



Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales  
2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4JA  
[commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk](mailto:commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk)

15 May 2025

Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP  
Secretary of State for Justice  
102 Petty France  
London, SW1H 9GL

Copied to: Alex Davies-Jones MP, Minister for Victims and VAWG; Lord Timpson  
OBE, Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

Dear Lord Chancellor,

#### **URGENT: RESPONSE TO PRISON RECALL CHANGES**

I am deeply concerned by yesterday's announcement changing fixed-term recall eligibility, which will lead to the vast majority of recalled offenders being re-released automatically after 28 days without risk assessment. It is clear that victims' safety has not been considered in this decision – the consequences of which could be deadly.

The domestic abuse perpetrators within this cohort of offenders are some of the most dangerous – they are fixated on their victims, stopping at nothing to maintain control over them. Regardless of the offence for which they are serving a sentence, these perpetrators consistently breach protective orders and show disregard for safeguarding measures, putting their victims at high risk of serious harm or death.

This change will also put significant additional pressure on an already-overwhelmed Probation Service, and I am deeply concerned for the knock-on impact that this will have on the safety of victims and survivors whose perpetrators are being managed in the community. Shifting the pent-up pressure within the Prison Service onto the underfunded and under resourced Probation Service is not an effective solution to this crisis and will lead to victims being harmed.

I note the point in Minister Davies-Jones' letter dated 14th May that this change will not impact provisions which protect victims, including the ability of frontline workers to apply for licence conditions and recall for offenders who breach such conditions. Although I understand that such provisions will still be employed in practice, this change will significantly water down their impact and utility as tools to manage perpetrators' risk in the community. Regardless of funding and legislative changes planned for the future, these will not be in place in time to mitigate risks caused by this change.

It is critical that all offenders with a known history of domestic abuse, regardless of their index offence, are exempted from this change. If they are recalled, at a minimum they must be risk assessed before they are re-released. However, limitations of existing data mean that this full cohort cannot be exempted – this government values victims' safety, I must request that you halt the implementation of this change until such time when this exemption can be made.

I am aware that your officials are working on solutions to identify domestic abuse perpetrators within sentencing data – I would urge you to ensure this work is prioritised and delivered at pace.

I would welcome an urgent meeting with you before a statutory instrument is laid to discuss the full impact of these measures on victims and survivors of domestic abuse, potential options for exemptions (including for example when the breach is related to domestic abuse or the offender has a known history of domestic abuse) and how to ensure victims' safety amidst the prison capacity crisis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Jacobs', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dame Nicole Jacobs

**Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales**