

## Useful terminology

The following explanations may be useful to you while proceedings are going ahead:

**CLAIMANT/VICTIM** the person who is the victim of a crime.

**DEFENDANT** the person who the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is prosecuting at the court based on police evidence for the case.

**FIRST HEARING/PLEA HEARING** this is the hearing where the defendant will enter a plea (guilty/not guilty/guilty on a basis). Usually you will NOT be required to attend this hearing.

**TRIAL** if the defendant pleads 'not guilty' then a trial date will be set – usually in about 2-6 months time. At this hearing you will have the opportunity to put YOUR evidence to the court in person.

**BAIL CONDITIONS** these are conditions put in place by the police or CPS until the first hearing. Usually they include specific restrictions about contact between the defendant and the victim or witnesses, and/or restrictions on where the defendant can go (like your house or place of work). These usually remain in place until a trial or sentencing – UNLESS you want them changed.

**RESTRAINING ORDER** usually a comprehensive 'no contact order' issued by the court for a specified length of time, normally including restrictions on contact with you (including social media), and on where the defendant can go. It may include provisions for child contact where applicable.

**SENTENCING** this happens after the defendant has either pleaded, or been found guilty (at a trial). Sentences are made by either a Judge or a Magistrates Bench.

**PRE-SENTENCING REPORT (PSR)** A report, normally written by the Probation Service, after speaking to the defendant. It can recommend

various sentencing options such as community orders, curfews, electronic tags, drug or alcohol treatment programmes or relationship programmes. Sentencing is normally adjourned until this report has been completed and any existing bail conditions remain in place until the sentence has been made.

If you would like to have any part of this leaflet explained further or translated, or put into a different format, such as larger print, please contact us to discuss your needs.

Supporting victims  
of domestic abuse

**Gloucestershire  
Domestic Abuse  
Support Service**

Free and Confidential Service

**0845 602 9035**

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[www.gdass.org.uk](http://www.gdass.org.uk)

[facebook.com/GDASSglos](https://www.facebook.com/GDASSglos)

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Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) is delivered by GreenSquare Group and Splitz Support Service. Both organisations are experienced in delivering domestic abuse services in the region.



# Court Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)



**Gloucestershire Domestic  
Abuse Support Service**

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# WHAT IS A Court IDVA?

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) work with those going through the Criminal Justice System.

Courts can be daunting places, and for those of us who aren't legally trained it can be also be very confusing. Legal staff will often use terminology that we don't understand and the process is not always made clear to us. Court IDVAs can explain the processes within the Criminal Justice System and help you to understand the legal jargon.

The legal role of the Court IDVA is to be 'the voice of the victim' within the court setting. This means that YOUR views and wishes can be put to the court and taken into consideration when important legal decisions are made. Court IDVAs can also advocate on behalf of a victim to improve services within the Criminal Justice System for all victims.

## Your Court IDVA will act as the 'go-between' between you and the court

Court IDVAs attend the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) and feed back the results to the victims. This means you can get an update straight after the hearing. They will also call you before the hearing to discuss what you want from the proceedings.

## What can my Court IDVA do for me?

Your Court IDVA will help make the court process more understandable by keeping you informed at hearings and ensuring you know what's happening before it happens.

Some of the measures they can help with are:

- arranging a pre-trial visit;
- assessment of victim/witness safety both inside and outside of court;
- applying for special measures (such as screens, using the back entrances to the building, video links) where appropriate;
- supporting you to request a restraining order (if you want one);
- keeping you informed of proposed conditions for restraining orders and supporting you to express your wishes to the court;
- emotional support when attending court; and
- co-ordinating protection from civil and criminal courts.

## What about after court?

Your Court IDVA can refer you for longer term support with the GDASS floating support team, if you would like it.

We provide support to women and men who have experienced domestic abuse. This will take place over the phone, at home or at a venue in the community agreed between the support worker and you.

## Group work

We facilitate group work around the county, which will support you to identify, come to terms with, and overcome your personal challenges in a supportive environment, with other people who have experienced similar situations.

## Places of safety

If it is not possible for you to stay in your own home, we will support you to access a 'place of safety'. You will be able to remain in a place of safety until you are able to return to your own home, or you are able to move to a new home. If you do not want to leave your home but are not feeling safe, we can support you to make your home safer.

## Floating support

We will provide support to women and men who have experienced domestic abuse. This will take place over the telephone, at home or at a venue within the community agreed between the support worker and you. Floating support will normally last around 12 weeks and is tailored to the support needs identified between you and your support worker.