

Information Sheet

Clare's Law Protection from Domestic Abuse

Absolutely anyone can apply for a disclosure using Clare's Law, which is designed to protect potential victims of domestic abuse by allowing them (or a person who is concerned about them) to request information about their partner's past.

So if you're worried about your own relationship, or someone else's, you can request information and find out whether there's a risk of abuse.

How to use Clare's Law:

- 1) The first step is simply to go to the police. Tell them your concerns. You can do this by visiting your local station in person, calling the police 101 number, or even by speaking to an officer on the street. Ask them about Clare's Law, or obtaining a 'domestic violence disclosure'.
- 2) The police will ask you to give an overview of your concerns. They will also take your name and contact details, so they can follow it up.
- 3) If you mention anything that could be a criminal offence - for example that your partner has hit you – the police will have to investigate that as a crime, and may choose to arrest your partner if they feel it necessary. They should also give you the details of a specialist domestic violence service, to which you can go for support.
- 4) Depending on what you've mentioned in your initial chat, the police may invite you in for a face-to-face meeting to put in the application for a disclosure. You will need to bring two forms of ID to this meeting, which should be with a specialist domestic abuse officer. They will also speak to other agencies, such as social services, to see what information they hold on the person involved.
- 5) Once the police have gathered all the details available, they will do a risk assessment to determine if anyone is likely to be harmed, based on their information.
- 6) If the police don't think abuse is likely - even if the person they've been considering has a history of such behaviour - they will not make a disclosure. The information the police and other agencies hold on individuals is private. There has to be a pressing reason for them to share it, or they are not allowed to do so. So not getting a disclosure doesn't mean there is no violent past: it just means the police either don't have any information, or they don't feel the risk is high enough at that time.
- 7) If the authorities feel abuse is likely, they will put together a safety plan about how to make any necessary disclosures. The police think carefully about who that disclosure should be made to: a person who receives information about domestic abuse isn't allowed to share it with anyone without explicit permission from the police, and the police can't give information to anyone unless it's completely necessary.
- 8) If you request a disclosure about your partner, it is likely you would be given any details directly, unless the police felt it was in your best interests to tell someone else instead.

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- 9) If you request a disclosure as a third party, the police may well go straight to the potential victim of abuse to make the disclosure. If they are young, or especially vulnerable, they might disclose to their parents or someone else who can help keep them safe. This means that you might not be told the outcome if you request a disclosure about someone else. It doesn't mean nothing has been done, but that the police don't feel you need to be told to prevent abuse.
- 10) Once the police have made a disclosure, they should again make a referral to a specialist service to get support for the party (or parties) involved. They should also then work with the potential victim to create a safety plan.