ISVA SERVICE: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

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ISVA SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICE PURPOSE

The core purpose of this document is to set out the parameters for managing and delivering the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Service safely, effectively and to a high standard. It sets the minimum standards for Sexual Violence Support Service and works in line with LimeCulture's accreditation programmes.

ISVA Service supports all victims and survivors regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, religious belief, disability or sexual orientation so the language used in this document is gender neutral, whether the recent or non-recent. There is a specific section within this document relating to male victims and survivors.

DEFINITION OF AN INDEPENDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISOR (ISVA)

OneYMCA / Early Childhood Partnership uses LimeCulture's definition:

Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, or ISVAs as they are more commonly known, provide practical and emotional support to victims of sexual violence. The support provided by an ISVA will vary from case to case, depending on the needs of the victim and their circumstances. However, the main role of an ISVA includes making sure that have experienced sexual assault/abuse have the best advice on:

- counselling and other appropriate services available to them;
- the process involved in reporting a crime to the police;
- taking their case through the criminal justice process, should they choose to do so.

KEY PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING ISVA SUPPORT

- ISVAs are independent from other agencies and act as the voice of the survivor;
- ISVAs focus on safety and risk;
- ISVAs focus on improving outcomes for survivors;
- ISVAs advocating for survivors through the criminal justice system;
- ISVAs will completing and review safety and support (SAS) plans.

Throughout your support, your ISVA will be honest, clear and encourage you to access other appropriate support services as required.

ISVA SERVICE – OUR AIMS:

- the organisations aim and objectives are provided within ISVA client agreement document;
- the organisations strategic plan is available;
- the organisations policies and procedures are available via our website or can be provided a format requested by service user;
- service users will be encouraged to provide feedback and engage in service review via the client feedback form;
- feedback will be sought from clients regarding marketing inclusivity;
- to work with all clients in a trauma-informed way to help the try and understand what their own personal experiences.

REFERRALS

Referrals for ISVA support are accepted either via professionals or self-referrals by emailing ISVABeds@oneymca.org or by calling 0300 002 0004. A safe, convenient time will be arranged with survivors so they feel able to speak with a member of the team.

IDVA / ISVA – PROVISION

Where domestic abuse has been identified we will work with the local IDVA Service who will take the lead on high risk and cases that are referred to MARAC for initial risk assessment and safety planning work to be completed. ISVA Service provide ongoing support after this time if required.

SERVICE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The ISVA Service covers Luton Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough.

All our ISVAs work with:

- those who have experienced sexual violence and/or abuse whether recent or non-recent;
- all people, of any age and all genders;
- those with previous convictions or ongoing investigations of a sexual nature are still eligible for ISVA support, however, the way in which we work with you will be reviewed and amended to ensure the safety of staff. If it is deemed is not the appropriate service we will signpost / refer to an alternative, more suitable service.

MALE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

ISVA Service will provide support to male victims and survivors and understand that this particular group may take longer to engage with support. We will use flexible working practices to ensure male victims and survivors feel empowered to choose how they engage with the service. Male victims and survivors will be, wherever possible, offered the option of having a male ISVA.

ALLOCATION PATHWAY

ISVA Service aim to provide initial contact with new clients within 5 working days of referral, or sooner. The ISVA Lead will:

- check diversity requirements to establish any survivor preferences, our goal will be to allocate an ISVA based on any preferences wherever possible.
- allocate the referral to an ISVA, considering appropriate skill sets/training;
- check whether there are any conflicts of interest;
- ensure client records are kept up-to-date on our secure, electronic database;
- contact the referrer if more clarification is needed about the case or about any identified pre-existing risk factors;
- email referrer to confirm receipt of referral.

FIRST CONTACT

The allocated ISVA will make contact in a way they feel is appropriate whilst considering the client's preferred method of communication stated on the referral form.

Contact will be attempted via text on initial contact (if safe to do so). The further 4 attempts will be by various methods including further texts, telephone calls, email or via referrer if proving difficult to establish contact. Contact attempts will be at varying times of the day to factor in work schedules, school drop off/pick-ups, etc.

We understand that contacting clients can increase risk, so careful consideration is given when attempting any contact – especially initial contact.

EXPLAINATION OF OUR SERVICE OFFER AND POLICY

Prior to support starting the allocated ISVA will provide an explanation of the services offered and the purpose of:

- risk and needs assessment;
- safety planning;
- support through report to police and the criminal justice system (where relevant);
- advocating and co-ordinating with other agencies on their behalf, if appropriate or required;
- referring to talk therapies, where appropriate;
- ISVA Complaints Policy and procedure;

Clients engaging with the ISVA Service will be central to their support planning throughout their engagement with the service.

Clients who decline support from ISVA Service will receive a feedback request as follows by Microsoft Forms, text or telephone call:

‘ ISVA Service is continually seeking ways to improve the support we offer to victims and survivors. Please could you give us an indication of why you chose not to work with us at this time:

1) Support not wanted at this time
2) I changed my mind about wanting support
3) I did not agree to the referral
4) I have been waiting too long for support to start
5) Other: please state_____

INITIAL ISVA ASSESSMENT

The initial assessment is an opportunity for the allocated ISVA to:

- introduce themselves and the service / discuss the Privacy Notice and Consent forms;
- establish how the client wishes to receive their support considering their circumstances, their wishes and the best method/time of contact;
- discuss support options;
- create a Safety and Support (SAS) / Child and Young Person Safety and Support plan (CYP SAS) with the client, which will be regularly reviewed.

CONSENT

In agreeing to the initial referral being made, the client is giving implied consent for the ISVA to discuss details of the case with the referrer. Consent will be discussed at initial assessment and reviewed throughout the client’s engagement with the service.

The allocated ISVA will send the client our ISVA Client Agreement via text or email.

If the client is a child or young person the allocated ISVA will have an initial conversation with the parent, guardian or carer to explain the service prior to meeting with the child or young person. The allocated ISVA will send the parent, carer or guardian the link to the ISVA Service Agreement for Parent/Guardian.

CASE MANAGEMENT

OneYMCA / Early Childhood Partnership recognises effective case management underpins all ISVA case work and staff supervision. The ISVA Lead will conduct supervision with ISVAs. Case management ensures that individual cases are monitored and any issues identified.

The overall purpose of case management is to:

- monitor and evaluate work performance;
- clarify priorities and targets;
- asses if the correct assessment tool is in place;
- explore the need for external referrals, and record those completed;
- review and ensure the client's voice is captured within work completed;
- ensure the case record is current, consistent and standardised;
- identify gaps and monitor quality by regular dip sample reviews;
- share information about work;
- recognise and deal with potential and existing issues;
- provide support as part of professional development;
- monitor length of support being offered to a family.

SUPERVISION OF ISVAs

If an ISVA is working towards an accredited qualification additional supervision will be be provided by the ISVA Lead.

LINE MANAGEMENT – SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

The ISVA Lead reports to the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Service Manager.

CLOSING CASES

The length of ISVA intervention is usually determined by the particular package of support and the way it is being delivered. The ISVA will ensure that the client is fully aware of how long the ISVA will be working with them. The last visit will not be an unexpected event and will be discussed, and agreed, with the client.

The ISVA will take steps to:

- consult with their ISVA Lead during case supervision about the appropriate time to close a case;
- remind the client at the appropriate time that the last session is due;
- consider, as appropriate, signposting to other services;
- when closing a case, review the SAS for uncompleted actions;
- complete a closing summary;
- ensure that all case notes are up to date and complete;
- notify the referrer that the case has been closed;
- create a case study in those cases that present learning opportunities for other staff, or where exceptional practice has resulted in excellent outcomes.
- Complete the final client feedback survey. This can be used with an adult or child/young person (or their parent)

RECORD KEEPING

The following information is routinely recorded:

- referrals made to other agencies;
- professional meetings such as CIN, CP, ICPC and MARAC;
- a record of any contact with the client or other agencies;
- letters and emails that have been sent;
- any appointments with clients;
- any attendance at external meetings in relation to the client;
- complete actions arising from multiagency setting;

- important, relevant dates, e.g., court dates, trial dates, case conferences;
- incoming letters and emails will be recorded.

SAFETY AND SUPPORT PLAN (SAS)

Your ISVA will, alongside you, complete a Safety and Support (SAS) plan to allow us to:

- jointly identify, monitor and manage your individual risks and/ needs;
- create a safety and support plan that is flexible and tailored to your specific circumstances. It will be led by you and tailored to meet your individual needs. It will be reviewed regularly and will provide clarity about the nature of support the ISVA will provide.

We have adapted the safety and support plan for children and young people which is session based and can be completed in a school or other setting. In addition to this the ISVA will obtain essential information from the parent or carer before beginning work with the child or young person.

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Client support and safety is central to any multiagency working the ISVA service does. The ISVA Service operates within a coordinated community response that includes both strategic and operational responses and a commitment to engage with, and participate in, all relevant groups and partnerships.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CONFERENCES

ISVA may be required to attend children and young people conferences to give their professional judgement about the case that they have been allocated.

- ISVAs attendance at conferences will be based on what is the safest practice for the victim/survivor;
- ISVAs will give their professional opinion and contribute fully to the process. The ISVA explain their role at the meeting to you prior to attending the meeting;
- It is the statutory responsibility of the chair to make any decision based on the information provided at the conference.

SAFEGUARDING

ISVAs work within a multiagency framework, and in compliance with OneYMCA / Early Childhood Partnership Child and Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures. The ISVAs work with both adults and children. It is expected that the referring agency will notify Children's / Adult's Services if they consider you or your children to be at risk.

The ISVA Service records any safeguarding concerns internally and uses My Concern to record our own safeguarding concerns internally. A report must be completed on this system in addition to any external local authority safeguarding alerts raised.

Reporting Vulnerable Adult Abuse

The three areas covered by ISVA Service - Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council – all have the same form to complete, the link is:

- SV1 latest version.docx (live.com)

Reporting Child Abuse

- Luton Borough Council: Referral to Children's Social Care - professional - Luton Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council: Bic 100 Children's Services Referral Form Guidance (centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)
- Bedford Borough Council: Report a concern about a child (bedford.gov.uk)

ISVA staff regularly attend safeguarding training in line with LSCB and internal practice requirements, which is usually within 3 years. Staff raise any safeguarding concerns with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the relevant form will be completed by the ISVA.

The ISVA Service must make a referral to social services where there is:

- a new concern identified that a child/vulnerable adult may be at risk of significant harm; or
- a known child/vulnerable adult is identified for the first time; or
- an escalation of concern about risk level.

SUPPORT AT COURT

CAB, Witness service:

Your ISVA will work closely with the CAB Witness Service to that you receive (if wanted):

- a pre-trial visit;
- support during the trial;
- appropriate post-trial support;
- liaison with Witness Service, arranging safe arrival at court, and for separate entrance and waiting facilities to be provided, where available.

Criminal courts

Where ISVAs attend court to support you, the minimum you can expect is:

- an update and explanation of court results, including sentencing decision;
- advice on your options including:
- feedback to the Witness Care Unit and or the Officer in Charge (OIC) regarding:
    - any Special Measures required – screens, video link and live link;
    - pre-trial visit;
    - restraining order requests
    - a separate exit (where available).

Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC)

Your ISVA will liaise with the Court IDVA Service to make sure you have appropriate support in place.

Civil & Family Courts

Support may be provided within the Civil and Family Court although the ISVA cannot act as a legal representation, however the judge may ask for ISVA input. The support provided at civil court is similar to the practice in the criminal court. The ISVA will:

- safety plan with the client to enable them to attend court;
- provide emotional and moral support;
- advise on court procedure;
- liaise with partner agencies including solicitors, Children and Families Court Advisory Support Services (CAFCASS), or court officials with the consent of the client.

ISVA TRAINING AND INDUCTION

ISVAs hold a nationally recognised qualification. If they do not hold the qualification they will be provided LimeCulture ISVA training.

ISVAs will receive:

- an induction package of training;
- opportunities for peer learning and observational training;
- any other training relevant to the role;
- ISVA qualification certificates are available on request from the ISVA Lead – via our email: ISVABeds@oneymca.org.