

# The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

Keeping People Safe from  
Domestic Violence and Abuse

This booklet is for you if you are in a relationship and you are worried that your partner may have been abusive in the past.

## What is the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme?

The aim of this scheme is to give you the opportunity to make enquiries about your partner if you are worried that they may have been abusive in the past.

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

The scheme aims to help you to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship, Gloucestershire Constabulary work closely with Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services (GDASS) to ensure that individuals are offered help and support when making that choice.

## Who can ask for a disclosure?

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

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

## Step One: How do I make an application?

If you are being supported by GDASS then speak to your GDASS worker in the first instance.

Alternatively, you must complete an application form which you can access by:

- Visiting a police station (*Gloucester, Cheltenham, Cirencester, Stow, Stroud, Tewkesbury, Coleford*)
- Visiting Gloucestershire Constabulary website ([www.gloucestershire.police.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk)) and printing a form off yourself.

Once the application form is completed, please bring this together with two forms of ID to the police station where the process will begin. The two forms of ID must include one photo ID

- either a passport, photo driving licence or Student ID  
and another form of ID
- a household utility bill; your bank statement, your benefit book, or birth certificate.

**This process could take a maximum of 35 days. If at any point you become more worried please contact the police or GDASS. If it is an emergency you should always call 999.**

## Step Two

Once the police have received your completed application form and have verified your identity, they will run initial checks based on the information you have provided and conduct an initial risk assessment.

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

If you have alleged a crime has been committed against you in your application, e.g. you indicate that your partner has hit you, then the police may investigate this as a crime and may arrest your partner.

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

**If the police believe that you are at risk and in need of protection from harm, they will take immediate action.**

## Step Two continued:

The police will run checks and may speak to other agencies including Probation, GDASS and social Care based on the information you give them.

The police may also want to speak to you directly to find out more about your relationship.

They will work as quickly as possible to complete the checks but, depending on the circumstances, some checks may take longer for the results to be received by the police.

It is envisaged that the maximum time that it will take to complete the whole process, including these and the disclosure of information if decided necessary, is 35 days.

**The police will act immediately if at any point they consider you to be at risk and in need of protection from harm.**

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

The police will meet with other safeguarding agencies (such as the Probation Service, GDASS, Social Services) to discuss the information that you have given them, 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 you from your partner. If they decide to disclose information, they will decide who should receive the information and set up a safety plan tailored to your needs to provide you with help and support.

### Step Four: Potential disclosure

#### **What kind of information you might be given**

If the checks show that your partner has 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 you or to a person who is more able to protect you.

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

If the checks do not show that there is a pressing need to make a disclosure to prevent further crime, the police will tell you that. This may be because your partner does not have a record of violent offences or there is no information held to indicate they pose a risk of harm to you. Or it may be that some information is held on your partner but this is not sufficient to demonstrate a pressing need for disclosure.

It may be the case that your partner is not known to the police for violent offences or there is insufficient information to indicate they pose a risk of harm to you but they are showing worrying behaviour. In this case, the police or other support agency can work to protect you by providing advice and support.

## Your Right to Know

Under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, you may receive a disclosure even if you have not asked for one. That is because, if the police receive information about your partner which they consider puts you at risk of harm from domestic violence, then they may consider disclosing that information to you or another person who they consider best placed to protect you.

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

## Important note

You should be aware that police checks or any disclosures made are not a guarantee of safety. They will, however, make sure you are aware of what local and national support is **available**.

### After you are given information

*Can I tell my family and friends about this? I really need to talk to someone.*

If you receive a disclosure, it should be treated as confidential. It is only being given to you so that you can take steps to protect yourself. You must not share this information with anyone else unless you have spoken to the police, or person who gave you the information, and they have agreed with you that it will be shared.

Subject to the condition that the information is kept confidential, you can:

- use the information to keep yourself safe;
- use the information to keep any children involved in the situation safe;
- ask what support is available;
- ask for advice on how to keep yourself and others safe.

The police may decide not to give you information if they think that you will discuss it with others. However, the police will still take steps to protect you if you are at risk of harm.

The police may take action against you if the information is disclosed without their consent, which could include civil or criminal proceedings.

You should be aware that it is an offence (under Section 55 of the Data Protection Act 1998) for a person to 'knowingly or recklessly obtain or disclose personal data without the consent of the data controller' which in this case is usually the police.

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**If no disclosure is made but you still have concerns and want further information about protecting yourself, there is action you can take to protect yourself in the future.**

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The police can provide you with information and advice on how to protect yourself and how to recognise the warning signs of domestic violence. There are also a number of specialist services and organisations providing information about domestic violence, how to spot it and how to work with the authorities to intervene.

## Local Support Services

You can contact Gloucestershire Police on 101.

In an emergency always ring 999.

### **Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS):**

Provides support, advice and information to all victims of domestic abuse and professionals in Gloucestershire  
**0845 602 9035** (Mon-Fri 9-5pm)

### **Gloucestershire Domestic Violence Support Advocacy Project (GDVSAP):**

Provides support to victims/survivors throughout Gloucestershire who are affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence  
**01452 500115**

### **Hope House Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC):**

Provides a one stop shop for victims of sexual violence, where individuals can access support, advice and information.  
**01452 754390**

### **Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre:**

Provides free, confidential support for victims of sexual violence  
**01452 526770**

## National Support helplines

If you would like additional help and support on domestic violence, and abuse, then you can contact any of the following national helplines:

- **National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247**
- **Broken Rainbow – 0300 999 5428**
- **Men's Advice Line – 0808 801 0327**
- **Stalking Helpline – 0808 802 0300**



**Gloucestershire Constabulary**

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Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AN

**Tel: 101** [www.gloucestershire.police.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk)

