

Press Release



21st October 2008

Landmark research calls for UK to be savvy about rape and sexual abuse

The Survivors Trust will carry out a research project to investigate the prevalence of rape, sexual abuse and violence and around the widespread beliefs and attitudes which exist around these issues in the UK. The findings of this research, which will be called SAVI UK, will play an important role in shaping Government policy in areas including health, crime and the Third Sector. The study will also have a fundamental role in changing public perceptions and creating community awareness about rape, sexual abuse and violence.

The Survivors Trust is an umbrella organisation which improves responses for people affected by rape, sexual abuse or violence, by influencing government policy and advocating for specialist services which provide support to victims throughout the UK and Ireland.

Fay Maxted, CEO of The Survivors Trust, said “This research will bring new insights into the widespread problem of rape and sexual abuse in the UK. It will shed light on the hidden nature of this crime by showing that rape and sexual abuse can, and does, happen to the people we may least expect.”

“We all need to be savvy about the realities of rape and sexual abuse, and this research has a vital role to play in creating awareness by highlighting how rape and sexual abuse affects all sections of society.”

She continued to say “A major emphasis will be placed on the inclusion of marginalised groups and ensuring that all of the population have an equal opportunity to take part in SAVI UK.”

This project builds on and extends the landmark research carried out by Dublin Rape Crisis in 2002 called SAVI (Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland). SAVI investigated the prevalence of sexual abuse and violence in the population of Ireland and identified the particular needs of victims. It became a key influencing factor to inform policy and practice across Ireland.

SAVI UK will replicate SAVI with the population of the UK and is estimated to cost in the region of £1million. The Big Lottery Fund research programme has funded the first stage of SAVI UK which will identify a key research partner and develop a feasibility study.

The study will promote community learning across the UK by raising awareness around sexual violence and abuse, with regional themes highlighting differences between rural and urban

areas. This will contribute to social cohesion as all of the community are invited to join together to tackle the issue of sexual abuse.

Ms. Maxted concluded to say “SAVI UK will be vital to improving responses to rape and sexual abuse by providing a better understanding of how to respond to victims’ needs, better targeting of resources and better implementation of preventative measures.”

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Notes to Editors:

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The Survivors Trust is a national umbrella agency for over 120 specialist voluntary sector agencies who provide a range of counselling, therapeutic and support services to those affected by rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse. The Survivors Trust member agencies work with all victims/survivors including women, men and children.

More information about The Survivors trust can be found on our website:

www.thesurvivorstrust.org