A guide to: the Police and Victim Support

“Domestic violence is a crime and the police will deal with it in a serious manner”
Domestic violence is a crime and the police will deal with it in a serious manner.

The police will:
- Protect you and your children
- Remove the risk of further violence by arresting the suspect where there is sufficient evidence and powers to arrest for a criminal offence, breach of bail conditions or injunction.
- Arrange first aid or other medical assistance.
- Talk to you separately from the suspect.
- A written statement will be taken about the incident and if appropriate will be used in court as evidence. The police will ask for a photograph to be taken of any injury if necessary.
- The police will send all relevant information to the Crown Prosecution Service which will decide whether a case should go to court. The police will explain the procedure and be supportive throughout.
- Offer support and reassurance.
- Help you access other agencies.
- If the victim wants to have the charges dropped, a written statement will be required setting out the reasons for this course of action.
- Careful consideration will be given by the police as to whether the case can continue via alternative means.

Police Powers
- The police may enter a house without a search warrant if it is necessary to prevent injury or a breach of the peace.
- The police may be invited into a house by an occupier, and this invitation cannot be withdrawn by another person whilst the complaint is being investigated.
- The police can arrest any person reasonably suspected of committing an offence if it is necessary to prevent that person injuring someone.

The police will inform you:
- When the suspect has been released, whether on bail or otherwise.
- Bail conditions which are set by a court or police, will usually state that the suspect is not to contact you in any way and must keep away from you.
- Whether the suspect has been charged.
- Of any action taken, including forthcoming court appearances.

Clare’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – DVDS)

Clare’s Law, also known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, provides people with the information they need to leave an abusive situation before there is serious escalation.

It is a national scheme, and will ensure you can make an informed decision about your relationship and, if necessary, your escape.

How to use Clare’s Law:
1. Go to the police & tell them your concerns. You can do this by visiting your local station and ask them about “obtaining a domestic violence disclosure”.
2. The police will ask you to give them an overview of your concerns. They will also take your name and contact details, so they can follow up your concerns.
3. If you mention anything that could be a criminal offence, the police will have to investigate that as a crime and may choose to arrest your partner if they feel it’s necessary.
4. Depending on what you initially mentioned the police may invite you for a face-to-face meeting to put in the application for disclosure. You’ll need to bring two forms of ID to this meeting.
   a. This meeting will be with a specialist domestic violence 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, they’ll complete a risk assessment to determine if anyone is likely to be harmed based on the information collected.
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 is private. There has to be a pressing reason for them to share it or they are not allowed to do so.
   a. Not getting a disclosure doesn’t mean there is not a violent past. It means the police either don’t have any information – or the risk isn’t high enough at the time.
7. If the authorities feel abuse is likely, they will help you put together a safety plan and decide whether to make any disclosures to you. The police have to consider carefully who they should disclose the information to. A person who receives the information isn’t allowed to share it with anyone without the explicit permission from the police. And the police can’t give information to anyone unless 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.
9. If you request a disclosure as a third party, the police may go straight to the potential victim to make the disclosure. If they are young, or vulnerable, they might disclose to their parents or someone else. It doesn’t mean nothing has been done, but the police don’t feel you need to be told.
10. Once the police have made a disclosure, they should 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.

Victim Support
- Victim Support is an independent charity that helps you cope with crime. They can contact you after a crime to offer free, confidential support and information. Some staff have been specifically trained to offer support and advice to anyone suffering from domestic violence.
- Their witness service can help you if you have to attend Magistrates’ or Crown Court. The police and other organisations refer people to victim support; or you can contact them directly to ask for help.

Independent domestic violence advocate

Victim Support Havering has a dedicated member of staff who will make contact with high risk victims of domestic violence soon after the police have attended and is there to offer support and advice to help those who need to attend court. This support will be tailored to your individual need.
In an emergency dial 999

Police stations:
Romford police station: Tel: 01708 779110
Hornchurch police station: Tel: 01708 779425

Victim support
Victim Support Havering:
Tel: 020 8550 2410 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)
Outside of these hours there is an answerphone, you can leave a message and a safe contact number and they will call you back.

For more information about Victim Support go to www.victimsupport.org.uk

Alternatively you can call the National Support Helpline: Tel: 0845 3030900

Reducing the Risk – Havering