

Group highlights issue of childhood sexual abuse

AN IMPORTANT event is being held in Fife next Tuesday to help raise awareness of the long-term consequences of sexual abuse.

Project manager Anne Macdonald said it would also highlight the possible closure of the Kirkcaldy Area Abuse Survivors Project "due to Fife Council saying they are unable to find the money to fund us, and other similar projects.

"The impact this would have on survivors and healthcare professionals who use our services will be devastating."

She emphasised the need for local authorities and the Government to take action in placing resources to support these victims of crime.

KAASP was established in January 1995 to provide free and confidential support services to adult, male and female survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

The services consist of counselling, support, crisis support, advocacy, groups,

befriending, drop-in, library, helpline and support to partners and families of survivors.

The project offers training and talks, and acts as a specialist resource to other social and health care professionals needing information and advice.

Ms Macdonald stated the benefits from the counselling and support services they provided had a wide-ranging effect on survivors' lives.

"The sexual abuse of children is not going to end," she confirmed. "Generations of children have been abused and remain silent, but this silence and secrecy is slowly being broken down and survivors are learning they are not alone."

Ms Macdonald said with help and support, "survivors can and do become well."

"They are able to come to terms with their abuse, enabling them to be freer to experience life as they deserve.

"Therefore the need for our project is paramount for survivors, as well as the wider community."

KAASP will be holding a special screening and seminar, 'Beyond Survival', at the Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy, next Tuesday at 2 pm.

The film, A Kind of Hush, will be shown, depicting the consequences of sexual abuse in the true life experience of a young man who is battling to make a new life for himself having suffered sexual abuse as a child.

There will be a panel discussion after the screening, which will include survivors.

Those attending can hear their experiences of services, what has worked for them, and ways forward.

There will be over 400 people attending the event ranging from the head of social work for Fife, the police, criminal justice services, child protection, GPs, psychiatrists, social workers and survivors.