



**Natalie Curtis**

**- HSES Project Partner**

My Journey

**Balfour Beatty**

# Essex Police – Media Release October 2018



Brave woman speaks out about domestic abuse to encourage victims to come forward

1,052 views



Essex Police

Published on Oct 4, 2018

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The wife of a man jailed for coercive and controlling behaviour has spoken about the abuse she suffered to inspire others to come forward.

Essex Police media release:

<https://www.essex.police.uk/news/news-and-features/2018/10oct/brave-woman-who-was-abused-by-her-husband-speaks-o/>

YouTube clip:

<https://youtu.be/wolBtCHD5ps>

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# My Work life and Behavioral changes

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- **My Work Life**

- Re-employed by Balfour Beatty since October 2011
- Working as a high performing HSES Specialist on various projects; East London Line, Thameslink Project (London) , Dubai World Port Rail Project (Essex), SESP ( South East Section) Crossrail Project, Traction, Work Winning for CP6 and Track Programme, and more recently Hither Green and Angerstein Rail Project.

- **Behavioral Changes**

- Increase in sick days over a period of when things were becoming so difficult in my life
- Work from home days where my ex husband started to control when I could go to work, he would tell me his feeling unwell and I had to look after him
- Changes in appearance – constantly covered up to hide the bruises and injuries sustained, long sleeve, roll neck tops even in summer months, not looking my normal neat appearance, constantly looking drained and exhausted
- Repeatedly talked about ex husband, totally neglected myself and my well being.
- I received constant facetime calls or phone calls, which colleagues mentioned as annoying but I made excuses as to why I was constantly receiving calls, I would go to a meeting room.
- Would no longer accept any events or conferences out of London area, for fear he would either show up or demand to come with me. He once stayed at the hotel I was doing a training course at in Croydon.
- He then worked on the same projects as me taking me to and from work
- Working additional hours/shifts to be safe without fear of him being on same shift times
- I absolutely love my career but I started to not enjoy anything life had to offer, from a happy bubbly person who did the very best I could for my projects to not even be able to hold conversations, in fact I was beginning to ignore people that were saying hello. I was just existing or bursting into tears.
- I went from home to work, and work to home. I then become a recluse in my own home, the place we should all fill the safest.

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## Response from Balfour Beatty...

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- As soon as I had told my family and close friends that on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June that I had fled my marital home for good and worked with Essex Police I informed my employer.
- Balfour Beatty supported me, believed me and more importantly gave me time out without any pressure to return until I was ready, I was open and honest and had realistic conversations on managing my own well being, but for me I needed routine.
- Havering Women's Aid and Women's Aid HQ have provided me with the most vital support, with agreement from Balfour Beatty I have attended the Freedom programme, Power Programme, meet my Caseworker weekly, Trauma counselling – these appointments are mid week and within working hours. I don't believe I would be where I'am on my journey if I was not allowed this time for self healing and self care. I'm still working with my casework & attend trauma counselling.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is in place for all employees to use as well as Private Medical Care. I have used this on several occasions for support and to see a specialist.
- What worked for me 5 weeks off, 3 weeks working with Essex police, 1 week clearing apartment to hand back to the landlord then I went back to work, because I wanted routine and normality. I had a back to work meeting and regular meetings which helped my manager understand what time I require off and what I needed to do if I felt upset or not able to manage my workload.

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# Essex Police

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- Without the support of Essex Police I believe would still be in a violent and abusive marriage, if not another statistic.
- From the first ever 101 call I made through to being interviewed the first time I was then referred over to the Operation Juno team, my family and I experienced nothing but care, compassion and support. This also includes the Essex police media team in which the video was produced and released with the sole purpose in inspiring others to come forward to the police/support teams if they are experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- The witness care team who kept me informed of the pending court case at the time, I knew what to expect and every stage of the next steps.
- Essex Police gave me the contact details for Women's Aid, I had no idea such a life changing vital charity existed
- Essex Police visited me at my safe address for 3 weeks to gather statements, evidence and to help me secure an indefinite restraining order that was issued during the sentencing in October 2018. I felt absolutely lost at this point and did not feel confident to drive.

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# Moving forward on my Journey

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- To keep raising awareness as a proud Campaigner with Women's Aid including National Media, radio and events
- To end the stigma around Domestic Violence and abuse by working with Balfour Beatty to ensure we are a member of EIDA
- With the support of Women's Aid and the National Training Centre the "ask me" programme is currently being developed that will align with our own in house Make Safety Personal programmes/Mental health programmes.
- The National Training Centre have a training day for workplace managers alongside best practice policies and procedures to ensure as a business we are aligned and compliant with current laws.
- Remember that every individual experiencing Domestic Violence and abuse is different
- It's everyone's responsibility to help educate and advise on Domestic Abuse and violence and have a support system for anyone experiencing DV/abuse

**Balfour Beatty**