

What to do if you need urgent police help through the 999 service, but can't speak

If you're in an emergency situation and need police help, but can't speak, Make Yourself Heard and let the 999 operator know your call is genuine.



WHEN YOU CALL 999

All 999 calls are directed to call centres and will be answered by BT operators. They will ask which service you need. If no service is requested but anything suspicious is heard throughout the process, BT operators will connect you to a police call handler.

IF YOU CALL 999 FROM A MOBILE

It is always best to speak to the operator if you can, even by whispering. You may also be asked to cough or tap the keys on your phone in response to questions.

If making a sound would put you or someone else in danger and the BT operator cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, your call will be transferred to the Silent Solution system.

The Silent Solution is a police system used to filter out large numbers of accidental or hoax 999 calls. It also exists to help people who are unable to speak, but who genuinely need police assistance. You will hear an automated police message, which lasts for 20

seconds and begins with 'you are through to the police'. It will ask you to press 55 to be put through to police call management. The BT operator will remain on the line and listen. If you **press 55**, they will be notified and transfer the call to the police. If you don't press 55, the call will be terminated. Pressing 55 does not allow police to track your location.

WHAT THEN?

When transferred to your local police force, the police call handler will attempt to communicate with you by asking simple yes or no questions. If you are not able to speak, listen carefully to the questions and instructions from the call handler so they can assess your call and arrange help if needed.

IF YOU CALL 999 FROM A LANDLINE

Because it's less likely that 999 calls are made by accident from landlines, the Silent Solution system is not used.

If, when an emergency call on a landline is received:

- there is no request for an emergency
 - the caller does not answer questions
 - only background noise can be heard and BT operators cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed,
- then you will be connected to a police call handler as doubt exists.

If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again.

If you pick up again during this 45 seconds and the BT operator is concerned for your safety, the call will be connected to police.

When 999 calls are made from landlines, information about where you're calling from should be automatically available to the call handlers to help provide a response.



#MakeYourselfHeard
#SilentSolution



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women's aid
until women & children are safe

What is Ask for ANI?

Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) is a codeword scheme developed by the Home Office to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help from the safety of their local pharmacy.

Why has Ask for ANI been developed?

We know that local areas are already doing great work to support victims of domestic abuse who may be more isolated and finding it more difficult to access help and support as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Local areas have worked quickly and innovatively to provide awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives that are already providing vital help to those at risk from domestic abuse.

The **'Ask for ANI'** scheme is intended to work alongside and build on existing work and provide an additional tool that can be used to help the most vulnerable victims access emergency support in the community.

The scheme has been developed with the help of partners including the domestic abuse sector, pharmacy associations and the police and is being rolled out across the UK from January 2021. It is being independently evaluated by Ipsos MORI and we are keen to work with local areas to assess how the scheme is working and understand how it can be improved and adapted to meet local needs.

How does the scheme work?

Victims of domestic abuse will be able to use the codeword **ANI** in participating pharmacies (including all Boots stores and participating independent pharmacies) to let staff know that they require an emergency police response or help contacting a helpline or specialist support service.

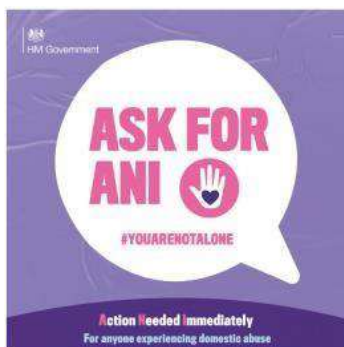
Participating pharmacies will display posters in their window and around the pharmacy to let customers know that they can approach their staff to seek help. Any information shared will be treated confidentially.

When a victim uses the codeword or asks for help, the member of staff will offer to accompany the individual to the consultation room. They will then check whether the victim 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.

If the victim is not in an emergency situation, the staff member will support the victim to contact a national domestic abuse helpline or local support service. They may also contact the police via 101.

Information about how pharmacies can access interpretation services is included in the training guidance and animation.

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 the Safe Spaces scheme 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



The Home Office will arrange for details of participating pharmacies to be shared with local areas.

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 the police and 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.

How can local partners support the Ask for ANI scheme?

Ask for ANI has been developed to provide a model for emergency assistance to be provided to victims of domestic abuse in the community, but we recognise that local ownership and commitment to the scheme will be key to its success. We would welcome your help in raising awareness of Ask for ANI across local networks to help ensure that victims and frontline professionals know the codeword and how it can be used to access emergency support. We would also welcome any feedback on how the scheme is being implemented as part of your response to tackling domestic abuse locally.

What should local partners expect on account of the launch of the scheme?

We expect use of the scheme to be at low numbers but local domestic abuse services may receive phone calls from pharmacies assisting a victim. Local services should follow their usual processes in providing help and support. Feedback about the scheme maybe discussed at local partnership meeting and you may wish to integrate Ask for ANI in to your local strategic planning.

Local partners may also see media communications about the scheme around the time that the scheme goes live. We will aim to ensure that these are as refined and targeted as possible so as to keep the codeword itself discreet.

Communication materials and guidance for pharmacies

Pharmacies can sign up to Ask for **ANI** by completing this online form. Once registered, pharmacies will be sent a link to posters and training materials which include an animated video explaining how the scheme works.

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. Please contact the Home Office team at AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk