**A BRIEF HISTORY**

In 1987 a group of women from a variety of backgrounds came together on a voluntary basis with the aim of developing a support service for women and girls in Barnsley. Over two years they met, raised money and trained, before opening a helpline service in 1989 for women who had been raped or sexually abused. Initially this functioned on a shoestring. They had no premises of their own and the bare minimum of equipment. On Thursday evenings they would wind the telephone downstairs to a borrowed office and take calls in the 2-hour session. For the rest of the week, the answer phone was locked in a filing cabinet in a disused attic!

In 1991 after securing additional funding, they moved into better premises and were at last able to offer face to face counselling to women in a safe and comfortable environment. The workload increased on all fronts over the years and the recruitment of new volunteers, and employment of a Development Worker and part-time Admin Worker in 1996, enabled the services to women to be extended in line with client demand.

In the intervening years we have taken further steps and have extended our services to offer support to women, men, children, young people and families.

Following several successful funding bids and a large increase in client workload and demand for specialist training and support, BSARCS appointed a specialist CSE trainer and a small number of children’s therapists to add to the teams.

BSARCS is now led by a Development Manager and Trustee Board. There is now a team of counsellors and therapists, an ISVA team and a business and finance team. Additionally BSARCS also has a team of specialist ISVAs based in Rotherham.

Our base is in the Core, which hosts several voluntary organisations, and we are lucky to have comfortably furnished clients spaces, group rooms and offices.

In addition to individual counselling and therapy sessions, BSARCS’ also offers support through the justice process, specialist training and group work – overall we support around 1, 500 adults and children each year.