Home Office

Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (formerly the destitute domestic violence concession (DDVC)

Version 9.0

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About this guidance

This guidance explains the eligibility criteria to apply for temporary permission to stay in the UK under the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) formerly known as the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC).

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior case worker cannot help you, or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Domestic Violence Immigration Policy team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on), or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance, then email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **9.0** (formerly titled destitute domestic violence concession (DDVC)
- published for Home Office staff on **2 March 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to insert a new section on guidance on ensuring an applicant's UKVI account is secure.

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Introduction

Background

This concession provides a short period of independent immigration status and financial support to certain partners who are victims of domestic abuse, allowing them to leave an abusive relationship to a position of safety and support. During this 3-month period of permission to stay the victim (where they do not have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme) must do one of the following to address their immigration status:

- apply for permission to stay in a relevant immigration route
- apply for settlement on form SET (DV) where they are eligible to do so under Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse (Appendix VDA)
- make arrangements to leave the UK

Where they have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, they can apply at any time for settlement on form SET (DV) where they are eligible to do so under Appendix VDA, but they will lose their access to public funds under this concession if they do not do so within the 3-month period of permission to stay. This concession (which previously only provided for a victim of domestic abuse in the UK with permission as a partner under Appendix FM or Appendix Armed Forces) was expanded from 16 February 2024 to provide a 3-month period of status and temporary support to a migrant victim of domestic abuse in the UK as a dependent partner of a migrant in the UK with permission on a work or study route.

From 4 April 2024, the eligibility for the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) was further expanded to include a spouse, civil partner or durable partner under Appendix EU with pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (including where that was granted or is now held on the basis of retained rights) and their dependent children.

Where an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member (including a ‘joining family member’ or a ‘family member who has retained the right of residence’ by virtue of a relationship with them), with extant limited leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules (also referred to as pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme) obtains temporary permission to stay in the UK under the MVDAC, they will retain their pre-settled status alongside that other permission.

From 4 February 2025, the eligibility for the MVDAC was further expanded to include a partner, fiancé or fiancée or proposed civil partner under Appendix Ukraine Scheme who was granted permission or Leave Outside the Rules as set out in UKR 29.3, on the basis of their relationship with a Ukrainian national.

The policy does not provide for all victims of domestic abuse and not everyone granted permission under this concession will be eligible to apply for settlement under Appendix VDA.

Policy intention

The overall intention of the policy is to protect eligible migrant victims of domestic abuse and their children and thus support the most vulnerable by:

- providing an eligible victim of domestic abuse a period of 3 months' permission to stay independent from their partner
- providing an ability to apply for recourse to public funds to enable financial support where required
- facilitating an application for permission to stay in a relevant immigration route, including an application for settlement on form SET (DV) as a victim of domestic abuse if eligible under Appendix VDA, or:
  - the making of plans to leave the UK during a short period of lawful status
  - financial stability / support from specialist services

This is a policy concession outside the Immigration Rules, due to the unique nature of the applications and speed in which decisions must be taken to best support eligible victims.

This policy does not provide for migrants here with status in their own right, such as students and workers, who already have status independent from their abuser and should be financially independent as assessed in their initial application to enter the UK and can retain their current status if they choose, with additional support from the Support for Migrant Victims scheme and the charity sector available. Nor does the policy provide for illegal entrants or those who entered the UK temporarily, for example as a visitor who overstayed, as it would be contradictory to the Government's overall approach to illegal migration.

Any other permission held is varied automatically upon being granted permission under the MVDAC (unless that other permission is pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme held by an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member). This other permission, once varied, cannot be reinstated once an application under this concession has been granted. If an applicant wishes to return to their previous permission, they will need to make a valid application.

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Eligibility

This page tells you the requirements which must be met for an applicant to qualify for temporary permission outside the Immigration Rules, under the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC).

For the purpose of this guidance, any definitions are the same as those set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and in the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance.

Eligibility for this concession is limited to those who are, or have last been granted permission as, one of the following:

- a partner under Appendix FM (except for permission as a fiancé / fiancée or proposed civil partner) of a person who is a British citizen, settled in the UK or a European Economic Area (EEA) national in the UK with limited leave to enter or remain granted under paragraph EU3 of Appendix EU on the basis of meeting condition 1 in paragraph EU14 of Appendix EU
- a spouse, civil partner or durable partner under Appendix EU with limited leave to enter or remain as a family member of a relevant EEA citizen (or of a qualifying British citizen), as a joining family member of a relevant sponsor or as a family member who has retained the right of residence, granted under paragraph EU3 or EU3A of that Appendix
- a partner under Appendix FM, Part 8 Part 11, or Appendix Family Reunion (Protection) of a person with permission as a refugee
- a spouse, civil partner, unmarried or same sex partner under paragraph 282(a), 282(c), 285, 295B(a), 295B(c) or 295E of Part 8 of a person present and settled in the UK a victim of domestic abuse under Appendix FM or Part 8
- a partner under Appendix HM Armed Forces or the previous Appendix Armed Forces (except for permission as a fiancé or fiancée or proposed civil partner) of a person who is a member of HM Armed Forces or an HM Armed Forces service leaver
- a partner of a person with permission to enter or stay on a work route or as a student
- or as a partner, fiancé or fiancée or proposed civil partner under Appendix Ukraine Scheme who was granted permission, or Leave Outside the Rules as set out in UKR 29.3 on the basis of their relationship with a Ukrainian national

and:

- the applicant's relationship has broken down due to them being a victim of domestic abuse
- the applicant requires a short period of permission to stay independent from their sponsor partner
- the applicant wants the option to apply for access to public funds

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

A person may be granted limited leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU (also referred to as pre-settled status under the EUSS) as a spouse, civil partner or durable partner of a relevant EEA citizen (or of a qualifying British citizen or relevant sponsor), where they are, or for the relevant period were, party to a marriage, in a civil partnership or in a durable partnership, with that relevant EEA citizen, qualifying British citizen or relevant sponsor. This means that they can apply under this route where they were granted pre-settled status as the spouse, civil partner or durable partner of that person (including where they have since become a 'family member who has retained the right of residence' under Appendix EU, by virtue of their relationship with that person) or where they were granted pre-settled status as a 'family member who has retained the right of residence' under Appendix EU.

Other than dependent children, other family members who have or last had pre-settled status under the EUSS are ineligible under this route. Any family members who have or last had an EUSS family permit are also ineligible under this route.

Pre-settled status under the EUSS held by an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member (including a 'joining family member' or a 'family member who has retained the right of residence' by virtue of a relationship with them), is retained by them where they are granted temporary permission under the MVDAC.

For more information on how the EUSS and the EUSS family permit provide for victims of domestic abuse, see the section 'A family member who has retained the right of residence' in EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members or the section 'Family member of a relevant EEA citizen' in EU Settlement Scheme Family Permit and Travel Permit.

Work routes

Most of the categories under the Immigration Rules relate to work. Not all work routes allow for dependent partners to be granted permission, but, where they do, those partners are included under this concession.

A work route is defined broadly as any route that involves an economic purpose. It includes long standing routes such as UK Ancestry, closed routes such as Turkish worker / businessperson and newer routes such as High Potential Individual.

Work routes can all be found on: work in the UK.

By way of an exception, dependent partners under the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route are excluded from eligibility under this concession. That is because they can apply for further permission and settle independently of their partner on the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) route after a relationship breaks down and they can make a change of conditions application should they need access to public funds.

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Children

Applicants can include any dependent children under the age of 18, or who are aged over 18 at the date of application if they were last granted permission as the dependent child of their parent or parents and are not leading an independent life, who need to apply for 3 months' permission under the concession. This is most likely to be when the dependent child is also reliant on the partner's sponsor for their immigration status. In all cases, a parent of the child must have been, or is at the same time being, granted permission under the concession.

If a dependent child already has settlement or is a British citizen but is included on the form, then you should disregard this.

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Application process

This page describes the application process.

A person seeking permission to stay under the Migrant Victim of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) must complete and submit the leave outside the Immigration Rules (LOTR) (DVV) form to: Home Office: Domestic abuse.

Postal applications will be accepted, although processing times are likely to be longer. Postal applications should be sent to:

DV Duty Officer

Permanent Migration
Department 84
Level 4
The Capital
Old Hall Street
Liverpool
L3 9PP

As part of the notification form LOTR (DDV), an applicant must sign the declaration confirming that they give their consent for the Home Office to disclose details of their case to any third parties to assist them in their application, such as a refuge, social services, legal representatives or the Department for Work and Pensions.

You must confirm receipt of the notification by email where possible. The Home Office aims to process notifications within 5 working days of receipt.

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Ensuring an applicant's UKVI account is secure

If you identify that an applicant may not have sole control of their UKVI account, or that their account details appear inaccurate or out of date, you should take the following steps to help them secure their information and ensure they receive all immigration updates directly.

If someone else may have access to the applicant's account

If you become aware that another person may have created, accessed, or is managing the applicant's UKVI account, or if the applicant is unsure who currently has access, you should advise them to contact UKVI immediately. Provide them with the following link: https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk.

If the applicant already has sole access but needs to recover their account

If the applicant confirms they have secure, sole access to their account but still needs to recover it (for example, if they cannot log in), they should use the standard UKVI account recovery service. Provide them with the following link: https://update-your-details.homeoffice.gov.uk/account-recovery/help.

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Deciding an application

This page tells you about deciding an application for permission to stay under the Migrant Victim of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC).

Granting permission to stay

Those who meet the criteria of the MVDAC must be granted Leave Outside the Rules (LOTR) for 3 months on conditions permitting employment with no prohibition on recourse to public funds (code 1A). This will vary any permission currently held by the applicant, unless that permission is pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) held by an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member (including a 'joining family member' or a 'family member who has retained the right of residence' by virtue of a relationship with them).

You must send them a letter which confirms you have granted LOTR.

You should confirm in that letter whether the applicant is eligible to make an application for settlement under Appendix VDA via form SET(DV) or whether they are not eligible to do so. The letter granting LOTR will inform applicants that they must submit any further application, including a SET(DV) application if eligible, before the expiry date of their LOTR (unless they have retained pre-settled status under the EUSS). If an application is validly made before the expiry date of their LOTR, the applicant will benefit from section 3C leave until their application is decided.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Where an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member, has retained pre-settled status under the EUSS, they can apply at any time for settlement on form SET (DV) where they are eligible to do so under Appendix VDA, but they will lose their access to public funds under the MVDAC concession if they do not do so within the 3-month period of permission to stay.

Where the person holds (as an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member) or held (as a family member of a qualifying British citizen) pre-settled status under the EUSS, they can, if they wish, apply for settled status under the EUSS

(indefinite leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU) once they are eligible for it based on their continuous residence in the UK or otherwise.

If a person without pre-settled status under the EUSS (as an EU, other EEA or Swiss citizen, or their family member) fails to submit another application before the expiry date of their LOTR and has not already left the UK, they will become an overstayer, losing entitlement to public funds and may be removed from the UK.

You must inform the applicant in that letter they should make a separate application to the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) to receive public funds which will be assessed against the normal DWP criteria.

A grant of permission under the MVDAC is recognition that an applicant declared themselves a victim of domestic abuse who required immigration status independent from their partner because of the relationship breaking down because of domestic abuse, with recourse to public funds where eligible and does not guarantee that any subsequent application for permission under the Immigration Rules will be granted.

3C leave

Where a person has made an in-time application under the MVDAC (where they hold extant permission or status at the date of application) and the expiry date of that permission or status is reached before a decision is made, that permission or status and any associated conditions, will be extended by section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971 (3C leave) until they receive their decision. This protects them from becoming an overstayer while they are awaiting a decision on that application.

Where a person with 3 months' LOTR under the MVDAC makes a valid SET (DV) or other immigration application before the LOTR expires, their LOTR will continue automatically until they receive a decision on their immigration application. If the immigration application is refused and the applicant has a right of administrative review or appeal which they exercise within the specified deadline, the LOTR will continue automatically until the administrative review or appeal is concluded.

Permission granted for less than 6 months will lapse if the holder leaves the Common Travel Area – this includes permission granted under the MVDAC, which is granted for a period of 3 months. Additionally, where a person's permission under the MVDAC is extended by virtue of section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971, their permission, as extended, will lapse if the holder leaves the UK.

Where a person's permission under the MVDAC has lapsed by leaving the Common Travel Area or the UK, they will be unable to re-enter the UK unless they make a successful application for permission to enter the UK (or they have pre-settled status under the EUSS).

Refusing permission to stay

This page tells you how to refuse an application under the Migrant Victim of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC).

If the applicant fails to meet the criteria to qualify for permission to stay under the concession you must:

- notify the applicant in writing
- return all documents
- update Home Office records

If an applicant applies under the MVDAC when they already have permission under the concession, then that application should be refused.

Reconsiderations

There is no right of appeal or administrative review against a refusal under this concession, or an automatic right for a refusal to be reconsidered. Requests should only be reconsidered where it is suggested that the policy has been incorrectly applied. Any reconsideration must be agreed by a senior case worker.

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