

# IDVA SERVICE

Bromley  
& Croydon  
Women's Aid  
Working to end domestic abuse

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

**PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK THAT THE CLIENT MEETS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA BEFORE MAKING THE REFERRAL, THEY MUST:**

- Live in the London Borough of Bromley (i.e. pay council tax to London Borough of Bromley)
- Be in need of practical and emotional support around Domestic Abuse
- Have experienced Domestic Abuse within the last three months
- Have experienced any Sexual Abuse
- Be at high risk of harm from a perpetrator(s), scoring 10+ or higher on a SafeLives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist
- Aged 16 or over
- Willing to engage with safety and action planning
- Need emotional support and/or attending domestic abuse-related court appointments

**Please note: The IDVA is not able to work with clients who live outside the London Borough of Bromley**

## WHAT IS AN IDVA?

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) are specialists who are trained to work with victims of domestic abuse at high-risk of serious harm.

## WHAT IS AN IDSVVA?

Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence advocate are specialists who are trained to work with victims of sexual abuse at high risk of serious harm. The role of the IDSVVA is to coordinate a multi-agency response to a victim of sexual abuse assessed to be at high risk of serious harm or homicide.

BCWA have three IDSVVAs in their team.

## WHAT DO THEY DO?

The main purpose of an independent domestic violence advocate (IDVA) is to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of crisis and assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans. Their role often begins at the point of crisis for a victim e.g. just after a police call-out, or when a woman goes to hospital for medical help after a violent attack.

If assessed as being high risk we will refer your case to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). This is a monthly risk-management meeting which professionals can share information to ensure you receive the best risk management plan possible to keep you and your children safe.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE BCWA IDVA SERVICE

When your case is received by the BCWA IDVA service, they will contact you within 48 hours to carry out a risk assessment to ascertain risk levels and therefore will be able to address safety.

IDVAs work can include court support, support within health services, housing advice, signposting and mediating between clients and services, and is always rooted in the safety of the victim and their family.

Your IDVA will listen to you and treat you with respect and without any judgement. Their aim is to support and empower you, as well as keeping you safe.

## IDVAS OFFER SUPPORT WITH:

- Undertaking risk assessments
- Tailored and person-centred safety and support planning
- Accompanying clients to court or arranging pre-trial visits
- Access to refuge accommodation
- We can advocate with housing provider to secure property
- Empowering clients to give evidence and to write their victim impact statement
- Requesting special measures in court including screens, video links and advocate for restraining orders
- Providing emotional support and signposting clients to appropriate services
- Liaising with social workers on behalf of the client and children

## WHAT AN IDVA DOES NOT DO:

- Tell you what to do
- Work with you if you don't want us too (this is a voluntary service so clients have to want to engage with the service)
- Keep the case open pending application for housing
- Offer mediation between client and abuser
- Attend meetings if the abuser attends
- Speak to perpetrators

## WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU AS A CLIENT

For an IDVA to help you, you need to be willing to accept that help and communicate with your IDVA, responding to messages and calls as best you can. Your IDVA will arrange to communicate with you in a way that is safe, whatever your living situation. Supply any information requested with them in a timely manner.

Your IDVA will listen to you and treat you with respect. Our ultimate aim is to support and empower you, providing you with options and choices to make safe decisions. In turn we expect you to treat your BCWA IDVA with the same respect.

## AT THE END OF YOUR TIME WITH US, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS THE SUPPORT MAY END.

These include:

- **Your case has become lower risk**

If this happens your IDVA will refer you to the BCWA Community Outreach service, the team that works with medium and lower risk cases for follow on support.

- **You move out of London Borough of Bromley**

If this happens, your IDVA will make a referral to the local service in the area you are moving to and ensure they have been in touch with you before closing your case.

- **You decide not to engage with the service any more**

In this case, please inform your IDVA.

For any of the above, we will contact referrer to update them that we are closing the case.

