

George Pub and Grill social media post statement

██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ I am the Domestic Abuse Coordinator for Stockton (employed by Stockton Borough Council). I have an active Twitter account which I use for work purposes (although this page does state they are my own views and not those of Stockton Borough Council). On the 28th July 2019, I was made aware via an ambassador for Women’s Aid who shared screen shots of the Facebook post of the 27/07/19 “*Would you punch your ex in the face for a steak*” - created by the George Pub and Grill Stockton. As a result of this, I received personal contact from both the ambassador for Women’s Aid and a member of the House of Lords highlight their concerns and both wanting this landlord dealt with.

On the 29th July 2019, I contacted (via email) Cleveland Police, a Member of Parliament, the Police & Crime Commissioner’s Office and Stockton Borough Council Licensing to make them aware of the Facebook posts by this particular establishment. I stated in my correspondence that the post is clearly promoting domestic abuse and is not appropriate when we are trying both locally and nationally to ensure we prevent domestic abuse. I requested whether there was anything that could be done regarding the post as, at this point (29/07/19), the particular post was still showing. I received confirmation from all parties that the appropriate departments were aware and an investigation was going to occur.

My concern is not only that this post was extremely inappropriate in the content itself but it has allowed a platform for all followers of the social media page to further comment inappropriate content in relation to domestic abuse. One particular user commented “punch her? I would make sure she was never found”. I am concerned that making a “joke” out of domestic abuse could allow people to believe the risk of domestic abuse is low and I feel this goes against all of the work we are trying to do.

My role is to coordinate the response in Stockton to Domestic Abuse. A Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed which aims to improve physical, psychological and social outcomes for the residents of Stockton-On-Tees. By promoting preventative measures, alongside early intervention, support and protection, we aim to reduce the effects of harmful behaviour now and for the generations to come. This is done via a multi-agency response. The Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out its work to reduce harm to victims and their families. One of the key commitments in the strategy is to “*use social marketing methods to engage local communities*” - the engagement we want is to be positive and focusing on awareness raising of domestic abuse amongst communities so people are aware of what it is and where to access support.