



**domestic
abuse
commissioner**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

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Alex Davies-Jones MP
Minister for Victims and VAWG
102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ

Dear Minister for Victims and VAWG,

Thank you for your invitation to an introductory meeting prior to summer recess. I was very pleased to meet with you in your new capacity, and I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome you, in writing, to your new role as Minister for Victims and VAWG in this new Government. I have no doubt that your previous role as Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, as well as your former membership of the APPG on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, and of the Bill Committee for the Domestic Abuse Bill (now Act), will have equipped you with invaluable experience and insight to take on this important role at the Ministry of Justice. 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, 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, 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 year¹. 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.

The Ministry of Justice, sitting at the heart of the criminal and civil justice systems, as well as its oversight of significant funding streams for victims' services, is critically placed to pave the way

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

forwards, drive improvements and, crucially, support other Departments to play their part in responding to domestic abuse. To this end, I have also written, and will further write, to a number of Ministers across Government to highlight the ambitions I have for their Departments.

Given your central role at the Ministry of Justice, along with Minister Phillips at the Home Office, in leading and coordinating the Government's response to VAWG, including as Departmental mission-lead for the Government's 'Take Back Our Streets' mission, 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 Ministry of Justice briefings, 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 in writing some of the key work currently being undertaken by my Office below.

We discussed in our recent meeting our shared understanding of the need for a holistic, end-to-end approach to the criminal justice system and domestic abuse. I therefore wanted to briefly highlight the policy report my Office is currently working on in relation to these issues. Development of the report to date has included direct engagement with those with lived experience of domestic abuse, as well as those working in relevant statutory agencies and specialist domestic abuse services. My Office and I will keep you updated on the progress of this work, particularly as our recommendations develop, including via a preliminary briefing paper in the autumn. Once finalised, the full report will be laid before Parliament by the end of the year and, as you will be aware, will require a formal response from Government, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

I was also glad to have the opportunity to discuss SDS40 with you. As I set out in my recent [letter](#) to the Minister for Prisons, Probation and Parole, I welcome the efforts that have been built into early prison release plans to mitigate risks and to attempt to exclude those domestic abuse perpetrators convicted of more serious offences. I do, however, remain concerned about the message early release sends and the impact it could have on victims. As we discussed, robust communication with victims - and the specialist services who support them - to keep them informed will be critical. I was therefore pleased to hear of the roundtable you hosted with the specialist sector in August to this end. I would be very interested to discuss with you further your plans for monitoring the wider impacts of the prison capacity crisis, including the potential impact on sentencing more broadly.

Under the previous Government I have worked with Lord Chancellors and Justice 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.

It was therefore very welcome to have the opportunity to meet with you in July, shortly after your appointment, and 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. To this end, I would be most grateful if your Office were able to advise of your availability for us to

meet again 1-1 in the autumn. I also very much look forward to joining the Victim and Witness Sector Engagement Group you are hosting on 12 September.

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