



Guidance for professionals for Domestic Abuse Emergency Operating Procedures – COVID19

April 2020

We know that this is a difficult and worrying time for everyone – but particularly so for adults and children living with domestic abuse, and the professionals working hard to support them. It is imperative that we give the message to victims and families that we are still actively working to support them in this situation and will continue to ensure domestic abuse is a priority. Measures can be taken to help victims and their children feel safe at home, and to ensure we have the appropriate response to enable victims and children to leave home when they are at risk there.

Understandably, we need to think differently about how this is achieved and adapt our practice to respond in these exceptional circumstances.

The support and intervention we offer the family, including perpetrators of domestic abuse will be crucial in reducing risk.

Learning from other countries who have been significantly affected by COVID-19, is that there has been increase in incidents of domestic abuse during the pandemic.

It essential that all frontline practitioners with a role in safeguarding victims and families take time to review each of their cases to consider the risk posed to victims of domestic abuse and where appropriate their children by:

- Increased time at home
- Increased proximity to the person causing harm
- Increased emotional and financial stress
- Increased isolation
- Reduced family and social support
- Increased risk of illness

Practitioners should follow their own service specific guidance for assessment and recording within case management systems.



Following on from the government's updated advice and measures to enforce lock down measures announced on 23 March 2020, this guidance sets out temporary arrangements for the following:

- Safety Planning and Harm Reduction
- Emergency Housing Options for victims wanting to leave a household
- Statutory and Specialist Safeguarding Services
- Community Support

We expect that further guidance and temporary amendments to legislation and standards relating to domestic abuse and services delivered to victims and families will be provided in due course, and this guidance will be amended and updated when this becomes available.

1. Safety and Harm Reduction Planning

It may feel like a challenge to consider how to safety plan during the current situation when much of the advice we have offered previously needs to be varied to respond to the coronavirus pandemic in line with government guidance. However, this is also a real opportunity to think in a different way about how this can be achieved with everyone in the family. Safety planning needs to be creative and flexible, maximising opportunity for safe communication between vulnerable families, and as many different services as practical, keeping these families in sight. Safety and harm reduction plans should be reviewed with all victims/families that practitioners are working with where there is a known concern/risk in relation to domestic abuse.

Safe Lives have some helpful advice regarding safety planning please see online link below

<https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety%20planning%20guide,%20%20victims%20and%20survivors,%20COVID-19.pdf>

Respect have produced a helpful guidance for practitioners working with perpetrators of domestic abuse and responding to the challenges of COVID 19.

<http://respect.uk.net/>

If you are working with perpetrators, we would encourage you to speak to Turning the Spotlight for additional support and guidance. Follow the link below:

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/north-west/cumbria/turning-spotlight>

Link to support document for perpetrators: Survival kit for men under pressure

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/news/2020/3/31/corona-crisis-survival-kit-for-men-under-pressure>



2. Emergency Housing options for victims wanting to leave a household

Victims and their children are allowed to leave home to seek safe accommodation or refuge and government guidelines regarding social distancing or self-isolation do not prevent this. It is vitally important that all victims, and families are given this advice and do not feel that they have no other option than to remain in their home with someone who is abusing them.

The Local Authorities, and Housing Associations are working collaboratively to ensure that emergency accommodation is available to Cumbrian residents who are experiencing domestic abuse.

If a family or single person wants to seek refuge the process to do this remains the same, please contact:

Allerdale Borough Council 01900 702660 homelessness@allerdale.gov.uk Kirsty Fryer 01900 702584	Barrow Borough Council 01229 876599 sarah@womenscommunitymatters.org Sarah Goodwin 01229 311102 or 01229 876599
Carlisle City Council 01228 817079 Caroline.graham@carlisle.gov.uk 01228 817089/07793 666152	Copeland Borough Council 01946 598300 Gillian.reid@copeland.gov.uk Gillian Reid 01946 598475/07776151831
Eden District Council 01768 817817 Karen.Teasdale@endenha.org.uk Karen Teesdale 01768 861414	South Lakeland District Council 01539 733333

Or the following National helplines:

Domestic Violence Assist External Link - 0800 195 8699

Specialises in assistance to obtain emergency injunctions from being further abused.

Women’s Aid Domestic Violence Helpline External Link - 0808 2000 247

Free 24-hour national helpline run by Women’s Aid and Refuge. Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Live chat: <https://chat.womensaid.org.uk> (Monday to Friday 10 am to 12 pm)



3. Statutory and Specialist Safeguarding Services

a) Adult social care

A safeguarding concern in relation to an adult at risk should still be referred into the local Single Point of Access using the normal procedure.

Allerdale and Copeland	0300 303 3589
Carlisle and Eden	0300 303 3249
Furness and South Lakes	0300 303 2704

We are operating temporary extended office hours during the COVID-19 outbreak. Please contact your local Adult Social Care office at the following times:
Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

At all other times please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01228 526690.

If you believe an adult is at immediate risk of harm the Police should be contacted on 999

a) Children's social care

A safeguarding concern for the welfare of a child or young person should still be referred into Cumbria's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm the Police should be contacted on 999.

If you are a member of the public with a safeguarding concern about a child please contact the Cumbria Safeguarding Hub on **0333 240 1727** or complete a single contact form [here](#)

If you are a professional with an urgent safeguarding concern, please contact the Safeguarding hub by telephone. If your concern is not urgent please complete a single contact form (hyperlink to be added).

Please see the Cumbria Safeguarding Children's Partnership website for more details on [this page](#).

b) Victim Support

Victim Support provides the specialist domestic abuse service provision in Cumbria, including the IDVA (Independent domestic abuse advisor for high risk victims), IVA (Independent Victim Advocates for medium and standard risk) and Turning the Spotlight (Work with victims and perpetrators).

Referral process for an IDVA remains unchanged. IDVA's are allocated when a



multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) referral is received.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Victim Support practitioners will provide the following support Mon-Fri 9am - 6pm

:

- Telephone support
- Online live chat
- IDVA (independent Victim advocate)

T: 0300 3030 157 (local)

E: Cumbria.Admin@victimsupport.org.uk

Outside hours 24 support line 0808 1689 111

Victim Support practitioners will make an assessment at the point of referral and mutually (with the victim) decide what is the best plan forward, incorporating the most up to date infection control guidelines that comes through on a daily basis.

c) Cumbria Constabulary

It is business as usual for domestic abuse for the police. Wherever possible all reports are responded too by a face to face visit. Police take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and investigate them. The police will look to take positive action at every opportunity. All reports of domestic abuse now have minimum standards of investigation. Police work closely with the CPS (crown prosecution service) to pursue perpetrators and bring them to justice. DVPO (domestic violence prevention order) are always considered if a prosecution is not possible.

When attending any non-domestic abuse incidents officers will be vigilant for the signs, consider the history at addresses and try to speak with family members separately to see if everything is OK.

Operation Encompass disclosures are still being given to schools so they can put safeguarding measures in place and respond appropriately even when the child is at home.

Officers will still be submitting domestic abuse referrals and a DASH (domestic abuse stalking harassment assessment) will be completed at every domestic incident. All necessary referrals and signposting to other agencies will be completed.

MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) – is taking place every four weeks in each area of the county. Agencies have been asked to make referrals as normal and ensure their updates are ready for the meeting. Any actions they are given from the meeting will be sent via email. The following agencies dial into the meeting: Police – who will continue to chair, Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Mental Health, Probation, Health and Victim Support



All other usual attendees do not need to dial in unless they have made a referral. They will need to submit information on relevant cases using a template form, which will be emailed to them. The agencies that dial in will also need to complete the form. The information provided on the form will be shared on your behalf by the MARAC Co-ordinator. If there is a complex case that needs specific representation then that professional will be invited to dial in.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) or Clare's Law scheme continues to operate with multi-agency partners dialling into virtual meetings every three weeks. Members of the public can still make requests under the 'Right to Ask' opportunity. All disclosures are still provided face to face to people deemed to be at risk of harm.

[The Silent Solution guide](#) – enables a victim to make contact with the police without speaking. This can be disseminated and given to victims/ families.

d) Health

Universal health services are still very much available.

Any practitioner or service user can seek support and advice from the Health Visitor service, Midwife and GP practice.

During the current Covid-19 crisis, health visitors are not undertaking home visits as frequently, however will try to maintain contact by phone with families who they are usually in touch with.

An online source of advice and guidance for Health Visitors can be accessed [here](#)

Health Visitors and other Health Care Practitioners are able to complete a MARAC referral/ DASH over the phone where safe to do so in order for health to continue to refer in high risk cases. Dash risk checklist can be accessed [here](#)

GP's are undertaking consultations primarily via telephone and should a disclosure of domestic abuse be made during a consultation they will be able to assess for immediate safety, support and signpost.

Mental Health Services have developed specific website pages in response to the current outbreak where useful links can be found regarding resources for specific groups and online resources that have been developed. These are particularly important at this time due to the impact restrictions and the outbreak will have on wellbeing and access to support. Resources can be accessed [here](#)

e) Community Support

Barrow's Women's Centre

From 24th March 2020—Services & Support @ Women's Community Matters

Details of our reduced service due to Corona Virus Covid-19 outbreak & necessary restrictions/precautions

We are currently offering support via phone and email only

A limited number of staff are working from the Centre and where possible others are working from home

Please see opening times and contact details below.

Please watch social media for further updates/changes to our service and for useful information.

If you or someone you are working with is in crisis please give us call, message or email during the times below.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reception emails and phone 9.30am—4pm	Reception emails and phone 9.30am—4pm	Reception emails and phone 9.30am—4pm	Reception emails and phone 9.30am—4pm	Reception emails and phone 9.30am—4pm
<i>Women's Community Matters</i> Facebook page messages are answered 9.30am—4pm, Monday to Friday.				
Telephone appointments available for women and young people	Telephone appointments available for women and young people	Telephone appointments available for women and young people	Telephone appointments available for women and young people	Telephone appointments available for women and young people
Please ring for access to the Clothes Bank	Please ring for access to the Clothes Bank	Please ring for access to the Clothes Bank	Please ring for access to the Clothes Bank	Please ring for access to the Clothes Bank

All events, groups and activities have been cancelled until further notice

Telephone: 01229 311 102 Email: reception@womenscommunitymatters.org Website: <http://www.womenscommunitymatters.org>

ZDrive: 1.Room booking and diary 24.03.20

SafetyNet

These are challenging times at Safety Net but we will continue to work in partnership to deliver high-quality services to our service users.

We would like our stakeholders, partners, other professionals and service users to know that, as a service, we are still very much open and all staff have been set up to work remotely.

Professionals can refer using the online [referral form on our website](#), and we are still taking self-referrals by telephone.

We believe it is vital that we play our part to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19, as such we will be contacting all service users this week to let them know that, although we will not be seeing them face to face in our offices, we will be offering 1:1 video or telephone sessions instead.

Our staff will do their utmost to support our communities in these challenging times. As well as continuing with weekly therapeutic or support sessions we will also check that our clients are safe and have practical and emotional support in place and we will provide advice and signpost where necessary.



We will also regularly update our website and social media platforms with relevant information, advice and self-help guidance.

If you require any information or advice then just email, call or message us via our website.

Stay safe and let's all look after each other.

Trauma informed support & therapy services for those affected by DA are being offered via:

- Telephone assessment
- Telephone video 1:1 sessions
- Telephone sessions
- Web updates / advice
- Chat function social media

T: 01228 515859

M: 07748 682 600

E: office@safetynet.org

Women Out West (WOW)

We are here for you during these challenging times as always, but we have adapted our services to comply with the guidance from government on preventing spread of Covid-19.

Our team is now working from home but available to support you by phone & email.

You can [download a flyer with details here](#) or see below:

Email contact any time: contactus@womenoutwest.co.uk

Reception phone enquiries: (Monday to Friday 9.30 – 2.30pm) 01946 550103

1:1 phone appointments: (Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm) 07539 780431

Gateway 4 Women

Gateway 4 Women staff members are continuing to work from home and are offering support via telephone, email and Facebook. Anybody requiring support can contact us via Facebook Messenger or by calling the Gateway 4 Women Centre on 01228 212090 where all messages continue to be monitored and picked up – If you leave a voicemail, please ensure you leave a name and contact number or other preferred method of contact. Alternatively, get in touch via email on admin@cumbriagateway.co.uk . All women are welcome to self-refer and all agencies can continue to refer through the usual channels.



Emergency Support Helpline for vulnerable people needing urgent help with food, medicines and essential supplies

Cumbria County Council and partners have launched an emergency support service and 6 welfare coordination Hubs for people at high risk of becoming seriously ill, as a result of COVID-19, and who do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours. If they have no alternative support, these people will now be able to call the Freephone number to request help with getting food, medicines, essential supplies and home deliveries.

Ways to get in touch:

- Phone - The emergency telephone support helpline is **0800 783 1966**.
- Online - [COVID-19 online support form](#).
- Email your request for help to COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk .

The telephone 'call' centre will operate Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, and 10am to 2pm at weekends and Bank Holidays. The service also accepts referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community.

The helpline is there to support those at 'high risk' and includes people over 70 years old, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions who should be protecting themselves by staying at home. The majority of these people will already be receiving support from family, friends or local voluntary groups with tasks like shopping or collection of medicines if they require it. But we know that a small number of people will not have this support. The helpline will also accept referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community.