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DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

Domestic abuse has a higher rate of repeat offences than other crime and anyone worried about an abusive relationship is urged by police to report it sooner rather than later.

Home Office research suggests that domestic abuse is rarely a seldom occurrence; 44% of people are victimised more than once and almost one in five (18%) are victimised three or more times.ⁱ

The figures are high as often victims do not report incidents through fear that abuse may become worse or they are reliant on their abuser for financial support.

Abusive relationships often grow in frequency and severity, and sometimes the early incidents may not be even thought of as abuse. Many begin with emotional abuse such as name calling and put downs, and this escalates over time to more severe emotional abuse and sometimes physical violence.

Detective Inspector Andy Berry, from Devon and Cornwall Police, said: “Andy Berry, Chairman of the Northern Devon MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) said:

“Most victims experience several forms of abuse and these may begin very subtly and then escalate. This escalation can sometimes be very quick and lead rapidly to a significant incident with other victims the escalation can be gradual over a longer-period of time.

“Domestic abuse is one of the most under-reported crimes and often many incidents of abuse happen before the victim will seek help.

“If people are worried about family, friends or colleagues it important that they or they advise or assist the victim seek help and advice. But if the victim can't or won't and they are really concerned that someone may get hurt then they should be prepared to raise the alarm themselves”

The public can call Devon and Cornwall Police on 101 to report their concerns. For advice and information call the National Domestic Abuse helpline on 0808 2000 247.

ENDS

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14/11/11

Notes to editors:

The media are invited to attend a briefing event at Middlemoor, Devon and Cornwall Police headquarters on Wednesday 16 November at 10am.

Interviews will be available with:

- Detective Chief Inspector. Steve Parker, Devon and Cornwall Police
- Detective Inspector Andy Berry and Chairman of Northern Devon MARAC, Devon and Cornwall Police
- Steven Slater, Computer Forensic Manager, Devon and Cornwall Police
- Rachel Martin, ADVA Manager
- Carolyn Southwell, Pet Retreat Ma, RSPCA

DVD and audio copies of interviews with victims will be available for TV and radio broadcast.

For further information please contact:

- Sarah Shervington, External Communications Support Officer, Devon and Cornwall Police
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- Annette Richman, KOR Communications
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ⁱ Dodd T. et al (2004). Crime in England and Wales 2003-04. Home Office, London (from 'Statistics on Domestic Violence')