



# Remote Live Court Room Link – Additional Choice for Clients

St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre offers a comprehensive service to men, women and children across Greater Manchester, Cheshire and the High Peak area of Derbyshire who have been raped and sexually assaulted. A key element of this service is the practical and emotional support offered by our team of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers. This support is available to all clients, irrelevant of age, who are involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Many clients are required to appear as a witness within the Court setting. Feedback given to our ISVA team was that many clients felt this experience to be completely overwhelming. Attending Court can result in fear and anxiety which, in turn, can affect the quality of the evidence given by the witness.

A range of special measures on how vulnerable witnesses provide evidence do exist. However, these all included attending the Court building itself.

In September 2014, the St. Mary's Centre obtained a grant from the Ministry of Justice to provide a Remote Live Court Room Link from the St. Mary's Centre to Crown Courts across the Country. This allowed clients to give their evidence in familiar surroundings which were well away from the Court itself.

**A working group was set up in order to produce an agreed protocol for use. Members of the group included representatives from:**

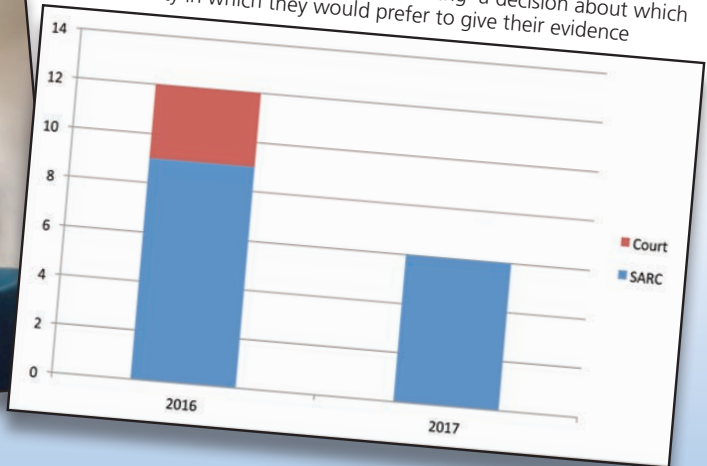
- St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- HMCTS
- Judiciary
- Greater Manchester Police
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Witness Service.

The Link consists of four rooms in a self-contained area within SARC. It has its own entrance, car parking and restrooms.

**Female Adult "If I had the misfortune of having to give evidence in a case like this again, I would want to do it here"**

**Female Child Aged 12 " I had a great afternoon – I had to talk to the Judge over the TV but had a great time playing Cluedo....and winning!"**

**Use to Date** Each client is offered a Pre-Trial Visit to both the Court setting and St. Mary's Centre before making a decision about which facility in which they would prefer to give their evidence



Reasons for SARC Link Use

Verdicts – January 2016-January 2017

