



**domestic
abuse
commissioner**



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4 November 2020

Sent by email (cc' Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping & Housing, Kelly Tolhurst)

Dear Rt Hon. Robert Jenrick MP,

As we move towards new national restrictions to help reduce and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus, we are writing to outline our priorities for ensuring that victims and survivors of domestic abuse can access support and perpetrators are brought to justice.

While Covid-19 has not in itself caused domestic abuse, it has created a conducive context for it to happen. For many, this period has led to an escalation of violence and abuse, closed down routes for people to safely escape and made it more challenging to bring perpetrators to justice. As you will be very aware, there has been a surge in demand for domestic abuse services. Beyond the period of the tightest lockdown, the demand for domestic abuse services has continued to remain high as the impact of abuse continues.

During the last lockdown period, swift action from the government helped to ensure that vital funds were made available to domestic abuse services and there was a significant growth in public awareness as a result of the You Are Not Alone campaign.

As we enter into a second period of national lockdown it is essential that we renew and double down our efforts to tackle domestic abuse. We have attached a longer policy note outlining in more detail the specific measures which we believe are necessary to assist the government in meeting its objective to support victims during this period.

We are calling on the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to undertake an urgent needs assessment of any additional resources required by the projects that have already been funded to help ensure that they have the resources needed between now and the end of the financial year to meet the increased demand.

Furthermore, we would like to offer our assistance in helping to identify how alternative accommodation options can be made available for people fleeing domestic abuse during this period by disapplying tests in the homelessness legislation and working closely with councils and housing associations to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are prioritised in allocations policies, and where appropriate perpetrators are rehoused so that a survivor can remain their home.

We want to thank you again for your support on this issue, and as ever, stand ready to support the government in its important work to help keep victims of domestic abuse safe.



Nicole Jacobs
Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales



Dame Vera Baird QC
Victims Commissioner for England and Wales