



Help & Support
for Polish Women
& Children

Who are we?

"OPOKA" is a confidential and free specialist Domestic Violence Service for Polish women and children. Our service is delivered and run entirely by experienced & specialist Bi-lingual Polish Staff & Volunteers.

What are our aims?

Our initial aim is to stop Domestic Violence and abuse within the Polish community by providing both practical, educational and specialist assistance that supports Women and Children who are experiencing Domestic Violence and abuse and are isolated due to the fact that they are from an Eastern European background and have limited or no understanding as to how to gain or access support to begin to address the risks they are currently experiencing.

Our secondary aim is to raise awareness through training advice and advocacy about the suffering and isolation of the Polish women and children we support to other voluntary and statutory services such as the Police, Criminal Justice System Local Authorities, Social Services & Safeguarding Teams, GP's, the NHS, Schools and Teaching Staff and all other relevant professionals. We aim also to do this within the Polish community and the wider community in general in order that the signs and symptoms of Domestic Violence are more easily recognised, reported and stopped!



Free contact line

0300 365 1700

info@opoka.org.uk

www.opoka.org.uk



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IDSVA Support (Polish and English speaking Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Advisor) For other Service Providers & Professionals who want to help or support Polish Women & Children!



What confidential, safe & free Polish Bi-lingual services do we provide?

- Bi-Lingual Polish Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Advisor Service (IDSVA). This includes attendance at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and safety planning.
- Guidance to gain safe accommodation and access to welfare and other statutory forms of support.
- Specialist representation, advocacy and translation services.
- Help navigating the legal system, reviewing and accessing legal options, support with civil orders.
- Multi-agency and liaison services.
- Peer Support & befriending services.
- Counselling & group support by trained and in training accredited therapists.

For all other professionals who come in to contact with Polish women and children, who they suspect or know are experiencing Domestic Violence (DV) our service is completely free and we welcome all enquiries. Polish victims of (DV) are extremely vulnerable and isolated not just because of the devastating effects of violence and abuse. But also due to cultural and language barriers and through a sense of fear that within the tight knit Polish community they will be vilified and face further discrimination and abuse if they speak up and try to tell someone the truth. If these women also have children they are afraid that social services will remove the children from their care which causes further isolation and reduces the chances they have to access vital life saving support and help.

The Starfish Story



A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish, You can't begin to make a difference!" The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "Well, I made difference to that one!"

By Antoine de St.Exupery