

[News story: Ministry of Justice grant to support victims of domestic abuse in family courts](#)

In the draft Domestic Abuse Bill and consultation response published on 21 January 2019, government announced its intention to improve support for victims of domestic abuse who are going through family court proceedings.

The Ministry of Justice is pleased to announce that it has awarded a grant of just under £900,000 to two organisations who provide in-court support to vulnerable victims: the Personal Support Unit (PSU) and the Citizens Advice Witness Service.

PSU has been supporting litigants in person in family courts since 2001 and Citizens Advice has been supporting witnesses in criminal court proceedings since 2014. They both have extensive front-line experience of helping victims and witnesses navigate court processes and feel safe at court.

Citizens Advice will be using the funding to extend their current Witness Service to selected family courts to provide information and practical and emotional support to victims before, during and after the day of the hearing. PSU will be using the funding to invest in further training of their staff and volunteers and to share learnings on best practice with a range of family justice stakeholders.

The funding runs from January 2019 through to 31 March 2020, and will allow Citizens Advice to provide these services in up to 12 family courts across England and PSU in 24 courts across England and Wales.

We are determined to improve the experience of victims of domestic abuse in the family courts, and this grant is part of a wider package of measures across the family justice system. In the draft Domestic Abuse Bill we have committed to giving the family courts the power to stop unrepresented perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in family proceedings. We have also included a package of practical action in the accompanying domestic abuse consultation response.

Related link

[Domestic abuse consultation response and draft bill](#)