



# **Her Centre Independent Domestic Abuse/Sexual Abuse Service Framework Policy**

## **Introduction**

The Her Centre Independent Domestic and Sexual Abuse Advocacy (IDSVA) Service is a domestic/sexual Abuse service providing emotional & practical support to clients deemed at being of high risk of suffering serious harm by the perpetrator. The service is for women only. Our approach is client-led, based on empowering women to take back control of their lives.

## **1. Service Provision**

1.1 The IDSVA team is responsible for the delivery of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse support to clients at high risk of suffering further harm and are as such qualified to deliver this service. The service provides IDSVA services in line with the SAFE LIVES definition of the work. This work will only be undertaken by those who are SAFE LIVES trained or have experience. A SAFE LIVES and Survivor Trust qualified Senior IDSVA or Service manager will manage the service.

1.2 The IDSVA team use a SAFE LIVES recognised process of assessing each individual client for her eligibility and to signpost those women who do not meet the high risk IDSVA service to another appropriate service.

1.3 The IDSVA team have implemented an intake process that requires them to contact the client in a timely manner. The IDSVA team are qualified to decide the risk and safety levels of each individual. The IDSVA team will assess clients on an individual basis to identify which services are appropriate and which clients reach the service threshold. It is important that other Her Centre staff and volunteers do not overstate the availability of the IDSVA team.

## **2. Procedures**

2.1 Our referral pathway is to take MARAC referrals and other referrals from specific sources (GP surgeries, Children's Social Services) for most of our clients. However we also will risk assess women who approach us directly and where they are deemed to be high risk will refer them to MARAC and take on the case. Her Centre also takes more medium risk referrals from a wider range of agencies for specialist services such as our Young Women's IDSVA and our Sexual Abuse and Stalking Advocacy. Where the domestic abuse is historic, the IDSVA team can refer externally to partner agencies offering the right levels of support. The Services Director will decide on all referrals and will review cases of self-referrals with staff. This ensures that the IDSVA team are focused on women who are mainly high risk, using the team's skills appropriately.



### **3. Risk Management and Safety Planning**

3.1 Client safety is key to our work, and Her Centre will ensure effective support is always provided. Risk assessment and safety planning with Domestic Abuse clients will only be carried out by the IDSVAs team. In the event of the absence of any IDSVAs team member the client details will be taken and passed on to the team. With an emergency issue or a client seeking urgent safety the other Her Centre staff can advise the client of relevant telephone numbers, such as the emergency services and the National Domestic Abuse Helpline. This allows the duty of care to be passed to an external agency and does not leave the Her Centre liable for misinformation or negative consequences that could put women at risk and jeopardize its reputation.

3.2 The IDSVAs team will always have at least one member of staff available each day to respond to any urgent enquiries, though non IDSVAs staff can also refer women to emergency help lines. The IDSVAs team supports the clients' ability to act for themselves and to be pro-active in engaging with appropriate services. Issues around child protection will be referred to Children's Safeguarding and line managers will review the case details where the client has objected to this referral.

3.3 The IDSVAs team work to the Her Centre Child and Adult Safeguarding policies. The Child and Adult Safeguarding policies are reviewed and updated in line with the Greenwich Safeguarding Adult and Children's team. High risk cases will always be referred to Adult Safeguarding team where there is risk and all children are referred to Children's Safeguarding.

### **4. Human Resources**

1. The Senior IDSVAs and Service Director Job descriptions clarify their responsibilities to clients, to the IDSVAs team, and to Her Centre as a whole. The Service Director is responsible for daily operations and for liaison with external agencies and is answerable to the authorities. The Services Director is the Safeguarding lead for Her Centre.

2. The Service Director is responsible for recruiting IDSVAs trainees who have signed a comprehensive confidentiality policy and are able to access with some limitations files and records. The IDSVAs trainee is also required to pass on referrals according to the IDSVAs pathway.

3. The IDSVAs team offers an induction process and training for IDSVAs trainees and new workers on boundaries within the work and guidelines on personal safety. These boundaries must be always adhered to.

4. The IDSVAs service requires that a senior member of IDSVAs staff be available during work hours for consultation on any issues that arise and in the absence of the Service Director the CEO will provide this.

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