



**WELCOME
AND
INTRODUCTION**

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WELCOME

Hello, and welcome to the Kick Back group community.

The group was formed in 2023 to ensure that the views and experiences of women who had experienced sexual violence and abuse, either as an adult or child, were integrated into the development, design, and implementation of the services and provision of East Kent Rape Crisis Centre, as well as acting as a resource for external services.

Although affiliated with the centre, we are an independent group of women who may not have accessed the centres services, but share a common goal of wanting to improve the experiences and journeys of those who come after us.

Initially known as the service user consultation group, our change of name grew out of our passion for improving and developing service provision, as well as a desire to empower, have a voice, and be a community of women who, in solidarity 'kick back' to make a difference.

We recognise that the experience of sexual violence and abuse can be silencing and render you isolated and invisible. Within the group you can be as visible as you would like to be. Using the safety and support of the community, you can develop your confidence and strengthen your voice. You will be heard.

This booklet introduces you to the values and vision of the group, the work that we are involved in and what you can expect as a member of our community.

With best wishes



OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision

It is our vision to create a safe, kind, visible, and vibrant survivor community that has co-design, co-production, and survivor leadership at its heart, which is valued in its work to improve the services, care, and provision for all who are affected by sexual violence and abuse.

Our values

- To promote a safe space based on a culture of respect, empowerment and trust.
- To create a community of women which is survivor-sensitive and survivor-empowering.
- That the voices of all are heard and respected.
- To use our experiences to help develop services and provision for those affected by sexual violence and abuse.
- We take care of ourselves so we can safely undertake the work that is important to us.
- We understand the importance of communication and feel confident to challenge and to ask questions.
- We aim to be safe in everything we do, to be creative and innovative and learn from our mistakes if we get it wrong.
- We are confident and have the courage to communicate ideas and suggestions and speak up for our beliefs.

INTERESTED IN BEING INVOLVED?

Women aged 18+ who have experienced East Kent Rape Crisis Centre's (EKRCC) services within the last two years, and would like to be involved, are encouraged to register their interest, either by speaking to a member of EKRCC staff and giving their verbal consent for their name and contact details to be passed on, or by emailing: serviceuserconsultationgroup@ekrcc.org.uk.

Women who have not used the services of EKRCC but have experienced sexual violence or abuse are also welcome to join and can express their interest via: serviceuserconsultationgroup@ekrcc.org.uk.

You will be contacted and invited to attend a short 1-2-1 welcome meeting. Depending on your preference, this will be held either virtually or by telephone.

The purpose of this meeting is to talk with you about the group and answer any questions you have. You will be asked what your preferred method of contact is, if there are any specific areas of work you would like to be involved in, and if you have any support needs you wish to disclose to enable you to contribute as fully as you would like. You will not be asked any questions about your experience.



If you would like to attend our Kick Back community meetings, these are held every eight weeks for up to 90 minutes. To reduce travel time and make the meetings as accessible as possible, they are held online via Zoom. Face-to-face meetings are also an option depending on community members ability to travel.

The meeting agenda varies dependant on whether any new requests have been made of the group and what existing work is being undertaken.

We always welcome new ideas from community members.

There is no expectation that you join the meetings, and some community members instead wish to be kept up-to-date and contribute on either a 1-2-1 basis or by email. This is OK, and your preference for how much or little you want to be involved will be respected.

INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

The ladder of participation is widely recognised for understanding different forms and degrees of involvement and engagement. It is important to recognise that providing a voice and opportunity for participation at different levels is valuable and important.

Based on the work of Arnstein (1969), we have developed a Kick Back group ladder of involvement which reflects the breadth of work that we can be invited to be involved in.

Co-production

We develop, decide, design and do together with paid members of staff as equal partners.

Co-design

We decide, design and have influence over decisions but may not be involved in carrying out the activity.

Engaged

We are given regular opportunities to express our views in a variety of ways. We can influence some decisions.

Consulted

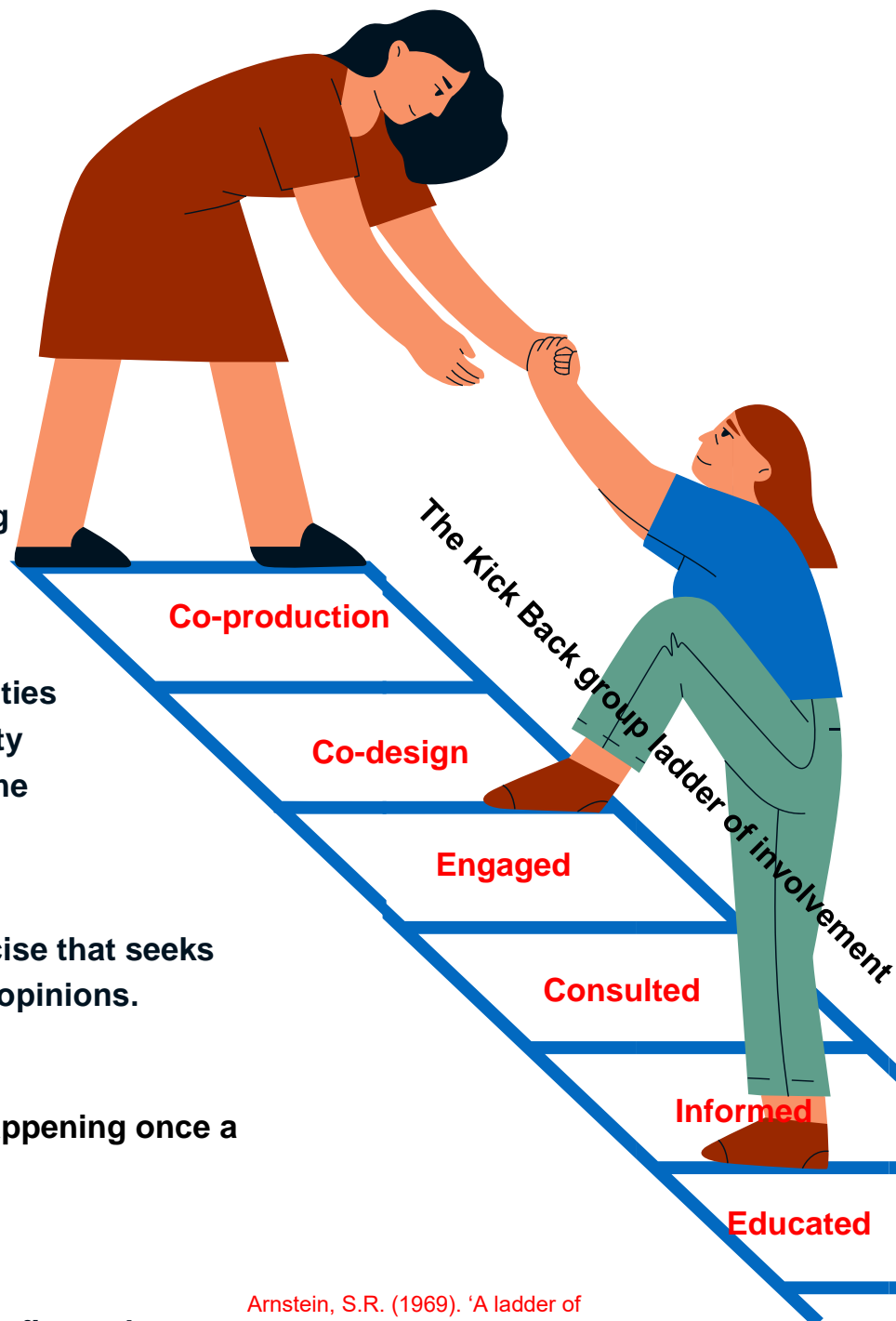
An information gathering exercise that seeks to find out people's views and opinions.

Informed

Letting people know what is happening once a decision has been made.

Educated

People are educated on the benefits and rationale of services.



Arnstein, S.R. (1969). 'A ladder of citizen participation'. Journal of American Planning Association, Vol 35, No 4, pp216-224.

Things to keep in mind

What involvement opportunities are available?

Activities and opportunities for involvement vary depending on the needs and requests of EKRCC and local agencies working in the field of sexual violence.

Examples of work that we have undertaken include the development of information booklets aimed at those who have experienced sexual violence and abuse; for those who have accessed the services of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), we have shared our experiences to help inform their work, and have also been consulted in the shaping of a new community provision led by EKRCC.

How do I find out about opportunities and do I have to be involved?

At each Kick Back community meeting, any opportunities for involvement will be shared. This will include information on the nature of the activity, the time commitment involved, and the deadline for the activity to be completed.

It is up to individual group members whether they wish to become involved. For some activities, a specific experience may be needed. Please keep this in mind when deciding.

KICK BACK

For members who choose not to attend meetings, or are unable to attend, the opportunity will be shared via email.

Occasionally, we may be asked for feedback, consultation, or involvement, which has a tight deadline. On these occasions, rather than wait for the next meeting, the community will be emailed.

What level of involvement can I have?

You can be involved as much or as little as you want. Some community members have chosen to attend meetings and be involved in involvement activities, and others have chosen to be kept up-to-date and make contributions via email.

We also understand that people's situation and ability to be involved changes. If you need to step back, we are completely comfortable with this.

Is the work difficult?

Although you will not be asked about your experience/s, due to the specific nature of the activity, the work, or meetings may be emotive or give rise to difficult feelings and memories, and at times there may need to be discussions around specific experiences, i.e., the criminal justice system to inform a piece of work.

These discussions will be led sensitively and there will always be an option for you to withdraw from these discussions - your well-being always comes first.



Therefore, we must keep the community as safe as possible. We do this by having a check-in at the beginning and end of each meeting, and if you are involved in a specific piece of work, extra meetings or check-ins will be scheduled, and together, we will consider how to balance the work and your well-being.

However, although you will be supported, we must all be responsible for our safety and consider ways of looking after ourselves during and after meetings.

What other ways are community members supported and helped to feel safe?

It is important that the community feels safe, respectful, and connected. To enable this, there are some things that we ask people to consider. If there is something specific that would help you to contribute and be involved safely, please let us know at your welcome meeting.

- a. We don't mind if you turn your camera off during meetings. We understand that, for some, this is an unsafe and triggering experience.
- b. We have developed a safe space agreement, which will be shared with you. These are things that we all keep in mind, consider, and work by when we meet to keep the group as safe as possible. These are revised regularly.
- c. We appreciate that sometimes we don't get it right. If this happens, please tell us so we can make changes.

What is the time commitment?

You are in control of how much involvement you have. If you wish to attend the Kick Back community meetings this would be around 90 minutes every eight weeks.

If you wish to become involved in an activity, you need to be able to lend more of your time. Depending on the activity, consider time for additional meetings, reading through information and helping develop the project.

Will I be paid?

As being a member of the Kick Back group is a voluntary role; we are unable to pay you for your time. However, we can reimburse you for any travel expenses and parking costs you incur in attending any face-to-face meetings we hold and if travel is needed to participate in an activity you are developing.

Travel and parking costs will be reimbursed as per EKRCC's travel policy.

If I am not paid, how is my time and work valued?

Although we are not in a position to financially remunerate peoples time, it is important that people are recognised (if they wish to be) for their time and contributions.

How we can do this varies but can take the form of meeting minutes, names listed in reports and publications and the work being recognised and valued by the EKRCC team and trustees.

As many people wish to remain anonymous, one way to recognise the community's work is to state that members of the Kick Back community undertook the work.

Confidentiality

- No personal identifiable information is held about any Kick Back community member.
- The safe space agreement requests that if you are attending community meetings, the content, and discussions of the meeting remain confidential.
- We use the online video conferencing platform Zoom to meet as a community. Meeting online this way can have some difficulties and we urge you to consider the following:

Please ensure confidentiality by making sure you have a private space to connect and there is nobody else in the room with you who is not taking part in the meeting.

Be aware of your surroundings, you may have personal items or pictures behind you which you don't want others to see.

You may wish to consider wearing headphones so the meeting cannot be heard by others nearby.

Measuring the impact of our work

So, we can measure the impact of our work, as well as understand the individual benefits that people gain from being part of the community, you will be asked if you would like to complete an anonymous evaluation form.

The results will be shared with the community, as well as the Director of EKRCC.



