

PDVS

Our Voices

Hi everyone.

My name is Catherine Turner and it is my privilege and pleasure to be the Chair of the Management Committee of Preston Domestic Violence Services.

Like many workers all over the country the team of 6 part time workers at PDVS has been working from home. I am so proud of them - their commitment and dedication to their jobs never falters and they rise so well to the new challenges involved in working from home.

The statistics back this up. We are still supporting many vulnerable people and answering their calls on domestic abuse. Of course, working from home is not ideal but the important thing is that victim's needs are still being met. Hopefully the workers will be back in the office as soon as it's safe to continue with their extremely valuable work.

The other matter I wish to mention is that of funding. This is a constant concern for charities and voluntary organisations. Preston Domestic Violence Services receive no funding from the government and relies on grants and donations. We are an organisation that is very economical to run - only £200 per day funds all our services. Every donation is really appreciated by us, not only for the monetary side but also because it demonstrates the value in which we are held.

Thank you everyone who has donated and has supported us in the past.

Please consider helping us - perhaps by becoming a member or joining the 200 Club.

Thank you for anything you can spare.

Hear from our staff about what it has been like working from home

Kerry- Hope Service

Working from home has had its ups and downs however, it has become my normal for the last five months. Initially I thought that working from home would be for a couple of weeks not a few months.

Working from home has meant a completely new routine for me and there has been a few struggles along the way with trying to balance working life and home life and just in general unwinding and switching off after work which I would normally do whilst driving home. Setting up a working space when others were also working from home felt strange for me but with a few adaptations new routines were soon the new normal. It felt odd not working with my colleagues, but we have kept connected via phone calls, zoom and WhatsApp. This has been useful but it's not the same as working together in the office.

At the beginning of lockdown, it was different having telephone appointments instead of the normal face to face appointments, but the clients and I have adapted well. For clients I have found that with flexibility of working from home I can work around the client more as I am not limited to room availability and it has also worked well with some clients who struggle to come to an office or have other commitments.

On the downside some clients have been at home with the perpetrator or children so are not always able to talk so we have put things in place so it is safe for them. An example of this is a telephone call whilst they have been on a walk or holding their appointment if they have had to take their partner to an appointment and waited in the car for them. With safety measures implemented through COVID some situations have been challenging but these challenges have been met and overcome with continued support.

On a plus note I have not missed the traffic when travelling to and from work, but I do miss working in the office environment and with the team and look forward to some normality hopefully soon.

To find out more information or to access the service email hope@pdvs.org.uk
Or call our helpline on 01772 201601

Omayya- Changing Futures

Working from home has been challenging to say the least. At first it felt safe and a relief but as time has passed the novelty has worn off whilst having to work alongside the tiny voice of a 7 year old constantly asking for snacks, toilet breaks, and reporting aches and ailments. A work desk filled with figurines and felts and crayons with YouTube constantly running on the TV is not quite the same as our lovely office filled with quiet adults who don't need to share my desk!

However there have also been the advantages of no early queues of traffic to get into the office and no panic of rushing back for the school run in the afternoon. Working from home has allowed more of a personal connection with the service users as we are all in our own home environments. I can hear their children playing in the back and they can hear mine which has allowed some other conversation including them asking how my daughter is. This has been nice as we often know so much about our service users lives and it has been nice for them to have a little insight into ours. This has allowed them to relax and build a more personal rapport and remove some of the formalities which come with an office environment.

Overall working at home has had its advantages and disadvantages I do miss seeing my service users and colleagues in person. Having some interaction with my colleagues over a cup of tea and chit chat about daily life has been missed. Merging home and work life has been an adjustment however a necessary one. I have offered reassurances of a different type more around protection of their health and abiding to lockdown rules and coping with lockdown restrictions. The virus has increased their concerns from domestic abuse to keeping safe from the virus and coping with children being at home all the time. It has been a learning curve for us all. I am sure we will appreciate "normality" much more once matters settle.

To find out more information or to access the service email changingfutures@pdvs.org.uk
Or call our helpline on 01772 201601



Robina- Outreach Service

Initially I thought we were going to be in lockdown for a few weeks but never anticipated to still be at home after 5 months. Working from home during lockdown has completely transformed to a new normal working life which would have been unthinkable at the beginning of 2020.

It has presented challenges and advantages working away from the office. Working in the comfort of my own home has presented challenges in getting used to a completely new routine along with a complete discipline of focus. The absence of a staff team subsidised via zoom/phone meetings has been a useful tool to keep connected but it cannot beat the in-person connection that is essential to everyday working.

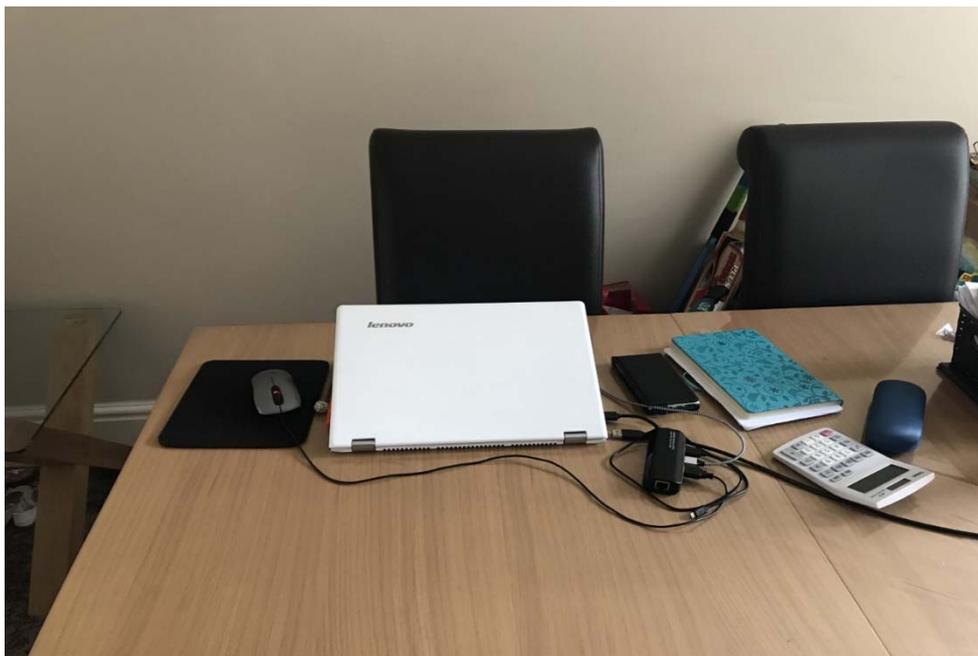
At the beginning it felt strange not having the face to face support with clients but as time went on, I quickly adapted to the changes and continued to provide the high-quality Outreach Service support.

With so much uncertainty, confusion and adaptation of safety measures I felt I have managed to keep afloat and helped to keep my clients safe and calm as I continue to provide the support they need.

The Outreach Service has continued to support clients on a weekly basis via 121 phone meetings, providing emotional and practical support. One big advantage has been that it has saved a lot of travelling time from home to work and able to access training via zoom.

To be honest I can't wait to get back in the office and be with my fabulous team mates again. Miss them so much.

To find out more information or to access the service email outreach@pdvs.org.uk
Or call our helpline on 01772 201601



We spoke to service users about their experiences during lockdown

I have been married for 12 years and during this time I lived with my husband and two children. The marriage has always been controlling but I had always put it down to my husband having anger issues. He would shout, call me names and tell me what I could and couldn't do. He didn't like family coming to our house because he told me that they would influence me, and he believed they didn't like him. He used to tell me that we had no money so I couldn't take the children out and would check my mobile phone regularly. Again, I had no reason not to believe him and thought he just had a few issues with being insecure. My husband worked long hours and drank heavily each night which would cause arguments. I just kept thinking the situation would get better after he acknowledged that he had a 'few problems.'

When the lockdown started the control increased and he told me he was doing this to protect us. He worked very long hours and started to drink more alcohol each night. I began feeling that I was very isolated with no one to turn to and was told that I didn't need anyone else because I had him. He then told me that the children were no longer to have contact with my family and that I would abide by his rules. I began to feel frightened in my home and felt that I was constantly walking on eggshells. After an argument one night my husband grabbed me and dragged me across the upstairs landing, I was just grateful that the children were asleep. After this incident my husband would humiliate me and call me names making me feel low. I went to stay with my family. My husband turned up and demanded that I returned home but I threatened to call the police, so he left. I decided that I could no longer stay in my marriage and told him that I no longer wanted to stay as I had realised what he was really like.

I rang the helpline for support, and I am now being supported through the Outreach Service to help me move forward. I have now accepted that my marriage was abusive, and I want my children and I to be free from him. My husband refused to move out of our home, but I have received support to help me leave the marriage with my two children and I now have a house of my own. There are still aspects of control using the children, but I am now seeking legal advice from a solicitor. I am regaining control and my self-esteem and my confidence is now slowly building.

I have recently moved from another town just prior to the lockdown to flee my abuser. However arriving just before the lockdown has meant I have not been able to meet new people and settle into my new environment as I would have liked and needed.

I am a very sociable person and the lockdown has been a great detriment for me being unable to forge a new life and meet new people to feel reassured in this unknown environment. I have arrived during a time of fear and worry, and I had become confined to her home again. I had fled for freedom and entered a lockdown.

However, with support I have been able to get through a week at a time knowing that this is all a temporary measure and eventually I will be able to set up my new life here. It has also allowed me to slow down and use the lockdown for some recovery and reflection and recognising there is no harm in taking time out just for myself.

The lockdown has made some people who have fled control feel restricted and controlled yet again and can trigger feelings and memories of the life they have left behind therefore accessing support throughout has been essential for me to remember that I am not alone.

Are you one of the millions of people who feel everyone has a right to feel safe in their own home? Then join our 200 Club and support victims of domestic violence in Preston...

You can support victims of domestic violence in Preston and be in with a chance of winning a cash prize every month by becoming a member of the PDVS 200 Club. Shares are £2 each per month, (no limit to the number of shares you can buy). The 200 Club supports our support services to local victims (such as the helpline, the counselling service, and our advice and emotional support services

For more information please email enquiries@pdvs.org.uk

As an organisation delivering services for victims of domestic violence and abuse in Preston, we know COVID 19 will have serious impacts on the lives of victims and their children. We are fully aware that for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse home is not always a place of safety and access to support services will be even more difficult during these times.

We want to be able to continue to support our service users and those needing our services but can only do this with your support. We welcome any financial donation that will help us continue to deliver services during this difficult time.

Whilst we have changed some of our working practices to ensure the safety of our staff, we are committed to providing emotional support, advice and help to anyone who needs it during this time.

Donate now and help us to support those who are in very vulnerable situations and desperate for support.

To donate please follow the link below:

<https://www.pdvs.org.uk/supportdonate/>

Thank you for your support and stay safe.