

## **Stop Domestic Abuse Update**

Dear Colleagues

This is a dynamic situation and, as such, our plans have been changing according to new information and advice. We continue to operate the majority of our services, taking referrals as usual, but many are being delivered in a different way e.g. via telephone, skype etc. Referral pathways for our victim services remain open with assessments including the impact of Covid-19 for those still living in an abusive relationship.

I am grateful to my colleagues at Stop Domestic Abuse that remain in client facing roles in order to keep the refuges open. Colleagues have been flexible, particularly where their role is not suitable for home working, and they have been re-deployed or re-trained to deliver other roles within the organisation, including re-deployment to refuge. For those working from home I recognise that this brings its own set of challenges. We have also had various refuges self-isolating due to suspected cases of COVID-19 and this also brings with it its own set of challenges.

### **Community-based services for victims of domestic abuse**

- Support is being provided remotely. In some cases, a home visit may be essential e.g. to provide some target hardening measures or for an urgent joint visit.
- Stop Domestic Abuse continues to support all MARACs and the daily HRDA via telephone/conference call.

### **Group Work**

- From week beginning 4 May 2020 we will pilot delivering The Freedom Programme remotely
  - Tuesday 7.30pm from 5/5/2020
  - Thursday 10am from 7/5/2020
  - Thursday 7.30pm from 7/5/2020

Interest has been so great that we have added a second evening session to the pilot. We are delivering evening sessions to widen engagement opportunities. If these pilots are successful, we will roll out additional group work sessions including "Own My Life" and supporting clients experiencing adolescent to parent violence (APV) workshops.

### **Accommodation-based services**

- All refuges in Hampshire and Portsmouth remain open and we are continuing to provide care and support and housing management services.
- Occupancy rates remain very high.
- Refuges in Hampshire and Portsmouth are continuing to take new referrals.
- We continue to follow Public Health Guidelines in order to protect clients, staff and stakeholders.

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- We have amended our referral and assessment criteria to ask additional screening questions with regards to travel and general health.

### **Children and Young People's (CYP) Services**

- Community-based Children and Young People's Workers are providing remote support to older children (aged 10+) living in the community or have been redeployed to provide support in refuge.
- Children and Young People's workers have developed activity and work packs for children living in refuge who are self-isolating.

### **Up2U**

- The Up2U programme cannot be delivered remotely. Therefore, support to clients involves key-working and risk management.

We have worked closely with our partner, Portsmouth City Council, who developed the Up2U programme, to adapt resources to enable us to deliver effective support remotely that improves safety for victims of domestic abuse and ensures that perpetrators take responsibility for their actions and have healthy coping mechanisms.

This version of Up2U is suitable for remote delivery and allows clients to return to the full programme when restrictions are lifted. We are not currently taking new referrals for any Up2U programme.

### **Virtual Drop-in Service**

- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse that cannot use a telephone to access support and advice can contact a worker via messenger 9.30am – 11.30am, 3.00-5.00pm, 6.00-8.00pm Monday – Friday.  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Southerndas/>

### **Other Services**

- During the pandemic we are unable to accept general donations.
- Donations of money can be donated here:  
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1001534>

### **Referrals to the Helpline**

When the Government measures were introduced on Monday 23 March 2020 Stop Domestic Abuse immediately saw a reduction in self-referrals and referrals from some other agencies e.g. schools and health providers, with referrals from the Police and referrals to refuge remaining initially constant.

In Hampshire Stop Domestic Abuse is now seeing a 22% increase in referrals on the February 2020 weekly average (Police referrals have increased by 32%) Since extending the opening hours of the telephone lines and introducing the virtual drop-in

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we have had an increase in the number of survivors contacting us. Whilst numbers using the virtual drop-in are relatively low it is being used by victims unable to make a telephone call and we have examples of victims using it to find out about accessing refuge or using it to arrange a suitable time to speak to a worker when it is safe for them.

In Portsmouth total referrals have remained similar to the number of referrals received in February (weekly average) but there has been a 27% increase in referrals from Police.

### **Women's Aid Resources**

Women's Aid have developed/provided a number of resources for both providers and survivors.

- **Covid-19/Coronavirus: Safety Advice for Survivors**

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors/>

- **FAQ's about the early release of prisoners**

The government has announced new measures to protect the NHS from coronavirus risks in prisons, deciding to release selected low-risk offenders, who have served over half their sentence and are within two months of their automatic release dates. You may receive queries from concerned victims in the coming weeks about the early release of prisoners. Women's Aid have provided responses to some of the most likely questions and, in particular, how to find out whether their offender is going to be released under this scheme.

Please find attached to the email a document providing more information on this.

### **"My Hero is You": A storybook for children on Covid-19**

A new storybook for 6-11 year olds has recently been published, which aims to help children understand and come to terms with Covid-19. The storybook been produced though a collaboration of over 50 humanitarian sector organisations. It has been translated into various languages including: Arabic, Turkish, French, German, Spanish, and Malay. Further translations and audio versions will be added.

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- **Coping with the new normal**

Deborah Cartwright, Chief Executive Officer of Oasis Domestic Abuse Service in Kent (Women's Aid Member Service) has developed this workshop for SafeLives to share with sector staff. It is to help with overwhelm, life-balance (in general, but framed around staying at home at present) and self-care. It's

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called 'Coping with the new normal' and it is adapted from a workshop she normally delivers for day-to-day planning and self-care.

<https://www.social-led.org.uk/freeness>

### **Media**

There has been increased interest from the media in domestic abuse under the current "lockdown". Stop Domestic Abuse, the work we are doing and the impact of COVID-19 on victims has been featured in a number of articles including Meridian News, Radio Solent, Wave 105, Express FM, Action Hampshire and in the local printed press including The News.

On 28 April 2020 Stop Domestic Abuse was mentioned in Parliament during the long awaited second reading of the Domestic Abuse Bill. Maria Miller MP for Basingstoke recognised the work of Stop Domestic Abuse during her contribution to the debate. This Bill is much needed but significant changes are required to ensure this legislation delivers the transformation that survivors need. This Bill needs to deliver a safe child contact and family court system, stronger housing rights to enable survivors to escape an abuser yet remain in their own home, equal protection and support for migrant women, more support for children, a minimum number of refuge spaces per head of population and statutory funding of refuges. As Covid-19 shuts down routes to safety and support, these reforms are now more needed than ever.

### **Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service**

Email: [advice@stopdomesticabuse.uk](mailto:advice@stopdomesticabuse.uk)

Secure email: [advice.hampshire@stopdomesticabuse.cjism.net](mailto:advice.hampshire@stopdomesticabuse.cjism.net)

Telephone: 033 0016 5112

Advice Line opening hours:

*For victims, perpetrators and their family/friends 9.30am-5.30pm Monday – Thursday and 9.30am-5.00pm Friday.*

*For professionals 11.30am-2.30pm Monday-Friday.*

Core service hours:

9.30am - 5.30pm Monday-Thursday,

9.30am - 5.00pm Friday.

**Refuges can be accessed 24 hrs by calling 033 0016 5112 and following the answerphone instructions.**

### **Portsmouth Integrated Domestic Abuse Refuge and Outreach Service**

Email: [portsmouthreferral@stopdomesticabuse.uk](mailto:portsmouthreferral@stopdomesticabuse.uk)

Secure email: [portsmouthreferral@sdas.cjism.net](mailto:portsmouthreferral@sdas.cjism.net)

Telephone: 02392 065494

Opening hours: 9:00am – 9.00pm Monday-Friday

Weekends and bank holidays 10:00am-6.00pm



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### **Up2U**

*Please note that the normal contact details for this service have temporarily changed.*

Email: [Up2U@stopdomesticabuse.uk](mailto:Up2U@stopdomesticabuse.uk)

Secure email: [up2u.secure@stopdomesticabuse](mailto:up2u.secure@stopdomesticabuse)

Telephone: 07908413247

9.30am - 5.30pm Monday-Thursday,

9.30am - 5.00pm Friday.

### **Social Media**

Please do follow us on social media for updated information about our services.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/southerndas>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Southerndas/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southerndas/>

Website: [www.stopdomesticabuse.uk](http://www.stopdomesticabuse.uk)