

Domestic abuse charities can apply for vital funds

- Charities can bid for a share of £10 million funding to support victims of domestic abuse
- The money will be used to support additional refuge bed spaces and specialist support
- A further £6 million will also be given to homelessness charities to support their work during this time

Details on how domestic abuse charities can access the vital funds they need to support vulnerable groups over the coming months have today (7 May 2020) been set out by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick.

Last week, it was confirmed that there would be an additional £10 million for domestic abuse accommodation services over the coming months.

This is part of a [£76 million package of government support](#) for the most vulnerable in society, including those affected by domestic abuse.

This funding will support domestic abuse safe accommodation services who not only provide beds, but also offer the critical help victims and their children need.

The support can be used to ensure existing services remain open as well as to create additional capacity and support during these unprecedented times.

The [fund will be open for domestic abuse charities in England](#), including refuges, to bid for a share. Charities providing Domestic Abuse Safe accommodation (including refuges) in England can apply for this funding.

In order to ensure the funding can be shared as quickly as possible, the bidding process has been streamlined meaning people can access the help they need as soon as possible.

Further information on funding streams for charities providing other domestic abuse services will be made available in due course.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

Domestic abuse leaves vulnerable people, including children, living in fear in the very place where they should feel most safe and secure – inside their own home.

Protecting victims is an absolute priority and the funding charities can now apply for from today will help them meeting the challenges and support those that need it the most.

As well as this emergency funding, the government has also set out plans to support survivors of domestic abuse in the long-term by giving them better access to local housing services.

Government will bring forward legislation to give domestic abuse victims 'priority need' access to settled housing, ensuring they can find a home which is safe, secure and away from the threat of abuse.

Sandra Horley, CBE, chief executive of Refuge says:

Refuge welcomes the government's promise of extra funding for domestic abuse services. Over the last few weeks, calls to Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline have risen by around 50%, showing the sheer numbers of women needing support.

This extra funding will help ensure those providing specialist domestic abuse services can give abused women and children life-saving refuge accommodation. No woman or child seeking sanctuary and support should ever be turned away.

Linked to this, an additional £6 million will be made available for frontline homeless charities. This funding will be shared amongst organisations who are on frontline, keeping vulnerable people without a home safe and giving them the help they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This follows the [appointment of Dame Louise Casey](#) to spearhead a new government taskforce on the response to rough sleeping during the coronavirus pandemic.

The taskforce will work hand-in-hand with councils and agencies across the country on plans to ensure rough sleepers can move into long-term, safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over – ensuring as few people as possible return to life on the streets.

In addition to the £10 million for accommodation services, the government is also providing further support to protect the most vulnerable. This includes:

- The Department for Education will provide £26.4 million to support vulnerable children, including support for families of disabled children and working to safeguard vulnerable children including care leavers and children in the early years. This funding applies to England, except for funding for Childline, which will apply to the UK.
- The Ministry of Justice will provide £25 million to help victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in the community access support services during the coronavirus outbreak, and a further £3 million per annum investment in Independent Sexual Violence Advisers until 2022. This funding applies to England and Wales.
- The Home Office will be providing £3.8 million for community-based domestic abuse services and modern slavery services, and for added support for modern slavery charities who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. The Home Office will be providing £7.8 million in

emergency support for charities helping vulnerable children who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. This includes children at risk of sexual abuse and criminal exploitation. This funding applies to England and Wales.

Nicki Norman Women's Aid Acting CEO said:

The government's announcement of emergency funding for specialist refuges and safe accommodation services is very welcome. A recent Women's Aid Survivor Survey found it is significantly harder for survivors to leave the abuser and seek specialist help. Over three-quarters of survivors responding said Covid-19 has made it harder for them to leave.

Refuges are working around the clock to support women and children who are no longer safe at home. However, these life-saving services are facing the additional challenges of staff shortages, lost income and managing self-isolation in communal buildings.

We are pleased that domestic abuse charities can bid directly to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the urgently needed emergency cash. We hope all departments will now work in partnership with the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector to ensure funding is fair, flexible and reaches the frontline effectively.

It is also critical that funding for services led 'by and for' BME women, Deaf and disabled women and LGBT survivors is ring-fenced. These highly specialist services are vital for meeting survivors' needs but are often marginalized within current funding systems.