

Pioneering approach in family courts to support domestic abuse victims better

- pilot launched at family courts in North Wales and Dorset to better support victims of domestic abuse
- sets out to improve information sharing so that victims avoid retelling traumatic experiences
- part of government's decisive action to tackle domestic violence and improve victim support

The new pilot launched at family courts in North Wales and Dorset aims to improve information sharing between agencies such as the police, local authorities and the courts. This could include local domestic abuse professionals sharing risk assessments with the court to spare victims and parties in the case the trauma of having to unnecessarily repeat their experiences.

Crucially, it will also boost the voice of children at every stage of the process, ensuring they are listened to and their views are taken into account when decisions are made about their futures. It will see children given more opportunity to explain how they feel and, following a court order, to say whether it is working for them.

The pilots work by allowing judges to review gathered information and request more documentation before a case gets to court. It avoids the circumstances of the case being debated in the courtroom, which can often exacerbate conflict between parents. The pilot will also encourage proceedings to be less adversarial so that more emphasis can be put into investigating and addressing allegations of domestic abuse and other harmful behaviours – rather than allowing confrontation in the courtroom to take place.

Between three months and a year after a ruling is made, in most cases the courts and the agencies involved will carry out a review to ensure decisions made are working well. This includes assessing whether court orders are being followed and whether additional support is needed.

Justice Minister Lord Wolfson QC said:

This government is doing everything we can to protect victims, make them feel safer, and give them greater confidence in the justice system.

These pilots will help ensure victims of domestic abuse aren't further traumatised by the court process and that better decisions are made about their and their children's lives.

This, alongside our landmark Domestic Abuse Act, will ensure that victims are loudly heard and fully supported.

The pilot follows from a [review of Family Courts](#) which found that an adversarial process often worsened conflict between parents and could have a damaging impact on victims and their children.

Today's (8 March 2022) announcement forms part of the government's sweeping reforms to transform the way family courts operate, contained in the Domestic Abuse Act. These include a ban on perpetrators cross-examining their victims as well as measures to prevent them from repeatedly bringing their ex-partners back to court – which can be used as a form of continuing domestic abuse.

Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

Every day I hear from domestic abuse survivors about their experiences in the family courts. Many victims and their children feel re-traumatised by the process which is why seeing improvements in the family courts is one of my top priorities as Commissioner

I am delighted to see the Harm Panel's recommendation to test a more investigative approach to domestic abuse cases now being piloted.

Crucial to the success of these pilots will be ensuring that domestic abuse – particularly coercive control and the impact it has on adult and child victims – is fully understood and the risk it poses to survivors and children is taken into account throughout the proceedings.

Rhianon Argent, Senior Practitioner, Bournemouth Women's Refuge & BCP Outreach Team, said:

BCHA are pleased to be involved in this important pilot project that will provide essential support for domestic abuse survivors going through the family court. This project has enabled us to recently recruit a specialist support worker, as part of our domestic abuse team, who will be dedicated to the family court.

They will focus on the safety of victims at risk of harm from partners, ex-partners or family members providing support before, during and after the court process.

In addition they will provide training and support for court personnel in understanding domestic abuse and coercive control.

This is a much-needed new initiative, so that we can raise awareness of the trauma caused by domestic abuse and help to

achieve best evidence at court with victims and survivors in Bournemouth and the surrounding areas.

Rhian Lewis, Head of Operations / Deputy CEO, Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) North Wales

DASU are very excited to be actively involved in the pathfinder's pilot in North Wales.

Many of the families that we support have felt let down by the Family Courts system stating that they felt that no one was listening to their experiences of domestic abuse and that perpetrators were able to continue to control and abuse them through this process. Survivors of domestic abuse have suffered enough.

The Pathfinder pilot is a real opportunity to change the way that we support families that experience domestic abuse by recognising the risk, addressing safeguarding issues, reducing re-traumatisation and putting children and their non-abusive parent at the heart of the process. This system will improve their quality of life and put a stop to perpetrators being able to use the Family Courts as a means of exercising their control.

The investigative pilot will be tested initially in Bournemouth and Weymouth in Dorset, and Caernarfon, Mold, Prestatyn and Wrexham in North Wales for up to two years before a full evaluation.

The pilot was designed in consultation with a wide range of family justice experts including judges, charities and academics and is comprised of three stages. Agencies will first gather information and assess whether there are any concerns for a child or person involved in the case about substance misuse, domestic abuse, or other welfare issues. There will then be a hearing to decide what interventions or decisions are required, for example whether it could be suitable for mediation out of court. It would also look at whether programmes such as Separated Parent programmes on how to put children first when a relationship breaks down are needed before an order is made. The new process aims to take the confrontational elements out of the family court system, with a focus more on investigating and solving problems to reduce potential harm to those involved.

The pilot will also, when appropriate and safe, help direct families towards accessing out of court options such as mediation. This could see them avoid the family courts altogether, resolving disputes without the stress of often lengthy and costly courtroom battles.

The government has invested more than £3.3 million into a landmark mediation voucher scheme helping thousands of families find amicable solutions outside the courts. Since its launch in March 2021, over 5,800 vouchers have already been used under the scheme with 77 percent of cases reaching full or partial

agreements away from the family courts.

Notes to editors

- The pilot was drawn up by the Private Law Advisory and Pilots Group made up of individual members of the judiciary, Cafcass, HMCTS, and the Ministry of Justice. It also worked closely with stakeholders such as the Family Justice Young People's Board, academics, police, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and charities such as Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, SafeLives, Respect, JUSTICE, Centre of Justice Innovation, and the Nuffield Foundation.
- The types of cases being involved in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Courts are:
 - Child arrangement orders – an order that decides the arrangements of whom a child is to live with, spend time with, or has contact with.
 - Specific issue order – to resolve a particular issue around parental responsibility. For example, this could be around medical treatment, name change, relocation or education.
 - Prohibited steps order – to prevent a parent from carrying out a particular action as part of their parental responsibility. For example, removing and relocating the child to outside England and Wales or changing a child's surname.
- In January 2022, the Government announced £1.3 million in funding for a [Family Mediation voucher scheme](#), bringing the total amount to nearly £3.1 with thousands of families benefiting from free out of court mediation.
- In August 2021, the Government announced a [call for evidence on dispute resolution](#), seeking views on the best ways to settle family, business and other civil disputes away from the court room. A response will be published in due course.
- In November 2020, a [review of the Presumption of Parental Contact](#) was launched. This work is still ongoing.
- In December 2021, the Government launched a [consultation on a new Victims' Law](#) which would help provide greater support to victims and ensure they have a voice in the justice system. This consultation closed in February and will be responded to in due course.

[UK government and global businesses in new £20 million partnership to educate girls in developing countries](#)

- to mark International Women's Day [8 March], Prime Minister Boris Johnson will launch a new global partnership with 11 businesses to improve girls' access to education and employment in developing

countries

- the UK government is contributing an initial £9 million, with businesses providing £11 million in total
- the programme aims to provide high quality skills training to around 1 million girls around the world
- improving girls' access to education is a key part of the UK's foreign policy, to ensure we build back better from the pandemic and prevent a lost generation. Investing in education helps lift communities out of poverty and protects girls from early marriage, forced labour and gender-based violence

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is launching a new £20 million business partnership as the UK continues to lead global efforts to improve girls' access to education in developing countries.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of children did not have any access to school – and girls from disadvantaged families are particularly vulnerable to missing out on education, whether through poverty or prejudice. The pandemic has created even more barriers to education, with a peak of 1.6 billion children around the world having faced school closures.

In the UK's first education partnership of its kind, the UK government is joining forces with the private sector to boost girls' access to education in developing countries. Partners include Unilever, Pearson, PwC, Microsoft, Accenture, Standard Chartered, United Bank for Africa, Coursera, Vodafone, BP and Cognizant. The UK Government will be working in partnership with UNICEF's Generation Unlimited (GenU) to help deliver the programme, with key partners funding GenU being Accenture, Standard Chartered, Unilever, Microsoft, and United Bank for Africa.

Last night [7 March], a reception was held in No.10 Downing Street to mark the announcement and International Women's Day, which was attended by partners, including: Jill Huntley, Global Managing Director, Corporate Citizenship at Accenture; Dr Betty Vandenbosch, Chief Content Officer at Coursera and Marissa Thomas, Chief Operating Officer at PwC.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The United Kingdom has long been a proud and mighty champion of this fundamental cause and today we take one leap further through our first Global Partnership of its kind – opening the opportunity for one million girls across the developing world to have access to high quality skills training.

Ensuring every girl and young woman across the globe receives 12 years of quality education is the greatest tool in our armoury to end the world's great injustices.

Delivering on this mission will be one of the best defences against ignorance, ensure the greatest protection from prejudice and put a rocket booster behind our hopes and dreams for global development

in the years to come.

Businesses, charities, schools and colleges will shortly be able to bid for funds from the programme. The partnership wants to support projects that will improve access to education for girls, with a focus on providing the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills needed to find work in key sectors such as technology and manufacturing. This could include funding new skills training programmes, improving teaching or redesigning training to make it more relevant to business needs. Initially bids will be encouraged for projects in Nigeria and Bangladesh, two countries where significant barriers to girls' education remain.

Funding from the programme will also help expand GenU's 'Passport to Earning' (P2E) platform. This digital skills platform will provide girls with free, certified education and skills training which they can then use to support future employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. UNICEF's precursor to P2E was listed among Time Magazine's 100 Best Inventions of 2021.

Some of the businesses involved will be contributing a range of resources including books, computers and other technology, mentors, advice and access to their networks, skills and training programmes. The private sector involvement will help ensure that education and learning opportunities provide girls with the skills for the future that employers need.

The UK is playing a leading global role to improve girls' education in developing countries. During the UK's G7 Presidency last year it secured agreement to help get an additional 40 million girls into school by 2026; and secondly to help 20 million girls to learn to read by the age of 10 by 2026. In 2021, the UK hosted a successful Global Education Summit, which raised \$4 billion in pledges from world leaders to support schools through the Global Partnership for Education. Between 2015 and 2020, the UK supported at least 15.6 million children in developing countries to gain a decent education, including 8.1 million girls.

We have already seen considerable success with similar skills programmes such as the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) in Bangladesh. This involved training up marginalised young girls with the skills they needed to be able to secure jobs within demand sectors, which gave these young girls more economic, social and personal freedom. As a result, the programme saw a 62% reduction in child marriage among the girls and families involved.

Similarly, the 'Educate!' programme across Uganda and Rwanda has provided industry-specific (agriculture and tourism) sessions for girls, as well as sessions to boost their literacy skills. This programme saw a 120% increase in income among the female participants.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Supporting women and girls is at the heart of UK foreign policy. We want women to have agency over their own lives and to be free to succeed.

Investing in girls' education is vital for a more sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future. That's why we are partnering with the private sector to help girls in developing countries access education and job opportunities.

Helen Grant, Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education said:

Every girl everywhere deserves to have an education.

From school right the way through to the workplace, our partnership will help give women and girls the skills they need to reach their full potential.

Kevin Frey, Chief Executive Officer of Generation Unlimited said:

The Girls' Education Skills Partnership exemplifies the commitment of the UK government and the private sector in addressing the critical gap in skilling girls for 21st Century opportunities.

P2E is an innovative skills platform designed with partners to reach the girls everywhere, every time, preparing them with in-demand market relevant skills.

- the programme is called the Girls' Education Skills Partnership
- the £11 million provided by businesses is a mixture of funding and resources
- GenU (housed within UNICEF) will manage the funding that will be open for bids
- the companies providing funding to GenU are Accenture, Standard Chartered, Unilever, Microsoft, and United Bank for Africa
- seven countries have been identified for the Passport to Earning (P2E) platform: Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Niger, Egypt and India

Putin is directing a campaign of violence and cruelty against civilians

Thank you, Madam President. And may I start by thanking, too, Martin Griffiths and Cathy Russell for their sobering briefings. I also want to add my thanks and appreciation for the work of your organisations, the courage of your staff, and the integrity of your reporting.

Madam President,

Martin, Cathy and Colleagues have already described in sobering detail the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. 1.7 million refugees – 1.7 million individual lives, destroyed. And the UN expects this to rise to 4 million in the coming weeks.

We've seen the devastation caused by Russian missiles and bombardment, including reports of cluster munitions in Ukrainian cities:

apartment blocks torn apart:

hospitals, schools, in ruins:

people left without electricity, food, water and shelter.

We can't turn the clock back.

Russia's invasion has been met with fierce resistance by the Ukrainian people. In response, President Putin is directing a campaign of violence and cruelty against civilians.

But let me be clear – we will hold Russia to account for its actions, and we will investigate thoroughly allegations of war crimes and violations of international law.

Madam President,

In response to this tragedy, the UK Prime Minister today announced a further \$130 million of aid, which brings to a total the UK's support for Ukraine, to \$520 million. In addition, individual members of the British public have given over \$130 million.

This is intended to help Ukrainians in need, and support neighbouring countries receive refugees.

But as I have said before, what the Ukrainian people really need is an end to this invasion.

So, we appeal to Russia to end their war before they bring even more tragedy to the Ukraine – and even more shame on their own nation.

Vassily Alekseevich,

The great Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote: "Man is given not only one life, but also one conscience."

I know that you've spoken under instructions today, but I ask you to report faithfully back to Moscow what you have heard today – the urgency of this Council's calls for peace.

I thank you.

Statement by the Governor of Turks and Caicos Islands on the Russian invasion of Ukraine

I thought it important to give an update on the UK's response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and the support TCI is, and will provide, in terms of sanctions.

Russia's assault on Ukraine is an unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack against a sovereign democratic state. It is a clear breach of international law and the UN Charter. I spent some of early military career in West Germany, defending Europe from the threat of Soviet aggression, and to see columns of Tanks from Russia's 'First Guards Tank Army', bearing down on cities and civilians, in a democratic state, is unconscionable. Ukraine – who are standing up to this aggression with admirable courage – have already suffered horrific attacks – missiles and air strikes have torn through apartment blocks; innocent people including children have lost their lives.

Today (2 March) 141 Countries voted in the United Nations deploring Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calling for an immediate withdrawal of Forces. With the exception of Cuba that vote, deploring Russian aggression, included every Caribbean country. While thirty five countries abstained, only 5 voted against (Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea and Syria). Of the abstentions, six of Russia's allies, who voted with her after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, abstained today including – most notably in our region – Cuba.

It is the first time in 40 years the 'Security Council' has referred a crisis to the assembly and only the 11th time an emergency session of the UN general assembly has been called since 1950. . The initial General Assembly resolution was co-sponsored by some our closest neighbours: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. Good for them.

Staying with our region, CARICOM (where our Premier presently is, representing TCI) heard the Chair, the Prime Minister of Belize, John Briceno say: "As we meet, Russia has invaded Ukraine. This is a flagrant violation of international law. We condemn in the strongest terms this unjustified invasion. There must be an immediate cessation of hostilities, an immediate and unilateral withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine. We call for all to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law."

The events of the last few days have demonstrated that the Kremlin was never serious about engaging in diplomacy – and was focussed only on deceit and furthering territorial ambitions. The Russian government lied not only to the world but crucially to their own people. This is not an argument with

Russians, many of whom will deplore their President's actions, but with the small circle who control the Russian State, and who have enriched themselves on it. It is vital for the safety of every nation that President Putin's venture should ultimately fail, and be seen to fail. The UK stands with Ukraine – and I personally admire the defence the Ukrainians are mounting.

As families shelter from rocket attacks, and paratroopers drop on a Ukrainian city, and Tank columns are on the move, the number of refugees seem to be in the region of well over 500,000. From our perspective, in the Caribbean, it is worth acknowledging there were disturbing reports that suggested those with African or South Asian heritage or ethnicity were being discriminated against. The UK Government – and others in this region – have received absolute assurances from the Ukrainian Government that this is not sanctioned and will not be tolerated, and that all will be treated equally.

The UK means what it says in terms of defending the Ukrainian people's right to choose their own destiny. As a result it has launched the largest package of sanctions in the UK's history – sanctions that TCI have been, and are, also bringing into force. This is being implemented in partnership with our international allies in order to cut off funding for President Putin's war.

These will inflict serious economic pain and we have agreed with international partners that many of Russia's key banks will be removed from SWIFT (the foundational process by which money is moved between banks). This is the first step towards a total SWIFT ban. New sanctions will devastate Russia's economy and targets Vladimir Putin directly and his inner circle including Sergey Lavrov.

More than 100 companies and oligarchs at the heart of President Putin's regime have been hit with sanctions yesterday worth 100s of billions of pounds, asset freezes and travel bans on Russia's banking and defence sector. This includes asset freezes on VTB, Russia's second largest bank, worth £154 billion, Rostec, Russia's defence giant, responsible for \$13bn of arms exports per year. Sanctions will also soon be implemented on 571 members of the Duma and Federation council who sanctioned the invasion of Ukraine.

The UK have banned Aeroflot and all other Russian commercial and private jets from UK airspace and these airlines and private jets are equally banned from TCI airspace and all other Overseas Territories. The UK will be introducing new financial measures to freeze the assets of Russian banks and lay legislation before the UK Parliament to ban the Russian state and Russia's economically vital industries and companies (like Gazprom) from raising finance on the UK's money markets – the most important financial centre in Europe.

This legislation will also prevent Russian banks from clearing payments in sterling, and as soon as it comes into force it will apply to Sberbank – Russia's largest bank. Additional legislation will ban exports to Russia across a range of critical sectors, this includes critical, high-end technological equipment. It will blunt Russia's military-industrial capabilities and act as a drag on Russia's economy for years to come.

Working with allies the intention is to cripple Russia's economic development in both the short and, if necessary, the long term. The UK and our allies are united and clear that nothing and no one is off the table. UK sanctions will also apply to Belarussian individuals and organisations that have supported the Russian invasion.

Beyond sanctions, we are already providing a range of economic, humanitarian and defensive military assistance. The UK have pledged £220 million of aid, which includes £120 million of humanitarian assistance providing Ukrainians with access to basic necessities and vital medical supplies. The funding will help aid agencies respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, creating a lifeline for Ukrainians with access to basic necessities. UK Government humanitarian experts have also deployed to the region to bolster the UK's support to countries receiving those fleeing the violence in Ukraine.

Having been one of the first to send sophisticated anti-tank weapons to the Ukrainians – to allow them a fighting chance to defend themselves – and watching them use these to good effect in defending their homeland, the UK continues to help Ukraine strengthen its defences with joint exercises, maritime support and by training over 20,000 members of its army.

The UK is ramping up support for trade in priority industries to £3.5 billion – including £1.7 billion to boost Ukraine's naval capability. We are also providing \$500 million in loan guarantees to support Multilateral Development Banks, such as the World Bank, to bolster Ukraine's economy. We particularly welcome Germany's decision to suspend Nord Stream 2 that brings Russian Gas to Europe. We must hold Russia responsible for their actions, which will be met with severe costs, and to do this Europe must reduce its dependence on Russian gas.

The Kremlin's unprovoked aggression has led the Russian people into a quagmire and, as demonstrated today, turned Russia into an international pariah. The world community now stands against them and in solidarity with Ukraine. The Russian government's attempt to conquer an independent state by force of arms, is an attack on the security and freedom of Europe but it goes far wider than that. It's an attack against the international order and its impacts, particularly if President Putin were to prevail, will be felt globally should dictators, and those who see themselves as the 'strong' set against weak neighbours, believe they can act with impunity. I'm proud of the Ukrainians who are resisting, I'm proud to be associated with those supporting them, and I'm proud that TCI – in the only way it can – is supporting them through the imposition of sanctions against those who wage war against democratic neighbours.

PM call with the leaders of the France, Germany and the United States: 7 March 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the leaders of the France, Germany and the United States this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to the leaders of France, Germany and the United States this afternoon about the situation in Ukraine.

The leaders condemned Russia's barbaric action and expressed their ongoing solidarity with the people of Ukraine. They discussed the military and political situation on the ground and agree that any future negotiations on Ukraine's future would have to put the needs and wishes of Ukrainians first.

The Prime Minister and other leaders agreed to continue to apply pressure on Russia to isolate Putin diplomatically and economically. The Prime Minister stressed that our goal must be ensuring Putin's failure in this act of aggression against Ukraine.

The group agreed to continue meeting in this format in the days ahead.

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