

Extra support for councils to expand services for domestic abuse victims and their children

- £6 million for councils to prepare for new domestic abuse duty
- Councils will have a duty to provide support for victims of domestic abuse
- New funding will help councils train staff and plan for accommodation and support services

Extra support will be given to councils to help them to prepare for the introduction of landmark legislation that will ensure domestic abuse victims and their families get the vital help they need has been announced today (5 October 2020) by Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst MP.

Thousands more people are expected to be helped from April 2021 when the new law comes into force placing a duty on councils to support victims of domestic abuse.

Once the duty comes into force, the new £6 million funding announced today will mean that councils in England can commission additional vital support for those victims of domestic abuse and their children who might currently be turned away from refuges and other safe accommodation because their needs cannot be met.

The Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before Parliament, includes a new duty for councils to assess and provide support and safe accommodation to victims and their children in England.

This new funding will mean councils can plan accommodation and specialist services ahead of the Act coming into force and ensure that in all areas across the country services are joined up.

Councils can prepare by linking in with other agencies such as police or health commissioners and ensure their staff receive training in the new duty.

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime which creates long term impacts on victims, their children, and wider society. The government has committed to transforming the response to domestic abuse so victims and their children receive the support they need when they need it.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst MP said:

Survivors of domestic abuse need safe refuge in order to escape this heinous crime, and support to start to rebuild their lives.

Councils already provide much needed support, but the landmark

Domestic Abuse Bill will mean for the first time councils will have a duty to provide support in safe accommodation for anyone fleeing abuse.

The funding I am announcing today will help councils prepare for this new duty that will see thousands more survivors helped and a generation of their children able to grow up safely and free from fear of abuse.

We have committed to supporting all domestic abuse survivors. That's why since 2014 we've invested £80 million in safe accommodation services to support victims of domestic abuse.

In April, the Home Secretary announced £2 million to ensure helplines and online services continue to be easily accessible to victims, during the coronavirus pandemic.

This follows the appointment in September 2019 of an independent Domestic Abuse Commissioner to lead on driving improvements in the response to domestic abuse in the UK, putting victims at the heart of the response.

The funding is part of a raft of measures designed to help support councils meet their new obligations. To further help councils prepare, the government has today published [guidance on the fund's purpose](#) and is providing councils with further information and support.

The government's £10 million emergency fund, already announced, is supporting domestic abuse victims and their families during the pandemic, helping to provide over 1,500 new beds and re-open 344 bed-spaces. This is part of a wider £76 million package of government support for the COVID-19 emergency response.

In addition, a [consultation](#) has been launched today on how the new burdens funding associated with the new duty should be allocated in order to enable councils to meet their new duty.

Councils need to be ready for this new duty and the government is consulting with them on the best way to allocate funding from April 2021 to ensure they are able to meet their new obligation.

[Local people invited to shape Severn Valley water management plan](#)

- Helping communities along the River Severn to be resilient and prepared for the impacts of climate change
- Seeking to reduce the risk of flooding for nearly 3,000 homes and

businesses

- Securing long term water resources for people and businesses

The Environment Agency and Shropshire Council will soon engage with communities about proposals that seek to help people and businesses along the River Severn be prepared and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The most recent climate change projections confirm the UK will experience wetter winters and drier summers, with an increased likelihood of more intense rainfall leading to flooding. Those who live and work around the River Severn know too well the devastating impact of flooding, on homes, businesses, infrastructure and the economy.

Yet the River Severn and the rivers that flow in to it also see the impacts of too little water for people, businesses and agriculture. At these times the Environment Agency 'tops up' the rivers from reservoirs and groundwater sources.

The emerging Severn Valley water management plan seeks to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Severn for nearly 3,000 homes and businesses. The proposals aim to explore options of storing flood water to reduce the amount of water flowing down the river at times of flood, while also looking at ways to store it for use when needed.

Adam Lines, from the Environment Agency said:

This is a very visionary project and one we're excited to be part of. The Severn Valley water management plan could help communities along the whole of the River Severn as it passes from Wales through Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire be better prepared for the extremes of climate change.

The northern relief road in Shrewsbury forms an important part of the proposals; it includes designing a road embankment that could help contain and store flood water away and upstream of Shrewsbury. Combined, the new road and a water management plan could reduce the risk of flooding to homes and allow further economic development.

This is the very start of the journey, there are a lot of unknowns, but the Environment Agency and Shropshire Council want to engage people now to help refine and develop the proposals.

Along with input from local communities and partners, environmental and ground surveys will also be carried out to increase understanding of all of the areas that could be potentially impacted by the proposals. This process will shape how work will be taken forward to minimise impacts and promote local ideas and opportunities wherever possible.

Mark Barrow from Shropshire Council said:

It is essential that we communicate and engage with people as soon as possible.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to review what infrastructure needs to be in place to mitigate the impacts of climate change, flooding and water security. This is a long term proposal, so it's critical that everyone who has a property or business that is currently at risk of flooding or is affected by flooding from the River Severn, is able to inform and shape this work.

Engagement with communities and partners will be Covid-secure, so may rely less on face to face engagement and more on innovative approaches.

This is a long term vision, and won't happen overnight, so it's as important as ever that everyone knows if their property or business is currently at risk of flooding and it is a simple and quick process to find out.

To check if your property, business, or place of work is at flood risk, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

More information can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or call our Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[Defence Infrastructure Organisation sets out future spending with launch of Procurement Pipeline](#)

News story

DIO spends around £3-billion each year buying infrastructure services in the UK and overseas to support the UK Armed Forces.



Ministry of Defence plaque. MOD Crown Copyright.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has today (5 October 2020) launched its Procurement Pipeline.

The Procurement Pipeline complements the previously published DIO Commercial Strategy and informs existing and potential suppliers of what DIO plans to buy on behalf of its customers.

The publication of the pipeline supports DIO's commercial principles of being easier to do business with and building a broader and more diverse supplier base, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The pipeline will be updated each quarter to provide the supply chain with greater visibility, enabling them to better plan their activities and offering reassurance of future work packages during potentially challenging times for industry.

DIO is passionate about the work it does to support the men and women of defence. Its suppliers are at the forefront of what it does in the construction and infrastructure markets, and DIO's ambition is to work seamlessly with its supply chain to be more efficient and more productive.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said:

We are committed to being a good commercial partner. Our defence estate is a critical element in our delivery to our people and defence tasks. We hope a transparent pipeline helps all suppliers identify how and where we can work together.

Nick Wilkinson, DIO's Commercial Director, said:

I am pleased to share DIO's Procurement Pipeline with current and potential suppliers.

It is extremely important both for us in DIO and our current and future suppliers that we share as much of our upcoming work as possible.

We know the importance of having time to adequately plan strategic alignment, bidding resources and working resources against work packages suppliers are interested in.

This is equally important for DIO as it helps us to think further ahead in our planning and gives a wide range of high capability suppliers from SMEs to large organisations the ability to bid.

[HMRC urges universities to warn new students of tax scams danger](#)

Students starting university this year are being warned by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that they could be targeted by a fresh wave of tax scams.

As new students start the academic year, they can be particularly vulnerable to cybercrime. With universities taking a blended approach to online and face-to-face tuition this year, and an increase in remote working due to the pandemic, students could be left particularly exposed to the work of fraudsters.

Freshers might also be more vulnerable to these types of scams due to their limited experience of the tax system.

HMRC has written to universities, through Universities UK, asking them to help ensure their students know how to spot a scam.

In August this year HMRC received reports from the public of more than 74,800 scam emails, text messages and phone calls. Nearly 41,300 of these specifically offered bogus tax rebates.

Thousands of these scams were targeted at students and the criminals involved appear to have obtained their personal university email addresses by unlawful means. These scams often offer fake tax refunds or help with claiming Covid-related financial support.

Phishing email messages can also provide a gateway for criminals. Students who provide personal details in response can end up inadvertently giving access to important accounts, like email or online banking, leaving scammers free to commit fraud and steal their money.

Criminals also use phone scams to threaten taxpayers into handing over cash. Some 651,600 scams have been referred to HMRC since August last year. Of those, more than 215,660 were voice or phone scams, known as vishing.

If someone calls, emails or texts claiming to be from HMRC, saying that you can claim financial help, are due a tax refund or owe tax, and asks for bank details, it might be a scam. Check GOV.UK for [how to recognise genuine HMRC contact](#).

Jesse Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Cyber criminals use every method they can to steal money and

personal data from students.

We are concerned that remote working because of Covid-19 could lead to more tax scams targeting a new and potentially vulnerable university intake.

HM Revenue and Customs is doing everything it can to clamp down on cyber fraud, but students also need to be vigilant. We would urge university principals to take a lead in helping to protect their students from these cyber criminals by raising awareness of what to look out for.

Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said:

The security and welfare of students is always a priority for universities. The message to students, at what is a particularly stressful time, is to remain vigilant and question anything that seems unusual.

Any student who fears their account may have been misused is encouraged to speak to either university support services, their bank, or to the police via [Action Fraud](#).

Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan, said:

I want every student to be as safe as possible this term, both online and offline, and it is absolutely vital they are aware of the risks posed by tax scams.

I encourage institutions to warn students about this issue and arm them with the information they need to identify and respond to tax scams if they should be targeted.

HMRC works with the telecoms industry to automatically block spoofed numbers used by scammers and since August last year, has worked with internet service providers to take down nearly 10,870 malicious web pages.

Read the letter that HMRC has asked Universities UK to share with Vice Chancellors so they can make their students aware of the risk of being scammed:

[HMRC letter to Vice Chancellors warning about cyber scams targeting new students](#) (PDF, 64.8KB, 2 pages)

HMRC's advice:

Stop:

- take a moment to think before parting with your information or money.

- don't give out private information or reply to text messages, and don't download attachments or click on links in texts or emails you weren't expecting

Challenge:

- it's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests – only criminals will try to rush or panic you
- [search 'scams' on GOV.UK](#) for information on how to recognise genuine HMRC contact and how to avoid and report scams

Protect:

- forward suspicious emails claiming to be from HMRC to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599
- contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen victim to a scam, and report it to [Action Fraud](#)

[Examples of current scamming frauds](#) can be found on GOV.UK..

HMRC prevents scams by:

- automatically identifying most cyber scams before customer have even reported them to us
- asking Internet Service Providers to remove the malicious web pages or phishing websites
- deploying innovative technologies to prevent misleading and malicious communications ever reaching our citizens
- warning the public through [sharing details and examples of genuine and scam communications on GOV.UK](#) and through the media
- maintaining channels through which people can report suspicious contact, at phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and 60599 for texts
- working with the telecoms industry to automatically block spoofed numbers
- tackling misleading websites designed to make customers pay for services that should be free or low cost, often charging customers for connection to HMRC phone helplines
- working closely with national and international law enforcement organisations

[Charity Fraud Awareness Week 2020](#)



Like all sectors, charities can be susceptible to fraud and cybercrime. Those providing vital services and support to local communities during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may be particularly vulnerable.

All charities, even those with relatively small reserves to call upon, can take simple steps to boost resilience to fraud and cybercrime. In times like these, prevention really is better than cure.

The fraud awareness campaign, run jointly by the Charity Commission and Fraud Advisory Panel (together with a coalition of sector partners), aims to encourage and empower charities to talk about fraud and share best practice.

The 2020 campaign will focus on 3 simple messages:

1. Be fraud aware
2. Take time to check
3. Keep your charity safe

Get involved in the campaign

You can access a range of free resources from one handy [charity fraud awareness hub](#). You'll find mini-tutorials, on-demand webinars, videos and factsheets to help you with fraud awareness.

Download the [supporters pack from the Fraud Advisory Panel website](#) (includes campaign posters and social media assets).

[Join the conversation on Twitter](#) by promoting your own counter fraud messages or retweet ours using the hashtag #CharityFraudOut.

You can also develop your own counter fraud activities aimed at staff and volunteers, members and beneficiaries, donors and supporters.

Join the fraud awareness webinar

This free webinar will be available at 10am on Tuesday 20 October 2020.

The guest speakers will consider fraud and cybercrime over the next 6 to 12 months from a range of different charity perspectives. It will also outline some of the big issues we think charities should be thinking about now to prepare.

Notes

1. This award-winning campaign is in its fifth year. It is led by a coalition of over 40 charities, regulators, law enforcers, representative bodies and other not-for-profit stakeholders from across the world.
2. Read our guidance to help [protect your charity from fraud and cyber crime](#).

Published 5 October 2020

Last updated 19 October 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 19 October 2020

Added information about a free fraud webinar at 10am on Tuesday 20 October 2020. Also added a link to guidance: [protect your charity from fraud and cyber crime](#).

2. 5 October 2020

First published.