

NEWS RELEASE

DOMESTIC ABUSE DOUBLES OVER CHRISTMAS

Rachael Powell – Information & Communication Officer

01803 841440

20 December 2005

As Christmas is fast approaching it is highlighted that at this time of year the number of domestic abuse incidents that take place rise significantly.

Detective Sergeant (DS) Nick Wilden from the Torbay Police Domestic Violence Unit said 'it is unfortunate but from the police's experience and statistics incidents of domestic abuse markedly increase over the Christmas period.'

DS Wilden stated that this is owing to a number of factors. 'For example, higher consumption of alcohol and often strained social and family gatherings can often be the catalyst for arguments leading to assaults and abuse. This is a particularly busy time for police in South West Devon and it is not unusual for the police to be called to over double the normal rate of such incidents over the festive season. Such incidents have a terrible effect on the victim and especially children caught up in such events.'

Because of this Torbay Domestic Abuse Forum would like to let anyone who is a victim of domestic abuse, or think a family member or friend is a victim over the Christmas period know that there is help available to them.

HELP IS AVAILABLE...

Specially trained **Police Domestic Violence Officers** will be available over the Christmas period to help and advise anyone who has concerns or has been the victim of domestic abuse. They can be contacted on **01803 841469** (Torbay) or **01626 323792** (Newton Abbot).

In an emergency always dial 999.



The Police and Domestic Violence Officers can also be contacted anonymously via the **Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111**.

Please remember, if you do not want to report an incident to the Police there are other organisations available that you can call for advice and support.

For example, **South Devon Women's Aid** is a charity for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. Christine McKenna, General Manager for South Devon Women's Aid, said 'we run a helpline which women can call to talk about their experiences and also seek advice and assistance about what to do next. As well as the helpline we also offer face to face sessions with a trained volunteer. The volunteer will meet the woman to offer support and listen. They can also attend appointments such as solicitors or housing to support them through these processes'.

There are various other services which South Devon Women's Aid also offer:

- A free counselling service.
- Support groups in Torbay, South Hams and Teignbridge areas.
- Pattern Changing Courses.
- A Safe House - where women who are fleeing domestic abuse can go.
- Volunteers – a new training course for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer is due to commence in January 2006.

If you are male and are experiencing domestic abuse there is also help and support available for you.

Victim Support has a number of trained volunteers who can offer advice and support to men. Tanya Till, Senior Service Community/Training Manager from Victim Support said 'the number of men who are finding themselves victims of domestic abuse is increasing. They often feel isolated and have no one to turn to for support. Victim Support has a

[Safer Communities Torbay](#) - working with you for you

number of male volunteers who have been trained to work with male victims of domestic abuse.'

If you would like to speak to anyone from **Victim Support** they **can be contacted locally on 0845 676 10 20 and nationally on 0845 30 30 900.**

Detective Sergeant Nick Wilden stressed 'domestic abuse is a crime and the police will deal robustly and positively with anyone committing such offences.' So the message from the Police is; have a great Christmas but remember there is always help available.

If you are reading this knowing that drinking alcohol or using another substance causes you to become violent or abusive, seriously consider the consequences. Counselling services for abusive behaviour can be accessed through GP's and other services including **RELATE (01803 297854)** and **R.E.S.P.E.C.T (national helpline 0845 122 8609).**

NOTES TO EDITORS:

To arrange interviews please contact Rachael Powell in the Safer Communities Office on 01803 841440. For more information also visit our website: www.safercommunitiestorbay.org.uk.

Torbay Domestic Abuse Forum is a group of representatives from a number of agencies who have a front line involvement with victims, perpetrators or children who have been affected by domestic abuse.