



# Safer Seven

On: Clare's Law



## 1. What is Clare's Law

The official name for Clare's Law is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS). It simply means any member of the public has the right to ask the police if their partner might pose a risk to them by accessing their partners criminal history. This also applies to 'third party' members of the public who are able to make enquiries of the partner of a family member or close friend. This is known as a 'right to ask'. There is also a 'right to know' which places a risk management responsibility on safeguarding agencies.

## 3. Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)

Clare's father began campaigning, calling for a system to be put in place to allow people to find out whether their new partners had a violent past.

In July 2012, Clare's Law was launched as a pilot in 4 police forces. After a successful pilot, the scheme was launched across England and Wales on 8th March 2014 – International Women's Day

## 5. Who has the right to ask and know?

Anyone has the right to ask and submit an application. This includes where a person asks, because they believe that their friend or relative might be in a relationship with a potentially abusive partner.

However, any disclosure will only be made to the person in the relationship i.e. the person at risk. The same principle applies to the 'right to know'. There may be some occasions where disclosure might be made to a third party if they are best placed to safeguard the person at risk

## 7. What to do next

For further information or to make a Clare's Law Request visit: <https://west-midlands.police.uk/your-options/clares-law-domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme>

For further information about domestic abuse visit <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/domesticabuse>

The expectation is that team leaders will present briefings to their staff. It will be important to make the topic relevant to your service. The briefings should not be mixed in with the ordinary day to day issues of the team, as this will diminish their impact. Visit our Learning Zone to see our selection of briefings and more [HERE](#)

## 2. Why it matters

The Clare's Law scheme was introduced in 2009 after 36-year-old Clare Woods was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Clare, a mum of one was strangled and set on fire at her home in Salford, Greater Manchester, in February 2009 by George Appleton, who had a record of violence against women. Clare had met Appleton on Facebook. She knew nothing about his history of violence against women, which included threats, repeated harassment and the kidnapping at knifepoint of one of his ex-girlfriends.

## 4. How does it work?

There are 2 procedures under the DVDS:

1. The 'Right to Ask', triggered by a member of the public applying to the police for a disclosure.
2. The 'Right to Know', triggered by the police making a proactive decision to disclose information to protect a potential victim.

In both cases the police and other safeguarding agencies will carry out checks and where necessary the police have common law powers to disclose information about a person's known history of violence or abuse. Whilst actual disclosure falls to the police, it is generally a multi-agency panel that decides whether the risk is sufficient to warrant disclosure

## 6. How is the disclosure given?

There is standard wording that must be read to the person receiving the disclosure.

They will be told that the information must only be used for the purpose for which it has been shared i.e. safeguarding.

They will be asked to sign an undertaking that they agree that the information is confidential, and they will not disclose this any further.