

Project Summary for JLA Page

Sexual violence implies any form of unwanted sexual activity that is not consented to by the receiving person¹. It encompasses a broad range of behaviours, including sexual assault, abuse and rape. For the year ending March 2018, the Crime Survey for England and Wales recorded 150,732 cases of sexual offences¹. According to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, sexual violence is an under-researched area². Interventions available for survivors of sexual abuse are not always centred on the needs of survivors². The area of sexual violence would benefit from more research, and identifying the current top unanswered questions would help to do this. Research is needed to identify the needs of survivors, and subsequently ensure their recovery needs receive the appropriate attention. It is also crucial that survivors themselves, and those working with survivors, are at the centre of such research to help shape services, guidelines and future research - they are ultimately the experts by lived experience.

The aim of the Sexual Violence Priority Setting Partnership (SVPSP) is to explore and prioritise uncertainties concerning the care of adult survivors (18+) of sexual violence, from the perspectives of survivors of sexual violence and health and social care professionals. Survivors will include those individuals who self-identify as a person with lived experience of sexual violence as an adult and/or a child.

Objectives of the SVPSP are to:

- Work with survivors and professionals to identify uncertainties about the best way to support people who have experienced sexual violence.
- Agree a prioritised list of those uncertainties for research purposes.
- Publicise the results of the PSP and its process.
- Take the results to research commissioning bodies to be considered for funding

We will use a range of outreach methods to enable diverse groups, who are 'seldom heard' in sexual violence research, to engage with the project. This is important as it will allow uncertainties around the specific support and recovery needs of different groups to be considered when sexual violence research priorities are identified.

These 'seldom unheard' groups in sexual violence research include:

- Males
- Individuals with learning disabilities
- Sex workers

- Ethnic minority groups
- The LGBTQ+ community
- The elderly

The scope of the Sexual violence PSP is defined as:

- The health and social care needs of adults (18 and over) that have experienced sexual violence, in childhood and/or adulthood.
- All forms of sexual violence, including penetrative and non-penetrative, will be considered.
- It will gather responses from Individuals who currently live in the UK who have experience of SV in the UK or overseas.

The PSP will exclude from its scope:

- Any survey responses regarding the prevention of sexual violence;
- Any survey responses focussing on the specifics of the criminal justice component in response to sexual violence incidents; however, responses regarding the effects and impact (e.g. psychological and emotional) of this component and process will be included.
- Any survey responses received from individuals who are not survivors, or a health and social care professional with direct experience of working with survivors.
- Any survey responses from purely family members/supporters/loved ones of survivors. Unlike other PSP's responses from such individuals will be excluded. This decision has been made based on a number of factors that were discussed during the first SG meeting. For example, many survivors are not close to and or/ in contact with family members, and additionally often survivors do not disclose their experiences to anyone at all. This was felt to be especially the case for hard-to-reach groups. It was suggested that the inclusion of family members/supporters may negatively effects the diversity the PSP is hoping to capture in the survey. In addition to this, it was strongly felt that the focus should remain on the survivors themselves. It was felt that it could potentially skew results/ Top 10 priorities by including supporters in the survey. The SVPSP does however acknowledge the importance of family members/supporters/loved ones to many survivors and acknowledges the effect such experiences can have on these individuals. Hopefully, future work and research will give voice to their crucial views and perspectives – but this is not within the scope of this PSP.
- Any survey responses received from individuals who live outside the UK.
- Any survey responses from children (under 18) affected by sexual violence.

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References

¹ NHS. Help after rape and sexual assault.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/help-after-rape-and-sexual-assault/>

Accessed 5 July 2019.

² Sexual Violence Research Initiative (2019) FAQ.

<https://www.svri.org/faq>

Accessed 25 August 2019.