



# FORUM NEWS

November 2017

## Editors Column

Welcome to the November edition of the Forum News on behalf of the Worcestershire Forum against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Once again thanks for the great feedback following the September edition. This edition features a further insight into coercive control and a celebration of some of the excellent preventative work in Worcestershire. This year's White Ribbon campaign will focus on schemes including Clare's Law and launch the "Worried" campaign.

Topics this month include spotlight features on homelessness and domestic abuse from SafeLives. I offer guidance for professionals around 'asking the question' which can be life changing however challenging.

We feature a selection of short films that all deliver powerful messages. The recently published domestic abuse pathway has been included in the newsletter which will provide a consistent guide for professionals in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable victims and children. Look out for the new poster campaign.

Finally, sincere thanks go to everyone who has contributed towards any features of this newsletter, the collaborative approach is invaluable.

Wishing you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

**Martin Lakeman**

## Forum launches NEW Worried campaign

This month sees the launch of a New poster to raise public awareness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) across Worcestershire and the wider West Mercia Police area.

Despite the encouraging figures in the last two years in Worcestershire (171), we need to do more to promote this innovative scheme. In support of the poster is a revised leaflet and an easy read version which has been developed following a recent Domestic Homicide Review (DHR).

We all have a role in promoting and signposting this scheme and providing victims or just normal members of society with their "Right to Ask" under the scheme. The aim of this scheme is to give you a formal mechanism to make inquiries about your partner if you are worried that they may have been abusive in the past.

If police checks show that your partner has a record of abusive behaviour, or there is other information to indicate that you may be at risk from your partner, the police will consider sharing this information with you. The police will disclose information only if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so in the interests of protecting you or children from harm.

The scheme aims to help you to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship, or start a new relationship, and provides further help and support to assist you when making that choice. More information can be found at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/dvds](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/dvds).

**WORRIED**  
that your partner could be abusive?

Jealousy  
Criticism  
Controlling Behaviour  
Intimidation

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) gives you the **right to ask** the police if your partner has a history of domestic abuse.

Nobody should feel unsafe in a relationship. Find out more: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/dvds](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/dvds)

West Mercia POLICE For more information call: 101

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## Coercive Control - Is an 'Invisible Noose'

**This powerful article by Shonagh Dillon, CEO of Hampshire charity Aurora New Dawn sums up the challenge for professionals but that we need to do more. Coercive control only became a criminal offence in December 2015. In the sector, we welcomed this news with open arms. Although the use of the legislation is off to a slow start, the message we need to get out to survivors is that coercive control is a criminal offence. The law can be used every day by professionals that work with survivors; and this message can make all the difference. Across West Mercia only 25 offenders have been charged with the offence since being introduced. It's clear we need to do more.**



Coercive control might be 'new' in terms of legislation but it certainly isn't a new type of abuse that is happening. Instead, it is the very essence of how perpetrators exert power and control over their partners; it is the ability to systematically destroy a person's way of being, knowing and existing. Think of an invisible noose the perpetrator lays around a victim's neck. You can't see it, they can't show it to you, it's just there, always there, breathing with them, knowing their every move, weighing down their everyday lives.

Now imagine that noose equates to every penny you spend, every conversation you have, every text you send, each person you make friends with on social media. Imagine it being the capacity to smile, but not too much, and not at the wrong person. To listen to the key in the lock, the footsteps in the hallway and know what the approaching mood might be. Imagine having to stay awake until you know it is safe to sleep because your kids are ok. Imagine having to pretend to be asleep to avoid another rape. Imagine feeling so isolated and so lonely that you cannot even bring yourself to call your mum, your best friend, your sister, your brother; you don't know what to say and they wouldn't believe you anyway...

Sometimes the noose becomes so tight you can't breathe, and your body literally shakes. You can't remember what you were meant to be doing or what the rules were.

**Are you meant to have tea ready at 6.30 or 6.45?**

**Was it ok the way you asked for money towards the kids' school trip?**

**Did he say you couldn't wear that skirt, or was it the one he liked you in?**

**Shit, you bought skimmed milk, why did you do that? You know what happened last time....**

Coercive control destroys lives. It is hard to spot and whilst everyone else is looking for signs of physical injury, perpetrators are able to continue to tie each knot, of each twine, of every necklace that becomes the invisible noose around survivors' necks.



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## What the law has to say.

If you have any questions, more information can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/  
domestic-violence-and-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse)

As professionals we need to spot the signs sooner, we need to accept that coercion is in the centre of the room; let us see it, let us make it visible, because all the time it is invisible the perpetrator has the control and we collude with it.

As a worker in the violence against women sector, my biggest joy is watching survivors undo each knot, take off the necklace and begin to breathe again. It takes time, courage, tears and support and I have been privileged to watch many survivors do this over the years. In my opinion, they are the bravest people I have ever met.

I'd like us to talk to each other more about coercion. I like to start the conversation there.

It is our responsibility to show victims and survivors that they are not alone, that what they are experiencing is not only abuse but is actually so serious it is recognised in UK law as a criminal offence.

## Forum celebrates raising awareness of domestic abuse

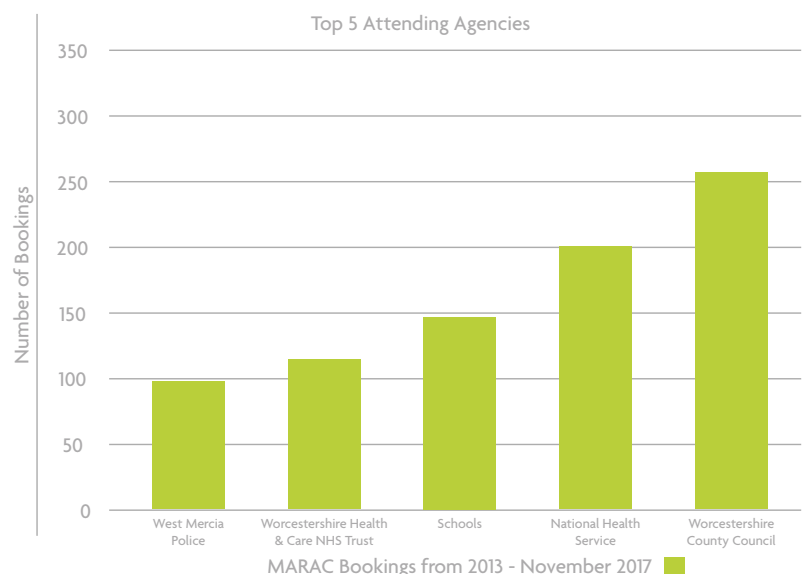
This month sees us celebrating the hugely successful multi agency domestic abuse awareness events that we have been putting on since 2013. At the centre of these events has been the powerful voices of survivors who have shared their stories and experiences with professionals who have left with a spring in their step with an enhanced determination to make a difference. Since 2013, 1404 professionals have attended from 533 different agencies. #Impressive

This engagement and diversity of agencies has further reinforced that Domestic abuse is everyone's business. This event for the past years has been the hottest ticket in town, selling out within days of being announced. November 30th will see the next event during the International 16 days of action (White Ribbon campaign). Worcestershire once again celebrating being accredited as a White Ribbon County.

**The following is a reflection by a delegate, Mandy Child's from the Independence Trust;**

I was hoping when I booked myself on this Conference to expand my knowledge, grow in confidence and gain a better understanding of the challenges we face as Managers and front-line workers when faced with those exposed to Domestic Abuse. It ticked all the boxes on this front and more. Martin and guest speakers were passionate, informed and committed to highlighting the devastation that DA causes.

It struck a chord with me when he stated that, 'domestic abuse, is everyone's business' and we are not alone when facing the question of how we can support the victims of DA.



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It was also encouraging to hear, that these awareness events have been attended by Magistrates, health, schools, the police and many more agencies from across Worcestershire.

Coercive and Controlling behaviour was featured, which underpins most of the cases of abuse. This was brought to life in a tangible but harrowing way when two survivors of abuse shared their stories of their experiences of this vile crime with us. One of the survivors (a Woman), had the courage to stand before us and say, "I will go anywhere and speak to anyone about what's happened to me, If it stops others from going through what I've been through."

Both of the survivors showed enormous courage and thankfully seemed on the way to recovery and regaining their life back. That was great to hear! We can do not less by attending this event and sharing not just information but Transformative info i.e. Act on what we have learnt, Share with all our contacts, Bring up at appropriate meetings..... This was the best event I have been to on Domestic Abuse.

## Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) - known as Sarah's Law

The scheme came about after Sarah Payne was abducted and murdered by convicted paedophile Roy Whiting.

It allows members of the public - parents, carers, guardians or interested third parties - to ask the police to tell them about a person's record of child sex offences if they are concerned about that person's access to a child.

The police already disclose information about registered sex offenders and violent offenders in a controlled way to a variety of people, including head teachers, leisure centre managers, employers, landlords and parents. This important disclosure scheme is an additional tool that the police can use to keep children safe. In Worcestershire there have been **108 applications** in the last 2 years under the scheme that have sought to safeguard children.

For more information about the scheme and how to make an application go to [www.westmercia.police.uk/article/2502/Child-Sex-Offender-Disclosure-Scheme](http://www.westmercia.police.uk/article/2502/Child-Sex-Offender-Disclosure-Scheme)



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## Engaging Fathers and other Significant Males

There is evidence to suggest that it is not unusual for there to be a lack of visibility of some fathers or significant males, particularly when interventions relate to welfare or safeguarding concerns. A review of literature and evidence from Serious Case Reviews (Ofsted, 2011) highlights that fathers or significant males are far less involved or recognised than mothers when children's welfare is a concern.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Board has developed a useful guidance document which draws together relevant research and intelligence and considers phenomenon such as labelling fathers and mothers as gatekeepers. The Guidance provides practitioners with advice on how to facilitate engagement as well as some principles of professional practice. At the end of the document is a helpful list of Dos and Don'ts.

Engaging Fathers and Other Significant Males can be located on the West Midlands Safeguarding Children procedures website at: [westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Worcestershire%20Downloads/Engaging%20fathers%20FINAL%20%2025%2009%2014%7Blink%20updated%5D.pdf](https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Worcestershire%20Downloads/Engaging%20fathers%20FINAL%20%2025%2009%2014%7Blink%20updated%5D.pdf)



## Learning and Improvement Briefing Voice of the child – do you know what's it's like to be me?

It is not possible to deliver effective services to children and young people without listening to what they have to say about their experiences. That does not just mean professionals asking them if they are feeling okay between meetings and ticking a box to say that they have 'seen' the child. It means understanding the child or young person's lived experience using whatever means are available to practitioners and checking this out over time. It means gaining a sense of what it feels like to be that particular child or young person living in that specific family situation.

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8932/learning\\_and\\_improvement\\_briefing\\_8\\_voice\\_of\\_the\\_child](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8932/learning_and_improvement_briefing_8_voice_of_the_child)

## Learning and Improvement Briefing – Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity is a combination of looking, listening, asking direct questions, checking out and reflecting on the information received. It means not taking a single sources of information and accepting it as face value. It means testing out your professional assumptions about different types of families. It means triangulating information from different sources to gain a better understanding of family functioning which, in turn helps to make predictions about what is likely to happen in the future. It means seeing past the obvious.

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8937/briefing\\_sheet\\_9\\_professional\\_curiosity](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8937/briefing_sheet_9_professional_curiosity)



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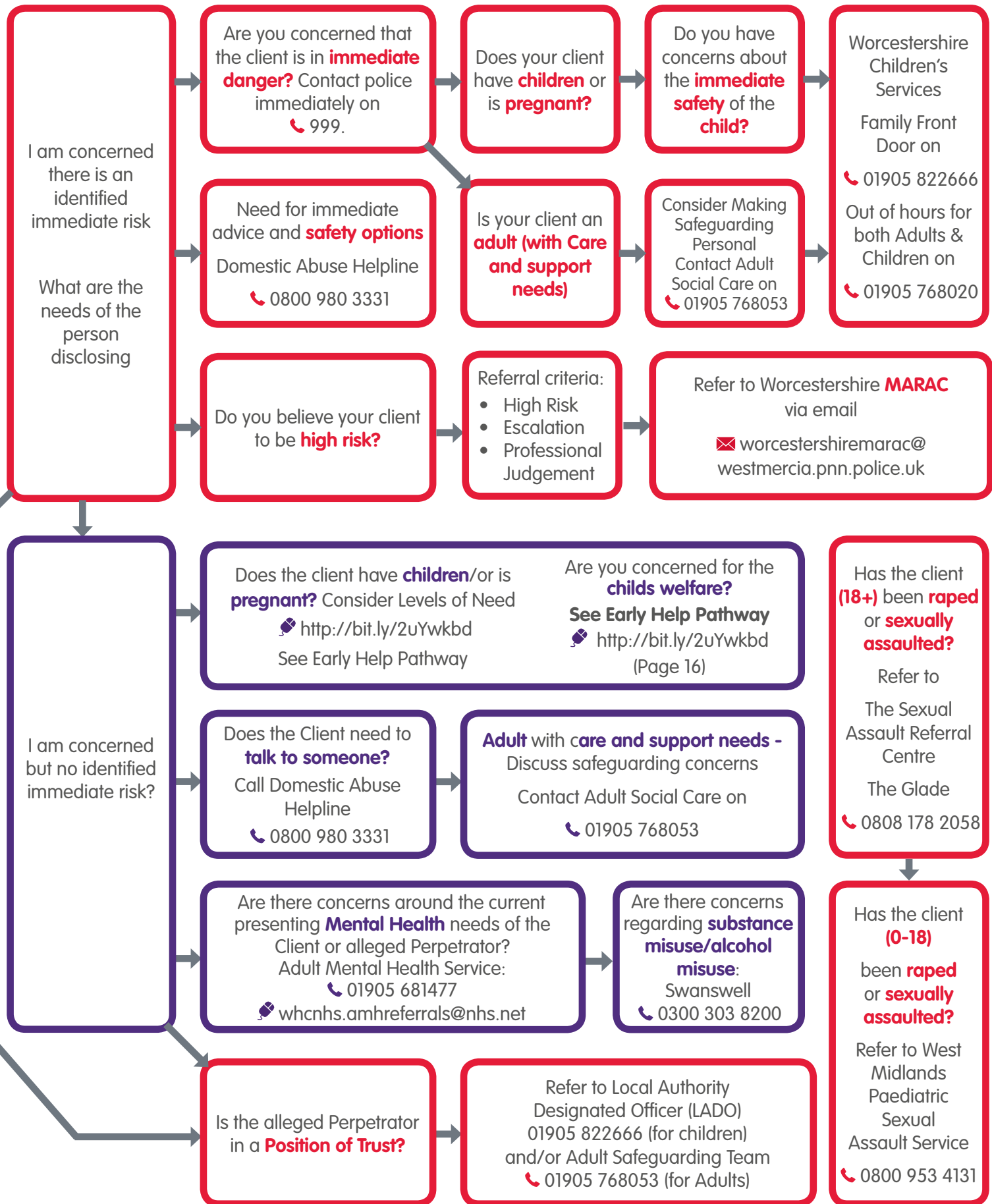
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# DOMESTIC ABUSE PATHWAY



## DISCLOSURE

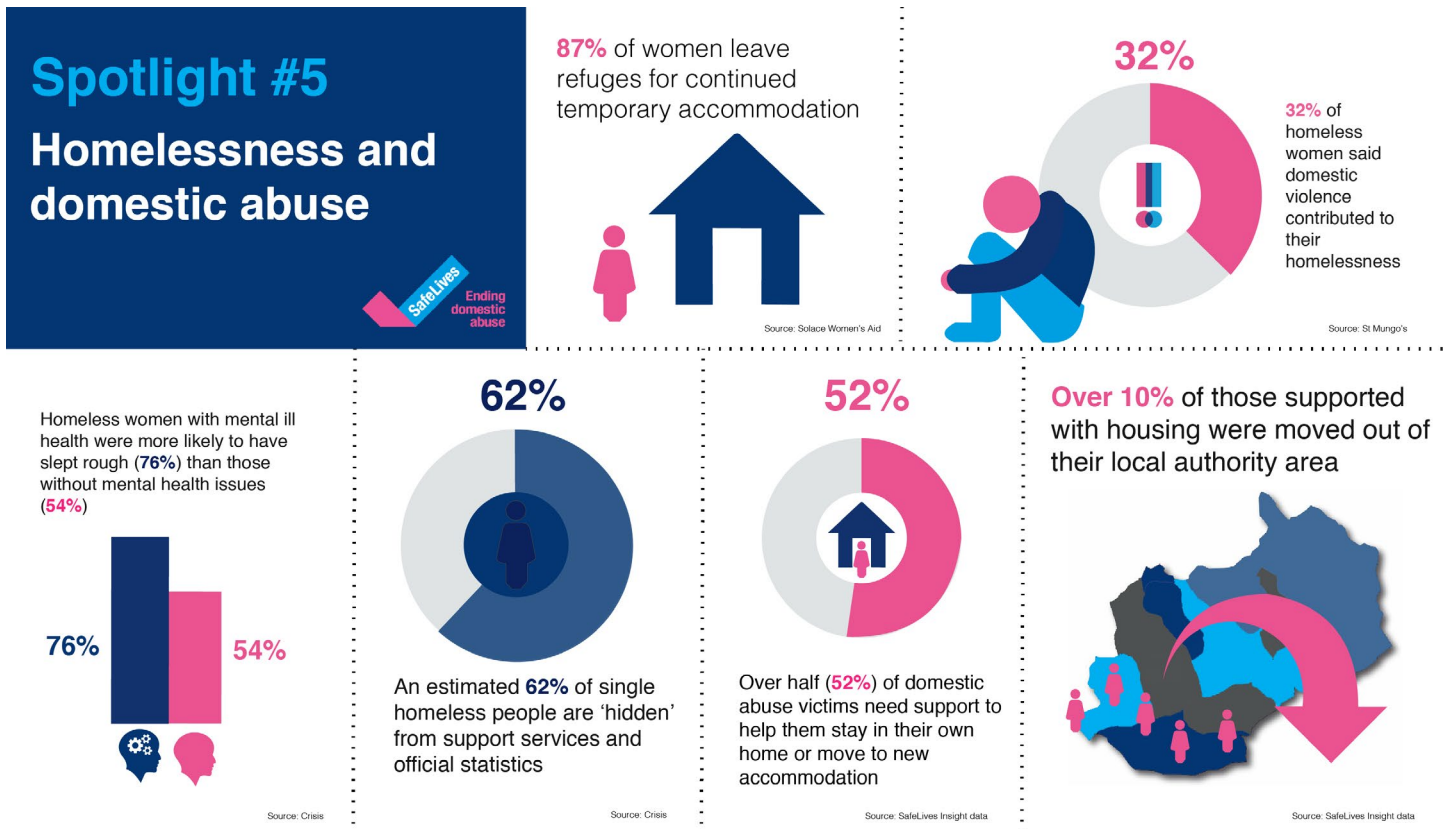


**Domestic Abuse Helpline:** Is the single point of access to services:- refuge / safe houses, support, recovery and educational programmes, Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA's) and Peer support



## Spotlight #5 Homelessness and Domestic Abuse

This month sees Safelives latest Spotlight #5 which focuses on victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are homeless. The spotlight looks at the additional risks they face and the difficulties they have in accessing support. The spotlight features a series of blogs and podcasts from a range of voices. As well as featured experts, who share their views, experiences and practice tips.



This includes a podcast from The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) entitled "The Missing piece of the puzzle: The vital role of housing providers in tackling domestic abuse" by Aisha Sharif from Standing Together Against Domestic Violence talks about the pivotal role social housing providers play in identifying and responding to domestic abuse, and how the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance ensures that all housing providers can support victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Worcestershire has already held an initial domestic abuse housing workshop supported by DAHA and is planning further events and housing providers are undertaking the Self- Assessment evaluation in supporting victims of domestic abuse. More information can be found at: [accreditation.dahalliance.org.uk/](https://www.accreditation.dahalliance.org.uk/)

Full details of the spotlight can be found here



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## What evidence tells us:



**85%** of victims of domestic abuse seek help **five times** on average before they get effective support.



**Four out of five victims** of domestic abuse do not call the police.



Hospital Idvas are **more likely to engage** victims who disclose high levels of complex mental health needs than local domestic abuse services (57% vs 35%).

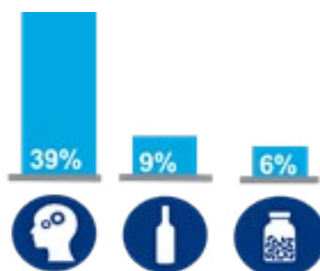
After support from an Idva, 54% of survivors reported feeling **much safer** at case closure.



54%

### Evidence tells us:

Nearly **40% of children** in households where domestic abuse was taking place were **not known to children's services**.



**39% of victims at high or medium risk of domestic abuse** have mental health issues, 9% have substance misuse issues and 6% drug misuse issues.



The overwhelming majority of children exposed to abuse (96%) were **often at home** when the abuse took place, and 88% **witnessed the abuse directly**. In a quarter (26%) of cases the **child tried to intervene** to stop the abuse.

Of those children who were directly harmed by a parent or family member, 89% experienced **emotional abuse**, 25% were **neglected** and 6% were **sexually abused**.







In this edition we hear the story of "R" a male victim who has worked closely with the Forum in a number of ways to raise awareness of male domestic abuse.



Unfortunately my story is not uncommon. Many men are victims of domestic abuse. Although statistically we are said to be less likely to be affected when you take into the account the figures for reporting and the difficulty in getting support it is my belief that men are equally likely to be victims of some type of domestic abuse. Where my story is different is that I reached out, I spoke out and I was able to access support which continues to this day.

I was in an abusive relationship for 11 years and I have a son with my ex partner. One of the most difficult things about many types of abuse is that victims are often unaware of what constitutes abuse. This was the case for me. It's only since I have done my own research, had counselling and group therapy that I have come to realise exactly what was going on. I separated from my ex nearly 3 years ago and I am still learning about her abuse and how it has affected me. The problem with this scenario is that by the time you realise the relationship is unhealthy and abusive a lot of damage has been done and it can take years to heal if at all. I have accepted that some aspects of what I have been through will be with

me for the rest of my life but I am learning to cope with them.

My story is a long one so I will try to sum up the key points. In hindsight I now realise that my relationship with my ex was abusive from day one. Whether it's a conscious decision on the part of the perpetrator I'm still not sure but the patterns of behaviour which ultimately became power and control were always there. I did suffer physical violence. I was hit. I had household items thrown at me. I was thrown around. I was threatened with a knife. It may seem odd to say this but none of those things keep me awake at night these days. It's the psychological, emotional abuse that does all the damage. It's systematic and often over a prolonged period of time. Many victims I have spoken to agree with me. Scars and broken bones heal fairly quickly, the brain takes a lot longer. This type of abuse destroys your self esteem, self worth, confidence and ultimately your basic ability to function on a normal level. It is catastrophic and for some people fatal. It cannot be underestimated but can also be hard to prove.



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# My Story



The cycle of abuse is very clear when I look back at those 11 years. My ex would spend periods of time absolutely rubbishing my every word and action, putting me down, and making me feel guilty for doing the things that made me happy. She would indirectly isolate me from family and friends by being so unkind to me in their company that I would think it wasn't worth the hassle of seeing them. At the point that I felt like I couldn't continue she would do something really nice, a grand gesture. Example of this are buying me loads of designer clothes, booking a holiday often accompanied by a card saying how wonderful I was and what a great partner and eventually father I was. This is sometimes referred to as Love bombing. As I realise now it was very effective in drawing me back into the relationship and thinking it's not all bad. I used to justify to friends that I could cope with the bad stuff because the good times were so amazing. I was totally in love with this person and infatuated by her. I desperately wanted to be with her and to make her happy. So I would try harder and the result would always be the same. This is demoralising and often impossible to achieve.

One of the most powerful tools in abusive relationships is language whether spoken or written. With my ex there were no boundaries. She knew which buttons to press with me and when she did so she didn't stop until I had nothing left to give. Not only would she abuse me but my family, my upbringing, my friends, my beliefs, basically everything that make me me. Any response I had would be twisted and manipulated and used against me. I never won an argument. She combined this with gaslighting, altering the truth, telling lies with such conviction that you begin to question your own version of events and ultimately your own sanity. She would bombard me with abusive texts and phone calls when I was away from the house. I have literally thousands of messages. Her daily record was 80. But every time she would switch back to being so lovely that I couldn't leave her. Victims of abuse are often questioned as to why they stayed for so long. It's really hard to explain and there are often a complicated set of circumstances but it's never straightforward or of course everyone would just walk away. In my case it was the factors I have already discussed but one other key point. I thought I could help her. My ex had a troubled upbringing and had constantly felt abandoned particularly by men. Because I loved her I

was going to be the one to prove her wrong, to stand by her through thick and thin. My counsellor telling me one day that I would never fix her and explaining why was the catalyst I needed to leave her. It's my belief that she has a personality disorder, most likely narcissistic and it's very hard to fix if the perpetrator doesn't even realise or want to be fixed. The lucky victims reach this point and start the process of getting out; the unlucky ones are still there.



When our son was born in 2011 things were initially better. She had a year off work and we were a proper little family. I was very happy as I had wanted children for a long time. But it didn't take long for the cracks to appear. She went back to work. She loves her job and she could earn more money than me. I was self employed and I raised our son on a day to day basis fitting my work around him. It's my belief that she has always struggled with this. Should she be a mum, a career woman, both and as a man shouldn't I be providing for her. I on the other hand was very happy with my role. As things began to deteriorate I was once again the focus of her frustration but this time it was worse because I had a son and I couldn't just walk away. As he grew up our son witnessed more and more of the abuse and one occasion she was verbally and physically abusive towards me whilst he sat next to me on the sofa. She threatened to have me killed. He hid under a



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# My Story



blanket. On other occasions he would plead with her to stop shouting at daddy. To this day my son is protective and kind to me I believe for this reason but there is fundamentally no good in children witnessing abuse. I feel very guilty about this.

One of the biggest fears about leaving an abusive partner, especially one that thrives on power and control, is that it's likely things will get worse as they realise they could be losing control. This was the case for me. We were still living together so every day was a struggle. I learnt coping mechanisms and escape plans to avoid escalation and in general these enabled me to cope. My ex's family lived in another county so she took me to court to be given permission to relocate over 150 miles away. She lost at magistrate's court, appealed and lost in crown court and appealed at the high court in London but was denied an appeal. As I am sure you can imagine this was a lengthy, costly and highly distressing time. The courts are far fairer to fathers these days but as a man it's still very hard to prove your worth as a parent. When she lost this battle she took me to court to force the sale of the family home where I had lived for a number of years before she moved in. She was hell bent on making me homeless, penniless and alone. I was determined not to let this happen and after over 6 months of effort I manage to get a mortgage and buy her out. She then took all the furniture out of the house, including the curtains!

During this time she had a new partner. Initially he seemed ok although I was unsure about him especially with regard to my son. As time went on he became more and more difficult, then angry and abusive. I now had two people making my life difficult. He threatened to have me beaten up, killed, to take my son away, stole my property and eventually that he would find a girl to go to the police and say that I had raped her. Fortunately for me I had been recording all conversations for many months with him and my ex. I took this to the police and he ended up in prison. It turned out he was a career criminal and had duped my ex too.

In summary I would say this. Any domestic abuse is unacceptable but it is vitally important to remember it effect both men and women.. Men are suffering too but the difficulty for them is the stigma that prevents them coming forward, the lack of support out there for them and I have experienced that they are often not believed when they do. I have reported my ex to the police so many times and nothing has ever been done. The first time she did I was arrested and spent a day in a cell before being released without charge. There is help out there and the group therapy and support I have had from my amazing family and friends has saved my life but I am one of the lucky ones. I still struggle. I still have dark days. My mental health is inextricably linked to the abuse I have suffered but I am self aware and determined to be a survivor and more importantly help others.

## Did you Know?

Recent research shows that between 2012 and 2014 **92%** of domestic homicide reviews involved coercive control as a critical factor (Monckton-Smith, Szymanska & Haile, 2017).



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## Domestic abuse survivors can vote safely under Government plans for anonymous registration

**More domestic abuse survivors will be able to vote in safety under a new law that will make it easier for them to register anonymously under proposals within the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill.**

I remember as a Detective Superintendent reviewing and authorising applications to be removed from the electoral role to safeguard and protect victims. Although each application was assessed on its own merit I always felt that the scheme wasn't used enough. Victims currently need to prove they are in danger when they apply to appear anonymously on the electoral register.

This requires very specific evidence or a letter from a senior independent witness – but campaigners claim this is too hard to secure and could discourage many victims from voting.

The Government has now announced plans to expand the number of people who can act as witnesses and allow more kinds of evidence to be put forward. It claims the changes will particularly benefit women living in refuges or "those who have left their refuge but continue to be in hiding from their perpetrators".

Under current law, domestic abuse survivors can only register to vote anonymously if they can prove that appearing on the electoral register would put their safety at risk. This either requires a Court Order or letters signed by senior figures such as police superintendents or directors of social services.

The new legislation, will expand the range of acceptable evidence to include new safeguarding measures such as domestic violence protection orders and police cautions for domestic abuse. It will also lower the seniority required from a witness to include police inspectors and social workers, and will add additional professions such as health staff.

The changes come as part of an ongoing government programme to tackle violence against women and girls. Campaigners are calling for anonymous voter registration valid for life as opposed to the current five year period.

More guidance can be found at: [bit.ly/2k1lmAs](https://bit.ly/2k1lmAs)



Changes to **Anonymous Voter Registration** will make it easier for survivors of domestic abuse to register to vote anonymously

GOV.UK



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# Asking the question Routine Enquiry



**It's acknowledged that routinely asking the question around domestic abuse for professionals can be challenging and sometimes uncomfortable. But we know that it saves lives and although it may feel awkward and take us out of our comfort zone, lessons learnt tell us that, many silent victims are just waiting to be asked, in the hope of sharing their secret to access help and support. Victims are sworn to secrecy by the actions and consequences of their abuser. It's vitally important that we give victims the opportunity to share this secret by asking the question.**

There is a strong likelihood that a person living in fear of domestic abuse may consider that the problem is their fault; that nobody will believe them; they may be too frightened to tell, may not understand that domestic abuse is more than physical violence and not perceive that they are in fact a victim or may continue to minimize or underestimate the risks to them and/or their child(ren).

An important aspect of asking the question is that staff recognise the legitimacy of their role in asking and are confident and competent in offering supportive responses, hence the importance of training, support and supervision for all staff. It should be emphasised that the person may not answer the question on the first occasion and it is vitally important to ask the question on future occasions. It takes tremendous courage to acknowledge that abuse is taking place and ask for help. We know that asking the question can save lives.

The role of the professional is not to be the specialist but to signpost victims to specialist services and provide resources providing information and support. It's important to understand that the victim is best placed to know when to make these calls and how to manage their safety on a day to day basis. Enquiry should be made in private on a one-to-one basis in an environment where the person feels safe, and in a kind, sensitive manner.

Listed below are examples of questions you might ask.

Initial questions:

- How are things at home?
- Do you feel safe?
- How are you feeling?
- Are you getting the support you need at home?

Follow up – here are some possible follow-on questions that may help you to develop a discussion following a disclosure of abuse. Remember that it is important to allow the victim to take things at their own pace.

- Do you ever feel frightened of your partner?
- Does your partner ever treat you badly such as shout at you, constantly call you names, push you around or threaten you?
- We all have rows at home occasionally. What happens when you and your partner fight or disagree?
- Has your partner ever: Forced sex on you, withheld sex or made you have sex in a way that you are unhappy with?
- Does your partner get jealous and if so, how does he/she then act?
- Are there consequences if you don't do something? Are you afraid of what may happen? (what will happen?)

**Golden Principles: Listen – Believe – Empathy – Define Abuse – Act to Protect – Reassure – Signpost – Be Professionally Curious**



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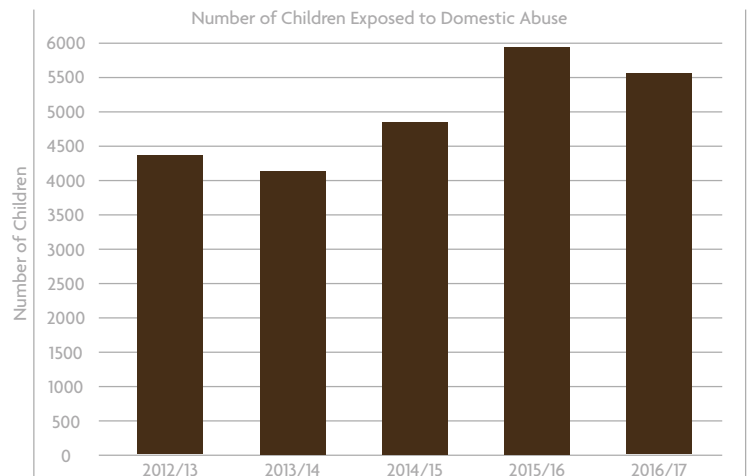
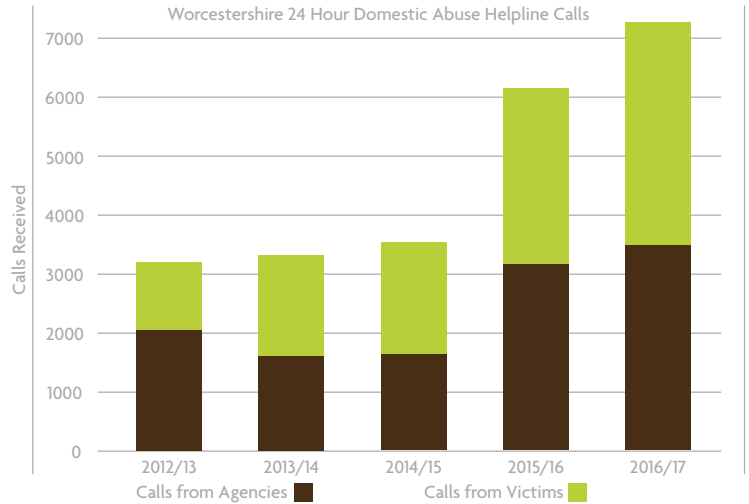
## Demand for Helpline Grows!

**Demand has continued to grow for help and support to the Worcestershire 24 hour domestic abuse helpline.**

Since 2013 its seen a 229% increase in calls from victims seeking advice, help and support. We saw significant rises between 2014/15 to 2015/16 of some 96.5% and then this year a further rise of 26.8% in calls from victims. This has to be seen in a positive context with less victims suffering in silence and having that courage to pick up the phone. It reflects the enhanced trust and confidence in our collective ability to break the cycle of abuse. However, we all know there is much more to be done. It also reassuring that the calls from professionals to the helpline asking for advice has risen reflecting the principle of "Getting it right first time".

This chart shows the annual increases for the past 5 years. These increases should be seen in a positive light with enhanced trust and confidence in victims to report.

This chart represents the number of individual children exposed to domestic and not those that are repeatedly exposed. If we take a 12 month period we have had 789 children exposed 3 or more times and 202 children exposed 5 or more times. A snapshot of 5 months tells us that 35% of social workers assessments identify domestic abuse as a risk factor. 46% of Child Protection plans, 32% of Looked after Children and 32% of Children in Need plans have domestic abuse as a risk factor.



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## White Ribbon Campaign 2017

This year's 16 days of action (White ribbon campaign) is fast approaching. The campaign commences on Saturday 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) – concluding on Sunday 10 December (International Human Rights Day), the campaign is well established across Worcestershire.

We continue to raise awareness throughout the year of the devastating impact of both domestic abuse and sexual violence. It's also important to say that our approach is about embracing all victims, regardless of gender. Our dedicated site [www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/worcestershire](http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/worcestershire) makes up 27% of all the national pledges, a significant achievement. This year we will continue to promote the pledge site. Making a pledge only takes a minute and is a powerful statement of your stand against abuse, both personally and as a county. It sends a strong message to those suffering in silence that we care and we know from experience that it will provide some silent victims with the courage to report or reach out for help. The launch event is on Friday 24th November at University of Worcester at 1pm. This year we will be focusing on raising awareness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) and the offence of Coercive and Controlling Behaviour.

There will be a number of materials to support the campaign which you can either download from the Forum website [www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk](http://www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk) or provided through myself. Below are a selection of some of the posters.



### Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

**Q:** What is coercive and control?  
**A:** This type of abuse in an intimate or family relationship involves an ongoing pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. Coercion can include a pattern of threats, humiliation and intimidation. Control can include making someone feel dependent and isolating them from their sources of support, and controlling their everyday behaviour.

**Examples of behaviour or tactics used by perpetrators**

- Isolating them from family and friends
- Controlling or tracking movements
- Repeated patterns, humiliation or embarrassment
- Controlling when they can sleep
- Manipulating someone or their friends and family
- Using children
- Controlling finances or creating financial dependence
- Restricting their access to healthcare or medication
- Controlling what they wear
- Family 'abuse' or threats to their reputation
- Controlling their social media
- Demanding degrading sexual acts

**Myth busting**  
 This isn't about conduct in a 'normal' relationship, it's about repeated criminal behaviour and creating fear of not abiding by someone else's rules.

- 74% suffering psychological abuse are less likely to report to the police
- 46% didn't see themselves as victims of domestic abuse\*
- 37% did not report to the police because they didn't think they could help\*

\*ONS 2013

**Types of evidence**

- Emails, screenshots and social media
- Phone records, text messages and 999 tapes
- CCTV and body-worn video footage
- Medical and bank records
- Previous offences and witness testimony

Don't Suffer In Silence, Tell Someone...  
**0800 980 3331**  
 24 hour Domestic Abuse Helpline

Find out more online, by scanning the QR code opposite using the camera on your smart phone or tablet. Alternatively you can visit the website at [www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk](http://www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk)

WORCESTERSHIRE FORUM AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
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### DOMESTIC ABUSE CAN BE...

### IS THIS HAPPENING TO YOU?

Coercive Control is a criminal offence. You don't have to be assaulted to be a victim of Domestic Abuse. Psychological and emotional abuse destroys lives.

Find out more online, by scanning the QR code opposite using the camera on your smart phone or tablet. Alternatively you can visit the website at [www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk](http://www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk)

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 Stronger Together

### DOMESTIC ABUSE CAN BE...

**THAT'S WRONG**

**THAT'S WRONG**

**THAT'S WRONG**

**WHATEVER I DO, IT'S ALWAYS WRONG**

**IS YOUR LIFE LIKE THIS?**

Coercive Control is a criminal offence. You don't have to be assaulted to be a victim of Domestic Abuse. Psychological and emotional abuse destroys lives.

Find out more online, by scanning the QR code opposite using the camera on your smart phone or tablet. Alternatively you can visit the website at [www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk](http://www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk)

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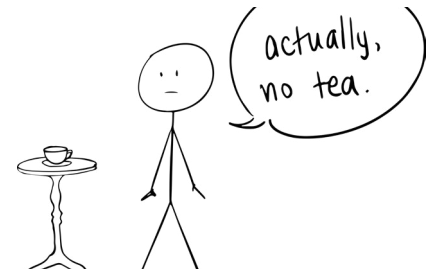




## Cup of Tea - #ConsentsEverything



This is an innovative video explaining consent. If you're still struggling with consent just imagine instead of initiating sex you're making them a cup of tea. **#brilliant**



## Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Suzy Lamplugh Trust have written the first of a series of guest articles for SHP magazine. **Read the first article about supporting lone worker policies with technology here**

Lone worker safety organisation LONEALERT have written a guest blog for Suzy Lamplugh Trust on the nature of lone working, "Safety in black and white - so why is lone working such a grey area?" Click here to read. Watch this short video which is a simple guide to stalking.



## Innovative Film released by Students - Paint



Produced by students from the City College Norwich Media Learning Company, features a young couple who are in a relationship. The students are working with Norfolk Police.

Paint is used in the video to demonstrate the impact the behaviour has on the victim, with the message 'If only abuse was this obvious'.

See the full film [here](#)



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## FREE DOMESTIC ABUSE E-LEARNING

Tackling domestic abuse is everyone's business. In an effort to raise the awareness of professionals across Worcestershire on the devastating impact of domestic abuse we are providing this **FREE** online training to any professional in Worcestershire until April 2018. It's aimed at individuals in organisations and voluntary groups that work with adults, children and young people.

To access the training visit: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20380/safeguarding\\_children\\_information\\_for\\_professionals/897/safeguarding\\_children\\_training/7](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20380/safeguarding_children_information_for_professionals/897/safeguarding_children_training/7)



## Let's make this Christmas a happier one! The twelve days of Christmas



This film is set to an amended soundtrack of the well-known song "the Twelve Days of Christmas" revealing a Christmas filled with emotional pain, physical abuse and mistreatment. Sadly we know too well about the emotional and psychological damage caused to children by domestic abuse. Children can often be the forgotten witnesses and victims of domestic abuse and violence and are considered to be passive in the home situation. Parents can sometimes have an over optimistic view that their child does not know about the abuse, thinking the children have not been exposed to it. Sadly, this can also be the issue for professionals talking to parents. Prolonged or regular exposure to domestic violence and abuse can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional well-being, despite the best efforts of the victim parent to protect the child.



**For more information  
click here**



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## The SMART rules



Years ago when in the police I led and delivered regionally on Internet safety. It brought a smile to my face to come across the SMART rules being once again promoted across social media. They are as true today as they were years ago when educating young people and parents about how to safe on line. I don't believe in reinventing the wheel so here they are again. #commonsense



### Safe:

Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.



### Meet:

Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present. Remember online friends



### Accepting:

Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files, images or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!



### Reliable:

Someone online might lie about who they are and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information by looking at other websites, in books, or with someone who knows. If you like



### Tell:

Tell a parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone, or something, makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.



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## In the Spotlight

### **Name:**

Marc Linton

### **Organisation:**

Rooftop Housing / West Mercia Women's Aid

### **Position:**

Support Coordinator for male victims of domestic abuse

### **My first proper job was...**

Selling Drawing Office Supplies

### **When I was a child I wanted to be...**

Out on my bike, making dens and on rope swings, just being a kid really.

### **Favourite book / film...**

One flew over the cuckoo's nest, it's a classic.

### **Favourite Meal...**

Sunday roast, with beef, Yorkshire pudding, cauliflower cheese... the works!!

### **Favourite drink...**

Chocolate milk.

### **The best piece of advice I was given was...**

Don't judge others until you've walked a mile in their shoes.

### **If I could invite any four people to dinner, they would be...**

Peter Kay, Billy Bragg, Jennifer Saunders and Bill Bailey. I think it'd be a great laugh along with some sing along songs.

### **After work I like to...**

Go to gigs, I love live music.

### **If I was invisible for the day I would...**

Fudge the governments books so more money gets ploughed into the support networks







## 'Ask for Angela' campaign launched in Worcester

### #ASKFORANGELA

ARE YOU IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION  
AND YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE?

ASK FOR ANGELA AT THE BAR, AND STAFF WILL  
DISCREETLY HELP YOU OUT.

“HI'M ANGELA,

ARE YOU ON A DATE  
THAT ISN'T WORKING OUT?

DO YOU FEEL LIKE  
YOU'RE NOT IN A  
SAFE SITUATION?

IS YOUR TINDER OR  
POF DATE NOT WHO  
THEY SAID THEY WERE  
ON THEIR PROFILE?

DOES IT ALL FEEL  
A BIT WEIRD?

IF YOU GO TO THE BAR AND ASK FOR 'ANGELA'  
THE BAR STAFF WILL KNOW YOU NEED SOME HELP GETTING  
OUT OF YOUR SITUATION AND WILL CALL YOU A TAXI OR  
HELP YOU OUT DISCREETLY - WITHOUT TOO MUCH FUSS

”



[www.worcester.ac.uk/studentsupport](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/studentsupport)  
[www.worcester.gov.uk/community-safety](http://www.worcester.gov.uk/community-safety)

Have you ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable on a date and wished the ground would swallow you up so you wouldn't have to concoct an excuse to leave.

AN INNOVATIVE campaign to help those who feel threatened on dates has been launched in Worcester. Student services staff at the University of Worcester have been working closely with Worcester City Council and Night Safe to bring the "Ask for Angela" campaign to city centre venues.

The campaign that originated in Lincolnshire seeks to support those who find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, or on the receiving end of an inappropriate comment or unwanted attention are encouraged to go to the bar and "Ask for Angela" - a phrase aimed at alerting staff so they can help defuse the situation discreetly.

City venues taking part in the campaign include Tramps, Velvet, Mode, Alexanders, The Crown, Heroes, The Royal Exchange, McDonalds (the Cross), Tonic Bar, All Bar One, Slug and Lettuce, Starbucks C/S, Cosy Club, Conservatory, Bottles. This is a welcomed move in supporting people who can feel vulnerable when meeting for the first time or wanting support when feeling unsafe.



Courtesy of Safer Communities Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership, Lincolnshire. Originators of the 'Ask Angela' poster campaign.



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## What is a Snapchat streak?

**Snapchat is an app that is hugely popular among young people. The app allows users to send photos and videos to their contacts and create 'streaks'. But what does this mean?**

### How does Snapchat work?

Snapchat is a messaging app that allows users to share content, such as photos, texts and videos, i.e. 'Snaps'. Snaps only appear for a matter of seconds before disappearing from users' screens. You can choose to send a 'Snap' directly to one other person, or you can post it on your 'Story' so that it can be viewed by all of your contacts. Your contacts are able to view this for 24 hours before it is deleted from your account.

### What is a streak?

Streaks count how many consecutive days two people have been sending Snaps to each other. Every day they send a Snap their streak gets longer.

### How do you know if you have a streak?

A streak is shown next to a contact's name on the Snapchat app. A streak is symbolised by a little picture of a flame and the number of days the streaks has gone on for. Only the two people involved in the streak can see this.

### Why are young people so interested in streaks?

Streaks give users a sense of competition and friendship. A lot of young people want to get streaks to rivals their friends, or to show that they have a very close friendship with a particular contact. However, there can be pressure to respond on a daily basis and it may affect their self-esteem if they feel that others have stronger friendships. This can lead to bullying and isolation, another form of abuse.

## Hollie Guard: Your NEW Personal Safety App



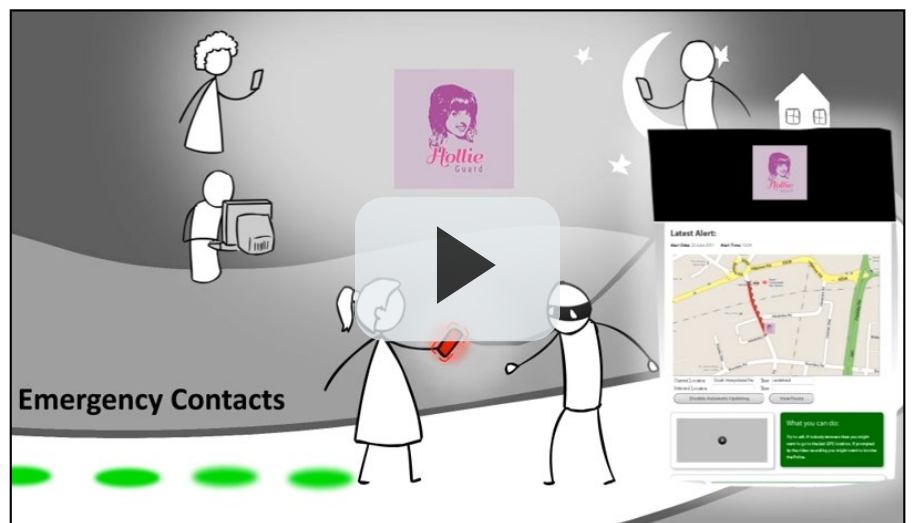
Hollie Guard is a next generation smartphone app that provides enhanced levels of protection. Hollie Guard can help you feel safe.

In danger? A simple shake or tap activates Hollie Guard, automatically sending your location and audio/video evidence to your designated contacts.

To find out more click on:

<http://hollieguard.com/index.php>  
<http://hollieguard.com/UserGuide.pdf>

See the full film [here](#).



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# DOMESTIC ABUSE DROP IN ADVICE CENTRE

**Monday - Friday  
9:30am - 12pm**

Haswell House, St Nicholas Street,  
Worcester WR1 1UN

If you are suffering from domestic abuse and need someone to talk to for advice, we hold a drop in advice centre every Monday - Friday morning 9:30am - 12pm.

You will be able to discuss any problems that you may have with a member of our team.



QualitySolicitors Parkinson Wright have a designated Domestic Abuse Team led by Suzanne Oldnall. We work quickly to understand your unique situation and make your safety our priority. If you are in immediate danger we can take swift action and, where necessary, we obtain court orders to protect you and your family from the abusive partner.

You can talk to us in complete confidence. We'll discuss your options and what outcome you would like as well as clearly explaining the ways in which the law can protect you from domestic violence. As well as providing legal advice, we can put you in touch with a range of organisations who can provide additional help and support. We keep you informed at every stage, explaining everything in straightforward terms and taking the right legal steps to protect you and your family.

For more information or to book a confidential appointment, please contact Suzanne Oldnall

☎ 01905 721 600 🌐 [qualitysolicitors.com/parkinsonwright](http://qualitysolicitors.com/parkinsonwright)

## Editor's Note

I hope you've enjoyed the newsletter and feel more informed and empowered to make a difference. I rely on others to contribute to the newsletter. If you would like to submit an article or offer an idea for a future subject/spotlight or just want to provide any feedback, then please get in touch with me at [mlakeman@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:mlakeman@worcestershire.gov.uk)



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