



# Domestic Abuse Toolkit

## Awareness and support in the workplace



Talk to us, we can help.

# 01

## Domestic Abuse Toolkit

### Awareness and support in the workplace

---

#### Domestic abuse and our workforce – our values

Essex Police has a responsibility to provide all staff and officers with a safe working environment and this toolkit represents our commitment to recognising the devastating impact of domestic abuse and providing support, compassion and understanding to staff and officers who may be victims.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any circumstances and any abuse perpetrated by officers and staff will not be condoned. Any allegation, disclosure or conviction of domestic abuse perpetrated by an officer or member of staff will be robustly investigated in accordance with Force Policy.

#### Purpose of the toolkit

This toolkit has been developed to:

- Help managers understand domestic abuse and the impact that it has in the workplace;
- Provide practical advice and information for employees of Essex Police who may be involved in a Domestic Abuse relationship;
- Provides information on how to support and safeguard officers and staff who may be victims of domestic abuse.

The toolkit also provides guidance on what to do if a member of your team is a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

#### What is in the toolkit?

- Understanding domestic abuse
- Recognising the signs of domestic abuse
- Checklist for managers
- Asking difficult questions
- Confidentiality
- Making reasonable adjustments
- Support for victims
- Support for perpetrators
- Victim and perpetrator FAQs – What would happen if....?

## Understanding domestic abuse

---

Domestic abuse is a pattern of **controlling and coercive behaviour** which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within an intimate relationship or a family. It can include violence by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim.

The behaviour is usually frequent and persistent and can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

### Physical

A wide range of different behaviour can come under the heading of physical abuse and can include punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair out, pushing and strangling. It can also include withholding access to medication, medical care or forcing alcohol or other drug use.

### Sexual

Rape and sexual abuse is common in abusive relationships due to the victim's refusal of consent being ignored. Any situation where someone is forced to take part in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity is sexual abuse.

### Psychological/emotional

Emotional or psychological abuse can be either verbal or non-verbal.

This kind of domestic abuse chips away at the confidence and independence of the victim to make them compliant and limit their ability to leave their abuser.

Emotional abuse can include verbal abuse such as yelling, name-calling, blaming and shaming, isolation, intimidation, threats of violence and controlling behaviour.

### Financial

Economic or financial abuse limits the victim's ability to get help.

The abuser controls finances; withholds money or credit cards; makes someone unreasonably account for the money they spend; exploits assets; withholds basic necessities; prevents someone from working or sabotages the victim's job and deliberately runs up debts.

## Recognising the signs of domestic abuse

---

Anybody can be affected by domestic abuse and anybody can be an abuser – irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, disability or lifestyle.

This guide should help you recognise the signs in yourself and in others.

However, it's essential not to jump to conclusions based on the presence or absence of any of these signs.

### How do I know if I am experiencing abuse?

If you answer yes to one or more of the following questions, you may be in an abusive relationship (this list is not exhaustive):

- Has your partner/family member tried to keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- Do they constantly check up on you or follow you?
- Do they constantly belittle or humiliate you, or regularly criticise or insult you in front of other people?
- Do they unjustly accuse you of flirting or of having affairs?
- Are you ever scared of this person?
- Have they ever withheld medication from you?
- Have they prevented you from continuing or starting a college course, or from going to work?
- Have you ever changed your behaviour because you're afraid of what your partner/family member might do or say to you?
- Have they ever deliberately destroyed any of your possessions?
- Has your partner/family member ever hurt or threatened you or your children?
- Have they ever kept you short of money so you're unable to buy food and other necessary items for yourself and your children?
- Have they ever forced you to do something that you really didn't want to do, including sexually?

# 04

## How do I know if my colleagues are experiencing domestic abuse?

---

There are some common signs which might indicate that a member of staff could be experiencing or has experienced domestic abuse. The list below includes some (but not all) possible signs:

### Physical signs

- Visible bruising or injuries with unlikely explanations
- A change in the pattern or amount of make-up used
- A change in the way a person dresses, for example clothes that do not suit the climate which may be to hide injuries

### Psychological/emotional

- A change in a person's attitude, for example becoming insular / anxious / frightened/ tearful / aggressive
- Frequent self-certified sickness absences and/or frequent hospital visits

### Behaviour

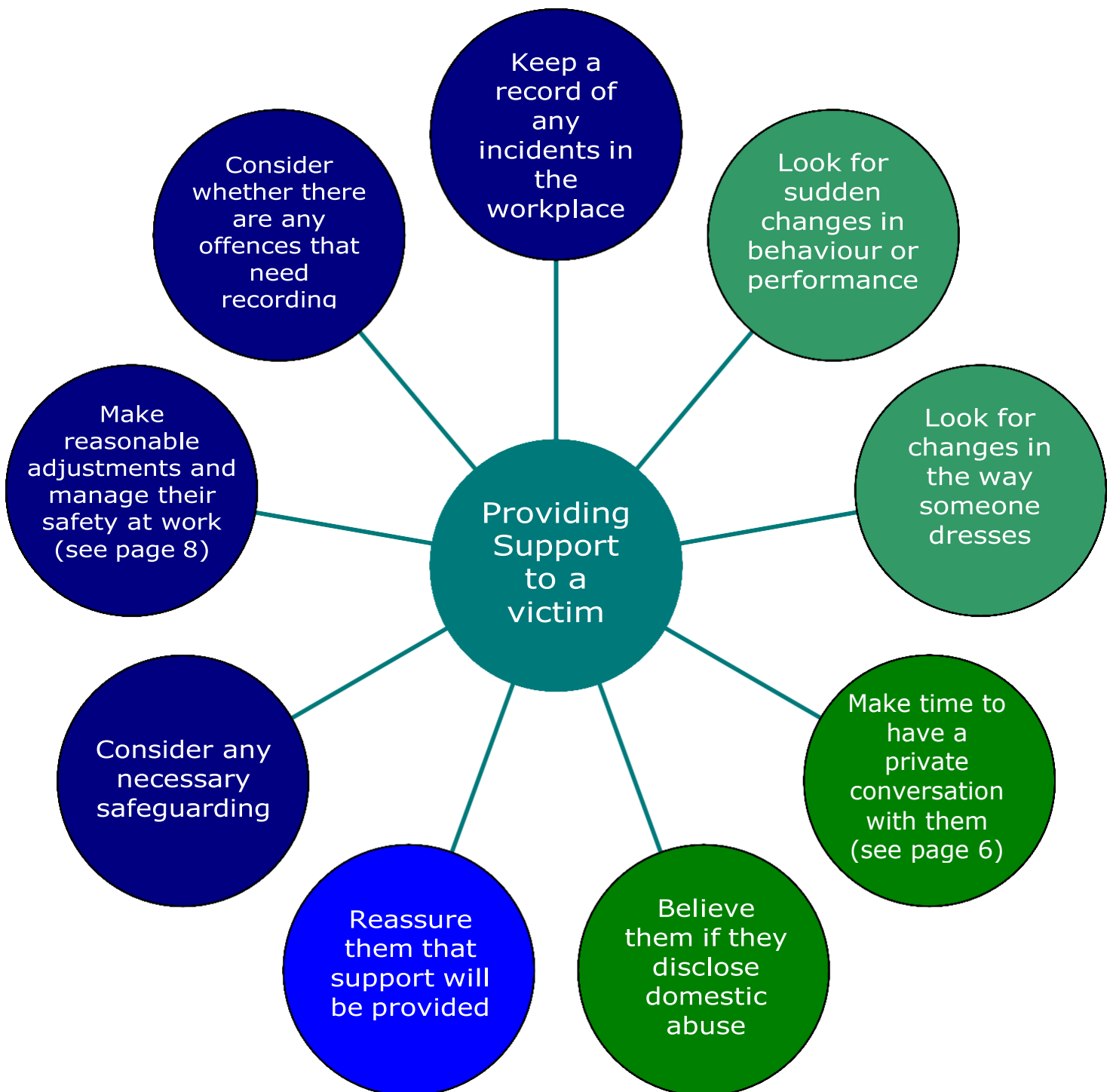
- A change in a person's working patterns, for example frequent lateness or needing to leave early
- Lack of confidence and very low self esteem
- A change in the use of the telephone, for example a large number of personal calls and strong reaction to these calls
- Changes to the quality and quantity of work
- Poor attendance or high presenteeism (reluctant to leave work) without explanation
- Marked decrease in financial situation (although there may be many other explanations for this)

## Checklist for managers

---

You may be the first point of contact for someone reporting domestic abuse. Being a confidant can confuse roles so you should ensure that you make a managerial commitment rather than a personal commitment to support your member of staff.

There are a range of actions you can take to provide support around domestic abuse. In many cases it is about being aware and signposting to the organisations that provide specialist support:





## Asking difficult questions

---

If you suspect that an officer or member of staff is experiencing domestic abuse, you should facilitate a conversation to discuss this so that you can provide them with the appropriate support. **Police officers and staff are bound by standards of professional behaviour and the code of ethics. It is important to make it clear that any alleged offence will need to be recorded and investigated.**

Shying away from the subject can perpetuate the fear of stigma and increase feelings of anxiety. Often officers and staff will not feel confident in speaking up, so making the first move to begin a conversation can be key.

You should ask them indirect questions, to help establish a relationship and develop empathy.

Below are some examples of questions that could be used:

- **How are you doing at the moment? Are there any issues you would like to discuss with me?**
- **I have noticed recently that you are not yourself. Is anything the matter?**
- **Are there any problems or reasons that may be contributing to your frequent sickness absence / under-performance at work?**
- **Is everything all right at home?**
- **What support do you think might help? What would you like to happen? How?**

Be a good listener and avoid victim blaming. It is important that you are able to provide a non-judgmental and supportive environment. Respecting boundaries and privacy is essential.

Because of the serious psychological effects of such violence, it is extremely difficult for someone who has experienced domestic abuse to take the first step to talk about it and seek help or advice. A victim may make a number of attempts to talk to you about their experience before they are actually able to do so and it is therefore critical that you demonstrate that you believe them.

Proof of physical violence should not be sought, as the violence experienced may be psychological and/or emotional abuse – to seek or require proof could compound the effects and make it less likely that the victim will seek help in the future.

## Confidentiality

---

### Victims of domestic abuse

Officers and staff who disclose that they are victims of domestic abuse may be concerned about their information being kept confidential. Although confidentiality is a consideration there are some circumstances in which it cannot be assured. This may occur when there are concerns regarding children, vulnerable adults or where the Force is required to protect the safety of their officers and staff. In these circumstances, the officers and staff will be informed why confidentiality cannot be maintained.

If an investigation is taking place then the details will need to be recorded but wherever possible the records will be secured.

As far as is reasonably possible, information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

Should you decide not to inform anyone in the workplace about your situation, you are encouraged to seek advice and support from a Domestic Abuse support agency (see page 9).

For further information about confidentiality and how allegations may be investigated, please see the Essex Police Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures:

B1700, Domestic Abuse Policy

B1701, Domestic Abuse Initial Grading and Attendance

B1702, Domestic Abuse Investigations

B1704, Domestic Abuse involving Police Personnel

### Perpetrators of domestic abuse

If you are aware that you are abusing your partner, the first step is to face up to your responsibilities and seek help in changing your actions (see page 12). A report of crime will have to be recorded and fully investigated.

Although confidentiality cannot be assured for officers and staff who disclose that they are perpetrators of domestic abuse, we will discuss with you how the disclosure will be handled and we will ensure you are provided with support to help you address your behaviour.



## Making reasonable adjustments and safeguarding

---

As part of the support you provide to your staff, you may need to make reasonable adjustments within the workplace.

Individuals should be encouraged to make informed decisions about the course of action to be taken and this should be applied to all stages of any process. That said those affected must be made aware of the obligations placed upon employees towards their staff which may prompt action to advance the safety and wellbeing of individuals even if such support is not desired or requested. The following options could be considered:

- Diverting phone calls and emails;
- Making temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns using existing procedures i.e. flexible working;
- Allowing flexible working or special leave to facilitate any practical arrangements that are required, such as for seeking legal advice, attending counselling or attending court;
- Considering the approval of annual leave at little or no notice;
- Making changes to specific duties, for example moving the individual from a front line position to avoid contact with the perpetrator;
- Alerting reception / security if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace and ensuring arrangements are in place for travelling safely to and from work;
- With the individual's consent – advising colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agreeing a response if the perpetrator contacts the workplace;
- Providing additional support if the individual's performance is affected;
- Advice regarding use of Social Media;

For further information on Safeguarding please contact the Central Referral Unit (CRU):

- Opening Hours: 08:00-22:00hrs, seven days a week.
- Telephone ext. 180340 or email: [cru.sqts@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:cru.sqts@essex.pnn.police.uk)

The CRU's primary purpose is to assess the risk experienced by victims of stalking and domestic abuse (including honour-based abuse) and vulnerable adult abuse and implement safeguarding where appropriate to reduce the risk.

## Support for victims – where can I go for help and support?

---

We can give you the contact details of a range of organisations and local support groups that can help you and offer further advice and practical guidance on domestic abuse.

### National support groups:

#### **24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**

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

0808 2000 247

Provides emergency accommodation for women and children when they are most in need. The Free phone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline helps women find spaces in refuges across the UK.

#### **Man Kind:**

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

01823 334244

Gives support to male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence.

#### **Men's Advice Line**

[info@mensadviceline.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk)

0808 801 0327

Confidential helpline for men experiencing Domestic Violence

#### **National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV):**

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

0844 8044 999

Offers free legal support to any survivor of domestic violence, by helping individuals get emergency injunctions, usually within 24 hours.

#### **Karma Nirvana:**

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

0800 5999 247

Supporting victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

#### **LGBT Foundation:**

0345 330 3030.

National charity delivering advice, support and information services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.

#### **Victim Support:**

[essex@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:essex@victimsupport.org.uk)

0808 178 1694

Offers help to anyone affected by crime – victims, witnesses, friends and family. This can include emotional support, information and practical help, either over the phone or face-to-face.

## Local support groups:

### **COMPASS – ESSEX DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE**

0330 333 7 444

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

Available 24hrs a day, trained staff will provide information, advice and guidance and where appropriate, complete an assessment and ensure contact is made with the most appropriate support service so that the right support is provided at the right time. Community services and specialist accommodation such as refuges, IDVA and outreach work will be delivered by SOS Domestic Abuse Projects, Changing Pathways and Next Chapter across areas of Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Southend, Tendring, Thurrock, Uttlesford.

### **Essex Victims' Gateway**

[www.essexvictimsgateway.org](http://www.essexvictimsgateway.org)

Provides useful information and advice on what to do and how to get help if you have been a victim of crime in Essex and also local service providers for Domestic Abuse Victims.

### **Changing Pathways**

[www.changingpathways.org](http://www.changingpathways.org)

01268 729707

Changing Pathways (formerly known as Basildon Women's Aid) is a domestic abuse charity working across the areas of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford and Thurrock. They provide free and confidential services to support people who are currently experiencing, or have previously experienced domestic abuse.

### **SOS Domestic Abuse Project**

[www.sosdap.org](http://www.sosdap.org)

Dove Crisis Helpline - 01702 302333 / Monday to Friday 10am-4pm.

Refuge referrals — 01702 302333 (plus emergencies — out of hours).

Appointments at Dove- Monday to Friday 10am-4pm at 4 West Road, Westcliff, SSO 9DA.

Fledglings Services for Children and Young People - 01702 343868.

A charity based in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, supporting women, men, children and families who have been affected by domestic abuse.

### **The Next Chapter**

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

01206 500 585

Provide safe, emergency accommodation for women and children suffering from domestic abuse, as well as offer advice, help and support to safely remain at home if you are not yet ready to leave. Offer services for Braintree, Colchester, Tendring and Uttlesford areas.

### **Synergy Essex** (Essex Partnership of Rape Crisis Centre)

[support@synergyessex.org.uk](mailto:support@synergyessex.org.uk)

0300 003 7777

Offers a dedicated information, support and referral telephone line for victims.

## Support for perpetrators

---

There are services available that are aimed at breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse. They will help you to reflect on your behaviour, the damage your behaviour can cause and what you can do to change.

These include:

**SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS** - 0845 372 7701

A helpline to respond to enquiries and signpost people needing help with their behaviour, directing them to appropriate intervention within the Essex area. This is delivered by the Change Project.

The dedicated telephone number for this service is available between Monday-Friday from 9am to 5pm. This support line has been set up so that anyone wanting help for themselves or someone else can get advice or be referred to the service that meets their need.

For further information go to [www.setdab.org](http://www.setdab.org)

**Respect Phone Line:**

A confidential and anonymous helpline for anyone, male or female, concerned about their violence and/or abuse towards a partner or ex-partner.

Perpetrators of domestic violence can access help and support by contacting the Respect charity.

The Respect Free phone number is 0808 802 4040

Monday - Friday 9am-5pm

Email [info@respectphoneline.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk)

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

## Victim & perpetrator FAQs – what would happen if.....?

---

### I'm a victim reporting domestic abuse via 999 or 101

The overriding principle is that domestic abuse incidents involving police officers and staff will always be treated in exactly the same way as those involving any member of the public.

Consideration will be given to restricting any STORM incident that identifies someone involved as a police officer or a member of police staff. Every effort will be made to ensure that information relating to the investigation is restricted to those that are involved in the case, dependent on the level of risk to the victim and family.

The Domestic Abuse Initial Grading and Attendance Procedure (B1701) provides further details and is available on the ConnEXion pages.

#### What happens after the phone-call?

Where police are called to a domestic abuse incident involving Essex Police personnel the Force Control Room Inspector will be made aware. The Inspector will determine if the incident and associated communication should be restricted. This will include radio communications should one or both of the involved parties be in the workplace.

The Force Control Room will conduct a risk assessment and decide on the level of response to the call. An emergency grading is dependent upon the identified risk.

Our first priority is to make sure you and any children who may be present are safe.

If they need to, officers can force entry to your home to protect you. Police officers will talk to you independently, away from the abuser.

We'll ask you questions about what happened and write down what you say.

We'll give you first aid, if you need it.

Essex police will always take positive action in cases of domestic abuse. If there is a legal power and it is necessary to do so, then the abuser will be arrested.

#### What happens after the police have visited?

All frontline officers are specially trained in dealing with Domestic Abuse incidents. They can give you the contact details of a range of organisations and local support groups that can help you and offer advice and practical guidance on domestic abuse.

If someone has been or is to be arrested we will call you to tell you who's in charge of your case and how to contact them. Depending on the level of danger that you are in, this may be a uniformed police officer or a specialist police investigator.

If statements are required we will help you with your:

- Witness Statement (the evidence that is used in court)
- Victim Personal Statement (your statement about how the crime has affected you and your family)

There is also help and support available for you should there be a court trial.

## What happens to the person who is arrested?

They will be taken to a police station. We may:

- Interview them
- Charge them with a criminal offence
- Keep them in custody until they go to court, or release them on bail, with conditions to limit what they do. For example, they could be bailed as long as they don't go back to your family home before they go to court. If they don't comply with these conditions, they can be re-arrested and may be kept in custody.
- If we have further enquiries to carry out, and it is felt there is no risk to your safety, they may be released from custody with no conditions.
- If there is not enough evidence to proceed to court we may release them from custody with no further action. We may be able to apply for a Domestic Violence Protection Order to protect you for up to 28 days.

For further information on what may happen during an investigation please see the Essex Police Domestic Abuse Investigations procedure B1702 and Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Order procedure B1706.

## What happens in the workplace?

### **Will my manager be told?**

In all incidents of domestic abuse, where you are the victim, your manager will be informed along with a Command Team Representative. We may also liaise with the Central Referral Unit Detective Inspector to ensure a suitable member of staff is assigned to manage safeguarding of you and your family.

Essex Police will take action to ensure confidentiality as far as possible.

## Where can I go for help & support?

We can give you the contact details of a range of organisations and local support groups that can help you and offer further advice and practical guidance on domestic abuse (see page 9).



## I'm a victim reporting domestic abuse to my line manager

### What will my manager do?

Your manager will signpost you to the range of support that is available to you (see page 9) and will talk you through how to report the incident.

All incidents of domestic abuse where you are the victim will be dealt with confidentially as far as possible. Every effort should be made to ensure that information relating to the investigation is restricted to those that are involved in the case, dependent on the level of risk to the victim and family.

Depending on the nature of the incident, your manager may put special arrangements in place (see page 8).

## I've been arrested for domestic abuse

### Which Police Station will I be taken to?

When a police officer or member of police staff is arrested, due consideration will be given as to which police station they are taken in order to ensure impartiality. This may mean that you are taken to a station that is not within your division or in some cases not in your Force area.

### Will my manager be told?

In addition to your responsibility to inform your manager if you have any criminal action taken against you, your manager will also be informed if it is known that you are an employee or officer of Essex Police. The Professional Standards Department will also be notified.

### Will I be suspended from work?

Depending on the circumstances and the role that you perform, you may be suspended from work.

### How will my arrest be managed?

Every incident of domestic abuse involving a police officer or member of police staff will be dealt with in accordance with Force Policy.

## I think I'm a perpetrator of domestic abuse

### What should I do?

Being abusive towards your partner is unacceptable in any circumstances.

If you are aware that you are abusing your partner, the first step is to face up to your responsibilities and seek help in changing your actions (see page 11).

## What happens if I tell my manager?

Domestic abuse perpetrated by officers and staff will not be condoned under any circumstance nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Essex police will always take positive action in cases of domestic abuse. If there is a legal power and it is necessary to do so, then you may be arrested. Your conduct outside of work may also lead to disciplinary action being taken against another officer or member of staff.

If you disclose that you are a perpetrator, your manager:

- May need to speak to other people within the organisation to ensure an effective safety plan is in place for anyone at risk **and** that you are supported.
- Will provide you with information about the services and support that are available to you
- Will refer you to Occupational Health

## I think my colleague may be a victim of domestic abuse

If you think that a colleague may be a victim of domestic abuse you should tell your manager in confidence so that they can talk to your colleague confidentially and provide them with the appropriate support.

## I think my colleague may be a perpetrator of domestic abuse

If you think that a colleague may be a perpetrator of domestic abuse you should tell your manager in confidence so that they can talk to your colleague confidentially and take appropriate action.

You can also use the 'PSD anonymous contact' link accessed via the intranet.