**Guidance for Professionals**

**What does the HSES DA programme cover?**

Our six-week Programme supports women who are victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse and who live in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove area. The service is offered one day a week to women who are not in crisis, have been assessed at standard risk (0-6 ticks on DASH) or possibly the lower end of medium risk (7-9 on DASH)and their primary need is for support is:

(i) to reduce the likelihood of abuse escalating e.g. those experiencing emotional or financial

abuse

(ii) recover after ending an abusive relationship and help keep themselves and their children

 safe from future abusive relationships

Our programmes are held in the community in places where people feel safe and we work closely with the other agencies to endure clients and their families are receiving the support they need.

**What domestic abuse experience does HSES have?**

Since 1996 the Home-Start East Sussex home-visiting service has been providing support to local families who have experienced domestic abuse in their past, or where crises have arisen and there is a need to refer to Refuge and other specialist services. We started delivering our specialist domestic abuse group-work programme in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove in 2016.

All HSES staff are well-qualified and experienced. Kate, the CEO of Home-Start East Sussex has a range of relevant postgraduate qualifications and has undertaken SafeLives Service Managers Training. In addition, she is a member of the East Sussex County Council Local Safeguarding Children’s Board, the National Home-Start Federation Domestic Abuse Steering Group and the development committee for the East Sussex/Brighton & Hove joint strategy for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls.

Vicki, the Co-ordinator of the Freedom Programme (our Community IDVA) works 20 hours a week. She is a former probation officer where she spent 8 year’s working with male and female victims and perpetrators of abuse. She was a court officer and ran group-work programmes for offenders. She is a certified Professional Freedom Facilitator and is undertaking SafeLives IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) training aimed at those working with High Risk Clients – a higher level of risk than those eligible for our programme.

Alex the Programme Assistant is a certified Professional Freedom Facilitator and has undertaken other domestic abuse training to fit her for assisting at the weekly sessions. She is currently working towards a Diploma in Domestic Violence Studies.

**Eligibility**

The HSES DA programme is for women victims and survivors of domestic abuse aged 16+, living, working or visiting Brighton & Hove and East Sussex to enable them to move on from their experience of domestic abuse and keep themselves and their children safe in future relationships. Clients are accepted that are not currently in crisis but are vulnerable as a result of their experience. Women with children of any age are prioritised and we promote the recovery of their children in line with our charity’s objectives. We aim to offer approx. 80% of places to women with children, some of whom might be;

* subject to Child Protection plan
* at risk of removal
* living away from them e.g. they no longer have parental responsibility or their children are old enough to have left home

However we do accept referrals for women without children to whom we offer approx. 20% of the places.

Referrals assessed as standard or medium risk will be accepted as long as (i) the perpetrator is no longer a risk to victim or other clients/staff attending the programme (ii) the victim is not dealing with any current crises and is at the right stage in their life to engage and benefit from the programme.

**How do I make a referral?**

Go to our website HSES.org.uk and click onto the programme page. Download the professionals’ referral form (as well as a DASH RIC if any abuse has taken place within the last three months.) The referrer must ensure that the service user has given consent for the referral. If the referral is missing key information we will return the referral to the referrer and not be able to accept it until it is completed. Email to vicki.thomson@hses.org.uk ensuring you have password protected the documents and confirmed your name, agency and password with Vicki by text 07505426118 <https://www.wikihow.com/Password-Protect-a-Microsoft-Word-Document> You will receive an automated email acknowledgement.

**What happens next?**

* Vicki will assess and respond to all referrals according to risk.
* Referrals that prove not to be eligible will be returned to the referrer
* Vicki will aim to make first contact with clients within 5 working days of receiving all key information from referrer
* Once Vicki makes contact with the client she will review the DASH and talk to them about the programme.
* She will make three attempts to contact the client. If she is unable to make contact Vicki will let you know.

**What then?**

* If the client is eligible and decides to join a programme, she will be allocated to a specific programme or to our general waiting list depending on whether there is a programme planned in their area. Vicki will talk to them about information sharing and support planning. Safety planning should not be necessary for eligible clients, unless their situation escalates after referral.
* When appropriate and subject to data protection, Vicki may make contact with the referrer and other agencies regarding the safety of the client or their children.
* You can contact Vicki, Community IDVA and Programme Coordinator on 07505426118.
* To escalate a concern about the service you can contact the CEO kate.lawrence@hses.org.uk

**Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

* Where appropriate, and subject to Data Protection, Vicki may make contact with the referrer and other agencies to liaise with them around the referral. You can also contact Vicki if you have any questions. 07505426118.
* Service user data will be held securely and confidentially.
* There are safeguards to ensure that sensitive information is only accessed by those who ‘need to know’ about it.
* Where protective steps need to be taken, information may be shared with other agencies, such as the Police, Child or Adult Services.