

“Landmark moment” as Domestic Abuse Bill introduced to Parliament

The government’s landmark Domestic Abuse Bill will be introduced in Parliament today, signalling a major step forward in transforming the response to this crime.

The Bill is the most comprehensive package ever presented to Parliament to tackle domestic abuse, both supporting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice.

Following extensive work with stakeholders and charities, the government carried out a public consultation on measures to be included in the Bill that saw more than 3,200 responses.

[A draft of the Bill was published in January](#) and has undergone extensive scrutiny by a Joint Committee of cross party MPs and Peers as part of the government’s collaborative approach to ensure this historic legislation is correct. The Committee published a report on the draft bill in June and made a set of recommendations which the government has considered carefully.

Measures in the Bill include:

- introducing the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse, which will include economic abuse
- establishing a Domestic Abuse Commissioner to champion victims and survivors
- introducing new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to further protect victims and place restrictions on the actions of offenders
- prohibiting the cross-examination of victims by their abusers in the family courts
- providing automatic eligibility for special measures to support more victims to give evidence in the criminal courts

The Prime Minister, who launched the consultation at Downing Street in March last year, said:

Domestic abuse can take many forms, from horrific physical violence to coercive behaviour that robs people of their self-esteem, their

freedom and their right to feel safe in their own homes, but the immense bravery I've seen demonstrated by survivors is consistent throughout. We have a duty not only to bring the perpetrators of these vile crimes to justice, but to support victims as they rebuild their lives.

This Bill will help us do just that and represents a true step-change in our approach. It couldn't have happened without the victims, charities, campaign groups and frontline agencies who have worked alongside government to ensure we get this right, and as we reflect on reaching this important milestone together I want to express my thanks to them once more.

Responding to the Joint Committee's report, the government has either accepted or partially accepted the majority of recommendations and has committed to consider several further as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Also being announced today are government plans to support asylum seekers suffering domestic abuse by ensuring they have access to refuges, ensuring that victims can receive the specialist support they need.

The government will also undertake a review into the statutory response to migrant victims of domestic abuse.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Domestic abuse destroys lives and tears families apart, but all too often it is hidden behind closed doors.

This landmark Bill is an opportunity to help those who suffer this deeply harmful crime and support those who bring the perpetrators to justice.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

This Bill marks a fundamental shift in our response to domestic abuse – establishing greater protections for victims, whilst ensuring perpetrators feel the full weight of the law.

By banning abusers from cross-examining their victims in the family courts, and giving courts greater powers through new protection orders, we are making sure the justice system is better equipped than ever to tackle this horrific crime.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins said:

Having spoken to survivors of domestic abuse, I have been both

shocked by their stories and moved by their resilience and strength. As a government, we must do all we can to support those who have suffered this horrendous abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Bill goes further than ever before and recognises the complex nature of domestic abuse, while putting the needs of victims at the forefront.

In January, the government published a report into the economic and social cost of domestic abuse, which revealed the cost to victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2017 in England and Wales was an estimated £66 billion. It is estimated that around 2 million adults experience domestic abuse each year, affecting almost 6% of all adults.

The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill follows a meeting, hosted by the Prime Minister in Downing Street last week with domestic abuse survivors, frontline experts and charities, including Refuge, SafeLives and Women's Aid. During the event the Prime Minister reiterated her personal commitment to tackling this issue, which has been a priority throughout her career. Discussions were intended to inform the delivery of the Bill through Parliament, with attendees urged to continue pushing for change to stamp out abuse and support victims, and to work with the Prime Minister's successor in taking this important policy forward.

[Roads policing review to improve safety](#)

- government will review roads policing as part of [Road Safety Action Plan](#)
- review will highlight best practice and identify gaps in service
- a pilot programme of new initiatives could be running as early as next year

A first-of-its-kind joint review into roads policing and traffic enforcement will be launched later this year, in a bid to improve road safety.

The 2 year review, jointly funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England, will look at how roads policing currently works, its effectiveness, and where improvements could be made or gaps bridged.

The DfT will be looking at this with the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council. A pilot programme based on the review and consultation feedback could begin next year, and could test out new initiatives or ways of working to see what works best in reducing road casualties.

Road Safety Minister Michael Ellis said:

We have strong laws in place to ensure people are kept safe on our roads at all times.

But roads policing is a key deterrent in stopping drivers breaking the law and risking their and other people's lives.

This review will not only highlight where police forces are doing good work, it will show what more can be done to improve road safety.

The review will also look at how the police and different agencies work together, the information they share and how improvements may increase capability and capacity.

It will also consider how best to police roads in rural and urban areas, and the strategic road network.

In order to find out what currently works well, a call for evidence will be launched this autumn. Findings and recommendations will be ready in 2020.

The review will not increase the burden on existing police forces. In fact, to help free up police time, the department has rolled out a new version of the Collision Reporting and Sharing software and provided a smartphone app to work on existing police mobile devices as well as funding to buy tablet computers.

This app enables officers to accurately report crash data and locations on site, rather than having to return to a police station to duplicate paperwork on a computer.

The DfT has also invested in the development of roadside breathalysers, which once finished, will enable suspected drink drivers to be tested at the roadside, without having to go back to the police station for a test, and the reading can then be used in court.

[PM's words from reception held at Downing Street to celebrate the winning England Cricket team](#)

The final was not just cricket at its best but sport at its best – courage, character, sportsmanship, drama, incredible skill and even the odd slice of luck...

All combining to create a real thriller, one of the great sporting spectacles of our time.

It was a fitting end to what has been a great tournament – and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in once again making our country a sporting showcase for the world.

The players and coaching staff.

The organisers and volunteers.

The incredible spectators from 10 nations who brought such colour and passion to England and Wales this summer.

The runners-up yesterday, New Zealand.

Real champions show their true character not just in victory but also in defeat, and I am sure everyone here agrees that their response on the field yesterday shows what Black Caps are made of, what New Zealanders are made of.

They are a credit to their team, a credit to their sport and a credit to their nation.

Then of course, there is England.

Or “World Cup-winning England”, as we can get used to saying.

You are a team that represents modern Britain – and that plays like no other side in the world.

In the group stage you responded to setbacks not by giving in but by coming back stronger than ever.

And, when the odds were against you in the biggest game of your lives, you simply and stubbornly refused to lose.

It is that determination, that character, that has made you world champions.

But more than that you have made history.

You have helped the nation fall in love with cricket once again.

And, perhaps most important of all, as we saw across the country last night and at the Oval this morning, you have inspired countless future Morgans, Rashids and Archers.

This was a record-breaking World Cup.

Yesterday we saw a final for the ages.

And here today we have a team that will be spoken of in awe for generations to come.

Thank you all once again.

On behalf of the whole country congratulations to – and I just want to say this one more time – England’s World Cup winners.

Social media, young people and mental health

An Irishman, a Barbadian and a Kiwi...

Sorry, there's no punchline – I just wanted to talk about our England cricket team, who I met on the way over here at Downing Street.

And our brilliant England captain, star bowler and star batsman, and this entire generation of England cricketers, who come from so many different backgrounds to play for our country.

Because these guys – like the England Women's World Cup team – are role models to so many boys and girls in this country.

And it's a sign of how far we've come since Norman Tebbit's infamous 'cricket test' that nobody cares where you come from, only where you want to call home. And I hope that we call it a new cricket test that we are a meritocracy as a country wherever you come from.

I thought it was worth starting with the England cricket team, not only to cheer everybody up but also because we have to make sure that we remember what the recent past was like when we decide on the future.

Our sporting role models now reflect what our country looks like – and this itself is a huge sign of progress. I think we can take that analysis into the space we're talking about tonight.

Because things weren't always better for children and teenagers before smartphones and social media. We often discuss the impact of social media and the challenges it brings but as mentioned in the introduction we must also remember the great advances it brings.

By most metrics it's never been better: smoking is down, alcohol misuse is down, drug abuse is down. More young people are staying in school and going to university than ever before.

You see the thing is, no matter how much we care about improving our country, we've always got to base those improvements on an honest assessment of where we are. An honest assessment means also reflecting that each age brings new challenges and our task is to rise to those new challenges and harness those for the benefit of our society.

This afternoon some of the biggest social media companies in the world – Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google, YouTube, Tumblr and Snapchat – all came together at the Department for Health and Social Care...

...the Matt Hancock app was also represented.

And what we discussed is exactly what we're talking about tonight – young people, social media and the impact on mental health. And the word that kept coming up in the meeting – and not just from me – was responsibility.

It was clear: the penny has now dropped – social media companies get that they have a social responsibility, and that we all have a shared responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our children.

This was the third social media summit I've called this year, and so far we've managed to get the big tech firms – which includes Twitter – to agree to remove suicide and self-harm content, and start addressing the spread of anti-vax misinformation, Instagram have introduced a new anti-bullying tool, and they've all repeated to me that they recognise they have a duty of care to their users, particularly children and young people.

The next step from the work we've been doing is research. Today, we agreed that we must build a scientifically-rigorous evidence base so we can better understand the health impact of social media, and so we can better identify what more we need to do to keep our children safe online.

We will use the data that social media companies hold for social good. Because, while we've made significant progress in these past few months, there is still much more to do.

And ultimately we need to ensure we allow those who express themselves on social media as a cry for help to make that cry while not subjecting others to the damaging impact of viewing material that promotes self-harm or suicide.

And I have made it crystal-clear that if they don't collaborate, we will legislate.

So today, we agreed to start a new strategic partnership between the Samaritans and 'the big 6': Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google, YouTube and Twitter.

We want the social media companies to contribute at least £1 million to get this partnership off the ground. The government is playing a leading role in bringing this partnership together, and has also contributing funding.

Our mission will be to follow the evidence: develop a scientifically based understanding of what the challenge is, and what resources, support and guidelines we need to establish and better protect children and young people online.

And the key will be to ensure we have a clinically credible analysis of what should and shouldn't be online and ensure when social media companies want to take down content that is harmful, or are required to take down content that is harmful, the boundary of what should and shouldn't be online is defined by clinical standards. There's a clear need for a partnership here to make sure we get that line right.

Ultimately technology isn't the problem: cars don't kill people because of a

design flaw. People die in car crashes, most of the time, due to human error.

The challenge with social media is also a human challenge.

I'm well known for caring about driving technological upgrades through the NHS and before that across the economy as culture secretary. The reason I care about technology is because I care about people.

Ultimately, harnessing people to harness technology – that is the challenge that we face. The challenge we face online is to ask the question: are humans going to do the right thing?

Are social media companies going to play their part by making their services safer?

Are governments going to hold these companies to account?

And how are we going to support parents and carers to keep their children safe and healthy online?

Essentially, how are we all going to live up to our responsibilities?

And I believe we will. For 2 reasons.

First: history shows us that new technologies sometimes develop faster than our ability to fully understand their impact, but when we do catch up, we act successfully.

It took a century of speed limits, vehicle inspections, traffic lights, drink-driving laws, seatbelt legislation, to make driving as safe as it is now. And now, per mile driven, cars have never been safer.

And we're still not done, because driver-less cars will be the next step – proof that progress is driven both by advances in understanding and improvements in the technology itself.

And of course that progress, itself, is never complete.

I take inspiration from the first modern labour law in this country, introduced by a Conservative: Robert Peel, father to Sir Robert Peel, one of our greatest prime ministers.

The 1802 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act recognised that cotton mill owners needed to better protect the children working with this new-fangled machinery.

Now, it took a few more decades, and a few more factory acts, before child labour was outlawed altogether, but that first Factory Act, introduced by a Conservative mill owner, started the course of gradual improvements to make the world of work safer for children, women and men.

This task of harnessing new technology for the benefit of society does not take one act of parliament – it is a constant effort to make sure our

rulebook is up to date, to allow for the great innovations of our age but to also ensure the benefit of that innovation is brought to the whole of society.

The history of technology, the history of humanity itself, is one of constant and gradual improvements. Now, gradual does not mean slow – that's not to say we need to wait decades for change to happen.

The pace of technological transformation is faster now than at any point in history so we must pick up the pace of progress to make this technology safer, sooner.

Look at it this way: Facebook is 15 years old now, which in tech years is about... 46. They've even appointed Nick Clegg – and you don't get more of a grown-up than Sir Nick.

So this technology is maturing, there's more middle-aged people now using Facebook than teenagers, and through improving our understanding and improving the technology, we can make it safer for everyone. That's the first reason I have confidence that we will get this right, but it requires constant effort to upgrade the laws by which we live.

Second: Mental health, thanks to the actions of this Prime Minister, and her predecessor, is finally being talked about, and taken as seriously as physical health.

[Political content withdrawn]

We've started a fundamental shift in how we think about mental health in this country, and the approach the NHS is taking to preventing, treating and supporting good mental health in the future.

This fundamental shift is important but it is by no means complete. We've put a record amount of funding into mental health services but there is so much more to do.

And I think it's very important that we talk about the impact of social media, and the wellbeing of young people, in this wider context of good mental health: how do we promote and encourage good mental health?

So the third, and final thing, I'd like to touch on tonight is resilience, which is really another way of saying prevention: the guiding principle of the NHS over the next decade.

How can we help people, particularly children and young people, to become more resilient in the first place?

This isn't about telling people to toughen up – it's about teaching people the cognitive and emotional skills they need to deal with adversity.

It's about promoting positive mental health and preventing problems from causing illness.

Because life will throw at you challenges, times of stress and adversity – losing a job, divorce, bereavement. It's how we respond, how resilient we are, that ultimately determines the impact on our mental health.

The child development expert, Professor Ann Masten, puts it brilliantly:

Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children.

Everyday magic, but it is not automatic. Resilience isn't a fixed attribute. It's something we can teach. It's something that can be learned, it's something that must be nurtured.

It's an essential life skill that we should equip every child and young person with, so they can meet challenges head-on, face adversity, learn and grow, and improve as a person.

I'm delighted we're working with our colleagues at the Department for Education to equip and empower children, from a young age, with this essential life skill.

Teaching resilience, along with self-respect and self-worth, learning about the importance of honesty, courage, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and justice.

Values to live by, and vital to our mental health.

We're also teaching children about the dangers of fake news and why truth matters – whether it's falsehoods about vaccines or falsehoods about people.

As a parent, I want to protect my children from the dangers in this world, but I know I can't be with them every minute of the day – I don't think they'd like it very much if I tried.

But I hope that what I've taught them will help prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future.

As parents, as a society, we can't remove every challenge, but we can teach young people how to overcome them, how to cope with adversity, and how to become more resilient.

So it comes down to this:

Responsibility: everybody playing their part – social media companies, government, parents and carers.

Research: building the evidence base to improve our understanding, and improve the new technology.

Resilience: teaching the right way to respond to challenges.

That's how we protect our children. And that's how we build a safer, healthier world for them to grow up in.

And it is an area in which we can succeed – we are leading the world and we must not fail if we're going to ensure the next generation grows up to live the happy and fulfilling lives that we all want to see.

[Launch of Smart Farm Pilot at EXPO in Paraguay](#)

The event will take place next July 15 at 19:00 Hs., at the Annual Expo of Mariano Roque Alonso exhibit, the largest annual agribusiness fair.

Local authorities and guests linked to the agricultural and cattle sector, as well as businesses will be in attendance. Representatives from UK-based businesses that work on Agri-Tech will also be present, offering their products to the agriculture sector in Paraguay. The companies will take part in business round tables during their visit to Paraguay.

The objective of the Paraguay Satellite Demonstration Farm is to provide an initial monitoring test facility to validate cutting edge British technologies that have the potential to significantly improve agricultural productivity for farming systems in Paraguay.

This first pilot is in implementation phase at a private cattle ranch, located in the San Pedro district in the north of the country. The results of this pilot have proven the value of the technology to increase farm profitability and suitability for promotion of their adoption in Paraguay and other countries in the region. As the British Ambassador in Asuncion, Matthew Hedges said:

The launch of this pilot is the culmination of years of careful work between the Foreign Commonwealth Office, through our Embassy in Asuncion, the Department of International Trade and British businesses offering cutting-edge technology for agribusiness.

We hope this is the first of many business opportunities to take advantage of the innovation the UK has to offer

GREAT Campaign

The launch of the Smar Farm pilot received support from the GREAT campaign, a cross-Government initiative aimed to showcase the best of the UK and encourage people to visit, do business, invest and study in the UK. It is the

Government's most ambitious international promotional campaign ever, uniting the efforts of the private and public sectors to generate jobs and growth for Britain.

Further information

If you want to learn more about the pilot farm, visit the website of the [AgriEpi Centre](#).

For other information about the launch, contact Karina Rodriguez, Political and Communications Officer at the British Embassy in Asuncion, at Karina.Rodriguez@fco.gov.uk.

For more information about the events and activities of the British Embassy in Paraguay, follow us on: