

# Covid-19 Updates & Resources

March 27th, 2020

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The government defines domestic abuse as an event or pattern of events of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16 or over who are (or have been) intimate partners or family members.

Physical violence is just one type of abuse – domestic abuse can be any behaviour which is used to harm, punish or frighten you, or makes you feel bullied, controlled or intimidated. This includes mental, sexual, financial and emotional abuse and other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), so called ‘honour’ based violence and forced marriage.

## Local Updates

RBK have been working with our providers to ensure support remains available for all those who may be experiencing Domestic & Sexual Violence. These services are vital for our communities and offering support in the current situation has become even more challenging. This puts more responsibility on us given the escalation of risk for victim survivors who are self-isolating at home with their abuser/s

*“our thoughts are with those adult and child victims living with abusive perpetrators, where home is not a place of safety, but a place where they will face a potential increase in violence and psychological abuse as well as even greater isolation. Early evidence from the lockdown in China suggests that reports of domestic abuse have doubled in some areas and we know previous crises have led to an increase in perpetrators abusing their victims”*

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/covid-19> .

It is crucial that information on available support services are publicized widely across the borough. Work is underway to send out comms material through various mediums including Social Media, daily resident newsletters, the RBK website and posters.

It is important for us to continue to work as a coordinated community response. We are all working hard to adapt to the new guidance to try and slow the spread of Covid-19, while continuing to provide support to those in need. This means resources will be stretched so we ask that professionals work together to make this process run as smoothly as possible.

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**Please keep in mind that during this time, vulnerable victims may not be as able to use their phones.**

When making a referral please indicate:

- **Whether there is a safe time to call**
- **Whether it is safe to send texts or leave voicemails**

In addition to making referrals, please also **give service users relevant contact details** so they can reach out when convenient and safe.

## STATUS OF LOCAL SERVICES

### Kingston DV Hub

The Kingston DV Hub team are working from home until further notice. Please be assured that it is business as usual and they are still accepting new referrals and supporting existing victims/survivors daily. At present, the DV Hub will not be completing any face to face work with service users. However, the IDVAs are continuing to provide support over the phone and online. Please note that IDVAs can also still attend professionals meetings virtually. The DV Hub is also able to provide advice to professionals over the phone.

The Kingston One Stop Shop and Empowerment Groups are suspended until further notice.

- The DV Hub are accepting new referrals as normal via [kingstondvhub@refuge.org.uk](mailto:kingstondvhub@refuge.org.uk)
- Their telephone line is open Monday - Friday (9:30 - 5pm) - 0208 547 6046.

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## **Kingston Hospital IDVA**

The Kingston Hospital IDVA/Victim Support are still accepting referrals and supporting existing victim survivors and carrying out work over the telephone.

- Email Address: [agata.nowak@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:agata.nowak@victimsupport.org.uk)
- Their telephone line is open Monday - Friday (9:30 - 5pm) - 07342065820

## **Kingston Complex Needs Service**


The Kingston Complex Needs Worker is still accepting referrals and supporting existing victim survivors and carrying out work over the telephone.

- Email Address: [outreach.swlcn@refuge.org.uk](mailto:outreach.swlcn@refuge.org.uk)
- Their telephone line is open Monday - Friday (9:00 - 5pm) - 0208 943 8188

## **MARAC**

- Please keep referring all high risk cases to MARAC as usual, this procedure has not changed ([MARAC@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:MARAC@kingston.gov.uk))
- An adapted MARAC will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> April. More information will be circulated to MARAC Reps (More information about the Kingston MARAC is [here](#))

## **Kingston Housing Options Team**

- The Housing options team is available through the customer service contact number - 0208 547 5000 9 - 5pm Monday - Friday.
  - Professionals can email them on [housing.options@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:housing.options@kingston.gov.uk)
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## National and Pan-London Resources

- The Police:
  - Available 24/7
  - Emergency – 999
  - Non-emergency – 101
- Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline:
  - Available 24/7
  - 08082000247
- Women's Aid Live Chat:
  - If it's unsafe or you're unable to speak on the phone, the online chat operates from 10am- 12pm Monday to Friday (two hours daily)
  - <https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/>
- GALOP LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline (London):
  - Available Monday to Friday 10am-12:30pm and 1:30pm-4pm
  - 02077042040
- Women and Girls Network Advice Line:
  - Available Monday to Friday 10am-4pm and on Wednesdays from 6pm-9pm
  - 08088010660
- Women and Girls Network Sexual Violence Helpline:
  - Available Monday to Friday 10am -12:30pm and 2:30-4pm and on Wednesdays from 6pm to 9pm
  - 08088010770
- South London Rape Crisis
  - 0808 802 999
  - 12- 2:30pm daily and 7 - 9:30pm daily

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## Resources for Professionals & Practical Tools

### SUPPORTING A SURVIVOR WHEN A DISCLOSURE IS MADE

If a victim survivor makes a disclosure of domestic abuse on the phone, please check that the alleged perpetrator is not in the same room and if it is safe for them to talk.

If it is not safe to talk;

- Offer to text the local and/or national number to them and agree a safe way to do this (ie. text the number backwards).
- If they have access to the internet, encourage the victim survivor to Google the Women's Aid Live Chat and speak to someone online.
- Encourage them to contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline if it is safer to call later in the evening.
- ***If they are in immediate danger, ask if they would like you to ring 999***
  - *Please FIRST take the house number and street in case the call gets cut, followed by postcode if they are still on the line*
  - *Check if they are injured as this will determine if an ambulance needs to be requested for as well*
  - *Keep the person on the line and ask a colleague to call 999 with the details*
  - *While you have them on the phone, continue to check regarding their safety (Is there somewhere in the house they can lock themselves in). Give them the option of staying on the phone and not say anything if that is safer.*
  - *If it's safe to do so, ask if they can leave the house and approach a neighbour or anyone in the street to help them*
  - *Please stay on the phone until you have confirmation that emergency services have arrived*

If it is safe to talk, please use some of the key-messages highlighted below and encourage them to contact our local domestic abuse service for further support.

### Questions that could be asked if concerned about abuse in the household:

- *'Are there any particular obstacles you are facing that are stopping you from accessing support? Is there anyone in particular who is stopping you from accessing support?'*
- *'Are there any concerns in your household, is there any particular risk to you or your child/ren?'*

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If a disclosure of domestic abuse is made - these key messages that were created by Refuge charity are a great way to acknowledge it -

- *People who experience domestic violence come from all walks of life. All ages, all religions, all races*
- *You are not to blame for your partner's violence...he/she alone is responsible, violence is a choice he/she makes*
- *There are solutions to the problem. . .getting help is a brave and positive step*
- *Take your time to consider your options...take one day at a time, don't feel pressured into making any decisions*
- *Everyone has a right to live free from violence*
- *Reaching out for help (talking about it) is a massive step and you should be proud of yourself for doing this!*

## **SAFETY PLANNING WITH SURVIVORS WHO ARE SELF-ISOLATING**

- Ask survivors what their priorities are in terms of safety and what they are concerned about, you can then prioritise their worries and concerns when safety planning
- Feel free to help survivors with their safety plan if there are things you think they haven't considered, but don't scare them or be judgmental
- Enquire about whether the perpetrator is still going out to work and if not, if there are times during the day where you can speak to the survivor where the perpetrator will not be around
- Ask the survivor if there are increased risks around the perpetrator being at home more during this time, and if so, if they can call you perhaps on their daily walk instead of you calling them
- Ask the survivor if they have considered what they would do in situations that they are worried about, including a crisis, and help them to make a safety plan for each situation that they are worried about so they can feel prepared and supported
- Go through different options that you know about, for example the resources and numbers above, IDVA support, calling the police, refuge accommodation etc. so that the survivor knows there are people out there to help them to keep safe, but don't force anything on them or tell them what they 'should do', respect their choices.

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- Always highlight the importance of calling 999 in an emergency. Survivors will never be forced to make a statement or report a crime, but the police are always who they should call if they feel immediately at risk

#### Checking in re: Health & Wellbeing

- Does the survivor have any medical conditions? Do they have access to their own Medication?
- Is the survivor able to contact the GP safely instead of usual face to face appointment?
- Explore if they have any interests that can be pursued while in isolation – reading, online yoga, meditation etc.
- Are they able to maintain contact with their support network?
- Encourage survivor to try maintaining a routine for the welfare of themselves and their children.

#### Additional Resources:

[Guidance for staying safe during Covid-19 for Survivors](#)

[Bright Sky](#) is a free to download mobile app, launched by Hestia in partnership with the Vodafone Foundation, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

[Guidance](#) on Economic Abuse while self-isolating.

[Covid-19 and Child Contact Arrangements](#)

Information on how victim survivors can secure their devices can be found [here](#)

Resources for parents and children - a [Parent Pack](#) created by West Sussex Connect  
Doctors of the World have created information on Covid-19 in various languages. [here](#)

Coronavirus update: For the latest updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19), visit the [NHS website](#) or view [Kingston-specific information](#).