

**Domestic abuse service supports record numbers of young people**

Somerset County Council’s domestic abuse service has supported a record number of young people seeking support during 2022/23.

Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS) helpline took 301 calls from people between the age of 16 – 20-year-olds since April last year, compared to 128 in 2021/22 – a nearly three times increase.

Proportionately young people experience the highest rates of domestic abuse of any age group. For many, experiences of domestic abuse begin in their childhood home. It is estimated that 1 in 5 children are exposed to domestic abuse. This means that for many young people, their experience of domestic abuse does not begin in their own relationships, but in the childhood home when witnessing adult relatives in abusive relationships.

Young people experiencing relationships that cause them to feel scared, controlled or who are being harmed can find local, non-judgemental help and support by contacting SIDAS on 0800 69 49 999 or online at [www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/).

Councillor Adam Dance, Somerset County Council’s Executive Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity, said:

“Young people can witness or experience many types of domestic abuse and the likelihood of experiencing high severity abuse is no different to adults.

“I am pleased to see an increase in young people coming forward for support when they have concerns that they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship or think they know someone who may be. Support is non-judgemental and free through our service and I would encourage anyone with concerns to get in touch with SIDAS. Domestic abuse, be it physical or non-physical is wrong. If someone is hurting you or making you do something you don’t want to, you do not have to put up with it – help is always available.”

Young people in abusive relationships often experience partners who:

·         Constantly check their phone and/or emails without permission

·         Put them down in front of others or to their face

·         Try to stop them seeing family and friends

·         Have mood swings and explosive temper

·         Are Possessive or is extremely jealous

·         Makes false accusations

·         Asks them to take part in ‘sexting’

·         Makes them have sex without consent

·         Makes them watch pornography or films them having sex

·         Tells them what they can/can’t wear, where they can/can’t go

·         Physically hurts them in any way

·         Tells them they will hurt themselves/someone else if they don’t do something

Any relationship that does not make someone feel good is an unhealthy relationship.

For young people demonstrating harmful behaviour, and for those they are harming, help and support is available - visit [www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/) or call 0800 69 49 999 to know more.

In an emergency, call the police on 999. If you can’t speak, listen to the question and then tap or cough to answer. Press 55 to signal an emergency.

**Ends**

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 01823 355020 or email pressoffice@somerset.gov.uk

The SCC Communications Team are also on social media:

[www.twitter.com/somersetcouncil](http://www.twitter.com/somersetcouncil)

[www.facebook.com/somersetcountycouncil](http://www.facebook.com/somersetcountycouncil)

[www.flickr.com/somersetcountycouncil](http://www.flickr.com/somersetcountycouncil)

[www.youtube.com/yoursomerset](http://www.youtube.com/yoursomerset)

To find out who the elected Somerset County Councillor is for a particular area, simply visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/councillors/somerset-county-councillors/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/councillors/somerset-county-councillors/)