



Thank you for signing up for the VOICES at the DAC newsletter.

My name is Nicole Jacobs, and I am the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales.

This new platform is a way for survivors to connect with me and the office. Hear relevant news from the domestic abuse sector and government, and find opportunities which may be of interest for you to share your lived experience and elevate your voice.

Our new webpages also have various ways you can get in touch with the team.

I look forward to connecting with you as we work together to improve the response to domestic abuse.

Nicole

"It is very important to me that I hear from a diverse range of people with lived experience of domestic abuse and that they are able to use their voice to create meaningful change.

"I hear from hundreds of victims and survivors of domestic abuse who want to do just this but haven't been given the opportunity to.

"That's why I am delighted to have launched VOICES at the DAC. I hope it will raise the voices of victims and survivors who want to have a seat at the table."



About the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is an independent voice that speaks up for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. The Commissioner uses her statutory powers, which are set out in the Domestic Abuse Act, to raise public awareness and hold both agencies and

government to account in tackling domestic abuse. The Commissioner has six key priorities which you can find out more about on our website:

- [A safe Family Justice system where children's needs and the impact of domestic abuse are central.](#)
- [Transforming the police and the wider justice response to domestic abuse.](#)
- [Improving the response to and support available for children and young people subject to domestic abuse.](#)
- [Sustainable funding for domestic abuse services.](#)
- [Preventing domestic abuse related deaths.](#)
- [Putting Safety Before Status so that migrant survivors can report abuse and access support.](#)

We want to hear from you!

Our first snapshot survey is about your experience of reporting domestic abuse to the police.

Were the police involved at any point? If they were- did you get the outcome you wanted? If you didn't call the police - why not?

You can take this quarter's snapshot survey [here](#).

You can find out about the wider work of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to influence Criminal Justice [here](#).

Opportunities to use your voice

Want to use your voice? See below for the opportunities we are sharing with this newsletter:

With each newsletter we will be sharing details from organisations who are looking to engage survivors. To be clear these are not linked or connected to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner or her office. They are opportunities we have spotted or have been asked to share.

To feature on this newsletter, we asked organisations to tell us their safeguarding policies, support available, and remuneration, as well as ethical approval if they are a research institution. We have used this information to share opportunities that have the right structures

in place. However, we are not responsible for the opportunities or the organisations themselves, and individuals should consider carefully whether these opportunities are right for them.

Below are a few from this newsletters' list. You can click here for the full list of opportunities for this quarter: [Opportunities to share your voice March 2024](#)

- Whole Health Project, Standing Together: regional focus groups and one to one conversations in Feb-June 2023 to hear from survivors about your experiences of healthcare settings. [Find out more.](#)
- Survivors and Justice Survey, NAPAC: National Association of People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) has a survey open for adults who have experienced any form of abuse in childhood. The survey is open until Thursday 29th March and consists of ten questions. Complete the survey [here](#).
- Online Survey, Reducing the Risk: an online survey to inform delivery in Oxford of services that meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ victims. Complete the survey [here](#).

If you are not sure if something is right for you, please look at our webpage [Lived experience matters](#) which may answer some of your questions.

Survivor stories

[Click here](#) to read stories and perspectives that survivors have shared with us.

Recent blogs include a powerful account written by Rhianon, who wrote a piece for us called Diary of a Victim. She outlines the horror of being stalked and describes finding purpose in using her voice.

Please note, the blog includes descriptions of stalking and violence, which may be distressing.

News

We appreciate there is so much work to be done to improve the response to domestic abuse across our systems and services. Each newsletter we will share news related to domestic abuse that we have spotted and that we think may interest you. Where relevant we will share what we are doing to respond. We will also share government consultations so that you can share your voice directly with government where possible.

Calls for more funding for domestic abuse amid local authority financial difficulty

- The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is highlighting the need for urgent funding for domestic abuse services amid the local authority funding crisis.
- This may be something you are aware of on a local level. We are concerned how domestic abuse services will be impacted and the Commissioner has written to the Government and council leaders to outline her concerns and highlight the crucial role of independent, specialist services in supporting survivors and their children, providing referral pathways, and relieving pressure on the statutory services.
- The Commissioner is calling for changes to the Victims and Prisoners' Bill, currently in Parliament, which would make sure that domestic abuse services are properly funded, even where Local Authorities face financial difficulties.
- Read the Commissioner's letter to the Communities Secretary [here](#).

DWP announces changes to the way child maintenance is enforced

- We know that many Child Maintenance recipients are survivors of domestic abuse and perpetrators often refuse to pay as part of post-separation control.
- Under [new government plans](#), parents who refuse to financially support their children will face quicker penalties.
- The Commissioner welcomes these changes to better enforce payments. Our office will continue to push for improvements for survivors who access the Child Maintenance Service.
- As with any legislative change, there will be a delay of months until this comes into force.
- Click [here](#) for a helpful guide from Gingerbread about claiming Child Maintenance safely as a survivor of domestic abuse.

Electoral Register Anonymity Process

- We know that some survivors don't register to vote as they are fearful of being on the electoral roll.
- Anonymous registration is now available to voters whose safety would be at risk if their name or address were listed on the electoral register. This includes survivors of domestic abuse.
- An application must be submitted to an electoral registration officer in writing and must provide certain evidence that the person applying is at risk.
- Click [here](#) to read the Electoral Commission's guidance for registering to vote anonymously.
- Click [here](#) to apply to register to vote anonymously.


Respond: DLUHC consultation on reforms to social housing allocations

- DLUHC (the government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) has published a [consultation](#) seeking views from local housing authorities, social housing landlords, tenants and applicants on proposals to amend social housing allocation rules.
- It is also open to the general public to take part if you are interested. The Commissioner will be responding to the consultation, which closes on 26th March. We will publish our response on our website [here](#).



Feedback

Let us know what you want to hear about on the VOICES at the DAC platform: [Email the team here](#).



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VOICES at
the DAC**