

Building a society where NO male survivor is left behind

BEYOND THE

# SILENCE

ISSUE FIVE  
Winter 2025

# WE ARE

# THE



NO male  
survivor  
left  
behind.

2025: THE YEAR OF CONSENT

# COMING OF AGE

CELEBRATING 16 YEARS OF WE ARE SURVIVORS.

**WE ARE  
SURVIVORS.**

BEYOND THE

WE ARE SURVIVORS.

# SILENCE



ISSUE FIVE Winter 2025

# INSIDE

Happy Birthday	02
News	03
Meet The Team	04
Fundraising	05
Silent No More	06
And The Winner Is...	08
Campaigns	09
Birthday Messages	10
Measuring Impact	12
The Year of Consent	13
What Does Consent Mean?	14
Community	16
The Last Word	19

WE ARE SURVIVORS.

BEYOND THE SILENCE is published quarterly by We Are Survivors, and is edited, designed and produced by our Grahame.

We'd love your feedback. What would you like to see in future editions? Let us know.

media@wearesurvivors.org.uk

www.wearesurvivors.org.uk



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We're 16 years old, and you're invited to the party!

## WELCOME TO THE BRAND NEW ISSUE OF BEYOND THE SILENCE.

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I'd get from the corner of the room in the flat, to an organisation that supports over 2,500 men like me - male survivors - every year; thanks to a staff team of over 50; with a hub in Salford and spoke sites in Tameside, Wigan and Trafford... oh, and in all 15 prisons across the North West. It genuinely blows my mind every single day!

16 years feels so... big! There is a poignancy to this for me. Whilst this 16th year brings me so much pride for what we've achieved, when I was turning 16, that's when the sexual abuse was getting more intense, worse maybe. So maybe that is the very definition of pain into power?

This edition of *Beyond the Silence* is packed full of history, bursting with celebration and certainly laced with reflection... and maybe a hint of excitement for what we've got coming up in our 16th year.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, if you're new to the magazine then pick up past editions featuring *Casualty's* Barney



Walsh, *Hollyoaks'* James Sutton, and man of the year, our Emmy Award winning Richard Gadd! You can download them by going to [www.wearesurvivors.org.uk/breakthesilence/beyond-the-silence](http://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk/breakthesilence/beyond-the-silence)

Happy Birthday to us and a very special thank you to you.

DUNCAN CRAIG OBE  
Chief Executive Officer

# NEWS

## VICTIMS AND PRISONERS ACT



### STRATEGY

# GM MALE STRATEGY

Greater Manchester launches groundbreaking new strategy.

THE LATE GREAT ANTHONY H WILSON, co-founder of Factory Records and the Hacienda once said *“this is Manchester, we do things differently here”* and we certainly do, especially when something is just not right.

Whilst in the England and Wales national strategy, male victims of sexual violence, domestic abuse, ‘so called’ honour-based killing, and forced marriage are classed as victims of violence against women and girls; here in Greater Manchester we’re doing things differently. Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, Kate Green, has now officially launched the Greater Manchester Plan for Tackling Gender Based Violence Against Men and Boys, stating:

*“Our plan aims to reduce gender-based violence against men and boys, encourage them to seek help and live well, and ensure high-quality, accessible services across Greater Manchester. We are committed to a trauma-informed and responsive, inclusive approach that addresses the specific needs of male victims and recognises the complex power dynamics and intersectional challenges they face.”*

The GM plan was co-authored by our very own Chief Executive Officer and Professor David Gadd.

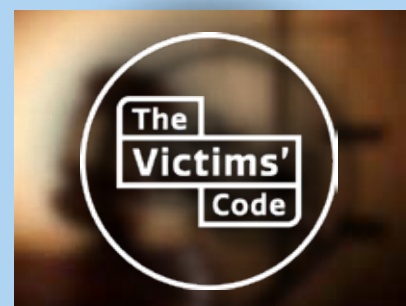
Go to [www.wearesurvivors.org.uk/news/greater-manchester-on-imd2024](http://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk/news/greater-manchester-on-imd2024) to find out more. ■

Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, Lord Timpson has now signed a commencement order for the Victims & Prisoner Act 2024, bringing into force measures ensuring:

- The Victims Commissioner can hold agencies to account
- A simplified complaint process for victims
- Relevant agencies comply with the Victims’ Code

Minister Timpson said: “I was delighted to sign the commencement order for the Victims and Prisoner Act 2024 yesterday. By strengthening the powers of the Victims’ Commissioner and improving support, we’re putting victims at the heart of the justice system.”

## VICTIMS’ CODE



The Ministry of Justice has launched its latest campaign to heighten awareness of The Victims’ Code – the 12 rights that victims of crime in England and Wales can expect to receive.

Take a look at the website: [victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/your-rights/as-a-victim](http://victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/your-rights/as-a-victim)

# MEET THE TEAM

## THEO AARONS

Digital Communications  
Co-ordinator

"I APPRECIATE THE EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENT FOSTERED BY WE ARE SURVIVORS. As a member of the Communications team, alongside three exceptional colleagues, I am continually motivated to advance my professional skills and contribute effectively to our shared mission. One of the most memorable projects I had the opportunity to work on was the magazine advertisement for the launch of Beyond The Silence Issue 4. This project was particularly enjoyable due to the collaboration with the exceptionally talented James Sutton. His participation added significant value to the advertisement, making it an extraordinary experience. The most challenging part of my role is having to be always up to date with the newest trends and preferences so that I'm creating relevant content that will speak to many male survivors and may help them start their healing journey with us here at We Are Survivors." ■

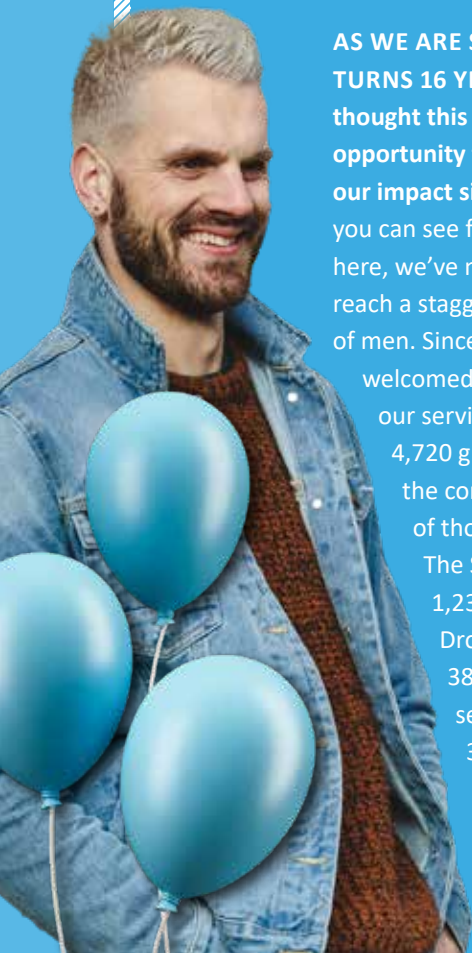


Find out more about our work at:  
[www.wearesurvivors.org.uk](http://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk)



# OUR STATS

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE. AT A GLANCE.



AS WE ARE SURVIVORS TURNS 16 YEARS OLD, we thought this was a perfect opportunity to look back at our impact since 2009. As you can see from the figures here, we've managed to reach a staggering number of men. Since 2009, we have welcomed 7,251 clients into our service, and provided 4,720 group sessions in the community. 2,650 of those sessions were The Safe Room, and 1,238 were through Drop-Ins. With 38,227 therapy sessions, that's 31,856 hours! And we're just getting started...

7,251  
REFERRALS  
PROCESSED



4,720  
GROUP  
SESSIONS



38,227  
THERAPY  
SESSIONS



14,148  
ISVA  
SESSIONS





# SUPPORT IN 2025



2024 WAS A FANTASTIC YEAR FOR FUNDRAISING, from our participation in the Great Manchester Run to our Charity of the Year partnership with the Mere Golf Resort and Spa, We Are Survivors has raised over £27,000 from individual supporters!

Hot on the heels of these wonderful donations, 2025 kicks off with the support of EnQuest, an independent energy company, focused on mature late-life assets, responsibly optimising production to provide energy security. Where they can, they repurpose infrastructure to deliver renewable energy and decarbonisation projects before executing world-class decommissioning. The donation was from their Offshore Team on the Thistle Platform in the North Sea. The team's good Health and Safety performance is rewarded with money for their chosen charities, nominated and voted on by their staff and usually personal to at least one person on board the platform. *THANK YOU Thistle Asset Team and EnQuest for your support!*

If you're part of an organisation or know someone that's interested in supporting We Are Survivors please contact us here: [fundraising@wearesurvivors.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@wearesurvivors.org.uk) to explore some opportunities to support Male survivors.

## NATIONAL LOTTERY

# HERE'S TO THE PLAYERS

Thanks to National Lottery funding, We Are Survivors is now able to reach more male survivors than ever.

**MALE SURVIVORS ARE IN EVERY COMMUNITY AND IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD IN GREATER MANCHESTER.**

While we do everything we can to reach male victims across our city, we know that there are many men who are isolated from life-changing support due to barriers out of their control - their geographical location, a lack of public transport connectivity, or simply that they cannot meet the costs of travel to sessions at our hub or afford wifi access to engage with our online support. We urgently need to be side-by-side in communities with male survivors, take our support to them and make it easy to seek help.

A major three-year grant from the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund is enabling us to do just this. We are

expanding our support of male survivors of sexual violence by opening six spoke sites in community settings across Greater Manchester - the first time that our support services will be accessible outside of our city centre base.

It is our aim that no male survivor will be more than 40 minutes away from support and, following consultation with partners and local communities, 2025 will see our first three spoke sites open in Wigan, Trafford and Tameside.

We would like to express enormous gratitude to the National Lottery players for their support of this project, which will enable many more men across our city to break their silence and take positive steps towards recovery.

## GRAB YOUR FREE FUNDRAISING PACK



To download or read our FREE Fundraising pack, just scan the QR code.

# SILENT NO MORE

## A History of We Are Survivors

Part One: 2007-2012

In the first of a four-part series celebrating sixteen years of We Are Survivors, we look at the founding of the organisation...

A second-hand copy of 'Building Websites for Dummies' bought from Oxfam near Manchester Royal Infirmary; a second-hand laptop with a dodgy screen; and a pay-as-you-go mobile topped up with £25 credit.

As an origin story, it's certainly humble – but from those humble beginnings here we are 16 years later - the UK's largest male survivor charity with an international reach and a trusted supporter of thousands of men.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. In the first of a four-part feature, we're diving into the history and the key moments of We Are Survivors first 16 years. But the story actually begins about 18 years ago...

### 2007

**BIG NEWS:** Madeleine McCann goes missing

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *The Queen*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Umbrella* – Rihanna

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *Rugby World Cup Final*

Duncan Craig, a student counsellor/psychologist studying at the University of Manchester is on placement within the NHS. While working with a client in Wythenshawe, Duncan was triggered into dealing with his own experience of childhood

sexual abuse. Support however, was virtually non-existent, certainly in Greater Manchester. "Literally no one wanted to know about male survivors", says Duncan. "People were pointing me towards amazing support in Greater Manchester for females, but that was no good for us boys and men."

### 2008

**BIG NEWS:** Barack Obama wins US Presidential election

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *Mamma Mia*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Hallelujah* – Alexandra Burke

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *Wallace & Gromit: A Matter Of Loaf & Death*

Duncan very quickly realised that he wouldn't – *couldn't* - be the only man dealing with the trauma of sexual abuse and quickly had the idea to start some kind of support network or mechanism for men to get the help they needed. In the evenings after his day job and during days off, Duncan knocked on doors, and e-mailed anyone he could find who might take his idea seriously...

Thankfully, a small but influential number of people listened (and if you know Duncan, you'll know he has a knack of persuading people to listen!). Bernie Ryan OBE managed St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at the time gave him a few words of advice and encouragement; as did his lecturers and some peers at the University; and with that he gathered together a small group of professionals and trusted individuals and an initial plan for Survivors Manchester was developed and a Board of Trustees was formed.



## 2009

**BIG NEWS:** The death of Michael Jackson

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *Slumdog Millionaire*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Pokerface* – Lady Gaga

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *Britain's Got Talent Final*

The morning of Saturday 5th February the postman knocked on Duncan's front door and handed him a large brown envelope. Inside was a letter and accompanying certificate of incorporation from Companies House, stating that Survivors Manchester was now formally a not-for-profit organisation.

This is when the book, the laptop and the mobile become so important. Taking a characteristic hands-on approach, Duncan used these tools to build a website and start a primitive telephone support line. Duncan: "I knew first hand that 'logging on' and dipping your toe in the 'digital' water was such a shared experience of male survivors that I needed to get underneath that behaviour and understand why survivor websites were so important."

## 2010

**BIG NEWS:** Coalition government formed in UK between Conservative & LibDems

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *Toy Story 3*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Love The Way You Lie* – Eminem & Rihanna

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *The X Factor Final*

Maintaining this support offer to male survivors was going to require cold, hard cash.

This is when the generosity of Manchester folk took hold. Christos Tsaprounis, one of Duncan's best friends, decided to grab his trainers and ran the Greater Manchester Run year-after-year raising over £3000, which went a long way to keeping that mobile phone topped up with credit, and the website hosting running smoothly – ensuring messages of hope and support got to male survivors.

Virtual support was all very well, but the need for a safe space for male survivors to receive face-to-face support quickly became apparent. Responding to an ad from a Northern Quarter coffee shop offering space in their premises, the first ever male survivors peer-support group was set up with members of this 'Safe Room' donating £1 each session to sustain the group.

## 2011

**BIG NEWS:** Summer riots across the UK

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *The Kings Speech*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Rolling In The Deep* – Adele

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *The X Factor Final*

A pivotal moment came when Zurich Community Trust awarded Survivors Manchester a grant of £5000 a year over three years. This allowed the organisation to reach the threshold to register with the Charity Commission as a charity in England and Wales. Duncan: "That formal registration made people take note, to listen and show that we were serious about this, we wanted

to create proper services for male survivors because we deserve them! But Zurich Community Trust didn't just help us reach that financial threshold, they stood with us and opened their doors to allow us to access a wealth of their people with useful skills."

Since day one, male survivors have been at the heart of everything we do. Not just with service delivery, but with decision making. Being 'survivor-led' is vital to our existence.

## 2012

**BIG NEWS:** Costa Concordia capsizes

**FILM OF THE YEAR:** *Skyfall*

**SONG OF THE YEAR:** *Somebody That I Used To Know* – Gotye ft. Kimbra

**TV OF THE YEAR:** *Olympics Closing Ceremony*

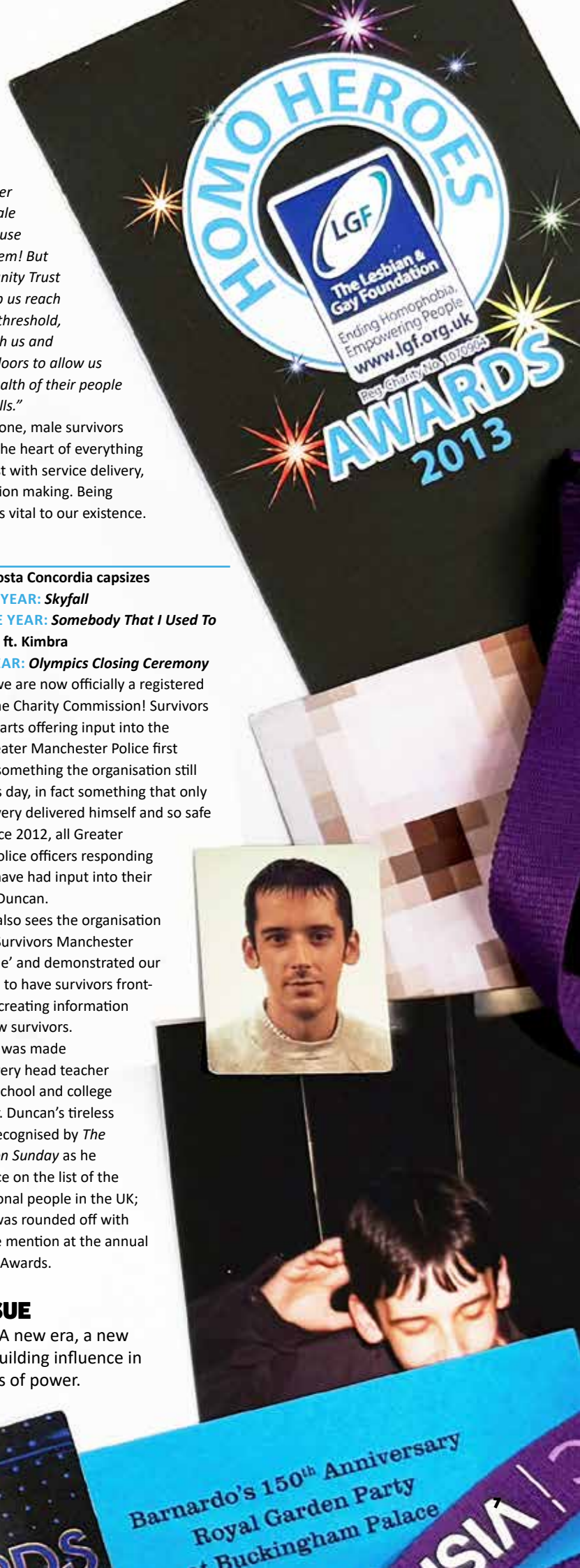
A big year as we are now officially a registered charity with the Charity Commission! Survivors Manchester starts offering input into the training of Greater Manchester Police first responders – something the organisation still delivers to this day, in fact something that only Duncan has ever delivered himself and so safe to say that since 2012, all Greater Manchester Police officers responding to male rape have had input into their training from Duncan.

This year also sees the organisation produce the 'Survivors Manchester Survivors Guide' and demonstrated our determination to have survivors front-and-centre in creating information aimed at fellow survivors.

The guide was made available to every head teacher in every high school and college in Manchester. Duncan's tireless efforts were recognised by *The Independent on Sunday* as he receives a place on the list of the most inspirational people in the UK; and the year was rounded off with an honourable mention at the annual Homo Heroes Awards.

## NEXT ISSUE

**2013-2016.** A new era, a new home and building influence in the corridors of power.



# AND THE WINNER IS...



We don't do the work we do for awards and recognition, but we've been lucky to have our work marked and celebrated over the years...

**IN OUR FIRST SIXTEEN YEARS, We Are Survivors has been recognised as a groundbreaking organisation centering the needs and experiences of male survivors.** We've been lucky to see that recognition take the shape of some key awards.

Our CEO Duncan Craig recognises the importance of these awards, "An award for the delivery of a service is so often a big boost for the team and is recognition for their hard work. An award for the organisation makes us all feel great and something to remember in tough times. But any award recognition for We Are Survivors is a recognition for male survivors, who feel really proud when they see us being recognised - they feel seen."

For Duncan one of the awards that brings the most pride is his OBE "because of what it was for and the recognition of male survivors" In terms of the organisation though, Duncan says "I have to say the Chief Constable's Special

*Commendation Award for our work on the Reynhard Sinaga case - the biggest rape case in British legal history. We were commended for our work with the victims/survivors. It meant a lot to us all, especially Gayna and the ISVA team who were so central to that work."*

Other award recipients can have a profound effect on We Are Survivors. "When Peter Ash won his National Television Award for the sexual abuse storyline in Coronation Street, he talked about us in his acceptance speech. And watching the Golden Globes and seeing our name on screen, and being thanked when Richard Gadd gave his speech after winning for Baby Reindeer... we were all gagged!" ■



*Check out our trophy cabinet!*





# LEVELLING UP



# ON IT

How do we top what the ON IT campaign achieved in 2024? Simple. Make it bigger and better!

**ON IT is a joint campaign from We Are Survivors and George House Trust, and is a source of relevant information about sex, chems, HIV and consent, to inform, understand and help keep people safe.**

The campaign developed from the groundbreaking report 'Sex, Chems, HIV & Consent' by Dr. Michael Atkins (aka Cheddar Gorgeous) which centred the voices of those who have sex whilst using chems, with all messaging and information is shaped by the community for the community. This year ON IT gets bigger and better with attendance at local prides across the north west, culminating in the fabulous Manchester Pride Parade; some major updates to the website; partnerships with some amazing content creators and in our Year Of Consent, we also have some very exciting plans for later in the year! Keep an eye on all our socials for details throughout the year! Stay safe.

Visit ON IT at [www.onit.org.uk](http://www.onit.org.uk)

# ARE YOU OUR ALLY?

More venues, more support. We need male survivor allies more than ever. Have you signed up yet?

**Survivor Ally has undergone a significant update recently to enhance its offerings and provide comprehensive support to male survivors.**

We have enriched our pages with crucial new information, ensuring a more robust understanding for our users. In addition to our existing courses, we now provide resources specifically designed to deepen your understanding of male survivors and guide you in creating safe spaces within your practice or studio. To complete your course, please visit the website (see below). Upon completion, you will receive a Survivor Ally certificate and stickers, symbolising your commitment to this vital cause. Survivor Ally plays a crucial role in equipping professionals operating in physical settings with the necessary training to ensure their clients, who may be survivors, feel comfortable and supported. It is imperative that we foster safer environments across all areas of life.

Visit SURVIVOR ALLY at [www.wereallies.co.uk](http://www.wereallies.co.uk)



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## WE ARE SURVIVORS.

One of the best parts of any birthday celebration is receiving messages from friends and supporters...

We Are Survivors wouldn't be the organisation it is today without the support, friendship and allyship of so many individuals and organisations.

We've been humbled by some of the messages we've received from our supporters for our 16th birthday, and we're proud to share some of them here with you. We reflect all that love and support back to everyone on this page, and to all those who have been supportive - and sometimes critical - friends since 2009.

We'd love to read your birthday messages and memories of We Are Survivors first 16 years. Use the #WAS16 and tag us on social media. You can follow us on most major platforms.

    @ThisIsSurvivors



A very Happy Birthday and a huge thank you to We Are Survivors. The work you do supporting male survivors and making sure their experiences are recognised is truly remarkable. It's imperative that consent is ingrained into the minds of future generations from day dot. We are committed to improving understanding of consent and tackling harmful attitudes throughout society. No will always mean no.

*Alex Davies-Jones MP, Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls*

A very happy 16th birthday to all at We Are Survivors! Enjoy a wonderful 'Year of Consent' - and here's to many more victories!

*Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester*

Just wanting to send a personal congratulations and happy 16th year to an amazing service that continues to strive and provide excellent services to the community. Here's to the next years and continued partnership work together!

*Kate Davies CBE, Director of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Services Commissioning, NHS England.*

Happy 16th Birthday We Are Survivors. A huge thank you for everything you do to champion and empower the voices of male survivors. We Are Survivors continue to be a driving force in embedding culture change across the country, and an integral part of implementing the NHS Sexual Safety Charter locally. Thank you Duncan and the team for all you do in putting survivor voice first.

*Catherine Hinwood OBE, Programme Director for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence NHS England.*

Happy Birthday! What an incredible milestone for an incredible charity! What you do is so important and leading the way in changing lives with survivors both in GM and nationally.

*Liz Windsor-Welsh, Chief Executive of Action Together*

It's been my honour to serve on your Board all these years. You've had great times and difficult times, but all have been part of shaping the wonderful organisation you've become. Wishing you an amazing 16th birthday! X

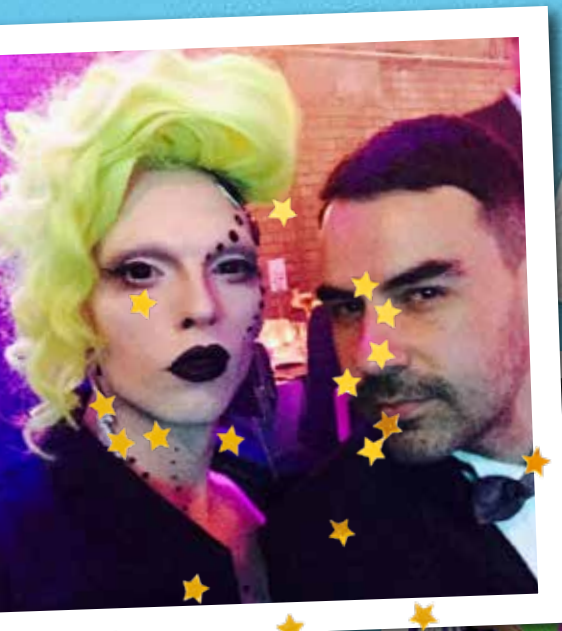
*Evan Chiswell, Founder Trustee and current Deputy Chair of Trustees*

Happy Birthday to the wonderful We Are Survivors. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do in supporting male survivors to break the silence. I look forward to what is still to come as you work ever closer towards ensuring no male survivors are left behind. Keep up the great work!

*Wesley Doherty, Founder Trustee*

Happy 16th Birthday from us all at Salford CVS. We Are Survivors are an important organisation in the VCSE ecosystem in Salford, GM, and beyond... ably led by the extraordinary Duncan Craig. Here's to many more birthdays.

*Alison Paige, CEO of Salford CVS*



I just want to wish one of my favourite charity's the most happy 16th birthday. To everyone at We Are Survivors. Keep breaking the silence. Keep helping men, lads and boys break the silence. Keep reminding us all that we're not doing enough and that it's all our responsibility to make the change. Keep changing the world you absolute bunch of legends

**Darren Knight, CEO of George House Trust**



Happiest of birthdays to We Are Survivors! Huge congratulations on 16 incredible years supporting thousands of male survivors to break their silence and access positive affirming services. Also all the influencing work the team delivers nationally and internationally to break the stigma of sexual violence and abuse of men and boys.

**Annie Emery, CEO of MASH**

Happy 16th birthday to our friends We Are Survivors. Thanks for all the incredible work you do to support our communities. Wishing you a great birthday year and much continued success.

**Monty and all the team at London Friend**

Happy Birthday We Are Survivors - not a troublesome 16 year old but a brilliant partner adding real value to the work of the Probation Service - congratulations!

**Chris Edwards, Regional Director of Greater Manchester, HMPPS**

Happy birthday to We Are Survivors! For 16 years, you've been a pillar of strength and support for survivors across Greater Manchester, changing countless lives, and empowering individuals. Keep up the incredible work.

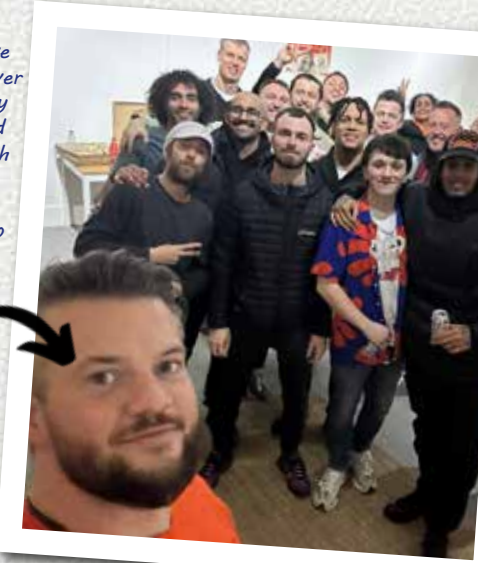
**City Mayor Paul Dennett**

Happy 16th! Thank you very much for both your direct work with survivors, and your commitment to forging effective partnerships with mine and other organisations.

**Bishop David Walker, Bishop of Manchester**

Happy Birthday big bro! I've learned so much from you over the years and I'm extremely grateful for the wisdom and knowledge you've shared with me. Thank you for giving the Mandem the words, understanding and courage to know what it is to give and gain consent. Loads love, Mandem Meetup! X

**Jamie Dennis, CEO of Mandem Meetup**



Sixteen incredible years changing the narrative around male and non-binary survivors of abuse. Thanks for all the support, love, care and community!

**Nathaniel J Hall, Writer, Actor**

I want to wish our amazing charity We Are Survivors a wonderful 16th Birthday. I am privileged and humbled to be a part of the journey so far and I'm so excited to see what's next!

**Prof Craig Harris, Chair of We Are Survivors**

Greater Manchester Rape Crisis would like to congratulate We are Survivors on 16 years of dedication to raising awareness of the prevalence and impact of sexual violence on men and boys and to providing support to men when few other services existed. You must be a lifeline for many. Happy Birthday!

**Anne Stebbings, CEO of Greater Manchester Rape Crisis**

Many happy returns, We Are Survivors. You are growing up fast. So well done on all that you. It will soon be time for GCSEs, so just make sure you get an 'ology' and all will be fine ;-).

**Professor David Gadd, Professor of Criminology at the University of Manchester**

Happy 16th Birthday to the wonderful team at We Are Survivors. Thank you again for changing so many men's lives, changing society's views and supporting the work of so many other like minded professionals.

**Mark Brookes, Chair of Mankind Initiative**

A big BIG Happy 16th Birthday to a place that feels like home. Thank you for always making me and many others feel welcome, safe, seen, heard and wanted. Thank you for introducing me to many other brave, courageous, inspiring and honest people. Thank you for so many amazing moments in life that I am able to look back at with pride. For 16 years young you have certainly lived an extraordinary life and moved mountains for Male Survivors. I love being part of your journey and without wishing any life away I will always look forward to watching you grow and develop. Happy Birthday We Are Survivors.

**Callum, male survivor and Expert Reference Group Member**



From everyone at Vent, we want to say a massive happy 16th birthday to We Are Survivors. You have been instrumental in giving male survivors a voice, including ourselves and men we support across the UK. Thank you for all the work you've done and continue to do. Here's to the next 16 years!

**Freddie Crocker, Vent Podcast**

Mazal tov to We Are Survivors on your 16th birthday from all your colleagues at JSAS Jewish Sexual Abuse Support! You are a few years older than us and like our big brother. Thank you for the support, sharing, and general fabulousness you have brought to the SV sector. We are proud to work and grow with you.

**Erica Marks, CEO of JSAS (Jewish Sexual Abuse Support)**

Happy Birthday to 'We are Survivors' - many congratulations on all the incredible work you have done over the last 16 years.

**Phil Trow BBC Radio Manchester**



# MEASURING IMPACT

We recently worked with the amazing MBA ‘Team Tango’ at the University of Manchester to measure and improve our messaging.

**WE ARE SURVIVORS** had the exciting opportunity to participate in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) consultancy programme at the University of Manchester. The course aims to develop socially responsible business leaders through 15 to 18 months of study, that includes live client consultancy projects.

We worked alongside a team of five fantastic MBA students (Team Tango) to answer the question, *‘What is the impact of We Are Survivors public messaging since its inception and how can it be measured?’*. This gave us fantastic insight into the impression we’ve created with the public in our first 16 years. Through working with the students, we also hoped to increase our social presence and utilise our vast amount of data resources to improve both our client services and engagement.

**“This experience has been incredibly enriching, both professionally and personally. It taught me the value of empathy in leadership and how businesses can align profit with purpose.”**

**Vaibhav Prakash**  
*Team Tango*

**“We Are Survivors is an organisation that really cares about how to reach those in need.”**

**Enrique Seminario, Team Tango**

Our impact was measured through a combination of a public survey, an internal client survey and interviews with similar charitable organisations. The results were developed into a series of recommendations by the students. For example, as the Asian community is under-represented in our client base, the team recommended that we produce specific content of Asian survivor stories in order to help engage people from this background. The survey found that whilst most public respondents were aware of male sexual harm, the age bracket of 18–24-year-olds were least aware. The ONS reported in 2022 that full-time students are five times more likely to suffer sexual harm, so it is vitally important that we increase awareness amongst this demographic.

Moving forward, the MBA consultancy programme has provided valuable advice that we can put into practice. This includes engaging with the student population, and reforming how we collect data so we can better understand how people become familiar with We Are Survivors. We can also utilise the strategy on our social media platforms, to create clear and effective messages for internal clients and the wider external audience. This will involve further collaboration with our ambassadors, using more video content and posting relevant content on specific media platforms, so we know the message is getting to the intended audience. We’ll also be looking at creating an annual public survey to keep up-to-date with current trends.

We’d like to extend our gratitude to the University of Manchester and Team Tango. Their dedication, business acumen and analytical skills have helped formulate foundations for how we can measure our impact and improve our messaging into the next 16 years and beyond.



# 2025

# THE YEAR OF CONSENT

**AS WE ARE SURVIVORS TURNS 16 YEARS OLD and we reach the “age of consent”, it feels really fitting for an organisation like ours doing the work we do to take a breath and recognise that.**

However, it's not like We Are Survivors to stay still for long and so we're delighted that in our 16th Year we launch our YEAR OF CONSENT. Throughout our 16th birthday year, we are going to focus so much of our campaigning, influencing and public engagement work on the topic of consent.

- **What does consent mean?**
- **What does consent mean for you?**
- **How do we navigate the conversation of consent between individuals and within wider society?**
- **What conversations are we NOT having around consent?**
- **How do we get the message out there that consent isn't a fixed point and we can withdraw consent or give consent at any point?**

Some of these questions can be difficult for people to engage with; sometimes difficult for survivors to talk about; but some people find other ways to express their ideas and opinions. In our Year of Consent, we will invite everyone and anyone to explore consent with us through the use of visual art, theatre, film, dance, research and even a club night! We will engage with the

**We've only just begun to start writing our plans and we want to invite you to be part of this exciting year!**

male survivors we support to help them find ways of expressing themselves; ask our stakeholders to join the conversation; and challenge leaders into acting on consent.

We will explore our own history in the pages of Beyond the Silence Magazine throughout each of the quarterly editions (sign up here if you want to get a copy straight into your inbox).

Working with the creative collective Traumascapes, we will create a documentary capturing the Year of Consent and document changes in attitudes.

Our Art Room group will reach out into our male survivor community and the wider arts community to develop an Exhibition of Consent that we aim to take around Greater Manchester galleries.

We will join forces with academics and researchers to host a conference looking at learning and sharing knowledge; and with our partners George House Trust, we will build on our On It project and host Symposium on Consent in which professionals, researchers, and those with lived experience come together to listen and learn.

With our theatre-makers partners, we will present two specific pieces of theatre that take the audience on a journey and challenge them to think about consent and the impact of it. Finally, we will end our 16th Birthday year with the Festival of Consent (26th January – 1st March 2026) which will bring together our work from across the year, invite others to share their work, and premiere our documentary, A Year of Consent.

**We have only just begun to start writing our plans and we want to invite you to be part of this exciting year and so if you are interested in sponsoring any of the work, producing an event, being part of the festival, or want to know more, please email [ceo@wearesurvivors.org.uk](mailto:ceo@wearesurvivors.org.uk)**



**WE ARE SURVIVORS HAS THE YEAR OF OUR 16TH BIRTHDAY EARMARKED AS THE YEAR OF CONSENT.** With age of consent in the UK being 16, and the organisation turning 16, it feels like a perfect opportunity for us to explore this vital topic. Every single person that walks through our door in the search for support has experienced the impact of non-consensual activity, and whilst it can mean different things to different people, it's a topic that's never far from our conversations. So we asked some of the staff here for their definitions of consent...

**PETER**  
Expert Reference Group Member

"The definition of consent to me in a sexual/relationship context is an agreement by individuals to understand and agree and respect each

other's sexual boundaries. I personally believe that a discussion about the meaning of consent and what each person may or may not consent to is critical. This should ensure respect for limits and avoid behaviours that could be deemed as abuse/rape. Consent defines boundaries. In my view consent could be fluid, depending on the situation. So, NO means No and should always be respected."

**PROF. HARRIS**  
Chair of We Are Survivors

"Consent to me means asking the question and if the answer changes so does your action. Consent is fluid and not fixed and communication is critical. No response is not agreement so if you don't know it's a NO!"

**NICK**  
Senior Informaton & Data Analyst

"I see consent as the cornerstone of all relationships. I believe it is about setting clear boundaries between yourself and your partner in

In our 16th year, We Are Survivors is recognising 2025 as the Year of Consent. But what IS consent? We asked some of the **We Are Survivors** family.

# WHAT DOES CONSENT MEAN TO YOU?



“There’s no such thing as ‘blurred lines’. The line is definitive.”

**GAYNA**  
ISVA Service Manager

order to know that you both agree on the activity you are going to engage in. Consent is something that should be taught from early on in our education system to help create healthy communication and develop boundaries. Unfortunately, I believe this is something that is currently lacking. Alarmingly, I don’t remember hearing an education worker mention ‘consent’ until I reached University. I’m unsure whether this is because of the general ‘taboo’ around topics of a sexual nature in school, but consent should be at the forefront of sex education. Comprehensive education for school children on the subject would hopefully lead to a reduction in sexual harms.”

**CHRIS**  
Deputy CEO at We Are Survivors

“To consent means to agree to something, and the word can be used in lots of different situations. It is something which can also be taken away by you at any point. To me, it should be used as the ultimate safety barrier in some aspects and should be respected, never twisted to abuse by anyone.”

**GAYNA**  
ISVA Service Manager

“Consent means having the right to say yes or no, feeling you have the power to do so, and having the right to change your mind, knowing that you’re in control. There is no such thing as ‘blurred lines’ the line is definitive.”

**DUNCAN**  
ISVA

“I’d define consent as when a person is making a choice under no duress to make that choice and having the freedom to change their mind when they choose to, regardless of what was originally said or agreed. Consent to me is about respect. I personally want to make choices for myself without feeling pressured to fit someone else’s desires or do something I’m not comfortable with because I’m scared of the consequences if I don’t. I’d want people to respect my choices if I am not fully able to make those for myself, or even if they disagree with

my decision. I want that same freedom of choice available to everyone. Inviolable.”

**LUKE**  
Community Development Co-Ordinator

“Consent is an on-going explicit, articulated and voluntary willingness to engage in an activity, situation or relationship, made with full knowledge of the relevant context and with sound mind, and may be subject to change or withdrawal. Consent to me speaks to the power of the word ‘no’; to the very start of a person finding their own voice and individuality - of choosing to be both a part of and apart from”

**KAELIN**  
ISVA

“I define consent as the freedom and capacity to make an informed choice, and that my choice can be my decision, and my decision alone. To me, consent means that I am respected, autonomous and my words are listened to, regardless of the decision that I make.”

**TAG**  
Operations Manager & PA to CEO

“I define consent as the voluntary, enthusiastic agreement to participate in something. To me, consent is the cornerstone of every part of my life. Beyond sex and relationships, I think far too many things in life happen outside of our explicit consent, because they have been accepted by most people as being part of the norm. From appearing in the background of someone’s TikTok that they’re filming in public or being forced to hug a stranger because they decided it’s OK, I think we would all be happier if we were given the grace to decide for ourselves what we’re comfortable with, without fear of being labelled awkward or combative.”

**ADD YOUR VOICE!**

We want this conversation to continue, and would love to hear YOUR definitions of consent. Let us know on social media. You can follow us on most major platforms @ThisIsSurvivors #ThisIsConsent



# SUPPORT FOR EVERYONE

The impact of sexual abuse often reaches beyond the survivor and affects close friends and family. Our Supporter Saferoom, part of our growing Nightingale Services, offers essential support...

**“To break the silence of the sexual abuse, rape and sexual exploitation of boys and men, and support them and their loved ones to engage in positive healing, free from the impact abuse.”**

Our mission statement at We Are Survivors includes everyone affected by the impact of sexual trauma, whether you're a supporter or a survivor. We believe that recovery should be for all and that no one should be left to manage alone. This is why your voice, as a supporter, matters too! We want you to feel heard, understood and supported. The Supporter Saferoom is a peer support group for the supporters of loved ones who have experienced the impact of sexual trauma, whether you are a partner, parent or a friend. Our goal for the Supporter Saferoom is to provide a safe, non-judgemental and respectful environment where you can feel that you can be yourself and

you can comfortably share your own thoughts, feelings and knowledge with others. The Supporter Saferoom could be the place for you if you are going through a difficult experience and you are struggling to get through this alone. By connecting and listening to other supporters, you may find that other supporters have previously faced a similar challenge and found a great way to get through it. It is this shared knowledge and support that can make a real valuable difference and can help you to feel that you are not alone in your situation.

## THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE SUPPORTER SAFEROOM?

- **Feel validated and validate others' experiences by showing a mutual understanding.**
- **Be empowered and empower others by offering emotional and/or practical support.**





**“Partner, parent or friend, we want you to feel heard, understood and supported.”**

- Help each other grow and move forwards together.
- Develop your knowledge on how to manage your own wellbeing.
- Increase hope and feel that you are not alone.
- Increase your confidence and resilience to future challenges.
- Be part of a strong support network.

We understand the importance of confidentiality, and that's why We Are Survivors staff abide by a confidentiality policy, which means everything you discuss will be confidential.

### **GET IN TOUCH!**

We'd love to hear from you about how we can support you as best as possible. If you feel that this is the right space for you, please give us a call on **0161 236 2182**, or email us to find out more information at this address: [supporterservices@wearesurvivors.org.uk](mailto:supporterservices@wearesurvivors.org.uk)

## **COMMUNITY GROUPS**

### **MONDAYS**

#### **DROP IN**

A safe space to connect.

#### **HEALTH WALK**

Fresh air and good company. Join us!

#### **MANDEM MEETUP TALKING CIRCLE**

A judgement free talking circle hosted by our brothers at Mandem Meetup.

### **TUESDAYS**

#### **YOGA STUDIO**

A weekly yoga session in a safe space.

#### **THE COFFEE SHOP**

Let's grab a brew and have a chat.

#### **THE HANGOUT**

A brand new group for survivors 18-30.

#### **THE SAFE ROOM**

Confidential, peer-to-peer support groups. Talk, listen and learn.

### **WEDNESDAYS**

#### **THE ART ROOM**

Express yourself artistically - all abilities!

#### **THE SAFE ROOM**

Confidential, peer-to-peer support groups. Talk, listen and learn.

#### **THE WRITER'S ROOM**

Get creative. All abilities welcome!

### **THURSDAYS**

#### **THE BUILDERS YARD (LEGO)**

Come and join other survivors and get building with Lego.

#### **THE COFFEE SHOP**

Let's grab a brew and have a chat.

#### **THE SAFE ROOM**

Confidential, peer-to-peer support groups. Talk, listen and learn.

### **FRIDAYS**

#### **HEALTH WALK**

Fresh air and good company. Join us!

#### **THE GARDEN AT RHS**

Get out of the city for a gardening session in beautiful surroundings.

### **SATURDAYS (Twice a month)**

#### **THE SAFE ROOM (ONLINE)**

Confidential, peer-to-peer support groups. Talk, listen and learn.

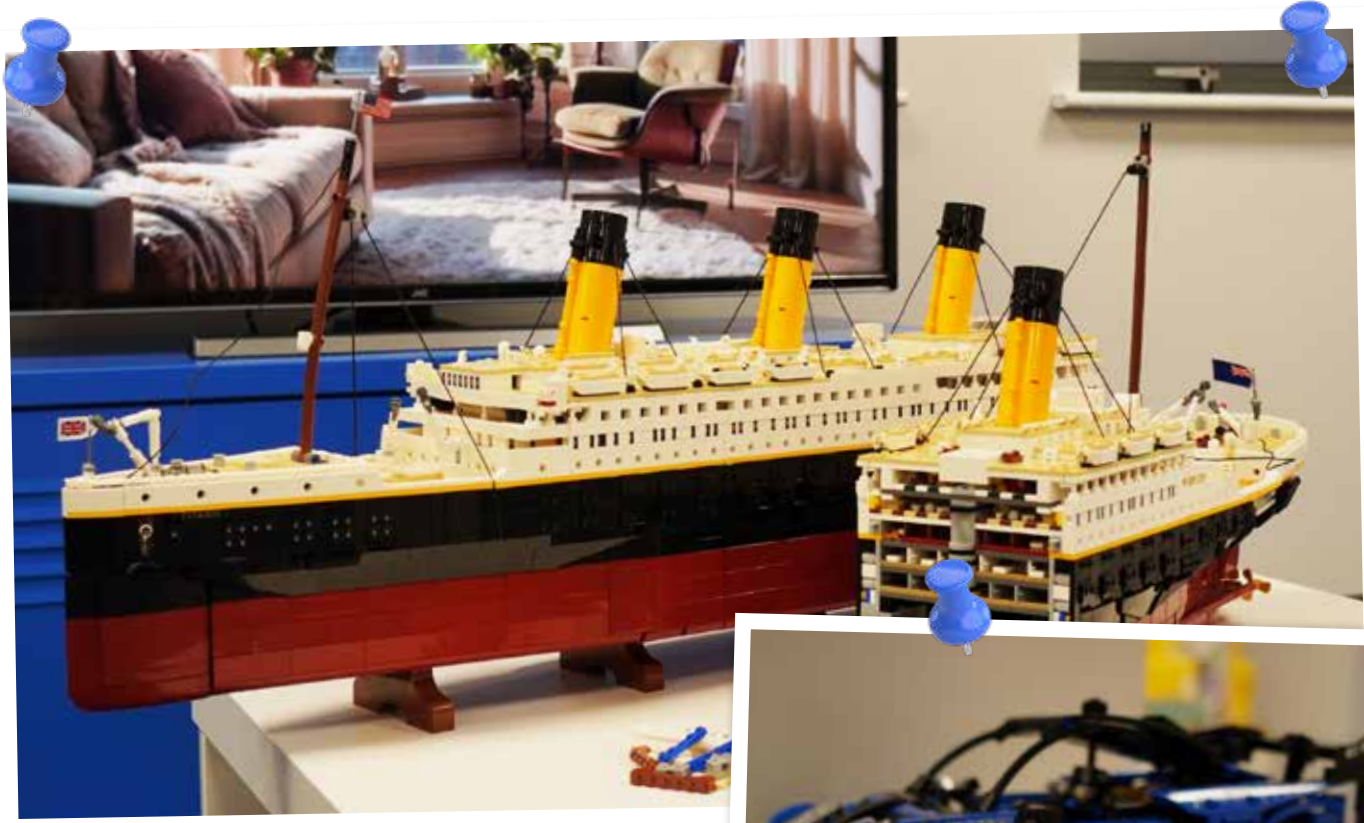


**Scan the QR code to sign up for regular updates!**

# GALLERY

Share your art, poetry and creativity with us.

Every issue we want to celebrate the creativity of male survivors. Expressing yourself through art, poetry and writing can be an important part of healing. If you'd like to share your work, send them to the e-mail on page 2.



## A TITANIC ACHIEVEMENT

The lads who come along to our Builder's Yard group are about to reach a historic milestone, but they need your help!

The Builder's Yard at We Are Survivors is our weekly LEGO group, offering a safe, creative space to tackle LEGO building projects. One of the biggest projects recently has been building the Titanic! We asked George, who facilitates the group, to give us the lowdown...

"The lads first got stuck into the LEGO® Titanic all the way back in March 2024, and we've been chipping away at the over 9000-piece model at our weekly Builder's Yard ever since. Whilst other projects have come and gone over the months, the ship has become a constant sight on the windowsill in our Community Space, slowly but surely getting closer to completion. The real vessel took about three years to build, and whilst we're still on track to beat that, we'd welcome any eager builders to come and join us on a Thursday afternoon to help us complete it. We can't promise it will be more 'seaworthy' than its namesake – and we certainly won't be sending it down the canal on a wintry maiden-voyage!" Our thanks to Big Life Group for the original funding for this service.

THE BUILDERS YARD runs every Thursday from 12pm-2pm.  
To get involved, give us a call on [0161 236 2182](tel:01612362182)



You can see lots more creativity and read some powerful words from male survivors on our website. Scan the QR code to visit our online Gallery.

# THE LAST WORD



**Duncan Craig OBE**  
Chief Executive  
We Are Survivors

[ WE ARE SURVIVORS. ]

## NO male survivor left behind

### MAIN OFFICE

Unit 9 Brewery Yard  
Deva City Office Park  
Trinity Way, Salford  
M3 7BB

### Office:

0161 236 2182

### E-mail:

support@wearesurvivors.org.uk

### Website:

www.wearesurvivors.org.uk



@thisissurvivors

We Are Survivors is a Company Ltd by Guarantee (06811096). Registered Charity in England & Wales (1144941)

## OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

### 24/7 Support Line

0808 500 2222

247sexualabusesupport.org.uk

### Shout

85258

This is a 24/7 text service that supports people if they are feeling overwhelmed or anxious.

**Free and confidential.**

### Samaritans

116 123 (available 24 hours a day)

jo@Samaritans.org.uk

### Mankind

018823 334 244 (Domestic Abuse Support) Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm

www.mankind.org.uk

### Dad Matters

0161 344 0669

dadmatters.org.uk



Supporting Men's Mental Wellbeing  
Through Community, Activity & Purpose.

info@mandemmeetup.org

www.mandemmeetup.org

## WE ARE SURVIVORS.



**Over the last 16 years there has been a monumental shift in the visibility of male survivors in society, in the media, and in the public discourse. I'd like to think we've played a part in that. I guess history will decide.**

But despite the fact that society has torn off the cover that was hiding male survivors, in Government policy and strategy, I and all of you male survivors out there are classed as 'victims of violence against women and girls'. Now I'm not even sure my GCSE English Teacher Mr Makinson would have accepted that as English.

It's never made any sense to me why successive leaders have stuck with it; why with actual violence against women and girls being declared (rightly so) as a national emergency that they wouldn't want to only have women and girls in a strategy called tackling violence against women and girls; or why they wouldn't want to be true, factual and accurate with what they're saying.

By now we understand the importance of visibility, regardless of the subject matter. When a public figure shares in the news a particular diagnosis, we see rates of testing go through the roof. When we see celebrities ask the public for help on a telethon, millions of pounds are raised. So we can all easily agree that visibility saves lives yeah?

So my question then is... do you think my life is not worth saving? Do you think I should either go back to being invisible or just be invisible? What is the issue here? Why don't you want to see me?

Well regardless of whatever those in power think; let me tell you (and yes, I'm speaking to myself here too). I think you're worth being seen. I think your life is priceless. I think you have so much to give to life and I see you, I really see you.

We are here.

We are real.

We are visible.

**We Are Survivors.**

# #IsThisOK



**When we see it's not OK  
We can say it's not OK**

**ANDY BURNHAM**  
MAYOR OF  
GREATER  
MANCHESTER



**@IsThisOKGM**  
**isthisokgm.co.uk**