



UK Government

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: A CROSS-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO BUILD A SAFER SOCIETY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Volume 2

Action Plan

December 2025

An illustration at the bottom of the page shows the silhouettes of four diverse women and girls. From left to right: a woman with long reddish-brown hair, a woman with dark curly hair, a woman with short reddish hair, and a woman with short blonde hair. They are wearing various colored tops (teal, purple, pink, orange).

CP 1450-II



Government of the United Kingdom
Home Office

Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government
strategy to build a safer society for women and girls
Volume 2

Action Plan

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of His Majesty

December 2025



© Crown copyright 2025

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at VAWGEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

ISBN 978-1-5286-6142-3

E03514542 12/25

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

Contents

Actions to deliver change	3
Our Action Plan	4
Pillar 1: Prevention and Early Intervention	5
Pillar 2: Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators	15
Pillar 3: Support	27
Whole of Society Approach	39

Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy
to build a safer society for women and girls Volume 2

Action Plan

Actions to deliver change

The Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls ("the Strategy") sets out an ambitious vision for our mission to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) within a decade. This Action Plan sets out the concrete commitments that we will deliver, working across government, frontline public services, the VAWG sector, civil society organisations, academia, business, and wider society. These specific actions cover the Spending Review period running from 2026 - 2029.

Our Action Plan



Pillar 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

We must stop violence and abuse before it starts. That means breaking the intergenerational cycle of abuse through early intervention and prevention – protecting young people, disrupting dangerous attitudes and stopping harmful behaviours escalating.



Online: an unprecedented challenge

1. To ensure online spaces are safe, especially for children and young people, we will:
 - a) **Build on the Online Safety Act to make the UK the safest place for children online, and one of the hardest places for children to access harmful content.** We will work with industry to improve uptake and ease of use of parental controls and to strengthen the protections they offer. We will also build international partnerships with like-minded partners to tackle this global issue together.
 - b) **Utilise the Government's Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP) for online safety.** The statement sets out five government priorities, including embedding safety by design, ensuring industry transparency and accountability, delivering agile regulation, creating an inclusive digital society, and fostering innovation in online safety technologies. 'Safety by design' explicitly includes the goal to tackle VAWG online. This priority aims to embed safety into platform design to ensure safer online experiences for all users, with a specific focus on women and girls. Ofcom is required to have regard to these priorities as it exercises its regulatory functions. The SSP ensures that Ofcom must report annually on how it is delivering against these priorities, including progress on tackling online VAWG.
 - c) **Criminalise strangulation pornography.** We are legislating to make it a criminal offence to possess or publish pornography which depicts strangulation or suffocation.
 - d) **Designate the depiction of strangulation or suffocation in pornography as a priority offence under the Online Safety Act.** This will mean platforms are held accountable for ensuring content, which can lead to normalising harmful practices in peoples private lives, does not spread. Platforms will be required to take proactive steps to prevent users from seeing illegal strangulation and suffocation content in pornography. This could include companies using automated systems to pre-emptively detect and hide the images, moderation tools, or stricter content policies to prevent abusive content from circulating.
 - e) **Ban nudification apps and other tools designed to create synthetic non-consensual intimate images (NCII),** to stop women and girls' images being tampered with and exploited without their consent. This will target the firms and individuals providing and supplying such tools.
 - f) **Make it impossible for children in the UK to take, share or view a nude image, to help protect our children.** We are working constructively with companies to make this a reality.
 - g) **Explore routes to ensure that intimate images that are taken, created or shared without consent are removed online.**
 - h) **Work to develop a greater understanding of potential links and prevalence of human trafficking in pornography** to guide future policy and law enforcement response on this issue.

- i) **Work to ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) models cannot assist VAWG offending.** We are introducing new legislation to strengthen safeguards against AI-generated sexual abuse. The testing defence for non-consensual intimate images, child sexual abuse and extreme pornography will empower designated bodies – such as AI developers and child protection agencies – to carry out safe and secure testing of AI models. This will help to embed robust safeguards from the outset and drive continuous improvement.
- j) **Develop the Government’s own testing on VAWG risks to improve our understanding of the capabilities and threats posed by AI.** This will help to identify vulnerabilities in AI security, which companies can address to ensure their models do not create, promote or instruct on harmful VAWG behaviours.
- k) **Work across government on what more we can do to encourage ‘safety by design’ of smart and connected technology** to better protect victims and survivors and help stop perpetrators using this type of technology to further their abuse.
- l) **Deliver the Government’s manifesto commitment to ban non-consensual sexually explicit deepfakes by creating a new criminal offence through the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.** Deepfake pictures and videos can look and sound convincing, and in some cases can copy someone’s face, voice, and mannerisms, but are made using AI. This offence criminalises the creation of non-consensual deepfake intimate images without consent or reasonable belief in consent, as well as asking someone to create a non-consensual intimate image deepfake.
- m) **Make the ‘cyberflashing’ offence a ‘priority offence’ under the Online Safety Act 2023.** Cyberflashing involves someone sharing photos or films of a person’s genitals for the purposes of their own sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, alarm or distress.
- n) **Improve media literacy among adults in England and Wales, helping people to develop the digital skills they need to protect themselves online, and to tackle the prevalence of misogynistic content.** We will work with Ofcom to embed their three-year Media Literacy Strategy which reflects this priority. So far, this has included Ofcom research exploring why harmful behaviour occurs and how individuals are drawn into communities promoting discriminatory views.
- o) **Keep under review whether children are having age-appropriate experiences and assess whether ‘priority content’ that is harmful to children should be upgraded to ‘primary priority content’ in the Online Safety Act 2023. This will mean services will need to take further specific action to prevent children of all ages from encountering it.** Under the Online Safety Act 2023, children must be prevented from accessing ‘primary priority content’ such as pornography and should be given age-appropriate access to ‘priority content’. This includes abusive or hateful content which does not meet the criminal threshold, including misogyny. Currently Ofcom’s codes provide protections for all under 18s from ‘priority content’. We will keep under review whether this should be upgraded to ‘primary priority content’.

- p) **Address the issues detailed in Baroness Bertin’s Independent Pornography Review and create a joint team**, across the Home Office, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Ministry of Justice and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to rigorously examine the evidence to inform the government’s approach to pornography policy.
- q) **Launch a call for evidence to better understand online misogynistic image-based abuse** and the extent to which there are new harms and behaviour which may not be fully captured by existing criminal offences.
- r) **Convene governments and tech companies to accelerate action to prevent tech-facilitated violence against women and children, using our position as co-chair of the 18-member Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Abuse and Harassment to drive collective action.** This includes action to stop image-based abuse by establishing a global mechanism to share and remove online intimate image abuse as well as agreeing a new Model National Framework for Adult Non-Consensual Intimate Image (NCII) sharing.
- s) **Support a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office-funded Online Violence Alert System for women political actors**, to detect and predict abuse and coordinate rapid responses.
- t) **Invest in promoting safe online environments for all in low- and middle-income countries and a safety by design approach** to preventing tech-facilitated abuse and online VAWG.
- u) **Continue to work with our international partners to ensure we learn the lessons from global successes against VAWG and have access to these innovations.**

In schools and education

- 2. To ensure that every child and young person understands consent and healthy relationships and is supported in schools, education, and the community, we will:
 - a) **Implement the overhauled Relationship, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum to ensure that children are equipped with the skills they need to develop healthy relationships, and the tools to tackle harmful influences.** Through our new statutory guidance, we will support young people to develop positive conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and to understand the harmful impacts of misogynistic online content, including pornography. We will teach about “involuntary celibates” (incels) and misogynistic influencers, without stigmatising boys, as well as increasing awareness of AI and deepfakes.
 - b) **By the end of this parliament in 2029, every state funded secondary school in England will have a credible offer for educating students about healthy and respectful relationships, with every child able to access support.** There are different ways of delivering this kind of education – through the improved RSHE curriculum, specialist training to deliver teaching in-house, working with

external providers to provide whole school sessions, or mentoring – and we will give schools the choice on which approach to use.

- c) **Invest £3 million in a teacher training fund over the next two years to ensure that the new curriculum has the greatest impact, and £5 million to pilot healthy relationships training delivered by external providers.** Further Department for Education investment by the end of the parliament will test the best approach to healthy relationship education and workshops, learning from these and growing the approach to deliver excellent provision in every secondary school in England.
- d) **Support schools to integrate learning about positive relationships and VAWG across every part of a child's school life.** This means that learning about these issues is not confined to RSHE but that schools foster a culture where harmful attitudes and behaviours are consistently challenged, VAWG is understood within the context of other subjects, such as history and geography, gender equality is encouraged, and everyone, from leadership to pupils, plays a role in creating a safe, inclusive environment.
- e) **Work with the sector, led by the Department for Education, to understand and address specific barriers to teacher recruitment and retention, and to take action to create more opportunities,** including for men, to enter the profession, gain relevant qualifications and build fulfilling careers. The impact of boosting recruitment of men in the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce is likely to be positive from a number of perspectives, including providing the essential positive early example for boys to learn from and emulate as they develop.
- f) **Continue to work with schools on their media literacy education so that schools feel equipped to teach children and young people how to navigate the digital world safely, including understanding the dangers and how to be critical.** The Government has established an Independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, covering ages 5 to 19, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE. The Review, published in autumn 2024, highlighted that the curriculum needs to keep pace with social and technological change, and that it should include a renewed focus on media literacy. The Review's recommendations will inform our reforms to the curriculum, including responding to trends in digital information and AI.
- g) **Provide almost one million more young people with access to mental health support in school this year, and we will accelerate the rollout of Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges to reach full national coverage by 2029.** Support teams will work directly with school and college staff to provide advice. These teams are made up of mental health professionals who can help identify and tackle issues early on.
- h) **Starting in 2026, launch a public campaign to support parents and caregivers to help them reinforce positive behaviour and respectful relationships,** so that they understand and can echo what is being taught in schools.

3. To embed an understanding and respect for healthy relationships in those progressing to higher and further education and prevent VAWG in these settings:
 - a) **We are exploring the most effective route to make Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) mandatory for young people under 18 in further education colleges.**
 - b) **The Further Education Student Support Champion launched a comprehensive RSE toolkit** to equip college staff to handle sensitive topics like coercive control and consent.
 - c) **The Office for Students introduced a new registration condition in August 2025** requiring universities to publish clear, accessible policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct.

In the community

4. To support understanding of healthy relationships and prevent harmful behaviours outside of education settings, we will:
 - a) **Prevent harmful behaviours by increasing young people's access to real-world opportunities for connection within their communities, through commitments set out in the National Youth Strategy, published in December 2025.** The National Youth Strategy sets out how we will support young people to develop trusted relationships outside their family by giving young people more opportunities to engage with adults they trust, including trained youth workers, while doing things that they love in safe spaces. By creating the conditions for young people to thrive and a better understanding of what healthy relationships look like, the National Youth Strategy will contribute to preventing harmful behaviours like VAWG.
 - b) **Develop a framework to support targeted work addressing loneliness among young men in specific sectors.**
 - c) **Support access to youth work provision and improve the expertise of the youth workforce.** The Department for Culture, Media, and Sport is working with the National Youth Agency to develop online resources and practical guidance, which will support youth workers to recognise and tackle harmful behaviour. VAWG training will be available for both paid and volunteer youth workers.
 - d) **Collaborate with the Premier League and the Premier League Foundation who will develop new education resources, informed by stakeholder and external expertise, that challenge harmful attitudes towards women and girls.** Through the Premier League Primary Stars education programme, which is available to all schools across England and Wales, children aged 5–11 will have access to in-classroom and online resources that raise awareness of gender stereotypes and allyship.
 - e) **Develop education resources for older age groups participating in the Premier League Inspires and Premier League Kicks community**

programmes. These will engage young people in areas of high need with tailored sessions on gender equality, healthy relationships, respect and consent that are led by football club charity staff. To date, 2.5 million young people have engaged in these Premier League funded community programmes.

- f) **Harness the power of sport to ensure fewer boys and young men are left vulnerable to loneliness and isolation.** The Government has invested more than £300,000 to fund Rugby League Cares to deliver two pilots in Wigan and Wakefield. Both programmes aim to improve the wellbeing, confidence, and aspirations of participants.
- g) **Explore funding externally delivered interventions to support children who have experienced domestic abuse at home.**
- h) **Develop an online ‘parent hub’ providing guidance on media literacy and online safety for parents and carers, led by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Department for Education.** By strengthening parental media literacy and encouraging informed, respectful online behaviour, this initiative will help to prevent online misogyny and harmful behaviours.
- i) **Launch a community engagement campaign to raise awareness of ‘honour’-based abuse and the related harms.** This will work with community ambassadors as trusted voices to challenge harmful behaviours and encourage those affected to seek help.

Identifying harm and providing a route to change

- 5. To spot and address harmful behaviours sooner and create clear pathways for positive change, we will:
 - a) **Commission a major programme of research this year to look at how different organisations like the police, schools, and social care are currently approaching teenage relationship abuse, and what changes are required to strengthen society’s response to it.** The findings will help us to establish evidence-based interventions to ensure that young people get the right support at the right time.
 - b) **Introduce a new package of measures for young people displaying harmful behaviours to change their behaviours, and to improve the response to teenage relationship abuse and child to parent and caregiver abuse.** We will launch a new helpline in 2026 to support young people who are displaying harmful or abusive behaviours in their intimate relationships or towards their siblings, parents or caregivers. Alongside this, we will increase support to victims of teenage relationship abuse and information for professionals through the NSPCC’s Childline helpline.
 - c) **Pilot and evaluate interventions in schools directly targeted to supporting young people who display harmful behaviours, including teenage relationship abuse.** This pilot will begin from September 2026.

- d) **Pilot a newly developed harmful sexual behaviour identification and management tool in 2026, to support local safeguarding partnerships in identifying harmful sexual behaviours.** This will further advance professionals' confidence in identifying harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people to enable early intervention.
- e) **Create a statutory definition of child to parent and caregiver abuse,** to improve understanding and strengthen frontline responses to child to parent and caregiver abuse. In 2026, we will update guidance to support frontline professionals.
- f) **Continue scoping a review into the legal framework of domestic abuse to ensure it captures the experience of adolescents. This includes reviewing the age limit in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.** Under current legislation, it is considered domestic abuse only if both the victim and the perpetrator are aged 16 or over.
- g) **Update the Government's statutory guidance on domestic abuse to include bespoke information on teenage relationship abuse.**
- h) **Strengthen our crime prevention approach** to ensure that overlapping risk factors and harm types, including children and young people's experiences of violence, abuse, and other adverse childhood experiences are addressed in a coherent and integrated way and ensure that they are referred to the most appropriate support.
- i) **Work with the youth and civil society sectors to raise awareness of VAWG and, where relevant, connect youth and VAWG organisations and services** to improve support for young people.
- j) **Continue to work with Youth Offending Teams to ensure staff have the skills, training, and resources they need to respond effectively to young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours or attitudes,** recognising the critical importance of addressing these behaviours among children and young people.
- k) **Establish an online intervention to support children who are viewing child sexual abuse material,** to tackle children and young people's increasingly early exposure to pornographic material.
- l) **Work with police to implement Operation Encompass effectively.** The information sharing duty, which commenced in November 2025, places a new legal requirement on police forces to notify relevant educational settings when they attend a domestic abuse incident in a child's home. We have published statutory guidance for police and will continue to work with the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection on monitoring the duty and ensuring children affected by domestic abuse form part of new training for police on VAWG.
- m) **Deliver the Government's manifesto commitment to bring forward a ban on abusive conversion practices.** We recognise that LGBT+ people can face

abuse from many individuals and groups, including from family members or partners. To address some of these harms, we remain committed to bring forward a draft legislative ban on conversion practices.

Providing wrap-around family support and breaking the cycle of intergenerational abuse

6. To support at-risk and vulnerable children, adults and families, we will:

- a) **Commit over £2.4 billion to local authorities over the next three years to roll out the Families First Partnership Programme and stop more vulnerable children from falling through the cracks.** To support this, we are working with councils and the other agencies they work with to reform family support services. The changes include introducing a single ‘front door’ in every local area so families with complex needs know where and how they can get help. Through the Families First Partnership Programme, we are committed to delivering the national rollout of Family Help, multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) and family group decision-making reforms that make a real, tangible difference to children and families. We want local areas to develop a high-quality support system that places children and families at the centre of its design and offers meaningful, consistent support that responds to their changing needs.
- b) **Increase Family Help lead practitioners.** Professionals with the knowledge, skills and experience to work with families to build strong relationships and be the main point of contact for the family for as long as they require support, ending vulnerable families being passed on to different professionals and having to tell their story over and over again. Each local area will introduce new ‘Lead Child Protection Practitioner’ social worker roles that are embedded in the local MACPTs. These will be expert, experienced and skilled practitioners leading child protection work. Effective multi-agency child protection is a system where the right decisions are made at the right time for children to keep them safe. The Families First Partnership Programme is establishing MACPTs in every local area to bring a clear, fresh focus where there are child protection concerns, bringing experts together across agencies to identify actual or likely significant harm and take decisive action to protect children.
- c) **Fund Best Start Family Hubs in every local authority.** These services will reach the children and families who will benefit most – those from low-income families and with additional vulnerabilities. Best Start Family Hubs will be open to all and include professionals working across health and education. They will work with nurseries, childminders, schools, health services, libraries and local voluntary and community groups. We will make it easier and more affordable for children to access early education and care.
- d) **Invest tens of millions a year from 2025 to bolster child and family social workers’ capacity and skills, including to better identify risk and intervene early on VAWG.** This will enable social workers to recognise violence and abuse earlier and provide support to prevent future harm.

- e) **Provide a new core offer for parents as part of the Best Start in Life Strategy**, including a new Best Start digital service, bringing together the trusted advice and guidance parents need in one place, linking families to local services.
- f) **Improve support for parents by making Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave ‘day one’ rights through the Employment Rights Bill**. However, we have also been clear that the wider parental leave and pay system does not work as effectively as it should and that it must be reviewed. That review is co-led by the Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Work Pensions and was launched on 1 July 2025. It will look to improve how the system can better support working families and reflect the realities of modern work and childcare, while still balancing the needs of businesses and the Exchequer. All current and upcoming parental leave and pay entitlements will be in scope. We expect the review to run for a period of 18 months. The Government will conclude the review with a set of findings and a roadmap, including next steps for taking any potential reforms forward to implementation.
- g) **Fund the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to develop learning materials focused on domestic abuse, with a view to keeping more children safe**. These will be funded by the Department for Education and include resources on the increased risk of domestic abuse during pregnancy, a learning podcast on male victims, men as allies, and the broader issue of toxic masculinity.
- h) **Publish data on the reasons for the decline in child sexual abuse and exploitation representation in child in need assessment data** and the reasons for variations across local authorities, as recommended by Baroness Casey in her recent audit on group-based child sexual exploitation.

Pillar 2: Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

We will use every tool available to make understanding, identifying, and responding to this violence a mainstream responsibility of every agency and institution – ultimately putting an end to the shameful fact that only a handful of those women and girls who report abuse to the police see justice served.



Police Reform and Prioritisation

7. To ensure that public protection is embedded as a new specialism across policing, we will:
 - a) **Ensure that the police treat VAWG as a top priority, with the seriousness it deserves.** The Government's new National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection (NCVPP), which is supported by £13.1 million of Home Office investment in its first year, will focus on prioritisation and accountability. Tackling VAWG will be a core policing priority at every rank and in every role. It will be properly resourced as a policing specialism.
 - b) **Develop new and ambitious career pathways for VAWG and public protection through the NCVPP, so that future police leaders will all be expected to have built up experience and training in public protection roles.** These pathways will mirror the specialist progression routes in counter-terrorism and serious organised crime.
 - c) **Review and strengthen police training across all operational levels for front line, specialist, and leadership.** New, robust training packages will ensure all officers have the skills to investigate VAWG offences and provide support to victims and survivors. Every officer should be equipped to respond effectively, sensitively, and consistently.
 - d) **Ensure police recruit a wider range of people, with skills and experience from other sectors and specialisms to strengthen the police response to VAWG.** That could include those who have previously worked with vulnerable people, those with lived experience of VAWG, and technology experts.
 - e) **Improve police performance standards through accountability and rigorous performance monitoring.** Our new Police Performance Framework means that for the first time the Home Office will hold Chief Constables to account for their force's performance on VAWG and child sexual abuse. That means stronger ministerial and departmental oversight, monitoring arrests and charges for key crime types, and seeking answers where progress is too slow.
8. To ensure police have the right specialist support within their ranks to respond to VAWG appropriately, we will:
 - a) **Roll out 'Raneem's Law' to all forces in England and Wales to improve the police response to domestic abuse victims and survivors.** These specialists will review risk assessments, quality assure responses, and advise officers being dispatched to live incidents, so no opportunity to protect a victim is missed. Already operating in Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Bedfordshire, Humberside, and West Midlands, this model is delivering potentially life-saving support from the first point of contact. Our goal is to ensure that when victims and survivors reach out, the police are ready to protect them.
 - b) **Embed specialist rape and sexual offences teams in every police force in England and Wales.** It is essential that every police force has the right specialist

capability to properly investigate rape and sexual offences. While the operational independence of Chief Constables remains a fundamental principle of British policing, it is vitally important that all forces have the specialist officers and resources needed to support victims and survivors and bring perpetrators to justice.

- c) **Equip police officers and staff with the capability and evidence-based guidance they need to respond effectively to violence against women and girls.** This includes working with the NCVPP to apply learning from Operation Soteria, a pioneering, Home Office-funded programme which has involved academics working with policing to develop new tools and guidance to improve the way adult rape and sexual offences are investigated. We will continue to support forces to understand the progress they have made since Operation Soteria launched in 2023 and identify areas for further improvement, including non-contact sexual offences, such as exposure and voyeurism. Through the NCVPP, we will take the learning from the Operation Soteria approach and ensure academic expertise informs new VAWG training and guidance for policing.

9. To keep perpetrators out of policing, we:

- a) **Made changes which mean all police officers are now required to hold and maintain vetting clearance** and those who fail to do so will be dismissed.
- b) **Will tighten requirements on forces to suspend those under investigation for specified VAWG offences and introduce mandatory vetting standards** which will enable forces to exclude people from policing who have a caution or conviction for listed VAWG offences.

A coordinated approach

10. To improve collaboration among frontline professionals and ensure they properly assess and respond to risk, we will:

- a) **Expand the use of Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) groups, ensuring robust, joined-up perpetrator management processes are in place in every force area.** A consistent national approach will ensure that the most dangerous VAWG perpetrators are not only identified but actively targeted and disrupted, like terrorists and serious criminals.
- b) **Exploring options to introduce a statutory duty to collaborate, ensuring agencies work together seamlessly to manage risk and prevent harm.**
- c) **Develop new guidance on best practice for effective multi-agency working, with a clear focus on the multi-agency approach to domestic abuse and risk.** This guidance will set out key principles and 'what good looks like' in responding to domestic abuse, helping professionals across policing, health, education, and social services to better assess risk and meet victims and survivors' needs. The guidance will be published in spring 2026.

- d) **Produce government guidance on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)** to improve consistency and effectiveness across the country and analyse whether to place MARACs on a statutory footing.
- e) **Improve training on assessing and managing VAWG risk for frontline police officers by 2029, through the NCVPP.**
- f) **By 2028, the Law Commission will review the law on homicide offences and the sentencing framework for murder, including how the law responds to abuse-related cases and defences.** This review will inform future legislative changes to ensure the law better reflects the realities of abuse.
- g) **Coordinate efforts, led by the Home Office, across the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General's Office, and the Crown Prosecution Service to improve the prevention, investigation and prosecution of 'honour'-based abuse (HBA).** To ensure perpetrators are brought to justice and ultimately prevent these crimes from happening, frontline professionals must understand HBA, know what action to take, and work together across agencies. Female genital mutilation (FGM) will be considered specifically, recognising the unique challenges it presents. This includes how notions of 'honour' can act as a driving factor in offences such as forced marriage and FGM. This will be kickstarted by a ministerial roundtable to focus efforts and collectively agree on robust action.
- h) **Legislate to introduce a statutory definition of HBA with accompanying multi-agency statutory guidance, to establish a shared language and understanding of this complex crime.**
- i) **Improve police understanding and identification of stalking.** The Home Office will work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to ensure all police forces implement the changes they committed to in response to the super-complaint on stalking. The Home Office will conduct a Stalking Legislation Review to determine whether and how the law needs to change to improve identification and management of stalking behaviours within the criminal justice system.
- j) **Conduct a review of the FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty to identify further areas of improvement.**
- k) **Work with the VAWG sector and police to develop and legislate a statutory definition of adult sexual exploitation with accompanying multi-agency statutory guidance,** to establish a shared understanding of sexual exploitation of adults.
- l) **Issue multi-agency statutory guidance on stalking,** including on engaging with Independent Stalking Advocates. Issue statutory guidance for the police on releasing information to victims and survivors about their online stalker under the "Right to Know" scheme.
- m) **Update the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance by the end of 2026** to ensure it aligns with the current domestic abuse landscape and best practice.

- n) **Update the Coercive or Controlling Behaviour Statutory Guidance by the end of 2026** to reflect the significant evolution in our understanding of coercive control since the original guidance was published.

Operating with leading technology

- 11. Leading technology will be used to pursue perpetrators. We will deploy tools normally reserved for counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime:
 - a) **Deliver a consistent Rapid Video Response (RVR) model across police forces by Spring 2026.** £1.5m of funding will enable victims and survivors to speak with a police officer via immediate video call so investigations can begin without delay.
 - b) **Expand the use of the Home Office's network of Undercover Online Operatives to address VAWG**, improving capabilities to counter and reduce the highest harms posed to the UK public from VAWG.
 - c) **Expand use of data-driven policing initiatives, like the Metropolitan Police's V100**, which use advanced analytics to systematically identify, target and manage the most dangerous men who pose a risk to women, driving adoption through the NCVPP.
 - d) **Roll out Live Facial Recognition vans to seven forces across the country**, equipping officers with targeted, cutting-edge technology to catch high-harm criminals including those perpetrating VAWG such as rape and domestic abuse.
 - e) **Consult on the legal framework for facial recognition** to ensure this powerful technology is used to tackle VAWG perpetrators.
 - f) **Enable police to identify more sexual offenders than ever before using advanced forensic technology that matches a male specific strand of DNA (Y-STRs) to those arrested in relation to a crime.** Y-STR profiling is a well-established science and is an extremely useful tool in some of the most serious criminal offences, especially in the cases of sexual assault, where low levels of male DNA can sometimes be undetectable. Expanding the National DNA Database to include Y-STR profiles will harness the investigative potential of this technique, enabling law enforcement agencies to match male-specific DNA from those arrested to crime scene samples, both in current and cold case reviews. Use of the database will increase in investigative leads for policing, speeding up investigations and reduce trauma for victims and families, and has the potential to open new lines of enquiry in cases where an unidentified male offender has left only a limited trace of DNA. £7 million of funding will be provided for the development of the database, and plans for expansion start in 2026.
 - g) **Expand the use of electronic monitoring for VAWG cases, this will include the use of alcohol tags in VAWG cases to reduce the freedoms of perpetrators**, and we will explore further innovative technological solutions to monitor risk and prevent harm, such as proximity monitoring of perpetrators.

- h) **Review and improve police risk assessments for VAWG crimes.** Working with the NCVPP we will ensure the police have the right tools to effectively risk assess cases involving HBA, stalking, child victims, and teenage relationship abuse. This includes a review of the tool used to assess the risk posed by sex offenders to make sure it's as effective as possible. The NCVPP will also improve training on assessing and managing VAWG risk for front line police officers by 2029.
 - i) **Work with police forces, to improve the quality of data available to us.**
12. To enable police to take robust enforcement action against perpetrators using all the tools available to them, we will:
- a) **Expect police forces to follow the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS, or “Clare’s Law”) statutory guidance, respond rapidly, and help protect those at risk from harm.** We know that more needs to be done to make sure the current scheme is working for victims and survivors. The Home Office is working closely with the Independent Office for Police Conduct and NCVPP to review the DVDS and better understand the barriers forces face when applying the statutory guidance and to ensure these implementation issues are addressed.
 - b) **Create a clearer, consistent framework for police and other agencies to improve implementation of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.** Implement the statutory guidance for police on releasing information to victims and survivors about their online stalker under the “Right to Know” scheme and explore the potential to expand both schemes to other forms of VAWG.
 - c) **Develop and roll out a digital tool to support the police to make better decisions when disclosing information through the DVDS or the stalking “Right to Know” scheme.**
 - d) **Provide up to £1 million of funding to intensify Project Vigilant deployments in many police forces.** Project Vigilant deployments involve plain clothed behavioural detection officers being deployed in the nighttime economy, to identify individuals exhibiting predatory behaviours, before uniformed officers intervene to disrupt the behaviour. This money will enable additional specialist deployments, support the trial of new tools including sniffer dogs trained to detect spiking drugs like GHB and MDMA and help to gather evidence on how the approach works in different settings.
 - e) **Take robust action to tackle spiking.** We have delivered the Government’s manifesto commitment to create a new criminal offence of administering a harmful substance (including by spiking) in the Crime and Policing Bill to help police better respond to this crime. The legislation is one part of a wider package of measures being progressed by the Government on spiking. In addition to the legislative change, the Government is taking forward a wide range of work to combat spiking. This includes:
 - i. Deliver training for Security Industry Authority-licenced door supervisors, aiming to train all 346,000+ licence holders by April 2028.
 - ii. Fund research on the effectiveness of rapid urine-testing kits for spiking detection.

- iii. Support police spiking intensification weeks to raise awareness, improve reporting, and increase testing nationwide.
 - iv. Fund academic research into perpetrators' motivations behind spiking offences.
 - v. Work with the police to develop spiking guidance for forces and pilot new approaches to gathering timely samples from victims.
 - vi. Continue to train staff in the hospitality sector to understand and better respond to spiking incidents.
- f) **Improve the data collection on the role of cocaine and opiate use in domestic abuse cases.** This will build on existing practice and pilot standardised data collection and began in July 2025. A small number of forces will pilot a new domestic abuse flag, to be added to the existing Drug Testing on Arrest data collection, which will identify cases where a person is arrested for a domestic abuse-related offence and subsequently tests positive for cocaine and/or opiates. This will help build a more reliable evidence base to assess the relationship between drug use and domestic abuse.
- g) **Give police new powers through the Crime and Policing Bill to take down online platforms that are facilitating sexual exploitation and tackle the misuse of adult service websites for this purpose.** We cannot have sites on which people can buy and sell human beings with impunity. This new power will allow law enforcement to apply to the courts for an order to suspend Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and domain names for a specified period up to 12 months when they are being used for serious crime, including the offences relating to sexual exploitation. The Online Safety Act will require these sites to take safety measures to protect users or face significant penalties. Law enforcement partners are closely monitoring these websites to develop intelligence on sexual exploitation and identify opportunities to safeguard those subjected to abuse.
- h) **Consider whether the licensing regime for Sexual Entertainment Venues should be amended to prevent sexual exploitation in the night-time economy and during festivals and sporting events.** Current legislation excludes certain premises from requiring a licence. This effectively permits 'sexual entertainment' to take place in these premises, meaning local councils cannot enforce safety measures that could prevent sexual exploitation. We will therefore engage with affected individuals, local communities and key, targeted stakeholders to determine whether and how this regime should be amended, with the protection of women and girls at the forefront.
- i) **Strengthen the law enforcement response to sexual exploitation.** Prosecutions and convictions for sexual exploitation have historically been extremely low. We will pilot a national law enforcement hub that will for the first time encourage the sharing of intelligence and best practices across local police forces and specialist support charities, create a national directory of capabilities related to the investigation and support of victims of sexual exploitation, and identify opportunities for safeguarding victims and investigating perpetrators of sexual exploitation offences. The National Police Chiefs' Council are leading Project Turnstone, which will develop a new framework for investigating modern

slavery and includes a suite of products to guide forces to identify and tackle sexual exploitation.

- j) **Consider improvements to the identification system for victims and survivors of modern slavery, including for victims and survivors who have been sexually exploited.** On 16 July 2025, the Home Office launched a public Call for Evidence on how the government can improve the process of identifying victims and survivors of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. The Home Office is now analysing the responses received.

Managing perpetrators in all settings

13. Perpetrators will be managed robustly across all criminal justice agencies to stop future harm. We will:
 - a) **Improve police and criminal justice system's use of VAWG protection orders through a series of reforms, including improving data collection and publication, enhancing police systems for recording and managing orders, strengthening guidance and application processes, and exploring measures to bolster enforcement and monitoring.** These changes will help streamline processes, improve operational efficiency, increase transparency, and ensure victims and survivors are better protected from all forms of VAWG.
 - b) **Roll out Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) to all police forces and courts across England and Wales to ensure frontline agencies have access to the most effective tools to disrupt and restrict perpetrators in and out of the criminal justice system.** The DAPO is a game-changing new protective order that can impose a combination of tougher prohibitions and requirements on perpetrators in the community and going through the criminal justice system. Flexible in scope and duration, this order sends a clear signal that abusive behaviour won't be tolerated. By rolling out to across England and Wales, we are ensuring that domestic abuse victims and survivors are offered greater protections from their abusers.
 - c) **Improve the function of Stalking Protector Orders (SPOs) to ensure that they are used effectively and at the earliest opportunity.** We are legislating in the Crime and Policing Bill to allow the courts to make SPOs on conviction or acquittal of their own volition. We will also improve the function and use of interim SPOs to ensure they operate effectively and provide timely safeguards and assess whether the processes around applying for an SPO can be improved so it is as seamless as possible.
 - d) **Launch a pilot in financial year 2026/27 on the multi-agency management of forced marriage and FGM protection orders,** which can be made by a court to protect someone at risk of either forced marriage or FGM.
 - e) **Continue to work towards an automated system to ensure policing and other law enforcement agencies are notified of VAWG protection orders issued in the courts to give victims and survivors faster, more consistent**

protection. Unacceptably, there is currently no automatic information-sharing between family courts and criminal justice agencies, leading to police and other agencies often not being able to build an accurate profile of, or case against, a perpetrator, as they do not have all the information. This is a shocking gap in the system. This summer, we have begun to close this loophole by establishing a new process for the automatic sharing of Non-Molestation Orders (NMOs) – the most commonly issued VAWG-related order in the family courts – between family courts and the police to ensure that police are consistently informed of NMOs when made. This enables the police to take early steps to safeguard the victim proactively, run background checks, and monitor the perpetrator. We are exploring going even further to ensure that there is an automatic system in place for all court jurisdictions and VAWG protection orders.

- f) **Improve the CPS response to VAWG cases through the ongoing implementation of the updated CPS VAWG Strategy for 2025–2030, which was published in November 2025.** The Strategy aims to increase the number of VAWG cases reaching court (year on year) by facilitating a more holistic understanding of how different forms of VAWG intersect and escalate, helping prosecutors to recognise patterns of harmful behaviour and build stronger cases from the outset in partnership with policing. Crucially, this work also aims to reduce the rate of VAWG victim attrition by ensuring victims and survivors are well-informed and supported throughout their engagement with the CPS, with additional, specialist support for victims and survivors of rape and serious sexual offences.
- g) **Support the CPS and police as they jointly implement the CPS-Police Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan, which aims to transform the investigation and prosecution of domestic abuse cases by strengthening collaborative working between both agencies.** The Plan establishes a shared commitment between police and prosecutors to build stronger cases from the outset. It aims to deliver more timely justice, improve the identification of behaviour-driven offending, and ensure that victims and survivors are heard, supported and protected throughout the criminal justice process.
- h) **As part of this work, the CPS and police will continue to explore how expanding police-led charging decisions in specific domestic abuse cases can improve outcomes for domestic abuse victims and survivors.** This aims to improve outcomes for domestic abuse victims and survivors by testing the timeliness of decision-making, whilst exploring whether this can unblock delays in the criminal justice system.
- i) **Work with the CPS and police to jointly improve access to justice for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including reviewing the time limits for charging domestic abuse-related summary offences, and considering whether greater flexibility could help reduce the number of timed-out cases.** We will establish whether the benefits of a more consistent approach across domestic abuse-related offences could support victims and survivors who face delays in reporting their abuse due to trauma, fear or coercive control. These actions will form part of our wider commitment to create a justice system that is

fair, responsive and better equipped to meet the needs of domestic abuse victims and survivors.

- j) **Bring Operation Soteria to courts.** Operation Soteria fundamentally changed the way that the police and CPS investigate and prosecute rape cases, ensuring that investigations do not place the responsibility on the victim, and that police and CPS work in partnership. We will now test the extent to which the principles of Operation Soteria are followed at court and establish areas for improvement which can then be considered on a national level.
- k) **Introduce a new domestic abuse marker at court through the Sentencing Bill, meaning that for the first time we will be able to identify all domestic abuse offenders.** This will mean that where a judge believes an offence involved domestic abuse, they must clearly say so at sentencing and the court must record this. For the first time, this will identify all domestic abuse offenders in the criminal justice system, even when the offence is not obviously domestic abuse related. It will support HM Prisons and Probation Service to put in place appropriate interventions in prison and the community, better inform offender management, and support improved data collection and evaluation of how these offenders are managed in the criminal justice system.
- l) **Significantly invest in the capacity and capability of the Probation Service and community services.** This investment will enable more electronic monitoring, additional staffing, and expanded accommodation, ensuring offenders are closely tracked, supported, and managed effectively.
- m) **Replace the violent and sex offender database (ViSOR) with a new Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS) by June 2028.** MAPPS will enable the police and HM Prisons and Probation Service to more effectively manage serious offenders who pose a risk of harm to the public through upgraded technological capabilities and improved data sharing. Once delivered, we will continue to develop MAPPS to provide additional capabilities beyond the current system (ViSOR) such as automated information sharing, and ensuring police, prisons and probation staff have the right tools to manage the most dangerous offenders of these crimes.
- n) **Strengthen guidance on using multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) to tackle domestic abuse and will improve how the Probation Service uses data to ensure MAPPA are used effectively to better manage the most dangerous domestic abuse offenders.** Alongside modernising our systems, we are strengthening the frameworks that guide how agencies work together to manage high-risk offenders. This includes enhancing data systems to capture offence-specific details, risk levels, and MAPPA status. We are exploring how modern digital technology can take unstructured data in offender records, such as indicators of domestic abuse or child safeguarding concerns, and present the data in accessible format to probation practitioners, to inform risk assessments.
- o) **Overhaul the framework for managing sex offenders, to ensure the focus is on effectively and intensively managing the offenders who pose a risk.** The most recent statistics show that over 70,000 sex offenders were subject to

notification requirements (often referred to as “being on the sex offenders’ register”) in England and Wales.¹ We will undertake research into the current notification requirements system for registered sex offenders – which has remained fundamentally the same for over 20 years – and identify opportunities to enable the police to target resource at risk.

- p) **Jointly review, across the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service risk assessment processes** to ensure they are robust and responsive to the specific risks posed by VAWG perpetrators.

14. To ensure robust management of perpetrators through interventions in the community, we will:

- a) **Significantly expand access to tailored interventions for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators – from first-time offenders to higher-risk perpetrators.** The Home Office will address the patchwork of provision of perpetrator interventions across England and Wales and begin work to establish a consistent and comprehensive offering in every local area.
- b) **Roll out the Drive Project across England and Wales, ensuring there is access to a proven response for the most dangerous domestic abuse perpetrators within three years.**
- c) **Consult on the introduction of punitive measures for VAWG perpetrators, including making VAWG convictions grounds for professional bans.** We will establish tough new measures to ensure that perpetrators are no longer able to act with impunity and that individuals in positions of trust and influence will be held to the highest standards. Many professional regulators and bodies already have rules about “maintaining trust” and “bringing the profession into disrepute.” We will make it clear: if you abuse, you lose the right to positions of power, privilege, and influence. We will introduce tough new measures to ensure that they face real consequences and work with every sector, from healthcare to sporting, works to stop perpetrators from holding positions of responsibility, privilege, and influence.
- d) **Commission research in 2025/26 to better understand perpetration of HBA** and the appropriateness of different approaches in addressing these behaviours.
- e) **Encourage a coordinated community response, drawing on and sharing best practice from Police and Crime Commissioners** already bringing together local services such as police, health, and specialist support to manage perpetrators and protect victims and survivors more effectively.
- f) **Develop national standards for perpetrator interventions by 2026 to support and enable the increased provision and expansion of safe, consistent and high-quality VAWG perpetrator interventions.** The Home Office will replace the current standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions with one set of standards that covers both domestic abuse and stalking perpetrator interventions

¹ **HM Government (2025) Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) annual report: 2024 to 2025.** Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-annual-report-2024-to-2025>

by 2026. This will include specific consideration of stalking that takes place outside of a domestic abuse context. We will introduce a mechanism to ensure that programmes are meeting these standards, for example through the introduction of an accreditation scheme. We will review these standards to reflect the latest evidence.

15. To respond robustly to foreign nationals who commit VAWG on UK soil, we will:

- a) **Change the law to allow foreign national offenders to be deported immediately after sentencing.**
- b) **Ensure asylum seekers who commit notifiable sex offences can be stripped of their right to claim refugee protections** through new powers being introduced in the Borders Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill.
- c) **Put better processes in place to identify risk in the asylum estate and improving the support offer and response to migrant victims and survivors of abuse, including by explore options to enhance training for service providers on VAWG**, reviewing the information provided to asylum seekers on arrival to clearly communicate expected behaviours and the law on VAWG, and working with the VAWG sector to improve access to emergency accommodation for asylum seekers who are victims and survivors of domestic abuse and are seeking refuge.
- d) **Increase the scope of the ‘Deport Now Appeal Later’ from eight countries to 23, so foreign nationals who have their human rights claim refused are removed from the UK** to their home country before they can appeal the decision. Individuals can then take part in their UK appeal hearing from overseas using video technology.
- e) **Introduce a risk-led model for serious incidents in Immigration Enforcement** which involves triaging cases through a central command unit and routing high-risk ones into joint operations with police, ensuring that women at risk of violence are identified earlier, safeguarded faster, and supported more effectively.

Pillar 3: Support

We will never lose sight of our focus on victims and survivors, or the fact that no one victim or survivor is the same. We will address the current fragmentation in our system and be clear that all of government, and every aspect of the criminal justice system, holds responsibility for ensuring victims and survivors can recover and live free from abuse.



Radical transformation of the commissioning landscape

16. To ensure that services are able to support victims and survivors effectively and that victims and survivors get the support they need, we will:
- a) **Support victims and survivors with the largest-ever investment of £550 million in victim support services over the next three years.** This includes annual increases.
 - b) **Further support victims and survivors with £5 million each year from the Department of Health and Social Care.** This significant investment reinforces that healthcare, along with every part of society, has a vital part to play in supporting victims and survivors.
 - c) **Reform how victims' services are commissioned to ensure that support is consistent, delivers what victims and survivors need, and is fit for purpose.** This will include drawing on existing duties in Wales within the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015; and considering implementation of the Duty to Collaborate in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, which applies to England. The aim is to improve local commissioning of support services for adult and child victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and serious violence, with specific attention to the diversity of victim cohorts. We want to improve how funding is used and ensure that it is based on what victims and survivors need. We will consider the implications from the reforms to policing to ensure these goals are achieved.
 - d) **Publish a cross-government commissioning statement, which will replace the National Statement of Expectations and VAWG Commissioning Toolkit.** This statement will provide clear definitions of 'by-and-for' and specialist services, helping commissioners to allocate funding more effectively. It will also provide clarity on the commissioning responsibilities of national government departments and guidance to local commissioners on how their local duties, such as the Duty to Provide Safe Accommodation, Duty to Collaborate, and Serious Violence Duty work together. This will ensure that the full spectrum of provision, including for prevention and early intervention, pursuit of perpetrators, and support for victims and survivors, is more consistent across the system.
 - e) **Ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse across England and Wales can continue to access one-off cash payments for the financial year 2026/27 to help them flee abuse and begin rebuilding their lives.** These payments enable victims and survivors to secure long-term safety and stability. We will work across government, with the charity and private sectors, to identify routes to permanently address the gaps in support and provision which these funds temporarily address.
 - f) **Expand Home Office investment in a range of helpline services that provide support and advice to victims and survivors, their families, and professionals, as well as individuals concerned about their own behaviour.** This will include tailored helplines for specific communities who require more specific support, ensuring that support is accessible, inclusive, and responsive.

This investment will strengthen the national response to VAWG by ensuring that someone is there to support when victims and survivors most need advice.

- g) **Commence a call for evidence across a network of rural stakeholders** to inform understanding of the availability of support services and delivery methodologies that might be effective in rural areas.
- h) **Continue to embed the principles of the Victims Funding Strategy nationally.**

Support that understands every victim and survivor

17. To ensure that victims and survivors with complex and intersecting needs receive the support they need, we will:

- a) **Invest £55.8 million from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in a new multiple disadvantage programme.** This is a collaboration with the Department for Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, and the Department for Work and Pensions and will transform the way local public service systems respond to people facing or at risk of multiple disadvantage, helping them regain control over their lives with the right support at the right time. Through intensive casework, peer support, and by joining up services, data and funding across partners, this will prevent some of our most vulnerable citizens – including women experiencing domestic abuse and with complex needs – from repeatedly falling through the gaps between services and relying on crisis support.
- b) **Build on learning from the Changing Futures programme through the Government's commitment of £100 million to deliver Community Help Partnerships.** By working closely with local areas to tackle barriers and change incentives, these new partnerships will bring together a range of services to reach vulnerable individuals earlier, before problems escalate. Community help partnerships are a part of the Government's wider approach to public sector reform to integrate services, focus on prevention, and devolve powers to local areas.
- c) **Introduce a requirement for police to seek a victim's consent before sharing their information with Immigration Enforcement,** to try and remove additional barriers that migrant and asylum-seeking victims and survivors who experience domestic abuse face when trying to report abuse.
- d) **Continue to invest in the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme.** This will ensure that migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds are able to access support to leave abusive relationships while they seek to regularise their status.
- e) **Deliver a fund to provide specialist advocacy provision across England and Wales, including 'by and for' provision.** This will improve the offer for victims and survivors who have additional barriers to seeking support.

- f) **Introduce free independent legal advisers for victims and survivors of adult rape.** This support will help to ensure that victims and survivors feel confident in asserting their rights from the moment they report a crime.
 - g) **Further expand the Victim Witness Care Unit,** which has provided exemplary care to over 1000 clients since its launch in 2023. Providing constant support to victims, survivors, and witnesses of the most serious criminal allegations throughout their journey.
 - h) **Produce guidance on how drug and alcohol treatment providers can better support and improve service provision for all women accessing treatment, including victims and survivors of VAWG.** While some local areas have arrangements which provide trauma-informed support for women, this provision is variable and many women who have experienced VAWG and substance use issues can face barriers in accessing the support they need. The Department for Health and Social Care will produce guidance on how drug and alcohol treatment providers can better support and improve service provision for women accessing treatment.
 - i) **Amend the anonymous registration rules in the upcoming Elections Bill to extend the length of the anonymity period, meaning victims and survivors no longer have to reapply annually.** Victims and survivors of domestic abuse and others who would be put at risk if named publicly on the Electoral Register have the option to be registered anonymously. This option keeps their name and address from public view and is vitally important in keeping people safe whilst also ensuring they are able to participate in our elections. The current requirement for anonymous electors to reapply every year to remain on the register places an unnecessary burden on these people.
18. To better support victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and human trafficking, we will:
- a) **Deliver a needs-based model to ensure adult victims and survivors of modern slavery, including women who are victims of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude who are referred through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM),** have access to safe housing, financial support, and a dedicated support worker to assist in their recovery.
 - b) **Commit to delivering a contract to provide national coverage, across England and Wales, of the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian service, which is currently available in two-thirds of Local Authorities.** The service provides support to child victims of exploitation and trafficking who have been referred into the NRM, including sexual exploitation and grooming, and the professionals working with them.
 - c) **Continue to deliver the expanded devolved decision-making pilot for child victims of exploitation and trafficking** which is testing whether determining if a child is a victim of modern slavery within existing and localised safeguarding structures is a more appropriate model for children. We will consider how the

findings of the pilot can be used to inform our future approach to NRM decision-making for children.

19. To better support victims and survivors of forced marriage and female genital mutilation, we will:
 - a) **Undertake research examining the feasibility of estimating the prevalence of forced marriage and FGM.** Forced marriage and FGM can often be described as hidden crimes. But we can't let this get in the way of developing our understanding of the prevalence and nature of these crimes. Improving our understanding of the numbers of people affected can help us to better ensure there is adequate support available.
 - b) **Continue delivering a transformation programme to improve all aspects of the Forced Marriage Unit's (FMU) operations so that victims and survivors, and professionals, receive the best possible service and support.** This will build on the FMU new mission statement launched in March 2025. The joint Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office FMU has been working to combat forced marriage, both at home and abroad, since 2005. The unit provides support and advice for victims and survivors, those at risk, and professionals, through its public helpline and inbox while delivering an outreach programme delivering training and awareness raising sessions for professionals and communities across the country.

Therapeutic support for victims of child sexual abuse

20. To deliver a specialist response which recognises the severity of child sexual abuse, we will:
 - a) **Invest up to £50 million to transform support for victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation across every NHS region in England.** Under this Government we are expanding the world-leading Child House (Barnahus) model so that children and young people affected by these horrific crimes can access the specialist care they need. Under the Child House approach, healthcare, emotional support, and multi-agency expertise are brought together under one roof to deliver joined-up child-centred care that recognises the full scale of trauma and harm.

Improving victims' and survivors' experience of the justice system

21. To improve victims' and survivors' experience of, and engagement with, the criminal justice system, we will:
 - a) **Reduce myths and misconceptions at court.** Following the Law Commission's report on the use of evidence in sexual offence prosecutions, we will introduce legislation to improve the victim experience at court, focusing on the admissibility of evidence and clarifying the support that victims and survivors can access in the courtroom.

- b) **Expand the use of Domestic Abuse Specialist Courts to improve support for victims and survivors, and strengthen rehabilitative management of perpetrators.** Domestic abuse cases are undeniably complex and specialist courts can bring specialists and multiple agencies together to improve justice outcomes and victims' experience. This can have long-term positive impacts, helping victims and survivors to recover and rebuild their lives. We will expand the use of Domestic Abuse Specialist Courts, as recommended by the Independent Sentencing Review.
- c) **Accelerate the progression of cases to improve timeliness in the criminal courts.** The time it takes for rape and other sexual offences cases to move through the criminal courts is unacceptable and can impact on victim attrition from the court process. We are undertaking work to reform the criminal courts and ensure a sustainable system, implementing the recommendations from Sir Brian Leveson's once-in-a-generation reforms in his Review of the Criminal Courts.
- d) **Continue raising awareness of the Victims' Code, which sets out the rights of all victims of crime,** including the right to be provided with information, and to be referred to support services.
- e) **Make trauma-informed training available for all criminal court staff by spring 2026** to improve how criminal courts support victims and survivors, helping to reduce attrition and ensure criminal courts are responsive and better equipped to meet the needs of victims and survivors.
- f) **Strengthen post-conviction communication and support. We are establishing a new, dedicated Victim Helpline and updating the Victim Contact Scheme through the Victims and Courts Bill.** Victims of domestic abuse and specified VAWG-related breach offences will be able to request information about their offender's release through the Victim Helpline, and receive this information where appropriate, ensuring they are not left in the dark at critical moments.
- g) **Improve training for criminal justice practitioners on VAWG to inform appropriate sentencing and offender management.** We will also work with the Criminal Bar to ensure that the needs of victims and survivors are understood and their experience at court is improved.
- h) **Deliver the CPS' Victim Transformation Programme improving the service they provide to all victims and survivors of crime who interact with them, including those affected by VAWG.** The CPS is already providing an enhanced service to adult victims and survivors of rape and serious sexual offences. This includes a dedicated Victim Liaison Officer to act as a consistent point of contact and answer any questions throughout the legal process, as well as the opportunity to meet with the prosecution team before trial to help victims and survivors feel more prepared for court.
- i) **Evaluate evidence on strengthening victims' and survivors' right to challenge decisions to discontinue prosecutions.** In addition to the Victim Transformation Programme, in June 2025, the CPS launched a pilot enabling

rape and sexual offence victims and survivors to request a review of their case from a different prosecutor before a final decision is taken to stop the case. We will evaluate this work ahead of a wider rollout.

- j) **Legislate in the Crime and Policing Bill to introduce a disregard scheme for the cautions and convictions issued to individuals under the age of 18 for the offence of persistently loitering or soliciting in a street or public place for the purpose of prostitution, contrary to Section 1 of The Street Offences Act 1959.** The criminal law has rightly evolved to make clear that children cannot be prostitutes, and it is long overdue that individuals convicted of child prostitution offences have their convictions disregarded and criminal records expunged.
- k) **Review how the law addresses prostitution to ensure it better protects women and girls.** The acts of buying and selling sex are not in themselves illegal in England and Wales. However, there are many activities that can be associated with prostitution which are offences. This includes activities linked to exploitation, such as controlling prostitution, and activities that present a public nuisance. We will review the impact of these existing laws on the prevalence and harms associated with prostitution and sexual exploitation. This will include consideration of whether to introduce a new 'sex-for-rent' offence. A consultation conducted by the previous government identified mixed views as to whether this new offence should be introduced, and alternative measures to reduce sexual exploitation within the housing sector.
- l) **Continue to offer free transcripts of sentencing remarks to victims and survivors of rape and other sexual offences in cases that are heard in a crown court.** Sentencing is an important part of the criminal justice process for victims and survivors, but we know that attending court to hear the judge's sentencing remarks can be distressing. The Ministry of Justice concluded, following a one-year pilot, that provision should be continued on an ongoing basis for these victims and survivors.

22. To ensure that the family courts and civil courts cannot be used as spaces to re-victimise victims and survivors, we will:

- a) **Publish measures, during 2026-27 through the Family Justice Board (FJB), to track progress in meeting commitments to improve the family justice system response to domestic abuse.** For too long, victims and survivors of VAWG have been traumatised and retraumatised via the family courts. We categorically cannot let this continue. We need reforms across the family justice system and the role of the FJB, co-chaired by the Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice, is central to overseeing these reforms. The FJB has agreed to introduce clear success measures to ensure it is meeting its commitments to improve the whole family justice system.
- b) **Expand the Private Law Pathfinder pilot to one additional Designated Family Judge area by January 2026, with a view to national roll-out to improve the experiences for children and families.** The model applies in family court proceedings for child arrangements orders, specific issue orders, prohibited steps orders and proceedings for an enforcement following an alleged breach of a child

arrangements order and is now operational in nine court areas across England and Wales. By January, it will mean a quarter of all relevant cases follow the model.

- c) **Legislating to automatically restrict the exercise of parental responsibility for those convicted of serious sexual offences against children.** This means that these child sex offenders will no longer be able to make day-to-day decisions in relation to their children. This will protect children and reduce retraumatisation. We are also legislating to automatically restrict the exercise of parental responsibility of rapists where their crimes have led to the birth of a child for whom they hold parental responsibility.
- d) **Repeal the presumption of parental involvement in the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014,** reaffirming our commitment to ensuring that the welfare of the individual child remains the court's paramount consideration.
- e) **Prevent the instruction of unregulated experts in family law children's proceedings.** The Government is aware that counter allegations of so-called 'parental alienation' can be used in cases where domestic abuse has been alleged. Although the Government is clear that "parental alienation syndrome" has no evidential basis and is a discredited concept, officials are also aware of concerns regarding unregulated experts providing expert evidence around claims of parental alienation. We are working to prevent the instruction of unregulated experts, including unregulated "parental alienation" experts.
- f) **Work with the Family Procedure Rule Committee on information sharing and disclosure over the next 12 months.** The Family Procedure Rule Committee will assess whether current restrictions on sharing information from family cases are always justified and proportionate.
- g) **Work with stakeholders across the family justice system to improve information sharing between organisations over the next 12 months.**
- h) **Consider the findings of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report on the operation of the Family Court Reporting and Review Mechanism and provide a government response.**
- i) **Work with the judiciary to support the anonymisation and publication of more family court judgments.** We want families and children to have confidence in the decisions the family court makes about their lives and for these to be more transparent. Since January 2025, Transparency Orders have been made available in all courts in England and Wales, providing a clear framework for journalists and legal bloggers to know what they are able to report about what they see and hear at a hearing.
- j) **Examine the misuse of civil courts to continue patterns of abuse and explore whether further safeguards, guidance, or procedural changes could strengthen the court's response to this form of abuse.**

23. To improve support to women going through the criminal justice system, we will:
- a) **Improve awareness and understanding of how victims and survivors can become criminalised, particularly among criminal justice agencies.** As part of this, we will explore changes to crown court and magistrates' court defence forms to include questions about histories of domestic abuse and coercive control, helping to gather contextual information and deepen our understanding of the factors leading to criminalisation.
 - b) **Explore the recommendation from the Independent Sentencing Review to consider a women's specific pathway as part of drug and alcohol treatment requirements.**
24. To improve support to victims and survivors in the Service Justice System, we will:
- a) **Strengthen protection and support for victims and survivors of VAWG within the Service Justice System through the introduction of legislative measures similar to those already in place in the criminal justice system,** focused on safeguarding victims and survivors and reducing the risk of further harm.
 - b) **Deliver an Independent Legal Advocacy Pilot in 2026, providing independent legal advice to complainants of sexual offences in the Service Justice System,** empowering victims and survivors to make informed decisions at every stage of the process.

Right to live free from abuse

Housing

25. To ensure that domestic abuse victims and survivors have access to safe and stable housing, we will:
- a) **Continue to fund the Safe Accommodation Duty, committing £499 million over the next three years.** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government increased funding for the Safe Accommodation Duty by £30 million in 2025-26, bringing the total investment to £160 million, and is increasing investment to enable local authorities in England to provide the support victims and survivors need in safe housing, with £499 million over the next three years. Local level funding allocations will be confirmed as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. This funding shows our commitment to making sure no victim is left without a safe place to go and that every survivor has the chance to rebuild their life free from abuse.
 - b) **Support victims and survivors at every stage of their journey,** from improving pathways into safe accommodation for those who need to flee an abusive partner, to support in accessing longer-term housing as they rebuild their lives.

- c) **Work with partners across housing, homelessness, and the domestic abuse sectors to improve access to social housing for victims and survivors.** This includes removing barriers, better support to victims and survivors in joint tenancies, and evaluating sanctuary schemes to support victims and survivors who wish to remain in their homes. Oversight will be provided by the Domestic Abuse Housing Group, ensuring strong leadership, clear accountability, and improved outcomes for victims and survivors.
- d) **Improve the rights of tenants, including victims and survivors of VAWG, through The Renters' Rights Act.** The Act will allow individuals to unilaterally end joint assured periodic tenancies and will support victims and survivors of domestic abuse to leave a home they rent with their abuser, by stopping them from being locked into fixed terms.
- e) **Publish a consultation on our manifesto commitment to strengthen rights and protections for cohabiting couples by spring 2026.** Limited financial rights for separating cohabitants can aid perpetrators of domestic abuse and make it harder for victims and survivors to leave a relationship because they are economically dependent on their partner. We will publish a consultation by spring 2026, which will include consideration of how victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including economic abuse, can best be protected by cohabitation reform.
- f) **Deliver on the published Homelessness Strategy,** which acknowledges domestic abuse as a significant risk factor for homelessness and sets out measures to better support and protect those affected.

Economic Abuse

26. To prevent economic abuse and support survivors to regain financial independence, we will:

- a) **Remove the Direct Pay service type so that Child Maintenance Service (CMS) manages and transfers payments between parents, to prevent the CMS from being used as a tool of abuse.** We have already introduced a CMS Specialist Case Team that supports customers experiencing more complex domestic abuse to reduce re-traumatisation, providing a named caseworker where required.
- b) **Work with the financial sector and regulators to explore limiting the ability of joint financial services products, including joint mortgages, to be used as a tool of abuse, and to better support victims and survivors.**
- c) **Implement the Financial Inclusion Strategy (FIS) which will remove barriers to underserved groups accessing the financial products and services they need.** The FIS has considered the needs of victims and survivors of economic abuse in initiatives to support financially excluded people – for example, how to support individuals to open a bank account when they have no fixed abode.
- d) **Support victims and survivors in debt to government, starting by piloting an Economic Abuse Evidence Form from 2025, to help victims and survivors to**

disclose their circumstances. This Economic Abuse Evidence Form which has already been rolled out successfully in the financial services sector, will support those victims and survivors with a debt owed to government to explain their circumstances to multiple organisations at once, without the need to repeat themselves. This is less traumatic for them and quicker and more efficient for creditors.

- e) **Ensure coerced debt is accurately reflected and addressed on victims' and survivors' credit files, in line with commitments in the FIS.** This includes work by the largest Credit Reference Agencies (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion) lenders, trade associations, and the third sector to develop an approach that supports credit restoration for those affected by economic abuse.
- f) **Update and expand the Economic Abuse Toolkit to help public sector organisations recovering debt to understand, identify, and support those who have experienced, or may be experiencing, economic abuse.** The updated toolkit will seek to align the response to victims and survivors in debt across government and will be published by spring 2026. As part of the new Government Debt Profession, we will launch an economic abuse training module derived from the toolkit to all Government Debt Management Professionals.
- g) **Include measures to protect and support victims and survivors of economic and financial abuse in the Home Office's upcoming Fraud Strategy.** The new Fraud Strategy, will include measures to deliver public awareness to prevent fraud and improve victim support, including those who are subject to economic and financial abuse.
- h) **Abolished the fee for the Persons at Risk of Violence (PARV) order in November 2025, so that victims and survivors experiencing insolvency can apply easily for an exemption to their details being published on the insolvency register.** The publication of personal details (such as personal addresses) on the insolvency register is a statutory requirement. This can be particularly dangerous for victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are escaping their abuser. The only way to prevent these details being made public is by applying for the PARV order. We have abolished the fee for these orders, so that victims and survivors of domestic abuse never find themselves unable to pay for a PARV order.

Employment

27. To ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse can access appropriate employment opportunities and support programmes, we will:

- a) **Explore the specific needs of survivors transitioning from refuges to ensure that they receive full and tailored employment support to get back to work.** Our aim is to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse can access appropriate employment opportunities and support programmes, where this aligns with their circumstances and recovery journey. By doing so, we will help survivors to move towards long-term stability and independence.

- b) **Work with employers to maximise employment opportunities and provide support for those experiencing domestic abuse in the workplace.**
- c) **Provide employment opportunities in the civil service for victims and survivors of VAWG through a new Going Forward into Employment Life Chance recruitment pathway.** This is a network of 20 life chance recruitment pathways across the civil service that work with partners to bring people from diverse backgrounds into government, breaking down barriers to opportunity.

Learning from tragedy

28. To strengthen multi-agency collaboration to address and prevent fatal VAWG, we will:

- a) **Publish new statutory guidance on Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) – soon to be known as Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews – and implement a new quality assurance process with publicly appointed board members.** The new guidance and assurance process will help ensure that DHRs are of higher quality, completed more swiftly, and that recommendations are implemented without delay.
- b) **Share all national recommendations with the Violence Against Women and Girls Sub-Board** to ensure that recommendations from DHRs lead to meaningful change and drive accountability and coordinated action.
- c) **Ensure that the 2025/26 training programme for coroners will include the sharing of experience and best practice in investigating deaths where domestic abuse is believed to be a factor.** This has been confirmed by the Chief Coroner.
- d) **Explore expanding the Domestic Homicide and Suspected Victim Suicides Project, which currently tracks every domestic abuse-related death, in future years to encompass all forms of fatal VAWG,** to enable deeper analysis and a more comprehensive understanding of every death resulting from these forms of violence and abuse.
- e) **Monitor the implementation of new policing guidance on unexpected deaths and suspected suicides** by conducting deep dives into how specific police forces are responding.
- f) **Continue to support mental health practitioners across the country with the NHS England's Staying Safe from Suicide: Best practice guidance e-learning session.** This e-learning session is designed to complement our Staying Safe from Suicide Guidance, launched in April 2025. It provides practical, evidence-based guidance on how to approach and support people to stay safe from suicide. This evidence-based training is grounded in National Institute for Clinical Excellence 2022 guidance and aligns with the Government's 5-year Cross Sector National Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- g) **Continue to fund services to support families bereaved by domestic abuse related deaths.**

Whole of Society Approach

Ending VAWG starts with the individual and demands commitment and contribution from every single one of us and every part of society. We each have a role to play, whether by challenging harmful behaviours when we see them, reflecting on our own actions, or setting a positive example. Beyond the individual, it is critical that all frontline services that may come across VAWG are equipped not only to identify and support victims and survivors, but also to recognise, challenge, and disrupt perpetrator behaviour at the earliest opportunity.



Improving public awareness of VAWG and creating lasting change

29. To help improve public understanding, awareness, and recognition of VAWG, and create lasting societal change, we will:

- a) **Launch a long-term national programme of behaviour change campaigns to deliver a generational shift in the awareness, attitudes, and behaviours underpinning abuse.** Prevention must be everyone's responsibility and to make long-lasting change in society we need to change the attitudes and behaviours of adults just as much as children and young people. Communications activity across multiple channels will raise awareness and understanding of what constitutes abuse, as well as how to challenge perpetrators, educate young people and support victims and survivors. The campaign will reach the general public to drive a societal response, and will also target misguided young men and boys, parents, and victims and survivors of abuse.
- b) **Introduce sustained, multi-year and consistent public messaging on these harms and how to prevent them.** This will encompass harms perpetrated against women and girls in both private and public spaces, as recommended by the Angiolini Inquiry.
- c) **Launch a national conversation and summit to build a positive, aspirational agenda for men and boys** – not at the expense of women and girls, but in support of them.
- d) **Launch research to improve our understanding of how societal and gender norms influence the choices and actions of men and women in the UK.** This will involve looking at the experiences and attitudes of people across all backgrounds through a programme of work by the Office for Equality and Opportunity. This research will support the development of targeted interventions to better understand stereotypes and attitudes from across a wide range of age groups, and test “what works” to reduce VAWG.
- e) **Work in partnership with community and civil society partners to better understand the underlying factors that lead to rising isolation and the spread of extremist views.**
- f) **Use our role as hosts of EURO 2028** to set an exemplar for tackling sexism and misogyny within football and promoting positive attitudes and behaviours.
- g) **Launch “All In”, a new global High-Level Panel of elders, convening former heads of state, Nobel laureates, activists and survivors,** to drive high level political advocacy for ending VAWG.
- h) **Generate rigorous global evidence and expertise on what works to prevent VAWG and scale up proven approaches through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office’s flagship “What Works” programme.**

- i) **Establish an Innovation Council on VAWG to work with the Office for the Impact Economy.** The Innovation Council will bring together key voices from the frontline, research, private business and philanthropy with the task of identifying and evaluating innovative new projects, and then scaling those interventions that we think are likely to have the biggest impact.

Setting up our healthcare system to better tackle VAWG

30. To set up our healthcare system to better tackle VAWG, we will:

- a) **Roll out a domestic abuse and sexual violence referral service, “Steps to Safety”, across Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) from April 2026.** This will give general practices the tools and ability to identify and refer victims and survivors into support services. Our goal is national provision of this service, and by 2029, any victim or survivor in England will be able to get the help they need by talking to staff at their general practice – ending the current patchwork of services.
- b) **Drive transformation across the NHS to prevent VAWG and improve support for victims and survivors, working with Jess Asato MP, the VAWG Adviser to the Department of Health and Social Care.** Jess Asato MP will lead efforts to reduce the negative impact of alcohol on VAWG, embed support within neighbourhood health services, and strengthen local commissioning of services.
- c) **Expand the training and resource programme across the NHS in England to train employees on sexual misconduct and create clear, consistently applied standards and reporting pathways internally.**
- d) **Launch a new mandatory safeguarding learning programme for the entire NHS workforce in 2026.** It will cover all aspects of domestic abuse and improving support for victims and survivors across the health system.
- e) **Implement the 10 Year Health Plan that will transform the healthcare model in England, creating an NHS that is fit for the future, delivering more integrated health and care, closer to home, with a renewed focus on prevention and neighbourhoods.** Neighbourhood health approaches have the potential to make it easier for victims and survivors and those with concerns about their own behaviour in relationships to see a GP, which in some areas may include through Neighbourhood Health Centres.
- f) **Introduce guidance to clarify the roles of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Leads in Integrated Care Boards and NHS Trusts and to link them more closely to Women’s Health Champions.**
- g) **Support Integrated Care Boards in offering evidence-based interventions and treatment to tackle VAWG** by building the evidence base, disseminating examples of good practice through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Leads network and highlighting Integrated Care Boards offering trailblazing interventions.

- h) **Improve our understanding of why pregnancy and the time after birth is a period of heightened risk for domestic abuse** and explore interventions in the healthcare sector that could support partners and prevent this from occurring.
- i) **Work with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on its forthcoming updates to domestic abuse guidance** and ensure that the guidance is embedded in NHS commissioning and provision of domestic abuse and sexual violence services, including staff training.
- j) **Reduce waiting times and tackle the treatment gap (the percentage of individuals having mental illness and not accessing the services) to help victims and survivors of violence and abuse get the support they need.** We continue to expand NHS Talking Therapies to deliver additional courses of treatment and increase session numbers to boost recovery with an expectation that an additional 384,000 people will access treatment by 2028/2029. We will spend £15.6 billion on mental health support in 25/26 alone.
- k) **Implement the Men's Health Strategy for England published in November 2025.** The strategy sets out how we will improve the health and wellbeing of all men and boys in England and recognises men as both perpetrators and victims and survivors of abuse and violence. Alongside outlining how the health system will contribute to halving VAWG in a decade, the strategy aims to tackle certain societal norms and engagement in unhealthy behaviours that may be linked to violence.
- l) **Explore and identify clinical pathways and services to support child victims and survivors of FGM following an FGM diagnosis.**
- m) **Building on work already underway, explore the most appropriate setting for FGM medical assessments to support child victims and survivors of FGM nationally.**
- n) **Improve how we track our impact in supporting victims and survivors.** Our roll-out of the "Steps to Safety" referral service for general practitioners and the expansion of the Child House model will include developing suitable health sub-metrics and identifying appropriate data sources that will ensure we can track our impact more effectively.

Every corner of public life will be safe

31. To ensure that every corner of public life will be safe, we will:

- a) **Commence the Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Act 2023 on 1 April 2026. Everyone has the right to both feel safe and be safe going about their day-to-day lives.** The Protection from Sex-Based Harassment in Public Act 2023 (PSH Act) was a vital first step in achieving this by bringing forward an aggravated offence of intentional harassment on the basis of sex or presumed sex. To complement this, the Home Office will also explore introducing a public sexual harassment awareness course for perpetrators to challenge and change behaviours and reduce offending.

- b) **Update national design guidance to reflect a VAWG perspective, ensuring that safety considerations inform how public spaces are designed.**
 - c) **Review the Secure Stations Scheme to establish consistent accreditation focused on personal safety across the rail network**, ensuring stations are equipped with features such as visible and well-trained staff, clear reporting mechanisms, appropriate signage, and designated safe spaces.
 - d) **Improve connectivity of CCTV at train stations to the British Transport Police (BTP).** This will enable BTP officers to have more access to real-time footage from across the railway and help to identify offenders as quickly as possible.
 - e) **Explore expanding the provision and use of CCTV on the bus network, to increase feelings of safety and reduce the length of investigations.**
 - f) **Launch mandatory training for staff in the bus industry**, including drivers, on how to recognise and respond to incidents of VAWG and anti-social behaviour on the network to enable earlier identification and intervention.
 - g) **Publish statutory guidance by the end of 2027, setting out clear recommendations for making all bus stations and stops in England as safe and accessible as possible.** Local authorities must have regard to this guidance when planning, upgrading, or maintaining these facilities.
 - h) **Scope the feasibility of a single national reporting mechanism across all modes of public transport** to increase reporting and feelings of safety.
 - i) **Work to disqualify from driving those VAWG offenders who have used vehicles as part of their offending behaviours or criminal acts**, utilising existing powers.
 - j) **Bring forward legislation to address the inconsistent taxi and private hire vehicle driver licensing standards highlighted in Baroness Casey's audit into child sexual exploitation.** As a first step, we introduced an amendment to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill that will allow us to set national minimum standards focused on safety and accessibility, which all drivers must meet.
 - k) **Deliver a strategic VAWG package for Roads Policing.** This programme, developed under the strategic partnership between the Department for Transport, the Home Office and the National Police Chief's Council Roads Policing, will strengthen capacity to coordinate intelligence and tasking on roads-related VAWG offences. It will focus on deterring, disrupting and detecting offenders who use vehicles as part of their criminal behaviour.
32. To ensure that no opportunity is missed to protect victims and survivors, including those with pets, we will:

- a) **Have commenced a research project to explore the connection between pet abuse and domestic abuse**, to identify intervention opportunities and equip relevant stakeholders.
- b) **Work with the veterinary profession to support initiatives designed to help vets and practice staff recognise potential signs of domestic abuse through non-accidental injuries.**
- c) **Strengthen the pet microchipping regime** to prevent the records of domestic abuse victims and survivors being accessed inappropriately.
- d) **Work with charities to increase the awareness of services available for the pets of domestic abuse victims and survivors** to support more victims to escape abuse.

Workplaces will be environments safe from VAWG

33. To ensure workplaces are safe environments from VAWG, we will:

- a) **Conduct an annual survey of employers' policies and training on VAWG.**
This will help to assess how many employers have relevant measures in place, encouraging wider adoption of workplace policies that support victims and survivors and recognising the crucial role employers play.
- b) **Work with employers to strengthen their response to VAWG. This includes:**
 - i. Updating existing guidance for employers on workplace support for domestic abuse victims and survivors and expanding it to cover all VAWG victims and survivors.
 - ii. Encouraging employers to ensure that their staff receive sufficient training on VAWG and to implement robust policies and processes on responding to victims and survivors, and perpetrators of VAWG, in the workplace.
 - iii. Encouraging employers to become members of expert networks such as the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse and the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant.
- c) **Strengthen protections against harassment by introducing three amendments to the Equality Act 2010's harassment provisions. As part of this, the Employment Rights Bill will:**
 - i. Require employers to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.
 - ii. Introduce an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties.
 - iii. Introduce a power to enable regulations to specify steps that are to be regarded as "reasonable", to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.
- d) **Strengthen protections for whistleblowers in the workplace, making it easier for employers and employees to intervene about sexual harassment at work.** Our Employment Rights Bill contains a measure to strengthen protections for whistleblowers in all workplaces by making it explicit that sexual harassment

can be the basis for a 'protected disclosure', to make it easier for employers and workers to report concerns.

- e) **Strengthen protections in the workplace by ensuring that employers are no longer able to misuse Non-Disclosure Agreements to prevent workers from speaking about harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination.** The Employment Rights Bill contains a measure that will void any provision in an agreement, such as a contract of employment or settlement agreement, between a worker and their employer that prevents a worker from speaking out about relevant harassment or discrimination.
- f) **From 2026, launch a refreshed workplace training package on VAWG for all government departments,** including new model guidance which will include providing special leave to support victims and survivors.
- g) **Upskill all Department for Work and Pensions frontline staff across the country by 2029, to intervene early on VAWG.** This includes strengthening domestic abuse training to over 16,000 Universal Credit Work Coaches in Jobcentres and nearly 4,000 caseworkers in the Child Maintenance Service. This aims to equip the Department for Work and Pension's skilled workforce to identify risks and signs of perpetration and refer those experiencing VAWG to the right support.
- h) **Ensure victims and survivors of domestic abuse are supported by our domestic abuse Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in Jobcentres and refresh training for Jobcentre domestic abuse SPOCs** to enhance frontline support for domestic abuse victims and survivors and domestic abuse perpetrators.

A robust response to VAWG within the Armed Forces

34. To drive prevention and early intervention efforts within the Armed Forces and improve support for victims and survivors and their families, we will:

- a) **Deliver the Raising Our Standards Programme, launched in September 2024, which will drive vital change across Defence.** This includes improving education and training, to prevent and root out unacceptable behaviours, strengthening reporting systems, and building trust in leadership to deliver the culture change needed to prevent VAWG.
- b) **Deliver a VAWG prevention taskforce which will draw on best practices and evidence from inside and outside government to develop approaches that address the causes of VAWG, rather than simply reacting after incidents occur.** We will identify key intervention points, trial a series of targeted initiatives, and scale those that prove effective. Initial pilots will launch in Catterick Garrison and Plymouth Naval Base in early 2026, before rollout across the Armed Forces.
- c) **Deliver strategic communication campaigns that set out clear standards and equips personnel with the knowledge and confidence to prevent, report and respond to unacceptable behaviours.**

- d) **Appoint an Armed Forces Commissioner in 2026** to hold Defence to account and drive improvements to Service life.
- e) **Refresh the External Challenge Panel to deliver increased independent oversight and challenge to Defence's work on improving culture.**
- f) **Enhance data collection and analysis to provide evidence-based insight,** inform decisions and ensure transparency and accountability, such as through the new bi-annual Armed Forces Sexualised Behaviours and Sexual Harassment Survey, first reporting in November 2025.
- g) **Improve access to Sexual Assault Referral Centres for serving personnel and veterans,** ensuring victims and survivors receive confidential medical and practical support.
- h) **Deliver three new interventions through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to support Armed Forces communities affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking.** A new helpline, run by Aurora New Dawn, will offer free, confidential support to serving personnel, Reservists, and their families, backed by a £150,000 investment over a two-year period to March 2027. Aurora New Dawn will also deliver a CPDUK-accredited therapeutic groupwork programme for 100 serving women, supported by £94,000 over 23 months to January 2027. In addition, the Defence Medical Welfare Service will provide online counselling and wellbeing services for serving and reservist women, funded by £122,335 over two years to March 2027.

E03514542

978-1-5286-6142-3