**Guidance for all Family Support Workers (FSW) when supporting parents with the Freedom course online**

The aim is to support the parent and ensure they are safe throughout the online course, especially if they are still in a relationship with a perpetrator and remain in the same property. The FSW can support and encourage the parent to complete the online programme, however, the parent needs to take responsibility for completing the sessions.

* We want the parent/s to have a greater awareness and knowledge of domestic abuse/violence, and an understanding of the impact it has on children.
* Each family will need to be looked at individually and the risk needs to be assessed before supporting the parent in accessing the Freedom course online. The FSW and social worker might need to put in place a safety plan with the parent before starting the Freedom online programme. The FSW also needs to take into consideration if the home environment is the right place to support the parent in going through the Freedom programme online.
* You need to advise women not to share information that they are learning with the perpetrator as this would increase the risk to her.
* The FSW is there for support and to ensure the parent is emotionally contained. If at any point any questions are raised during the sessions and the FSW is unable to answer them, then please see list of contact details below for professionals who are trained in this topic. The parent can be advised to make contact with the relevant agencies.
* If at any point during the sessions the FSW identifies the parent is feeling more confident and beginning to feel more empowered and makes a decision they want to end the relationship with their partner, the FSW and social worker will need to ensure this is done in a safe way, because at this point the situation is likely to escalate and the parent/children may become more at risk. The FSW needs to pause the online course, and speak to the allocated social worker, team manager/senior, and complete a safety plan with the parent.
* A referral will need to be made to Women’s Aid to continue to work with and support the parent/children and look at what options are available, and be involved in any safety planning and next steps. The FSW can continue to support alongside this process, as often they have developed a good working relationship with the family.
* Explain to the women that WMWA doesn’t just offer emergency support but also help with safety planning and risk management, emotional and listening support, referrals to housing and family time issues etc…
* Be aware that a referral to WMWA doesn’t always equate to immediate support, as there are waiting lists. If sessions stir up any issues or at the point of planning to leave, women should be encouraged to make contact with the helpline alongside any safety planning/risk assessing or referrals the FSW or SW make.
* The online programme doesn’t replace or provide anywhere near as much knowledge or understanding as doing a face to face group programme.
* Be aware that freedom do not provide reports or certificates to perpetrators, as completing the programme doesn’t indicate a permanent change in understanding or abusive behaviours.

**Contact details for agencies who can support families suffering from domestic abuse/violence:**

**For general support around domestic abuse for adults/parents please use the WMWA website and 24hour helplines.**

0800 783 1359 - Herefordshire

0800 980 3331 - Worcestershire

[helpline@wmwa.org.uk](mailto:helpline@wmwa.org.uk)

24 HR Domestic Abuse Helplines 0800 9803331

Web: [www.westmerciawomensaid.org](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org)

[www.womenaid.org.uk/covid19-coronavirus-saftey-advice-for-survivors/](http://www.womenaid.org.uk/covid19-coronavirus-saftey-advice-for-survivors/)

**Assisting Victims of Domestic Abuse by adopting the Ask Ani code word scheme**

For information on how to adopt the Ask for Ani scheme go to: www.gov.uk/homeoffice/pharmacy-codeword-scheme

**West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre**

Seeking help and making contact with WMRSASC

Telephone helplines: 01905 724514 (Worcestershire) or 01432 344777 (Herefordshire)

(Please note: If you are a professional seeking information on behalf of a third party please contact the main office on 01905 611655 or email referrals@wmrsasc.org.uk)

**Refuge** is a national charity that supports women and children affected by domestic abuse

Tel 0808 200 0247. [helpline@refuge.org.uk](mailto:helpline@refuge.org.uk)

**Karma Nirvana** support victims of honour based and forced marriages

Tel 01823 334244

**NSPCC** offer advice and information on domestic abuse for children, young people and parents.

Tel 0808 800 5000. [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Mankind** provide emotional and practical information for men who are subjected to domestic abuse.

01823 334244

**Men’s Advice Line** offer information and support for men experiencing domestic abuse. They also provide a free helpline and on line chat service

0808 801 0327. [info@mensadviceline.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk)