

## **Domestic Abuse offer and functioning during the COVID-19 restrictions**

During this time we have been in discussion with commissioned services and our own Council provision to try and set out what the offer to victims and their families will be, for now.

In deciding what we can collectively provide we have used the following principles:

- Children, young people and adults at risk of immediate harm will continue to be a priority
- Face to face contact will be avoided wherever possible
- We will continue to depend on and work in partnership with all of our key agencies
- Priority will be given for 1:1 work for people with the following assessed needs
  - High risk MARAC cases
  - Families where one or more child is open to Child In Need or Child Protection Plans.
  - Clients who want to end the abusive relationship.
  - Clients who are concerned about their own behaviour in the relationship.
  - There is a known counter allegation of domestic abuse.
  - Women who have multiple complex vulnerabilities and who score above three on the chaos index.

There are already some restrictions in place:

- all staff are operating from home so there could be delays in responding. Please email where possible in the first instance to help staff plan their day
- all group work has currently ceased - although IT solutions to this are being developed and there may be options in the future
- the community bases at Crewe and Macc have been shut in line with government guidance
- our refuge provision was 16 units across 11 properties but we cannot have multiple occupancy so now we can accommodate 11 individuals or families at any one time. Traditional refuge accommodation in other areas is impacted even further so we will struggle to offer onward referral out of area
- our target hardening service (reinforcing locks etc) has been suspended

However our creative, committed staff are our greatest asset and we are confident that Cheshire East clients will continue to receive the best service we can offer and we may emerge from this crisis having learned much about new and effective ways of working.

So here is the offer at present although the arrangements below will be open to review as new information, guidance and instruction emerge.

**DA HUB:** (0300 123 5101); [CEDAH@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:CEDAH@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

We will be increasing staffing at the DA HUB – as well as the Council staff there will also be four members of MY CWA staff committing their time to the HUB so that the substantive piece of work undertaken there will meet the needs of most people and only those in the above priority categories will be referred for further support.

All of those who engage will be assessed for risk, have a comprehensive safety plan, a piece of work around the dynamics and cycles of DA and also support in relation to maintaining their emotional and mental wellbeing.

## **MARAC**

We will continue with eMARAC as usual, and look to conducting full MARAC through virtual means. In order for this to work effectively, it will be critical that agencies note their actual, up to date capacity to undertake safeguarding measures on the information form returned for eMARAC. With this realistic picture we will be better able to make sound risk management decisions. Thank you.

**IDVAs** [eastmarac@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:eastmarac@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Contact with high risk clients will be via the phone with IDVAs relying on partners to support the co-ordination of responses to reduce risks.

**MyCWA** [info@mycwa.org.uk](mailto:info@mycwa.org.uk) [www.mycwa.org.uk](http://www.mycwa.org.uk)

Priority will be given to working with the client groups identified above and co-delivering the HUB service. There will be a focus on getting appropriate materials on line so that clients can access this and self help, and also agencies can use these to inform the intervention that they may be able to provide to reduce risk and harm. MyCWA will continue to offer consultation with professional staff to increase confidence in any work they may need to do.

## **THANK YOU**

We know that everyone will be doing their best to support those made vulnerable by domestic abuse, especially at a time when home restrictions may escalate tensions and result in more referrals. We thank everyone for their partnership work and welcome further information from you about any changes to your service delivery.

Please do not hesitate to contact the named worker or service, preferably by email in the first instance, if you need to discuss further.

HUB [cedah@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:cedah@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

IDVA service [eastmarac@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:eastmarac@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

MyCWA [info@mycwa.org.uk](mailto:info@mycwa.org.uk) [www.mycwa.org.uk](http://www.mycwa.org.uk)

[Judith.gibson@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.gibson@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## **OTHER USEFUL SITES AND APPS FOR CLIENTS**

**Bright Sky** - Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app, launched in partnership with the Vodafone Foundation, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. Download from your app store.

[Women's Aid's online chat service](#), open from 10am-12pm Monday-Friday.

[Chayn](#) provides online tools, information, courses and support for people experiencing abuse, all free to access. Their [Soul Medicine](#) courses provide bitesized support, delivered in disguised emails at a time that you choose. They are also launching a secure [Telegram channel](#) to provide particular support during this time.