RASASH
RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE
SERVICE HIGHLAND

CASE FOR SUPPORT



An important note

As you review our Case for Support, we want to acknowledge that the content may contain information that could be upsetting or triggering. **Your wellbeing is important to us**, and we encourage you to prioritise your emotional health while engaging with our material.

If you find yourself in need of support or someone to talk to, **please don't hesitate to reach out to RASASH**. Our highly trained team is here to provide guidance and assistance. You can contact us via the support line on:

Text: 07451 288080
Call: 03330 066909
Email: support@rasash.org.uk

www.rasash.org.uk

FOREWORD



Iona M.J. MacDonald

Award-winning journalist and RASASH Ambassador

*"The impact of RASASH's work is beyond essential – **it's priceless.***

*As the **only specialist service in the Highland** region for survivors of sexual violence, RASASH delivers several important pieces of work.*

*As well as **supporting and advocating for survivors** of sexual abuse, RASASH also **delivers informative prevention work**, and **campaigns tirelessly** for a society free from all forms of sexual violence."*

*People in Highland deserve to have these services freely accessible, and **as a charity RASASH relies on funding** to help them achieve that.*

***That's why donating to or fundraising for RASASH is so important.** You can make a big difference - for survivors, for our communities, and for Highland."*

RASASH

I came to RASASH looking for support a year after getting out of a sexually violent relationship. ***The in person sessions saved my life and helped me make a lot of positive changes****...It's a service I wish didn't have to exist but am so happy it does.*

- Survivor supported by RASASH



It's quotes like this that **fuels RASASH's motivation to continue to deliver our life-changing work across Highland** to survivors of sexual violence.

Sexual violence remains a pressing issue affecting individuals of all backgrounds, and **RASASH stands at the forefront**, offering critical support and advocacy services alongside prevention, training and campaigning work.

Your interest in supporting RASASH not only demonstrates **your commitment to helping a local charity**; it also directly contributes to creating a safer and more supportive environment for survivors of sexual violence in Highland.



We invite you to **read our Case for Support** and join us in our mission to empower survivors, challenge societal norms, and ultimately, create a world free from sexual violence. **Together, we can make a lasting impact!**

RASASH

OUR PURPOSE AND VISION

As a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) based in Inverness, RASASH are the **only specialist sexual violence service in the Highland Council region.**

Established in 2014, RASASH is dedicated to:

Providing Specialised Support:

Offering free, confidential, and specialist support and information to individuals aged 13 and above affected by sexual violence in the Highland area.

Preventing and Eliminating Sexual Violence:

Proactively working to prevent and ultimately eliminate sexual violence within our community.

Building Partnerships for Change:

Collaborating with partners to improve the way society and services respond to survivors of sexual violence.

RASASH
RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE SERVICE HIGHLAND

Our Vision

A society free from all forms of sexual violence

RASASH

OUR MISSION

Accessible Support:

Ensure anyone affected by sexual violence in Highland has **access to free, confidential, and specialist support** through RASASH's dedicated services.

Informed Empowerment:

Inform and empower survivors about their rights with the expertise of RASASH's specialised criminal justice team.

Provide advocacy **to navigate the criminal justice system**, ensuring survivors have access to information and are listened to.

Fear-Free Community:

Create a community where **people can live without fear of sexual violence**, across Highland and beyond.

Healthy Relationships for Young People:

Support young people in **developing healthy, consensual relationships** with the guidance and resources offered by RASASH.

Partnerships and Training:

Collaborate with various stakeholders, utilising RASASH's expertise to create a united front against sexual violence.

Provide specialist training on trauma-informed approaches to ensure survivors receive the best support across all services.

RASASH

WHY RASASH IS NEEDED



In the Highlands, there has been **a concerning increase in sexual crimes**. The year 2025 witnessed a disconcerting **15% increase**, as reported by Police Scotland. However, with **only 1 in 5 survivors expected to report** to the Police, **this figure is likely to be significantly higher.**

Sexual violence is a pervasive issue with profound, **life-changing consequences for survivors**. It can affect their emotional and social development and hinder them from reaching their full potential. Survivors often grapple with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidality, eating disorders, and substance misuse.

In the Highland region, survivors face the added challenge of living in rural, 'fragile' communities. These often lack economic opportunities, have below-average income levels, problems with transport, and limited service provision. Without adequate support, many survivors find it difficult to engage in education or employment, and resort to harmful coping mechanisms.

Early intervention is essential to enhancing the life prospects of survivors of sexual violence and mitigating the effects of poverty.

RASASH plays a pivotal role in doing this in the Highland area, offering vital services and resources to survivors, in-person and remotely. By providing free emotional support, advocacy and outreach work, **RASASH help survivors to navigate the challenges they face and rebuild their lives**. Additionally, RASASH contributes to **raising awareness, challenging societal attitudes and advocating for change** to combat sexual violence effectively.

RASASH's efforts in intervention and prevention are pivotal, not only in healing survivors but in safeguarding the future of the Highland community.

***"I would never have been able to access support if you were not travelling to my area**, and without it I would not have made it through my trial."*

– Survivor supported by RASASH's Outreach Team

RASASH

CASE STUDY



SANDY'S STORY OF HEALING

Sandy* experienced childhood sexual abuse inflicted by a family member. Despite maintaining a facade of normality with marriage and a family, Sandy was silently struggling - experiencing dissociation, post-traumatic stress, and resorted to alcohol to cope.

With emotional support sessions, Sandy, who was initially sceptical of how RASASH could help, embarked on a journey towards healing. Although some doubt lingered, their commitment to "just one more" session became a lifeline. As time unfolded, Sandy witnessed **incremental improvements**, finding the strength to reveal more of themselves in each session.

These subtle victories transformed into pivotal milestones. With newly found confidence, Sandy joined a local singing group that became a place of refuge and offered a glimpse of a life that was not ruled by the abuse they endured. **Empowered by support, Sandy reshaped their life** - establishing boundaries at work, carving time for personal interests, and confronting the unresolved grief surrounding their parent's death.

Sandy expressed appreciation for the non-judgmental, safe, and empowering environment at RASASH. Despite previously trying other therapeutic groups and services, Sandy shared that this was the first time they felt anything had truly 'worked' for them. Sandy's story highlights the **profound impact of person-centred, specialist support**.

***Name changed to uphold confidentiality**

RASASH

OUR SERVICE

For nearly a decade, **RASASH has been working towards the prevention and elimination of sexual violence**. We're striving to create a safer environment while offering vital support and advocacy for survivors.

- Our **free and confidential support** starts from the age of 13 and is **tailored to meet the individual needs of all survivors**.
- We **support all genders** and offer a **safe and welcoming space**.
- Our support extends to non-abusing family and friends and other professionals who may be supporting a survivor.
- We have received over **1,500 referrals**, from across Highland.
- We have **reached over 15,000 young people** aged 11-25 across the school and youth network through our sexual violence prevention workshops.



SUPPORT SERVICES

Our **Support Line**, a lifeline for many, receives around **2,000 contacts annually**. Survivors can call, text and email us for support.

Our specialist Support Workers provide **tailored, therapeutic support in one-to-one sessions** in person or remotely. This includes our Outreach service which **travels across rural Highland** providing support sessions within communities. This ensures accessibility and support for all.

Workers use various approaches such as art, journaling, and for younger survivors, play, **to create a safe and confidential space for healing**.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

Seeking criminal justice after sexual violence can feel confusing and overwhelming. **Our Advocacy Workers help guide people through the legal process.** This can include:

- attending police statements and Video Recorded Interviews(VRIs)
- attending Video Identity Parades (VIPERS)
- communicating with the police and courts
- helping survivors access security measures for their home
- arranging court visits and providing court support

We also provide post court support such as:

- helping survivors access criminal injuries compensation
- making sure survivors are aware of the victim notification scheme
- communicating with parole boards to find our about sentences and prison release dates.

OUR SERVICE



PREVENTION, TRAINING AND CAMPAIGNING

At the heart of RASASH's mission is the prevention and elimination of sexual violence. **We deliver the national prevention programme in schools**, **challenging harmful behaviours that perpetuate sexual violence.** Our aim is two-fold – to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place and to reduce its traumatic impact by increasing access to support for children and young people.

An important part of our prevention work includes **trauma-informed training for educational staff and national programmes that help embed a culture of zero-tolerance** (Equally Safe at School and Equally Safe at Colleges & Universities). We also **deliver training to other statutory and third sector organisations** to improve responses and support to survivors in the community. Furthermore. we **facilitate and nurture youth-led activism** through our Stand Up Ambassador group, who passionately campaign to raise awareness and prevent gender-based violence in their local communities.



*"The prevention workshop was **really powerful**. It made me realise that **what happened to me wasn't okay** that it was normal to be struggling, and that **support was available**."*

RASASH Prevention Workshop Participant

RASASH

CASE STUDY

ALEX'S PATH TO JUSTICE AND HEALING



Alex* was sexually assaulted by a stranger in a public place. Sharing this traumatic experience with their Social Care Worker, **Alex was guided to reach out to RASASH's Support Line**.

Once connected with RASASH, **Alex was linked with their Advocacy Service to navigate the complexities of reporting the assault**. Initially hesitant about involving the Police, Alex found **reassurance and understanding from their Advocacy Worker**, who emphasised that the decision was entirely theirs to make.

After careful consideration, **Alex chose to pursue justice** and their Advocacy Worker facilitated the process, contacting the Police on their behalf and arranging for a statement to be taken in the safety of Alex's home. Throughout this process, **Alex's Advocacy Worker remained by their side, offering support and ensuring they felt empowered.**

As the Police investigation unfolded, Alex learned that her perpetrator was also charged with assaulting another person in a strikingly similar manner. **Alex's Advocacy Worker helped them grasp the legal nuances**, in particular in cases where there are multiple victims.

Alex attended a video identity parade at the Police station, accompanied by their Advocacy Worker. **The experience was distressing, but having support there to debrief afterwards provided a sense of comfort**.

Alex's Advocacy Worker continues to provide guidance and encouragement as they navigate the complexities of the legal process and works towards healing. In addition to legal support, **Alex attended emotional support sessions provided by RASASH** with plans for further session in the future .

Alex's story underscores the **vital role of Advocacy Services in empowering survivors of sexual assault**, offering not only practical assistance but also invaluable emotional support on their path to justice and recovery.

***Name changed to uphold confidentiality**

RASASH

OUR IMPACT

Treated them with respect

RASASH works to make a difference to the lives of those affected by sexual violence - whether its survivors, their family and friends, or the wider Highland community. The **transformative impact of our support services on people is evidenced by the feedback we receive**. We walk alongside survivors to support healing, rebuild self-esteem, and foster hope for the future.

OUR 2025-26 SURVIVOR FEEDBACK

96%+ of survivors rated RASASH's support as **"excellent"**

What we did well:

- **Treated them with respect**
- **Made them feel safe & comfortable**
- **Listened to them**
- **Gave them choices**
- **Helped them understand their trauma symptoms**



*"I felt that every staff member I met was **especially kind, welcoming and non-judgemental**...I think **what you do is amazing**. If more people knew about you, I think they'd feel **this is a place that could help**."*

- Survivor supported by RASASH

RASASH

OUR 2025-26 IMPACT STATS

680
people supported* across Highland

This includes all people supported with emotional support and criminal justice advocacy, including family and friends.



352
referrals into RASASH from across Highland

1,856
support line contacts answered via calls, texts and emails

31%
of survivors we supported were between **13-25 years old**

66%
of survivors we supported were aged **26 years +**

28%
of survivors were aged **under 13** at the time they experienced abuse

3% of survivors we supported did not disclose their age

1,445
hours of advocacy

131
referrals* for advocacy

*Our referrals come from the Police, the Shores (the Sexual Assault Referral Centre at Raigmore Hospital), the Courts, NHS, other Voluntary Organisations and from survivors themselves.

230
prevention workshops delivered to **17** Highland schools

4,077
young Highland workshop participants*

*1,867 were reached for the first time.

*"**RASASH has been an incredible support to me**. When we started working together I didn't know where to begin...I now have coping strategies to employ [and] I know myself more than I ever thought possible....**your work and care has been truly life changing**."*

– Survivor supported by RASASH

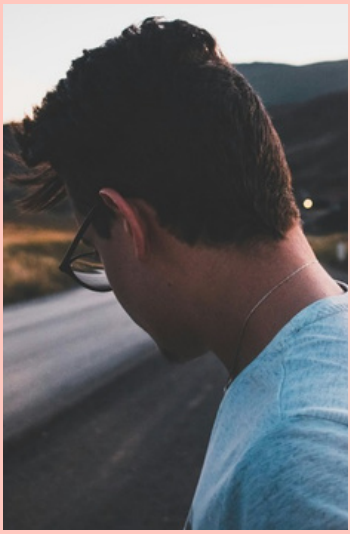
*"Just knowing you have someone who **believes in you** and is with you through the process **makes me feel like I'm strong enough to get through this**."*

– Survivor supported by RASASH's Advocacy Service

RASASH

CASE STUDY

JAMIE'S STORY OF EMPOWERMENT



Jamie's* journey with RASASH began a few months after they endured a traumatic sexual assault by a peer at college. The assault happened while Jamie was just a teenager.

Jamie felt unable to travel to RASASH's office in Inverness after the assault, but knew that online support would not work for them. RASASH was able to offer face-to-face support via its outreach service. An **Outreach Worker travelled to Jamie's hometown to meet them in a confidential place where they felt safe.**

During their sessions, Jamie felt able to process the complex emotions they were feeling with their worker by their side. The RASASH worker helped Jamie to **accept that the assault was not their fault and what they were feeling was a normal** reaction to trauma.

The sessions also provided a safe space for Jamie to **explore the possibility of reporting the assault**, a decision that felt scary and overwhelming. Within this person-centred and confidential environment, Jamie felt able to **navigate these considerations** without the fear that the decision would be made for them.

Jamie's engagement with RASASH extended beyond personal healing. It uncovered a deep-seated desire to speak out against sexual violence, gender inequality, and patriarchy - **a newfound voice and activism that blossomed within the support sessions**.

Content with finishing their emotional support sessions, **Jamie planned to seek advocacy support from RASASH for reporting the assault**. Jamie's story reflects not only their personal growth and resilience but also highlights the **transformative power of specialist emotional support and advocacy**.

***Name changed to uphold confidentiality**

RASASH

SUPPORT OUR WORK TODAY!



At RASASH, we believe that **individuals and local businesses have the power to transform their communities** through philanthropy and social responsibility. We invite you to **join us in making a meaningful impact in our community** by becoming one of our corporate partners.

Your support can come in various forms, from financial contributions to donating time or in-kind goods and services. By supporting us, **you or your business can play a pivotal role in directly supporting survivors and creating positive change across Highland.**

5 ways you can support RASASH:

Financial Contributions	Your financial support is vital to allow us to continue to provide our life changing services. Every penny contributed positively impacts survivors lives.
In-Kind Donations	Donating relevant equipment, materials, meeting and event space or providing your specialist services, helps to reduce our operational costs.
Fundraising Initiatives	Organise fundraising events within your community or company to raise funds for our cause, creating a sense of unity and social impact.
Sponsorship Opportunities	Consider sponsoring one of our support rooms or a specific programme of work, demonstrating your commitment to survivors well-being.
Volunteer Engagement	Get involved by volunteering or encourage and support your employees to volunteer their time and skills to assist us with key awareness raising and fundraising activities.

RASASH

DONATE, FUNDRAISE & GET IN TOUCH

Donate with JustGiving

Start fundraising with JustGiving

Call us on:
01463 257657

Email us at:
fundraising@rasash.org.uk

*"**RASASH has saved my life**. I do not think I would be here if it wasn't for you **helping me to find myself again after what happened to me as a boy**, my heart was always just - lost."*

Survivor supported by RASASH

*"Everyone I have spoken to from RASASH have been incredibly supportive. **It was empowering and healing to be heard and believed and validated.** Having someone with me as events unfolded leading to a police report was invaluable. I can't thank you enough."*

Survivor supported by RASASH's Advocacy Service

RASASH
RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE SERVICE HIGHLAND

Registered Charity in Scotland: SC045019

RASASH

RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE SERVICE HIGHLAND

Winner of 2026 GSK Impact Award
The King's Fund

Member of the Good Fundraising Guarantee
Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel

Silver Charter Award
LGBT Youth Scotland

Key HVAWP Partner
Highland Violence Against Women Partnership

Living Wage Employer
Living Wage Foudation
