

# Specialist Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services April 2022



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What's changing?

From 1 April 2022 the domestic abuse and sexual violence service system across our area changes. The helpline service will start to expand (number 0808 80 200 28). Members of the public and practitioners can use this number to find out about all the help available locally. More options for safe accommodation and accommodation related support have been developed, and there is now a specialist service provided 'by and for' Black and Minority/Minoritised Ethnic women. There is still specialist support for:

- children and families
- those using abusive behaviours who want to change
- domestic abuse victims across all levels of risk and need
- those who have been subjected to sexual violence.

Those who have been victim of domestic abuse will not change worker when the risks they face change, so there will be more continuity of support. The helpline responders will know about capacity across the rest of the service system, so will keep in touch, and reduce the risk of people falling through the net before they get the help they need.

### How do I help someone?

The easiest thing to remember is the helpline number, which is free to phone and is not recorded on bills: 0808 80 200 28. Ask [DSVTeam@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:DSVTeam@leicester.gov.uk) for flyers or posters. Have these visible in public places, waiting areas and inside toilet doors. You can share the number, or you can help someone by providing a safe space to make the call. You can share the information about the website in the same way [freeva.org.uk](http://freeva.org.uk). All the domestic abuse services someone can access are listed on the website, alongside referral information. You can also find out about other services such as housing support on our website [leicester.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://leicester.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

**IN AN EMERGENCY WHERE THERE IS AN IMMINENT RISK TO LIFE AND/OR SERIOUS INJURY, ALWAYS TELEPHONE 999.**

## **What kind of help is available?**

There is a broad range of support and information available locally, and access to national networks of support. Having someone to listen, who understands, is often the most important help someone can get. Emotional and practical help is available, with a range of agencies locally wanting to make a positive difference and increase safety. Being in a group with others and working through the impact of abuse can be very positive and powerful. Having someone advocate for you and liaise with other agencies can help. Locally commissioned services can offer all these elements, and have staff trained and supported to do so, throughout the recovery process.

## **Is there help for men and women?**

There is help for men and women who have been subjected to sexual violence or domestic abuse, whoever that is from. Men can sometimes think a service is not 'for them' so it might be important to reassure them that they are not the first to experience abuse and that the expertise is there; even if they want to just find out more information and discuss their options.

## **Is there help for children and families?**

There is specialist help for young people, children, and families. There are:

- support groups and individual work
- parallel groups that can run for adult/victim and child/ren
- tailored options for different ages of children
- groups running in languages other than English, and support workers fluent in a range of community languages.

## **What about those using harmful behaviours?**

Men and women concerned about their own behaviour, including young people, can contact the local services for help. There is a specialist provider working with young people using violence and adults perpetrating domestic abuse.

## **Will there be a wait for services?**

There will be some form of support that can be offered straight away, where needed. Sometimes there might be a wait for a group at a particular time or place, or to start

individual face-to-face support. There will be active contact at an agreed frequency and reviews of ongoing risks. No-one should wait more than six weeks to be able to access support, and if risks and needs are high it should be within 48 hours.

### **Can someone in paid work access a refuge?**

Yes, sometimes. Local providers of safe accommodation are working to reduce any barriers for victims to access safety. They have support schemes in place, including how to manage rental charges in a refuge if you are in employment or studying.

### **Will services help someone with insecure immigration status?**

People can access support whether they have secure immigration status or not. Sometimes if a victim of domestic abuse has no recourse to public funds, it can be harder to find safe accommodation if there is no availability locally, or if the concession has not been applied for, but there are no commissioning restrictions to our domestic abuse safe accommodation support, and there are pathways to immigration support.

### **Will there still be an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) Service?**

The new services work across all levels of risk so that people don't have to change service or worker as the risks they face change. This was a key part of what those who had suffered abuse said was important when we were commissioning. There are at least 12 trained IDVA roles across the new service system, and approximately a further 20 funded through other grants. All support staff in the new service system will have had thorough training and a programme of continued professional development. Providers must meet national quality standards such as those set by Women's Aid Federation England, Imkaan, Respect and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

### **How can I give feedback about services I have used?**

If you have feedback on the locally commissioned services, please use the feedback form on our website [leicester.gov.uk/domesticabuse](https://leicester.gov.uk/domesticabuse)