

**STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Response to HMIC report on domestic abuse, December 2015

Summary

'Increasingly everyone's business: a progress report on the police response to domestic abuse,' a [report](#) published yesterday by HMIC, found that police response to domestic abuse is improving, but that the police are at risk of being overwhelmed by calls relating to domestic abuse.

However, domestic abuse is still an under-reported crime, as many people (particularly men) are afraid to involve the police. Twelves Company, a charity that works with the police and other agencies to support victims of domestic abuse in Cornwall, is urging people to seek help if they're concerned about their own relationship, or worried about a friend or relative. Anyone can call the charity in confidence, without having to involve the police.

Details

One in four women, and one in six men will experience domestic abuse at some time in their lives. This equates to 180,000 victims in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly alone.

Last year, Twelves Company supported over 2,700 people in Cornwall, 7% of whom were men.

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including emotional, physical, sexual and financial. We work with people in all types of relationships, and are seeing increasing numbers of young people abused by their boyfriends and girlfriends.

The issue of domestic abuse has an increasingly high profile, as evidenced by the broadcast of '*Love You to Death*', a documentary on domestic abuse, on BBC2 this evening. However, coverage tends to focus on female victims, exacerbating the stigma experienced by male victims, and making it harder for them to seek help. Twelves Company recognises that anyone, of any gender and age, in any kind of relationship, can be a victim of domestic abuse.

The HMIC report compares the performance of police forces across England and Wales, and measured increases in recorded crimes with domestic abuse markers. Almost all forces saw an increase in the twelve months to 31st March 2015, with Devon and Cornwall having third highest percentage of domestic abuse-related calls.

The 2013-14 Crime Survey for England and Wales found that the most common reasons for not reporting abuse to the police were embarrassment, fear of humiliation and fear of not being believed or helped. As domestic abuse is so often hidden, and so rarely talked about, it can be difficult to ask for help – but support is available for men and women of any age in Cornwall.

Over the Christmas period, when stress levels rise, and when many people spend time with friends and family, Twelves Company urges everyone to look out for signs that all may not be well in a relationship.

People concerned about domestic abuse – whether they're worried for themselves, or for a friend or family member – are encouraged to call Twelves Company on 03458 12 12 12, or to email support@twelvescompany.co.uk.

Quotes

Tom Dingwall, CEO of Twelves Company, said, “We welcome the news that police response to domestic abuse is improving, and we continue to work closely with police and other agencies to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are able to access the support they need.”

Dina Holder, Domestic Abuse Services Manager for Twelves Company, said, “If you’re experiencing abuse from your partner, we are here to help you. We will listen and believe you, and we will support you to make your own decisions.”

Laura Smit, Team Leader for Twelves Company, said, “Victims of domestic abuse may be too afraid to seek help. If a friend or relative rings REACH, we can find ways to safely help victims. That phone call could be the difference between continuing in an abusive relationship or finding a way to leave. In some cases, it could be the difference between life and death. No concern is too trivial, and you don’t need proof that something is definitely wrong.”

--ENDS--

Notes to Editor

[Twelves Company](#) is a registered charity that works in Devon and Cornwall to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence – male and female, adult and child. Last year, it supported over 2,700 people in Cornwall who were victims of domestic abuse.

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