Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

Three-year strategy 2026-2029

July 2026

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July 2026

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Foreword

Since taking office, I have been determined to ensure that all victims and survivors – no matter who they are or where they live - are able to get the right help and support to recover and rebuild from abuse.

Over five years later, I'm pleased that no matter the change in government or leadership, domestic abuse has remained a key political priority. This has seen my office, in partnership with others, strengthen oversight in the family justice system, place a spotlight on the lessons we must learn from domestic abuse related deaths, amplify the voices of child victims and champion greater protections for migrant survivors.

While there is much to be proud of, we still have much more to do.

When I speak to victims and survivors, frontline workers and statutory agencies, three persistent problems come up time and again. Too many victims reach out for help and don't get the response they need at the very moment when the right support could be lifesaving. Frontline services are chronically underfunded, leaving too many people without

anywhere to turn. And when the system fails victims, there is little accountability to make it right.

This strategy seeks to change this. Guided by what survivors have told us and the independent role that I am able to play using my unique statutory powers, we will be focused on driving change within the criminal justice system, improving the health response to domestic abuse and ensuring specialist services have the funding they need.

This new three-year plan also comes at a moment of real opportunity. The government's ambition to halve violence against women and girls within a decade provides a once in a generation moment to overhaul our approach to domestic abuse and the attitudes that cause it. I will use every tool I have to ensure survivors' voices and experiences shape how that commitment is delivered.

Domestic abuse is not inevitable. With the right investment, the right support and the right political will, we can tackle and prevent it. I look forward to working closely with people impacted by domestic abuse, specialist

services, agencies and political leaders to turn this strategy into lasting change.

Dame Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

About the Domestic Abuse Commissioner

Established via the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is the independent voice for all victims and survivors of domestic abuse across England and Wales.

Engaging at the highest levels of government, the Commissioner provides public leadership on domestic abuse by speaking with survivors to understand their needs and pressing decision makers to enact the changes that will improve the help and support they receive.

The Commissioner was granted unique data gathering powers and the ability to publish and lay recommendations before Parliament via the Domestic Abuse Act, which public bodies are required to respond to by setting out how they will improve their response.

Dame Nicole Jacobs was appointed as the first Domestic Abuse Commissioner in 2019. This strategy marks the start of her new three-year term, during which the office will use research, advocacy and convening powers to highlight the changes needed to tackle and prevent domestic abuse, ensure perpetrators are held to account and push for survivors to

receive the specialist support they need to rebuild and thrive.

Mission

Championing a stronger, more consistent response to domestic abuse, amplifying survivors' voices to drive the changes that enable them to rebuild and thrive.

Our approach

How we work

Everything we do is shaped by the values that guide us.

We are compassionate towards others and respectful of people's time, knowledge and expertise, we seek out opportunities to collaborate, and we are courageous when taking difficult decisions and having honest conversations when they matter.

These values are not just internal commitments - they shape every interaction and underpin the trust placed in this office to deliver for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Listen and learn
We engage with people who have experienced domestic abuse to understand their concerns and hear their ideas on what they want to see change within our systems and services. This helps us build a clearer picture of what works - from preventing domestic abuse in the first place to supporting people as they recover. We take a gender-informed approach, based on the understanding that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls, while recognising the impact abuse has on all victims and survivors.

Speak up and share what works
We use what we learn to shape how domestic abuse is understood and tackled across England and Wales. We work to raise awareness, share effective practice, and ensure that good responses become the norm rather than the exception.

Push for change
As an independent office, we speak publicly and candidly about systems that are failing victims and survivors. We use evidence and amplify survivors' voices to push for better laws, policies and services, and to hold local and national government to account.

Work together
We cannot create change alone. We work alongside the domestic abuse sector, public services, local and national government, politicians, and most importantly people with lived experience of domestic abuse to push for the accountability, funding and support needed to ensure survivors can rebuild and recover from harm.

Informing our strategy

This strategy builds on the previous strategy and has been shaped by listening to victims and survivors, frontline domestic abuse services, statutory agencies and political leaders. Through this engagement we have identified three persistent problems that cut across every part of the response to domestic abuse.

The moment people first seek help is critical. Whether reaching out to a local support service, the police or their GP, the response victims receive at that moment can be lifesaving. Too often, however, the right support is either not there or falls short of what victims and survivors need. We will push for the right services to be there and ensure they

respond to survivors in a way that is timely, trauma-informed, consistent and safe.

Services are not funded well enough: Years of underinvestment and a lack of ring-fenced funding for domestic abuse services means that too many people cannot get the help and support they need. We will push for spending decisions that properly reflect what frontline services tell us they need.

There is little accountability: When victims and survivors receive a poor or harmful response, there are too few consequences. We will use our powers to scrutinise, challenge and hold national and local government to account on changing this.

Where we want to see change

Victims and survivors interact with many different systems when seeking safety, support and justice. Evidence gathered through our engagement and oversight work identified four areas where reform is most urgently needed to improve the response to domestic abuse.

Over the next three years, the Commissioner's work will focus on specialist services, health, policing and probation. Across each area, we

will use our statutory powers, evidence and convening role to drive accountability and systemic improvement. Our ambition for each area is:

Specialist services

Anyone impacted by domestic abuse can access independent specialist support when they need it, no matter where they live or what their circumstances are.

We will do this by advocating for survivors' needs to be reflected in the way services are defined and commissioned and through ensuring government spending decisions adequately reflect what specialist services say they need to meet demand.

Health

All people impacted by domestic abuse can access the mental health support they need, at the right time**.**

We will do this by advocating for domestic abuse to be rightly recognised as a public health issue. We will also push for healthcare specialists to get the training and advice they

need to identify and respond to domestic abuse, so that people impacted get the support they need.

Policing

The police response to domestic abuse is shaped by the needs and circumstances of everyone impacted by domestic abuse and works to prevent further harm.

We will do this by ensuring the proposed police reform creates a system that listens to victims and survivors and builds a structure that responds to their needs. We will also highlight and share good practice to drive consistency in frontline policing and ensure officers are equipped with the knowledge and understanding they need to effectively respond to domestic abuse.

Probation

The Probation Service responds to the needs of people impacted by domestic abuse within its remit and successfully changes behaviour to prevent further harm.

We will do this by ensuring probation can effectively work in partnership with agencies and specialist domestic abuse services. We will also seek to ensure all of probation have the tools and information they need to effectively address domestic abuse, tackle harmful behaviour and keep victims safe.

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