

Beyond the bruises – Somerset’s new fight against non-physical domestic abuse

A new campaign aims to raise the profile of lesser-known types of domestic abuse and encourage those who may not realise they are being abused to come forward for support and advice.

Launching on [White Ribbon Day](#) and at the beginning of the worldwide campaign [16 Days of Action](#) Somerset Council has commissioned 12 short films to shine the spotlight on non-physical types of domestic abuse.

The films direct anyone who is experiencing these forms of abuse to a new website, somersestdomesticabuse.org.uk, where they can get more information, support and advice or by contacting the service on 0800 69 49 999.

The films, available to view here: <https://bit.ly/12DACF>, will be launched on TV and across a range of social, digital and video sharing platforms.

Councillor Adam Dance, Somerset County Council’s Executive Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity, emphasised the importance of recognising that domestic abuse encompasses more than just physical violence. “Domestic abuse is often thought of as physical violence,” he stated, “but abuse can take many forms, such as using a variety of methods to control someone - for example, controlling someone’s money, what they wear, who they see or what they do.

“It is my hope that these short films will help people recognise abusive behaviour in themselves, their relationships or the relationships of their friends and family.

“Everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life free from abuse. If you or someone you know is experiencing these types of behaviour from a family member, partner or ex-partner, please seek help – you will be believed.”

The new films are part of Somerset Council’s ongoing commitment to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a legal definition of domestic abuse:

1. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards are aged 16 years or over
2. Both persons are “personally connected” (including ex-partners and family members)

You do not have to be living with the person who is being abusive to you.

There are many types of behaviours that can form non-physical domestic abuse, these may include:

- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological or emotional
- Stalking and harassment - including online or via text message

If you are experiencing any form of domestic abuse, worried about someone you know, or are concerned about the impact of your behaviour towards others, then help is available: somersestdomesticabuse.org.uk or by telephoning 0800 69 49 999 - between 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week.

In an emergency you should always dial 999. If you are worried that an abuser may overhear your call you can remain silent, tap the phone and dial 55 when prompted by the operator who will send help.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired you can register with emergencySMS.net. Once registered you will be able to send a text to 999 if you require help in an emergency.