

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

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 the current situation, we are surveying all our accredited members on a weekly basis, to understand, collate and share information about the challenges they're facing – including, in some cases, their closure.

Respect-Accredited Members' Service Provision Update for the week ending 03/04/20.

Remote service provision

All of our surveyed members are offering telephone or video-conferencing support on a one-to-one basis. For the majority of services, the emphasis of this work is on managing immediate risk and safeguarding issues and the sessions are therefore focused on crisis and stress management, as well as calming and de-escalation techniques. The speed with which services have been able to adapt to the closure of all offices and facilities for in-person appointments is remarkable, and has ensured that perpetrators continue to be offered a service and held accountable for their behavior – particular during isolation with their families.

Online group-work

A small number of services are trialing the delivery of group-work via video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Teams. Respect expect to see an increase in the use of this particular format over the coming weeks and is therefore working with its national and international colleagues to understand how it can be delivered safely and effectively.

In-person provision

A small number of services are 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.

New referrals

Currently, half of all 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), and training and other work, 25% of surveyed services furloughed between 20%–80% of their staff. Most others have indicated that they are

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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 resources are being employed by 8 out of 20 surveyed services. A further 5 are considering making changes to how they currently work.

Additional Financial Support

15% of surveyed services have been able to access Covid-19 specific financial support.