

DOMESTIC ABUSE PROFESSIONALS AT C-19 TESTING SITES FACTSHEET

How to respond to a domestic abuse disclosure at COVID-19 testing sites

All professionals have an obligation to safeguard vulnerable adults and children.

These exceptional times can make it difficult for victims to report in the normal manner and disclosures of domestic abuse could be made at COVID-19 testing sites.

Domestic abuse is defined as “any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality”.

You must act if someone discloses abuse to you or you suspect abuse.

Signs and symptoms of domestic abuse include:

- Injuries – A victim may have bruising, cuts or other injuries and may make excuses for them
- Stress – A victim may display physical symptoms related to stress, other anxiety disorders or depression
- Low self-esteem – A victim may display unusually low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Coercion – A person might display irrational, controlling, jealous, aggressive or possessive, behaviour

Take action

You must act if someone discloses abuse to you or you suspect abuse. Based on what you have seen and heard, make a professional judgment about what you should do next.

If you identify or recognise the above, be professionally supportive, inquisitive and take the following action:

- If the victim or other vulnerable person is in immediate risk of harm this **MUST** be reported immediately - dial 999
- Safeguard the victim and any children (discreetly and not in the presence of their suspected abuser)
- Explain to the victim your priority is to make them and any other vulnerable people safe. Establish:
 - Their name, date of birth, address, contact details
 - Who are they at risk from – gather as much detail as possible about the offender name, date of birth, where they are now, are they known to police?
 - Details of what has happened.
 - Whether there is anyone else living in the same dwelling e.g. children. Again full details if possible: name, date of birth and are they also at risk from the offender?



- Does the victim already have a plan or suitable options to make themselves safe?
- Will the victim tell the police? Consideration should be given as to if the matter needs reporting to the Police

If there is immediate risk of danger

If the situation is urgent – for example there are injuries or a risk of immediate harm, dial 999 and ask for the police. Additionally, once you have dialled 999, if children are at risk, you should call your local authority children's services or follow your organisation's child protection policy.

If the situation is serious and the victim is scared and frightened, but there is no immediate risk of danger

You should seek advice from your service manager or your service's domestic abuse champion and follow your organisation's safeguarding protocols.

If the victim is not in immediate danger, but is scared or frightened, or unhappy in their relationship

Ask them how you can help. Make sure the victim knows about sources of help and support, such as those listed below, as well as any local services, and encourage them to get in contact.

Signposting for help and support

For details of the help and support agencies in Lancashire, visit www.noexcuseforabuse.co.uk

If you believe there is an immediate risk of harm to someone, or it is an emergency, you should always dial 999.

If you are unsure what to do

If you are unsure about what to do, speak to a local domestic violence service, the police or children's services for advice. They can suggest the right way forward and will speak initially on an anonymous basis.

Reporting domestic abuse

If you want to report a crime, but you are not in immediate danger, you can call the police on 101 or report online here: lancashire.police.uk/reportcrime

If you need the police in an emergency, please do not be afraid to dial 999 - they will help you and protect you from danger.