**COVID-19 and Domestic Abuse – How can pharmacies help?**

The cross government definition of domestic abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

* psychological
* physical
* sexual
* financial
* emotional

Domestic abuse can make victims feel isolated and, during the current lockdown, being isolated with an abuser could be more dangerous than ever. To find out more about domestic abuse you can complete the short e-learning package that can be found at

<https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/website/elearning_modules/92616>

**If you are concerned about the immediate safety of someone – call the police on 999.**

If you are in a position to have a conversation with a customer about domestic abuse, in a safe environment, you could ask them some of the following questions and give them the following information. **This is only if there is a safe space for this to take place.**

* Questions you could ask
  + Are you safe at home?
  + Are you scared of someone at home?
  + Is the person you are scared of there now?  Do they live with you?
  + Do you ever get left alone at the moment?
  + If you have children, are they safe?
  + Are you able to contact family or friends?
  + Are you able to seek help – ie call helplines or seek online support?
  + Do you need to leave now?
* Reassure people that help is still available – domestic abuse support services are not closed
* Shopping for essential items or a trip to the pharmacy could be a time to call for help if the abuser stays at home – see details of helplines below – is there somewhere they can use to make a phone call?
* If the person has access to a computer, some organisations offer online chat – but be aware the abuser may be checking browser history
* Do not try to intervene yourself, this could make the situation worse
* Leaving home to escape domestic abuse IS STILL ALLOWED under the current restrictions
* If someone’s immediate safety is at risk please encourage them to report to the police.
* Ensure they are aware of how to make silent calls to the police. If someone is able to dial 999 but unable to speak, pressing 55 or tapping the handset will alert the call operator that they are a genuine caller and that they need help. The call operator will give instructions about what to do next. It is best to call from a landline if they can.
* They could store a support service number on their phone under another name or download the BrightSky app. Perpetrators are likely to be monitoring phones though, so check it will be safe to do this.

Local and National Services that can help

Cambridge Women’s Aid (City/East/South Cambs) 01223 361214

Refuge (Fenland/Hunts/Peterborough) 07787 255821

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

Men’s Advice Line 0808 8010 327 [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

LGBT Helpline 0800 999 5428 [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

Women’s Aid Online Chat <https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/>

Honour-Based Abuse 0800 5999 247 <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/>

Respect phone line (for perpetrators of abuse) 0808 802 4040 <http://respect.uk.net/>

Bright Sky App - <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

Can be downloaded from App Store or Google Play.

For more information visit the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse Partnership at [www.cambsdsav.org,uk](http://www.cambsdsav.org,uk)