

Domestic violence

As highlighted on the BBC's One Show on Tuesday evening incidents of domestic violence increase over the Christmas period.

Violence in the home is unacceptable and everyone has rights in law to be protected. On average

- Domestic violence accounts for approximately 15% of violent crime nationally, accounting for 31% of all violence against women and 5% of all violence against men.
- Two women a week are killed by a current or former male partner.
- One in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime, and women experience a greater risk of repeat victimisation and serious injury.
- Eighty-nine per cent of those suffering four or more incidents of domestic violence are women.
- One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute.

Domestic violence is still largely a hidden crime: those who have experienced abuse often try to hide the abuse from families, friends, or authorities.

- They may be ashamed of what has happened.
- They may feel they were to some extent to blame.
- They may think it was a "one-off" and won't happen again.
- They may be frightened that if they tell anyone about it, their partner will find out and they will be in danger of further and perhaps more severe violence from him.

For all these reasons, and others, victims of abuse are likely to experience repeated attacks before they report the abuse to anyone.

Jackie Mensah, head of Bennett Griffin LLP's Family Law Department in Worthing, and a committee member of Worthing Women's Aid says:

"Domestic abuse is a crime and can exist in many forms. Domestic abuse is not just about physical violence, but can include emotional, sexual or financial harm. I would urge anyone experiencing domestic abuse to find out about their rights and the services that are available. We are expert in applying for court injunctions to protect our clients and their children. We encourage our clients to access all the help they may need in addition to legal advice, by way of referrals to counsellors and/or local refuge centres."

If you or anyone you know is suffering domestic violence and needs further advice please call Jackie Mensah on 01903 229938 for an initial discussion, on a completely confidential and non-committal basis.

EDITORS: For further information call Jackie Mensah on 01903 229938 or email jnm@bennett-griffin.co.uk