



# Press Release

19<sup>th</sup> March 2009

## Harman announces £1.6 million fund for sexual abuse voluntary sector

A Special Fund for the sexual abuse voluntary sector has been announced today by the Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman. The fund, worth £1.6 million, is a cross-Government initiative involving the Government Equalities Office, Department of Health and the Home Office. Organisations affiliated to The Survivors Trust and Rape Crisis England and Wales will be able to apply to the fund, which is intended to help services currently on the brink of closure to continue supporting survivors of rape and sexual abuse in the year ahead.

Fay Maxted, CEO, of The Survivors Trust said: “We are extremely pleased that Harriet Harman has announced funding for The Survivors Trust and Rape Crisis member groups. It signals real progress in the Government’s commitment to all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse. However, we emphasise that their work towards helping victims rebuild their lives must not stop here.”

The voluntary sector agencies comprising The Survivors Trust provide essential crisis and therapeutic support services for victims of rape and sexual abuse. Funding for these organisations is at crisis point – eight of The Survivors Trust’s member agencies have closed due to lack of funds since 2007.

There is a currently a postcode lottery in service provision meaning that traumatised and vulnerable individuals who desperately need access to support can face huge delays. This is if they are able to access a service at all – in many areas there is no specialist help for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. The reason for this is that funding for services simply isn’t available on a wide enough scale. The provision of the £1.6 million Special Fund by the Government will mean that the most struggling services will be able to apply for emergency funding which will keep them afloat for longer.

Fay added: “All victims of rape or sexual abuse have the right to be able to access a local service that will provide them with appropriate support for as long as they feel they need it. The Government must continue to work closely with The Survivors Trust and Rape Crisis to develop longer-term and sustainable funding to help these victims.”

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## **Notes to Editors:**

- This announcement follows a statement made by the Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman, Minister for Women, in the House of Commons on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009 which highlighted how Government officials have been working with The Survivors Trust and Rape Crisis England and Wales to plan this fund.
  - The Special Fund for the sexual abuse voluntary sector will be open for applications from the date of its announcement. It is currently planned to run for one year. No confirmation of a similar fund for future years has yet been confirmed by the Government.
  - Applications can be made to the Special Fund by member organisations of The Survivors Trust and Rape Crisis England and Wales.
  - In order for the fund to be allocated an Awarding Board will be established and function from the beginning of April 2009. A reviewing process will be carried out by the Board who will examine all applications received and allocate portions of the Fund to the organisations and services most at risk of closure.
  - Case studies about The Survivors Trust member agencies containing details of the implications of their funding situation can be obtained from The Survivors Trust.
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### **For more information please contact:**

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*The Survivors Trust is a national umbrella agency for over 120 specialist voluntary sector agencies providing a range of counselling, therapeutic and support services working with women, men and children who are victims/survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse.*

**More information about The Survivors Trust and a media pack can be found  
on our website:**

[www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)

