

# Mission Statement for Male Victims/Survivors

The government is committed to preventing all forms of gender-based violence and addressing it wherever and however it occurs, these crimes disproportionately affect women and girls, and the cross-government “Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy” is a document produced by the Home Office after extensive research and collaboration into gender-based violence. The Strategy sets out the government's vision for supporting all female victims and survivors, however; alongside this strategy document, they identified the need to produce a position statement in order to include men and boys.

The fact that the government felt it appropriate to provide a position statement on men and boys as an aside to the VAWG strategy is indicative of the growing recognition that men and boys have not had the support and guidance afforded women and girls previously, and that there has been a failure in services to recognise the significant number of male victims needing support.

Our mission at The Shores SARC is to help men, women and children who have had unwanted abusive sexual experiences to live happier lives. We are inclusive of serving family members, friends, partners, and service providers by providing information and support resources on our website and in the community during promotional engagement activities and outreach work.

A significant number of men and boys experience violent and abusive crimes such as domestic abuse, all forms of current and historic sexual violence, including the risks and harm associated with prostitution and sex work, stalking, and ‘honour based’ violence and abuse.

Men and boys require inclusive support processes that understand their needs, The Shores SARC provides this service to all males. At the SARC all our staff are committed to ensuring that all victim/survivors of unwanted sexual violence, acute and non-recent, regardless of gender status, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, class or other protected characteristic can access appropriate professional and compassionate support;

At The Shores SARC we have both male and female forensic nurses and male and female crisis support workers. This ensures that should a client need and then choose to have a forensic examination, The Shores SARC can offer them a gender specific staff member of their choice for both the examination and Crisis Support.

We understand that all male victims and survivors have faced barriers to reporting and that this has led to a subsequent reluctance to seek help. At the Shores SARC we recognise that where males are concerned there is the perception support agencies are targeted at supporting female victims only, we recognise that there can be overwhelming feelings of shame and/or embarrassment, often, denial; That there is a fear of stigmatisation and an overwhelming fear that by coming forward for help and support they may lose control of the direction any care pathway may lead.

Male victims and survivors of sexual violence crimes will experience and respond differently, dependant on their unique experiences, therefore at Dorset SARC men and boys are not identified as a single homogenous group, all our staff, male and female are professional and compassionate and understand that any care pathway is aligned with an individual's needs. We will always put all clients at the centre of service delivery.

In addition to perceived barriers there can be structural inequalities that can discriminate or exclude, explicitly or implicitly, groups of victims and survivors such as gay, bisexual and transgender (GBTQ+) men and boys.

We recognise that GBTQ+ Men and boys require an inclusive support service that understands their needs. We recognise that previous bad experiences of reporting and concerns about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in support services can leave individuals feeling vulnerable and untrusting.

We continue to work hard to develop all our staff to understand individual needs and concerns, to be professional and compassionate, at Dorset SARC we offer sexual and gender-informed support, working very closely with LGBTQ+ organisations, offering support to those organisations and receiving training from those locally based but nationally recognised organisations.

Victim/survivors from disabled, isolated, marginalised and BME communities often feel unable to access support services, Crisis support workers and engagement officers from the Dorset SARC are working closely with partner organisations to reach out to these hard to engage members of our communities. We continue to develop joint training packages and conduct presentations in order to encourage engagement.

We will continue to map out the diversity of needs across Dorset and endeavour to reach out to all those in need of our service and support until all marginalised communities have been reached and engaged. We encourage contact from Victim/Survivors, the Public Sector, Health and Welfare and Local Authorities.

We are willing to engage with individuals, organisations and institutions in order to educate all about the services we offer, we give guidance on how to help and support survivors of sexual assault and rape. More information can be found on our website at [the-shores.org.uk](http://the-shores.org.uk) or by phoning the Sexual Assault Referral Centre on 01202 552056 or 08009709954.