



**Dyfed Powys Police Violence against
Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual
Violence Communication Plan**

**THE MID AND WEST WALES SAFEGUARDING
BOARD**

April 2020

Domestic Abuse –COVID -19 pandemic

We are concerned that COVID-19 (Coronavirus) may have a serious impact on the lives of women, children and men who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Fears over jobs, financial pressure, school closures, working from home and the other current changes to our day to day lives may increase the likelihood of domestic abuse incidents.

If you're already living with domestic abuse, the restrictions put in place while the government tries to slow the spread of the virus may have left you feeling fearful of being isolated at home with your abuser. It may also leave you feeling less able access help and support. You may not be able to see the friends and family who usually support you, and some of the places where you go for help or treatment may be closed or offering a reduced service.

As always, **if you or someone else is in immediate danger please call 999 and ask for the police.**

If you would like advice or support for you or someone else, please call the Live Fear Free Helpline on 0808 80 10800.

Advice to Victims

Try and keep a mobile phone with you at all times if possible. The police are a key service when in immediate danger. Do not be afraid to call 999 in an emergency.

Silent Solutions

Familiarise yourself with **The Silent Solution system**. This is a system for victims of domestic abuse who might be afraid of further danger and escalation of harm if they are overheard when calling 999 in an emergency.

When somebody calls 999, an operator will ask which emergency service is required. If the caller is unable to audibly signal to the operator, the call will be forwarded to an operating system.

If **55** is pressed by the caller, the system will detect this. The operator will then transfer the call to the relevant police force as an emergency.

National helplines, email, text and live chat support services, and local specialist services, are currently open for business as usual, although their delivery is likely to have to adapt over the coming weeks.

Help and Support

Some local support services in the community may be temporarily suspended or providing services in a different way during the COVID 19 pandemic. This may mean that some survivors will feel particularly isolated.

If previously accessing counselling that has now been suspended; some counselling services can continue to provide helpline support. For example, Supportline provide a confidential telephone helpline and email counselling service. Particularly to those at risk of abuse or are isolated: www.supportline.org.uk

Women's Aid is continuing to provide the following services:

The Survivors' Forum is an online resource for survivors of domestic abuse. The Survivors' forum can be accessed 24/7. This is a place where survivors can support each other and share their experiences.

Women's Aid Live Chat is currently available Monday to Friday 10- 12pm. This could be a safer way to access some support; particularly if an abuser might also be in the property so it would be unsafe to make a telephone call.

Women's Aid Email Service is still operating and can also provide support.

Looking after children can be particularly difficult challenging when isolating. Family lives have support available including online forums: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

- Staying Safe - Safe Lives guide for victims and survivors - <http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety%20planning%20guide%2C%20victims%20and%20survivors%2C%20COVID-19.pdf>

Helplines

National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247

Live Fear Free Helpline- 0808 8010 800

Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales (All Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline)

Victim Support- 0845 30 30 900

National Stalking Helpline- 0808 802 0300

Men's Advice Line- 0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

Rape Crisis (England and Wales)- 0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994

Domestic abuse - Thinking of Leaving

At the moment leaving might feel particularly difficult and you might be worried about having to leave your home in an emergency. If possible pack an emergency bag for you and your children and keep it somewhere safe. Try to include essential things such as medication, identification, money or cards. Essential clothing for you and your children.

Due to self- isolation staying with family and friends might not be an option. If you need to access refuge accommodation you can do this via the Live Fear Free Helpline on 0808 80 10 800. The Local Authority also has a responsibility to give you information about your housing rights however this service may be reduced at this time. Shelter provide free confidential housing information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues. They also have a helpline: 08000 495 495 <https://sheltercymru.org.uk/>

DVPN - A Domestic Violence Protection Order can remove a perpetrator from the residence and from making contact with the survivor for up to 28 days. An Occupation Order is an injunction which removes an abusers' rights to reside in the family home.

Child Contact

If a survivor has concerns around the family court, it will be useful to take a look at the CAFCASS website for guidance. They are regularly updating their information: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/2020/03/18/coronavirus-covid-19-update-on-cafcass-preparedness/>

If you're a child or young person and domestic abuse is happening in your home or relationship, then call Childline on 0800 1111.

Welfare Benefits

If you are concerned about your financial situation, you could contact Turn2us. They help people to access the money available to them through welfare benefits and grants. Their website has an income-related benefits checker enabling you to check that you are receiving all of the benefits you are entitled to: www.turn2us.org.uk

Financial Abuse

Many survivors experience economic abuse within the context of intimate partner violence. Surviving Economic Abuse can provide information and resources: <https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/>

Disability

Deaf Hope provides practical and emotional support to deaf women experiencing domestic abuse: www.signhealth.org.uk

Emergency SMS provides a text message service for deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired people in the UK to send SMS messages to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the Police: www.emergencysms.org.uk

Police Spokesperson

Detective Superintendent Anthony Griffiths, Head of Protecting Vulnerable People with Dyfed Powys Police has issued this message to victims of domestic abuse:

“We know this is a time of worry for all of us but this may be heightened for those who have suffered or are suffering domestic abuse in any of its forms. The isolation period, in most cases, will mean that you have little to no respite from your abuser and you may be concerned that your reporting mechanisms are now limited. I want to offer you some reassurance.

“I want you to know we are here for you and will remain here for you throughout. We have the resources to support you and we will take your report seriously”.

“One of your concerns may be the ways in which you will contact us should something occur. 999 is available for all emergencies and I want to remind you of our silent solutions. If you ring 999 and are not in a safe position to speak just press '55'. This will notify the operator to transfer your call to the relevant police force. Our staff will listen, and make an assessment of your situation based on what they can hear in the background so we can get the right response to you

“If you are concerned and would prefer not to speak to the police, you could use one of the many charities offering support, these include:

- Women’s Aid who hold a web chat between 10am and noon (Monday to Friday); the 24 hour
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** – 0808 2000 247
- **Live Fear Free Helpline:** 0808 8010 800 Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales (All Wales Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Helpline)
- **Victim Support:** 0845 30 30 900
- **National Stalking Helpline:** 0808 802 0300
- **Men’s Advice Line**
0808 801 0327
www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- **National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline** – 0800 999 5428

- **Rape Crisis (England and Wales)**
0808 802 9999
www.rapecrisis.org.uk
- **The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994**
- **Any of the Local Specialist Providers of Support detailed in the table below;**

Local Authority	Provider(s)	Specialism	Contact Details	Accessible Via Live Fear Free Helpline
Regional Service	IDVA Service- Hafan Cymru and Pobl	High Risk Domestic Abuse	Carmarthenshire and Powys- 01267 221194 Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion- 01646 698820.	Yes
Regional Service	New Pathways	Sexual Violence	Ceredigion: 01970 610124 Carmarthenshire: 01267 235464 Powys: 01267 226166 SARC Out of Hours (All areas) 07423 437020	Yes
National Service	BAWSO	VAWDASV BAME	0800 731 8147 (24 hr helpline)	
Powys	Montgomery Family Crisis Centre	Domestic Abuse	01686 629114	Yes
	Calan DVS	Domestic Abuse	01874 625146	Yes
Ceredigion	West Wales Domestic Abuse Service	Domestic Abuse	01970 625585 And/or 01239 615385	Yes
Carmarthenshire	Carmarthen DAS	Domestic Abuse	01267238410/234725	Yes
	Threshold DAS	Domestic Abuse	01554 752422	Yes
	Calan DVS	Domestic Abuse	01269 597474	Yes

	Dewis Choice	Domestic Abuse for people aged 60+	Referral via statutory agency e.g. safeguarding, police, health	No
Pembrokeshire	Pobl	Domestic Abuse	01646 698820	Yes
	Hafan Cymru	Domestic Abuse-Refuge Only	0808 80 10 800	Yes

“If you do require our support but are worried that we will leave your abuser isolated with you after an incident, I want to tell you about **Domestic Violence Protection Orders**. These are orders we can secure through the court within 48 hours.

"The order, if granted, can have a number of provisions including preventing the abuser from returning to the property for 28 days. This should give you the necessary respite and allow you time to put longer term plans in place. You might be reading lots about backlogs with the courts but DVPOs are handled differently and are still available to us.

“I hope this information has provided you with reassurance that we are here for you and will remain here for you throughout.”