

BBC Radio Shropshire Factsheet

Domestic Violence

Organisations offering help and advice

Shropshire County Council Social Care Team can be contacted via the web site - www.shropshire.gov.uk - follow the link to Social Care and Health or look in the A-Z index under D for Domestic Violence.

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Or call **01743 253729** and ask for your local Social Care team.

You can write to them at:

Shropshire County Council
Social Care and Health Directorate
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

The Safer Communities Team has also put together a crisis plan which you will find at the bottom of this fact sheet.

People in Telford and Wrekin area can call **01952 202352** (daytime) or **01952 670104** (out of hours). These are numbers for Housing Needs, but they will put you in touch with local refuges

Wace Morgan Solicitors have a **24-hour Trauma Line** offering advice to men or women suffering domestic abuse, violence or threats of violence. They can secure public funding to take emergency steps such as the granting of a non-molestation order.

The number is **07803 677785**.

Women's Aid help women and children. Their 24 hour helpline is staffed by trained female advisors. The number for Shropshire and Herefordshire is:

0800 783 1359,

Refuge - www.refuge.org.uk - runs a national helpline on:

0808 2000 247.

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They provide a lifeline for women and children who experience domestic violence. The organisation is also opening a new refuge in Shropshire in September 2005.

Victim Support will help male victims. The Victim Supportline number is:

0845 30 30 900

They will refer you to your local branch.



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Their web site can be found at www.victimsupport.org/

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Mankind is another organisation offering help to men.

Their national contact number is 0870 794 4124, or see www.mankind.org.uk

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Sure Start in Harlescott, Shrewsbury is running a women's support group. Contact Julie or Sophie on 01743 452400

All police stations have domestic violence units. The contact number for West Mercia police is:

08457 444 888

There's also a new website dealing with domestic violence aimed specifically at children and young people at www.thehideout.org.uk

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE CRISIS PLANNING

Kath Goodchild, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator with the Safer Communities Team at Shropshire County Council has put together a crisis plan, which is designed to help you think through your choices during what is often a traumatic time.

1. What is a crisis plan?

The Crisis Plan is a list of practical questions you could think about as a way of planning to keep yourself and your children safe if and when your partner is violent or abusive again, or if you are preparing to leave home. However, thinking about a crisis plan doesn't mean that you have to leave home.

The terms 'domestic violence' and 'domestic abuse' are used throughout. They mean any form of abusive and controlling behaviour used by one adult against a partner or ex-partner, whether physical, sexual, emotional or financial.

2. Before making a Crisis Plan – Assess the Danger

Before you discuss a Crisis Plan with an agency professional or a trusted person, it is important you discuss with her/him the following questions as soon as possible:

- 1) Whether there is immediate danger for you and your children.
- 2) Your current contact with your abusive partner.

This may help you to identify any current risks, and decide what your options for action are and what information and support you need now.



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Also keep in mind that the times before, during and after leaving an abusive partner are known to be more dangerous than other times.

3. Making a Crisis Plan

Here are some questions and issues to think about in case of a violent incident or when preparing to leave home

- 1) Is there somewhere you can quickly and easily use a phone – at a neighbour's or a relative's home, or other contact?
- 2) Who will you call? (*Identify who, make a mental note, and write it down somewhere safe*).
- 3) Can you agree a code or signal with a neighbour so they know when to call the police or take some other action you have agreed with them in advance? For example, putting a vase or toy in the window, if you are being threatened, or are trapped in the house.
- 4) Do you know where you can go to be safe in an emergency – perhaps with a relative or friend, through Women's Aid, or emergency housing?
- 5) Can you make and always carry with you a list of phone numbers for an emergency, as even well-known numbers can be forgotten in a panic. Is it safe to put them into your mobile phone's memory? (*Don't forget to include friends, relatives, local police and Women's Aid Helpline numbers*).
- 6) Could you try to save some emergency money for bus, train or taxi fares? Where could you hide this money?
- 7) It is a good idea to have an extra set of keys cut for the house, flat or car.
- 8) Keep the keys, money and a set of clothes for yourself and the children packed ready in a bag so that you can leave quickly. Some leave this with a neighbour or friend. Who can you leave it with?
- 9) If possible take any important legal or financial papers and keep them in your emergency bag. These could include: marriage and birth certificates, court orders, health cards, passports, income support book, child benefit books, driving licence, cheque book, credit cards, building society book, and your National Insurance number. Have you got access to these?
- 10) Are there any other important documents you need with you?
If you can't get the originals, you may have to make a photocopy when you can.
- 11) It may be useful to have photocopies of a gas or electricity bill in case you need to show proof of your last address. Many organisations need to separate proofs of



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your identity and address.

- 12) Remember that if you do leave home in a hurry because of the abuse, and later discover that you have forgotten something, it is always possible to arrange for the protection of a police escort to return home to collect things. Contact the Domestic Violence Unit, West Mercia Police on 08457 444888.
- 13) If you have more time to plan leaving, try to do as much as possible of the following:
 - Leave when the abuser is not around.
 - Take all of your children with you.
 - Take what you can of your personal possessions which have sentimental value.
 - Take favourite toys for the children.
 - Take clothing for at least several days.
 - Take any medicine that you or the children may need, and bottles and nappies if you have a baby.
 - Open a separate savings account in another bank or building society to build up money for after you leave.
 - Arrange for someone to take care of the pets.

There is no excuse for abuse or violence. Using abusive and controlling behaviour of any kind to hurt, frighten, dominate or isolate another person is never acceptable.

Crisis plan from the Safer Communities Team at Shropshire County Council

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