

# CORRECTION SLIP

Title: **Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls - Volume 1 - Strategy**

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CP 1450-I

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## Corrections:

### **Page 63**

Remove infographic (statistic unconfirmed).

### **Page 76**

Text currently reads:

2. **The 24/7 Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line**, run by Rape Crisis is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year at 0808 500 2222 or their live chat service can be accessed [here](#).

Text should read:

2. **Rape Crisis England & Wales** – the feminist charity working to end child sexual abuse, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and all other forms of sexual violence, and support survivors to find their local Rape Crisis centre:  
<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/find-a-centre/>. Their 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line is available 24 hours a day by calling 0808 500 2222 or via live chat [www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk](http://www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk).

Text currently reads:

5. **Money Advice Plus** – the helpline in partnership with Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA), dedicated to supporting victims of economic abuse, email [info@survivingeconomicabuse.org](mailto:info@survivingeconomicabuse.org) by providing a safe space to discuss your financial situation, prioritise issues and move forward with economic safety. Their helpline can be accessed by phone on 0808 196 8845.

Text should read:

5. **Money Advice Plus** – Centre for Excellence for Debt and Economic Abuse Services. Offers a helpline and regulated debt casework service supporting victims of economic abuse. The helpline provides a safe space to discuss financial situations, prioritise issues, and move toward economic safety. Contact: 0808 196 8845.

## Page 76

Text currently reads:

7. **Respect** – an organisation that works with male victims of domestic abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators on 0808 801 0327 or visit [mensadviceline.org.uk](http://mensadviceline.org.uk).

Text should read:

7. **Respect** – the UK charity stopping domestic abuse perpetrators, providing the Respect Phoneline for people concerned about their behaviour 0808 802 4040, [respectphoneline.org.uk](http://respectphoneline.org.uk) open Monday to Friday, 10am – 5pm. Respect also provides the Men's Advice Line for male victims of domestic abuse [mensadviceline.org.uk](http://mensadviceline.org.uk) open Monday to Friday, 10am – 5pm

## Page 77

Text to remove (incorporated in above) and subsequent paragraphs renumbered accordingly.

11. **Men's Advice Line** – 0808 801 0327 open Monday to Friday 10am-5pm or email [info@mensadviceline.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk)

## Page 79

Add text to correct omission:

31. **Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA)** – provides specialist advocacy and support to families and friends bereaved by domestic homicide, domestic abuse-related suicides, and unexplained deaths. Contact: [help@aafda.org.uk](mailto:help@aafda.org.uk) or 07887 488 464. [www.aafda.org.uk](http://www.aafda.org.uk)
32. **The Survivors Trust** – The Survivors Trust is a national membership organisation supporting specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the voluntary sector. [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org).
33. **We Are Survivors** – supporting boys and men, and their loved ones, in the UK affected by sexual harms. [www.wearesurvivors.org.uk](http://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk).

## Page 82

Text currently reads:

28. [text here]

Text should read:

28. **Ministry of Justice** (2024). *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: Outcomes by Offence*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly>



UK Government

# **FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: A CROSS-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO BUILD A SAFER SOCIETY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**Volume 1**

**Strategy**

**December 2025**

CP 1450-I



Government of the United Kingdom  
**Home Office**

**Freedom from Violence and Abuse:** a cross-government  
strategy to build a safer society for women and girls  
Volume 1

Strategy

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department  
by Command of His Majesty

December 2025



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# Content advisory

This Strategy includes sensitive material relating to violence against women and girls.

Some readers may find this distressing. A list of support services for victims and survivors is provided at the end of this document.

# Prime Minister's Foreword

I have spent a good deal of my professional life fighting for justice for the victims, survivors and families affected by violence against women and girls. I have seen the unimaginable, often lifelong, pain and trauma it causes. I know first-hand the challenges of getting cases to trial and perpetrators convicted. I have sat with too many families grieving the loss of their loved ones – like Penny and John Clough.

I will never forget the day Penny and John came to my office and told me what they had been through. Their daughter Jane was murdered in the car park of the Blackpool hospital where she worked, by the man awaiting trial on multiple charges of raping her. I gave them my word then that I would do everything I could, not just for Penny, John and Jane, but for all the Pennys, Johns and Janes in our country.

That is why I have set the national goal of halving violence against women and girls in a decade. I know it is an enormous undertaking. I wish it were not, but it is. You only have to listen to the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls each year in the House of Commons, reading out the name of every single woman killed, or suspected to be killed, by a man in the previous twelve months. Yet, as everybody in public service knows, the work we do together can make or break a life. I have seen it myself, as a public servant, and I also know from those campaigners what service can do when it listens and empowers people far beyond the walls of the state.

That is the spirit in which this Strategy begins a whole-of-government, whole-of-society effort. It is the first step in a truly national endeavour that prioritises prevention, tackling the root causes of this violence, while relentlessly pursuing its perpetrators and supporting its victims and survivors.

When I talk about a whole-of-society effort, I do not intend to diminish the focus on the men that are the perpetrators of this violence. We must address the misogyny and inequality that are the root causes of violence against women; and part of that is articulating a positive, aspirational vision for boys and men in Britain today. Only then will we achieve the scale of our ambition.

I am enormously grateful to all the victims, survivors, families, and campaigners who have worked with us to co-design this strategy and its accompanying action plan. It has produced a document that is intentionally different from traditional government publications. I hope it signals the beginning of a new way of working together. But that is what this is – the first step in a decade-long national endeavour. Just as I promised Penny and John, I say to everyone who cares about ending this violence: we will continue to listen to you, and to work with you at every step of this moral mission for our country. And together, we will make the UK one of the safest places in the world for women and girls.

# Joint Ministerial Foreword

Violence against women and girls is everyone's business. This has been said many times over, but it is usually just words. The solution to this problem will not come from one government department and it will not just come from the government alone – it has to come from charities, businesses, public bodies of every kind and most importantly from the public themselves.

This Strategy has ambitions for the next decade, however it will not be static nor is it the sum total of all the actions that will be taken by the government in that period. What it does do, is show us that change is needed and what has been done before has either been insufficient or simply ineffective. What this Strategy must achieve is the ambition to actually make violence against women and girls everyone's business. For too long, survivors and victims of these crimes have been failed because it wasn't.

A decade-long ambition must go beyond the silos of government departments, individual budgets, and short-term spending cycles. While targeted investment and legislative changes within parliamentary terms are valuable tools, they alone cannot deliver the cultural shift required. To truly make ending violence against women and girls everyone's business, we need sustained, cross-government commitment and shared accountability that transcends political timelines. Violence against women and girls must become a mainstream responsibility of every institution that interacts with people. It should no longer be an add on when someone dies or lessons learned after a tragedy. It must become a mainstream government responsibility in every department both nationally and locally.

- **Jess Phillips, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls**

Ending violence against women and girls is one of the most critical challenges of our time, and every victim and survivor deserves to be seen, heard and supported. As Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, I am committed to shaping a justice system that works for victims and holds perpetrators to account. Much of my political career has been dedicated to tackling these issues, and leading this Strategy has been one of the greatest honours of my time in public life so far. Working alongside survivors, frontline organisations and experts to shape this Strategy has been a privilege, and a reminder that we cannot afford to wait.

Everyone knows a woman or girl who has been impacted by violence or abuse. It is something that is happening everywhere; it is happening in our homes, schools, workplaces, streets and online. That is why this Strategy matters so deeply. Government cannot achieve the goal to end violence against women and girls alone, and women and girls cannot make this change happen by themselves. Real change requires action from every part of society. Everyone – including men and boys – must feel part of this mission, as allies and active participants in creating safer communities. Ending violence against women and girls is not just a 'women's issue'; it is a societal issue, and progress depends

on all of us working together. This Strategy sets out our vision for a society where women and girls can live free from fear, and where victims are never left feeling isolated or unsupported. It is a vision of a justice system that women and girls can trust – one that puts the victim first, demands accountability, and challenges the attitudes that allow abuse to persist. I am determined to deliver lasting change, and proud to present this strategy and the ambition it represents. Ending violence against women and girls will take commitment and courage – from government, communities, and from every individual. This Strategy marks a decisive step towards that goal, and now we must turn our ambition into action.

- **Alex Davies-Jones, Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls**

# Thank you and acknowledgements

Expert and survivor voices are at the heart of everything we do. This Strategy has been informed by the lived experiences of so many victims, survivors, and their families, alongside the foremost experts in the violence against women and girls (VAWG) sector, frontline services, civil society organisations, academics, law enforcement, criminal justice delivery partners, health professionals, educators, philanthropists and wider stakeholders. We would like to thank every one of you for your invaluable insight and contributions. Developing this Strategy would not have been possible without you.

To inform this Strategy, we carried out extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. This included 12 thematic roundtable meetings chaired by ministers and attended by over 100 organisations – including those on the frontline dealing with the toughest issues day in, day out. We examined some of the most pressing and challenging issues enabling VAWG today, including tackling the emerging and ever-changing threat of online and tech-facilitated VAWG and pursuing the highest-risk perpetrators. These roundtables have directly shaped the Strategy. Every recommendation has been thoroughly reviewed, and many have become commitments in this Strategy and accompanying Action Plan. These roundtables were complemented by dedicated engagement on individual policy issues, sessions with experts and academics on the evidence underpinning the Strategy, as well as an event held by the Prime Minister in Number 10 Downing Street to explore how we can improve accountability, partnerships, and working across sectors.

Alongside this engagement, we established a Strategy Advisory Board to inform the development and implementation of the Strategy, with over 20 experts from the VAWG sector, criminal justice delivery partners, and academics. This Board will continue to oversee the implementation of the Strategy over its lifetime. We thank our members, both permanent and rotating, for your contributions which helped to define the content and the framing of the Strategy. We look forward to continuing to work together in turning this Strategy into action.

Crucially, ensuring the views of victims and survivors are being heard was an important part of developing this work. We are grateful to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and her team for organising a Survivor Summit in March 2025. Ministers and senior officials heard powerful first-hand testimony from survivors spanning from their experiences of the criminal justice system, accessing victim support services, housing, benefits, healthcare and welfare, highlighting the barriers victims face and the importance of multi-agency working to overcome these. We want to do justice to the issues raised by these brave survivors through the commitments outlined in this Strategy, and we will continue to ensure their voices are heard through our work to deliver the Strategy going forward.

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This Strategy is just the beginning. It is dynamic and adaptive and will continue to evolve as we gather new insights and continue to engage with the experts on the frontline.

# Executive Summary

Ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a moral mission for our whole society and it will require a whole of society effort to achieve it. Our mission prioritises prevention, focused on addressing root causes, the relentless pursuit of perpetrators, and comprehensive support for victims and survivors.

The cultural norms and misogynistic attitudes that enable and inspire this violence permeate every part of our country – from family homes, schools and workplaces to our streets, sports clubs and local communities. Shamefully, they have long been present in the agencies and institutions of the State, the very organisations in which victims, survivors and families are supposed to be able to place their trust. And, of course, they are increasingly perpetrated online, with new and evolving forms of digital abuse driving an ever-growing impact on young people.

The human cost of this societal failure is utterly devastating. One in eight women in England and Wales in the year ending March 2025 experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault<sup>1</sup>, or stalking.<sup>2</sup> On average, almost 200 rapes were recorded by the police every single day in the year ending June 2025,<sup>3</sup> which itself is likely to be an underestimate of how many of these crimes actually occur. And more than 150 women in England and Wales are killed every year.<sup>4</sup> In one of the most moving and distressing moments in the Parliamentary calendar, the current Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, Jess Phillips marks International Women's Day in the House of Commons by reading out the names of every single woman killed or suspected to be killed by a man in the previous twelve months.

So often we look to the next generation to be a generation of hope and progress – and yet far from breaking the cycle of harm, the problem is getting worse. There are alarming levels of violence and abuse in teenage relationships, with 39% of 13-to-17-year-olds who have been in a relationship in the past year, experiencing emotional or physical abuse.<sup>5</sup>

For those who survive such appalling abuse, the physical and mental harm can be life-altering and often life-long. It can affect every area of a victim or survivor's life – from their ability to work or study, their financial security, their housing arrangements and their future relationships. It can affect their sense of safety and security out in public or in their own home. It can lead to women and girls feeling forced to change their behaviours or curtail their own freedoms to avoid violence and abuse, fracturing the social fabric of our communities and undermining the very freedoms on which our liberal democratic society is founded.

The Prime Minister has made this national mission to tackle VAWG a personal priority for his Premiership. This decision is rooted in his own years of personal experience, throughout his career as a prosecutor, supporting victims, survivors and families in their search for justice. He has set a goal that no other country in the world has achieved – a

national target to halve VAWG in a decade, as a major step towards the vision of a modern Britain where women and girls can live free from the fear of violence and abuse.

The ‘Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls’ (“the Strategy”) is intentionally different from traditional government documents. It reflects the Prime Minister’s personal commitment to lead this national endeavour from the very top of government and on behalf of the whole country. It reflects the profound commitment of everyone involved in this work to put victims, survivors and families first; to keep listening to them and working with them at every step of the change ahead. It seeks to reflect the idea that this can only be the beginning of a decade-long, government-wide, whole-of-society effort to make the UK one of the safest places in the world for women and girls.

When we say this is an issue for all of us, we do not minimise the importance of focusing on men and boys. We must address the root causes of this violence and abuse, the misogyny, dangerous attitudes and escalating behaviours, on and offline, that lead men and boys to become perpetrators. We must also have the confidence to build a positive agenda that promotes opportunities for men and boys that is in no way at the expense of opportunities for women and girls. Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, supported by current Minister for Victims and VAWG, Alex Davies Jones, will lead this work, culminating in a national summit for men and boys next year. We must recognise that men and boys can also be the victims of this violence and abuse, while being clear that women and girls are substantially more likely to be affected.

## Focus areas

The Strategy is built on three objectives: prevention & early intervention to address the root causes of abuse; the relentless pursuit of its perpetrators; and support for all those affected by violence and abuse when it happens.

We have already delivered significant work in each of these areas. For example, we have introduced new criminal offences for creating sexually explicit deepfakes or taking intimate images without consent, for spiking and installing equipment to enable such acts; as well as new measures to prevent and tackle ‘honour’-based abuse. We have committed £160 million to local authorities for 2025/26 alone, a £30 million increase, to expand provision of safe accommodation for victims, survivors and children. And we have invested £13.1 million in the establishment of a new National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection.

But to deliver on our promise to halve VAWG in a decade, as the first step to ultimately ensuring every woman and girl lives free from violence, it is time to go further. This Strategy represents a comprehensive, whole-of-society response to that challenge. A snapshot of those actions – which are set out in full within the Action Plan – is captured in this document.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

We must stop violence before it starts. That means breaking the intergenerational cycle of abuse through early intervention and prevention – protecting young people, disrupting dangerous attitudes and stopping harmful behaviours escalating.

Our plan to do this includes:

- Supporting schools to challenge misogyny, ensuring every child understands consent and healthy relationships, while equipping parents, teachers and role models to intervene early and guide young people to act with empathy, respect and kindness to others.
- Acting decisively to safeguard young people by making the UK one of the hardest places for children to access harmful content and misogynistic influences online.
- Launching major awareness-raising and behaviour change campaigns, so people know when and how to intervene.
- And, linked to all the above, launching a national conversation and summit to build a positive, aspirational agenda for men and boys – not at the expense of women and girls, but in support of them.

## Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

Prevention and support are imperative. But while VAWG exists, we must ensure that no perpetrator acts with impunity. To do this, we will use every tool available to make understanding, identifying, and responding to this violence a mainstream responsibility of every agency and institution – ultimately putting an end to the shameful fact that only a handful of those women and girls who report abuse to the police see justice served.

While continuing with the major step forward of establishing the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection, these service and institution reforms include:

- Embedding domestic abuse specialists into emergency response, ensuring there are dedicated teams to respond to rape and sexual offences and improving vetting and disbarring to ensure there is no place for perpetrators within policing.
- Deploying cutting-edge enforcement technologies, including tactics typically reserved for counter terrorism as well as serious and organised crime.
- And driving cultural change so VAWG is treated on an equal footing with other serious crimes.

This work will ultimately ensure that the UK has one of the most robust responses to perpetrators of VAWG in the world.

## Support

While we need this unprecedented focus on prevention, and relentlessly pursuing those who harm, we know we will not solve this problem overnight. And so, we will never lose sight of our focus on victims and survivors, or the fact that no one victim or survivor is the same. We will address the current fragmentation in our system and be clear that all of

government, and every aspect of the criminal justice system, holds responsibility for ensuring victims and survivors can recover and live free from abuse.

Our work to deliver on this promise includes:

- Delivering a whole-of-government approach, so victims and survivors can access housing, health and justice seamlessly – making support more consistent, responsive and easier to reach.
- Reforming the court system based on a trauma-informed approach, ultimately improving and enhancing access to justice.
- And reforming how services are commissioned so that provision is fit for purpose and based on what victims and survivors actually need.

Through this approach, we will build a system that enables victims and survivors to cope, recover and move forward.

# Introduction

## Implementation: A Ten-Year Journey

This Strategy marks the beginning of a whole-of-government, whole-of-society effort working in partnership to make the country one of the safest places in the world for women and girls.

Success will mean prevention is robust, specialist support is available when and where it is needed, without exception, and enforcement is fast and effective.

And success demands commitment from every single one of us:

- Government agencies and institutions – from health and policing to justice and education – each resolutely focused on VAWG, all working together.
- Businesses protecting employees, supporting survivors and championing gender equality.
- Those with influence – whether a community leader, a cultural influencer or a sporting icon – modelling respect and using their platforms to denounce abuse.
- Civil Society organisations – shaping and delivering services including victim support, driving prevention and campaigning and advocating for victims and survivors.
- And communities coming together to challenge harmful norms, drive grassroots and volunteering initiatives, and amplifying voices for change.

Of course, this Strategy will only succeed if implementation is relentless and accountability is clear. That is why we will:

- Chair a cross-government VAWG Ministerial Group every quarter to review progress and drive next steps, reporting regularly back to the Prime Minister.
- Ensure the Ministerial Group is backed by the best available data, and a dedicated cross-government delivery team.
- Place ongoing engagement at the heart of the strategy – including at the centre of government with No.10 to maintain momentum and collaboration.
- Create an Innovation Council, to help build effective partnerships and find solutions to emerging threats.
- And complement this work with a national summit in 2026 on men and boys.

This Strategy is not just a government plan. It is a national endeavour. Together, we will deliver the transformation needed to halve VAWG in a decade and to build a society where women and girls can live and flourish free from fear.

## Plan on a Page

<b>Our Vision</b>		
<b>Prevention and early intervention</b>	<b>Relentless pursuit of perpetrators</b>	<b>Support for victims and survivors to live free from abuse</b>
Support educators to challenge misogyny and teach young people about healthy relationships.	Embed public protection as a specialism within policing and ensure police treat VAWG as a top priority with the seriousness it deserves.	Reform support for survivors and victims to address the fragmented system we have in place.
Act decisively to safeguarding young people from abuse, including rapidly-evolving online harms.	Use cutting-edge technology to prevent and detect abuse and close the gap between perpetration and enforcement.	Ensure that all of government holds responsibility for supporting survivors and victims to recover and live free from abuse.
Make sure that no child should have their future determined by being a victim of violence and abuse.	Manage perpetrators, both in and outside the Criminal Justice System, to ensure perpetrators do not operate with impunity.	Embed a trauma-informed approach to the VAWG response across the justice system.

**A Whole of Society Approach**  
Underpinned by investment and a commitment to long-term societal change across every part of society.

*Table 1: Plan on a Page*

## Defining violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls covers a wide range of crime types and behaviours that are disproportionately experienced by women and perpetrated by men. Together, domestic abuse, stalking and sexual assault affected 5.1 million victims in the year ending March 2025<sup>6</sup> and this does not include victims of other VAWG crimes and behaviours, such as sexual harassment, online and technology-facilitated abuse, and teenage relationship abuse. VAWG crimes and behaviours include but are not limited to:

- domestic abuse;
- stalking;
- sexual violence, including rape and other sexual offences;
- sexual harassment;
- 'honour'-based abuse (HBA), including forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- online and technology-facilitated abuse, including 'cyberflashing' and non-consensual intimate image abuse;
- fatal VAWG, including domestic homicides, femicides, and suicides and sudden or unexplained deaths which occur in the context of abuse;
- sexual exploitation, including in relation to prostitution and human trafficking;
- spiking.

The majority of perpetrators of these crimes and behaviours are men; prosecution data shows that over 90% of those prosecuted for domestic abuse, stalking or sexual offences are male.<sup>7</sup>

While anyone can be subjected to these crimes and behaviours, data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) shows us that women and girls are overwhelmingly disproportionately affected. For example, in the year ending March 2025, the proportion of women who were victims of:

- sexual assault, was four times higher than the proportion of men (3.0% vs 0.7%);
- domestic abuse, was higher than the proportion of men (9.1% vs 6.5%);
- stalking, was over double the proportion of men (4.0% vs 1.8%), and
- sexual harassment, was two and a half times higher than for men (6.2% vs 2.5%).<sup>8</sup>

We know that men and boys can and do experience these crimes and behaviours and that their needs and experiences are often unique. Around 1 in 5 men have experienced domestic abuse, 1 in 17 men have experienced sexual assault, and 1 in 13 men have experienced stalking since the age of 16.<sup>9</sup> We have developed a Men and Boys explanatory note to detail how this Strategy reflects the needs of male victims of these crimes and behaviours. This can be found on the Strategy Gov.uk page.

It is important too that we recognise that VAWG can be intersecting, with victims experiencing multiple different forms of these crimes and behaviours at once. These can exist alongside other forms of discrimination, including racism, compounding the effects of the abuse dramatically for victims and survivors and making it harder to recover and rebuild their lives.

We know that individual protected characteristics can affect people's experiences of violence and abuse, including how they interact with services, police, and the justice system. For example, Black and other minoritised ethnic groups are more likely to experience criminalisation,<sup>10</sup> particularly migrant victims and asylum seekers where the fear of criminalisation may be used as a tool to abuse.

The most recent statistics from the year ending March 2025 reveal some of these disparities:

- A significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years (18.2%) and 20 to 24 years old (12.9%) experienced domestic abuse in the previous year, compared with those in age categories of 25 years or older.<sup>11</sup> Younger people were also more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than those aged 35 and over; 5% of 16 to 19 year-olds, 6.1% of 20 to 24 year-olds and 3.3% of 25 to 34 year-olds.<sup>12</sup>
- A significantly higher proportion of those who experienced domestic abuse had a disability (13.4%) than did not (6.7%).<sup>13</sup> In addition, a significantly higher percentage of people aged 16 years and over with a disability were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those without (3.1% compared with 1.6%).<sup>14</sup>
- A significantly higher proportion of full-time students experienced domestic abuse (14.1%) compared with people in managerial and professional (6.8%), intermediate (7.1%) and routine and manual occupations (8.2%).<sup>15</sup>
- We know that ethnic disproportionality is likely to exist for certain types of VAWG. For example, between the years ending March 2022 and March 2025, people from the Black/Black British ethnic group were 2.5 times as likely to be a victim of domestic homicide than those from the White ethnic group.<sup>16</sup>

## **Who does this Strategy apply to?**

This Strategy includes commitments to help protect all victims and survivors of VAWG crimes and behaviours, including but not limited to those who are LGBT+, Black or from other minoritised ethnic groups, deaf and/or disabled, older, migrants, children and babies, and men and boys. We recognise how factors such as an individual's race, disability, age, sex, and sexual orientation, shape experiences of abuse and access to justice. The actions and interventions set out in this Strategy will take these differences into account, reflecting this Government's commitment to offer support that understands every victim and survivor, inclusive and regardless of their background and protected characteristics, responding to these diverse needs so that the Strategy truly delivers for all.

Children who experience sexual abuse and exploitation are considered throughout this Strategy, with specific commitments aimed at tackling the appalling crimes of child sexual exploitation and abuse. However, these crimes require a standalone specialist response. That is why there is a distinct, but linked, ambitious programme of work across government to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse, including grooming gangs, and the Home Secretary has already set out a transformative package of measures to overhaul the response to these most heinous crimes.

## Terminology

**Victims and Survivors** – We use victims and survivors throughout this Strategy for consistency in legal and policy contexts. We recognise that many prefer survivor. Both terms are respected, and we acknowledge that experiences are not linear and individuals may identify differently.

**Perpetrators and Offenders** – Perpetrator refers to anyone who causes harm, including those outside the criminal justice system. Offender is used only for individuals with a conviction.

**Root causes** – VAWG does not occur in isolation, it stems from complex and often deep-rooted societal factors that enable violence and abuse to persist. Tackling these crimes requires more than a reactive approach, we must focus on prevention by challenging harmful social and cultural attitudes that drive offending. Evidence shows that sexist beliefs promoting male dominance play a significant role,<sup>17</sup> while public understanding of VAWG remains limited and distorted by persistent myths such as victim-blaming;<sup>18</sup> the idea that most rapes are by strangers; or that false allegations are common.<sup>19</sup> These misconceptions are compounded by the spread of misogynistic and violent content online and create dangerous conditions that enable abuse.

### Attitudinal and behavioural barriers



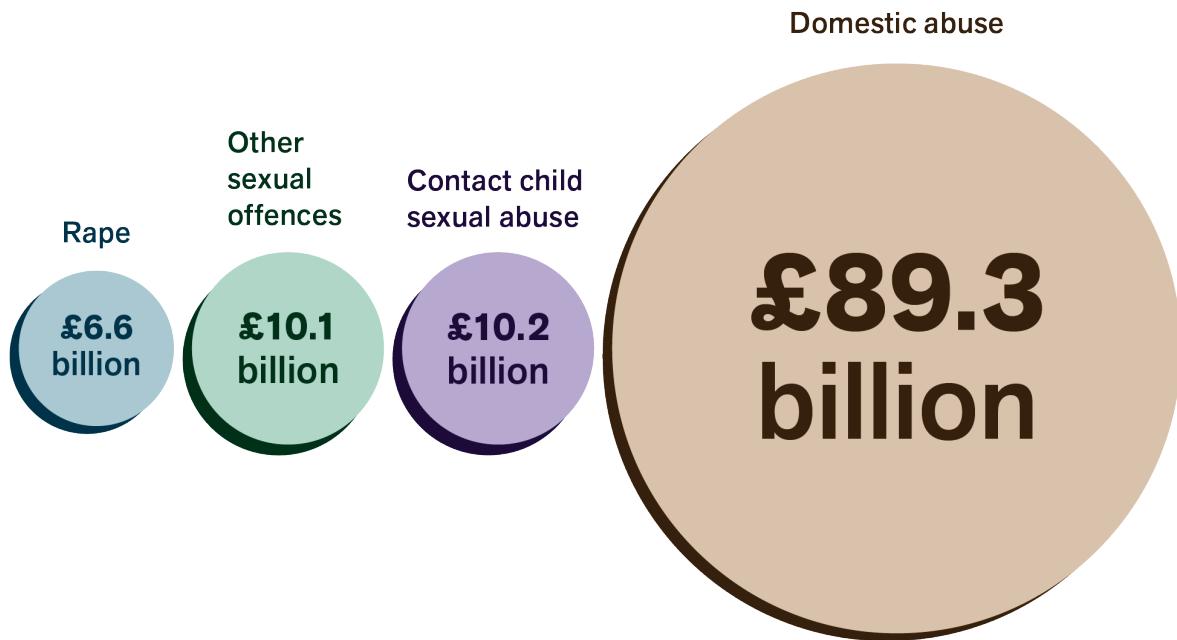
## Personal Cost

All of these crimes, whether committed online or offline, take an enormous personal toll on victims and survivors and can cause lifelong physical and mental harm. Violence and abuse can take place once or persist over many years, and it can impact every area of a victim or survivor's life. It can impact their ability to work or study, their financial security, their housing arrangements and their relationships, and can lead to social isolation which can prevent them from seeking safety and support. Experiencing these crimes deeply affects someone's sense of safety and security in their home, in public or in the wider community. This culminates in a culture in which women and girls often feel less safe and secure than men, both online and offline. This fear of violence and abuse is corrosive, fracturing the fabric of our communities and preventing the creation of the just society we aspire to build.

VAWG also affects babies, children and young people. They are often harmed directly when they witness the abuse of their parent or caregiver. We also see alarming amounts of harmful behaviours among young people themselves. These experiences rob children of safety, trust, and confidence, shaping their futures in ways no child should ever have to endure.

Alongside entrenched sexist attitudes, new and powerful influences are shaping the fight against violence. The spread of misogynistic content online, the easy accessibility of violent pornography, and the lack of tools for parents and teachers to counter these harmful trends are challenges for the 21st century. They contribute to a culture that normalises abuse and control and must be tackled as the online root causes of real-world violence.

The economic cost of these crimes to society is huge. The annual socio-economic cost in 2025/26 prices is estimated to be £89.3 billion for domestic abuse,<sup>20</sup> £6.6 billion for rape, and £10.2 billion for other sexual offences.<sup>21</sup> These costs are only estimated for adults. The economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse (CSA) including financial and non-financial (monetised) costs for all victims who began to experience, or continued to experience, contact CSA in England and Wales in the year ending 31st March 2019 was at least £10.1 billion.<sup>22</sup> The majority of these costs are due to the consequences of these crimes on victims and survivors, including the physical and emotional harms victims and survivors suffer as a result. This includes lost output due to time taken off work and reduced productivity at work following an offence, as well as the costs to access health and victim services. Costs are also incurred by the criminal justice system following offences, from police investigations through to the processing of cases through the civil and criminal courts. Effectively tackling these crimes will not only prevent harm and save lives; the benefits will also be felt across the criminal justice system, social care and the National Health Service (NHS).



At its most violent and damaging, VAWG can kill. Each death is an unconscionable tragedy that leaves behind stolen futures and shattered families. These women are not statistics, but real people whose lives are snatched away: they are daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts, friends, partners. Our Strategy confronts the horrific reality of killed women and girls and we will act to prevent further tragedies. These deaths represent the gravest failure of the state to protect victims.

This Government is determined to learn lessons from these deaths and act on them, so that no more families endure the pain others have suffered. Many of the actions set out in this Strategy are the direct result of learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Prevention of Future Death reports, and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or from the tireless campaigning of bereaved families. In too many cases, there were missed opportunities to prevent, detect, and intervene. Those failures cost lives.

Their stories, and the courage of those who loved them, are the driving force behind this Strategy and our mission to halve VAWG. We owe it to these women and their families to build a system that acts decisively, learns from every tragedy, and ensures that no life is lost to violence and abuse. This Strategy is for them.

## Hollie Gazzard

Hollie was a 20-year-old hairdresser, described by her family as bubbly, creative, and full of life. Hollie had ended a controlling relationship with Asher Maslin, a man with a known history of violence who had been reported to police multiple times. On 18 February 2014, Maslin entered Hollie's workplace in Gloucester and fatally stabbed her in front of colleagues and clients.

Despite multiple police reports about Maslin's violent behaviour, there was no effective safeguarding or early intervention. Authorities failed to act on known risks, including his history of violence and escalating coercive control.

## Alice Ruggles

Alice was a 24-year-old graduate and customer service professional known for her warmth, wit, and kindness. In early 2016, Alice ended a brief relationship with Trimaan Dhillon, who quickly became obsessive and controlling.

Despite Alice reporting his stalking behaviour to police, which included sending her repeated messages, hacking her social media, and turning up at her home, no meaningful protective action was taken, including to enforce safeguarding protocols (stalking protection orders did not yet exist). On 12 October 2016, Dhillon broke into her Gateshead flat and murdered her. Her case led to the founding of the Alice Ruggles Trust, which campaigns for stronger protections against stalking, as well as educating young people and upskilling professionals.

## Sarah Everard

Sarah was a 33-year-old marketing executive described by friends as strong and principled. She was known for her kindness, independence, and love of the outdoors. On 3 March 2021, she was abducted, raped, and murdered by serving Metropolitan Police officer Wayne Couzens, who used his warrant card and handcuffs to falsely arrest her under the guise of COVID-19 regulations.

Sarah's murder exposed deep institutional failings. Couzens had been reported to police eight times for indecent exposure, and faced other allegations of serious sexual offending. However, the failure to investigate and act on internal warnings allowed him to stay in place and commit the ultimate abuse of his power.

## Fawziyah Javed

Fawziyah was a 31-year-old solicitor from Leeds, known for her intelligence, compassion, and commitment to helping others, particularly in the South Asian community. Fawziyah endured a coercive and abusive marriage to Kashif Anwar, who isolated her, stole from her, and physically assaulted her. Fawziyah reported Anwar to the police on two occasions and told the police that he had coerced and controlled her, physically assaulted her, including causing her to become unconscious, and had threatened to kill her. She also told the police that she was pregnant and planning on leaving Anwar and explained that the situation would bring 'shame' on her family.

In September 2021, while pregnant and preparing to divorce him, Fawziyah agreed to go on holiday with Anwar to Edinburgh. During a walk at Arthur's Seat, he pushed her from a height, causing fatal injuries. Her final words to rescuers identified him as her killer, leading to his conviction. Fawziyah's family has since launched the Fawziyah Javed Foundation to give practical support to the families of victims of domestic homicide.

Despite clear signs of coercive control and physical violence and despite Fawziyah's reports of escalating abuse, there were multiple police failings and no coordinated safeguarding response or use of protective orders or support services.

## Zara Aleena

Zara Aleena was a 35-year-old law graduate with a fierce sense of justice and compassion. She had recently begun working for the Crown Prosecution Service and was on track to become a qualified solicitor. Zara was deeply rooted in her community, a carer for her mother and grandmother, and known for her joyful spirit and radiant energy.

On 26 June 2022, she was sexually assaulted and murdered while walking home in Ilford, East London. The man responsible had a long history of violent offences and the Coroner concluded that he should have been recalled to prison days earlier. The Coroner also identified failures across probation, police and prison services.

## Kiena Dawes

Kiena Dawes was a 23-year-old hairdresser, described as a happy-go-lucky girl, kind and bright. Kiena and Ryan Wellings (30 years old) met in 2020 and over their two-year relationship, Ryan subjected Kiena to repeated physical assaults, bullying and coercive control. Kiena took her own life in July 2022 and left a suicide note on her phone in which she described the abuse from Ryan.

This was the first trial considering unlawful killing of a partner who took their own life after domestic abuse; Ryan was subsequently convicted of assault and controlling and coercive behaviour.

## Raneem Oudeh & Khaola Saleem

Raneem Oudeh, 22, lived in Solihull and was described as a caring, passionate and ambitious woman. Her mother Khaola Saleem was described as generous, loving and always happy. In 2018, they were tragically murdered by Raneem's ex partner, Janbaz Tarin.

13 reports had previously been made to police with concerns for Raneem's safety, but no arrests were made. On the night they were killed, Janbaz spent hours searching for Raneem. Raneem rang 999 four times, but the police did not respond. An inquest into their deaths identified that multiple police failures to investigate and safeguard had materially contributed to their deaths.

## Nicole Smallman & Bibaa Henry

Nicole Smallman was a 27-year-old photographer, described as a joy to be around, enthusiastic and much-loved. Bibaa Henry, her sister, was a 46-year-old social worker, described as a fervent advocate for safeguarding vulnerable people. On 5 June 2020, Nicole and Bibaa visited Fryent Country Park to celebrate Bibaa's birthday with a group of friends. The sisters were reported missing the next day. Friends went looking for them on 7 June and their bodies were discovered in the park. The sisters had been stabbed multiple times by Danyal Hussein (18 years old), who believed killing women would bring him financial wealth as part of an occult ritual. Two IOPC investigations were subsequently conducted into the actions of the Metropolitan Police Service, which identified failures to appropriately progress investigative actions and gross misconduct by officers.

The deaths of each of these women is a heartbreakingly reminder of what happens when the systems that are supposed to protect women instead fail them, and when preventable violence and abuse are allowed to become fatal. Their stories are not isolated tragedies. They reflect a broader pattern of missed opportunities, inadequate protections, and institutional inaction, which has persisted for far too long.

It is too late to protect those we have already lost. But their lives must drive the change we so urgently need. This Strategy is dedicated to every woman taken by violence, named and unnamed, and to building a future where such loss is no longer possible.

*"We should never have to rely on the perseverance and tenacity of grieving parents or survivors to push for action, justice or reform."*

**Mina Smallman, Mother of Nicole Smallman & Bibaa Henry**

# Child Sexual Abuse



## Child Sexual Abuse

Alongside the education and early intervention measures, and work to support frontline professionals being considered within this Strategy, the Government is driving forward a dedicated programme of work to tackle all forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. These measures are critical to safeguard and protect all children, and support adult victims and survivors of these crimes, but will also support our efforts to halve VAWG, and will continue to be overseen by an Inter-Ministerial Group chaired by the Minister for Safeguarding and VAWG, and through the Keeping Children Safe Ministerial Board.

The scale of child sexual abuse is truly staggering. Children make up only 20% of the population but are the victims in 40% of all sexual offences recorded by the police.<sup>23</sup> 9.1% of all adults in England and Wales are estimated to have been sexually abused before the age of 18, according to the Office for National Statistics' Crime Survey for England and Wales.<sup>24</sup> That equates to 4.3 million adult victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.<sup>25</sup> Child sexual abuse takes place in a broad range of contexts and settings, including within the family home, in institutions, in our communities and, increasingly, online.

That is why the Home Office has invested over £60 million of dedicated funding to prevent and tackle child sexual abuse this year. This important work will be supported by the Government's wider transformational programme of reforms to children's social care and child protection, being delivered through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and the Families First Partnership Programme, supported with £2.4 billion of funding to 2026/27 through a multi-year settlement.

We also know that those who experience sexual abuse in childhood are over twice as likely to experience domestic abuse, and over 13 times more likely to experience rape or assault by penetration in adulthood, compared to those who did not.<sup>26</sup> Tackling child sexual abuse is accordingly critical as an early intervention and prevention approach to tackling VAWG and delivering on our commitment to halve VAWG in a decade.

Ultimately, over the next decade we want to drive down prevalence and draw these crimes out of the shadows. In recent years, reporting and identification of child sexual abuse has increased, with 104,345 child sexual offences recorded by the police in the year to June 2025, up by 330% from 24,274 offences in the year to June 2013.<sup>27</sup> This reflects improved detection and reporting, not a reduction in harm. More offenders are being brought to justice, with prosecutions and convictions for both contact child sexual abuse and indecent image offences at their highest since 2018.<sup>28</sup> This is good progress, but we need to go much further.

## Driving a robust response to the recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

Over the last ten years we have seen the publication of multiple local and national statutory and independent inquiries, investigations and inspectorate reports with recommendations on how to improve the response to child sexual abuse. This Government is committed to acting on those reviews, learning from where things have

gone wrong, embedding cultural change across institutions and ensuring that victims and survivors are heard.

As set out in the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Progress Update published in April 2025, the Government is driving forward a range of measures that respond directly to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) following its rigorous investigations over seven years which engaged over 7,000 victims and survivors and considered over 2 million pages of evidence. Key actions to deliver against the IICSA recommendations will include:

- Introducing, in the Crime and Policing Bill, a new mandatory reporting duty for individuals undertaking key roles with responsibility for children in England to report sexual abuse and creating a new criminal offence of obstructing an individual from making a report under the duty.
- Launching a consultation on proposals to establish a Child Protection Authority (CPA) in England. The CPA will provide national oversight, embed good practice, and drive improvements in the system to better protect children from harm.
- Legislating to make grooming a statutory aggravating factor in the sentencing of child sexual offences. This will include, but is not limited to, offences committed by individuals involved in grooming gangs.
- Introducing reforms to the disclosure and barring system so more roles working with children are eligible for the highest level of check issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Removing the three-year limit for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to bring personal injury claims against those responsible through the civil courts.
- Seeking to amend the Law of Apologies to encourage organisations to apologise for action by current or former employees, including in cases of child sexual abuse.
- Legislating to instruct the Information Commissioner's Office to produce a code of practice on retention of records related to child sexual abuse.

The Government also recognises the need to improve how safeguarding agencies protect and support children at risk of sexual abuse within the family home. We have accepted all of the recommendations for central government made by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report into this issue. To tackle child sexual abuse in the family environment we are developing improved training for social workers, new practice guides for practitioners and improved support for CSA victims within relevant health settings.

## **Stepping up the response to changing patterns of child sexual abuse**

The Government is delivering a systemic approach to tackle child sexual abuse, ensuring legislation and interventions stay ahead of offenders' evolving methods, particularly the use of technology to groom and exploit children. Guided by measurable impact, we focus on actions that demonstrably reduce risk and seek to prevent the harm happening in the first instance to better address the scale of online child sexual abuse and ensuring technology works to protect children, not exploit them.

The Online Safety Act 2023 provides robust new protections for children, but more must be done. This Government is going further by taking forward several measures in the Crime and Policing Bill to address the evolving threat posed by child sexual abuse and exploitation by:

- Bringing in a new law to ensure that there are no safe spaces for offenders to commit online child sexual abuse. This new criminal offence will target moderators and administrators who run sites dedicated to child sexual abuse – either sharing child sexual abuse material content or advice on how to commit these heinous offences.
- Introducing a new offence that criminalises artificial intelligence (AI) models that have been made or adapted to create child sexual abuse material. These optimised models produce hyper-realistic child sexual abuse material that often contains the likeness of real children. The models are not currently illegal in the UK.
- Updating the existing law criminalising ‘paedophile manuals’ to cover using AI to create child sexual abuse material, reflecting the evolving nature of online child sexual abuse.
- Providing Border Force with new powers to detect child sexual abuse material at the UK border, strengthening our response to these challenges of the digital age.
- Introducing new measures so that registered sex offenders who pose a risk of using a new identity to offend will be restricted from changing their names, unless explicitly approved by the police. The Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme will also be put on a statutory footing.
- Making additional investment in the Child Sexual Abuse Undercover Online Network to target the highest harm individuals which is in addition to the dedicated funding to the National Crime Agency and GCHQ.
- Introducing new capabilities through the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme and Child Abuse Image Database using cutting-edge technology to identify offenders and victims more quickly.

## Grooming Gangs

Group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse committed by grooming gangs is abhorrent, and amongst the most horrendous crimes. This has seen young children subjected to unimaginable harm. This includes children as young as 10 being exploited, abused, plied with drugs and alcohol, brutally raped by gangs of men and then disgracefully let down again and again by the authorities who were meant to protect them and keep them safe. These despicable crimes cause trauma which stays with victims and survivors throughout their lives. It is a stain on our society and must be stopped. We are unwavering in our determination to identify these horrific crimes, to punish perpetrators and to protect children from harm.

The Government has accepted all of the recommendations made by Baroness Casey in her rapid audit of Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, published in June 2025.

On 9th December, the Home Secretary announced to Parliament the appointment of Baroness Anne Longfield as the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs, working alongside Zoë Billingham CBE and Eleanor Kelly CBE as panel members. The

Chair and panel were recommended by Baroness Casey and will bring extensive experience of championing children's rights, knowledge of policing and local government.

Draft Terms of Reference for the Inquiry have also been published, on which the Chair will undertake a period of consultation. The final Terms of Reference will be agreed and published by March 2026, when the Inquiry will be formally established. The Terms of Reference explicitly state that the inquiry will examine ethnicity, religion and culture. We worked closely with victims and survivors throughout setting up the Inquiry, and that will continue. As we move into the next phase, victims and survivors will have opportunities to engage directly with the inquiry.

The Government has also confirmed the launch of a new national police operation for territorial police forces in England and Wales into group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse, which has already begun its work. Operation BEACONPORT is being overseen by the National Crime Agency (NCA) and delivered in partnership with policing, including the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Taskforce and the Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX) Programme. £3.6 million of funding is being allocated to the NCA and police forces to support BEACONPORT this financial year, with further funding for future years to be confirmed in due course.

This builds on concerted action to address group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse to identify these crimes, punish perpetrators and deliver justice for victims and survivors. This includes:

- Strengthening the CSE Taskforce and Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel to drive stronger investigations.
- Introducing a new child sexual abuse police performance framework to ensure all forces work to a common framework to improve the law enforcement response.
- Commissioning HMICFRS to reinspect forces to ensure the police response to group-based child sexual exploitation is as robust as it can be.
- Updating the guidance on child sexual exploitation, to ensure advice for those working with children remains relevant and informed by the latest available evidence.

It is imperative that we fully understand the drivers behind this abuse to inform how we can best prevent and tackle it. The former Home Secretary asked Baroness Casey to look into the gaps in our current collection of ethnicity data, and to examine the societal and cultural drivers behind grooming gangs. We have accepted Baroness Casey's recommendations on those issues. We will partner with UK Research and Innovation to deliver a research programme to better understand the causes of grooming gangs.

In July 2025, the former Home Secretary wrote to all Chief Constables to set out the clear expectation that ethnicity data on grooming gang suspects should be collected in every case, and to urge them to make sure they are fulfilling their obligation to collect suspect ethnicity data as part of the Government's commitment to transparency and accountability. The Government intends to legislate to mandate collection of ethnicity data for suspects in future. In the meantime, the Home Office continues to work closely with the CSE Taskforce and forces to improve the collection of data.

The Government is also driving forward vital work to establish a new information sharing duty through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, making clear that information must be shared where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Bill also includes provisions that empower the Secretary of State for Education to introduce a consistent identifier for children. This will be set out in regulations, including the number to be used and the agencies required to adopt it.

Baroness Casey's report also highlighted that a wider cohort of victims of child sexual exploitation may have been unjustly criminalised when their position as victims of group based CSE was not properly identified or understood by the relevant authorities.

We are working with relevant bodies across the criminal justice system to ensure any such cases are identified, reviewed and that victims and survivors are properly supported.

Taken together, these reforms mark the biggest domestic programme of work ever to root out child sexual abuse and exploitation, whether in our communities, institutions, in the family environment or online, with an unrelenting focus on stopping these crimes from happening in the first place, bringing more offenders to justice and providing better care and support for victims and survivors.

And in recognition that these crimes cross boundaries with victims, offenders and enabling platforms often in different jurisdictions, this Government will continue to lead the way internationally, working collaboratively with Five Country and G7 partners, EU, UN and Council of Europe, and wider civil society and international partners to promote and share best practice and build the global capacity to respond and keep children safe in our communities and online across the world.

# Prevention and Early Intervention



*Tackling violence against women and girls has been central to my life's work. When I ran a refuge for women and children escaping domestic abuse, I saw the fear and devastation that violence wreaks on lives, and the bravery shown by survivors.*

*Harmful behaviours often begin early, yet for too long, prevention has been left out of the conversation. Violence is learned, it is not innate – so prevention is essential.*

*We are strengthening the curriculum, improving relationships education, and providing clear guidance for teachers to confidently address misogyny and harmful online influences. The National Youth Strategy will increase young people's access to trusted adults and role models to challenge and change attitudes, supporting our drive to stamp out misogyny and abuse across society.*

*Prevention must be paired with robust support. Our transformative investments into children's social care and the Best Start Family Hubs will enable family services to address domestic abuse, and help foster safe, loving homes.*

*Our Government will work with partners across society to prevent violence and empower women and girls.*

**Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education  
and Minister for Women and Equalities**

*Our connected world should empower us, not endanger us. Prevention is at the heart of our mission to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. Through the Online Safety Act, services must have measures to prevent illegal content like stalking, harassment and intimate image abuse. These are some of the most robust protections for women and girls online anywhere in the world.*

*As technologies evolve, so will our interventions. Our proposed world-leading ban on nudification apps will be a defining example. We are putting more stringent obligations on platforms through the Online Safety Act, including to stop 'cyberflashing'. But regulation alone is not enough. Prevention also means giving people the confidence and tools to navigate the digital world safely through effective media literacy education.*

*The internet should never enable abuse. No excuses. Together, we will create an online environment where abuse is not tolerated and women and girls can connect, innovate and thrive without fear.*

**Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology**

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Our Strategy starts with prevention, by focusing on the root causes of VAWG and designing interventions to address these. This means challenging sexist attitudes and providing a counter to the rise in misogynistic content online. It means giving our teachers, parents and caregivers the tools to have conversations with children about healthy relationships, and the confidence to challenge harmful behaviours constructively. We also need to push back against the rise in violent and degrading pornography which we know can influence attitudes and lead to violence and abuse in the real world. The current system doesn't do this effectively, and we need to change that.

Effective prevention begins with education. Within the next decade, we will ensure that children and young people are significantly less likely to become involved in VAWG. We want to build a society where harmful, misogynistic behaviours are challenged; where young people are supported to navigate relationships with kindness and respect; where men and boys are working to end abuse; and where children are protected from harmful and criminal content online.

The Government has already taken significant steps to improve the lives of young people. Over one million more children and young people will have access to mental health support this year in schools and colleges in England, helping to address emerging issues early and build resilience. We are committed to tackling child poverty and recognise that economic hardship can increase vulnerability and limit opportunities. We will build a system that prioritises safety, stability, and support for every young person. We are committed to ensuring that all children achieve and thrive, supporting young people to grow up with a sense of purpose, belonging and self-esteem and the skills to follow their chosen pathways.

Over the next decade, we will give children the knowledge and confidence to build respectful relationships and challenge harmful behaviours, and we will build environments where abuse is never tolerated, and always challenged – across our schools, communities and public services. Young people must be allowed to thrive free from harm.

Tackling dangerous attitudes before they become ingrained is crucial. Deeply rooted societal attitudes and outdated gender norms fuel VAWG and must be challenged. When harmful beliefs about power, control, and gender roles go unchallenged, they create environments where abuse is normalised and tolerated. Harmful myths about sexual violence persist both here in the UK and globally, including the belief that victims provoke attacks through their clothing or behaviour; that most rapes are committed by strangers;

and that false allegations are common.<sup>29</sup> Research from the Crown Prosecution Service found that only a third of UK respondents understood that false allegations of rape are rare, and only 42% of 18-24 year olds understood that being in a relationship or marriage does not mean consent can be assumed.<sup>30</sup>

Everyone in society has a part to play in preventing VAWG. While interventions with children and young people play a fundamental part in this, the wider commitment to long-term societal change cannot be achieved without changing the attitudes of adults too. We will take action to prevent VAWG among adults, including in higher and further education, and drive behaviour change among all of society through a long-term national programme of behaviour change campaigns as set out in our Whole of Society Approach later in this Strategy. By engaging communities, workplaces, and older generations through this activity, alongside young people, we will create a culture where abuse is never tolerated and always challenged.



## Online: an unprecedented challenge

These deeply rooted societal attitudes and outdated gender norms which fuel VAWG are being reinforced online, where misogynistic content is amplified and presented as fact to impressionable audiences, creating an unprecedented challenge. Influential figures promote sexual entitlement, trivialise consent, and normalise abuse. We must not underestimate the reach and influence of these narratives.<sup>31</sup> In 2023, an online survey by Women's Aid found that children and young people who reported exposure to misogynistic

social media content were almost five times more likely to view physically hurting someone as acceptable if you say sorry afterwards than those who hadn't seen such content.<sup>32</sup>

As part of the work to respond to the challenges of online harms, we must tackle the availability and accessibility of extreme violent and misogynistic pornography, which is driving an uptick in dangerous sexual behaviours offline. Most concerning is the ease with which children and young people have been consuming violent and degrading online pornography. It should alarm us all that a survey for the Children's Commissioner found that 10% of children who had ever seen pornography, had done so by age 9.<sup>33</sup>

Much of the pornographic content freely available and easily accessible is aggressive, coercive or misogynistic in nature, and it is particularly concerning that violent acts are not only present in extreme pornographic content but have now become mainstream across platforms.

This mainstreaming is especially concerning given its potential real-world impacts. We know that watching pornography can shape sexual scripts. In particular, the normalisation of strangulation or 'choking' in pornography is now being mimicked at an alarming rate in real sexual encounters with potentially life-threatening consequences without an understanding of the risks of harm. In a 2024 online survey, the Institute for Addressing Strangulation found that over a third (35%) of 16-34-year-olds reported being strangled/choked at least once during consensual sex.<sup>34</sup> Responding to the shocking findings of Baroness Bertin's pornography review and the worrying figures about the normalisation of strangulation in sex, without an understanding of the potential risks, is a crucial part of this work. This is why this Government will ban strangulation and suffocation in pornography.



The government tabled amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill that will criminalise possessing or publishing depictions of strangulation or suffocation in pornography, with responsibilities put on tech platforms to stop the spread of this content.



Meanwhile, the rise of nudification apps, used to create non-consensual abusive imagery, including child sexual abuse material, further enables exploitation, with over 290 such tools identified in 2025.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, we will also ban nudification apps and other tools designed to create synthetic non-consensual intimate images (NCII) to stop women and girls' images being tampered with and exploited without their consent. This will target the firms and individuals providing and supplying such tools.

Keeping children safe is the first responsibility of any government, and that includes online. We want the UK to be the safest place in the world to be online, and one of the hardest places for children to access harmful content, including extreme and violent pornography.

The Online Safety Act 2023 goes a significant way to protecting adults from illegal content and children from harmful content anywhere in the world. As a result of the Act, all pornographic websites accessible in the UK, and other websites with such content, must implement robust age assurance measures like facial scans or credit card checks to prevent children from accidentally or intentionally accessing this content. Ofcom is

responsible for robust enforcement and recently levied its largest fine so far of £1 million on a pornography company for failing to put in place proper age checks.

On 25 November 2025, Ofcom published additional guidance which sets out practical measures platforms can take to tackle online harms that disproportionately affect women and girls. It complements codes of practice covering illegal content and content harmful to children. The Government expects tech platforms to adopt the measures in the guidance, and Ofcom will be monitoring this and will publish a report on platforms' performance.<sup>36</sup>

The nature of child sexual abuse has fundamentally shifted. In 2024, 91% of the reports received by the International Watch Foundation, and found to be criminal (i.e. they contained, linked to or advertised child sexual abuse material), were found to contain 'self-generated' imagery.<sup>37</sup> Police recorded 7,263 Sexual Communication with a Child offences in the last year, almost double since the offence came into force in 2017/18. (NSPCC).<sup>38</sup> We must protect our children from being coerced into sharing nude images and becoming stuck in a cycle of sextortion, grooming, and abuse. Children's access to smartphones must be managed to protect them from harm. To support that mission, we want to make it impossible for children in the UK to take, share or view a nude image. We are working constructively with companies to make this a reality.

## In schools, education and the community

Every child and young person should understand consent and what healthy, respectful relationships look like. They should be supported by parents, teachers, and role models to challenge harmful behaviours and navigate relationships safely. We will take urgent action in schools and education settings to build a future where misogynistic attitudes and harmful content are challenged and where young people can build safe, respectful relationships.

Education interventions have a vital part to play. An international evidence review by The Youth Endowment Fund, established to prevent children being drawn into violence, found that relationship violence prevention lessons and activities could reduce violence between young people in intimate relationships by 17% on average.<sup>39</sup>

This Government is committed to ensuring that children are taught to tackle harmful ideas, unhealthy views about relationships, and misogyny in school. We have overhauled the Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum, with a new focus on developing skills for healthy relationships from the beginning of primary school, and equipping children with the tools to tackle harmful influences. Through our new statutory guidance, we will support young people to develop positive conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and to understand the harmful impacts of misogynistic online content, including pornography. We will teach about "involuntary celibates" (incels) and misogynistic influencers, without stigmatising boys, as well as increasing awareness of AI and deepfakes.

By the end of this parliament in 2029, every secondary school in England will have a credible offer for educating students about healthy and respectful relationships, with every child able to access support. There are different ways of delivering this kind of education – through the improved RSHE curriculum, specialist training to deliver teaching in-house,

working with external providers to provide whole school sessions, or mentoring – and we will give schools the choice on which approach to use. We will invest £3 million in a teacher training fund over the next two years to ensure that the new curriculum has the greatest impact and £5 million to pilot healthy relationships training delivered by external providers.

It is important too to recognise that developing an understanding and respect for healthy relationships and consent does not end after secondary school. There is growing evidence that misogyny and sexual harms are a significant concern in further and higher education.<sup>40</sup> We must encourage young adults to build on what they learn about relationships in schools and embed those behaviours as they enter further or higher education. The Minister for Skills is exploring the most effective route to make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) mandatory for young people under 18 in further education colleges, and the Further Education Student Support Champion launched a comprehensive RSE toolkit to equip college staff to handle sensitive topics like coercive control and consent. In Higher Education, the Office for Students introduced a new registration condition in August 2025 requiring universities to publish clear, accessible policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct.

Outside of education settings, we will harness opportunities to prevent harmful behaviour among young people by increasing access to meaningful, real-world connections within their communities. This will include delivering commitments set out in the National Youth Strategy and leveraging the power of sport to engage and inspire children and young people.

## **Identifying harm and providing a route to change**

The level of violence and abuse in teenage relationships is truly concerning, with 39% of teenage children aged 13-17 who had been in a relationship in the past year having experienced emotional or physical abuse from a partner.<sup>41</sup> This is particularly disturbing when viewed in the context of the widespread dissemination of misogynistic content online and the increasing influence of harmful social media personalities as outlined in the online section above.

In response, we need to ensure that anyone working with children can identify harmful behaviours that may be of concern in this context and intervene to stop them from continuing or escalating. This includes sexually harmful behaviours and controlling and abusive tendencies towards peers, partners, siblings, parents or caregivers.

Halving VAWG in a decade will require a genuine investment in preventative work. This includes identifying new types of interventions and working out which ones are most effective in challenging and changing emerging harmful behaviours or attitudes in young people. To support this, we will invest £8 million for an innovation fund, with an additional £5 million in investment from the Youth Endowment Fund. We intend to work with local government, social investors and philanthropists to build on this initial investment.

This package will also include a new helpline, launching in 2026, for young people to call for support if they are displaying – or concerned about displaying – these kinds of harmful behaviours or attitudes.

We will also work to ensure that staff in Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) have the skills, training, and resources they need to respond effectively to young people displaying harmful behaviours.

## **Providing wrap-around family support and breaking the cycle of intergenerational abuse**

It is well established that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including experiencing domestic abuse in the home, impact the future likelihood of victimisation or perpetration of crime. For example, children who witness domestic abuse are more likely to suffer serious emotional and physical harm both immediately and later in life, and with nearly half (48%) of adults who were abused as children experiencing domestic abuse themselves, the cycle of harm is clear and deeply concerning.<sup>42</sup> Identifying these risks early, including among vulnerable families, and taking action to address them, can reduce the likelihood of future violence and abuse.

We also know that one in four families with babies and children under five struggle to get trusted advice and guidance to support them in parenting, with funding for integrated, holistic early parenting and family support radically reducing since 2010.<sup>43</sup> This can be particularly problematic in families experiencing hardships such as unemployment or where abuse may be taking place. It is imperative that families are supported to address any vulnerabilities that may lead to future harm and perpetuate harmful patterns of intergenerational abuse.

We will not allow children growing up around abuse to be defined by it. Where harm is present, we will intervene with tailored support. Moving beyond the identification of risk factors, we will seek to ensure families receive support to de-escalate abusive situations, access targeted services, leave dangerous environments and ultimately, break the cycle of intergenerational abuse. This includes helping families to navigate a complex landscape of potential support offers to make sure they can get quick access to the services they need.

We will invest tens of millions a year from 2025 to bolster child and family social workers' capacity and skills, including to better identify risk and intervene early on VAWG. We will also invest in family services to provide high-quality support to babies, children and families with new Best Start Family Hubs in disadvantaged areas. In 2025-26 we more than doubled direct investment in spend for families, children and young people to over half a billion pounds. We have committed to provide £1.8 billion for the Families First Partnership Programme over the next three years and have announced an additional investment of £547 million, bringing the total funding provided for the Families First Partnership Programme to £2.4 billion over the next three years. This funding will help to ensure that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis.

The police are under an obligation to inform schools about police attended incidents of domestic abuse, and they do so under 'Operation Encompass'. We have published

statutory guidance for police and will continue to work with the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection on monitoring the duty and ensuring children affected by domestic abuse form part of new training for police on violence against women and girls.

Where harm is present, we will intervene with tailored support. Moving beyond the identification of risk factors, we will seek to ensure families receive support to deescalate abusive situations, access targeted services, leave dangerous environments and ultimately, break the cycle of intergenerational abuse. We will support programmes for families affected by domestic abuse, once the perpetrator of the abuse has left the family home. The Department for Education will fund the What Works Centre Foundations to carry out ongoing evaluation of support services for child victims of domestic abuse. A Randomised Control Trial will be undertaken and will show that it is possible to ethically evaluate the impact of domestic abuse services for children and young people.

## **A responsibility for all**

Prevention must be recognised as a collective responsibility. Lasting change requires more than educating children and young people; it also demands that adults examine and transform their own attitudes and behaviours. This includes challenging harmful norms, modelling respect and equality, and taking proactive steps to prevent abuse in everyday settings. These principles sit alongside the broader whole-of-society approach outlined later in this Strategy, ensuring that prevention is embedded at every level of community and institutional life.

# Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators



*“For too long, violence against women and girls has been treated as a fact of life. I won’t accept that. We need to treat it as the national emergency that it is.*

*To achieve our mission of halving violence against women and girls, we need to prevent boys and young men from engaging in these heinous crimes. We need to support victims and survivor to get justice and give them the chance to heal. And we also need to bear down on those who perpetrate these awful crimes – ensuring they cannot do so again.*

*This strategy contains a raft of measures that will do exactly that. They ensure we can better identify abusers, whether they are operating in the online world, the offline world, or both. This strategy also gives law enforcement greater ability to bring these offenders to justice. And it ensures that victims and survivors are given greater protection from their abusers than ever before, tightening the restrictions that we can place on offenders when they are in the community.”*

**The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, Home Secretary.**

## Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

We must put an end to perpetrators evading justice. The policing response to these crimes is inconsistent across the country and charge rates are shamefully low. Intelligence, data and technology isn’t used effectively by the police which means offenders can slip through the gaps. When offenders are caught and charged, the justice system is too slow and victims disengage with the process. The result is that perpetrators are operating with impunity, without consequence, and enter a pattern of repeat offending.

This Government will ensure that perpetrators of VAWG are pursued and punished. They will face consequences and be held accountable for their actions. For too long, dangerous individuals who perpetrate these crimes have operated with impunity. That stops now.

Fatal incidents of VAWG represent the most devastating failure of our systems to protect women and girls. Three women were killed a week on average in the year ending March 2024.<sup>44</sup> This is unacceptable.

We will empower the police to tackle the most dangerous perpetrators. We will use law enforcement approaches traditionally reserved for terrorists and organised crime in cases of VAWG, marking a significant escalation in the government’s approach to perpetrators. We will work with forces and agencies to improve our use of data and intelligence to track the most harmful and prolific VAWG perpetrators recognising that these men present severe harm to our society.

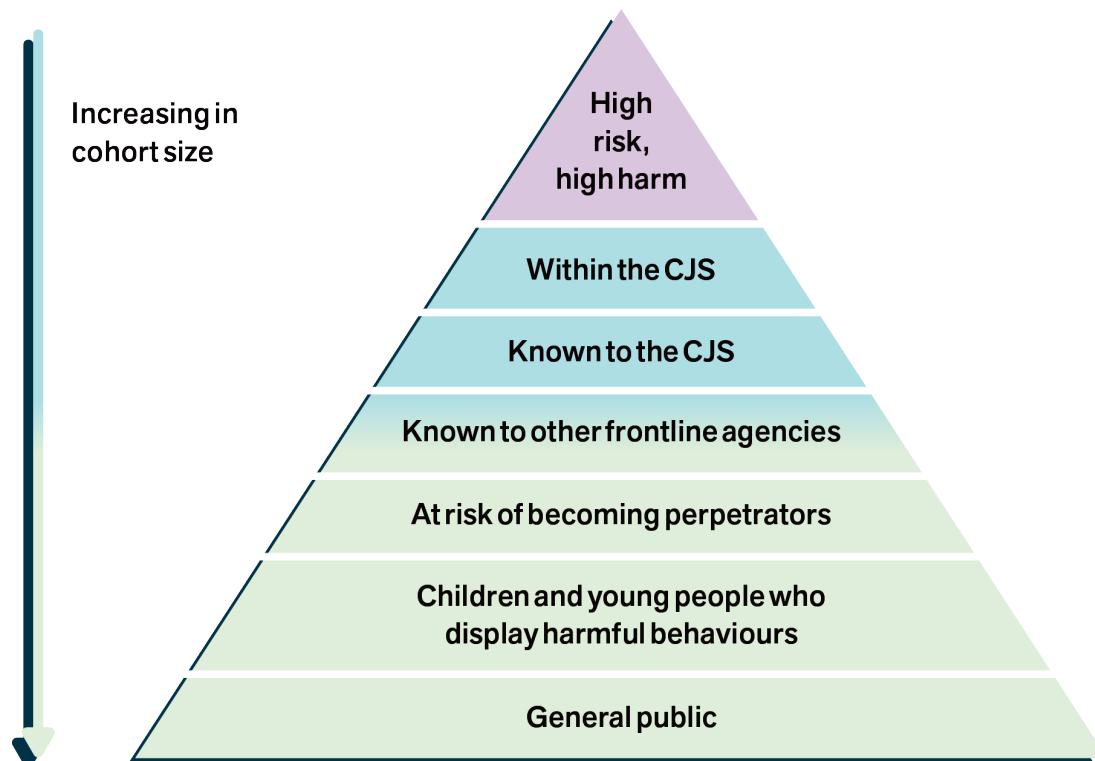
Technology must be used to improve how the police respond to perpetrators. Progress has been made in implementing protective orders and electronic monitoring, but there is

still considerable scope for further action. World-leading capabilities must be embedded across the police and criminal justice services to deliver timely, trauma-informed outcomes.

Perpetrators, not victims, should bear the full weight of accountability. Low trust in justice outcomes will be addressed with action and improvement. Justice delayed is justice denied. The number of sexual offences waiting to go to the Crown Court is at a record high,<sup>45</sup> eroding the confidence of survivors and playing into the hands of criminals. Under this Government, the most sweeping transformation of Criminal Courts in a generation will be delivered – protecting victims and survivors, ensuring proper access to justice, and ensuring criminals are able to act with impunity no longer.

Misogyny and harm must be given no place to hide in our society.

We must be honest – these men are husbands, brothers, sons, and community members in positions of trust and many of them may never enter the criminal justice system. We must give society the tools to root out harm wherever it occurs, in workplaces, sports clubs, communities, and in the home. Stopping misogyny and harm is everyone's business. Public information campaigns will be at the forefront of our response. Reform of public services will seek to ensure that when concerns are raised, there is provision.



The response to VAWG perpetrators remains inconsistent and insufficient. Many cases often go unreported due to barriers such as fear of retaliation, embarrassment, and low trust in justice outcomes.<sup>46</sup> Even when concerns are raised by agencies or perpetrators seek help, interventions are often weak, leaving offending unchecked.

Yet instead of perpetrators facing consequences, the burden often falls on victims, who must seek civil injunctions, chase progress on their case, and secure refuge for safety. Charge rates remain low: in the year ending June 2025, only 9.2% of rape offences, 11.2% of other sexual offences, and 8.8% of stalking offences assigned an outcome by the police resulted in charges.<sup>47</sup>

While the CPS maintains high charge and conviction rates (80% and 74% of referred cases respectively for the year ending June 2025), police referrals for domestic abuse have fallen by 38% since 2015/16,<sup>48</sup> reflecting systemic weaknesses in identifying and pursuing perpetrators effectively.

Even when cases proceed, enforcement is slow and inconsistent. These pressures should never prevent a criminal justice response where needed, but they highlight the need for alternative measures to disrupt harm and reduce risk outside formal court processes.

VAWG offenders can be among the most prolific and dangerous, yet policing and criminal justice responses do not match the severity of their crimes. Intelligence-led approaches used for terrorism and organised crime are rarely applied to VAWG. Similarly, protective orders and electronic monitoring remain underused or poorly implemented, resulting in missed opportunities to disrupt harm and hold offenders accountable for their actions.

## Police Reform and Prioritisation

Ever since the creation of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the Home Office has taken a back seat on the policing of VAWG, leaving it up to local politicians to decide on the robustness and consistency of forces' response. That has resulted in a postcode lottery for victims and survivors.

This Government will ensure the police treat VAWG as a top priority, with the seriousness it deserves.

Police hold unique powers and responsibilities to prevent VAWG, pursue perpetrators, and protect victims and survivors from further harm. In the past, responses have fallen short of what victims and survivors deserve. The Angiolini Inquiry Part 1,<sup>49</sup> Baroness Casey's Review into the Standards of Behaviour and Internal Culture of the Metropolitan Police Service,<sup>50</sup> and inspection reports from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)<sup>51</sup> have all exposed serious and systemic failings in how VAWG is policed.

Tackling VAWG must be treated as a core policing priority at every rank and in every role. Every officer should be equipped to respond effectively, sensitively, and consistently. Public protection must be elevated and properly resourced as a policing specialism, and VAWG recognised as central to the mission of policing. These crimes can be complex, high-harm, and high-volume, which means knowledge and understanding of VAWG cannot be optional. It must be embedded in the training of every officer as a fundamental requirement. Achieving this demands a radical shift in how policing views VAWG and public protection, moving from a peripheral issue to a defining measure of policing

standards and trust. The Policing White Paper will set out the new reforms to workforce standards.

We will ask the police to treat VAWG with a new and relentless focus on prioritisation and accountability. Central to this reform is the new National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection (NCVPP), which is supported by £13.1 million of Home Office investment in its first year. The NCVPP will provide national coordination and strategic leadership. For the first time, the NCVPP brings existing operational VAWG programmes together under one roof, with additional capacity to deliver on the Government's manifesto commitment to strengthen police training nationwide. Ambitious career pathways in VAWG will be supported, mirroring the specialist leadership and progression routes in counter-terrorism, offering a prestigious and purposeful career.

## ‘Raneem’s Law’

We will roll out ‘Raneem’s Law’ to all forces in England and Wales by the end of this parliament to improve the police response to domestic abuse victims. These specialists will review risk assessments, quality assure responses, and advise officers being dispatched to live incidents, so no opportunity to protect a victim is missed. Already operating in Bedfordshire, Humberside, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, and West Midlands, this model is delivering potentially life-saving support from the very first point of contact. Our goal is clear: when victims reach out, the police are ready to protect them.

## Specialist rape teams

Alongside this, we are embedding specialist rape teams in every police force in England and Wales, to ensure the right expertise is in place to investigate these crimes effectively. Operational independence of Chief Constables remains a cornerstone of British policing, but it is vital that all forces have the specialist officers and resources needed to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice. Our reforms will deliver a consistent, specialist-led response across all forces.

We will create a clearer, more consistent framework for police and other agencies to improve implementation of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (‘Clare’s Law’). ‘Clare’s Law’ was established in memory of Clare Wood, who was not told about her ex-boyfriend’s history of violence against women when she went to the police for help. Alongside this, we will implement the statutory guidance for police on releasing information to victims about their online stalker under the ‘Right to Know’ scheme and explore the

potential to expand both schemes to other forms of VAWG. We will also develop and roll out a digital tool, to support the police to make better decisions when disclosing to victims and survivors.

Performance will be rigorously monitored, with Chief Constables held to account through stronger ministerial oversight and the use of transparent data. We expect those who protect the public to meet the highest standards of conduct, those who fall below these standards will have no place to hide under this Government. Chief Constables now have stronger powers to sack rogue officers during misconduct hearings and convictions of crimes such as rape will automatically now amount to gross misconduct, with a presumption of dismissal. This Government has also put in place new regulations requiring all officers to maintain vetting clearance, with dismissal for those who fail. Mandatory vetting standards will exclude individuals with cautions or convictions for listed VAWG offences. The Government has committed to strengthening requirements on forces to suspend officers under investigation for specified VAWG offences.

Both the Angiolini and Casey reports highlight that poor-quality and incomplete data severely limits our understanding of perpetrators and victims. Robust, accurate data is fundamental to effective policing. Without it, forces cannot identify patterns, allocate resources, or intervene early and effectively to protect women and girls. Improving police data on VAWG is therefore fundamental and in line with Part 2 of the Angiolini Inquiry, forces must strengthen their data practices to ensure consistent, high-quality information on VAWG crimes.

## A coordinated approach

The Government will ensure that perpetrators are not overlooked or lost between agencies or jurisdictions by embedding robust coordination mechanisms and strengthening the legislative framework.

We will expand the use of the Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) approach so that robust, joined-up perpetrator management processes are in place in every force area. A consistent national approach will ensure the most dangerous VAWG perpetrators are identified, targeted, and disrupted with the same intensity as terrorists and serious organised criminals. We are also exploring options to introduce a statutory duty to collaborate, ensuring agencies work together seamlessly to manage risk and prevent harm.

Legislation will provide the foundation for change. By 2028, the Law Commission will review the law on homicide offences and the sentencing framework for murder, including how the law responds to abuse-related cases and defences. This review will inform future legislative changes to ensure the law better reflects the realities of abuse. We will also appoint an expert barrister to conduct an independent Stalking Legislation Review to determine whether and how the law needs to change to improve identification and management of stalking behaviours within the criminal justice system.

## Operating with leading technology

The tools and tactics used to pursue VAWG perpetrators within policing and across the criminal justice system, do not match the severity and risk of their crimes. We know that there are proven intelligence-led tools and tactics used to address terrorism and serious and organised crime, which can be adopted for VAWG but this is rarely or inconsistently done. This needs to change.

Harnessing technology, we will disrupt perpetrators and monitor offenders to prevent harm. We will deploy leading technology and proactive interventions to identify, monitor, and disrupt perpetrators before further harm occurs.

We need police forces to use every tool in their arsenal to pursue perpetrators. This includes using cutting-edge new tools that draw on counter-terrorism tactics and more effectively implementing existing tools like protective orders. We know that VAWG is often complex and we need to support police with suitable guidance and, where relevant, strengthen legislation, to enable them to use those tools available to them as effectively as possible, while ensuring that their work remains focused on protecting victims and survivors and not just making efficiencies. The NCVPP will help to consolidate this approach across forces, and we're implementing practical changes to strengthen police enforcement across VAWG crime types.

One of these invaluable tools is facial recognition, given its potential to identify and crack down on more perpetrators. The Government will increase the use of facial recognition and has already committed to roll out Live Facial Recognition (LFR) vans to seven forces across the country, equipping officers with targeted, cutting-edge technology to catch high-harm criminals including those perpetrating VAWG crimes. On 4 December 2025, the Government announced a consultation on the legal framework for facial recognition to balance concerns about this powerful technology with the potential to tackle VAWG and other crimes.

### Facial Recognition:

Since January 2024, the use of Live Facial Recognition has enabled the Metropolitan Police to stop around 290 registered sex offenders and check that they are abiding by the conditions placed on them. Of these, 17 individuals have been arrested for breaches, and a further eight cases have resulted in follow-up action. In addition, the Metropolitan Police has made 253 arrests of wanted offenders, including 17 sought for VAWG-related offences. This group includes three males who were deemed high-risk domestic abuse suspects.

Alongside this, we will expand data-driven policing initiatives like the Metropolitan Police's V100 programme, which uses advanced analytics to systematically identify and target the most dangerous men who pose a risk to women. The Metropolitan Police state the programme has allowed for more than 126 of the highest-risk offenders to be charged with 574 offences.<sup>52</sup> We expect all police forces to understand and act on the data they have available to them to pursue perpetrators and break patterns of offending.

We will also continue to roll out a consistent Rapid Video Response model across police forces. This will enable victims to speak to an officer via immediate and secure video call, allowing investigations to begin in minutes rather than in days. Initial trials found arrest rates for suspects were 50% higher for those receiving RVR than those who did not, demonstrating how this tool can be a more effective response to domestic abuse.<sup>53</sup> £1.5 million has already been allocated to support this rollout.

Drawing on tactics used to tackle child sexual abuse online, we will expand the use of covert officers to address VAWG, improving capabilities to counter and reduce the highest harms posed to the UK public from VAWG. This builds on the success of the Home Office's network of Undercover Online operatives, which has already prevented significant future harm by tackling child sexual abuse online.

Improving the use of existing policing tools is essential too, with electronic monitoring and playing an important part in managing risk. We plan to expand the use of electronic monitoring for VAWG cases and explore further innovative technological solutions such as proximity monitoring of perpetrators.

## Managing perpetrators in all settings

Robust enforcement through policing and the criminal justice system are essential to stopping perpetrators and reducing reoffending, and this Government is taking decisive action across the system. However, we must recognise that management of perpetrators cannot be limited to the criminal justice system alone. It is imperative that we manage perpetrators wherever they are to stop further harm, whether they are known to the criminal justice system, on probation, or out in the community with no prior conviction. We need a robust response both within and outside the criminal justice system for all perpetrators.

We will strengthen frontline tools and interventions to disrupt abuse and protect victims within the community and across the criminal justice system, including through improvements and consistent enforcement of protection orders. We will roll out Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) to all police forces and courts across England and Wales. The DAPO is a game-changing new protective order that can impose a combination of tougher prohibitions and requirements on perpetrators both going through the criminal justice system and out in the community. Flexible in scope and duration, these protection orders send a clear signal that abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. By rolling

out to every police force area and court, we are ensuring that domestic abuse victims are offered greater protections from their abusers.

We will deliver against the manifesto commitment to strengthen Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) by launching SPO intensification sites. These will aim to drive up use of SPOs and provide opportunities to test innovative approaches to enforce conditions and monitor breaches, which could be adopted nationwide.

To strengthen post-conviction controls and reduce risk when offenders are back in the community, we will explore changes to licence conditions for offenders. This includes introducing restriction zones to curtail the movement of the most serious and violent perpetrators – ensuring that the onus is on them and curbing their freedom, rather than on victims and survivors.

To strengthen how we manage the most serious offenders, we will replace the legacy violent and sex offender database (ViSOR) with a modernised Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS) by June 2028.

The Probation Service must play a critical role in the effective management of offenders. Like other agencies, it faces systemic challenges and has been under significant strain, limiting its ability to contribute fully to this effort. To address this, we are making substantial investments in probation and community services. In 2024/25, we recruited 1,000 trainee probation officers, with a target of a further 1,300 in 2025/26, and probation and community services funding is set to rise by up to £700 million by 2029. This investment will support expanded electronic monitoring, additional staffing, and expanded accommodation, ensuring offenders are closely tracked, supported, and managed effectively.

Alongside reforms in the criminal justice system, we will take action to improve perpetrator management through interventions in the community. There is strong evidence that targeted perpetrator interventions that challenge harmful attitudes and support behaviour change can be instrumental in preventing further harm. Therefore, we will accelerate the expansion of proven perpetrator intervention programmes as well as continue to develop and test further programmes. The Home Office will address the patchwork of provision of perpetrator interventions across England and Wales and begin work to establish a consistent and comprehensive offering in every local area so there is greater access to tailored interventions for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators – from first-time offenders to higher-risk perpetrators.

Backed by a £53 million investment over the next 4 years, the Drive Project, which targets high-risk, high-harm domestic abuse offenders through intensive case management, will be scaled up so that every area in England and Wales has access within three years.

## Drive Project:

The Drive Project is an intensive case management approach which aims to disrupt the behaviour of high-risk, high-harm serial domestic abuse offenders. It works to divert perpetrators and address wider needs such as mental health or substance misuse support, disrupt offending by working with police to put barriers in place to prevent further abuse, and change behaviour by working with perpetrators one to one. The independent evaluation of the project found from case start to case closure percentages of perpetrators using physical abuse reduced by 82% and sexual abuse by 88% as reported by the perpetrators and their victims over the course of the programme.<sup>54</sup> The Home Office will roll out the Drive Project across England and Wales and introduce a consistent approach to the most harmful perpetrators of domestic abuse in every area.

We must recognise too, that society as a whole, including industry, employers, and tech companies, can do much more to address and stop perpetration, including through punitive measures. Every institution, profession, and community has a role to play in driving long-term change, because silence enables abuse. It is imperative that we send a clear message that abusive behaviour has real and lasting consequences, both legally and socially. It is imperative that we send a clear message that abusive behaviour has real and lasting consequences, both legally and socially. For example, while many professional bodies already have standards around “maintaining trust” and “bringing the profession into disrepute”, we will go further. Perpetrators of these serious crimes should not be allowed to hold positions of power, privilege, or influence. This must apply across all sectors, from healthcare to sport. We must work together to ensure that those who abuse cannot act with impunity or continue in roles that carry responsibility and public trust. Our work in this space is just beginning, but there is ample opportunity for action.

We must also ensure that all of our services who protect us are held to account. The job of our Armed Forces is to be ready to deter, fight and win. To do that our people must feel safe – this is critical to our operational effectiveness. Recent cases have highlighted the need for renewed determination to drive change and address VAWG offending in Defence. The Armed Forces Sexualised Behaviours and Sexual Harassment survey<sup>55</sup> further highlights the need to take decisive action in our Armed Forces. This 2025 survey found that in the last 12 months, 67% of Regular Servicewomen and 34% of Regular Servicemen experienced at least one sexualised behaviour. We also know that there are additional barriers to support for Service personnel and their families, including regular posting rotation, potential exposure to traumatic events, and challenges accessing support during postings abroad.<sup>56</sup>

Our Armed Forces are rightly respected the world over but to retain this reputation we must enforce the highest standards and actively root out unacceptable behaviours. To achieve this, we must ensure that we are setting the right culture top down to instil the values and behaviours we expect from the outset and that Service personnel are confident

that action will be taken against anyone who causes harm, no matter their rank or position. It is equally imperative that victims and survivors feel safe to report and trust that their cases will be taken seriously. Defence needs to build on progress over recent years to establish clear routes to raise concerns quickly, safely, and independently from the chain of command. We need to make sure that accountability and transparency is driven through data, enabling us to make the right decisions on what to do next to drive change across Defence.

# Support



*Violence against women and girls can have profound and lasting impacts on all aspects of victims' lives. As Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice ensuring that these victims receive the right support at the right time is both a personal priority for me and fundamental to achieving our unprecedented mission to halve violence against women and girls.*

*Support services – from counselling, to advocacy, to safe accommodation—provide vital lifelines for victims and survivors. This pillar sets out our vision to build a joined-up, comprehensive system of support for victims everywhere – no matter their background or geographical location. I am proud that my department will be contributing to this vision by investing £550 million in essential services over the next three years. This multi-year package – the largest ever provided—is an important step in the cross-government effort to ensure victims' access to critical support throughout the criminal justice system and beyond.*

**David Lammy, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,  
Secretary of State for Justice, and Lord Chancellor**

*Earlier this year I had a perfectly normal conversation with a woman during one of my 'street surgeries' as a constituency MP. She thanked me for calling by, told me there were no issues she wanted to raise and sent me on my way. Moments later, she chased me down the street and, fighting back her tears, disclosed she was a victim of serious domestic abuse and had been threatened into silence.*

*It was a stark reminder that women and girls live in the shadow of violence every day – both the threat and reality of it. This chilling fact of life is a public health emergency that shames our society and must end.*

*The NHS is on the frontline of our response. Staff are often the first point of contact, offering support, treatment and rehabilitation. They also have eyes on those at risk. So we are training them to spot the telltale signs of abuse – and, to help victims and survivors take the first steps to safety, we will roll out a new referral service across GP practices nationwide. We will also end the trauma of children and young people, who have been sexually abused, having to relive their ordeal over and over by bringing a range of specialist support services under one roof to every NHS region in England.*

*It is a shameful truth that some of the most alarming health inequalities are those faced by victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. They find it harder to get help from NHS services, live in poorer health and die younger. I have asked Jess Asato MP to help me reform NHS culture so that whenever and wherever a victim or survivor contacts the NHS, it is there for them and treats them with compassion, care and dignity.*

*I am determined that the NHS plays its part in keeping women and girls safe, alive and well.*

**Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care**

## Support

Supporting victims of VAWG crimes is more than just a moral duty, it is essential if we are going to break the cycle of offending and bring more perpetrators to justice. Yet we know that the support victims receive is patchy, and that our public services are not good enough at spotting victims and directing them to appropriate services. Commissioning of services lacks join up, and support that meets the unique and diverse needs of victims and survivors is not readily available.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) causes profound and lasting harm. Every victim and survivor must have access to tailored, holistic support – practical, emotional, and therapeutic. Delivered by services that understand their needs, including specialist ‘by-and-for’ organisations rooted in lived experience. Over the next decade, we will build a system designed around victims and survivors – accessible, coordinated, and compassionate – that replaces the current patchwork of provision. This whole-society effort will empower frontline professionals, such as GPs, teachers, youth workers and social workers, to spot the signs of abuse and connect individuals to specialist help.

The current support landscape is too fragmented, inconsistent, and difficult to navigate.

VAWG is not localised; it can happen to anyone, anywhere in the country. But for victims, survivors and their families, too often where you live and who you are dictates the support that you can access. So, when victims and survivors do seek help, the support available can be patchy and unpredictable.<sup>57</sup>

Limited coordination between commissioners and frontline services means gaps persist, and short-term funding cycles make planning and delivery difficult.<sup>58</sup> As a result, victims fall through the cracks, and disparities remain, particularly for groups such as disabled adults, who experience significantly higher rates of domestic abuse and sexual assault.<sup>59</sup>

Just as we are committed to delivering a consistent, high-quality policing response across England and Wales, we must also confront the disparities in the provision of support so that every victim, whether in a city or a rural village, can access the help they need.

Over the lifetime of this Strategy, we will radically overhaul the support services commissioning landscape to build a system that is more joined-up, survivor-centred, in line with the Civil Society Covenant principles, fit for purpose, and which recognises the very varied needs women have, including those with disabilities, or from different ethnic backgrounds. Our ambition is to ensure that victims and survivors can access the right support at the right time, whether that's therapeutic care, specialist advocacy to navigate the criminal justice system, or dedicated community-based services.

## **Radical transformation of the commissioning landscape**

We know that support services cannot serve victims and survivors effectively without sufficient resources and in too many cases, women and girls have not been able to access the support services they need. To right this wrong, this Government will support victims with the largest-ever investment of £550 million in victim support services over the next three years, maintaining existing funding with annual uplifts.

This will be further supported with £5 million each year from the Department of Health and Social Care. This significant investment reinforces that healthcare, along with every part of society, has a vital part to play in supporting victims and survivors.

Funding for services alone is not enough. We need to fix the short term and fragmented commissioning landscape that lets victims down.<sup>60</sup> We will deliver a radical transformation of the commissioning landscape, which means reforming how services are commissioned, to ensure victims and survivors receive consistent, high-quality support that is fit for purpose and meets their needs.

Our approach will draw on existing duties in Wales under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and the implementation of the Duty to Collaborate in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, which applies to England. The aim is to strengthen commissioning for adult and child victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and serious violence, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of diverse victim cohorts. We will consider the implications from the reforms to policing to ensure these goals are achieved.

To support this transformation, we will publish a new national commissioning statement to replace the current National Statement of Expectations and VAWG Commissioning Toolkit. This statement will provide clear definitions of 'by-and-for' and specialist services, helping funders allocate funding more effectively. It will also clarify the commissioning responsibilities of national government departments and offer guidance to local commissioners on how their duties, such as the Safe Accommodation Duty, Duty to Collaborate, and Serious Violence Duty, work together. This will ensure a more consistent approach across prevention and early intervention, perpetrator response, and victim support.

We will also ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse across England and Wales can continue to access one-off cash payments to help them flee abuse and begin rebuilding their lives. These payments are a vital lifeline for victims and survivors, including for those with no recourse to public funds, enabling them to secure long-term safety and stability.

## Support that understands every victim and survivor

Victims experiencing multiple disadvantage – combinations of homelessness and rough sleeping, poor mental health, substance use, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system – face additional barriers to accessing support and are often excluded due to their multiple needs.<sup>61</sup> They are also more likely to struggle to engage with support due to trauma and negative previous experiences with services.<sup>62</sup> Of those engaged by the Changing Futures programme, which provides targeted support for multiple disadvantage, 93% of women had experienced domestic abuse.<sup>63</sup>

People need flexible, person-centred support and co-ordinated specialist services to help with chronic co-occurring needs. Our ambition is to break down these barriers by delivering holistic, tailored support that meets the full range of needs. This approach will not only empower victims and survivors to cope, recover, and rebuild their lives but will also help to prevent repeat victimisation and drive behaviour change among perpetrators. By addressing fundamental inequalities and ensuring services are inclusive and accessible, we will create a system that works for everyone, regardless of background or circumstance.

That's why, building on learning from the successful Changing Futures programme, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government will invest £55.8 million in a new multiple disadvantage programme. This is a collaboration with the Department for Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions and will transform the way local public service systems respond to people facing or at risk of multiple disadvantage, helping them regain control over their lives with the right support at the right time. Through intensive casework, peer support, and by joining up services, data and funding across partners, including with civil society, this will prevent some of our most vulnerable citizens – including women experiencing domestic abuse and with complex needs – from repeatedly falling through the gaps between services and relying on crisis support.

We also recognise how immigration status can affect victims of VAWG and that many migrant and asylum-seeking victims will not come forward to report abuse out of fear about their future.<sup>64</sup> This is why this Government will introduce a requirement for police to seek a domestic abuse victim's consent before sharing their information with Immigration Enforcement. This is a ground-breaking measure that will be instrumental in supporting some of the most vulnerable victims, allowing them to report crimes without fear while improving trust and access to justice and helping police to identify more perpetrators of these crimes.

## Therapeutic support for victims of child sexual abuse

Child victims of VAWG, including child sexual abuse, are some of the most vulnerable. They deserve a tailored, specialist response which recognises the severity of the crimes that they have experienced.

The Department for Health and Social Care will invest up to £50 million to transform support for victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation across every NHS region in England. Under this Government we are expanding the world-leading Child House (Barnahus) model so that children and young people affected by these horrific crimes can access the specialist care they need. Under the Child House approach, healthcare, emotional support and multi-agency expertise are brought together under one roof to deliver joined-up child-centred care that recognises the full scale of trauma and harm.

Too often, children are forced to relive their experiences by repeating harrowing accounts to multiple professionals, compounding their trauma.<sup>65</sup> Child Houses change this by creating a single safe, welcoming space where essential multi-agency services come to the child. Support is available for the whole family, providing counselling, practical advice and wraparound care so parents and carers are equipped to help their child recover and rebuild.

This proven model is internationally recognised as the gold standard for therapeutic support for children who have suffered sexual abuse.

## Improving victims' and survivors' experience of the justice system

We are delivering bold reform in the criminal courts to improve timeliness for all victims and survivors, including those of VAWG offences. This Government inherited an invisible emergency in our criminal courts with a record and rising caseload, which has been years in the making. While the Government is dedicated to improving timeliness for victims of rape, which is currently at an unacceptable level, the scale of this crisis means that rapid improvement in the short-term is not achievable. We have invested heavily in the system; in record sitting days, court buildings and technology, and in legal professionals, but Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts has made clear that nothing short of major reform will fix the system. Even with radical action, it will take time before these reforms take effect and we must support victims and survivors through this period. That means both improving the experience of trial for victims of rape and funding vital victim support services.

We will tackle rape myths and misconceptions at court, bringing forward a package of legislative measures to improve the experience of giving evidence for victims and survivors of sexual violence. We will also bring the principles of Operation Soteria to the courtroom to ensure those are being modelled by the whole criminal justice system. Alongside this dedicated work on rape and sexual offences, we are exploring specialist court models, such as specialist domestic abuse courts, to provide better support to victims and survivors. Every contact made with professionals is critical – training for criminal justice practitioners will seek to ensure the Criminal Justice System is not used as a space to revictimise survivors.

The CPS must also continue to improve how it communicates with victims and survivors, so that they feel informed, safe, and supported throughout the justice process, and that all available protective measures are used to safeguard them. This includes delivering the Victim Transformation Programme to improve the services they provide to all victims of crime who interact with them, including those affected by VAWG, and implementing its updated VAWG Strategy for 2025-2030, published in November 2025. The Strategy aims to increase the number of VAWG cases reaching court by deepening understanding of how different forms of VAWG intersect and escalate, and to reduce victim attrition by ensuring victims are well-informed and supported throughout their engagement with the CPS.<sup>66</sup>

VAWG offending is becoming increasingly complex, with behaviour-driven offending, interrelated crime types, and cyber elements all presenting challenges for prosecutors. To ensure that its VAWG casework is of the highest standard, the CPS must enhance prosecutors' specialist skills and knowledge to ensure they are well-equipped to handle these cases.

## **Family Courts**

The family courts deal with some of the most vulnerable people in our society and make crucial decisions about the lives of children. We also know that those involved in family court proceedings are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse.<sup>67</sup> In a review of nearly 300 child arrangement case files and 100 hearings, indications of abuse featured in 73% of hearings and 87% of case files.<sup>68</sup> Despite this the system is not responding effectively and too many victims and survivors of VAWG report negative experiences of the family courts.

We will ensure that the family courts are no longer spaces where victims and survivors of VAWG can be revictimised. Through a programme of reform, we will reduce opportunities for perpetrators to misuse legal processes, strengthen protections for victims, survivors and children, and embed a trauma-informed approach across the system. These changes will help to shift the culture within the family courts, prioritising safety, accountability, and the welfare of the child above all else.

## **Broader experience of the criminal justice system**

We know that a large proportion of women in contact with the criminal justice system are victims of VAWG. Estimates suggest that 67% of women in the community and 68% of those in prison have reported being a victim of domestic abuse.<sup>69</sup> There is a lack of awareness and understanding across the criminal justice system about the contextual dynamics of domestic abuse which lead victims to offend, impacting their response. The Government is committed to reducing the number of women in custody by addressing their distinct needs. Chaired by Lord Timpson, the Women's Justice Board was set up to advise the Government on achieving this goal.

We will improve support for women in the criminal justice system by strengthening awareness and understanding of how victims can become criminalised, particularly among criminal justice agencies. As part of this, we will explore changes to Crown Court and Magistrates' Court defence forms to include questions about histories of domestic abuse,

including coercive control, helping to gather contextual information and deepen our understanding of the factors leading to criminalisation.

## Right to live free from abuse

### Housing

Safe and secure housing is a critical foundation for safety, recovery, and long-term independence for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children. Uncertainty about where to go can trap victims in homes with their perpetrators, and we know that survivors, particularly women, face a heightened risk of homelessness due to financial insecurity after leaving abusive partners.<sup>70</sup> The CSEW estimates for year ending March 2025 showed that a higher proportion of people who had experienced homelessness in their lifetime experienced domestic abuse in the last year (22.1%), compared with those who had never been homeless (7.2%).<sup>71</sup>

In 2024/25, local councils supported 35,990 households facing homelessness because of domestic abuse, representing 11% of all households homeless or at risk.<sup>72</sup> During the same period, 76,850 individuals, including adults and children, accessed safe accommodation, a 20% increase on the previous year. However, 28,190 households could not be supported, an increase of 5% from 2023/24.<sup>73</sup> These figures underline the urgent need for action.

No one should be forced to remain in an unsafe situation because they fear becoming homeless. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that the housing system enables victims to escape abuse and rebuild their lives. This means improving pathways into safe accommodation for those who need to flee and providing better support to access longer-term housing as they recover.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provided £160 million in 2025-26 for the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty, a £30 million uplift from the previous year and is increasing investment to enable local authorities in England to provide the support victims need in safe housing, committing £499 million over the next three years. Councils have a legal duty to create local plans to make sure they provide victims and their children with the help they need to recover and rebuild their lives in places of safety. A ministerial-chaired Domestic Abuse Housing Group provides national oversight, supported by annual monitoring data. The Safe Accommodation Duty will be included in the work to change the commissioning landscape, to drive greater consistency and quality of delivery across the country.

### Economic Abuse

Economic and financial abuse can have devastating and long-lasting effects on victims and survivors, often continuing long after a relationship has ended.<sup>74</sup> Estimates from the CSEW show that 3.3% of women aged 16 and over experienced economic abuse from a current or former partner in the year ending March 2025.<sup>75</sup> This form of abuse can trap victims in harmful relationships and create barriers to rebuilding their lives.

When victims begin to recover, financial insecurity should never force them back to an abusive partner. We will work across the public and private sectors to prevent economic abuse and support survivors to regain financial independence. This includes working with banks to ensure services meet the needs of victims and addressing systemic issues, such as perpetrators withholding child maintenance payments. Alongside this, we will tackle the misuse of financial products, such as joint mortgages, loans, and credit cards, that perpetrators exploit to maintain control. These practices can cause severe harm, leaving victims in debt, damaging their credit rating, and limiting access to future financial products.

HM Treasury will work with key stakeholders, including industry and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), to explore how joint mortgages are used as a tool of abuse and how victims and survivors can be better supported. We are also working with the financial services and third sectors to develop an approach to improve the way that coerced debt is reflected on victims' and survivors' credit files, to help them access financial products in future.

## Employment

For survivors of domestic abuse leaving a refuge, unemployment can be a major barrier to rebuilding their lives. Without a stable income, access to safe housing and essential resources for themselves and their children often remains out of reach. Secure employment in a supportive environment is not just a financial necessity – it is a vital step toward recovery, helping survivors regain confidence, independence, and a sense of control over their future.

We will explore the specific needs of survivors transitioning from refuges to ensure that they receive full and tailored employment support to get back to work. Our aim is to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse can access appropriate employment opportunities and support programmes, where this aligns with their circumstances and recovery journey. By doing so, we will help survivors to move towards long-term stability and independence.

## Learning from tragedy

Tragically, our Strategy must also confront the most severe and heartbreakingly outcomes of violence and abuse. This includes domestic homicides, femicides, suicides and sudden or unexplained deaths that occur in the context of VAWG. The scale and nature of these deaths is intolerable and demands urgent, coordinated action.

Domestic Homicide Reviews, alongside Prevention of Future Death Reports and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Reports highlight the critical importance of robust early intervention in safeguarding victims. This is a central pillar of our mission and Strategy. These reviews reveal missed opportunities to intervene, gaps in safeguarding practices, and failures in coordination across agencies. They underscore the urgent need for a strong, multi-agency response to support victims and prevent perpetrators from causing further harm. By learning from these tragedies, we can strengthen our systems, close existing loopholes, and ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated.

While we are making progress in understanding and responding to domestic abuse-related deaths, we recognise that more needs to be done to address other forms of fatal VAWG. Currently the murders of Sarah Everard or Zara Aleena would not fall within the current remit of such reviews because they were not domestic in nature. These forms of femicide cannot be ignored; institutions and policy makers must learn lessons from every death.

In response, we must embed learning from every case into practice, ensuring that public agencies are equipped to take decisive, coordinated action to prevent future deaths and better support victims and survivors. We are committed to driving systemic change across the society, so that no life is lost to violence and abuse that could have been prevented. Strengthening accountability, improving multi-agency responses, collaborating with civil society and learning from tragedy are essential to building a system that protects women and girls before harm escalates and supports them better.

Too many victims of domestic abuse are driven to take their own lives, and many others die in unexplained or suspicious circumstances. While we are improving data collection on these deaths, we know the true number is likely to be significantly underestimated. To address this, we will strengthen the police response to victims. New guidance published by the College of Policing and the Domestic Homicide Project highlights the importance of recognising a history of abuse and applying professional curiosity at the scene of unexpected deaths, including suspected suicides. We will monitor the implementation of this guidance by conducting deep dives into how specific police forces are responding. Going forward, the Senior Investigating Officer training programme will also cover suspected victim suicide and deaths following domestic abuse. However, we understand that for the police to respond to these deaths effectively, we must ensure they have the tools they need to investigate suicides and unexpected deaths linked to VAWG.

These changes are not only about improving investigations, they are about improving support for victims and survivors. By embedding learning from every tragic case into frontline practice, we can strengthen agency responses, improve safeguarding, and take decisive action to prevent further loss of life. We will continue working closely with affected families and support organisations to ensure that every death linked to VAWG is treated with the seriousness and sensitivity it deserves.

# Whole of Society Approach



## Whole of society approach

The reality is that we cannot rely on the criminal justice process alone to stop perpetrators from causing harm. Ending VAWG starts with the individual and demands commitment and contribution from every single one of us and every part of society. We each have a role to play, whether by challenging harmful behaviours when we see them, reflecting on our own actions, or setting a positive example.

Beyond the individual, it is critical that all frontline services that may come across VAWG are equipped not only to identify and support victims and survivors, but also to recognise, challenge, and disrupt perpetrator behaviour at the earliest opportunity. Most perpetrators never come to the attention of the police or courts, often because victims and survivors choose not to involve law enforcement.<sup>76</sup> Some victims and survivors may not want their abuser imprisoned but do want the abuse to stop. In many cases, the first disclosure of violence or abuse is made to a professional outside policing, such as a teacher, doctor, social worker, or Jobcentre adviser.<sup>77</sup>

Evidence shows that training and support for primary care staff improves recorded identification of domestic abuse and referral to domestic abuse agencies.<sup>78</sup> This approach aims to prevent harm from escalating and reduce the long-term impact of abuse. These frontline professionals therefore play a vital role in identifying abuse early and connecting victims and survivors to specialist support.

It's essential therefore that we are training staff to recognise the signs of abuse and equipping them to identify those at risk, ask informed and sensitive questions, and connect individuals to specialist support.<sup>79</sup> UK initiatives such as Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRISi) and the Pathfinder project, which work to embed domestic abuse awareness in health settings and improve early identification and response, demonstrate the impact of integrating this approach into frontline services.<sup>80</sup>

This Government is committed to ensuring that, over the next decade, frontline staff across every sector act quickly to address VAWG, whether they are healthcare professionals, social workers, teachers, Jobcentre staff, employers, transport workers, civil society staff and volunteers or those in the financial sector. Delivery partners must be empowered and motivated to challenge abuse wherever it occurs, driving change in every part of UK society. By doing this, we can help create safer environments and reduce the risk of abuse and sexual violence in any public space.

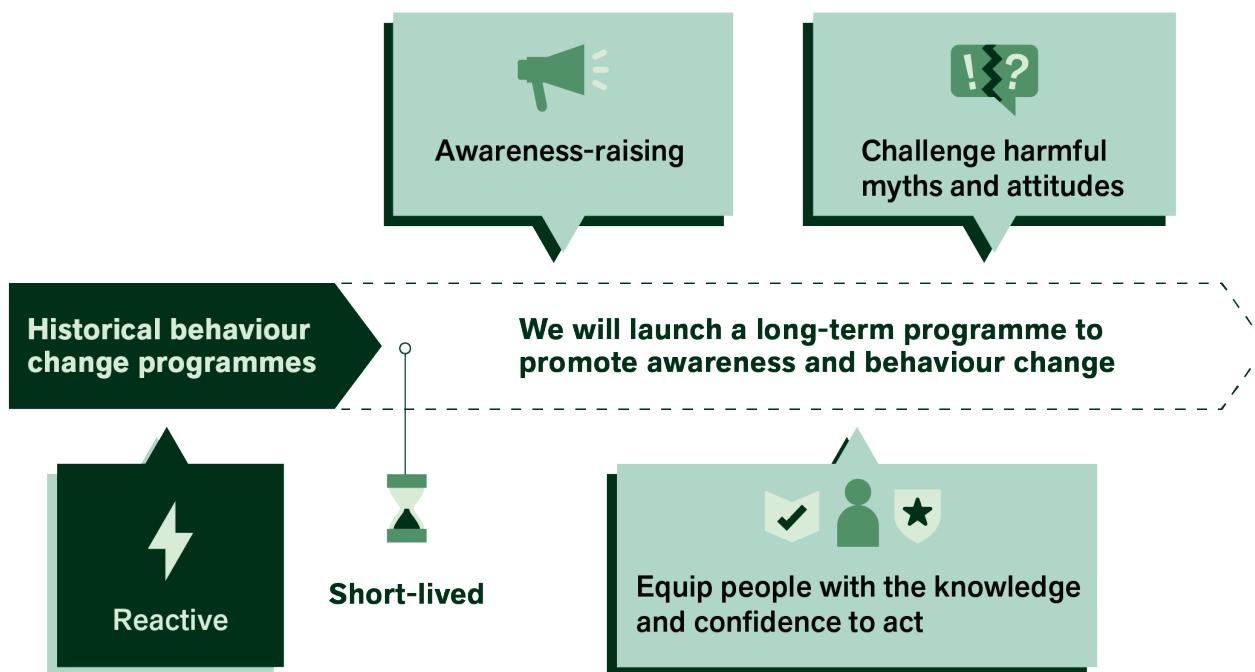
We must make VAWG everyone's business to reduce it meaningfully over the long-term.

## Improving public awareness of VAWG and creating lasting change

The scale and impact of VAWG public understanding remains low, as evidenced in the low volumes of reports and convictions compared to the prevalence of domestic abuse, despite it being a criminal offence since 2015.<sup>81</sup> These misconceptions fuel tolerance of attitudes and behaviours that enable abuse. Although more victims and survivors are

bravely speaking out, society has yet to embed the generational shift in attitudes that is needed.

Too often, people do not know when or how to intervene or believe they cannot make a difference. Historically, behaviour change campaigns have been reactive and short-lived, with campaigns that fail to deliver lasting impact. We will change this. To equip people with the knowledge and confidence to act, and ensure that we are addressing adult behaviours and attitudes in our prevention efforts just as much as those of children and young people, we will launch a long-term programme of awareness-raising and behaviour change campaigns that improve public understanding of VAWG, challenge harmful myths and attitudes, and build confidence to intervene safely and effectively. The campaign will reach the general public to drive a societal response, and will also target misguided young men and boys, parents and victims of abuse. This activity will be supported by research to deepen our understanding of the relationship between societal attitudes towards women and girls and the prevalence of VAWG behaviours. This is about creating a sustained shift, not just in awareness, but in behaviour, so that together we can build a society where women and girls are safe and respected.



## Setting up our healthcare system to better tackle VAWG

Health services can often be the first place where victims and survivors disclose and it is important that these are a safe place for people experiencing abuse. This Government's action will ensure health is not an add-on but is part of the solution. The NHS plays a vital role in identifying abuse early, supporting survivors, and responding to perpetrators. From April 2026, the Department for Health and Social Care will roll out a domestic abuse and sexual violence referral service across Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) called "Steps to Safety". This will give general practices the tools and ability to identify and refer victims and survivors into support services, building on innovative approaches already operating in England, and will include evaluation of the services. This Government has set a goal for national provision of this service and our aim is that by 2029 any victim or survivor in England can get the help they need by talking to staff at their general practice – ending the patchwork of services currently in place.

Alongside this, we will drive cultural change within the NHS to ensure staff are equipped and supported to respond effectively to VAWG. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has appointed a new advisor on VAWG, Jess Asato MP, to drive further transformation in preventing VAWG and supporting victims and survivors. Jess Asato MP will focus on reducing the negative impact of alcohol on VAWG, embedding VAWG support into neighbourhood health services, and improving commissioning of services.

*“VAWG isn’t just a criminal justice issue, it’s a public health emergency. When we strengthen healthcare systems to identify abuse early, support survivors, challenge perpetrators and address the trauma that fuels cycles of harm, we make communities safer. Ensuring health is not an add-on to prevention; it is a core part of the solution”*

– Jess Asato MP

## Every corner of public life will be safe

Women and girls must both feel safe and be safe in every aspect of public life, including shared and open spaces such as streets, parks, transport hubs, and public buildings. Safety is not just about reducing risk, it is about creating environments that foster confidence, dignity, and freedom of movement. Design and planning are critical tools in achieving this. Well-lit streets, accessible transport, and thoughtful urban design can deter violence, reduce opportunities for harm, and send a clear message that public spaces belong to everyone. By embedding considerations of VAWG into planning and transport guidance, we can ensure that safety is built into the fabric of our communities, making public spaces welcoming and secure for all. To support this, we will update national design guidance to reflect a VAWG perspective, ensuring that safety considerations inform how public spaces are designed.

Everyone has the right to go about their daily lives free from harassment and harm. The Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Act 2023 (PSH Act) marked a significant step forward by introducing an aggravated offence of intentional harassment based on sex or presumed sex. The Government will commence the PSH Act on 1 April 2026. To complement this, the Home Office will explore introducing a public sexual harassment awareness course for perpetrators, aimed at challenging harmful behaviours, reducing reoffending, and promoting long-term cultural change.

Workplaces will be environments safe from VAWG. Workplaces are more than places of employment – they are communities where people spend a significant part of their lives. Employers therefore have a unique responsibility and opportunity to help prevent VAWG, support victims and survivors, and call out concerning behaviours. Every workplace must be a safe and respectful environment for all.

We will aim to embed a culture of accountability and support across all sectors. This means ensuring employers have the right tools, clear guidance, and a robust legal framework to protect staff, respond effectively to incidents, and play an active role in the wider societal effort to end VAWG.

The Civil Service must set the standard in tackling VAWG, leading by example. To achieve this, the Government will launch a refreshed VAWG workplace training package for all government departments, alongside new model guidance for civil service employers. This guidance will include a range of measures, including the provision of special leave to support victims and survivors, to help ensure staff are equipped to respond effectively and compassionately.

We will work with employers to embed stronger workplace responses in all sectors to VAWG by assessing progress through an annual survey, updating guidance to cover all forms of VAWG not just domestic abuse, and promoting robust policies, training, and membership of expert networks.

Alongside this, the Employment Rights Bill will strengthen the Equality Act 2010's protections against sexual harassment in the workplace by making it clear that employers must take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their employees, and by introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties such as customers and clients. It will strengthen whistleblower protections, ensuring sexual harassment can be reported as a protected disclosure, and will prevent misuse of non-disclosure agreements that silence victims of harassment or discrimination. The Victims and Courts Bill will extend this to all victims and direct witnesses of crime.

# Accountability



## Accountability

This Government is determined to meet its goal of halving VAWG. Alongside ambition, we need accountability. Significant investment and complex delivery systems require clear governance, transparency and measurable outcomes.

## Governance

Halving VAWG will be a programme of change which impacts the lives of millions. To ensure that change is felt by the public, a cross-government VAWG Ministerial Group will be the core governance structure to drive progress. This Group has led the creation of the Strategy and will continue to drive its implementation, ensuring that publication marks the beginning, not the end, of our ambition, and that our vision translates into real change. Co-chaired by the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls and the Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls, and attended by Ministers from across government, it embodies the approach we are taking to embed this mission into every corner of public life. This Ministerial Group will meet for a cross-government board approximately every quarter to review progress and risks to meeting our aim. Supporting ministers in their decisions will be a VAWG team spanning the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Education and Health.

Public accountability is vital. We will publish an annual report on progress offering the public and parliament an opportunity to scrutinise this work.



## Monitoring

We will measure our ambition to halve VAWG through a combined estimate of the proportion of people aged 16 and over who have experienced any of domestic abuse, sexual assault<sup>82</sup>, or stalking, in the previous 12 months, as measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).<sup>83</sup> This measure includes cases which have not been disclosed to the police or other agencies. First published on 24 July 2025,<sup>84</sup> the combined measure differs from previous prevalence estimates which did not combine crime types. This metric is available by sex of the victim to show specific estimates for women and men separately, with an aim to produce breakdowns by other characteristics in the future. As the CSEW does not survey people under the age of 16, we cannot include them in this combined measure. However, we are working with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on how we can best understand the prevalence of VAWG for those under 16, including considering alternative sources.

Our baseline to measure the ambition against, is that 11.3% of people aged 16 and over (approximately 5.4 million people) experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking in England and Wales in the year ending March 2024.<sup>85</sup> As such our ambition is to halve this number by the year ending March 2034. In the year ending March 2025, it was 10.6% (or around 5.1 million people).<sup>86</sup>

These crimes are complex, and so we need to use more than one metric to measure our progress against this Strategy more broadly. That is why we are using supporting headline metrics focused on female homicide, repeat domestic abuse, and the prevalence of sexual harassment. These do not cover all types of VAWG because, for example, crime types like female genital mutilation are not covered by the CSEW as it is not possible to produce a reliable estimate that way, meaning we need to do more work to understand prevalence. However, these metrics cover some of the highest harm and highest volume crimes that we can currently robustly measure. In addition, we will use a range of sub-metrics to measure progress across government against the pillars of this Strategy.

Some of our measures and metrics are still in development as they include data from new sources or require more granular data from existing sources. In addition, we know the insight we can gather from the data available to us is often limited by data quality issues. We will work with data partners, such as police forces, to improve the quality of data available to us. Where we can, we will gather and understand data by demographics. As such we will expand what we monitor over time to enhance our understanding of VAWG, such as developing suitable health sub-metrics as part of the roll-out of the Steps to Safety referral service for general practitioners and the expansion of the Child House model.

We will report on the development and latest trends in our measures as part of our annual progress reports. We will use our performance framework, together with broader insights, to understand the reasons behind any changes we see in our measures. We will work collaboratively with the Welsh Government, Scottish Government, and Northern Ireland Executive on data-sharing and analysis and assessing progress made against the Strategy including through sharing of best practice.

Key headline metric		
Prevalence of VAWG among people aged 16 and over (combined measure of domestic abuse, sexual assault, <sup>87</sup> and stalking)		
Supporting headline metrics		
Female homicides	Repeat domestic abuse	Prevalence of sexual harassment
Sub-metrics		
Prevention and Early Intervention	Perpetrators	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence of VAWG among children and young people</li> <li>Attitudes towards women, misogyny, and harmful behaviour</li> <li>Prevalence of online harms</li> <li>Protection orders made and breached</li> <li>Multi-agency risk assessment conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police recorded crime</li> <li>Referrals from the police to the CPS for early advice or charging decisions</li> <li>Charges</li> <li>Prosecutions</li> <li>Victim attrition (at police, CPS, and court stages)</li> <li>Timeliness (of police, CPS, and court stages)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victims reporting to the police, healthcare, and other professionals and support services</li> <li>Use of helplines</li> <li>Domestic abuse safe accommodation</li> <li>New social housing tenancies for those leaving last home due to domestic abuse</li> </ul>

*Table 2: performance framework for monitoring halving VAWG in a decade*

## Evidence and evaluation

VAWG is complex and constantly evolving. The hidden nature of these crimes and behaviours makes it difficult to undertake comprehensive research and evaluation to understand its drivers and effective interventions. As a result, evidence in some areas remains limited or is still emerging. However, it is not acceptable to treat VAWG as inevitable; we must prioritise building a robust evidence base, understanding what works to stop these crimes, and identifying the most effective interventions.

This Strategy is grounded in the best available research and analysis, including an evidence review which included screening of over 2,000 academic papers to identify relevant evidence of what works to reduce violence against women and girls and support victims and survivors. We also learnt from international best practice by examining approaches in countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States, and Spain, which embed VAWG prevention within wider efforts to tackle gender inequality. Our evidence review found strong evidence for interventions like healthy relationships education in

schools and promising evidence for some perpetrator programmes, which is why they feature prominently in this strategy. It is important though that interventions should not be limited to those we know work given the limited evidence in some areas. Evidence gaps include evidence of what works to reduce non-contact sexual offences, stalking, ‘honour’-based’ abuse, and misogynistic and harmful content. There are also large gaps in long-term follow-up evidence and impact evidence due to the hidden nature of abuse, and ethical and practical barriers.

This Government is committed to improving our evidence base and understanding of ‘what works’ to address VAWG. For too long, the inability to nationally evidence what works has prevented government investment. This Strategy introduces innovative funding to provide provision which did not previously exist – a new referral service for general practices to refer into; training for teachers to deliver healthy relationships; and new technology across police forces.

As we test and learn what works, we will adapt and strengthen our approach to ensure it remains grounded in the strongest possible evidence. As part of this, Chief Scientific Advisors and UK Research and Innovation platforms will work alongside policy to develop UK specific research that is tailored to evidence gaps. In early 2026, the Test, Learn and Grow Programme (led by Cabinet Office) will launch an accelerator project in partnership with Islington Council, to reduce violence against women and girls. The focus is to develop and test solutions that reflect the needs of local people with experience of the issue. Learning will be shared rapidly across the city working with London Councils, the Greater London Authority and the London Office of Technology and Innovation. As well as with the cross-government VAWG Ministerial Group.

In addition, a joint Cabinet Office-HM Treasury unit, the Evaluation Taskforce, will lead a programme to ensure evidence and evaluation continually underpins the delivery of this Strategy.

To help us try and test innovative new approaches, we will also establish an Innovation Council on VAWG to work with the Office for the Impact Economy. The Innovation Council will bring together key voices from the frontline, research, private business and philanthropy with the task of identifying and evaluating innovative new projects, and then scaling those interventions that we think are likely to have the biggest impact.

## Delivery Partners

### Learning from experts and those with lived experiences

Lived experience and expert voices have been central to shaping this Strategy. We engaged with over 100 organisations, including specialist civil society organisations, criminal justice partners, frontline services, and academics, through thematic roundtables and our Strategy Advisory Board. We are grateful to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and her team for convening a Survivor Summit, where Ministers heard powerful testimony directly from survivors.

The Government's ongoing work on VAWG must be informed by experts, delivery partners, and victims and survivors. We will continue to engage extensively with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including policing and criminal justice agencies, local authorities and councils, academics, third sector experts and those with lived experiences, to ensure we are factoring in expert and frontline voices and are embedding the Civil Society Covenant principles. This will include continuing our Strategy Advisory Board, which was set up to inform the development and implementation of the Strategy and is attended by over 20 experts from the VAWG sector, criminal justice delivery agencies, and academia. No10 will convene a cross-government stakeholder forum in 2026 to ensure we continue to collaborate, maintain momentum and draw on expertise to problem solve together.

The Government, in line with the Civil Society Covenant, values the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector's vital role in shaping and delivering VAWG services through trusted, lived experience-informed partnerships that strengthen strategies and support victims and survivors.

## **Devolved Governments and Overseas Territories**

### **Devolved Governments**

This Strategy applies to areas under UK Government responsibility. Commitments on crime, policing, and justice apply to England and Wales, while those on health, social care, housing, transport, and education apply to England only, as these are devolved matters. Reserved areas, such as online safety and immigration, apply across the UK.

We have engaged with the Welsh Government, Scottish Government, and Northern Ireland Executive in the development of the Strategy, including through roundtables with Welsh stakeholders and representation of the Wales National Advisor on VAWG as part of our Strategy Advisory Board. Each Devolved Government has its own strategy, and our Strategy has been informed by best practices drawn from the approaches of all three Devolved Governments. We are committed to sharing learning and best practice to make our work complementary.

VAWG is a national and international emergency, and we will continue working with the Welsh Government, Scottish Government, and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure a coordinated UK-wide response.

### ***Welsh Government***

Tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) has been a long-standing priority for the Welsh Government, as demonstrated through the ground-breaking Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act.<sup>88</sup>

The Act sets out provisions for a National VAWDASV strategy, as well as local strategies developed by partnerships between local authorities and health boards as well as invited others (including Police and Crime Commissioners and the third sector). The Welsh Government published its second in May 2022<sup>89</sup>, which set out the vision to end VAWG,

domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. The VAWDASV Blueprint approach brings together devolved and reserved public authorities, non-governmental organisations, specialist services and survivors whose voices are integral to securing a future without VAWG to deliver the Welsh Government's strategy.

### ***Scottish Government***

Equally Safe, Scotland's strategy to prevent and eradicate VAWG, sets out a vision to prevent violence from occurring in the first place, to build the capability and capacity of support services, and to strengthen the justice response to victims, survivors and perpetrators.<sup>90</sup> It is informed by the experience of victims and survivors and by the expertise of professionals working in the field. It has been co-owned by the Scottish Government and Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) since 2014.

The strategy is supported by the Delivering Equally Safe Fund which provides £21.6 million for FY25/25, supporting 115 projects from 107 organisations. Additionally, the Scottish Government awarded £48 million to victims' organisations for the period 2022-2025 under our Victim Centred Approach Fund as part of their commitment to putting victims at the heart of the justice system.

### ***Northern Ireland Executive***

In 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive directed that a Strategy to End VAWG (EVAWG) be developed, and the Executive Office is leading on this whole of government, whole of society approach. The Ending VAWG Strategic Framework was launched in September 2024.<sup>91</sup> It was co-designed by a wide range of people representing different organisations and viewpoints from across society and government, community and voluntary and other sectors, including people with lived experience.

The first Delivery Plan, covering the first 2 years (2024-26), includes key actions which will drive community investment, increase collaboration, raise awareness and support change through effective campaigns and messaging.<sup>92</sup>

### **Overseas Territories**

This Strategy is an opportunity to shape and inform the work we do to address VAWG across the UK's Overseas Territories (OTs), reflecting a shared commitment to the safety of over 270,000 residents. OT administrations have progressed legislative reforms, improved frontline services, coordinated multi-agency responses, and launched public awareness campaigns to strengthen the response to VAWG, but there is more to do. The Home Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will continue to support locally-led initiatives across all pillars of the Strategy, drawing on global best practice and enhancing data collection, including on tech-facilitated VAWG. We are committed to ensuring that VAWG is addressed comprehensively across all UK jurisdictions.

## International context

VAWG is a global issue that no country can tackle alone. The UK works with international partners to share evidence, learn from best practice, and apply proven approaches, including through the What Works initiative. Following the UK's ratification of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO's recent evaluation highlighted progress but also areas for improvement,<sup>93</sup> which we will address in collaboration with Devolved Governments. The UK plays an active role in global efforts such as the Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse and the International Alliance for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. Through these partnerships, we aim to strengthen our mission to halve VAWG by learning from global successes and innovations.

## Turning Strategy into Action

This Strategy marks the start of a ten-year journey. While this document sets out our vision and priorities, the full breadth of commitments is detailed in the accompanying Action Plan.

To achieve our ambition of halving VAWG within a decade, we must keep progress under constant review, adapt to new evidence, and share learning widely. We will continue to draw on best practice and emerging research, ensuring our approach remains grounded in what works. As part of this, the UK will use its global platform to drive coordinated international action, with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) convening new partnerships and coalitions with countries around the world committed to tackling VAWG. Together, we will learn, innovate, and act on the strongest evidence to deliver real change. This builds on the work of All In, a global panel co-launched by the FCDO to mobilise political leadership and funding for evidence-based prevention strategies.

We have set ourselves a significant challenge, but this Government will rise to it. Victims and survivors deserve nothing less. To ensure accountability, we will publish regular updates on progress. Our vision is clear: a UK where the right of women and girls to live free from abuse is fundamental non-negotiable right, not a privilege.

## Achievements to date

We have taken significant steps to strengthen protections, improve enforcement, and support victims and survivors. Key achievements include:

- **Updating the law**
  - Criminalised the creation of non-consensual sexually explicit deepfakes under the **Data (Use and Access) Act 2025**.
  - Introduced offences for taking intimate images without consent and installing equipment to enable such acts.
  - Introduced six measures to tackle stalking, including statutory guidance enabling police to release identities of online stalkers and a review of stalking legislation.
  - Introducing legislation that criminalises strangulation and suffocation in pornography.

- **Enhanced Policing and Enforcement**
  - Embedded domestic abuse specialists in 999 control rooms under **Raneem's Law** across five police forces to improve risk assessments and response.
  - Established the **National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection** (April 2025) with £13.1 million funding, including a £2 million uplift for targeted policing.
  - Expanded **MAPPA** to automatically include offenders convicted of controlling or coercive behaviour sentenced to 12 months or more.
- **Tackling 'Honour'-Based Abuse**
  - Announced a statutory definition of HBA, launched community engagement campaigns, enhanced training, and funded specialist support services.
- **Improving Victim Support**
  - CPS recruited over 40 **Victim Liaison Officers** for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) units, ensuring consistent victim support.
  - Rolled out **pre-trial meetings** for adult victims of rape and serious sexual offences, enabling victims to speak with prosecution teams before giving evidence.
  - Launched a pilot enabling RASSO victims to request a **review of their case** from a different prosecutor before a final decision is taken to stop the case.
- **Family Court Reforms**
  - Expanded **the Pathfinder programme**.
  - Announced intention to repeal the presumption of parental involvement under the **Children Act 1989**.
- **Strengthening Local Support**
  - Required local authorities to ensure safe accommodation for victims and children.
  - Allocated **£160** million to local authorities for 2025/26 (a £30 million uplift) to expand provision and strengthen partnerships with specialist domestic abuse providers.

# Support available for victims and survivors

1. **Refuge** – an organisation that provides support for women who are victims of domestic abuse. Their National Domestic Abuse Helpline is 0808 2000 247, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their live chat service is available Monday – Friday 3pm – 10pm at [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk).
2. **Rape Crisis England & Wales** – the feminist charity working to end child sexual abuse, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and all other forms of sexual violence, and support survivors to find their local Rape Crisis centre: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/find-a-centre/>. Their 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line is available 24 hours a day by calling 0808 500 2222 or via live chat [www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk](http://www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk).
3. **Victim Support** – a specialist service helping anyone affected by any types of crime, not only those who experience it directly, but also their friends, family and any other people involved. 0808 168 9111, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Live Chat is available on their website, [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk).
4. **Solace Women's Aid** – an organisation supporting all victims of violence against women and girls. Please call on 0808 802 5565.
5. **Money Advice Plus** – Centre for Excellence for Debt and Economic Abuse Services. Offers a helpline and regulated debt casework service supporting victims of economic abuse. The helpline provides a safe space to discuss financial situations, prioritise issues, and move toward economic safety. Contact: 0808 196 8845.
6. **Women's Aid** – an organisation supporting women affected by domestic abuse. Live Chat is available on their website, [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) or email [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)
7. **Respect** – the UK charity stopping domestic abuse perpetrators, providing the Respect Phoneline for people concerned about their behaviour 0808 802 4040, [respectphoneline.org.uk](http://respectphoneline.org.uk) open Monday to Friday, 10am – 5pm. Respect also provides the Men's Advice Line for male victims of domestic abuse [mensadviceline.org.uk](http://mensadviceline.org.uk) open Monday to Friday, 10am – 5pm
8. **Hourglass** – a specialist organisation aiming to end the harm, abuse, and exploitation of older people in the UK. Their helpline can be accessed by phone on 0808 808 8141, by text on 07860 052906, or by emailing [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org).

9. **Galop** – a specialist organisation and LGBT anti-violence charity offering support to LGBT victims. Their domestic abuse Helpline is 0800 999 5428. Their email address is: [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk).
10. **Karma Nirvana National ‘Honour’-Based Abuse (HBA) helpline** – a specialist organisation supporting victims of ‘honour’-based abuse and forced marriage. Their helpline is 0800 599 9247 and is open 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.
11. **Suzy Lamplugh Trust National Stalking helpline** – 0808 802 0300 9.30am to 8pm on a Monday and Wednesday, and 9:30am to 4pm on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
12. **Revenge Porn helpline** – open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. 0345 600 0459 or [help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk](mailto:help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk).
13. **Sign Health Domestic Abuse Service** – a specialist domestic abuse service to support the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. Please text 07800 003 421, or email [da@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:da@signhealth.org.uk).
14. **Stay Safe East** – a specialist organisation providing support for disabled and Deaf victims of domestic abuse. Telephone or SMS/Text: 07865 340 122, or email [enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk).
15. **NSPCC** – The UK’s leading children’s charity working to prevent abuse, rebuild children’s lives and support families. Their contact number is 0808 800 5000, 10am to 8pm Monday to Friday, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
16. **NSPCC FGM helpline** – 0800 028 3550 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday, or email [fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgm.help@nspcc.org.uk).
17. **UK Forced Marriage Unit** – 020 7008 0151, or email [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk) providing support to victims and potential victims of forced marriage alongside professionals dealing with cases. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).
18. **Southall Black Sisters** – an organisation providing support for ethnic minority victims and migrant women. Their Helpline is 020 8571 9595, open between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday, or email [info@southallblacksisters.co.uk](mailto:info@southallblacksisters.co.uk).
19. **Aurora New Dawn** provide specialist support for Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force personnel and their family members who are victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence or Stalking. It is open Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm at +44 (0)333 0912 527.
20. **Hestia Respond to Abuse Advice Line** – a specialist advice line supporting employers to help staff experiencing domestic abuse on 0203 879 3695 or via email [adviceline.EB@hestia.org](mailto:adviceline.EB@hestia.org) 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
21. **Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)** – SARCs provide medical, practical and emotional support, and forensic medical examination if required, to anyone who has

been raped, sexually assaulted or abused. You can get help from a SARC by booking an appointment with your nearest one: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/sexual-health-services/find-a-rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centre/>...

22. **Broken Rites** – a group offering mutual support and information to separated and divorced spouses and partners of clergy, ministers, and Church Army Officers. Please e-mail [enquiries@brokenrites.org](mailto:enquiries@brokenrites.org).
23. **Clinks** – an organisation that supports the voluntary sector working with people in the criminal justice system and their families. Clinks have a directory of services, although it is not exhaustive, and are experienced in supporting women who have suffered domestic abuse. Their telephone number is 020 7383 0966.
24. **Dogs Trust Freedom Project** – a specialist dog fostering service for victims fleeing domestic abuse. Their contact number is 020 7837 0006 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm).
25. **FLOWS** – Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors – a service delivered by RCJ Advice who provide free and confidential legal advice for women survivors on seeking a protective order from the courts. They can be contacted on 0203 745 7707, by email at [flows@rjadvice.org.uk](mailto:flows@rjadvice.org.uk) or via their website at <https://www.flows.org.uk/>
26. **Jewish Women's Aid** – a specialist organisation supporting Jewish women and children affected by domestic abuse. Their helpline is 0808 801 0500 and is open Mondays-Thursdays from 9.30am to 9.30pm (excluding Jewish holidays and bank holidays).
27. **Muslim Women's Network** – a specialist organisation supporting Muslim women and girls. Their helpline is 0800 999 5786 or email: [info@mwnhelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@mwnhelpline.co.uk)
28. **Sikh Women's Aid** – a specialist organisation supporting Sikh women and girls affected by domestic, sexual, honour-based, spiritual, or faith-related abuse. Their helpline is 0333 090 1220 or email: [info@sikhwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:info@sikhwomensaid.org.uk).
29. **Rights of Women** – a charity that provides free confidential advice and information to women on the law in England and Wales with a specific focus on Violence Against Women and Girls.
  - National family law advice line: 020 7251 6577, open between 7:00pm-9:00pm Tuesday-Thursday and 12:00pm-2:00pm Friday
  - London family law advice line: 020 7608 1137, open between 10:00am-12:00pm/2:00pm-4:00pm Monday and Thursday, and 2:00pm-4:00pm Tuesday-Wednesday
  - Criminal law advice line: 020 7251 8887, open between 10:00am-12:00pm Tuesday and 7:00pm-9:00pm Thursday
  - Immigration and asylum law advice line: 020 7490 7689, open between 10:00am-12:00pm/2:00pm-4:00pm Monday and Thursday

30. **Legal Aid** – legal aid can help you get legal advice, mediation or representation in court or tribunal if you are eligible and cannot afford to pay for it. Further information can be found here [Legal aid: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/legal-aid)
31. **Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA)** – provides specialist advocacy and support to families and friends bereaved by domestic homicide, domestic abuse-related suicides, and unexplained deaths. Contact: [help@aafda.org.uk](mailto:help@aafda.org.uk) or 07887 488 464. [www.aafda.org.uk](http://www.aafda.org.uk)
32. **The Survivors Trust** – The Survivors Trust is a national membership organisation supporting specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the voluntary sector. [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org).
33. **We Are Survivors** – supporting boys and men, and their loved ones, in the UK affected by sexual harms. [www.wearesurvivors.org.uk](http://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk).

## **Wales-specific organisations**

34. **Live Fear Free helpline** – 0808 801 0800 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also text on 07860 077 333.
35. **Dyn Wales helpline** – an organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse. 0808 801 0321 or email [support@dynwales.org](mailto:support@dynwales.org) (support for male victims).
36. **Welsh Women's Aid** – an organisation supporting Welsh women affected by domestic abuse. Information and support is available on their website: [www.welshwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk)
37. **BAWSO** – a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting ethnic minority communities. Their Wales-wide helpline can be contacted on 0800 731 8147 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# Endnotes

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