



# National definition of IDVA work

## What is an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor?

The main purpose of independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA) is to address the safety of victims at **high risk** of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim's primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients **from the point of crisis** to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans.

They are **pro-active** in implementing the plans, which address immediate safety, including practical steps to protect themselves and their children, as well as longer-term solutions. These plans will include actions from the MARAC as well as sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations. IDVAs support and work over the short- to medium-term to put them on the path to **long-term safety**. They receive specialist accredited training and hold a nationally recognised qualification.

Since they work with the highest risk cases, IDVAs are most effective as part of an IDVA service and within a multi-agency framework. The IDVA's role in all multi-agency settings is to keep the client's perspective and safety at the centre of proceedings.

Studies have shown that when high risk clients engage with an IDVA, there are **clear and measurable improvements in safety**, including a reduction in the escalation and severity of abuse and a reduction or even cessation in repeat incidents of abuse<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>For more information on the impact of IDVA work please refer to Safety in Numbers: a multi-site evaluation of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors: [http://www.safelives.org.uk/research/Safety\\_in\\_Numbers\\_16pp.pdf](http://www.safelives.org.uk/research/Safety_in_Numbers_16pp.pdf)