



**domestic  
abuse  
commissioner**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

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29 August 2024

Jess Phillips MP  
Minister for Safeguarding and VAWG  
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4JA

Dear Minister for Safeguarding and VAWG,

Thank you for your recent letter and for the invitation to the VAWG Reception event at the Home Office in July, which you hosted alongside the Home Secretary. It was a pleasure to attend and to hear from you directly, along with partners across the specialist VAWG sector, on your ambitions and plans to deliver the Government's commitment to halving VAWG in ten years.

I would like to take the opportunity to formally welcome you to your new role as Minister for Safeguarding and VAWG in this new Government. I have long applauded your tireless work to tackle violence against women and girls, both in and outside of Parliament, and your relentless dedication to making the voices of victims and survivors heard. It has been a pleasure to work with you on a range of issues in your previous capacities, and, as we have discussed, I very much look forward to continuing to work with you in your new role, towards our shared vision of ending domestic abuse.

As you know, I fully support this Government's overarching commitment to halving VAWG in ten years. This is, rightly, an ambitious aim that, as you've set out in your Manifesto and your recent letter, will require full commitment and collaboration at every level and branch of Government, working together to fully harness levers of change. It will require close partnerships with the specialist VAWG sector, and the entirety of the public sector to achieve.

As the Autumn Budget and Spending Review approaches, I sincerely hope that the level of ambition set out in the Government's commitment to halve VAWG is matched equally in the ambition of its funding proposals. Recognising the challenges of a tight fiscal environment, it is imperative to remember that investment in reducing domestic abuse represents an investment to save, in the context of the estimated £81 billion cost of domestic abuse to society in a single year<sup>1</sup>. My Office will shortly submit representation to HMT setting out in full my position on the Budget and Spending Review; I will ensure a copy is shared with your team for your information.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 2016 analysis, adjusted to 2023/24 prices.

The Home Office, as the overall lead Department for domestic abuse, as well as its wider work on justice, immigration and public safety matters, is critically placed to pave the way forwards, drive improvements and, crucially, support other Departments to play their part. To this end, I have also written, and will further write, to a number of other Ministers in Departments across Government to highlight the ambitions I have for their response to domestic abuse.

Given your central role at the Home Office in leading and coordinating the Government's response to VAWG, along with Minister Davies-Jones at the Ministry of Justice, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the full range of briefings I have shared with Officials and new Ministers across Government departments. These set out my key issues, priorities and recommendations for each Department, which, if implemented holistically and in full, would support significant progress towards the halving of violence against women and girls in our society. I hope that, alongside the specific Home Office briefing, these are useful in understanding my ambitions for a cross-Government response to domestic abuse. As these briefings are attached to this correspondence, I will not list all of my priorities here, but will briefly set out some of the key work currently being undertaken by my Office below.

You highlight in your recent letter the Government's particular focus on criminal justice reform, and on prevention and education. These are priorities shared with my Office. To this end, we are currently working on the development of two policy reports, concerning respectively the criminal justice response to domestic abuse, and children and young people as victims of domestic abuse. Development of both reports include direct engagement with those with lived experience of the issues, as well as those working in relevant statutory agencies and specialist domestic abuse services. The children and young people report will also include mapping of the specialist domestic abuse support available to this cohort, building on my Office's previous mapping of specialist support services, [A Patchwork of Provision](#). My Office and I will keep you updated on the progress of all of this work, particularly as our recommendations develop. Once finalised, these reports will be laid before Parliament and, as you will be aware, will require a formal response from Government, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

As you are aware, my Office is also delivering the Domestic Abuse Related Deaths Oversight Mechanism, which is currently in its pilot stage. Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews provide a wealth of information about the circumstances that have led to a death, opportunities missed, and lessons to be learned to prevent future tragedies. The current pilot has provided a critical first step in addressing the under-utilisation of these insights at both a local and national level, but must be expanded to every part of the country in order to truly maximise the benefits, boost accountability for implementation of recommendations and ultimately prevent future deaths. My forthcoming submission to HMT on the Autumn Spending Review will set out in more detail the options for this expansion.

Under the previous Government I have worked with Home Secretaries and Home Office Ministers through 1-1 meetings, fora such as the VAWG Ministerial Steering Group, and regular engagement with Officials. I remain available to you and your colleagues across this new Government to engage and advise on all issues relating to domestic abuse - as well as to facilitate, wherever helpful, invaluable connections to the specialist sector and to victims and survivors themselves. I am therefore very much looking forward to our upcoming meeting next week and the opportunity to discuss in more detail the Government's legislative and policy agenda, as Parliament returns from summer recess. I very much hope that this will be the first of many meetings between us as

we work together during this Government's term to transform the response to domestic abuse, and halve VAWG in a decade.

Yours sincerely,

Nicole Jacobs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales**