



## Responding to Domestic Abuse COVID-19 Briefing

The COVID-19 outbreak brings new challenges for people who are living through domestic abuse. Victim/Survivors who are self-isolating may not be able to access support or escape abuse at times when they otherwise would. Self-isolating while living with an abuser may also see an increase of risk of harm. However, support is available.

This briefing provides an overview of support that is available to victims and survivors during this difficult period across the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the City of Westminster.

**Please find information relating to the following:**

1. [Support from the Police](#)
2. [Support from Domestic Abuse Services](#)
3. [Housing Support](#)
4. [Support from Family and Children's Services](#)
5. [Support from Adult Safeguarding Services](#)
6. [Supporting Staff and Colleagues](#)

### 1. Support from the Police:

All support from the Police is continuing as normal. There are steps the police can take to remove an abuser from the home if someone is at risk. In an emergency, please always call 999. For non-emergency support, the 101 number can be dialled. There are safeguarding teams and specialist investigators on duty 24/7 for advice and help. It is recognised that attending police stations may not be practical however if you prefer the safety of your local police station, they remain open.

### 2. Support from Domestic Abuse Services:

- **The Angelou Partnership:**

The [Angelou Partnership](#) is the support service for the three boroughs. It consists of a partnership of 10 specialist services with one front door to contact support.

Angelou can provide support if you have been subjected to domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, forced marriage, so called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and

child exploitation. It provides specialist support to the Black, Minority and Ethnic and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.

Angelou support is moving from face-to-face sessions to telephone and online based support. please contact the numbers below for support and details of service provision.

**To contact Angelou:**

0808 801 0660 Monday to Friday: 10am - 4pm Wednesdays: 6pm - 9pm Translators available	0208 741 7008 Mondays to Fridays: 10am – 6pm Thurs 10am – 9pm Translators available
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Outside of those hours the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** can be of support and is available 24 hrs a day on **0808 2000 247**.

- **Women’s Aid:**

Where telephone support is not safe, Women’s Aid have an online service to support you. This includes an instant messaging service (Mon–Fri, 10am–12pm), email support (response within 5 days), a survivor’s handbook (to get help on housing, safety planning, dealing with police and more) and a community of survivor’s forum.

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

- **Hestia’s Bright Sky App:**

Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship (displays as a weather app). It has a secure journal tool to record behaviour via text, audio, video or photo, without the content being stored on the device. <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs):**

MARACs are victim focused information sharing and risk management meetings attended by key agencies to safety plan for people who are at high risk of harm. MARAC meetings will move from face-to-face meetings to alternative arrangements to ensure safety is maintained and risk managed. Standing Together oversee our MARACs. To speak to someone about any changes, please email the MARAC Team at [MARAC@standingtogether.org.uk](mailto:MARAC@standingtogether.org.uk)

- **Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA):**

SEA have put together a helpful resource which provides an overview of support available to anyone who is experiencing economic abuse. Economic abuse is when an abuser may restrict how their partner acquires, uses and maintains money and economic resources, such as accommodation, food, clothing and transportation.

The resource is designed to your economic wellbeing and safety. It also contains information on financial support that is available.

<https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Economic-abuse-and-the-coronavirus-outbreak.pdf>

- **Additional Local and National Helplines:**

Victim Support	0808 168 9111
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Men's Advice Line (Web chat service also available)	0808 801 0327 Mon and Weds, 9am–8pm; Tues, Thurs and Fri, 9am–5pm or <a href="mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk">info@mensadviceline.org.uk</a>
National Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300 9am to 4pm weekdays except for Wednesdays when it is open 1pm to 4pm.
Samaritans	116 123 (Available 24/7) or Text: 85258
Forced Marriage Unit	0207 008 0151 / <a href="mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk">fmu@fco.gov.uk</a>
Female Genital Mutilation Helpline	0800 028 3550 / <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>

### 3. Housing Support:

- **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:**

There has been a reduction in face-to-face support services. Please do not come to the Town Hall even if the situation is urgent. However, if someone is about to be made homeless or if they are in temporary accommodation and need an urgent repair, please call the Housing Line number on 0207 361 3008 or email at [hhat@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:hhat@rbkc.gov.uk).

- **Hammersmith & Fulham:**

The Council are limiting face-to-face appointments and encouraging residents to make contact by telephone. Council tenants can contact their Housing Officers directly or through the following numbers:

Duty Lines	Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm	North: 0208 753 4808
		South: 0208 753 4327
Housing Options and Advice	Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm	020 8753 4198

In cases of emergencies only, where it is not possible or safe to make contact by phone, residents can attend their local area office or the Customer Service Centre (Monday-Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Hammersmith North office	New Zealand Way White City Estate W12 7DE
Fulham Area Office	363 North End Road SW6 1NW
Customer Service Centre	145 King Street Hammersmith W6 9JT

For out of hours support (weekends, bank holidays and after 6pm on weekdays) please contact 0208 748 8588.

- **City of Westminster:**

**If you live in a Westminster Council property:**

Support is available for current tenants and a contingency plan is in place to keep your essential housing services running. You are advised if at all possible to avoid coming into any service centre offices unless your request is urgent. To speak to a member of staff who can offer you advice if you have a housing problem please contact 0800 358 3783.

#### **Homelessness Support:**

Homeless assessment services at the Passage (single applicants) and Bruckner St (families) are open for emergency homelessness cases. You are advised to avoid visiting either site if possible. Instead you can either telephone the service 020 7641 1000 or complete the online assessment form. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/homelessness>  
Our contact centre is operating as normal, and staff are available to deal with all telephone and online queries.

#### **Support from Shelter:**

Shelter will not be providing face to face advice, but anyone needing housing advice can contact them either by email at [Westminster@shelter.org.uk](mailto:Westminster@shelter.org.uk) or by telephone on 0344 515 2048.

## **4. Support from Family and Children's Services:**

Referrals and consultations for advice for the welfare of children can be made in the usual way and the Family Services teams are able to respond. Social Workers are still visiting families and responding to their needs.

Details for each of the boroughs are below:

- **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:**

If you are worried that a child or young person is at immediate risk, please contact the assessment and access team immediately at [socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk) or Tel: 020 7361 3013.

If you need a service in an emergency between 5pm and 9am on weekdays or 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays, you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 020 7361 3013.

- **City of Westminster:**

If you are worried that a child or young person is at immediate risk, please contact the assessment and access team immediately at [acesstochildrengservices@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:acesstochildrengservices@westminster.gov.uk) or Tel: 020 7641 4000

If you need a service in an emergency between 5pm and 9am on weekdays or 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays, you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 020 7641 2388.

- **Hammersmith & Fulham:**

If you are worried that a child or young person is at immediate risk, please contact the Initial Consultation and Advice team (ICAT) immediately at [familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk) or Tel: 020 8753 6600

If you need a service in an emergency between 5pm and 9am on weekdays or 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays, you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 020 8748 8588.

## 5. Support from Adult Safeguarding Services:

- **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster:**

Normal Safeguarding referral processes apply for both boroughs. However, for escalation purposes, please use the contact details provided:

Name:	Contact Details:
Safeguarding Operational Team	RBKC Safeguarding Lead: Natasha Persaud-Hinds Tel: 07870548271 Email: <a href="mailto:nphinds@westminster.gov.uk">nphinds@westminster.gov.uk</a>  WCC Safeguarding Lead: Denise Roach ( Interim) Tel: 07807159960 Email: <a href="mailto:Denise.roach@rbkc.gov.uk">Denise.roach@rbkc.gov.uk</a>
Mental Capacity Team Bi borough	MCA Lead: Lynn Tan Tel: 07970 944432 Email: <a href="mailto:Lynn.Tan@rbkc.gov.uk">Lynn.Tan@rbkc.gov.uk</a>

- **Hammersmith & Fulham:**

Normal Safeguarding referral processes apply for H&F. However, for escalation purposes, please use the contact details provided:

Name:	Contact Details:
Adult Social Care	Head of Safeguarding: Shazia Deen Tel: 07827 663887 Email: <a href="mailto:shazia.deen@lbhf.gov.uk">shazia.deen@lbhf.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:SafeguardingAdults@lbhf.gov.uk">SafeguardingAdults@lbhf.gov.uk</a>

## 6. Supporting Staff and Colleagues:

It is important to remember that domestic abuse may also be experienced by staff and colleagues. Managers should take steps to ensure that their team members are supported whilst in self-isolation. The support services mentioned above are available to everyone. In addition, a Domestic Abuse Staff Policy is available for both staff and managers:

[https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/RBKC\\_HR/Pages/Domestic-Violence-Policy.aspx](https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/RBKC_HR/Pages/Domestic-Violence-Policy.aspx)

For updates or any changes to the information above, please contact Shabana Kausar, VAWG Strategic Lead at [Shabana.kausar@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Shabana.kausar@rbkc.gov.uk)