



Domestic abuse and general support during Coronavirus/Covid-19 outbreak – newsletter #19 17-04-20

Hello all – please see latest info attached and below. Firstly, I just thought it might be useful to summarise key points about where we are at in relation to domestic abuse locally and nationally.

We are seeing an increase in reports/referrals of domestic abuse locally (Cumbria) and this reflects the [national picture](#), including those with the [most serious outcomes](#) unfortunately. Key messages for us are;

- **All our local services remain open**, including our commissioned services (Victim Support/Turning the Spotlight and The Bridgeway)
- Also, all our **third sector organisations working in the domestic and sexual abuse field remain open** and are still available for support and advice for professionals and victims/survivors
- Victim Support have a 24/7 supportline 0808 16 89 111
- Victim Support have a Live Chat service <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat>
- The Bridgeway remains open, 24/7 phone access at 0808 118 6432, See also <https://www.thebridgeway.org.uk/>
- Freephone 24/7 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline remains open 0808 2000 247
- Women's Aid have a Live Chat service <https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/>
- Silent Solution - If victims need help from the police but can't talk they can ring 999 and use the Silent Solution. Details here <https://policeconduct.gov.uk/news/national-campaign-raise-awareness-silent-solution-system>, see image attached – please share
- Cumbria Police info here https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Advice-Centre/Personal-Safety/Domestic-Abuse.aspx?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialSignIn&utm_content=Coronavirus

At this particularly challenging time we need to remember that **the basics of how we support victims of domestic abuse still apply**. Victims/survivors of abuse cannot always put into words what is wrong in their lives. They do not always know they are a victim of abuse. They need a range of ways and people they can approach to talk about their own lives and to work out how it might be different. Then they need support to put into action their plans, which may be long term. **Remember domestic abuse victims CAN breach lockdown rules and are allowed to leave home to stay safe**. For anyone seeking to flee from domestic abuse please use any of the support services listed above, full contact details have been circulated in previous emails and you can find copies of all previous newsletters in PDF format at <http://www.womenscommunitymatters.org/cumbria-domestic-champions/> just in case you lose/misplace any info.

Finally please note the [criticism from within the domestic abuse sector of recent advice given by NCDV](#), the advice distributed by the National Domestic Violence Centre (NDVC) instructed women to seek a court order to legally rule safe zones in their homes which perpetrators cannot access during the lockdown period. Nicki Norman, Acting Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said: *"We would not support this unsafe and inaccurate advice. At a time when police forces and specialist domestic abuse services are clearly stating that help and support is available for women and children, this is a very dangerous message to send. Advising victims to create a 'safe zone' within their own property undermines everything we know about controlling perpetrators – there is simply no way that an 'out of bounds area' within a property would stop abuse."*

Please remember to advise victims, in an emergency always call 999.

Ministry of Justice, early prisoner release – some people we work with may be aware that the perpetrators of abuse towards them are due for early release from prison. Please see information below which includes links to support information.

SAFA C19 Helpline – please see information attached about a Cumbria wide helpline service.

Latest domestic abuse related news

1. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/how-to-help-someone-domestic-abuse-lockdown_uk_5e8c3c67c5b6e1a2e0f9712f
2. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/domestic-abuse-sufferers-are-the-hidden-victims-of-lockdown>
3. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-covid-19-lockdown?CMP=fb_gu&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR0hLJN94Z3oRIL75Vsnudqk2NS3g6KLRwLmE1wRjjwWMOKn673LsBjD9A#Echobox=1586978464
4. <https://inews.co.uk/news/coronavirus-unsafe-inaccurate-domestic-violence-safe-zone-advice-victims-risk-2538547?fbclid=IwAR2IbK9RC8WS4KqgbAfV5eUGAEv76iJhdXGHE-ADRZ-9hXiNa3wEdZSKOXQ>

Poems – also attached are two poems we have been given, personal accounts of domestic abuse from two different perspectives. One is written by a survivor and one by the friend of a survivor. Just thought they might be useful in reflecting on the horror and the challenges of working with domestic abuse. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK EVERYONE – YOU’RE GREAT!

Take care, stay safe and I hope you have a lovely weekend, Steve

Steve Robson
Trainer/Facilitator

Cumbria Domestic Abuse Champions’ Network
Nan Tait Centre
Abbey Road
Barrow in Furness LA14 1LG
Tel: 01229 311102
Email: champions@womenscommunitymatters.org

Covid-19 Early Prisoner Release – from Ministry of Justice

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. This action is necessary to avoid thousands of prisoners overwhelming local NHS services and to save lives. All actions have been informed by the advice of experts from Public Health England and will be kept under constant review.

Safeguards

We know that the decision to release an offender early will be distressing for some victims, but a number of safeguards have been put in place.

- Public protection is paramount. **No high-risk offenders, including those convicted of violent or sexual offences, anyone of national security concern or a danger to children, will be considered for release**, nor any prisoners who have not served at least half their custodial term. Additionally, no offender convicted of COVID-19 related offences, including coughing at emergency workers or stealing personal protective equipment, will be eligible.
- All offenders considered for release will be subject to a thorough risk-assessment beforehand to ensure they do not pose a significant risk to the public, including whether they pose a risk of domestic abuse or there are child safeguarding issues.
- Every offender released will be:
 - subject to strict licence conditions;
 - electronically monitored, including with GPS tags, to enforce the requirement to stay at home;
 - and immediately recalled to prison for breaching these conditions or committing further offences.

What happens next?

- The releases will be phased over time but can start from this week (w/c 6 April).
- Phasing the release will ensure appropriate checks and risk assessments can take place. This will not lead to thousands of prisoners being released at the same time.

For more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/measures-announced-to-protect-nhs-from-coronavirus-risk-in-prisons>

What support is available to victims?

- Although for the offenders in scope victims would not normally be informed of the offenders' automatic release, we are currently arranging a central point of contact should victims have any initial concerns and will provide further details in advance of any prisoners being released. We will share a core script with support service providers which may help with questions from victims.
- Victims should contact the **police** on **999** if they are concerned about their immediate safety.
- We're committed to ensuring victims continue to receive the support they need during this challenging time and have been working with Police and Crime Commissioners and nationally-commissioned services on contingency arrangements.

Further information on how victims can access support can be found

here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-victim-and-witness-services>

Make Yourself Heard

In danger, need the police, but can't speak?

- 1** Dial 999
- 2** Listen to the questions from the 999 operator
- 3** Respond by coughing or tapping the handset if you can
- 4** If prompted, press **55**
This lets the 999 call operator know it's a genuine emergency and you'll be put through to the police.

See our guide for more information.



#MakeYourselfHeard
#SilentSolution



www.policeconduct.gov.uk

Led by

IOPC Independent Office for Police Conduct

Supported by

women's aid
until women & children are safe

NPCC
National Police Chiefs' Council

COVID-19 Helpline - SAFA

From Monday 13th April 2020, SAFA Cumbria will be using our team of trained counsellors to provide telephone support for ANYONE in Cumbria who is anxious, isolated or worried about COVID-19.

Talking now is more important than ever ...

How it works.

Our team of experienced counsellors will provide emotional help and support over the telephone. Anyone in Cumbria can ring to access the support. Types of client may include:

- People who are isolated
- People who are anxious
- People who are worried about the future
- People who are worried about friends or family
- People who have been bereaved

How we can help.

We may be help to able in the following ways:

- Provide a calm listening ear
- Provide coping techniques & improve resilience
- View things in a different light
- Regain emotional balance
- Minimize trauma

How to access the service.

Please ring 01229 832269. Your details will be taken, a counsellor will then be assigned who will call you back.

All calls are confidential, and we only need your first name and a contact number.

COVID-19 Helpline Number (01229 832269)

The helpline is manned by trained staff and is manned Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

POEMS

You nearly destroyed me

He caged me and contained me, took away all my fight.
He made me feel cold and dark, darker than a winter's night
He made me feel useless and made me forget my worth
He tormented me and degraded me with his relentless fists of words,
I daren't talk to anyone not even the birds
He isolated me and took away my freedom so I could only depend on him,
Reality is I should have seen what he was doing and thrown him in the bin.
The constant insults I suffered and him punching the walls,
Scared me so much I didn't know who or how to call
I wanted help to escape for mine and the kids sake,
I just hoped that when it came to asking for it, it wasn't too late
Not only was it mental abuse but physical and emotional too
I used to often feel sick or be sick the only place he never came with me was when I
went to the loo
He controlled me and manipulated me yet he always said "I love you"
He always said he was 'sorry' and made me believe it was true
He loved the control and knew how to make me scared,
I just couldn't leave him I didn't even dare
He made me weak, he made me afraid and always made me feel like he was the one I
betrayed
He used all of this to his advantage because he knew I wouldn't leave,
He always said he 'cared' and knew how to make me believe.
I hate him for what he's done to us and for that I'll never forgive,
All that matters is now he's gone and yet again I can start to live

Rhiannon, 2019

Where do I take it?

You lean on me
You ease your pain
You unload
Your world of woes
You recount each little thing you miss
His touch,
Your love,
Football talk,
Pillow talk,
The way it felt
When you kiss.

He turned your head
You fell hard
You fell fast
You overlooked
His dark, dark past
He could do no wrong
You danced to every song
You set up home
Good wishes sent
Goodbyes said
His history filled me with dread.

He turned your head
So you looked the way he said
He turned your heel
So you faced the view he allowed
He silenced your voice
So you spoke to only him
He played the records
So you danced to his tune
He vetted your companions
So you saved all time for him
He caged you because he could not compete.

Trapped
We raced
We saved you
We risked ourselves
We took you back
We helped you escape far away
We placed you in the arms of loved ones
You rose like a Phoenix
You recovered
You rebuilt
You let him back in.

Where do I take it
When you tell me you love him
Where do I take it
When you tell me your heart is shattered
Where do I take it
When you tell me you can't live without him
Where do I take it
When you tell me things weren't that bad
Where do I take it
When you tell me you are together again.

Where do I take it
My guilt
When you are a crime statistic.

Michelle M Gardiner, 2019