



BELIEVE IN BASILDON

Leader of Basildon Council

CLLr Gavin Callaghan

Mr S Holliday
Castledon School
Bromfords Drive,
Wickford,
Essex,
SS12 0PW

16th November 2020

Domestic Abuse Services

Dear Mr S Holliday,

Covid-19 has impacted on us as individuals and as a community in many, many ways. I would like to thank you for your dedication in balancing the education of your pupils with their safety and wellbeing as well as that of your staff during the pandemic.

I am writing to you about one particularly distressing consequence of Covid-19 and lockdowns, which is the rise in domestic abuse. A surge in violence inside the home has been reported across the country and worldwide.

This trend is mirrored locally too. The South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub has reported an increase in approaches from people in the Basildon borough since April from 187 in the same period last year to 255 this year – an increase of 36%. The hub does a brilliant job and is one of the most valuable services we have for people in incredibly tough and dangerous situations. It has supported 1,200 people and their families since it started in 2017 with housing advice and refuge accommodation, legal assistance, advocate support and many other services. There is no doubt that the service has been under serious strain keeping up with demand and working under difficult conditions over the past eight months. We owe them a huge debt of thanks.

I know it can be very hard sometimes for people in an abusive relationship to reach out for help. Basildon Council wants to help you and your staff to be aware of the places that people can go to for help and support in case a parent reaches out to you for help.

If a parent needs to talk to someone and work out how to leave an abusive situation, there is help and support for them, and lots of people who will do all they can to help them find safety. The South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub (SEDAH) is a good place to start. People can either call them on 01268 206798 for help and advice, in complete confidence or email SEDAH@basildon.gov.uk

c/o The Basildon Centre St. Martin's Square Basildon Essex SS14 1DL
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There is also advice and support available from the organisations below:

- Outside of business hours - Compass – 03303 337444 – open 24/7 for access to refuge space and support
- Changing Pathways – 01268 729707 – open Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm for access to refuge space and support remotely
- National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000247 – Freephone 24 hour service

The pandemic isn't over and I know from calls to our Community Hub that there are people struggling during the current lockdown. I hope I have given you enough information to be able to share with anyone you feel needs domestic abuse support and help to keep them safe.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Gavin Callaghan, Leader of Basildon Council