

Summary of DA plan

Last modified

- Monday, 31 May, 2021 - 07:00

What to do if a customer is a victim of domestic abuse

Check to see if the customer is safe	<p>It is important to establish whether the customer feels safe at this moment.</p> <p>All reports of domestic abuse should be handled sensitively. Our customers often talk about domestic abuse when they speak to us and it is important to find out if they are still experiencing these issues.</p> <p>Domestic abuse can be 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. For further information, please see the operational instructions for Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>Ask the customer:</p> <p>Are you safe at the moment?</p> <p>If a customer states that they are not safe, see Section A below.</p> <p>If a customer indicates that they are safe but have ongoing concerns about domestic abuse, see Section B.</p>
Section A - If the customer states that they are not safe	
Take the statement seriously	<p>Remain calm and listen carefully.</p> <p>Stop what you are doing – give the customer your full attention.</p>

Summon a colleague for support

If the customer is on the phone **do not put them on hold; use the mute button while you summon help if necessary.**

Office-based colleagues must **Summon help** by standing up; raising an arm or following the locally agreed procedures for summoning a colleague for support.

Your colleague will **recognise the sign** and assist in finding contact numbers, listen next to you to witness the conversation and call the emergency services, if required. If possible, this should be a team leader on your workgroup or the duty manager if on twilight or Saturday.

Home-based colleagues must contact their real time support group for help.

Someone within the group will answer you and will act as your support partner. Your support partner will provide real time assistance by listening to the call as it unfolds and finding relevant guidance for you.

Gather information to gauge level of risk

Talk to the customer to gather information. This should include asking:

Where are you and do you have someone with you?

Why is it that you're in immediate danger?

Are there children with you?

Who is it that has threatened you or that you are frightened of?

What have they threatened?

Do you intend to go anywhere?

Call the Emergency Services

The most important thing is the safety of our customers and their children. Where a customer has indicated that they are in immediate danger or risk of attack, **they should be encouraged to phone the police on 999 immediately. You should:**

Ask the customer to phone 999 and report to the police that they are in immediate danger. Reassure them that a child maintenance conversation can be concluded at a time when their safety is not at risk.

Where the customer has indicated that they are unable or unwilling to phone the police themselves:

	<p>2. Ask the customer whether they want you to phone the emergency services on their behalf.</p> <p>Consent to contact the emergency services should be sought where possible. Where the customer refuses to give consent, or where a response cannot be obtained, a team leader or deputy manager will decide if it's necessary to call the emergency services. A decision will need to be taken on the facts of each case. Information can be disclosed proactively with the emergency services where it is clear that a customer or child faces clear and significant risks to their welfare or safety.</p> <p>3. Call the emergency services</p> <p>Do not delay in contacting the emergency services if you agree with your supporting colleague that it is appropriate. For example, if the customer states they are in immediate danger or the alleged abuser is with them or on route, dial (9)999. To keep the customer on the call, you will need to use another device such a team leader's phone or mobile to phone the police. You should inform the customer that you are phoning the police unless it unsafe or inappropriate to do so. You should provide information that will assist the emergency services in their role and refrain from divulging irrelevant personal details. The information disclosed must be relevant and limited to what is necessary. Tell the police officer that they must not divulge any information supplied by CMG unless it is essential as part of their duty. Explain the reasons why the call is being made and provide all relevant information, including the customer's location if known.</p>
<p>Consider referral to an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader (ACSSL)</p>	<p>Once any deemed risk has been addressed, or if you have decided that it's not necessary to contact the emergency services at this time but you still have concerns about your customer's wellbeing after all other signposting information and support has been provided consider a referral to an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader (ACSSL).</p> <p>1. Complete the ACSSL Referral Form</p> <p>The ACSSL will assess the situation and contact the referrer to advise on any further action they need to take. If the case is particularly complex, the ACSSL may make a decision to take over the case and make all necessary contacts with the customer and/or any support services.</p> <p>2. If you are advised that there is no further action to take or that the ACSSL has taken over the case, record this in the</p>

	<p>contact notes for the customer.</p> <p>For more information regarding Advanced Customer Support, refer to the ACS guidance</p>
<p>Review the situation</p>	<p>When making a decision to phone the police and disclose information, the decision and reason for it must be fully documented. This is essential in case of any challenge or dispute over information that has been disclosed. It protects both staff and the Department. Record details of the incident in the description, against an inbound call within the activities applet on the contact summary screen and discuss the call with your team leader or duty manager. This field is limited in characters and therefore any message would need to be specific. Further information to be added to the case notes.</p> <p>Based on the nature and content of the call, you should consider whether any further follow up action or support is required. For example, phoning the customer back at a later date or time.</p> <p>Following a difficult call, it is important that you are supported as a member of staff and your wellbeing considered. Review the situation with your manager and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the call has affected you. whether taking a break or time out would be appropriate. whether you would benefit from a conversation with a Mental Health First Aider contacting PAM Assist – Our Employee Assistance Programme, if required. whether any reasonable adjustments or further support is appropriate. <p>For home-based colleagues, after the call, in all scenarios where support has been requested, the caseworker will be contacted via video call to: ask how the call has affected them, provide signposting to additional support and arrange line manager supportive care.</p>

Section B - If the customer indicates that they are safe but you still have concerns about their immediate safety

Signpost

As the customer has indicated they are not in danger, provide signposting information

Refer to signposting in section C

Consider whether the actions being requested on the call have the potential to negatively affect the situation, which could result in the customer being in danger.

Seek Support

Immediately following the call, discuss the situation with a team leader who will decide if it's still necessary to call the emergency services despite the customer indicating they are safe. A decision will need to be taken on the facts of each case. Information can be disclosed proactively with the emergency services where it is clear that a customer or child faces clear and significant risks to their welfare or safety

**Call the
Emergency
Services**

If you decide it's still necessary to call the emergency services, follow **Section A paragraph Call the Emergency Services**

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Once any deemed risk has been addressed, or if you decided that it's not necessary to contact the emergency services at this time but you still have concerns about your customer's wellbeing after all other signposting information and support has been provided consider a referral to an Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader (ACSSL).

1. Complete the [ACSSL Referral Form](#).
The ACSSL will assess the situation and contact the referrer to advise on any further action they need to take. If the case is particularly complex, the ACSSL may make a decision to take over the case and make all necessary contacts with the customer and /or any support services.
- 2.If you are advised that the there is no further action to take or that the ACSSL has taken over the case, record this in the contact notes for the customer.

For more information regarding Advanced Customer Support, refer to the **ACS guidance**

Customer
Support Senior
Leader (ACSSL)

Section C - If the customer states that they do not feel like they are in immediate danger

Signpost

If the situation is not urgent for example, they are a victim of Domestic Abuse but do not feel in immediate danger or in risk of attack

Advise the customer to contact their neighbourhood policing team for advice if the abuse is ongoing but it is not an emergency. Details of their local policing team can be found on: www.police.uk(link is external) - for customers living in England, Northern Ireland or Wales

www.scotland.police.uk - for customers living in Scotland.

The **Complex Needs Toolkit** is available on the [2012 Scheme Tools intranet page](#) and holds quick links to information which can be used to support vulnerable customers including victims of domestic abuse.

Encourage or help the customer to seek help. If the customer has access to the Internet, signpost them to the [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk)(link is external) website. Customers can search the site for 'domestic abuse' to find information which will enable them to get the expert help and advice they need from specialist support services.

Advise the customer of 'safe spaces' where victims of Domestic Abuse can go to so they can contact a helpline, collect their thoughts or find a local support service. This is available at all Boots Pharmacies, 200 Superdrug Pharmacies, Morrisons Pharmacies and 60 independent pharmacies - <https://uksaysnomore.org/where-is-my-nearest-safe-space/>(link is external)

Some useful organisations that you can signpost to are:

National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 200 0247

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk(link is external)

Galop (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people) - 0800 999 5428

www.galop.org.uk(link is external)

Men's Advice Line - 0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk(link is external)

Rape Crisis (England and Wales) - 0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk(link is external)

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline -
0800 027 1234

sdafmh.org.uk(link is external)

Scottish Women's Aid - 0800 027 1234

www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk(link is external)

Live Fear Free Helpline (Wales) - 0808 80 10 800

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>(link is external)

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland - 0808 802 1414

www.womensaidni.org(link is external)