



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: 26 January, 2022

### **Don't suffer in silence this Valentine's Day**

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, West Mercia residents suffering domestic abuse are being urged to speak out.

For the majority of couples, Valentine's Day is a happy occasion; however West Mercia Women's Aid is keen to remind people that outward displays of love and affection mask the reality of a lot of women's lives. Perpetrators often apologise and declare they won't do it again.

Sue Coleman, Chief Executive of the charity explained : "Valentine's Day is a chance to point out that domestic abuse is the ultimate betrayal; torture and bullying from someone who claims to love you. It's a powerful message to remind people how complicated it is for victims suffering abuse in their own homes; it really is not as simple as just leaving the family home and moving on. We urge victims of domestic abuse not to suffer in silence but to call our helpline where they will be supported sensitively and in confidence.

"Nationally, domestic abuse is a widely underreported crime and West Mercia is no exception. This is not an inevitable part of life, but many victims are understandably worried about the possible consequences of speaking out. It's important to remember that,

with the right support, life after domestic abuse can be so much better."

John Champion, West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner said :  
"Domestic abuse is unfortunately a vastly underreported crime in West Mercia. I want everyone to feel comfortable and confident in being able to report any crime to the police, including domestic abuse.

"I encourage anyone who is or has been a victim of domestic abuse to come forward to report the incident. I would also like to reassure residents that there is always support available from organisations like West Mercia Women's Aid who can help victims in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin."

West Mercia Women's Aid works throughout West Mercia.

Sue concluded: "Our Valentine's message to all those suffering in silence is that our services are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you are worried, please pick up the phone and call our confidential 24 hour helpline numbers. We will listen, support and help you either to escape the violence immediately or to plan for a happier and safer life in 2022."

The 24 hour helpline numbers are:

0800 783 1359 (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)

0800 980 3331 (Worcestershire)

For further information call West Mercia Women's Aid on 01432 356146.

**Ends**

For media comment please contact Sue Coleman, Chief Executive,  
West Mercia Women's Aid on 01432 356 146

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