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Welcome to the second edition of the Covid-19 Somerset Domestic Abuse Newsletter

Domestic abuse continues to be a priority for all councils in Somerset due to its long lasting impact on the lives of survivors and their families.

Despite the recent change in the Government guidance to “Stay Alert” with relaxation of some of the restrictions. There remains many increased risks for survivors of domestic abuse. Self-isolating and/or social distancing does continue. And these create additional barriers for people to seek help. Plus increase the risk of emotional or physical harm.

Find enclosed useful local and national information, to help you identify and support people affected by domestic abuse at this time.

Please share this newsletter with colleagues and your teams or other networks!

Domestic Abuse Prevalence and Response During Covid-19

As reported in the previous newsletter, a new **Somerset Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Task Group**, has been established. This comprises councils, police, social care, local support service providers and health services, who're meeting weekly to look at the up to date information about the prevalence of domestic abuse in Somerset, understand what's working well and where there maybe areas of development to help identify and support men and women affected by domestic abuse during this pandemic.

The scorecard that this Task Group reviews, shows the weekly average of calls/referrals/service contacts during 2019/20, across a range of services. This provides a baseline, and we review weekly data updates, to quickly be able to identify any areas of concern. As at 14th May, there has been a small increase in service contacts from April. However, to date there haven't been any significant rises.

Although it's widely expected (nationally and locally) that demand may increase on services, once restrictions ease.

What More Are We Doing To Respond?

Pharmacies—Following on from the new national **Boots the Chemist** safe spaces scheme, SCC and the Clinical Commissioning Group have contacted all other local pharmacies to encourage them to also display posters and be a safe space for someone to get domestic abuse help.

No Closed Doors campaign - Please see page 3 for more information on this SCC campaign which is now being scaled up to reach thousands more of Somerset's population.

What Are We Seeing In The Community—What's Not In The Data?

Domestic abuse incidents are being recognised in our volunteer and community sector organisations with people disclosing abuse who would not normally come forward for instance, those in the shielded group who are being supported for other needs. Due to the known barriers in reporting domestic abuse, it's anticipated that if an increase in reporting emerges, it may not be until daily life returns to normal, when pressures ease, and survivors feel more able to get support. This will mean that the increased demand for services may come later in the year. This estimated position has been factored into service planning.

In the meantime, services have capacity, are able to increase capacity if needed, and work is ongoing to ensure that everyone in Somerset who need support, can access it.

NHS England Guidance

Do you work in the NHS? NHS England have recently published "a letter to the system". This contains useful links for people working in an NHS setting.

The letter can be found online at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/domestic-abuse-during-covid-19-a-reminder-of-advice-for-nhs-staff/>.

Please remember whatever setting you work in Somerset. You can access local help and advice via our Somerset domestic abuse website at www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk. And if you'd like information on local and regional sexual violence/abuse support services, please go to: www.survivorpathway.org.uk.

Somerset's Domestic Abuse Campaign #NoClosedDoors2020

As reported in the previous special Covid edition of this newsletter, Somerset County Council is rolling out a new Covid-19 campaign, focused on the key messages that apply at this time.

- (1) Increase awareness that local confidential help is still available to men and women affected by domestic abuse.
- (2) Make the public aware that leaving an abuser does not break the self-isolation guidelines
- (3) Empower individuals to spot the signs and take action safely.

Below is a copy of the new poster. A series of advertisements in radio, newspaper and online platforms will be published during the next few months.

You can support this campaign by looking out for the hashtag #NoClosedDoors2020 on social media. Please share, like and comment with support to any of Somerset County Council's posts, to help increase engagement and spread the message far and wide.

We don't want our communities to suffer domestic abuse in silence.

Coronavirus restrictions may heighten domestic tension.

Help is, and will continue to be, available.

Somerset Domestic Abuse Service on 0800 69 49 999
somersetsurvivors.org.uk

In an emergency always dial 999. If you are worried that an abuser may realise you are calling remain silent and press 55 for help.

Search #NoClosedDoors2020 and retweet or repost to help someone experiencing domestic abuse.

helping to keep you safe

SOMERSET County Council



Actions You Can Take To Support Domestic Abuse Prevention

Your recommendations

1. Ensure you and your front line staff are aware of the **pathways and always use the [DASH Risk Assessment](#)**. See page 6.
2. Ensure you and your colleagues/teams have completed **training**. See below for advice.
3. **Safeguarding** "Business As Usual" continues – use the existing pathways for child and adult safeguarding. [Somerset Direct remains open—Tel: 0300 123 2224]
4. Please help promote the **#nocloseddoors2020 campaign**, both you as an individual and as your organisation (please speak to your communications team if necessary!).
5. Attend and participate in **MARAC** (see page 6 for the current process)
6. If you do any **publicity** to raise awareness of domestic abuse in your customer or employee newsletters, then please **always** include the local Somerset domestic abuse helpline and website—which are 0800 69 49 999 and [www.sometsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.somerset survivors.org.uk)



Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

Although face-to-face trainings have been postponed. There are several e-learning opportunities for you and your colleagues. These include those listed below.

If You're External To Somerset County Council

The charity Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) has two helpful e-learning:

1. Understanding Domestic Violence and Abuse
2. Complicated Matters: Domestic and Sexual Violence, Problematic Substance Use and Mental Ill-health

Find online at <http://www.elearning.avaproject.org.uk/>

Do You Work For Somerset County Council?

Find at The Learning Centre, These Courses:

- Domestic Abuse (introduction)
- Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking



Reprovide Project Coronavirus Update

Due to the high demand for places on the virtual Reprovide Domestic Violence Intervention Programme (DVIP) sessions for professionals, two new dates have been organised.

These are 1 hour long virtual meetings for professionals during which Dr Nate Eisenstadt from the University of Bristol Research team and the Somerset Reprovide team will give an update, overview of the research and programme followed by a Q and A.

The additional virtual sessions will be taking place from 10-11am on Tuesday 2nd June and Friday 5th June.

Places can be booked by following the links below –

Tue 2nd June 2020 – [Book online here](#)

Fri 5th June 2020 – [Book online here](#)

Any Questions About Reprovide?

To discuss how this service could help your clients who want to change their domestically abusive behaviour, please contact Rachel Laurie, the Somerset Reprovide Manager by emailing Rachel.laurie@barnardos.org.uk or phone: 01823 270938

Submitted by Rachel Laurie



Community Rehabilitation Company Update

Do you work with a client who's on probation? The Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC who deliver the supervision and support to offenders categorised as low and medium risk in Somerset, have now launched an advice line.

This support line is staffed by skilled and experienced probation workers, to provide quick help to offenders, whose circumstances maybe quickly changing as a result of the pandemic. This is in addition to their routine and regular appointments with their supervising officer.

Many of the root causes of offending behaviour may be made worse at this time, whether that is down to loss of jobs creating financial stress, or anxiety about the future exacerbating anger, mental ill-health or substance misuse issues. Early intervention to help the people KSS supervise to access support available is at the heart of this approach. Helping ensuring offenders are equipped to make better choices, reduce their likelihood of reoffending and strengthen the safety of everyone in the communities KSS serve.

The advice line number is 0808 196 353 or visit the [KSS CRC website for more information here](#).

Submitted by KSS CRC



How to Make a Referral to the Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service

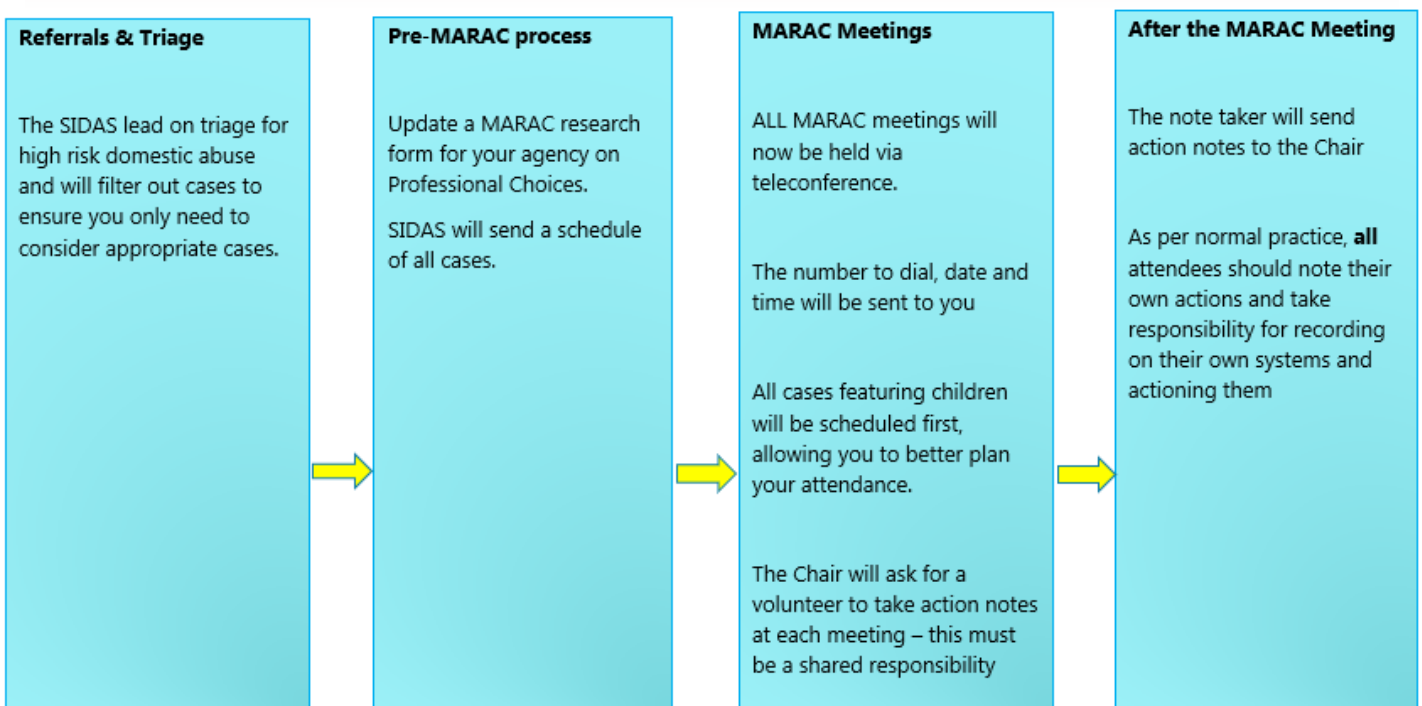
Please visit <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/how-to-make-a-referral/> for the domestic abuse risk identification checklist (DASH RIC), SIDAS referral form and other useful documents to help you safeguard victims and their families.

Tips For A Good Referral

1. **Complete** the ACPO DASH. (This is what we now use in Somerset). Be curious. Write any specific relevant information onto the DASH or referral form (if that's required).
2. Be sensitive. **Take a trauma informed approach**. Encourage safe disclosure and engagement. Also to find out what the survivor/victim wants (it may not be what you think it is).
3. Include all relevant information. **Including any equality and diversity details**. Does the victim face any particular barriers seeking help?
4. Be aware of **particular risk factors**, e.g. separation, pregnancy, escalation of abuse. Use your professional judgement, if the 'number of ticks' seems too low to reflect what you're hearing/seeing. But explain on your referral form/DASH your justification.

MARAC in Somerset—Interim Arrangements

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, effective multi-agency working to safeguard victims at high risk of harm from domestic abuse remains essential. MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) continue to operate in Somerset. These have been reviewed to ensure remain the response is achievable. The current process is illustrated below.





**Somerset & Avon
rape & sexual abuse support**

Coronavirus Update On Services

Confidential specialist support for people who have experienced rape or any kind of sexual assault or abuse at any time in their lives

Freephone Helpline

Open to anyone

0808 801 0456
0808 801 0646

Mon: 11am - 2pm
Tue: 12noon - 2pm, 6pm-8pm
Wed: 12noon - 2pm, 6pm-8pm
Thu: 12noon - 2pm, 6pm-8pm
Fri: 11am - 2pm

Other Services

1 to 1 Counselling
**1 to 1 Specialist
Support**

e-support

support@sarsas.org.uk

Confidential, practical and emotional support provided by trained staff via e-mail

Contact

Bristol Office **0117 929 9556**
Taunton Office **01823 324 944**

info@sarsas.org.uk
www.sarsas.org.uk

Charity Registered in England No. 1126682
Company No. 6738639

Covid-19 Useful Publications

Please find below links to useful national publications relating to domestic abuse and Covid-19

- [Domestic abuse: how to get help \(Home Office\)](#)
- [Domestic abuse during COVID-19: Guidance for mental health practitioners \(AVA\)](#)
- [Guidance for providers of safe accommodation with support for victims of domestic abuse and their children \(MHCLG\)](#)
- [Harmful Traditional Practices in the Workplace, Urgent Response to Covid-19 \(University of Central Lancashire\)](#)
- [Safety and support resources for survivors, friends, family, neighbours and community members \(Women's Aid\)](#)
- [Staying safe during covid-19, a guide for victims and survivors of domestic abuse \(Safe Lives\)](#)

MindLine

Mindline Somerset
Emotional support helpline
Coronavirus



01823 276 892

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Healthy Somerset

Somerset Coronavirus Helpline

0300 7906275

COVID-19: to find out how to stay
healthy, happy and safe at home head
to the Healthy Somerset website



Produced by Somerset County Council Public Health

On behalf of the Safer Somerset Partnership

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