



## ‘Ask for ANI’: Briefing on Domestic Abuse Codeword Scheme for police and Police and Crime Commissioners

### What is Ask for ANI?

During the Covid-19 period many victims of domestic abuse will have found themselves more isolated and may be finding it more difficult to access help and support.

The Government is launching the ‘**Ask for ANI**’ domestic abuse codeword scheme to help victims access emergency support in the community. Victims will be able to use the codeword **ANI (Assistance Needed Immediately)** in pharmacies to let staff know that they require an emergency police response or help contacting a helpline or specialist support service.

Participating pharmacies will display posters in their window and around the shop to let customers know that they can approach their staff to seek help.

When a victim uses the codeword or asks for help, the member of staff will ask the victim to accompany them to the consultation room. They will then check whether the victim is in danger and wants the police to be called. If so, the staff member will offer the use of a phone to dial 999 or make the call on the victim’s behalf.

This may be the only opportunity for a victim to contact the police and get immediate help, but in some cases the victim may not need emergency help and the staff member will assist them to contact a national domestic abuse helpline or local support service. They may also contact the police via 101.

### Which pharmacies will be participating in Ask for ANI?

The scheme is voluntary so not all pharmacies will be participating in Ask for ANI, however participating pharmacies will display posters like this to show that they are operating the scheme:



Some pharmacies in your area will already be running another pharmacy-based scheme called [Safe Spaces](#) which enables victims of domestic abuse to use the pharmacy consultation room to access information on domestic abuse support services. The Ask for ANI scheme can work alongside Safe Spaces to support victims, who need more immediate assistance, to signal that they need help and for pharmacy

staff to direct them to the help they need. Safe Spaces pharmacies can also adopt Ask for ANI and can display jointly branded materials like this:



Participating pharmacies will be provided with training and guidance materials which include an animated video explaining how the scheme works, Ask for ANI implementation guidance and introductory guidance on domestic abuse.

It should be noted that all pharmacies have safeguarding policies and procedures and will respond to requests for help from vulnerable members of the community accordingly. We are working with national pharmacy bodies to ensure all pharmacies are aware of the scheme so that staff working in non-participating pharmacies know the codeword and understand that a safeguarding response is required if someone uses the codeword in their pharmacy.

The Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council will work together to provide police forces with a list of the Ask for ANI pharmacies in your area.

### How can police support the Ask for ANI scheme?

**Enabling the most isolated victims to reach out for immediate help from the police is at the heart of this scheme.**

An 'Ask for ANI' call to the police may come from a member of staff in the pharmacy or from the victim themselves. Guidance to pharmacy staff sets out that they should let the police call handler know that the ANI codeword has been used. A victim calling from a pharmacy may also mention that they have used the Ask for ANI scheme.

**If a pharmacy or victim calls 999 to say that the ANI codeword has been used, police should take the following action.** The action outlined is to be taken in addition to normal procedures.

#### Control room call handlers

- The use of the codeword ANI should alert call handlers that help from the police is required by a victim of domestic abuse.
- Call handlers should request relevant information from the caller, including their location and make an assessment of the level of response required. A priority response should be the default, unless the assessment suggests that is not appropriate.
- Officers should be dispatched to the pharmacy in line with the response.
- The call handler should record that an Ask for ANI codeword call has been received and the outcome of the call.

In a non-emergency situation, a pharmacy may use the 101 number to contact the police. As above, the 101 call handler should record that an Ask for ANI call has been received and the outcome of the call.

All control room call handlers (those covering 101 and 999 calls) will need to be briefed on the ANI codeword.

### **Officers attending an ANI call out**

- Officers should follow normal procedures and guidelines for responding to a domestic abuse call out, including completion of a DASH risk assessment.
- If the codeword user has left the pharmacy before police arrive, police should work with the pharmacy staff to assess whether any immediate safeguarding action is needed.
- The pharmacy will not collect personal information about the victim.

### **Business analysts**

An evaluation of the Ask for ANI scheme will be carried out by Ipsos Mori. To monitor the impact and effectiveness, the Home Office will be requesting information on use of the scheme. We would welcome the support of business analysts in collecting the following data:

- The number of Ask for ANI calls received per month;
- Date and time of the call;
- The outcome of the call received (e.g. response outcome, response time);
- Key characteristics data: gender, ethnicity and age of victim.

We will review the need for ongoing data collection after the scheme has been in operation for six months.

### **Ask for ANI force champion**

We would be very grateful if each force could nominate an 'Ask for ANI champion' to:

- act as a single point of contact responsible for sharing information within the force about the scheme and raising any questions/issues pre and post implementation; and
- provide feedback to the Home Office on use of the scheme within the force area, including the information outlined above.

To register as an Ask for ANI champion please send your name and a contact email address to [AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk).

## **All officers providing safeguarding advice**

Officers providing safeguarding advice to victims of domestic abuse are encouraged to raise awareness of the Ask for ANI scheme as a way of accessing emergency support in the community.

## **How can Police and Crime Commissioners support the Ask for ANI scheme?**

PCCs can support Ask for ANI by sharing information about the scheme with their local networks and commissioned services.

Guidance for participating pharmacies makes clear that victims can be referred to national helplines or local specialist support services and that information on local support services is available via the [Bright Sky app](#).

By raising awareness of the scheme among local support services, PCCs can help to support an effective local response to individuals seeking support via Ask for ANI.

## **Next steps**

We are planning to launch the scheme in the coming weeks and will notify forces and PCC offices about launch plans separately.

## **Get in touch**

We'd welcome any questions or feedback on the Ask for ANI scheme and please let us know if there is any additional information or support you need. Contact the Home Office team at [AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk).