

Funding boost for rape and domestic abuse support

- £11 million to support victims during winter and beyond
- £7 million for innovative programmes to stop domestic abuse happening in the first place
- new set of rights for victims to hold criminal justice agencies to account published

Nearly £11 million will go towards a range of services offering practical and emotional help – allowing organisations to recruit more staff, adapt to remote counselling methods during the pandemic and keep helplines open for longer.

In addition Ministers have today announced a further £7 million will go towards a range of innovative programmes aimed at perpetrators – designed to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

It comes as charities have reported a sharp increase in demand during the pandemic, including a 46% rise in calls, with some victims feeling at greater risk of harm or deciding to report abuse for the first time.

The package of support confirmed today includes:

- £10.1 million going to rape and domestic abuse support centres and Police and Crime Commissioners to fund services across England and Wales.
- £7.17 million for a range of innovative programmes aimed at perpetrators to last beyond the pandemic to help offenders change their behaviours and prevent these destructive crimes from happening in the first place. Independent research has shown these programmes cut risk of physical abuse, with the Drive Partnership, which is one of the programmes being funded, demonstrating an 82% reduction in risk. 29 funding awards totalling £7.17 million have been awarded to Police and Crime Commissioners working with perpetrators of domestic abuse, including West Mercia, Dorset and Sussex.
- £680,000 going directly towards up to 34 domestic abuse organisations that have shown a need for extra funds. The 34 organisations provide support services for victims, including front line services and virtual services. Funds might be needed, for example, to provide new temporary staff to deal with additional calls to helplines or to provide additional counselling for victims.
- A renewal of the #YouAreNotAlone campaign for the period of new restrictions which signposts people towards support services and online resources, and reminds people that the new national restrictions do not apply if you are in danger at home.

In addition, victims of all crimes will benefit from a clearer set of rights regarding the support they should receive from the police, courts and other

criminal justice agencies.

The new Victims' Code sets out 12 key overarching rights, which are clear, concise and easy to understand. It will come into force on 1 April 2021 and includes a new right for eligible victims to be automatically referred to the Victim Contact Scheme as well as greater rights for victims of mentally disordered offenders.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Robert Buckland QC MP said:

Nothing will detract from our support for victims and their needs will continue to be a priority long after this pandemic.

This funding will make sure that vital help is always available for those who need it, while our new Victims' Code will ensure their rights are recognised at every stage of the justice system.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

My message to victims of domestic abuse during this unprecedented time is clear: You are not alone.

This funding and our awareness campaign will help victims get the support they need, and police work is continuing throughout the winter to ensure victims are protected and those committing these crimes feel the full force of the law.

It is also vital that we tackle the root causes of violent behaviour which is why we are funding perpetrator prevention programmes to identify serial offenders, and work with them to change their behaviour.

Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping Kelly Tolhurst MP said:

We know that for some the lockdown has led to issues with violence in the home – this is completely unacceptable. Our message to those fleeing domestic abuse is that you can still leave your home and escape to safety if needed with your children – and we are keeping refuges open to support.

Our emergency funding is creating extra bed spaces over winter, to help supporting victims escape and rebuild their lives, free from abuse.

Today's funding follows the announcement of an unprecedented £76 million pledged by Ministers in May to help the most vulnerable in society during this challenging time and builds on transformational measures included in the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill.

Meanwhile, domestic abuse, sexual violence cases and other serious offences have been prioritised by the courts during the pandemic. The government is investing £80 million in a range of measures to reduce delays and deliver speedier justice for victims – including hiring 1,600 new staff and opening more temporary ‘Nightingale Courts’.

Chief Executive of Victim Support, Diana Fawcett, said:

We welcome this additional funding from the Ministry of Justice which will enable us to continue operating our essential live chat service 24/7, nationwide.

We recognise that those affected by crime may be worried about accessing support services during these current restrictions, so it’s more important than ever to respond to victims at any time, regardless of where they live. We also know that for victims of crime who live with their abusers, live chat offers them an alternative way to access practical and emotional support discreetly.

During this challenging time, our message to victims is clear. Our specialist support services are still open and are here to offer you free and confidential support whenever you need it.

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

Police and Crime Commissioners welcome today’s announcement. The additional money we are receiving will help domestic abuse and sexual violence charities in our communities provide the support vulnerable victims need, where they need it most.

We also welcome the re-launch the national #YouAreNotAlone campaign. The Covid-19 pandemic has heightened concerns around abuse taking place behind closed doors. Everyone needs to recognise they have a part to play in looking out for vulnerable members of our communities. And victims need to know that services are still open to them if they need help and support.

We continue to make the case for increased funding allocations which also provide certainty for our service providers and allow for longer-term planning, capacity building, and service resilience.

Since the pandemic government has made available over £92 million to ensure victims of crime can still access the support they rely on. This includes:

- £10 million for domestic abuse safe accommodation charities services.
- £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.

- £22 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.
- £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.
- £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

Throughout the pandemic, the measures introduced by this government have been designed to protect and support everyone across the UK, including our most vulnerable. This announcement forms part of that ongoing work.

Notes to editors

Funding

- The Ministry of Justice will provide £10.1 million that will go directly towards services supporting victims as well as all Police and Crime Commissioners who will distribute funds themselves to organisations in their areas. The funding will be distributed from this week onwards.
- The Home Office has confirmed 29 funding awards totalling £7.17 million to Police and Crime Commissioners working with perpetrators of domestic abuse. This funding will introduce a range of innovative programmes from early intervention through to intensive targeted programmes for high-harm and high-risk offenders. This includes the Drive Partnerships which independent evaluation has shown participation results in substantial reductions in abuse and risk among the users of this service, with physical abuse reduced by 82% and controlling behaviours reduced by 73%. By funding perpetrator services, we will address the root of the problem by preventing offending.
- The government's #YouAreNotAlone communications campaign, which raises awareness of domestic abuse and guides people to advice and support available in 16 languages, has been relaunched and will continue over the period of new restrictions.
- £683,000 will be awarded by the Home Office to the 34 domestic abuse organisations which received allocations from one or both of the two original £2 million pots of Covid funding, subject to their showing a need for extra funds.
- MHCLG has extended the spending period for their £10 million emergency funding for domestic abuse safe accommodation charities, and many charities have taken up this offer, ensuring extra bed spaces are in place over winter..

Victims Code

- Following a [consultation in March](#) a new Victims' Code – which sets out the minimum level of services victims can expect from criminal justice

agencies – will be published this week.

- The new Code will come into force on 1 April 2021, to allow criminal justice agencies and others who provide services under the Code time to embed any operational changes to meet their new obligations.
- Changes in the new Code include:
 - Simplifying and shortening the Code to make it clear, concise and easy to understand.
 - Changing the Victim Contact Scheme from an opt-in to an automatic referral scheme.
 - Offering greater flexibility over when a Victim Personal Statement, which tells the court how the crime has affected the victim, can be made.
 - New rights for victims of mentally disordered offenders, allowing them access to a Victim Liaison Officer to provide information on an offender's management and potential release from hospital.
 - For the first time, the Code sets out the rights of victims of Foreign National Offenders to be updated on when an offender's deportation may occur.
 - The new Code also includes practical information about how victims can access services provided by the National Health Service and sign-posts them to where they can get help and advice if they are approached by the media.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will:

- Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they witness abuse
- Establish a Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse
- Provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support
- Place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in courts in England and Wales
- Introduce a ban on the "rough sex" defence by incorporating the case of R vs Brown into legislation, invalidating any courtroom defence of consent where a victim suffers serious harm or is killed
- Create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link)
- Enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

("Clare's law") on a statutory footing

ensure that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy

- Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences. [Detailed factsheets](#) on each point are available on gov.uk

DA Perpetrator Interventions Fund recipients:

- Mayor's Office for Police and Crime
- Gwent
- Leicestershire
- Suffolk
- Hampshire
- Staffordshire
- Cheshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Lancashire
- West Mercia
- Merseyside
- South Yorkshire
- Sussex
- West Midlands
- Essex
- Devon & Cornwall
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire

Drive programme fund recipients:

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- Northumbria
- Mayor's Office for Police and Crime
- Dorset
- South Wales