






freedom from abuse & violence



Annual Review 2019 - 2020

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R.I.S.E. (Refuge, Information, Support and Education)
is a registered charity (No.1065846).

Who we are

RISE is the Sussex domestic violence and abuse charity that's worked for 25 years to end all forms of violence and abuse against women, their families and those identifying as LGBTQ+.

We work across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove providing wrap-around services for adults and children on their recovery journey, following experiences of domestic abuse. They include a helpline, emergency refuge accommodation, expert specialist advocacy, professional legal and housing advice, counselling, family interventions and therapeutic support for children and young people. We also provide one of the few dedicated LGBTQ+ refuge and support services.

Message from the Chair



2019/20 was my first year as Chair of RISE, and it gives me pleasure to introduce the annual review.

We launched our new Strategic Plan at the

outset of the year and the trustees and management team worked together via our working groups on the operationalising of this document. This gave us, as trustees, the opportunity to work alongside the staff and gain a better understanding of the valuable and professional services that RISE provides. My thanks go to the trustees who give so much time to RISE.

We received 6,988 referrals last year, which translated into 2,770 clients that we supported across all areas of our work.

Three of our trustees, Ele Doulton, Anne-Marie Harrison and Beverly Sawyers, resigned from their roles during this year, and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment.

In December we had a wonderful celebration of our 25 years providing services for women and children in the city. This was a great opportunity to showcase our work and for service users, staff and volunteers past and present to come together for a very enjoyable day of entertainment, hosted by the fabulous author and journalist Alexandra Heminsley, who is a great supporter of RISE.

We ended the year in not such a celebratory mood as the organisation, like the rest of the world, faced the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has seen an enormous increase in demand, and many of our staff have had to deliver services from their own homes. However, we've been able to maintain our high-quality services and I feel hugely proud to be part of such a well-respected and hardworking organisation, especially in these difficult times.

Tricia Wass
Chair

Message from the CEO



I am delighted to be introducing RISE's achievements in 2019/20, my third year as RISE CEO and the charity's 25th year in operation. It's also the year we launched our new Five-Year Strategic Plan, that we developed by listening to staff, survivors, stakeholders and our Board. The four strategic aims listed below demonstrate our new sense of direction:



Excellence:

RISE will be a centre of excellence for domestic violence and abuse knowledge and expertise.



Community Focused:

RISE will broaden our reach, take a community approach and increase our role in a community response to domestic violence and abuse.



Voice & Leadership:

RISE will be a recognised leading voice on domestic abuse and violence in the context of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and come alongside survivors to amplify their voices to inform provision and bring social change.



Secure, Sustainable & Future Proofed:

RISE will diversify and grow income streams; commit to good governance principles and practice; exploit new technology for service delivery, to improve accessibility and modernise our service offer.

Last year was our 25th anniversary, culminating in an event that charted our history and celebrated those that built what started out as the Women's Refuge Project and is now RISE.

It was an unusual end to this financial year with the start of lockdown in late March 2020 due to Covid-19. This unexpected crisis tested our resilience, proving that we have strong business continuity plans. RISE acted quickly to put in place onsite skeleton staff, observing all government advice, alongside remote working. We immediately communicated that our service remained open and moved rapidly to use new remote technology.

I can't thank our supporters and funders enough for their generous support, enabling RISE to help survivors and their families navigate their journey to recovery.

Jo Gough
CEO

Lockdown? Welcome to my world!

Marcella's story

During the coronavirus pandemic, many of us have been living in fear: scared to leave the house, go to work or the shops, visit the doctor or get on public transport. Welcome to my world. As a domestic abuse survivor, this has been my daily reality for years.

I met my former partner through mutual friends and we would initially meet up for casual dates like going to the gym, having coffee or dinner. The abuse started around three months after meeting him. It wasn't violent at first, however he would spit in my face and was controlling over who I could see and where I could go. It's very difficult to explain the overwhelming terror of being in a coercive relationship. I lived in a constant state of high alert. I was hospitalised twice - once after he kidnapped me and held me hostage overnight, giving me four broken ribs and concussion. The second occasion was after I met a friend (that he had forbidden me to see) at the gym. He stamped on my head and put me through a night of physical and emotional abuse, resulting in loss of hearing in my right ear and long-term head injuries.

With the support of RISE, I moved to a refuge in another county, as it was not considered safe for me to stay in Brighton. When he was eventually charged with coercive control and sentenced to five years in prison, reduced to three because of his guilty plea, I finally felt safe; relieved that he was off the streets where he was no longer a threat to me or anyone else. I was still living in refuge, waiting for the council to rehouse me, when lockdown began.

Being trapped indoors has not been an easy ride for anyone, but at least when your home is a sanctuary you're surrounded by comforts. I saw so many social media posts about people binge-watching Netflix, eating nice food and sitting in the garden with loved ones. At the refuge, we didn't have any of that, just the few possessions we'd managed to take with us as we fled.

Over 1/3

**of our clients have
experienced surveillance,
harassment or stalking
by their perpetrator**

Our bubble may not have been the one we would necessarily have chosen, but we looked out for each other and became like a family. We would sit together in the lounge with our blankets every morning, eagerly waiting for the news bulletins of the day. We'd discuss our families and how much we missed them, as a lot of women didn't have their children with them. At least with the virus, we could take preventative measures - wash our hands, keep the refuge clean, wear masks - we



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**When you're being
attacked, harassed and
abused there is a light at
the end of the tunnel.**

had more control than we'd ever had in our abusive relationships. I will never experience anything like it and I hold that very special time in my heart.

For me, the only way of getting away was to move away. Calling RISE was so hard, because you don't trust anyone so you don't want to talk to someone you don't know. But when you're being attacked, harassed and abused there is a light at the end of the tunnel. You may have to make the difficult decision to completely leave

your old life behind, and living in a refuge isn't always easy... but I know that it saved my life.

Since leaving refuge I have spoken at a Coercive Control Symposium at the London South Bank University, as well as supporting RISE to deliver coercive control training for Sussex Police. I know that without RISE I may not be alive today, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness of the horrendous crime that is coercive control.

The Portal

RISE is the lead partner in the Portal contract commissioned by the local authority to deliver domestic and sexual violence services across Brighton & Hove and East Sussex.

RISE subcontracts to our partners Survivors Network for the provision of sexual violence services, and Change Grow Live to provide domestic abuse services in East Sussex.

Last year RISE saw 1,297 survivors under this contract.

Last year our helpline staff and volunteers handled 3,793 calls, which was an average of 15 per working day

Helpline

RISE provides the only domestic abuse helpline in Sussex, which can be reached on 01273 622 828.

Since the start of lockdown, we have seen a threefold increase in calls to the helpline. We redeployed staff from other RISE services and were fortunate to receive some emergency government funding, secured by Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne, to employ some temporary bank staff. These staff have worked alongside our wonderful group of volunteers to meet this demand.

However the demand has remained high far beyond lockdown easing, and we anticipate further spikes as restrictions tighten again, when known incidences of domestic abuse and violence will increase.



It's a testament to how high RISE is regarded by the community that so many people reach out to us for help. We'd like to thank our staff for showing such incredible resilience and continuing to support our clients in near impossible conditions.



MARAC

RISE now chairs the Brighton & Hove MARAC, which brings our expertise in domestic abuse to the heart of the process. Our IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) caseworkers also attend the MARAC to represent the views and wishes of survivors. After the MARAC, we offer the survivor the opportunity of ongoing casework and referral through to therapeutic recovery services within RISE at a later date.

RISE was also involved as a chair in piloting the MARAC hub in early 2020. This model was trialled in order to address the rising referrals to the MARAC. The MARAC hub pilot was a multi-agency initiative to triage cases and implement actions to avert some cases needing a full MARAC conference.



What is MARAC?

MARAC stands for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. People are referred to the MARAC because they have been identified as being at high risk of harm from domestic abuse and violence. The MARAC is attended by Sussex Police SIU (special investigation unit), Children's Services and Adult Social Care, drug and alcohol services, representatives from housing providers and mental health services as well as ourselves as the specialist domestic abuse service.

21%

of RISE clients reported threats to kill from their perpetrator

Refuge

RISE runs a 15-flat refuge at a confidential address in Brighton for women and children escaping domestic abuse. Women and families are supported throughout their stay by a named key worker as well as accessing recovery group work, creative wellbeing activities and advocacy and referrals into local services. Children and their parents receive specialist support and activities from our family workers.

After six months we support residents to move on into accommodation outside the refuge. We have worked closely with the local authority housing department as well as our partner Stonewater Housing to provide the best possible options for our clients.

During lockdown we continued to run our refuge with a skeleton staff onsite, by observing strict social distancing with colleagues and residents. We had to thoroughly risk assess our intake process, but were quickly able to accept new women into refuge. Although the lockdown measures impacted on the mental health of some of our residents, they really came together as

a community, supporting each other with kindness.

Our refuge has benefitted from some incredible generosity from the local community.

26 students from Tormead School came all the way from Guildford to help build a nature trail in our refuge garden. As well as clearing several sack loads of brambles and undergrowth and laying plastic sheeting and woodchip down for the 40-metre-long path, they even raised £350 to help cover the cost of the tools and materials.



62 adults & 56 children

stayed in our refuge last year. Nearly half of the children were under five

It wasn't just the garden that got a makeover - we also ran our first ever crowdfunder to pay for new soft play items in the children's room. *Running Like A Girl* best-selling author Alexandra Heminsley unveiled the soft play equipment in the summer, saying "I have a two-year-old and I am in no doubt about how much joy it will bring."

Lucy Dance, a trainee Therapeutic Wellbeing Practitioner, supported women and children staying at refuge to paint four beautiful murals which are now on display there. The Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Alexandra Phillips, had the honour of officially unveiling the 'Art Corridor'.

The women and children staying at refuge were overwhelmed by the support and donations from the community at Christmas. This made such a difference to the residents at what can be a difficult time of year. The very generous St Peter's Church gave everyone a gold necklace that said 'you are loved'.

More recently we've had enormous support during lockdown. A supporter of Lewes Ladies FC paid for laptops for the children to enable them to do their school work remotely when schools closed, St Peter's Church provided very generous food parcels, and we received isolation mental health packages from Sussex Partnership Trust. Our very own Board of Trustees also sent self-care packages to everyone staying at refuge.

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To all the staff at RISE, I want to say a big thank you for giving me the chance to make a new start in life. Without you guys and your support I couldn't imagine where I would be. But thanks to you all, for the first time in a long time I am so happy, content and looking forward to the future ahead.

Feedback from a refuge resident



Sarah's story

I started volunteering on the RISE helpline in September 2018. I'd used a similar service myself, and always knew at some point I wanted to volunteer for a domestic abuse charity to give something back.

I was 15 when I met the person who became the perpetrator of the abuse I experienced, and within two months we were living together. His substance misuse problems got worse over time, and I experienced what I now know is emotional abuse. It breaks my heart when I hear women tell me they don't think what is happening to them is domestic abuse. That's how I felt, all those years ago.

We had a child together when I was 19, and when I was pregnant his drunken verbal abuse got worse. I had to call an ambulance when he locked me in the bathroom. That was one of his favourite 'punishments' – either locking me in or locking me out of the house.

Abuse generally escalates, and most of the injuries I sustained were after we split up. This is so common – it's when they lose their control over you.

Feedback from a RISE client:
"I would like to say a huge thank you to RISE for the support you gave me. Sarah has been my rock. She always makes me feel reassured at such a difficult time in my life. What an amazing woman."

95%

of clients said they would recommend this service to friends and family if they needed help

Volunteering on the helpline was a privilege as it's the first point of contact for anyone who calls RISE. It's really important to build up trust - it might be the first time they've told anyone what's happening to them. I praise them for speaking to me. What they've done by calling us is taking the first, and biggest, step. A lot of women find it hard to open up, as they feel they won't be believed.

After the seven months I spent on the helpline I got some paid hours as bank staff which gave me a deeper insight into the sorts of cases that come through to RISE and the work it does to support people. As well as taking helpline calls, I also answered referrals that came through on email, as well as dealing with queries from professionals such as GPs, probation workers and midwives.

After four months I started work in the RISE refuge, where I worked with clients face-to-face for the first time. I learnt to help them with their other support needs, such as dealing with housing workers and social services.



I got a permanent job as a caseworker just before lockdown, so my training had to be done remotely. The work I did during that period was mainly providing emotional support, because practical support was much harder; housing for example – as it was impossible to move. Court dates were pushed back and other agencies weren't operating.

I had to be in the right headspace to volunteer. I knew I wanted to do it for a long time, but waited for my gut to tell me when I was ready. It sounds strange to say that I enjoy the work, as I hear about so much trauma every day. But what I enjoy is feeling like I am empowering people, and helping them find who they are again. I know it can take years... but I also know it can be done because I did it.

Specialist services

LGBTQ+

We are proud of our specialist LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) service, which was the first of its kind when it was developed 14 years ago, and offers case work support to LGBTQ+ survivors. We have a presence in local community venues, the Rainbow Hub and Allsorts Youth Project, where we have a regular drop-in and run domestic abuse workshops for young LGBTQ+ people. We have also delivered training to organisations, alongside Stonewall.

Our expertise was recognised when we became part of a national working group alongside other LGBTQ+ agencies and Galop (the National LGBTQ+ anti-violence charity) last year, to create new ways of working and sharing knowledge around abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships.

It was heart-breaking when our LGBTQ+ refuge project ended in November 2019, which had seen huge successes in supporting LGBTQ+ clients in dispersed self-contained units in the community. It was therefore a huge relief to secure funding from the **Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)** so the project could resume in April 2020.

1 in 3

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are affected by domestic or sexual abuse and violence



As an inclusive service, working with people from all walks of life, we regularly attend Brighton Pride, Trans Pride and Disability Pride. Last year we held headdress making workshops for our staff, clients and supporters, and wore them when we marched in the Pride parade. We combined a gold theme to mark 50 years since the Stonewall riots, and silver to celebrate RISE's 25th anniversary.

Feedback from someone who has used our BME Service.

“I felt scared, vulnerable and guilty as I was led to think that what happened was my own fault. I had to go back to my own country and the thought of coming back was dreadful. When RISE contacted me, I received hope there was a way out of the nightmare I was in. I was listened to, advised and guided.”

Victims of honour-based violence are seven times more likely to experience abuse from multiple perpetrators.

Black and Minoritised Specialist Service

RISE runs a specialist service for black and minoritised women and girls aged 16+ affected by domestic or sexual violence or abuse. This includes those at risk of forced marriage, female genital mutilation, so called ‘honour’ based violence and other harmful practices. Women who have no recourse to public funds fall into this client group - which means they are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits, or to public housing.

Women from these communities may face the following barriers to accessing support:

- Fear of stereotyping or racism.
- Language needs.
- Fear of deportation due to immigration or asylum status.
- Fear of children being taken away, or rejection from a family or community.

As well as supporting clients directly through case work, and healthy relationships and prevention work, our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Specialist Officer, working closely alongside our Community Building project (see page 17), plays a critical role in sharing knowledge and best practice at a local and national level to help ensure

women and girls from these communities get the specialist support they need. This work has included:

- Creating bespoke virtual training to Brighton and Hove City Council.
- Overseeing and facilitating the BME advisory group for our Portal partners and community groups.
- Securing a funding pathway for women with no recourse to public funding to access our refuge.
- Working with Karma Nirvana on the response to Covid-19.
- Providing consultancy to statutory organisations within Brighton & Hove and East Sussex.



Housing

Our Domestic Violence Housing Specialist Officer started in November 2019.

She supports clients who have complex housing issues, helping them to access stable and safe housing by working closely with local authorities, housing associations and housing providers.

In February 2020, she successfully lobbied Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) to prioritise survivors of domestic abuse, so they can move straight from our refuge into more long-term accommodation, bypassing emergency accommodation. Prior to this, women moving out of our refuge faced an uncertain future – most private rental accommodation is rarely affordable, and going into emergency accommodation can make women and families feel isolated or unsafe again. This lack of stability can impact badly on survivors, with some even returning to their perpetrators.

Speaking about one of the families who accessed a home through this arrangement, their caseworker said: “this has made all the difference to the family, especially with the children not having to move far away. They can access the same support services and can continue to get therapy from RISE and are so, so happy.”

Thank you to **Nationwide** for funding this post.

Make a Change project – working with perpetrators

We believe that in order to achieve our vision of a world free from domestic abuse and violence, it is essential to engage with



those who perpetrate it. Between January 2019 and March 2020, RISE worked in partnership with Respect to deliver a pilot programme, where we supported the partners and ex-partners of people who use abusive behaviour towards them.

An evaluation of this pilot project by the University of Stirling found:

- 75% of men who attended the programme completed it - which is an unusually high level of retention.
- The most common motivation for those accessing the programme was wanting to improve their relationships, wanting help to stop being abusive, and wanting their partners and ex-partners to feel safe around them.
- Those who engaged with the programme said that they developed greater insight into their abusive behaviour, as well as a commitment to changing it.

Respect

make a
change

change that lasts
the right response to domestic abuse

In the community

Domestic abuse is a particularly insidious crime because it often happens behind closed doors, and the amount of control exerted by the perpetrator means it is largely underreported, and can go by unnoticed.

That's why it is so important for RISE to have our services embedded in the community, to ensure we can reach as many people in need of our help as possible.

We have a specialist Health Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor, who works at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, in the maternity ward, accident & emergency and the Claude Nicole Sexual Health Clinic. She works with domestic abuse victims offering immediate support, safety planning and signposting. She also provides essential training to hospital staff to increase awareness of domestic abuse to help them to better identify and respond to domestic abuse.

We also have a Criminal Justice Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor based at the head office of Sussex Police. She receives referrals from the police, and guides our clients through the criminal justice system – which to many can seem overwhelming and intimidating. She also aims to raise awareness within the local police force, helping them to develop a greater understanding of the complex nature of this type of crime and the challenges for victims.

We also provide a weekly drop-in surgery at Hove Town Hall alongside local police officers (paused due to lockdown) where survivors can approach us and get advice and referral into the service if needed.

The average length of abuse experienced by our clients is

65 months

(almost five and a half years)



Building communities

We are entering the final year of our four-year Community Engagement and Building Project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund Women and Girls Initiative. On average a survivor of domestic abuse will tell five people before she gets the help she needs, so this project aims to reach women by opening up dialogue, building capacity and creating safe spaces for women affected by domestic abuse.

Ask Me Ambassadors

The Ask Me scheme provides domestic abuse awareness training for anyone whose job means they come into contact with the general public. It covers how to start conversations on the topic and challenge myths, stereotypes and victim blaming. Despite Covid-19 disrupting our final year with the cancellation of two fully booked trainings, we still managed to recruit and train 24 new Ambassadors. We will also be piloting a new online package for Ask Me, designed by Women's Aid.

Community Connectors

This programme, where women with lived experience of domestic abuse use their gifts and strengths to create change in their local community, is really thriving! We recruited 12 new Connectors last year whose remarkable projects include:

- A community garden supporting mental wellbeing (currently paused due to Covid, but will launch next year).
- Yoga classes for children and their mothers (launched and active).
- A creative hub reaching isolated elders through employing craft skills (in progress).

The long-term goal is to support the survivors to build an independent, self-sustaining network and community space.



Feedback from a worker at William Collier House:

“We often doubt ourselves and feel lost or out of our depth supporting clients in abusive relationships. Having the consultations with Jen from RISE felt reassuring and allowed the whole team to be on the same page with how we support our clients.”

Research

The focus of the Walk Together research project and Community Research Programme is to ensure that survivor voice is embedded in the work that RISE does, so we are better informed about the needs of survivors and how we can work together to ensure that they are met. The Walk Together research project has finished following the journeys of eight survivors and two community groups, with the aim to track 'space for action' (freedom to live without abuse) and get a better understanding of survivor needs and experiences. The Community Research Programme has supported six community researchers and four research assistants since October 2017.

Black and minoritised community work

We have listened to our black and minoritised communities and created safe spaces where organic conversations around healthy relationships and domestic abuse can open up. Women had asked to learn how to use a sewing machine and a project called Sew and Grow evolved. Other women wanted to share their stories and workshops were held.

In lockdown, we ran sessions over Zoom and Whatsapp with interpreters, to teach women how to make face masks at home and importantly, to stay connected. All of these women only spaces increased skills and built confidence, whilst cultivating a relationship of trust with RISE. Since the start of this project we have engaged with over 300 women from across different black and minoritised communities through activities and workshops.

Capacity building

We have seen an increase in referrals to RISE through the work we have done providing domestic abuse training and developing 'champions' at hostels and specialist organisations for older and disabled people across the city. These partnerships include Possability People, Speak Out, Blatchington Court Trust, Anchor Hanover, Phase One, William Collier House, Equinox Women's Project, Stanley Court, St Patricks, George Williams, Leslie Best House, Fred Emery, Stopover, Clocktower Sanctuary, Fulfilling Lives, First Base, Just Life, Mungos, CGL, Oasis, YMCA Downslink and Antifreeze.



Therapy

We have continued to provide our Trauma Therapy Service offering 1:1 therapy and wellbeing groups to women, children and young people impacted by domestic abuse. This is funded by the CCG as part of the Trauma Pathway for Brighton & Hove, in collaboration with Survivors Network, Mankind and NHS Sussex Partnership. This has been a very successful collaboration and we would like to thank all of our colleagues that were involved, especially NHS Sussex Partnership for chairing the meetings, overseeing the clinical governance and providing consultancy and support.



This year we completed our three-year **Comic Relief** trauma project which provided us with a trauma specialist. She delivered training across the organisation to develop our trauma-informed approach, and provided trauma therapy for clients.

Our therapists are continuing to practice EMDR (eye movement desensitisation reprocessing) which is having very positive results.

We are also developing our 'Creative Community' approaches to wellbeing and this has included:

- Setting up a community wellbeing garden in collaboration with The Plot in Stanmer Park funded by the **Postcode Lottery**.
- Running a range of creative arts and wellbeing groups for adolescent girls affected by domestic violence.
- Developing and running new groups for mothers and children working together using art and play to develop relationships and support children's wellbeing.

68%

of women who experience domestic abuse go on to develop PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)

Thank you!

We would like to thank all our volunteer therapists without whom the service wouldn't exist! Cathy Bunker, Gill Daikin, Vanessa Jones, Eleanor Mile, Debra Oliver, Stephanie Pearce, Catherine Rees, Georgina Smith. We are so grateful for all the time and care that they have put into their work at RISE. They have helped us reach so many more people and we are eternally grateful!

We would also like to thank our volunteer Therapeutic Child Wellbeing Practitioner Eleanor Bullock-Johnson and Violet Blythe and Ellie Liddell-Crewe for co-facilitating the Arts and Wellbeing Group on **The Barge** in collaboration with **Onca Gallery**.

We would like to thank Lucy Dance, a volunteer Therapeutic Wellbeing Practitioner, for developing wellbeing sessions at refuge, and who worked with refuge residents to create the Art Corridor you read about on page 9.

Thank you as well to music therapy service **Nordoff Robbins and Harriet Crawford** - who have provided music therapy at RISE and have been able to run a therapeutic choir as well as providing wellbeing sessions for mothers and children at our refuge.

Last year our Therapy Team provided:
1 – 1 therapy for 77 adults
and young people and
26 children, wellbeing
groups for 72 people, and
assessments and support
for 155 people



Community fundraising

It's been a busy year and we'd like to thank our fantastic fundraisers! From the Co-Women Coworking 'Viva la Vulva' cupcakes to the Merry Maids International Women's Day lunch raising a huge £1,800.

Last year we were proud to become one of **Lewes Ladies FC's** Sister Ships - a "posse of bad-ass women-empowering vessels" which brought us together with other local women-focussed groups, including Brighton Women's Centre and the Sister Society, to collaborate in pioneering culture changes and supporting each other to empower the women in our local community.

Actor, writer, and advocate for Hampshire-based domestic abuse charity Aurora New Dawn, Kirsty Dillon, put on a show called 'Groomed to Perfection' at the

Theatre Royal. The play reflected the epidemic of violence against women and girls and how popular culture has groomed the female race for thousands of years to absorb, expect and stay silent about abuse. There was a bucket shake after the show and our CEO Jo Gough was invited to a post-performance Q & A about the issues raised.

Before it was sadly cut short due to the pandemic, the **Old Market Theatre** in Hove put on a genre-spanning mini-season of shows called **Reigning Women**. RISE was selected to fundraise after the shows, which celebrated the kick-ass women strutting their stuff on the entertainment scene.

Over the festive period, **Brighton Girl**, a network dedicated to empowering, inspiring and supporting all women living

in Brighton, donated wrapped Christmas gifts to our clients. Pippa Moyle, who organised the Big Wrap, said "RISE has supported many of our members and allies, providing a crucial lifeline to women across the city. As a community, we are incredibly grateful for the hard work that the organisation puts into keeping our sisters safe and protected. It was a wonderful privilege to give back at Christmas."



Companies

Throughout the year we've been overwhelmed by the generosity and support we've had from local businesses.

Following **Search Seven's** award-winning Share7 campaign, of which RISE were one of the benefitting charities, Managing Director Gavin Willis (pictured below) conceived the fantastic **#SuperHeroesRISEup** initiative which you'll read about on the next page. We are honoured to also be a part of their **#share77k** campaign and would wholeheartedly like to thank Gavin and the team for their creativity and unwavering support. It will be a pleasure to continue to work with them! "We've been supporting RISE for the last three years now, since a member of the team picked them as their chosen charity for our **#share7** campaign in 2018," said Gavin. "We love supporting RISE, what they stand for is fantastic, and we wanted to continue our support beyond that campaign."



#SuperHeroesRISEup worked really well and looked brilliant, and I am pleased it has now become a key part of this event."

Yoddi Pappa, the Managing Director of **Papa Pitta** who were one of our Heroes Run sponsors, went on to launch our sellout 'Battle of the Restaurants' pub quiz, which raised £500 as 14 of Brighton's finest eateries went head-to-head to discover who was the cleverest of them all!



Yoddi (pictured above) said: "the idea came out of wanting to give back and to raise awareness around the issue of domestic violence and abuse. We had over 70 people from some of the top restaurants in Brighton and it was so much fun."

We'd also like to give a special mention to **Brighton Gin**, who've consistently donated some fabulous prizes throughout the year, as well as **Bluebird Tea**, **Loving Earth**, the **Pet Shed** and **Mooncup**, who we received a donation from after being nominated by a staff member that had used our services.

Races

Heroes Run

The biggest and best superhero-themed fun run, the RISE Heroes Run, returned to Hove Lawns, as over 400 men, women, children and even dogs donned their best hero attire and helped raise the £15,000 needed to fund a much-needed child therapist.

Our superhero-themed dog show was a hit, and we partnered with search marketing company Search Seven to launch **#SuperHeroesRISEup**. This gave local businesses the opportunity to sponsor kilometre markers which were displayed along the route, featuring a custom super hero in bespoke company branding! Thank you to **Creative Blend** for designing the artwork and of course our lovely sponsors **Fitzhugh Gates, Pappa Pitta, Clarity Environmental, Fastnet, Search Seven** and **Pragmatic**.

8K Undercliff Run for Women

Our flagship event the 8K Undercliff Run for Women attracted nearly 500 runners who raised almost £30,000 as a sea of pink vests took over the scenic white cliffs from Saltdean to the Marina and back.

Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist and 'Crumble Lady' Lorraine Bowen provided a warm-up for the runners, and the Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Alex Phillips, awarded prizes to the first, second and third placed participants.

Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, who started the race said, "I'm honoured to have been invited. Now in its 12th year, this fantastic event is vitally important for the continuation of the crisis support and emotional care provided by RISE that helps women and families in our city rebuild their lives."



If you'd like to sign up to help out at our events please email fundraising@riseuk.org.uk

"It felt amazing to win. All the women were so supportive; it felt like a community down there, it was very heart-warming."
8K Undercliff Run winner Heidi Hodgson.

Special thanks to **Clarity Environmental** for providing some pro bono consultancy to help us reduce our environmental impact and make the event as sustainable as possible, and to **Higgidy Pies** who sponsored the race numbers.

Brighton Half Marathon

We were once again a charity partner of the Brighton Half Marathon with 20 RISE runners raising £9,000 for our essential domestic abuse services.

We couldn't do it (or any of our other races and events) without our amazing volunteers who ran one of the water stations, cheering on the runners amidst extremely windy weather conditions!

Thank you to the following companies for donating prizes, and treats for runners and volunteers: **Montezumas, FRoG, Retro Pink Barbershop, Friendly Panda, Thompson Morgan, Brighton Fringe, Brighton Pavilion, Lucky Voice, Jury's Inn, LazerZone, Purezza, Ruby Moon, Small Batch Coffee, Studio 57, Brighton Regency, Routemaster, Espionage Missions, Paint Pots Cafe.**



£52,652

was raised last year through races



Georgie's story

I still loved him and I believed him every time he came back crying, telling me how sorry he was. I believed it would stop; he made me believe I was to blame.

The first time I sought help it was after an assault that had left me black and blue. Afterwards, we wrote letters every day and he had it word-perfect; I thought he was a changed man. I followed my heart, a decision I will forever regret. The abuse continued and he didn't have any remorse for what he'd done. When the physical abuse returned, one day he put his hands around my neck whilst I was driving.

Later, I managed to text my neighbour asking her to call the police without the blue lights. I then quickly deleted the message as my partner grabbed the phone from my hands. The police arrived four minutes later and I answered the door and ran out. That day was the beginning of my freedom.

My whole life and belongings were transported to the refuge I was placed in, where I met a lady with the warmest smile. I was in a dark place, but for the first time someone actually understood what I was going through. There were times when I nearly broke; there were times when I wanted to pick up the phone and call my ex-partner. But instead I spoke to the workers at the refuge and to the amazing lifelong friends I met there. We supported each other on our low days and filled our time with making new fun memories for our children. I attended the Freedom Programme which opened my eyes to our relationship and the refuge gave me valuable tools to rebuild my life.



To say thank you, I decided to fundraise from 10,000 feet with a skydive, raising an amazing £500. The skydive was incredible and an experience I will never forget. I'm glad it's enabled me to share my story to others who may be going through a similar experience.



Without RISE I don't know where my beautiful son and I would be today.



Last year I was invited to RISE's 25th anniversary party, where I stood up and told my story to over 100 people.

There are so many women and men who are facing this nightmare every day and domestic abuse is such a whispered topic in people my age. People don't know what to say to someone who's suffering.

“

It made me strong enough to walk away and stay away. If I can help one person, I will be happy.

The truth is that when you're in that situation sometimes you don't want to listen, but RISE didn't give up on me.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

2019 was our 25th anniversary and we celebrated in style with an exhibition and party, hosted by journalist and author Alexandra Heminsley.

We were delighted to collaborate with the Devil's Dyke Network for spoken word and performance art and hear from Green MP Caroline Lucas who has supported our work for many years.

As you can see from our timeline, we've come a long way from the Women's Refuge Project, with a single landline telephone, to services and staff in locations across Sussex.

1994

The Women's Refuge Project is launched. Based out of a cramped office in Brighton Women's Centre, a helpline is set up for women experiencing domestic abuse. Later that year we opened our Brighton refuge with space for six families.

1995

The first outreach team is set up. With just one full time worker, one part time worker and a part-time student social worker, the team supports 881 women and 938 children in the first year. the same year Brighton police opened their first domestic violence unit, and all cases of domestic abuse in the city started being referred to RISE.

1998

Our first preventative schools initiative is launched.

1999

Our new training service is launched, with 200 police officers and 75 housing officers trained that year.

2003

The first therapist is employed at RISE, on five hours a week. When the funding ran out later that year, the service continued with trainee volunteer counsellors on placement.

2006

Our LGBTQ+ domestic abuse project is launched. This was the first of its kind in the country.

2007

We run our first symposium, Drum Out Abuse, along with a march.

2008

Women's Refuge Project rebrands as RISE. This year we launch the RISE 8K Undercliff Run for Women, the first women-only 8K run in the country. This has continued every year since!

2014

RISE wins the Kings Fund GSK Award for innovation in health.

2015

RISE begins leadership of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Domestic and Sexual Abuse & Violence contract to deliver the Portal branded services.

2016

Children In Need re-funds our Family Team, and a boys group is developed in collaboration with the Youth Offending Service. The same year RISE helps launch the Break 4 Change National training programme - one of the leading providers of child to parent abuse interventions in the UK.

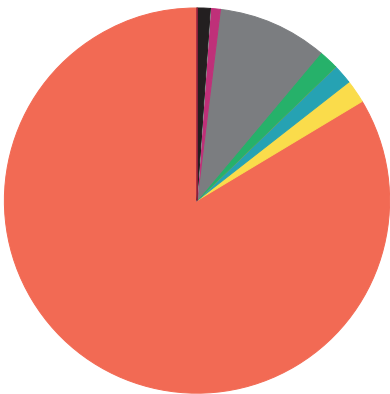
2016/17

RISE is among the first to receive the Women's Aid Quality Standard award.

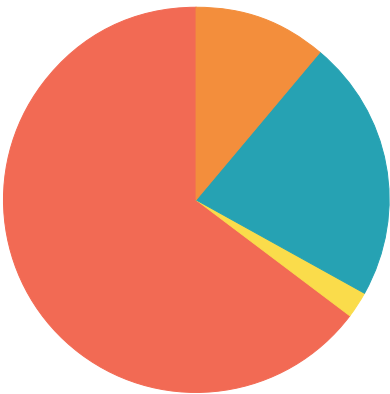
Income and expenditure

Income: £2,562,642

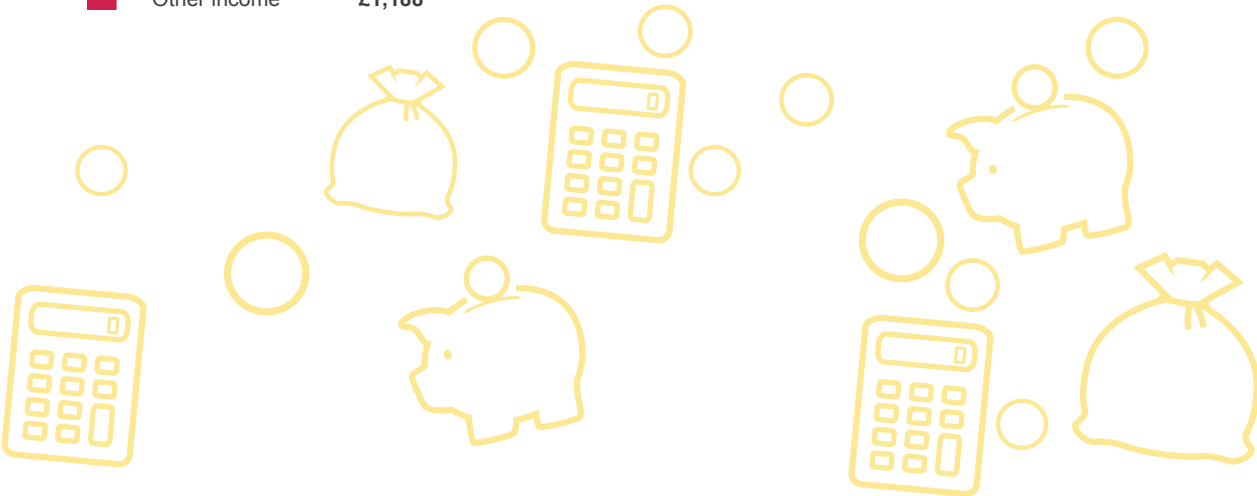
Expenditure: £2,728,084



Grants & Contracts	£2,139,698
Races	£52,652
Major Donors	£40,000
Companies	£1,344
Other Donations	£43,830
Residential	£230,793
Fees	£21,031
Investments	£2,628
gift Aid	£29,477
Other income	£1,188



Salaries	£2,748,720
Fundraising costs	£84,059
Direct Service Costs	£932,839
Support, Governance & Overheads	£482,869



Make a donation
www.riseuk.org.uk/donate

Get involved

You can help support people to live free from domestic abuse and violence in the following ways:

Give a regular gift

As you've seen from this report, many parts of our service are only funded in the shorter term. So once that time and money is up, we're left searching for a way to keep important services running. What is most valuable to us are small but regular donations, so we can plan ahead and ensure our survivors have ongoing support from us. Even donating the cost of a coffee every month will help us ensure domestic abuse survivors can continue to rely on us during their recovery.

Hold a fundraising event for RISE

Whether it's a film night, quiz, raffle or dress up day, contact fundraising@riseuk.org.uk and we can send you a fundraising pack filled with top tips for maximising your fundraising!

Leave us a gift in your Will

We've partnered with Make a Will Online, so making a will couldn't be easier. Once your loved ones are cared for, do something amazing and remember us in your Will. Visit www.riseuk.org/giftsinwills for more information.

Have a RISE collection box at home or at work

Those loose pennies really add up - and can go a long way to help us continue our vital crisis support, practical guidance and emotional care. Email fundraising@riseuk.org.uk and we can send you a box.

Volunteer for RISE

Visit www.riseuk.org.uk/volunteering for our current volunteer vacancies, or email volunteering@riseuk.org.uk to be added to our volunteer mailing list to find out about volunteer opportunities as they arise.

Request helpline cards

1 in 4 women in the UK will be affected by domestic abuse in her lifetime, so it may be happening to someone you love. Having our helpline cards available at workplaces and community centres lets people know that help and support is just a phone call away. Helpline cards can be requested by emailing: communications@riseuk.org.uk.

