

SERVICE INTAKE POLICY

PURPOSE:

To set out the approach of Changing Pathways (CP) in managing new referrals for all service delivery.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all CP employees and volunteers working in a support capacity with victims/survivors of Domestic Abuse and Violence (DVA).

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- CJSM Secure Email Guidelines
- Supervision and Support Policy

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Rationale
1	November 2016	Philippa Ladd – CEO	First publication
2	August 2018	Sue Davis and Zoe Mckee	Annual Review
3	February 2021	Kelly Mackenzie – IDVA	Annual Review – Version Control and Contents page added, format changes made, changes made to content.
4	March 2022	Annabelle Gardner – Brighter Futures DAP	Annual Review – minor changes made plus addition of paragraph 11 – clients leaving the service.

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PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

1.0 Aims and Principles

1.1 CP is committed to offering a consistently high-quality service to all service users and potential service users from the point of entry to exit from the service.

1.2 Service users can expect the same high-quality service from CP regardless of the service they access or the length of time in which they access the service.

1.3 CP is committed to delivering a service to victims of DVA which is needs led and builds upon the individual strengths of service users and promotes their independence.

1.4 CP is committed to reducing the barriers that women and men face in accessing support for DVA.

PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

2.0 Making an Enquiry

2.1 CP operates a number of options for people seeking advice in relation to DVA and referrals for a service.

2.2 CP operates a helpline between the hours of 8:00am – 6:00pm, Monday to Friday (closed bank and public holidays) which the public and professionals can call to make enquiries about their options and the services available. For Bank Holidays and weekends calls are diverted to Compass, the single point of access for domestic abuse services in Essex.

2.3 During these same times, designated duty practitioners will be responsible for responding to referrals and enquiries sent to referrals@changingpathways.org, idva@changingpathways.org, brighterfutures@changingpathways.org, Objective Connect file sharing system and the secure CJSM email systems.

2.4 Referrals for vacant refuge space can be made directly via phone to the refuge with the vacant space: Basildon Refuge 01268 581 591 or Thurrock Refuge 01375 845 899.

2.5 Information on vacant refuge spaces across England and Wales can be provided by practitioners for individuals and agencies where required using Routes to Support.

3.0 Making a Referral – Basildon and Thurrock Refuge

3.1 CP offers safe, temporary accommodation for women and their children who are at high risk of serious harm (emotional and/or physical) or death due to domestic abuse within Basildon and Thurrock refuges and dispersed property sites.

3.2 Referrals for vacant refuge space can be made by professionals from any agency or by the individual themselves.

3.3 Vacant refuge bed space will be advertised on Routes to Support and via an email sent to local partners when space is available.

3.4 As part of the grant contract agreement for Basildon Refuge, partners in the local South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub (SEDAH) will be given 24-hour prior notification of Basildon based bed space for referrals before being advertised on Routes to Support.

4.0 Risk and Suitability Assessment – Refuge

4.1 As each referral is received, the refuge practitioner will complete the Refuge CP referral form with the individual. This assessment will enable the practitioner to understand the risk of harm that the individual is experiencing due to domestic abuse and the suitability of the individual for the refuge space.

4.2 The comprehensive assessment will seek to understand the nature of the risk that the individual is facing, the geographical areas which are unsafe for the individual and the specific needs of the woman and any children that she may have.

4.3 The refuge assessment will seek to understand the individual's current housing arrangements and will advise the individual of alternative housing options to ensure the individual is fully aware of their options. For example, staying in their own home with orders and safety measures in place. CP can offer a short-term stay in refuge for a woman while orders and safety measures are put in place.

4.4 During the referral assessment, the practitioner will discuss with the individual their responsibility for the rent of the room, including a weekly personal charge payment. The practitioner will also discuss "move on", making it clear that individual will be expected to proactively engage with their "move on" from refuge at the start of their stay and throughout. The individual will need to consider all rehousing options including the private rental sector.

4.5 Having complex or additional needs is not necessarily a barrier to accessing refuge space but additional information may be required to ensure CP is able to effectively and safely manage these needs. If complex or additional needs cannot be met by CP, practitioners will make referrals to partner agencies.

4.6 With the individual's consent, the practitioner will contact other agencies involved in working with the family to seek further information on support needs.

4.7 Where an individual has drug or alcohol issues and a specialist drug and alcohol agency is involved in their care, the agency will be asked to work with the individual and CP to put in place a plan for CP to safely and effectively support the individual with their drug and/or alcohol needs.

4.8 Where an individual has No Recourse to Public Funds, the referring agency will be asked to provide written confirmation of which agency will be responsible for paying the individual's rent (including personal charge) and a weekly income and administration charge before the refuge space can be confirmed.

4.9 Enquiries at referral stage will be made regarding any offending history. Criminal convictions will not be a barrier to accessing refuge space. However, if the referral has a

serious conviction such as GBH/ABH, Arson or Schedule One offences then refuge space will not be offered.

5.0 Offering a Refuge Space

5.1 Following the completion of a refuge assessment, the practitioner will discuss the referral with the Refuge Services manager who will make the final decision on offering the refuge space. In the absence of the Refuge Services manager, another member of the Senior Management Team will make the decision.

5.2 A decision to offer a refuge space will be made on each individual basis and in deciding the manager will consider the following:

- That domestic abuse is the presenting issue
- The level of risk and the types of domestic abuse being experienced
- The geographical area/s that they are most at risk from
- The ability of CP to safely manage any additional/complex needs
- The composition of the women already resident in the refuge and any additional/complex needs that they may have.

5.3 Where domestic abuse is the presenting issue, but the manager considers the risk to be too high for the organisation to safely manage or the individual's needs cannot be safely met, the practitioner will work with the individual referred and/or the referring agency to make a referral to another suitable refuge. This may be outside of the Essex area and is dependent upon refuge space available.

5.4 CP's refuge sites are shared accommodation and are therefore unable to accept women with male children over the age of 14 years old. However, CP are able to accommodate women with male children up to the age of 18 years old (if still in education) within the self-contained dispersed accommodation sites.

5.5 The reasons for a refusal to offer an individual a refuge space will be discussed with the individual and/or referring agency.

5.6 Referrals for a vacant refuge space will be accepted for women resident outside of the refuge local area and will be based on risk levels to keep women and their children safe.

6.0 Making a Referral – Community Based Services

6.1 CP offers community based, outreach support services for women and men experiencing domestic abuse and living within Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Epping Forest, Harlow, and Thurrock.

6.2 Referrals from individuals and agencies will be accepted via email and telephone either via COMPASS 0330 333 7 444, the single point of access for domestic abuse services in Essex, the Duty Line 01268 729 707, the relevant service email address (see 2.3) or by contacting the individual service as detailed in table below.

Outreach Services	01268 729 707
IDVA Services	01268 729 707
Thurrock Brighter Futures	01268 729 707 or 07875 342 015 or 07494 167408
Independent Advocacy & Stalking Service	01268 729 707
EDAPP	07773 088 929

7.0 Risk and Suitability Assessment – Community Based Services

7.1 For all referrals to community-based services, the organisation’s referral form will be completed. An enhanced SafeLives DASH risk assessment will be undertaken and a referral will be made to the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Children’s Social Care if the high-risk MARAC threshold is met.

7.2 If a situation arises where both parties, the victim and alleged perpetrator, present as victims and are both referred to Changing Pathways, then Changing Pathways will work with the first person referred and SafeSteps will work with the second person referred.

SafeSteps helpline for Southend – 01702 302333. SafeSteps 24/7 helpline for Essex – 03303 337444.

7.3 For male victims of domestic abuse, the Respect Toolkit will be completed as part of the assessment in addition to the enhanced SafeLives DASH risk assessment.

7.4 A waiting list will be operated if the demand for a community-based outreach service is higher than can be safely managed by the practitioners working within that service. Where this is the case, the referring agency/individual will be informed at point of referral.

7.5 Cases on a waiting list will be allocated to practitioners on the basis of risk and length of time waiting for support. This does not apply to the Brighter Futures programme.

7.6 The Brighter Futures programme holds a waiting list. This is because service users attending the programme are not deemed to be at risk of imminent and serious harm.

8.0 Counselling Services

8.1 CP operates therapeutic and counselling services as part of its package of support for service users to aid their recovery from DVA.

8.2 An internal referral for therapeutic support can be made by a CP service when the individual's immediate needs have been met. A referral for therapeutic support will not be accepted for an individual who has received less than three support sessions with their key worker.

8.3 Referrals will be placed on a waiting list and will be offered an assessment to assess suitability for therapeutic support. Service users who do not attend their appointment or cancel without good reason will be removed from the waiting list and a new referral will be required if they wish to continue.

8.4 Service users on the waiting list for CP services have been updated. Counselling via telephone has now continued for refuge service users and those service users who were receiving counselling prior to the COVID-19 lockdown.

8.5 Where appropriate, CP can offer a referral to the interim Emotional Wellbeing Service. This service provides service users with continued emotional support from a counsellor.

8.6 Urgent referrals for counselling continue to be accepted.

8.7 Where counselling via telephone has been offered, a safe place for the call to take place will be agreed prior to the sessions taking place.

8.8 Where a referral to the Counselling Service or interim Emotional Wellbeing Service is not possible due to service capacity or is not appropriate due to the service user's needs, service users will be signposted to other therapeutic services in their local area. If they are to remain in service, service users will be provided with continued emotional support by their allocated caseworker.

9.0 Children and Young People (CYP) Services

9.1 All children and young people resident in a CP's refuge will be offered an appointment with the CYP Practitioner to assess their support needs. Where appropriate, the child's mother will be part of the assessment process.

9.2 Following the assessment, specialist therapeutic and safeguarding services will be offered.

10.0 Quality Assurance

10.1 CP's Practitioners will complete an enhanced SafeLives DASH with all service users.

10.2 Regular audits of referrals will be completed by line managers as part of the organisation's quality assurance processes.

10.3 Regular case reviews between practitioner and manager are part of the Supervision and Support Policy.

11.0 Clients leaving the service

When a client leaves the service their case should be closed down.

The client should be informed that their mobile number will be deleted from CP employees' work mobiles; clients should receive the following as a last message:

This is an end of support message.

Due to GDPR regulations, your contact number will now be deleted from our mobile contacts.

If you require future assistance please call 0330 333 7 444 or 01268 729707.

Once this message has been sent, the contact details should be deleted from any work mobile phones and the client's number should be blocked.

In addition to adhering to GDPR regulations, this ensures that clients needing further support from CP will follow the correct procedure in order to have a new case opened, and be allocated an appropriate practitioner.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

This policy is subject to annual review or when significant changes occur

Date	Author	Board Approval	Next Review Date
November 2016	Philippa Ladd	March 2017	November 2017
August 2018	Sue Davis and Zoe Mckee	August 2018	August 2019
February 2021	Kelly Mackenzie	March 2021	February 2022
March 2022	Annabelle Gardner	March 2022	March 2023