APPENDIX 5
Understanding Domestic and Sexual Violence and Harmful Practices
What is this booklet about?

This booklet is about Domestic and Sexual Violence and ‘Honour’ Based Violence. It explains what different types of abuse can be and what you can do if you or someone you know is being abused.

Domestic violence can be...

Domestic violence is a pattern of control which can include physical, sexual, psychological, and, or financial abuse, by a current or former partner or family members and can include, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse:

- **Physical** - pushing, pinching, hitting, shaking, spitting, biting, kicking, throwing or smashing things, threatening to hurt someone including children and pets, using weapons, strangulation.

- **Emotional** - making you feel sad or suicidal, anxious or stupid, name calling, put downs, sending horrible messages including online, checking where you are, checking your phone, isolating you, stopping you seeing friends and family, stopping you having a job, threatening you including threatening to kill you, your children or an animal or family pet.

- **Financial** - taking all your money, monitoring your spending, forcing you to spend your money on them or on certain things, borrowing money and not paying it back, making you take out loans for them.

- **Sexual** - unwanted verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, being touched where you don’t want to be touched (bottom, breasts, penis or vagina) or being forced to touch other people in these places, forcing you to have sex including with other people, taking explicit photos of you and threatening to share them with others, forcing you to do sexual things that you don’t want to do, forcing you to watch pornography.

- **Domestic violence can also include:**
  - Shouting at you and your children
  - Withholding contraception
  - Forcing pregnancy
  - Causing a miscarriage
  - Not caring for you
  - Saying horrible things about you on social networking sites

It is a repeated pattern of behaviour when someone does or says things to you to make you upset or frightened. It’s when someone uses abuse to have power and control over you and you do not agree to what is happening. It may get worse over time and you may be scared to speak out or stop them.

Abuse can happen to anyone; man or woman; straight, bisexual, gay, lesbian or transgender; disabled or not; young or old; and any race.

It is wrong and is never ok. It is never the victims fault and everyone has the right not to be abused.

It can destroy your self confidence and leave you feeling isolated and lonely.

If you are in a relationship with someone, you should feel safe, loved and respected and free to be yourself but if your relationship leaves you feeling scared, intimidated or controlled, it’s possible you’re in an abusive relationship.

At the end of this booklet, there are telephone numbers of the people and services you can talk to.
Violence if you are pregnant

Violence can increase during pregnancy and puts a pregnant woman and her unborn child in danger.

It can increase the risk of miscarriage, infection, premature birth, low birth weight and foetal death.

Your abusive partner is not only potentially endangering your life but also the life of your unborn baby.

If you are pregnant and being abused, there are specialist services that can help you.

You can also seek help in confidence from:

- Your GP
- Midwife
- Obstetrician
- Health visitor
- Social worker

Sexual violence can be...

Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic directed against a person’s sexuality using force, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.

Abuse can include:

- **Rape** - forced sexual intercourse including penetration by body part or an object and also includes forced oral sex.
- **Sexual harassment** - unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This can take place anywhere and includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls and online harassment.

Sexual violence could also include:

- Prostitution
- Trafficking

If you are pregnant and being abused, there are specialist services that can help you.
Prostitution

Prostitution is the exchange of sexual acts for money. It can be associated with monetary needs and drug and alcohol misuse. It may also be of a forced nature and abusive.

Trafficking

Trafficking is the recruitment and transportation of people using deception, abduction, force, intimidation and threats, and use of power for the purpose of exploiting someone by forcing them into prostitution, sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Stalking

Stalking is continual unwanted and obsessive harassment causing fear, alarm, or distress and can include threatening phone calls, texts, letters, damaging property and spying on or following someone.

Stalking is most often committed by a current or former partner and should be taken very seriously as it causes increased risk of harm.

What is a harmful practice?

Harmful practices are forms of violence that have been committed, mainly against women, in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered acceptable. They are never acceptable.

Abuse can include:

• Female genital circumcision or cutting - is the complete or partial removal or alteration of the external genitalia of a female for non medical reasons. Female genital cutting is based on ancient beliefs surrounding the need to control women’s fertility and sexuality.

Female genital cutting is illegal in the UK and this includes taking girls or women outside of the UK to perform female genital cutting. It is not a requirement of any religion.

Female genital cutting can have serious health implications including haemorrhage, septicaemia, tissue trauma, severe pain and infection, shock, death, difficulties in childbirth including obstructed labour and resuscitation of an infant.

• Forced marriage - is conducted without the valid agreement of one or both parties, where pressure is a factor.

Abuse may also be used or someone may be made to feel like they are bringing shame on the family if they don’t marry.

In some cases, people may be taken abroad without knowing they are to be married and when they arrive in the country their passport may be taken by their family to try to stop them from returning home. This may happen just before or during school holidays.

Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and is not the same as an arranged marriage where both parties agree to the marriage.

• ‘Honour’ based violence and ‘murders in the name of so called honour’ are committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family or community. It usually occurs when it is felt or thought that a relative has shamed a family or community by breaking their honour.

Victims, often young girls, are perceived to have acted outside community boundaries or accepted behaviour, especially in relation to relationships and sexual matters.

There is no honour in murder, unexplained death (suicide), false imprisonment, rape, kidnap, threats to kill, fear of or actual forced marriage, domestic or sexual violence, harassment and many other acts, behaviour and conduct.
Violence, immigration and no recourse to public funds

Domestic, sexual and ‘honour’ based violence can happen to anyone.

It can be more difficult to tell someone you are experiencing abuse if you have no entitlement to welfare benefits, public housing, Home Office support for asylum seekers and you are subject to immigration control. There are specialist services that can help you in confidence and will not report you to authorities in relation to your immigration status. If you came to the UK with the person who is being abusive towards you on their visa and you do not have permission to stay in the UK in your own right (indefinite leave to remain), you can also access specialist legal advice from a legal rights solicitors.

You can also seek help from:

Asylum Aid:
0207 354 9264
Southall Black Sisters:
0208 571 0800
The Home Office and UK Border Agency

Domestic, sexual and ‘honour’ based violence can happen to anyone no matter what age you are including in young people’s relationships.

It can happen between people who are dating, have children together or are married to each other. It can happen either when people live together or separately. It can also happen when people split up. It is wrong and is never ok. It is never the victims fault and everyone has the right not to be abused. It can destroy your self confidence and leave you feeling isolated and lonely.

The abuse could also include someone saying horrible things about you on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger. Texting and peer pressure could also be used as part of the abuse.

There are telephone numbers of people and services you can talk to at the end of this booklet.
Violence if you are a man, or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

Domestic, sexual and ‘honour’ based violence can happen to anyone whether you are a woman, heterosexual man, or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

It can be more difficult to tell someone you are a man experiencing abuse from a woman, or if you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

It can be even more difficult if your family and friends don’t know about your sexuality.

Specialist services that can help you are detailed at the end of this booklet.

Violence, disability and mental health

Domestic, sexual and ‘honour’ based violence can happen if you have a disability or not.

It can be difficult if your abuser is your carer and if they use your disability as part of the abuse. Violence can also impact on your mental health.

There are services that can help detailed in this booklet but you can seek further specialist support from:

Disablement Association of Barking and Dagenham: 020 8215 9630
Independent Living Agency: 020 8593 6677
Mencap Barking and Dagenham: 020 8262 5330
Voiceability: 020 8590 2666
MIND: 0300 123 3393
Scope: 0808 800 3333

Supporting a family member or a friend

If you think a family member or a friend is being abused, try telling them you are concerned and explain what you are worried about.

- Let them know you want to help and support where you can. You can help in exploring what choices are available, however it is important to support whatever decision they make whilst being clear the abuse is wrong and reassuring them it is not their fault.

Remember to prioritise safety – yours and theirs and do not judge. It is not always easy to just leave a relationship.

Practical tips:

- Agree a code word or action that if they say to you or you see, you know they are in danger and need help that they cannot access themselves.
- Encourage them to memorise important numbers.
- Offer to keep copies of important documents and other items in case they have to leave in a hurry; such as money, keys, bank and benefit details, passports, birth certificates and other important items and documents.
- Tell them the abuse isn’t their fault and no one deserves to be abused.
- Encourage them to find out about options including accessing specialist support as they can help with a safety plan including ways to keep safe.
- Let them make their own decisions as they may not be ready to leave their partner and you have to respect this and remain non-judgemental.
- Don’t give up; you may be their only support.
- Don’t act as mediator or recommend couples counselling.
People who commit domestic and sexual violence or harmful practices

If you are worried about your behaviour or you are using violence or abuse towards a partner, former partner, family member or any other person and you want to take responsibility for your abusive behaviour and get help, there is support you can access and organisations you can contact.

Anger management programmes are not appropriate for sorting out domestic violence because people who commit violence choose to behave violently to get what they want and gain control.

People who commit violence also may use drugs and alcohol however drugs and alcohol, addiction and financial problems do not cause violence and cannot be used as an excuse.

Local Barking and Dagenham support

Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy (IDSVA) Service
020 8591 3498
Confidential support for anyone who has experienced domestic and sexual violence or harmful practices

Local Police 101

Police in an Emergency 999

Victim Support
020 8550 2410
www.victimsupport.org.uk
Support to victims of crime

Women’s Trust Counselling Service
020 7034 0303/0304
www.womanstrust.org.uk
Confidential support for women who have experienced domestic violence

The Havens (Whitechapel)
020 7247 4787
www.thehavens.org.uk
Confidential help and support for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted in the last 12 months

East London Rape Crisis Centre
020 7683 1210
www.niaendingviolence.org.uk
Confidential help and support for women and girls aged 14 and over who have been raped or sexually assaulted, regardless of when it happened

The Listening Zone
020 8491 2345
Confidential free counselling for 14 to 21 year olds

Ashiana Network Youth Counselling
020 8539 0427
Confidential free counselling for 13 to 21 year olds

CRI: Gateway Service
020 8507 8668
Confidential advice and information for drug and alcohol users and assessment of individual needs, one-to-one sessions and group work
National support

National Domestic Violence Helpline  
0808 2000 247  
www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk  
Free confidential support for women experiencing domestic violence

Solace Women’s Aid Advice Hub  
0808 802 5565  
Supporting women and children affected by domestic and sexual violence

Rape Crisis London  
0808 802 9999  
www.rapecrisislondon.org  
Confidential support for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence

National Stalking Helpline  
0300 636 0300  
www.stalkinghelpline.org  
Support for anyone who is or has been affected by harassment and stalking

Forward  
020 8960 4000  
www.forwarduk.org.uk  
Support for girls and women who have or may experience female genital circumcision/cutting

Forced Marriage Unit  
020 7008 0151  
www.gov.uk/forced-marriage  
Advice and support to those who have or may experience forced marriage

Karma Nirvana  
0800 5999247  
www.karmanirvana.org.uk  
Support for victims of honour violence and forced marriage

Childline  
0800 1111  
www.childline.org.uk  
Free confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people

The Hideout  
www.thehideout.org.uk  
Support for children and young people to understand domestic abuse and how to take positive action if it’s happening to you

NSPCC  
0808 800 5000  
www.nspcc.org.uk  
Free confidential advice to protect children and prevent abuse

Broken Rainbow  
0300 999 5428  
www.brokenrainbow.org.uk  
Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic violence

Galop  
020 7704 2040  
www.galop.org.uk  
Support for anyone who have experienced biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexual violence or domestic abuse

Men’s Advice Line  
0808 801 0327  
www.mensadvicecentre.org.uk  
Support for men experiencing domestic violence

Respect  
0808 802 4040  
www.respectphoneline.org.uk  
Support for perpetrators of domestic violence who want to change their behaviour

Domestic Violence Intervention Project  
020 7633 9181  
www.dvip.org  
Support for men who have been violent to their partner and for women who have experienced domestic violence and support for parents and children affected by domestic violence through supervised contact and play therapy

Respond  
0808 808 0700  
www.respond.org.uk  
Provides services to children and adults with learning disabilities who have experienced abuse or trauma, as well as those who have abused others

Rights of Women  
www.rightsofwomen.org.uk  
Free Family Law Advice  
020 7251 6577  
Free Criminal Law Advice  
020 7251 8887  
Free Immigration and Asylum Law Advice  
020 7490 7689

Ascent Project  
020 7608 1137  
Free confidential family and criminal law legal advice