

# The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

Keeping People Safe from Domestic Violence

This leaflet is to make you aware that you may be subject to an application under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme on whether you have a history of violent behaviour.



Home Office



South Yorkshire

**POLICE**

## What is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme?

The aim of this scheme is to give victims or concerned third parties a formal mechanism to make inquiries about you if they are worried that you have been abusive in the past.

If police checks show that you have a record of violent behaviour, or there is other information to indicate that your partner may be at risk from you, then police will consider sharing this information with your partner or concerned third party.

## Who can ask for a disclosure?

A disclosure under this Scheme is the sharing of specific information about your previous violent behaviour with a partner or a concerned third person for the purposes of protecting your partner from domestic violence.

- Your partner can make an application to receive information about your previous violent behaviour if they have a concern that you may harm them.
- Any concerned third party, such as a partner's parent, neighbour or friend can also make an application if they are concerned about your behaviour.
- However, a third party person making an application would not necessarily receive information about you. It may be more appropriate for someone else to receive the information, such as the victim or a person that is in a position to protect the victim from the abuse.
- Information will only be given to someone who is in a position to use the information to protect your partner from the abuse.

## How does the process work?

### **Step One:** Initial contact with the police

When your partner or concerned third party contacts the police, a police officer or a member of police staff will take the details of what prompted the enquiry and the nature of their relationship with you.

The police will run some initial checks based on the information provided by your partner or concerned third party and conduct an initial risk assessment.

The purpose of these initial checks is for the police to establish if there are any immediate concerns about your behaviour.

No disclosure of information will take place at this stage unless it is necessary to provide immediate protection to your partner.

**If the police believe that your partner is at risk from your behaviour and in need of protection from harm, they will take immediate action.**

## **Step Two:** Face to face meeting to complete the application

Depending on the outcome of Step One, your partner or concerned third party will participate in a face-to-face meeting with the police. This meeting is to establish further details about the application made by a partner or concerned third party in order to assess both the application and the risks that your behaviour may cause.

The police may run checks and speak to other agencies about you including the Prison Service, the Probation Service and Social Services based on the information given by your partner or concerned third party that have made the enquiry.

**The police will act immediately if at any point they consider your partner to be at risk from your behaviour.**

## **Step Three:** Multi-agency meeting to consider disclosure

The police will meet with other safeguarding agencies (such as the Probation Service, Prison Service, Social Services) to discuss the information requested by your partner or concerned third party, along with additional information the police may have received from the checks they have run, and any relevant information from the agencies they have talked to. The multi-agency meeting will then decide whether any disclosure is lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect your partner from you.

If they decide to disclose information, they will decide who should receive the information and set up a safety plan to provide help and support to your partner.

## **Step Four:** potential disclosure

### **What kind of information might be disclosed**

If the checks show that you have a record of violent offences or there is other information that indicates there is a pressing need to make a disclosure to prevent further crime, the police may disclose this information to your partner or concerned third party or to a person who is more able to protect your partner.

Your previous convictions are treated as confidential, and the information will only be disclosed if it is lawful, proportionate and there is a pressing need to make the disclosure to prevent further crime from occurring.

## A victim's Right to Know

Under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, your partner may receive a disclosure even if they have not asked for one. That's because, if the police receive information about your behaviour which they consider may cause you to harm your partner, then they may consider disclosing that information to your partner or another person who they consider best placed to protect your partner.

The decision to disclose information when a victim has not asked for a disclosure will be made by the multi-agency meeting, and the disclosure will only be made if it is lawful, proportionate and there is a pressing need to make the disclosure to prevent further crime.

## Will the police tell me if a disclosure about me is made?

The police will consider whether to tell you that a disclosure to your partner or concerned third party is being made, but only if they are satisfied that the act of telling you will not increase the risk to your partner.

## Support help lines

If you would like help and support to stop your violent behaviour, then you can contact the Respect phoneline on 0808 802 4040. You can also ask the police for information on support groups that exist where you live.



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