

## **Geoff's story**

I met Helen on an online dating site and at first our relationship appeared idyllic. She soon fell pregnant and we made plans to spend our future together. Soon afterwards I found out that she was an alcoholic in recovery and had four children who now lived with their father (her ex husband), they had been removed from her care after a drunken suicide attempt a year prior to our relationship starting.

Helen's behaviour became ever more controlling and manipulative as the months went by. She would check my emails, text messages and Facebook account. She also hacked into these account and sent text messages to my female friends from my phone pretending to be me.

Helen became violent towards me. She threw a laptop, threatened me repeatedly, destroyed another computer and would soak my sons (from a previous relationship) ironing once I had completed it. She singled my son out at meal times and often refused to allow him to eat desert. She would also serve his last and slam his plate down in front of him.

He witnessed her shouting, slamming doors at me and indulging in long periods of ignoring / isolating behaviour.

Helen also prevented me from maintaining relationships with friends by constant questioning, checking behaviours - it was easier for me to not go out that face a barrage of questions.

Helen threw me out of the house we shared, started drinking (began phoning friends and family telling the most abhorrent lies about me and spreading rumours that I was using pornography) and took an overdose - all within two month of our baby daughter being born, I later found out she had been drinking throughout this period. Despite all of this I decided to try again with the relationship but it only lasted another 5 months before I had to leave.

When I left Helen told a social worker that I had been violent and abusive towards her. The social worker advised her that I was to have no unsupervised contact - I was never invited to the meeting or allowed to put forward my side of things. I never received minutes of this meeting. Helen also lied to the Police that I had stolen some of her possessions - this prevented me from being able to recover my things before she moved out of the house we rented. I lost virtually all

of my things and an £800 deposit on the house. She telephoned the police the day before they were going to arrest me that she had found the items.

For the past 14 months I have had sporadic contact with my daughter and Helen still spreads lies and abuses me through the phone, text and email. She has threatened to lose me my job and contact with my son if I put in an application for a court order. My life is getting better slowly but it has been a living hell for almost three years now.

*Ends*