

Respect

The Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Services

17th April 2020

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Respect recognises that social distancing guidelines developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic present major challenges for frontline service providers. We are also acutely aware that furloughing staff and withdrawing domestic abuse perpetrator services will have a significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of survivors and their children. As part of our response to this, we are surveying all our accredited members on a weekly basis, to understand the challenges they're facing – including, in some cases, their closure.

Respect-Accredited Members' and Drive Service Provision Update for the week ending 17/04/20.

Remote service provision

All of our surveyed members (25) are offering telephone or video-conferencing support on a one-to-one basis. For most services, the emphasis of this work is on managing immediate risk and safeguarding issues with a focused-on crisis and stress management, as well as calming and de-escalation techniques. There are only three services who are currently delivering an adapted one-to-one behavior change programme online. Agencies hold concern regarding the efficacy of doing this work particularly in the absence of a research base to support its delivery.

Online group-work

A small number of services continue to trialing the delivery of group-work via video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Teams. Concerns are held by services and Respect regarding the adherence to GDPR and respect for client confidentiality. It has already been reported that this can be difficult to manage for the service.

In-person provision

Two services are currently providing in-person meetings where this is considered necessary and social distancing guidelines can still be adhered to; this generally applies to high risk and crisis situations. One service is currently exploring the delivery of a group programme with adherence to social distancing guidelines. In consultation with services the majority feel that this would be very difficult to manage in reality and their premises do not afford the scope to ensure safety and wellbeing of clients.

New referrals

Currently, half of twenty surveyed services are continuing to accept new referrals. Although we anticipate that some services will be negatively affected by a lack of funding, it is also expected that services will adapt their ways of working, enabling them to continue accepting new referrals.

Furloughing and closure of services

This week, as a result of a loss of income from the family courts (through CAFCASS), training and other work, 28% of surveyed services furloughed between 20%–80% of their staff. Most others with funding from income

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generation have indicated that they are considering this option, as are survivor support services. We expect this to increase unless additional support is made available.

Survivor and children's safety

In order to offer increased levels of contact, additional staff time is being employed by 8 out of 25 surveyed services. A further 5 are considering making changes to how they currently work.

Additional Financial Support

12% of surveyed services have been able to access Covid-19 specific financial support. This support has come via individual grants made by non-statutory funders.