

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: Service Updates during the COVID 19 Crisis

Avoiding public spaces and working at home can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but for many home may not be the safest option. We know that any external factors that add stress and financial strain can negatively impact relationships and escalate an abuser's behaviour – and the safety of a survivor is compromised.

Abuse is about power and control. When survivors are forced to stay in the home or in close proximity to their abuser more frequently, an abuser will use any tool to exert control over their victim, including a global health concern such as COVID 19. In a time where the government is enforcing "social distancing," and many are advised to work from home and not meet friends and family, an abuser may take advantage of the situation to gain more control and further isolate the person they are abusing. It can feel difficult to safely reach out for help when an abuser is with you 24/7.

COVID 19 might have changed the ways in which services are working but they are still running – and support is available:

<u>Barking and Dagenham</u>	
<p>Domestic and Sexual Violence Service – Refuge One to one confidential, non-judgemental support and advocacy to all people living or working in Barking and Dagenham experiencing domestic abuse. This includes support for children, refuge accommodation and sanctuary schemes.</p> <p>The service is running via phone, email, webchat and online applications.</p>	<p>Call: 0300 456 0174 Email: BDAdvocacy@refuge.org.uk Web: https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/barking-and-dagenham/</p>
<p>DV FLAG East Free independent confidential advice on legal options to anyone experiencing domestic abuse in Barking & Dagenham and surrounding areas</p>	<p>Call: 020 8507 5994 Email: dvflageast@bdcab.org.uk Web: http://www.dvflageast.org.uk/</p>
<p>MARAC The MARAC is a multi-agency meeting to discuss the highest risk cases of domestic abuse. The Barking and Dagenham MARAC is running every three weeks, via conference call – it otherwise remains unchanged. Please encourage your service user to consent to a referral to Refuge at the same time. You do not need consent to refer to MARAC.</p>	<p>Email: MARACReferrals@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

National Services	
<p>National Domestic Abuse Helpline The helpline is open 24/7 and is run by highly trained, female advisers. Many different languages are available, and they can work with callers to increase safety, access refuge accommodation and other specialist services. Call back and email available from the website.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 2000 247 Web: https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/</p>
<p>Respect Phonenumber The phonenumber is staffed by non-judgemental advisors who can give honest advice to people using abusive behaviours.</p> <p>Webchat available from the website 10:00-11:00 and 15:00-16:00 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 8024040 Email: info@respectphonenumber.org.uk Webchat: https://respectphonenumber.org.uk/</p>
<p>Men's Advice Line Non-judgmental emotional support, practical advice and information for men experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Monday: 9am – 8pm Tuesday: 9am – 5pm Wednesday: 9am – 8pm Thursday: 9am – 5pm Friday: 9am – 5pm</p> <p>Webchat available from the website 10:00-11:00 and 15:00-16:00 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 8010327 Email: info@mensadvice.org.uk Web: https://mensadvice.org.uk/</p>
<p>Childline</p> <p>Support and advice for any child or young person, whatever they need to talk about. Web page given specific for domestic abuse but young people can make use of the online message boards too: https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/message-boards/</p>	<p>Call: 0800 1111 (9am until midnight) Web: https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/domestic-abuse/</p>
<p>National Stalking Helpline Offers information and guidance to anybody in the UK who is currently or has previously been affected by harassment or stalking.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 802 0300 Web: https://www.suzylamplugh.org/pages/category/national-stalking-helpline</p>

London Services

<p>Ashiana Network: Specialist counselling and support for women who have experienced violence and abuse. Ashiana staff are working remotely. Support will be offered over the telephone, online and where safe to do so through skype. Counselling will be offered over the telephone.</p>	<p>Call: 020 8539 0427 Email: info@ashiana.org.uk Web: http://www.ashiana.org.uk/</p>
<p>London Survivors Gateway: Offers survivors of rape and sexual abuse help to access specialist services in London. Works with anyone aged 13 or above regardless of gender, sexuality, disability, language, ethnicity or immigration status. Open 10:00-16:00 Mon-Fri.</p>	<p>Call: 0808 801 0860 Professional Referral: https://www.dpmscloud.com/external/referralfomorgwgn</p>
<p>East London Rape Crisis: Specialist help to women and girls over the age of 14 who have experienced rape, sexual abuse or violence. Support workers are working remotely. Advice, support and counselling are over the telephone.</p>	<p>Call: 020 7683 1210 Helpline: 0800 160 1036 Email: info@niaendingviolence.org.uk</p>
<p>Galop: LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse and violence can contact GALOP who provide confidential advice and support to members of the LGBT+ community. The London Helpline is currently closed - alternative details given for contact.</p>	<p>London Helpline: 020 7704 2040 (temporarily closed) National LGBT+ helpline: 0800 999 5428 Web: www.galop.org.uk (still able to make referrals by way of webform)</p>
<p>Deaf Hope SignHealth works to improve the health and wellbeing of people who are Deaf. DeafHope is their specialist domestic abuse service for people who are deaf.</p>	<p>Text: 07970 350366 Email: deafhope@signhealth.org.uk</p>

Online Support

Notes from Chayn

With social-distancing, quarantines, and border closings, life can feel frightening and uncertain. This is especially true for anyone living in an abusive household or working on recovering from trauma. Chayn are creating a web-based daily support group for survivors called "Notes From Chayn". It is free for anyone experiencing gender-based violence. The group will offer daily tips, tricks, tools, and comforting words to our community.

The programme is 10 weeks long and will be delivered over Telegram, a secure messaging app. The content takes the best from Chayn's experience, [Women's Aid's Power to Change programme](#) and [Rockpool's Sexual Violence Recovery Toolkit](#). Sign up here:

<https://t.me/joinchat/AAAAAFH1r7Goj7j3ZgOnPA>