

New Partner (Clare's Law)

Who is at risk?

- Lone parents in newly formed relationships may quickly involve new partners in a caring role. In the vast majority of cases there will be no concerns. However they may need assurance that new partners do not pose a risk to them or their children.
- Professionals should ensure that they explore with the main carer what they know about their new partner and their past.
- Professionals should be aware that single mothers can be targeted by gangs for “cuckooing”.
- Professionals should always be inquisitive when a new or unexplained adult is in the home.

Why it Matters

- Local and national child practice learning reviews have highlighted instances where new partners, when left in a caring role, have been unable to keep children safe.
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/13/alfie-steele-mother-and-partner-guilty-over-death-of-boy-9-in-bath> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64951673>
- In some cases children have been seriously harmed by new partners. Many had a history of abusive behaviour.
- It can be difficult for a lone parent/carer - with limited awareness of a new partner's past or their capacity to parent - to make an informed decision on whether to leave child/ren in their care.
- Professionals working with vulnerable families should encourage lone parents to ask questions and be prepared to ‘think the unthinkable’.
- This can equally apply to other families, not just those deemed vulnerable.

How Can Professionals Help?

New relationships can be very emotional and intense.

As a result parents/carers' may not feel able to ask difficult questions without support.

As a professional you can assist by:

Having ongoing conversations about new partners with the parents/carers.

Consider that the main carer of the child may be in a coercive/ controlling situation. Be prepared to facilitate a multi-agency professional's meeting where there are concerns.

Engage with other family members/friends.

Remind the parent/carer about the opportunity to find out about their new partner using sources such as Clare's Law.

What Can Professionals Do?

Encourage the primary carer to see the importance of the role of "significant others" in the child's life, including when introducing new partners.

Make sure those with parental responsibility, (including those who are not directly involved in children's lives), know when there are professional concerns about their child.

Use professional curiosity to explore details of the new partner.

Further information

Clare's Law-The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) – commonly known as 'Clare's law' – allows individuals to ask the police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. www.clares-law.com

<https://www.met.police.uk/rqo/request/ri/request-information/sarahs-law-beta/sarahs-law-child-sex-offender-disclosure-scheme/>

National Domestic Violence Helpline - Refuge: 0808 2000 247
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline Refuge Men's Advice Line: 0808 8010327
www.mensadviceline.org.uk

A really simple and useful resource for all professionals who are dealing with a family involving a new partner: <https://click.clickrelationships.org/content/all->

