

The domestic violence disclosure scheme project: information sharing and domestic abuse

This project seeks to examine the effectiveness of DVDS as a method of information sharing and the implications for broader domestic abuse policy and practice.

Key details

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Police region	Yorkshire
Collaboration and partnership	ESRC grant number UKRI602
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	March 2026
Date due for completion	October 2028

Research context

In a concerted effort to improve system responses to domestic abuse, various jurisdictions across the globe have placed a strong emphasis on the value of information sharing. A key goal of information sharing is to keep perpetrators in view and in doing so, provide improved protections to victim-survivors. To support this shift towards information sharing models of accountability and protection, domestic violence disclosure schemes (DVDS) have been introduced in several jurisdictions, with England and Wales being the first to introduce such a scheme in 2014.

The model was placed on statutory footing in 2021 and thus far not been subject to an in-depth analysis through the lens of information sharing. Given the consistent identification of information sharing as a key area of improvement in formal systems' response to domestic abuse, now is the right time to critically examine the operation of DVDS and to consider whether current information sharing practices are effective in achieving their intended aims. This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of DVDS as a method of information sharing and the implications for broader domestic abuse policy and practice.

Objectives

- examine the strengths and weaknesses of DVDS as a method of information sharing and the implications this has for broader domestic abuse policy and practice
- explore how, when and in what circumstances police forces in England and Wales share information via DVDS
- examine the role of partner organisations in Clare's Law and how information is shared between those agencies
- explore formal and informal processes of information sharing engaged in by victim-survivors and the implications this might have
- discover how and if perpetrator accountability is incorporated into the DVDS
- establish how DVDS data is collected and stored by forces and partners
- consider the implications of information sharing within the context of Clare's Law for international jurisdictions

Research methodology

To achieve our project aims, will employ quantitative and qualitative research methods to examine information sharing at three levels:

- police force/partnership level
- domestic abuse frontline/delivery level
- victim-survivor level

The project will be undertaken in four phases as outlined below:

Phase one

We will conduct a literature review and policy analysis of how DVDS have been implemented internationally and how these schemes are situated within broader information sharing practices.

Phase two

We will complete a quantitative analysis of DVDS data from all 43 police forces in England and Wales from 2019–2025.

Phase three

Interviews will be conducted with professionals tasked with implementing DVDS to explore how information is shared/ disclosed. These interviews will include police officers of varying role and rank, third sector representatives, probation officers and child and adult safeguarding representatives. Interviews will take place across six police force areas (including associated partners) in England and Wales.

Interviews will also be with victim-survivors who have experience with the DVDS or have views on the scheme. Victim-survivors will also be asked about their experiences of informal practices of information sharing. The project will seek to engage minoritised victim-survivors to explore their perceptions of the scheme.

Phase four

The final stage of the project will focus on knowledge exchange. We will host a series of online and in person events sharing the findings of the study with police constabularies, policy makers and other key stakeholders.

Research participation

If victim-survivors or professionals who have experiences or views on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme/Clare's Law would be interested in talking to the researchers, please email [Charlotte Barlow](#) for further details.

Additional resources

[Project website](#)