

Domestic Abuse – Help Is Available

The safety and well-being of adults and children who are at risk of experiencing violence during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is being supported with funds for key organisations.

Scotland's 24hr Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline is available on 0800 027 1234.

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline is available on 08088 01 03 02. Calls to this number are free. Or email support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk or text 07537 410027.

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 April 2019, reflects the full spectrum of abuse that victims may suffer, providing police and prosecutors with greater powers to target those who engage in coercive or controlling behaviour towards their partners or ex-partners. Further information on the law can be found at <https://safer.scot/>

The Scottish Government has provided an additional £825,000 to Police Scotland to support the training of officers and frontline staff to respond to and investigate the new domestic abuse offence.

Grants from the Scottish Government's £350 million Communities Fund have been made to Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland to ensure that access to these key support services is maintained and victims still have access to methods of reporting crimes during the crisis, including using online video platforms, text messaging and phone calls.

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said:

"Anyone experiencing violence, including coercive and controlling behaviours, should not feel in any way inhibited by the current coronavirus outbreak to report a crime against them.

"These are enormously difficult times, but the safety of victims who experience abuse in the home is paramount – the message to stay at home does not mean that they should not seek urgent help, advice or support.

"As the anniversary of the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018 approaches, it is a priority now as ever that victims of domestic abuse and gender based violence have access to support services, and that support organisations and frontline staff, who work tirelessly to provide these vital services, are supported to deliver new ways of working in these unprecedented times."