

Example of a grant awarded from Funds set up with ECF and matched funding from the Proceeds of Crime Scheme:

Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA)

CARA, based in Colchester, received £4,000 from three charitable funds set up with support from the Proceeds of Crime Matched Funding Scheme at Essex Community Foundation (ECF). This grant was to support the salary of a Young Person's Practitioner, to work with children and young people who have experienced sexual violence or child sexual abuse.

Therapy, often provided 1 to 1, is so helpful for people, including children, who have experienced trauma or are vulnerable due to other circumstances. In 2022, CARA paired counsellors with over 225 young people, supporting and acting as advocates for them.

Though the team fully expects the number of referrals they receive to continue increasing, they are preparing to face the challenge by organising a robust programme with a compassionate team and they have plans to expand and reach out to more young people.

This includes working with schools to raise awareness and help staff and teachers to better understand the needs of vulnerable students and ensure their needs are met. To support this, CARA has made a series of videos that can easily be used in classrooms (these can be viewed [here](#)).

Helen Parr, CEO of CARA said, *"Thank you so much for supporting CARA's specialist counselling service for young people who have been victims of sexual violence or child sexual abuse.*

"CARA is the only organisation in our area providing this vital support for young victims and survivors, and there is a huge demand for our service. In 2023, we received 254 new referrals for young people aged 13-17.

"We are very proud of our team of compassionate and committed Young Person's Practitioners, who provide one-to-one therapeutic support for young people, helping them to understand what has happened to them and how it has affected them, recognise they are not to blame and develop coping skills to help them move forward with their lives."



Some members of the CARA team.

It is hard to understate the life-changing impact that this therapy is having, when reading the testimonials from young people who have been helped:

- *“When I first came to see you I felt alone. I had closed down completely. Now I have a group of people who I know will listen and understand. Thank you for giving me the courage to reach out”.*
- *“I just think it’s been so helpful. I really feel it has turned my life around. I am much more in control of my emotions and also the choices I make. Even things like recognising I have the tools to move out of certain bad situations is something new to me. I have more confidence in myself; not just the way I look or the things I do, but deep within myself I feel confident. 100% my belief system is different and I know I am going to be able to notice abusive behaviour within my relationships if it ever happens again”.*