



**domestic
abuse
commissioner**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4JA

commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

26 September 2024

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1 Horse Guards Road,
London SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer,

I would like to warmly welcome you to your role as Chancellor of the Exchequer in this new Government. We met briefly when we both celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Leeds Women's Aid in 2022. Since my appointment as the first Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales in September 2019, I have had the privilege to act as an independent voice for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, drawing on my 30 years' experience in domestic abuse services, policy and intervention. I have used my statutory powers, which are set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, to hold both agencies and government to account to help improve the support provided to the 2.1 million victims and survivors of domestic abuse every year and to hold perpetrators to account.

I fully support this Government's overarching commitment to halving VAWG in ten years. This is, rightly, a hugely ambitious commitment, which must be matched by equally ambitious investment to realise. My Office has recently submitted stakeholder representation to HM Treasury's Autumn Budget and Spending Review; I attach a copy of this submission for your reference. This first Spending Review provides a critical opportunity to demonstrate the strength of the Government's commitment and set the tone for its coming term. 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 £85 billion cost of domestic abuse to society in a single year¹. My priorities are set out in full in the attached submission, but I would like to take the opportunity here to highlight a few key issues.

The independent specialist domestic abuse sector is the backbone of support for victims and survivors across England and Wales. Its expertise, experience and dedication are unrivalled and have driven forward so much of the life-saving change we have seen over recent decades. Organisations made herculean efforts in the most challenging of circumstances to provide a lifeline for survivors when their services were needed more than ever during the pandemic². Statutory services such as social care and policing rely on these specialist services to function effectively and prevent serious further harm, as part of a coordinated multi-agency response to domestic abuse.

¹ Based on Home Office analysis published in 2019, adjusted to July 2024 prices.

² [Domestic abuse and Covid-19: A year into the pandemic \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2020/11/11-domestic-abuse-and-covid-19-a-year-into-the-pandemic)

Despite this, my 2022 mapping of specialist domestic abuse services³, identified a postcode lottery of support for victims and survivors, with services struggling to meet need. This was particularly acute for those services led 'by and for' minoritised communities. Today, the sector remains under-funded and undervalued, with funding piecemeal and services struggling to retain expert staff⁴. The Local Authorities financial crisis⁵ now further threatens the specialist domestic abuse sector. Many services currently face a funding cliff-edge post March 2025, and need urgent clarity on and confirmation of future funding in order to continue their work. Support for victims and survivors, alongside perpetrator interventions, prevent future harm and the significant costs incurred by that harm. Investment in long-term, sustainable funding, which doesn't leave services and survivors at the mercy of crisis after crisis, represents real value for money and a saving on future costs.

In my submission I have detailed how £800m dedicated funding on domestic abuse could go a long way towards halving VAWG in a decade. If domestic abuse reduces by just 1%, this investment would be cost-neutral⁶. Even just considering the direct costs to the public purse, an investment of £800m need only reduce domestic abuse by 3% to be cost-neutral.⁷ In reality, comprehensive provision of support for victims, interventions with perpetrators, and robust accountability for local areas is likely to reduce abuse by far more than this. Halving domestic abuse in a decade will bring benefits of £47bn per year, of which £12bn would be direct cost to HMT.

HMT also plays a key role in engaging directly with the financial services sector. Whilst there have been positive steps forward within this sector to disrupt opportunities for abusers to weaponise financial systems and services, there is still a severe lack of consistency of approach and a lack of transparency. I therefore support Surviving Economic Abuse's calls⁸ for the Government, led by HMT, to commit to collaborative and strategic working with the financial services sector and specialist VAWG sector on these issues.

For this financial year, £10m committed by the previous Government for the Tackling Economic Impacts of Domestic Abuse (TEIDA) Fund remains to be allocated. The fund aimed to understand the impacts of domestic abuse on the labour market, support victims of domestic abuse in the workplace or prevent victims experiencing further abuse, and represented considerable collaboration between industry, civil servants, and specialist services. The 2024 General Election announcement halted decisions regarding bids, but it is critical that this funding commitment is honoured, and work is undertaken as soon as possible with the specialist domestic abuse sector to understand the most sensible way for this money to be spent in the remaining time available. TEIDA funding will not only be important to the Government's missions to kickstart economic growth and break down barriers to opportunities, but will also crucially support the Government to deliver its commitment to halve VAWG in a decade. At the very least, I would expect this funding to be reallocated onto other VAWG-related funding streams.

³ ['A Patchwork of Provision' - Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#)

⁴ [Recruitment-Retention-in-the-VAWG-Sector-Recommendations-Final-2024-1.pdf \(womensaid.org.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Letter to Communities Secretary on local authority financial crisis - Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#)

⁶ The Home Office 'Economic costs of Domestic Abuse' sets a unit cost of £42,221 per victim of domestic abuse (adjusted to July 2024 prices). £800m represents approximately 19,000 victims of domestic abuse against this unit cost, or approximately 1% of the 2.1m victims of domestic abuse every year.

⁷ Based on the Home Office 'Economic costs of domestic abuse' using just the costs in response to domestic abuse of lost economic output, health services, victim services, police, criminal legal costs, civil legal costs, and 'other', adjusted for inflation, which comes to a unit cost of £12,046.

⁸ [Surviving-Economic-Abuse General-Election-Manifesto V2 \(survivingeconomicabuse.org\)](#)

Finally, I would like to emphasise to you my sincere offer of assistance to support you and your colleagues across Government in achieving your commitment to halve VAWG. My Office works independently of any organisation or political party to amplify the voices of victims and survivors of domestic abuse. My small team of domestic abuse experts develop policy, conduct research, and collect practitioner insight to ensure that we remain at the forefront of understanding of what victims and survivors need, and are well placed to offer solutions. We remain available to the Government to engage and advise on all issues relating to domestic abuse, as well as to facilitate, wherever needed, invaluable connections to the specialist sector and to victims and survivors themselves. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you the issues I have highlighted in this letter and in my Spending Review submission at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Nicole Jacobs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales