

SOUTH LIVERPOOL DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES (SLDAS)

Volunteer Information Pack

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for SLDAS. Please find enclosed a volunteer training pack, which will hopefully provide information about working as a volunteer for the project.

The date for our next training course and closing date for applications is to be confirmed. Applications will be processed in order of receipt.

Contents of this pack

- Domestic Violence Awareness
- Organisation's Background/ Aims & Objectives
- Type of Service Offered
- The Key Role of Volunteers, Task Description, Person Specification
- Volunteer Confidentiality
- Volunteer Training Aims & Objectives
- Volunteer Training Programme
- Volunteer Application Form
- Organisation Leaflet

I would be grateful if you would read this information, fill in the application form and return to:

**Women's Advice Centre
Bridge Chapel Centre
Heath Road
Liverpool. L19 4XR**

Or by email to finance@sldas.co.uk

If you have any problems completing the application form and would like help, please contact me 0151 494 1777 to discuss the matter further, or to arrange an appointment to come in and complete the form, as I will be happy to assist.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you once again for your interest in volunteering for SLDAS.

Many Thanks

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Domestic Violence Awareness

What is Domestic violence?

We use the term domestic violence to describe the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person (usually a woman)

By another (usually a man)

With whom they have or have had a close or intimate relationship.

Domestic Violence is abusive or controlling behavior which is used most frequently by men to maintain power over 'their' women however violence can also be directed towards children other family members, and friends of the woman herself.

Controlling and abusive behavior can also occur in lesbian and gay relationships and in a small number of cases, by women against men.

You have the right to live free from violence and fear. You may feel humiliated, frightened, ashamed, alone and confused – but you are not to blame. Domestic Violence is very common: it can happen to any woman, regardless of her age, social class, race, disability or lifestyle.

Domestic Violence can start at any point in a relationship, even many years after you first met. However, research shows that formal marriage, pregnancy or childbirth can sometimes signal the beginning of abuse. Domestic Violence is rarely a one-off event.

Physical Violence often escalates in frequency and severity over time. However, the violence can take many forms and even though the physical or sexual abuse may not happen regularly, other forms of abusive or controlling behaviour may be ongoing, so that you always feel off-balance or anxious about your relationship. Even when a woman leaves a violent man, the abuse may continue afterwards through unwanted contact, sometimes over arrangements for children.

Although every situation is unique, there are some common behaviors that link the experience of an abusive relationship. Acknowledging that you are in an abusive relationship is an important step in preventing and stopping the violence. All forms of abuse – psychological economic, emotional, sexual and physical – come from the abuser's desire to maintain power and control over another person.

The following list of abusive and violent behaviours is often part of domestic violence. They can help you recognize if you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship.

Destructive criticism and verbal abuse: shouting; mocking; accusing; name calling; saying you are ugly, stupid, worthless or useless; constant criticism.

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Pressure Tactics: Threatening to withhold money, disconnect the telephone, take the car away, commit suicide, take the children away, report you to the welfare agencies unless you do what he says, lying to your friends and family about you, saying you have no choice in any decisions.

Disrespect: Persistently putting you down in front of other people; not listening or responding when you talk; interrupting your telephone calls; taking money from your purse without asking; refusing to help with childcare or housework.

Breaking Trust: Lying to you; withholding information from you; being jealous; having other relationships; breaking promises and shared agreements.

Isolation: Monitoring or blocking your telephone calls; telling you where you can and cannot go; preventing you from seeing friends and relatives; making you a prisoner in your own home.

Harassment: Following you; checking up on you; opening your mail; repeatedly dialling 1471 to see who has telephoned you.

Threats: Making angry gestures; using physical size to intimidate; wielding a knife or a gun; threatening to kill or harm you, your children, or your friends and family.

Sexual violence: Using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts, having sex with you when you don't want to have sex; sexual degradation; forcing you to have sex in front of others; forced sado-masochistic practices.

Physical violence: Denying you food, warmth or sleep; keeping you locked up; punching; slapping; hitting; biting; pinching; kicking; pulling your hair out; pushing; shoving; burning; strangling; raping, beating – often leading to permanent injuries and sometimes death.

Denial: Saying the abuse doesn't happen; saying you caused the abusive behaviour; being publicly gentle and patient, but privately violent; crying and begging forgiveness; saying it will never happen again.

Everyone has the right to be safe in their own home, yet tens of thousands of women and children in this country are regularly subjected to intimidation and violence.

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Organisation's Background

The idea of a domestic violence project for the Speke and Garston areas developed out of discussions at the Speke Garston partnership's Community Safety Working Group, focussing on the following strategic objective *"to improve the quality of life of local people by tackling crime & improving community safety"*. At the same time, domestic violence was developing a higher profile in the locality & had been identified as one of the key areas of community concern by residents & agencies working in the area.

Speke Garston Domestic Violence Project was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in May 1998 & registered as a charity in September 1998. In January 2011 we changed the Projects name to South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services.

Who Are We?

South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services is an independent charity, run by a group of trustees. The membership of these groups includes women who live locally as well as women who work for relevant voluntary or statutory organisations.

The project is committed to recruiting more local women onto the Board of Trustees, with the aim of becoming an organisation run *"by local women for local women"*. However, we recognise that this is a long-term aim requiring positive action in recruitment, induction & training.

What Are Our Aims?

The project's long-term aims are:

- To enable & support women in the Speke, Garston & wider south Liverpool areas to live their lives free from violence abuse & fear.
- To empower local communities to challenge violence against women & children whenever & wherever it occurs.
- To participate in the regeneration of the Speke & Garston areas by taking a lead in tackling violence against women & raising awareness of this as a key approach in addressing issues of community safety, health & economic regeneration.

What Do We Mean by "Domestic Violence"?

South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services operates within a working definition that identifies violence & abuse towards women – whether physical, sexual, emotional, financial or psychological - as the misuse of male power.

What Type of Services Do We Offer?

The project offers information, emotional & practical support, advocacy, counselling & self-development opportunities to women who are or have experienced violence from a partner, ex-partner or other person they know. Volunteers play a key role in making these services possible. The organisation provides:

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- **Impartial Information:** information on a range of issues including; legal matters, housing, welfare benefits, child access/custody, & opportunities for training & education. Signposting to appropriate agencies including refuge/safe accommodation.
- **Advocacy:** when necessary we will be the voice of women, particularly in attendance at MARAC & other professional meetings:
- *Throughout this process, the project works with women to develop strategies to increase their self-esteem & confidence in a capacity building manner.*
- **Support:** The experience of domestic violence for women is one that reduces self-esteem & confidence. Women often become very isolated as a result of their partner's violence: in some cases, this is enforced isolation, while in other cases women retreat from social situations due to self-blame & low self-esteem. Therefore, the project works with women to rebuild their self-esteem through emotional, moral & practical support.
- **Informal One-to-One Support:** This service includes the provision of one-to-one support & a listening ear, crisis planning, telephone support & capacity building with a woman; these services are ongoing as requested.
- **Formal Counselling:** This is available if identified by a woman as one of her needs & will include the provision of an agreed number of sessions over a specified period of time.
- **Groups:** SLDAS facilitates self-help groups for women who have experienced domestic violence. Group sessions include informal training, group counselling & talk time. Structured groups are also run including the Freedom Programme, assertiveness, self-esteem building, Harmony etc.

What Approach Does the Organisation Take?

SLDAS is committed to taking a holistic approach in developing & delivering services & activities which:

- Are independent & confidential
- Are accessible to all women
- Are locally based & reflect the range of locally identified needs
- Build women's self-esteem & adopt a capacity-building approach
- Encourage & support user involvement in all aspects of operation, management & development
- Build on consultation & collaboration with local agencies
- Are sustainable in the long term.

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Where Are These Services Based?

The organisation operates from a drop-in centre within the Bridge Chapel Centre, Garston. The Project also provides services on an outreach & drop in basis within Speke, Garston & the wider South Liverpool area. A sensitive service for women providing crisis intervention when required has been developed. A self-help group & a women's support group run weekly within the drop-in centre.

The Key Role of Volunteers

South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services recognises & appreciates the key role that volunteers play within the project & seeks to create rewarding opportunities for volunteers.

Volunteer Roles

- Providing informal information, advice & support to women who attend the project's outreach sessions;
- Providing advocacy support to women who have contacted the project
- Providing counselling support to women (trained counsellors or student counsellors only);
- Assisting with the development & distribution of publicity materials;
- Assisting with project administration;
- Contributing to the overall development of the project by becoming a trustee or member of the project's Advisory Group.

What Is Required to Become a Volunteer?

Prospective volunteers need to demonstrate the following:

- Commitment to the projects aims & values, including its woman-centred, empowerment approach.
- A positive attitude & commitment to work with women of any age, ethnic origin, culture, sexuality or disability in line with the project's Equal Opportunities & Confidentiality Policies.
- Empathy & a non-judgemental attitude towards women who have experienced violence from a partner-ex-partner or other person known to them.
- Basic listening skills & non-directive communication skills.
- Willingness & ability to participate in the full volunteer training programme & acceptance that this will involve an element of assessment.
- Willingness & ability to participate in further training & supervision provided by the organisation.
- A minimum commitment of 2 hours per week over a 6-month period

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- Ordinarily, Trustees will occupy one role at any given time for the purpose of maintaining clarity for staff, service users and members. Therefore, volunteers becoming trustees would cease to be active in the delivery of services, and trustees who opt to support day-to-day service delivery will stand down as trustees. There may be instances whereby a person occupying two roles is advantageous for the organisation, and so if this is deemed to be the case the Board reserves the right to review this on a case by case basis, and for a limited period only. *

Expenses

Volunteers may claim travel, subsistence & any other out of pocket expenses: payment towards childcare will be dependent on availability of funding at start of course

Training

Volunteers must:

Complete & pass the SLDAS Open Awards Volunteer Training Programme

Level 1 (for counselling volunteers) Level 2 (for volunteer support workers)

(Social Work students who complete a placement at SLDAS (35 days and above) will be encouraged to attend the Volunteer Training Programme above, however if this is not possible, these students may be eligible to volunteer for SLDAS after the end of their placement at the discretion of the Services Co-ordinators

All volunteers must complete Level 1 Safeguarding Children Training

Volunteers will be encouraged to attend appropriate ongoing training sessions, in-house & externally.

Support

Potential volunteers have an initial meeting at SLDAS to assess any specific training /special needs that need to be addressed so that as many women as possible can access training & volunteer work. Childcare, hours, academic support or mobility access etc. may limit women's chances to participate in voluntary work so SLDAS strives to overcome these barriers & advocate social & economic inclusion wherever possible.

During volunteer training regular evaluations of progress are carried out to support potential volunteers throughout.

On completion of training volunteers are offered one-to-one support sessions with the services Co-ordinators on a regular basis. There will also be quarterly meetings of all volunteers.

*Amendment added 05/08/20

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Volunteer Task Description

SLDAS Volunteers will be expected to:

- Have completed the SLDAS volunteer training course.
- Ensure that all work is conducted in line with SLDAS policies & philosophy.
- Support & apply confidentiality & equal opportunities policies.
- Take active responsibility for the provision of the services offered.
- Attend meetings & support sessions on a regular basis.

- Attend recommended external training in order to develop personally & professionally.
- Be responsible to the Services Co-Ordinators

SLDAS Volunteers roles may include:

- The provision of information, advice & support to women who attend the project.
- The provision of advocacy to women who have contacted the project.
- Assisting with the development & distribution of publicity materials.
- Assisting with project administration.
- Raising awareness of domestic violence by facilitating training sessions to external groups.

Volunteer Person Specification

Essential Skills:

- Awareness of the inequalities that face women in society.
- Commitment to empowering women.
- Empathy towards women who experience or have experienced domestic violence.
- A non-judgemental attitude.
- A commitment to reliability & punctuality.
- Enthusiasm & motivation.
- A willingness to undertake appropriate training.

Desirable Skills:

- The ability to challenge the oppression of women & children.
- Communication skills.
- Awareness of confidentiality issues.
- Awareness of equal opportunity issues.

Confidentiality Policy

This information is a condensed version of the Project's confidentiality policy. The comprehensive version of this policy is located within the volunteer policy file at the Bridge Chapel Office.

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Confidentiality is a safety issue for South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services. The principle of the policy is to promote the right of the individual. SLDAS is committed to maintaining high standards of confidentiality in all aspects of its work. This includes records & information pertaining to management, employees, volunteers & service users. Breaches of confidentiality may jeopardise the well being of staff, volunteer or client & will be subject to disciplinary action.

Absolute Confidentiality Is Essential at All Times:

- The identity of service users must be protected at all times unless the woman has given her permission to speak to a related agency. Where there are issues surrounding child abuse/protection, supervision & guidance are paramount. Volunteers must relate any suspicion, worries to the services co-ordinators
- It may be a life and death issue for women & children using the service.
- Anybody & everybody may break confidentiality.
- Bragging, gossip, power games & access may lead to breaks in confidentiality. Poor statistical reporting/monitoring, record keeping, lack of written policies, passing messages, meetings, other agencies, DWP procedure, school records, electoral registers etc. etc.

Basic Rules to Remember:

- We must protect the identity of women service users.
- Remember: always ask yourself: who really needs information, what do they need to know, have you permission to give information.
- Check the comprehensive confidentiality policy or a member of staff if you are in doubt about disclosure of any details.
- Confidentiality in training & while working with women must be maintained at all times.
- We must never speak to anybody outside the project about service users.

Once again this policy only forms the basis of the Projects' Confidentiality Policy. All terms & conditions are fully outlined in the comprehensive policy. This policy must be adhered to rigorously to enable the project to maintain & build upon a reputation of trust and respect.

Volunteer Equal Opportunities Policy

Equal Opportunities Statement:

The work of South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services is rooted in feminism; a philosophy, which recognises gender based inequality.

In seeking to redress this inequality, there has to be recognition of the many ways in which groups or individuals are discriminated against within society.

It is not the intention of SLDAS to provide an exhausting list of those who experience discrimination, as this is considered hierarchical and potentially oppressive in itself. We strive to eradicate such practice.

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It is the aim of SLDAS that no individual should feel discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment on any grounds, whether that individual is a paid or unpaid worker or a service user.

SLDAS aims to continue to address ways in which the service can be made accessible to as many people as possible. SLDAS recognises that, as a voluntary agency, there may be constraints, usually financial, on the implementation of anti-discriminatory measures. This is not to say that the agency views those constraints acceptable.

It is considered practical to begin to effect change where we can and to set targets that are realistic & achievable.

This policy is intended to be an active one. The collective has identified this plan as the most effective way forward ensuring the implementation of any Equal Opportunities Policy.

For further information, the SLDAS comprehensive EOP policy is located in the volunteer policy file.

Volunteer Training Course

Aims and Objectives

The course will be participative in nature with some formal input from professionals. The emphasis will, however, be on experimental learning & self-directed learning.

Aims purpose

To facilitate training, further develop personal interaction skills, personal growth & awareness of self & others within the training relationship.

To provide learners with the skills, knowledge & attributes necessary to enable them to work with women who have or are experiencing violence in a proficient manner, therefore, capable & safe with their respective groups.

To provide training in a manner, which is experiential & self-directed, therefore, highly relevant to those working directly with women who are or have experienced violence from a person they know.

Primary Objectives Include:

- Development of a sound understanding of Domestic Violence & its impact on women & children's lives.
- Promoting self-awareness.
- Practice of interactive & interpersonal skills.
- Progression to on going training.
- Enhancing personal effectiveness in skills & qualities in order to enable women who use the service to manage problems more effectively.

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The initial training programme will cover the following:

- The prevalence, nature and effects of violence against women & children from a known man
- Links with other forms of abuse e.g.-bullying, alcohol/drug abuse;
- Compounding factors in violence against women - relating to ethnicity, age, disability &/or sexuality;
- Range of options open to women & their consequences;
- Legal framework - civil & criminal legal processes: the procedure of Police and courts:
- When & how to refer on for other specialist advice;
- Basic housing rights & local housing policy relating to domestic violence;
- Safety/crisis planning;
- Role & services provided by local refuges, Merseyside Sexual Assault Project, Voice for Change & other domestic violence projects;
- SLDAS project policies on: equal opportunities, confidentiality, referrals, contact methods & safety, boundaries & complaints & grievances;
- SLDAS organizational structure i.e.- Board of Trustees, & Advisory Group.

Timetable

Training times are negotiable & planning sessions will very much depend on how flexible we can make them to suit the majority of potential volunteers. The course is accredited by OpenAwards, three credits at level 1 & three credits at level 2. The course therefore takes 21 hours for the level one unit entitled 'Domestic Violence Awareness' & 30 hours for the level two unit entitled 'Supporting Women & Children'.

Unit 1 – Domestic Violence Awareness is run over 5 weeks

Unit 2 – Supporting Women and Children is run over 7 weeks

The training is normally run between 9.30 – 2.30 but times can be flexible to suit the group. We can also facilitate evening training programmes, depending on the demand for an evening course.

NB: there will be a 2 week break between unit 1 and 2

After each unit is completed a workshop will be held the following week which is optional attendance & is to allow learners to consolidate their knowledge from the previous weeks,

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discuss what they have learnt with other learners & complete any outstanding work to bring their folders up to date.

Please now complete the volunteer application & Equal Opportunities form

We look forward to hearing from you.