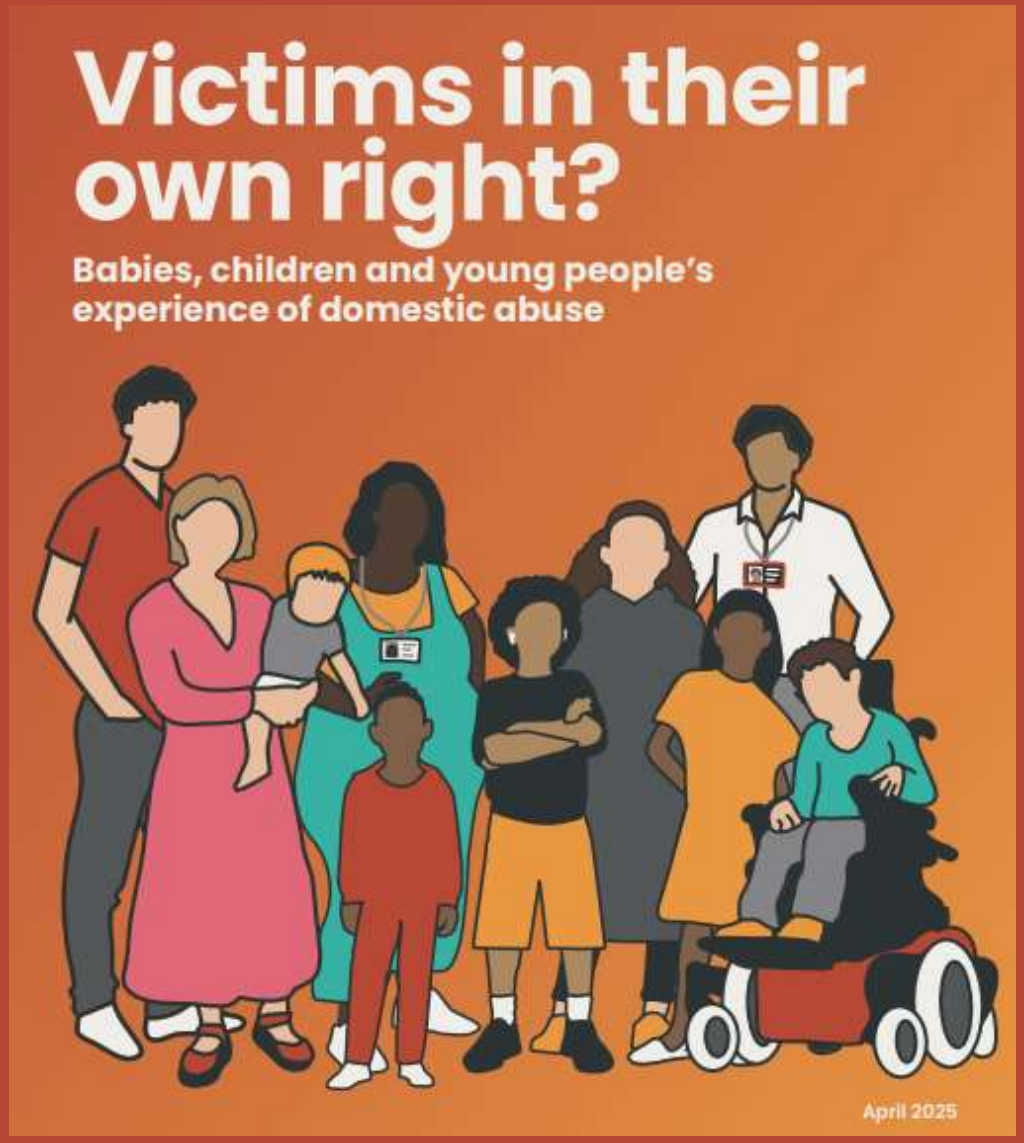


Victims in their own right

Webinar G1 : Specialist Services

May 2025

domestic abuse commissioner

Agenda

Introduction
Tell Nicole
Exploration of support services
Key messages
Recommendations for policy and practice
Q&A

Go to Menti.com and type code:
51103314

Commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

Content warning: The presentation does not include any direct descriptions of domestic abuse. There are words and pictures that children have written and made, which describe their feelings about the help they did or did not receive. They also describe what they wish would change. Some people may find the children's words upsetting. Please take a break away from the presentation if you need to.



Background

In 2021, children were, for the first time, recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in England and Wales.

Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines a child victim as any child who “sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse.”

Despite this welcome change, it is still unclear what this means in practice.



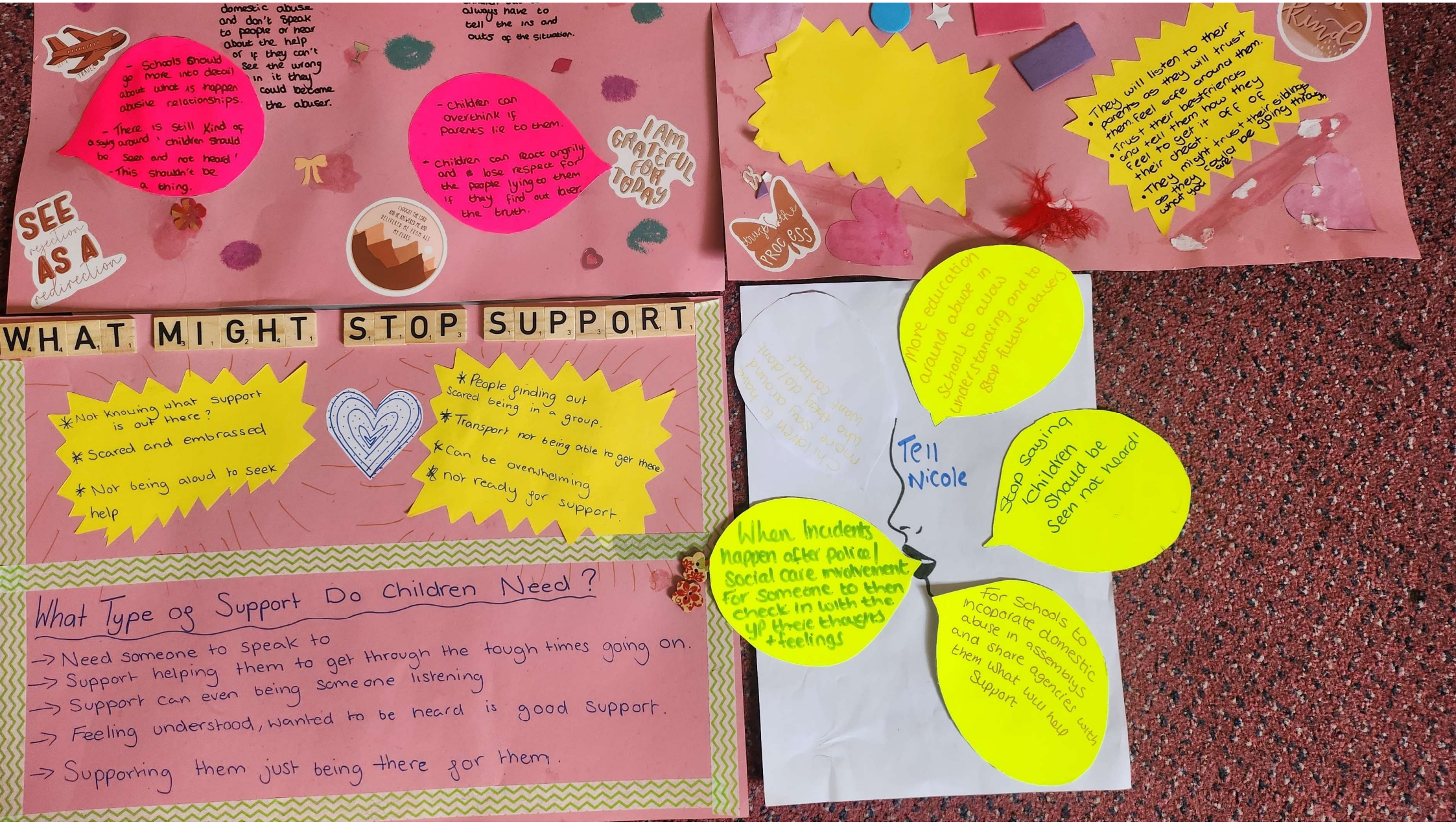

tell
nicole

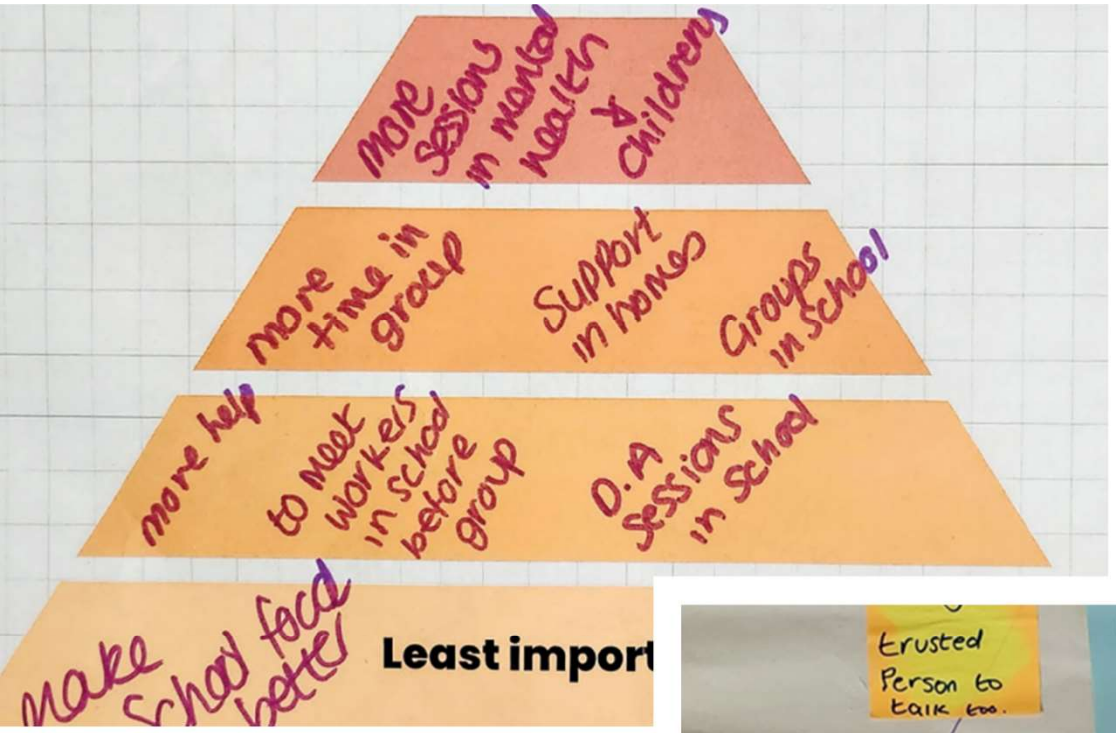
Tell Nicole enables children and young people to have the opportunity to ‘tell’ the Commissioner what they think about domestic abuse issues in a way that is meaningful to them.

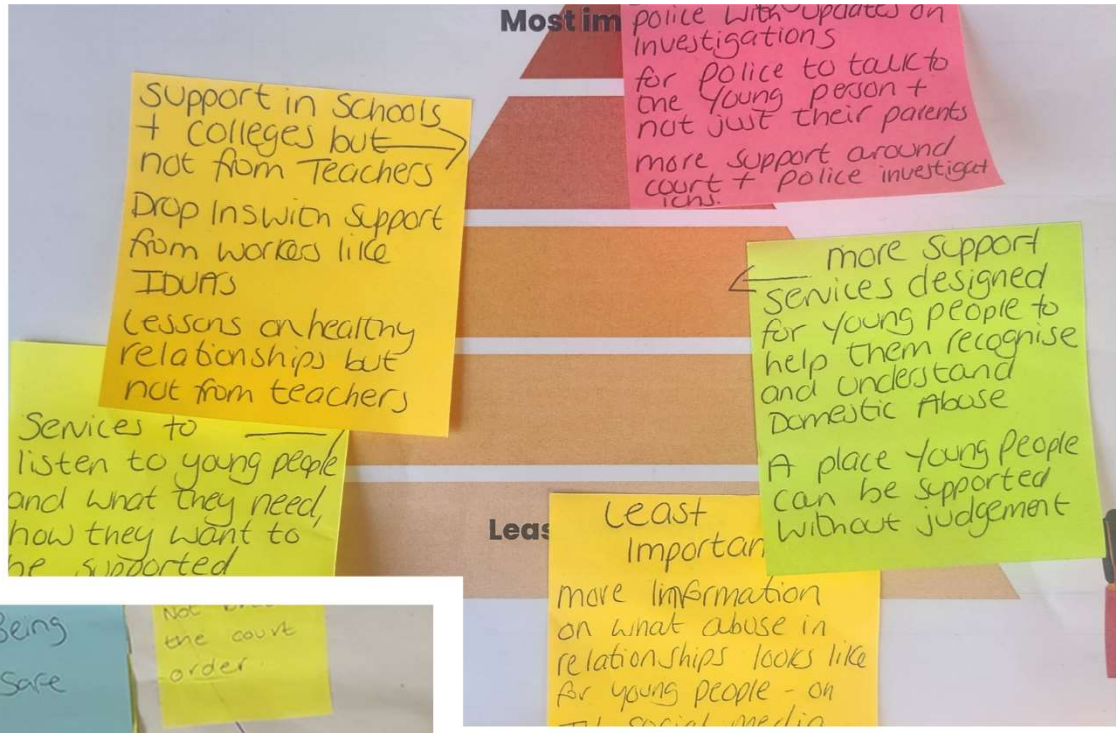
The key to this framework is to collaborate with professional who are already involved in children’s lives through voice, participation and engagement work. Materials and guidance documents were shared by the DAC team to enable engagement.

The guidance is flexible and encouraged workers to tailor sessions according to age, needs, and interests of young people

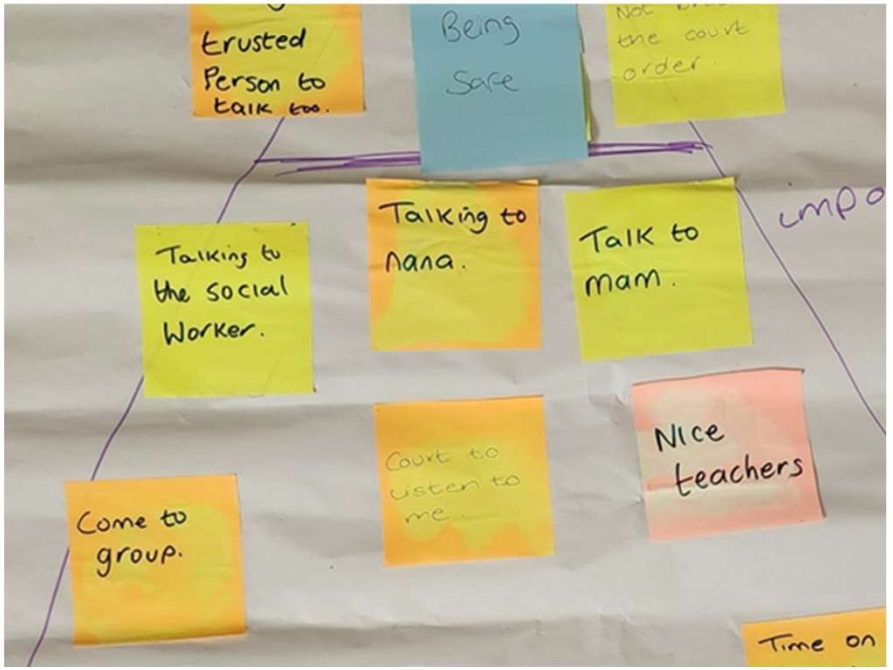


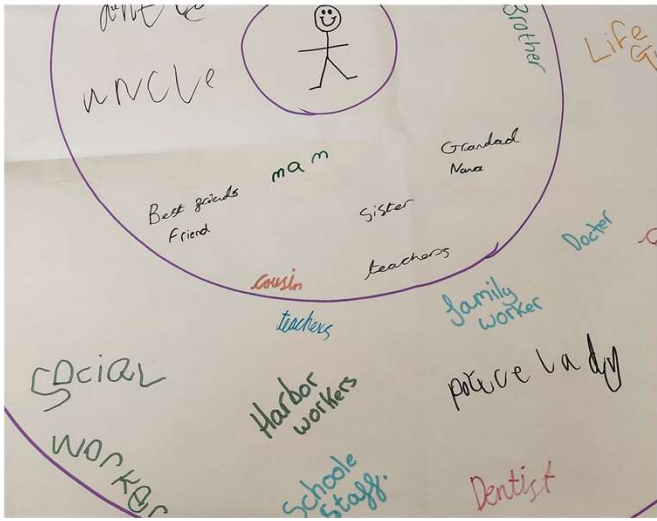

domestic abuse and don't speak to people or hear about the help or if they can't see the wrong in it they could become the abuser.
always have to tell the ins and outs of the situation.
- Schools should go more into detail about what is happen abusive relationships.
- There is still kind of a saying around 'children should be seen and not heard'
- This shouldn't be a thing.
- Children can overthink if parents lie to them.
- Children can react angrily and lose respect for the people lying to them if they find out later the truth.
I AM GRATEFUL FOR TODAY
SEE rejection AS A redirection
They will listen to their parents as they will trust them. Feel safe around them. Trust their bestfriends and tell them how they feel to get it off of their chest. They might trust their siblings as they are going through what you are.
WHAT MIGHT STOP SUPPORT
* Not knowing what support is out there?
* Scared and embrassed
* Nor being aloud to seek help
* People finding out
Scared being in a group.
* Transport nor being able to get there.
* Can be overwhelming
* Not ready for support.
What Type of Support Do Children Need?
-> Need someone to speak to
-> Support helping them to get through the tough times going on.
-> Support can even being someone listening
-> Feeling understood, wanted to be heard is good support.
-> Supporting them just being there for them.
More education around abuse in schools to allow understanding and to stop future abuses
Tell Nicole
Stop saying Children Should be Seen not Heard!
When Incidents happen after police/ social care involvement for someone to then check in with the yp their thoughts + feelings
For schools to incoporate domestic abuse in assemblys and share agencies with them what they help support


more sessions in mental health & childrens
more time in group
Support in homes
Groups in School
more help
to meet workers in school before group
D.A Sessions in School
make school food better
Least import


Most im
police with updates on investigations
for police to talk to the young person + not just their parents
more support around court + police investigat
Support in Schools + Colleges but not from Teachers
Drop Ins with support from workers like IDVAS
Lessons on healthy relationships but not from teachers
more support services designed for young people to help them recognise and understand Domestic Abuse
A place young people can be supported without judgement
Services to listen to young people and what they need, how they want to
Leas
Least Importan
more information on what abuse in relationships looks like for young people - on


POLICE
Social Worker
teacher
harbour
Neighbour
My Friend
My Mum
My Sister
counsellor
my baby
This is me!
Uncle
Aunt
grandaddy
doctor
I would like Support from Teacher.


Trusted Person to talk too.
Being Safe
the court order
Talking to the social Worker.
Talking to nana.
Talk to mam.
Come to group.
Court to listen to me.
Nice teachers
Time on


uncle
brother
Life
mam
Grandad Nana
Best friends Friend
sister
cousin
teachers
Doctor
family worker
teachers
social
Harbor workers
police lady
worker
schools staff
Dentist

Key themes: Tell the Government



Better **understanding** of children's experience of domestic abuse.

The **legal system** supports children affected by abuse.

Greater awareness of what **support** is helpful.

Improve the **availability of services**.

"Even though children are now classified as victims, their voices still feel hidden."

(Comment from online group meeting)

What support is helpful for children to recover?

Safety and space where they can talk to someone who listens.

"To be able to play, relax and talk to adults. To have a place away from the hurting and fighting."

(Children aged 6 to 9 years)

"Young people need someone they can relate to and talk to when they need it."

(Postcard, secondary school-aged child)

Greater choice over length, location and type of support



Groups versus One to One?

One to one support

"Talk to adults and not children because they will tell others about what is happening at home." (Child aged six to nine years)

"I wouldn't want to talk about it in a group with other children as they might not believe you." (Postcard, child aged 10 years)

Group support

"I like group better than on my own."
"Groups are more fun."
"Talking to other children is better"
"Don't feel on your own."
"Make new friends."

(Children aged 4 to 11 years)



Qualities that children valued in professionals

Experienced and have a good understanding of domestic abuse.

Able to relate, having been through things themselves.

Kind and respectful to children.

Good listeners and able to keep calm and positive.

Patient and non-judgemental.

Children want professionals to:
Take more time to listen to them and work at their pace.

Recognise that adults have more power, which can be unfair for children, e.g. confidentiality.



Support services for children affected by domestic abuse

TECHNICAL REPORT



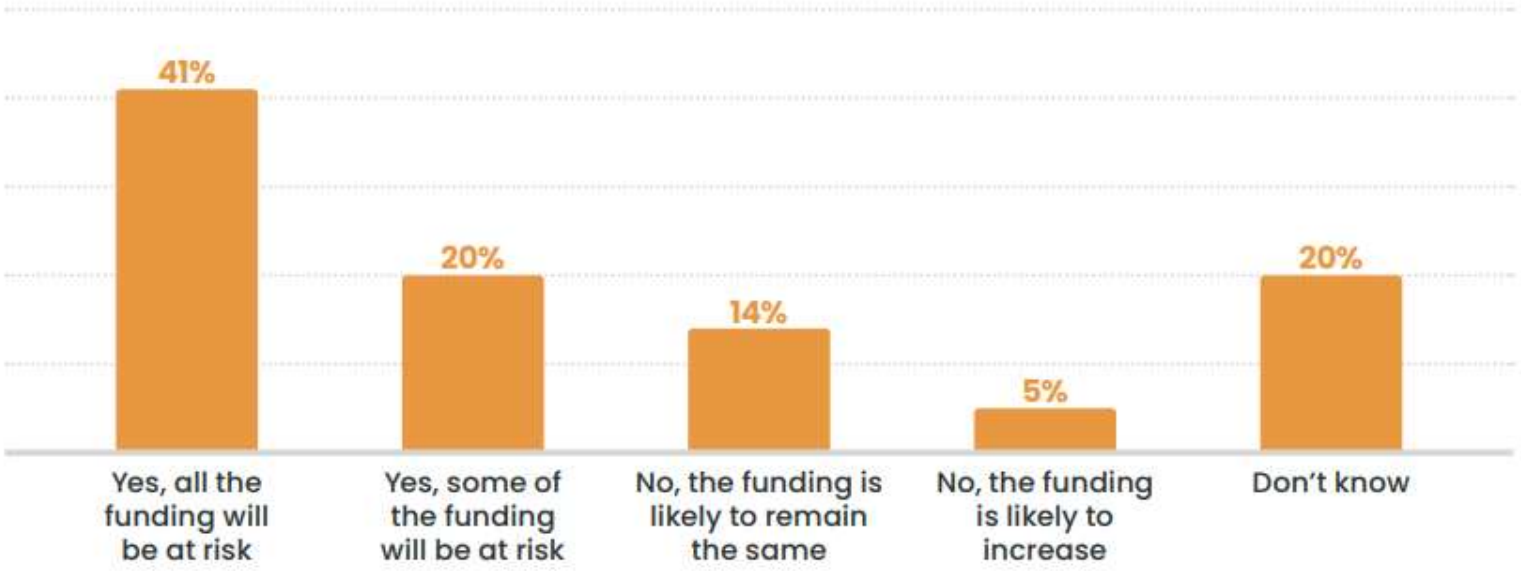
domestic abuse commissioner

April 2025

Two surveys of commissioners and providers of domestic abuse support services to children held during 2024.

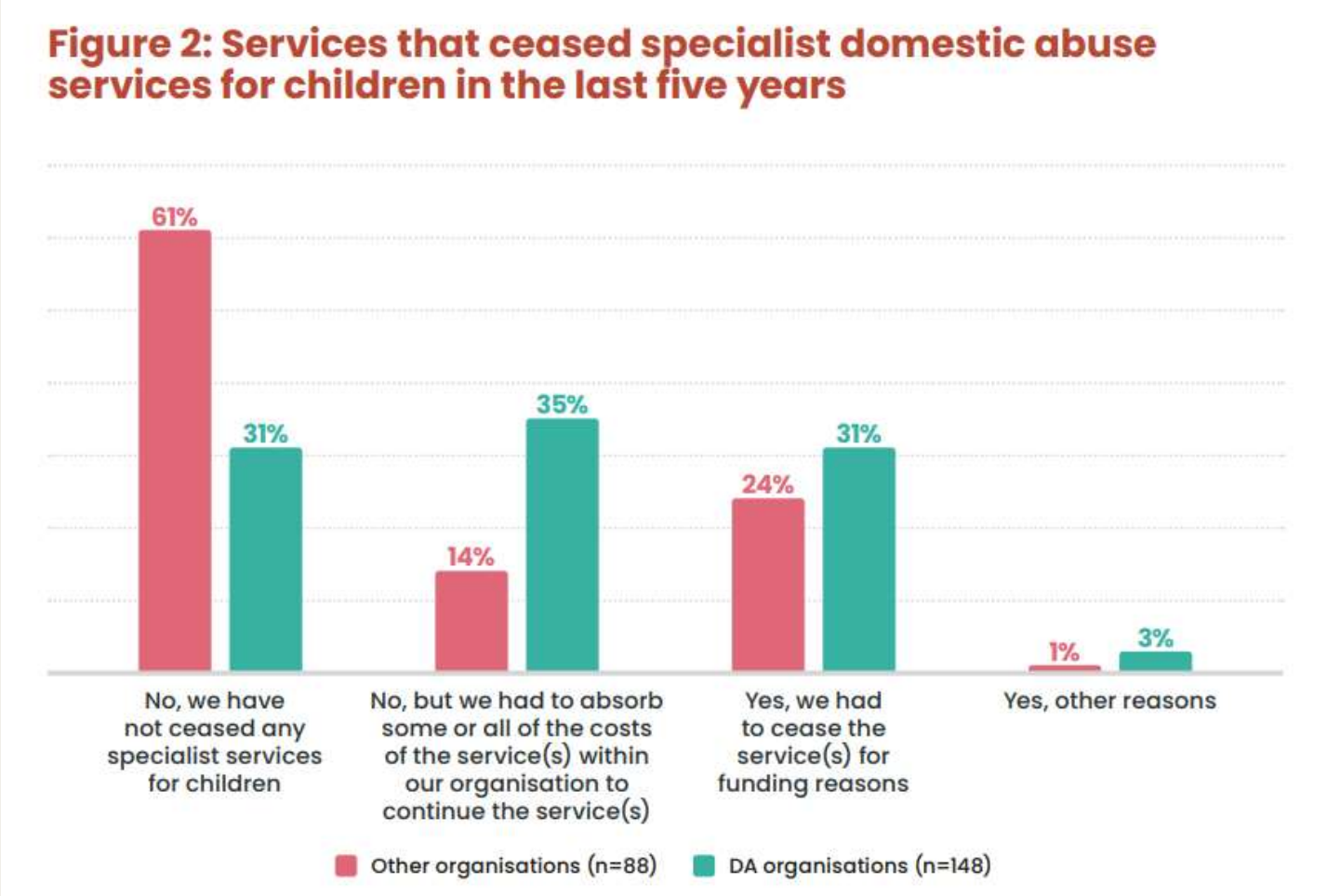
Funding of domestic abuse services for children is at risk

Figure 1: Commissioners' views on whether the funding for the service is at risk of being cut or reduced when the current funding comes to an end



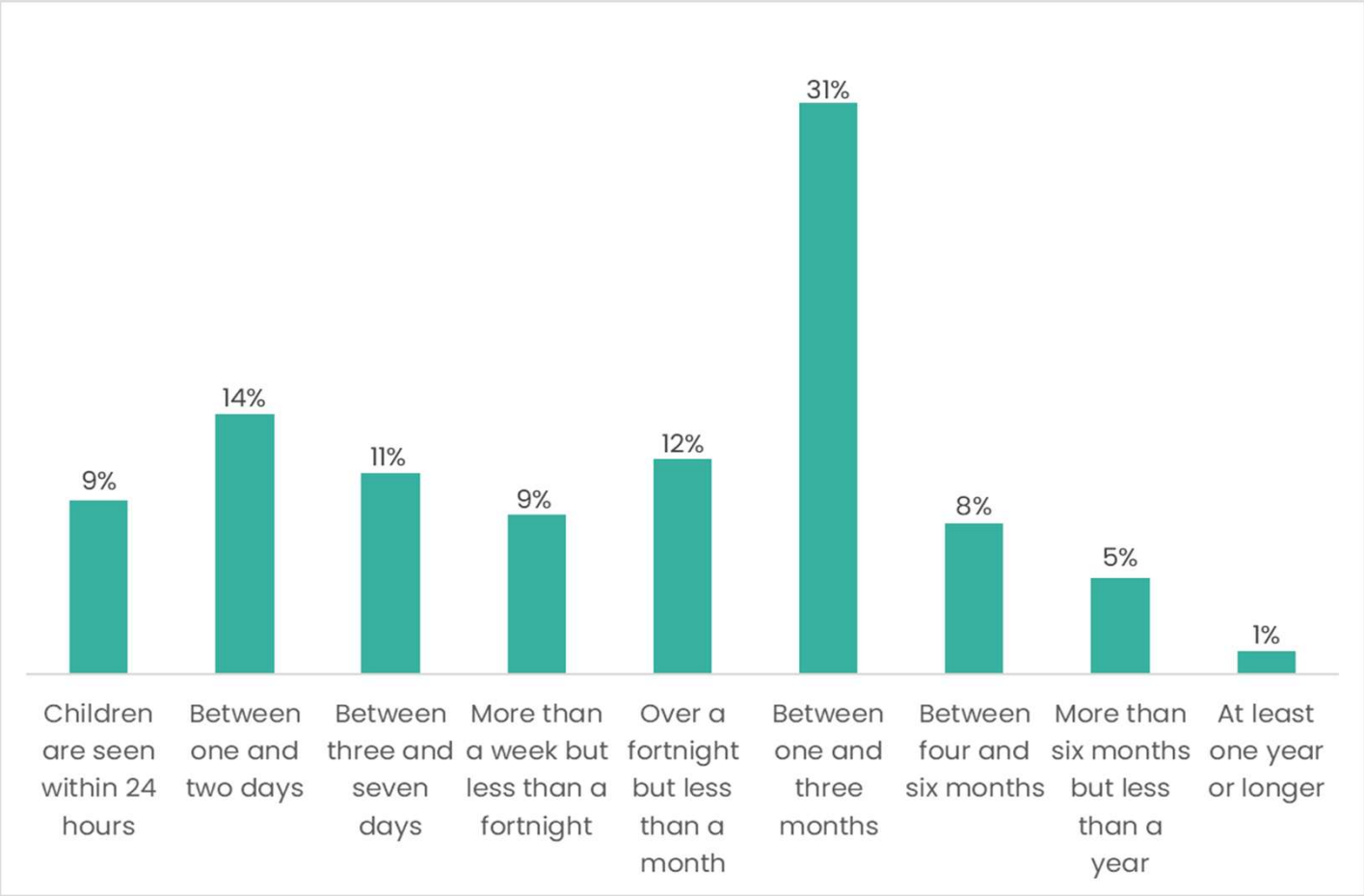
Only one in five commissioned services had secure funding arrangements.

Services within domestic abuse organisations at greater risk



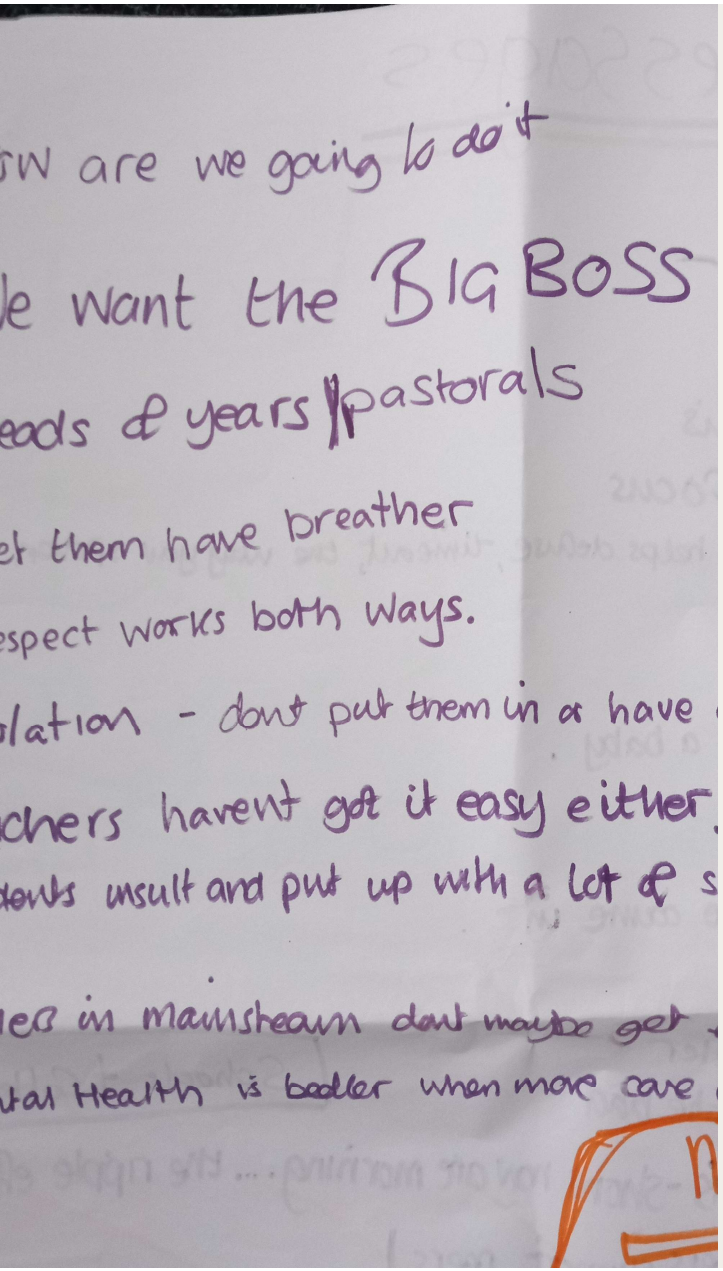
Majority of domestic abuse services reported that in the past 5 years they had to cease a service a service for children or absorb costs to continue delivering it.

Children's access to services: waiting times reported by service providers



Over a quarter of services (27%) said that they had to turn away referrals because they received more referrals than they had the capacity or funding to support.

Population	Service is specifically tailored for this population	Service is accessible to this population and is used by them regularly	Service can be accessed by this population but is not used by them regularly	Another organisation provides a service tailored for this population, so we tend to refer people there	Service is less suitable for this population of children and young people	Do not know or Not applicable or Missing	Best and worst access
Black and minoritised children and young people	7%	48%	29%	0%	0%	16%	55%
LGBQ+ young people	1%	37%	41%	2%	1%	19%	38%
Non-binary Trans young people	1%	26%	48%	3%	2%	20%	27%
Children and young people with special educational needs including learning disabilities and/or are neurodiverse	3%	56%	20%	2%	2%	17%	59%
Children experiencing problems with drugs or alcohol	1%	18%	35%	15%	10%	21%	19%
d/Deaf children and young people	1%	9%	47%	11%	12%	21%	9%
Physically disabled children and young people	1%	19%	51%	6%	3%	20%	20%
Children and young people with mental health needs	10%	54%	13%	3%	1%	18%	64%
Girls and Young women	25%	55%	3%	1%	1%	17%	79%
Boys and Young men	18%	51%	7%	2%	3%	18%	69%
Young people needing support for spiritual abuse	4%	5%	35%	7%	17%	32%	9%
Young people needing support for so-called 'honour'-based abuse and harmful practices	5%	18%	36%	12%	9%	20%	23%
Children bereaved by domestic abuse-related death	3%	12%	32%	15%	14%	23%	15%
Children involved in the criminal justice system	5%	21%	30%	11%	12%	21%	26%



This is a critical moment for the new Government.

- The forthcoming Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy,
- Spring 2025 Spending Review
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Bold leadership is needed for the Government to meet its ambition to halve VAWG within a decade.

This requires contribution from the whole machinery of the Government, requiring buy-in and coordination across each of its missions.

The Commissioner's recommendations represent a blueprint towards supporting children subject to domestic abuse and preventing future harm; as such, they should be considered in full.

Seven key themes

Representing a consistent thread throughout the report.

Centring children's voices.

Stronger cross-departmental working and strategic leadership.

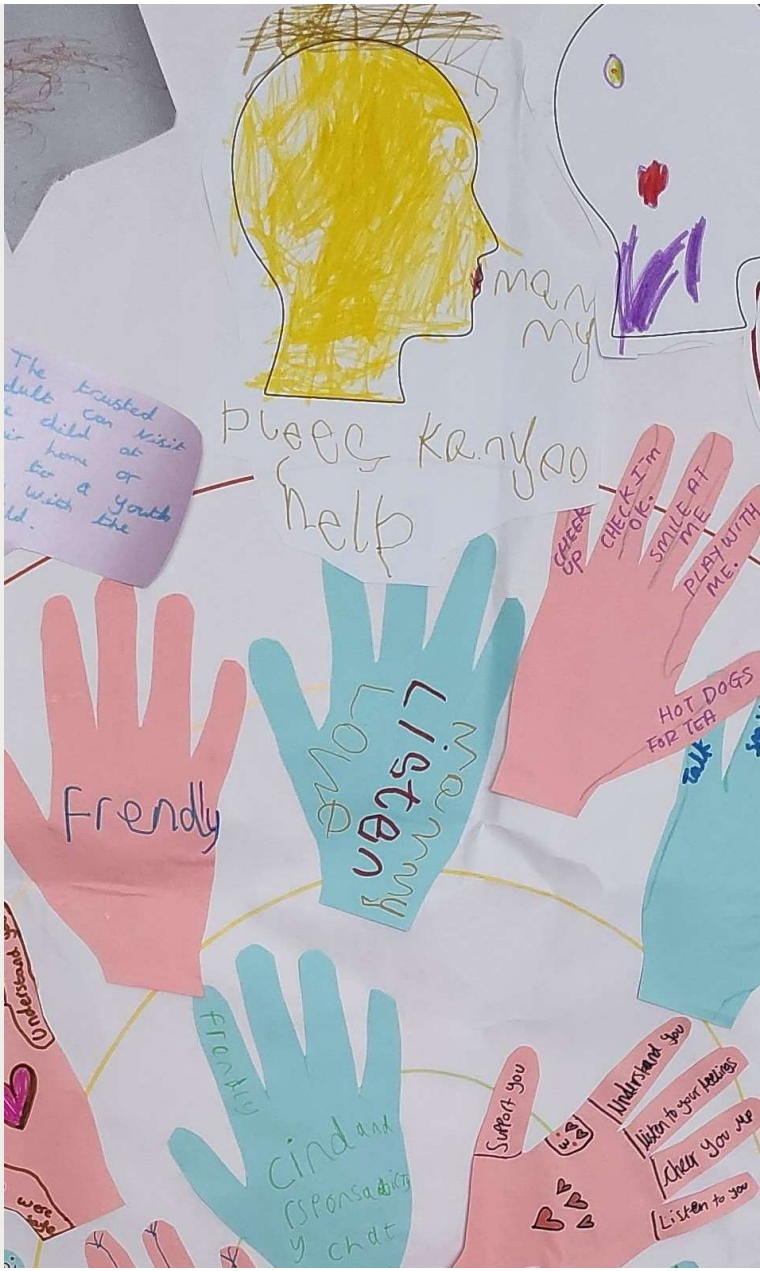
Holistic funding.

Data and evidence.

Specialist training for every frontline professional who may work with babies, children or young people.

Safeguarding.

Ensuring practice is informed by specialists



1: Centring Children's Voices

Recommendations

The Home Office and the DfE jointly funds the DAC Office to pilot the creation of a national youth panel, to inform policy, in England and Wales.

Every member department of the proposed cross-Government working group reviews and develops their response to children as victims, to reflect that children's voice is paramount in any interaction or policy development. This must include a review of the public bodies that they are responsible for.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government publishes guidance requiring each local authority to capture the views and experiences of children in safe accommodation within their needs assessments, data monitoring forms and strategies, and commits to ensuring children's voices are represented.

Children told us:

- they needed physical and emotional safety and space where they can talk to someone who will believe them and listen to them
- their accounts of what was happening may differ from those of their parents, carers and siblings
- their views have often been sidelined or considered secondary to those of adults

What this means for you

Theme 1: Centring children's voices

Children subject to domestic abuse, and their non-abusive parents or caregivers, must be listened to and involved in decision making about their own lives, at every level, by every agency.

Commissioners must consider how the experiences of children subject to domestic abuse can safely and meaningfully inform the shaping and delivery of services that are commissioned to support them. Commissioners could refer to existing best practice models, such as the CAFADA toolkit and Everyday Heroes' Participation Toolkit in Scotland.

Where children are bereaved by a domestic abuse-related death, children are given a voice and included in decision making about their future.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 1: Centring children's voices

We need to **challenge the view that children are too vulnerable to share their experiences**. Listening to and working with children subject to domestic abuse **must include offering flexibility, choice and empowerment**. This is especially important when the child has additional needs and vulnerabilities.

Roundtable participants shared best practice examples for including the child's voice, ensuring their representation and understanding their needs. These included:

• Involving d/Deaf children and their families in the design and delivery of services, ensuring their voices are central and the services provided are relevant and effectively address the specific needs of the d/Deaf community.

• Considering the needs of the child in service design and access - culturally informed engagement

• Inclusive materials, such as leaflets and outreach materials, often lead adult and child victims to support – this is the first step in making support accessible for disabled victims and survivors.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 1: Centring children's voices

- Co-producing service design.
- Setting up Youth Hubs informed by what children have said that they want and need.
- Intersectional experts by experience groups informing organisational policies.
- Representation and LGBT+ leadership in consultations and multi-agency bodies, including MARAC.
- Identifying systemic barriers such as no recourse to public funds, institutional discrimination, language and access needs to ensure there is representation of diverse groups

2: Stronger cross-departmental working and strategic leadership

Recommendations

Every Government Department contributes to ensuring that the new statutory guidance accompanying the forthcoming Child and Wellbeing Act includes substantial detail for frontline practice on what Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act means in practice, alongside a child-friendly version of this guidance.

The DfE develops updated RSE guidance.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport ensures that the Youth Strategy includes improving joint working between domestic abuse and youth organisations, at both a policy and practice level, to acknowledge the overlap between childhood exposure to domestic abuse, and involvement in serious youth violence.

CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP carry out bi-annual joint thematic inspections of local areas focused on domestic abuse.

Children told us:

- We should take their messages to those at the very top of government: "We want the BIG BOSS!"
- Those in charge did not fully appreciate the impact that domestic abuse can have on children's lives.
- All children needed to have basic information about domestic abuse.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 2: Stronger cross-departmental working and strategic leadership

Domestic abuse is a **shared strategy** with a public health lens, across the CSP, LSCP, Safeguarding Adult Board, Local Family Justice Boards, and ICB, to ensure that there are shared objectives and a holistic whole-family strategy and approach across an area. This includes **pooling resources to fund shared posts for the development of a strategy and implementation**. This would be done by the **various boards sharing data on prevalence and demographics** as well as themes from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, serious case reviews, and other death reviews to inform strategy and needs assessments.

All local multi-agency fora should ensure that **RSE and children's experience of domestic abuse is a priority and discussed as a standing item at least quarterly**. This includes Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards, which many of you here today would be a part of.

The National Youth Strategy announced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, backed by £85 million funding is **a huge opportunity for cross-government working to bring the youth and domestic abuse sectors closer.** This can be further strengthened in the scope of the Government's overall VAWG strategy. Also, at the local level influence commissioning and optimization of youth spaces.

3: Holistic funding

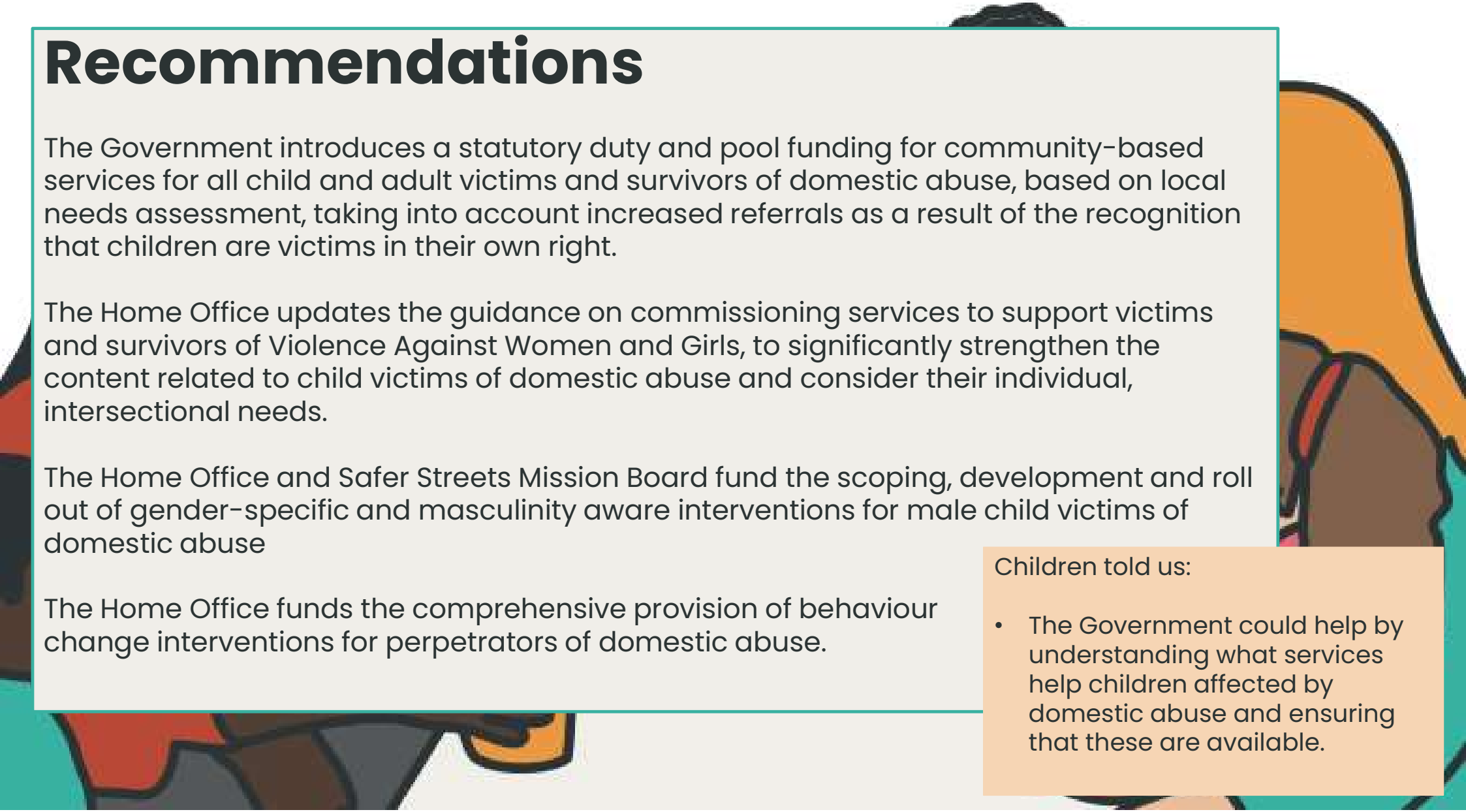
Recommendations

The Government introduces a statutory duty and pool funding for community-based services for all child and adult victims and survivors of domestic abuse, based on local needs assessment, taking into account increased referrals as a result of the recognition that children are victims in their own right.

The Home Office updates the guidance on commissioning services to support victims and survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls, to significantly strengthen the content related to child victims of domestic abuse and consider their individual, intersectional needs.

The Home Office and Safer Streets Mission Board fund the scoping, development and roll out of gender-specific and masculinity aware interventions for male child victims of domestic abuse

The Home Office funds the comprehensive provision of behaviour change interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse.



Children told us:

- The Government could help by understanding what services help children affected by domestic abuse and ensuring that these are available.

Recommendations

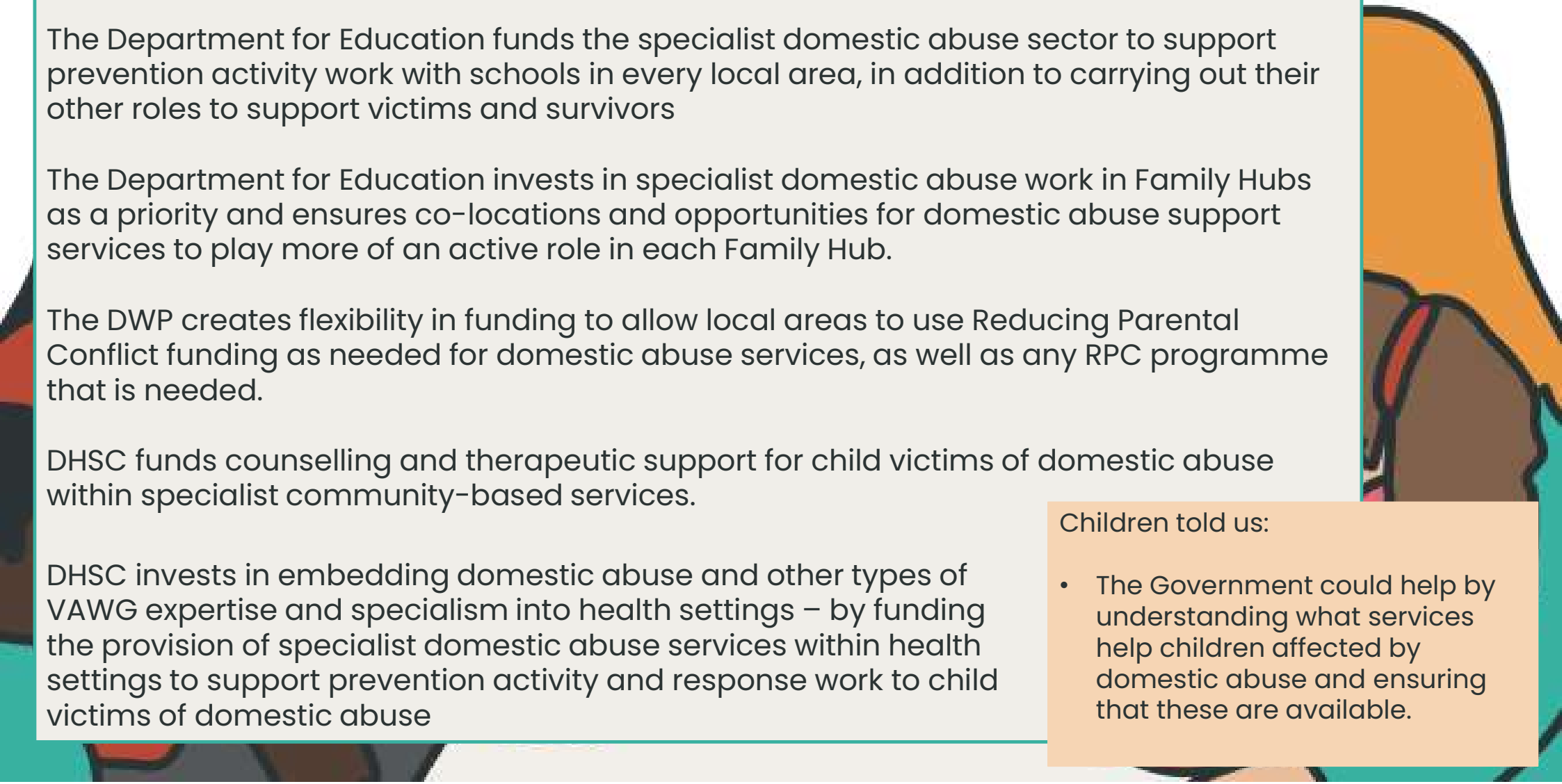
The Department for Education funds the specialist domestic abuse sector to support prevention activity work with schools in every local area, in addition to carrying out their other roles to support victims and survivors

The Department for Education invests in specialist domestic abuse work in Family Hubs as a priority and ensures co-locations and opportunities for domestic abuse support services to play more of an active role in each Family Hub.

The DWP creates flexibility in funding to allow local areas to use Reducing Parental Conflict funding as needed for domestic abuse services, as well as any RPC programme that is needed.

DHSC funds counselling and therapeutic support for child victims of domestic abuse within specialist community-based services.

DHSC invests in embedding domestic abuse and other types of VAWG expertise and specialism into health settings – by funding the provision of specialist domestic abuse services within health settings to support prevention activity and response work to child victims of domestic abuse



Children told us:

- The Government could help by understanding what services help children affected by domestic abuse and ensuring that these are available.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 3: Holistic Funding.

Commissioners across all agencies in all areas collaborate on **understanding the prevalence and needs of children subject to domestic abuse**, including those with no recourse to public funds, and pool funding to commission specialist, independent community-based services, including 'by and for' services, to support them.

Fewer than 1% of perpetrators receive specialist intervention to challenge or change their behaviour. The Commissioner's own mapping exercise in 2022 found that only 7% of survivors who wanted their perpetrator to receive support to change their behaviour were able to get it.

Few practitioners attending the roundtables could point to **specialist support for child victims of intimate partner homicide.** Service providers were also less confident about supporting this group of children compared with other children with additional or intersecting needs.

What this means for you

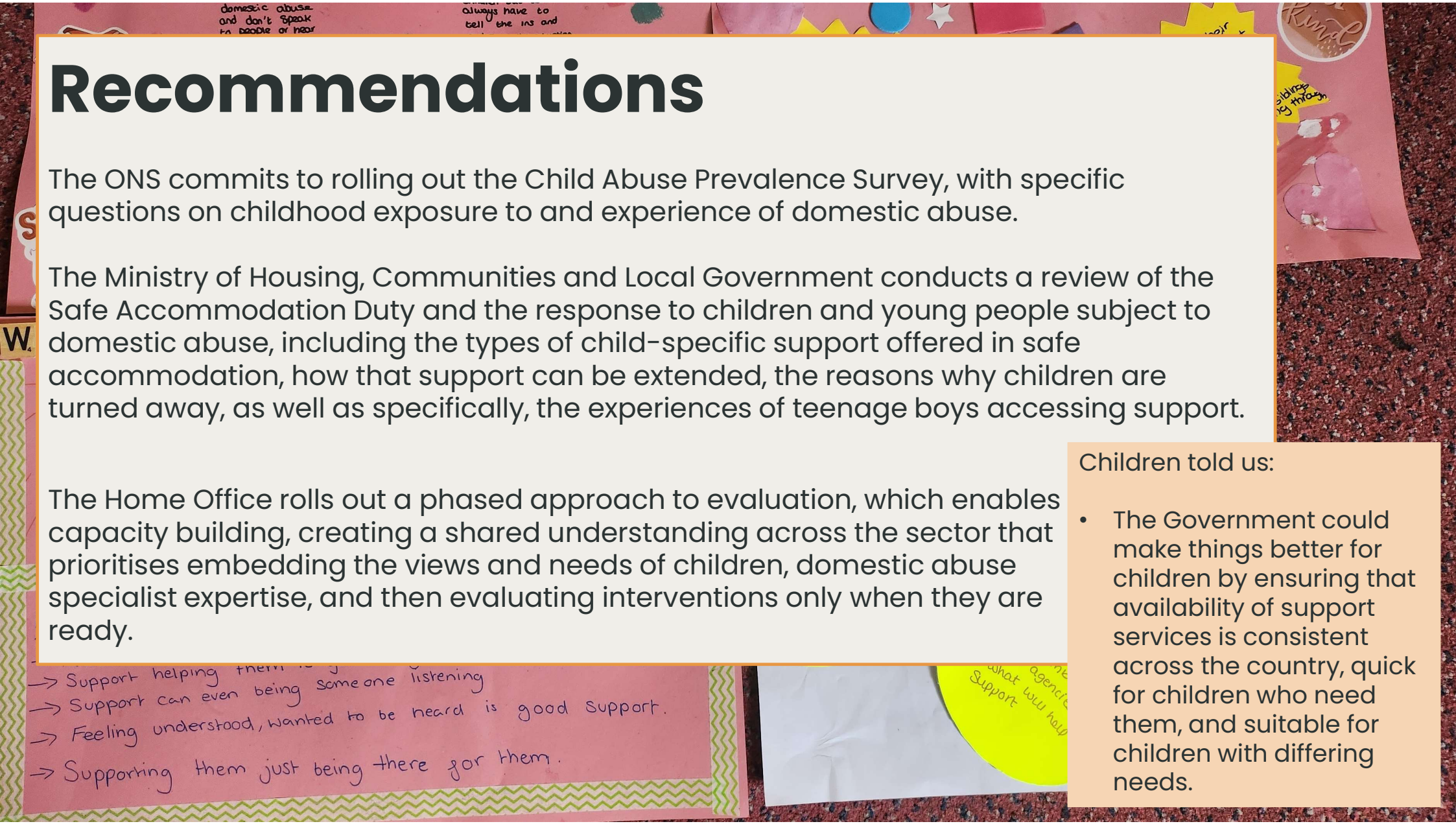
domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 3: Holistic Funding.

Despite a public health approach being promoted globally, the perception of frontline practitioners participating in the DAC roundtables was that there were few examples of prevention activity with children and young people actually taking place. **In the current fiscal environment, prevention activity has mostly been deprioritised at both a national government level and in local commissioning decisions,** with funding being directed towards the risk-based, crisis response.

Involvement from specialist domestic abuse services in early help and social care is critical. This was borne out in feedback from Early Help practitioners and social workers, who told the Commissioner that where a domestic abuse service was part of the Early Help or social care frontdoor provision, parents and children were more likely to disclose abuse, when they had not previously.

4: Data and evidence



Recommendations

The ONS commits to rolling out the Child Abuse Prevalence Survey, with specific questions on childhood exposure to and experience of domestic abuse.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government conducts a review of the Safe Accommodation Duty and the response to children and young people subject to domestic abuse, including the types of child-specific support offered in safe accommodation, how that support can be extended, the reasons why children are turned away, as well as specifically, the experiences of teenage boys accessing support.

The Home Office rolls out a phased approach to evaluation, which enables capacity building, creating a shared understanding across the sector that prioritises embedding the views and needs of children, domestic abuse specialist expertise, and then evaluating interventions only when they are ready.

Children told us:

- The Government could make things better for children by ensuring that availability of support services is consistent across the country, quick for children who need them, and suitable for children with differing needs.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 4: Data and Evidence

As part of their duties within the Duty to Collaborate, safeguarding partners, with the inclusion of education, must include **annual data on children subject to domestic abuse** in their area, to ensure that Joint Strategic Needs Assessments are as accurate as possible.

All services that are commissioned for any type of work with children and young people should **build safeguarding case numbers and nature of referrals into contract management with a specific domestic abuse flag**. This non-identifiable information should be **shared with the LSCP** so that analysis can be carried out to inform local assessments of need. This should be developed in line with government guidance and a shared linguistic framework to avoid confusion and discrepancy.

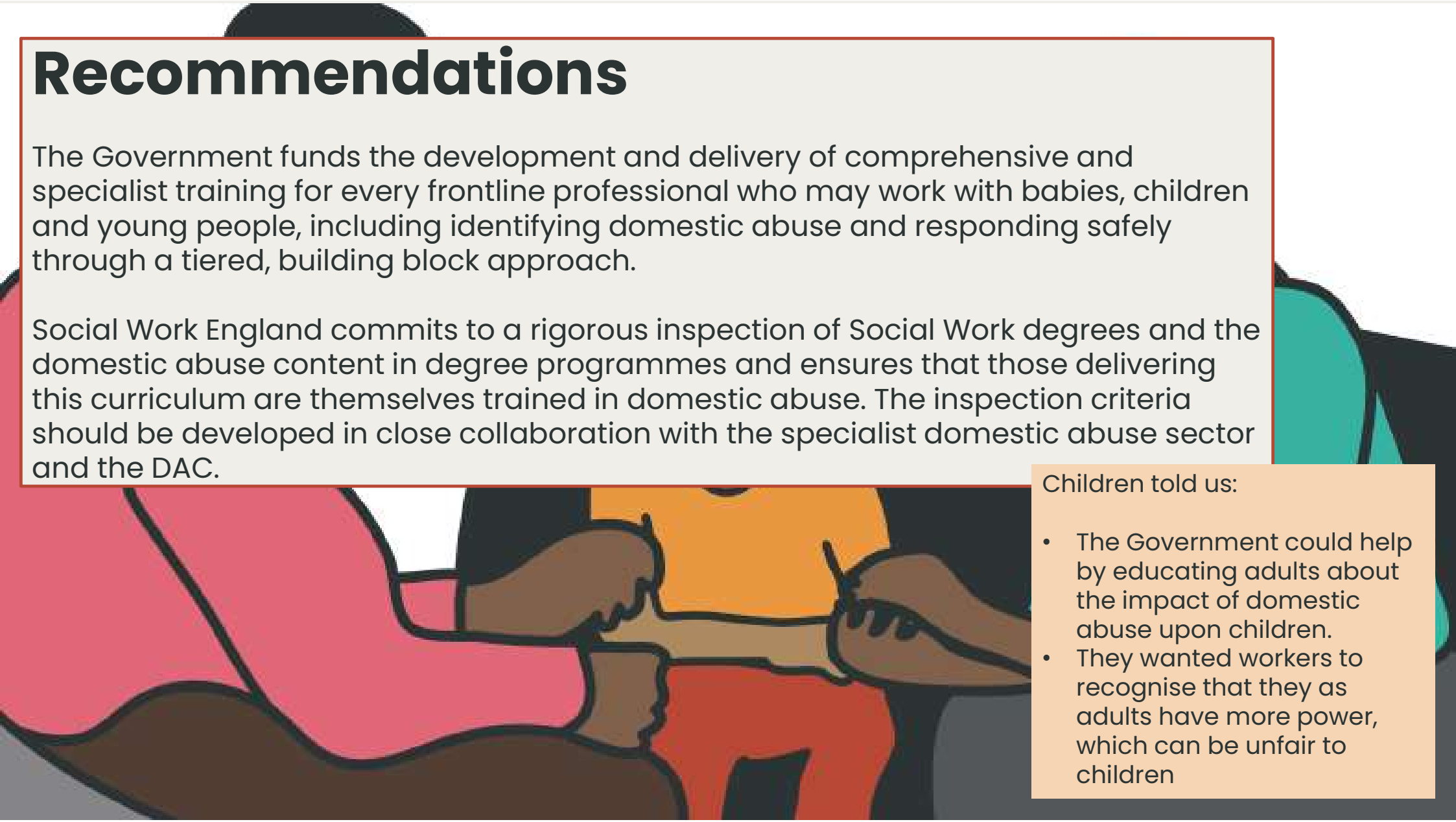
Local areas must report on early help data, and the number of children subject to domestic abuse accessing, or turned away from Early Help services, as part of the requirement to submit data as part of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

5: Specialist training for frontline professionals

Recommendations

The Government funds the development and delivery of comprehensive and specialist training for every frontline professional who may work with babies, children and young people, including identifying domestic abuse and responding safely through a tiered, building block approach.

Social Work England commits to a rigorous inspection of Social Work degrees and the domestic abuse content in degree programmes and ensures that those delivering this curriculum are themselves trained in domestic abuse. The inspection criteria should be developed in close collaboration with the specialist domestic abuse sector and the DAC.



Children told us:

- The Government could help by educating adults about the impact of domestic abuse upon children.
- They wanted workers to recognise that they as adults have more power, which can be unfair to children

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 5: Specialist training for frontline professionals

Universal for all professionals that have contact with babies, children and young people	Exercise **professional curiosity** and confidently **spot the signs** of all forms of domestic abuse (including coercive and controlling behaviour, technology-facilitated abuse, so-called 'honour-based' abuse and harmful practices) for all children. Respond appropriately to children who are experiencing domestic abuse. This **includes demonstrating trauma informed practice, age-appropriate communication methods, understanding barriers to engagement**, and best responses for children with diverse identities and needs, and protected characteristics, recognising the importance of **intersectionality**. Refer children (and associated adults) to relevant services. This includes **knowledge of local specialist services** and understanding both organisational and statutory **safeguarding systems and local protocols** for all levels of need, including early help. Professionals should be confident navigating local and interagency referral pathways.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 5: Specialist training for frontline professionals

Tailored for professionals who have contact with children and young people in the context of their experiences of abuse	Understand children and young people's experiences of domestic abuse as **complex trauma,** including the **challenges faced by children and families.** Understand the **impact** of domestic abuse for children, young people, their families, and wider relationships and the coping mechanisms they may use in the context of intersectionality, recognising the **diverse nature of identities and need.** Understand the importance of **information sharing and multi-agency working** when working with children and young people with lived experience of domestic abuse. Understand **the link between domestic abuse and other forms of risk and harm**, including serious violence. Understand the **dynamics of domestic abuse,** including recognising 'victim blaming' and placing responsibility on perpetrators using harmful behaviours. Competence in **documenting interactions with children**, being mindful of appropriate terminology. Recognising **the protective role and strengths of the non-abusive parent** and the importance of protective relationships. Understand **typologies of perpetrators** (including various forms of presentation). Understand effective **strategies for prevention, identification and intervention** that ensure children and their non-abusive parent/guardian receive appropriate and timely support

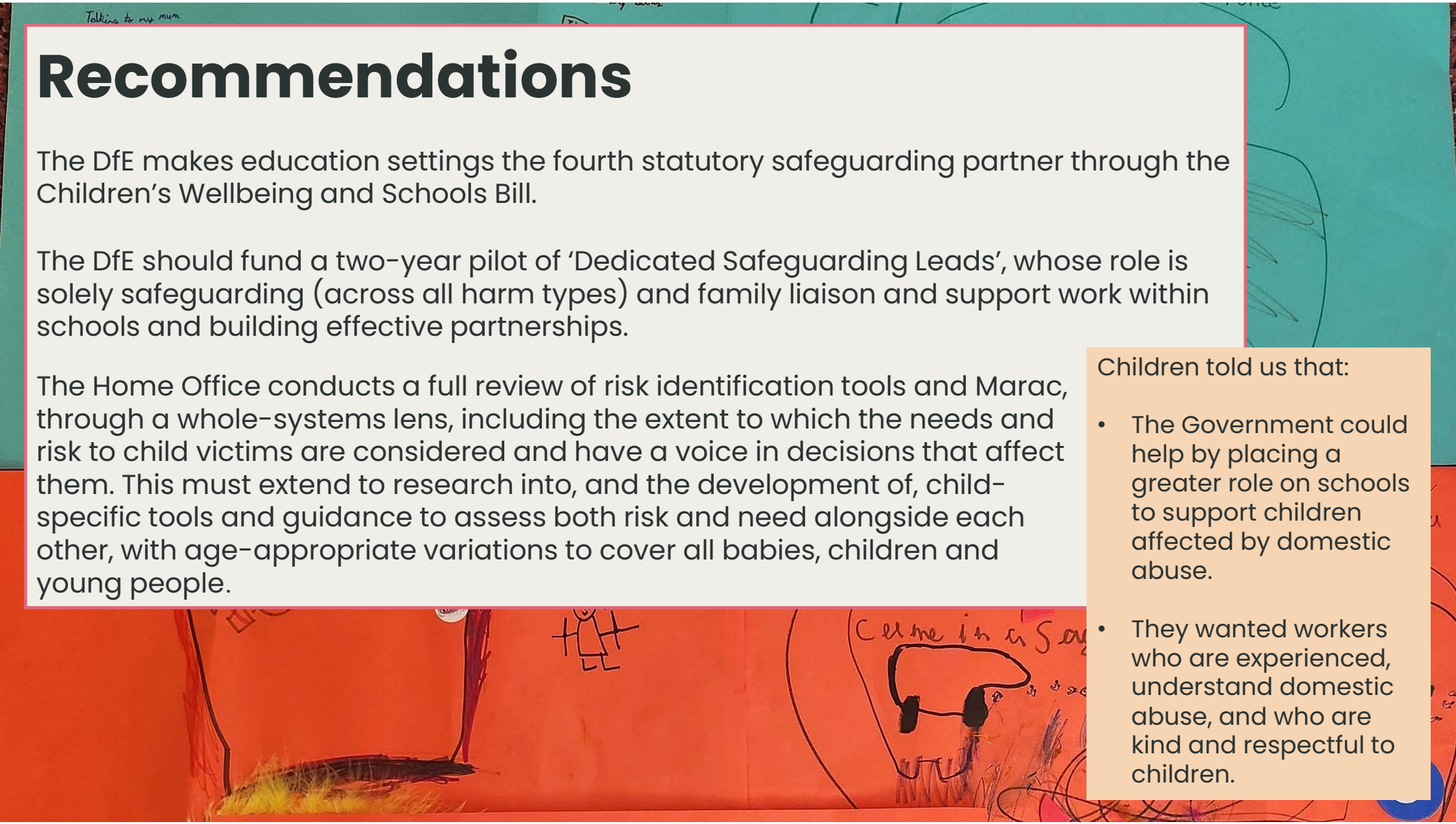
What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 5: Specialist training for frontline professionals

Specialist for professionals supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse/professionals providing interventions for individuals using harmful behaviours	Competence in **assessing risk and need** and **tailoring support** for children experiencing domestic abuse. Competence in **planning focused support sessions** with children that are appropriate for children's age and development and align with their individual and intersecting needs. Understand how **to tailor support for children bereaved by domestic abuse-related deaths.** Understand how to **deliver domestic abuse content in an RSE setting** for various age ranges. Understand how to **engage with perpetrators**, supporting them to engage in behavioural change programmes while holding them to account. Understand how to **advocate for children**, both on an individual and institutional level.

6: Safeguarding



Recommendations

The DfE makes education settings the fourth statutory safeguarding partner through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

The DfE should fund a two-year pilot of 'Dedicated Safeguarding Leads', whose role is solely safeguarding (across all harm types) and family liaison and support work within schools and building effective partnerships.

The Home Office conducts a full review of risk identification tools and Marac, through a whole-systems lens, including the extent to which the needs and risk to child victims are considered and have a voice in decisions that affect them. This must extend to research into, and the development of, child-specific tools and guidance to assess both risk and need alongside each other, with age-appropriate variations to cover all babies, children and young people.

Children told us that:

- The Government could help by placing a greater role on schools to support children affected by domestic abuse.
- They wanted workers who are experienced, understand domestic abuse, and who are kind and respectful to children.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 6: Safeguarding

All child safeguarding policies must be updated to reflect that children are victims in their own right as per the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition.

Where children are identified as victims in their own right, information must be shared in a timely and relevant way with a view to supporting child victims and the non-abusive parent as early as possible, including referrals for advocacy and specialist support. **Communication between agencies and services should not be confined to formal meetings.**

There must be strong strategic and operational multi-agency working, governance and information sharing between MARAC, MATAC, MAPPA and MASH, where these exist.

There must be **regular representation at MARAC meetings** from children's social care, education safeguarding, **children's health safeguarding**, probation, police, housing and the specialist domestic abuse sector to specifically represent child as well as adult victims.

7: Ensuring practice is informed by specialists



Recommendations

The DfE funds the co-location of independent domestic abuse specialist services in children's social care.

The DfE implements learning into the new Child Protection and Family Help Offer, including models that partner with the non-abusive parent and hold the perpetrator to account, such as Safe and Together.

Children told us that:

- To help them recover from domestic abuse, they needed greater choice over the length, location and type of support they receive .
- They want workers who understand domestic abuse and who are good at working with children and young people.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 7: Ensuring Practice is informed by specialists.

Independent specialist services (commissioned and non-commissioned) that work with child victims of domestic abuse **should be able to access local training and guidance** on child protection, adult safeguarding, the Mental Capacity Act, the Care Act, and other relevant information, in order to ensure their responses are informed within wider frameworks, and they are upskilled to be able to bid for local funding.

Universal access points for families **should display signposting information to specialist domestic abuse services.**

Commissioners should ensure that services they commission can take **self-referrals and be as accessible and flexible in their referral pathways as possible.**

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 7: Ensuring Practice is informed by specialists.

CSC should fund **independent domestic abuse specialists to be co-located** in children's social care, to provide guidance and advocacy support on cases where there are barriers for victims in engaging. This must be resourced at **full cost recovery** to meet demand.

Every child and their non-abusive parent subject to domestic abuse should be **offered a range of independent, specialist support.** This should continue if they are stepped down from children's social care or subject to no further action and met with an early help referral and support if appropriate and wanted, to avoid a repeat referral to children's social care.

All **specialist services should have a DSL within them, who is named and trained**, responsible for taking safeguarding decisions and actions, and up to date with relevant safeguarding training.

Local authorities should ensure that all safe accommodation settings **have a specific independent specialist support offer for child victims of domestic abuse**, considering their individual needs, gender, age and other factors

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 7: Ensuring Practice is informed by specialists.

Local strategic leads and commissioners must recognise the value of the independent specialist sectors by:

- Treating them as subject experts and **using their expertise to inform work on children affected by domestic abuse, as well as more universal prevention activity**. This includes ensuring that any local and regional guidance produced that may relate to children as victims of domestic abuse reflects the Domestic Abuse Act.

- Appropriately **building in full cost recovery to cover their time and expenses required to fully engage in local and regional consultations and strategy development** in an institutional advocacy role. This goes beyond formal meetings and is relevant to preparation and action time required.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 7: Ensuring Practice is informed by specialists.

- Allowing **reasonable timeframes for local and regional consultations and strategy** development so that the independent specialist sectors are able to give each item the full attention it needs. Local and regional public bodies should coordinate their requests for information and consultation so that the specialist sectors are not put under undue pressure and time and financial constraints.

- Consider how to **support the independent domestic abuse sector with recruitment, retention, and capacity building, in recognition of the integral part it plays in the multi-agency response**. Local and regional processes must support the sector to thrive and not compound the multiple pressures they face.

What this means for you

domestic abuse commissioner

Theme 7: Ensuring Practice is informed by specialists.

Local strategic leads and commissioners should work in partnership with specialist services and people with lived experience, including children and young people, to:

- Co-produce a comprehensive outcomes framework to maintain and monitor ongoing data collection and data led localised system-wide delivery plans.
- Inform needs assessments.
- Inform child centred service design.

This work must be fully compensated appropriately for both organisations and individuals.

Q&A

Which of the Commissioner's practice recommendations are relevant to your role or setting? What are the tangible actions you can be doing or starting a conversation about where you are?

Please share reflections, existing good practice and ideas on how responses can be improved for babies, children and young people.

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