



WATSON ESAM Solicitors

**PRESS
RELEASE**

Domestic Abuse – Don't suffer in silence

It is a sad fact that domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime. Statistics show that 77% of the victims are women and 2 women a week are killed by their partners or former partners.

Domestic abuse can be physical, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Physical and sexual abuse are usually more easily recognisable but the abuse can take many forms such as destructive criticism and verbal abuse; disrespect; harassment and checking up; lying; forcing a person to do things they don't want to do; destroying possessions; pressure tactics, such as withholding money, denying access to friends, work, college etc.; threats, such as to take the children away; denial of the abuse and being nice in public.

Victims regularly find it difficult to accept that they are being abused and don't look for help. It can be difficult to take that first brave step in telling someone what is going on behind closed doors, but help is out there.

The first port of call is usually the police for anyone in immediate danger, but more that can be done to help victims protect themselves and their children from suffering abuse at the hands of a family member.

With the help of a solicitor a victim can apply to court for the protection of an order, commonly referred to as an injunction. A 'non molestation order' can protect the victim or their child from violence or threatened violence and from harassment and pestering or instructing or encouraging anyone else to do these things. An 'occupation order' can order the perpetrator to move out of the family home and not to return or even go within a certain distance of it. Both of these orders can usually be made within a couple of days – even on the same day in emergency situations.

Applications for these orders are not made in public so no one who is not connected with the case will be in attendance.

The orders are of course only a piece of paper, but once one has been made it is a criminal offence to breach the order and the perpetrator can be arrested and brought before a court. The local police station is notified of any injunction made and so any calls from the house or relating to the parties involved are given high/top priority.

Some people are entitled to legal aid (now known as public funding) to help cover the cost of applying for an injunction.

For further information about domestic abuse, or for help in applying for an injunction, call Sadie Baldwin or Leanne Barton at Watson Esam on 0114 275 3350 or email sadie.baldwin@watson-esam.co.uk or leanne.barton@watson-esam.co.uk.

Further information:

Watson Esam is one of the oldest established legal firms in Sheffield practising from its offices in Paradise Square. A medium sized firm with approximately 40 staff, it is well known for delivering first class services to clients in South Yorkshire.

Michelle Cooper head of the firm's family department. She specialises in high value divorce and ancillary relief cases. She is an accredited specialist panel member in advanced financial provision and domestic abuse with Resolution (formerly the Solicitors Family Law Association) and is Chair of South Yorkshire and District Resolution. She also sits on national Resolution sub-committees.

The firm's family department won the Yorkshire Lawyer Private Client Award in 2007 and is listed as recommended in The Legal 500.

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