

Emergency funding to support most vulnerable in society during pandemic

- More than £76 million extra funding to support most vulnerable in society during pandemic
- Funding for charities to support survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, vulnerable children and their families and victims of modern slavery
- Domestic abuse survivors to automatically qualify for priority need under council duty to relieve homelessness

An unprecedented £76 million package of support to ensure the most vulnerable in society get the support they need during the pandemic has been announced by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick today (Saturday 2 May).

This funding will support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery as well as ensuring vulnerable children and young people continue to get the help they need.

A change to the rules will also mean that those fleeing domestic abuse and facing homelessness as a result will be automatically considered as priority by their council for housing – ensuring more survivors of domestic abuse have access to a safe home.

These crimes should never happen, but the government understands that the instruction to stay at home will be a huge cause of anxiety to some people. We recognise that front line charities have struggled to continue some of their work during the pandemic and at the same time, there may be increased risks for people trapped in abusive or exploitative situations

It is right that these vulnerable people get access to the help they need, which will include additional support for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and more safe spaces and accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse and their children. Anyone at risk should contact the police.

This funding will also help front line charities to be able to offer different ways of supporting those in need, including through virtual or telephone-based services, as well as providing direct support to families of disabled children through the provision of goods including household appliances and sensory toys.

Today's funding is part of comprehensive measures to support vulnerable people through the pandemic and the Government is working closely with councils, charities and other partners to ensure they get the support they need.

Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick MP, said:

It is essential that the most vulnerable people in our communities continue to get the vital support they need during this pandemic.

This multi-million-pound package is a boost for charities working on front line to provide often lifesaving support or services at this unprecedented time.

This includes essential support for domestic abuse victims, living in fear in the place where they should feel most safe – their home.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Protecting the most vulnerable in our society is crucial in these difficult times. Whilst staying at home for a prolonged period of time is a challenge for us all, for some it poses a different kind of struggle, which takes place behind closed doors.

For survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery, this funding will ensure they can continue to receive the support they desperately need to rebuild their lives, whether that's safe accommodation or specialist counselling.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

From day one of this national health emergency, we have been working across government, law enforcement and charities, to safeguard the most vulnerable people from abuse.

I'm delighted that together we can provide this multi-million pound funding to help ensure vital services remain accessible to victims.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Robert Buckland QC MP said:

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are devastating crimes and now, more than ever, victims should know that they are not alone.

Throughout the pandemic, this government has made protecting those at risk of abuse a priority and this important new investment will ensure that vital support services are available when needed.

Despite these challenging times, we will always do everything in our power to bring perpetrators to justice and stand by those who have experienced such horrific crimes.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

My absolute priority is the safety and security of vulnerable children, and supporting them throughout this pandemic. As we take action to overcome this unprecedented situation, we all must work together to keep children safe.

This financial commitment will help those on the frontline continue their vital work in communities across the country.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our brilliant charities are vital to the national effort to beat coronavirus and this investment will provide much needed support for some of the most vulnerable people in Britain.

This is the first allocation of the unprecedented £750 million sum pledged by the government so that charities on the front line are able to help those in need right now.

This funding is coming from the £750 million package of support for charities announced by the Chancellor last month, to ensure they can continue their vital work during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has led the allocation of funding to support charities providing key services to help vulnerable people during the crisis. Further announcements on allocations will be made soon.

Today's funding update includes:

Vulnerable children: A total of £34.15 million will support work to safeguard vulnerable children including children with disabilities, those who are critically ill, care leavers and children in the early years. Funding will also allow charities to offer support services in new ways, using remote

working and technology solutions, for example, to help tackle criminal threats and mitigate the risks to vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus pandemic

Domestic abuse survivors: The announcement includes £28 million to help survivors of domestic abuse and their children by providing more safe spaces, accommodation and access to support services during the coronavirus outbreak.

Survivors of sexual violence: £10 million has been announced to support victims of sexual violence access advice and support, through the funding of technology to enable charities to offer services remotely. A further £3 million per annum until 2022 will also be invested in the recruitment of more Independent Sexual Violence Advisors across the country.

Survivors of modern slavery: £ 1.73 million will provide emergency support to modern slavery charities who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. This funding will go towards individuals supported through the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract and will allow victims to stay in government-funded safe accommodation for the next three months, access financial assistance, access support services remotely, and ensure we can manage additional demand on the services during this period.

Total package:

The funding is made up as follows:

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will be providing £10m for safe accommodation services. This funding applies to England. The announcement regarding automatic priority consideration for housing applies to 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 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 £3m per annum investment in Independent Sexual Violence Advisers until 2022. This funding applies to England and Wales.
- 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