



**edinburgh rape crisis centre**  
supporting survivors of sexual violence

## **Background Information:**

### **National Advocacy Project**

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#### **Rape Crisis Scotland**

Rape Crisis Scotland is a national charity working to end sexual violence.

Our aims are to:

- Challenge prejudicial attitudes towards survivors of sexual violence;
- Work with local rape crisis centres to ensure survivors are offered consistent, high quality support;
- Provide a National Helpline to offer support to survivors of sexual violence across Scotland;
- Assist in the development of new rape crisis provision around Scotland and
- Provide a central information and resource service on sexual violence.

#### **Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre**

Established in 1978 Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERCC) is a unique support, advocacy and information service for women, non-binary people, members of the trans community and young people aged 12 and over in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian who have experienced sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

Our charitable objectives are to reduce the distress and suffering of people affected by sexual violence through the provision of support and information, and to increase awareness of sexual violence and its impacts within the wider community. To deliver these objectives, we provide a range of trauma-informed support services for survivors of sexual violence, including short-term and longer-term support, advocacy, outreach, and group support. In addition we deliver training for a broad range of stakeholders across Edinburgh and the Lothians, and run a sexual violence prevention project which works with young people towards preventing sexual violence.

## **National Advocacy Project**

The National Advocacy Project is funded by the Scottish Government and is a partnership between Rape Crisis Scotland and local rape crisis centres across Scotland. The project aims to provide support and advocacy to survivors who have engaged or are considering engaging with the criminal justice system following a sexual crime.

The objectives of the project are:

- an improvement in the support available to victims of rape and serious sexual crime;
- an improvement in the experience of the criminal justice process for victims of rape and serious sexual crime; and
- the development of a better understanding of motivations to proceed or not to proceed within the criminal justice process and what difference advocacy support makes to this decision

The project was externally evaluated by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, who found that it provides a “life changing” service to survivors of sexual crime. More information about the evaluation findings can be found here:

<https://www.sccjr.ac.uk/publications/evaluation-of-the-rape-crisis-scotland-national-advocacy-project-final-report-2018/>

## **Visually Recorded Interview (VRI) Pilot**

The VRI pilot is a joint project between Rape Crisis Scotland, Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Government. Running in Edinburgh and the Highlands, the pilot involves the visual recording of the police statements of rape complainers, with a view to these statements potentially being used as someone’s evidence in chief in any trial. The key aim of this pilot is to provide dedicated advocacy support to complainers involved in the pilot.

This pilot is funded by the Scottish Government. Funding is confirmed up to 31 March 2020 and agreed in principle for the duration of the two year pilot which is expected to be until August 2021.