

Embargoed until 00.01 on Monday 21 November 2011

HEALTHCARE EXPERTS IN DEVON TO RECEIVE TRAINING

More than 60 healthcare professionals in Devon will be involved in a practical workshop to help identify and advise pregnant women and new mothers who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

It is estimated, between four and nine women in every 100 are abused during pregnancy or just after the birth, and one midwife in five knows that at least one of her expectant mothers is a victim.ⁱ

Detective Sergeant Chloe Webber, from Devon and Cornwall Police, said: "Pregnancy and just after birth is a particular dangerous time as the victim's attention is often taken away from her partner and directed towards the baby. The abuser's control and power is challenged and as a result abuse can either begin or escalate to ensure the victim remains under the abuser's control.

"The abuse can be emotional, financial or physical and can have an effect on the welfare of the victim and her baby."

The training, undertaken by Tender (www.tender.org.uk) has been funded by ADVA (Against Domestic Violence and Abuse in Devon).

ADVA manager Rachel Martin said: "We are really pleased to be able to hold these workshops to help educate healthcare professionals. The knowledge they gain can be used in hospital maternity units, health centres, GP surgeries and children's centres ensuring all victims all receive help and advice."

ⁱ Taft, Angela (2002) *Violence against women in pregnancy and after childbirth: Current knowledge and issues in healthcare responses* Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse Issues Paper 6.