

Local Government Secretary confirms new support for survivors of domestic abuse

- Government confirms plans for new legal duty for local authorities to deliver life-saving support to survivors of domestic abuse
- New move will end postcode lottery of support for those fleeing violent relationships
- Further £15 million for refuges and safe accommodation projects in 2020 to 2021

Survivors of domestic abuse will be provided with essential, life-saving support in safe accommodation thanks to new legal requirement upon every council in England from next year, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has confirmed.

As outlined in the Queen's Speech, the government intends to amend the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill to include for the first time a statutory duty on councils to provide support.

The Bill will transform the response to domestic abuse to better protect victims and their children, ensure they have the support they need, as well as pursuing their abusers.

Many councils are already providing tailored support to those in need, but this move will bring an end to the postcode lottery of support for those fleeing abusive relationships.

This step forms part of a wider government drive to bolster protection for survivors of domestic abuse including the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill which is currently before the House.

Local Government Secretary, Robert Jenrick MP, said:

Domestic abuse destroys lives and leaves victims living in fear in the place where they should feel most safe – their homes.

This duty upon councils will now be brought forward – ensuring survivors get the help they need wherever they are, so they can rebuild their lives away from the threat of abuse.

This government is determined to pursue abusers, better protect victims and their children, and ensure they have the support they need – so we can end this abhorrent practice for good.

Ahead of this new duty coming into force in 2021, the government has also announced a further £15 million in funding to run these essential services in

2020 to 2021 – a 20% increase on 2019 to 2020.

The duty will then be funded from April 2021, subject to future spending review discussions.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Bill will bring about the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse.

The Bill will also establish a new Domestic Abuse Commissioner and prohibit the cross-examination of victims by their abusers in the family courts.

Local authorities will also be required to develop and publish strategies which set out in detail the range of support services available for those fleeing violent relationships – including refuge accommodation and specialist support from safety through to independence.

Sandra Horley CBE, Chief Executive of national domestic abuse charity Refuge, said:

This much needed change in the law could mean an end to the postcode lottery of finding emergency accommodation, and would ensure critical specialist services are on a much more sustainable financial footing.

We look forward to working with the government to make sure every woman and child can access the support they need, and that means sustainable funding that meets need and addresses current shortfalls.”

In November last year, ministers awarded a further £22 million for domestic abuse projects across England – ensuring thousands more survivors have access to the help they need as they move towards a safe and healthy future, free from domestic abuse.

Funding is helping to provide over 2,200 new beds in refuges and other safe accommodation, as well as access to education and tailored employment and life skills guidance.

All of this action will help more people understand domestic abuse better and ensure those that need it can access the support they need, while staying safe and protected from future abuse.

The launch of this [consultation](#) received widespread support, including from Women’s Aid, which said “We warmly welcome this announcement, which shows the government’s commitment to the long-term funding of lifesaving refuges.”

In November 2018, the government confirmed that [63 projects across England were to share £22 million](#) to help domestic abuse survivors.

That funding has helped to provide tailored support to more than 25,000

survivors and their families – including over 2,200 additional beds in refuges and other safe accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Bill had its second reading on Wednesday 2 October.

The Bill includes measures such as introducing a statutory definition of domestic abuse, Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and banning the cross-examination of victims by their perpetrators in family proceedings. We have already appointed a Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, who will promote best practice and highlight the plight of some of the most vulnerable victims.

Statutory guidance also now strongly encourages councils to prioritise domestic abuse survivors who are ready to move on from refuges when allocating social housing, to free up valuable refuge spaces for others who may need them.

The government published its [response to the consultation](#) on 14 October.

The new £15 million fund will ensure vital safe accommodation services including refuges are maintained ahead of the new duty coming into force.

This builds on other actions being taken by the government to end domestic abuse and tackle violence against women against girls, supporting survivors and ensuring offenders are prosecuted. Such as:

- the criminalisation of forced marriage and the introduction of new stalking laws
- a national roll-out of domestic violence protection orders and the domestic violence disclosure scheme
- the £15 million 3-year Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund

Work paused on the Carlisle flood risk management scheme for the winter

Since construction started in July 2019, we have encountered the wettest August and September in the last 30 years according to the Met Office. This has made working conditions for machinery and Environment Agency teams on the ground difficult for both the in river works and embankment construction.

Works to date have been focussed in the Warwick Road area. The decision to pause has not been taken lightly and the Environment Agency consider it will be of greater benefit in the long run to pause rather than attempt to carry on through winter when we are likely to make little progress. Much of the plant and equipment will be moved from Melbourne Park from the end of October and will return in 2020.

The change in the works timetable will not increase the flood risk to the local area. In addition to this flood scheme the Environment Agency have been preparing for the wetter winter period. Their 2019 winter readiness plans remain unchanged and include: replacing flood gates at the Caldew Maltings; control panel repairs at Little Caldew pumping station; repairs to flood embankments at Willowholme and Parham Beck; repairs to Durranshill flood storage basin; as well as regularly removing blockages and debris that would have increased flood risk.

Stewart Mounsey, flood manager for Cumbria, said:

I would like to reassure people that pause doesn't mean stop. We will be busy behind the scenes working with our designers and contractor to plan our works for an accelerated start in spring 2020. Although we won't be building embankments in the winter the public may see some activity in the winter months that will be supporting the accelerated return.

The pause does not affect the completion of our works which were originally planned for spring 2020 to enable the new defences to be built ahead of winter 2020. Pausing main construction works in winter 2019 will not affect our 2020 winter readiness or our ongoing preparations for delivery of Phases 2 and 3.

The Environment Agency can never fully protect people from future flooding, so they are asking residents at risk of flooding to prepare in advance by going [online](#) and signing up for free flood warnings. Alternatively, they can telephone the Environment Agency Floodline on 0345 988 1188 and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.

[FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019](#)

[Sign up for email alerts](#) and receive updates on travel advice for Qatar.

The FIFA Club World Cup will kick off in Qatar on 11 December. A large number of fans are expected to attend the tournament. Here are some tips to help make your visit safe and enjoyable.

Before you go

Below is information to help you plan your visit to Qatar. Subscribe to our [travel advice](#) and follow our social media channels for important updates. Facebook: [@UKinQatar](#) Twitter: [@UKinQatar](#)

Travelling to and staying in Qatar

There may be an increased demand for flights and hotels during the games. Plan ahead and book as early as possible to avoid disappointment. For further information check the FIFA [official website](#) and useful information from [Visit Qatar](#).

Passports and visas

You can get a 30-day tourist visa-waiver on arrival in Qatar, but your passport should be valid for at least 6 months from your date of entry. If you hold one of the [other types of British passport](#), you must get a visa before you travel.

If you plan to visit any other countries in the Middle East on your trip, be sure to check the passport validity requirements and visa requirements of each country.

You should carry your passport with you at all times. If you lose your passport, you'll need to get an [Emergency Travel Document](#) from the British Embassy in Doha.

Accommodation

Qatar's hotels accommodate around 25,000 rooms and most of the properties are located in central Doha. In the run-up to the tournament, accommodation options might fill up. If you haven't secured accommodation, you should aim to do so quickly. Please check the [Where to Stay](#) section of the Qatar National Tourism Council website that can help you with your search.

Transport

Qatar is a compact country and fans travelling to attend the tournament will have a number of options to access venues. These include buses, taxis and car hire. Check the National Tourism Council's [Getting Around](#) page for further information. Popular ride hailing apps are also widely used. The new Doha Metro partially opened in early 2019 and offers limited travel to certain areas. You can check routes and plan your trip on the [Metro](#) website.

Driving

Car hire agencies are numerous and many are located at Hamad International Airport. If you plan to hire a vehicle during your stay, check the [safety and security](#) page of our travel advice for information on road safety and driving licence requirements in Qatar.

[Video on driving](#)

Insurance

Make sure you have comprehensive travel insurance that covers pre-existing conditions and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation. In some hospitals you may need to pay in advance before claiming back from your insurance company. Find more advice on [getting the right travel insurance](#).

Local laws and customs

Travel global, think local

[Video on prohibited items](#)

There may be serious penalties for doing something that might not be illegal in the UK. You are strongly recommended to familiarise yourself with the [local laws and customs](#) section of our travel advice.

- Be responsible and respectful. Certain behaviour considered normal in the UK may cause offence in Qatar.
- Dress modestly and avoid public displays of affection. Women should ensure shoulders and knees are covered in public.
- Sexual relations outside of marriage are not permitted. Opposite-sex couples checking into hotels may be asked to provide a marriage certificate if sharing a room.
- Alcohol cannot be brought into Qatar and must only be consumed on licensed premises. Public intoxication and rowdy conduct is not acceptable and may lead to arrest.
- There is a zero tolerance towards drugs. Bringing drugs to Qatar or being in possession of drugs will result in a lengthy prison sentence.
- Be mindful when taking pictures. Sensitive sites like government buildings, embassies, mosques and construction sites are off-limits. Some Qatari females may object to being photographed. If in doubt, seek permission.
- Make sure any hotel, car hire or other bills are settled before you leave. Non-payment of debt in Qatar is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.

Cash

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Qatar. ATMs are available and should accept most overseas credit cards, although the amount of cash per withdrawal may be limited. You might want to advise your bank you are travelling abroad to ensure your cards will be operational in Qatar.

Diversity

As the population of Qatar is predominately expatriate, it is home to people, languages, and cultures from all over the world. Arabic is the official language but English is widely spoken in most contexts.

Homosexuality is illegal in Qatar. See our [information and advice page](#) for the LGBT community before you travel.

Prescription and over-the-counter medicines

Most common over-the-counter medicines are available at pharmacies in Qatar. If you need to bring prescription medication with you during your trip, make sure you carry the prescription with you. Check the [health](#) page of our travel advice for further information.

Climate

Although a desert climate, winter in Qatar tends to be relatively mild with temperatures averaging around 20 degrees Celsius. A sweater or jacket for the evening is recommended. Rainfall is scarce, though on average one damp day during December can be expected. Heavy rainfall may result in some flooding to roads.

Air quality is low by UK standards and strong winds can often raise dust and sandstorms so those with respiratory problems should take care.

Official Website

Information on venues, matches and ticketing can be found on the official [FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019](#) website. You can also follow the official FIFA social media channels for information during the tournament.

Facebook: [@fifaclubworldcup](#)

Twitter: [@FIFACOM](#)

Emergency contacts

Most visits to Qatar are trouble free but if you do need emergency assistance, call 999 for police, ambulance or fire services.

Links

Disclaimer

This information is provided as a general guide and is based upon information provided to the embassy by the relevant local authorities and may be subject to change at any time with little or no notice. The FCO and the British embassy will not be liable for any inaccuracies in this information. British nationals wishing to obtain any further information must contact the relevant

local authority.

[Duke and Duchess of Cambridge witness the impact of climate change in northern Pakistan](#)

TRH saw how communities are responding and adapting to the effects of climate change, which is a key area of interest for The Duke and Duchess at home and globally.

They first visited the remote Chiatibo Glacier in Broghil National Park to see how climate change is causing glaciers to melt, creating risks for downstream communities. They received a detailed briefing on glacial melting, climate change and its causes and implications from Pakistani hydrometeorologist and glacier expert Dr Furrukh Bashir of the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

Afterwards TRH travelled to Bumburet, home to the Kalash minority, to see the damage that flooding linked to climate change has already caused in the region, and to learn how communities are responding. They saw first-hand the extensive damage done by a 2015 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) and received a briefing from the community on how the lives of local people were affected. They then saw a first aid drill performed by volunteers from the local Emergency Response Team, which is supported by UK Aid, a river crossing drill performed by the regional Search and Rescue Team.

Finally, TRH met members of the Kalash and Sunni communities in the settlement of Karakal, to learn more about their distinctive culture.

Notes to Editors

Climate Change

As climate change effects are accentuated at altitude, a 1.5°C global temperature increase (the limit of what the world might realistically be able to achieve through rapid and concerted action) is likely to mean warming of c.2.2°C for northern Pakistan's mountains. This could lead to a loss of 36% of its glaciers by 2100.

The melting of the region's glaciers poses immediate problems for the communities living below them. Temporary glacial lakes have been forming at an increasing rate and expanding in volume since the 1990s. When these burst, in 'Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding' incidents (GLOFs), downstream communities are often devastated. A GLOF in Bumburet in 2000 destroyed 40% of cultivatable land, and another in 2015 washed away roads, houses and other

infrastructure. Disaster preparedness training and monitoring equipment installed by NGOs meant there was enough warning of the 2015 GLOF for the community's volunteer Emergency Response Team to evacuate those at risk. As a result, no lives were lost.

Broghil National Park

Established in 2010 with support from the WWF, Broghil National Park is a haven for indigenous and migratory fauna, especially rare Pamirian and Siberian birds. The Broghil Valley is largely treeless Alpine tundra, at around 3500m in elevation. It stretches over 310,000 acres and is sparsely populated. The settlement of Ishkarwaz, close to the Chiatibo Glacier, is home to the world's highest polo ground, which every year hosts a celebrated yak polo tournament. The Park is in the remote and sparsely populated north-east of the Chitral District, adjacent to the Wakhan Corridor, a strip of Afghanistan which borders Pakistan to the south and Tajikistan to the north. The Hindu Raj range and the many glaciers that flow from it form the southern side of the Broghil Valley.

UK involvement

The UK Government, through DFID, is contributing to a pioneering project, called Building Disaster Resilience in Pakistan, which looks at how to provide early warning of GLOF events to downstream communities. This is now being scaled up into a programme covering vulnerable communities across northern Pakistan. £33.9m of UK aid has been provided so far.

The world's poorest communities are often the hardest hit by the consequences of climate change – this community is a key example. The UK is committed to ensure that resilience building for local communities to make them less vulnerable to extreme weather changes is at the heart of its strategy to fight climate change with UK aid. Across Pakistan, this is one of four programmes focused on adaptation to climate change.

By 2020 this programme will:

- Help 1.5 million people prepare themselves for natural disasters including flooding and drought
- Ensure communities and towns have hazard maps and plans for when shocks to happen
- Build agricultural resilience to extreme weather changes, a pilot which will inform our work globally to respond to climate change
- Establish emergency response teams in districts at risk to manage crises
- Ensure that local communities are in close contact with local government to share information and respond together to natural disasters

In Bumburet, UK aid has supported post-flood reconstruction and disaster preparedness work, delivered by the NGO ACTED. ACTED helped to re-establish and train the village Emergency Response Team (crucial to preventing loss of life in the 2015 floods) and constructed drainage lines, roads, irrigation channels, flood protection walls, and shelters.

'Cash for work' schemes support Kalash households by providing a market for the handicrafts produced by female villagers, and 'climate smart' training helps farmers adapt their agricultural techniques to ensure food security. ACTED work closely in the area with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP). WWF also supports conservation projects locally.

For further information

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

Contact
British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. 0300 500 5306

[Ambassador Daniel Pruce's Op-ed on UK-Philippines Friendship Day](#)

I am very happy to be observing the 19th UK-Philippines Friendship Day which we commemorated on 20 October. We have a lot to celebrate in our relationship, and one element in which our partnership is growing stronger, richer and deeper is in education. We have for many years enjoyed hosting British students in the UK, who travel from the Philippines to schools and universities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to take advantage of the world class education offered there. Recent changes to the UK immigration system which will allow for a new two-year post study visa option will, I'm sure, be advantageous to Filipino scholars considering the UK as an education destination.

Also, through our Chevening scholarships scheme, the British embassy in Manila has been sending students to the UK to study for their master's degrees on a wide array of topics since 1983 – 468 Filipinos have been awarded this opportunity to date. Chevening scholars are selected on their leadership qualities and their desire to make a real difference. They return to the Philippines at the end of their studies, and continue to make a difference as leaders in their field and in the further development of the country. I recently waved off the most recent batch of 28 scholars who are studying in such diverse fields as sustainable fashion, health, plant taxonomy, energy management, policy and, happily, education.

In the field of Science and Technology we collaborate under the Newton Agham Programme with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to offer research grants and PhD scholarships for the UK. And with the Department of Science

and Technology (DOST) as our key partner, we jointly awarded 10 large-scale three-year research grants that focus on health and environment. Newton Agham also provides support to DOST-funded researchers through the Leaders in Innovation Fellowship Programme, an intensive training course on innovation to build capacity for entrepreneurship and commercialisation.

And even yet, as our relationship in the field of education matures, and in collaboration with the British Council, we continue to open up enormous opportunities for Filipinos to access UK education. There are currently 24 higher education institutions here in the Philippines offering Trans-National Education programmes authorised by the CHED; this includes partnerships with nine UK universities. In partnership with the British Council we are proud to have contributed to the development of the new Transnational Education Act which was recently signed by President Duterte, which will support the expansion of such partnerships between foreign and local universities.

We have also been working closely with Philippine institutions such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in sharing the UK's strong expertise and experience in Technical- Vocational Education and Training (TVET) where UK companies, TVET colleges and higher education institutions have for many years provided international capacity building to raise the quality and relevance of skills development. The UK's strengths in finance techniques in this field make it more accessible to women and low-income youth.

So we are going from strength to strength in our education relationship, but education is only one element of the mature friendship between the UK and the Philippines which stretches back many centuries, based on honesty and trust, and the strong bonds between our peoples.

We are two, proud, island nations, committed to each other and to making a positive contribution to the wider world. Friendship Day is an opportunity to celebrate how we work together to make the world a better place, such as our collaboration on tackling climate change, where we are powerful partners. And how we support each other, as we do in fighting the sexual exploitation of children, where we succeed. Every friendship has the opportunity to grow, to challenge each other, to help each other, in good times and bad. With our historic collaboration and multiple partnerships, the solid foundations of our friendship are unshakeable.

We are, indeed, closer than you think.