

Police have a message for sufferers of domestic abuse

Lothian and Borders Police are encouraging victims of domestic abuse to take the first step in their journey to seeking help and getting a fresh start this festive period.

This weekend, 7-9 December 2012, all bus tickets on Lothian Buses and Firstbus buses will be advertising contact details for the Domestic Abuse Helpline, a charity designed to provide help and guidance to sufferers.

A phone number, website and a QR code will be printed to allow people from communities across Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Scottish Borders to either telephone or visit the Lothian and Borders Police website.

The details on the tickets are deliberately subtle so victims needn't feel worried about being caught carrying them.

Despite an encouraging rise in the past few years in victims coming forward, domestic abuse is vastly under-reported. This campaign is designed to empower victims and arm them with practical tools they can really use to break free.

Assistant Chief Constable Graham Sinclair from Lothian and Borders Police said:- "People often think domestic abuse is purely about physical violence however many people suffer years of verbal and emotional abuse which is just as damaging.

"Domestic abuse saps the confidence of victims and leaves them in a constant state of fear and anxiety. As such, it is vastly under-reported, and although more than 7,700 incidents were reported across Scotland last year, we believe this is only a fraction of the true amount.

"For women suffering domestic abuse, taking the bus this

weekend could be the first step on a much more important journey. If you are suffering domestic abuse, or know someone who is, get the bus this weekend. Call the helpline now or later, have a look at our web pages, and know that there are people who can help.”

Liz Kelly from the [Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) added:- ” We view this initiative being taken by Lothian and Borders Police as a positive step forward in addressing the anxieties of many victims of domestic abuse who fear that the police do not have an understanding of their situation and the negative impact it has on their own lives and that of their children and families.

“We will work closely with the police during this initiative and give our assurance that anyone affected by domestic abuse will be offered support and information at any time of the day or night. The telephone number is 0800 027 1234 and is free from landlines.”

The Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline number is 0800 027 1234 and is free from landlines.