

disclosure is lawful, necessary and proportionate to protect you. If they decide to disclose information, they will decide who to tell. They may discuss a safety plan tailored to help and support you.

### Receiving a disclosure

Under the scheme, you may be told information even if you have not asked for it. That is because, if the police receive information about your partner which they consider puts you at risk of harm from domestic abuse, then they may consider disclosing that information.

Where it is decided that a disclosure will be made, police will tell you, or the person who is considered best placed to protect you. This will be made in person, and if you like, a support worker can attend this meeting with you. This could include someone from Victim Support NI or Women's Aid, for example. All disclosures must be treated as confidential and must only be used for the purpose of protecting you.

At the disclosure meeting, you will be asked to sign an undertaking that the information will not be shared unless with the prior agreement of police.

You should be aware that police checks, or any disclosure made, are not a guarantee of safety. The police will, however, make sure you are aware of what support is available to you.

### Police and support contacts

You can contact PSNI on non-emergency number **101**.

**In an emergency always call 999.**

If you would like information on issues relating to domestic abuse, you can also contact the free, independent support organisations listed on the following page.

### 24-hour domestic and sexual violence helpline

freephone: 0808 802 1414  
email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org  
text: 'support' to 07797 805839

### Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

telephone: 028 9024 9041  
email: info@womensaidni.org

### Victim Support Northern Ireland

telephone: 028 9024 4039  
email: foyle@victimsupportni.org.uk  
or belfast@victimsupportni.org.uk

### Men's Advisory Project Northern Ireland

telephone: 028 9024 1929 (Belfast)  
028 7116 0001 (Foyle);  
email: info@mapni.co.uk

### Men's Action Network

telephone: 028 7137 7777  
email: admin@man-ni.org

Visit [nidirect.gov.uk/see-the-signs](https://nidirect.gov.uk/see-the-signs),  
call PSNI on **101** or the confidential  
24 hour helpline **0808 802 1414**

Keeping People Safe



Department of  
**Justice**  
[www.justice-ni.gov.uk](https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

## THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE DISCLOSURE SCHEME (DVADS)

Keeping People Safe



Department of  
**Justice**  
[www.justice-ni.gov.uk](https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)



## WHAT IS DVADS?

DVADS is a police-operated scheme that lets you make inquiries to the police about your partner, if you're worried they have been abusive in the past.

It also allows someone else you know to ask about your partner, if they have concerns that your partner has a history of abusive behaviour.

You must be aged 16 or over to apply to the scheme.

## What happens?

If police checks show that your partner has a record of violent or abusive behaviour – or there is other information indicating that you may be at risk – police will consider sharing the information they hold.

If a decision is made to share this information, it will be shared with you as the person at risk. On some occasions, it may be shared with the person considered best placed to protect you, e.g. a social worker.

The main purpose of DVADS is to keep people safe. It aims to help you make an informed choice on whether to continue a relationship.

### The scheme works in two ways:

#### 1. 'Right to Ask'

This applies when you, or someone you know (such as a family member or a friend), makes a direct application to police for information.

An application can be made by completing a form. The form and further information on the scheme are available on the PSNI website [psni.police.uk/crime/ domestic-abuse/dvads/](https://psni.police.uk/crime/domestic-abuse/dvads/) as well as the nidirect website [nidirect.gov.uk/see-the-signs](https://nidirect.gov.uk/see-the-signs).

#### 2. 'Power to Tell'

This applies when indirect information has been received by police about your safety, and where, after appropriate checks are made, police judge that a disclosure should be made to protect you.

## How does 'Right to Ask' work?

There are three steps to this part of the scheme:

### First contact with police

Once police receive an application, they will acknowledge

this using the safe method of contact given on the application form. The police will then make initial checks on their systems.

If police identify an immediate risk of harm to you, at any stage of the scheme's process, they will take steps to disclose any information they have as soon as possible.

### Face-to-face meeting

Depending on the outcome of the initial checks (and if no immediate risk has been identified), police will invite the applicant to a face-to-face meeting. This will allow them to gather further information to support the application. Photographic proof of identity will be needed at this meeting.

### Deciding on disclosure

Depending on the outcome of the meeting, police – acting in conjunction with other safeguarding agencies – will discuss the information available to them. They 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 to tell. They may discuss a safety plan to help and support you.

## How does 'Power to Tell' work?

This part of the scheme involves only two steps:

### Receipt of information

Indirect information is received by police, who make initial checks on its systems. Police also assess whether there is any immediate risk.

### Deciding on disclosure

Depending on the information received and potential risks, police – acting in conjunction with other safeguarding agencies – will discuss the information available to them. They will then decide whether any