



HM Government

The Government's response to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report:

**“A Patchwork of Provision:
how to meet the needs of
victims and survivors across
England and Wales”**

Easy read version
April 2023



What the words mean

These words are written in **bold** in the text.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is when someone over 16 abuses another person, who is older than 16 and they have a close relationship. This could be an intimate partner, ex-partner or family member.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner



The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is an independent office that speaks up for victims and survivors. The Commissioner is Nicole Jacobs. She and her team help the public know more about **domestic abuse**. They make sure the Government and services do a good job in tackling domestic abuse.

Integrated Care Boards

An NHS organisation that plans and organises services to meet the health needs of people in their area. It includes local authorities and other partners. It also manages the NHS budget.

Mandatory training

This is training that all staff have to do in their organisation, as it gives essential information and skills.

Perpetrators

The person who carries out **domestic abuse** and other crimes.

Police and Crime Commissioners

Every local police force has a **Police and Crime Commissioner**. People elected for these roles make sure the local police force is run well and there is less crime happening.

**Independent
Domestic
Violence
Advisers (IDVA)**

They support victims and their children who have experienced or are at high risk of **domestic abuse** to be kept safe.

For example by sharing important information, assessing risk or helping them to access the support they may need.

**Mapping
exercise**

Work which looks at an area or region and looks in detail at what is happening there.

The Home Office

**The Forced
Marriage Unit**

The Ministry of Justice

**Department for
Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities**

**Department of Health and
Social Care**

These are all part of
the **Government**.

Each has its own work to
do. They also work together
and work with other
Government departments.

These words are
written in **bold blue**
in the text





The **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** wrote a report in 2022 called ‘A patchwork of provision; how to meet the needs of victims and survivors (of domestic abuse) across England and Wales’.



Her report says what services there are for victims and survivors of abuse in England and Wales. It explains which areas or groups of people do not get good services and what kind of services they need.



It also tells the Government their recommendations – what they think should change to make services for victims better. This report gives the Government responses to the **Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s** recommendations.



The Government is already doing a lot of work to support victims and survivors of **domestic abuse**. There are already 2 big plans that explain how the Government is going to improve things for women and girls. One plan is the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (July 2021) – click here to read the easy read version.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1024534/DomesticAbuseStrategy_easy_read.pdf



The second plan is the Tackling **Domestic Abuse** Plan (March 2022) – click here to read the easy read version.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1075073/TacklDomAbusePln-V1_06-05-22_.pdf



The Tackling **Domestic Abuse** Plan says the Government will spend £230 million on tackling **domestic abuse**, including £140 million to support victims.



The Welsh Government has its own plans for tackling violence against women and girls and **domestic abuse**. It will also make sure victims and survivors get help.



The **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** made 26 recommendations in her report. The recommendations are grouped in themes and are written on purple. What the Government says in response to these recommendations is written afterwards on blue. The Government says that they are already doing a lot of the recommendations made by the **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** in her report.

Specialist domestic abuse services



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says: Specialist domestic abuse services should be planned locally. The Government should find the money to pay for these services.

The Government says:

Local Authorities, **Police and Crime Commissioners** and **Integrated Care Boards** will work together to do this.

The Government is spending £460 million on **Police and Crime Commissioner**-funded victims services, which includes **domestic abuse** support over the next 3 years. It is also giving an extra £20 million over the next 3 years to NHS England.



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:

There needs to be more specialist counselling and support to victims and survivors, including children.



The Government says:

The Department of Health and Social Care is giving more money (at least £2.3 billion) for these services. It also pays for Independent Domestic Violence Advisers. **The Ministry of Justice** is also giving more money for victim and witness support services.



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The Government is giving up to £10.3 million over the next 3 years to organisations who will provide support to children experiencing **domestic abuse**. The support given to children will be provided through local organisations.



Information is shared between the police and schools when children are victims of **domestic abuse**.

The Government has already given over £250 million to local authorities

Finding out what services are needed



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
The Government need to understand what support for victims and survivors, including children, works best.

The Government says:

The Government have plans to find out what support services are needed and work best. Local commissioners will give them information about what is happening in their areas. The Government will check how many victims need help with domestic abuse in different areas across the country. They want to know which areas need more support and make sure that everyone who needs help can get it.



Helping perpetrators to change



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
There should be more services that support **perpetrators** of domestic abuse to change their behaviour.



The Government says:

The Government is already funding projects to help **perpetrators** to change their behaviour. This is having good results. So, the Government will give more money for this work.

Funding



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
The Government should say how they will use the **mapping exercise** information which found out where more services are needed.



The Government says:

The Government agree there are some gaps, especially for specialist support. The Government is giving over £140 million to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse. They are giving £8.4 million through a Violence Against Women and Girls Support and Specialist Services fund, so voluntary and community groups can get money to provide these services. This special fund will help to improve services for victims and survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls, delivered by community members for the communities they serve.



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The Ministry of Justice, the Home Office and the **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** are spending millions of pounds every year on community-based services. This includes £81 million for Independent Domestic Violence Advisers and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers to help support victims and survivors.

Training plan for staff who work with the public



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:

Training should help staff working with victims know about how different people experience violence and abuse in different ways.

Training should help staff understand what kind of support different groups of people, like people with a learning disability, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds need.

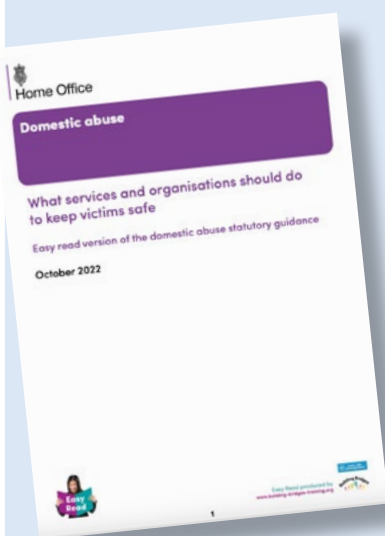
The Government says:

The Government already has training for staff who work with the public.

There is easy read guidance for staff who need to follow the Domestic Abuse Act:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141521/Domestic_Abuse_Statutory_Guidance_Easy_Read_V13_26-10-22_.pdf

For example, the Forced Marriage Unit do a monthly training session. There is already training for healthcare workers, for teachers and school staff, the police, employers, and staff working in housing, immigration and Jobcentre Plus.



Victims and survivors who face many disadvantages



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says: The Department for **Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** should find out more about housing support needs for victims who face many disadvantages.

The Government says:

The Government already does a lot of this by helping victims with extra support needs for issues like rough sleeping, drug and alcohol problems, offenders and young victims.

The Government has given £5.7 million to 12 local authorities to test an 18-month programme which will help rough sleepers affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence to get off the street and out of danger.

People who sleep on the street may be in more danger or may need more help and support to be protected from violence.

They may also make it more difficult to ask for and find help.



Local commissioners



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
The report has some actions for local areas to do.

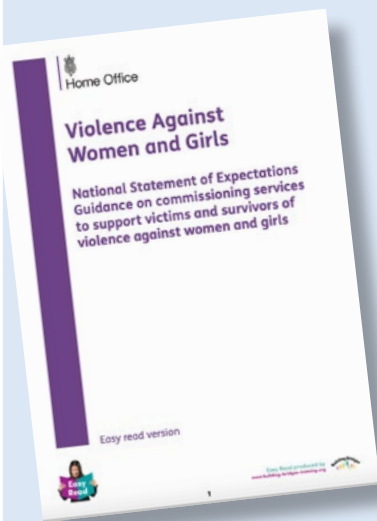
The Government says:

These recommendations are for local commissioners to think about.

The Government supports the aims of these recommendations. They agree with the Home Office's National Statement of Expectations (March 2022). You can read the easy read version here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1094254/NatStatExp2022_V1_14-06-22_.pdf

There should be good and accessible information about local services for victims and survivors.



Victims and survivors with learning disabilities



Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
The Home Office must make sure national campaigns can be linked with local campaigns. There should be a special awareness raising campaign for people with a learning disability.

The Government says:

The Government recognises that people with disabilities are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse. The Enough! Campaign has an easy read version:

https://enough.campaign.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-05/Enough%20is%20enough%20-%20Easy%20Read_0.pdf





And information about how to get more help:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1032358/domestic-abuse-how-get-helpv6-easy-read.pdf

There is also a British Sign Language video version.



The **Home Office** and the **Department of Health and Social Care** are also doing the Safe Care at Home Review, which is looking into abuse in people's own homes.

The review is looking into the experience of people living with a disability. Local authorities lead on social care and safeguarding.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) must attend sex and relationships education. This includes learning about being safe and about personal boundaries. And knowing who to report to if someone makes them feel unhappy or unsafe.



One to one case workers

Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:

The report says there should be funds to pay for one-to-one case workers who can support victims.



The Government says:

The Government is making funding available for these workers and other advocacy and support roles.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:

The Department of Health and Social care with NHS England should have a plan for health workers to have better awareness of domestic abuse in healthcare settings.

They should build partnerships with special domestic abuse services.



The Government says:

NHS staff have mandatory training about domestic abuse. This is because many victims ask health workers for help with abuse. Domestic abuse is included in the Women's Health Strategy:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092970/Womens-Health-Strategy-easy-read.pdf



The Home Office is giving money for domestic abuse help in healthcare settings to give staff more skills to be able to identify victims and help them use support services.

There is also more money for mental health support and talking therapies.



Victim funding strategy

Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Report says:
It is very important there are independent services to support victims and survivors of abuse.

The Government says:

The Government works with local areas but feels they know the best services for the people in their area.



Conclusion

The Government thanks the **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** for her report.

The Government is committed to tackling violence against women and girls including **domestic abuse**.

It is working hard to challenge attitudes and spending money to make services for victims better.

It knows more work still needs to be done and will work with The **Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office** to continue to make improvements.

