

REPORT TO: Safer Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 15 January 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO: Communities
SUBJECT: Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre (RASASC)
WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the advice, support and counselling services offered through RASASC for the benefit of men, women and young people affected by any form of sexual violence

2.0 RECOMMENDATION That members of the Board consider and comment on any aspect of this report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Safe Place Project successfully set up a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. SARC's are a national initiative and care for people who have suffered rape or serious sexual assault. The crisis service went live on 1 April 2011 and is located at St Mary's Hospital in Manchester and provided by Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The aftercare service is provided by the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre. The Pan-Cheshire aftercare service is funded 50% by the local authorities and went live on 1 October 2010 covering Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

- 3.2 The SARC is a dedicated facility staffed by specialist medical personnel and experienced support staff who provide crisis and aftercare services to anyone who has been raped or experienced serious sexual abuse whether now or in the past.

The SARC provide a comprehensive and co-ordinated forensic and counselling service to men, women and children.

The service includes

- Immediate crisis support
- A forensic medical examination
- Emergency contraception and pregnancy testing
- Information relating to infection and sexually transmitted diseases

- Support through the criminal Justice system
 - One to one counselling
 - 24 hour advice and information line
- 3.3 RASASC is the aftercare service offered to those aged 13 plus in Halton who have experienced sexual violence. RASASC accept self-referrals as well as referrals from other agencies.
- 3.4 The Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA's) are specially trained to work sensitively and support those who have experienced the trauma of rape or sexual assault, assisting them to consider several issues including:
- Reporting the incident to the police
 - Preservation of forensic evidence
 - Risk of HIV and access to early treatment intervention
 - Risk of sexually transmitted infections
 - Risk of pregnancy

The ISVA will help with health issues, such as GUM appointments as well as liaising with other social support agencies as required. They will provide advocacy and support through reporting to the Police and with any subsequent legal proceedings. As well as providing individuals with emotional support.

- 3.5 Individuals who have been affected by sexual violence may experience a wide range of short and/or long term emotional and physical effects which can have a negative impact upon their lives.

People respond to rape and sexual assault or abuse in many ways – these could include a sense of being numb; feeling of rage or anger; a sense of fear; confusion; guilt; and/or many other emotions. Physical effects may include injuries to the body; pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases; etc.

Sexual violence can impact upon how individuals see themselves and how they relate to others. Each person has their own way of coping there is no right or wrong way to react to sexual violence.

- 3.6 RASASC offer a range of services including: Counselling; ISVA Support; Group work; Young Peoples Service; Confidence Building Courses; Advise; Information and Advocacy.

- 3.7 During the period 1st April 2012 – 28th September 2012 Halton RASASC received 95 new referrals, with 15 of those under the age of 17.

All SARC clients contacted within 24 hours of referral; all other clients contacted within 72 hours of referral. Where phone contact could not be made, a letter was sent to the client therefore the longest wait time for contact would be between 3-5 days.

74 initial meetings were arranged – 14 of the meetings were cancelled by

clients and rebooked with a DNA figure of 15.

ISVA hours for this quarter were 390; counselling hours were 353.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications contained within this report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

5.1 A Healthy Halton

To remove barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health by working across partnership to address the wider determinants of health such as unemployment, education and skills, housing, crime and environment.

Examples:

1. Preventable cause of death
2. Preventable cause of infant mortality
3. Preventable cause of mental health
4. Preventable cases presenting at A & E

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

To maximise an individual's potential to increase and manage their income and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services assisting victims to develop better financial management skills and to address debt through appropriate sign posting.

5.3 Children and Young People in Halton

Children and young people in Halton are emotionally, physically and sexually healthy and Children and young people will feel safe at home, in school and in their communities. For example, ensuring homes are healthy safe environments through offering support to parents and providing access for aftercare support for victims of sexual violence whether a child or young person.

5.4 A Safer Halton

To understand and tackle the problem of domestic abuse and sexual violence in all its forms. For example, through ensuring adult victims have access to protective and supportive measures and the subsequent impact on the environment with regards to crime and ASB.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 It is important that the council continue to support after care service provision for individuals who have suffered the trauma of rape and/or sexual violence within Halton and continue to meet the needs of the

borough.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No financial implications to note within this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 RASASC are fully committed to equal opportunities through all aspects of their work. The Organisation strives to create an inclusive and accessible environment that actively promotes an ethos of appreciating difference. RASASC are committed to challenging the myths and stereotypes, aiming to work in an anti-discriminatory way at all times.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act