



Home Office

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme 'Clare's Law'

What is it and how does it work?



Easy read version

What is domestic abuse?



Domestic abuse includes domestic violence. It is a terrible crime. It ruins the lives of victims and their families.



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 says that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour or financial abuse.

What is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme?



The **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** is also known as “**Clare’s Law**” after Clare Wood. She was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in Manchester in 2009.



The **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** started in all police forces in England and Wales in March 2014.



The **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** tells the police how to share information about a person’s previous violent or abusive offending. This includes emotional abuse, controlling behaviour, or financial abuse by a person. It can protect a partner or ex-partner from being a victim of abuse.



Information can be shared about a person's history of violence or abuse if it will prevent further crime.



Any information shared by the police must follow other laws such as the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974



From 2015 the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** includes ex-partners as well as current partners.

The new Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme guidance



The updated guidance says how the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** will work. It helps police officers and people who work in public protection.



It includes how different ways of communication can be used such as technology to give information to victims.

How the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme helps victims



It is a way of sharing information so if you are in an intimate personal relationship with a person who was violent or abusive, you can make the right choices. You can decide whether to continue the relationship. Or you can decide about your personal safety if you are no longer in the relationship.



It helps members of the public and the police to be responsible for the safety of someone who might be a victim.

How the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme works



“Right to ask” is when you ask the police or agencies for information on another person. If you are worried that another person could hurt or abuse you, you can ask if they have a police record. Family, friends or those who may be responsible for your safeguarding such as a social worker, can also ask for you.



Under **“right to know”** the police can check if the person there are concerns about has a police record. If they do have a record, the police will share that information to protect you.



You can ask the police for information by going into a police station or by asking online.



If you go to a police station you can ask in private. You will also have your needs met because of your disability.



If you ask online there will be a 'quick escape' button so you can leave the website quickly.



You will have to give some personal details such as where you live and work, your date of birth and if you have any children.



You will have to tell the police about the relationship with the person you are worried about. You will have to say how long you have known them.



The police will also ask you if the person you are worried about knows you are asking for information about them.



The police officer who helps you will know how the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** works. They will tell you what happens next. They may give you some information to take home. They will tell you about the **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** and other organisations that can help you.



You will have to show the police some ID like a bank statement or electricity bill. The police cannot give you information without this.



Any information the police give you is confidential. You cannot share it with other people. You may have to sign a paper to say you will keep the information to yourself.



They can give the information to you or someone who is responsible for keeping you safe, like a social worker. But no one else.



The information is called 'a disclosure'. It will be told to you and it won't be written down.



There will be a meeting where you can give the police more information within **10 days**.



It should take **28 days (4 weeks)** to get an answer from the police after you have asked for information.



“**Right to know**” is when the police or an agency decide to share information to protect you.



Under “**right to know**”, if the information about the person’s violent and abusive behaviour means they could harm you, the police will decide if any information should be shared to protect you from abuse.



If the police think you are at high risk of harm, they should discuss this at a **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**.

If this is not possible, they should arrange a multi-agency meeting for people who work in housing, education, social services and community support groups.



These are some of the criminal acts that the police might give you information on:

- **Violence**
- **Threatening behaviour**
- **Theft**
- **Sexual assault**
- **Cruelty to children**
- **Harassment**
- **Stalking**
- **Criminal damage**



If you want help about domestic abuse please see a list of organisations at the end of the main guidance document.

[Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\) Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)