



HM Government

TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE PLAN

**This is everyone's responsibility.
Let's stop domestic abuse now.**

March 2022

CP 639



Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan

'This is everyone's responsibility. Let's stop domestic abuse now.'

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

March 2022

CP 639



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Contents

Forewords	3
Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary	3
Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Safeguarding	5
Introduction	7
What we have achieved	8
Building on our achievements	9
Why we must tackle domestic abuse	10
Our approach	11
Executive Summary	15
Prioritising Prevention	15
Supporting Victims	17
Pursuing Perpetrators	19
A Stronger System	21
Prioritising Prevention	23
What we know, do not know, and need to do	23
What we are already doing and what more we will do	24
Supporting Victims	28
What we know, do not know, and need to do	28
What we are already doing and what more we will do	32
Pursuing Perpetrators	46
What we know, do not know, and need to do	46
What we are already doing and what more we will do	49
A Stronger System	58
What we know, do not know, and need to do	58
What we are already doing and what more we will do	61
Delivery	70
Implementation	70

Monitoring progress	70
Governance	71
Annex A - Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence Breakdown of Responses	72
Annex B - Data on Domestic Abuse	78
Annex C - Commitments	87
Annex D - References	95

Forewords

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary



Domestic abuse is the most common form of violence against women and girls.

In England and Wales, 2.3 million people are known to have experienced it in one year, 1.6 million of them women. It is likely that we all know someone who is being hurt in this way, at the hands of a person who is supposed to make them feel safe and secure. Despite being such a pervasive and insidious crime, it too often goes unnoticed by others.

The COVID-19 pandemic made domestic abuse loom larger in the public's conscience. We must not lose that focus. Through this Plan, we will deliver the practical steps needed for the whole of society to say, 'enough is enough'.

This Government has already taken steps to change things, with funding to increase support for victims and survivors, the introduction of coercive and controlling behaviour as an offence in 2015, and the passing of our landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognised that children too can be victims of domestic abuse. This Plan sets out how we will invest over £230 million to deliver many of the Act's provisions to bring about a response from all parts of society, to overcome domestic abuse.

This Plan will place greater focus than ever before on preventing abuse. We will do this by improving our understanding of what works to prevent domestic abuse, and using education as a tool to address the harmful attitudes and behaviours which can start young and can lead to individuals becoming abusive. We will ensure victims and survivors and their children have access to safe accommodation.

We will be more robust and relentless in our response to domestic abuse perpetrators, whether through electronic tagging, innovative behaviour change programmes, or tougher sentences. And we will examine how to deal with the most harmful abusers, including options for a register of domestic abuse offenders.

It is vital we take the onus off victims and survivors, and that we consider what more needs to be done so they can get the support they need at work and focus on rebuilding their lives. That is why the Government will review whether the current statutory leave provision for employees does enough to support victims and survivors who are escaping domestic abuse. We will set out any next steps later this year.

And why the Government will be investing a minimum of £47.1 million over three years into support services. We will make the police, Family Courts, and Criminal Justice System easier for victims and survivors to navigate. And we will make it easier for them to disclose abuse through continued funding of vital helplines, and to get the tailored support they need from specialist and 'by and for' support services.

Our approach is all about enabling the whole system to operate with greater coordination and effectiveness. This will include training for those professionals most likely to encounter domestic abuse to better identify it and refer victims and survivors to appropriate support, including up to £7.5 million investment into interventions in healthcare settings. Reforms to Domestic Homicide Reviews will improve our understanding and drive down the frequency of these terrible crimes.

This Plan for tackling domestic abuse is fully aligned with the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy that we published last Summer. Both that Strategy and this Plan are informed by the unprecedented 180,000 responses we received to the Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence. They echo the voices of victims and survivors.

It is vital for both to recognise the disproportionate impact that domestic abuse has on women, and to ensure male victims and survivors get the support they need. That is why we have published a refreshed Supporting Male Victims document.

Domestic abuse is everyone's business, and we need to stop it now.

Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Safeguarding



Domestic abuse causes untold harm and misery in our society. Victims and survivors endure horrific ordeals that can stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Their experiences must drive our determination to confront these awful crimes wherever and whenever they occur.

This Plan recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. Only by understanding the gendered nature of this crime and recognising the specific needs of all victims and survivors, can the whole of society mount an appropriate response.

Interventions need to begin at an early age. It is vital that we embed attitudes and behaviours which reduce the likelihood of future abusive behaviour. The new Relationships, Health and Sex Education curriculum will help do this.

The Plan also sets out actions to enable relevant professionals to better recognise and act upon abusive behaviours. By expanding the Ask for ANI codeword scheme into Jobcentre Plus settings, we will make it easier for victims and survivors to seek help and support.

We are taking action to bring more domestic abuse perpetrators to justice and reduce reoffending. This includes next steps in our rollout of Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, a key provision in the landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and a commitment to establish a set of standards for perpetrator interventions. The Plan also includes measures to drive down the number of domestic homicides, of which there are still far too many, and improve our knowledge of suicides that take place in the context of domestic abuse.

It is essential that victims and survivors can access a wide range of support. They have suffered terribly and the help available to them can make all the difference. The Plan recognises this and among its many commitments sets out steps to strengthen the provision of specialist and 'by and for' services and ways to encourage employers to go further in their support for staff who may be facing domestic abuse. We take a whole family approach, which recognises children as victims and commits to increasing the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse fund.

This Plan calls for more financial sector firms to sign up to the Financial Abuse Code, which is critical. It will support our efforts to prevent economic abuse and help deliver the best possible outcomes for victims and survivors.

Every case is different, but there are a number of core questions that must drive our approach, such as 'What could have been done to prevent the abuse or intervene earlier?' and 'What more could we do to support the victim or survivor?'

By asking these questions, and by seeking the answers at every turn, we will transform our response to domestic abuse. That is what this Plan is designed to achieve.

None of this would have been possible without the voices of victims and survivors who responded to the Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence. Their testimonies were integral to the development of this Plan. So too was the expertise and insight, for which I am hugely grateful, of charities, police, and frontline professionals.

Domestic abuse may often take place behind closed doors, but we will not let this issue be hidden from view. By asking the right questions and by sticking to this Plan, we will protect the public, root out the abusers, and make our society safer.

Introduction

Domestic abuse is horrendous and pervasive, and still too often hidden from view. It turns victims' and survivors' closest relationships from what should be sources of love and security into sources of pain, fear, and anxiety. This reality is far too common; the 2019-20 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)^a estimated 2.3 million people experienced it in the previous year¹. Women are more likely to be impacted by domestic abuse² and domestic homicide³, and men are most likely to be the perpetrators⁴. Domestic abuse is the most prevalent form of violence against women and girls^b, and its consequences are enormously harmful. Around one in five homicides are related to domestic abuse⁵ and we are concerned about its effect on suicides.

The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated what is an already horrific experience faced by domestic abuse victims and survivors. Lockdown left them, including children, more vulnerable than ever, as they were spending far more time at home with abusers and away from others who might realise something was wrong. That said, domestic abuse affected millions before the COVID-19 pandemic, disproportionately women⁶. It will continue to do so unless we all take responsibility and act.

The brave, harrowing testimonies of victims and survivors of domestic abuse in response to the [Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence](#), made plain how a perpetrator's behaviour has a lasting impact on a victim's and survivor's life. The

^a The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a nationally representative face-to-face victimisation survey, in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. This includes self-completion modules on certain topics, including domestic abuse. For the crime types and population it covers, the CSEW provides a better reflection of the true extent of crime experienced by the population than police-recorded statistics, because the survey includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by, the police.

^b The term 'violence against women and girls' refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term 'violence against women and girls', this refers to all victims and survivors of any of these offences.

Government thanks all those victims and survivors who courageously gave their contributions, which were an invaluable asset in the development of this Plan.

“More needs to be done to hold perpetrators to account and support victims, I was blamed.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

In the past, the onus has too often been placed on the victim and survivor to take action. This Plan sets a new course. It vigorously targets those who perpetrate domestic abuse to prevent first-time, repeat, and serial offending. It will set out the building blocks for an enhanced system that will aim to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place, deliver better outcomes for victims and survivors, as well as one that is unrelenting in the pursuit of perpetrators and unequivocal in insisting it is they who need to change their behaviour.

What we have achieved

Since 2010, we have made great strides in our efforts to tackle domestic abuse and wider violence against women and girls, introducing several new measures:

- In 2011, we commenced the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process so lessons can be learnt to reduce the number of domestic homicides.
- In 2015, we introduced the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour through the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) to clamp down on these insidious forms of behaviour, underscoring that domestic abuse goes well beyond only physical violence.
- In 2020, the Department for Education made Relationships Education mandatory in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education mandatory in all secondary schools.
- And in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we provided over £28 million to support domestic abuse organisations in delivering vital services to victims and survivors. We also launched the #YouAreNotAlone campaign and Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) codeword scheme to increase awareness among victims and survivors of how to safely access help and support.

In April 2021, the landmark [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) gained Royal Assent. This legislation provides the tools and powers for this Plan to drive down the number of people who face domestic abuse and better support victims and survivors. Its many reforms include:

- Updating the definition of domestic abuse so that it recognises children as victims and economic abuse as a form of domestic abuse.

- A statutory duty on local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims and survivors and their children within safe accommodation. This has been supported by £125 million of funding in 2021-22 to enable local authorities to deliver it.
- New Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) to bring together the strongest elements of existing protective orders into a single, comprehensive order. This will mean we have a more efficient and robust response to, and management of, domestic abuse perpetrators.
- The creation of new offences of non-fatal strangulation and threats to disclose intimate images means that abusers will face the full force of the law.
- Family Court reforms which prohibit cross-examination of victims and survivors by perpetrators, provide automatic eligibility for special measures to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and clarify the availability of barring orders under [Section 91\(14\) of the Children Act 1989](#).
- Establishing the role of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as an independent voice who will stand up for victims and survivors and, among other responsibilities, hold public bodies to account.

But we know we need to do more.

Building on our achievements

This Plan seeks to build on the work of previous strategies^{7,8} and to complement the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#) published in July 2021. It will also set out how various aspects of the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) will be delivered through:

- A whole pillar dedicated to **preventing domestic abuse from ever happening** in the first place. This includes further actions to enhance the delivery of the new Relationship, Sex and Health Education curriculum so young people have greater awareness and understanding of abusive behaviours.
- **More support for victims and survivors.** This Plan will set out a multi-year funding package to deliver community-based support services, how the duty for accommodation-based support will be delivered, and a commitment to review whether the current statutory leave provision for employees does enough to support victims and survivors.
- **Tougher, more robust actions which deal with domestic abusers.** These include next steps in the delivery of DAPNs and DAPOs, a commitment to consider options for more robust management of domestic abusers, including the option of creating a register of domestic abusers, and provisions for electronic monitoring of the most harmful perpetrators.

The Plan also details how the Government will respond to the recommendations in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports to improve the response to domestic abuse. There will also be more information on the

Domestic Abuse Commissioner's role, including her oversight on Domestic Homicide Review recommendations and Family Courts and a new victim engagement mechanism.

Why we must tackle domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a complex and multi-faceted form of crime. It can be physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological, economic, a combination of these, and include many other forms of harmful behaviour. There is no one type of domestic abuse, nor is there one solution to remedy it. This is reflected in the [statutory definition of domestic abuse](#) we passed in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), which sets out numerous forms of behaviour^c, any one of which can constitute domestic abuse, if both the victim and survivor and perpetrator are “personally connected”^d.

And while anyone can be a victim and survivor of domestic abuse, women are disproportionately affected. The 2019-20 CSEW showed that over two-thirds (1.6 million) of those estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the previous year were women⁹, and in 73% of domestic abuse crimes recorded by police in England and Wales in 2020-21, the victim and survivor was a woman¹⁰. In the year ending March 2021, we know that the majority of defendants (92%) in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were men¹¹.

The data underscores the importance of tackling domestic abuse through the lens of violence against women and girls. Indeed, many forms of these crimes take place within the context of domestic abuse, including 36% of stalking and harassment cases and 19% of sexual offences¹².

Yet these data do not include the number of child victims, with estimates suggesting between March 2017-19 that 7% of children aged 10 to 15 years were living in households where an adult reported experiencing domestic abuse in the previous year¹³. Witnessing domestic abuse as a child can have devastating consequences and is linked to later experience of, or perpetration of, abuse^{14,15}.

With this in mind, and through examination of the available data, a wide-ranging review of the academic literature and the unprecedented over 180,000 responses to the Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence, four major problems were identified that this Plan will seek to address:

Problem One, the stubbornly high prevalence of domestic abuse. The 2019-20 CSEW estimated that 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 experienced domestic abuse in England and Wales¹⁶ in the previous year. These numbers are intolerably high.

Problem Two, the significant loss of life caused by domestic abuse, with 114 domestic homicides recorded in 2020-21, of which 75 were female victims¹⁷. These homicides are at the most extreme end of a spectrum of harms that domestic abuse perpetrators inflict on

^c [Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) provides greater detail on the behaviour which constitutes “domestic abuse”.

^d [Section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) provides greater detail on what constitutes “personally connected”.

their victims. In too many cases, these harms can also result in a victim taking their own life. Despite this, only 8% of recorded domestic abuse crimes¹⁸ were assigned an outcome of charged or summonsed in 2020-21.

Problem Three, the negative health, emotional, economic, and social impact victims and survivors face during and following domestic abuse. Whilst more needs to be done to prevent domestic abuse, when it does occur, victims and survivors need a comprehensive package of support that is not just crisis-focused, and which takes the onus off them. They need greater access to support services, particularly specialist and 'by and for'^e services (which are designed and led by and for individuals and the communities they serve), support for the whole family, interventions which address financial and housing insecurity, more support in the workplace, and a better experience of the police, Family Courts, and the Criminal Justice System.

Problem Four, an efficient system is necessary to allow us as a society to tackle domestic abuse. To improve the current system, three specific problems need to be addressed:

- a) **Identifying more domestic abuse cases.** Currently there are gaps in public awareness of what constitutes domestic abuse, which hinders identification of cases. Increasing the ability of professionals to identify and respond to domestic abuse cases, particularly those more likely to regularly encounter them, should also contribute to identification of more cases. And the system needs to provide more opportunities for victims and survivors to disclose abuse by addressing the reasons why they do not do this. These include not knowing if or where support existed or how to access it.
- b) **Greater collaboration and coordination between and within organisations.** Research has shown this is crucial to reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse. When organisations do not collaborate and coordinate internally and externally, opportunities are missed to identify victims and survivors and perpetrators sooner. This also helps to curtail abuse. Plus, sharing crucial information about victims and survivors can help tailor and improve the support they receive.
- c) **Improving our knowledge about domestic abuse through better data.** There are gaps in the crime survey data collected¹⁹ on domestic abuse. In general, more information needs to be made available from the data on the characteristics of victims and survivors, to ensure the impact of domestic abuse on specific groups can be studied and better understood. There is also more we can do to improve our knowledge, with two particular areas where more focus is needed: domestic homicides and suicides following domestic abuse. Any improvements in data on and knowledge of domestic abuse can be fed back into the system to tailor and refine the response to domestic abuse.

Our approach

This Plan is a call to the whole of society to tackle domestic abuse. These crimes are everyone's business, as is the business of addressing them. We must all play a role. We

^e 'By and for' services are specialist services that are led, designed, and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve (for example victims and survivors from ethnic minority backgrounds, deaf and disabled victims and survivors, and LGBT victims and survivors).

need all parts of national and local Government, charities, the private sector, and individuals in their own communities to act. This Plan seeks to encourage and facilitate the necessary coordination to achieve this.

Our approach is to be practical, not prescriptive. This Plan commits to implement the measures that are most appropriate for the problems they aim to solve, without being fixed to one particular method. The complexity of domestic abuse and variety of forms it takes demands such flexibility in our response.

The Plan is closely aligned with the recently published Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. Domestic abuse is one form of violence against women and girls, however many of these crimes can happen in the context of domestic abuse. For example, we know that a large proportion of rapes occur in intimate partner relationships and that most cases of 'honour'-based abuse occur in a domestic abuse context. The documents make complementary commitments and will share an integrated governance framework overseen by the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls Inter-Ministerial Group, chaired by the Home Secretary.

Both will be supported by a revised National Statement of Expectations, which provides clear and consistent guidance for local areas on how to commission support services for victims and survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls.

We have also refreshed our Supporting Male Victims document, in recognition of the fact that men and boys are affected by crimes such as domestic abuse, and require a nuanced, tailored response. However, our approach speaks to all victims and survivors of domestic abuse and our Plan will help and support all victims and survivors.

This Plan used the Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence as a key data source. It received an unprecedented total of over 180,000 responses and comprised of four elements:

- **A public-facing survey**, as well as a **nationally representative survey**^f to ensure a fair representation of views from across society;
- **A victim and survivor survey** to better understand lived experiences of people accessing support and the Criminal Justice System, distributed via specialist support organisations;
- **16 focus groups** with a range of expert organisations and professionals to discuss specific crime types, including domestic abuse, as well as broader issues; and
- **Written submissions** from a wide range of expert respondents which provided information on the scope, scale, and prevalence of domestic abuse, prevention, support available, perpetrator management and more.

^f Quotas were set on age, gender, and region, with weighting applied on these variables to reflect national profiles. Note: the respondents to the public-facing survey were more likely to be female, LGBT+, of no reported religion, and victims and survivors of violence against women and girls offences than the wider population, therefore their views will differ from the views of the wider population.

The Call for Evidence ran in two phases. Phase One ran between 10 December 2020 and 19 February 2021. In Phase Two, the public survey was reopened by the Home Secretary between 12 March and 26 March 2021.

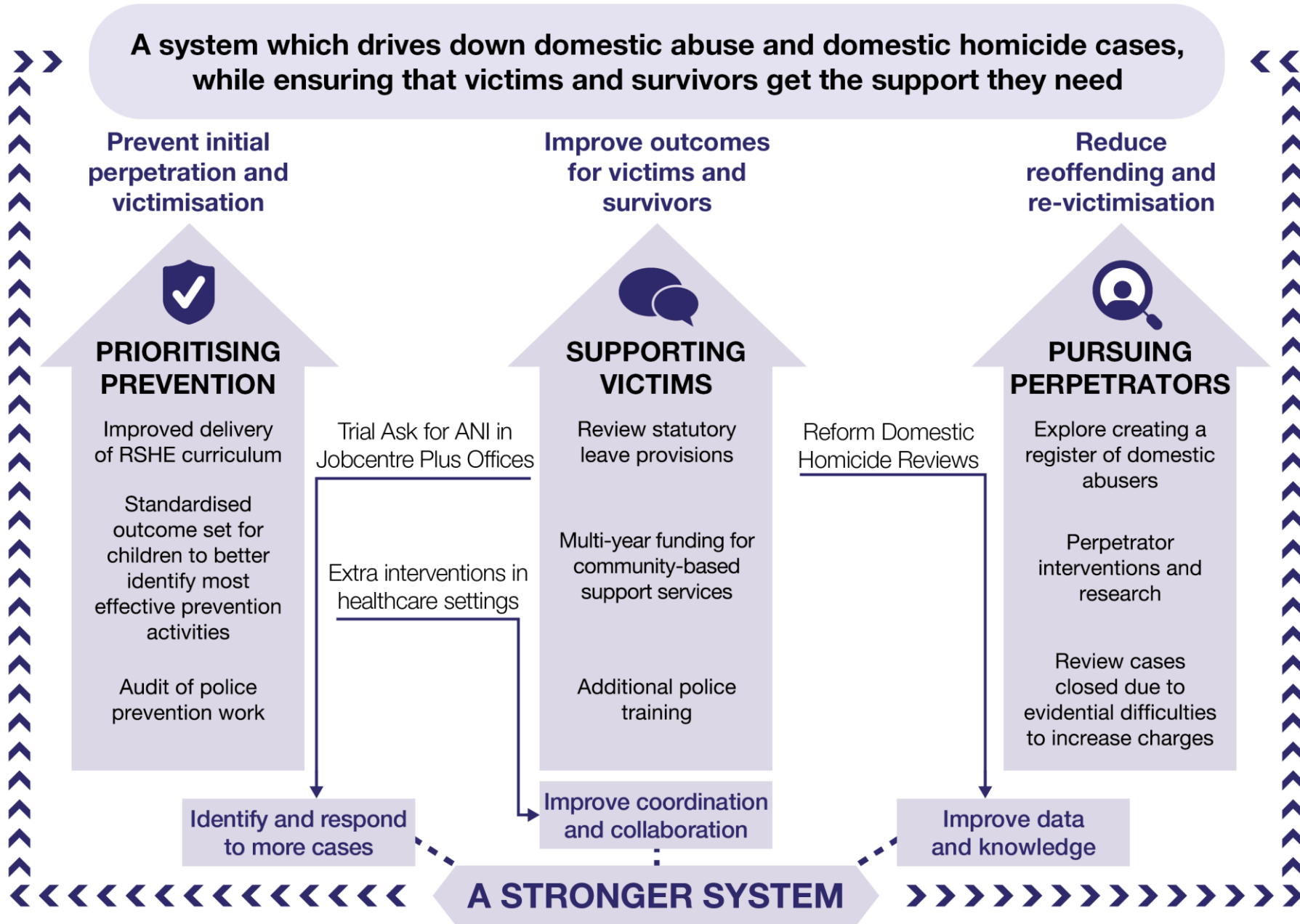
The Call for Evidence was open to people aged 16 or over across England and Wales. Respondents tended to be female and aged between 16 and 34. We heard from a wide range of people across the country, including from different ethnicities, ages, sexes, and sexual orientations. A number of these respondents, or their friends, family, or colleagues, had been directly affected by domestic abuse. For this Plan, we carefully filtered the responses to the victim and survivor survey to generate data specifically from victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Only the data from the Call for Evidence that met the following criteria were used to inform this Plan:

- A domestic abuse or specialist organisation supported the victim and survivor to submit a survey response;
- An Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) supported the victim and survivor; or
- Domestic abuse was specifically mentioned in the open text questions.

We have included anonymised quotes from respondents to the Call for Evidence throughout this document. This reflects its significant influence on the Plan, particularly the voices of victims and survivors.

The elements of this Plan which relate to crime, policing, and justice apply to both England and Wales. The elements relating to health, social care, and education are devolved to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and therefore apply to England only. The Welsh Government has been engaged throughout the development of the Plan.



Executive Summary



Prioritising Prevention

Objective

'Reduce the amount of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, by stopping people from becoming perpetrators and victims to begin with'

Rationale

Domestic abuse devastates the lives of millions. We know its scale is vast (Problem One), and we know its consequences, which often include loss of life, are intolerable (Problem Two). We know there are several factors which can increase the likelihood of someone becoming an abuser. There are interventions to address this, although in many cases, we do not yet know the most effective at mitigating those risk factors. Equally, we do not know the extent to which these risk factors cause an increased likelihood of domestic abuse rather than just being associated with it. Therefore, to drive down domestic abuse and domestic homicide by preventing them from ever happening in the first place, we need actions which not only tackle those risk factors but interventions to help us better understand them. We want a more targeted approach to see domestic abuse and domestic homicide reduce by more than it ever has before.

Metrics

These are shared with those in the *Pursuing Perpetrators* pillar.

- A reduction in the prevalence of domestic abuse. Source: *Crime Survey for England and Wales* (Office for National Statistics).
- A reduction in the number of domestic homicides. Source: *Homicide Index* (Home Office).

Key commitments

- Being of a younger age and low levels of education are two significant risk factors. To address them, the Department for Education will **provide support to teachers delivering the recently refreshed Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum**. Experts, including domestic abuse organisations, will together feed into what this support looks like. Ensuring children know about healthy relationships through the RSHE curriculum at a young age, as well as challenging poor attitudes towards relationship behaviours, will help to prevent cases of domestic abuse later in life.
- The Home Office is supporting the **development of methods to comparably measure the effectiveness of different interventions which support children experiencing domestic abuse**. These measures will consider key outcomes for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, such as the impact on relationships, wellbeing, and perceptions of safety and freedom. This will improve our understanding of what works to support and improve outcomes for children who experience domestic abuse.
- **The Home Office will work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify and audit police forces which record the highest rates of domestic homicide and serious domestic abuse crimes**. The Home Office will work with these forces to improve their domestic abuse metrics and identify challenges they are facing. The aim is to prevent serious incidents, including domestic homicides, from ever occurring.



Supporting Victims

Objective

‘Help all victims and survivors who have escaped from domestic abuse feel that they can get back to life as normal, with support for their health, emotional, economic, and social needs’

Rationale

We need to improve health, emotional, economic, and social outcomes for domestic abuse victims and survivors (Problem Three). We know there are many forms of support which can do this, particularly support services and professional support. However, these must be tailored to each and every individual. That is why this Plan sets out a range of support to ensure that every victim and survivor can get the support they need. We will also monitor their needs and reflect changes in our policy. This individualised approach will help **to take the onus off victims and survivors** by ensuring support is tailored to them, no matter how complex their needs.

Metrics

- An increase in spending on support services, including on ‘by and for’ services, for domestic abuse victims and survivors. Source: *Home Office and Ministry of Justice spending on services that provide support for domestic abuse victims and survivors, and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities spending on services that provide support for domestic abuse victims and survivors within safe accommodation.*
- Support services are crucial in helping victims and survivors of domestic abuse recover^{20,21}. However, we need to ensure they all provide a consistently good service across the country. The upcoming Victims Funding Strategy will propose a set of core metrics to be used across support services to establish what good looks like. It will also improve how the Government monitors its impact.
- An increase in reporting of domestic abuse to the police⁹. Source: *Crime Survey for England and Wales - Percentage of victims and survivors reporting partner abuse to the police (Office for National Statistics) and Domestic abuse-flagged police recorded crimes (Home Office).*

⁹ Domestic abuse is an under-reported crime. The gap between police reports of domestic abuse and the number of domestic abuse victims and survivors estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales means there is a significant number of unidentified cases. Uncovering more of these cases could lead to earlier interventions which shorten the duration of domestic abuse (reducing prevalence), and lead to better outcomes for victims and survivors.

We have included further performance metrics in the *Delivery* section of the document. These will track our progress in delivering this support to victims and survivors, and the impact they are having.

Key commitments

- In order to understand whether more needs to be done to support domestic abuse victims and survivors to rebuild their lives, **the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will review the current statutory leave provision for employees and consider if this does enough to support victims and survivors who are trying to escape domestic abuse.** We will set out any next steps later this year.
- In recognition of how important support services are, **the Ministry of Justice will ringfence £47.1 over three for community-based services supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence and provide £81 million for Independent Domestic Violence Advisers and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers.** Both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice will **offer multi-year awards of funding to organisations supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse.** This will mean more survivors receive higher quality support services.
- To help increase the confidence of victims and survivors in the police, encourage more people to report domestic abuse, and receive better treatment when they do come forward, **the Home Office will provide up to £3.3 million to fund the rollout of Domestic Abuse Matters training** to forces which have yet to deliver it, or do not have their own specific domestic abuse training.
- As part of the Victims Funding Strategy, the Ministry of Justice will be looking at **introducing national commissioning standards across all victim support services and DLUHC Quality Standards for support in safe accommodation.** This will ensure that the commissioning of support in safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims and survivors and their children will be subject to the same standards as all victim support services.



Pursuing Perpetrators

Objective

‘Reduce the amount of people who are repeat offenders and make sure that those who commit this crime feel the full force of the law’

Rationale

We are clear that **perpetrators are the ones who need to change their behaviour** and stop offending. By relentlessly pursuing them we can make this happen. We can drive down the prevalence of domestic abuse (Problem One) and reduce the number of domestic homicides (Problem Two).

This involves better understanding and addressing the falling number of charges, prosecutions, and convictions so perpetrators are stopped and face justice. We need to improve risk assessments and expand and strengthen the measures we have to deal with abusers once risks are identified. And we need to deploy interventions and programmes which do not just stop perpetrators, but which change their behaviour in the long-term.

Metrics

Some* of these are shared with those in the *Prioritising Prevention* pillar.

- An increase in the number of charges for domestic abuse-flagged crimes. Source: *Crime outcomes in England and Wales (Home Office)* and *Crown Prosecution Service data on the volume of charges (Crown Prosecution Service)*.
- *A reduction in the prevalence of domestic abuse victims. Source: *Crime Survey for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics)*.
- *A reduction in the number of domestic homicides. Source: *Homicide Index (Home Office)*.

Key commitments

- To better understand and address the falling number of charges, the Home Office will accept recommendations made in reports by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to **conduct a review of data on domestic abuse cases closed due to evidential difficulties. This is where cases are closed by the police due to the lack of evidence (Outcomes 15) or where the victim does not support police action (Outcome 16).**

- To manage the most harmful domestic abusers more robustly, **the Government is actively exploring creating a register of domestic abuse offenders**. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice will increase tagging for those leaving custody, including around 3,500 individuals who are at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse.
- To help the police assess the dangers posed by individual domestic abusers, the **Home Office will allocate £6.7 million over the next three years to refine and pilot the rollout of a risk assessment tool**. The Recency, Frequency, Gravity and Victimisation model has huge potential to enhance these risk assessments by identifying the most dangerous serial abusers.
- **To get perpetrators to change their behaviour and reduce reoffending, the Home Office will invest £75 million over three years into tackling domestic abusers**. This includes funding for perpetrator interventions, with multi-year agreements where appropriate, evaluation, and further research. This will include funding for interventions that directly address domestic abusers' behaviours. The Home Office will also develop a set of national principles and standards to promote a consistent and safe approach by these programmes.



A Stronger System

Objective

‘Improve the systems and processes that underpin the response to domestic abuse across society’

There are three specific ways in which the Plan aims to improve these systems and processes:

- ‘More domestic abuse cases are identified and responded to appropriately’;
- ‘Improve collaboration and coordination between and within organisations’; and
- ‘Improve data on, and knowledge of, domestic abuse’.

Rationale

To make sure we can be at our strongest when tackling domestic abuse, we need a robust system that works across the whole of society. This is important in enabling us to effectively deliver on our first three objectives.

We will make it easier for more victims and survivors to report domestic abuse, as well as making sure that professionals who regularly encounter domestic abuse can better identify and refer victims and survivors appropriately (Problem Four A). This is critical to them accessing the support they need. Improved communication between Departments, public service organisations and wider society (Problem Four B) will contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of domestic abuse. And addressing gaps in data and knowledge, including on domestic homicide and suicides following domestic abuse (Problem Four C), will mean we can tailor future interventions so that they are most effective.

Metrics

We will be able to judge if we have a better system if the other three objectives are being delivered. Outputs of measures committed to in this pillar will be monitored closely to ensure our system delivers an effective response to domestic abuse.

Key commitments

- We want to make it easier for people to ask for help and identify more cases. **The Home Office will work with the Department for Work and Pensions to trial and, if it is successful, consider a national rollout of the Ask for ANI codeword scheme across Jobcentre Plus offices.** The scheme currently provides a simple and discreet

way for domestic abuse victims and survivors to signal that they need immediate help using a codeword in participating pharmacies.

- We know that providing doctors, nurses, and midwives with the skills to better identify and refer domestic abuse cases will help to better join up the response across society. **The Home Office will therefore invest up to £7.5 million over three years to implement those structures within healthcare settings.**
- **The Department of Health and Social Care will publish their Women's Health Strategy in Spring 2022**, which will address some of the barriers that victims and survivors of domestic abuse face when interacting with important health services, and help to ensure that our healthcare professionals are appropriately equipped to support and refer those suffering trauma from abuse.
- There is much more that needs to be done to improve our data on domestic homicides and suicides following domestic abuse. To address this, **the Home Office will reform the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process**. This will include working with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify best practice in referring suicides that followed domestic abuse for a DHR and launching an online database in 2022 of all DHRs, in which £1.3 million has been invested.

Prioritising Prevention

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘Reduce the amount of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, by stopping people from becoming perpetrators and victims to begin with’

If we are to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and domestic homicide, robust action is needed to prevent it from happening in the first place. We can do this by better understanding what factors can lead to a higher risk of someone becoming a domestic abuser. We are looking at whether these circumstances actually cause domestic abuse or are just associated with a higher likelihood. But we must still act now and directly address those risk factors to have the biggest possible chance of preventing cases of domestic abuse and domestic homicide.

What we know, do not know, and need to do

Anyone can be a victim and survivor or perpetrator of domestic abuse. In this pillar, we set out **the risk factors which we know are associated with an increased likelihood of domestic abuse perpetration and victimisation.**

“So much more needs to be done to understand what lies beneath behaviours of perpetrators.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

We know that whilst younger males are more likely to perpetrate domestic abuse, there are several other factors influencing whether someone might commit these crimes. We know there is a complex relationship between domestic abuse and, for example, a lower level of education, having a criminal history, a disadvantaged background, and whether those around them condone violence and gender inequality. We know experience of child abuse is a consistent predictor of domestic abuse for both perpetrators and victims. The relationship between domestic abuse perpetration and substance misuse is even more complex, so too is the relationship between domestic abuse perpetration and mental

health issues. **It is important to highlight that simply because an individual is exposed to any one of these risk factors, it does not necessarily mean they will experience or carry out domestic abuse.**

Given we do not know what can cause domestic abuse, or what may just be an associated risk, it makes it difficult to precisely identify what will achieve the greatest change. To address this, **we need to introduce a range of interventions and monitor their effectiveness.**

While we await more data, **we still need to deliver interventions which address the risk factors outlined in Annex B.** Often, the risk factors for domestic abuse are the same as those for other crime types²². This means we can aim to drive down multiple types of crime at once.

What we are already doing and what more we will do

Identifying preventative measures

We must continue to understand the most effective ways of preventing all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse. That is why **the Home Office has committed to invest £3 million in 2022-23 towards programmes that improve our understanding on what works to prevent violence against women and girls.**

To respond to the urgent need to scale-up efforts to prevent violence against women and girls crimes, including domestic abuse, **the United Kingdom is investing in *What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale*.** This will be the first global effort to systematically scale-up violence prevention efforts and evaluate their impact. Through this, we hope to learn how to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, preventing first occurrence, and reducing reoffending and re-victimisation at scale.

Taking preventative measures

Increasing awareness

In the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#), the Home Office committed to roll out a multi-year **communications campaign focused on creating behaviour change**. The campaign, called 'Enough', launched in March 2022, with its first phase focusing on challenging perpetrators and encouraging members of the public to take action if they witness abuse. Television adverts, outdoor posters, radio, digital audio, partnerships, and social media content all aimed to increase awareness of challenging perpetrators and signposted to a [campaign website](#) with more information and support for victims and survivors. Campaign materials have featured in transport settings including bus stops, roadsides, train stations, the London Underground and in pubs, bars, and men's toilets.

The Government is also committed to protecting people from conversion therapy practices, which can constitute a form of domestic abuse, and preventing it from happening in the first place. The Home Office will work with the Equality Hub to make clear how some so-called 'conversion therapy' practices may constitute domestic abuse, such as family members coercing a relative into undertaking it. In addition, the Home Office is committed

to supporting the Equality Hub in taking appropriate action to end the practice, and support victims and survivors.

Teaching young people

“Teaching young people what is unacceptable and abusive behaviour in relationships is essential... Teaching young people about what is abusive will have a huge impact on lowering abuse in the future.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

It is important we have measures that target ‘younger age groups’. These measures can often align with addressing ‘low levels of education’. The need to do so was raised in all components of the [Call for Evidence](#). Respondents felt that children and young adults need to be educated about:

- healthy relationships;
- consent;
- what behaviours are not acceptable, particularly regarding coercive control in a relationship;
- the relevant laws; and
- how to access help if needed.

The Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum will play a key part in improving children’s education to ensure they understand healthy relationships. That is why, since September 2020, the Department for Education made Relationships Education mandatory in all primary schools, Relationships and Sex Education mandatory in all secondary schools, and Health Education mandatory in all state funded schools.

Pupils need to be taught about the concepts and laws relating to a range of areas including consent, coercion, and domestic abuse. Boys and young men should understand what is not acceptable within relationships and girls and young women need to know what not to accept. To help teachers to deliver the RSHE curriculum, **the Department for Education will work with experts to develop a package of support for teachers**. This will include guidance, expert-led webinars, and regional events to facilitate the sharing of good practice and effective networking. The Department for Education will continue to build a programme of support that meets teachers’ needs.

There is a link between holding views that support gender inequality and condone violence and domestic abuse²³. We must prevent these attitudes from developing at a young age. Therefore, it is vital that trusted adults, including parents and teachers, take steps to ensure children and young people respect each other. This means that harmful attitudes and behaviours cannot be left unchallenged and must not be tolerated. Schools and colleges can play a vital role in fostering a positive culture in which healthy behaviours are understood and encouraged, and harmful attitudes challenged. [The Respectful School Communities Toolkit](#) supports school leaders to create a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline.

The '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (KCSIE) guidance has been strengthened following a full consultation process last year and the findings from the [Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges](#). The guidance now better supports schools and colleges to prevent, identify and respond appropriately to abuse where it is reported. It sets out that downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours. It can create an unsafe environment for children and, in some cases, a culture that normalises domestic abuse. The guidance sets out that schools and colleges are expected to have clear processes to support victims and survivors and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse. The KCSIE guidance remains under constant review.

Outcomes for children

It is crucial that we maximise our knowledge on what works to support and improve outcomes for children experiencing domestic abuse. This can be particularly challenging given difficulties in comparing studies of different interventions in this area, because each study measures success in different ways.

“Children living in a home where there is domestic abuse/control are traumatised by what they are forced to witness. Government must put in place help and counselling for these children.”

Call for Evidence, Nationally Representative Survey

Therefore, **the Home Office is supporting the development of a set of tools to measure the effectiveness of interventions that support children experiencing domestic abuse.** This work is being undertaken by a group led by University College London. This group is agreeing a set of common outcomes which could be measured in evaluations of child and family interventions which address domestic abuse. The next stage is to agree appropriate measurement tools to assess these outcomes. To facilitate this, the Home Office is funding research to investigate the types of measures currently being used.

It is vital that children and ‘younger age groups’ are protected from content and activity online that can cause them significant physical and psychological harm; 80% of 12-15-year-old internet users have had at least one potentially harmful online experience in the last 12 months²⁴. The Online Safety Bill will require companies to protect all children from the most harmful content and activity on the internet and ensure that wider protections are age appropriate. It will also require websites that publish or host pornographic content to put in place measures which prevent children from accessing such material.

Child, early and forced marriage is a form of violence against women and girls, which denies women and girls their rights, freedom, and ability to make choices that affect their lives. Delaying marriage reduces the risk of domestic abuse, amongst other benefits including reducing adolescent pregnancy, preventing maternal deaths, giving people better career opportunities, and preventing school dropouts²⁵.

Given this, the Government has supported the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill, which would tackle child marriage by raising the age of marriage and civil partnership in England and Wales from 16 to 18. It will also expand the offence of forced marriage to provide that it is always illegal to arrange the marriage (legally binding or otherwise) of an under-18, even when coercion is not used. In addition, the Government continues to provide support for victims and survivors, and those at risk of forced marriage through the joint Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office [Forced Marriage Unit's helpline](#).

Child-to-parent abuse

Tackling behaviours early on is key to preventing future offending, as these learned behaviours can act as a steppingstone towards perpetrating abuse in later life. **The Home Office will publish updated guidance for frontline practitioners on child-to-parent abuse (CPA) this year**, working with frontline practitioners include those working in the police, health, education, and social care, to name just a few. **The Home Office will also work with stakeholders to reach an agreed definition and terminology for this type of behaviour.** This will underpin policy development on the response to CPA, and comprehensive guidance to support practitioners and service commissioners.

Role of the police

For those in intimate relationships or those starting out in new relationships who have concerns about their partner's behaviour, the Government introduced the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), also known as Clare's Law, which came into force in England and Wales in 2014. The DVDS sets out procedures that can be used by the police to disclose information about previous violent or abusive offending, including emotional abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, or economic abuse by an individual, where this may help protect their partner or ex-partner. These disclosures could be critical in safeguarding a victim and survivor or potential victim.

Under [Section 77 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), we will be placing the guidance for the DVDS on a statutory footing. This will help ensure a uniform and consistent implementation of the Scheme by the police. **The Home Office is reviewing and revising the existing guidance, including considering the timescales for disclosure and promoting tools which allow applications to be made online.** The revised guidance will go out for public consultation shortly.

Multi-agency working is crucial to preventing domestic homicides, and the police have an important role to play. [The Domestic Homicide Project](#) found that 52% of domestic homicide suspects between March 2020 and 2021 were previously known to police as a suspect for any prior offending. Of those, 82% were known to police for domestic abuse. This shows that the police have an important role to play in preventing these tragedies.

That is why the Home Office will collaborate with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Domestic Abuse Lead, Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe, on a new Domestic Abuse Policing and Domestic Homicide Prevention Pilot. The pilot will identify forces that have relatively high levels of domestic homicide and serious domestic abuse incidents. These forces will be audited to ensure they are doing everything they can to prevent domestic abusers from causing harm. This will involve data collection, work to improve their domestic abuse metrics, and help to identify challenges they are facing in domestic abuse policing, all with the aim of preventing domestic homicides.

Supporting Victims

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘Help all victims and survivors who have escaped from domestic abuse feel that they can get back to life as normal with support for their health, emotional, economic, and social needs’

We must first and foremost seek to prevent domestic abuse from happening. But when it does occur, we need to do everything in our power to mitigate its impact, to help victims and survivors recover and to encourage them to feel that they can get back to life as normal. We will deliver a wide-ranging package of support with measures which we know are effective. One that is not just crisis-focussed, and which **takes the onus off victims and survivors**. We will also seek to better understand how the support provided can be improved.

What we know, do not know, and need to do

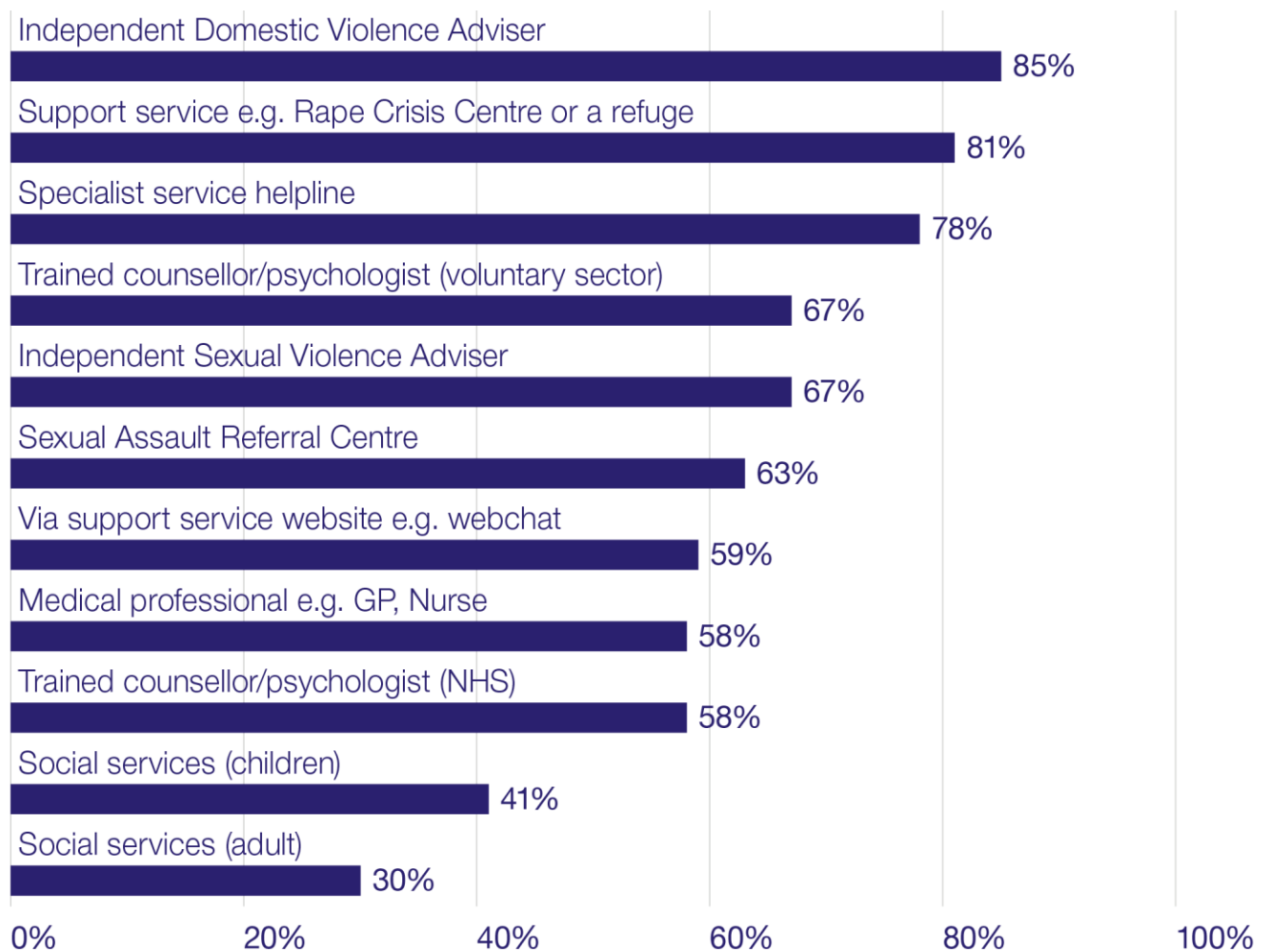
“Support services were really important as they validated my feelings and supported me and empowered me to take action and leave my partner.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

We know there is a wide variety of support available to victims and survivors. In many cases, it is clear which forms of support deliver improved outcomes. However, we do not know which measures will work best for individuals. The package of support required by each person will be unique to them and their circumstances. Additionally, we know this can be an underreported crime, and our experience of what works is based on victims and survivors who have been reached and received help, not those whose cases remain unidentified. Domestic abuse remains too often hidden from view. Therefore, this Plan cannot be prescriptive in the support offered to victims and survivors. Instead, **it needs to deliver a holistic package of support, with a wide variety of interventions** that will enable victims and survivors to access the support most suited to their needs.

The [Call for Evidence](#) provided data on the forms of professional support which generated the greatest satisfaction among victims and survivors (**Figure 1**). Victims and survivors were most satisfied with Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (85%), support services (81%), and helplines (78%). Satisfaction was also high for voluntary sector psychologists and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAS, 67% for both).

Figure 1 – Call for Evidence victim and survivor survey responses for satisfaction with professional support received, 2020-21



Source: Domestic abuse-specific Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence responses

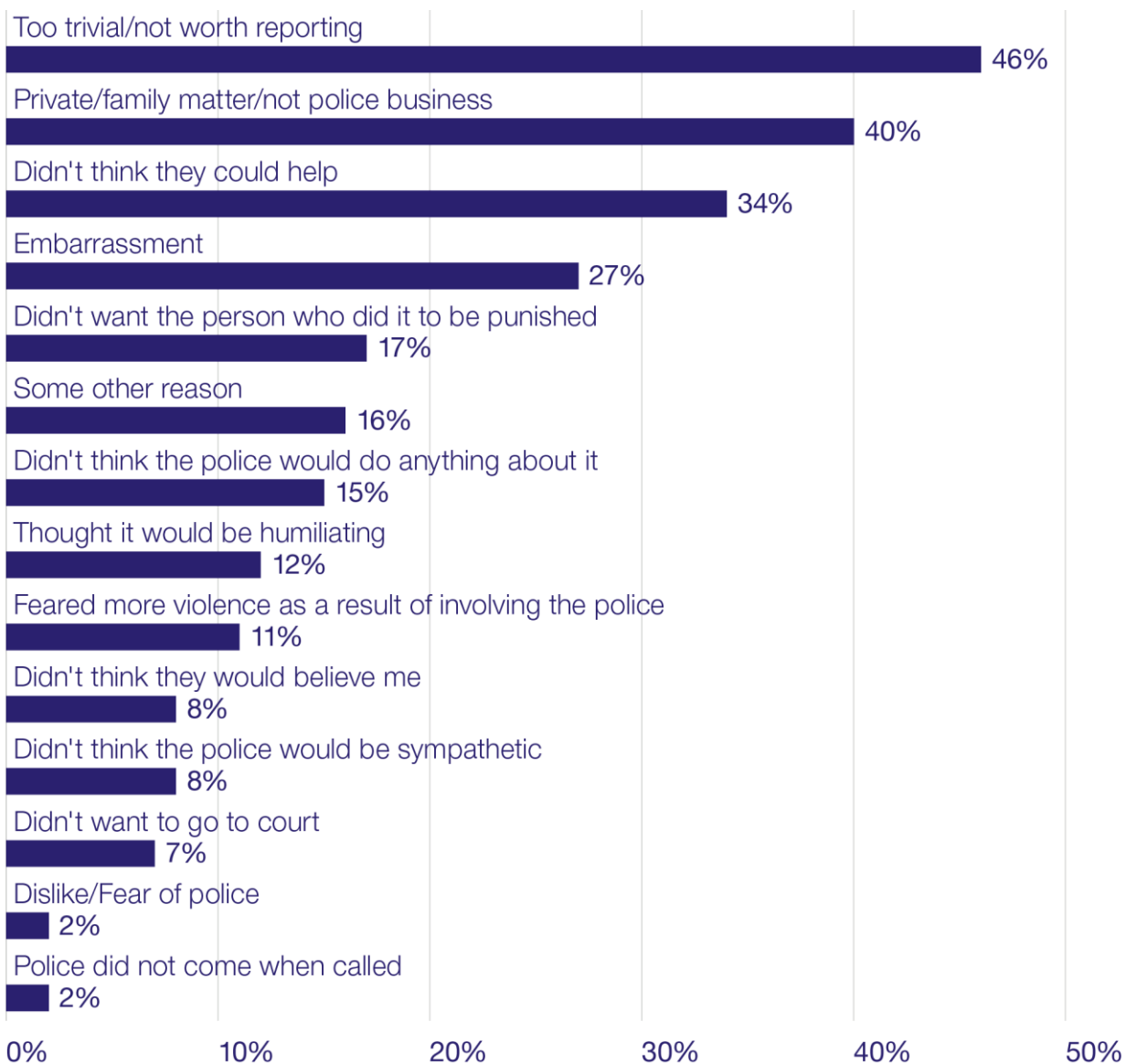
There are five broad categories of support which will deliver improved outcomes:

1. support services and professional support;
2. support for the whole family;
3. economic and housing support;

- 4. support in the workplace; and
- 5. support through the police, Family Courts and Criminal Justice System.

This Plan needs to set out how **tailored, community-based, and accommodation-based services** will be provided – services that are accessible and which generate the greatest satisfaction from victims and survivors. We need to ensure a **whole family approach** that provides support for all family members is available. Responses to the Call for Evidence made clear that **economic abuse** can leave victims and survivors economically dependent on abusers, creating financial insecurity that makes it harder for them to access safety. We know that **employers** need more robust responses and protocols after disclosures of domestic abuse.

Figure 2 – Why the victim did not tell the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last year, England and Wales, year ending March 2018

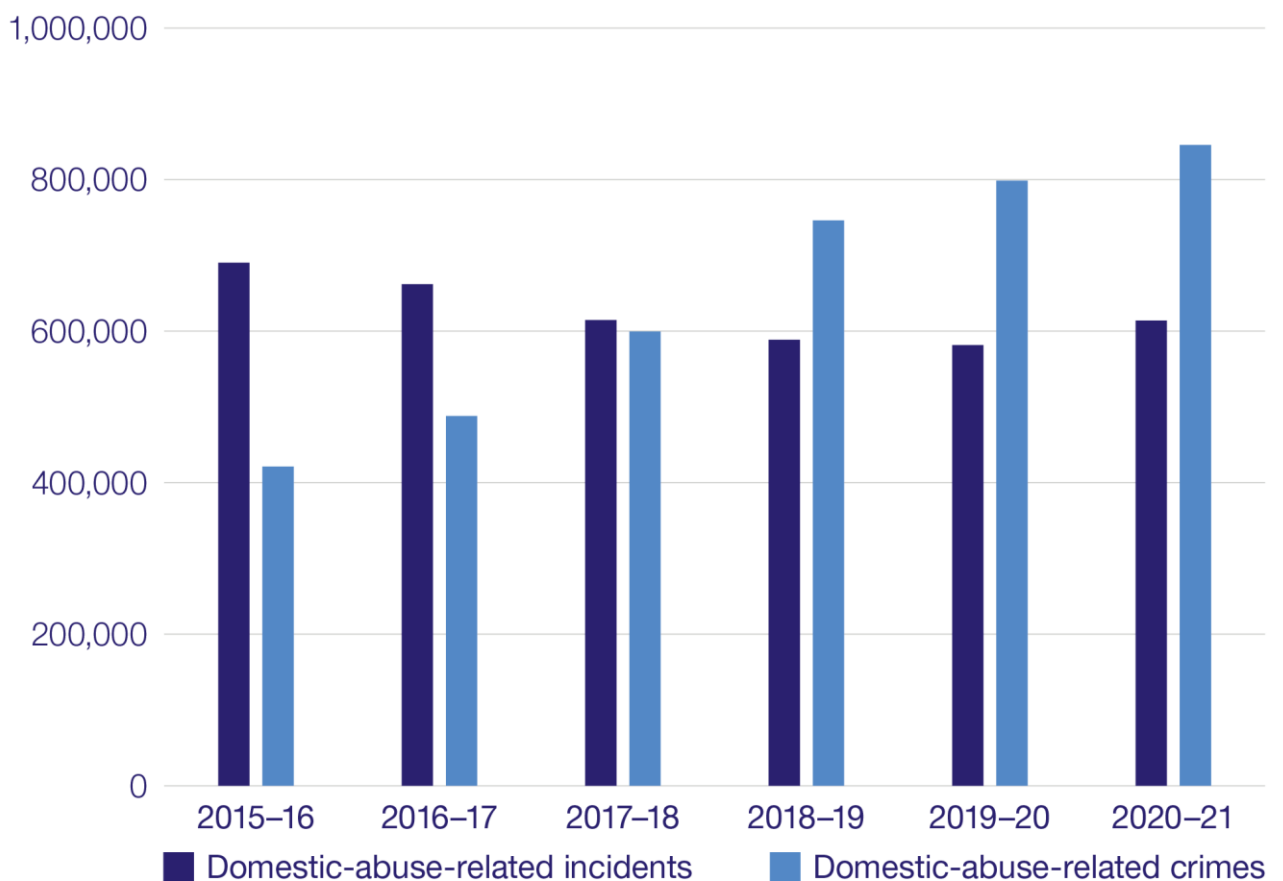


Source: Office for National Statistics

Only a small proportion of victims and survivors **report domestic abuse to the police**. The Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) shows that only 17% of victims and survivors whose partner abuses them report it to the police²⁶. The most frequently cited reason was thinking it was too trivial or not worth reporting (46%). Another reason was thinking the police couldn't help (34%).

We need to increase reporting to the police of domestic abuse-related incidents and recorded crimes. This will mean more victims and survivors, if they choose to, can access support and protection from the police and the wider Criminal Justice System. **Figure 3** shows a year-on-year increase in police recorded domestic abuse-related crime (excluding fraud) in England and Wales between 2015 to 2021. Though the gap between prevalence and police recording is decreasing due to improvements in how police record domestic abuse, this is still below the 2.3 million estimated by the CSEW over the same period.

Figure 3 – Volumes of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by police in England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics

What we are already doing and what more we will do

All the measures we take to support victims and survivors must have victims and survivors at their core. We need to ensure their voices inform policy and that we hear from those across the whole of society, particularly as we uncover a greater number of cases. To do this, **we will provide additional funding to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to establish a mechanism for their input into policy development and implementation.**

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is uniquely placed to have meaningful conversations with victims, which can feed directly into policy work across government. We will also continue to engage with charities and organisations who support victims and survivors.

A range of support

Support services and professional support

Advocacy and therapeutic interventions can have positive effects on victims' and survivors' wellbeing, and the most effective methods are tailored to individuals' needs²⁷. In 2021-22, the Ministry of Justice provided £150.5 million for victim, survivor and witness support services. This included £51 million to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims and survivors, building on the emergency funding from the last financial year to help domestic abuse and sexual violence services meet the demand driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government also awarded £25 million in May 2020 to help domestic abuse and specialist rape organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This helped organisations to recruit more staff and adapt to remote counselling methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. A further £2 million was provided to ensure that helplines and online services continued to be easily accessible.

The Ministry of Justice also conducted a wider [consultation on the upcoming Victims' Bill](#) which looked at the provision of community-based support and a statutory underpinning for the Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) roles.

The Ministry of Justice is increasing funding for victim and witness support services, to £185 million by 2024-25. This includes funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 and funding to implement the new national support for victims of rape and sexual violence which will be available 24/7.

Of this, £147 million has been committed to per annum between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This includes a minimum of **£81 million over three years to fund 700 ISVA and IDVA roles, with additional funding to be confirmed later this year.** There will be a **ringfence of £15.7 million per annum to be spent on community-based services supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.** The £147 million includes funding for Police and Crime Commissioners to commission a range of support services for victims of all crime, based on their assessment of local demand. Police and Crime Commissioners will be required to pass the multi-year commitment on to the local services they commission, to ensure frontline service providers receive the full benefits.

The Home Office is also planning to double funding for survivors of sexual violence and the [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) by 2024-25, and further increase funding for all the national helplines it supports.

Multi-year funding by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice will offer more stability and consistency for victims as services will not be dependent on yearly grants. Investing in these services will help to ensure that high quality support is available to victims when needed.

Responses to the Call for Evidence emphasised a troubling ‘postcode lottery’ when it came to the availability of support services. To address this, **we will use the results of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s mapping exercise of support services across the country to identify gaps and better target funding to local services.**

The Call for Evidence also highlighted that services are routinely commissioned in silos which means support services cannot properly support people with complex needs. To help address this, **we are publishing refreshed versions of the National Statement of Expectations and Commissioning Toolkit.** They will ensure there are consistent processes for commissioning services across the country. **The updated documents include further information on how local areas should work in partnership with specialist ‘by and for’ organisations.** This will build on the guidance issued in relation to provision of support services by local authorities in safe accommodation. These documents will make sure every victim and survivor across the country can receive help.

Support in safe accommodation

To ensure sufficient provision of support services in safe accommodation, as well as the community, the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) placed a new duty on Tier One local authorities to assess the need, and commission support for all victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including children, within safe accommodation. In 2021-22, this was supported by £125 million of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The new duty came into force on 1 October 2021, accompanied by [Statutory Guidance](#) to support local authorities in implementing it. Since then, DLUHC has confirmed a further £125 million will be provided in 2022-23 to support delivery of the duty.

To go even further, as part of the Victims Funding Strategy, **the Ministry of Justice will be looking at introducing national commissioning standards across all victim support services and DLUHC Quality Standards for support in safe accommodation.** This will ensure that safe accommodation for victims will be subject to the same standards as all victim support services.

Not all vacancies in safe accommodation are available to every victim and survivor due to the accommodation not being able to offer the specialist support that may be required by each person. Sadly, some victims and survivors will not be able to access safe accommodation, even if there are vacancies. By providing funding for support services in safe accommodation, it should make more of those vacancies available to a greater number of victims and survivors. This increases the numbers supported in safe accommodation and decreases the numbers turned away.

To ensure the new duty works for all victims and survivors, a Ministerial-led National Expert Steering Group has been established to oversee the successful provision and

delivery of the new duties across the country, which will meet at least twice a year. The group is co-chaired by the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. It will review any operational challenges on the ground, looking at possible causes and solutions.

Tailored support

“I would never [have] been able to overcome the abuse without specialised support... We need more services and investment as it took me days of trying to call all the time to get through.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

We know the importance of support that is tailored to the specific needs of different groups of victims and survivors. In 2021-22, the Home Office provided Sign Health with just over £145,000 to support deaf victims and survivors of domestic abuse. More widely, the Government has also backed the British Sign Language (BSL) Bill which if passed, would require the Government to produce guidance about the promotion and facilitation of the use of BSL.

The Home Office provided Victim Support with £125,000 in 2021-22, to help build the capacity of IDVAs to support disabled victims and survivors and create a network of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference disability champions. We have also provided just over £200,000 to the organisation Hourglass to enhance their helpline, provide casework support, and train specialist IDVAs to support older victims and survivors.

In 2021-22, the Home Office provided £1.5 million to launch the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme to further support this group. This was in recognition of the additional barriers those with insecure immigration status can face in seeking support. Doing this helps to remove some of the control abusers exert over victims. Anyone who has suffered domestic abuse should be treated as a victim and survivor first and foremost, regardless of their immigration status. The 12-month pilot scheme is being run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners. It provides accommodation and wrap-around support to migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse. An independent evaluator, Behavioural Insights Ltd, has also been appointed to assess the pilot, with a final report to be published in Summer 2022. **We will take on board the evaluation findings to inform future decisions. In the interim, we will provide £1.4 million in 2022-23 to continue to fund support for migrant victims and survivors.** The Scheme will help the Government paint an accurate picture of what support migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse need.

For male victims and survivors, one example of the services funded is the Men’s Advice Line, run by Respect, which has received just under £168,000 per year. In 2020-21, the helpline was provided with a further £151,000 to bolster services in response to COVID-19 pandemic pressures and in 2021-22, a further uplift of £64,500.

“We need tailored, 'by and for' support for women with particular needs (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, disabled women, women with multiple layers of need, LGBT victims).”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

'By and for' support

In 2021-22, the Home Office committed to provide an additional £1.5 million in funding to increase provision of 'by and for' and specialist services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and all forms of violence against women and girls. This was in recognition of the benefits victims and survivors report from accessing such services.

We know that specialist and 'by and for' organisations face challenges in navigating local commissioning processes. To begin addressing this, **the statutory guidance to support implementation of the duty on local authorities to commission support services in safe accommodation sets out that, where possible, this should be conducted on a multi-year basis.** This means that smaller organisations can offer a stable service to victims and survivors. We also want to ensure smaller voluntary organisations are not left out and are clear that local authorities should seek specialist advice to ensure the particular needs of specific groups of victims and survivors are considered.

Support for the whole family

We know that all family members affected by domestic abuse need to be supported. This kind of whole-family approach is already being delivered through the following schemes:

- The Government has committed over £39 million to champion **family hubs** and, at the 2021 Budget, announced a further £82 million to create a network of family hubs in England. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services for children of all ages, the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Services could start to include support for survivors of domestic abuse. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but these principles are key to the family hub model.
- At the 2021 Spending Review, the Supporting Families programme received a £200 million uplift in funding, taking the total planned investment to £695 million until 2024-25, representing a 40% real-terms uplift in funding. This will enable the programme to secure better life outcomes for up to 300,000 more families by 2025 and ensure that many more benefit from improved services. The Supporting Families programme is designed to improve public services for families by promoting and funding integrated support. This ensures families get access to early, coordinated help to address multiple and complex needs, including domestic abuse. The programme encourages domestic abuse to be viewed in the context of other problems affecting the family, such as youth crime, substance misuse, truancy, or mental health issues, so that all problems are addressed holistically and not in isolation.
- By taking a whole-family approach, we can address the devastating impact that experiencing domestic abuse can have on the health and development of children.

That is why the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) recognises children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims. And it is also why in 2021-22, the Home Office has provided over £3 million, through the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse (CADA) Fund, to organisations providing specialist support within the community to children who are experiencing domestic abuse. **The Home Office will increase funding so that the CADA fund receives £4.1 million in 2022-23.**

- Concerns about obtaining a school placement for children may be a barrier to victims and survivors escaping domestic abuse mid-way through the school year, and seeking refuge or safe accommodation, particularly if it means leaving the area. However, parents can apply for a place for their child at any school at any time; and where there are places available, the child must be admitted. In 2021, following a consultation the Department for Education revised the [School Admissions Code](#) to improve the in-year admissions process and minimise gaps in children's education. There are proposals to include children living in a refuge or relevant accommodation^h as an eligible category for placement via local Fair Access Protocols.

We also know particular focus is needed on children who are supported by children's social care to ensure that provision in schools is effective in addressing their needs. Following the [Review of Children in Need](#), which looked at educational outcomes of children with a social worker, including those that have experienced domestic abuse, **the Department for Education has made up to £26.6 million available to What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC)**. With this funding, WWCSC is testing school-based interventions aimed at understanding barriers and improving outcomes for children who need a social worker. The Department for Education **will share the learning from the WWCSC trials with schools and wider safeguarding partners once the independent evaluation reports are published in early 2023**. This includes the impact of interventions such as social workers in schools and supervision models for schools' Designated Safeguarding Leadsⁱ.

To strengthen the safeguarding response for children who have experienced domestic abuse, **the Home Office has been allocated £1.1 million from HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund**. This will include investing in [Operation Encompass](#), which enables information sharing between police and schools in cases where a school-aged child has experienced a domestic abuse incident, so the school is in a better position to support the affected child. The investment will enable the Home Office to:

- Evaluate the current Operation Encompass scheme;

^h For a full definition of 'relevant accommodation' included under the Fair Access Protocol, see Section A3 of [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#).

ⁱ The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and protecting all children in their school or college. They also play a critical role in the lives of children who have, or have had, a social worker by safeguarding them, and by supporting their wider welfare, including their educational outcomes. The role of the DSL carries a significant level of responsibility. They should be a senior member of the school or college's senior leadership team. They will have an in-depth knowledge of safeguarding guidance (such as Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children) and related pieces of legislation (for example the [Children Act 1989](#)), that their workplace must follow.

- Expand the ongoing pilot scheme, extending coverage to health visitors so that when the police attend an incident involving very young children (0-5 years) this information is shared with the child's health visitor;
- Evaluate the extension of the scheme coverage to health visitors;
- Research the feasibility of expanding the scheme to other harm types; and
- Provide a National Teachers' Helpline for all staff in education settings to seek guidance about supporting pupils affected by domestic abuse following an Operation Encompass notification.

This funding **will also be used to review the national police response to children experiencing domestic abuse**. This will help them better understand local responses and work out how to improve national practice. The review will consider how the police work with partners such as local authorities so that the response is joined up and effective in supporting children. We will consider recommendations from the research to transform the national response to children who experience domestic abuse.

The Government will also consider the findings from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care once it reports. The Review is taking a fundamental look at how to make a real difference to the needs, experiences, and outcomes of those supported by children's social care. In June 2021, the Review published its [Case for Change](#), setting out its initial take on the overarching challenges. The report highlighted the impact of domestic abuse on children and families and the tension between help and protection in the current system. The Review will set out its final recommendations in the Spring.

Economic and housing support

Through the landmark [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), economic abuse was expressly recognised as a distinct form of domestic abuse. It is defined as any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or to obtain goods or services.

Having recognised the problems, the Government is working closely with organisations and charities that seek to promote awareness of economic abuse. The Government has previously invested £567,000 to raise awareness of economic abuse, providing support for domestic abuse victims and survivors who have faced economic abuse and those who may be in financial difficulty. To continue supporting victims of economic abuse, **the Home Office will double funding to a minimum of £200,000**. This will improve our response to economic abuse and provide vital support and economic safety for victims and survivors.

Ensuring victims and survivors have the funds to move forward with their lives is crucial. **That is why the Home Office will run a further trial of the flexible funding model, supported by up to £300,000 of funding over three years**. The funds will be made available to charities in selected local authorities, and they will have wide-ranging discretion on what these funds can be used to acquire, based on their first-hand understanding of individual's needs. In turn, this will help improve our knowledge on what victims and survivors need.

“My partner used money and assets such as the family car, to control me, emotionally blackmail me, isolate me and belittle me. I had not understood that finances could be used to abuse someone until it happened to me and I fear there are many, many women being treated in the same way.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

In recognition of the role that financial services play in responding to domestic abuse, UK Finance and the Building Societies Association (FBSA) publish a [Financial Abuse Code](#). The Code raises awareness of economic or financial abuse and sets out how participating banks and building societies should support customers who are victims and survivors of economic or financial abuse. This will ensure there is more consistency in the support available for those who need it. Since its launch in 2018, over 29 firms representing a large proportion of retail banks have signed up to the Code. **The Government strongly encourages more banks and financial institutions to sign up to the Financial Abuse Code and will continue supporting UK Finance and partners to promote the Code.** We will continue to engage with the financial sector to raise awareness and strengthen the sector’s response to domestic abuse.

To help victims and survivors reach safe accommodation, the Department for Transport supported the establishment of the Rail to Refuge scheme in March 2020. The scheme allows victims and survivors of domestic abuse to access free rail travel to flee an abuser. This means they can get to accommodation which they may not otherwise have had the means to access. The scheme is currently assisting four survivors a day, on average²⁸.

To deliver housing stability for victims and survivors, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has committed to running two consultations to gather more information on how to support those living in social housing:

- The first consultation will gather evidence on issues faced by victims and survivors in joint tenancies. Victims and survivors can be threatened with homelessness by perpetrators if they are in a joint tenancy. They are at risk of paying costs they are not responsible for (including rent arrears) if the abuser does not pay despite being in a joint tenancy, which could lead to eviction. Currently, without agreement from their landlord, the only way a victim and survivor can transfer a tenancy and all its obligations into solely their name is through the courts. This leaves victims and survivors in a highly insecure and unsafe position. The Government is committed to exploring potential solutions to this issue. We want to bring victims and survivors more security if the right option for them is remaining in their own home.
- The second consultation will consider regulating to prevent local authorities applying a local connection test for victims and survivors of domestic abuse who apply for social housing. Despite [2018 guidance](#) encouraging local authorities to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse “are not disadvantaged by any residency or local connection requirements”, we know there is anecdotal evidence that some local authorities continue to disqualify victims and survivors of domestic abuse from social housing where they do not have a local connection. The consultation will consider how this exemption can be better implemented.

Wherever possible and safe, victims and survivors should stay in their homes and perpetrators should be the ones who leave. When this is not possible, it is important they are able to find secure, appropriate, and stable housing. To help achieve this, the Department for Work and Pensions has committed to introducing an exemption, for survivors aged under 35 and living alone, from the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance. This change will be worth around £15 million per year. It will enable victims and survivors to claim housing support at the higher, one-bedroom rate. This will support them to rent settled accommodation which they do not have to share. This change will also apply to some victims and survivors of ‘honour’-based abuse²⁹, as we know that most cases of ‘honour’-based abuse occur in a domestic abuse context.

Support in the workplace

“Employers need to know how to support victims.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

We know victims and survivors need practical support in the workplace. To establish how the workplace can best provide this support, in June 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) launched a review and published the [Workplace Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse Report](#). This sets out the need to tackle domestic abuse as a workplace issue, and the positive role that employers can play in supporting victims and survivors. The report includes best practice case studies and prompts to help those experiencing domestic abuse. BEIS has also been working with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service to ensure that guidance on domestic abuse while working from home has been updated and shared over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statutory right to request a flexible working arrangement is also available to support employed victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Being able to change a work pattern during challenging times can help to balance work with personal circumstances. BEIS [recently consulted](#) on measures to increase the availability, and support the uptake, of flexible working. The measures sought to make the existing regulatory framework more responsive to an individual’s needs and proposed extending the right to request flexible working to all employees from their first day of employment. The Government will publish its response in due course.

We know that employers play a critical role in the response to domestic abuse and can help remove some of the burdens on a victim and survivor by providing flexibility and support. That is why we need to consider whether more needs to be done. **The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will review the current statutory leave provision for employees and consider if this does enough to support victims and survivors who are trying to escape domestic abuse.** We will set out any next steps later this year.

“Every workplace needs a domestic abuse policy for their employees.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

We know employers want more guidance on how to respond to domestic abuse. The [Public Health England Business in the Community Domestic Abuse Employer Toolkit](#) helps employers support and empower employees experiencing domestic abuse. There is also a [guide for employers](#) on managing and supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse from the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development. UNISON has also produced a [model workplace agreement](#) on domestic violence and abuse.

The Civil Service is committed to leading by example. **That is why the Government commits to all Departments having robust policies and effective support plans in place for those employees who are victims and survivors of domestic abuse.** Model guidance has been issued to Departments, which can be adapted to their circumstances.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, working with the Home Office, has also committed to **holding roundtables with employers to share best practice on workplace support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.** The work of the roundtables will consider:

- How to develop safe and inclusive workplace environments, where victims and survivors can feel confident to disclose domestic abuse;
- How to support victims and survivors in a variety of situations where domestic abuse impacts their role, for example, where domestic abuse impacts on safety in the workplace, leads to performance issues, and where they work with the perpetrator;
- How to best support employers, for example, by developing specific products such as model policies, guidance, as well as through education and training; and
- How to reach large and small employers nationally, regionally, and locally.

[The Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant](#) (EDAC) is a commitment by businesses to support women affected by abuse to (re-)enter the workplace. Employers, providers, and partner organisations are invited to sign the Covenant and identify employment opportunities or pledge to raise awareness of domestic abuse within the workplace. Several Government departments collaborate with and support EDAC, including the Department for Work and Pensions, who are signatory partners.

[The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) (EIDA) is a growing network of large and small businesses supporting employers to take action on domestic abuse. Members range from global corporates to small and medium size enterprises across the UK. Membership is free and EIDA provides practical guidance, up to date tools and materials, as well as signposting to support services for employers. They also have a free to download [employer toolkit](#) which has been updated to reflect post-COVID-19 pandemic working.

The Government calls on more organisations and employers to follow suit and join these organisations and schemes. We will continue raising awareness of domestic

abuse and drive best practice among employers. The Home Office will also encourage partners within the Government's supply chains to take steps to tackle domestic abuse and will help them implement their own policies, including through joining these initiatives.

To provide guidance for managers whose employees are experiencing domestic abuse, the Home Office has provided funding to Hestia to set up an employer helpline. **Hestia's [Everyone's Business Advice Line](#) is available to any business or organisation in the UK who would like free guidance and information regarding domestic abuse.**

The police, Family Courts and Criminal Justice System

The police

“The system of reporting these crimes is so so difficult for victims, it needs to change. Police and all involved in the prosecution process need better training.”

Call for Evidence, Nationally Representative Survey

Our expectation is that the police deal with every victim and survivor of domestic abuse with compassion, empathy, and understanding. A response which demonstrates the seriousness of domestic abuse can help challenge victims' and survivors' common belief that domestic abuse is too trivial to report to the police. Building confidence in the police's response can also help address victims' and survivors' concerns that the police 'will not do anything about domestic abuse' or that 'they will not be believed' (**Figure 2**). We know this is a problem because data shows that only 17% of victims and survivors whose partner abuses them report it to the police³⁰.

One way of addressing this is by maximising the number of officers who have received Domestic Abuse Matters training. Many forces have already rolled out the training which is shaped by victim and survivor testimony. And for those that have not, **the Home Office will provide up to £3.3 million over three years to support their delivery of Domestic Abuse Matters.** The Home Office will also work with the College of Policing to update the programme, so it reflects the most up-to-date understanding of domestic abuse, including on coercive or controlling behaviour, where arrests for this offence are small compared to the proportion of total domestic abuse offences³¹.

We know one of the main reasons victims and survivors do not report domestic abuse to the police is because they do not think the police can help. This was reinforced by [Section 127 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980](#) which stipulated that a case can only be brought forward within six months from the time when the offence was committed, or the matter of complaint arose. A consequence of this time limit for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, who are more likely to delay reporting assaults, was a risk of being 'timed out'.

That is why the Government tabled an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that will change how the time limit is applied for common assault in domestic abuse cases in England and Wales. The time limit would apply from the time the crime was reported to the police, rather than when it occurred, and will be extended to a maximum of two years from the offence. This amendment will seek to ensure that victims and survivors feel that they can go to the police to get justice against the person who is

abusing them, with the confidence that the police and the Criminal Justice System can support them.

Concerns about engaging with the police are particularly acute for migrant victims and survivors, who can face additional challenges when reporting to the police due to fears of immigration action. We have undertaken a [Review](#) into the data-sharing arrangements between police and Immigration Enforcement when encountering migrant victims and survivors and witnesses of crime. This was in response to the [super-complaint submitted by Liberty and Southall Black Sisters](#) in 2018 and the subsequent [HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMIFRS\) inspection report](#), which detailed a series of findings and recommendations for the Home Office and police to consider. The super-complaint concerned the sharing of data between the police and Home Office and asserted that migrant victims and survivors and witnesses of crime can be reluctant to report to the police, due to fear of enforcement action being taken against them.

We recognise this is not good enough, which is why we will develop an Immigration Enforcement Migrant Victims Protocol. The purpose of the Protocol is to provide support to vulnerable victims and survivors to make applications to regularise their stay, ensuring no immigration enforcement action can be taken against them while an investigation is underway. **We will seek to develop and implement the Protocol in the coming months, working closely with the police and other relevant organisations.** Alongside this, **the Home Office will also consider a range of complementary initiatives to promote the reporting of crime amongst migrants with insecure immigration status, including outreach activities and strengthening Immigration Enforcement’s approach to vulnerable migrants through enhanced training and guidance on domestic abuse.** We will also work with the National Police Chiefs’ Council and College of Policing to ensure best practice is a standard in regard to safeguarding migrant victims and survivors.

The Family Courts and Criminal Justice System

“I wasn’t given any advice before court. I wasn’t given any special measures or explained the process of what was going to be undertaken in the court room.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

We know more is needed to improve victims’ and survivors’ experience of the Criminal Justice System. The Government has already taken action to do this:

- The Ministry of Justice will provide funding to increase the number of IDVAs and ISVAs they fund to over 1,000. The Ministry of Justice will also aim to improve access to support from IDVAs for women in custody who have experienced domestic abuse and need expert support.
- Through [Section 62 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), the Government committed to introducing automatic eligibility for victims and survivors to request assistance should they fear testifying against the perpetrator in criminal proceedings. This is already available in family proceedings and will also be extended to civil proceedings this Spring, when [Section 64 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) is commenced.

The Government is also working to ensure that domestic abuse is better addressed in **Family Courts**. These measures deliver on a number of the commitments set out in the [Implementation Plan](#) published in the Government's response to the expert Harm Panel's [final report](#):

- The Ministry of Justice is working with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Victims' Commissioner to establish a monitoring mechanism to better understand what is happening in private law proceedings involving domestic abuse to improve transparency and accountability.
- A commitment to introduce a ban on cross-examination of, or by, a vulnerable party or witness in family and civil proceedings, through [Section 65](#) and [Section 66 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) this Spring. We will do this through court-appointed qualified legal representatives to conduct cross-examination where no alternative exists. This will stop victims and survivors from being cross-examined by the person abusing them.
- [Section 67 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) will be brought into effect later this Spring, clarifying the availability of existing provisions in [Section 91\(14\) of the Children Act 1989](#). This will ensure 'barring orders' prevent further proceedings without the court's permission. New Section 91A clarifies the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order, including where the court is satisfied that a further application made by the named person would put the child or another individual at risk of harm. This will prevent abusive partners from using court proceedings to continue their coercive control or other abuse.

Action has also been taken in relation to protective injunctions in family proceedings. Specifically, the effectiveness of processes to notify the police of orders as they are made. A pilot to test a new notification process for Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders and Forced Marriage Protection Orders has proven successful in increasing police awareness of these orders. The pilot has been extended until October 2022, after which the Ministry of Justice will explore making it permanent. In February 2022, a similar pilot was launched in North Yorkshire for Non-Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders with powers of arrest, which the Ministry of Justice is also exploring extending further.

Legal aid is available for domestic abuse victims and survivors in some private family and civil matters, including for those who are subject to financial abuse. It is also being made easier for domestic abuse victims and survivors to access the legal aid they need:

- **Providing the required evidence** – The Ministry of Justice recently made it easier for victims and survivors of domestic abuse to obtain and provide the evidence they need to access legal aid by removing all time limits for providing evidence and through [Section 80 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#). Healthcare professionals will not be able to charge individuals who have asked for certain evidence.
- **Meeting the means and merits tests** – The Ministry of Justice published a consultation on 15 March 2022 on proposed changes to the means test for legal aid. Under the plans, domestic abuse victims and survivors applying for a protective order or other proceedings would benefit from the more generous means test for civil legal

aid, which includes significant increases to the income and capital thresholds. In addition, if someone is applying for legal aid for a dispute about an asset, the asset will not be included in the means assessment. This is much fairer for domestic abuse victims and survivors who are contesting a property, often against the person abusing them, and who cannot use their equity in that property to fund the legal proceedings. These changes will significantly widen access to legal aid for victims and survivors and will make any contributions more affordable.

We also understand how important it is that anyone who needs an emergency injunction can access legal advice and representation quickly, whatever their means. The Ministry of Justice has changed the rules so that victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are applying for an injunction or Protective Order do not need to pass certain means test criteria to access legal aid. However, they may have to pay a financial contribution towards their legal costs.

To ensure the Family Courts deliver the right outcomes for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children, the Government, the judiciary, and key delivery partners such as the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, will continue working together to deliver on the wider commitments made in the Implementation Plan which followed the [Expert Panel's June 2020 Report](#). The Ministry of Justice, together with system partners, are piloting an Integrated Domestic Abuse Court which has been designed to reduce the re-traumatisation of domestic abuse victims and survivors and enhance the voice of the child in private law proceedings. Courts in Dorset and North Wales are involved in the pilot and are now testing a more investigative, less adversarial approach to Family Court proceedings.

Furthermore, to help all victims and survivors achieve justice, **the Ministry of Defence will continue to seek parity of outcome for those in the Service Justice System as those who engage within the Civilian Justice System**. The Armed Forces Bill, which gained Royal Assent in December to become the [Armed Forces Act 2021](#), supports jurisdictional concurrency by creating a legal duty on the prosecutors in the service justice and civilian systems to agree a protocol on the handling of such cases.

Female offenders

Research by the Centre for Women's Justice shows that women who kill their partners often do so in the context of being subjected to abuse from the men they kill. In 77% of the cases they researched, there is evidence to suggest that women had experienced violence or abuse from the deceased^{32,j}. Consequently, the Home Office will continue to work with the Ministry of Justice and the police to respond effectively to victims and survivors of domestic abuse to prevent the escalation that can end in domestic homicide.

The Ministry of Justice also acted to ensure women in custody can access support to address needs arising from experiences of domestic abuse. This includes access to a confidential and free Domestic Violence/Abuse Helpline. In addition, the Probation Service works in close partnership with organisations providing support services across England and Wales, including services focussed on domestic abuse. Since June 2018, the

^j The evidence used in this Report was collated from information in the public domain, primarily media reports, which were then compared with other secondary and primary data sources where available – for example, Domestic Homicide Review reports, Criminal Cases Review Commission reports, interviews with women, discussions with lawyers, and trial observations.

Probation Service has invested £9.5 million into these organisations, of which £2.1 million was explicitly for female offenders who have experienced domestic abuse.

In 2018, the [Female Offender Strategy](#) recognised the major role that domestic abuse can play in the lives of women who have committed crimes. Approximately 60% of all female offenders supervised in the community or in custody, who have had an assessment, report having experienced domestic abuse³³. In 2021, the Ministry of Justice published a [Concordat on Women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System](#) which committed to support these women and develop local partnerships to improve outcomes for women with multiple needs, including domestic abuse support.

When sentencing, courts must already consider the full circumstances of the case in line with any relevant sentencing guidelines issued by the independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales. Their [guidance](#) includes a mitigating factor where the offence was committed through coercion, intimidation or exploitation. It alerts sentencers that this factor may be particularly relevant where the offender has faced domestic abuse. In April 2021, the Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) Pilot was launched at 15 Magistrates courts. This is aimed at improving the quality and timeliness of information presented to sentencers, including on female offenders who are understood to have more complex needs.

And when such cases do still occur, it is vital that sentencing reflects the circumstances. Clare Wade QC is expected to make recommendations in her report which will conclude the Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review. **The Government will carefully consider these and decide whether changes should be made to the sentencing framework so the law in this area responds better to cases of domestic homicide.**

Pursuing Perpetrators

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘Reduce the amount of people who are repeat offenders and make sure that those who commit this crime feel the full force of the law’

We must stop domestic abuse from happening in the first place. But when it does, our Plan^k is clear: **perpetrators need to change their behaviour, nobody else does**. There must be no doubt in domestic abusers’ minds that the police response to their behaviour will be uncompromising, that they will be managed stringently, and that proactive steps will be taken to change their behaviour. By committing to measures which deliver these things, we can drive down reoffending and associated re-victimisation, and subsequently the overall prevalence of domestic abuse.

What we know, do not know, and need to do

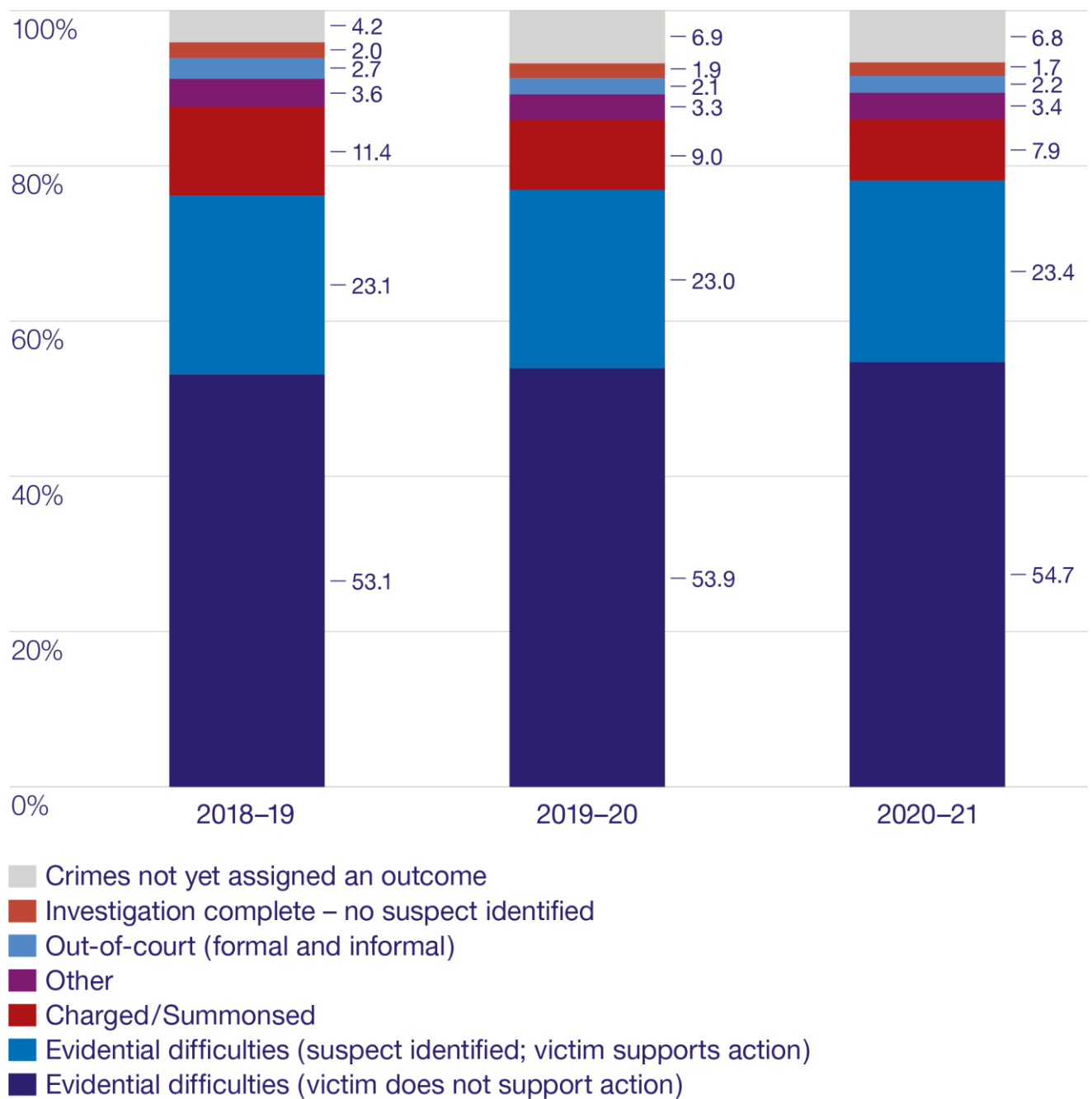
By definition, domestic abuse perpetrators are known to their victims, with most being current or previous intimate partners, but they can also be close or extended family. Although many incidents of domestic abuse are not reported to the police, we know the majority of defendants (92%) in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were men³⁴.

In 2020-21, **we know only 8% of recorded domestic abuse crimes were assigned an outcome of charged or summonsed in the same year**. This has reduced from 11% in year ending March 2019. Of the cases recorded by the police, 23% did not proceed due to evidential difficulties despite the victim or survivor supporting the prosecution³⁵ (Outcome 15). In addition, 55% of cases were closed due to the victim or survivor not supporting further action (Outcome 16; **Figure 4**). Analysis has also been conducted using data from 23 police forces to compare trends in outcomes for crimes related to domestic abuse compared to a non-domestic abuse crime of the same type. It found that charges are

^k [Section 75 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) requires the Government to produce a strategy setting out its approach on the management of domestic abuse perpetrators. This strategy is required to include information on detecting, investigating, and prosecuting offences; assessing and managing the risks posed by individuals who commit offences involving domestic abuse, including stalking; and reducing the risk that such individuals commit further offences. This pillar sets out the Government’s strategy for managing domestic abuse perpetrators, although this whole document and the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#), is relevant.

dropped faster for domestic abuse-flagged assaults with injury than non-domestic abuse cases. There has been a fall in absolute counts of charges for domestic abuse, despite the increase in recording of domestic abuse crimes. **But we do not know fully the drivers behind this trend.**

Figure 4 – Proportion of different outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related crimes England and Wales, year ending March 2019 to year ending March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021³⁶

Therefore, **we need to understand and address the falling number of charges, prosecutions, and convictions relating to domestic abuse.** In the *Detecting, investigating and prosecuting perpetrators* sections of this pillar, we set out measures which do just that.

We know effective and early risk assessments, combined with the right interventions, can reduce reoffending. The focus groups for the [Call for Evidence](#) highlighted the importance of intervening early once an individual has started displaying abusive behaviour. There is some evidence to suggest that behaviour change is possible if authorities intervene when individuals first start to become abusive. A trial funded by the Home Office of the Cautioning and Relationship Abuse (CARA) intervention for first-time offenders^l in West Midlands and Hampshire found that those who attended the course were significantly less likely to commit further domestic abuse than those who did not³⁷.

We have a range of measures, including Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements^m (MAPPA) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs), to manage offenders once risks are identified. However, our suite of risk assessment tools could be further improved to ensure the right measures are deployed for different perpetrators. There is also more we can do to better use what is already available for dealing with perpetrators. Therefore, **we need to improve those risk assessment tools as well as take more and stronger action in relation to domestic abusers.** These tools and measures are detailed in the *Assessing and managing risk* sections.

We also know that many domestic abusers are repeat offenders, with 83% of male offenders repeating their offences in a six-year follow-up period³⁸. We have evidence that serial perpetrators, or those who commit multiple domestic abuse crimes with different people, are moderately prevalent. A study in the United Kingdom found that over the course of an 18-month period, 50% of offenders had at least one further domestic incident, with 18% of those involving a different person³⁹.

There is promising evidence suggesting that intervening with high-risk perpetrators capable of the most harmful behaviours can be effective at reducing levels of abuse. An evaluation of the [Drive Project](#) indicates that participation resulted in reductions in abuse and risk amongst users of the service, with physical abuse reduced by 82% and jealous and controlling behaviours reduced by 73%. The cost of delivering Drive, estimated at £2,400 per perpetrator⁴⁰, compares favourably to the social and economic cost to society of high-risk perpetrators, at £63,000 per perpetrator.

We still do not have enough evidence on what works to prevent offending, including knowledge on the causes, drivers, and risk factors associated with perpetrators' behaviour. We also need to know more about what happens when domestic abuse continues over a

^l Project CARA is an awareness-raising programme that promotes behaviour change for individuals (male and female) who are alleged first-time domestic abuse offenders. The intervention comprises of two workshops that offenders attend as the core condition of the Caution.

^m MAPPA are a framework of statutory arrangements, under which the police and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, with the cooperation of other agencies with responsibility for health, housing, and social care, are required jointly to assess and manage the risk presented by known sexual and violent offenders. This includes those convicted of offences related to sexual abuse and stalking.

period time and whether the harm caused increases as a result^{n,41}. Therefore, **what we need to do is expand and evaluate interventions such as Drive and other perpetrator interventions, in addition to conducting further research on domestic abusers.** These actions are set out in the *Reducing reoffending* sections of this pillar.

What we are already doing and what more we will do

This Government will be uncompromising in its pursuit of all domestic abusers and ruthless in targeting those perpetrators responsible for the harm caused. They will face the full force of the law.

Detecting, investigating, and prosecuting perpetrators

“Perhaps there needs to be more of a spotlight shone on the perpetrators of these crimes as there is still a lot of shame and victim blaming.”

Call for Evidence, Nationally Representative Survey

We must root out domestic abusers and hold them to account. The police are integral to doing this. Three reports have recently been published on the police response to domestic abuse and other violence against women and girls crimes:

- [Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic - 2021](#) – by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), published in June 2021;
- [A duty to protect: Police use of protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls](#) – a joint investigation by HMICFRS, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, and the College of Policing, published in August 2021; and
- [Police response to violence against women and girls](#) – by HMICFRS and commissioned by the Home Secretary, published in September 2021.

To support the police in vigorously pursuing domestic abuse perpetrators, we have taken the findings in these reports extremely seriously. That is why we have and will continue to implement their recommendations. We have already:

- Made violence against women girls, including domestic abuse and stalking, a part of the Strategic Policing Requirement. This means that violence against women and girls will be set out as a national threat for police forces to respond to, alongside other threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child sexual abuse.

ⁿ Most data analysis on escalation relies on police-recorded crime data, which we know is not a complete picture of domestic abuse incidents experienced.

- Supported and funded the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) decision to appoint a new, full-time, Violence Against Women and Girls National Policing Lead, Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Maggie Blyth.

“With conviction rates so low it doesn't give anyone faith that crimes will be punished properly, and offenders could go on to commit more/more severe crimes.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

To go further we must ensure that cases are investigated thoroughly, and the number of charges goes up. It is unacceptable that three out of four domestic abuse crimes are not receiving a Criminal Justice Outcome⁴². **The Home Office will act on the [HMICFRS recommendation](#) to conduct a review of the data on domestic abuse cases that did not proceed (Outcomes 15 and 16) seek to understand why this is happening.** This will contribute towards more domestic abusers facing the full force of the law.

Whilst investigations are ongoing and to ensure victims and survivors are protected, we are proposing reforms in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill on pre-charge bail. To encourage the police to use bail more effectively, the legislation will adopt a neutral position by removing the presumption against using it. We will also introduce new pre-charge bail time periods for suspects, which are intended to be more balanced and proportionate. To better protect victims and survivors from domestic abusers, there will be a new duty to seek their views on pre-charge bail conditions. The Home Office will empower the College of Policing to issue Statutory Guidance to encourage consistency across all forces. These reforms are intended to make the system more effective and place greater emphasis on the protection of victims and survivors.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will also establish two new statutory out of court disposals for over 18s. There will be a lower-tier disposal (community caution) and an upper-tier disposal (diversionary caution). There must be conditions attached to both with the aim of achieving rehabilitation, such as engaging with support services, reparation, financial compensation or punishment, and unpaid work. Restrictive conditions can be set where they contribute to reparation or rehabilitation. Victims and survivors should be consulted for their views.

Following thorough investigation, there may be specific cases where prosecution is not the best way forward. In light of recent findings from the evaluation of the CARA project, and in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the NPCC, **the Ministry of Justice will draft a statutory Code of Practice which will prescribe the circumstances in which community and diversionary cautions may be given within the new two-tier system, the conditions that may be attached and the way in which they must be delivered and recorded.**

In addition, through the [Rape Review](#), which outlined a robust plan of action to improve how rapes cases are handled at every stage of the Criminal Justice System, we are investing in Operation Soteria, a programme of work aimed at delivering a new operating model for the investigation and prosecution of rape by June 2023. Work is currently underway in five police force areas and will expand into fourteen further police force areas

in the coming months. The programme has so far identified overlap between domestic abuse and rape and sexual offence cases, and it is therefore vital that officers have the right skills to understand these offences and how they may interrelate. Key learning is being shared regularly with police and prosecutors nationally, and we will continue to update on progress, including through our six-monthly Rape Review Progress Update.

It is also critical that victims and survivors have full confidence in how the police deal with domestic abusers, particularly in cases where the accused is a police officer. The College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on domestic abuse sets out guidance on how this should be dealt with. This includes the process for referring such allegations and providing victims and survivors with appropriate support. The College of Policing, HMICFRS and the Independent Office for Police Conduct are looking into the processes and procedures in place when allegations of domestic abuse are made against police officers. They will be publishing a final report this Spring. The Home Office will work with policing partners to carefully consider any recommendations made.

We have already taken measures to ensure domestic abusers face justice through the introduction of new criminal offences:

- Through the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), the Ministry of Justice extended the offence in [Section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015](#) for disclosing private sexual photographs or films with the intent to cause distress to someone who appears in them, to include threatening to disclose such material.
- The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) also removed the 'living together' requirement for the controlling or coercive behaviour offence. When the change comes into force, this means the offence will apply to intimate partners, ex-partners or family members, regardless of whether the person being abused and the perpetrator live together. To effectively implement the new offence and support detection, investigation, and prosecution of controlling or coercive behaviour, **the Home Office will issue updated Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance.**
- Under [Section 70 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), a new criminal offence of non-fatal strangulation will be created which will apply in all cases of intentional strangulation or suffocation, including in a domestic abuse context. This new criminal offence will be contained in [Sections 75A and 75B of the Serious Crime Act 2015](#), once Section 70 of the Domestic Abuse Act is brought into effect this Spring. The maximum penalty for the offence is five years imprisonment and/or a fine.
- And when it comes to abusive behaviour online, new communications offences will be introduced through the Online Safety Bill. These offences will more effectively capture a wider range of harms that individuals are exposed to on social media:
 - The 'harm-based communications' offence captures communications sent where a sender intended to cause harm, and which was sent without reasonable excuse. If an individual is found guilty of this, they could go to prison for up to two years.
 - The 'threatening communications' offence will capture communications which convey a serious threat of harm. This includes communications such as a threat to life, rape, or serious injury, or causing serious financial harm. In the context of

domestic abuse, this will protect victims and survivors from genuinely threatening communications, such as threats related to a partner's finances or threats concerning physical harm. If an individual is found guilty, they could go to prison for up to five years.

We want to go even further. Where a domestic homicide occurs, we want to ensure that the perpetrator faces the full extent of the law. **The independent review into the sentencing of domestic homicide cases** is considering how the law, as it currently stands, applies to cases of domestic homicide (prosecuted as either murder or manslaughter) where an individual has caused the death of an intimate partner or former partner, and, where appropriate, to identify options for reform. The Government will carefully consider any recommendations and decide whether changes should be made to the sentencing framework so the law in this area better responds to cases of domestic homicide.

Assessing and managing risk

“The perpetrator of the crime must be assessed for risk of further violence and appropriate measures taken to ensure the victim is 100% certain of their ongoing safety.”

Call for Evidence, Nationally Representative Survey

Once abusers have been identified and dealt with, steps must be taken to ensure they do not reoffend. This should be through assessing the risks posed by each individual and then taking appropriate action to manage them and prevent reoffending.

The soon-to-be-published Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance will set out different approaches to assessing risk. To assess risks posed by perpetrators, it highlights guidance issued to forces by the College of Policing on the overarching principles of ‘identification, assessment and management of serial or potentially dangerous domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators’⁴³.

We want to ensure the police are being proactive and using the best available technology to assess and manage serial perpetrators of domestic abuse. Working closely with the College of Policing, the Home Office funded University College London to undertake research to improve the understanding of a leading risk assessment tool, the Recency, Frequency, Gravity and Victimization model and its use in policing domestic abuse. This has huge potential for helping the police to assess how dangerous a domestic abuser is. However, more work is needed to improve the algorithm.

That is why the Home Office will **invest an additional £6.7 million over the next three years to further refine the algorithm and pilot its rollout**. This will help the police to more effectively target the most harmful serial domestic abusers, to prevent them from causing further harm to their victims.

Following risk assessment, there are a variety of tools available to manage domestic abusers and reduce offending, including protective orders. Many cases of stalking involve domestic abuse, and stalking is particularly likely to become entrenched or escalate if it is

not tackled early. This is the main reason why the Government introduced Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) in January 2020; these allow the police to intervene early to place conditions on the behaviour of a stalker, including in advance of a case coming to trial. As set out in our [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#), the [Home Office review](#) found SPOs are generally working well, but there is room for improvement, in particular to ensure that all police forces make proper use of them. The Home Office will continue to work with the police to ensure that all forces make effective use of SPOs.

The Government recognises concerns regarding the inconsistent use of orders by the police. That is why the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) introduced a new civil Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN), which is given by the police to provide immediate protection following a domestic abuse incident, and the new civil Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO). The DAPO will bring together the strongest elements of existing protective orders into a single, comprehensive order to provide flexible, longer-term protection for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We want the DAPO to become the go-to protective order for all forms of domestic abuse.

We will pilot DAPNs and DAPOs in selected areas across England and Wales to test the effectiveness and impact of the new model. Both DAPNs and DAPOs will be issued in pilot areas from early 2023 and undergo a process and impact evaluation ahead of expected national rollout in 2025. The Government is undertaking extensive work to prepare DAPNs and DAPOs for piloting. This includes selecting police forces and courts for participation in the pilot, designing a robust evaluation process, and ensuring that key features such as electronic monitoring, perpetrator programmes and notification requirements are fit-for-purpose and operationalised effectively. Pilot areas will be announced later this year.

To facilitate their implementation and encourage their use, the Government has committed to covering the cost of court fees incurred by the police for any DAPO applications made during the pilot. We will use the pilot to improve our understanding of the resource implications of the new DAPN and DAPO on the police and other agencies, allowing us to determine future resource requirements.

We know that electronic monitoring of a domestic abuser can make victims and survivors feel safer in some instances, and better-informed and better-engaged with the Criminal Justice System⁴⁴. Electronic monitoring can also act as a deterrent to perpetrators whilst the tag is being worn⁴⁵. The Government already has ambitious plans to cut crime by expanding the use of electronic monitoring, supported by an extra £183 million investment.

The Ministry of Justice will be increasing tagging of those leaving custody, including approximately 3,500 individuals who are at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse. We will trial electronic monitoring of curfew and location licence conditions for high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators following release from custody, using GPS and radio frequency technology. This will ensure certainty of detection when protective licence conditions are breached, strengthen offender management, help victims and survivors feel safe following the release of the abuser, and help prevent further offending. The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) gives courts powers to impose electronic monitoring as part of a DAPO.

The Ministry of Justice has committed to pilot problem-solving courts in England and Wales and is exploring the possible inclusion of a court focused on domestic abuse perpetrators. This model would hold offenders on community sentences more accountable

for compliance with their court orders through regular court reviews and provide tightly coordinated multi-agency supervision, while also seeking to protect and empower victims and survivors. Unlike the other problem-solving court models, this model would not be offered as an alternative to custody.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) operate a [national helpline and email contact service](#) to prevent any unwanted contact from prisoners, including to stop domestic abuse perpetrators contacting victims and survivors from inside prison. This service can be used by any agency or organisation supporting victims or survivors to contact HMPPS on their behalf. We want to ensure that everyone who needs to is making use of this service.

That is why we will be launching a communications drive this summer, to improve national and local organisations' awareness of this service to further protect victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We will also use this as an opportunity to support multi-agency partnership working at a local level, building on the learning from a police-led pilot working with HMP Hull and HMP Leeds which has sought to ensure abusers are not able to further victimise victims through effective information sharing.

For the most harmful domestic abusers who are in the community, where risks are identified we need to cut off opportunities for them to cause harm and ensure they face the consequences of their actions. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are another crucial mechanism for the management of convicted domestic abuser perpetrators. The Government has responded to calls for improvements in the way MAPPA works in practice:

- For the first time ever, a separate chapter entitled 'Domestic Abuse and Stalking' was introduced into the [MAPPA Statutory Guidance](#). This will raise the profile and bring a renewed focus, helping to strengthen the effective management of these types of offenders.
- To further strengthen the MAPPA framework, HMPPS have published a [Policy Framework](#) for the Probation Service regarding the management of MAPPA cases at the Level 1, including domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators. The Framework aims to improve consistency in the quality of information sharing, the regularity of reviews, and the identification of cases where additional risk management activity is required.
- The Government has also produced a thresholding document to guide practitioners in deciding on the level of management under MAPPA, so domestic abuse and stalking offenders are subject to the right level of supervision.

However, we know more needs to be done. **This is why the Government will go even further by considering robust options to deal with, and effectively manage, the most harmful domestic abusers and reduce the risks they pose. This will include considering options for a domestic abuse offenders register which will set out our long-term ambition to better track and manage the most harmful perpetrators.**

We know there is no easy solution for the creation of such a register, and opinions vary on how best to deliver one, so we will not rule anything in or out at this stage. We will explore

different options for how a domestic abuse offenders register could be used most effectively and the form it might consequently take. We will consider the following:

- Requiring the most dangerous domestic abusers to report certain matters to the police, such as when they start new relationships, open a bank account with a partner, or change address.
- Exploring the most effective multi-agency forums for sharing information and creating plans which target perpetrators in order to protect victims and their children. These could also help us better understand patterns of behaviour, including whether the harm and severity of abuse escalates over time.
- Looking into ways to formally label these offenders as ‘domestic abusers’ so they are more easily identifiable.

“My ex-husband was physically and mentally abusive during my seven year marriage, he continued this behaviour with his second wife and now his third. I'd like to see things put in place to stop people reoffending.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will also strengthen the way risks relating to domestic abuse and stalking are assessed and managed to reduce reoffending within its offender assessment system, through the delivery of guidance and more accessible training. This will include:

- Producing an evidence-based guidance document to support practitioners to complete robust assessment based on known domestic abuse risk factors;
- The development of a package of measures for improving the use and quality of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) tool;
- Delivery to all probation practitioners of externally commissioned new domestic abuse learning and development to inform practice, risk assessment and risk management; and
- Development of a package of measures for working with stalking behaviours, including accessible practitioner support and guidance.

As a condition of a domestic abuse offenders’ licence, following their release from custody the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) enables them to be subject to polygraph testing. It could be used where they have been imprisoned for breaching a Domestic Abuse Protection Order or a range of other domestic-abuse related offences. We know this testing has been an effective tool in the management of sexual offenders since 2014^o. In 2021, a three-year

^o See [Mandatory polygraph tests factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

pilot was commenced in four probation areas covering 13 police force areas^p, for mandatory polygraph examinations on domestic abuse perpetrators released on licence who have been identified at high or very high risk of causing serious harm.

The Ministry of Defence will also review what possibilities there are to begin recognising and identifying offender patterns and warning signs. **An initial working-level review will be undertaken to examine how data from the Civilian Justice System can be acquired and consolidated with data from the Service Justice System, to ensure that repeat offences are not lost between jurisdictions.** Additionally, thought will be given to how these data can be interpreted to predict potential individuals at risk of becoming perpetrators, with special consideration to any points of Service life that may contribute to that risk.

Reducing reoffending

“It’s well-established now that you cannot just put perpetrators in prison and expect behaviour to stop, we’ve moved from thinking it detracts from survivor funding I think, we need to know something has to be done to reduce reoffending.”

Call for Evidence, Focus Group

Holding a domestic abuser to account for their behaviour involves more than just seeking a criminal justice outcome. They must change their behaviour as well.

To stop domestic abusers from repeatedly offending, we need to understand why it happens so we can better tackle the crime. We still have more to learn about these individuals. That is why we have awarded £2.2 million since 2020-21 to fund research into domestic abuse perpetrators. This research will strengthen the evidence base for what works in addressing their behaviour and reducing reoffending.

The Home Office has also invested over £25 million over the last two years to introduce innovative approaches, which operate both within and outside a criminal justice setting, to address domestic abuse. These include behaviour change and stalking programmes, programmes focused on children and adolescents, and expanding projects such as Drive in local areas. The [Drive Project](#) involves a case manager coordinating a bespoke one-to-one intervention including disruption (Criminal Justice System involvement and safeguarding), behaviour change, and diversionary support (substance misuse, housing, employment support) for the perpetrator, as well as an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate for the victim and survivor.

HMPs also deliver a range of interventions to address convicted perpetrators who have committed a domestic abuse-related offence. These interventions target attitudes and thinking, emotion and relationship management, as well as sexual offending. Four of these are accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel (CSAAP), who

^p North West (Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire, and Cumbria Police); Greater Manchester (Greater Manchester Police); North East (Durham Constabulary, Cleveland, and Northumbria Police); and Yorkshire and Humber (South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Humberside Police).

assess the quality of programmes against the evidence base. HMPPS are committed to the ongoing support, monitoring, and evaluation of these programmes.

Our investment in and evaluation of perpetrator interventions is critical to changing the behaviour of domestic abusers and understanding how to prevent more of these individuals reoffending in future. That is why it is so important we continue our investment. **The Home Office will invest a further £75 million over the next three years into tackling domestic abuse perpetrators. This will fund perpetrator interventions, with multi-year agreements granted where appropriate, evaluation, and further research** to improve our knowledge of what works to reduce reoffending. We can then feed this knowledge into perpetrator programmes to hone and refine them. We will also **share these findings and any emerging evidence** with local commissioners and the police to ensure everyone can benefit from this work.

We are also interested in **focused deterrence models that combine credible support, community engagement and deterrence**, which have been successfully used to tackle and reduce violence and violent offenders. We will explore interventions that embody these principles with the £75 million funding for tackling perpetrators.

This Government recognises the importance of a consistent approach to determining the quality of perpetrator interventions, particularly on safeguarding and victim and survivor safety. That is why we are working with Durham University, Respect, and SafeLives to develop a **set of overarching national standards and principles for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions**.

Local areas should have the right interventions in place for perpetrators. One way we will ensure this is through **empowering local areas to develop their own perpetrator strategies and needs assessments for interventions**. The Home Office recently funded the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands and Cordis Bright to develop a toolkit to support local needs assessments and commissioning of perpetrator programmes and projects. We will support a wider rollout of this toolkit so all local areas can benefit.

In addition, **the Ministry of Defence will review ways in which attendance of behaviour change programmes can be facilitated so that its personnel are able to complete perpetrator courses**, other than in extreme unavoidable cases where there is an overriding operational imperative.

And following the commitment outlined in the [Harm Panel Implementation Plan](#), **Ministry of Justice convened a Steering Group to review the evidence base on Family Court Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DAPPs)**. The review will consider whether to allow those involved in Family Court proceedings to self-refer to perpetrator programmes. It will also consider the need for additional services beyond current provision to better meet the needs of families involved in Family Court proceedings, particularly domestic abuse victims and survivors and their children. The outcome of the review will form the basis of a new commissioning specification for perpetrator programmes linked to Family Court proceedings.

These programmes and projects, and the Government's investment into them, are vital to delivering on our objective of reducing reoffending and preventing re-victimisation.

A Stronger System

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘Improve the systems and processes that underpin the response to domestic abuse across society’

The whole of society needs to work together to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, and deliver the best possible outcomes for victims and survivors. Domestic abuse cases must be identified quicker and in greater numbers. Organisations must be able to collaborate and coordinate their response. We must address the gaps in data and knowledge on domestic abuse to improve our response.

What we know, do not know, and need to do

“[We need to] have better training to understand the behaviour and pattern perpetrators exhibit in order to correctly and efficiently identify them.”

Call for Evidence, Nationally Representative Survey

We need to identify more cases. The three ways to do this are set out in the *Identifying cases* section. The first is **to increase awareness of what constitutes domestic abuse so victims, survivors and the wider public can better identify it.** We know only 34% of partner abuse victims and survivors perceived what happened to them to be domestic abuse⁴⁶. In the long-term, we are addressing this through education and measures set out in the *Prioritising Prevention* pillar. We do not know if these attitudes persist simply due to a lack of awareness and understanding, or a more engrained set of values. We can assess the extent to which it is the latter if effective awareness raising causes minimal change.

Secondly, **professionals who often encounter domestic abuse need support and training to improve their ability to identify and appropriately refer cases.** However, in some cases, they lack the capability to do so⁴⁷. A particularly important group is healthcare professionals. Healthcare settings can allow access to typically harder to reach victims and survivors.

And thirdly, **we must encourage and facilitate more disclosures by victims and survivors**. SafeLives estimate that it takes on average three years before victims and survivors access support⁴⁸. Among respondents to the victim and survivor survey element of the [Call for Evidence](#), two of the most common reasons were being unsure where or how to access support (32%), and not knowing support existed (18%).

Separately, **collaboration and coordination between and within organisations must be improved**. Research has consistently found that collaboration between agencies, in particular multi-component and multi-agency interventions, is crucial to reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse. Given the complex range of factors underpinning domestic abuse, a holistic approach with multiple, coordinated actions, produces far better results than one-off interventions⁴⁹. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are a successful example of multi-agency collaboration. [Early analysis conducted by SafeLives](#) shows that following intervention by a MARAC and an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor, up to 60% of victims and survivors report no further violence.

In order for different systems such as education, health care, social services, criminal justice, and charitable organisations to coordinate effectively, they need increased communication. This involves sharing goals and best practice. Good communication between services can be difficult for various reasons, including local authority governance structures. It is also vital for there to be a common understanding of domestic abuse⁵⁰. One study showed important information being missed between police and social workers due to their different understandings of the same concepts⁵¹.

A pilot of the Health Pathfinder Project, an initiative focused on building a coordinated and consistent healthcare response to domestic abuse, found that over nine in ten of the victims and survivors referred to the service reported improved wellbeing and greater feelings of safety⁵². This highlights the potential benefits of increased coordination within a specific sector.

“Data on violence against women is very patchy. Better data collection and reporting is a crucial part of addressing this issue.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

Finally, we need better data on, and knowledge of, domestic abuse. This information must also be effectively shared to improve the response to domestic abuse. We know researching hidden crimes like domestic abuse can be particularly challenging. A major problem is a lack of comprehensive, comparable, and disaggregated data on victims, survivors and perpetrators, including information on protected characteristics. Addressing this would allow more granular analysis of all those involved.

There has been much research which has gathered knowledge on domestic abuse. It has provided valuable insights into factors that may predict or exacerbate the potential for domestic abuse occurring, how we may best go about preventing it, and the importance of systemic change and multi-agency working. However, there is still more to learn⁵³. There are two particular areas where this Plan is focused on increasing the knowledge base.

The first being our knowledge of domestic homicides, and what we can learn from individual cases in order to reduce the number of tragedies. We do know who they impact. Domestic homicides constitute a significant proportion of all female homicides: in the year ending March 2021, almost half (49%) of adult women homicide victims were killed in a domestic homicide, with 10% of male homicides being domestic homicides in the year to March 2021⁵⁴. Of the female domestic homicide victims, 76% were killed by a partner or ex-partner, 15% were killed by a parent, and 9% were killed by a child or other family relative, such as a brother or sister⁵⁵. Of the male domestic homicide victims, 26% were killed by a partner or ex-partner, 33% were killed by a parent, and 41% were killed by a child or other family relative, such as a brother or sister⁵⁶. This shows domestic homicide is sadly a gendered crime, and that it is inextricably linked to femicide^{57,58,59}.

Research and tools are being developed to help understand risk factors for domestic homicide and potential escalation of perpetrator behaviour. Jane Monckton-Smith's 'Homicide Timeline'⁶⁰ outlines the eight steps that often precede a domestic homicide. But we need to know more on what works to reduce the risk of domestic homicide at each stage in the cycle, and how we can identify potential victims and suspects that never come to the attention of the police until a domestic homicide takes place.

The second area of focus is suicides that follow domestic abuse. One Home Office-funded project found that there were 39 victim suicides following domestic abuse in the year to 31 March 2021⁶¹. [The Domestic Homicide Project](#) is the first time the Home Office has collated data on victim suicides at a national level, so at present we have no comparable data. However, this is likely to be an under-estimate of all victim suicides with a history of domestic abuse as, given the nature of the Project, it inherently excluded those suicides where a prior history of domestic abuse was not known to police.

Indeed, a project by the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme and Kent Police found that 30% of all suspected^q suicides between 2019 and 2021 were linked to domestic abuse. This included not only victims of domestic abuse, but also children and young people living in households impacted by domestic abuse, and perpetrators. Previous research has also suggested that domestic abuse could account for as many as four suicides per week in the UK⁶². A recent study (not yet peer-reviewed) shows that after adjusting for other variables, past-year suicide attempts were two to three times more common in victims of intimate partner violence than non-victims. Past-year self-harm and suicidal thoughts were also more common in victims⁶³.

It is devastating to know that those trapped by domestic abuse can feel so hopeless that they believe the only way out is suicide, with recent research suggesting almost a quarter (24%) of Refuge's clients had felt suicidal at one time or another⁶⁴.

^q The Kent and Medway data are based on initial police reports of suspected suicides and are therefore pre-coroner inquest.

What we are already doing and what more we will do

Identifying cases

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘More domestic abuse cases are identified and responded to appropriately’

“Training needs to be given to the police, medical professionals and teachers alike, so they are able to recognise the red flags in advance.”

Call for Evidence, Victim and Survivor Survey

As domestic abuse sadly remains a hidden harm, it is crucial that communities work together to tackle domestic abuse. This is where families, friends and neighbours play a crucial role alongside the organisations we interact with in our daily lives. **We are creating a coordinated community response whereby everyone has a role to play.** We do not want the information shared after a serious incident has occurred when it is too late. We will continue to work with charities and the police to build on our work.

The Government is taking steps to improve awareness of what constitutes domestic abuse among the next generation through delivery of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum and all the measures outlined in the *Prioritising Prevention* pillar. To increase awareness among adults, we have run communication campaigns, including launching ‘[Enough](#)’, and in April 2020 the Home Office launched the #YouAreNotAlone (#YANA) campaign which not only raised awareness, but ensured victims and survivors of abuse, and those worried about them, know how to access help and advice. The #YANA campaign has been translated into 16 languages and we have worked with a range of community media outlets, influencers, and organisations to help get the message to domestic abuse victims and survivors about the support available.

Action has already been taken to support and offer training to key groups of professionals; **social workers** must meet Social Work England’s professional standards and initial training to prepare them. For **healthcare professionals**, the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) Programme offers training and support to GPs to help them more easily identify cases of domestic abuse among their patients. And all **operational Probation Service staff** must complete mandatory training on adult and child safeguarding, including training on domestic abuse.

However, we know more action is needed to support and train professionals in frontline agencies. In particular, those in statutory and non-statutory agencies who do not always understand how to support victims and survivors with no access to benefits, or how to correctly signpost them to specialist services. To address this, the Home Office will explore ways to increase awareness and promote greater understanding amongst agencies on how to respond to the needs of victims and survivors with no recourse to public funds, including signposting to appropriate support pathways.

Specific actions that are targeted at key groups of professionals include:

- **Up to £7.5 million investment over three years into interventions in healthcare settings. This will support upskilling healthcare professionals and ensuring they can effectively identify and refer victims and survivors to support services.**
- For **GP practices** specifically, IRISi will incorporate additional content into their IRIS Programme training in relation to suicides that follow domestic abuse. It will highlight that when there has been a disclosure of domestic abuse by a patient, and the patient later goes on to die by suicide, GPs should ask the Community Safety Partnership to consider commissioning a Domestic Homicide Review. This will support learning for local agencies, build our evidence base and understanding, and ultimately prevent these tragic deaths.
- **The Department of Health and Social Care will publish their Women’s Health Strategy this Spring, which will address some of the barriers victims and survivors of domestic abuse experience when interacting with important health services, and help to ensure that our healthcare professionals are appropriately equipped to support those suffering trauma from abuse.** Trauma informed practice means that healthcare professionals operate with an awareness of the trauma that people may have experienced through abuse, and actively seek to prevent re-traumatisation. This will help to address some of the barriers that victims and survivors of domestic abuse experience when interacting with important health services.
- To support the important role that schools and colleges play in identifying children who may be at risk of harm, from Summer 2022 the Department for Education will make available an online resource hub for **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)** in schools and colleges. It will enable them to access advice and guidance, including on domestic abuse.
- The **Ministry of Defence will review the general safeguarding training requirements** across the whole force (civilian and military), to examine how best to ensure there is appropriate training aimed at all levels, from ‘basic awareness’ to ‘specialist’.

To further bolster awareness of the support available and encourage more disclosures, **NHS England and NHS Improvement is running a communications campaign to raise awareness of the support available through Sexual Assault and Referral Centres (SARCs)**. The key messages will focus on making people aware of what SARCs offer and how to access them. Specifically, that they are available across England 24 hours a day seven days a week; that adults can access a SARC without notifying the police; and that they are confidential and include health and wellbeing professionals.

Steps have also been taken to facilitate an increase in disclosures. In January 2021, to provide victims and survivors with a simple and discreet way to signal that they need immediate help from the safety of their local pharmacy, the Home Office launched the [‘Ask for ANI’](#) codeword scheme. The scheme shares traits with other codeword schemes such as Ask for Angela which operates in bars, clubs, and other venues. Over half of pharmacies across the UK are now participating in the Ask for ANI scheme, including Boots, Lloyds, and Superdrug. This was accompanied by the #YouAreNotAlone campaign to make victims and survivors aware that this was a setting where they could disclose abuse and access support.

We will build on this by expanding where the innovative Ask for ANI codeword scheme operates. **The Home Office will work with the Department for Work and Pensions to trial and, if the trial is successful, consider a national rollout of the Ask for ANI codeword scheme across Jobcentre Plus offices.** Both Departments will work closely with the relevant partners to ensure the scheme builds on and complements existing work already being undertaken by local areas, and that it continues to meet local needs.

And to make it easier to report abusive behaviour online, under the Online Safety Bill, companies will have a duty to ensure they have effective and accessible reporting and redress mechanisms. They will need to allow users, including victims and survivors of domestic abuse, to report harmful content and raise any concerns if a company has failed to fulfil its duties of care. If companies are made aware of illegal content on their sites, they must remove it swiftly.

The **Ministry of Defence is also producing tailored materials for its personnel, detailing the different routes to support** (including information regarding the difference between the Civilian and Service Justice Systems), as well as information to support those responding to disclosure. This will mean more victims and survivors are aware of the support available.

Collaboration and coordination

OUR OBJECTIVE: ‘Improve collaboration and coordination between and within organisations’

“Until connections are made across the whole system nothing will change, it’s just sticking plaster at the edges.”

Call for Evidence, Public Survey

More action is required to facilitate a common understanding of domestic abuse across the whole system, which is critical to coordination between and within organisations. That is one of the reasons **the Government will soon publish new Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance.** This Guidance will provide further details on the different types of abuse and abusive behaviours, including economic abuse, to support frontline agencies and professionals based on the [definition of domestic abuse in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#).

Reforms are already being delivered to facilitate coordination and identification of best practice within local authorities. The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) requires Tier One Local Authorities to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, which assesses the need, and commissions support for all victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including children, within safe accommodation. The makeup of Local Partnership Boards may vary across areas, but as a minimum, the Boards will include members from across the system, representing Local Authorities, victims and survivors and their children, domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations, health care providers, and the police or other criminal justice agencies.

In addition, through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the Government will place new duties on a range of agencies to work collaboratively to prepare a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence. When defining the scope of these strategies, local areas will be able to consider whether to include domestic abuse and sexual offences along with other types of serious violence. Opportunities to prevent future violence could include the work of Violence Reduction Units across England and Wales, whose aim is to reduce and prevent serious violence with a focus on knife crime and youth violence in public spaces, and can include addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences, of which domestic abuse is one.

From 2018 to 2020, the Department of Health and Social Care managed £2 million of funding for the domestic abuse Pathfinder programme, which created a model health response for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse in acute, community and mental health services, and focused on building a coordinated and consistent healthcare response to domestic abuse. The Pathfinder Toolkit was published in 2020, to encourage best practice across the health system.

To go further and improve communication and information sharing between organisations, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Ministry of Justice will continue to work collaboratively to ensure alignment between Integrated Care Systems^r (ICSs) in health and social care in England, and victim support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. This will ensure victims and survivors have access to whatever services they need.

This alignment will be further strengthened through the **Government investing up to £7.5 million in healthcare settings over the next three years**. This investment will put in place measures to facilitate coordination within and with other organisations. In addition, **the Department of Health and Social Care, including its Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, will work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote evidence-based approaches to domestic abuse through guidance and engagement with the new ICSs**. This will include best practice on the health and care system's role in preventing domestic abuse, identifying where people may be a victim and survivor or perpetrator of domestic abuse, taking the right action, long-term support for victims and survivors, and learning from previous cases.

The Department of Health and Social Care plans to launch a public discussion paper this Spring to inform the development of a new longer-term mental health plan. This will set up for a wide-ranging and ambitious conversation about potential solutions to improve mental health and wellbeing, both within and beyond Government, and the NHS. People with lived experience of domestic abuse, and relevant experts, will be encouraged to feed in to help ensure that the new plan makes a difference for this group.

To improve **communication and information sharing in the Criminal Justice System**, the Common Platform is being introduced to provide a new digital case management system. It will be used in the Magistrates' and Crown courts to ensure that cases where domestic abuse is a factor, are recorded on criminal court case management systems. By sharing identifiers, this will ensure that criminal justice agencies will be better able to flag

^r The Health and Care Bill will create 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICS) across England – these will allocate resources, coordinate services, and plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.

domestic abuse cases on their systems. Testing of the Common Platform began in 2017 and work is currently due to complete in 2024.

It is essential that the wider safeguarding system, including statutory and non-statutory partners, work together effectively to identify and support children and young people who both exhibit harmful behaviours, and are victims to them. The [Children Act 2004](#) (as amended by the [Social Work Act 2017](#)) placed a shared and equal duty on the three safeguarding partners (police, health, and local authority) to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

In November 2019, the Department for Education appointed Sir Alan Wood CBE to explore how these reforms are working. [Sir Alan's report](#), published in May 2021, identified that the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have facilitated better working together at local level in relation to issues such as domestic abuse, in some areas. In response, **the Department for Education will share learning from the 'engaging schools' multi-agency safeguarding arrangement projects when they conclude in 2022.** These projects include testing new approaches to tackling domestic abuse through exploring the role that schools can play in identifying and responding to concerns about domestic abuse, and the impact on children and young people. This year (2021-22) the Department for Education is funding 25 safeguarding partners to help further implement the multi-agency reforms.

The Ministry of Defence will look at an overhaul of the current investigation management system used by the Service Police. This includes the potential implementation of a new system that aligns more closely with the Home Office police national crime database, and enables more effective transfer of information, where required, between military and civilian agencies.

Improving data and knowledge

OUR OBJECTIVE: 'Improve data on and knowledge of domestic abuse'

We need more granular data on the characteristics of victims and survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse to be made available. To help achieve this, **the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will look to publish more disaggregated characteristics data on domestic abuse victims and survivors where possible**, ensuring that any outputs are non-disclosive. To allow greater disaggregation, a three-year combined dataset may be used.

It is imperative that the data collected on domestic abuse victims and survivors are representative. The age range for respondents eligible for the domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) was expanded in April 2017, changing from adults aged 16 to 59 years to adults aged 16 to 74 years. As the CSEW does not currently collect data on adults over 74, we do not know the true prevalence of domestic abuse amongst this age group. Once it is possible to return to the face-to-face mode of delivery for the CSEW, **the ONS will immediately remove the current upper age limit for respondents to the self-completion modules to ensure data collected on the prevalence of domestic abuse captures victims and survivors aged over 74.**

The ONS also recognises that data collected by the CSEW misses particular subgroups of the population. It is their ambition, in line with the commitments set out in the Inclusive Data Taskforce, to be as inclusive as possible in data collection. **The ONS plan to explore the options for expanding the CSEW to include those in residential care settings.** This requires significant investment with a first phase of research to understand the scope of the work, taking into account safeguarding, ethical and data quality implications, followed by a survey pilot.

To improve the quality of the recording of domestic abuse-related crimes, the Home Office has established and manages a data quality improvements project, the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS). The NDQIS is working with police forces to help improve the ‘flagging’ of domestic abuse-recorded crimes within police recorded crime data. This project will improve police practices of recording domestic abuse-flagged offences and enable better data analysis of such crimes.

Millions of adults receive excellent support in their own homes from paid, unpaid, and voluntary carers. We know this is greatly valued, helping people with day-to-day tasks and to live more independent and fulfilling lives. However, concerning evidence was presented during the passage of the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) on the measures available to protect people living with disability facing abuse at the hands of people providing their care.

The Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care are jointly leading the Safe Care at Home Review into the protections and support available to adults abused in their own homes by people providing their care. The Review will be completed before the end of 2022. The [Terms of Reference](#) for the Review have been published on GOV.UK. The Review will collect inputs from the sector, experts, and seek the views of people with lived experience to improve understanding of the issue, challenges, and available support.

The Government is committed to ensuring people receive quality care with positive outcomes, which includes preventing and addressing any instances of abuse or exploitation by the people providing that care.

Learning from domestic homicide cases

Domestic homicide is a heinous crime^s. One that has cut too many lives tragically short and left families in grief. For many, it is the threat of homicide which engenders unimaginable fear. We must do everything we can to prevent domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, from happening.

The [Domestic Homicide Project](#) was set up in 2020 to monitor domestic homicides during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the Project was to look at each homicide in order to use the insights and findings to identify rapid learning for police in their response to domestic abuse and seek to prevent future deaths. The Project, undertaken by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP), found that between March 2020 to 2021, in 47% of intimate partner

^s A domestic homicide can be understood from [Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#) to be the death of a person aged 16 or over which has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect by a person to whom the victim was related or with whom they were or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or by a member of the same household.

homicides, the suspect was known to the police as a perpetrator of domestic abuse with this or other victims^{t,65}. **The Home Office funding will allow the Project to continue to build on the initial findings and learning that will help inform the design of interventions to prevent domestic homicides.**

The Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process is underpinned by legislation that provides for local areas to carry out a DHR for every domestic homicide. DHRs came into force in 2011 through [Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#)^u. The expectation is that a DHR should be undertaken into every domestic homicide, where lessons can be learned, and it is crucial that a DHR is undertaken where appropriate. The Home Secretary can direct local areas to establish and participate in DHRs where she considers they should be carried out.

DHRs offer a unique opportunity to understand what happened to the victim and learn lessons that will help to prevent further tragedies. DHRs give families and friends of victims the chance to offer invaluable insight into what life is like for a victim of domestic abuse, the barriers to getting help that victims face, to contribute to learning for local and national agencies, and to see real change made after the heart-breaking loss of their loved one.

The Home Office is committed to the fundamental principles of DHRs; putting the victim's voice at the heart of the review, treating family and friends as crucial to the review, and identifying and implementing measurable lessons learned to prevent future deaths. However, we know we need to do more to make sure the system is working as effectively as possible. That is why **we plan to reform the DHR process**. Specifically, we will commit to ambitious and significant reforms of the following aspects of DHRs:

- **Updated guidance** – Refreshing the existing [Statutory Guidance](#) to provide local bodies with clear guidance on how to write high-quality, effective reports that will provide learning outcomes. This will also give clearer information to local bodies on conducting DHRs where the victim has died by suicide.
- **Training for DHR Chairs** – A more intense compulsory training plan to ensure those involved in the reviews produce the highest quality DHRs.
- **System change** – The Home Office will drive systematic change across Government to implement lessons learnt from DHRs at a national level. This will ensure that processes and policies are updated where a DHR finds they do not adequately support victims or address domestic abuse.
- **Oversight** – The creation of a stronger oversight mechanism by:

^t This Project relied on police records on domestic homicides and domestic suicides and is not without limitations. It relies on information being shared with the police by other agencies and/or disclosed by victims. It also relies on police identifying relevant cases to submit to the Project, which might not always be clearly identified as domestic abuse-related, for example.

^u [Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#) states that a DHR is a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by (a) a person to whom they were related or with whom they were or had been in an intimate personal relationship or (b) a member of the same household as themselves; with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

- **Bolstering the role of the Quality Assurance (QA) panel.** Enhancing the role of the QA panel in collaboration with DHR Chairs will produce higher quality DHRs. This in turn will create a more proactive approach to the reviews process and ultimately decrease time scales.
- **Introducing a formal role for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.** The Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be given responsibility for identifying key themes and learning opportunities from DHRs and advising the Government on where to make improvements at a national level. The Commissioner will also identify and support local and regional improvements.
- **Exploring introducing a formal role for Police and Crime Commissioners.** We will explore whether Police and Crime Commissioners should be given an increased governance function to enable them to ensure that recommendations and action plans from DHRs are being implemented. This will ensure learning from DHRs is embedded and informs policy making and service commissioning.

In addition, **the Department of Health and Social Care, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the NHS National Safeguarding Steering Group will embed meaningful learning and action with the health care system from recommendations in DHRs.**

The Home Office is committed to finding evidence-based and innovative domestic homicide prevention interventions. The Home Office will fund the College of Policing in supporting Kent Police and Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing to undertake exploratory analysis of Accident and Emergency data sharing, to work out whether it can help police forces to **target those at risk of lethal and near-lethal domestic abuse.**

To ensure all DHRs are accessible to the public, relevant stakeholders, and researchers, we are working to build an online repository of all DHRs in which we are investing £1.3 million, and which will go live in 2022. The DHR Repository will enable far greater analysis of patterns, trends, and risk factors for domestic homicide. Ultimately, it will improve the whole of society's understanding of the triggers and causes of domestic homicide and the ways these horrific crimes can be prevented.

This work is in addition to the £130 million the Home Office invested in tackling serious violent crime in 2021-22 and the broader work to reduce all homicides. This builds on three strategic pillars, and our knowledge of how to address them: tackling drugs; tackling serious violence; and working with perpetrators and victims and survivors to tackle domestic abuse. All homicides, including domestic homicides, have multiple and complex drivers and so a well-informed, coordinated, system-wide approach is essential.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) Domestic Homicide Project's 12-month report published in 2020 found that in 20% of domestic homicide cases, the suspect (mis)used drugs. The ten-year [Drugs Strategy](#) sets out plans for a whole system approach that will contribute to reductions in drug-related homicide through the three-year £300 million investment in tackling supply, and the £780 million uplift in investment in treatment and recovery services.

Suicides that follow domestic abuse

We know more action is needed to better understand suicides that follow domestic abuse. The [Domestic Homicide Review Statutory Guidance](#)^v is clear that the presence of domestic abuse in a relationship of a person who has died by suicide is enough to trigger a DHR, and for agencies to work collaboratively to identify and implement lessons learned. There is no expectation that a DHR should attempt to prove that a suicide was directly a result of domestic abuse.

We will take several measures to improve our understanding of, as well as our response to, suicides that follow domestic abuse. **The Home Office will work with domestic abuse leads in the police to identify best practice in identifying appropriate suicide cases to be referred for DHRs.** An example of such an approach is ensuring, where practical, that police forces have a Senior Investigating Officer attend every suicide scene. This is the approach employed in Greater Manchester Police where a specially trained officer attends all unnatural deaths Special Procedure Investigations, including suicides. Greater Manchester Police's approach includes working closely with coroners on these deaths. Our reforms to the DHR process will also help improve our learning and data on suicides and improve the process as a whole to help drive better outcomes from DHRs.

In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has committed to working with the suicide and self-harm prevention sector over the coming year to review the [2012 Suicide Prevention Strategy](#) for England. This will include consideration of the drivers linked to suicide, and how far these are reflected in the original Strategy, including links to domestic abuse. DHSC and its Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and NHS England and NHS Improvement will work with local areas to highlight the links between domestic abuse and suicide. They will also share good practice to inform local planning for suicide prevention plans and real-time suicide surveillance.

Action will also be taken to improve the police response to suicides that follow domestic abuse. **The Home Office will also work with the NPCC and the College of Policing to implement the recommendations in the VKPP and NPCC [report into Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides During the COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-2021](#)⁶⁶.** This means that **in cases of unexplained death or suspected suicide, especially female, the police must consider whether domestic abuse may be a contributory factor, and if so, whether any criminal offence has been committed.** In addition, **the police must ensure that all suspected victim suicides where there is a history of domestic abuse, and where they meet the criteria as set out under the statutory guidance, are referred for a Domestic Homicide Review.**

In addition, the NPCC and College of Policing will also take forward work to support policing to help identify and reduce the risks of suicide in cases involving domestic abuse. **The College of Policing will review the Authorised Professional Practice on Suicide to ensure that it explicitly includes references to domestic abuse.** They will also ensure that both the Authorised Professional Practice on Suicide and the Authorised Professional Practice on Domestic Abuse make reference to each other.

^v The DHR Statutory Guidance was issued under [Section 9\(3\) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#).

Delivery

Implementation

The publication of this document is just the beginning of a sustained period of delivery. Over the coming months and years, we will be implementing the measures committed to in this Plan. In total, **the Government will be investing over £230 million in tackling and domestic abuse**. The table in **Annex C** summarises the commitments and investments that this Plan makes.

Monitoring progress

To determine whether the Plan's objectives are being delivered, we will track changes in the metrics set out in the *Executive Summary*. In addition to the headline metrics for our objective of supporting the needs of victims and survivors, we have also identified an additional set of performance indicators for various elements of the wider package of support:

- **Support services** (access to safe accommodation) – A decrease in the numbers of victims and survivors turned away from support in safe accommodation in England. Source: *A new metric that will be collected annually by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*.
- **Support services** (in safe accommodation) – An increase in the numbers of victims and survivors supported in safe accommodation in England. Source: *A new metric that will be collected annually by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*.
- **Support with finances and housing** – Of those households owed a homelessness duty as a result of domestic abuse, an increase in the proportion whose duty ends with 'accommodation secured'. Source: *Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*.
- **Support through the police** – An increase in victim and survivor satisfaction. Sources: *Police domestic abuse victim and survivor satisfaction surveys (Police)*; *Crime Survey for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics)*.
- **Support through the Criminal Justice System** – A decrease in the proportion of victims and survivors withdrawing from criminal justice proceedings. Source: *Crime outcomes in England and Wales (Home Office)*.

Governance

This document complements and falls under the wider umbrella of the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#). Implementation of this Plan will be overseen by the **Home Secretary-chaired Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Inter-Ministerial Group**, which is managing the delivery of the overarching strategy. The group had its first meeting in December 2021. It includes Ministers from across Government and benefits from advice and input from key external voices such as senior law enforcement representatives, the Domestic Abuse and Victims' Commissioners, the Government's Independent Adviser on Violence Against Women and Girls, and key violence against women and girls sector representatives.

Annex A - Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence Breakdown of Responses

Introduction

Between December 2020 and March 2021, the Home Office launched a [Call for Evidence](#) to gather information to inform the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2020-24](#).

The aim of the Call for Evidence was to understand the scale of violence and other crimes against women and girls and their impact, the measures which may help identify and prevent these crimes, the extent to which current legislation and services are being used effectively to tackle them, and to identify examples of best practice.

Findings from the Call for Evidence are presented throughout the main body of the Plan. This annex provides further details about the approach taken and a summary of the respondents.

Strands of the Call for Evidence

The Call for Evidence was open in two phases:

- **Phase 1** ran between 10 December 2020 and 19 February 2021. The public were invited to participate in the Call for Evidence via a survey and/or by submitting evidence in writing (via gov.uk). In addition, Phase 1 included administering a nationally representative survey of public views, a victim and survivor survey, and thematic focus groups. These are further detailed below. All surveys were administered online.
- In **Phase 2**, the survey of public views was reopened for a further two weeks between 12 March and 26 March 2021.

In total, we received over 180,000 responses to the Call for Evidence: around 19,000 responses during Phase 1 and over 160,000 responses during Phase 2.

Open public survey

The public consultation survey was conducted on behalf of the Home Office by Ipsos MORI to capture the views of the general public in relation to their understanding and awareness of violence against women and girls, and their views on support for victims and survivors, and the Government's response to these crimes.

In total, 15,894 people responded to the public survey in Phase 1. This sample cannot be considered representative of the views of the population of England and Wales, as people self-selected to take part, and those willing to share their personal views in this way may not be representative of the population as a whole.

In Phase 2, a further 162,513 people responded to the public survey. As with Phase 1, this sample is not considered representative of the population as a whole and may have been affected by the circumstances surrounding the reopening.

Nationally representative survey

To ensure a fair representation of wider societal views, Ipsos MORI surveyed 2,000 adults aged 16-65 in England and Wales between the 12 and 18 January 2021 (using the same questions as those in the open public survey). The sample was nationally representative, with quotas set on age, gender and region, and weighting has been applied on these variables to reflect national profiles.

Survey reporting

When reporting findings, a clear distinction is made between the three different survey samples (the public consultation survey in Phase 1 and 2, and the nationally representative survey), and any comparisons should be treated with caution given differences in sampling methodology and timings.

Sample characteristics of the public survey samples

	Nationally representative (Nat Rep)	Phase 1	Phase 2
	Percentage		
Sex			
Male	50	10	8
Female	50	86	90
Prefer not to say	0	1	1
Other	0	3	1
Gender Identity			
Gender the same as registered sex at birth	97	96	98
Gender not the same as registered sex at birth	2	1	1

Prefer not to say	2	3	1
Ethnicity			
White	87	88	91
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	2	4	4
Asian/Asian British	6	4	3
Black/Black British	2	2	1
Other ethnic group	1	1	1
Prefer not to say	2	2	1
Age			
16-24	18	26	44
25-34	21	26	28
35-44	21	18	12
45-54	21	16	8
55-64	19	9	5
65+	-	5	3
Sexual Orientation			
Straight/heterosexual	88	75	76
LGBT	9	20	21
Prefer not to say	3	5	3
Disability			
Long-term disability or illness	18	20	14
No long-term disability or illness	80	76	83
Prefer not to say	2	4	3
Religion			
Any religion	48	33	28
No religion	48	62	68
Prefer not to say	4	6	4
Victim of violence against women and girls offences			
Yes	20	81	86
No	74	17	11
Prefer not to say	6	3	3

Victim and survivor survey

A tailored survey was developed for victims and survivors and was distributed via a range of specialist organisations who work with victims and survivors of violence against women and girls. The survey link was distributed amongst the existing victim and survivor networks of these organisations and was open to anyone who received the link and wished to share their views. It is therefore not representative of all victims and survivors in England and Wales. A total of 581 responses were received to the victim and survivor survey.

The organisations who assisted the Home Office in distributing the survey were:

- Beyond the Streets
- Hestia
- Karma Nirvana
- Mankind Initiative
- Rape Crisis
- Refuge
- South West Grid for Learning (Revenge Porn Helpline)
- Survivors UK
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- The Survivors Trust
- Welsh Women's Aid

For the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, we have carefully filtered the overall victims and survivors survey to only include victims and survivors of domestic abuse. A submission was included if they matched with one or more of the following criteria:

- a) A domestic abuse organisation supported the victim and survivor to submit a survey response.
- b) An Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) supported the victim and survivor.
- c) Domestic abuse was specifically mentioned in the open text questions.

Applying these criteria resulted in a sample size of 261 responses being included.

Sample characteristics of victim and survivor survey participants – domestic abuse

	Proportion
Sex	
Female	85
Male	14
Other	1
Gender Identity	
Gender the same as registered sex at birth	100
Gender not the same as registered sex at birth	0

Ethnicity	
White	74
Asian/Asian British	13
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	5
Black/Black British	5
Other ethnic group	2
Prefer not to say	1
Age	
16-19	1
20-24	7
25-34	26
35-44	33
45-54	24
55-64	7
65-74	2
75-84	1
Sexual Orientation	
Straight/heterosexual	93
LGBT	5
Prefer not to say	2
Disability	
Long-term disability or illness	35
No long-term disability or illness	63
Prefer not to say	2
Religion	
Any religion	60
No religion	36
Prefer not to say	3

Note: the proportions are for non-missing data.

Focus groups

BritainThinks conducted 16 focus groups on behalf of the Home Office with experts and stakeholders. These included voluntary and community sector organisations, practitioners and academics, representatives working within the Criminal Justice System (police and legal experts), as well as local Government and regulators.

Victim and survivor representatives were also included in the research, either as participants in a focus group or, where more appropriate, in the form of an in-depth interview.

16 Themes covered in the focus groups	
Perpetrator management	Mental health
The Criminal Justice System	'By and for' services: BAME, LGBT, elderly victims and survivors
Local commissioning	'By and for' services: deaf and disabled victims and survivors
Duty of care: education and employment settings	Male victims and survivors
Online harms	Migrant victims and survivors and international obligations
Domestic abuse	Prostitution and sex work
Rape and sexual violence	Stalking and harassment
'Honour' based abuse, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM)	Children and adolescents

Written submissions

As part of the Call for Evidence there was an open invitation for experts, academics, stakeholders, and members of the public to provide written feedback. Responses focussed on scope, scale and prevalence, prevention, perpetrators, the Criminal Justice System and other system response. A range of evidence, experiences, and views were shared.

In total, 413 written submissions were received during Phase 1 and 158 during Phase 2.

Limitations

The evidence collected through this Call for Evidence does not include all experiences or views from those affected by, or those with views relating to domestic abuse. It reflects the views and evidence provided by those who chose to engage with the Call for Evidence. Where relevant, the Call for Evidence findings were supplemented with a review of the existing literature and data (such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales and data on police recorded crime).

Annex B - Data on Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse prevalence in England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) collects victimisation data through the use of a self-completion module. This is considered the most reliable measure for the prevalence of domestic abuse in England and Wales. However, we recognise it may not entirely reflect the number of victims and survivors among certain groups, such as those with disabilities, which this Plan will seek to address.

The most recent data available from the CSEW for year ending March 2020 shows 20.8% of adults aged 16 to 74 reported having experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16⁶⁷. This equates to 8.8 million adults aged 16 to 74 who had experienced domestic abuse in their adult life, and 67% of these were women.

The latest CSEW data for year ending March 2020 estimates that 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced domestic abuse in the previous year^w (out of which 1.6 million were women and 757,000 were men⁶⁸). The Call for Evidence nationally representative survey found that most people felt that domestic abuse now occurs more often than it did five years ago^x. Over the last decade, however, CSEW data shows that there has been a small but statistically significant decrease in the prevalence of domestic abuse, with this trend flattening over recent years (**Figure 5**)⁶⁹. The downward trend is predominately driven by reductions in the prevalence of partner abuse; however, family abuse has also seen a decrease in prevalence. The CSEW⁷⁰ shows that individuals' perceptions of crime as a whole do not typically match reality. This is particularly the case for perceptions at the national (rather than local) level. This may also be driven by increased reporting and awareness of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse by a partner or ex-partner is more prevalent than domestic abuse by a family member, and this has consistently been the case⁷¹. In the year ending March 2020, 4% of adults aged 16 to 74 (1.7 million victims and survivors) reported having experienced partner abuse in the last year, compared with 1.9% of adults aged 16 to 74 (823,000 victims and survivors) who reported having experienced family abuse in the last year^{72,y}. For the year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020 combined, the CSEW showed

^w There are no prevalence estimates from the CSEW in the year ending March 2021, as the face-to-face survey and self-completion module were suspended to comply with the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions. For safeguarding reasons, the interim Telephone CSEW did not cover domestic abuse.

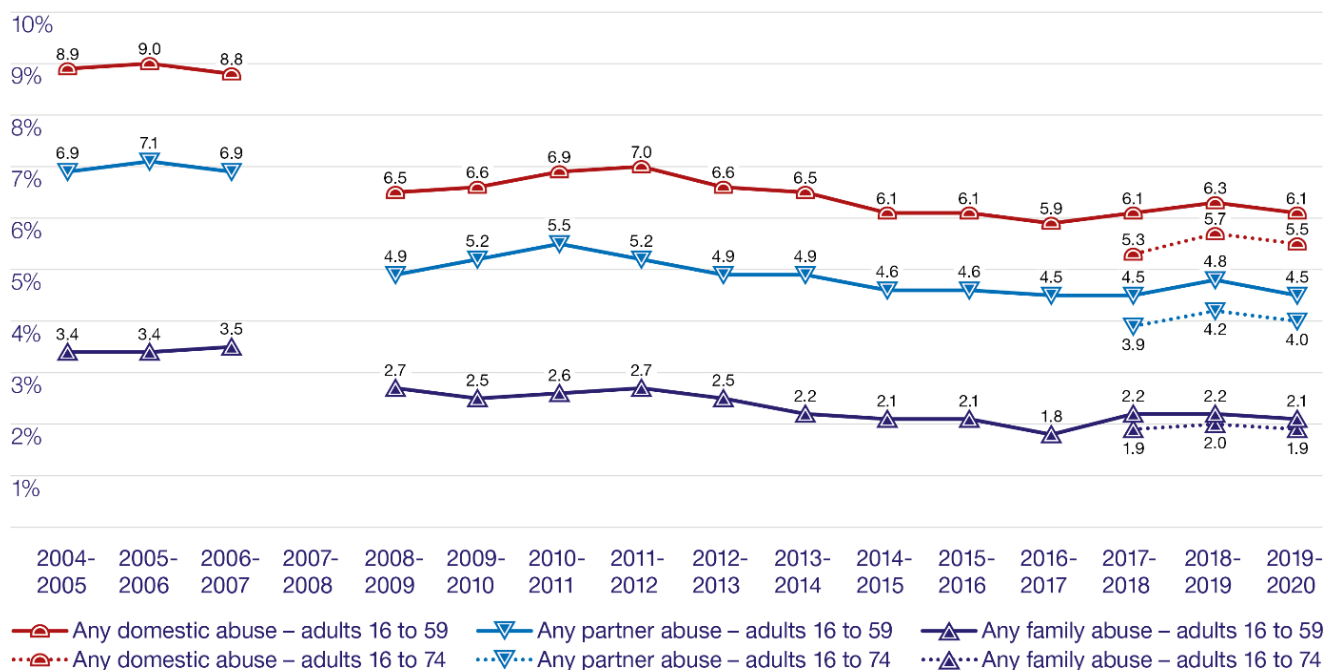
^x 59% of people thought that domestic abuse happened more often in England and Wales than five years ago.

^y Due to some victims and survivors having experienced both partner abuse and family abuse, these volumes if added up do not equate to the overall estimated volumes of victims and survivors.

that of adults aged 16 to 74 years who experienced sexual assault in the last year, 37% experienced rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) by a partner, ex-partner, or a family member⁷³.

Figure 5 – Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2020, and prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, England and Wales^z

Percentage of adults that were victims once or more



Source: Office for National Statistics

Domestic abuse prevalence by victim and survivor characteristics

Below is high-level information on the characteristics that are disproportionately present among victims and survivors of domestic abuse. The soon-to-be-published Statutory Guidance on Domestic Abuse will set out greater detail on these characteristics.

Sex

Women were significantly more likely than men to be victims and survivors of each type of domestic abuse, with the exception of sexual assault by a family member where, although higher, the difference was not significant⁷⁴. The CSEW for year ending March 2020 estimated the prevalence rate of domestic abuse, in the previous year, to be 7.3% for women and 3.6% for men.

^z There is a gap in the data for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions on domestic abuse were not included. The upper age limit for the self-completion module was increased in 2017, to ask all respondents aged 16 to 74 years.

Age

The data is limited on the prevalence of children exposed to domestic abuse. The CSEW for the year ending March 2018 found that 41% of adults aged 16 to 59 who reported having experienced partner abuse said that children had been present in the household^{aa,75}. Young women are more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the previous year than women of older age. In the year ending March 2020, the CSEW estimated that women aged 16 to 19 years were more likely to have been victims and survivors of domestic abuse (14%) than women aged 20 years and over. For men, there were fewer observable differences by age. However, those aged 16 to 19 were more likely to have been victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the last year (5.3%) than men aged 20 and above⁷⁶.

Marital status

In the year ending March 2020, the CSEW estimated that adults aged 16 to 74 years who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse (16.4% and 11.4% respectively) than those who were married or civil partnered (3%), cohabiting (5.5%), single (8.4%), or widowed (3.2%). The differences were more pronounced in relation to partner abuse than in relation to family abuse⁷⁷.

Sexual orientation

Bisexual adults aged 16 to 74 were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (15.2%) than gay or lesbian (8.4%), or heterosexual or straight adults (5.2%)^{78,bb}.

Employment status

People who were unemployed or ill were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (8.6% and 14% respectively) compared with those in employment (5.4%). Women who were unemployed were nearly three times more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (13.1%) than men who were unemployed (5.0%)⁷⁹.

Disability

The CSEW for year ending March 2020 estimated that adults aged 16 to 74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without (11.8% compared with 4.6%), and women with a disability were even more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (14.7%)⁸⁰. For disabled men, the estimated prevalence was 7.5%.

Ethnicity

For the year ending March 2020, the CSEW estimated that those from a mixed ethnic background were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse within the last year

^{aa} If the victim and survivor had experienced more than one partner abuse incident, the question asked of the most recent incident.

^{bb} Terminology relating to sexual orientation reflects the terms used in the CSEW.

(7.6%) than those from white (5.7%), black (3.7%), or Asian (3.6%) ethnic backgrounds^{81,cc}.

Religion

For the year ending March 2020, those reporting their religion as Buddhist or an 'Other' religion not listed (10% and 9% respectively) were more likely to report domestic abuse within the last year. This compares to 6% of those with no religion, 5% of Christians, 4% of Muslims, and 3% of Hindus⁸².

Gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity

There are currently no nationally representative figures on the prevalence of domestic abuse by characteristics of gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity in the UK^{dd}.

International comparison of domestic abuse prevalence

Domestic abuse prevalence differs internationally, and there are insights we can learn from other countries. However, it is worth noting there are limitations to how well prevalence can be compared internationally, as definitions of what constitutes domestic abuse, as well as the legal frameworks, differ from country to country. In addition, national crime surveys differ in methodologies and type of questions asked.

According to the World Health Organisation, [Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates from 2018](#)^{ee} from 161 developed and developing countries, an average of 27% of ever-married or partnered women aged 15 to 49 had been subjected to physical and or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime. This figure was 13% for the last 12 months. The lifetime prevalence for the European region was 21%, the 12-month prevalence rate was 6%. This was slightly lower for the UK where 24% of this group experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime and 4% had in the previous 12 months. European countries with particularly low estimated lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence include Ireland (16%) and Switzerland (12%). Countries with a similar prevalence to the UK include Australia (23%) and New Zealand (23%), the US (26%) and Sweden (21%).

The impact of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on victims and survivors, witnesses, and wider society. The consequences of domestic abuse can encompass mental, physical, and financial harms, as well as causing harm to the wider families in which the domestic abuse

^{cc} Terminology relating to ethnicity reflects the terms used in the CSEW.

^{dd} The CSEW does ask for respondent's gender identity, however the number of transgender victims and survivors of domestic abuse are too low to publish. Figures are not published for CSEW estimates based on fewer than 50 respondents.

^{ee} Estimates were based on a systematic review of studies on the prevalence of violence against women between 2000-18 in 161 countries. This includes data from all available prevalence studies of physical, sexual, and psychological interpersonal violence and sexual violence experienced by a current or former male partner.

occurs. The most prominent impacts of domestic abuse which have been identified through the Call for Evidence and wider literature are:

Mental health

The harm on emotional and mental health inflicted on victims and survivors, both in the short and long term, is well evidenced. Research has found that during and after the abuse, victims and survivors can experience anger and frustration⁸³, decreased self-esteem⁸⁴, and identity loss⁸⁵. Domestic abuse increases the risk of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder⁸⁶.

These findings are supported by data from the CSEW on partner abuse. In the year ending March 2018, the CSEW found that nearly half (48.9%) of the victims and survivors of partner abuse aged 16 to 59 reported having suffered mental or emotional problems as a result of the domestic abuse. Just under a quarter (24.5%) reported having stopped trusting people and experienced difficulty in other relationships as a consequence of partner abuse. Distressingly, 8.4% reported having tried to kill themselves⁸⁷.

Physical harm

Domestic abuse is often non-physical, and a large number of people in the Call for Evidence nationally representative survey agreed that domestic abuse does not have to involve physical violence^{ff}. Still, every year many victims and survivors experience physical violence and threats of violence. The CSEW for the year ending March 2020 found that 2.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 had experienced threats or force⁸⁸ at the hands of a partner, ex-partner, or family member in the previous year. This equates to 1.1 million victims and survivors, of which 68% were women⁸⁸. In addition, the CSEW for the year ending March 2018 found that a quarter of victims and survivors (25.5%) who reported partner abuse in the last year said they had received a physical injury as a result of the abuse⁸⁹.

Domestic abuse can lead to permanent physical damage and disability⁹⁰. The physical harm victims and survivors suffer due to domestic abuse can make them more likely to engage in coping mechanisms which can have negative impacts, such as smoking and alcohol consumption⁹¹. The consequences of abuse are significantly worse for female victims and survivors who are of low income, ethnic minority backgrounds, or unemployed⁹². Intimate partner violence during pregnancy has been shown to have an association with adverse birth outcomes, as physical assault or sexual trauma may increase the risk of spontaneous abortion, preterm delivery, low birthweight, or neonatal death⁹³.

In the year ending March 2021, domestic abuse-related sexual offences made up just under a fifth (19%) of all sexual offences⁹⁴. Of sexual offences that were domestic abuse-related, 94% involved female victims and survivors⁹⁵. In the year to March 2021, 49% of police recorded rapes of a female aged 16 years and over were domestic abuse-related,

^{ff} 78% of the nationally representative public survey disagreed that domestic abuse has to involve physical violence to be considered domestic abuse (90% in Phase One and 96% in Phase Two).

⁹⁹ This figure responds to non-sexual threats and force only.

and 12% of police recorded rapes of a male aged 16 years and over were domestic abuse-related⁹⁶.

Harm to children and young people

The CSEW for the year ending March 2018 found that 41% of adults aged 16 to 59 who reported having experienced partner abuse said that children had been present in the household^{hh,97}. Exposure to domestic abuse during childhood can have a profound effect on children's development and wellbeing, and they may be more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as substance misuse, and earlier sexual activity, during adolescence and adulthood⁹⁸. Witnessing domestic abuse has also been shown to be associated with worse educational outcomes, a lower income in the future, and violence perpetration. Mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, sleep disturbances, and anxiety were also linked to witnessing domestic abuse⁹⁹. Research has also shown that, of a sample of suicides in children and young people, 9% of those under 20 who had died by suicide had witnessed parental domestic violence¹⁰⁰. The presence of domestic abuse is also a risk factor for child physical abuse, with children who were exposed to domestic violence being more likely to be physically abused and neglected¹⁰¹.

Social and economic cost

While it is impossible to truly quantify the harms victims and survivors face, for those identified within the year ending March 2017, the cost of domestic abuse was estimated to be approximately £66 billion (about £74 billion in today's prices). The biggest component of this estimated cost was £47 billion for the physical and emotional harms suffered. Other costs that were a consequence of domestic abuse include the lost labour output (estimated in the region of £14 billion), as well as the cost to health and victim and survivor services^{102,ii}.

In the most serious cases, domestic abuse can tragically end in the death of the victim. Out of 114 domestic homicides in the year ending March 2021, 57 were women killed by a partner or an ex-partner. There has been a general downward trend in the number of domestic homicides over the last ten years¹⁰³. Homicides have a significant societal cost – currently estimated around £3.7 million (2021/22 prices)^{104,ji}. This does not include wider impacts on family members and communities. We recognise that every suicide is a tragedy which has a devastating impact on friends, families, and communities.

Identified risk factors for domestic abuse

While there is evidence to indicate the following risk factors are predictive of domestic abuse, we are not implying they cause domestic abuse. We recognise the individual experience of the victim and survivor, and that risk factors will present differently or

^{hh} If the victim and survivor had experienced more than one partner abuse incident, the question asked of the most recent incident.

ⁱⁱ Note that the costs uprated to 2021/22 prices only account for changes in inflation and do not consider other changes in prevalence and unit costs.

^{ji} Costs cover all types of homicide. The costs uprated to 2021/22 prices only account for changes in inflation and do not consider other changes in prevalence and unit costs.

perhaps not at all in some cases. We do not consider experience of these risk factors to be an 'excuse' for the perpetration of domestic abuse under any circumstances. Equally, we do not believe that victims' and survivors' experiences of domestic abuse are necessarily because of the presence of any risk factors.

Individual-level predictors

- **Gender** – Men and women can both be victims and survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse. However, a range of evidence suggests that women are most likely to be victims and survivors, and men are most likely to be the perpetrator. The CSEW for the year ending March 2020 shows that 7.3% of women compared to 3.6% of men aged 16 to 74 had been victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the previous year¹⁰⁵. The majority of defendants (92%) in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were men in the year ending March 2021¹⁰⁶.
- **Age** – Being a young adult has been identified in the research as a factor that can be predictive of both perpetration and victimisation. Two studies which focus on the risk factors for domestic abuse, both identified a link between younger age and an increased risk of intimate partner violence perpetration and increased physical aggression^{107,108}. In addition, a systematic review of the evidence which covered 35 studies, found that women of older ages were least likely to be associated with perpetration and victimisation of violence¹⁰⁹.
- **Low levels of education and unemployment** – Unemployment has been identified to be a risk factor for both abuse perpetration and victimisation^{110,111}. For education, findings indicate some association with low levels of education and perpetration of domestic abuse.
- **Criminal history** – A history of previous criminal activity has been linked to an increased risk of perpetrating domestic abuse¹¹². Additionally, previous antisocial behaviour has been shown to be predictive of domestic violence perpetration¹¹³.
- **Substance misuse** – Several systematic reviews have found a complex but significant relationship between alcohol and drug use, and domestic abuse perpetration^{114,115,116}. A focus on underlying issues including mental health problems and substance misuse is important in order to break cycles of disengagement and reoffending.
- **Mental health problems** – Mental health problems are not a cause of domestic abuse; however, it can be a risk factor for perpetration and victimisation. Depression has been linked with perpetrating abuse^{117,118}, and mental health issues can lead to an increased risk of being a victim of domestic abuse¹¹⁹.
- **Behavioural problems in childhood** – Behavioural problems in childhood such as aggression, withdrawal, and conduct disorders have been found to be linked to a higher likelihood of domestic abuse perpetration and victimisation later in life¹²⁰.
- **'Traditional' gender role views** – Endorsing views on gender inequality and male domination have been linked to domestic abuse in various studies. In both men and women, hostility towards women has been found to be a significant factor associated

with physical and psychological intimate partner violence perpetration¹²¹. For male perpetrators in particular, risk factors can include a general acceptance towards violence against women, and the view of sexual entitlement¹²².

- **Pregnancy** – Being pregnant may put women at increased risk of abuse, although the data available on prevalence of domestic abuse amongst pregnant individuals is limited. Some studies suggest as high as 40-60% of pregnant women experience abuse during pregnancy, while others suggest prevalence is much lower, ranging between 1% and 20%¹²³ (depending on the country and how prevalence is calculated)¹²⁴.

Interpersonal-level predictors

- **Experience of child abuse** – One of the most consistent predictors of later perpetration or victimisation of domestic abuse is experiencing abuse in childhood. Both physical and psychological child abuse have been linked with domestic abuse perpetration and victimisation in later life^{125,126}. One study¹²⁷ tracked 67 physically abused and 78 non-abused adolescents and found that 42% were perpetrators and 34% were victims of abuse in relationships later in life.
- **Exposure to violence at home** – In addition to child abuse, exposure to violence at home has been shown to be predictive of experiencing intimate partner violence in later life^{128,129}.
- **Relationship status (recent divorce or separation)** – The CSEW year ending March 2020 shows that people who are separated or divorced are more likely to be victims and survivors of domestic abuse. This is particularly pronounced for female victims and survivors of partner abuse¹³⁰. Women who are divorced or separated are more likely to be at risk of being sexually assaulted by their former partners, than they were when married^{131,132}. Being married has been shown to be a clinically and statistically significant protective factor against intimate partner violence¹³³.
- **Poor quality peer relationships** – The inability to form strong relationships with peers, including characteristics such as conflict and poor conflict resolution, has been found to predict domestic abuse perpetration and victimisation for both male and females later in life¹³⁴.
- **Disadvantaged status** – Disadvantaged status, typically determined by a person's level of education, occupation, and income, has been identified as a risk factor for many types of crime and violence, including domestic abuse¹³⁵. Elevated rates of partner violence are found in families characterised by economic stress and male unemployment¹³⁶.

Community-level predictors

- **Neighbourhood deprivation including low levels of employment and a high proportion of households with children** – Areas with disadvantaged communities, low employment, and a high proportion of single-parent-led households with children have been shown to be linked to higher levels of intimate partner violence^{137,138}.

- **Societal or cultural norms that condone violence and gender inequality** – An acceptance of gender inequality and violence can increase the risk of perpetration and victimisation of domestic abuse¹³⁹.

Annex C - Commitments

DEPARTMENT	COMMITMENT	INVESTMENT
PRIORITISING PREVENTION		
Department for Education	Work with experts to develop a package of support for teachers to help them deliver the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum.	-
Home Office	Support the development of a set of tools to measure the effectiveness of interventions that support children experiencing domestic abuse.	£84,000
Home Office	Publish updated guidance for frontline practitioners on child-to-parent abuse.	-
Home Office	Work with stakeholders on the issue of child-to-parent abuse to reach an agreed definition and terminology for this type of behaviour.	-
Home Office	Review and revise the guidance on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, including considering the timescales for disclosure and promoting tools which allow applications to be made online.	-
Home Office	Work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify and audit police forces with the highest rates of domestic homicide and serious domestic abuse incidents – the Domestic Abuse Policing and Domestic Homicide Prevention Pilot.	-
SUPPORTING VICTIMS		
Support Services and Professional Support		
Home Office	Domestic Abuse Commissioner to establish a Victim Engagement Mechanism.	£69,000
Ministry of Justice	The Ministry of Justice are increasing funding for victim and witness support services, to £185 million by 2024-25. Of this, £147 million has been committed to per annum between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This includes a	£128,100,000

	<p>minimum of £81 million over three years to fund 700 ISVA and IDVA roles, with additional funding to be confirmed later this year. There will be a ringfence of £15.7 million per annum to be spent on community-based services supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.</p> <p>The £147 million includes funding for Police and Crime Commissioners to commission a range of support services for victims of all crime, based on their assessment of local demand. Police and Crime Commissioners will be required to pass the multi-year commitment on to the local services they commission, to ensure frontline service providers receive the full benefits.</p>	
Home Office	Double funding for National Domestic Abuse Helpline, and further increase funding for all the national helplines.	£2,010,000
Home Office	Double dedicated funding for survivors of sexual violence.	£400,000
Home Office and Ministry of Justice	Offer multi-year awards of funding to organisations supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse.	-
Home Office	Use the results of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's mapping exercise of support services across the country to identify gaps and better target funding to local services.	-
Ministry of Justice	Look at introducing national commissioning standards across all victim support services, with DLUHC Quality Standards for support in safe accommodation aligned with these proposals.	-
Home Office	Supporting Migrant Victims.	£1,400,000
Support for the Whole Family		
Home Office	Increase funding for organisations who provide specialist support to children who are victims of domestic abuse.	£4,100,000
Home Office	Invest in Operation Encompass: Evaluation of the current scheme.	Part of £548,000 for Operation Encompass
Home Office	Invest in Operation Encompass: Expand the ongoing pilot scheme so that when the police attend an incident involving very young children (0-5 years old) this information is shared with health visitors.	Part of £548,000 for Operation Encompass

Home Office	Invest in Operation Encompass: Evaluation of the extension of the scheme.	Part of £548,000 for Operation Encompass
Home Office	Invest in Operation Encompass: Research the feasibility of expanding the scheme to other harm types.	Part of £548,000 for Operation Encompass
Home Office	Invest in Operation Encompass: Provide a National Teachers' Helpline.	Part of £548,000 for Operation Encompass
Home Office	Review the national police response to children experiencing domestic abuse.	£552,000
Department for Education	Share the learning from the What Works for Children's Social Care trials with schools and safeguarding partners once the independent evaluation reports are published.	-
Economic and Housing Support		
Home Office	Double funding to continue improving our response to economic abuse and providing vital support and economic safety for victims and survivors.	£200,000 (total funding)
Home Office	Trial of the flexible funding model for charities to purchase vital good and services for victims and survivors.	Up to £300,000
Support in the Workplace		
Home Office	Encourage more employers to join the Employers' Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC) and the Employers' Domestic Abuse Initiative (EIDA).	-
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities	Work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to review and build on their workplace policies to support staff affected by domestic abuse.	-
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Review whether the current statutory leave provision for employees does enough to support victims and survivors who are escaping domestic abuse.	-
Her Majesty's Government	All departments to have robust policies and effective support plans in place for those employees who are victims and survivors of domestic abuse.	-
Department for Business, Energy and	Hold roundtables with employers to share best practice on workplace support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.	-

Industrial Strategy		
Her Majesty's Government	We will continue raising awareness of domestic abuse and drive best practice among employers.	-
The Police, Family Courts and Criminal Justice System		
Home Office	Fund update and the rollout of the Domestic Abuse Matters training to forces which have yet to deliver it, or do not have their own specific domestic abuse training.	Up to £3,300,000
Home Office	Develop and implement an Immigration Enforcement Migrant Victims Protocol.	-
Home Office	Consider a range of initiatives to promote the reporting of crime amongst migrants with insecure immigration status.	-
Ministry of Justice	Improve access to support from IDVAs for women in custody who have experienced domestic abuse.	-
Ministry of Defence	Continue to seek parity of outcomes for those in the Service Justice System as those who engage within the Civilian Justice System.	-
PURSUING PERPETRATORS		
Home Office	Review data on domestic abuse cases closed due to evidential difficulties, specifically Outcomes 15 or 16.	-
Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council	Draft a statutory code of practice to prescribe the circumstances where community and diversionary cautions may be given.	-
Home Office	Issue updated Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Statutory Guidance	-
Home Office	Refine and pilot the rollout by police of the cutting-edge Recency, Frequency, Gravity and Victimisation model for risk assessing potential domestic abusers.	Up to £6,700,000
Ministry of Justice	Increase tagging for those leaving custody, including around 3,500 individuals who are at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse.	- (Part of wider investment in electronic monitoring)
Ministry of Justice	Launch a communications drive to improve national and local organisations' awareness of the service	-

	which prevents unwanted contact from prisoners, including to stop domestic abuse perpetrators contacting victims and survivors.	
Home Office	Explore ways to actively manage the most harmful perpetrators, including through the creation of a register of domestic abuse offenders.	-
Ministry of Defence	Undertake a working-level review to examine how data from the Civilian Justice System can be acquired and consolidated with data from the Service Justice System.	-
Home Office	Invest in perpetrator interventions and fund further research on perpetrators. This includes exploring further interventions that embody the principles of focussed deterrence models.	Part of £75,000,000
Home Office	Share findings and any emerging evidence from evaluations we will conduct into perpetrator interventions.	-
Home Office	Empower local areas to develop their own perpetrator strategies, including by supporting the rollout of a toolkit to support needs assessments and commissioning.	-
Home Office	Develop a set of national standards and principles for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions.	- (£108,000 previous funding)
Ministry of Defence	Review ways to facilitate personnel attending perpetrator programmes.	-
A STRONGER SYSTEM		
Identifying Cases		
Home Office	Set up effective interventions within healthcare settings, including to upskill healthcare professionals, and improve coordination within them and with other organisations.	Up to £7,500,000
Home Office	Incorporate additional content on suicides in the context of domestic abuse into IRIS Programme training for GPs.	-
Department of Health and Social Care	Produce the Women's Health Strategy.	-
Department for Education	Develop an online resource hub for Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and colleges.	-

Ministry of Defence	Review the general safeguarding training requirements across the whole force (civilian and military).	-
Home Office	Launch an online repository of all Domestic Homicide Reviews.	- (£1,300,000 previous funding)
Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions	Trial and consider a national rollout of the Ask for ANI codeword scheme across the Jobcentre Plus network.	£300,000
Ministry of Defence	Tailored materials for its personnel, detailing the different routes to support.	-
Home Office	Continue to work with charities and the police to build a coordinated community response.	-
Collaboration and Coordination		
Home Office	Explore ways to increase awareness and promote greater understanding amongst agencies on how to respond to the needs of victims and survivors with no recourse to public funds.	-
Department of Health and Social Care	Work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote evidence-based approaches to domestic abuse through guidance and engagement with the new Integrated Care Systems.	-
Department for Education	Share learning from the 'engaging schools' multi-agency safeguarding arrangements projects.	-
Department of Health and Social Care	Launch a public discussion paper to inform the development of a new longer-term mental health strategy.	-
Ministry of Defence	Possible overhaul of the current investigation management system used by the Service Police.	-
Improve Data and Knowledge		
Office for National Statistics	Look to publish more disaggregated characteristics data on domestic abuse victims and survivors.	-
Office for National Statistics	Remove the current upper age limit for respondents to the self-completion modules of the Crime Survey for England and Wales, to capture data on victims and survivors aged over 74.	-

Office for National Statistics	Explore the options for expanding the Crime Survey for England and Wales to include those in residential care settings.	£200,000
Home Office	Continue funding the Domestic Homicide Project.	£250,000 (from £75,000,000 perpetrator funding)
Home Office	Reform Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs): Update the Statutory Guidance.	- (Funded through £75,000,000 perpetrator funding)
Home Office	Reform Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs): More intense, compulsory training for DHR Chairs.	- (Funded through £75,000,000 perpetrator funding)
Home Office	Reform Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs): System change to implement learning from DHRs.	- (Funded through £75,000,000 perpetrator funding)
Home Office	Reform Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs): DHR oversight mechanism.	- (Funded through £75,000,000 perpetrator funding)
Department of Health and Social Care	With the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the NHS National Safeguarding Steering Group, will embed meaningful learning and action with the healthcare system from recommendations in DHRs.	-
Home Office	Fund the College of Policing to support Kent Police and Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing to undertake exploratory analysis of A&E data sharing, to assess whether it can help police forces target those at risk of lethal and near-lethal domestic abuse.	- (£23838.36 previous funding)

Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council	Identify best practice in identifying appropriate suicide cases to be referred for DHRs.	-
National Police Chiefs' Council	In cases of unexplained death or suspected suicide, especially female, police to consider whether domestic abuse may be a contributory factor and if any criminal offence has been committed.	-
National Police Chiefs' Council	Police to ensure that all suspected victim suicides where there is a history of domestic abuse, and where they meet the criteria as set out under the statutory guidance, are referred for a Domestic Homicide Review.	-
College of Policing	Authorised Professional Practice on Suicide to explicitly include references to domestic abuse.	-
TOTAL FUNDING: £230,763,000 (Comprising funding for 2022/23 only and multi-year investment)		

Annex D - References

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 - ³ [Appendix tables: homicide in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
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