

## **Matthew's story**

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2006 one month after our first baby was born, we went out for a few drinks with the intention to not be home too late due to the baby, so at 2am I suggested it was time to head home. She wanted to stay out but I said we really should be getting back. She agreed to leave but as we were walking home she started arguing, stating that I had belittled her in front of her friends. She was becoming very aggressive. She began shouting when we got in the house and smashed a mirror over my head. I had never seen this side of her before. Not wanting to make things worse, I just dropped it and slept on the couch. The next morning she came out of the bedroom as if nothing had happened, so I didn't mention it.

A few weeks later I got a call from work to see if I could do an extra shift. I said no as I was already exhausted from night feeds and working 60 hours per week. When I got off the phone he told me to ring them back and tell them I'm coming in. I refused, I didn't want to go to work. She started arguing saying that she wanted some new clothes. Every time I tried to talk she would shout over the top of me. All of a sudden she smashed the glass door on our living room unit and started to throw the pieces at me. I had scratches all over my face and neck. I ran to the closest people I could think of. They let me stay the night at their home. The next morning, I returned home to her crying, saying that she was sorry and it would never happen again. A few years passed before anything else happened.

In 2009 we lost our middle child. We were both distraught by this and it changed our relationship completely. She started going out a lot more, leaving me at home with our child and rolling in sometime the next day. She was arguing more and becoming aggressive again. This continued for a few months and I eventually found out she was using cocaine and that she was cheating on me. When I confronted her about the cheating she blamed it on me for not being there for her when she lost our baby.

I still loved her and was desperate to make it work and so I forgave her. After our 3rd baby was born I was left holding 2 children, working full time and doing night feeds. I started to become miserable because she would pick at me for every little thing I did. I even found out that she had spent nearly £5000 on cocaine, using it whilst the children were around.

It became a daily struggle of shouting and pushing me around. In 2013 she came in from a night out and attacked me. I ran to my neighbour's house to phone the police but she phoned the police on me also. We were both arrested. They interviewed me straight away as I hadn't been drinking and they had to wait for her to sober up. After she was interviewed, the police told me they would just let us both go even though I had marks on me and she didn't.

We decided to make a fresh start after this incident and moved away as a family. Things were great for a few months, until a rumour started that I had been sleeping with someone. This was not true. A few weeks after the cheating accusations we invited a few friends over, she even invited the lady that I was accused of cheating on. Everything was going fine, everyone was enjoying themselves, even my partner and the lady I was accused of cheating with. Then out of nowhere my ex comes out with, 'I know the truth'. It was almost as if somebody had switched a light switch and her face filled with anger. She started shouting and the other lady and I were both refusing her claims but she just wouldn't listen. I decided to remove myself from the situation. After 10 minutes I made my way back to the house. She was stood waiting for me, then out of nowhere she started jumping on me. She was biting and scratching me all over my face. I told the kids to run upstairs to their bedrooms but they wouldn't leave me. They were dragging at their mum to get off me. I managed to break free, grabbed the kids and made it into my bedroom I pushed the bed up against the door the kids were crying. I saw the house phone on the bed so I phoned the police. Before I knew it, she barged into the bedroom. She pushed me down on the bed and bit at my eye and ear. She continued to viciously attack me, with our children in the room.

I eventually managed to get out of the house and shortly after the police and ambulance turned up. The police took a statement and pictures as well as the clothes I was wearing. The next day I was phoned by the police telling me that they were pressing charges. I was given custody of the children and she was only allowed supervised access. We were free from her and my children and I are finally safe, happy and making a fresh start.