

Over the phone advice for tenants at risk of Domestic Abuse

As a helpline operator, you are likely to have contact with vulnerable residents who may be at risk of death or serious injury due to domestic abuse. We have created this handout to support you to provide appropriate advice and signposting. Domestic abuse has increased substantially during the current period of lockdown.

You may not be informed domestic abuse is occurring directly but could be made aware indirectly via anti-social behaviour complaints from neighbours who are reporting shouting, arguing, banging or other noise nuisance from the property. Neighbours may report this to you but not anyone else including the Police or social services. As a result, you may be the only person aware and able to help.

When in contact with anyone at risk of domestic abuse your first consideration should be “is it safe to talk” as any advice you give over the phone may increase risk if the perpetrator is present. Ask if there is a safe time to call back possibly when the victim or perpetrator is taking their daily exercise or doing food shopping.

Key referral advice:

1. **In an emergency call 999.** If the victim is unable to talk to the operator they can press 55 which will transfer the call to the police. This does not allow the police to track your location but alerts them to the victim's risk. The operator will ask the caller a number of questions that will require a “yes” or “no” response to help them locate the victim and respond appropriately.
2. **BCHA dedicated advice and referral line 01202 710 777.** This is a dedicated helpline that is open 24 hours a day to support victims in need. This is available for anyone living in the BCP area.
3. **BCP “Together we Can” helpline 0300 1237052.** Via this number any vulnerable resident living within BCP can be linked with a volunteer to help with food shopping or just providing a listening ear a couple of times a week which will help those feeling isolated from family and friends.
4. **Nationals helplines and other local services.** Please see the list below which outlines other support services available that may help to reduce risk within the family home.
5. **Bright Sky app.** Recommend the victim download this app if it is safe to do so. It will appear on their phone as a weather app but holds vital details of local and national domestic abuse services.
6. **Rail to refuge scheme.** Victims fleeing domestic abuse can now apply for free train travel to refuge accommodation, through Women's Aid's new ‘rail to refuge’ scheme, supported by South Eastern and Great Western Railway. Victims escaping domestic abuse are usually advised to seek refuge services far away from their perpetrator, but for many victims, raising the cash to pay for a train ticket can be very difficult. This is especially true for victims experiencing economic abuse, who may have no access to cash.

This brief guidance is designed to help you to signpost to the specialist services who can complete the appropriate assessments and respond accordingly. If you have a specific case you need advice on, please contact BCHA's dedicated phone line for support or contact the Police.

Domestic abuse affects people in all sections of society. It goes on behind closed doors with the victim often afraid to ask for help.

HELPLINES FOR TENANTS DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 advice

- NHS – 111
- NHS – 999 (For severe symptoms or other illnesses)

Urgent help

- 999 or 112

Housing advice, benefits & legal support

- Citizens Advice Bureau – 03444 111 444

Housing & homelessness

- Crisis – 020 7426 5685
- Shelter – 0800 800 4444

Financial advice

- Money Advice Service – 0800 138 7777
- National Debtline – 0808 808 4000

Domestic abuse & violence

- BCP residents dedicated domestic abuse advice line: **01202 710 777**
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247
- Men's Advice Line – 0808 8010 327
- GALOP (LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline) – 08009995428

Disability & impairment

- Disability Living Foundation Charity – 0300 999 0004
- Disability Rights UK – independent living and carers – 0330 995 0404

Food support

- Trussell Trust – 01722 580 180
- Fareshare – 0131 608 0967

Help for the elderly

- Age UK – 0800 678 1602

Refugee, asylum & immigration support

- Migrant Help – 0808 8010 503
- British Red Cross – 0344 871 11 11

Mental health support

- Samaritans – 116 123
- Mind – 0300 123 3393
- SANE – 020 3805 1790

Support for children

- NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

Animal welfare

- RSPCA – 0300 123 4999

BCP Together we can

- 0300 123705

