

Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill

PIP WILLIAMS



Knowledge is power.

Francis Bacon

“ quote fancy

Education & Training



“It is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim’s liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self.

It is not just women’s bodily integrity which is violated but also their human rights” Evan Stark



Education & Training

- ▶ The new definition must recognise that coercive control - a repeated pattern of degrading, isolating, intimidating and controlling a victim - is at the heart of domestic abuse. It needs to be underpinned with a gendered understanding of DVA
- ▶ Ensure mandatory Relationships and Sex Education, which will be introduced in all schools from September 2019, has a clear and gendered focus on tackling domestic abuse and VAWG and is delivered with a 'whole school approach' to prevention.

Early Help & Support

Early Help & Support

- ▶ Many women are doing their best to manage the abuse on their own, to keep their children as safe as possible, but without this early help available or others who see, can support, sign post and give info. They are finding themselves in a position of being punished, of having their children removed rather than being protected and supported to avoid reaching crisis point.
- ▶ It's a duty for all public bodies to make domestic violence and abuse their business- especially in health , social services and education - so that women are able to disclose and get support at the first point that is right for them

Health & Wellbeing

- ▶ Establish mandatory, ongoing training for health care providers and professionals for identifying and responding to domestic abuse, with advanced provision for 'first contact' staff and those in specialities where they are likely to care for women and children survivors
- ▶ Ensure health care settings are safe places for survivors, where disclosures of domestic abuse are responded to effectively and which deliver effective 'sign-posting' and 'referral pathways' to specialist support services.
- ▶ Secure domestic abuse as a priority within Public Health England's Strategy and the NHS Forward View, and setting out clear roles and responsibilities of local health and social care providers for commissioning and service provision.



Specialist Refuges & Services



Tina

“We've been abused, day in, day out, so we are all going to have complex issues. We had complex lives”

Cash C

“Support staff is too stronger word to describe the employees at the refuge. They weren’t qualified to help navigate the complex and soul destroying system inflicted upon women and children fleeing domestic violence.

They saw us as a burden, looked down upon us - we were desperate women unable to have functioning relationships – we’d brought this on ourselves. That’s how I felt every time one of them dismissed my concerns.”

Specialist refuges and service

- ▶ The Bill must be underpinned by a sustainable future for specialist domestic abuse services - including the national network of life-saving refuges
- ▶ Women who have experienced DV don't always present with just this alone, mental health and substance misuse
- ▶ Women's refuges should be resourced and enabled to provide for women with mental health and substance misuse problems. However the availability of specialist refuge accommodation for women affected by domestic abuse are rare

Housing & Welfare

Tanya

I was temporarily housed in unsuitable accommodation after being stabbed repeatedly, whilst my focus should only have been to rehabilitate.

This contributed significantly to my health and wellbeing.

But I had no choice but to return to the environment where I had experienced all my abuse and trauma, this led to a high level of fear and anxiety.

In addition I was going through court proceedings which probation informed authorities that I was at extremely high risk to reside in the same accommodation.

No one intervened, the only option I had was to be proactive during all of the trauma I was experiencing and get a mutual exchange which I had to facilitate myself.

Housing and Welfare

- ▶ Exempt all women fleeing domestic abuse from the benefit cap, and a duty to assess all welfare reforms for their impact on women's ability to escape and rebuild their lives.
- ▶ Enshrine the Government commitment to secure lifetime tenancies for survivors of domestic abuse, and clarifying their priority need for social housing.



Children and Families

Children and Family

- ▶ A statutory footing for the principle of Operation Encompass7 : police disclosure of a domestic abuse incident at a child's home to their school before 9am on the next school day.
- ▶ A statutory duty for training on domestic abuse within children's services, and clear and consistent protocols to improve information sharing on children at risk of harm from domestic abuse within and between agencies.
- ▶ The position of children who witness domestic violence , and a recognition that for them to witness it is to experience it. The govt are proposing to make domestic violence that happens in front of children an aggravated offense- we think this is a good thing

Tanya

- ▶ Intervention with professionals (Children's Services) Professionals focus always has to be on the Mother and Child, there is a tendency for professionals to focus Domestic Abuse on the perpetrator, in my experience this creates problems for survivors to engage with professionals.
- ▶ Language used in discussions with survivors of abuse is extremely important. Using the correct language and non judgmental approach, can be the starting point for survivors to build up trust amongst professional and in turn leading to create a significant shift in addressing and leaving an abusive relationship.

Trauma Informed

Trauma Informed



Trauma Informed

Women don't really understand the impact all these experiences have on their mental, emotional and physical health.

I wouldn't have identified with the word 'vulnerable' or traumatised" because at the time I was doing the best I could.

We need to listen to women and put their needs at the heart of services, if we want to support and help women in rebuilding their lives and fulfilling their potential.





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