



## DOMESTIC / INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE POLICY

- We recognise that domestic/interpersonal violence is a serious problem which occurs in all sections of society regardless of age, background, race and status.
- We recognise that all forms of interpersonal violence are unacceptable and must be challenged and stopped.
- We believe that no-one should have to endure violence.
- We will witness to what it truly means to value human beings, men, women and children, and challenge society about its behaviour.
- We undertake to listen, support and care for those affected by interpersonal violence.
- We will keep up to date and work with the support agencies that are available locally.
- We will attempt to make appropriate referrals based on empowering those affected to make their own choices.

### IMMEDIATE CONCERNS REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If Child Protection issues arise or immediate danger is threatened to service users, volunteers should contact their team leader or Project Director immediately. In the event of an emergency call 999.

If there are serious concerns write down a detailed statement (what, when, how, who) and store them in the service user's file which should be kept in a locked cabinet.

Dos	Don'ts
Give priority to immediate safety	Be judgmental
Offer same sex interview and first language where possible	Ask what he/she did to provoke the violence
Take the service user seriously	Ask for proof of violence
Believe the person. It takes a lot of courage to tell about violence. Whether the person takes the disclosure further could depend upon your reaction	Make decisions for the person
Reassure the service user that the violence is not their fault	Ask why he/she hasn't left earlier
Remember that their problems may be compounded by language, cultural barriers and racism	Ignore your intuition if you suspect the customer is experiencing abuse - ask them sensitively
Let the service user know that s/he is not alone in experiencing abuse	Give out their address/contact details for any reason
Always consult with specialist agencies (particularly Women's Aid)	Be casual or cynical
Listen to what h/she needs to resolve the situation	Assume that the children's needs are being met
Check where mail can be safely sent - confidentiality is crucial	Expect an immediate decision or pressurise the person to make quick changes

Ensure that he/she knows your name and when/how you can be contacted	Offer to be intermediary between the service user and the abusive partner
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### WHAT IF THEY AREN'T READY TO DISCLOSE OR LEAVE?

- Build up a relationship of trust so that he/she is more likely to disclose incidents of abuse
- Build self-esteem regardless of whether they are ready to address the abuse or not
- Investigate and inform them of their choices - for example, it may be a refuge, or an injunction. (Find out the specifics beforehand as, for example, women who use drugs/alcohol have limited access to refuge spaces).
- If in doubt always refer to or consult with a specialist service.

### DISPLAY THE FOLLOWING LOCAL NUMBERS

- Local Social Services Child Protection team.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Further information on your local SARC is available from [crisispoint.org.uk](http://crisispoint.org.uk).
- Local police
- Local domestic/interpersonal violence support project if any.

### FOR THE PROJECT

Display a charter on how you will deal with disclosures of violence, whether they are current or past incidents.

Display domestic/interpersonal violence posters that raise awareness to those you work with.

Ensure that referral information is available and that your volunteers know what to do if they are making a referral.

### AN EXAMPLE OF A CHARTER FOR THE PROJECT

1 in 4 women will experience violence from someone close to them at some point in their life. We understand that many people have experienced all sorts of violence, both in their past and currently, mostly from those closest to them. We want to make telling your story as easy as it possibly can be:

- We will believe you and try to support you, whatever you decide to do.
- We understand that this may be your background and that it may be difficult to tell us about this violence.
- We want you to understand that the violence is not your fault and that we are not here to judge or blame you.