***Glossary of Terms***

**Achieving Best Evidence (ABE)** – an ABE is a statement taken from you, by the Police, which is recorded on video. You may be asked to explain what has happened and answer a few questions. This video may be used as a statement in court

**Affirmation/oath** – A declaration that someone is required to give before they give evidence in court, that what they say will be the truth. An oath is a religious version of this sworn on a holy book, whilst an affirmation is non-religious.

**Age of consent** - The age of consent is the age at which a person is considered to be legally competent to consent to sexual acts, and is thus the minimum age of a person that another person is legally permitted to engage in sexual activity with. In England and Wales this age is 16 years.

**Age of criminal responsibility** – This is the minimum age at which a person can be arrested and charged with a crime. In England and Wales this age is 10 years.

**Assault by Penetration** – this is a sexual assault where by the perpetrator penetrates the victim with either a body part or an object, without belief of consent; for example, using hands or fingers

**Bail conditions** – After a suspect is arrested for a crime, if granted bail they are allowed to go home or to a different address until the date of their trial. They may only be released if they promise to adhere to conditions such as not contacting certain people, or reporting to a police station at certain times.

**Barrister** – a lawyer who presents the case in court; both the defence, and the prosecution, will have a barrister. In criminal cases, barristers might wear robes and wigs, as often seen in films

**Consent** – giving your permission for something to happen; consent should be informed and willing, having the freedom to consent means having the freedom to choose and knowing nothing bad will happen to you if you decline. Having the capacity to consent means that an individual should be able to understand the implications and consequences of their choice, and be able to communicate this choice to another

**Court** – a building where trials take place. One court house will often have several court rooms within it, so more than one trial will likely take place within the building in a single day

**Cross-examination** – The questioning of someone during the trial by the barrister representing the opposite side. Eg. When the victim is questioned by the defence barrister

**Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** - an independent group of lawyers who decide whether cases brought by the police will go on to court; CPS will then prepare cases which are going forward to trial

**Defendant** – a person who has been accused of a crime and will stand trial

**Evidence** – this may be anything which helps to prove or explain the events which have led to a trial

**Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)** – specialist advisors who give independent help , advice and support to survivors whether they want to report to the police or not. For more information, please call the number listed at the bottom of the page.

**Initial Statement** – this is the first statement given to the police, and may be quite brief i.e. what happened, where, and any details known about the perpetrator

**Judge** – the person who oversees a trial and ensures that everything is happening according to the law; the judge may also determine a sentence for those who are found guilty of a crime

**Jury** – a group of twelve people, who are randomly selected, to listen to all the evidence presented throughout a trial. They will decide whether the defendant is guilty, or not guilty

**Officer in Case (OIC)** – a police officer who leads the investigation process in a case, and is responsible for updating survivors

**Perpetrator** – the person, or people, who have committed a criminal offence

**Plea** - An accused person's formal reply to a charge in a criminal court, the choices being guilty or not guilty.

**Police Investigation** – after a crime is reported the process of a Police Investigation may begin, where the police begin to collect evidence and speak with witnesses and suspects

**Pre-trial preparation hearing** – A hearing that takes place in court after someone is charged with an offence, during which they must enter a plea to each of the charges listed. Other administrative duties will also be dealt with by both barristers during this hearing in order to get the case ready to go to trial. The victim is not required to attend

**Pre-trial visit** – A visit to a court for a victim or witness before the date of the trial, in order to familiarise themselves with the building and facilities

**Prosecution** – the prosecution is the team who present the witness’ case, and work towards prosecuting the alleged perpetrator

**Rape** – when one person penetrates the mouth, vagina or anus of another individual with his penis, without that individual’s consent

**Remanded in custody** – When a person has not been convicted of a crime yet, but is detained in a prison until a trial or sentencing hearing will take place. The time they spend on remand will be taken off by the judge at sentencing should the individual be found guilty at trial

**Restraining order** – A court order issued to prohibit an individual from carrying out a particular action for a certain period of time, especially approaching or contacting a specified person

**Sentence** – the penalty given to an individual who has been found guilty of a crime, at the end of the court process

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)** – this is a place where survivors may go shortly after an incident of rape or sexual assault in order to have a medical examination by specialist nurses. During the examination some survivors may agree to have physical evidence collected from their body. A SARC can provide survivors with medical support including emergency contraception, and may also provide counselling or advocacy. Somerset and Avon’s SARC is named *The Bridge*

**Statutory Rape** – when an adult has sex with an individual who is under the age of consent; in England and Wales this age boundary is 16

**Suspect** – a person who has been accused, or is suspected, of having committed a crime, and who is under police investigation

**Trial** – the process where evidence is presented to a jury, who then find an individual to be guilty or not guilty

**Verdict** – a jury’s final decision about whether the defendant is guilty, or not guilty, is also called the ‘verdict’. When the jury has decided they will deliver their verdict to the judge, who will then decide on the appropriate sentence

**Victim** – an individual who a crime has happened *to;* in court this person might also be called the complainant

**VPS** **Victim Personal Statement -** (read out/played after sentencing of perpetrator if he/she is found to be guilty. This is a statement detailing the victim’s point of view on how the crime has affected them. It is up to the victim to decide if she/he wants this read out/played)

**VCS** **Victim Contact Scheme** - (victims of violent/sexual where offenders who get a 12+ months sentence)

**VLO** **Victim Liaison Officer -** (main point of contact from Victim Contact Scheme)

**Witness** – A person who is asked to give evidence in court, about something they may have witnessed or been told about

**Witness service** – A team of staff based in the court whose job is to support prosecution witnesses, and their families and friends, to deal with the experience of going to court and giving evidence