

# SaferPlaces

Domestic Abuse Support Services



ESSEX DOMESTIC ABUSE  
SUPPORT SERVICES





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# Introduction

Safer Places is an independent charity which provides a comprehensive range of services to adults and children affected by all forms of Domestic Abuse who live in Mid, West, South and North Essex, East Hertfordshire, Broxbourne and Southend.

Safer Places has 14 main income streams, the majority is provided by statutory

agencies who commission or otherwise fund services from us but we also have additional sums from charitable sources and our own income generation. Therefore whilst we are commissioned to provide services to Essex, Hertfordshire and Southend and for the delivery of IDVA services in Essex (including Thurrock and Southend) we are able to provide

## Gateway

Referrals are made to the Safer Places Gateway which can be contacted on

**03301 025811 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

Every referral received whether made by an agency or as a self-referral will undergo an assessment process, to determine the risks and needs facing the victim and their family and what is needed to address those risks, taking on board the preferences of the individual.

The support we provide is based on risk, need and choice and delivered on this basis whether the client is living in our refuge or their own accommodation.

Most people experiencing Domestic Abuse do not need to move into a refuge.

some additional services supplementing commissioned services in each area.

We provide support to people living in their own homes or in one of our refuges. Our Practitioners are all qualified to a minimum of level 3 in Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence (QCF), we also have Practitioners qualified as IDVA

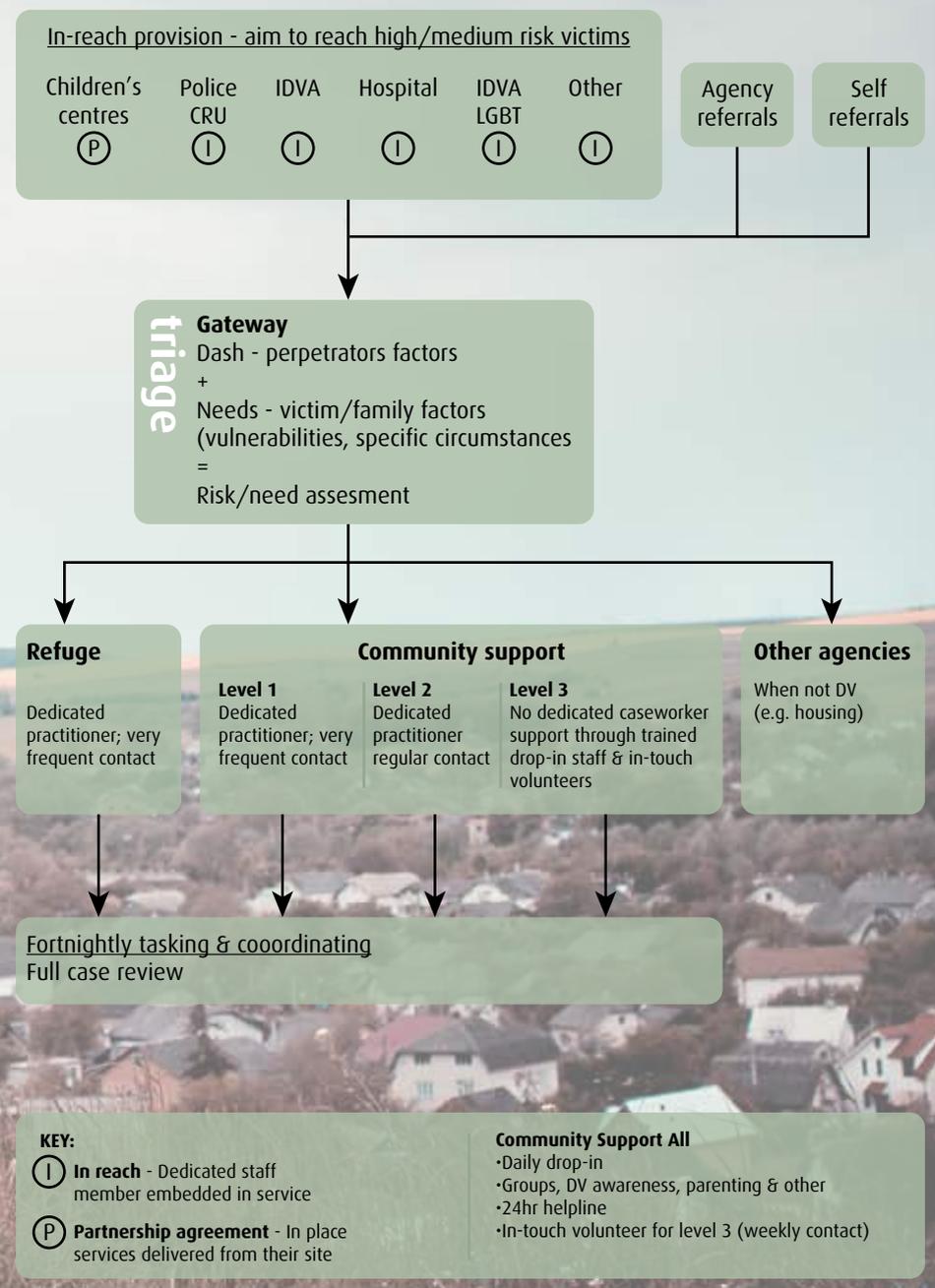
(Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) ISAC (Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers) and ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors.)

All Safer Places services are accessed through the Gateway although Police and MARAC referrals for the Essex IDVA service go direct to the IDVA service.

# Services



## Safer Places service model



## Community Based Services

**Community Based Services are provided within the following District and unitary Authority areas;**

Harlow, Epping Forest, Uttlesford, East Hertfordshire, Broxbourne, Southend, Chelmsford, Castlepoint, Rochford, Maldon, Braintree, Basildon and Brentwood. Community based services in Colchester and Tendring are provided by Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge under a sub contract to Safer Places.

**Following an assessment by the Gateway a tailored package of support will be offered which could include:**

- Support from an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (High Risk)
- Support from a Domestic Abuse Practitioner (Medium Risk)
- Support from a trained volunteer (Standard Risk)

**The support offered, at whichever level of risk will have the following core components:**

**Managing risk** through agreeing safety plans which could include; Flagging the address on police systems, "Target hardening" the property, preparing to leave safely, personal safety and alarms, ensuring safety online, safe child contact and implementing of civil orders.

**Housing matters** including housing rights, moving, approaching the council and bidding and sustaining a tenancy.

**Money issues** such as support with accessing benefits, managing debt and budgeting.

**Employability** support in areas such as sustaining existing employment, preparing for work and getting a job (we have an excellent partnership with Essex Job Centre Plus with clear pathways for victims).

**Mental and Physical Health issues** support including initial assessment, referral to appropriate agencies, liaison and support to access other health services for the victim and their children.

**Emotional Wellbeing** support, including access to our programmes, counselling services and emotional support including BIT (Brief Interventions Therapy) from Practitioners.

**Support with children and parenting** including engagement with children's social services, children's centres, schools and other services.

**Referral** into a wide range of additional services provided either by Safer Places or by partner agencies.

## Additional services

Additional services provided by Safer Places can be accessed by the Practitioner for those having 1:1 support or by the gateway for those who do not want 1:1 support. These include;

**Access to "drop-in" service** which is held every weekday in every area, clients can come along and meet with a Domestic Abuse Practitioner, whatever the support or information they need. Drop in venues change and are planned on a week to week basis. Some drop-ins are static, others change to meet the needs of those wanting to access them. The Gateway will advise clients and referrers direct and will organise a local "drop-in" for anyone who is in need of the services in a specific area.

**Access to our 24 hour helpline** is a standard provision for all clients.

**Access to legal support surgeries** is available either face to face or by phone, our legal advisor holds fixed "surgeries" and we have partnerships with legal teams to access legally aided or pro bono or reduced cost services. The pace at which we can have legal matters dealt with is swift, even out of office hours.

**Access to our programmes** includes our core programme, Triple R. This is provided in every area where we work. Further details of Triple R are provided on page 16. Additional programmes include specialist parenting programmes such as the AVA programme, You + Me mum, family programmes to build attachment and practical skills programmes e.g. Big Cook, Little Cook (cooking as a family).

**Peer group support** is usually accessed after Triple R, but can be accessed without being in Triple R. The Gateway is able to give details on all of our programmes. Most are run through invitation only Facebook pages and The Gateway can refer. Peer Support Groups provide online support as well as group activities, additional information about the peer groups is on page 16.

Specialist Services are available. Safer Places has specialist workers who, as well as being trained in Domestic Abuse can assist in meeting the needs of the following groups:

- Victims with learning disabilities
- Older victims
- LGBT victims
- BMER victims
- Male victims
- Victims whose experience involves sexual violence
- Those with substance misuse problems
- Those with mental health problems

**Counselling** is readily accessible, our team is made up of placement counsellors and qualified volunteers. Counselling is available across our entire service, as and when it is needed by clients to help them with addressing a variety of issues. Each session is generally tailored to the individual. There is flexibility within our therapy that allows for a variety of counselling formats.

## Support with Accommodation – Refuge and other



Safer Places provides accommodation to victims of Domestic Abuse who are assessed as:

- Unable to remain in the community because of the probability of further harm from the perpetrator who is likely to pursue them and not be constrained by civil and other orders intended to prevent contact.
- At risk of further abuse who, for reasons of additional vulnerability, do not at that time have the capacity to play their full role in keeping themselves and their children safe.

Safer Places does not admit to refuge people who have experienced conflict or abuse that can safely remain in the community either within their own home or an alternative home.

It is unlikely that a victim in need of refuge can be safely accommodated within the area they have come from. Admission to refuge is a major disruptive step for a family as it involves all that relocation to another area entails, including the need for children to move school and for adults and children to leave their friends and other familiar connections and support networks behind.

### Safer Places offers the following accommodation:

**The Interim Unit** is a vital part of our accommodation services as sometimes at the point of referral a victim and children may need immediate refuge admission, however, given a short period and with Safer Places staff working quickly and closely with partner agencies it may be possible for the family to safely return home or to their home area within a week to pick up their lives again with the risk from the perpetrator managed. Victims for whom it is thought possible that a swift return to the community could be achieved can be admitted to this unit. Safer Places does not charge rent for admission to this unit meaning benefits and existing housing arrangements are undisturbed pending effort for a safe return to the community. The unit can also be used for those families and individuals where there is a need to further assess whether admission to a refuge is the right response for the family. The unit is staffed 24 hours a day and 7 days a week therefore we are able to ensure intensive work as well as fast assessment.

### Quotes from Clients:

“I think the interim unit is brilliant. I was abused for 5 years before I came forward. If this had been available earlier I would have taken the chance to come here with my children for a week and got things sorted out much much sooner.”

“For me to be able to move in and be safe and have my carer with me has made the difference between me being able to get away or having to stay.”

**Colchester and Tendring** This service is subcontracted by Safer Places to Colchester and Tendring Women’s Refuge. There are two refuge buildings based in Colchester where women and children can live and receive specialist support. The main Colchester refuge runs a registered preschool nursery on site which is funded through other sources and is rated as “outstanding” by Ofsted.

**Accommodation in Harlow** consists of one family refuge and two small refuges for single women (one five unit house suitable for older victims with ground floor accommodation suitable for a person with a disability and one four bed house suitable for younger single women.)

**Hope House** is a new pilot project opened in September 2016. This provides the opportunity for especially vulnerable victims who have multiple challenges (e.g. mental health or substance misuse in addition to being a victim of Domestic Abuse) to have a higher level of support aimed at enabling this group to have the best chance of recovery and rebuilding their resilience. Although this service may be available to women who have children the children must be cared for in another way during the period of the refuge stay. The support available in this unit may assist the victim to recover sufficiently to be able to parent safely in future.

**The Chelmsford Refuge** is a 12 unit family refuge in Chelmsford.

**The Mid Essex Properties** are self-contained properties which provide safe accommodation to single male victims, male victims with children and others with needs best met in this type of accommodation.

Whilst the location of most of our refuges are well known to many professionals, the Mid Essex properties are new and the properties we use will change over time. We aim to keep the location of these properties as confidential as possible on the basis that there are occasions when we work with clients fleeing from perpetrators employed by statutory services and also those fleeing so called honour based abuse.

**Accommodation in Southend** refuge provides 22 units of accommodation for families and single people.

**Accommodation in Hertfordshire** is comprised of two refuges which between them accommodate 26 families, one of the refuges has self-contained units for larger families.

**Longer stay accommodation** is available in exceptional cases, we have a number of self-contained flats in Harlow.

Other services are available, we can sometimes access suitable interim accommodation for older people needing to stay in a safe place on an interim basis pending resolution of circumstances at home.

## IDVA

Safer Places provides the IDVA service for Essex. Referrals to IDVAs (high risk victims) are made direct to the IDVA service if they are linked to police incidents or from the MARAC if they have been referred there. Safer Places also refers high risk clients who have been identified through the Safer Places Gateway. These include self referrals and also those from other agencies.

The IDVA service's main focus is to address the safety of high risk victims of Domestic Abuse and their children, where they are experiencing abuse from a partner, an ex-partner or a family member. We work with clients from the point of crisis within a multi-agency arena; whilst remaining an independent single point of contact for the client.

The IDVA service supports clients over a short to intermediate time frame or until the criminal justice process is complete, empowering clients to embark on the path to long term safety. The IDVA will work with the client to assess the level of risk and any available options to the client, ensuring that they have all available information to make informed choices about their future.

The IDVA service is pro-active in implementing individual safety and support plans with our clients, including practical steps to protect themselves and their children as well as long term solutions.

The IDVA service also provides support and advocacy around the MARAC process, sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations tailored to the client's needs. IDVA's receive specialist accredited training and hold nationally recognised qualifications and within our team we have specialists Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA's), Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC's), mental health IDVA's, Criminal Justice IDVA's and an LGBT IDVA.

Safer Places recognises that risk is fluid, once the risk posed to the client has reduced then the IDVA will liaise with our community based support teams to ensure a smooth transition for the client where they are then able to access longer term support to build resilience.

The IDVA's are based in community HUB's as we prioritise face-to-face contact and have a base at Essex Police Headquarters allowing us to work alongside Essex Police to better serve our clients.

## Children

We do not work in isolation with our clients who have families; we know that a whole family approach is needed in order to safeguard both clients and their children to have the best chance at long term recovery.

For every client who has children and is engaged with Safer Places we discuss the safety of the children whilst at home, or at school or nursery and work directly with these agencies and social care to ensure that all children are safeguarded and that the protective parent is supported in their approach to tackling the risk and effects of living in and recovering from an abusive relationship. We work with our partners to ensure that all children engaged with our service are aware of and have access to counselling services and play therapies.

For those children who may have had to take time out of school or move areas for their safety, their parents receive one to one support in identifying potential new schools and practical support with applications.

For children who are living in our refuges we have constant activities available both with and without parents to encourage safe spaces, interaction with peers and parent / children bonding. During July 2016 alone the refuges have organised days out such as Park Play, Ice Skating, Horse Riding and Science club. Safer Places have also run a Big Cook Little Cook program, encouraging families to work together whilst providing valuable life skills to both parents and children.

During school holidays we provide an enhanced range of activities for children and families depending on what children and young people want to do. In the summer of 2016 we provided the following; ice skating, family picnics, trips to activity centres, park play, a science club, trips to London and cinema visits.

Our aim is to provide stimulating activities children and families can enjoy together and to support them in building happy memories.

# Programmes

Safer Places provides a range of programmes including parenting and practical skills programmes. Our core programme which runs continuously in every area is Triple R.



## Triple R

Triple R is a CBT based Domestic Abuse programme which has three aims:

- To enable victim/survivors to **recognise** the abuse and its impacts on them and their children
- To enable them to **recover** from the abuse and support their children to do so
- To develop **resilience** building on their strengths and address their challenges in order to build a better sustainable safe future for themselves and their families

The programme has four modules:

### Modules and Sessions:

#### 1. Recognition

- a. Naming Abuse
- b. Understanding Abuse
- c. The Cycle of Abuse/Trauma Bonding

#### 2. Recovery

- a. Psychology of Abuse
- b. The Effects of Abuse/The Effects of Leaving
- c. Understanding Identity/Self Esteem

#### 3. Children

- a. Values and Parenting
- b. The Effects of Abuse on children/Communicating with children about Abuse
- c. Keeping Children Safe

#### 4. Resilience

- a. Physical and Emotional Risk/Safety
- b. Society and Victim Blaming
- c. Moving on

Each module has four sessions each lasting 90 minutes. Participants can do all four modules or select a module based on their own circumstances or stage they are at on their recovery to resilience journey.

**Self-Sustaining peer groups** are support/social groups run by clients for clients. The purpose of the groups is to reduce social isolation for victims/survivors and ensure ongoing long term peer support for those who need it. They also help victims/survivors to develop skills and self-confidence through helping to facilitate the group. Groups meet on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis and agree which activities they wish to undertake, these have included crafts, self-defence classes, family camping trips, picnics, quiz mornings, guest speakers and skill swap workshops.

In Colchester and Tendring a range of programmes are delivered throughout the year including the Freedom Programme, Roads to Recovery and the Liberty Programme.

## Daisy

The Daisy project is delivered in partnership between Safer Places and the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow. The purpose of the project is to identify victims experiencing domestic Abuse presenting at Princess Alexandra Hospital Harlow. The service has been running for over 3 years now and is well integrated with the hospital. Referrals are taken from hospital staff. Other professionals are likely to become engaged with these clients and children as a result of hidden victims being identified in these settings. The Daisy Project is effective in identifying victims who were previously not known to other services and reaching mainly high risk victims and otherwise "hidden" groups.

## Professional Training

Safer Places offers a range of specialist Domestic Violence/Abuse training to professionals.

All of our training is developed and delivered by experts to meet the needs of practitioners who come into contact with people affected by Domestic Abuse or to raise awareness to members of the public.

Our training includes a range of courses, at various levels from basic Domestic Abuse Awareness to tailored training packages designed to meet the specific needs of organisations.

### Areas we cover include:

- DV Awareness
- Coercive control and the new legislation
- DASH Risk Model training
- Working with Complex Needs
- Working with Older victims
- Stalking
- Effects on Children
- Response to DV in the health sector
- Working with male victims
- Routine enquiry
- Honour Based Abuse
- Domestic Abuse awareness in the workplace (policies and procedures for human resource departments)

In 2016 we delivered training to over 1000 professionals from various sectors including, Police, Health, Social Care and Education. This included training to the Safeguarding leads for 280 schools across Essex, on how to recognise if a child is living in a home where there is Domestic Abuse, the effects on children and how to support these families.

J9 Domestic Abuse awareness training was developed by Safer Places to support the creation of networks of Domestic Violence champions and safe places for victims to disclose across Essex. This training has been delivered across the county having been commissioned by District Councils in Harlow, Basildon, Epping Forest, Uttlesford and Castlepoint and Rochford. All Job Centre Plus centres in Essex are now J9 centres.



CONTACT US

**Call us today**

**03301 025811**

**Our experts are here 24/7 and will be happy to help you.**

You can contact us on our email [info@saferplaces.co.uk](mailto:info@saferplaces.co.uk)  
Our Office is here for you from 09:00 to 17:00 from Monday to Friday

You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter [@SaferPlacesUK](#)



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