

Please keep those families affected by Domestic Abuse in your prayers.

Whilst individuals, families and the country as a whole face increasingly difficult and uncertain times during the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes even more important that we work together to ensure that those who may be vulnerable or at risk, get the vital support they need. Although inconvenient for many, the current government measures should increase our safety, but for victims of domestic abuse and their children, home can be a place of fear and often danger. We know that the risks will increase as 'social distancing', self-isolation, and as the financial impact of the pandemic becomes a reality. Perpetrators often attempt to isolate their partners from family, friends, work and community and the pandemic provides them with an increased ability to do so. We also know incidents of abuse increase as families are forced together, and during periods of economic instability. Domestic abuse charities are concerned that survivors ability to seek support from services will become more difficult as perpetrators spend more time at home. We are therefore facing a complex and scary picture.

In this time of crisis South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Team would like to reassure survivors, other professionals and their communities that they are still here, but do need to take steps to ensure that whilst adhering to the governments guidelines around "social distancing" they can continue to safely deliver their core services. With immediate effect they have had to postpone all face to face work including group work. Until further notice SWSDAOS will provide outreach support via telephone, whilst working with partners in the voluntary and statutory sector to ensure the needs of survivors and children are considered and met.

SWSDAOS needs our communities more than ever to help them continue to provide life-saving support for survivors and children, so please consider doing the following;

- Please listen out for your neighbours and call for help if you think someone is at risk.
- If safe to do so, please reach out to anyone you believe is in an abusive relationship and encourage them to contact SWSDAOS for advice and support, in particular around safety planning during these times.
- If it is not safe for the survivors themselves to contact us then SWSDAOS are always willing to support friends, family and any professional, so they can safely pass information on.
- Please keep victims and children affected by domestic abuse in your prayers.

Above all be kind, survivors and children more than ever need to know that when they are ready you are there for them and that there is support available.

Anyone needing advice can ring the SWSDAOS helpline on [01483 898884](tel:01483898884)

Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

Your call will be answered by a trained Domestic Abuse Support Worker. If they are unable to answer please leave a short message with safe contact details and a member of staff will ring you back. SWSDAOS also have a 24 hour answerphone or you can email swr@swsda.org.uk .

In an emergency dial 999