

New domestic abuse principles published

Published on 12 December 2024

New principles to accompany the domestic violence disclosure scheme have been released by the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)

News 3 mins read

The **domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS)**, also known as 'Clare's Law', was implemented across all police forces in England and Wales in March 2014. It requires that police forces share information with domestic abuse victims (or potential victims) about their partner's or ex-partner's previous abusive offending.?

The scheme allows anyone, regardless of sex or gender, to enquire whether their partner has previous convictions for domestic abuse, known as the 'right to ask'. It puts a responsibility on forces to inform people if they believe their partner could be a risk to them. This is known as the 'right to know'.

Research has shown, however, that the approach and support to victims has been inconsistent in the way that individual forces apply the thresholds for disclosing information. This leaves the public vulnerable to potential harm. The new principles will support forces to improve their understanding and approach to ensure a consistent process when using the DVDS.

Principles

The **domestic violence disclosure scheme principles** include practice examples from forces and relevant evidence base, covering six areas:?

1. Governance and assurance – ensuring robust governance and oversight mechanisms.?
2. Performance – establishing and maintaining rigorous performance measures to monitor and improve implementation of the DVDS.??

3. Training and resources – ensuring everyone involved in the DVDS receives thorough training and a clear understanding of the statutory guidance.?
4. Evidence of a full risk assessment – forces should continuously reassess risks at every stage, including during the initial application and following any disclosure.??
5. Robust 'right to know' entry route – forces are encouraged to examine and refine their processes for identifying and acting on relevant intelligence, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in their 'right to know' cases.?
6. Roles and responsibilities of partner agencies – ensuring that independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs) and other agencies are substantially involved during engagement and disclosure.?

This is about protecting victims and potential victims. We need to work together to share information with victims whenever we can. The DVDS is an important tool to help achieve this and we need to make sure it is used consistently across all forces. These new principles will help policing, by making it clear when forces should disclose information to those at risk of domestic abuse."

Assistant Chief Constable Tom Harding, Director of Public Safety & Risk at the College of Policing

The principles are aimed at anyone who works in policing, including partner agencies that have a role with domestic violence and victims. It is one of several pieces of work that the College and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) are working on with forces to support improvements to tackling domestic abuse, with an overall commitment to providing an enhanced service to victims and putting them at the centre of our response.?

Domestic abuse causes considerable harm to victims and has wider impacts across society. People rightly expect, where policing knows an individual may present a risk of domestic abuse, this knowledge is appropriately shared to protect potential victims.

It is imperative that we offer a consistent, supportive service to those at risk of, or enduring abuse. And these principles, developed by policing with the support of victims' charities and academics, aim to minimise the threat and break the cycle of abuse."

Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe, NPCC lead for Domestic Abuse

- [Read the domestic violence disclosure scheme principles](#)

Tags

Domestic violence Domestic abuse