

Timeline: 30 years of rape crisis services for women and girls in Edinburgh

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre

National and international

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERCC) established as a collective. It was set up by women, some of whom were involved in the Edinburgh Women's Liberation Movement, who wanted to provide a safe and confidential space for women who had been raped. The shared understanding was that rape and sexual abuse are an abuse of power and ERCC would work to change attitudes as well as providing support. 1st July ERCC opens with a vigil on Princes Street and extensive coverage in East coast press and on TV and radio. The ways of working established then by the first collective provide the framework for work 30 years on: Thursday evening meetings for support workers, the helpline is on varied hours a week; confidentiality; individual face-to-face support sessions; refusal to use the word victim; work towards changing attitudes in society towards rape; same helpline number 0131 556 9437. 10 calls to the helpline from women. | 1978 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helpline runs 13 hours a week. 34 calls to the helpline from women. | 1979 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 May Margaret Thatcher is elected Britain's first woman Prime Minister. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings and talks delivered across Edinburgh to range of organisations including universities, colleges, the Samaritans and Women's Aid. | 1980 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First annual report published. 37 calls to the helpline from women. | 1981 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National campaign begins against using women's past sexual history as evidence during trials. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin giving talks to Lothian and Borders police. One quarter of calls to the helpline are adults who have been sexually abused as children by their family. This leads to development of Incest Survivors' Group in Edinburgh. | 1982 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish rape crisis centres attempt to get a Private Member's Bill to restrict sexual history evidence questioning. However, this is unsuccessful. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 calls to the helpline from women. | 1983 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Amendment for the Equal Pay Act. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83 calls to the helpline from women. | 1984 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incest Survivors' helpline for women starts. This helps to increase awareness within rape crisis centres of the prevalence of sexual violence in the family. 100 calls to the helpline from women. | 1985 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 86 rape crisis centres in UK. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 169 calls to the helpline from women. | 1986 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act introduced to prevent a woman's past sexual history as evidence. However, 'exceptions' can be made at judges discretion. Scottish Law Lords rule for the first time that sexual harassment is sex discrimination and can be challenged under the law. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received first ever grant from Lothian Regional Social Work Committee towards running costs. Previous 9 years ERCC relied solely on donations | 1987 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 241 rapes reported in Scotland, 64 led to prosecutions and 34 in convictions. Conviction rate in Scotland is 14%. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> and fundraising. Runs first self-help group for rape survivors. 211 calls to helpline from women. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second annual report produced for celebration of 10th anniversary. In first 10 years ERCC supported over 1,000 women. Helpline runs 15 hours a week on a rota basis by volunteers. Support offered includes face-to-face, long-term support and accompanying women to appointments. | 1988 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helpline closed for 5 weeks as building works took place. Face to face and letter support continued. 272 calls to the helpline by women. | 1989 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape within marriage is recognised as a crime in Scotland. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 227 calls to the helpline by women. | 1990 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 141 calls to the helpline by women. | 1991 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For first time in 14 years of relying entirely on voluntary workers, a grant is secured to employ a full time worker. 269 calls to the helpline by women. Volunteer numbers fluctuate – helpline hours can not be sustained. Hours reduced from 15 – 6 hours. Incest Survivors’ line closes. Urban Aid funding to expand into outreach work. | 1992 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third annual report produced to celebrate 15th anniversary. Moved premises to basement in Broughton Street Lane. Over 2,000 women supported in first 15 years. Restructuring of support service as long-term waiting list has built up, so the length of number of sessions is reduced. 2 full time workers for new outreach service. | 1993 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Zero Tolerance campaign to raise awareness of domestic violence is launched by the Women’s Committee of Edinburgh District Council. It is taken up by local authorities across the UK. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women is adopted by the UN General Assembly. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 volunteers. Average of 26 new women contacting centre a month. Average 20 face-to-face a week. New logo and publicity materials, including bookmark and fundraising materials. | 1994 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 20% of female population was raped during the 1994 Rwanda genocide as part of a deliberate military strategy. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach work in urban areas: Wester Hailes, Oxfgangs, North Leith, Gracemount, Burdiehouse, Moredunvale and Southouse. Outreach includes work to develop networks for workers. A confidential workers helpline opens in June, 2-4pm on a Wednesday. Face-to-face sessions and training provided for workers. | 1995 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved premises from Broughton Street Lane to larger premises, to accommodate growth in volunteers and women being supported. Ritual abuse resource pack produced by ERCC and Dundee rape crisis centre. | 1996 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Rape Crisis Network run a TV advertisement over Christmas and New Year. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and growth of external training and talks to raise awareness and profile of ERCC. | 1997 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Parliament established. 120 women win seats in the general election. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 570 rapes reported in Scotland, 65 led to prosecutions and 29 in convictions. Conviction rate in Scotland is 5%. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Became involved with the Women Supporting Women project in Pilton, and develop training package. | 1998 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 paid worker in post. Work on applying for funding applications for other positions undertaken. | 1999 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence against women becomes a policy priority of the Scottish Parliament. UN General Assembly designate 25th November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This date begins the 16 Days for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. |
| | 2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Party Group on Survivors of Sexual Abuse established. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed name to Edinburgh Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (EWRASAC) with the aim of more accurately reflecting the work of the organisation in supporting women and girls who have experienced any kind of sexual violence. | 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 589 rapes reported in Scotland, 61 led to prosecutions and 36 in convictions. Conviction rate in Scotland is 5%. First parliamentary debate on child sexual abuse |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branch out into West Edinburgh with a dedicated worker who had an office in Gilmerton and offered support there. | 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 743 reports of rape in Scotland. The Sexual Offences (Procedures and Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2002 prohibits the accused in sexual offences trials from conducting his own defence and tightens the restrictions regarding the use of sexual history and character evidence. Scottish Rape Crisis Network funded by Scottish Executive to set up national office. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25th anniversary held at Edinburgh City Chambers. 785 women call the helpline for support, of which 288 had not been in contact before. | 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87 rapes are reported to the police in Edinburgh. A review of the investigation and prosecution of rape in Scotland is undertaken by Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EWRASAC faced closure, only 4 volunteers run centre. Long-term waiting list is at 1 year and is frozen. Helpline covered a minimum of 3 days a week. Funding secured for 3 new paid posts and restructuring took place. Continued funding received from City of Edinburgh Council. April – September support line open 222 hours. 22 face to face sessions. | 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive establishes a 'Rape Crisis Specific Fund' in recognition of historical underfunding of Rape Crisis Centres. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 new paid worker positions: Centre Coordinator, Support Service Coordinator and Information Development Worker. New volunteer trainings. Transition from collective to management structure with a Centre Coordinator and Board of Directors. Registered as a charitable company limited guarantee. New logo and rebranding of EWRASAC. | 2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amnesty International commission a survey on attitudes to rape. Results show that 30% believe a women is partially or totally responsible to blame if she is drunk and 22% believe she is partially or totally to blame if she had many sexual partners. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding received from City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Executive's Violence Against Women Fund and Rape Crisis Specific Fund, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland and The Robertson Trust. Helpline open an average of 5 days a week. 568 | 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive agrees funding for a pilot Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Glasgow, the first in Scotland. The Scottish Law Commission issues a consultation on their proposals for reform to |

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| <p>hours of helpline support provided 2005-2006. 2,226 women, 514 agencies and 116 family friends and partners contact the helpline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 108 face-to-face appointments offered. • 18 women offered long-term. • Truth about rape postcard campaign for young women. • New leaflets and women's support pack produced. Approx 2,000 leaflets requested by women survivors and agencies. | | <p>the law on rape and sexual assault.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2006-2006 975 crimes of rape recorded by the police, of which 38 resulted in convictions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Lottery Fund and LankellyChase Foundation funding secured for Support Worker, Advocacy Worker, Assistant Centre Coordinator and Training Worker posts. • Begin training calendar for external workers. • 2007-2008 53 women offered long-term support. • 156 face-to-face appointments. • 20 training events delivered. | 2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 rape crisis centres in UK, 9 of which are in Scotland. • Scottish Law Commission publishes recommendations on law reform & draft Bill reform of the law on rape and sexual offences in Scotland, • Rape Crisis Scotland national helpline launched. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 3,000 calls to helpline January – October. • Helpline on a minimum of 25 hours a week. • Long term waiting list down to couple of months. • Ongoing funding secured for posts for next 3 years. Now 9 paid staff member posts. • 2007-2008 approx 3,000 leaflets and support packs requested. • Funding secured from Scottish Community Foundation Women's Fund for Scotland, for a website, support pack for women and young women's information materials. • Free complementary therapies service established. • New Advocacy Worker in post and project established. • New East Lothian outreach post and project established (ELSAS) funded by Scottish Government Sexual Abuse Development Fund. • New Assistant Centre-coordinator and Training Development Worker in post • Support services extended to male family, friends and partners and Transgender survivors. | 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish rape conviction rate at all time low of 2.9% • Rape Crisis Scotland, This is not an invitation to help me campaign launched. |