

REFERRAL GUIDELINES

ADULT OUTREACH SERVICE

These guidelines are designed to assist with referrals to Harbour's adult outreach services and should be read alongside the referral form.

The Outreach service works with women and men who have or are experiencing domestic abuse. Outreach workers devise support plans with each client to tailor the service to their needs. This incorporates risk assessment and safety strategies as many clients are still living with or have recently left the abusive partner.

HARBOUR OUTREACH SERVICES

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE REFERRAL PROCESS

In all dealings with referring organisations, Harbour seeks to be positive and transparent and expects the same from those making referrals. Harbour requires as much information as is known during the referral process to ensure the correct decision is made on the referral for the benefit of the individual.

A referrer should expect an update or response from Harbour no more than 3 working days after making the referral, if this is not received then the referrer is advised to check that the referral has been received.

Harbour's **eligibility criteria** are:

- a. The applicant must 16 years or older.
- b. The applicant must be either fleeing domestic violence, still living with domestic violence, or have experienced domestic violence in the past
- c. Where a person presents with complex needs, Harbour must believe that it can effectively support the person with the issues arising from the domestic violence
- d. The applicant should not present a risk to Harbour's employees

a) Age of applicant

In some circumstances, Harbour may signpost persons aged 16 or 17 to the Children & Young People's service (where available).

b) Domestic violence

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”*

*This definition includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

The Outreach Service operates principally for women and men who are experiencing domestic violence and would like support in coping with its effects, keeping safe and support through the criminal justice process.

c) Complex Needs

Where an applicant has a range of complex needs, in particular addictive behaviours and/or mental health issues, Harbour needs to make a judgement whether it can effectively support the individual with their experiences of domestic violence. The balance of this judgement rests with whether the individual can demonstrate that they are functioning independently in their daily life, in which case they should be able to benefit from Harbour's support services.

d) Risk to Harbour Employees

See Section 8 below.

The following notes refer to the corresponding sections of the referral form:

1. THE REFERRER

Please indicate the time and date of the referral, this enables Harbour to monitor the time taken for referrals to be processed.

2. BACKGROUND

3. INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL DETAILS

Please provide as much information as possible.

4. PERPETRATOR'S DETAILS

Please provide as much information as possible.

5. CHILDREN'S DETAILS

Please provide as much information as possible.

6. PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT WITH HARBOUR

Please provide as much information as possible.

7. KEY AGENCIES WORKING WITH THE FAMILY

Harbour uses information about the individual's background and any agencies working with the family to carry out an initial risk assessment. A member of staff may contact any of these agencies to obtain background information.

An individual who has been violent towards a staff member of these agencies is unlikely to be offered a place within the Harbour Outreach service.

8. OTHER INFORMATION

The purpose of asking about criminal convictions is to enable Harbour to assess the risk presented by this individual to others and Harbour staff.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 places restrictions on the information Harbour can require to have disclosed. This Act defines the period of rehabilitation for criminal sentences, after which it is considered spent. The details are complicated but the key aspects are:

- Any prison sentence over 2.5 years never becomes spent
- Most sentences become spent after 5 years
- Prison sentences up to 6 months are spent after 7 years
- Prison sentences between 6 months and 2.5 years are spent after 10 years.
- Rehabilitation periods are halved if the person is under 18 when convicted.

Harbour may choose to not support an individual who has a history or predilection for violence or arson.

Information about secondary issues enables Harbour to ensure the individual meets section c) of the eligibility criteria, in other words that their primary support need is related to domestic violence and not another issue.

Other relevant information may relate to the individual's experiences or any special requirements they have.

Cultural/Faith/Language Needs

The referrer should provide any relevant information about specific needs and requirements of the individual in line with their culture or faith. Wherever possible, Harbour will endeavour to meet these needs, with assistance from other agencies as appropriate.

If an individual speaks no English whatsoever, it will be difficult for Harbour to support them. If they have some knowledge of English, then assistance can be brought in as required to ensure clear communication between Harbour staff and the individual.

9. CONFIRMATION

Please sign to confirm that you read and understood the declaration. If the form is emailed, this will be taken as a signed form.

10. DECISION ON REFERRAL

Harbour staff will make a decision on each referral based on the information provided, taking account of the needs of existing service users and consulting a Manager where the circumstances are complex.

Where the decision is that the individual cannot be offered support, Harbour always provides a reason for this decision.

APPEALING DECISIONS

If the referrer or the individual disagrees with the decision, the appeals procedure involves contacting the Service Manager in the first instance to express why the decision not to support should be reviewed again.

If this does not lead to a resolution to the satisfaction of all parties, then a formal appeal should be made to the Chief Executive of Harbour, in writing, explaining clearly why the decision is disputed.

The Chief Executive will respond to such appeals, in writing, within five working days. Further information about the appeals procedure can be obtained by calling 03000 20 25 25 or e-mailing feedback@myharbour.org.uk