



Somerset Domestic Abuse Newsletter

Covid Special Edition 3—July 2020



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

As coronavirus restrictions ease, we know that for people in domestically abusive situations, the abuse will not stop. Men, women and children who’re affected by domestic abuse, continue to need to be aware of the signs of abuse, and what they can do to get help. It’s likely that having experienced significant social restrictions, for many, abusive patterns have become more normalised.

You can help as a professional to ensure that your own teams and colleagues are aware of domestic abuse and the local referral pathway. And that this is used to help our communities.

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 previous newsletters, a new **Somerset Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Task Group**, has been established. Comprising representatives from councils, police, social care, local support service providers and health services.

The group now meets bi-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.

To date although there has been fluctuations in the demand for statutory and voluntary services, there has not been a sustained and significant increase. The Somerset Survivors website is experiencing a substantial increase in new visitors and hits, almost certainly as a result of the No Closed Doors 2020 campaign.

Somerset Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Task Group will continue to meet and monitor demand for some time to come. With us still living in a pandemic situation, we're aware that things can change quickly, and we want to be in a situation to respond swiftly should we need to.

Help For People Where English Isn't Their First Language

The Home Office have now published information guides for people without English as their first language. And who maybe experiencing domestic abuse, (or know someone who is) and needs help.

The translated guides are in these languages: Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali, Tamil, Urdu.

You can find these online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-get-help-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-translations>

Help for Those Who Are Deaf

If you have a customer/client who is deaf or can't verbally communicate. Do they know how to contact emergency services?

If not, let them know they can register with the emergencySMS service.

Just text REGISTER to 999. They'll get a text which tells them what to do next.

Do this when it is safe so they can text when they're in danger.

Get more information about this service online at <https://www.emergencysms.net/>

Somerset's Domestic Abuse Campaign #NoClosedDoors2020

As reported in our previous newsletters, Somerset County Council currently has a campaign with the aims of:

- (1) Increasing 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 any guidelines.
- (3) Empower individuals to spot the signs and take action safely.

A series of advertisements in radio, newspaper and online platforms have now been published. With further press releases, Sky TV advertising and other online/offline advertising being developed.

Get our video's, photo's, articles and poster online at <https://somersetnewsroom.com/2020/05/29/nocloseddoors2020-media-centre/>.

You can support this campaign by reviewing the media centre above, and using the materials in your own networks and teams.

Do continue to look 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.



Coercive Control—Podcast

Listen to this Association of Child Protection Professionals podcast to learn more about coercive control.

It's an interview with Dr Emma Katz who provides more information on her research into this type of domestic abuse.

Dr Katz is a leading research specialist in the harms caused by perpetrators to mothers and children in the context of domestic abuse. She is a Senior Lecturer in Childhood and Youth at Liverpool Hope University and has won multiple awards for her research, including the Corinna Seith Prize, awarded by Women Against Violence Europe in 2016.

Listen at <https://www.childprotectionprofessionals.org.uk/Blog/coercive-control>



LGBT+ Survivors of Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence



Galop, the national charity who operate the national LGBT+ domestic abuse helpline. Have produced a range of factsheets, some of which maybe helpful for you as a professional, or for anyone you work with. Find these online at www.galop.org.uk/factsheets/

Their national LGBT+ helpline is open Monday to Friday, and can be contacted on 0800 999 5428. (opening hours at their website above).

THE FIVE R'S OF ENQUIRY*



National charity Safe Lives have produced "The 5 R's of asking about domestic abuse". This guidance has been produced for health professionals, but is equally helpful for professionals in other settings too. Read the briefing [online here](#).



Somerset Phoenix Project



The Somerset Phoenix Project has published a range of resources to help professionals connect virtually with children, young people and their families during the pandemic.

Training videos and materials have also been added to their website. Find this all online at <https://www.somersetphoenixproject.org.uk/creative-resources>.

Additionally, they've have launched a new children's guide aimed at 8-12 years for those affected by sexual abuse. It explains all about what has happened to them and why the feel the way they do.

Follow the link below to download a copy.

www.somersetphoenixproject.org.uk/guide-for-children-and-young-people

Children and Domestic Abuse



Safe Lives Guidance for Professionals Working With Children

Advice and information has been published by the NSPCC to help professionals better understand and support children affected by domestic abuse. Read more online at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/june/protecting-children-from-domestic-abuse-during-coronavirus>

Safe Lives have produced guidance aimed at Children's Social Workers, Early Help Teams and Family Practitioners, to help support effective working during the Covid-19 crisis. If you'd like to have more help in understanding how you can safeguarding children and families, then please see the guide online [here](#).

Respect—New Webchat

Practitioners working with high-harm, high-risk and complex-need perpetrators can access expert advice via a dedicated webchat facility.

This new service will be available every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am-12pm and 2-4pm for 6 months, (from 28 May 2020).

A Practice Advisor from the Drive Project will give practitioners information and advice by exploring the presenting issues which require resolving.

To access this service please visit Respect Phoneline and click on 'launch webchat'.



Actions You Can Take To Support Domestic Abuse Prevention

What You Can Do

1. Ensure you and your front line staff know the local domestic abuse **pathways and always use the [DASH Risk Assessment](#)**. See page 7.
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. Regularly attend and participate in **MARAC** (see page 7 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.somerseturvivors.org.uk



Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

Although local 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



AVA now have more online webinars and courses available, if you work with people affected by domestic abuse. Including best practice for supporting survivors during Covid-19. Take a look online at <https://avaproject.org.uk/events/>



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

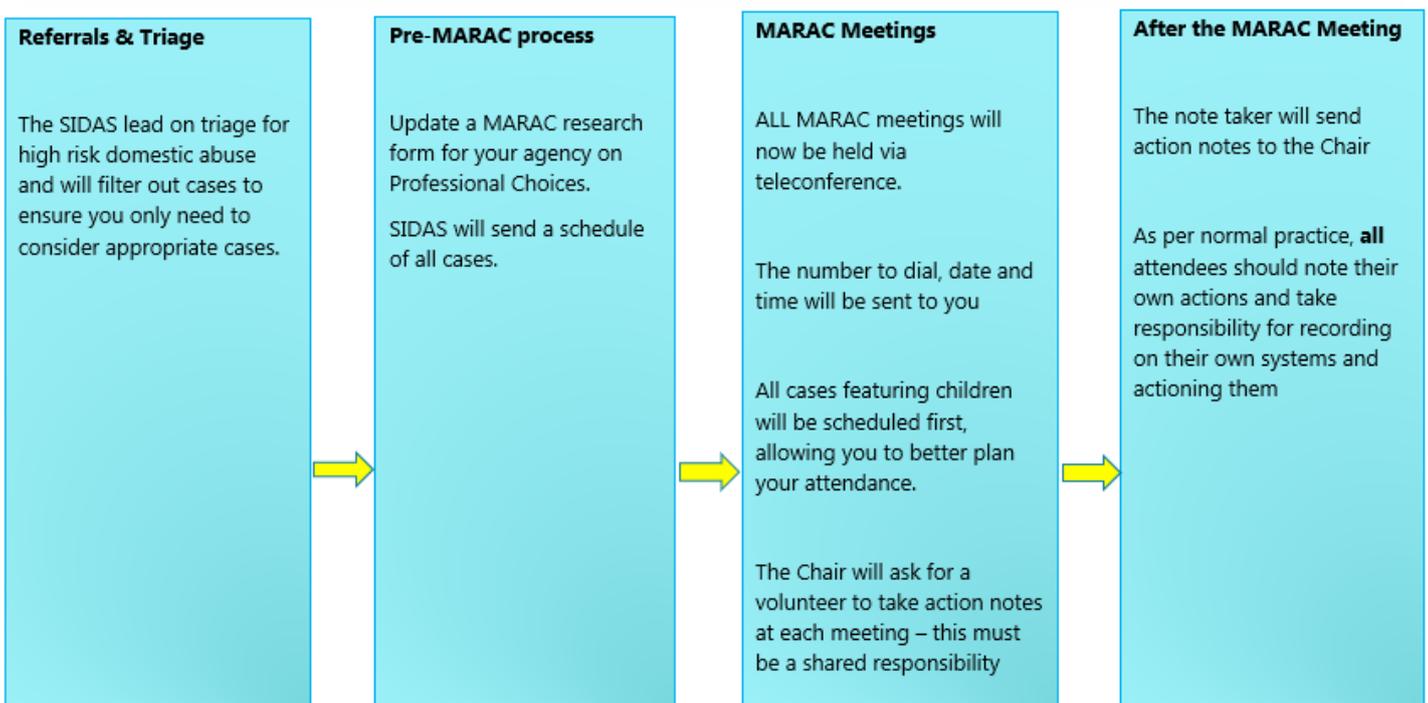
Please visit <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/how-to-make-a-referral/> for the domestic abuse risk identification checklist (DASH RIC), SIDAS referral form and other useful documents to help you safeguard victims and their families.

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.



Why Pause?

Pause works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. Pause aims to break this cycle and give women the opportunity to pause and take control of their lives. The purpose of Pause is to prevent the damaging consequences of thousands more children being taken into care each year.

Pause was created by professionals with frontline experience of working with vulnerable adults such as care leavers and sex workers, as well as in family courts and the field of child protection. The key to our success is the relationships we build with women at risk

of becoming pregnant and having a child taken into care.

We work in partnership, finding new ways to overcome the problems of the past, meet the challenges of the present so that, together, we can build a better future.

How Pause works

The integrated model

It offers an intense programme of therapeutic, practical and behavioural support through an integrated and systemic model. Each woman has a bespoke programme designed around their needs. The diagram below explains the key elements and examples of our approach:



For more information contact, Pause Practitioner

erin.black@nelsontrust.com or Tel: 07741 737669 or 01278 557730

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 \(MHCLG\)](#)
- [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 \(Safe Lives\)](#)



Somerset & Avon rape & sexual abuse support

SARSAS continues to deliver support to people who've experienced rape or any kind of sexual assault or abuse at anytime in their lives.

Visit their website for more information at www.sarsas.org.uk/

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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 helping to
keep you safe