

## The New Swindon Sanctuary Sexual Assault Referral Centre Releases Official Statistics for 2008 to 2009

**Swindon and Wiltshire, UK** – 26 June 2009 – The *New Swindon Sanctuary* Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) today released its new figures for reported sexual assault cases that been referred through the SARC. Mrs Jools James-Kempshall, the Manager for the *New Swindon Sanctuary* SARC, reported that there were 230 new cases from the county of Wiltshire handled by the centre in 2008.

Mrs James-Kempshall said: “The following figures are based on the cases handled by the *New Swindon Sanctuary* SARC, 1st April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2009. It is understood nationally that sexual violence and abuse is under reported and the true number of victims is likely to be higher. The British Crime Survey also echoes this.

The New Swindon Sanctuary Sexual Assault Referral Centre is a one stop location, jointly funded by Wiltshire Police and Swindon Primary Care Trust. The centre is accessible to female and male victims of rape and serious sexual assault, of any age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. The services offered include access to medical care, a forensic examination and counselling. Referrals can be made either through the Police, or victims/family members can refer direct to the SARC or via colleagues in services such as A&E, Genito-Urinary medicine, GP’s, Family Planning, Social Services and the voluntary sector.

Anyone wishing to self refer can call our 24/7 helpline – **0808 168 0024**. Self-referrals may choose whether or not they wish to undergo a forensic medical examination. Where an examination does take place, the victim can chose whether evidence should be passed anonymously to the police for intelligence purposes, or stored to enable them to report in the future should they wish to do so.

It is important to note that 30% of the victims that accessed our services last year were under 18 years of age and for this group of people we offer specialist medical care.

As part of her statement, Mrs James-Kempshall said: ‘ Our SARC in Wiltshire is an important and effective tool in delivering enhanced and holistic care to victims who have suffered rape or serious sexual assault. Our SARC works in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and are continuing to work with the Police, the Home Office and the Department of Health to improve outcomes for all victims of sexual violence.

“With your help, we can change the outcomes for countless people in our community by making the residents of Swindon and Wiltshire aware of our services and by doing so we can help more and more victims of rape and sexual assault take back control of their lives, rebuild their confidence, claim back their dignity and find their inner strength.”

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### Notes to Editors and Producers

For more information, to speak with a spokesperson at the *New Swindon Sanctuary* SARC, please contact Jools James-Kempshall on 01793 507811 or via email at [jools.james-kempshall@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:jools.james-kempshall@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk)