

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Coronavirus: What can we all do?

Download the [Bright Sky app](#) for support and information if you're expecting domestic abuse, or if you're concerned about someone you know.

If you're in immediate danger, always phone the police on 999.



Bright Sky

You've been inundated with information about COVID-19; from how to wash your hands, to the impact on the global economy. We've all be asked to stay at home, self-isolate, stop attending routine, non-essential appointments and have been told that there are to be

absolutely no gatherings of two or more people. The government guidance – put in place to save lives is having a profound impact on the lives of those, and their children that experience domestic abuse.

With social distancing and self-isolation in place, as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, many women, men and children will face an increased risk of abuse and violence, and will find accessing support even more difficult.

Friends, family members, colleagues and employers have a unique opportunity to respond in these uncertain times.

What are domestic abuse services doing?

In line with government advice and in response to this public health emergency, domestic abuse services across the country are adapting the way that they work, to ensure that help continues to be available for anyone experiencing domestic abuse.

Helplines are still open

The freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0800 2000 247

(Open 24/7)

For women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse

Galop

0800 999 5428

(Monday – Friday, 10am – 5:00pm and Wednesday and Thursday's until 8pm)

For those that identify as LGBTQ+ who are experiencing domestic abuse

Respect, Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327

(Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm)

For men and children who are experiencing domestic abuse

Mankind Initiative

01823 334244

(Monday – Friday, 10:00am – 4:00pm)

For men and children who are experiencing domestic abuse

**Important to note that this phone number could appear on any itemised bills*

Women Aid Live Chat

<https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/>

(Monday – Friday, 10:00am – 12:00pm)

For women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse

**Outside of these hours email facility available*

Refuges are still open and are finding safe ways to offer emergency accommodation.

What are the police doing?

The police are continuing to work to keep people safe from domestic abuse - call 999 if you need to.

Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences MARAC's are still operational, accepting referrals and holding virtual conferences. Your local MARAC lead will update you on their processes.

See: [Standing Together's guide to operating a MARAC virtually](#)

What can we all do?

Friends, family members, colleagues and employers have unique opportunity to respond in these uncertain times.

Do

Friends and family members

- Check-in but be mindful that communication channels may be monitored [see below for further information]
- Call 999 if you are concerned for someone's safety - the police are continuing to offer the same level of support as always
- If it's safe to do so - assist in putting them in contact with a specialist domestic abuse service, by using [Bright Sky](#). IDVA services across the UK are finding unique ways to safely communicate with those experiencing domestic abuse or use Women's Aid's live Chat.

Employer or colleague

At this moment, you may be the only person or perhaps your email exchanges are the only un-monitored communication channel someone who is experiencing abuse may have. You have a unique opportunity to respond and offer support.

- Check-in but be mindful that communication channels may be monitored [see below for further information]
- Call 999 if you are concerned for someone's safety - the police are continuing to offer the same level of support as always
- If it's safe to do so - assist in putting them in contact with a specialist domestic abuse service, by using [Bright Sky](#). IDVA services across the UK are finding unique ways to safely communicate with those experiencing domestic abuse or use Women's Aid's live Chat.

Download the [Bright Sky poster here](#)

Share your #WhatICanDo ideas online

Don't

- Don't think you can tell the perpetrator to stop - and they will. This will increase risk of significant harm to the victim and their children.
- Don't think you can or have to do this alone, the specialist workers are waiting for your call and ready to work with you through this.

What can you do?

Be aware that those that perpetrate abuse are invested in monitoring and controlling communications channels; from mobile phones, to emails, to instant messaging and even the communication they may have with delivery drivers, neighbours and any health services and emergency services, namely the police.

Be mindful with what you talk about, when you talk about it and in all circumstances listen to the victim, as they know – better than you – what lengths the perpetrator will go to have control and to monitor communication. Sadly, with each new piece of smart technology released to enhance our lives, those that perpetrate abuse are often looking for ways to use smart technology to monitor their victim and any children in the home.

- **Mobile phones** can be mirrored to a separate device, in effect providing a copy of the victim's mobile phone. This includes any in App communication, email accounts downloaded to the mobile phone and especially any unsolicited calls text messages. Specialist Domestic Abuse Services will never leave a voice message – they will keep on calling, until they reach the victim, often from a withheld or unknown number.
- **Smart Devices** can be set up to monitor every movement and communication.
- **Keystroke monitoring programme and viruses** these are programs that can be installed on computers to gain access to passwords, to monitor communication and traffic.

What you can do... be mindful that this could be happening, think twice about what you say, which communications channel may be safer and be led by the person you care about.

[Click here for information on covering your tracks online.](#)

If you are an employer you have a unique opportunity to reach out to ALL of your employees, letting them know that specialist support services are open, that if they need assistance or support to contact a named person (via email). If an employee reaches out via their work email, put them in contact with a specialist domestic abuse service – who will continue to communicate with them via email.

What we all need to remember

Leaving an abusive relationship; fleeing to a refuge or moving into a friend's house sadly doesn't mean that the risk of significant harm has subsided. It often means that the risks has increased.

Specialist support services are waiting to work with you. They will prepare a safe leaving plan with you, offer advice and suggestions for preparing to leave and will engage local services to ensure that you are supported in doing so. This could range from the police attending the home, whilst leaving to finding foster carers for any family pets, to making travel arrangements for you to access a refuge.

And finally listening, believing and offering unconditional positive regard to anyone experiencing domestic abuse is very important. Many women who have left abusive partners credit friends, family members and colleagues as being their silent heroes; the ones that listened when they thought no-one else could hear them, the ones that didn't blame them and the ones that were instrumental in linking them to specialist support services – what you do matters.

CAN YOU HELP?



Hestia's urgent coronavirus crisis appeal

The outbreak of COVID-19 is a national emergency. However, the people supported by Hestia are already in a crisis, fleeing domestic abuse, recovering from modern slavery or a mental health crisis.

These crises do not stop, they get worse.

Hestia need your support more than ever.

The charity urgently need to raise **£30,000** in the next two weeks in order to provide essential care packages to the thousands of people they support across London and the South East.

These packages will include essential items including food, nappies, cleaning equipment, and entertainment so individuals and families can stay safe and well during isolation.

DONATE NOW

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