

Domestic Violence & Abuse guidance : Covid-19

The covid-19 pandemic is a dangerous time for clients experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Please , use and share this document.

Domestic Abuse is a violent, coercive or controlling behaviour by a partner, ex-partner or a family member, regardless of gender or sexuality. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or economic



For updated information log onto:

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/categories/domestic-violence-abuse>



Tips if you suspect that violence or abuse is taking place

- Ask your client about what is happening when it is safe to do so.
- Validate that the abuse is not their fault and ask what support they need
- Support your client to be safe and connect them to specialist services
- Report the violence or abuse to the police and safeguarding services.
- Note : How much do you know about the circumstances of the person you are calling/visiting? e.g. do they have a partner? Is there a history of domestic abuse? Is the perpetrator likely to be with the client at the time of the visit/call? Make sure you have as much information as possible. Has any other service had recent contact? Work in a multi agency framework.

Tips & tools

- Establish methods to keep in regular contact with clients in your service. For example, if they don't have a phone, are you able to take a cheap mobile phone topped up with credit to give to the client, so they can keep in touch with you? Remember to put your work mobile number and your team number on to the phone.
- Tips for Phone welfare checks : Open the conversation with: 'We know that socially isolating is hard, and likely to make someone's situation worse, so we are contacting everyone regularly to check in on them, and to make sure they are safe and have what they need. How are you doing at the moment?'
- Check who else is around: 'Are you self-isolating alone or with someone else? Are they with you now? Can they hear what we're saying?. It has also been reported new dynamics of abuse, like withholding food, or threatening with contamination to the victims and the children have emerged in the past few weeks

Tips & tools

- If you hear someone in the background, and are worried it could be the perpetrator, or if the client confirms that they can be overheard say: `That's ok, we are making routine phone calls to offer support to all, we just wanted to check. How are you both? Have either of you had any symptoms? Do you need food/medication etc?
- If the client says they are alone, or can't be overheard ask directly about domestic I abuse: `Is your partner/partner's name/the person you are self -isolating with doing anything that is making you feel frightened or anxious at the moment?'
- If the client discloses ensure a safety plan is in place and offer support via local services . If not say: `Ok, great. Well we just want to check in with everyone regularly to see if they are ok – would it be ok for me to check in with you again?' Try and agree a time, and put this in your/your team's diary so that this is covered.

Safety Plan

- A safety plan is a personalised, practical plan that includes ways to remain safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or safety after you leave. Safety planning involves practical knowledge, how to cope with emotions, how to tell friends and family about the abuse, what legal options to take.
- A good safety plan will have all of the vital information victims or a family needs, and it is tailored to the victims and the family's unique situation and will help walk them through different scenarios (rehearse and practice).
- Safety plans should not only be considered in responding to disclosure or a recent incident, but it is also important to be utilised as a well being and safety action plan to reduce the intensity of harm and risk in some circumstances, as a tool to help individuals to think about what makes them feel safe AND what are their 'triggers' to take a risk or pose a risk to their family members.

Preventing isolation ?

- Are you in employment – do you have daily contact with work colleagues
- Who can you stay in daily contact with by phone or method of choice – who will initiate this contact? Is there a plan in place if they are unable to contact you (escalation?)
- Does anyone else know what's going on in your relationship?
- Are your friends/family aware of the situation?
- Do your the children know about the abuse- do they know what to do in an emergency (safety Plan)
- Get friends to check in regularly
- If you are not living with the perpetrator, do you need to revisit your social media privacy settings
- Develop safe word/ Codeword with friends/ family agencies this can be emailed, text, voice message, verbal conversation, voice note

Children & Young people

- A summary of weekly information for everyone working with (or living with) children, young people and families in Bury. Please, log onto link below for the most updated information.
<https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14794> . The information comes from a range of different sources. If you want to include any information please e-mail childrenstrust@bury.gov.uk The Early Help Toolkit gives information, fact sheets and links on a range of different topics.
- Rights of Women have produced guidance on COVID-19 and child contact arrangements.
<https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-information/family-law/coronavirus-and-child-contact-arrangements>
- There is a lot of support on offer for children and young people log onto:
 - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
 - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents>
 - <https://thehideout.org.uk>

Adults & Older people

If you have reason to believe that an adult or older person is experiencing domestic violence abuse. All the resources and tips still apply. Below is some guidance for professionals and managers who work with adults who have care and support needs and who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and it is felt a safeguarding duty is required by the Local authority under the Care Act s. 42. In the context of legislation, specific adult safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs

The Local Authority have a safeguarding duty.

You as a professional can complete a safeguarding referral which can be found on the Bury Directory

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/categories/staying-safe-safeguarding>

Alternatively email adultcareservices@bury.gov.uk Or contact adult care services on 0161 253 5151 or out of hours 0161 253 6606

If someone is in immediate danger contact the emergency services on 999.

Legal Aid & Civil Orders

- The Legal Aid Agency has unveiled a support package for civil, family and criminal legal aid practitioners to ensure access to justice during the coronavirus outbreak. The initiatives will make hardship payments easier to access and pause some debt repayments. Read the full announcement here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-package-for-legal-providers-will-ensure-access-to-justice-during-coronavirus-outbreak>
- Updated guidance on applying for a domestic violence injunction as an unrepresented applicant during the coronavirus outbreak. It explains the arrangements in place during the coronavirus pandemic, including making sure that a court is open before sending an application and that hearings can take place by remote means whenever possible. Read the full guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-for-a-domestic-violence-family-law-act-injunction-for-unrepresented-applicants>

Useful local numbers

Help & advice: It is important we spread the message you are not alone. Even if individuals are unable to leave their home at the moment, they can still access support through one of the helplines.

- If a person is in an emergency situation, advise them to call 999. If they are finding it difficult to speak . Please, advise to use the "Silent Solution system" this enables a 999 caller who is too scared to make a noise, or speak, to press 55 when prompted – to inform police they are in a genuine emergency.
- Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0161 636 7525 If you need support there is help out there contact <http://www.gmvictims.org.uk>
- Victim support – 0161 200 1950 live chat is now available 24/7 in all areas www.victimsupport.org.uk/live-chat
- Safenet in Bury are still operating their service, for a full update read the attached:



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- Pet fostering service for victim of domestic abuse <https://www.endeavourproject.org.uk/pet-fostering>

National helplines

- National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247.
- The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327.
- Refuge freephone helpline 0800 2000 247.
- The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994.
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428/
- Forced Marriage Unit- 0207 008 0151.
- Karma Nirvana (Honour Based Violence) 0800599247.
- Guardian Project (Female Genital Mutilation) for children and young people 07449 651677 or email guardian.project@outlook.com
- SOS Clinics (Female Genital Mutilation) – Adult service. Helpline: 07862 279289 / Email: info@nestac.org.uk
- RESPECT support for perpetrators: Email: info@respectphoneline.org.uk 0808 802 4040.
- Log onto <https://www.motiv8mcr.org> for telephone support for perpetrators.
- Talk Listen Change <https://talklistenchange.org.uk>

Apps & online tools

- Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app, launched by Hestia in partnership with the Vodafone Foundation, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>
- Chayn provides online tools, information, courses and support for people experiencing abuse, all free to access- <https://chayn.co> Their Soul Medicine courses provide bitesized support, delivered in disguised emails at a time that you choose.
- Hollie Guard - <https://hollieguard.com> the Hollie Guard app is free to download on any Android phone or iPhone and is proving popular for the reassurance it is providing families. The app turns the phone into a personal safety device that can be triggered if the user is ever in any danger.