



# **SAFER LIVING**

## **F O U N D A T I O N**

[www.saferlivingfoundation.org](http://www.saferlivingfoundation.org)

**2021–2022**

# The Safer Living Foundation Charity

## WHO WE ARE

The Safer Living Foundation (SLF) charity started as a joint venture between members of HMP Whatton and Nottingham Trent University (NTU), in collaboration with the National Probation Service and Nottinghamshire Police, in February 2014. The SLF is focused on preventing further victims of sexual abuse by reducing sexual offending through rehabilitative and preventative initiatives.

## OUR AIMS

Our charitable aims are:

- to prevent further victims of sexual abuse;
- to stop sexual reoffending;
- to help people with convictions lead positive and offence-free lives;
- to evaluate what we do and inform both practice and policy.

## OUR STORY

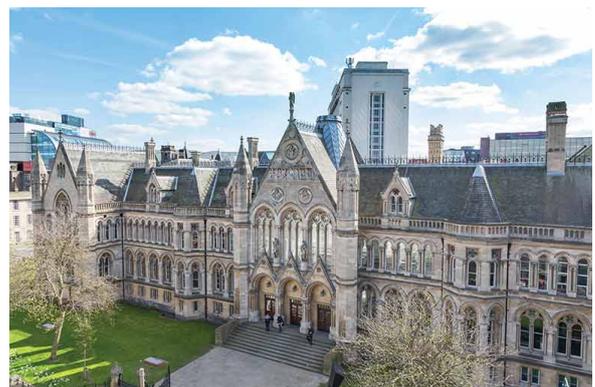
The SLF is the first charity of its kind, and it represents a partnership between academics, clinicians, practitioners, prison management, prisoners, ex-prisoners and the community. The charity makes use of its extensive theoretical and practical resources to deliver projects designed to prevent first-time sexual offences and to reduce sexual reoffending.

The organisation was the first to run prison-based Circles of Support and Accountability, a project that supports individuals in prison for a sexual offence while monitoring their risk before, during and after their release into the community.

All the projects undertaken by the SLF are evaluated in terms of their processes and outcomes to ensure that they are being delivered effectively and to establish how they might be further improved. The results of these evaluations are disseminated in peer-reviewed journals and books and presented at national and international conferences, and this work is used to improve and develop practice worldwide.



HMP Whatton



Nottingham Trent University

*“Our mission is to stop sexual offences being committed. We achieve this by developing and delivering rehabilitation programmes for those who have offended and preventative work for those at risk of a first offence. All our work is evidence based, and we thoroughly evaluate our activities to ensure that what we do, and how we do it, is effective. We share our findings nationally and internationally to influence policy and inform practice.”*

**Professor Belinda Winder, co-founder and Vice Chair of The Safer Living Foundation.**

## OUR TRUSTEES



Dr Lynn Saunders OBE, Governor of HMP Whatton, is a co-founder and the Chair.



Professor Belinda Winder, Director of the Centre for Crime, Offending, Prevention and Engagement at NTU, is a co-founder and the Vice Chair.



Professor (Hon.) Dr Geraldine Akerman, is a chartered forensic psychologist and is the Media and Communications Lead.



Laura Day, Deputy Governor at HMP Whatton, is the Volunteering Lead.



Dr Nicholas Blagden, co-founder, is an Associate Professor in Forensic Psychology and Head of the Sexual Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at NTU.



Dr Kerensa Hocken, co-founder, is a chartered and registered forensic psychologist specialising in the assessment and treatment of people who commit sexual offences.

Dr David Rowson is a chartered accountant and is the Treasurer.

## WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that, in 2019, 7.5% of adults aged 18 to 74 had experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16 years: a total of 3.1 million people.<sup>1</sup> The NSPCC reports that in the UK, there were 73,518 sexual offences (including rape, online grooming and sexual assault) against children recorded in 2019/20. This is an increase of 57% in the five years since 2014/15 and is equivalent to nearly 200 offences every day.<sup>2</sup>

There are around 12,000 people in UK prisons with convictions for sexual offences,<sup>3</sup> and most of these individuals will be released back into the community at some point. The majority will go on to live an offence-free life, but around one in ten is predicted to sexually reoffend.<sup>4</sup>

Sexual crime causes destruction and devastation in people's lives, and the perpetrators are often ostracised by our society. The SLF works to reduce the risk of reoffending by promoting the reintegration into society of people who have committed sexual offences, increasing their psychological well-being and social belonging. This in turn will benefit the wider community and prevent further victims of sexual crime.

The core aims of the Safer Living Foundation are to prevent sexual crime, to protect people from sexual abuse and to promote the rehabilitation of people who have committed a sexual offence or are at risk of committing a first-time sexual offence.



<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2019). *Child sexual abuse in England and Wales: Year ending March 2019*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/childsexualabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019>

<sup>2</sup> NSPCC. (2020). *Child sexual offences jump 57% in 5 years*. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2020/child-sexual-offences-rise/>

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2020). *Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2020*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>

<sup>4</sup> Helmus, L. et al. (2012). Absolute recidivism rates predicted by Static-99R and Static-2002R sex offender risk assessment tools vary across samples: A meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39(9), 1148–1171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854812443648>

## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SLF

The impact of sexual crime is significant and pervasive for the victim, the perpetrator and society as a whole. Sexual abuse destroys lives and families.

It is associated with:

- problematic mental and emotional health;
- substance abuse;
- relationship difficulties.

With the aim of keeping communities safe from sexual crime, the SLF delivers a range of projects that aim to reduce sexual (re)offending.

These projects include:

- **The Aurora Project**

An innovative service delivering one-to-one and group therapy to individuals concerned by their sexual thoughts and/or interests, aimed at reducing the risk of a first-time sexual offence occurring. This service is the only free prevention service of this nature that exists in the UK. Launched in November 2018, the service is currently at its operational capacity.

- **Prison-based Circles**

A service that supports individuals currently in prison for a sexual offence to help them reintegrate into the community. These circles provide social, emotional and practical support for individuals at high risk of committing another offence, aiming to reintegrate them back into the community without reoffending and helping them live constructive and pro-social lives.

- **Community Circles**

A service for those who are already living in the community. Volunteers will provide psychological, social and practical support to encourage an individual to maintain a fulfilling and pro-social life.

- **Young People's (YP) Circles**

A ground-breaking service designed for young people aged 12–21 who have sexually offended or displayed harmful sexual behaviour and who need support to reduce their risk of (re)offending. Volunteers focus on reducing the young person's social isolation and improving their emotional well-being.

- **The Apollo Project**

A therapeutically informed service delivering psychological and practical support for young people who have shown sexually harmful behaviour. It aims to equip them with tools to increase their psychological flexibility and therefore reduce their risk of (re)offending.

- **The Corbett Centre**

The Corbett Centre provides a safe place that offers practical and emotional support, education and training to individuals who have been in prison for a sexual offence. It focuses on reducing risk factors such as social isolation and builds on protective factors to aid safe reintegration into society.

- **The Support and Mentoring Service (SaMS)**

The SaMS began in 2020 and aims to help prisoners make a smooth transition from prison to the community by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and others.



# SUCCESS SO FAR

2015



In 2015, the SLF won the Robin Corbett Award for Prisoner Rehabilitation; in the same year, the charity was awarded a Butler Trust Certificate for their prison-based Circles project.

2016



In 2016, the SLF was presented with a Guardian University Award for Social and Community Impact.

2018



In 2018, the SLF received a commendation in the Howard League for Penal Reform Community Awards for Organisation of the Year. The same year, the Chair, Lynn Saunders, won the Guardian Public Service Award for Leadership Excellence.

2019



In 2019, the SLF was honoured to win Charity of the Year at the Third Sector Awards. In the same year, we also received a Commendation in the Howard League for Penal Reform Community Awards for the Aurora Project and were shortlisted in the Outstanding Organisation category of the Criminal Justice Alliance Awards.

# THE AURORA PROJECT

The Aurora Project provides a signposting, support and therapy service for individuals who are distressed about their unhealthy sexual thoughts and feelings. It aims to reduce the risk of a first-time sexual offence occurring. Our service helps prevent sexual offending before it happens and provides an opportunity for people to tackle problematic thoughts before they escalate.

The Aurora Project therefore aims to:

- provide therapeutic support to people willing to engage;
- prevent harm and escalation of sexual offending;
- use evidence-informed best practice and service-user involvement throughout the project;
- research and evaluate its processes and outcomes, improve its effectiveness and monitor its performance.



The Aurora Project provides a community service involving individual and group therapy to address the sexual thoughts, feeling and behaviours that individuals find distressing and believe could pose a risk of harm.

The Aurora Project is therapeutically informed, and its services are based in:

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy;
- Compassion-Focused Therapy;
- Functional Analytic Psychotherapy;
- Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing.

Therapy is delivered by trained facilitators who have years of experience running therapeutic interventions.

**For more information please visit:**

<https://saferlivingfoundation.org/aurora-project/>

**You can email the team at:**

[prevention@saferlivingfoundation.org](mailto:prevention@saferlivingfoundation.org)

**Or call:**

0115 848 4707

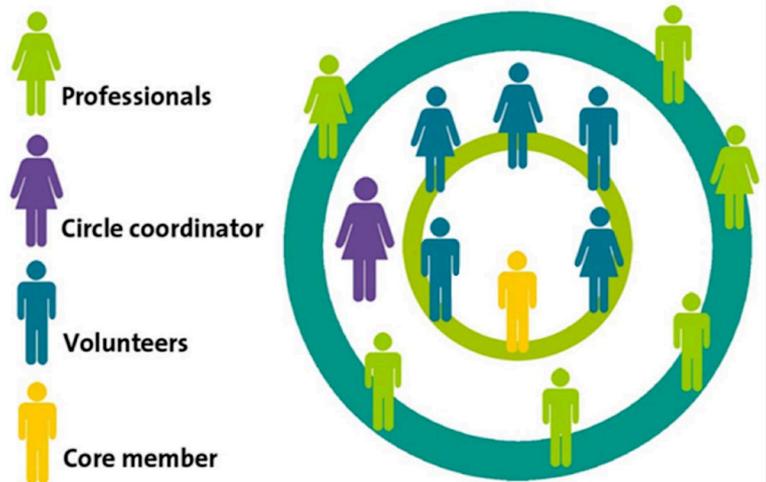
## Who can be referred to the Aurora Project?

- Adults of any gender (18+)
- Individuals concerned by their sexual thoughts, feelings & behaviours
- Individuals who have never sexually offended
- Individuals currently under investigation for a sexual offence
- Individuals with a caution for a sexual offence
- Self-referring individuals
- Individuals willing to travel to Nottingham

# CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Circles of Support and Accountability is a restorative justice initiative designed to reduce an individual's risk of committing further sexual offences.

A group of three to five specially trained volunteers meet on a regular basis with a vulnerable individual who has a sexual conviction and a high risk of reoffending. They provide this individual, known as the Core Member, with social, practical and emotional support. Circles are designed to monitor, mediate and reduce risk factors associated with reoffending.



Circles seek to balance both community protection and the rehabilitation of people who have sexually offended and are often socially isolated. The Circles work in close partnership with statutory agencies and are managed by a trained professional known as the Coordinator.

The Safer Living Foundation delivers three types of Circles, each having a slightly different focus:

## Community Circles

Community Circles help individuals who have left prison for a sexual offence readjust to life outside of custody. They are supported to find employment and housing and to reintegrate with society. The Circles help reduce their anxiety, depression and feelings of loneliness, which increase the risk of reoffending.

## Prison Circles

Prison Circles start when a high-risk and vulnerable prisoner is still at HMP Whatton. Volunteers can support them as they go "through the gate" – a transition that can leave a Core Member vulnerable and at increased risk. The first of their kind, these Circles help the Core Member to plan to be, and remain, stable and offence free.

## YP Circles

YP Circles are for people aged 12–21 who have demonstrated sexually harmful behaviour. A young person in this situation can become socially isolated, which increases their risk. YP Circles aim to support and encourage people to try new hobbies, search for jobs and develop appropriate relationships to create a positive and pro-social future.

*"I have met a group of caring people who are prepared to accept that I am more than the sum of my offences and accept me for who I am."*

**Core Member**

## THE APOLLO PROJECT

The Safer Living Foundation's Apollo Project commenced in 2018, and it receives funding from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

Research has shown that a third of sexual offences against children are committed by other young people.<sup>5</sup> The Apollo Project works with young people living in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire who are aged between 12 and 21 and who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. This behaviour may or may not have resulted in a caution or conviction.



In this project, young people receive therapeutically informed coaching from a team of three volunteers supervised by a manager. The Apollo intervention is based in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and is designed to increase psychological flexibility. It aims to help young people to develop better emotional regulation and build an independent and offence-free future.

## RELEASE AND RESETTLEMENT

### The Support and Mentoring Service (SaMS)

The SaMS is a new project for The Safer Living Foundation that began in April 2020. It aims to reduce anxiety around leaving prison by equipping a prisoner with the skills and knowledge they need to create a relaxed transition into the community to try and reduce the risk of harm to themselves and others.

The service focuses on prisoners at high and very high risk of reoffending who are being released within the next six months, are aged 55 and over and/or have additional needs with little or no support within the community.

Two experienced volunteers visit the prisoner each week to learn what support they will benefit best from once they are released. From there, we begin to establish links to community organisations that can offer further support upon release, and provisions can be put in place to help their transition back into the community. The volunteers also help with essential life skills that will enable the prisoner to live more independently once they are released.

### Covid-19

The SLF has continued to provide a wide range of services during the Covid-19 restrictions. When this has not been possible face to face, digital technology has been used. Volunteers have been supporting all Core Members via regular phone calls, and Coordinators have visited them face-to-face from a social distance when needed, as well as supporting them via phone calls and text messaging. The manager of the Corbett Centre also maintains contact through digital means and via a newsletter, which is edited by service users. The Corbett Centre is now fully open with support from all services. All activities are planned and booked in advance so the manager can monitor numbers in attendance and maintain social distancing.

<sup>5</sup> Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., & Chaffin, M. (2009). Juveniles who commit sex offenses against minors. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, NCJ227763. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

## THE CORBETT NETWORK

In 2015, the Safer Living Foundation was honoured with the Robin Corbett Award for Prisoner Rehabilitation. Following this, the SLF became a proud member of the Corbett Rehabilitation Network. This is a network of organisations, set up in the memory of Lord Robin Corbett by Lady Val Corbett, that are all working to improve the rehabilitation of prisoners.

Members of the network include the Prison Reform Trust, NACRO, Trailblazers, Unlock, the Shannon Trust, Clinks, Mitie, Enterprise Exchange, Switchback, The Exceptionals, Choirs Beating Time and Chrysalis.



## THE CORBETT CENTRE

The Corbett Centre was officially opened on 13 February 2019 and is open Monday to Friday and on occasional weekends. It represents a safe space for people who have been in prison, primarily those who have been convicted of sexual offences.

The aim of the Corbett Centre is to provide a community space for the excluded to feel included. It offers practical, emotional and social support to empower people to lead productive and meaningful lives. There are scheduled events to provide support for practical life skills such as classes in cookery, computer literacy, employability and personal finance. It also provides pastoral care as well as support for hobbies and interests.

These services have been selected and developed as they are designed to reduce risk factors for reoffending and are hoped to help service users build a positive and pro-social future.

### ACTIVITIES

- IT courses
- Religious services
- Vocational workshops
- Legal advice drop-in
- Samaritans

### FACILITIES

- Kitchen
- Social room
- Secure computers and monitored internet access
- Education and training resources

At the Corbett Centre, SLF and NTU staff, supported by volunteers, work with Nottinghamshire Police and Probation and NTU security to make sure it is a safe place for everyone that attends and for the local community. Data-sharing agreements are in place so that all services can refer Service Users to the Centre. The Corbett Centre can be contacted by sending an email to [corbett@saferlivingfoundation.org](mailto:corbett@saferlivingfoundation.org).

Additional SLF projects also make use of the Corbett Centre, including for:

- Community Circles meetings;
- Aurora sessions;
- SLF research activities;
- SLF & NTU meetings.



Nottingham Trent University

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Research underpins all the work the SLF does. Academics from SOCAMRU conduct process and outcome evaluations on all the projects to monitor how they are doing and what they are achieving. Biannual evaluation reports inform learning to ensure that the charity is delivering evidence-based best practice.

The evaluations take on a mixed-methods research design:

### Quantitative

- Regular collection of psychometric data.
- Measures change in risk factors for reoffending, e.g. social and emotional loneliness.



### Qualitative

- Interviews conducted with service users, volunteers, etc.
- Interview analysis unpacks individuals' experiences of SLF projects.



### Evaluation Report

- Informs SLF service learning.
- Provides evidence for funding applications.
- Disseminated in academic papers, books and conferences.

The SLF's research benefits from a strong service-user element. A service-user research group at HMP Whatton and feedback from SLF Circles Core Members help to refine the evaluations.

Findings from the evaluations are published on the SLF website and in academic journals, and they are also presented at both national and international conferences.

Regular evaluations of the SLF's progress and effectiveness, along with doctoral-level research into our projects, demonstrates our commitment to using evidence-based practice to reduce sexual offending. Everything we do is aimed at preventing further victims of sexual abuse.

## SOCAMRU

**Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct  
Research Unit**



Nottingham Trent University

## PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

The SLF works with local, national and international media to promote their work and provide a balanced point of view. This includes discussing the work of the charity with news organisations such as the BBC, the Guardian and the Nottingham Post.

Academics from Nottingham Trent University and the Trustees submit reports of the research they conduct, describing and exploring SLF projects, for publication in academic journals and disseminate their findings at both national and international conferences. There are multiple PhD students researching the impact of SLF projects, and they are heavily involved in these dissemination activities. For the full range of publications please refer to the SLF website at <https://www.saferlivingfoundation.org>.

Recently, SLF and NTU staff involved with the charity have contributed to a Palgrave book series exploring various aspects of sexual crime. The editions have focused on Circles, prevention of sexual crime, religion and spirituality, the experience of imprisonment, trauma and intellectual functioning. More information can be found at <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/15477>.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### VOLUNTEER FOR US

Volunteers make an incredible difference to individuals and the larger community; most of our projects could not function without volunteers giving their time.

We are always looking to expand our group of Circles volunteers. If you think you would be interested in becoming a volunteer, please visit our website for more information:

<https://saferlivingfoundation.org/how-can-you-help-2/applying-to-volunteer/applications/>



Alternatively, scan this QR code with your mobile device to take you straight there.

### WORK FOR US

We also have paid positions available for qualified therapists who would like to work on the Aurora project. If you are interested and would like to know more, please email us at [prevention@saferlivingfoundation.org](mailto:prevention@saferlivingfoundation.org).

### DONATIONS

The SLF is an award-winning, innovative charity working to prevent further victims of sexual abuse. We greatly value your support, as we would not be able to operate without it. If you feel able to donate, please visit the Virgin Money Giving website and search for the Safer Living Foundation.



You can also search for us on Amazon Smile to donate every time you shop, at no extra cost to you. Visit <https://smile.amazon.co.uk>.

### LEAVING A LEGACY

After providing for family, friends and priorities closer to home, please consider remembering the SLF in your will. Doing so can have a lasting impact on reducing the impact of sexual crime and making communities safer.

You are advised to consult a solicitor when drafting your will, but for more information please contact the SLF team.

## GET IN TOUCH



**Can you help us?**  
We are recruiting Volunteers

Contact us  
for more details



If you would like to discuss the work we do, our volunteering opportunities or how to support the SLF, then please do not hesitate to contact us!



[info@saferlivingfoundation.org](mailto:info@saferlivingfoundation.org)



[www.saferlivingfoundation.org](http://www.saferlivingfoundation.org)



[@saferlf](https://twitter.com/saferlf)



**The Safer Living Foundation**  
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**Nottingham**  
**NG13 9FQ**



# **SAFER LIVING**

## **F O U N D A T I O N**

**The Safer Living Foundation, UK Charity No. 1155788**

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