

Press release: Nearly £10 million cash boost to bring hundreds of homes to Festival Gardens

Funding injection will provide 1500 family homes on stalled site.

Press release: Access to compensation scheme for victims who lived with their attacker

- victims previously denied awards will also be able to claim
- part of wider review of Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme already underway

More victims of violent crime will be able to claim compensation, as the government today (28 February 2019) brought forward legislation to abolish the longstanding pre-1979 'same-roof' rule.

Under the so-called 'same roof' rule, victims of violent crimes which took place before 1979 have been blocked from receiving compensation if the attacker was someone they were living with at the time of the incident.

Ministers vowed to remove this obstacle and allow greater access to compensation, recognising the rule's unfair impact on victims of crimes such as child sexual abuse. The pledge is part of wider measures to boost support for victims included in the cross-government Victims Strategy, published last September.

The move will amend the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme so that all victims abused by someone they lived with can reapply for compensation – regardless of when the attack took place.

It will mean that victims who may not have come forward because of the rule, or were previously denied awards under it, will be eligible to claim compensation – with awards being made to those who meet the Scheme's other criteria.

A wider review of the whole compensation scheme, ordered by Ministers, is already underway. This review aims to ensure the scheme responds to the changing nature of crime, and best supports victims in their recovery.

Victims Minister Edward Argar said:

We are abolishing the out-dated 'same-roof' rule so no victim is unfairly denied access to compensation after the trauma they suffered many years ago, simply because they lived with their attacker.

This delivers on another of the commitments we set out in the Victims Strategy last year, and we are undertaking a full review of the whole scheme to ensure that it continues to reflect the changing nature of violent crime and needs of victims.

Today's announcement, along with the Victims Strategy, is a further reflection of this government's determination to ensure that victims of crime get the support they need and deserve.

Baroness Newlove, Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, said:

I very much welcome the government's move to abolish the "same roof" rule.

I have always felt that the rule was unfair. It has caused unnecessary distress to many victims and survivors, especially within families, where some siblings have been eligible for criminal injuries compensation and yet others have not, solely on the grounds of the date on which, the abuse took place.

In future, all victims of historic abuse will be treated equally and their access to compensation will be an acknowledgement of their suffering and pain.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme awards taxpayer-funded payments to victims injured as a result of violent crime, paying out over £150 million to victims in 2017/18.

The 'same roof rule' was part of the original scheme introduced in 1964 and was intended to ensure perpetrators would not benefit from compensation paid to victims they lived with.

It was amended in October 1979 so future victims could claim compensation if they no longer lived with their attacker and were unlikely to do so again. However, as is common with many changes to the law, this was not made retrospective – which meant some victims may have missed out on compensation if they were a victim of a violent crime before the law change.

A statutory instrument, laid in Parliament today, will remove the pre-1979 rule completely – enabling more victims access to compensation.

The ongoing review of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme will look at,

among other things, concerns around the eligibility rules, the definition of 'violent crime', and the type of injuries that are covered.

It will report back later this year and inform a future consultation on changes.

Notes to editors

'Same roof rule'

- The so-called 'same roof rule' was part of the original (non-statutory) compensation scheme introduced in 1964.
- The rule was changed in October 1979, but the changes were not made retrospective.
- The pre-1979 same roof rule applies to adults and children. Under the rule applicants are not entitled to compensation if they were living with their assailant as members of the same family at the time of the incident.
 - The reasons for the rule were, broadly, difficulties with evidence in such cases, and a wish to ensure that offenders did not benefit from compensation paid to the victim who they were living with.
 - The rule applies to all victims of abuse inflicted by a family member living under the same roof; this includes physical as well as sexual abuse.
- The rule was amended in 1979 to apply to adults who continued to live with their attacker only. Under the current 2012 Scheme, applicants can still be refused compensation if at the time of the incident they were adults living with the assailant as members of the same family, unless they no longer live together and are unlikely to do so again. This rule is being amended so that it will apply to adults from 1964 onwards to ensure that it applies equally to all applicants regardless of the date when the injuries were sustained.
- In July 2018 the Court of Appeal decided that the 'same-roof' rule had unfairly denied a claimant who was abused by her stepfather the right to damages. The government chose to not appeal this judgment, and confirmed that the rule would be removed as part of the Victims Strategy published in September.
- The statutory instrument laid today will remove the pre-1979 rule from the 2012 Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. New and past applicants refused an award under the pre-1979 rule will still need to meet all the remaining eligibility criteria within the 2012 Scheme.

Review

The review will examine whether the Scheme remains fit for purpose, reflects the changing nature of violent crime and effectively supports victims in their recovery.

It will consider:

- The scope of the Scheme, including the definition of violent crime for the purposes of compensation for injury, and the type of injuries that

are covered by the Scheme.

- The eligibility rules including, among other things, concerns about time limits for making applications, unspent convictions, and consent in sexual offences cases.
- The requirements of the Scheme in relation to decision-making, including issues such as the level of evidence required for compensation claims, and the timeframes for accepting or rejecting awards.
- The value and composition of awards available through the Scheme, including the balance struck between serious and less serious physical and mental injuries.
- The impact of the Scheme on particular groups, including victims of child sexual abuse and victims of terrorism.
- Opportunities to simplify the Scheme.
- The affordability and financial sustainability of the Scheme.

The review's [Terms of Reference](#).

The [Victims Strategy](#), published in September 2018, sets out a series of measures and commitments across government to overhaul the support available to victims of crime.

[News story: New training for health visitors to boost early language skills](#)

Children most at risk of starting school without the basic language and communications skills are set to benefit from expert education support at home.

Health visitors – who routinely do home visits to check on a child's development at age two – will receive additional training to identify speech, language and communication needs early on, with a new assessment and support package.

Specialist training will be provided for 1,000 health visitors who will work in some of the most deprived communities in England, as part of the Government's drive to tackle the 'word gap' – the gap in communication skills between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Speaking to an audience of 300 early years professionals in Manchester today (Thursday 28 February), Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi will also announce £24 million of additional funding for the 2019-20 academic year for Maintained Nursery Schools, providing reassurance for these settings which tend to care for higher numbers of disadvantaged children, often most at risk of falling behind.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi is expected to say:

Being able to communicate and express yourself is the gateway to success, not just in school but in later life. It's these crucial early years that make the most impact on a child's future path – because for those children who start out behind their peers, it's so much harder to catch up.

The evidence tells us that we need to improve children's communication and language before they arrive at school, when so much of a child's time is spent at home, to help get them on track to be confident, able learners.

If we are to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, we must think about how we can do things differently – including through parents. No parent has all the answers – so we need to make it easier for them to kickstart their child's learning at the earliest opportunity, whether by encouraging them to take part in educational activities as a family, support from trained experts at home to identify concerns earlier, or better access to high-quality early years education.

Children who start school with poor vocabulary are twice as likely to be unemployed as an adult, so health visitors will be trained to recognise early signs of delays with a child's speech and language development and take action when it can have the most benefit.

The programme, a joint initiative being rolled out across the country by the Department for Education and Public Health England, will benefit thousands of families across the country, with a focus on parents who may lack the time, resources, or confidence to support their children's learning at home.

It builds on the Education Secretary Damian Hinds' society-wide ambition to halve the proportion of children leaving Reception year without the communication, language and literacy skills needed to thrive within the next decade.

The first wave of training will involve 400 health visitors in 49 council areas identified as being in high need, based on deprivation factors including free school meal eligibility and the level achieved in speech, language and communication among children aged five in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The next wave will train a further 600 health visitors from 2020 onwards.

Professor Viv Bennett, Chief Nurse at Public Health England, said:

Health visitors have trusted relationships with families and play a vital role in supporting young children's health and wellbeing. This important new training will help more children develop the language and literacy skills they need to reach their full

potential, ensuring that specialist support gets to those that need it most.

Health visitors in five areas of the country – Derbyshire, Newham, Middlesbrough, Wakefield and Wiltshire – will trial a bespoke early language assessment tool being developed by the University of Newcastle, led by Professor James Law.

The assessment tool will be designed to be quick and easy for health visitors to use to support their professional judgement, taking into account any concerns raised by parents and carers. It will be trialled for the first time this summer and rolled out nationally in 2020.

Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham said:

The early years of a child's life are critical in giving them the best start and the best opportunities to get on. Speech and language skills are essential to that which is why this announcement is good news for Greater Manchester – and good news for our children and families.

This joint programme will enhance the work we are already doing across the city-region, doing things differently and driving forward pioneering approaches to close the educational inequality gap and ensure no child is left behind.

In recognition of the need for certainty about the 2019-20 academic year in maintained nursery schools, an additional £24 million will be provided to local authorities to enable them to continue funding maintained nursery schools at higher rates. This provides certainty for the sector ahead of the Spending Review.

Press release: Nearly £10 million cash boost to bring hundreds of homes to Festival Gardens

- £10 million for iconic Liverpool site at heart of the city
- Funding comes from Government's £450 million Local Authority Accelerated Construction (LAAC) programme
- Homes England to share office space with combined authority to help realise housing ambitions

Up to 1500 family homes will be built at the Festival Gardens in Liverpool thanks to a multi-million pound funding boost from Homes England, the agency announced today (February 28).

The Government's housing accelerator – which brings experts and funding to areas to tackle the housing crisis – will give a grant of £9.9 million to Liverpool City Council.

The cash injection– which comes from Government's £450 million Local Authority Accelerated Construction (LAAC) programme – will allow essential remediation work to take place on the site, paving the way for residential development to begin.

The news comes as Homes England officially opened new offices in the same building as Liverpool City Region Combined Authority at Mann Island, Pier Head – a move designed to help the two organisations collaborate more effectively to get homes built.

Sir Edward Lister, Chairman of Homes England, said:

"We are determined to use all the resources available to us to make homes happen across England – so I'm thrilled our funding means work can move forward rapidly at this historic site, providing homes for hundreds of families.

"And with Homes England and combined authority experts now working side by side, we expect to further accelerate the construction of new houses across the region."

Minister of State for Housing, Kit Malthouse MP, said:

"Delivering the homes Liverpool needs is a crucial element of our plan to build a successful and vibrant Northern Powerhouse.

"I was born and brought up in Liverpool and went to the original garden festival as a child, so I know how much this investment will regenerate a key area of this great city, transforming Festival Gardens site with desperately needed family homes."

The council has long held ambitious plans for the site but, to date, a lack of funding has meant crucial remediation works have been unable to take place. Now, activity is expected to begin on-site in the spring, with the first homes being available by 2022.

In addition to owner-occupied houses, the site will also include privately rented apartments.

Joe Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool, said:

"We welcome this essential financial injection from Homes England. Festival Gardens is a much-loved waterfront location and people have very fond memories of spending time there. We are fully aware of the potential the Festival Gardens has and its transformation will be a game-changer for this

city's economy in terms of new homes, construction jobs and growth.

"Thanks to this funding, the council can start essential remediation works on site and move forward with the vision of creating a significant number of new family homes in South Liverpool at an iconic destination.

"Alongside this, we are testing feasibility for a leisure element on site – Festival Gardens will not only deliver a much sought-after housing development, but also a first class visitor and cultural destination."

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, said:

"I welcome today's announcements from Homes England which demonstrate a real and ongoing commitment to the Liverpool City Region.

"I am particularly pleased to welcome the co-location of Homes England staff with the Combined Authority, which is the first arrangement of its kind in the country. Being physically based together in the same building will facilitate even closer joint working and present opportunities for further projects across the whole city region."

Ends

The Homes England press office can be contacted on media@homesengland.gov.uk or 0207 874 8262.

Press release: Newton-Paulet Fund: Professional Development Engagement Programme

Workshop on Governance and Management of science technology and Innovation in Regional Development under the framework of the Newton – Paulet Fund