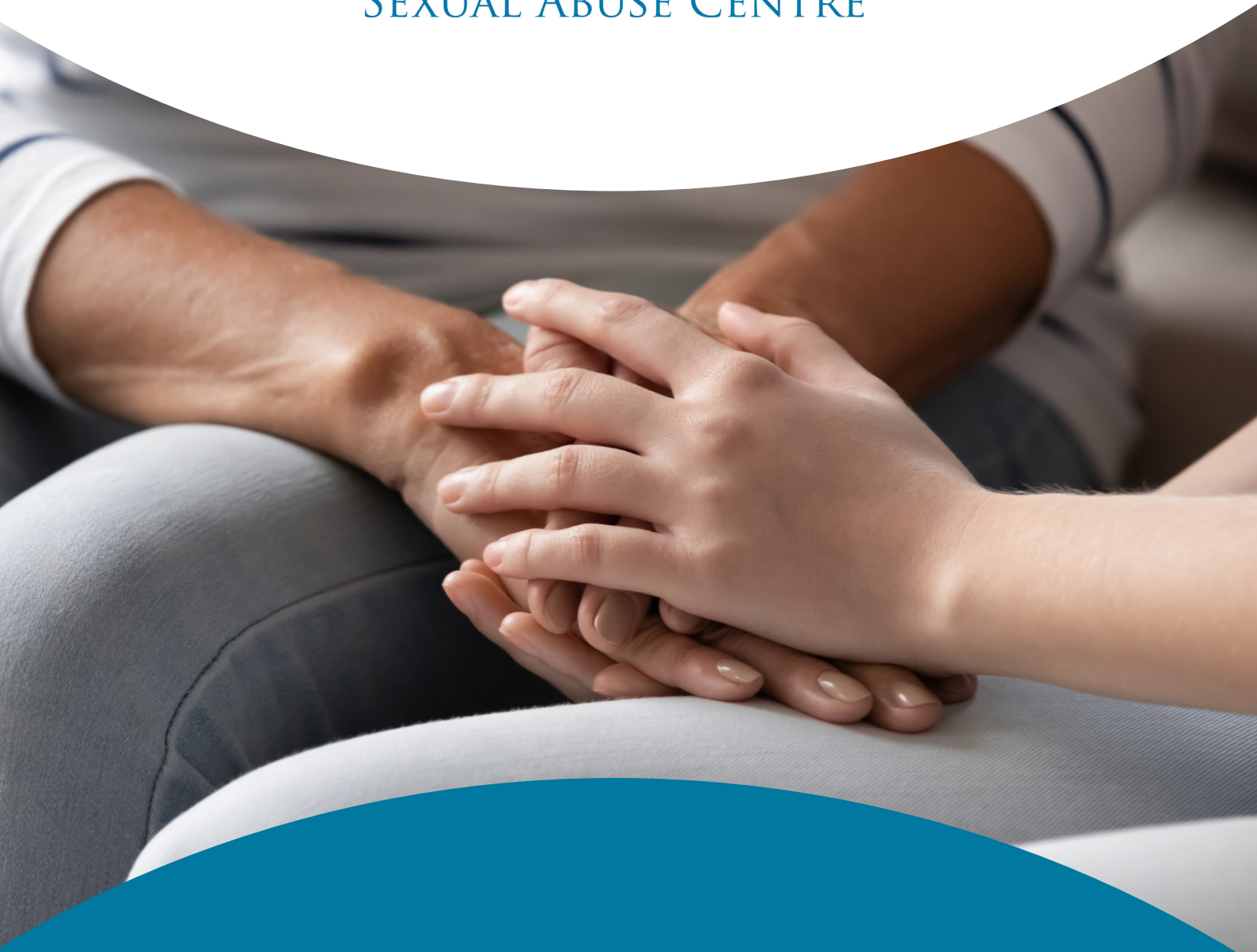




KERRY RAPE &  
SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE



2024 - 2028

# Strategic Plan



**CUAN**

An Ghnóimhairescht um Fhoréigean baile,  
Gnótasacht agus Imreachtúimthe  
The Domestic, Sexual and  
Gender-based Violence Agency



## Foreword by the Chairperson – Bríd McElligott

On behalf of the Board of the Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre (KRSAC), it gives us great pleasure to welcome the publishing of this, our Strategic Plan.

This plan has come about following a facilitated research, consultation and development process. I would like to acknowledge the participation and contribution of our staff, external stakeholders, board members and past service users in ensuring that this plan is as well informed as it is and developed in line with the vision for the service into the future.

The reasons for the existence and purpose of the Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre were critically assessed throughout this process and every effort has been made to ensure that our vision for a county where all survivors of sexual violence is supported by our actions. This vision underlines the passion which KRSAC has for the provision of counselling and support in Kerry. This strategic plan is a signal of the direction which we intend on taking up to and including 2028. The plan's design provides clarity regarding purpose, strategic goals and measurable targets.



In the context of this strategic plan the vision, mission, purpose and values of the service have all been revisited and revised based upon the collective experience of the organisation and with the input of stakeholders, internal and external.

The commitment of Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre to the survivors is unwavering and will remain our constant focus.

## History of Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre (KRSAC) was founded in 1992 as the Kerry Rape Crisis Centre with the support of grassroots volunteers concerned about the lack of services for survivors of sexual violence in the Kerry region. The original service started with a helpline staffed by volunteers. This developed into a volunteer led counselling service and advocacy. Over the next few years, we secured funding from statutory organisations and developed into a dynamic service with paid professionals. We now provide a range of counselling & support services.

KRSAC is governed by a Board of Directors who provide oversight and strategic direction for the Centre. The Board comprises of directors with legal, finance, counselling, education, communications, policing and project management experience.

The Centre employs dedicated counsellors who are trained to the highest standard and accredited with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. These highly qualified and experienced counsellors provide counselling to approximately 60 clients weekly.

For over 30 years, KRSAC has worked hard to respond to the needs of survivors, and challenged negative beliefs associated with sexual violence. We strongly believe that we have a duty to engage in difficult conversations that will have a lasting impact in challenging acceptance of sexual violence.

The structure adapted by the Company is democratic and non-hierarchical. The role and views of the staff and volunteers are crucial to the delivery of the strategic plan and therefore have a direct role in decision making structures.

The Strategy outlines the work of the organisation over the next five years. The plan outlines a set of strategic themes and aims agreed by consensus and geared at achieving the long-term vision for the development of the Company. An implementation plan has been agreed for the effective implementation of the strategic plan.

In the compilation of the plan the Chairperson met with staff, Manager, External Stakeholders and Board of Directors, during which questionnaires were issued and a series of review and planning meetings took place.

## Our Mission

**To provide a safe, confidential and free counselling and support service to survivors of all types of sexual violence and support for non-abusing partners, parents, relatives and friends**



“ I felt very nervous the first time I attended the Centre, but they gave me so much reassurance that I felt at ease and able to keep returning

” My counsellor stayed with me throughout the whole case and was a great source of support to me and my family when we got the verdict

## Our Core Values





## Our Services



**Confidential Helpline:** available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm



**Counselling:** one to one and group support for survivors and their families and friends



**Accompaniment to Gardaí & Court:** experienced support with all aspects of the legal process



**Advocacy:** for survivors of sexual abuse and violence and their family and friends



**Networking & Organisational Development:** at national, regional and local levels



**Awareness Raising & Educational Programmes:** improve understanding of sexual violence and crimes



## Confidential Helpline

KRSAC Helpline is a free confidential support service for anyone affected by sexual violence or sexual abuse no matter how or when it happened. The helpline is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and is often the first point of contact. Many clients are referred to us by other agencies such as the Gardaí, GPs, Social Workers, Educational Services or other professions. However, many survivors contact us themselves.

The helpline can be used in between appointments if clients need support or information.

The helpline is available for supporters of survivors or anyone who may have a need to talk about their experiences and issues relating to sexual violence or sexual abuse.

The helpline allows you to enquire into our accompaniment services where a trained member of our team will accompany you to the necessary service you require e.g Court, Garda or medical service. It is a place where you can obtain information, ask questions, and to be sign-posted to the appropriate service.

All helpline calls are free and confidential, and callers have the choice of whether to share their real name or phone number with the helpline support worker. At KRSAC, we adhere to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

**Freephone: 1800 633 333**  
**Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm**



## Accompaniment & Advocacy

### Garda Accompaniment

Trained and experienced staff are available to accompany clients when making a statement to the Gardaí. We can arrange for the client to meet the Gardaí at the KRSAC.

Support for clients goes far beyond actual accompaniment on the day. KRSAC counsellors ensure that the client is as prepared as possible for the psychological impact of the event. Rape Crisis Network Ireland accompaniment training ensures that our accompaniment staff and volunteers are fully equipped to provide support for survivors facing Garda interviews.

As well as providing the best possible support for our clients, this accompaniment programme also has the positive effect of linking survivors in to the wide range of other services provided for them by KRSAC, ranging from support for family and friends, legal advice where necessary, to specialised individual counselling.

The accompaniment training is funded by the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime. It helps build relationships and improve communication with local Gardaí, helping to increase understanding of the complexity of the issue for the victim, and helping to overcome any external resistance to the service.

### Court Accompaniment

KRSAC recognises that for survivors going through the justice system to prosecute an alleged offender on a sexual violence charge of a recent or historical crime, can be a very difficult and emotionally wearing process. The court room can be confusing and frightening and court procedures hard to understand. KRSAC offer support and information to clients throughout their legal proceedings.

We provide advocacy right throughout the process, from reporting to Court. We also prepare clients for the trial by explaining the process, visiting a Court to familiarise them with the setting. We assist the clients in preparing Victim Impact reports post-conviction.

”

**I knew where to look when I was giving evidence, so I wouldn't have to look at him, my counsellor had shown me around the court before the trial and explained all the procedures**





## Counselling

At certain times in our lives, we all encounter difficult or challenging situations and it helps to have someone to talk to. Friends and family can be supportive yet occasionally we may need someone with more skill to talk to. Often it is only when we talk to someone unconnected with our lives that we begin to hear what we are really saying and feeling. Counselling offers you this opportunity.

KRSAC counsellors are trained professionals who will listen carefully with no judgement. By listening attentively and patiently, the counsellor can begin to perceive the difficulties from the client's point of view and can help them to see things more clearly, possibly from a different perspective.

Survivors of sexual violence and sexual abuse can see a counsellor in a private and confidential setting. The relationship between a counsellor and client is confidential and is based on respect and trust. The counsellor will help you find solutions that are realistic and workable for you.

### Crisis Counselling

At different points in life, survivors of sexual violence and sexual abuse may experience some kind of crisis. A crisis is defined as a situation or event in which a person feels overwhelmed or has difficulty coping. During such a time, people experience a wide range of feelings, and each person's response to a crisis is different. It is normal to feel anxious, frightened or depressed at such a time.

Crisis counselling involves providing support and guidance to an individual or group of people such as family or community during a crisis. The purpose of crisis counselling is to decrease emotional pain, provide emotional support, make sure that the person in crisis is safe, and help develop a plan for coping with the situation.



”  
Throughout my counselling at the Centre I never felt under pressure, everything was at my pace

### Counselling for Young People

KRSAC is a safe place for young people to explore their thoughts, feelings and concerns without being judged. The trauma of sexual violence and sexual abuse can be devastating and without the necessary treatment the effects can last a life time.

KRSAC provides one-to-one counselling to young people from the age of 14. Their parents/guardians are also encouraged to avail of the support provided for them.

All counselling services are confidential and free at KRSAC. We adhere to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and any limits to confidentiality are explained at an early stage of the counselling process.

### Long Term Counselling

Long Term Counselling is offered to survivors who may have experienced any form of sexual abuse or sexual violence. Each client will receive an initial appointment. The initial appointment is the first face-to-face contact a client will have with a counsellor. The purpose of this session is to make sure that the client is safe and will benefit from KRSAC services.

Clients will usually attend for one session per week. This session lasts for one hour and if possible, be arranged for the same time each week.

## Networking & Organisational Development

Interagency collaboration and information sharing practice is vital to KRSAC to improve services to clients, to help develop services and to improve working practice to individual agencies and their professionals.

Multi-agency collaboration offers agencies a broader perspective and a better understanding of the issues Rape Crisis Services and their clients must

deal with daily as well as improved interactions with an understanding of other agencies. As part of our interagency and collaborative work KRSAC is represented on several committees:

Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)  
West Cork Sexual Violence Project  
Tralee International Resource Centre  
Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service

## Education & Awareness

KRSAC provide education and awareness raising initiatives for information exchange to help improve mutual understanding of sexual violence and sexual crimes and to develop competencies and skills necessary to enable changes in social attitude and behaviour.

Provision of awareness level training to staff and volunteers of educational institutions, community organisations, charities, and governmental agencies on issues of sexual violence and abuse.

### Public Awareness & Outreach

KRSAC is actively engaged in increasing public awareness through community-based outreach and fundraising. KRSAC engages in public outreach through radio and newspaper interviews focused on confronting sexual violence and increasing education.

### Social Media

KRSAC maintains an active presence online through Facebook, X, and Instagram to reach the communities they serve and beyond. Using these social media platforms, the organisation is able to draw awareness and fundraise through Facebook campaigns and Instagram.



”  
I have nothing but deep appreciation for the services provided by the centre, and sincere admiration for the way these services are carried out

”  
I felt very isolated and intimidated, having my counsellor there was my only support... without her I don't know how I would have got through it



# Organisational Structure

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors comprises of equal representation of senior leaders in their field of expertise, each of whom execute their duties as Board Directors in the best interest of KRSAC. The Board of Directors oversee the general operations of the organisation, ensuring that the organisation is operating within its proposed budgets and timescales while simultaneously operating in line with best practice standards and the Charities Code of Governance.



## Management

KRSAC is managed by an experienced and qualified manager with expertise in the field of business and sexual violence and sexual abuse. Responsible for all operational and fiscal activities of the Centre the manager plans and develops systems and procedures to improve the operating quality and efficiency of the organization; manages and supervise staff and volunteers in accordance to company policies and procedures and hires and source relevant training for all new and existing employees and volunteers. The manager is responsible for identifying, documenting and implementing business development processes and business strategies within the organization

including strategic planning, overseeing and coordinating the implementation of KRSAC strategy and is focused on the growth and development of KRSAC.

The manager reports to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis presenting to them all accounting and banking details, financial forecasts, statistical information on counselling, advocacy and helpline appointments. The monthly Board Meetings permit the board and manager the opportunity for continuous planning, developing and implementing best practice standards in line with the Charities Code of Governance.

## Counsellors

KRSAC is fortunate that we have a team of highly qualified, experienced, professional & committed counsellors specialising in the field of sexual violence. There are currently six counsellors mostly based in Tralee but also based in our outreach location in Killarney.

## Administration

The Centre has two part time office administrators who are integral to the efficient running of all aspects of the service.

## Counselling Supervision

KRSAC have a professionally qualified experienced supervisor to support Counsellors in their client work. Supervision is a formal arrangement for Counsellors to discuss their work regularly with someone who is experienced in Counselling and Supervision. The supervisor and counsellors work together and develop the efficacy of the Counsellor/ Client relationship. Supervision is a process to maintain adequate standards of Counselling and a method of consultancy to widen the horizons of the practitioner.

## Governance

KRSAC is registered with the 'Charities Regulatory Authority' and is signed up to the 'Governance Code', a code of practice for good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland. "We confirm that our organisation complies with The Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland".

KRSAC Board of Directors continues to collectively direct the governance of the organisation and exercise their diverse range of experience and expertise in a manner that each member reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the organisation. The board have commenced the process of working towards the Charities Governance Code which involves 'putting in place systems and procedures to ensure that KRSAC achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way'. The board oversees the planning and development of the organisation and ensures the highest standards of response to the ever-increasing needs of survivors of sexual violence.

## Budgetary Structure

KRSAC receives its core funding from CUAN, which is a statutory agency under the remit of the Department of Justice dedicated to tackling and reducing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV).

KRSAC staff and Board Directors assist with organising fundraising events to help meet the shortfall to our core funding.

Grant applications are made to several organisations and government departments for specific and specialised projects.



### CUAN

An Ghníomhaireacht um Fhoréigean Baile,  
Gnéasach agus Inscnebhunaithe  
The Domestic, Sexual and  
Gender-Based Violence Agency

## Partners & Collaborators



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality





# Vision for KRSAC

The Vision of KRSAC is to offer timely, professional & accessible counselling & support services to survivors of all forms of sexual violence and sexual abuse.

## Key Goals of Our Strategic Plan

1.

**Counselling & Support Services:** Support the provision of existing counselling services and to further develop a range of high quality counselling and support services to meet the diverse needs of all clients within the region.

2.

**Helpline Support:** Provide evidence based best practice telephone support counselling and referral service for anyone who has experienced sexual violence and their supporters.

3.

**Awareness Raising & Education:** Open opportunities for information exchange in order to improve mutual understanding of and to develop competencies and skills necessary to enable changes in social attitude and behaviour.

4.

**Accompaniment & Advocacy Support:** Participate in individual and systems advocacy with and on behalf of people who have experienced rape and/or sexual assault.

5.

**Networking & Continuous Organisational Development:** Create a dynamic and cohesive environment that fosters commitment and supports continuous improvement in developing KRSAC services within the Kerry region.

6.

**Fund & Build a Permanent and Bespoke Centre:** provide a safe and private facility that is located in close proximity to urban centres to help and support to survivors and their families of rape and sexual abuse.

## Goal 1: Counselling & Support Services

- **1.1:** To provide and develop KRSAC counselling services to meet the ongoing needs of survivors and their supporters.
- **1.2:** To ensure equality of access to all seeking KRSAC counselling service.
- **1.3:** To ensure we have the most qualified team of counsellors, meeting and where possible, exceeding required national qualification requirements.
- **1.4:** To annually review KRSAC service offering, process and procedures to ensure it is fit for purpose and to augment as appropriate.
- **1.5:** To establish a means for measuring impact and quality of service.



## Goal 2: KRSAC Support Helpline

- **2.1:** Develop, resource and launch a KRSAC Helpline Service.
- **2.2:** Ensure this helpline is accessible to all, irrespective of geographical location, gender, race, nationality, domiciliary status, religion or ability.
- **2.3:** To develop a model of best practice in terms of working collaboratively with existing crisis lines and other service providers to lessen the gaps and barriers to support, information and referrals for sexually abused clients, thereby connecting women, men and young people with the services and supports available to them in their communities.



## Goal 3: Awareness Raising & Education

- **3.1:** To develop and resource a Kerry focused information campaign for communities within Kerry in order to positively influence public attitudes, behaviours and beliefs in the services of KRSAC and the issue of rape and sexual abuse.
- **3.2:** To raise awareness among policy makers at a local, regional and national level of the prevalence and impact of sexual violence and abuse and the resources required to better serve the needs of survivors.
- **3.3:** To initiate and participate in projects and research activities which aim to advance knowledge in relation to sexual violence; inform and educate the public of the causes and consequences of sexual violence; decrease the impact on all women and men of sexual violence; and change beliefs, attitudes, practices and behaviours which allow sexual violence to occur.





## Goal 4: Accompaniment & Advocacy Support

- **4.1:** To respond to the needs of survivors of rape & or sexual abuse through advocacy and support including Court Accompaniment, Garda Accompaniment and other Accompaniment as required.
- **4.2:** To secure funding to recruit a dedicated advocate who would provide a range of accompaniment services.
- **4.3:** To provide the continuous, specialist and independent advocacy and support, which is not legal, needed throughout the long-drawn out process of deciding to report, reporting, investigation, prosecutorial decision, and if appropriate, charging, sending forward for trial, being listed for trial (and eventually sentence, if there is a conviction) – and beyond.

## Goal 5: Sustainability, Networking & Continuous Organisational Development

- **5.1:** To collaborate with main funding services; to diversify and expand the centre's funding source and service options.
- **5.2:** To develop a Fundraising Plan and appoint a Foundation Board to assist in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the KRASC and to fund projects of strategic importance.
- **5.3:** To establish strategic partnerships and alliances with other organisations and key stakeholders to advance the impact of the work of the KRASC.
- **5.4:** To continue to invest in one of our key resources – the team of the KRASC – to ensure all clients receive the most appropriate and professional level of service available.

## Goal 6: Fund & Build a Permanent and Bespoke Centre

- **6.1:** Secure a suitable site.
- **6.2:** Obtain planning permission.
- **6.3:** Establish a Foundation Board.
- **6.4:** Raise funds for construction from statutory and private sources.
- **6.5:** Open new KRASC Centre in 2028.

## Resources Required

Resource	To Deliver Goals
14 New Volunteers	2.1, 4.2 and 5.3
Case Manager	2.2 and 2.3
Adolescent Counsellor	2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3 and 4.3
Education Officer	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 4.3
Advocacy/Support Worker	2.2, 3.1, 3.2 and 3,4

## Impact by December 2028



Activity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
1 to 1 Client Counselling Sessions	2520	2646	2778	2916	3061
Group Counselling Sessions	0	5	10	10	10
Percentage of Clients who Represent Diverse Communities	15	15	20	20	20
Number of outreach events - advocacy & awareness work within the community	10	11	12	13	14
Number of outreach events - advocacy & awareness work within schools/HEIs	5	5	8	8	10
Total Number of Employees	8	10	10	11	12
Number of Additional Volunteers	10	14	14	14	14
Staff CPD Events	5	5	5	5	5
Number of PR/Media engagements	20	22	24	26	28
Social Media Followers (across all platforms)	4000	4250	4500	4750	5000
Number of Fundraising Events	4	5	5	6	6
Fundraising Income (operational)	20,000	25,000	25,000	30,000	30,000
Fundraising Income (including statutory contributions)	50,000	250,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Representatives on External Agencies & Networking	5	6	6	6	7
Legal Advocacy Court, Garda Accompaniments & Other	20	22	24	26	28
Research Projects	1	1	1	2	2



# KRSAC Events & Fundraising



**Brid McElligott (Chairperson) & Vera O'Leary (Manager) with Brendan Griffin TD at a briefing for elected representatives on our services**

**Lousie O' Neill, Author, and Vera O' Leary, Centre Manager, at the launch of the West Cork Sexual Violence Project**



**Conference on "Eliminating Violence Against Women & Girls" at the Rose Hotel, Tralee**



**An Garda Síochána coffee morning in support of victims of domestic violence in Kerry**



**Raising awareness of the Centre to staff and students at MTU Kerry South Campus**



**Charity Car Wash Day organised by Enterprise Car & Van Hire, John Joe Sheehy Road, Tralee**



# KRSAC 30th Birthday



## A Client's Letter

I wasn't sure how to say thank you, so I said I would write you a letter. I have thought about this letter often over the past year so here it is.

I came to you broken, not knowing who I was, unable to stop the negative thoughts swirling around my head. I had feelings of hatred towards myself. I prioritised everyone else before listening to myself.

I had a secret that I could never ever speak out loud. And in my darkest moments that secret would come out and hurt me over and over again. I couldn't ever admit that what had happened.

One of my most bravest moments was making that call to you. I dreaded that first meeting. I didn't like the feelings I had of being so vulnerable and admitting what had happened to me. I had so much fear that you would put blame on me or force me to pursue a prosecution.

I needn't have feared because all you did was listen to me. And helped me identify my true feelings. After a session I would feel absolutely worn out. An emotional explosion would happen and for days afterwards my thoughts would be working through my feelings through a new lense. I would see that I was a victim and was faultless. An innocent good person that someone did something awful to.

The sessions were hard work, they really were. And I would be raw and sore after them. But like going to the gym the results were amazing. Now I am me. I know my own thoughts and feelings. I can identify feelings and situations that make me uncomfortable. I can handle those feelings. You gave me a tool kit to help me deal with normal day to day feelings. And normal is a good word to use.

I'm not saying that magically everything in life is perfect. I live a normal life. But my world is stable. I'm happy because of me and choosing to make myself happy. The work has continued even though my sessions have finished. After the last session I felt a lot of fear. Who would listen to me and help me sort out my thoughts? The answer is simple: me.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. From the bottom of my heart. Thank you for taking on my burden, for your compassion, for listening to me and hearing me. You are a wonderful human and I really hope that you mind yourself and understand how important you are in the world.

“One of my most bravest moments was making that call to you”

“Thank you for taking on my burden, for your compassion, for listening to me and hearing me”





# Through the Chair

A group of eight survivors who attended the Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre for counselling came together in a facilitated group to explore telling their story and experiences through a creative medium. It was decided to use chairs as a way of telling their stories.

This collection of old salvaged chairs and their transformation into 'works of art' tell personal stories of suffering, pain, hope and healing. These chairs illustrate the feelings, experiences and frustrations associated with childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual violence issues, and the journey to recovery. Silence can be one of the biggest barriers to recovery. The participants of 'The Chair Project' know this from firsthand experience. It was important with this project to give participants a voice and to validate their experience of abuse.

**"I would love to have the courage to stand behind my chair" said the lady who made the baby chair that so moved me and still does. I tell her the courage she has shown in telling her story through the chair is courage enough for anyone.**

*An excerpt from Article by Billy Keane, Independent newspaper, on the Launch of 'Through The Chair' exhibition at the Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre.*







# KERRY RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE CENTRE



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