

Flexibility and variety of services

- Drop-in and outreach services, available at places older women feel comfortable (e.g. health centres, GP surgeries or Day/community centres) and support in their own homes.
- Staff may require training on older women's needs including benefits/pensions available to older women, and the ageing process.
- When signposting or referring older women to other services it is important to take their specific needs into consideration.
- Arranging a home visit if mobility is an issue or if the service user has caring responsibilities for a family member other than the perpetrator.
- Where this is not possible arrange to meet in other accessible areas which she can use easily.
- Recommending a phone service that uses minicom / videophone/ interpreting services if the service user is hard of hearing or Deaf.
- Arranging joint visits with other professionals if their presence is felt as reassuring for women.
- Be aware of refuges that can accommodate carers.
- Recognise the service user may want to maintain the relationship and help the abuser. Support any decision the service user makes - staying, leaving, or leaving and returning to an abusive relationship.
- Where possible and safe, look for support services for the 'vulnerable' perpetrator as this may be the only way to ensure a woman's safety.
- Offer as many options as possible, without overwhelming the service user. Where possible give the options in writing.
- Providing service users with relevant information, advice and assistance, is essential if they are to make informed choices regarding their future.

- Respect confidentiality – women in later years are not ‘just like children’.
- Believe and validate her experiences.
- Respect her autonomy. Respect her right to make decisions in her own life. When she is ready she will leave.
- Help her plan for future safety. What has she tried in the past to keep herself safe, is it working? Does she have a place to go if she needs to escape?
- Promote access to community services. Know the resources in your community that can cater to the specific needs of this age group.
- Offer support in addressing isolation. Feelings of isolation significantly impact on the quality of life of older women. Explore access to befriending services, local activities, Day/community centres.
- Co-ordination and integration of service with housing, social work, health and emergency services are a priority so build close links with these services.
- Be aware of solicitors/legal services that offer pro bono in your area. It's worth asking if the solicitor if they will visit service users at home/safe location.
- All older people and carers have the right to request a Community Care Assessment. This may be a good way to jointly work with Social Services.
- Know what Housing Association operate in your area as some offer women to register directly with them without going through the Local Authority.
- If you are not sure about the safety of your service user make a safeguarding referral or call them to discuss the case. Remember most older people will be registered to a GP, disclose any safety concerns to them.