

Saint Mary's Centre 23rd Annual Conference 2026

A Shared Vision: Reflecting on 40 Years of SARCs, Responding to Sexual Violence and Shaping the Future Together

Tuesday 21 – Wednesday 22 April 2026

Location: Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Programme – Tuesday 21 April – Morning

9.30am	Welcome and Introduction Lisa Waters, Head of Operational Performance and Strategic Partnerships, Saint Mary's Centre & SAFEPlace Merseyside
9.35am	SARCS – Looking Back (Working Title) Dr Michelle Carroll, Clinical Director, Saint Mary's SARC & SAFEPlace Merseyside
Chair:	Kathy Cowell OBE DL, Chairman, Manchester University Foundation Trust
10.00am	Claire Waxman OBE Victims Commissioner for England and Wales
10.20am	Title TBC D.Supt Phil Key, Greater Manchester Police
10.45am	TBC
11.10am	Questions
11.20am	BREAK
Chair:	Ursula Martin, Chief Executive, Specialist Hospitals Clinical Group, University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust
11.50am	Title TBC Lorien Haynes, Actor & Playwright TBC, Refuge Domestic Abuse Organisation
12.15pm	Panel Discussion – The Media's Depiction of Rape and Sexual Violence: Then, Now and Looking Forward Dr Sally Penni MBE, Barrister at Law, Kenworthy Chambers Isabelle Smith, Actress Prof Karen Boyle, Professor of Feminist Media Studies/ Head of Department of Humanities, University of Strathclyde
12.50pm	Questions
01.00pm	LUNCH



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Programme – Tuesday 21 April – Afternoon

Chair	HHJ Nicholas Dean KC, Hon. Recorder of Manchester
02.00pm	The Impact of Disclosing Childhood Sexual Abuse as a Child: The journey of disclosure and service responses – how far have we come? Michelle Wright, NHS Scotland
02.25pm	Reframing Vulnerability: Towards Empowerment and Accessible Support for Women with Learning Disabilities and Neurodivergent Women Penni Charteress, Service Lead: Learning Disabilities and Neurodivergent Women, The Women's Centre Cornwall
02.50pm	The Dutch multidisciplinary Sexual Assault Centres: from research to practice Iva Bicanic PhD, Director Knowledge Building, Sexual Assault Centres, The Netherlands
03.15pm	Questions
3.45 – 5.50pm	Workshops



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Programme – Wednesday 22 April

Chair:	Janet Potter, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service
09.00am	Kate Green OBE, Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities, Greater Manchester
09.25am	Stephen Parkinson, Director of Public Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service
09.50am	TBC
10.15am	QUESTIONS
10:30am	BREAK
Chair:	ACC Stephanie Parker, Protecting Vulnerable People, Greater Manchester Police
11.00am	Bridging the Gap: Because Healing Can't Wait Emily Jacob, Founder, ReConnected Life
11.25am	(Mock) Jury Decision Making in Cases of Male Sexual Victimization Dr Siobhan Weare, Reader in Law, Lancaster University Dr Dominic Willmott, Reader in Legal Psychology, Loughborough University Madeleine Millar, Research Associate, Lancaster University
11.50pm	Facilitating Constructive Dialogues with Boys and Young Men: the 'Why' and the 'How' Michael Conroy, Founder/Director, Men at Work CIC
12.15pm	Questions

12.30pm	LUNCH
Chair:	Dr Helen Mills, Sexual Offence Medicine Lead for the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine
01.30pm	Title TBC Slater and Gordon Lawyers
01.55pm	Minister Jess Phillips MP Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, Home Office
2.20pm	Questions
2.30 - 2.35pm	Closing Remarks Lisa Waters, Head of Operational Performance and Strategic Partnerships,, Saint Mary's Centre & SAFEPlace Merseyside
2.45 - 4.50pm	Workshops

Tuesday: 3.45pm – 4.45pm	WORKSHOP A	WORKSHOP B	WORKSHOP C	WORKSHOP D
	Evolution of the Saint Mary's SARC ISVA Role	DIVAS; Experts by Experience Sharing our experiences of how we speak out against gender-based violence and inequality	Title TBC	Parallel, connected and independent journeys with & outwith Saint Mary's SARC: Forty years of sexual violence activism in Manchester and beyond
	Dana Clarke, ISVA Gail Morgan, ISVA Shelby Coghlin, Child and Young Person's ISVA – CSE Joanne Watton, ISVA Megan Kay, ISVA	The DIVAS Group, Cornwall	Madeleine Ingham	Dr Sam Warner Consultant clinical psychologist, honorary senior lecturer at Salford University and chair Association of Child Protection Professionals
Tuesday: 4.50pm – 5.50pm	WORKSHOP E	WORKSHOP F	WORKSHOP G	WORKSHOP H
	Forensic Sampling: Update, Q&A and FFLM recommendations	Reflecting on 40 years of therapy at SARC	CICA – How to make an appeal of a decision and how to take a case to tribunal	From Regulation to Reality: How Regulation, Risk and Complexity are Changing the Response to Sexual Violence and Misconduct – an LJMU perspective
	Rachel Morgan, Forensic Reporting Scientist and Sexual Offences Scientific Lead, Cellmark Forensic Services Dr Bernadette Butler, President, The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians	Saint Mary's SARC Counselling Team	Slater and Gordon Lawyers	Yvonne Waring, Sexual Violence Liaison Officer Aine McLaughlin, Sexual Violence Liaison Advisor Jo Bleasdale, Inclusion Services Manager Liverpool John Moores University

Wednesday: 2.45pm – 3.45pm	WORKSHOP A	WORKSHOP B	WORKSHOP C	WORKSHOP D
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