



INTRODUCTION TO THE FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

The Floating Support Service provides support, within the community, to women who are experiencing or have experienced Domestic Violence/Abuse.

Services can include:

- Home Visits
- One-to-one support
- Information services
- Support to access justice
- Advocacy with statutory and non-statutory organisations

This service is funded through the NIHE (Supporting People) and designed to prevent women from becoming homeless as a result of domestic violence/abuse and to support them in maintaining their tenancies or to establish new tenancies.

The main aim is to help those women with special or complex need, specific to their domestic abuse situation, to maintain, sustain or re-establish their homes.

NOTE: Due to COVID restriction home visits have been suspended but one to one support will still be provided by telephone or any other means as appropriate

The main areas of focus are:

Safety Planning:

- Addressing safety and security needs
- Accompanying service users to solicitors or court as required.
- Informing women of the legislative framework regarding domestic violence.
- Linking women into existing community services such as crime prevention schemes

Housing Advice/Tenancy Issues:

- Information to support identification of appropriate new tenancy to respond to immediate or long-term needs
- Liaison with NIHE, Housing Associations, Private rental sector, emergency accommodation providers including refuge to respond to immediate or long-term needs
- Ensuring appropriate resettlement service in the event of 'move on' – either setting up home independently or having moved out of Refuge.
- Explaining terms and conditions of tenancy agreements
- Supporting women to sustain and maintain existing housing.
- Encouraging and supporting improvement of life skills

Money Management:

- Support to access Welfare/Housing Benefits
- Budgeting
- Rent issues/Arrears
- Bills/Debt management

Crisis Intervention/ Risk management:

- Monitoring and responding to crisis
- Ongoing Risk Assessments and reviews in respect of support services and exit plans
- Advocating for women who lack confidence in dealing with other people and organisations
- Referral and signposting to other specialist agencies (voluntary and statutory) as required and appropriate
- Referral and signposting to other Causeway & Mid-Ulster services that will support needs of service user and or service user child(ren)

The floating support service can only be successful if the service user engages with their support worker. We recognise that because of the personal circumstances of service users this engagement can sometimes be difficult. If we are unable to contact a service user on 3 occasions or there has been 3 missed appointments, the support worker will raise this with their line manager and the case may be closed. Disengagement will not preclude future support and we will welcome future contact. Subsequent contact from the service user will be treated as a new referral and we cannot guarantee that the same support worker will be allocated.

Floating Support Project: Useful Information

Support File

Once accepted onto the Floating Support Service at Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid we will compile a file containing all your Support Plans and Risk Assessments held in a secure online data system.

- On initial contact your support worker will advise you of the support that is available, ask you for information about your situation and what outcomes you wish to work towards. They will then help you to assess any current needs and risks to you and your children and identify what steps need to be taken to address these issues. This will be recorded on your individual Risk Assessment and Support Plan.
- Individual Risk Assessments and Support Plans will be agreed and signed by you and your Floating Support Worker. It is important that you do not sign anything which you do not agree with and that you ensure that the Floating Support worker is aware if you are not in agreement.
- Your individual Risk Assessment will be reviewed every three months however if within that 3-month period there is a change in your circumstances which affects a current risk or creates a new risk your risk assessment will be updated at that time. Your Support Plan will also be updated at this time if relevant.
- You can request a review of your Risk Assessment or Support Plan at any time.
- It is important that you inform the Floating Support Worker of any change in your circumstances or any incident which might affect levels of risk to yourself, your family or a member of staff.

While receiving support you can receive a copy of your Risk Assessment and Support Plan at any time. After exiting the service you can receive copies of records through the Subject Access Request process.

NOTE: Due to COVID restrictions verbal agreement will be noted on electronic files

Data Protection & Privacy Notice

When you start working with your support worker you will be asked to agree and sign a Privacy Notice. This explains what information we will hold about you and how we will use it. You have the right to request copies of your case file at any time. This is called a Subject Access Request. Details of how to get a copy of your file are outlined in the Data Protection Policy & Procedures. Your support worker or any other member of staff will be able to help you with this if required

Your file will be held for 5 years from date of exiting support and then will be destroyed.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Data Protection Policy & Procedures please ask a member of staff.

Confidentiality Policy & Adult Safeguarding and Child Protection

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid operates a confidentiality policy which ensures that all work carried out with the Floating Support Worker is confidential unless permission is given otherwise. Names will be omitted where possible and codes used instead. It is important to note that under our Adult Safeguarding and our Child Protection Policy confidentiality cannot be maintained should the worker become aware of any information which could indicate that an adult/ child is at risk of harm or in need of protection.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's:

- **Confidentiality Policy & Procedures**
- **Adult Safeguarding Policy & Procedures**
- **Child Protection Policy & Procedures**

please ask a member of staff.

Equal Opportunities

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and equal access for women and children to all services and equal treatment in respect of the quality of services provided regardless of:

- Perceived Religious or Political Affiliation
- Marital or Family Status
- Caring Responsibilities
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Nationality
- Race or Ethnic Origin

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Equal Opportunities Policies & Procedures please ask a member of staff.

Protection from Abuse

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid is committed to protecting all women and children who use our services from abuse. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly, offensively or in a way that makes you feel unsafe (either verbally or through the action of any member of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's staff or another service user) then we consider this to be potentially abusive and would take the matter very seriously. If you do have any concerns the matter should be reported to your support workers line manager in the first instance.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Adult Protection From Abuse & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures please ask a member of staff.

Code of Conduct & Professional Boundaries for Staff

All Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid staff are bound by a Code of Conduct which sets out how the organisation expects its staff to act and the professional boundaries in which they are expected to fulfil their roles. The Code of Conduct forms part of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's overall commitment to safeguarding service users and applies to all Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid staff. The role of the staff is to support service users; not to become their friends or develop intimate relationships with them. Staff have a responsibility to act within the boundaries of their roles as a professional worker at all times. Staff will not allow their relationship with a service user to develop beyond the boundaries of a professional one as this would be to abuse the relationship with women, children and young people.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Code of Conduct please ask a member of staff.

Health & Safety

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid aims to ensure that so far as is reasonably practical the health, safety and welfare of all staff and service users is protected. The Health & Safety Policy sets out the steps the organisation take to ensure that all premises and working practices are as safe as possible.

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Health & Safety Policy please ask a member of staff.

Appeals Procedure

In the event that you are refused service from the Floating Support project you have the right to dispute the decision. This can be done through Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Complaints Procedure

Comments & Complaints:

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid welcomes feedback from service users as a means of informing future services and policies. Comments can be made in writing or verbally. There is also a suggestion box available in the Women's Centre/Resource Centre. If you have a complaint please complete the complaints form attached, speak to any member of staff or contact:

The Community Services Manager
Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid
The Women's Centre
23 Abbey Street
Coleraine
BT52 1DU
(028) 70356573

The Floating Support Manager
Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid
Women's Resource Centre
27 Old Coagh Road
Cookstown
BT80 8QG
(028) 86769300

If you wish to obtain a full copy of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Comments & Complaints Policy & Procedures please ask a member of staff

CAUSEWAY & MID-ULSTER WOMEN'S AID
COMPLAINTS FORM

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid work then you can do so informally, by speaking in the first instance to a worker or by completing this form. More information on Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid's Complaints Procedures is available in our leaflet 'Comments & Complaints'

Nature of Complaint (include as much detail as possible i.e. dates, times and places, individuals concerned and corroborating evidence if any) Continue on back of page if necessary.

Name (or code) of person making complaint _____

Contact Details: (Address) _____

Telephone Number _____

Signature of Complainant _____

Date of Complaint _____

Once completed please return this form to:

Community Services Manager

Floating Support Manager

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid

Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid

The Women's Centre

Women's Resource Centre

23 Abbey Street

27 Old Coagh Road

Coleraine

Cookstown

BT52 1DU

BT80 8QG

If you wish to speak to anyone about this matter or have a query about the Complaints Procedure Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid can also be contacted on: **Telephone: (028) 70356573 OR (028) 86769300**

Email: admin@cmuwa.org.uk

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