

Police vow to tackle Domestic Abuse during World Cup

Domestic abuse offenders are being advised to seek help to change or risk paying the penalty as police work to protect victims during the World Cup.

Lancashire Police and partner agencies have promised to protect victims by focussing on those who abuse their partners and families during Brazil 2014.

Designated officers will be tasked with responding solely to domestic abuse incidents during England's World Cup games using dedicated cars, and victims are being urged to ensure they make use of the legislation available to them in the fight against abusers.

Since Clare's Law – a scheme which allows people to request information from the police about whether their partner has a domestic violence conviction- was introduced three months ago, 43 disclosures have been made by Lancashire Constabulary.

As well as being available to victims, Clare's Law can also be used by friends, family and third-party organisations to request information if they are concerned about someone's welfare. The police will make a decision whether to disclose information based on information revealed through police checks, and in each case will assess whether the disclosure should be classed as "urgent".

Superintendent Sue Cawley, Head of Lancashire Public Protection Unit, said: "Domestic abuse is an issue which people face and the police tackle on a daily basis all year round.

“However, it is well known that there’s a tendency for incidents of domestic violence to increase during high profile sporting events, particularly as more alcohol is consumed. With this in mind, we are using the competition to target offenders.

“High risk domestic abuse offenders and those with links to football violence have been identified across the force area and officers will be paying special attention to them.

"Our concern is that violent men may inflict violence on their partners, blaming their actions on things like stress or alcohol. There is no excuse for domestic abuse and perpetrators must be clear that the World Cup does not give them any justification for abusive behaviour.

“It is essential that every victim understands that there are people and services in place which can help them.

“We also have new powers available such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders and additional resources; we are determined to use them to protect victims, prevent offences and prosecute offenders.”

Specialist officers from the Public Protection department will also be on duty at key times to provide an enhanced service to domestic violence victims and gathering the best evidence possible to bring perpetrators to justice.

Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw has commissioned an awareness campaign for the duration of the World Cup, and he said: "The campaign is designed to make perpetrators think twice about their behaviour and understand the impact their actions have.

"But it is also sending out a very clear message – if you offend this summer, or at any other time, Lancashire Constabulary will arrest you, and you will spend time in a police cell. It is statistically proven that incidents of domestic abuse rise during the World Cup, and this will quite simply not be tolerated.

"I would also implore victims to make use of the legislation available to them. I am committed to ensuring vulnerable people are protected, and the introduction of Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Clare's Law are an important tool in this.

"I know victims, and their families, in Lancashire have already made use of Clare's Law, and I truly believe it is legislation which will save lives."

Domestic Abuse helplines are being promoted during the campaign which includes hard-hitting posters aimed at perpetrators and victims. These are being displayed in bars, clubs, supermarkets and community centres.

People will also see the campaign highlighted on bus shelters, billboards and through the use of leaflets.