



The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse

**Annual Report
2018-2019**



All-Party Parliamentary Group on
Domestic Violence and Abuse

women's aid
until women & children are safe

About the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Domestic Violence and Abuse provides a forum for discussion on how policy and legislation relating to domestic violence and abuse is affecting survivors and specialist support services. Women's Aid provides the secretariat to this group and supports the group in an administrative and operational capacity. The chair of the APPG is Jess Phillips MP, and the vice-chair is Maria Miller MP.

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either house or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of members of both houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group.

The report was researched and compiled by Women's Aid.

Thank you to the survivors

The APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse would like to record our sincerest thanks to the survivors who share their experiences, contribute and attend the APPG meetings.

The group understands how hard it can be for survivors to speak about the abuse they suffered. The courage they display is remarkable.

The valuable contribution made by many brave survivors provides the APPG – and the policymakers that the APPG influences – with clear insight into, and understanding of, the range of experiences and needs of survivors, and the reforms required to make a true impact on their lives and the lives of their children.

Survivors are experts by experience, and the APPG is extremely thankful to those who have shared their expertise.

Report author: Sophie Francis-Cansfield

Published by:

Women's Aid Federation of England, PO Box 3245, Bristol, BS2 2EH
© Women's Aid 2019

Women's Aid Federation of England is a registered charity in England & Wales (1054154)

■ Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
The 2018-19 programme:	
▶ Ensuring the domestic abuse bill works for migrant women	7
▶ Tackling homelessness – extending priority need to all survivors of domestic abuse	8
▶ Strengthening support for survivors – paid employment leave	10
▶ Domestic abuse: a neglected public health issue	11
Review: The APPG’s previous recommendations	14
Conclusion	15
Endnotes	16
Appendix: The officers and speakers of the APPG	17

Foreword

The APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse has completed another productive year. This year has been a key time for the group to influence government, as 2019 saw the publishing of the draft domestic abuse bill and finally saw it laid before parliament.

At this important time the group has been able to work not just cross-party, but with survivors of domestic abuse and the organisations who represent them, to ensure that the forthcoming domestic abuse bill can truly be a piece of legislation we can be proud of. We are not there yet, but this year saw the group act as the key vehicle to ensure that Home Office ministers heard the voices of all women whose lives they seek to improve. This included a significant focus on our enquiry into how the bill would affect migrant women, especially those without recourse to public funds. Working with the women's sector and the Step Up! Migrant Women coalition, we were able to ensure that ministers heard directly from migrant women survivors in order to inform how policy is decided going forward. There is still much work to be done in this area, however we feel proud that the APPG has led the way in providing a platform for some of the most marginalised voices.

Working with the APPG on Ending Homelessness this year, the APPG undertook enquiries to assess how well homelessness services across the country are catering for survivors of abuse and their children. The evidence was clear that more needs to be done to help those escaping abuse. They need not only a sustainable funding model for specialist refuge accommodation to ensure they can access a space, but also to be automatically assumed in priority need to access housing. The group will continue to work with colleagues in the APPG on Ending Homelessness to ensure that policies in this area are improved.

Following on from trailblazing legislation passed last year in New Zealand, the APPG sought to work across borders with legislators on policies which would help survivors of

abuse in their work places. In New Zealand survivors of domestic abuse are now entitled to 10 days paid leave if they are experiencing domestic abuse. Working with those who passed the laws in New Zealand and the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse, the TUC and GMB, the APPG has identified a number of key employment policies which would help survivors maintain and thrive in their employment. Too often policy makers see survivors of abuse merely through the prism of their welfare dependency. Domestic abuse affects every part of a survivor's life and for too long the world of work has been excluded from the possible solutions.

While the domestic abuse bill, and traditionally policy in this area, is held firmly by the Home Office, the reality is that domestic abuse is an issue for all government departments. It has long been felt that the Department for Health and Social Care should be a greater part of the conversation to create solutions when considering violence against women and girls. The APPG responded to this with a focus this year on the public health issues associated with domestic abuse and hope that going forward, policy will reflect this.

It is our honour to serve as the chair and vice-chair of the APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse, working with our secretariat, Women's Aid, and with voices from across the sector. We feel that the APPG goes from strength to strength in getting this once hidden issue to the top of the political agenda.



Jess Phillips

Jess Phillips MP
Chair of the APPG



Maria Miller

Maria Miller MP
Vice-Chair of the APPG

■ Introduction

In January 2019, the government published research into the social and economic cost of domestic abuse which showed that it costs society £66 billion a year¹. However, we know that domestic abuse costs more than money. It costs the lives of survivors and children.

Since the announcement of the government's intention to bring forward legislation on domestic abuse in 2017, the APPG has sought to highlight that domestic abuse is much wider than a criminal justice issue alone. The group's meetings have been, and continue to be, vital for ensuring parliamentarians understand lived experiences of domestic abuse.

The domestic abuse bill provides a real opportunity to transform the national response to survivors by bringing about change in both attitudes and practice across housing, health, family courts, education, immigration, welfare and specialist domestic abuse services. In 2018-19 the group has continued to focus on ensuring the legislation is scrutinised and amended to truly reflect the needs of survivors and life-saving specialist services. The topics of these meetings examined the wider aims of the government's domestic abuse bill, and they continue to be a valuable parliamentary mechanism for engagement on, and scrutiny of, the legislation.

Alongside this work, a joint committee of cross-party MPs and peers, which was chaired by the APPG's vice-chair Maria Miller MP, scrutinised the draft legislation. The committee took written evidence and oral evidence from a broad range of domestic abuse experts, and held dedicated sessions with adult and child survivors. The APPG welcomed the committee's report² which was published in June 2019, and included many recommendations to government previously made by this group.

Since the final meeting of this year's programme, the government has introduced

the domestic abuse bill³ into parliament. While there are minimal shifts in the original proposals of the legislation since it was published in draft form in January 2019, the government stated in its response⁴ to the joint committee's report that, "We have accepted many of the recommendations, in part or in full and have committed to giving other recommendations full consideration over the next few months ... once we have completed our consideration of these outstanding recommendations and, where appropriate, we will also bring forward amendments to the bill." The APPG urges the government to act on these commitments and bring forward new measures within the legislation.

As the domestic abuse bill progresses through parliament, the APPG will continue to push for the important and urgent changes that need to be delivered through the legislation to change the response received by survivors. The group is clear that the bill must meet the needs of **all** survivors of domestic abuse.

Terminology

In this briefing the term survivor has been used as much as possible, however there are some instances where this isn't possible and we refer specifically to women and girls. Nevertheless the primary focus is women survivors, as domestic abuse is a gendered crime which is deeply rooted in the societal inequality between women and men. It takes place 'because she is a woman and happens disproportionately to women.'⁵

In addition, the APPG's default position is to talk about 'domestic abuse' because we recognise that survivors may not identify with 'domestic violence' if they have not been physically abused, and we want to meet the needs of survivors and talk to them in a way that is as accessible as possible. However, we know that within the violence against women and girls (VAWG) sector and civil society 'domestic violence' is frequently used and there will be circumstances where this is the most appropriate terminology.

The APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse's recommendations

- ▶ Ensure the domestic abuse bill meets the needs of migrant women by expanding the eligibility criteria and length of the domestic violence rule (DVR) and destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession.
- ▶ Amend the domestic abuse bill to establish a firewall to separate immigration enforcement from the public services that survivors report and seek help from.
- ▶ Amend the domestic abuse bill to include a proposal that ensures every survivor fleeing domestic abuse who is homeless is automatically considered in priority need for settled housing.
- ▶ Ensure the domestic abuse bill goes beyond the criminal justice system alone and delivers requirements on employers to provide survivors with a period of paid leave.
- ▶ Secure domestic abuse and sexual violence as a strategic priority across the health and social care sector.
- ▶ Ensure all frontline healthcare staff are trained in understanding VAWG and advanced training is given to professionals who are in frequent contact with survivors (such as GPs and midwives).
- ▶ Ensure the domestic abuse commissioner maps and assesses the response of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local health bodies as an urgent priority.

2018-19 programme

Over the 2018-19 programme, the chair, vice-chair, officers and secretariat of the APPG agreed to focus on the following key issues:

- **Ensuring the domestic abuse bill works for migrant women.**
- **Tackling homelessness** – extending priority need to all survivors of domestic abuse.
- **Strengthening support for survivors** – paid employment leave.
- **Domestic abuse: a neglected public health issue.**

■ Ensuring the domestic abuse bill works for migrant women

This APPG is clear that ensuring full and equal protection and support for migrant survivors must be a priority for the domestic abuse bill. Migrant women face severe barriers to reporting and seeking help. Perpetrators use immigration status as a form of coercive control – threatening to inform the authorities, exploiting survivors’ fears of deportation and destitution, and withholding information or documentation on their status. This can pose insurmountable barriers to leaving, often compounded by hostile immigration policies. Despite clear duties that protection of victims should be prioritised ahead of immigration enforcement, the APPG is highly concerned that over half (27) of police forces in England and Wales confirmed in response to freedom of information (FoI) requests that they share victims’ details with the Home Office for immigration control purposes⁶.

“Migrant women should not have to choose between destitution or staying with their perpetrator.”

Zehrah Hasan, Liberty

Migrant survivors are also subject to inadequate – and even discriminatory – responses from the statutory services meant to protect and support them; a study of over 250 survivors found the police were less likely to arrest, pursue an investigation, or bring a criminal charge in cases involving migrant women than UK/EU nationals⁷.

This APPG remains deeply concerned that, as it stands, the domestic abuse bill does not offer the necessary protections that migrant women need. The Istanbul Convention

Two thirds of migrant women felt they would not be supported by the police due to their status and the most prominent barrier to reporting was fear of deportation.

Latin American Women’s Rights Service and Professor Cathy McIlwaine (2019)

makes clear that victims should be protected regardless of immigration status⁸. However, survivors with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) – including those with insecure status, undocumented migrants, survivors on student visas and European Economic Area (EEA) nationals – are unable to access welfare benefits. This means in practice they face huge challenges accessing refuge, as very few refuge services, who are facing a funding crisis, are able to cover the housing costs of their stay.

“The domestic abuse bill should not create false divisions between women or women on particular visas, and should ensure that all women have access to the support they need.”

Janet McDermott, Women’s Aid

The APPG heard from organisations working ‘by and for’ black, minority ethnic (BME) and migrant survivors about the reforms required to tackle these issues. These include: Southall Black Sister’s recommendations to expand the eligibility criteria and length of the domestic violence rule (DVR) and destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession to ensure all women with insecure immigration status can access a life-saving refuge space; and the Step Up Migrant Women coalition’s call for a firewall to separate immigration enforcement from

the public services that survivors report and seek help from. Both of these issues were highlighted by the joint committee that scrutinised the draft legislation, which also recommended for the creation of a firewall and for the DDV concession time limit to be extended to six months. In its response the government agreed to review the overall response to migrant survivors, however this group understands how vulnerable these survivors are and calls for more urgent action to be taken.

The APPG is clear that, alongside these changes, dedicated services led 'by and for' BME and migrant women are vital for meeting migrant women's specific needs - from language specialisms to expertise on immigration and discrimination. Although the Home Office makes clear that local areas should fund these services, in 2018 there were just 30 refuge services run 'by and for' BME women⁹.

“Services for black and minoritised women and girls are facing real threats, and without dedicated funding these specialist services will no longer exist.”

Marai Larasi, Imkaan

The bill must be delivered alongside a sustainable funding solution for support services, including specialist BME services, and ensure they are resourced to meet migrant women's needs.

Recommendations

The APPG urges the government to ensure the domestic abuse bill meets the needs of migrant women by expanding the eligibility criteria and length of the DVR and DDV concession, and is amended to establish a firewall to separate immigration enforcement from the public services that survivors report and seek help from.

■ Tackling homelessness - extending priority need to all survivors of domestic abuse

Too often people become homeless as a result of domestic abuse. Women's Aid's No Woman Turned Away (NWTa) project reveals the stark realities facing women and children who are unable to find a refuge space. 22 (7.1%) of the 309 women supported by the NWTa specialist practitioners slept rough, including in their car or in 24 hour homeless shelters, five of the women who slept rough had their children with them, and one woman was pregnant¹⁰.

In the 2017-18 programme, the group held a joint meeting with the APPG on Ending Homelessness to highlight the inconsistent, inappropriate and sometimes unsafe response when meeting the housing needs of survivors.

“When I first moved to London I struggled to gain accommodation as I wasn't from there. When I finally did secure housing, it was inadequate and unsafe - with other residents taking drugs in the communal areas.”

Survivor

Joint recommendations have been used by officers and other parliamentarians over the last year. In particular, the two groups have focused on the need to extend priority need to all survivors of domestic abuse.

Survivors are not automatically considered as in priority need for accommodation if they become homeless¹¹. Local authorities will only accept survivors as in priority need if the authority is satisfied that they have met

an additional 'vulnerability' test. The APPG remains concerned about how local areas in England are assessing 'vulnerability' when survivors are presenting as homeless to housing departments.

Proving you are homeless due to domestic abuse can be incredibly distressing for survivors and there is a lack of consistency between local authorities when it comes to assessment. The APPG is aware that survivors have been told to return home to a dangerous situation to retrieve evidence to prove they are homeless due to domestic abuse. In some cases, survivors are also being asked to provide a criminal reference number, which is inappropriate as many survivors do not want to report abuse to the police.

In addition, experiences show that domestic abuse in isolation is rarely considered to qualify someone as in priority need; particularly without dependent children.¹² The APPG remains deeply concerned by this, as it is vital for survivors fleeing domestic abuse to have access to safe, secure accommodation.

"We know survivors and their children are turned away daily from life-saving refuges in England due to lack of space, forcing them to sleep rough, sofa-surf and even return to the abuser because they simply have nowhere to turn. Nearly a quarter of the survivors supported by our No Woman Turned Away project in 2017-18 who approached their local housing team for help were told they weren't in 'priority need.' "

Lucy Hadley, Women's Aid

In 2017, only two per cent of people were found to be in priority need and made an offer of settled housing because they were vulnerable as a result of domestic abuse.

**MCLG, live tables on homelessness:
Table 773**

These inadequate and unsafe responses demonstrate why the domestic abuse bill must clarify that that all survivors fleeing their homes, and those leaving refuge, are in priority need. This APPG is clear that this decision must not be left to the discretion of local housing team's assessments of 'vulnerability'. In addition, in Wales and Scotland, domestic abuse is already a priority need, therefore survivors are receiving a different response depending on where they are in the country. It is therefore essential for the government to look to the example set, and provide the same protection for survivors in England.

Recommendation

This APPG, alongside the APPG for Ending Homelessness, calls on the government to amend the domestic abuse bill to include a proposal that ensures every survivor fleeing domestic abuse who is homeless is automatically considered in priority need for settled housing, rather than being subject to the vulnerability test to determine whether they qualify.

■ Strengthening support for survivors – paid employment leave

18.1% of respondents said their partner prevented them from having paid employment.

**Survivor Voices Survey,
Women's Aid (2018)**

It is estimated that around one in five victims of domestic abuse in the UK have to take time off work because of the abuse they have experienced¹³. Survivors often face significant difficulty in navigating employment policies and retaining their job at what is an incredibly traumatic time. Economic abuse* is a key tactic used by perpetrators to control their partner, and specific tools can include denying the means to improve a person's economic status and sabotaging employment. In addition, women who escape to refuge may also need to give up their job so that the abuser cannot find them. These problems undermine financial independence, which is vital for survivors leaving an abusive partner and trying to move on to safety.

"All I want to do is work and support my child but everything is stacked up against you without help."¹⁴

Survivor

There was an increased attention on these issues in 2018 when New Zealand passed legislation granting survivors of domestic abuse 10 days paid leave to allow them to

leave their partners, find new homes and protect themselves and their children**. There were a number of important details in this piece of legislation, including survivors not needing to provide proof of their circumstances, and being entitled to fast-tracked flexible work conditions designed to ensure their safety (such as changing their work location, changing their email address and having their contact details removed from the business's website).

The APPG was grateful that Jan Logie MP, the parliamentary under secretary for justice, who pushed for this important bill to go through the New Zealand parliament, shared her insight and knowledge with the group on the development of the legislation, and the factors that had been taken into consideration in regard to paid leave and flexible working arrangements.

"It's exciting to start changing the culture on employment and domestic abuse. The impact of this legislation (New Zealand) will be positive, but we also need training and other issues, such as housing, to be tackled."

Jan Logie MP

In the UK, there are currently initiatives such as the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA)¹⁵ that are working to promote awareness of domestic abuse with employers and provide them with tools to recognise domestic abuse and work with employees who experience it. GMB, the union, also have a Work to Stop Domestic Abuse initiative¹⁶ to support workers experiencing domestic abuse.

The APPG welcomes such examples of good practice. When the prevalence of this issue is taken in to consideration, the group is clear that all employers' practice must

* Economic abuse incorporates a range of behaviours which allow a perpetrator to control someone else's economic resources or freedoms.

** Domestic Violence - Victims' Protection Act 2018

be raised to this level to ensure survivors receive appropriate support at work. The group discussed how paid employment leave could be introduced in the UK, assessing the specific domestic factors that would need to be considered, and the legislation that would need to be amended, which has provided the APPG with a clear understanding of how to push forward reform in this area.

As it stands, the domestic abuse bill does not contain any specific proposals on employment, however it does take the welcome step of including economic abuse in the proposed statutory definition of domestic abuse. If the bill included an amendment that brought in paid domestic abuse leave, this would be a clear and important way of translating the government's focus on this form of abuse into much needed action.

Recommendation

The APPG urges the government to ensure the domestic abuse bill goes beyond the criminal justice system alone and delivers requirements on employers to provide survivors with a period of paid leave.

■ Domestic abuse: a neglected public health issue

The consequences of domestic abuse are estimated to cost health services £2.3 billion in one year.

The economic and social costs of domestic abuse (Oliver et al), Home Office (2019)

Domestic abuse and health services

Intimate partner abuse is a global health problem of epidemic proportions¹⁷. Survivors have often been subject to years of prolonged abuse; severely traumatic experiences associated with long term health impacts. 78% of women living in refuges in England on one day in 2017 had health needs, such as needing help with physical, mental or sexual health issues, and long-term illnesses and disabilities¹⁸.

“There is a year on year increase in people with complex needs who require refuge.”

Olwen Kelly, Swindon Women's Aid

Despite the huge health impacts of domestic abuse¹⁹, the APPG remains deeply concerned that it is not a health or social care priority at a national or local level. The APPG heard from a number of health professionals who highlighted the lack of progress in this area, alongside the other challenges facing health staff. The group acknowledges the recognition in the document²⁰ that accompanied the draft domestic abuse bill of the importance of improving awareness of domestic abuse

amongst health professionals, and that NHS England will be producing a four year plan in response to the aims of the bill. Almost all survivors interact with health services at some point and, for many women, it may be the only place they are alone and feel safe to disclose. Health and social care professionals are therefore in a crucial position to identify abuse, intervene early, and deliver support and referrals to other specialist services. There was a clear consensus amongst the speakers at the APPG that there must be compulsory – and on-going – training for all healthcare staff, with suggestions that this could be combined with the already mandatory safeguarding training.

“My first positive experience came through my health visitor who identified what was happening to me as she had experienced it too. My health visitor started visiting more, and labelled the abuse in her notes.”

Survivor

However without the resources needed, health services will not be able to meaningfully improve early intervention, care and support. The human and economic cost of domestic abuse to health services must be taken seriously by the Department for Health and Social Care, and the department needs to play a greater role by providing funding for training and hospital-based domestic abuse services.

In addition, the APPG is clear that the domestic abuse bill is an opportunity to deliver progress. The APPG knows from survivors and specialist services that there are high levels of inconsistency in responding to domestic abuse, which results in a lottery of access to support for survivors. The APPG welcomes that the domestic abuse bill places a duty on clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and NHS bodies to co-operate and respond to the domestic abuse commissioner’s recommendations.

To ensure an effective framework of national accountability, the group calls on the commissioner to map and assess the response of CCGs and local health bodies as an urgent priority.

“The proposed commissioner in the bill will be helpful in highlighting the public duty that the health service has in regard to responding to domestic abuse.”

**Gene Feder,
Professor of Primary Health Care**

This monitoring would help to ensure that local areas and CCGs are delivering safe and appropriate responses to survivors.

Sexual violence

While rapes reported to the police have nearly tripled (up by 173%) between 2014 and 2018, women have a less than 4% chance of ever having their case heard.

CPS Violence against women and girls crime report 2017-2018

Repeated concerns have been raised (including from this APPG) that limiting the domestic abuse bill to domestic abuse only and separating out this form of abuse from the established domestic policy framework of violence against women and girls (VAWG), ignores the inherent overlaps and intersections with domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG. However this APPG recognises that specialist experts, such as Rape Crisis England and Wales, note that sexual violence and domestic abuse do need to be considered and responded to

separately, particularly when all the forms of sexual violence are considered, for example stranger rape.

“Almost all the violence I experienced was sexual and my ex used it as a tool to carry out his coercion and control over me.”

Survivor

The APPG acknowledges that there is a welcome government focus on sexual violence, such as the end-to-end review of rape cases which is a result of the deeply concerning prosecution and conviction rates and the campaigning of specialist sexual violence and VAWG organisations. However, the response and support that survivors need goes beyond the criminal justice system. The group remains concerned that a key opportunity for identification of sexual violence workers in health settings. Since the publication of the draft domestic abuse bill, the group has urged for lessons to be learnt from the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, which included a national training framework and ‘ask and act’ duties for routine enquiry. Queries about why it is not mandatory for routine enquiry in health settings to take place have often been raised with the APPG. Similarly to domestic abuse, there is consensus that the Department for Health and Social Care does not give sufficient attention to sexual violence.

“Survivors are being let down by domestic abuse and sexual violence not being treated as a public health issue”

Jacqui Kilburn, Women’s Aid

Recommendations

The group urges the government to secure domestic abuse and sexual violence as a strategic priority across the health and social care sector; ensure all frontline healthcare staff are trained in understanding VAWG and advanced training is given to professionals who are in frequent contact with survivors (such as GPs and midwives); and the domestic abuse commissioner maps and assesses the response of CCGs and local health bodies as an urgent priority.

■ Review: The APPG's previous recommendations

In the Queen's speech in 2017, the government committed to deliver a domestic abuse bill, and therefore the group's 2017-18 programme covered a range of different issues related to the legislation. Since the APPG's report²¹ launched in September 2018 there have been a number of government announcements that could help secure some of the APPG's previous recommendations.

Sustainable funding

The APPG has repeatedly urged the government to provide a sustainable, long-term and secure funding model for specialist domestic abuse services, including those specific services for BME women, LGBT women, and women with disabilities, and specialist support for children who have experienced domestic abuse. The APPG therefore welcomed the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's proposal to establish the first ever legal duty placed on local authorities to deliver support to survivors of domestic abuse in accommodation-based services, backed by funding to place services on a sustainable footing. This new legal framework is a significant step in the right direction, and has the potential to end the postcode lottery that survivors currently face when seeking a refuge space. The government undertook a public consultation on this and published its response in October. The APPG welcomes the announcement that the duty will be delivered through the domestic abuse bill.

Online abuse

Women experiencing VAWG are not only abused offline, but frequently harassed, abused and stalked online by their partners or ex-partners. The APPG has called for a duty for social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, to work with specialist domestic abuse organisations to ensure that women and children survivors of domestic abuse are kept safe online. The group were pleased that the government acknowledged the increase in online abuse through its published 'Online Harms' white paper in April 2019, which included proposals such as a new statutory duty of care to make online companies more responsible for the safety of users. However, currently the proposals do not explicitly cover how online providers prevent and respond to online forms of VAWG, which the APPG is clear must be included.

Domestic abuse commissioner

A key element of the bill is the creation of a new domestic abuse commissioner, and the APPG welcomes the appointment of Nicole Jacobs as the designate domestic abuse commissioner. The APPG sought to examine the government's proposals and comparable roles to help strengthen the proposals and ensure that the role would make a difference to the lived experiences of survivors. The group made a number of recommendations such as calling for the commissioner to have an increased independence from government. The bill, as it now stands, contains welcome government amendments to the role, including on: reporting to parliament rather than only the home secretary; and a specific duty on cabinet ministers to respond to recommendations made by the commissioner.

■ Conclusion

The APPG has dedicated the last two programmes of meetings to scrutinise the domestic abuse bill and the current gaps in the legislation. The group welcomes the bill's entry into parliament, and remains committed to working with the government to ensure the needs of all survivors are heard and reflected in the legislation's journey through parliament.

The work of the APPG is crucial for ensuring an accurate understanding in parliament of the lived experiences of survivors, and the recommendations made by the group are made through the expertise of courageous survivors and specialist services, who remain over-stretched and under-resourced. These recommendations have been, and will continue to be, widely used and referenced in a range of sectors that will be engaging with the legislation during its passage. There are a number of key recommendations that remain unaddressed by the domestic abuse bill or insufficiently addressed within other government work, which is why the group continues to push for these important and urgent changes. The APPG hopes that the government will continue to openly and constructively engage with the group, and urges for the APPG's recommendations to be delivered to ensure that the bill is truly transformative.

The APPG will continue to hold meetings that support the wider aims of the domestic abuse bill, and highlight the true cross-departmental response that is needed, as well as continuing to tackle the societal issues, attitudes and inequalities that underpin and perpetrate domestic abuse. The APPG is resolute that the opportunity presented by the domestic abuse bill must not be missed. It must meet the needs of all survivors of domestic abuse and, specifically, migrant women must not continue to be marginalised from protection and support.

■ Endnotes

- 1 Oliver, R., Alexander, B., Roe, S. & Wlasny, M. (2019) *The economic and social costs of domestic abuse Research Report 107*. London: The Home Office
- 2 Available at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201719/jtselect/jtddab/2075/2075.pdf>
- 3 https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0422/cbill_2017-20190422_en_1.htm
- 4 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817556/CCS0619467038-001_Domestic_Abuse_Bill_Print_WEb_Accessible.pdf
- 5 United Nations (UN) Declaration on the elimination of violence against women 1993.
- 6 <http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2017/11/28/woman-reports-rape-to-police-and-is-arrested-on-immigration>
- 7 Bates, L., Gangoli, G., Hester, M. and Justice Project Team (2018) *Policy Evidence Summary 1: Migrant Women*. University of Bristol.
- 8 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Article 59.
- 9 Women's Aid (2019) *The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The Annual Audit*, Bristol: Women's Aid.
- 10 Women's Aid (2019) *Nowhere To Turn Report: Findings from the third year of the No Woman Turned Away project*, Bristol: Women's Aid.
- 11 Under the Housing Act 1996.
- 12 MHCLG, Live tables on homelessness: Table 773.
- 13 Trades Union Congress (August 2014), *Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A TUC Survey Report*.
- 14 Survivor who responded to Women's Aid's Survivor Voice Survey 2018.
- 15 <https://eida.org.uk/about/>
- 16 <https://www.gmb.org.uk/sites/default/files/domestic-abuse-policy.pdf>
- 17 WHO, Global and regional estimates of violence against women, 2013
- 18 Women's Aid (2017) *Survival and Beyond: The Domestic Abuse Report 2017*. Bristol: Women's Aid.
- 19 Oliver, R., Alexander, B., Roe, S. & Wlasny, M. (2019) *The economic and social costs of domestic abuse Research Report 107*. London: The Home Office
- 20 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-domestic-abuse-bill-overarching-documents>
- 21 <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/appg/>

■ Appendix

Officers of the APPG

- Jess Phillips MP – Chair
- Maria Miller MP – Vice-Chair
- Sarah Champion MP
- Vicky Foxcroft MP
- Baroness Glenys Thornton
- Caroline Lucas MP
- Baroness Sally Hamwee
- Norman Lamb MP
- Angela Rayner MP
- Paul Scully MP
- Sir Peter Bottomley MP
- Gavin Newlands MP
- Alison Thewliss MP
- Sir Keir Starmer MP
- Thangham Debbonaire MP
- Seema Malhotra MP
- Alex Chalk MP
- Baroness Verma
- Emma Hardy MP
- Alex Norris MP
- Angela Smith MP
- Baroness Lister
- Baroness Hogg

Speakers

- Andrea Simon, Public Affairs Manager, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)
- Annie, Survivor and Campaigner
- Dame Vera Baird QC, Victim's Commissioner
- Dianne Whitfield, co-Chair, Rape Crisis England & Wales
- Donna Kinnair, Chief Executive, Royal College of Nursing
- Dr Ravi Thiara, University of Warwick
- Gene Feder, Professor of Primary Health Care
- Jackie Doyle-Price MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health, Inequalities and Suicide Prevention
- Jacqui Kilburn, National Training Centre Manager, Women's Aid
- Jan Logie MP (New Zealand), Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Justice
- Janet McDermott, Head of Membership, Women's Aid
- Jemma, Survivor and Campaigner
- Katie Ghose, Chief Executive, Women's Aid Federation of England
- Marai Larasi, Executive Director, Imkaan
- Maxine Hendry, Tasking and Deployment Manager, Renfrewshire MARAC
- Olwen Kelly, Director, Swindon Women's Aid
- Zehrah Hasan, Policy and Campaigns Assistant, Liberty

*The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse
Annual Report 2018-19*

Women's Aid Federation of England,
PO Box 3245, Bristol, BS2 2EH
T: 0117 944 4411 F: 0117 924 1703
E: info@womensaid.org.uk W: www.womensaid.org.uk www.thehideout.org.uk

© Women's Aid 2019