



Domestic Abuse & COVID-19

A briefing for schools

Safeguarding Children at Home

Many children will be currently living with domestic abuse, both those who previously were known to have been in households with domestic abuse, as well as those for whom the recent lockdown, uncertainty of finances and changed daily life will have contributed to a more volatile home setting. This abuse may be occurring between any members of the household as well as from the child towards their carer.

Schools are requested to:

- 1) Use opportunities of routine contact with families to check on the safety of the children within the household
- 2) Ask open and closed questions to ascertain if there are immediate safeguarding concerns
- 3) Incorporate information about domestic abuse into communications with families, providing contact details for services
- 4) Respond to notifications from Op Encompass where the police have been to an incident at the student's home
- 5) Notify your safeguarding lead and take action if you have concerns, including a referral to children's services

Checking on safety (to be undertaken within routine calls to households)

An example question to assess if there could be problems within the home is:

"We are aware that being in isolation with family members can place a lot of additional pressure on people, so we're asking all of our families – do you feel safe at the moment?"

"No":

Offer to get off the line so they can call 999, or if they are not able to do so, make the call on their behalf. Agree a time you will call back to check how they are.

"Sort of":

Reassure the person that support is available and provide details of the services (below). Try to establish a safe time and number for the person to speak to a domestic abuse advisor and offer to call the service on

their behalf if it likely to be difficult for them to do so themselves.

"Yes":

Remind them that the school and services are there to support them, should they be concerned about their own, or someone else's situation in the future **If you need to explore the answer further, please be aware that there could be other people listening into the call, or that the person may be overheard, so check if they are able to speak freely, by way of a closed question, before proceeding further.** Please also ensure that you have discussed something to do with the child's education so that the person can say that was what the call was about and provide details, rather than having to disclose the safeguarding screening question.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is still active in Hampshire and schools will continue to be notified of domestic abuse incidents in the previous 24 hours by the police.

Some children will still be attending school, but many children who you receive a notification about won't be attending and therefore you won't have the same opportunity to support them.

Recommended responses to notification of an incident via Op Encompass:

- 1) Consider background information held about the family and any previous safeguarding notifications
- 2) Make contact with the family to offer support - provided the call is not answered by the alleged perpetrator, the call should include information about the domestic abuse services to the complaint as well as talking through ways to support, reassure and safety plan with the child(ren). If the alleged perpetrator answers the call and is aware the police have been involved, a more general discussion around checking if the child(ren) need any additional support will be more appropriate.
- 3) Be aware that it may be difficult for people to speak freely on the telephone – tailor what you say, and the information provided accordingly

Operation Encompass Teachers' Helpline - now available 0845 646 0890

This helpline has been put in place to provide school leaders staff with consultation, guidance, information and support when dealing with vulnerable children, after receiving an Op Encompass call/notification.

The dedicated helpline is available **Monday-Friday from 08:30 to 10:30am** - throughout term-time and school holidays. The helpline provides school staff with the opportunity to have immediate, in the moment, consultation with psychologists and therapists that is confidential and easily accessible.

Links to helpful resources

- [Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service Website](https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/domesticabuse) (for local service provision, professionals' advice & referral pathways)
- <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/domesticabuse>
- [Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership COVID-19 update web page](#) (including local service provision updates)
- [Aurora COVID helpline poster](#)
- [Hampton Trust poster](#)
- [Safety planning for victims \(COVID version\) - Safelives](#)
- [Safety planning for where the child is the aggressor](#) (see section 2 on safety planning, point 5)
- Operation Encompass national website: <https://www.operationencompass.org/>

Local support services

Aurora New Dawn 24 hour domestic abuse COVID helpline: 02394 216816

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service (Stop Domestic Abuse): 0330 0165112
Mon-Thurs 9.30am – 5.30pm & Friday 9.30am – 5pm (24 hr service to enable access to refuge accommodation)

Victim Care Service: 0808 1781641
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
(0808 1689111 outside these hours)

Nepali Domestic and Sexual Abuse Service: 07741 261387

YOU Trust (support with target hardening and their health advocacy project): 0800 9169878

Hampton Trust (perpetrator interventions): 02380 009898
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm with service available until 8pm on Tues & Thurs.

Support and Information for Children

Childline: 0800 1111;
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/family-relationships/domestic-abuse/>

National Contacts

24 hour Domestic Abuse helpline (female victims): 0808 2000247;
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
Men's Advice Line: 0808 8010327;
www.mensadvice.org.uk
Mankind Initiative: 01823 334244;
www.mankind.org.uk
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse helpline: 0800 9995428;
www.galop.org.uk
Respect National helpline (perpetrator help): 0808 8024040;
www.respect.uk.net



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