



We Listen | We Support | We Care
Providing Specialist Domestic Abuse Services



Offering Confidential Help and Support... *You are not alone*

Providing specialist and independent domestic abuse services across Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells. We work to ensure that all those affected by Domestic Violence & Abuse are aware of the choices available to them.

0800 917 9948

info@choicesdaservice.org.uk

www.choicesdaservice.org.uk

How We Can Help

We will listen to what you have to say

We will be supportive and non-judgmental

We will give you information about options available to you so that you can make an informed decision about your future

We can advise you about refuge accommodation locally and nationally

We can signpost to other agencies who can help

We can reassure you that it is not your fault



LOTTERY FUNDED

COMMUNITY PREVENTION & SUPPORT PROJECT

We are really pleased to announce that we have been successful in obtaining a grant from the Big Lottery to fund a three year domestic abuse community project.

The Big Lottery funding will ensure that over the next three years we can maintain and expand on some crucial services such as our Helpline which receives an increasing number of calls each month from individuals and professionals seeking advice; the delivery of community programmes such as the Freedom programme, the Recovery Toolkit and the DAY programme which currently are delivered in Dartford, Gravesham and Maidstone, but which are not consistently delivered in all areas as they are dependent on funding; and in addition we will be able to provide limited one to one support for standard/medium risk clients affected by domestic abuse.

The funding will enable us to employ a full time Team Leader, three full time Support Workers and a part time Administrator.

This new project is expected to start early Spring 2016.



Feedback from one of our IDVAs:

"I have had a lovely start to the week☺. I spoke to a client this morning who wanted to say thank you. She is an Iranian lady whose partner is very cold and controlling towards her and her adult sons. He is highly regarded in the community and when she asked for help the community did not believe her so she has been very isolated. She told me that she had never dreamt that help and support such as we offer was out there. She said that my call came at her "darkest time" and that I would never know what a difference I made. What was particularly lovely (and I'm not religious) was that she said that if ever I was in trouble and needed help, she hoped God would send me someone to help in the way He sent me to her."

Celebrating 20 years

an advocate for change.



Our History

The campaign for a refuge in the North Kent area began in the summer of 1989. The need was perceived by our sisters in Bexley Women's Aid who received calls from agencies and women who needed a safe place to stay outside of Bexley. After some initial research Hyde Housing agreed to work with the group to obtain capital funding from the Housing Corporation. Local Councillors, voluntary and statutory agencies met and a steering committee was formed. Each year a bid would go to the Housing Corporation and finally we were successful in 1995.

Dartford & Gravesham Women's Aid (DGWA) as we were then known received charitable status in 1995 and our first Annual General Meeting was held in September 1995.

In December 1996 with the support of Hyde Housing Association we opened our first house in Dartford providing accommodation for three families. In November 1997 a refuge for a further three families was opened in Gravesend which includes a playroom and is completely wheelchair user friendly. In 2001 with the support of Gravesend Churches Housing Association we opened our third refuge housing three families, and in June 2002 we opened our 4th refuge which houses eight families.

We now could provide supported accommodation for 17 women and 35 children and due to the continuing referrals the need was very evident.

DGWA became an incorporated charity on 8th July, 2008, and became known as North Kent Women's Aid (NKWA) on 1st January, 2009.

Due to the generous donation by Soroptimists International Gravesend & District of a large property in Gravesham, we opened a hostel for vulnerable homeless young people aged between 16 and 25 during February 2011. We are able to provide accommodation and support to seven people at any one time.

In recognition of the changes in the commissioning of services and to strengthen our ability to win contracts in 2012, NKWA, along with other independent specialist domestic abuse service providers formed the Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium (KDAC). The Consortium provides a more comprehensive county-wide service and as the specialist domestic abuse services are embedded in the local community, enables us to provide the best outcome for victims.

Since 2013, following the closure of a domestic abuse agency in Maidstone, we have increased the geographical area in which we work and now provide support services to the communities of Maidstone, Medway, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

In November 2014, to recognise the range of support services we provide to men, women and young people affected by domestic abuse across West Kent and Medway we became known as **Choices**.

Where we are now

Today we are now able to provide refuge accommodation and support for 17 women and 35 children at any one time.

In addition to providing refuge accommodation and support services to the women and children in refuge, we have also been increasing our activities in the community. We are actively involved in the One Stop Shops in a number of locations in West Kent and Medway providing support and advice to men and women in the community. In addition, we provide Helpline support and advice to victims of abuse as well as to other agency personnel seeking advice for their clients.

We co-ordinate and facilitate the Freedom Programmes which are run in Dartford, Gravesham and Maidstone. We also deliver other community programmes such as the Recovery Toolkit and the DAY programme.



We provide training on Domestic Abuse to statutory and voluntary organisations as well as give presentations in order to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse.

We are working with schools and youth organisations to introduce the 'Loves Me... Loves Me Not' healthy relationship programme which is a proactive way of informing children and young people about domestic abuse and helps to challenge and prevent abusive behaviour.

As part of KDAC, we provide -

- a Positive Relationships programme to adolescent girls who are more susceptible to early sex, early conceptions and violent and coercive relationships.
- a group programme for children aged 5-13 years who have experienced domestic abuse in their homes.
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to work with high risk victims of domestic abuse.

We continue to deliver a Family Advice service in Dartford, to provide practical and emotional support to families who have children/young people up to the age of 25 years.

More recently we have developed a programme, Choose Respect, for young males affected by domestic abuse. In addition we are running a pilot adolescent to parent violence group, Flipside, in January 2016.

Our services continue to develop and with the new Community Project starting next Spring we are excited about the future. Here's to the next 20 years, although it would be great to say one day that our services are no longer needed – Our dream for the future!

Choices is extremely thankful for the generosity of the many organisations and individuals who have given us money and items which have enabled us to do the work that we do.

Some words from an IDVA client

I have three lives which I now live
Mummy, work and one I constantly forgive
I smile and laugh when I am outside the house but when I'm home I turn into a timid mouse
I make my excuses everyday
Why does he have to make me pay?
What have I done that could be so bad
For him to lose his temper and be so mad?
He says he gets to the point of no return and loses control - I get pushed around like an old rag doll
I hate that point of no return. I should see the signs, I should learn
You back me into a corner, I can't get out. You are scaring me as you continue to shout
You say you could crush me, break every bone, I can't get help you have taken my phone
I said I wasn't scared and that I didn't care, intense pain changed that as well as you pulling my hair
You definitely showed me who was boss that night, I will never win this soul destroying fight
I clean and tidy so that you don't shout, my one mistake was not wringing the dishcloth out,
I say I'm sorry I won't do it again but that doesn't stop you inflicting pain
You have won now, you've finally made me cry, I'm still alive but inside I want to die
You let me go once you realised you had crossed the line, you've hurt me more than you did the last time
Twice I thought I wouldn't see the next day when I ask you about it, you say it's only play
I've had the warning now if I tell anyone or it doesn't go your way I'm so scared now, I will never be able to get away
I still love him I just don't like who he has become, he usually says sorry for what he has done
He promises he won't hurt me again and that he is in the wrong, his promises never last for very long
I hold on that our life will get back on track and that one day my body won't be bruised and black
No one would understand if I say I've been hurt inside and out, too scared to scream, too scared to shout
I know I'm at the point I'm being told what to say, just need to convince everyone we have a normal family life day to day
I'm a rubbish liar, but I must try, I have to convince everyone, the stakes are too high!!!
I know it's my fault you hurt me, and the other things that you do, I used to know the signs, but now I haven't a clue
I'm practising saying you've changed and nothing is wrong. Please let it come true or I won't be here for long :-(

Head Office

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Dartford, Kent
DA1 3JJ

Telephone: 01322 280686

Website: www.choicesdaservice.org.uk

My Donate:

www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk



Choices



@ChoicesDAS

One Stop Shop

Maidstone (Gateway):
Tuesdays 09.30am-11.30am
Maidstone Gateway, King Street,
Maidstone ME15 6JQ

Sevenoaks (Library):
Tuesdays 10:00am-12 noon
Buckhurst Lane, Buckhurst Lane,
Sevenoaks TN13 1LQ

Dartford (CAB):
Tuesdays 09:30am-12 noon
Trinity Resource Centre, High St,
Dartford DA1 1DE

Medway (Sunlight Centre):
Tuesdays 09.30am-11.30am
Sunlight Centre, 105 Richmond Road,
Gillingham, Medway ME7 1LX

Tonbridge (Circle Homes Russet):
Wednesday 09.30am-11.30am
Circle Homes Russet, 4 New Wharf Road,
Tonbridge TN9 1PS

Gravesend (CAB):
Thursdays 09.30am-12 noon Gravesend
Gateway, Windmill Street,
Gravesend DA12 1AU

Training

Choices provide specialised
training in domestic abuse
awareness.

Tailor made training specific to
your organisation
is also available on request.

Please contact: 01322 280686

Local Support and Feedback

Feedback:

We are keen to address issues that may be of particular interest to you. If you have any ideas or suggestions on what you would like to see featured in the Choices newsletter or to send us news from your organisation, please email us on admin@choicesdaservice.org.uk or call 01322 280686.

Black & Minority Ethnic Groups Advice and Support Services

Homestart:

Denton Multi-Cultural Family Centre, Lower
Range, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2QL

Tel: 01474 365891

(Mon-Fri 09:00am-4:00pm)

Email: team@homestartnwkent.fsnet.co.uk

One -to -One volunteer support for families in
their own homes. For families with a least one
child under 5.

Kent Equality Cohesion Council:

Basement 8, Wrotham Road, Gravesend,
Kent, DA11 0PA

Tel: 01474 369329

Email: info@kentec.org.uk

Working towards the reduction of inequality
and the elimination of discrimination.

Rethink/Sahayak

4-5 High Street, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0BQ

Tel: 01474 364837

Email: sahayak@rethink.org

(Mon-Fri 09:00am-5:00pm)

One-to-One befriending service to people with
mental health problems, domestic abuse and
provides support and information.

Respect

4th Floor, Development House, 56-64 Leonard
Street, London, EC2A 4LT

Tel: 020 7549 0578

Email: info@respect.uk.net

(Mon-Fri 09:00am-5:00pm)

Work with domestic violence perpetrators,
male victims and young people.

Services for men, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic abuse:

Broken Rainbow: 0300 999 5428,

Mon & Thurs – 10am-8pm;

Tues & Wed 10am-5pm

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

Men's advice Line: 0808 801 0327

www.mensadvice.org.uk

Victim Support: Male Helpline

0845 30 30 900

Internet Links:

www.thehideout.org.uk

(Children & Young Person)

www.refuge.org.uk

(Provide accommodation & advice)

www.womensaid.org.uk

(National charity for domestic abuse)

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/>

(National charity for domestic abuse)

www.direct.gov.uk

(UK Government website)

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

(Department for Immigration & Passport
advice)

www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

(Forced marriage)

www.dcsf.gov.uk

(Department for Children, Schools and
Families)

www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

(Free legal advice)

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/legal-aid-agency

www.legalaid.gov.uk

(Legal Aid Agency)

<http://www.ncdv.org.uk/>

(Free legal services)

<http://www.avaproject.org.uk/>

(Services to agencies and organisations)



Helpline
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