

News release: 17 June 2020

Show domestic abuse the red card

Fans will be looking forward to the football season getting underway again after professional sport was put on hold due to the coronavirus lockdown. However, matches can often mean an increase in domestic violence and abuse.

The number of domestic abuse reports forces receive often rise during national and international football competitions. And, with the re-start of the football season, including the Premier League and the Championship getting back underway this month, Lichfield District Council is backing a campaign, devised by Cannock Chase Council, to deter perpetrators of domestic abuse and encourage victims to seek help.

Councillor Ashley Yeates, Lichfield District Council's Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, said: "It's important to recognise that football itself does not cause domestic abuse. The behaviour and actions of abusers who exert power and control over their victims cause domestic abuse.

"Watching football can be emotional, frustrating, joyous, and it can be accompanied by alcohol. And now, after the heightened stress of lockdown, there is a real concern that this could lead to more instances of domestic abuse. This is why we are working to highlight this issue and signpost to support services."

Sergeant Neil Quinn, Lichfield Neighbourhood Policing Team, added: "For many the return of the football season is welcomed but for others it is a time of dread due to the heightened risk of domestic abuse.

"If you recognise you often take it out on your partner, when the game doesn't go your way, we want you to know there is support available to help you change.

"Equally, if you are the victim of domestic abuse report this to the police, always dial 999 in an emergency or seek support from one of the many domestic abuse support services available locally."

Perpetrators of domestic abuse are being encouraged to get help from New Era Domestic Abuse Service on 01785 601690, an organisation which offers specialist domestic violence prevention services.

Victims, individuals and families who have concerns, can report abuse and get support from New Era's Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent 24-hour confidential helpline on 0300 303 3778 or access their 24/7 live chat facility at www.new-era.uk.

Local support is also available from Pathway Project, a 24-hour confidential helpline, by calling 01543 676800.

Ends

Media enquiries

Esther Epstein, Press & Communications Officer, Lichfield District Council

T: 01543 308778 **E:** esther.epstein@lichfielddc.gov.uk

Reporting domestic abuse

Domestic abuse victims can call the police on 101, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. In an emergency, always call 999.

Staffordshire-wide support for victims and their families:

New Era's Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent 24-hour confidential helpline (across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent): 0300 303 3778 and their 24/7 live chat facility at www.new-era.uk.

Local support for victims and their families:

Pathway Project - a 24-hour confidential helpline (supporting Lichfield District and Tamworth): 01543 676800.

Staffordshire-wide services for perpetrators wanting to change their behaviour:

New Era Domestic Abuse Service for perpetrators who want support to change (across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent): 01785 601690.