

Violence Against Women and Girls Team (Public Health) Covid 19 VAWG Business Continuity Action Plan 2020/2021

Areas for planning	Description
1. Clear communication	Provide clear, proactive and unequivocal messaging to residents assuring them that domestic abuse remains a top priority for the council despite the circumstances.
	Let people know how they can get help for themselves or report concerns about others, and make clear that people with coronavirus symptoms can still access support. Identify and try to safely make contact with those who may be in a vulnerable home situation, including those known to refuges and social services, and help them to access suitable and safe accommodation if they want it
	Promote self-help resources and tips, such as helpline contacts and a guide to what to pack in an 'escape bag'/safety planning
	Make sure the council has discreet and secure communication channels for those who cannot make phone calls without being overheard. For example, offering online services as well as phone calls, providing codewords over the phone, having a 'quick exit' button on the website page with domestic abuse information
	Map out clear routes of escape for those wanting to leave an abusive setting which are tailored to the current circumstances,

	and then publicise these extensively through the council's channels. For example, what to do if you can't escape to family/friends, what to do if you/your child is ill, how an abuser who is themselves ill can be legally ejected, and how to alert authorities about abuse when you cannot access phone lines.
2. Coordinating across local services	Liaise with local police forces to ensure they have properly considered their ability to respond to an increase in domestic violence call-outs. This includes making sure domestic violence callouts and prevention work will remain a top priority if staff shortages occur and that response times will be maintained, as well as having the requisite protective equipment to enable officers to enter premises in an emergency. Encourage police to plan proactive targeted support for known victims, and continue to be on the lookout for people who may not be on the authorities' radar.
	To continue existing domestic abuse services remotely, such as IDVA/IRIS/Floating Support and counselling. Facilitate the use of secure online platforms and work with local groups and charities to ensure they are operating safely.
	Maintain regular communication with the local courts system to act quickly on domestic violence, stalking and child custody issues, for example issues raised by self-isolation, and to quickly issue protection orders.
	To contact all local refuge and support service providers (both commissioned and non-commissioned) to offer the council's support and make sure they have robust service continuity

	plans and the resources, guidance, equipment, food and provisions they need. This may also involve access to technology, emergency funding or adaptations to reporting deadlines and targets.
	Contact all other voluntary, community and support groups in the area – via the Bridge Renewal Trust and our CCR partners, including such groups, women’s groups, contact centres, religious groups, toddler groups – which may provide informal support to those experiencing abuse. To check if they have any concerns and whether they can be helped to continue working remotely.
3. Safe Accommodation	Explore if the council has enough secure housing available to house emergency cases, over and above existing homelessness provision, and council support continues for people who have left an abusive setting and moved to temporary accommodation.
	Work with Homes for Haringey to ensure all officers are briefed on how to handle domestic abuse cases sensitively, what support they should be offering and how to support vulnerable residents in their move.
4. Coordinated Community Response (CCR)	The CCR Representatives who have been trained, will know where and how to sign post residents to DA agencies, if they are approached by anyone seeking advice and information.
	Deliver Community Empowerment training to facilitate peer support
	Train Community Champions

5. Longer Term Objectives	To commission the VAWG contracts and include a new model that includes diverse and specialist services in future contracts, e.g. BAME Independent Domestic Violence Advocates/IDVAS