

## Who's who?

The case will be presided over by two or three Magistrates or a single District Judge. The Legal Advisor is legally qualified and advises the Magistrates on issues of law and procedure. The Court Usher, who traditionally wears a black gown, is a member of court staff who maintains contact between the Legal Adviser and Magistrates in court and the Lawyers and other people outside the court. The Crown Prosecutor is the lawyer who presents the case on behalf of the prosecution. The Defence Advocate represents the defendant. The IDVA informs the victim on the case progression and supports the victim through the court process.

## In court

The court is open to all members of the public aged 14 and over who wish to observe the proceedings. Children under the age of 14 are not normally permitted to come into court unless they are appearing as witnesses.

The Magistrates' or District Judge should be addressed as "Your worships". All those present in court must stand when the Magistrates' or District Judge enter or leave the court room. Any person attending court as a defendant or witness, must stand when taking the oath or affirmation and giving evidence in court. Permission to remain seated is likely to be given to any person having difficulty standing because of illness or disability. Food and drink must not be consumed in court and mobile phones should be switched off at all times. Headgear should not be worn except for religious reasons. Smoking is prohibited in all court buildings.

## Contacts

**National Helpline** 0808 2000 247

**Exeter Women's Aid** Helpline 0800 328 3070

**North Devon Women's Aid** Helpline 01271 370079

**South Devon Women's Aid** Helpline 01364 644088

**Relate Devon** 01392 275681

### Police Domestic Violence Units

Exeter: 01392 262221

East: 01392 262220

Mid: 01392 262222

North: 01271 313446 / 01271 313410

South: 01626 336552

### Domestic Violence Legal Helpline

(out of hours) 0800 5870 209

**Victim Support** 0845 676 10 20

### Witness Care Unit Service

01392 356 700

### Devon and Cornwall Probation

01392 474100

### National Helpline (RESPECT)

0845 122 8609

### Repair

Exeter: 07870 980272

North: 07773 394278

South: 07816 549113

**Men's Advice Line** 08088 010327

**Adva partnership** 01392 382233

[www.adva.org.uk](http://www.adva.org.uk)

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME  
IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999**

## A Guide to Devon's

# Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

## Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC)

Criminal prosecutions involving allegations of domestic abuse will be dealt with in the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

This leaflet is intended to give some guidance to defendants, victims and witnesses who may appear before the Specialist Domestic Violence Court.

Please note that the term "victim" in this leaflet is intended to refer to the person making the complaint of domestic abuse and is not intended to prejudge the guilt of the person being charged with the offence.

## What is the Specialist Domestic Violence Court?

This is a court in which the Crown Prosecutor, Magistrates (or District Judge), Legal Adviser, IDVA and Witness Support staff will have had specialist training in dealing with domestic violence cases.

## Where are the SDVCs in Devon and when do they operate?

Devon is fortunate to have three Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. These are based in the Magistrates' Courts at the following addresses and operate on the days listed below:

**Exeter: Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2LS**  
Sitting Wednesdays all day.

**North: The Law courts, Civic Centre, Barnstaple, EX31 1DX**  
Sitting Fridays.

**South: Newfoundland Way, Newton Abbott, TQ12 1NG**  
Sitting Wednesday afternoons.

## Special Measures for victims and vulnerable witnesses

Certain special measures can be made available to victims and vulnerable witnesses such as a separate means of access to the court building by arrangement, a separate and secure waiting area with facilities and a separate entrance to the court room in the event of a trial. In some circumstances the victim and witnesses may be permitted to give evidence behind a screen or by way of a live television link without actually going into the court room. There will also be an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor at court (IDVA).

## What is an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)?

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) liaise with external agencies such as Devon & Cornwall Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) and Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) on behalf of the victim. The IDVA is a person specially trained to offer support and assistance to the victim at court. The IDVA will be available to report the progress of the case to the victim and put the victim in touch with other organisations for help with such matters as housing, debt advice and counselling. The IDVA is part of an independent support service that can provide victims with a more specialised and person-centred form of support tailored to the victims needs.

## How to contact an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

There is an IDVA attached to each of Devon's three Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. They can be contacted at:

**Central Court**  
(for Exeter, East and Mid Devon)  
Tel. **01392 262233**

**North Devon**  
(for North Devon and Torridge)  
Tel. **01271 370079**

**South Devon**  
(for South Hams, Teignbridge, West Devon, Torbay)  
Tel. **01364 643866**