

# Survivor Support Services

**If you are in crisis, do not feel that you can keep yourself safe or are having thoughts of harming yourself or others, please contact emergency services via 999 or go to A&E.**

A variety of resources are available online to assist in finding counselling and other services that may be suitable for victims/ survivors.

## **Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)**

SARCs are specialist medical and forensic services for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Their services are free of charge and provided to women, men and children, regardless of whether the victim/ survivor wishes to report the offence to the police or not. Local Sexual Assault Referral Centres can be found on the NHS website by searching a postcode or town here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/LocationSearch/364>

## **Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs)**

ISVAs provide a range of specialist support to victims/ survivors to look after their needs. ISVAs can offer information about how the criminal justice system works, but there is no expectation that by contacting an ISVA a victim/ survivor will be expected to report any offence to the police. ISVAs can provide information to make sure victims/ survivors make the right decision for them. ISVAs are available at some SARCs and some other specialist support agencies.

More information about ISVAs and how to access them is available at the Survivors Trust website here:

<https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/independent-sexual-violence-advisers>

There are also Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and those who specialise in both domestic and sexual violence (IDSVAs) available at some survivor support organisations.

## **The Survivors Trust**

The Survivors Trust is an umbrella organisation with 129 member organisations based in the UK and Ireland which provide specialist support for women, men and children who have survived rape, sexual violence or childhood sexual abuse. The Survivors Trust also holds further information about SARCs and IDSVAs.

On the Survivors Trust website it is possible to search a postcode to find local support or to view services operating in a particular region. The Survivors Trust also holds information about services operating nationally. This information is available here:

<https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/find-support>

## **NHS Therapists**

Therapy provided through the NHS should be free of charge. It is possible for victims/ survivors to be referred for therapy through their GP. Alternatively, it is possible to contact some services directly for self-referral. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) is an NHS programme offering talking therapies for common mental health problems. IAPT services can be found by searching a postcode here:

[https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

## **The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

The BACP is a professional association for members of the counselling profession in the UK. The BACP website holds a directory of members and services that are registered with or accredited by them. Most of these are private and will charge for their services. It is possible to search their directory via postcode here:

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists>

It is possible to filter by:

- issues the victim/ survivor has suffered or is suffering (including abuse)
- the form of sessions (i.e. face to face, online, telephone, or home visits, long or short term)
- type of client (children, young people, adults)

The BACP also provide information about pre-trial therapy here:

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-journals/healthcare-counselling-and-psychotherapy-journal/april-2015/pre-trial-therapy/>

## **Counselling Directory**

Counselling Directory holds details of individual counsellors and psychotherapists that are personally registered as a member of a relevant professional body, and of counselling/ psychotherapy practices at which at least one of their therapists is registered, or the practice itself is. The list of the professional bodies they recognise is available at:

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/accreditation.html>

However, they do not monitor changes and therefore it is the responsibility of the person or organisation accessing the service to confirm that the accreditation is still valid.

It is possible to search Counselling Directory by postcode, town or country, here:

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/adv-search.html>

It is possible to filter by:

- issues the victim/ survivor has suffered or is suffering (including different forms of abuse)
- the specific type of therapy required (i.e. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Arts therapy, Psychoanalysis etc)
- the form of sessions (i.e. face to face, online or telephone)
- wheelchair accessibility
- type of client (children, young people, adults)

## **UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)**

The UKCP holds details of registered psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors. Their register is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. It is possible to search their directory by postcode or location here:

<https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/find-a-therapist/>

It is possible to filter by:

- issues the victim/ survivor has suffered or is suffering (including different forms of abuse)
- the specific type of therapy required (i.e. Cognitive and Behavioural Psychotherapy, Integrative Arts Psychotherapy, Psychoanalysis etc)
- type of client (children, young people, adults)
- additional language requirements

## **Charity and third sector therapists and support services**

Some community and charity sector organisations offer free or low-cost therapies and other forms of support:

### **Safe Spaces**

Safe Spaces is an independent helpline which provides support to victims/ survivors of church related abuse, regardless of whether a report has been made. Their helpline number is 0300 303 1056 and they are also available via email at [safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk) and web chat via the Safe Spaces website <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/> Their opening hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10am-6pm, and Thursday 12pm-8pm.

### **Helplines Partnership**

Helplines Partnership holds a database of helplines that may be suitable for victims/ survivors. The search tool allows for a keyword search and for helplines to be filtered by topic and region. This is available here:

<https://helplines.org/helplines/>

### **Survivors UK**

Survivors UK provides support to adult males who have experienced any form of sexual violence. They have web and text chat services as well as individual and group counselling in London. Details are available here:

<https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

### **Mind**

The Mind website details local Mind charities and the services they offer here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/local-minds/>

## **Rethink Mental Illness**

Rethink Mental Illness has a network of over 140 local support groups offering space for people suffering mental illness to talk about their experience and get peer support. It is possible to search for these groups by postcode or town here:

<https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/groups-in-your-area/>

They also provide over 200 mental health services in England including advocacy and helplines, offering support in issues ranging from employment to legal rights. It is possible to search for these groups by postcode or town here:

<https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/services/>

## **Mental Health Matters**

Mental Health Matters provide mental health support services including helplines, therapy, advocacy and crisis support. Details of the services they offer can be found here:

<https://www.mhm.org.uk/Pages/Category/find-a-service?Take=24>

## **Minister And Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS)**

MACSAS supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or other church officers. Their website offers useful resources and they also have a helpline for victims and survivors and their relatives. Details are available here:

<https://www.macsas.org.uk/>

## **Suzy Lamplugh Trust**

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust runs a national stalking helpline providing advice for victims who have been affected by harassment or stalking. Details are available here:

<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

## **Self-help resources**

**Help for Adult Victims of Child Abuse** provide a number of resources, many of which are freely available and written by survivors for survivors. They are available here:

<https://www.havoca.org/resources/>

The **National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)** provides some online advice addressing common concerns that many survivors have, available here:

<https://napac.org.uk/common-concerns/>

They also provide some freely-accessible reading on various topics for survivors here:

<https://napac.org.uk/resources/>

**Rape Crisis** provide online advice for many issues and concerns experienced by survivors. Much of their advice is suitable for adult victims of child abuse, not just for adult victims of rape. Further information is available here:

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-tools-to-help-you-cope/>

**One-in-four** provide a page full of resources focusing on support and self-care for survivors to download and work through at their own pace here:

<http://www.oneinfour.org.uk/support-self-care/>

**From Report to Court** is a downloadable handbook for adult survivors of sexual abuse and violence. It is produced by the organisation **Rights of Women**, but as the handbook focuses on the process of reporting sexual abuse all the way through to a criminal trial, it is usable by both men and women, and is available here:

<https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/From-Report-to-Court-2018.pdf>

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has also produced a booklet on wellbeing including some ideas about how to look after yourself, available here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/9006/view/your-wellbeing-independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse.pdf>

*This page was last reviewed December 2023.*