



Project updates 2018 - 2020

January – July 2020

The mesarch project is nearing its 2-year anniversary and we are glad to tell you about the tremendous progress we have made since our last update in December. Sixteen Sexual Assault Referral Centres and 25 support services (see full list below) are now involved in the project, enabling survivors to have a voice and share about their recovery journeys, experiences of a range of sectors and services and highlight what is important to them. We are so fortunate to be working with over 100 Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) that are inviting their clients to take part in the research; we would like to thank them for their continued support to ensure their clients have this opportunity.

To date, we have screened 1463 service users at SARCs, which is 59% of our target number of people to reach. 231 have been invited by their ISVAs and other professionals involved in their care to hear more. Of these, 76% provided consent to be contacted and 87 people have now enrolled in our longitudinal study. A quarter of people have been followed up for their 6 month interview.

The project continued during the lockdown and participants are being asked how the pandemic is affecting healing and recovery. We have written [here](#) about how the pandemic may be affecting survivors of sexual abuse and violence.

Our work to involve professionals at SARCs and other service providers as part of identifying best practice in SARCs is also ongoing, with a third of our interviews complete. We are using this opportunity to understand about how organisations and professionals have adapted to providing support to their clients during these difficult months.

Mesarch will 'screen' clients of SARCs up to Christmas and continue to invite people to join the project through their ISVAs until 30th April 2021.

If you would like to be involved or hear more, you can read testimonials [here](#) from our participants; or you can view the study video [here](#).

Due to Covid-19, we have decided to postpone our conference. This will now take place on Wednesday 12th May 2021 in collaboration with the [Mimos project](#). Please join us for this event to hear about our preliminary findings and from our [Lived Experience Group](#) about their experiences of being involved in the studies as well as discussions on future research in this field.

September 2018 – December 2019

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.

In order to reach service users and offer people the opportunity to be a part of the study, we need the involvement and support of SARCs and their staff. To date, the MESARCH project has brought together [14 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.*

Another piece of the puzzle to make this research possible has been working closely with third sector organisations. Our recruitment strategy required us to go well beyond the SARCs, 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 how to be involved in MESARCH. We recognise the difficulties for survivors of abuse, and indeed the challenges facing those in the voluntary sector, and research is often the last thing on people's minds. Yet teams of staff across the SARCs and other organisations have demonstrated their commitment to building knowledge and evidence about impacts of abuse and identifying 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 SARCs 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 preferences, 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 our 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

For a copy of this newsletter click [here](#)

Participating SARC Sites

The Blue Sky Centre

www.blueskycentre.org.uk / 0800 970 0370

Oakwood Place

www.oakwoodplace.org.uk / 01277 240620

Swindon and Wiltshire SARC

www.firstlight.org.uk / 01793 781916

Hope House

www.hopehousesarc.nhs.uk / 0300 4218400

Northumbria SARC

www.resachsarc.org.uk / 03333448283

Horizon

www.horizonsarc.org.uk / 0800 970 0375

The Saturn Centre

www.saturncentre.org.uk / 0800 0337797

The Bridge

www.thebridgecanhelp.org.uk / 0117 342 6999

The Herts SARC

www.hertssarc.org / 0808 178 4448

The Elms

www.theelmssarc.org / 0800 1935434

The Glade

www.theglade.org.uk / 0800 9709377

SARC Teesside

www.sarcteesside.co.uk / 03333 44 8283

The Harbour Centre

www.theharbourcentre.co.uk / 01603 276381

Treetops

www.solent.nhs.uk/sarc / 0300 123 6616

Serenity

www.nhft.nhs.uk/serenity / 01604 601713

Juniper Lodge

www.juniperlodge.org.uk / 0116 2733330

Third Sector and other organisations facilitating recruitment

Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (CRASAC)

www.crasac.org.uk / 02476 277777

Safeline

www.safeline.org.uk / 01926 402498

Rape or Sexual Abuse Support (RoSA)

www.rosasupport.org / 01788 551151

Safelink

www.safelinkupport.org.uk / 0333 323 543

Black Country Women's Aid

www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk / 121 552 6448

Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC)

www.glosrasac.org / 01452 526770

Umbrella

www.umbrellahealth.co.uk / 0121 237 5700

Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP)

www.rsvporg.co.uk / 0121 643 4136

Synergy

www.synergysessex.org.uk / 0300 003 7777

Survivors Network

www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk / 01273 203380

West Sussex LA

www.saturncentre.org / 01293 600469

Splitz

www.splitz.org / 01225 777 724

Peterborough Rape Crisis

www.prccg.org.uk / 01733 852578

Cambridge Rape Crisis

www.cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk / 01223 245 888

Changing Lives

www.changing-lives.org.uk / 0191 273 8891

Victims First

www.victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk / 0800 011 3116

Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland

www.rctn.org.uk / 0800 035 2794

West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre

www.wmrsasc.org.uk / 01905 724514 (Worcestershire) or 01432 344777 (Herefordshire)

Axis

www.axiscounselling.org.uk / Counselling – Shrewsbury Office 01743 357777, Telford Office 01952 278000 / ISVA Service – Shrewsbury 01743 243007, Telford 01952 586790

Arch North East

www.archnortheast.org / 01642 822331

South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)

www.sericc.org.uk / 01375 380609

Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse in Essex (CARA)

www.caraessex.org.uk / 01206 769795

SOS Rape Crisis

www.sosrc.org / 01702 667590

WORTH (WSCC)

0330 2228181

Yellow Door

<https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/> 02380 636313

Free from Violence and Abuse (FreeVA)

<https://www.freeva.org.uk/> 0808 8020028