

# #NOMORE | A MOTHERWELL CHESHIRE CAMPAIGN

## Background

- In 2016 the Government published the most recent Ending VAWG Strategy.
- A refreshed VAWG strategy is published today (Wed 6 March) to update on existing actions in the current strategy to ensure that all Government departments are tackling VAWG.
- It sets out new ambitions for national and local government as well as wider society to tackling all forms of VAWG, including sexual violence, stalking, and so-called 'honour-based' abuse.
- This strategy sits alongside the draft Domestic Abuse Bill, published on 21 January 2019, and non-legislative measures outlined here

## Facts & statistics

- In the UK, 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse and 1 in 5 sexual assault during her lifetime. Globally this rises to 1 in 3.
- The Crime Survey of England and Wales estimates 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims and 631,000 male victims. 5 in 6 victims (83%) did not report their experiences to the police.
- An estimated 3.1% of women (510,000) and 0.8% of men (138,000) aged 16-59 experienced sexual assault in the last year.
- Approximately 2 million adults experienced domestic abuse last year, with 695,000 of these being males.
- We have committed over £100 million to tackle VAWG over 5 years.

## Ten key commitments

The refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls strategy contains 54 new commitments, in addition to the 95 contained within the 2016 Strategy. This includes the commitment to:

- Carry out a review of the criminal justice response to rape and serious sexual offences, reporting to the Criminal Justice Board to investigate why there have been reductions in volumes of police referrals, CPS charges, prosecutions, and convictions for rape and serious sexual assault cases. The review will use this evidence to develop an action plan to address any identified issues, in order to ensure justice for all. It will cover the period from the point of police reporting through to final outcome in court. The Criminal Justice Board and Inter-Ministerial Group on Violence Against Women and Girls will oversee the review. We will establish a sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board, and a stakeholder advisory group to closely involve victims' groups
- Publish the first Male Victims' position statement to recognise the needs of male victims and clarify and strengthen our response, please see the separate fact sheet. This will be published on Thursday 7 March 2019 and will sit alongside the Strategy.
- Conduct research into the connection between porn and attitudes to women. Research has already been carried out into connections between pornography and sexual violence, including the 2015 report commissioned by the Children's Commissioner for England and Wales. However, we believe this needs to go further, and include an understanding of whether there are links between pornography and all harmful attitudes towards women more broadly.
- Explore issues of 'online flashing' and consider options for the next steps. Online flashing is a form of sexual harassment whereby individuals send out explicit sexual images without the consent of those receiving them, including through sharing files on public transport with strangers. We want to consider this issue in more depth and develop an appropriate response.
- Consider the impact of alcohol on VAWG. We will identify gaps in the evidence base on the relationship between alcohol and substance misuse and VAWG, and develop a response as part of the department's alcohol policy work.
- Develop guidance for supporting LGBT victims. Evidence suggests that LGBT victims of VAWG face particular barriers to accessing support. We will work closely with specialist VAWG organisations, commissioners, support

services, and the LGBT community to develop guidance on best practices for supporting LGBT victims, including providing clarity on the operation of the Equality Act.

- Gather regular data on sexual harassment. The Government is committed to challenging myths and stereotypes around harassment and sexual misconduct to ensure that people properly understand consent and that frontline professionals respond appropriately
- Conduct a review of the National Statement of Expectations. Central Government also plays a critical role in providing direction and support to local areas to support their decision-making. To do this, we published the National Statement of Expectations, supported by the Commissioning Toolkit, which sets out a blueprint for local action, and guidance for local commissioners on best practice. The VAWG Strategy refresh commits to reviewing this to ensure that it remains up to date and is having an impact locally.
- Increase funding for rape support centres by 10%. From 2019 there is an increase of 10% in funding for rape support centres, and we will commit funding over three years to provide longer-term sustainability for support centres. The Ministry of Justice will announce the outcome of their competition shortly.
- Provide £50m additional funding to tackle FGM across Africa. The UK Government has made the largest ever donor investment to help end the devastating and harmful practice of FGM by 2030. We will support the Africa-led movement to end FGM by supporting community programmes and grassroots campaigners; working with governments to get laws in place banning FGM, and working with religious leaders to call for an end to FGM and dispel the myth that it is a religious practice.

### **Male Victim Position Statement Fact Sheet**

The Government is publishing a male victim's position statement to sit alongside its Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy.

This covers crimes considered in the Ending VAWG Strategy including domestic abuse, sexual assault, honour-based abuse, stalking, forced marriage, prostitution, and sex work, committed by both men and women against males.

### **Facts and statistics**

- There were 695,000 male victims and survivors of domestic abuse in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018.
- Evidence tells us many men do not report abuse because of feelings of shame, embarrassment, denial, and stereotypes of masculinity.
- Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (2015-17) shows gay and bisexual men are more likely than heterosexual men to be victims of all crime, including the crimes framed within the Ending VAWG Strategy.
- Data from the CSEW (year ending March 2018) shows gay men were more than twice as likely to be victims of domestic abuse.
- An estimated 140,000 men in England and Wales (0.9%) aged 16 to 59 experienced sexual assault in the year ending March 2018.
- A report by Male Survivors Partnership showed 20 percent of men sampled took 31 years to report sexual abuse.
- Data collected by the Ministry of Justice show that there has been a 201% increase in the number of men and boys aged over 13 accessing MoJ-funded rape support services from 2014-18.
- The number of men and boys aged 13 years old and over-reporting a sexual assault has increased by 57% from 3,445 in 2015/16 to 5,394 in 2017/18.
- On average 20% of cases referred to the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) relate to male victims. As is the case with female victims, men may be forced into marriage for a variety of reasons (e.g. to strengthen family ties through marriage, to attempt to 'cure' homosexuality, or to find a carer for an individual with a disability).
- Between 2011-2017, the FMU handled 746 cases (approx. 8% of all cases) involving someone with a learning disability. In 55% of learning disability cases, the victim was male.

## Home Office commitments

- Provide £500,000 to specialist organisations that support male victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- Provide £500,000 to specialist LGBT domestic abuse organisations. This aims to improve support and raise awareness within LGBT communities, encourage reporting and improve monitoring and recording practices.
- Provide £146,000 to Survivors Manchester to support the formation and development of the Male Survivors Partnership. This is the UK umbrella development agency for groups working with male victims and survivors of sexual violence. They use research to gain a greater understanding of the needs of male survivors. This is used to inform commissioners, policymakers, and service providers.
- Providing £24m over the next three years to vital services that support all victims of sexual violence, including men and boys. This will increase access to advice, support, and counselling to help victims cope and, as far as possible, recover from these devastating crimes.

## Domestic Abuse Bill passes House of Commons 7 July 2020

The Domestic Abuse Bill completed its Report Stage and Third Reading yesterday (Monday 6 July), and was voted through by the House of Commons. The Bill will now be debated in the House of Lords, going through the same sequence of readings and stages as in the Commons, before it receives Royal Assent and becomes law.

### **Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins said:**

I am delighted that the Domestic Abuse Bill has been passed by the House of Commons, marking an important step in the Bill becoming law.

The Bill will have a profound and positive impact on millions of victims, survivors, and children across the country, and it is testament to the campaigners and parliamentarians who have worked so hard to get us to where we are today.

### **Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Robert Buckland said:**

This Bill will make a huge difference in supporting survivors of this devastating crime.

From better protection in court to the "rough sex defence" ban - we are delivering a justice system that protects victims and ensures perpetrators answer for their despicable actions.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will:

- create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they witness abuse
- establish a Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system, and other statutory agencies, and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse
- provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support
- place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation

- prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in courts in England and Wales
- bring the case of R vs Brown into legislation, invalidating any courtroom defence of consent where a victim suffers serious harm or is killed
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link)
- enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing ensure that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy
- extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls - 5 November 2019

This factsheet outlines action taken by the government to tackle violence against women and girls.

#### **Domestic abuse**

- On September 18 the government-appointed Nicole Jacobs as the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner.
- The government's Domestic Abuse Bill was introduced to Parliament in July. However, it will not be possible to enact the legislation before Parliament is dissolved. Therefore, the Domestic Abuse Bill will make no further progress in this Parliament.
- We continue to progress the non-legislative work which supports the measures in the Bill, including:
  - £8 million of Home Office funding to support children affected by domestic abuse;
  - crisis funding for those with no recourse to public funds (via the tampon tax)
  - additional funding and capacity building for services for disabled, elderly, and LGBT victims
  - updated support, training, and guidance on economic abuse
  - new and additional training for jobcentre work coaches, police, social workers, and probation staff to help them recognise and effectively tackle abuse
  - improved support for victims in the family court
  - additional £500,000 funding for provisions for male victims

#### **Further action to tackle violence against women and girls**

Earlier this year the Home Office published its refreshed violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy in order to provide further support to victims and survivors of violent crime. Among the 54 new commitments pledged in the refresh were:

- A cross-sector, end-to-end review into the criminal justice response to rape, overseen by the Criminal Justice Board;
- Commissioning research into whether there is a connection between pornography and attitudes towards women;
- Publish guidance on best practice for supporting LBG+ victims;
- Explore issues of 'online flashing' and consider options for next steps; and
- Consider the impact of alcohol on violence against women and girls

As part of our commitment to tackling all forms of VAWG, we have pledged over £100 million in funding.

On October 30, the government published the University of Bristol's research into the nature and prevalence of prostitution and sex work in England and Wales today, to help build the evidence base on this complex issue.

### **Sexual Violence**

Through the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, we are conducting a cross-sector, end-to-end review into the criminal justice response to rape, overseen by the Criminal Justice Board

The review has identified four priority areas which are to understand why there have been:

- Increases in cases that are closed by the police where a victim has been identified but where the victim does not support a prosecution
- Variation in referral to charge rates by police forces
- Declines in CPS charge volumes
- Decreases in the volume of rape convictions

On September 18 the Ministry of Justice announced increased funding of £5m to support victims of sexual violence, which includes £4m to provide a 50% uplift to the Rape Support Fund, and £1m to improve the quantity and consistency of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers.

### **Forced Marriage and FGM**

- The joint Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is leading efforts to combat forced marriage both at home and abroad. The FMU runs an advice helpline which can be reached on: 0207 008 0151
- The government made Forced Marriage a criminal offence in 2014
- More than 2,000 Forced Marriage Protection Orders have so far been issued
- The FMU is carrying out an ongoing programme of outreach for professionals, which works to prevent cases through training and awareness-raising. We have also published statutory multi-agency guidance and made available free e-learning to help professionals to recognise the warning signs and ensure that the right action is taken to help protect those at risk.
- There have been 4 convictions for forced marriage in the UK.
- Operation Limelight is an ongoing operation between law enforcement agencies at the border, which aims to raise awareness of crimes such as forced marriage and FGM
- The government significantly strengthened the law in 2015 to improve protection for victims and those at risk of FGM, and to break down barriers to prosecution. The government has:
  - introduced a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM;
  - extended the reach of extraterritorial offences;
  - introduced lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM;
  - introduced civil FGM Protection Orders; and
  - introduced a mandatory reporting duty for known cases in under 18s
- FGM Protection Orders are being used to good effect with 418 being granted since their introduction to the end of June 2019
- A mandatory reporting duty requiring professionals to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police came into force on 31 October 2015
- In February 2019 a woman became the first person in the UK to be convicted of FGM

## **Male victims**

In March the government published the first cross-government position statement on male victims of these crimes, which sets out the scale of abuse against men and the specific issues they can face

The Male Victims Position Statement sets out 12 specific commitments to better enable male victims and survivors to come forward and receive the support they need and bring perpetrators to justice. These include:

- 
- providing £500,000 to specialist organisations that support male victims and survivors of domestic abuse;
- awarding a specialist LGBT domestic abuse organisation that supports LGBT victims and survivors with £500,000; and
- providing increased funding over the next three years for services providing advice and counselling to all victims of sexual violence, including men and boys