



Female Rape Crisis Support Specialist (RCSS)

(Exempt under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, Part 1)

ABOUT US

Herts Area Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre, (HARCSAC), provides a free and confidential service run by women, for women over the age of eighteen who live in the Hertfordshire area. We are only able to do this because of the commitment of our volunteers.

The service is currently run by fourteen women plus three part-time paid staff. Some of our volunteers act as Trustees alongside their client work and some choose only to work with clients.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of ages and backgrounds as do our clients and so we welcome applications from any women willing to invest time in this worthwhile work.

We provide face to face support at our Centre in Hatfield and video support to women who cannot attend the Centre. We offer daytime and evening appointments according to our and the client's availability.

We are recruiting women to undertake training to enable them to volunteer to work directly with survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

Role Description

Location: Hatfield and WFH

Hours: Availability of a minimum of one one-hour client appointment per fortnight plus attendance at weekly peer supervision meetings on Thursday evenings. Any other ad hoc requirements e.g. training courses which are arranged by agreement. Bi-annual social events organised but not compulsory.

The role of the Rape Crisis Support Specialist (RCSS) is:

Face to face

Deliver face to face and video support to women. This is done in pairs working with another RCSS which enables us to provide continuity to our clients. You and your co-RCSS will keep the rest of us updated about the progress of each client and share experiences and learning at our weekly peer supervision meeting.

Sessions with clients are provided on a fortnightly basis for up to one hour. Face to face sessions usually take place at our centre in Hatfield but in special circumstances, if a woman is unable to get to our centre or access our video service, we may be able to see her in her own home/or another location.

Online Service

Our online service works in a very similar way to face to face except that sessions take place via zoom. You will still work with each client as part of a pair for up to one hour every two weeks.

Helpline

We provide a helpline which can be accessed by phone 'live' on a Thursday evening between 7.30pm and 9.30pm and which is answered by an RCSS. Outside of these times, potential and existing clients and anyone seeking information can leave an answerphone message or email. Messages are accessed remotely by the on-call helpline volunteer and responded to as quickly as possible.

We operate a flexible rota for on-call RCSS volunteers. Each volunteer is included on the rota and the frequency of being on-call will be determined by how many volunteers we have working at any one time e.g. currently it is only once every fourteen weeks.

Supervision

You will be expected to attend weekly peer supervision meetings which are held between 7.30pm - 9.30pm on Thursday evenings. This is a friendly, safe space for us all to learn through constructive feedback and exchange of ideas which helps us develop new skills and techniques and deliver the best possible service to our clients. One Thursday per month, the group has clinical supervision with a BACP qualified supervisor.

You will be expected to attend peer and clinical supervision regularly.

Person Specification

Knowledge: An understanding of, and a willingness to learn how to support the needs of adult women survivors of rape/sexual abuse/childhood sexual abuse.

Skills:

- Good listening and communication skills
- Self-motivation
- Good interpersonal skills
- Reliability
- Ability to work as a team member
- High-level of self-awareness
- Willingness to challenge own beliefs, preconceived ideas and prejudices

Attributes:

- Honesty
- Empathy
- Sense of humour
- Non-judgemental

Experience:

No formal qualifications or specific experience are necessary, but an awareness of women's issues is essential.

Volunteers will show a willingness to undertake further training as necessary and keep up to date with key issues and debates in this field as part of their ongoing personal development.

Successful candidates will show a commitment to the aims and values of the charity and be able to comply with an enhanced DBS (formerly CRB) check.



Trusteeship

Our service is looking to draw new Trustees from our volunteer community. No formal qualifications or specific experience are necessary, but knowledge of book-keeping, fundraising strategies, HR, Governance and/or general management would be particularly welcomed.

What we can offer you

In return for the time you invest with HARCSAC, you will receive high quality specialised training, the opportunity to be part of a committed and friendly team and have the satisfaction that you are making a real difference to the lives of women who have survived sexual violence.

As a group, we welcome all feedback and shared learning on ways to improve the service we provide.

If you have any questions about this, or anything else you wish to discuss then please call the office line on 01707 276539 or email recruitment@hertsareapeccrisis.org.uk.

Please note: neither this training nor volunteering with HARCSAC qualify as professional body counselling hours.

What you can expect as a volunteer

Volunteer Training

All of our volunteers participate in a full and thorough preparation training.

Training will take place on Thursday evenings over an 11-week period starting on September 10th and will involve large and small group work and some reading at home.

The work that you do during the training will be continuously assessed and you may be invited to a selection interview at the end of the course. You can also find details of our continuous assessment in this pack.

After the course

If you join the charity, you will be assigned a mentor who will support you through the induction process. The mentor will also help you to settle into your volunteering role.

In addition, all of our existing RCSS's will be on hand to help with any questions you may have and to support you if you need help.

Group Days

Group days are generally used for training and development purposes or social occasions. They typically occur two or three times per year and are usually held on a Saturday.

Trustees

Trustees are responsible for how the organisation is run and managed. Opportunities to become a Trustee will come up from time to time and if you are interested in helping to run the service you may wish to apply. Training will be provided for this role.

Continuous Assessment During Training

Why is there a need for continuous assessment?

Continuous assessment is a way in which each individual's strengths and weaknesses can be objectively assessed on an ongoing basis. It provides your trainers with an idea of your suitability for the role as a volunteer. This is the most objective method of trainee assessment and complies with our policies on equality, diversity and inclusion. Please be assured that assessment during training is not the only tool used to assess overall suitability for the role.

How will we obtain evidence of your suitability?

Each training session will be presented by our Lead Trainer with a Rape Crisis Support Specialist (RCSS) also present. The performance of each trainee will be assessed against a checklist of skills and attitudes that we consider essential to find in our volunteers. At the completion of training, and prior to the selection interview, the overall performance of all trainees will be considered. You will be given feedback at the interview stage of the process and will have the opportunity to discuss any points that have been raised.

What are we looking for?

- Personal values and attitudes that accord with the ethos and values of the service
- The ability to work in a non-directive way
- The demonstration of good supportive work within a team
- Good listening skills
- The ability to understand the impact on other people of what is being said
- The ability to use language appropriate to the situation

General Feedback

In addition to feedback at the selection interview, trainees will be given informal feedback as the course progresses.

Feedback will always be given in a constructive and supportive way and a note will be recorded.