



# One minute guide

## Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS)

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### What is Leeds Domestic Violence Service?

Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) is a new consortium arrangement providing a comprehensive support service for individuals, children and families affected by domestic violence and abuse.

The consortium consists of Leeds Women's Aid incorporating HALT, Behind Closed Doors, and Womens Health Matters; all have expertise specialising in domestic violence and abuse.

The new arrangements came into effect from 1st April 2017, and the new service contributes to the wider programme of work tackling domestic violence and abuse across the city. This has been identified as one of the Leeds City Council Breakthrough Projects ([guide](#)), bringing together partners across the city to tackle key issues.

### How is the new service different?

Bringing together the organisations under the new consortium arrangements offers a range of benefits; for example, LDVS is able to provide a tailored and seamless pathway for service users, who will only have to tell their story once. LDVS users are at the heart of what the service offers.

LDVS has been designed around the following integral principles. It is:

- Inclusive and accessible** - recognising that domestic violence and abuse cuts across peoples' ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexual orientation, disability or lifestyle and can occur in a range of relationships. LDVS acknowledges this, and addresses the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing support, e.g. by offering interpreting and translation services to service users who speak or understand little or no English;
- Flexible and responsive** - LDVS responds to emerging and changing need, both for individual service users, e.g. in response to changing levels of risk, and as an organisation, contributing to city-wide partnerships as they continue to develop;
- Working with a Think Family, Work Family ([guide](#)) approach** - and working in partnership with other practitioners through 'Team Around the Family' approaches. Where the service user has children (either living with them or elsewhere), the assessment and support plan will consider the impact of the situation on the children;
- Proactive and resolute** - LDVS practices assertive outreach, adopting persistent approaches to support positive engagement of individuals who have been identified as being at risk but who are difficult to contact or reluctant to engage with support;
- Supporting service users with multiple needs requiring intensive support** - LDVS is able to deal effectively with multiple needs - including drug and alcohol misuse, debt and mental health difficulties, providing specialist staff when needed;
- Restorative and aspirational in approach** - LDVS works restoratively ([guide](#)) with service users, offering high challenge and high support to help people identify sustainable long term solutions which recognise their strengths. LDVS promotes visible recovery, demonstrating that people can move to be free from the harms, risks and threats associated with domestic violence and abuse; and
- A learning organisation, sharing knowledge and expertise** - through its partnership work with other agencies and organisations, LDVS supports the development of the skills and confidence of staff in frontline services to respond effectively to domestic violence and abuse. The service also works together with partner organisations to develop and test new ways of working on this agenda.

## How does the service support individuals, children and young people experiencing domestic violence and abuse?

LDVS works with women, men and families in Leeds to offer a range of support:

**A 24-hour helpline (tel: 0113 2460401)** - individuals can call at any time, to talk about their situation, request information or request LDVS support;

**Drop-in services** - across the city, no appointment necessary, offering confidential emotional and practical support e.g. information about rights. Details of sessions are available from the helpline or email address. Both the helpline and drop-in services can be accessed anonymously by service users;

**Group work** - Support groups for women are available across the city. Groups provide opportunities for women to meet others who have had similar experiences in a relaxed, informal setting. The experienced group facilitator helps members share stories, plan for safety, and discuss patterns of abuse and control. In addition, members can receive advice, sign-posting and referrals for other support;

**Community Domestic Violence Team** - providing practical and emotional support on housing, benefits, safety planning, health and social care. Practitioners accompany service users to legal appointments and attendance at the Family Court as well as liaising with specialist support agencies;

**IDVA Team (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates)** - IDVAs support service users who need immediate crisis or safety advice, and focus on reducing their risk. They can provide legal advice and advocacy on a range of issues within family and criminal law, e.g. injunctions, divorce, and issues relating to the care of children;

**Emergency accommodation** - LDVS can offer emergency accommodation to anyone experiencing domestic abuse who needs safe and secure temporary accommodation - regardless of their gender or whether they have children. This support extends to finding alternative accommodation where necessary; and

**Support for children and young people in refuges** - LDVS has specialist children's workers who work with children and families, supporting them with practicalities such as finding school places and making travel arrangements, as well as offering outings and activities for families and providing one to one support or therapeutic play for children. Young people in refuges who have experienced violence or abuse in their own interpersonal relationships are offered a keyworker.

## What should practitioners do if they are working with a family which may benefit from LDVS support?

Practitioners can, with the consent of the person they are working with, download the LDVS referral form from the website, and email it to: [ldvs.referrals@lwa.cjism.net](mailto:ldvs.referrals@lwa.cjism.net). For further information and advice, practitioners should contact the helpline on tel: 0113 2460401.

LDVS also work closely with Caring Dads ([guide](#)), offering tailored support to the partners of men on the programme. Practitioners referring someone to Caring Dads should also seek consent from the man's partner for LDVS to contact them directly to offer support.

## Where can I find further information?

There is more information available from the LDVS [website](#), where referral forms can be downloaded. These can be emailed to: [ldvs.referrals@lwa.cjism.net](mailto:ldvs.referrals@lwa.cjism.net)

Alternatively, practitioners can obtain a referral form or request further information by emailing [administration@leedswomensaid.org.uk](mailto:administration@leedswomensaid.org.uk). The 24 hour helpline is available on tel: 0113 2460401 to offer information and advice to victims, members of the public and practitioners.