthened the diversity of our partnerships with Buckfastleigh Beekeepers, Renew gym and the Mare & Foal Sanctuary.

By building effective collaborations, we ensure a holistic approach to support, connecting survivors with the resources and networks they need to rebuild their lives.



## *Inclusivity*

We work in ways that are accessible and value diversity.

This year, we have focused on ensuring our services reach all survivors who need them, regardless of their background or circumstances.

In 2024/2025 we launched a new Women's Circle, blending meditation, psycho-education, manifestation, self-care, and empowerment practices, providing survivors with a safe and nurturing space for growth and connection.

## *Creativity*

We recognise the individuality of each person and adapt our services to meet their unique needs.

This year, we have creatively expanded our service offerings to include a wider range of support options, ensuring that survivors have more choices and pathways to recovery.

We encourage people to express their own creativity and held a crafty collage event for International Women's Day 2025.

## *Looking Ahead*

"Living Our Values" is not a static commitment - it is a dynamic and ongoing process.

As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to co-designing services with survivors, centring trauma-informed practices and advocating for change.

We will continue to embody our values: Inclusivity, Trust, Creativity, Feminism, and Collaboration, in all that we do, working towards a world where sexual violence is no longer a reality and where every survivor feels safe, supported, and empowered.



# Our values - in action



Winning at the  
DWIB awards



Hosting our  
conference



Art therapy



Our volunteer Ally  
auctioned a round  
egg for us!



Podcast



Beekeeping at  
Buckfastleigh



# Partnerships

In 2024–25, DRCSAS built strong, impactful partnerships through a dynamic mix of training, awareness-raising, and collaborative action. Our team attended a wide range of CPD sessions including anti-racism, disability awareness, HIV awareness with Eddystone Trust, and shame competence, ensuring our approach remains inclusive and trauma-informed.

We delivered high-quality training to over 165 professionals and volunteers across the region. This included full-day trauma stabilisation training for NHS and Torbay frontline staff, Disclosure of Sexual Violence training for Torbay Hospital and Devon & Cornwall Police, and volunteer development at levels 2 and 3.



Our outreach presence has never been stronger. We engaged communities at Exeter Pride, the Respect Festival, Mental Health Awareness events, and at Exeter City Football Club's Party in the Park.

During the 16 Days of Action, we led and participated in a wide range of events, including Reclaim the Night - Devon's largest march - with 25 staff and volunteers. We also partnered with Exeter City FC, FearFree, and More Positive Me on the White Ribbon campaign.

For International Women's Day, we hosted a vibrant Crafty College event and participated in local festivals. Our presence at Exeter University, including support for a student performance inspired by our activism, reflects our growing influence and lasting community impact.



# Lived Experience

My Voice Matters is a powerful peer-led research project by Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Services, funded by Torbay Council, giving centre stage to 17 survivors in Torbay who shared their stories, struggles, and hopes for better support.

Through honest, heartfelt conversations, the research uncovered key barriers—long waits, patchy service access, and a lack of trauma-informed care—but also shone a light on what does work: being believed, feeling seen, and finding strength in peer support.

Survivors made it clear—they're not just asking for therapy, they're asking for compassion, consistency, and community. They want services that understand trauma, respect diverse identities, and offer real help while they wait.

Peer support was a standout success—transformative for survivors and empowering for the peer researchers themselves.

This project proved that when survivors lead the way, we get real, grounded insight—and a blueprint for change. With the right emotional support, peer research is not only possible, it's powerful.

And it provided us with bold, survivor-driven recommendations that call for system-wide improvements in Torbay. It's a clear call to action: invest in inclusive, survivor-led approaches and build a support system that truly listens, adapts, and cares. Because when survivors speak up—their voices matter.

*“ The one thing I have learned, not just from peer research, is that peer support, being with other women who've experienced the same is absolutely massive, because you're not isolated. You can share your experiences, swap stories. You can find out what works and what's available. ”*

# Lived Experience

This year our Peer Ambassador group, funded by Torbay Council, took on a significant project, contributing to national research led by Rape Crisis England & Wales on the challenges of waiting lists for support. Alongside survivors and peers from other centres, our ambassadors took part in two co-production workshops, designed and facilitated by experienced researchers. These sessions provided a safe and inclusive space for ambassadors to share their experiences of seeking help, the impact of waiting for support, and their ideas for improving services.

“ I can honestly say that within DRCSAS I feel that my voice is heard and valued and I can see the influence of the ambassador group in changes that have been made in how services are run. ”

The workshops were highly successful, with ambassadors offering creative and practical suggestions to support those on waiting lists. Many of these insights focused on how people's needs change over time and how services can be more responsive during this waiting period. Importantly, several of their recommendations were implemented straightaway in our own service delivery, ensuring survivors did not have to wait to feel the benefit of their contributions.

This work went on to be shared with the Home Office, influencing policy at the highest level. By centring lived experience, the project not only influenced national learning but also created immediate, tangible improvements locally. Our ambassadors demonstrated the power of survivor voices in shaping services, helping us to better support people at every stage of their journey.

# Staff & Trustees



*"I cannot thank this service enough – without the support, guidance, and expertise – I hate to think where I would be at this moment." Survivor Feedback*

The Board of Trustees were very active this year supporting the charity with their improvements following the previous year's service transformations and approving a rebrand.

For several years our practitioners have been asking service users what they think about our name and branding. Following a strategic and all staff away day, we heard the views of the women in our organisation who agreed with our survivor's voice and data analysis that it time for a re-name and re-brand.

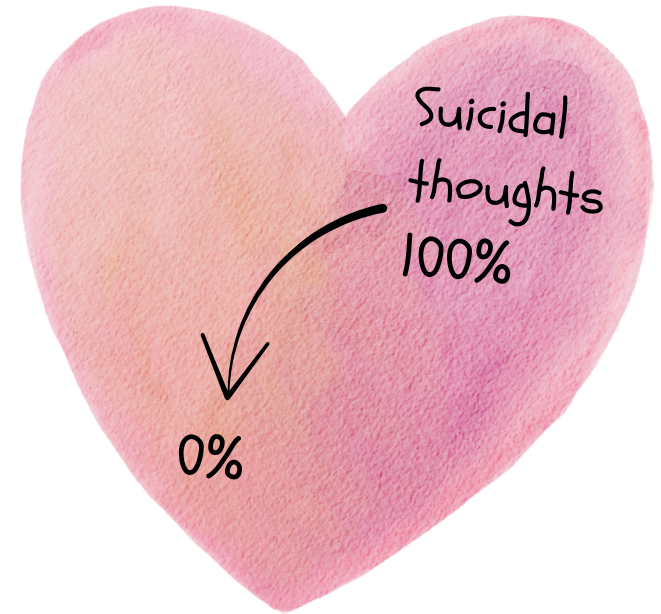
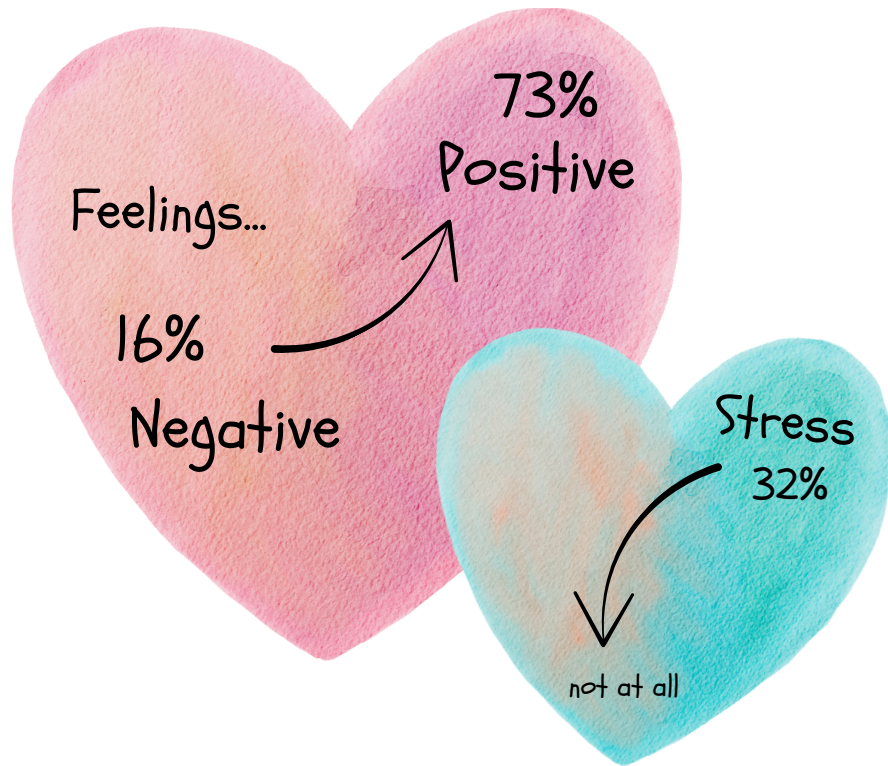
We all agreed that what matters will be keeping the essence of our organisation alive in this work which will commence in 2025/26.



# Outcomes

Outcomes from our adapted Core-10 evaluation highlight the positive impact DRCSAS support has on survivors' wellbeing, confidence, and social connection.

At the outset, 16% reported never feeling positive; post-support, 76% felt positive "often" or "all the time," with none reporting never. Stress and anxiety were initially intense for 32% but, post-support, most experienced them only "occasionally" or "not at all."



Most strikingly, suicidal thoughts, were reported by almost 100% of high-risk survivors at the beginning, reduced to 0% experiencing regular suicidal thoughts by the end.

Confidence also grew—conversation, difficult for many at first, became easier, reflecting improved social connection. These results show how our trauma-informed approach helps survivors move from distress and isolation to resilience, coping, and hope.



# Our Supporters

2024 – 2025 was a great year for us with both fostering existing partnerships with our supporters and creating new ones. We continued to be one of Exeter City Football Club Community Trust's charity partner enjoying closer working, as well as receiving donations. We were also delighted to be Devon Women in Business's charity of the year. This provided us with valuable networking opportunities, funding, and positive promotion. As winners this year we are automatic finalists for the West Country Women's Awards next year.

Early in the year we were approached by Jane, a women entrepreneur who wanted to set up a women's only Gym. A few months later she successfully launched Renew and we became their charity partner. This is a very lucrative partnership as our service users benefit from very generous reductions in membership and we receive a % donation from each monthly fee. Lastly, we were also incredibly well supported by Victim Support, in their role as strategic delivery partner. This partnership provided us with innovation funding, allowing us to deliver the first ever sexual violence practice conference in Devon.

But of course, there are loads of individuals who fundraised for us, trusts who gave us small grants and community donations we received. We are so very grateful for every individual or organisation who helped to support us this year. Thank you.



# Looking Forward...

There is no doubt that charities working in the sexual violence sector are experiencing a tough time with the current funding landscape, and Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Services is no different. As we look forward to 2025 – 2026 we do so with a mixture of hope and fear, working hard to navigate our new place in local systems with considerably reduced resources. But we will endeavour to keep our values at the forefront of our decision making and will do all we can for survivors of sexual violence.

One change we know we will experience in 2025/2026 is that one of our longest standing members of staff, Mandy Barnes who is our community and partnership manager, will be moving on after 9 years of service at Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Services. It is impossible to quantify the impact that Mandy has had in that time, except to say, we are confident it will have been life changing for hundreds of women. Not only did Mandy have overall responsibility for managing our helpline for the last 9 years, but she also arranged 'Reclaim the Night' every year, engaged with pivotal local partnerships and stretched our reach into countless diverse community groups.

We will be incredibly sad to see Mandy go, but with a warm heart we wish her all the best for her new future.



# With thanks

Devon Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Services were funded by several commissioners and trusts in 2024/2025. With thanks to the Ministry of Justice, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, Victim Support – Strategic Delivery Partnership, Torbay Council, The University of Exeter, Focus Foundation and Devon County Council Community Grants, who all contributed vital funding to enable us to support survivors of rape and sexual abuse in Devon and Torbay.

Thanks also to all of our of our volunteer fundraisers, from running marathons to completing epic sea swims - we are so grateful.

If you have been moved by hearing about the impact of our work and you want to donate, please donate here.



You can also access our fundraising toolkit if you would like to help us to continue to do the incredible work we do  
<https://devonrapecrisis.org.uk/fundraising/raising-money/>



# Get in touch

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**Donate:**

<https://www.justgiving.com/devonrapeandcrisisandsexualabuseservices>

**Volunteer:** [info@devonrapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:info@devonrapecrisis.org.uk)

*“From the bottom of my heart –  
a HUGE thank you!!” Survivor Feedback*