



Somerset Domestic Abuse Newsletter

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Welcome to this latest edition of the Somerset Domestic Abuse Newsletter, which contains updates on local and national domestic abuse related matters.

Please share with colleagues and your teams!

Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS) Update

Referrals—SIDAS received over 2100 referrals in 2018/19 which is a similar number to the previous year.

The majority of referrals (over 50%) continue to be made for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service. This indicates that people experiencing domestic abuse are not being identified until they reach a high risk level. But when people are receiving the IDVA service 81% of them reported feeling better about their situation. This is similar to the national average and reflects the effectiveness of the service.

Re-commissioning of Somerset's Domestic Abuse Service

In Progress

As reported in previous newsletters, Somerset County Council are continuing with their procurement activity to commission a specialist domestic abuse service to start in April 2020. It's likely that a decision will be made in the Autumn. Further information will be provided in due course.

Your Chance to Comment on Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse

Safe Accommodation for Domestic Abuse Victims National Consultation

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a consultation on the proposal to place a legal duty on local authorities to deliver support in secure accommodation services for survivors of domestic abuse and their children in England.

MHCLG want to hear views from victims and survivors, local authorities and professionals who support victims and their children.

The consultation will close on 2 August 2019.

Please read more/respond online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-safe-accommodation>

Do You Work With Men?

Men Can Be Victims of Domestic Abuse Too

There have been 3 recent domestic homicide reviews (DHR) here in Somerset, which have related to male victims of domestic abuse.

A recurring theme is the lack of awareness by many agencies that men can be victims too. The Somerset Domestic Abuse Board who oversees the recommendations from DHRs is currently reviewing this further to see what more can be done.

But do you know that **Respect** have just published the third edition of their **Toolkit for Work with Male Victims of Domestic Abuse?** Please take a look at this helpful online resource [here](#).

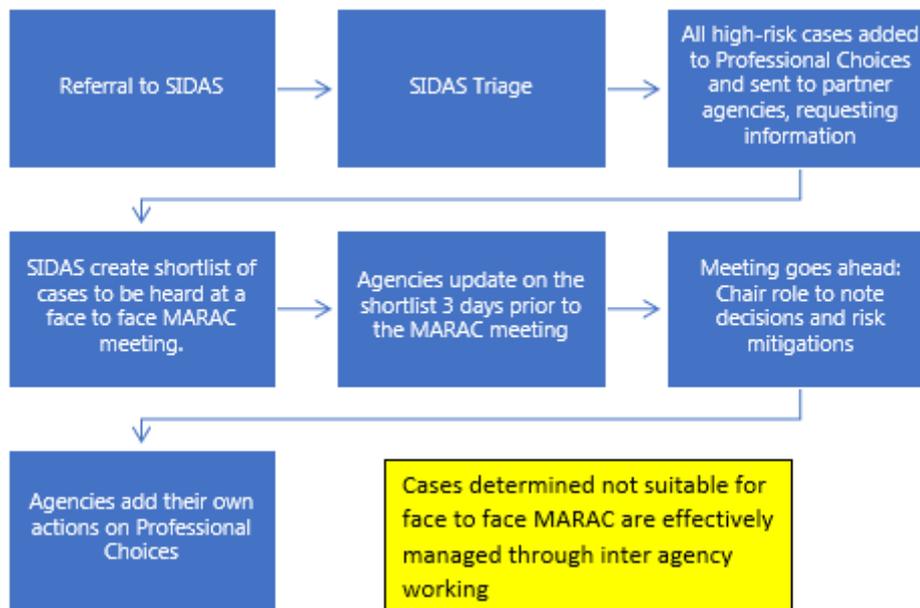
And don't forget that SIDAS work with male victims too. So if you do identify a man who's a victim of domestic abuse, please refer as per the pathway on page 5 of this newsletter.



New Somerset MARAC Process

New Way of Working in Place

The new way of working to manage high risk domestic abuse cases using MARAC is now in place. This means that SIDAS are taking the lead organising the best support for victims. The flowchart below explains the process and the newly revised MARAC Operating Protocol can be found online at <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/somerset-marac/>



How Much Do You Know About Forced Marriage?

The Government's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) recently published its 2018 activity. They gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,764 cases. The number of cases in 2018 represents a 47% increase compared with 2017 and is the highest number since these statistics were first in the current format in 2011. This does not necessarily represent an increase in the prevalence of forced marriage in the UK. Potential reasons for the increase in cases could be due to an increase in awareness through increased media attention, and a Home Office communication campaign about forced marriage. The FMU has also improved its data recording process.

Of the 1764 cases the FMU gave advice or support to, 49 were known to be from the south-west region (2.8%).

What is Forced marriage?

Firstly it's a criminal offence. A forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or mental incapacity, cannot) consent to the marriage, and violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is involved. An arranged marriage IS different, as both parties have consented to the union but can still refuse to marry if they choose to.

E-Learning—You can learn more about the signs of forced marriage and what to do, by completing e-learning. SCC employees can find a course online at [The Learning Centre](#). Or the Home Office have an e-learning course for all in their Virtual College- [click here](#).

New 'Litigants in Person' Project Now Being Piloted

Taunton CAB Secured Funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation

This one year pilot project provides free specialist advice and support to 'litigants in person' – people ineligible for legal aid and unable to afford legal assistance who are vulnerable due to GVA or domestic abuse.

Taunton CAB have used the funding to employ a caseworker who is able to advise and assist clients through the court processes relating to:

- civil injunctions (non-molestation orders and occupation orders);
- transfer of tenancy orders under the Family Law Act;
- divorce proceedings including financial orders; and
- child arrangement orders (including referrals to mediators);
- referral to other essential services

If you know someone who'd find this helpful, please see the poster below for more information.

The infographic is titled 'Litigants in Person Service' and is part of the 'citizens advice' brand. It is divided into several sections: 'The service', 'Multi-channel access', 'Assessment of eligibility', 'Level of advice', and 'Access to longer term support'. On the right side, there are sections for 'Clients' and 'Third parties'. The 'Clients' section lists three locations: Taunton (St. Mary's House), Wellington (Fore Street), and Halcon (Link Centre), with their respective opening hours. It also provides a phone number (03444 889623) and a website (citizensadvice.taunton.org.uk). The 'Third parties' section explains that third party agencies can signpost clients and that direct access referrals are possible online. The bottom of the infographic features the 'citizens advice Taunton' logo and the 'LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION England & Wales' logo.

Litigants in Person Service

The service
Funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation, the Litigants in Person service exists to assist people who have experienced domestic abuse to secure the court orders they need to provide protection for themselves and their children or to obtain financial orders. The Litigants in Person service will help clients prepare for and understand the legal process and speak on their behalf, when necessary, at no cost to the client

Multi-channel access

Our service is available, face-to-face, over the phone and online through our email advice form – to allow clients to access help in the way that's right for them. People can self-refer, be sign-posted or referred by other agencies - see reverse.

Assessment of eligibility

Has the client experienced domestic abuse; or other forms of GVA; or who is otherwise vulnerable, and do they need assistance but have no entitlement to legal aid or are without the financial means to obtain legal advice? Clients who do not meet the service criteria will be signposted to more appropriate support.

Level of advice

A specialist caseworker will assist clients through the court processes relating to civil injunctions (non-molestation orders and occupation orders); transfer of tenancy orders under the Family Law Act, divorce proceedings including financial orders and child arrangement orders (including referrals to mediators).

Access to longer term support

We can also help people with other issues by signposting or referring clients to other services - within Citizens Advice or through other organisations.

How to access the service?

Clients

Clients can present at any of our advice locations:

Taunton – St. Mary's House	Mon, Thu, Fri 10am – 2pm, Tue 2pm – 6.30pm
Wellington – Fore Street	Mon, Thu 10am – 1pm
Halcon – Link Centre	Tue 10am – 12.30pm
Priorswood – Community Centre	Thu 10am – 12.30pm

By calling the Somerset Advice line 03444 889623
Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm
*Calls cost the same as calling 01 and 02 numbers.

Online through our email advice form at citizensadvice.taunton.org.uk

Third parties

Third party agencies can signpost clients to contact us in any of the above ways.

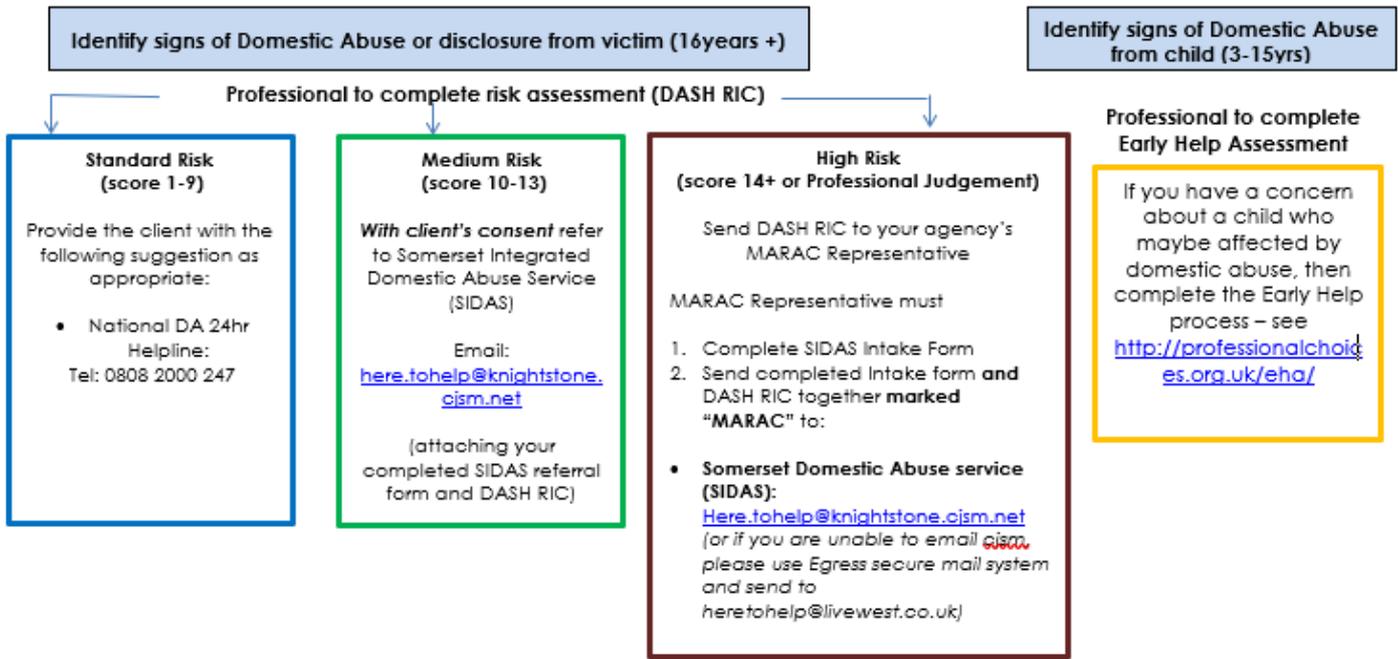
Alternatively, with your client's consent you can make a direct access referral to us online at: <https://citizensadvice.taunton.org.uk/referral-form/>

Please ensure you state that your referral is for the Litigants in Person project and provide as much detail about your client's advice needs as possible.

citizens advice Taunton

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
England & Wales

How to Make a Referral to the Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service



Remember

If you have **immediate** concerns about the client's safety, please call the Police on 999. If immediate risk to children or vulnerable adult, initiate your agency child protection or safeguarding adult procedures.

Be timely - You should complete all risk assessments, referral forms and send to the appropriate agency within 2 working days of identifying the risk

For more information about Somerset's domestic abuse services please visit www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk or call 0800 69 49 999

Update on My Change

This is no longer being delivered as a separate project and so referrals are closed.

SCC Get set work in Level 3 families where they can add value to the family, who may already be involved with a number of professionals or agencies. For those families who are receiving / going to receive a getset L3 service, then either Overcoming Abuse or Becoming Respectful that were part of the My Change programme where domestic abuse is identified as an emerging concern will be offered.

Due to the number of clients on a waiting list for the My Change programme, SIDAS have changed their operating model for the remainder of their contract and will be working to reduce the number of those awaiting the course, running the Overcoming Abuse sessions and will also accept clients who are referred in to the SIDAS service as 'medium' risk using the SIDAS Intake Form and an ACPO DASH.

Why The Details Are Important In Your Referral

Domestic abuse is rarely a single issue. This means it's not only the specialist domestic abuse workers in SIDAS who can help. But to enable SIDAS to offer as comprehensive service as possible. It's important that the referral is completed in full.

Recent local domestic homicide reviews show that when information is missing, responses to victims and their families has been limited.



Domestic Abuse In The Criminal Justice System Review

The Domestic Abuse (DA) 'Deep Dive' project was commissioned in 2015 by the National Criminal Justice Board to ensure the capacity and capability of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) to respond effectively to DA cases and effectively support victims. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) developed a DA best practice framework through this 'deep dive' exploration and analysis of the differing levels of performance in DA across local CJS. The framework brings together four main components of best practice:

- 1) A clear multi-agency/community approach which addresses risk management and safeguarding procedures;
- 2) Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support;
- 3) Trained and consistently deployed staff across all agencies (including robust judges); and
- 4) In court services: proactive witness services/pre-trial familiarisation visits/appropriate use of special measures.

Whilst none of these elements are unusual in themselves, they were identified in the 'deep dives' as the most significant contributors to the ability of areas to achieve successful outcomes in DA cases. The DA best practice framework emphasises the importance of all agencies working closely together to ensure cases are handled effectively, and victims and witnesses are supported appropriately.

These four emerging best practice components were tested in three Magistrate Court systems in England and Wales. The full evaluation and recommendations report showed that all of the test sites improved their DA performance on the majority of indicators, improving from low performing areas, to being in line with or above national average DA performance. The four best practice components then were approved as forming the best practice framework by the National Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) in March 2018.

Since September 2018, DA regional leads across England and Wales have been developing local plans to implement the best practice framework. The implementation date commenced in January 2019 and performance will be closely monitored.

A full evaluation report will be compiled by the National DA Best Practice Delivery Group and presented to the NCJB in September 2019.

*This article is courtesy of the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Newsletter
Spring 2019*

How Your Phone Can Protect You From Danger

Suzanne Jacob, the CEO of SafeLives recently made this short film for the BBC.

<https://www.bbc.com/ideas/videos/how-your-phone-can-protect-you-from-domesticabuse/p06sfbnn>



New Sexual Violence Therapies Service For Avon And Somerset

Avon and Somerset Sexual Violence Consortium is now the new provider of the sexual violence psychological therapies service in Avon and Somerset from 1 June 2019. The service provides essential support and treatment for people of all ages who have survived rape or serious sexual assault.

The Consortium is a group of local specialist service providers made up of Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support, with Bristol-based charities Womankind and The Green House.

For more details about the new service, see this [article](#)

Are You Working With Someone Who Has Experienced Rape or Sexual Abuse?



Graphic courtesy of www.survivorpathway.org.uk

Did you know you can visit The Survivor Pathway website for advice on the specialist sexual violence support services in the south-west?

You can find information on the Sexual Assault Referral Centres, counselling, helplines and much more—and the site is designed to be accessible to professionals, survivors or their supporters. Please go online at <http://www.survivorpathway.org.uk/>

New National Statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

The Department for Education recently announced that the new curriculum will be mandatory from September 2020.

Schools are being encouraged to adopt the new curriculum early from September 2019.

You can read more information on the statutory guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>



Training and Resources for Professionals

Somerset County Council Public Health organize a range of domestic abuse awareness courses throughout the year. Details of upcoming courses and dates are listed below.

For more dates, availability and to book please email PublicHealthTraining@somerset.gov.uk

Recognising the Signs of Domestic Abuse and How to Respond (level 1) - 1 day

December 10th (Yeovil)

Who Is This For?

For anyone who delivers any kind of service to the public.

Refresher Training (Level 2) - 1/2 day

September 12th (Bridgwater)

October 22nd (Yeovil)

Who Is This For?

If you've attended a level 1 course a year or more ago, or you have lots of experience working with domestic abuse victims and want to review and refine your knowledge.

Understanding and Identifying Domestic Abuse in Teenage Relationships

September 25th (Taunton)

Who Is This For?

For anyone who delivers any kind of support, care or education to teenagers

Do You Work For Somerset County Council?

There are several Domestic Abuse/ Community Safety E-Learnings You Can Complete. Including:

- Domestic Abuse (introduction)
- Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage
- Community Safety Awareness
- Prevent
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Find at The Learning Centre

Domestic Abuse Training For Children's Workforce by Barnardos's

Barnardo's Children's Services in Somerset offer a range of free training opportunities for professionals working in the county of Somerset area. This includes a chance for you to learn more about domestic abuse and sexual abuse affecting children.

Find all the Barnardo's training / booking information at this webpage: www.bookwhen.com/barnardos-somerset.



Somerset is one of 8 Pathfinder pilot sites. Pathfinder aims to share best practice and

improve the responses to survivors of domestic abuse from health agencies.

As part of the funding allocated to the project. Two new fixed term roles have been recruited to.

(1) Project lead, Donna Allender has been seconded from her Yeovil District Hospital IDVA role to this post. Donna is based in the Clinical Commissioning Group and working across the county in conjunction with the national Pathfinder Consortium to support the health trusts to implement the project.

(2) Kelly Markham is a Complex Needs IDVA and is seconded from SARSAS. Kelly's based within Somerset Partnership and is going to be working to raise awareness and embed good practice .

How Curious Are You?

In recent Somerset Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), a recurring theme is "**Professional Curiosity**".

The majority of DHRs show that victims have had contact with at least one statutory or voluntary sector agency. Although there are many examples of good practice.

There's also frequent occasions where professionals "accept" what they've been told. There's little attempts to understand the victims relationships, and how that's affecting them. This leads to missed opportunities to take action to keep the victim safe.

So what can you do?

- Keep an open mind
- Consider a family's circumstances holistically
- Be aware that rarely will victims or their families openly disclose domestic abuse
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. But do so in an open way, so not to criticise or judge.

Domestic Homicide Review Update

A few weeks ago, the latest local DHR report (case 019) was published, following Home Office Quality Assurance approval. There were several key learning points including:

1. Role of health agencies in identifying domestic abuse, especially where someone has been assaulted
2. Identification of domestic abuse, particularly when someone has multiple needs (e.g. homelessness, drug issues)
3. Effective inter agency working. Need for agencies to share information and work together.
4. Situational Couple Violence. How do agencies respond when there is apparently no single victim or single perpetrator.

Read the report online at [Somerset Survivors](#)

National Modern Slavery Update

Numbers of Potential Victims

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has published its 2018-19 summary on potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Findings from data on referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), a framework for identifying victims and ensuring they receive appropriate care, include: 3,137 referrals related to potential child victims, a 48% increase on the 2017 total. The NCA largely attribute this increase to a rise in the number of referrals relating to county lines - a process through which urban gangs use children to move drugs and/or money to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns.

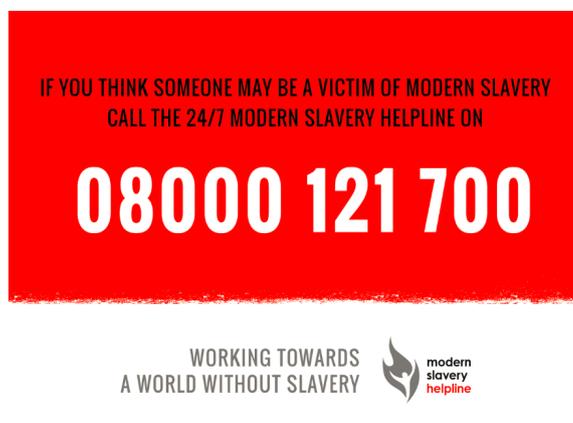
You can read the full report (and see local Avon and Somerset/ Somerset data) online [here](#).

Multi-Agency Assurance Panels (MAAPs)

The Home Office has published new guidance on the role and process of the newly established MAAPs. MAAPs are made up of professionals who have experience of working with victims of modern slavery.

They have been established to look at cases where a decision has been made that a person is not a victim of modern slavery and can request that a case be reviewed if they consider the decision has not been made in line with guidance.

Read more [here](#)



IF YOU THINK SOMEONE MAY BE A VICTIM OF MODERN SLAVERY
CALL THE 24/7 MODERN SLAVERY HELPLINE ON

08000 121 700

WORKING TOWARDS
A WORLD WITHOUT SLAVERY

 modern
slavery
helpline

Awareness Raising Materials and Publications

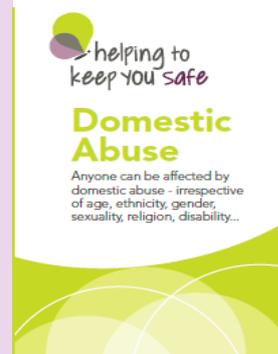
Have You Got Somerset Domestic Abuse Publications In Your Workplace?

Where Can You Get Awareness Raising Materials/Publications?

Some can be ordered online at <https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/resources/product-category/domestic-abuse/>

Download publications at <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/materials-to-download/>

Any Questions? Email communitysafetyteam@somerset.gov.uk



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On behalf of the Safer Somerset Partnership

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