

Domestic abuse disclosure requests up by 18% since lockdown began

Requests under Police Scotland's domestic abuse disclosure scheme have increased by 18 per cent since lockdown began.

Nearly 260 requests for disclosure were made between the start of lockdown on 23 March to 27 April 2020, compared to 219 in 2019.

The majority of requests are being made by police officers and other professionals (including social work and NHS) raising a concern about someone they think may be at risk of domestic abuse. Police Scotland will then make a decision about whether to make a disclosure in the interests of safeguarding a person.



Assistant Chief Constable Duncan Sloan, lead for Major Crime and Public Protection, Police Scotland, said: “Domestic abuse is an ongoing threat in our local communities and there remains an increased risk as people continue to observe isolation and physical distancing guidance.

“Police Scotland will not tolerate domestic abuse, tackling it and preventing it is a priority for us and that has not changed because of COVID 19.

“Domestic abuse is seldom a one off. People who abuse are likely to do so again and again.

“Survivors of abuse tell us that isolation is a tactic perpetrators use to restrict their opportunities to seek help and support from friends and families, via websites or through social media.

“No-one should live in fear of abuse.”

In the 12 months to 31 March 2020, Police Scotland received 2,648 requests for disclosure, a 66 per cent increase on the same period

2018/19 (1,596 applications).

In the same period more than 1200 disclosures were made to people indicating that their partner had an abusive past. This represents a 40 per cent increase on the same period the previous year (865 disclosures).

The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland remains in operation, and people can readily access the scheme if they are concerned that their partner or the partner of someone they know may have an abusive past.

ACC Sloan said: "Domestic abuse is about power and control. It can be physical or sexual, but it can include verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse. Offenders seek to frighten, humiliate and isolate victims from those who can offer them support.

"This is why it is so important that people understand that we are here to help now.

"Domestic abuse is everyone's business. We want to prevent harm by identifying people who may be at risk.

"We will continue to treat reports of domestic abuse as a priority, we will listen and we will investigate. Your safety is our priority."

If you, or anyone you know, are being abused or are at risk of abuse, please contact Police Scotland on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Or if you need support please contact Scotland's domestic abuse and forced marriage helpline on 0800 027 1234, where support is available 24/7.