

What is an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)?

An ISVA is a trained specialist who provides advice and support to anyone who has been the victim of sexual assault or rape at any time in their life, our ISVA service can offer you practical support to deal with your circumstances, make referrals to other agencies for support around additional issues as well as offering emotional support.

Our aim is to help give you the confidence; support and information you need to take control of your situation and move forward.

Our service is available to men, women and children. We can also offer emotional support through other victim support services.

ISVAs are specially trained to respond sensitively to the needs of people who have experienced sexual violence, and will support you to make choices about your life and empower you to take control over the decisions that are being made about your life.

What your ISVA can do

The ISVA can give face-to-face, telephone, text or email support. This includes:

- information and advice to help you think through your options
- working with other agencies to make sure that you are safe
- signposting you to external agencies depending on your needs
- supporting you with sexual health or attending genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic specialists in sexual health
- provide support to victims through the criminal justice process if you decide you want to report
- liaise with police for regular case updates, if you choose to report the sexual assault
- access to male and female ISVAs
- providing support under the victims right to review
- attending court with you and supporting you through the trial.

Your health

We can give you information and support related to your health. Here is some key information that may be helpful:

- If you are over 16 years old, hospitals and doctors must see you in complete confidence and will not tell the police unless you ask them to
- If you are worried about being pregnant, you can get advice and free, immediate treatment – including pregnancy testing and emergency contraception – from your GP or practice nurse, family planning clinics or Brook Advisory Centres. You can also get emergency contraception at some GUM (genito-urinary medicine) clinics and hospital A&E departments.

SARC

A Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) is a special facility where recent victims of rape or sexual assault can receive immediate help and support. This includes access to a forensic medical examination, which is carried out by an experienced and qualified doctor, and the opportunity to speak to the police about what has happened to you, if you choose to do so.

SARC services are completely client focused.

Upon arrival at the SARC, you will be met by a crisis worker who will speak to you in private to discuss any immediate concerns that you have, explain about the SARC procedures and discuss your options. They will give you all the information you need to help you make up your mind about what to do next. If you decide to proceed you will be given the option of having a forensic medical examination and also the opportunity to make a report to the police about what has happened.

How can the ISVA service help a child/young person?

- Signpost the young person to appropriate services.
- We will try to address any particular anxieties and concerns.
- We will make sure that support is available in school or college.
- We will liaise with social care or other relevant services to ensure support is in place where possible.
- We will also support parents/carers in order to support their child.
- We will support you if you have to attend court (and offer you support before, during and after a trial).

Telling the police

- Only you can decide whether or not to report the assault to the police. If you don't know what to do, we can talk to you about what it would mean and what your options are.
- You can report the attack to the police straight away, later, or not at all if you choose. If you report an attack soon after it has happened, however, it may give the police an opportunity to get physical evidence against your attacker that might not be available if you report the crime later. Alternatively, if you have been assaulted within the last seven days, you can attend the SARC who can take forensic evidence without you having to report to the police.
- You will be told the name of the officer dealing with your case. The police will let you know if someone is caught and charged and whether or not they are released on bail. You should tell the police if you are worried that the attacker will harass or intimidate you.

Diversity matters and we value it

We are committed to supporting the needs of the diverse communities we serve. We can provide interpreters and information in alternative formats. If you have additional needs please let us know so we can put the right support in place.

Other organisations that can help

- All ISVAs are Home Office accredited or working towards accreditation
- You will be contacted within 48 hours of us receiving a referral.
- Complaints procedures are available upon request
- Our ISVA service does not support offenders of sex crimes
- Live Chat is available on our website www.victimsupport.org.uk

Rape Crisis

Tel: 0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Victim Support male abuse helpline

Tel: 0800 328 3623

Helpline for men

Tel: 0808 800 5005

We welcome your feedback. If you would like to get involved in our service user group please get in touch.

VARC: 0300 303 1971

West Yorkshire ISVA Service:
01274 535432

We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents. For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using Next Generation Text (add **18001** before any of our phone numbers)
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit **victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved**

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