

COVID-19 Interim Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway

BRIEFING FOR FRONTLINE PROFESSIONALS

1. The impact of Coronavirus on domestic abuse

Measures put in place over the past few weeks to limit the spread of coronavirus have seen people's lives significantly change. For those living with a perpetrator of domestic abuse, life may have become especially difficult.

Coronavirus is not responsible for domestic abuse, but the government's advice around social isolation and distancing has created further opportunities for perpetrators to exert power and control over their victims. The wider consequences of the outbreak, including economic impact, will make victims even more vulnerable. We also know that the lasting impact on children and young people living in households with a perpetrator of domestic abuse is significant and we are committed to ensuring they are protected too.

Across Hertfordshire, all domestic abuse services are still operating, and our top priority is to ensure victims get the support they need.

2. Interim arrangements for referrals

For frontline professionals and members of the public, all current services and referral routes into services remain the same. Our services have adapted the way they work to continue offering a service to victims, even during lockdown.

Our priority is to ensure during lockdown those at the highest risk of harm or homicide are identified and get the right support, as quickly as possible. Therefore, we have a temporary arrangement with our Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service. The service works with high risk victims but will currently accept **any referrals** and conduct initial risk assessments, as a triaging service. They will immediately begin supporting victims where the risk of harm or homicide is high. Victims assessed as standard or medium risk will be signposted to Safer Places or other relevant services, depending on the needs identified.

Route 1 Apply normal referral pathways	Route 2 I am unsure who to refer too, or do not know what the service user needs	Route 3 The service user need relates to emergency accommodation
As all services remain operating, if you know the risk level of the service user, or have a clear idea on what they need, you should refer in the way you usually would to services.	If you are not sure of normal referral pathways, you are unsure of the service users risk level or unsure about what they need – refer to the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service run by 'Refuge'. They will triage the case and connect the service user to the right service.	If you know that the service user requires support with their accommodation , such as refuge accommodation, refer to Safer Places .
Contact		
A directory of domestic abuse services in Hertfordshire is available at: www.hertssunflower.org You can also call the Herts Domestic Abuse helpline: 08 088 088 088 (Mon-Fri: 9am – 9pm Sat-Sun: 9am – 4pm)	The Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service: 0300 790 6772 (Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:00) hertsidva@refuge.org.uk	Safer Places: 03301 025811 (24-hour emergency line) info@saferplaces.co.uk Online referral form here .