

Domestic Abuse: COVID-19/Coronavirus

COVID-19 is a worrying time for everyone but it will have serious impacts on those affected by domestic abuse. The following information has been collated to help those who are experiencing domestic abuse or those concerned about someone during this challenging time.

In an emergency call 999

Silent Solutions

The Silent Solution system enables a 999 mobile caller who is too scared to make a noise, or speak, to press 55 when prompted to inform police they are in an emergency. For more information about the Silent Solution System and what happens when calling from a landline click on the following link <https://tinyurl.com/yyyo5pg9>

Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

The Helpline offers support, advice and referral for any victim of domestic and sexual abuse/violence in Northern Ireland. The Helpline will also offer support and advice to those concerned about victims, those with concerns as to whether abuse is occurring and to professionals.

Telephone: 0808 802 1414 – 24/7 Confidential & Free

Website: www.dsahelpline.org Twitter: www.twitter.com/dsahelpline Facebook: www.facebook.com/dsahelpline

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is continuing to provide essential services to women and children living in refuge. Measures have been implemented in order to safeguard both residents and staff. Support Workers can continue to support Women via Skype and Facetime. Telephone support can be accessed 9am – 5pm by calling

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid: 028 90666049

North Down & Ards Women's Aid: 028 91273196

Armaghdown (Newry, Mourne & Down Area): 028 30258704

Safety Planning

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid have produced a Safety Plan for women who are self isolating during Covid 19. The guide can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/wo2tz7e>

Men's Advisory Project

MAP is open and now offering services of support, referral and confidential counselling to men who are suffering from the affects of domestic abuse 7 days a week.

02890241929

Home Secure Schemes

Newry, Mourne & Down contact Pat Quinn on 02830261022 or email: pquinn@ccgnewrycommunity.org

A Covid -19 Risk Assessment will be carried out on all referrals

Lisburn area referrals need to be made to Angela McCann (Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP) email: Angela.McCann@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

The 4 tiers of the scheme are currently operating

Ards and North Down contact Krystie Owen, Crime Prevention Officer email: KRYSTIE.OWEN@psni.pnn.police.uk

Currently unable to attend homes for visits but have been giving advice over the phone. Tier 1 alarms can possibly be issued if required although social distancing rules still apply.

The NIHE Sanctaury Scheme is currently restricted due to Covid 19

Accommodation

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is currently operating emergency contingency arrangements.

If you are homeless or worried about becoming homeless please ring the dedicated Homelessness line on [03448 920 908](tel:03448920908).

During normal working hours you will be referred to a Housing Advisor.

An emergency out-of-hours service is available after 5pm, at the weekend and on bank holidays.

The Rowan (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

The Rowan offers a range of support and services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to children, young people, women and men who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped, whether this happened in the past or more recently.

The Rowan can be accessed via

PSNI on [999](tel:999) or [101](tel:101).

Or by self-referral on [0800 389 4424](tel:08003894424).

Or by a third party such as a friend, family member or any professional or support worker

Money

If you are concerned about your financial situation, there is a central Debt Helpline for NI operated by Advice NI it is 0800 028 1881 and there is also email service to make contact it is advice@advicenmd.com

If it is complex and needs additional support they will refer to the local office. Local Offices:

Community Advice Ards & NorthDown

0300 123 9287

email :email@casnd.co.uk

Community Advice Lisburn & Castlereagh

02892 662251

email: calc@calni.com

Facebook: **Community Advice Lisburn & Castlereagh**

Community Advice Newry Mourne & Down

0300 3030 30

Email: advice@advicenmd.com

Facebook: **Community Advice Newry Mourne & Down.**

Disability

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

You will only be able to use this service if you have registered with emergency SMS.

To register, text “register” to 999. You will get a reply - then follow the instructions you are sent.

Child Contact

Child Contact arrangements are of particular concern to many survivors at the moment. The Lord Chief Justice has approved guidance across all tiers of the Family Courts (children order and matrimonial) with effect from 25 March 2020 which can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/tw23e4a>

This must be read in conjunction with the most recent ‘Guidance for all Courts’ published at <https://judiciaryni.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>.

Immigration

Your abuser might be using your immigration status against you. If you need some guidance you could contact the Law Centre Advice Line on 028 90244401 or visit <https://www.lawcentreni.org/coronavirus-covid-19-update>

The NHS have confirmed that no charges will be made in the diagnosis or treatment of coronavirus (COVID-19). This applies to everyone living in the UK, regardless of your immigration status. No immigration checks are required for testing or treatment for COVID-19, so please access healthcare if you need to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide>