



Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales  
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**Sent by email**

Dear Ms Nadine Dorries MP,

I want to begin by thanking you and colleagues in your department for your hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic. I appreciate that this is an unprecedentedly busy time for the Department for Health and Social Care.

As you will be aware, the necessary public health measures in response to Covid-19, particularly national lockdown, has placed those who are subject to domestic abuse in an incredibly difficult and dangerous position. In my role as the designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales I have been meeting regularly with the domestic abuse sector, government officials and Ministers during this period to help ensure robust protection for victims and survivors. I have strongly welcomed the additional funding that has been allocated by the government to support the vital work of the domestic abuse sector during this period, as well as efforts to raise public awareness of the issue.

I understand the Test and Trace system plays an essential role in breaking the chains of human-to-human transmission of the Covid-19 virus. However, I am concerned that there are likely to be a number of unintended consequences for victims and survivors of domestic abuse as a result of the roll out of the system, and the tracking app. There is already evidence that perpetrators of domestic abuse have used the pandemic as way of controlling victims. Those working in the sector have raised concerns that perpetrators could manipulate the Test and Trace system in order to continue their abuse by making fraudulent claims that they have been in contact with survivors in order for them to be asked to self-isolate unnecessarily. There are also concerns that contact tracing staff may inadvertently share contact details of survivors with perpetrators or associates, with significant safety implications. Despite assurances in the government guidance around security and anonymity, there remain unresolved issues with the app in relation to its potential impact on victims and survivors of abuse.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these matters further, and offer my support to work with the department to ensure the safety of victims and survivors of abuse.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales