

# Guidance for Orkney Islands Council Employees experiencing Domestic Abuse while homeworking due to Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

As directed by the government, due to the spread of Covid-19 those who can work from home should do so. However, there are specific challenges and potential risks for those experiencing domestic abuse in the home setting not only for themselves but also for their children and young people.

Those who live with an abuser may feel increased anxiety around the prospect of self-isolation and social distancing, or even quarantine. Additionally, for the many victims/survivors who do not live with their abusers, they may feel an increased level of fear at the prospect of their abuser knowing that they are at home, with the possibility for further surveillance and the opportunities for intimidation and abusive acts that this creates.

Anyone homeworking and feeling in a vulnerable position can make a safety plan. The Women's Aid Federation of England has information on making a safety plan here: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/making-a-safety-plan/#1447928982294-e2f74007-ab73>

There is also advice for covering your tracks online, and an exit site escape button on the website.

You may not have previously made your line manager aware of your personal circumstances, and there is no requirement for you to do this, but consideration of this under the current circumstances may be something to include in your safety planning, as for some a daily check in with your manager may be the only way you can alert someone you need help. If this is something you would find beneficial please discuss with your manager as soon as possible, when it is safe to do so. In a situation of potential risk, use the every-day phrase **[add phrase]** to alert your manager. Your manager will be made aware of this signal. If both you and your partner are employed by the council, you can agree with your manager what alternative word or phrase you will use at a time of escalation. Agree with your manager **in advance** the action to take if this alert is used – for example the manager can call 999 for you, contact a key worker for you, or advise you to leave your house to seek help.

There are national statements from Scottish Women's Aid and the Violence against Women and Girls sector regarding the concerns, possible impact and commitment to keep vital services in place, but these too will be impacted by the current situation. You can find this at <https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Statement-19-March-2020.pdf>

There will be changes regarding how some organisations offer support services over the coming weeks, keeping in mind their own staff's safety, including providing their service over the phone, online, by text or by email. While services will not be able to operate at their usual capacity, national and local Domestic Abuse services and

other relevant services will aim to continue to be available to offer support and guidance including safety planning.

## **Local Services**

### **Women's Aid Orkney**

Support is available by phone, text, email, WhatsApp and video call.

Phone: 01856877900, Monday to Friday 09:00 to 16:00 or 07538786885 at other times.

Email: [info@womensaidorkney.org.uk](mailto:info@womensaidorkney.org.uk).

Follow Women's Aid Orkney on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/womensaidorkney>

or Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WAOrkney>

Website: <http://womensaidorkney.org.uk/>

### **Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS)**

Continues to provide telephone, text, Instant Messaging and video conferencing support to women, men, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Contact ORSAS by email: [contact@orsas.scot](mailto:contact@orsas.scot)

or phone 01856872298 to leave a message.

Follow ORSAS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OrkneyRSAS/>

or Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OrkneyRSAS>

and Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/orkneyrsas/>

Website: <https://www.orsas.scot/>

### **Victim Support Orkney**

Can be contacted on 01856884547.

Hours of Service: Wednesday and Thursday 08:30 to 13:45.

Email Address: [victimsupport.orkney@victimsupportscotland.org.uk](mailto:victimsupport.orkney@victimsupportscotland.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.victimsupportscotland.org.uk>

### **Victim Support Scotland**

Has a free national helpline – phone: 08001601985.

Webchat is available through [www.victimsupport.scot](http://www.victimsupport.scot) for free and confidential support.

Both services are available from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday.

Website: <https://victimsupport.scot/>

## **Orkney Islands Council Housing**

Telephone: 01856873535.

Email: [allocations@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:allocations@orkney.gov.uk)

## **Orkney Housing Associations Ltd (OHAL)**

Telephone: 01856875253.

Email: [enquiries@ohal.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ohal.org.uk)

## **National Services**

### **Scotland's 24-hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline**

Freephone: 08000271234.

Email: [helpline@sdafmh.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sdafmh.org.uk)

Web chat at: [www.sdafmh.org.uk](http://www.sdafmh.org.uk).

The helpline is there to support anyone with experience of domestic abuse or forced marriage as well as their family members, friends, colleagues and professionals who support them.

### **National Rape Crisis**

Telephone: 08088010302.

Website: [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/)

### **National Support for Male Victims of Domestic Abuse**

Respect - Men's Advice Line (Scotland):

Telephone: 08088010327

Email: [info@mensadviceline.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk)

Website: <https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>

### **Survivors UK**

Provides help for men who have been sexually abused or raped:

Telephone: 02035983898.

Email: [help@survivorsuk.org](mailto:help@survivorsuk.org)

Website: <https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

## **Other support**

In an **emergency situation** you should call **999**.

## **The Silent Solution**

This protocol allows you to dial 999 and remain silent if it's not safe for you to talk. The operator will put you through to an automated system and if you press 55, the police will be dispatched to your location.