

## Clare's Law – Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

### BACKGROUND

Clare's Law, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) was introduced following the death of Clare Woods (1973-2009) who was in a relationship with George Appleton but unaware of his violent history of abuse. When the relationship ended Clare was subjected to harassment by Appleton, then raped and strangled by him before her body was set on fire and later discovered in her home in Salford. At the inquest, the coroner said: "... Consideration should be given to the disclosure of such convictions and their circumstances to potential victims in order that they can make informed choices about matters affecting their safety and that of their children."

### Questions to consider

Are we clear about who we can encourage to apply for information?  
Including young people?

For more information visit:

- GMP Booklet: [www.gmp.police.uk](http://www.gmp.police.uk)
- Government advice: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)
- Safe Lives resource: [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

The aim of the DVDS is to give a person potentially at risk a formal means of making enquiries about an individual who they are in a relationship with; so they can make a more informed decision regarding their continued relationship. It was initially set up as a pilot scheme in September 2012 across four areas, but went nationwide on March 8th 2014.

DVDS enhances previous arrangements whereby disclosure occurred in a reactive way when agencies received information about an offender with a violent history.

The legal framework allows the Police to share information:

- in the interest of Policing Purposes
- for pressing Social need.

The information sharing must be proportionate and relevant. In these cases, the public interest outweighs potential breach of privacy.

Under 'Right to Ask' individuals can apply to the police for information about a person's previous violent behaviour.

A family member or friend can also make an application on their behalf, but information will only be disclosed to the person potentially at risk, not the person who requests it unless they are acting as 'appropriate adult'.

The person at risk will not be told who made the application.

Under '**Right to Know**' agencies that come into possession of information can be expected to consider disclosure to safeguard potential victims from further crime.

As a professional, you can ask for information under 'Right to Know'. If you are working with an adult or a young person who expresses concerns, you can encourage them to ask for information. They can do at any police station.

They will need to give certain information, at least:

1. Full details of person potentially at risk – Name, DOB, address
2. Full details of subject - Name, DOB, address
3. Details of any children – Names, DOB, address.

The decision to disclose will be made at a multi-agency panel.

