

Unmesh Desai AM

Chair, Police and Crime Committee
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

4 May 2020

MOPAC300420-D3302

Dear Unmesh,

I am writing to update you and the PCC on our emergency response to COVID-19 for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Today, the Mayor has announced a £1.5 million emergency response fund to provide victims of domestic abuse with safe accommodation and support if they need to flee their homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

I have worked closely with a multi-agency project group of VAWG specialists and have made funding available to support this work. It is proposed that grants will be given to a number of specialist organisations to enable them to provide:

- additional crisis accommodation to supplement existing refuge accommodation or other emergency/temporary accommodation which Local Authorities or others may supply. The accommodation identified so far is located in the boroughs of Southwark and Brent;
- wrap around support services needed to effectively support victims, where this is not already provided locally to the victim; and
- where appropriate, the relocation and support of those perpetrating violent/abusive behaviours alongside appropriate safeguarding mechanisms

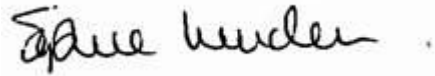
We have currently secured accommodation, including houses, flats and hostels, for up to 82 victims of domestic abuse - safe spaces where victims and their children can self-isolate and get support including mental health, legal and social care help, as well as food and medical supplies starting from today and throughout next week.

The aim of this project is to provide additional capacity within the system, as part of a short-term, emergency response to COVID-19 and the increase in incidences of domestic abuse that we are seeing as a result of the lockdown. From today, the accommodation we have sourced will be available for survivors who cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

We continue to work closely with providers on exit planning to ensure every survivor will have access to the necessary support when this lockdown period is over. We are also working closely with partners on recovery planning, as VAWG organisations and police are anticipating a significant increase in domestic abuse reporting as lockdown begins to ease.

As I set out in my letter to you on Friday, I will continue to keep you updated on relevant information as anything of significance changes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sophie Linden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime