

News story: Children affected by domestic abuse to benefit from £8 million fund

The fund gives charities, local authorities and other organisations the chance to bid for money for projects designed to intervene early to help children who have been directly or indirectly affected by domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse ruins the lives of its victims with more than 2 million people subjected to this terrible crime each year. However, NSPCC statistics show that as many as 1 in 5 children in the UK are also witness to or exposed to this horrible crime during childhood.

This could be through being exposed to domestic abuse in the family home, experiencing domestic abuse in their own intimate partner relationships or demonstrating harmful behaviours to those closest to them. Some 25% of girls and 18% of boys aged 13 to 17 have reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner.

Those children affected by domestic abuse in their early years are 4 times more likely to go on and experience or perpetrate domestic abuse later in life. Further studies have also concluded that children affected by domestic abuse are at greater risk of falling into substance abuse, juvenile pregnancy and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

It is heart-breaking to think that all too often children are unwittingly caught up in the effects of domestic abuse and for some, the mental scars of such early exposure will significantly impact on their lives.

However, we can intervene early to give these young people a lifeline and organisations are already providing services, which this government will help support through the fund we are opening today.

This government is absolutely committed to tackling these appalling crimes and is determined that no one should suffer at the hands of the people closest to them.

The multi-million pound boost comes from a £20 million investment designated specifically to help transform the lives of victims of domestic abuse set aside in the Budget and it is part of our wider work to tackle violence against women and children.

The government will assess the applications before informing successful

groups in the autumn. Applications will be open until 19 September.

The NSPCC have championed greater support for children affected by domestic abuse. The charity's Domestic Abuse, Recovering Together (DART) service supports mothers and children who have experienced domestic abuse, through group work and activities together. The NSPCC deliver the programme in 3 areas and have also trained 15 other organisations who provide the service in their areas.

Almudena Lara, NSPCC Head of Policy, said:

The NSPCC receives thousands of contacts every year about frightened children living with domestic abuse across the country, and we know that it can cause serious harm to children's emotional and physical wellbeing.

We want all children, and their parents, who have suffered domestic abuse to have access to the right services to help keep them safe and recover from these traumatic experiences.

Through the Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) service transformation fund the Home Office has already funded programmes aimed at supporting children affected by domestic abuse.

This has included a project in Cambridge, which provides long-term support for young victims and survivors of VAWG and young perpetrators, and a scheme in Southwark, where youngsters who have not engaged with existing support services are given bespoke support.

The fund comes as the government continues to work towards publishing its draft Domestic Abuse Bill following the domestic abuse public consultation earlier this year, which received more than 3,200 responses. This world-leading piece of legislation will create stronger powers to intervene early to stop abuse occurring, pursue perpetrators, and protect and support victims and survivors.

Measures included in the consultation include:

- new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to allow police and courts to act earlier and more effectively when abuse is suspected – these could include compulsory alcohol treatment, attending a programme to address perpetrators' underlying attitudes or addictions, and using electronic tagging to monitor them
- the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse recognising the many kinds of abuse suffered (psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional) – this will help to improve understanding among front-line professionals, law enforcement officers and prosecutors
- the creation of a domestic abuse commissioner to stand up for victims, monitor the provision of domestic abuse services and hold the government to account

The consultation also includes further proposals, for example, to put a new statutory aggravating factor in law, similar to those already in place for hate crimes. This would mean courts would have to consider tougher sentences up to the maximum penalty available, especially when children are involved.

You can read more information on [how to apply](#) for the fund.