



Briefing for stakeholders

1. Police Data

The West Area BCU (Hillingdon, Ealing and Hounslow) has seen a year-on-year increase in DA Offences (using the police data for the last 4 months).

Data shows that in the last week the police in Hillingdon recorded an increase in recorded DA Offences compared to the previous week. There were 63 DA Offences recorded compared to 56.

Refuge reports that the National DA Helpline saw an increase of 65% calls over the weekend (March 28/29).

2. London Resilience

There is a local and a pan London Resilience Forum in operation.

Councils across the country are required under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to make plans for maintaining vital services during “civil emergencies” and, in the words of 2018 government good practice guidance, to “protect, advise and provide humanitarian assistance” to residents and “play a major role in community leadership and recovery, going beyond the usual hours of work”.

London Councils is the body that represents all 33 authorities, and this includes being a crucial part of the London-wide London Resilience Forum (LRF), the capital’s cross-agency panel which also includes the police, fire service, NHS, Transport for London, Public Health England and the utility companies.

The relevant elements of all local authority emergency planning are now being put into effect. When any emergency situation or major “disruptive incident” arises affecting London as a whole, a Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) is formed from the LRF. It is a decision-making body with the job of co-ordinating and mobilising the efforts of all the many organisations involved, including by empowering a nominated “gold” local authority chief executive to be a point of contact for all the others.

A coronavirus SCG was formed six or seven weeks ago. It has seven sub groups, including one for health oversight, which takes in social care.

One fundamental duty of local authorities in situations like the current one is to ensure their “business continuity”, which means making sure the most essential services are maintained, adapting and prioritising them as necessary. These services fundamentally comprise looking after vulnerable older people and children amongst others.

COVID-19 is, of course, different from and more dangerous than flu, but the plans for mitigating serious disruptions caused by flu care being drawn on to address it. They include implementing special measures for staff welfare, for large scale absences and for the rapid training of colleagues to discharge the duties of colleagues while they are indisposed.

Amid all the anxiety, one possible source of comfort is that although recent threats to London from Swine Flu, Bird Flu and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) did not materialise, London's local authorities had made ready for them.

(Source: <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/coronavirus-london-how-the-capitals-local-authorities-have-planned-for-resilience/>)

3. Emergency Fund to support the voluntary sector

The Mayor of London has pledged £1 million to a new emergency support fund to help London's community and voluntary organisations affected by the impact of the coronavirus. The Mayor has joined City Bridge Trust, the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, and London Funders, a network of investors of London's civil society, to launch the new fund – with an initial £1 million provided by City Hall and £1 million from City Bridge Trust.

Further details can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-contributes-1m-to-emergency-support-fund>

4. What are the papers saying?

Nine people dead in England & Wales. Two cases have the hallmarks of being 'Homicide – Suicide' involving a total of 7 people of which there are 5 victims of homicide. These cases are subject to fuller investigation.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8167143/Husband-69-accused-Britains-self-isolation-murder.html?ito=email-19879319&utm_source=overlay_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=cc_newsflash&utm_content=news

“Lockdowns around the world bring rise in domestic violence”:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence>

France's interior minister says that reports of domestic violence across the country have jumped by more than 30% since the country went into lockdown on March 17th.

France already has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Europe. Every year, an estimated 219,000 women, aged 18 to 75, face physical or sexual violence by current or former partners, but only 20% report it. According to official figures, one woman is killed by a partner or former partner every three days.

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/28/domestic-violence-cases-jump-30-during-lockdown-in-france>

When Home Is More Dangerous Than the Coronavirus

Lockdowns are leaving domestic violence victims worldwide trapped with abusers.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/27/home-more-dangerous-coronavirus-isolation-domestic-violence/>

You will have identified that some of the UK's newspaper headlines are using inappropriate headlines to describe recent Domestic Abuse homicides i.e. by suggesting that COVID 19 'lock down' / isolation caused the homicides.

5. International Research / Information re Experiences of DA during COVID 19

China

In China Wan Fei, a retired police officer who is the founder of an anti-domestic violence nonprofit in Jingzhou, a city in the central Hubei province, told Sixth Tone that reports of domestic violence have nearly doubled since cities were put under lockdown.¹ He stated that the the police station in Jianli County (Jingzhou), had received 162 reports of domestic violence in February — three times more than the 47 reported during the same month the previous year. The number of cases reported in January had also doubled compared with the same period last year.

“The epidemic has had a huge impact on domestic violence,” said Wan. “According to our statistics, 90% of the causes of violence are related to the COVID-19 epidemic.”

Wan believes the fear and anxiety from the extended quarantine, as well as the economic strain put on many families (sic and) support systems for survivors of domestic violence have weakened.²

“While everyone’s attention is on the epidemic, victims of domestic violence are very much being neglected,” Wan said.

Feng Yuan, the director of Beijing-based women’s rights nonprofit Weiping, told Sixth Tone that they have also received a substantial number of domestic violence-related reports beginning around the time several cities went into lockdown.³

First Australian research regarding post-disaster domestic violence

Research conducted over the past decade in the United States and New Zealand confirm that domestic violence increased in those countries in the aftermath of earthquakes, hurricanes and floods. In the US, Enarson (2012), noted a 400% increase in demand for women’s shelters after the 1993 Missouri River Flood.

After Hurricane Katrina, Anastario, *et al.*, (2009) found a four-fold increase in intimate partner violence.

New Zealand police reported a 53 per cent increase in callouts to domestic violence incidents over the weekend of the Canterbury earthquake on 4 September 2010 (Houghton, 2010) and after the 2004 Whakatane flood, there was a tripling of workload for domestic violence agencies and a doubling of police callouts (Houghton, 2009).

¹ Zhang Wanqing, Sixth Tone. (March 2020) Domestic Violence Cases Surge During COVID-19 Epidemic accessed via <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005253/domestic-violence-cases-surge-during-covid-19-epidemic>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

Unsurprisingly this research highlights that the risk posed by natural disaster is greater for women in situations of existing domestic violence and that disaster itself can trigger an increase in the severity of existing violence and violence that is new.

It further highlights the limited or more restrictive opportunities for women to escape the violence and abuse.

6. Other Resources

- Hillingdon Council Domestic Abuse web pages <https://hillington.gov.uk/abuse> including Local Resources Guide
- Doctor of the World Corona Virus (COVID 19) NHS advice translated into a variety of different languages accessed via <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk>
- National Centre for Domestic Violence March Magazine Newsletter accessed via <https://www.ncdvmagazine.co.uk>
- Respect has launched its campaign #NoExcuseforAbuse which calls on perpetrators to recognise their behaviour has become abusive and call the phone line for guidance/support (to help change their behaviour). Tel: 0808 802 4040 or visit <http://respectphoneline.org.uk>

7. Local IDVA and MARAC Services – Reminder

As a reminder Hillingdon IDVA service and that provided by Victim Support remains operational. There will be remote contact with victims.

Referrals to Hillingdon IDVA Service can be made by the following NEW contact details:

E-mail: hidvas@hillington.gov.uk and Tel: 07874620954

In addition, the DA MARAC will operate remotely every 2 weeks. Referrals to be made to Tim Moriarty – Timothy.Moriarty@met.pnn.police.uk

8. ASK: Please:

- i) Do let us know if your Organisation/Agency is receiving an increase in referral of DA cases.
- ii) Provide us with any information or sources you think maybe useful.
- iii) Provide us with any concerns or information of note that we can pass to Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), Local Government Association (LGA), Local Resilience Forum and the London Harmful Practices Working Group.

Please send your updates to gcampbell1@hillington.gov.uk

The next briefing will be provided on or about 15 April 2020.

31 March 2020