

Refuge awarded grant to operate domestic abuse helpline

Domestic abuse charity Refuge has been awarded a grant to operate a vital helpline to provide confidential advice for domestic abuse victims.

Refuge has been awarded more than £1.2 million to run the National Domestic Violence Helpline, a free service which provides confidential information and expert support to people affected by domestic abuse.

The service is free to call on 0808 2000 247. It is staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year, by a dedicated team of experts.

As well as getting support, staff can help victims access refuge accommodation and other specialist services.

Refuge has also secured additional funding to develop new digital and mobile resources to support even more victims. This includes increasing capacity to answer more live calls, developing webchat services and publishing information on social media channels to widen the availability of the helpline service.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

The National Domestic Violence Helpline provides a lifeline for so many victims of domestic abuse and we are committed to ensuring those in help need get the best possible service.

Refuge's dedication and expertise will provide vital help for victims who may feel they have nowhere else to turn.

Sandra Horley, CBE, chief executive of Refuge said:

We are delighted to have been awarded this contract grant funding, which will increase the support available to those experiencing domestic abuse.

Two women a week die at the hands of their partner and every year thousands of children witness and experience abuse in the home.

No one should live in fear of violence and abuse; everyone has a right to live in safety. The National Domestic Violence Helpline can save lives and change lives.

The grant funding for Refuge was awarded following a competition. The grant will run from November 2019 to March 2022.

The government is driving the response to domestic abuse in the UK. The draft Domestic Abuse Bill, published in January set out a number of legislative and non-legislative measures to tackle the crime. These include:

- introducing a statutory government definition of domestic abuse, which will highlight economic abuse as a distinct type of abuse
- new domestic abuse protection notices and a domestic abuse protection orders (DAPO). Under a DAPO, perpetrators could be required to attend rehabilitation programmes where substance abuse is a factor in that abuse, or other behaviour change programmes
- a new Domestic Abuse Commissioner who will work to ensure that services are provided are as effective, evidence-based and safe as they can be
- placing the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) on a statutory footing

The government has committed more than £1 million a year up to 2022 to help fund six other helplines. These include support woman and girls who are experience violence, men experiencing violence and specialist support for other victims. These are:

- The National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans
- (LGBT) Domestic Violence Helpline, run by Galop – 0800 999 5428
- The National Stalking Helpline, run by The Suzy Lamplugh Trust – 0808 802 0300
- The Men's Advice Line, run by Respect – 0808 801 0327
- Respect Phonenumber for perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, run by Respect – 0808 802 4040
- Honour Based Abuse Helpline, run by Karma Nirvana – 0800 5999 247
- The Revenge Porn Helpline, run by South West Grid for Learning Trust – 0845 6000 459