

News story: Changes to domestic violence evidence requirements come into effect

Changes to evidence requirements in private family law disputes have come into effect. There will no longer be a time limit on abuse evidence, which previously stood at five years.

Additionally, the range of documents accepted as evidence of abuse has been widened to include statements from domestic violence support organisations and housing support officers.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

We have listened to victims' groups and carefully reviewed the criteria for legal aid for victims of domestic abuse in family cases.

Today's changes will ensure that vulnerable women and children get legal support, so their voice is properly heard in court.

Legal aid is available to people involved in private family disputes if they are victims, or are at risk of becoming victims, of domestic violence or child abuse. To qualify, applicants must provide objective evidence of the abuse while their case is also subject to means and merits tests.

Today's changes follow a review of the evidence requirements set out in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012.

The changes are the latest in a series of reforms the government is making to support victims of domestic violence, having previously announced a £17 million fund to support 41 projects across the country to tackle violence against women and girls.

The landmark Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill will also ensure that no stone is left unturned in protecting and supporting domestic violence victims and children.