

• WHO ARE WE?

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (**DAVSS**) is a community-based charity created in April 2011. We receive many self-referrals asking for help as well as referrals from the Police, other agencies including health and social services, and voluntary organisations. Our current team of 34 volunteers is managed by a professional manager with many years of experience in supporting people experiencing domestic abuse. Our Domestic Abuse Advisors undertake intensive Quality Mark training.

• WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?

DAVSS aims to break the cycle of abuse, enable survivors to take control of their lives again and improve life opportunities for their children who are often traumatised by their experiences. We work across the West Kent area, running the Domestic Abuse helpline from our offices in Tunbridge Wells.

• WHAT DO WE DO?

We provide practical and individual support to our clients including:

- Access to our Helpline weekday mornings giving immediate safety advice (answerphone outside of these hours)
- Face-to-face support at venues convenient to clients for those at high risk of serious harm, offering them options for action and support
- Signposting to other agencies or voluntary groups e.g. Police, Social Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Benefits and Housing, Health Professionals, Counselling, etc.
- Providing Support to Court to clients who often find this process very daunting and frightening
- Raising public awareness by arranging presentations, workshops, attending business and community events and providing safe and healthy relationship courses for young people in schools and colleges

• WHY DO WE DO IT?

Domestic abuse is a hidden crime regardless of social status, age, gender, sexual orientation or geographical location. Research shows that at some point in their lives, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse. Many victims endure abuse for years before seeking help. Every week in the UK alone, 2 women die as a result of domestic abuse.

• WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US?

Client *"The Volunteer spent all day in court with me. She met me, arranged to have my locks changed, and made me and my children feel much safer. Without this support, I would have been in trouble"*

Housing: *"Without DAVSS, victims would be left to fend for themselves and deal with agencies, courts, solicitors etc by themselves at what is already a traumatic time for them and their children."*

Community Safety Manager *"The work that DAVSS does is crucial to some of the most vulnerable and oppressed people in society"*

• HOW MANY PEOPLE DO WE HELP?

Referrals are increasing year on year. From April 2015 to March 2016 we received 711 referrals which involved 1044 children. Based on our figures to date, this is set to increase to over 800 referrals this year, demonstrating that the need for ongoing support services is ever present.

• HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Our challenge is to raise sufficient funds to continue to maintain this much needed service. If you, or a friend, are personally planning an event, please consider nominating DAVSS as your charity of choice for sponsorship. Alternatively, if you have family or friends who may wish to become a volunteer, please encourage them to look at our website.

Help us to make a real difference to the lives of local people and their children who urgently need our support.