

What do victims / survivors need?

Sandy Brindley, Rape Crisis Scotland

- *“I was not prepared.... it was the most degrading and terrifying thing.”*
- *“In our court system, you are totally humiliated. It was the most degrading experience I have been through”.*
- *“Court was absolutely horrendous, it was worse than being raped”.*
- *“Although there was a guilty verdict, I would never go through it again.”*

Quotes taken from the Inspectorate of Prosecution Thematic Review of the Investigation & Prosecution of Sexual Crime, November 2017

Complainers' views of the National Advocacy Project

Bethany: to me it's turned my life around, like, completely...

Isobel: I found it just invaluable.

Kerry: And having that reassurance and someone to speak to when you've had your voice kicked out of you how many times, the difference it can make to you is phenomenal.

Jane: ... with Rape Crisis, I never, kind of, felt they were trying to push me in to doing anything ...at any point I needed a question answered, or I wanted to talk about something, they were just there ... you, kind of, feel like there isn't anybody on your side. And they are.

Harleigh:... it's like having an army, you know, somebody's got your back and it gives you a bit of courage.

Jane: ... it's like somebody between a friend and a lawyer, I suppose ... just filling in all the gaps between all the different bits of the system where I think ... you just become another number on the list.

Isobel: [the criminal justice system] ... it's almost like a fortress that you can't get through.

Dee: She [AW] was able to explain a lot of court terms and jargon that me and [family member] didn't understand, like indictments and just a lot of the words, because me and [family member] sat in the first diet and we sat looking at each other like, what the hell are they going on about? We were sitting there and we couldn't even make sense of our own court case because it was too much political words and all these fancy terms. We asked [AW] and she went through it with us and made it so much easier to understand what was going to happen, and when and why.

Olivia: I don't think anybody can get through a court case without these [Advocacy Workers], you know, if it's that type of court case, you know....she actually kept steering us in the right way ... and I knew more of my rights than what I did beforehand. So by the time I got to court, I was quite able for it, you know. Because me suffering with anorexia doesn't help, you know, because I'd taken weight off with nerves, and it was getting closer, you know ... Because when she first met me, honestly, I could hardly talk, and I was crying, and I was like that, I just need your help 'cause I don't know what to do. And she just knew everything to say to me, and I was like that, this is definitely the person I need to get, is her, you know... I had dropped down to five stone ... I really was stressed at the time, I was like that, 'I don't think we're gonna be able to get any further than we have'. Because my doctor was talking about me being not fit enough for court. (In this instance, Olivia's case went ahead, she was able to give evidence, and the accused was found guilty of rape and sentenced to eleven years in prison.)

When you go to court, you know you're on your own, and she [AW] made sure I didn't feel that way, I didn't feel alone.