

01 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 stalked 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.*"

Why it matters:

02

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

07

What to do?

For more information visit:

www.gmp.police.uk

• Government advice:

www.gov.uk

• Safe Lives resource:

www.safelives.org.uk

• SafeNet Domestic Abuse & Support Services

www.safenet.org.uk

(Safenet can refer client for free legal advice)

Support is provided to those people by the police and specialist Domestic Violence services. As the person may be at high risk of serious injury or homicide at time of separation it is essential that they get advice from appropriate services re: planning a safe separation from the perpetrator and that it is also essential to access legal advice to protect themselves and any children, as they may be deemed to have "failed to protect" their children if they do not take appropriate steps once they have this information from the DVDS.

06

Information:

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, the subject and of any children. The decision to disclose will be made at a multi-agency panel meeting. Remember that potentially one of the most difficult or dangerous times is after the 'person potentially at risk' has been provided with information and decides to end the relationship.

03

Information:

The legal framework allows the Police to share information in the interest of policing purposes or for pressing social need. The information sharing must be proportionate and relevant. In these cases, the public interest outweighs any potential breach of privacy. Under 'Right to Ask' individuals can apply to the police for information about a person's previous violent behaviour.

Anyone can make an application under Right to Ask, not just family members or friends – including a professional. The Right to Know application is when an agency has information already in their possession that indicates a risk. 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.

05

04

Clare's Law

