

£22 million emergency coronavirus funding for more than 540 sexual violence and domestic abuse charities

- funding boost to help charities provide remote services and expand their support
- 548 organisations across the country are receiving money to support more victims
- part of £76 million package for victims during the pandemic

Social distancing measures mean that some charities can no longer offer face-to-face support, and must transfer to mainly remote services to provide victims with the practical and emotional help they need.

548 charities across England and Wales, including small and regional organisations, are now receiving funding to maintain their life-saving counselling and advice services. It will allow them to employ more staff, keep helplines open longer, as well as fund the technology needed for other forms of contact with victims – such as video calls.

Victims Minister Alex Chalk said:

Victims of domestic and sexual abuse show immense courage in coming forward and seeking help – so it is vital that support is available when they need it.

This funding boost will help frontline charities to continue their invaluable work, supporting some of the most vulnerable people in society during these difficult times.

It is part of an unprecedented £76 million of emergency funding announced by the government in May to ensure that these victims can continue to access the support they need. Organisations supporting victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse were invited to request funding directly from the Ministry of Justice or from their local Police and Crime Commissioner, and were required to provide evidence of what services they would deliver.

APCC Victims Leads, Deputy Mayor of London, Sophie Linden, and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner of North Yorkshire, Julia Mulligan, said:

We welcome the additional emergency funding that has been made available, through Police and Crime Commissioners, to provide the necessary support for local services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This funding is vital to ensure that services continue to be

available during the Covid-19 crisis, to provide support to those who are amongst the most vulnerable victims. We look forward to working with government to ensure that there is essential funding in place for these services throughout the duration of the Covid 19 crisis and beyond.

A further £3 million is being invested in recruiting Independent Sexual Violence Advisers – who provide advice and support for victims, and act as the link between police, support services and criminal justice agencies – until 2022.

Work has also been undertaken to ensure the funding is proportionate between general support services and those tailored to victims of abuse who are BAME, disabled or LGBTQI – with 20% of the charities supporting victims with protected characteristics.

The funding follows the virtual Hidden Harms Summit convened by the Prime Minister last month, which explored the unique challenges faced by victims of modern slavery, sexual violence and domestic abuse during the coronavirus pandemic, and the steps needed to ensure they continue to get the help they need.

A follow-up report to the summit will be published today.

Notes to editors

- In May, the Housing Secretary announced that the government was spending £76 million on supporting the most vulnerable in society during the Coronavirus pandemic.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-funding-to-support-most-vulnerable-in-society-during-pandemic>
- This funding was allocated as below:
 - The Ministry of Justice will provide £25 million to help victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in the community access support services during the coronavirus outbreak, and a further £3 million per annum investment in Independent Sexual Violence Advisers until 2022. This funding applies to England and Wales.
 - We are considering options for the remaining funding
 - The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will be providing £10 million for safe accommodation services in England.
 - The Department for Education will provide £26.4 million to support vulnerable children, including support for families of disabled children and working to safeguard vulnerable children including care leavers and children in the early years. This funding applies to England, except for funding for Childline, which will apply to the UK.
 - The Home Office will be providing £3.8 million for community-based domestic abuse services and modern slavery services, and for added support for modern slavery charities who have been impacted by the

coronavirus outbreak. The Home Office will be providing £7.8 million in emergency support for charities helping vulnerable children who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. This includes children at risk of sexual abuse and criminal exploitation. This funding applies to England and Wales.

- Further support to protect the most vulnerable. This includes:
 - In April we announced the immediate transfer of £600,000 to charities to help them provide remote services as a result of social distancing measures brought in during the coronavirus pandemic. You can read more here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-for-remote-victim-services>
 - In February, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provided £16.6 million to 75 projects across England to help fund domestic abuse refuge services, enabling victims and their children to stay safe, recover from the trauma, and access safe permanent rehousing where needed.
 - In June, they provided a further £8.1 million to provide additional bed spaces and support services to domestic abuse victims in safe accommodation, with a further £1.9 million still available for this support.
 - The Home Office launched a new public awareness campaign in April, under the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone, highlighting that if anyone is at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse, they are still able leave and seek refuge. The campaign publicises support available including the freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline number – 0808 2000 247 – run by Refuge, and online.