

# think of it as a safe way out

## More information

Safer Communities Torbay

01803 841274

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

Torbay exposing domestic abuse

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) is referred to as a system because, although it has the court processes at its heart, it also refers to early identification of domestic violence incidents. The SDVC is a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence which combines the work of lots of agencies and forms a multi-agency response that creates greater victim safety and brings perpetrators of domestic violence to account.

**Speak  
out  
break  
free**

**a guide to  
South Devon's  
Specialist  
Domestic  
Violence Court  
(SDVC)**





## Where is the court?

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) is based at Torquay Magistrates Court every Wednesday afternoon. A courtroom deals only with domestic violence cases.

## Where do I go when I arrive?

If you attend the SDVC as a victim or witness you may enter the court by a secure entrance into a witness suite. Friends/family can stay with you if you wish.

## Who will be at court?

Staff linked to the SDVC have been specially trained by people working in the field locally. This includes ushers, legal advisors, magistrates, police, probation officers, Crown Prosecution Service, defence lawyers and victim / witness support staff. The purpose of the training is to make relevant people more aware of the position that you may be in – why you may be scared, how you may feel and what might improve your experience at court.

## Special measures

Depending on the case a decision may be taken by the magistrates to allow you special measures for your evidence. This may be a video link from the witness suite or screens to shield you from the defendant in court. The Police officer dealing with your case can advise you about this.

## Help and support

A dedicated Witness Care Officer will update you on the progress of your case as events happen in court from beginning to end. The Witness Care Officer can assist you with transport, child care, or any other issues you may have, to help you through the court process. They can also link in with other agencies on your behalf for extended help. Locally two voluntary agencies can offer you the services of an 'Independent Domestic Violence Advocate' (IDVA). The IDVA can support you throughout the court process and beyond - speaking to other people on your behalf, taking you to court, supporting you while you are there and ensuring you are kept fully informed about the criminal justice process at all times.

## Successes of SDVC

- Enhances the effectiveness of court and support services for victims
- Makes support for victims and information sharing easier
- Improved risk management of victims and children
- Leads to greater accountability of the perpetrator
- Improves victim participation and satisfaction
- Increases public confidence in the Criminal Justice Service (CJS)

### Court address

South Devon Magistrates Court  
1st Floor Riviera House  
Nicholson Road  
Torquay TQ2 7TT  
Tel: 01803 612211

### Other agency details

#### Police Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU)

Tel: 01803 841469

#### Police (general)

Tel: 08752 777444

In an emergency always call **999**.

**Courts Witness Service** – offering support and advice to victims, witnesses and their families and friends

Tel: 01626 331646

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

#### Witness Care Unit

Tel: 01392 356799

#### Domestic Violence Team at Safer Communities Torbay

Tel: 01803 841274

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