



Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4JA
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7 October 2020

Sent by email

Dear Chris Philp MP.

As designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, an important function of my role is to work closely with the government to help ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse are able to successfully navigate court services and that those services are sensitive to their needs and experiences throughout the process.

Over the last few months meetings with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice, Alex Chalk MP, have been invaluable in helping to raise issues relating to domestic abuse and the criminal justice system during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as strengthening provisions in the Domestic Abuse Bill with regards to the family courts.

Given the remit of your role across both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, I would welcome a meeting to discuss further how to successfully reduce the backlog that has built up as a result of the significant demands on the court services during this period and the limitations on their functions as a result of the necessary public health measures. I would like to offer my support in helping to resolve this issue in a way that will help ensure that victims and survivors are provided with the specialist support they need. As you will be aware there is significant evidence to support the value of Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts (SDAC) and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) both in supporting victims and ensuring successful prosecutions of perpetrators. My office is currently in the process of commissioning a new piece of work to map the provision of court-based IDVAs and I would be very keen to discuss how findings from this project can help support your objectives in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Jacobs".

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales