



@NHSsafeguarding  
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People living in isolation and lockdown during COVID-19 are at an increased risk of exploitation and abuse. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline and Childline have seen a marked increase in disclosures.

**Primary Care staff are asked to consider how they are embedding routine enquiry into their practice.**

## SUPPORTING THOSE WHO DISCLOSE DOMESTIC ABUSE

During the lockdown, victims of domestic abuse may have no choice but to stay at home, increasing their risk of harm. Some of them may be thrown out, and find themselves with nowhere else to go.

Disclosures of domestic abuse have increased during the COVID-19 emergency. It takes huge courage for a victim to come forward and speak out abuse. Try to reassure the victim that:

- they are believed (validation)
- they do not deserve the abuse they have suffered
- they are not their own - make them aware of the support services, helplines and websites available to them

IRISi has useful information for primary care staff dealing with domestic abuse, including COVID-19 specific guidance: [www.iris.org](http://www.iris.org)

**Direct referral for specialised support, including risk assessment and safety planning, can be made to Hackney IRIS at [IRISHackney@niaendingviolence.org.uk](mailto:IRISHackney@niaendingviolence.org.uk)**  
Tel: 020 7683 1270

**High risk cases should be referred to the relevant local MARAC. For further guidance contact the MARAC Liaison Service at [huh-tr.MARAC@nhs.net](mailto:huh-tr.MARAC@nhs.net)**

## WORKING WITH PERPETRATORS

Perpetrators may respond to the stresses of lockdown through increased abuse and use social distancing as an excuse for isolating their victims further.

During lockdown, the safety of survivors and their children must remain the focus of any perpetrators intervention. Work at this time should focus on de-escalation techniques for the short and medium term, rather than long-term behavioural and attitudinal change.

**Hackney Domestic Abuse Intervention Service provides guidance for professionals and a referral pathway for perpetrators of abuse [dais@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:dais@hackney.gov.uk), 020 8356 4458/4459 or 0800 056 0905**

## HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Honour-based abuse (HBA) can often involve multiple perpetrators. Victims may be living in large, extended families, may be abused by in-laws as well as their partner, and may be ashamed or scared to ask for help.

There has been an increase in first time disclosures to healthcare staff (e.g. where victims are attending alone for their hospital appointments). There have also been a number of disclosures at COVID-19 testing sites.

**Hackney IRIS can support victims of HBA and offers guidance to the GP practice staff**

[IRISHackney@nieendingviolence.org.uk](mailto:IRISHackney@nieendingviolence.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7683 1270

## OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

**Refuge:** 24hr National Domestic Abuse Helpline  
[www.nationalhelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationalhelpline.org.uk), 0808 2000 247

**SafeLives:** COVID-19 advice and links to other sources  
[www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

**Karma Nirvana:** supports victims of HBA and guidances to professionals [www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk), 0800 5999 247

**ManKind Initiative:** Offers training and resources for professionals and confidential helpline for male victims  
[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk), 01823 334244

**Respect:** offer guidance for professionals and referral pathway for perpetrators [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

**If you are in immediate danger, or concerned that someone else might be, call the police on 999**

**The 'Silent Solution': if you are in danger and it is unsafe to speak, dial 999 and wait for instructions. If using a mobile, press 55 when prompted. If using a landline, try to stay on the call. The police will know this is an emergency, your call will be assessed and help will be arranged**