

**Dated:** 24/05/2024

**POLICY TITLE:** Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) (Clare's Law)

**OWNING DIRECTORATE:** Crime and Safeguarding

**AUTHOR:** Senior Lawyer (Operations & Disclosure)

**CONTACT DETAILS:** 101

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:** Complete

**AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE:** Available

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**AIM OF POLICY:** To safeguard a person at risk of domestic violence by enabling Northumbria Police to disclose information to a member of the public regarding an individual who may pose a risk to a particular person.

**BENEFIT OF POLICY:** This scheme will allow individuals to request information regarding a person about whom they have concern and requires that the police pro-actively make disclosures where a risk of domestic violence is perceived. In this way, the scheme will assist in allowing people to make informed decisions about their relationship and their own safety.

**REASON FOR POLICY:** The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) was introduced following a Coroner's report into the murder of Clare Wood at the hands of her ex-partner in February 2009. Clare's partner had a history of violent offending against previous partners of which Clare knew nothing.

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The DVDS provides a framework to enable the police to disclose information to a member of the public about the previous violent offending history of a new, existing or previous partner with a view to safeguarding them from violent offending and risk of harm.

The scheme is split into two parts; The Right to Ask, and the Right to Know.

The Right to Ask is the scheme which allows a member of the public to request information from the police.

The Right to Know places an obligation on the police to consider making a disclosure when a situation comes to their attention and a risk of domestic violence is perceived.

Northumbria Police will, where appropriate, provide information to a member of the public to enable safeguarding action to be taken.

An application under the scheme can be submitted in any of the following ways:

- Online via the Northumbria Police website
- By telephone via the Communications Centre
- In person at police station front offices

When a member of the public makes an application for disclosure the outcome may be:

1. No disclosure to be made
2. Presumption to disclose arises (i.e. the subject has convictions for domestic violence offences)
3. There is no presumption to disclose but that a risk is identified in any event

Any disclosure which is made will be to the person best placed to safeguard the person at risk. This will most likely be the person at risk themselves. If the Applicant is a third party (i.e. not the person at risk) it is unlikely that a disclosure will be made to them although each application will be considered on its own merits.

This policy engages Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) of an individual about whom a disclosure is made and constitutes an interference with those rights; however, that interference is legitimate and is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime and for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.

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**SOURCE DOCUMENT:** Review of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenders.

**GROUPS AFFECTED:** All officers and staff.

**ACCESS AND DISCLOSURE RESTRICTIONS:** None  
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