

More than 4,500 people told that current partner has a violent or abusive past

More than 8,500 people have made requests to Police Scotland's Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland (DSDAS) since its launch five years ago.

Of the 8,533 requests received, 4,536 people (53 per cent) were told that their current partner has a violent or abusive past.



Humza Yousaf

During lockdown Police Scotland saw a 34 per cent increase in DSDAS applications and a steady rise in the number of incidents being reported, after an initial slight decrease.

Assistant Chief Constable Judi Heaton, Police Scotland's lead for Major Crime and Public Protection, said: "Behind the numbers are people who have either escaped becoming victims of domestic abuse, or who are now aware of their partner's abusive past.

"Abusers manipulate and control their victims. Incidents of abuse are often followed by apologies before the abuse begins again. It can be very difficult for victims of domestic abuse to recognise their situation and to then take action to get themselves out of it.

"DSDAS provides that first step. It can help prevent domestic abuse and the long term damage it can cause victims, their families and their children. It can save lives.

“We want people to be safe. The disclosure scheme is effective in helping prevent abuse, even in our current situation. We recognise how difficult lockdown and the COVID19 situation has been and continues to be for many people. We are here to help.

“Equally, if you are concerned that someone you know, a relative, a friend or a neighbour may be a victim of domestic abuse, then make the call either to Police Scotland or one of our partner agencies.”

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said: “Domestic abuse is an absolutely abhorrent crime and will not be tolerated, holding perpetrators to account will continue to be a priority for the Scottish Government.

“We supported the launch of Police Scotland’s disclosure scheme and five years on I am pleased to see the success it has had in helping safeguard those who have been suffering from, or at risk of, domestic abuse.

“The fact that more than half of those who contacted the service were told of their partner’s violent or abusive past highlights the real difference this scheme is making. We will continue to work closely with criminal justice and third sector partners on our shared aim of completely eradicating domestic abuse.”

In the first four years of the Scheme, Police Scotland received 5,508 applications and made 2,902 disclosures (52 per cent disclosure rate).

Police Scotland responds to a domestic abuse call every nine minutes attending around 60,000 incidents every year.

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.