

What is ADVA?

Against Domestic Violence and Abuse is the recently adopted name for the Devon Domestic Violence Partnership.

It was set up in November 2002 to bring together the statutory and voluntary agencies within the county to tackle the problem of domestic violence.

What has ADVA been doing?

Much work has been done to try to reduce the impact of domestic violence within Devon, including the following services and projects:

- Women's outreach support service in each district
- Free phone helpline for male victims
- Pilot community-based programme for male perpetrators
- Specialist training courses including; working with children and domestic violence in Lesbian, Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender relationships
- Children's support worker in North Devon
- Publicity and Awareness materials for schools and youth settings to raise awareness
- Research to identify the educational, social and emotional impact on children who live with domestic violence
- Awareness raising publicity materials and campaigns about domestic violence to encourage those affected by it to seek help

**Domestic Violence is a crime
and must be stopped**

How much Domestic Violence is there in Devon?

- In 2003/4 reports to the Police involved
 - 8144 incidents of domestic violence
 - 4131 of these were for violent criminal offences
 - 1237 victims were subject to more than one incident
- Almost half of all homicides in Devon each year are domestic violence related
- There were 7 women murdered in Devon in 2001 through Domestic Violence.
- Domestic Violence costs Devon approximately £26,802,960 per year.

Research estimates the real scale of the problem could be more like 33,000 incidents occurring in Devon each year.

If you need help, advice or support in dealing with domestic violence call

National Women's Aid Helpline 0808 2000 247

Devon MALE 0845 064 6800

In an emergency call the Police on 999

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Domestic Violence

What is It?

It is defined as:

'Domestic Violence is the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another within the context of any close relationship.

Such abuse may manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation.'

Domestic Violence can be experienced by both women and men. It cuts across all boundaries of social class, age, race, disability, sexuality and lifestyle.

It is important to remember:

- You are not alone
- It is not your fault
- Advice and support is available

One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime

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Domestic Violence and men

Whilst the majority of victims of domestic violence are women, men can also be victims within both heterosexual and gay relationships.

- 20% of incidents reported to the Police show men as the victims
- In 2003/4 there were 1 628 domestic violence incidents where men were victims
- 1 in 6 men will be a victim of domestic violence in his lifetime

Many men find it difficult to admit they are facing abuse at the hands of their partner or family member.

It is often harder for men to talk about it to others.

This can be for many reasons including love of your partner, concern for your young children or fear of embarrassment and shame.

ADVA has funded one of the few discreet helplines for men - Devon MALE.

If you need help, advice or support in dealing with domestic violence as a male victim contact:

Devon MALE 0845 064 6800

In an emergency call the Police on 999

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Domestic Violence and Children

- 750,000 children nationally witness domestic violence every year
- Three-quarters of children on the child protection register have experienced domestic violence.
- In Devon in 2003 - 2004 of the 8,144 reported incidents of domestic violence there were children present at 3,205 of these.

Work carried out by ADVA included consultation with children and young people to find out what they want.

They wanted:

- To be heard
- To be understood
- To be able to talk about their experiences to a trusted adult
- To be able to access information about their situation

In response to this

- a new website has been created: www.urnotalone.org.uk
- a magazine circulated to all pupils aged 10 - 14 called 'Just Talk'
- an Education Welfare Officer attached to each of Devon's three refuges to help the interface between refuge and the children's new school
- the appointment of a specialist domestic violence children's support worker
- increased awareness by professionals about how to deal with the issue

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Domestic Violence and Children

Domestic Violence and Abuse is hugely unreported and masks the real scale of this issue which affects our children and young people.

Women's Aid ran a 'Listening to Children Campaign' in June 2004 and these are some of the comments made by children:

"Help mums and children to find
somewhere nice to live quicker."

(age 6)

"stop fighting because it
doesn't solve anything.
violence is horrible, mean and
it makes me feel not good."

(age 10)

"Give more support to children
and people to talk to who have
been in the same situation."

(age 6 1/2)

"stop me being scared."

(age 8)

"Domestic violence makes me feel
angry, frightened, scared to do
anything - to save another argument
- like I want to kill myself."

(age 15)

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Starchild

Shaking on the stairs
waiting for the scream,
it's the middle of the night,
is it just a dream?
or is one I love
hurting bad another
is a violent drunken dad
beating up my mother.

I'm a stairchild,
scared child,
scarred child,
sad;
I wish I didn't have a dad.

Mick

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I got flowers today

I got flowers today. It wasn't my birthday or any other special day. We had our first argument last night. And he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said. Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today. It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day. Last night he threw me into a wall and started to choke me. It seemed like a nightmare. I couldn't believe it was real. I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over. I know he must be sorry because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today and it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day. Last night he beat me up again. And it was much worse than all the other times. If I leave him, what will I do? How will I take care of my kids? What about money? I'm afraid of him and scared to leave. But I know he must be sorry because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today. Today was a very special day. It was the day of my funeral. Last night he finally killed me. He beat me to death. If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him, I would not have got flowers today.

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Devon County Council as an Employer

Devon County Council recognises that its employees will be amongst those impacted by Domestic Violence, and has launched a Workplace Policy . The purpose of the policy is:

To provide guidance and support to all employees of Devon County Council who are experiencing domestic violence in their personal life, as a survivor or a perpetrator; to make positive domestic or behavioural changes and provide a safe working environment;

To provide all staff, but in particular managers, HR Officers and counsellors, with an increased awareness of the main issues involved in domestic violence, to recognise potential victims/perpetrators and to provide a supportive structure in which to deal effectively with cases.

The policy will:

- raise awareness of domestic violence so that employees (current and potential), contractors, Partners, Councillors and Unions are aware of the policy and what it means for them.
- raise awareness regarding assistance/support available to staff.
- issue guidance for managers.
- provide training for managers.
- introduce a monitoring system to review the policy.

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