

Domestic Abuse Services in BwDBC and COVID19

The following is a list of all the services operating in Blackburn with Darwen during the Covid-19 pandemic

Wish Centre

The Wish premises on King Street is currently closed, and will reopen again when the government advice changes. Staff will continue to work remotely. They will continue to take referrals via the usual referral pathways. They can also be contacted in the normal way, via the helpline are looking 01254 260465 (Wish Centre) or 0808 2000 247 (Refuge Helpline).

Below is information already circulated by the Wish Centre, on 'Safety Planning when in Isolation':

- ALWAYS keep your mobile phone charged and with you.
- USE a code word with friends & family so they know, if you call or text them and use that word, they need to contact the police. Or agree with them you will send a blank text if you are in need of the police. If neighbours are aware of your situation, ask them to call police if they hear sounds of an attack.
- USE a code word with children to let them know they should leave the house. Agree with them before where they should go.
- DON'T drink alcohol together as the probability of abuse increases. If your abuser insists you drink, add lemonade or have a soft drink in between alcoholic drinks. Alcohol reduces your ability to think clearly and it's difficult to reason with a drunk person.
- IF you are drinking, make sure you both are eating properly. Keeps snacks available and don't skip meals.
- KEEP your bank card & car keys (if you have a car) in a safe place where you can access them quickly. Keep a little cash in your pocket if you can.
- USE your judgement and intuition with your abusers mood. Keep a close eye on their body language. Nobody knows them better than you know them. If a situation is escalating, try to leave the room.
- IF you can't get out of the house, go to a safe room that you can lock. Consider purchasing a Howsar Quick Lock from Amazon or eBay. They can be slipped into a pocket and they will give you enough time to call 999. Alternatively, put a door wedge under the door once you're in the room.
- IF the situation is likely to escalate, stay out of the kitchen, bathroom, garage, or rooms where there are possible weapons. Stay away from the top of the stairs.
- THINK about the quickest route out of your house. Consider risks that are unique to your home. Make sure children's toys are not blocking routes and exits.
- PACK an overnight bag and hide it somewhere if it's safe to do so - e.g. with a neighbour for example. Ensure you pack ID etc.

Programmes will continue and now delivered online on a 1:1 basis (AIM and Make the Change).

Children's workers are providing resources by post to children and young people, in line with home schooling.

Refuges to remain open they are not currently accepting new referrals but will monitor the situation.

Humraaz

Unity House is now also closed and will reopen when advised to do so, IDVA's and support workers will continue to work from home and on a rota basis.

Refuge will remain open. The refuge is at capacity at present but spaces that do become available will be advertised on the national database as usual practice.

Safenet

Safenet will continue to put regular updates out on social media, working on a plan to reach victims who may be at risk due to self-isolation, via online chat. All of Safenet's refuges are accepting referrals and will continue to as long as possible. Safenet are also freeing up space across their safe house stock to enable flexibility and moving people round if needed to minimise risk in communal areas and help residents to self-isolate safely.

In the community base in Blackpool and Lancaster Safenet have moved to telephone support but are in regular contact with clients and re-visiting all safety plans.

Important numbers

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER CALL 999

Wish Centre 01254 260465

Refuge Helpline 0808 2000 247

Samaritans 116 123 - if you are experiencing emotional/psychological abuse and feel low.

Shelter 0344 515 1831

Housing Needs Blackburn 01254 585444 - If the tenancy of your home is in the abusers name and they are threatening to make you leave or have locked you out.