



UK Government

Freedom from Violence and Abuse - the Strategy

This is the easy read version of
Freedom from Violence and Abuse:
a cross-government strategy to build
a safer society for women and girls.
Volume 1 – Strategy

December 2025



What the words mean

Artificial intelligence (AI)	A type of computer technology that allows machines to think, learn, and solve problems almost like a human.
Consent	Give permission for something to happen.
Cyberflashing	Sending sexual or rude photos to another persons phone to frighten or embarrass them.
Deepfake	A piece of media - a video, image, or audio recording - that has been digitally altered using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make a person appear to say or do something they never actually did.
Domestic abuse	Bullying, abusive or violent behaviour by a partner, ex-partner, or family member. Usually women are the victims and the abuse is done by men - however, men can also be victims. Children can also be victims too
Domestic Abuse Protection Orders	This order from the courts tells a perpetrator to keep away from their victim.
Economic abuse	Abuse where someone controls someone's money.
Female genital mutilation (FGM)	When a girl or a woman has part of her genitals (private parts) cut and there is no medical reason for it. It is against the law.
Forced marriage	When someone is made to marry someone else against their will or arranges for a child under 18 to marry.
Harassment	Behaving in a way to frighten or upset another person.

‘Honour’-based abuse	Violence, abuse or threats done by someone’s partner, family or community to protect the honour of the individual, their family or community. Sometimes it is a punishment for breaking the family or community’s rules. It can be physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.
National Youth Strategy	A big plan launched in 2025 about a better future for young people.
Offender	someone who has caused harm and has a conviction from the courts.
Online sexual exploitation	When someone uses the internet, social media, games, or mobile phones to sexually exploit or abuse another person. They may trick, pressure, or threaten someone to send sexual pictures or videos, or to do sexual acts online.
Perpetrator	Someone who causes harm, including those outside of the criminal justice system.
Pornography	Pictures, videos, writing, or audio that show naked bodies or people having sex. People may look at pornography for sexual pleasure.
Rape	When a person forces someone else to have sex, by physical force or by frightening them.
Sexual harassment	Unwanted sexual behaviour. It includes verbal, non-verbal, physical, or online behaviour.
Sexual offences	Sexual offences are crimes where someone is forced, pressured, or tricked into sexual activity, or where sexual activity happens without consent. This can include rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, grooming, secretly watching someone for sexual reasons, or sharing private sexual images without permission.

Spiking	Putting alcohol or drugs into someone's drink (or food) without their knowledge or consent .
Stalking	Somebody makes the victim frightened and upset because they won't leave them alone. This can be following them around, or sending them lots of messages on the phone or by email.
Stalking Protection Orders	This order from the courts tells a perpetrator to keep away from their victim.
Vetting	Checking someone's background to make sure they are suitable for a job.

There is a list of support organisations at end of the document.

Message from the Prime Minister



Sir Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister, has set a national goal to halve violence against women and girls in 10 years.

Message from Ministers Jess Phillips and Alex Davies-Jones



Jess Phillips is the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls. Alex Davies-Jones is the Minister for Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls



They are working together so that women and girls can live without fear.

Thank you

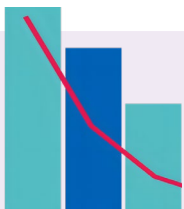


To all the women, victims, survivors, and organisations who have helped to develop this big plan.

About the plan



This explains what the government will do to make the UK a safer place for women and girls and support them to live free from violence and abuse.



The government wants to cut these crimes in half over the next ten years.



The plan focuses on three main goals:

1. stopping violence and abuse before it starts,
2. catching and punishing people who abuse women and girls,
3. helping victims who have been abused to recover and feel safe.

All of these goals are supported by one important idea. Everyone in society needs to work together. These changes need to happen in every part of society.

About the plan



Violence against women and girls covers a wide range of crime types and behaviours that are mainly experienced by women and done by men.



Violence against women and girls crimes and behaviours include:

- **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 internet abuse, including **'cyberflashing'** and non-consensual intimate image abuse,
- violence that leads to death, by killing or suicide
- sexual exploitation, including forcing women to sell sex and human trafficking,
- **spiking.**

These words are explained in 'what the words mean' above.



Stopping violence before it starts



The government wants to teach young people about respecting others and having healthy relationships.



Schools will help children learn about **consent** and how to treat others well. Teachers, parents, and role models will be trained to talk to young people about these topics.



The government also wants to make the internet safer by stopping harmful content, like violent videos or messages, from spreading.



They will make sure websites have rules to protect young people from seeing violence to women and girls online.



They also want to stop apps that create **deepfakes** - fake pictures of people - without their permission.

Catching and punishing people who abuse others



The government will make sure police and courts work better to catch and punish people who abuse women and girls.



They will use smart tools like facial recognition to find abusers faster.



Police will have special teams to handle cases involving sexual violence.



New laws will make it easier to protect victims and stop abusers from harming others.



For example, there will be orders to keep abusers away from their victims, and police will use technology to track them.

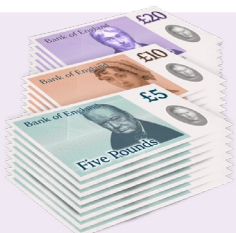


The government also wants to make sure that people who abuse others face serious consequences, even if they don't go to court.

Helping victims feel safe and recover



The government will make sure those who have been abused can get help, no matter where they live or who they are.



They will spend a lot of money to improve services like counselling, safe places to stay, and support for women who need help with money or housing.

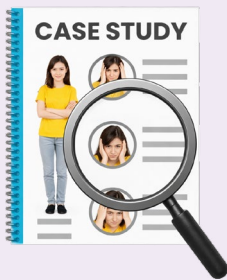


They will also make sure children who have been victims of abuse can get care in special places where they feel safe and don't have to keep telling their story over and over.



Doctors, teachers, and other workers will be better trained to notice when someone might need help and connect them to the right services.

Learning from the past



The government wants to learn from past tragedies. They will study these cases to make sure the same mistakes don't happen again. They will also make sure that people who abuse others can't hide or escape punishment.

Everyone can help



The government says that stopping violence and abuse is something everyone can help with. They want people to speak up when they see someone being abused or treated badly.



They will run campaigns to teach people how to safely help and how to treat others with respect.



They also want workplaces, schools, and public spaces to be safe places for women and girls. For example, workplaces will have rules to stop harassment.

Working together



The government will work with other countries and parts of the UK to share ideas and learn from each other.



They will also listen to experts and victims and survivors to make sure the plan works well.

How will we know it's working?



The government will check every year to see if fewer people have been victims. They will look at numbers and listen to feedback to make sure their plan is helping.



If something isn't working, they will make changes to improve it.

Help for people who need it



This list gives names and contact details of the many organisations that can help women who are victims or survivors. These groups offer support, advice, safe places to stay, and help with money or legal problems.



Some groups focus on helping specific people, like children, older people, or those from different backgrounds.

Links to support organisations

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.
2. **Rape Crisis England & Wales** – a 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 open 24 hours a day by calling 0808 500 2222 or via live chat www.247sexualabusesupport.org.uk.
3. **Victim Support** – a specialist service helping anyone affected by any type 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.
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 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 or email helpline@womensaid.org.uk
7. **Respect** – the UK charity stopping domestic abuse perpetrators, providing the Respect Phonenumber for people concerned about their behaviour 0808 802 4040, respectphonenumber.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 open Monday to Friday, 10am – 5pm 0808 801 0327 or email info@mensadviceline.org.uk

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.

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.

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** – a national charity supporting victims of stalking 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** – an organisation which support victims of non-consensual intimate image abuse and can assist in taking down images online open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. 0345 600 0459 or 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.

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.

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

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

17. **UK Forced Marriage Unit** – 020 7008 0151, or email fmufco.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.

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 advice.line.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

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. **FLAWS – 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@rjadvicelaw.org.uk or via their website at <https://www.flaws.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

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

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

31. **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)

32. **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 or 07887 488 464. www.aafda.org.uk

33. **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

34. **We Are Survivors** – supporting boys and men, and their loved ones, in the UK affected by sexual harms. www.wearesurvivors.org.uk.
Wales-specific organisations

35. **Live Fear Free helpline** – 0808 801 0800 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also text on 07860 077 333.

36. **Dyn Wales helpline** – an organisation supporting male victims of domestic abuse. 0808 801 0321 or email support@dynwales.org (support for male victims).

37. **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

38. **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.

