



# MESARCH

Research supporting best practice in  
Sexual Assault Referral Centres

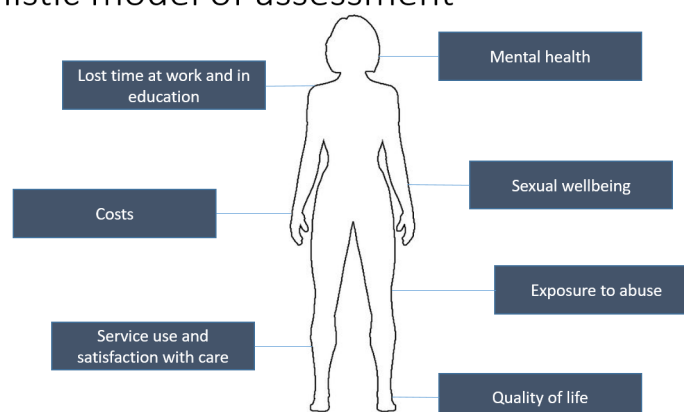
*Updates September 2018 – December 2019*



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Our project launched just over a year ago. We undertook national scoping work to understand the context of SARCs. In June, we concluded our pilot work with the help of staff and service users at Juniper Lodge SARC in Leicester, for which we are very grateful. In July, we received ethics approvals from the Health Research Authority and East Midlands-Derby Research Ethics Committee to launch our case study work (interviews with stakeholders) and undertake a national cohort (or longitudinal) study with adult survivors of sexual assault, rape and abuse. We completed our co-production of videos to facilitate recruitment of both professionals and people attending SARC services and the first screening for entry into the cohort study took place on August 1st 2019.

### Holistic model of assessment



In order to reach service users and offer people the opportunity to be apart of the study, we need the involvement and support of SARCs and their staff. To date, the MESARCH project has brought together 12 SARCs across England to enable this ground breaking work to be a success. But we still have one site to go! Do get in touch if you would like to propose your SARC service for participating. Email Dr Grace Carter at [grace.carter@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:grace.carter@coventry.ac.uk).

Another piece of the puzzle has been our engagement with the third sector. Our recruitment strategy required us to go well beyond the SARC's, and in fact we are now formally working with 23 partners in the charity sector, sexual health services and local councils to enable us to reach survivors and offer options for both staff and service users to consider and join the project at different points in people's journeys

We recognise the difficulties for survivors of abuse, and indeed the challenges facing those in the voluntary sector, and research is the last thing on people's minds. Yet teams of staff across the SARC's and other organisations have demonstrated their commitment to building knowledge and evidence about impacts of abuse and the need to pinpoint best practice care and cross-working. At each participating SARC staff screen all service users aged 18 years and above. To date, the eligibility of 500 people attending 12 SARC's has been considered. As service users are referred on to other services, staff at these sites have been trained to introduce the research using our video and consent is gathered to refer the person to the project team who then make contact in accordance with the person's preference, undertake the next level of consent checking and conduct a baseline interview. Our next steps are to develop our follow up surveys for 6 month and 1 and 2 years.

We are thankful and humbled by the willingness of the individuals, staff and organisations making this research possible. The research has important national implications and can also make a global contribution around the connections between experience of sexual violence and abuse and long term health and wellbeing. We remain dedicated to the mission to bring together

## A thousand survivors' voices for change.



*We welcome your suggestions and comments; please also share any concerns related to research by emailing us at [mesarch@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:mesarch@coventry.ac.uk)*

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